

not herself offer a rounded account of the messy dynamics of Victorian psychology as a whole, as might be inferred from the book's title. What is here is very fine, but it isn't all there is. Victorian psychology, drawing on diverse traditions, composed of different theoretical and investigative impulses, with uneven and different relations to the political and social questions of the day and different familiarities with physiology and the bio-medical sciences, is a much more complicated affair, and maybe this needed to be made a little clearer.

My third question is more specific. In her account of *Villette*, Shuttleworth argues that the novel responds to *Jane Eyre's* concession to the ideological claims of repressive self-control. *Villette*, she writes, "tentatively asserts the claims of the imagination, in opposition to the reason and control of the masculine world" (233). I think this is probably so, but an assessment of the value of such a step needs to be made in historical terms. As it stands, it seems a little stranded between the reaction-formations of Romantic protest, and the celebratory essentialism of some modern-day feminist theory in the manner of Cixous. Either way it doesn't, for me, enable much purchase to be gained on the hard contest of Victorian theories of psychology and femininity. Lucy Snowe's subjectivity remains embattled, and it is a slender foundation on which to build assertions of imaginative hope.

Much better I think is the book's overall judgement which resists such tentative positivity. Shuttleworth concludes that Charlotte Brontë is a much more political writer than is usually supposed in her exploration of Victorian theories of the self, but that her politics lack an "overarching moral frame," unlike those of Dickens or George Eliot (on whom Shuttleworth has written an equally excellent earlier book). Brontë's work is distinguished "not by the clarity with which she articulates an achieved position, but rather by the intensity with which she wrestles with contradictions (246). This is a just and accurate conclusion to a very fine book.

Kate Flint

"In the Victorian period, as today, the writing of the self is a political act" claims Sally Shuttleworth, and her study of Charlotte Brontë brilliantly illustrates this assertion. By placing Brontë's fiction firmly within the medical and social discourses which consistently resonate within it, she demolishes any lingering vestiges of the myth that the novelist worked in an isolated vacuum, generating and emplotting characters through some innate, almost miraculous creative power. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* has had a great deal to answer for in establishing an image of Brontë's own split self, divided between the near-painful gift of literary genius and more domestic, stereotypically womanly urges. Shuttleworth, however, forcefully demonstrates not just Brontë's awareness of contemporary debates concerning the relationship of the mind and body, of indivisible spiritual and physical selfhood, but shows her manipulating these ideas, even to the extent that her fiction consciously, and provocatively, anticipates more recent formulations of the contradictory positions occupied by the individual subject in relation to particular social and economic structures.

The book falls into two halves. The first provides a general picture of early and mid-Victorian psychological discourse as it informs Brontë's fiction: "psychological discourse" in a broad sense, including not just medical texts, but periodical and newspaper articles, domestic manuals, self-help books and so on. She sets up the two conflicting models of selfhood which Brontë incorporates in her novels, one based on the importance of mental control and self-regulation, the other (usually, but not invariably, in relation to women) on physiological instability. Both models were predicated on the necessity of learning to manage excess. She presents the Victorian fascination with the issue of legibility, of decoding and penetrating the secrets of the other, of breaking down the privacy of inner space. The opening chapter firmly establishes that the novelist's familiarity with this material is far from speculative, investigating the books kept at Howarth (including the annotated copy of Thomas John Graham's *Domestic Medicine*, authorial names which significantly recur, their authority questioned, in the figure of the doctor in *Villette*); the journals read by the Brontë family; the lectures at the Keighley Mechanics Institute, and other material potentially available to the novelist. Moreover, Shuttleworth valuably shows how the language of bodily economy employed within medical writing, engages, and is engaged by, writing on the body politic: in turn, this circulation of ideas is tied in with Brontë's own familiarity with, and comments on, political issues. In the chapters which follow, the treatment of phrenology (clearly distinguished from physiognomy) is of particular importance: phrenology's emphasis on the simultaneous activities of different parts of the mind—sometimes co-operative, sometimes warring—led to theories which show how a mind might be divided against itself. The whole of this first part is extensively and enterprisingly researched, even if it would be useful to learn a little more about the status, career, and hence the authority of those whom she cites on medical issues. It is not always clear how far they are representative or influential, or were seen as extremists even in their own time; Shuttleworth establishes through her range of reference, however, the repetitious nature of many of the central tenets in scientific circulation.

The second part offers a novel-by-novel reading of Brontë's fiction, informed by the material introduced and discussed in the first section. Again, the writing is clear and convincing, developing ideas of surveillance and scrutiny, of identity, control, self-management and circulation. Shuttleworth produces some important revisionist readings of well-worn assumptions, especially when she shows the falsity of the angel\whore opposition: *both*, she argues, are projections of the perceived fragility of the male sexual economy. In the light of her insights here, it's surprising that elsewhere she adheres to a somewhat static, even dated model of feminism, arguing, for example, that "Jane Eyre should not . . . be considered a heroine of feminist self-fulfilment, overthrowing the tyrannous demands of a patriarchal society for female submission. In subscribing to the oppositional principles of selfhood, seeking power through concealment and self-control, she is adhering to the competitive, individualistic principles which underpin Victorian social and economic theory." This is very true, but the opportunity could have been taken to interrogate how far Brontë's writings make us reassess the very nature of feminist activity. This aside, Shuttleworth treats very well the implicit analogy between the "surplus" middle-class woman and the unemployed worker, exploring parallels between concerns over blockages and obstructions in the

improperly functioning female body, and stagnation and inactivity in the economic sphere. She interestingly reads *Villette* in relation to the social repression encoded in Esquirol's theory of monomania, and shows how Brontë is at her most daring in this novel, where she dramatises woman's capacity to resist (as well, as has so frequently been noted, to adopt) patriarchal forms of surveillance.

And yet, for all the convincing deftness with which Shuttleworth traces the language and the assumptions of early Victorian psychoanalysis through the texture of Brontë's prose, showing her working both within and against its dominant discourses, there is more of an unmanageable excess within Brontë's writing than Shuttleworth is always ready to admit. In the chapter on *Villette*, she claims that in this, "her last novel, Brontë finally, tentatively, asserts the claims of the realm of the imagination." She acknowledges the danger of us, as readers, falling into the error of Dr John in assuming that we can somehow gain unproblematic access to a realm of hidden truth concealed somewhere within Lucy. The appeal of Lucy's narrative, despite the frustration occasioned by her concealments, lies as much in the incorporation of the reader's imagination as it does in the representation of Lucy's own. But surely this is true of earlier instances? It was, after all, in 1847, that Brontë wrote to George Lewes that the "imagination is a strong, restless faculty, which claims to be heard and exercised." Jane's paintings, let alone her strange dreams of children (two instances of the imagination which Shuttleworth does not discuss) may be explained as phenomena by setting their occurrence within contemporary contexts, but their open-ended effects cannot be thus circumscribed. No more can the narrative rhythms of the texts, nor the appeals that emplotment makes to a reader's own projections of desire and fulfilment: it would be interesting to think through the connections between the role of narration as a mode of representation within the human sciences and within fiction in the period. Rightly, Shuttleworth notes that the seeds of subsequent developments within psychoanalytic theory are contained in the categories with which Brontë was familiar. But there is plenty of scope to trace how the development of such theory in turn goes to form the positions from which we—post-Freudians, post-Lacanian—read. Twentieth-century theory offers, too, greater possibilities for assessing the dynamics of the enunciatory act of writing the self, of employing the first person mode so favoured by Brontë, that can be articulated through the terms of her Victorian sources. This potential for a dialogue between current and historical psychoanalytic readings remains a tacit, undeveloped presence. Moreover, the question of identity is one which spills beyond the categories of the psychoanalytic. Shuttleworth is certainly well aware of this, investigating what Paul Smith has termed the "dialectical view of the 'subject' and its relation to the social." But questions of class, of religion and of race, crucial determinants within Brontë's fictions, are here so neatly looped in to the terminology of the physiological that while the compelling point is made that the same metaphorical usages bind them together, other associative strands are necessarily suppressed.

Yet these caveats should not detract from the significance of Sally Shuttleworth's work: they represent, rather, avenues for investigation which her work has opened up. One major question which necessarily goes unanswered in this single author study is the degree to which the complex meshing of discourses surrounding and articulating both private and social bodies may be traced through other mid-nineteenth-century writers. Tantalisingly, Shuttleworth suggests that Dickens may be a potential

subject for study here, another author who, like Eliot (the focus of Shuttleworth's earlier major book-length study) is not conventionally associated with the history of science. The achievement of this book is to raise Charlotte Brontë to the status of a writer who needs to be taken seriously in relation to the medical and social debates of her time: our understanding of this author is thereby significantly illuminated. In this study, these debates do not remain at a generalised level of context, but are shown to provide the very linguistic tissue out of which Brontë's complex fictional identities are woven.

Christine Alexander

In *Villette*, Lucy Snowe is subjected to the interpretive gaze of the medical expert. Dr John Graham says: "I look on you now from a professional point of view, and I read, perhaps, all you would conceal—in your eye, which is curiously vivid and restless; in your cheek, which the blood has forsaken; in your hand, which you cannot steady." Lucy is a text that can be read, but read only by those who have the knowledge and skills required to decode the new language of selfhood. Dr John, based on Thomas John Graham, the author of Mr Brontë's much used and revered medical text *Modern Domestic Medicine* (1826), speaks with all the authority of current medical theory, framed by a patriarchal culture. In *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, Sally Shuttleworth sets out to show, first, that the exercise of this scientific authority is part of a gendered struggle for power and, second, that Charlotte Brontë's fiction challenges and subverts this culture of surveillance.

Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology is a fascinating exploration of Brontë's work within the frame of the dominant social and medical paradigms of her era. The argument is clearly divided into two sections: 1) a general study of aspects of Victorian psychology, concentrating on notions of insanity and selfhood, phrenology, and female bodily economy; and 2) the way Charlotte Brontë condenses and explores these ideas in her early writings and in each of her novels. The result is a new view of Brontë as a novelist who is far from culturally isolated: her fiction is seen to "actively encode the language and preoccupations of mid-nineteenth century social, psychological and economic thought" (2). As a female writer, Brontë both assimilated and challenged Victorian constructs. Like Vashti, she "grapples to conflict with abstractions," with such clashing ideologies as those of self-improvement (bolstered by the authority of phrenology) and respectable feminine containment (as articulated in Southey's rebuff to Brontë's urge to write).

Recent studies have sought to enlarge our understanding of Brontë's engagement with Victorian economic, religious and artistic debate. This book is the first to examine Brontë's work in relation to Victorian medical science. It adds to the growing body of literature that sees Brontë not as the intuitive genius of critical tradition, but as a thinker formed by, and integral to, her era. Shuttleworth argues that at the hands of critics ignoring the linguistic connections between the representations of self and the body politic, Charlotte Brontë has been depoliticised, her writing drained of its "class and gender power." Thus, by restoring the focus on language she shows anew how social and political debate actively informs the depiction of the individual psyche. This is