

One of the most successful features of the collection is how well-pitched it is: both Ouida novices and Ouida experts are likely to learn a lot from it. All the authors helpfully provide summaries of the tortuous plots of Ouida's novels, which not many readers are likely to have at their fingertips. And useful appendices give a list of the first editions of her works, a select bibliography of her journalism, and a record of the British theatrical adaptations of her novels. *Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture* launches new lines of enquiry into this still relatively-unexplored and at times awkward writer, whose prose style Wilde compared to Walter Pater's, and who certainly deserves to be studied more widely.

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Victorian Sacrifice: Ethics and Economics in Mid-Century Novels, by Ilana M. Blumberg; pp. ix + 260. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013, \$69.95.

Atonement and Self-Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative, by Jan-Melissa Schramm; pp. xi + 289. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, £59.99, £18.99 paper, \$104.99, \$29.99 paper.

Two striking images grace the covers of these excellent studies. Sidney Carton, eyes raised as he mounts the scaffold and reflects on his self-chosen act of substitution, and Frederic Leighton's "The Visible Madonna" (1862), representing Romola comforting ragged children as she recognizes her own turn from personal happiness in favor of sympathy with others and the mitigation of their sorrows: recalling and redefining ideals of heroism and gender, the images underscore the centrality of sacrifice to Victorian literature and culture and to our understanding of the period. With their rich interdisciplinary investigations, primarily (though not exclusively) focused on mid-Victorian texts and events, Jan-Melissa Schramm and Ilana M. Blumberg deepen and transform our sense of how the principle of sacrifice reverberated in legal, ethical, and theological contexts, as well as literary ones.

The intersection of theological debates with representational questions in law, politics, and the novel (and, to a lesser degree, drama) is the main analytical motor in Schramm's *Atonement and Self-Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative*. In chapters that return, time and again, to Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot—with Anthony Trollope and Edward Bulwer-Lytton rounding out the fictional field—Schramm examines the "varieties of vicarious experience" in Victorian representation (6). After an introduction that sets up the study's theoretical frameworks—Victorian and post-Victorian (Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas are particularly significant)—the first chapter centers on punishment and "the cognitive processes of adjudication" through identification and "imaginative substitution" that legal trials demanded (61). Chapter 2 focuses on the multiple narrative versions of the case of Eugene Aram, exploring their negotiations of criminal responsibility and expiatory punishment and tracing a connection to the novel

form and its conceptualizations of character, interiority, and performance. The fascinating third chapter extends these questions to accounts of Chartism and Chartist character, analyzing the movement's claims to representation and reportage of Chartist oratory and trials, before turning to Gaskell's and Dickens's fictional engagement with the issues of representation and democratic advocacy that Chartism had raised. The fourth chapter turns to "substitutionary atonement" and the ethics of dying for another, addressing theological controversy, the national response to the Crimean War, and Dickens's works of the 1850s (141). The final substantive chapter takes up instances of attempted or purported usurpation in novels by Eliot and Trollope, as well as in galvanizing dramas of imposture such as the Tichborne case, exploring the implications of interpersonal substitution for the moral, legal, and political expectations placed on recognition and identity.

Schramm's account of how the imaginative experience of vicariousness formed an element of moral development joins the important body of recent literature on Victorian sympathy, and her attention to varied contexts of vicariousness—in particular the jury trial and Chartist politics—adds a crucial perspective to this scholarship. Across these contexts, *substitution* comes to be as prominent a term as *sacrifice*, and the link between the two is resonant, highlighting the anxieties attendant upon a sacrificial ideal. As Schramm argues, substitution and, especially, substitutability—the "fungibility of social identity"—were necessary to the ideal and practice of salvific sacrifice, but they shaded the concept with opportunities for loss or fraud and challenges to autonomy and individuality (214). At times the book's framing focus on sacrifice, the particularly charged variety of substitution highlighted in the title, can overwhelm the readings of cases that partake of a more general concept of substitution. To have that cover image of Carton in one's mind while turning to the Tichborne case generates a momentary sense of category dissonance that Schramm's argument ably undermines in its local readings. The capacious notion of substitutability that provides the link between those cases will no doubt be as generative for future scholars as it is in this fascinating book.

Blumberg's wonderful study *Victorian Sacrifice: Ethics and Economics in Mid-Century Novels* has a tighter focus: the mid-century negotiation between Christian theology and an economic theory that celebrated laissez-faire capitalism. Blumberg's claim is that for many writers this negotiation resulted in a rejection of what she calls "maximalist altruism," an ideology of self-sacrifice in which "any speck of self-interest" would render an action ethically unjustifiable, in favor of an "ethical innovation," arrived at through economics, that took "mutual benefit" as both a desideratum and a real possibility (11, 24). Blumberg's aim in joining ethics and economics is to trace a shift in Victorian conceptions of duty and moral action. Engaging recent theorists of ethics and secularism, studies of literature and economics, and critical analyses of canonical and non-canonical novels, Blumberg brings deep intelligence, learning, and commitment to her valuable, lucid study.

Like Schramm, Blumberg calls attention to the discomfort that attends many Victorian representations of self-sacrifice, in particular to a sense of the excessiveness of sacrifice that fostered suspicion of its altruism and left it marked with vanity and selfishness. In her first chapter on Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853), Blumberg analyzes how a popular, "avowedly Christian" writer took sacrifice as a problem to explore,

rather than an obvious, uncontroversial duty; Yonge's hero, Sir Guy Morville, exemplifies sacrifice as an elite spiritual achievement that requires both Christian love and a complex sense of how to evaluate and balance the pleasures of others (32). Her second chapter examines the tangled relationship between suicide and self-sacrifice, juxtaposing theological debates over the Atonement, mid-century psychological and social-scientific studies of suicide, and Carton's self-sacrificial death. Blumberg counters the view that *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) exemplifies a liberal spirit by uncovering the rich language of sin, sacredness, and interdependence that structures Carton's sacrifice. Blumberg's brilliant reading of Dinah in Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) represents the heart of her account of mid-Victorian "ethical realism," which focuses on the novel's distribution of happiness in marriages, where suffering cannot be eradicated through self-sacrifice (101). Instead the novel works to create "a genuinely ethical subject whom the narrator respectfully but clearly reforms toward self-interest" (119). Trollope represents the furthest extension of the mid-Victorian reconsideration of altruism and sacrifice in Blumberg's argument, which reads *The Warden* (1855) and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1866–67) as envisioning a social life of "shared, rather than divided" experience, a "continuous exchange in which the longevity and intimacy of relation make it difficult to distinguish between giver and recipient, between giving and enjoying" (140, 170). Sacrifice, in this light, may be tantamount to a kind of theft, the denial of shared pleasure that generates social connection and community. Blumberg's chapter on Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) begins with gift theory and the insight that a gift—a sacrifice—"shares the structure of theft" in making "an uninvited, unilateral act of demand or claim"; in a convincing close reading of the novel's narrative form and the practices of composition, circulation, and reading that defined textual exchanges, Blumberg argues that Collins imagined the risk undertaken in the literary marketplace as the guarantee of an authentic free gift (174). Mary Augusta Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888) provides a late Victorian coda, an exploration of altruism that Blumberg persuasively argues partakes of a new ethical commitment to enabling the self-development of others, one that valued sacrifice but with a "shifted emphasis from individual suffering to collective growth" (225).

Blumberg's reading of the dynamics of sacrifice in the texts she studies is consistently exciting, revealing new dimensions of familiar (and less familiar) texts. Blumberg herself admits that the ethical innovation she locates in the Victorian engagement between ethics and economics may prompt a cynical response, one that is sometimes deserved: how convenient to be able to eschew sacrifice while claiming mutual benefit. But while acknowledging these qualms, she argues that it may nonetheless be appropriate—even desirable—to take the Victorian innovation as a springboard for reconsidering our own ethical questions. Contemporary manifestations of this ethic in practice—for instance, "social entrepreneurs" and philanthropocapitalists, who seek to do well by doing good—may frame their ventures in a utilitarian language, she suggests, but their "effects make their own case" (24, 24–25). Perhaps. But breaking out of a zero-sum model still leaves us with many ethical—and political—questions that cannot and should not be avoided: about inclusiveness and distribution, in particular. Blumberg's rich and captivating analysis casts the Victorian ethical imagination in a new light; whether that ethics can adequately illuminate a path through our contemporary moment seems less

certain, but her book makes a powerful argument that this Victorian revision is worth our consideration.

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Habit in the English Novel, 1850–1900: Lived Environments, Practices of the Self, by Sean O’Toole; pp. xii + 212. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, £50.00, \$100.00.

One might expect a book about habit to be boring, but Sean O’Toole’s *Habit in the English Novel, 1850–1900* proves otherwise. Upending the conventional understanding of habit as repetitious behavior, it uses Victorian novels to redefine habit as a dynamic relationship between the self, its lived environment, and other selves. Rather than closing down the play of perception, habit unseals it, revealing spaces into which the self may flow. This central claim clashes with the modernist view of habit originating in Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* (1873), which disparages habit as the stereotyped vision that fails to capture the uniqueness of passing moments. In addition to refuting the modernist paradigm of habit, Victorian novels also anticipate, and therefore disrupt, the psychoanalytic understanding of habit as unconscious behavior. *Habit in the English Novel* discovers a literary counter-tradition, including Charles Dickens’s *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65), George Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” (1859), George Meredith’s *The Egoist* (1879), and Henry James’s *The Spoils of Poynton* (1896–97), that transforms habit from rote, unconscious repetition into a volatile, ever-surprising force.

O’Toole transmutes habit in these ways first by invoking its nineteenth-century cultural contexts, such as physiological psychology and advice literature. Surveying the archive of British writing on habit from the associationism of John Locke and David Hume to the materialism of Alexander Bain and William Carpenter, he identifies William James’s *Principles of Psychology* (1890) as the period’s definitive psychological statement on habit. James positioned habit as “the enormous fly-wheel of society,” the force that propelled it forward while preserving its traditions. Likewise conduct manuals by Andrew Combe, Sarah Stickney Ellis, and Samuel Smiles all promoted the inculcation of productive habits as the path to virtue and happiness within existing social roles, class divisions, and institutional norms. Literary realism, O’Toole explains, subverts the other discourses’ moralizing tendencies, taking habit as “the impetus of narrative, a necessary ground, and a formal concern” (30–31). While he draws on twentieth-century French theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, essays by Philip Fisher and Eve Sedgwick more directly mold his argument. They help O’Toole to break habit from its confines within metaphysical dichotomies of compulsive/voluntary and biological/social, so that habit becomes instead the self’s way of relating to the world. Through this critical alchemy, the Victorian novel metamorphosizes, from an archive of interiority and introspection to the traces of “worldly habits and exterior space” (5).

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