Primitive Minds

Anna Neill

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INTRODUCTION


7. Vanessa Ryan has shown how Victorian novels highlight the role of nondeliberative thought in everyday mental processing, producing knowledge and insight that conscious thought cannot deliver as efficiently. Novels recognize the value of this “thinking without thinking” because they alert the reader to cognitive events that are usually invisible. See Ryan, “Fictions of Medical Minds: Victorian Novels and Medical Epistemology,” *Literature and Medicine* 25 (Fall 2006): 277–97; “Reading the Mind: From George Eliot’s Fiction to James Sully’s Psychology,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70.4 (October 2009): 615–35.


13. As referenced below and in the chapters that follow, the work of, in particular, Roger Luckhurst, Pamela Thurschwell, and Athena Vrettos has explored the fluid boundary between spiritualism and mental science in the Victorian period. See also Nicola Bown, “What Is the Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of?” in *The Victorian Supernatural*, edited by Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 151–72.


20. Ibid., 470.


29. Ibid., 58.


47. Gould identifies Cuvier’s anti-evolutionist functionalism (the coordination of parts that cannot undergo change independently of one another, thereby rendering the transmutation of species practically impossible) and emphasis on extinction in the history of organic succession as influential in the development of paleobiology and his own theory of “punctuated equilibrium.” See Gould, *Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, esp. 293–95.
48. Although Cuvier and Owen were both opponents of evolutionary adaptationism, neither unequivocally positioned species history within a Christian universe. Cuvier’s functionalism, Gould stresses, privileged the material relationship between organism and environment over the formalist position that function followed only divinely created types. See Gould, *Structure*, 291–304. While Owen is often thought to have organized taxonomies around a set of Platonic archetypes, he did not see homologous organs representing a creator’s functional “plan.” See Ron Amundson, ed., *Richard Owen: On the Nature of Limbs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), xxxvi–vii.

49. Shuttleworth and Taylor give Freud no special prominence in the literature of Victorian mental science, referencing Freudian psychoanalysis only in relation to the science of hypnosis and nineteenth-century medical studies of dreams and hysteria. See *Embodied Selves*, 6, 68, 70, 166.


57. Reed, *From Soul to Mind*, 5.


62. Ibid., 1: 20.

64. Charles Darwin, *Descent*, 106.
67. Debra Gettelman has also emphasized these interdisciplinary careers. See Gettelman, “Reverie, Reading, and the Victorian Novel” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005), 21.
69. Luckhurst, *Invention of Telepathy*, 17.
72. On this subject, see Davis, *George Eliot*, 122–34.
77. Ibid., 14.
84. See Reed, *From Soul to Mind*, 100–101.
86. Ibid., 107, 109.
89. Ibid., 245.
94. Ibid., 57.
100. Ibid., 225.
104. See also Davis, *George Eliot*, 123.

114. Carpenter, Mesmerism, 4.
115. Ibid., 19.
117. Maudsley, Physiology, 208–14, 298.
118. Ibid., 160.
119. Ibid., 168.
120. Tuke, Sleepwalking and Hypnotism, 6.
121. Ibid., 7.


124. James, Varieties, 6.
126. Ibid., 357.
127. Ibid., 358.
134. Ibid., 111.
137. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d’Urbervilles (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 68. All further references cited in the text.
138. Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11. In a related study, Debra Gettelman has traced how the states of reverie and rapt absorption are specifically associated with novel reading in the period, thus suggesting both the imaginative potential of and the proximity to mental disorder that novels offered to Victorian culture. See note 67.


**CHAPTER 1**


6. Shuttleworth puts more emphasis on the figure of monomania in Brontë’s novels in this respect, showing how nineteenth-century psychiatry identified monomania as a form of partial insanity. While in *Villette*, Lucy on one occasion describes herself

7. On Victorian medical accounts of hypochondriasis, see below. Gettelman has explored the tension in *Jane Eyre* between the pleasures of reverie (which are mimicked in readerly absorption) and a sense that daydreaming or overidentification may cause disruptive excess. See Gettelman, “Making Out ‘Jane Eyre,’” *ELH* 74.3 (Fall 2007): 557–81.


10. Ibid., 8–9.


18. Ibid., 430–33.


23. On the metaphorical cooption of colonial slavery to represent gender relations in *Jane Eyre*, see Susan Meyer, “Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of *Jane Eyre*,” in


25. Sharon Marcus, “The Profession of the Author: Abstraction, Advertising and *Jane Eyre*,” *PMLA* 110.2 (March 1995): 206–19. In *Villette*, too, Lucy seems both abstracted and abstracting: She describes how “in my reverie, methought I saw the continent of Europe, like a wide dream-land” (49); and she ends her story with a vision of the “destroying angel of the tempest” that wrecks vessels across the entire distance of the Atlantic, thus bringing M. Paul’s West Indian plantation into “imaginative proximity” (Marcus, 207) with European shores.

26. Ibid., 207


31. Ibid., 91.

32. Ibid., 20–29.


34. Ibid., 93–177.


37. Alison Byerly argues that even before reading *Modern Painters* in 1848, and certainly in *Villette*, Brontë illustrates Ruskin’s assertion that visual art must be more than imitation, combining the depiction of material things with the representation of inner experience. See Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 93.


41. Ibid., 362.

42. Buchan, *Advice to Mothers* (Boston: Joseph Bumstead, 1809), 45.

43. Ibid., 108.

44. *Mental Maladies*, 47.

46. Ibid., 286.
47. Ibid., 9.
48. Ibid., 12.
50. Ibid., 441.
51. Ibid. (June 1838): 784–91 (784).
53. Chambers, Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation, 290.
55. Shuttleworth, Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology, 42.
56. Ibid., 44.
60. Ibid., Bk. 1,56.
61. Richardson, British Romanticism, 66–74.
66. Prichard, Researches, 172.


69. Ibid., 381. Matthew observes of the theory that all species descend from “one Proteus principle of life capable of gradual circumstance-suited modifications and aggregations”: “There is more beauty and unity of design in this continual balancing of life to circumstance, and greater conformity to those dispositions of nature which are manifest to us, than in total destruction and new creation” (383–84). In turn of phrase as well as in meaning, this seems to anticipate Darwin’s famous remark that “there is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having being breathed originally into a few forms or only one.” Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species, edited by Joseph Carroll (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2003), 398.

70. Matthew, On Naval Timber, 370.

71. Peter Bolt identifies how the imagery in Jane’s symbolic paintings links them with her portraits. The portrait of Blanche Ingram, for example (painted before Jane actually meets her), associates her with the cormorant of the earlier painting because both are adorned with a gold bracelet. See Bolt, “Jane Eyre’s Three Paintings: Biblical Warnings and Greek Legends,” Victorian Web, http://victorianweb.org/authors/bronte/cbronte/bolt7.html (January 2012). Although nominally more realist, this portrait is also clearly drawn from the “spiritual eye.”

72. Prichard, A Treatise on Insanity, 320.

73. Ibid., 303.

74. Ibid., 304.

75. Ibid., 320–22.

76. Ibid., 323.

77. Charlotte Brontë to James Taylor, January 15, 1851, Correspondence, III:200.

78. Charlotte Brontë to James Taylor, February 11, 1851, Correspondence, III:208.


80. Charlotte Brontë to George Smith, October 30, 1852, Correspondence, IV:14.

81. Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes, November 6, 1847, Correspondence, II:152–53.

82. Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams, November 6, 1852, Correspondence IV:17.

83. Charlotte Brontë to George Smith, [undated], 1852, Correspondence IV:17.

CHAPTER 2

1. “Doubtfully Divine Missions,” All the Year Round 15 (May 1866): 404–8 (408); this journal is further cited as AYR.


8. Ibid., 145.

9. Ibid., 144.


17. See, for example, Caroline Levine, “Narrative Networks: Bleak House and the

18. Jill Matus has analyzed how Dickens uses the figure of recovered memory and trauma in her account of episodes of discontinuous consciousness and self-loss. See Matus, *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 83–120.


23. Ibid., 702.


28. Ibid., 181.


38. Ibid., 181.


40. Ibid., 2:101.

41. Ibid., 2:96 (emphasis in original).

42. Ibid.


45. Ibid., 549.

46. Ibid., 548.

47. Ibid., 582.

48. Ibid., 582, 610.

49. Ibid., 577.


52. Ibid., 531–50.

53. Ibid., 280.


57. Alison Winter describes the difficult career of therapeutic mesmerism in the 1830s. Notwithstanding that Thomas Wakely, editor of the influential *Lancet*, abandoned his unqualified contempt for mesmerism, Elliotson’s experiments continued to
be associated with the sensational stuff of mass media like the weekly penny pamphlets. See Winter, *Mesmerized*, 30–46.


64. Ibid., 209

65. Ibid., 170.


68. George Levine, *Dying to Know*, 5.

69. Ibid., 149–55.


72. Peltason argues that the scene at the garden gate represents Esther’s power to remove herself from desire. “Esther’s Will,” 672.


75. Ibid., 394.

76. Ibid., 392.


CHAPTER 3


8. Ibid., 9.


15. Ibid., 235.


18. Ibid., 232.


22. Ibid., 179.
23. Ibid., 180.
26. Ibid., 78.
29. Ibid., 179.
30. Ibid., 177.
31. Ibid., 91.
34. On the link between Gwendolyn and Mordecai as subjects of heightened consciousness, see Thurschwell, “George Eliot’s Prophecies,” 92–102; Jill Matus, Shock, Memory and the Unconscious, 149–52.
35. On Eliot’s use of the figure of Paracelsus and reanimation in The Lifted Veil, see Nurbhai and Newton, Judaism and the Novels, 6.
38. Toker, Towards the Ethics of Form, 118.
40. Catalepsy was sometimes identified as a nervous disorder in its own right, alongside hysteria, epilepsy, and others (see, for example, Esquirol, Mental Maladies, 109), and sometimes as a symptom of hysteria or another condition: “Catalepsy is characterized by loss of will and muscular rigidity. It occurs in paroxysms with loss of consciousness, the limbs remaining in for long periods in any position in which they are placed. It occurs in hysteria, various psychoses, hypnotic states, and organic brain disease.” Daniel E. Hughes, Hughes’ Practice of Medicine, 12th ed. (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston’s Son & Co., 1922), 552.
44. Eliot, “Notes on Form in Art,” 234.


54. Ibid., 36.

55. Ibid., 43.

56. Ibid., 56.


58. Ibid., 25.


61. Carpenter, “Man the Interpreter of Nature,” 194

62. Ibid., 197.


64. Ibid., 223.


66. Ibid., 285.

67. Ibid., 287.

68. Ibid., 282–83.


72. Ibid., 811–12.
74. Lewes, “Dread and Dislike of Science,” 815.
76. Ibid., 2:116.
77. Ibid., 2:116–19.

CHAPTER 4

1. Such inquiry anticipates current research into the cognitive value of nondeliberate or intuitive thought in complex intellectual activity. See Ryan, “Fictions of Mind.”
8. Ibid., 67, 52.
9. Ibid., 67.
11. Dana Seitler has shown how corporeal atavism stamps ancestral history back onto the present, thus highlighting how reversal and retrogression structure the very modernist ethos that attempts a break from the past. See Seitler, *Atavistic Tendencies: The Culture of Science in American Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
15. Ibid., 15.
24. Ibid., 45.
27. Kelly Hurley has argued that neo-Gothic forms respond to the theory of natural selection in combination with degenerationism. Darwinian evolution reduces humans to brute beasts and implies that they are as likely to retrogress as they are to progress to a higher intellectual and moral state. See Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
29. Ibid., 176.
40. Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, edited by Owen Dudley Edwards (Ox-
ford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6. All further references cited in the text.

41. Laura Otis describes how detection in Holmes’s stories functions as “an imperial immune system” as it “identif[ies] and neutraliz[es] living threats to society” that invade from new regions of contact. Otis, Membranes: Metaphors of Invasion in Nineteenth-Century Literature, Science, and Politics (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 91.

42. Interestingly, Holmes’s “methods”—including “retrospective narrative hypothesis, the importance of reading signs . . . the judicious use of tests, the preference for ruling out rather than ruling in, the use of maxims, and the claim to be engaged in a deductive science”—have been used to train medical students in diagnostic reasoning. See Kathryn Montgomery, “Sherlock Holmes and Clinical Reasoning,” in Teaching Literature and Medicine, edited by Anne Hunsaker Hawkins and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (New York: The Modern Language Association, 2000), 299–305, (299).


44. In this way, as Nils Clausson has argued, the Gothic “questions and even subverts the aspirations of criminal science to subject crime and criminality to scientific analysis.” See Clausson, “Degeneration, Fin-de-Siècle Gothic, and the Science of Detection: Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Hound of the Baskervilles and the Emergence of the Modern Detective Story,” Journal of Narrative Theory 35.1 (Winter 2005): 60–87 (63). This claim significantly revises Patrick Brantlinger’s influential accounts both of sensation fiction as “a secularization and domestication of the mysteries of gothic romance” and of its maturation in the detective novel as the “transformation of metaphysical-religious knowledge into the solution of a crime puzzle.” See Brantlinger, “What Is Sensational about the Sensational Novel?” Nineteenth-Century Fiction 37.1 (June 1982): 1–28 (8, 19).


48. Ibid., 252–53.


50. Ibid., 58.

51. Talbot, Degeneracy, 32

52. Ibid., 62.


56. Smajic describes this scene as an enactment of the “disembodied panoptic eye” and evidence of Holmes’s spiritualist powers—here levitation. Smajic, *Ghost-Seers, Detectives and Spiritualists*, 133.


58. See, for example, Podmore’s conclusions about the physical phenomena of spiritualism: “the line between what was not possible to fraudulent ingenuity and what was not possible cannot be drawn with sufficient sharpness to arrant the invocation of any new agency.” Podmore, *Apparitions and Thought-Transference: An Examination of the Evidence for Telepathy* (London: W. Scott Ltd., 1894), 37.


63. Ibid., 338.


66. Ibid., 1: 42.


70. Ibid., 63

71. Ibid., 170.

72. Ibid., 35.

73. Lombroso, “Nordau’s ‘Degeneration,’” 937.


76. Ibid., 651.

77. Ibid., 652.


91. Ibid., 548.

**CHAPTER 5**

2. Ibid., 214.
6. The now commonplace emphasis on Darwinian determinism in Hardy’s novels has been challenged in recent years. Gillian Beer argues that his characters find a consoling sense of continuity with nature, despite being sidelined by its non-human-centered plot. In *Dying to Know*, George Levine points out that Hardy’s naturalistic pessimism is offset by his emphasis on human consciousness as the source of meaning, “although with no sense that such power can transform the material world.” See Beer, *Darwin’s Plots*, 220–41; Levine, *Dying to Know*, 200–219 (202).
7. See Glendening, *Evolutionary Imagination*, 70.
10. Ibid., 127.
16. Kay Young describes such episodes in Tess as “dissociative,” where dissociation means limiting self-reflection to that which is necessary for survival. Young suggests that these dissociative, automatic states precipitate tragic events in the novel but also represent a form of defense against their psychic consequences. See Young, Imagining Minds: The Neuro-Aesthetics of Austen, Eliot, and Hardy (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 157–84.
19. Elaine Scarry points out the difference between Hardy’s depictions of the deep embodiment of work in contrast to the half-absorption in one’s activity of “play” (working the land as opposed to walking through it). See Scarry, Resisting Representation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 49–90 (52).
20. In an interview with William Archer, Hardy explained, “my pessimism, if pessimism it be, does not involve the assumption that the world is going to the dogs. . . . On the contrary, my practical philosophy is distinctly meliorist.” “Real Conversations II—With Mr. Thomas Hardy,” Critic 38 (April 1901): 309–18 (317).
22. Ibid, 22.
23. Ibid, 702.
24. Ibid., 705.
25. Ibid., 8.
28. Ibid., 5.
29. Ibid., 40.
30. Ibid., 44.
31. Lyman, Insomnia and Other Disorders, 161–62.
33. Ibid., 1:235.
34. Esquirol, Mental Maladies, 93.


37. Alexandre Brière de Boismont, *Hallucinations, or the Rational History of Apparitions, Dreams, Ecstasy, Magnetism, and Somnambulism* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1853), xi. All further references cited in the text.


40. Ibid., 2: 76–77.


45. Ibid., 2:1907n.


51. Ibid., 26.


56. “As I am old-fashioned, and think lucidity a virtue in poetry, as in prose, I am at a disadvantage in criticizing recent poets who apparently aim at obscurity.” “To Ezra Pound,” March 18, 1921, *Selected Letters*, 357.


59. Ibid., 98.

62. Ibid., 158.
63. Hardy, *Life and Works*, 323.
64. Ibid., 123.
65. Ibid., 227.

CONCLUSION

3. Ibid., 195–98.
4. Ibid., 4.
5. Ibid., 8.
8. Ibid., 354.
9. Ibid., 223.
10. Ibid., 286.
11. Ibid., 291.