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Body as Text: Physiognomy on the Early English Stage

by

Curtis Le Van

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

My dissertation explores the presence of physiognomy, which is the reading of faces and bodily affects to determine a person's character. I investigate plays originally produced for the early English stage, ranging from the late Middle Ages to the Restoration. In this work I argue that the bodies within the selected plays exist as texts that are to be interpreted by readers and audience members alike. While embodiment theory has done excellent work in explaining the corporeality of the pre-modern body, it does not consider the body as a textual construction. My work aims to fill such a gap. My main methodology is historicist, both old and new. I employ the former insofar as I incorporate primary texts relevant to understanding physiognomy and its workings on the early English stage. I also use New Historicism since I cover many influences on physiognomy, including theology, politics, and philosophy of the mind. The first chapter probes the York Cycle's biblical play *The Conspiracy*, as well as the morality play *Mankind*. I claim that physiognomy highlights the participatory aspects of both plays, as each contains bodies that help audiences learn of true piety. In the second chapter, I discuss Shakespeare's problem plays *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Hamlet*. I posit that the genre of problem play can best be understood as including works that contain incomplete or inaccurate physiognomic readings. For my final chapter, I analyze the tragicomedies *Marriage a-la-Mode*, by John Dryden, and *The Widow Ranter*, by Aphra Behn. I insist that examining the physiognomic readings can help us unite the dialectics between and among the multiple plots within each play. Over the course of these three chapters, I conclude that the body-as-text, understood through

physiognomy, allows modern readers to better grasp pre-modern understandings of internality as it evolved from the Middle Ages to the Restoration. In addition, I contend that genre often dictates the ways in which bodies are constructed textually. In summary, the contributions of my work can be listed as the following: (1) I provide examples of how physiognomy can be used to support a variety of methodologies, including Marxism, feminism, and deconstruction. (2) I offer a more thorough history of physiognomy, ranging from the late Middle Ages to the Restoration. (3) My work with genre is unique among current scholarship that engages with physiognomy. In my conclusion, I suggest paths forward with this project, such as the use of other methods for interpreting the body as a text, consisting of anatomy, physiology, and allegory.

Introduction

This is a dissertation about understanding the body as a text in early English drama. In it, I argue that the plays discussed represent bodies not only as material entities made of flesh, blood, and bones but as texts that require interpretation by characters within the plays as well as by audience members and readers outside them. While embodiment has, for the past three decades, been fresh on the mind of critics in medieval, early modern, and Restoration literature, critics in all three fields have focused on the physical conditions of corporeality, namely humors and passions; anatomical dissection; environmental and ecological interactions; and race, gender, and sexuality. While such studies have gone a long way to historicize these issues in terms of a pre-Cartesian or pre-modern epistemology, they skirt the important question of how the body is represented and interpreted in both language and performance.

Thus, my dissertation provides a hermeneutical framework that enables readers of early English drama to appreciate the body as a textual construct through the rich history of physiognomy, or the reading of the inner nature of a person through both facial features (known as humoral physiognomy) and bodily affects (referred to as affective physiognomy). As such, internality remains central to conceiving the body as a text: the face and body serve as an index for the soul or mind, and, therefore, modern readers must recognize pre-modern and early modern conceptions of inner life. I organize this framework chronologically, and over the course of three chapters, this study shows how physiognomy operates as a reading practice within various contexts. Moreover, the trans-historic approach allows readers to refine their grasps of

both physiognomy and internality by contrasting the two concepts' various manifestations throughout different eras.

Such historical approaches often appear to imply that the medieval period was a time of certainty, followed by the questioning of stability during the Renaissance, which, in turn, became displaced by the constancy of the Enlightenment. This work avoids such thinking insofar as each chapter affirms that physiognomy has had many impelling factors throughout its evolution. Indeed, the primary critical approach of this dissertation is historicist, both old and new. It employs the former insofar as I delineate important physiognomic tracts, expressing how they remain necessary in order to appreciate these plays more fully. However, this dissertation also engages with New Historicism, specifying that the physiognomy within each period has multiple key influencers, such as theological apologia, politics, philosophy of the mind, and even human anatomy and physiology.

A number of critics have written on physiognomy, and many use it as a catalog of sorts, detailing what certain facial structures or gestures meant to a contemporary audience in order to make political arguments. This dissertation would not be possible without such scholarship, and I actively build upon their findings to offer a more complete depiction of physiognomy's trajectory over time. Although I rely on previous critical works to articulate the tenets of this science, I expand this ongoing dialog by showcasing the evolution of physiognomy from the late Middle Ages to the Restoration, particularly in regard to subjectivity.

Specifically, my medieval chapter relies primarily on the scholarship of Joseph Ziegler and Carrie Griffin, each having a distinct approach. Ziegler places physiognomy within its theological and scientific contexts and does excellent work in situating this practice within pre-modern conceptions of epistemology and even ontology. While he is one of the more prolific

writers on medieval physiognomy, my study implements findings from three of his articles: “Text and Context: On the Rise of Physiognomy Thought in the Later Middle Ages” (2001), “Measuring the Human Body in Medieval and Early Renaissance Physiognomy” (2011), and “‘Phisonomia est lex Nature’: On the Nature of Character and Behaviour in Late Medieval Physiognomy” (2014). Griffin takes a more literary approach, advocating that many medieval physiognomic manuals remain ignored, or are not used to elucidate medieval fiction for modern audiences, as she indicates in her dissertation *A Good Reder’: The Middle English Wise Book of Philosophy and Astronomy* (2006), and her more recent publication, “‘Lynes of my Lore’: Judas and the Mark of Mars in the York Play of *The Conspiracy*” (2011), from which I largely base my reading of *The Conspiracy*. In general, I bring their work together, employing Griffin’s indexical approach to Ziegler’s historical contextualization. In other words, I argue that the medieval understanding of internality, as explicated by Ziegler, appears within dramatic works when we examine the locutions of physiognomic language, as practiced by Griffin. I further add to their method the use of affective physiognomy, an offshoot of the humoral physiognomy that Griffin and Ziegler consider exclusively.

My medieval chapter first acquaints readers with the two types of physiognomy: humoral and affective. The former interprets fixed facial features, such as nose size, bone structure, and eye color. The latter falls more in line with our current conception of body language and includes gestures, blushing, and even stance. After establishing this distinction, the chapter explores the importance of audience participation within biblical and morality plays, thereby uniting my analysis with genre. I argue that late medieval audiences at large would be familiar with physiognomy since it existed as a more folkish science, easily accessible to less educated viewers. From there, I contend that physiognomy enhances the dynamics and didactic nature of

each play. First, in *The Conspiracy*, I assert that having a lowly janitor perform a humoral physiognomic reading on Judas not only reinforces the idea that physiognomy was widespread, but that it also helps the play reach a broader audience. I then turn to affective physiognomy within the morality play *Mankind*, for which I posit that the bodies of the characters Mankind and Mercy operate as texts for the audience to read in order to learn about effective prayer and piety.

Within Renaissance studies, physiognomy has enjoyed a recent resurgence in its application by such critics as Sybille Baumbach, Michael Neill, and Coppélia Kahn. Baumbach, like Griffin to medieval physiognomy, has done much work in creating a directory of Shakespeare's use of physiognomy in her book *Shakespeare and the Art of Physiognomy* (2008). Within her articles on the subject, she steadily insists that Shakespeare's inclusion of physiognomy invites audience members to test the validity of physiognomy as a means for interpreting humans correctly. Neill often refers to Baumbach's earlier work in his articles on the subject, which include "The Look of Othello" (2009) and "A Book Where One May Read Strange Matters" (2013). He builds upon the early modern desire to read faces in order to discern one's true, inner nature. He sets out to prove that for early moderns, the inner character of each person quite literally etched itself on the face. Moreover, Neill stresses the importance of this belief by illustrating how face acting became more important after 1600. Kahn takes a somewhat different approach, and contends that understanding physiognomy on the Renaissance stage helps modern readers understand the ubiquity of self-fashioning within the time of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as articulated in her chapter "Reading Faces in *Hamlet*" from *Shakespeare and the Art of Lying* (2013). All of this scholarship serves as a point of departure for

my own work with Shakespeare's dramas, in which I convey the role of physiognomy within the bard's problem plays.

The second chapter, thus, probes the plays *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Hamlet*. I recap the long, ongoing debate as to what constitutes a problem play, acknowledging that it is not a term Shakespeare would have known. Ultimately, I insist that physiognomy allows Shakespeare to build tension and to construct questions of characters' interiorities that seemingly can be answered through physiognomy. However, this art fails to provide complete or even accurate readings. In particular, Helen in *All's Well* is consistently misread, and the play ends before we have a full understanding of her true disposition. In *Hamlet*, I set my analysis primarily within the second act, positing that Shakespeare demonstrates physiognomy's legitimacy, only to have it fail to read Gertrude thoroughly or correctly in the later closet scene. Both plays end before we fully understand either woman.

Of the three eras I consider, physiognomy has the smallest presence within Restoration studies. Critics such as Graham Tytler examine the reemergence of physiognomy later in the Long Eighteenth Century, and he centers his scholarship on the novels of Henry Fielding in his piece "Letters of Recommendation and False Vizors: Physiognomy in the Novels of Henry Fielding" (1990). Others, such as Markman Ellis and Barbara Benedict highlight the rise of sentimentality within the eighteenth century, which served as the vehicle for physiognomy's revitalization in their works. Ellis's *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (1996) and Benedict's "Reading Faces: Physiognomy and Epistemology in Late Eighteenth-Century Sentimental Novels" (1995) stress the importance of physiognomy in this literary mode. Yolanda Caballero Aceituno admits the lack of physiognomy in Restoration studies and argues that we must reconsider its stance in the era in her article "Anti-Slavery and

Sentimentalism in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (2006). She claims that the volatility during the Restoration requires modern critics to rethink physiognomy, and she offers a variety of new terms to explain how white Europeans would interpret the Other through physiognomy. Like Caballero Aceituno, I argue that physiognomy should not be seen as merely experiencing a revival later in the eighteenth century. Instead, I offer that the evolution of thought within medical and philosophical discourses from the seventeenth century explain how physiognomy was perceived during the Restoration. Moreover, the embryonic understandings of physiognomy and emotions find a felicitous home within the genre of tragicomedy.

Therefore, my third chapter engages with tragicomedy within the Restoration, and, in short, I contest that physiognomy unites the various plots within each play by encouraging audiences and readers to compare the various uses of physiognomy in each plot. For Dryden's *Marriage a-la-Mode*, I argue that Dryden inserts a more epicurean understanding of the soul, and that he highlights a shift from the Renaissance understanding of the soul and emotions or passions. Next, I contend that in *The Widow Ranter* Behn demonstrates the growing concern surrounding the more romantic aspects of subjectivity. Behn weaves multiple plots, but I insist that the character of the Widow is the anchor. All other plots reveal how characters use their individuality in the New World to create new personas, and re-write their bodies through blushes, glances, and other forms of physiognomic love-making. The Widow, however, rejects this practice and insists that she alone presents herself as she really is.

On the whole, readers may find it more affluent to view each of my chapters as a dialog among three dominant pillars: physiognomy, internality, and genre. Each one informs the other in some capacity. The face is used to read the internal self, and genre regularly dictates the ways a playwright fashions the types of *selves* present on the stage. The intended effect of such a

dialectic is to ground each chapter within drama in order to demonstrate that bodies on the early English stage are, indeed, literary compositions just as much as they are physical bodies. Therefore, each chapter seeks to explain the contemporary notions of the self, the prevailing doctrines of physiognomy, and the specific intricacies of distinct genres.

If the soul of wit is brevity, as Shakespeare's Polonius advocates, this introduction may become tedious if much longer; each chapter contains its own considerable introduction that contextualizes physiognomy for each era. In addition, each chapter concludes with my thoughts on uniting each era to create a composite, but clear timeline for the developments of the self and physiognomy.

Chapter One:

“a figure in your fals face ” ; or “Wepygne, sythyngne, and sobbyngne were my suffycyens”:

Humoral and Affective Physiognomy in Medieval English Drama

Introduction

Physiognomy is the art of judging the nature of a person, and, according to Galen, it began as a branch of medicine first articulated by Hippocrates, who analyzed physical symptoms of people’s behaviors presumably caused by the humors and four elements (Evans 292-3).¹ However, its predecessor dates back to ancient Babylon and was far more mystic since practitioners employed facial characteristics to read into one’s future, much like palm reading (Gadd 80). Over centuries, its practice and methods expanded and evolved. By the time of early English drama, physiognomy existed in two forms: humoral and affective. The former dominates most texts on the subject since Galen’s physiology serves as its foundation and is thus often referred to as “humoral characterology.” According to Moshe Barasch, physiognomy “centered almost completely on the permanent features of both the physical constitution (hair, complexion, general shape of the body and especially of the head) and the psychological structure (that is, the temperaments)” (418). In other words, the body’s appearance, the head in particular, signifies the internality of a person insofar as this inwardness was controlled by the humors, the climate, and, even later, the influence of the stars. Affective physiognomy emerged later in medieval Europe, through the reading and translating of pseudo-Aristotle, and it posits that the bodily responses to

¹ Sybille Baumbach argues the same, and provides the following citation from Galen: *Anim. mor. corp. temp.* 7.

the movement of the passions, what we would now consider emotions, can be interpreted. Sighing, weeping, blushing, gestures of elation and discomfort—all can and should be read to determine someone’s temperament.²

Within medieval thought, the rational soul is preeminent among all the spirits that animate the human body. Though distinct and dominate, the rational soul remained subject to outside influence by way of these bodily spirits. Joseph Ziegler outlines this relationship in his work “Phisonomia est Lex Nature”:

Typical in the physiognomic discourse is the open acknowledgement that the rational soul follows the body in the same way as the mover is affected by the instrument it is using. The motor is the soul and the instruments are the spirits which affect the body and soul through their change. The working of the intellect and the mind is affected by the changing qualities of the physical spirits in the body which is under celestial influence. (369)³

Thus, physiognomy provided a way to read the celestial influence on the body and its spirits, which, affected the rational soul, thereby legitimizing physiognomy as a means of interpreting the internality of another: the way the soul engages with the affected body and spirits produces notable effects on the soul itself.

² Julie Orlemanski makes a further distinction in her article “Physiognomy and Otiose Practicality.” She separates what I have called “humoral physiognomy” into two categories: analytic and astrological. The first looks to individual facial features without reference to the cosmos, while the second details the facial features of a person under a certain planet’s sway. While her distinction proves useful in her overall assessment that medieval practitioners were aware of the limits of physiognomy, it does little for my purposes, which looks to physiognomy in drama, not in actual practice. Moreover, in many physiognomic manuals, analytic and astrological physiognomies complement one another, insofar as facial features are listed in each planet’s description and are later expanded upon in the analytic portion of texts.

³ For consistency, it is important to point out that in the Renaissance, these spirits that worked through the body’s nervous system were often called “animal spirits” or “vital spirits.” Critics of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature often employ them interchangeably, or just use *spirits* in order to make a distinction between them and the soul. Critics of medieval writings often use primarily *spirits* as Ziegler does here, though *animal* and *vital* are certainly implied. Throughout this study I adopt the terms employed by critics who write on each distinct era: late medieval, Renaissance, and the seventeenth century.

This chapter considers both humoral and affective physiognomy in medieval drama. Admittedly, humoral physiognomy does not arise frequently on the stage since a character's appearance speaks for itself. Nonetheless, it remains a useful point of departure for understanding the body as a text intended to be interpreted by not only other characters within the plot, but by the audience as well. Consequently, affective physiognomy overshadows its antecedent throughout this dissertation given how often characters comment on one another's bodily affects and gestures. The first section of this chapter explores humoral physiognomy with the York biblical play, *The Conspiracy*, in which a janitor reads the face of Judas. The second section considers affective physiognomy in the morality play *Mankind*, in which bodily affects remain paramount in understanding true piety, contrition, inward sensation, and the nature of mercy. Both sections begin with an illustration of each type of physiognomy from the works of Chaucer as well as interaction with prominent physiognomic treatises of the era. But physiognomy did not begin with medieval literature, and, therefore, this introduction offers a brief history of physiognomy before the time of Chaucer and the medieval stage.

The reading of a character's psychological state through the body's motions and the face's composition appears frequently in late medieval literature despite its relative absence in classical literature. John Block Friedman points out that classical tragedians relied on masks to depict emotions and that heroic poets employed dialog and transitive action to describe states of emotional being (140). Thus, physiognomy resided in the works of science and medicine, and many classicists have traditionally turned to three ancients to relate its practice and reception: Pseudo-Aristotle, Polemo, and Pseudo-Apuleius.⁴

⁴ More recent scholarship on physiognomy has contested these three writers who were first identified by A. MacC. Armstrong. Recent scholars argue that the paraphrase of Polemo by Admantius should be considered since only a sentence of Polemo remains extant in Greek. Additionally, Apuleius' work *De physiognomoniam* has now been

In his oft-cited article “Methods of the Greek Physiognomists,” A. MacC. Armstrong clearly relates (pseudo-)Aristotle’s codification of physiognomy in *Physiognomonica*, which received elucidation in ps-Apuleius’ later commentary.⁵ Ps-Aristotle listed the chief methods of physiognomy as the expressive, zoological, and racial methods. The first relies on codifying common facial expressions or movements when certain emotions are apparent, such as anger or disgust. When a person’s face possesses those features while not in such an emotion—rage, for example—then that person may be called generally irascible (Armstrong 53). Ultimately, ps-Aristotle dismisses this method since it relies too much on fleeting, ephemeral emotions to define more stable, innate features. The racial method relates an individual’s appearance to a race associated with prominent characteristics. For example, someone who looks Egyptian would be “clever, teachable, irresponsible, rash, and erotic” (54). While this method, unlike the expressive one, does consider static forms, such as hair and skin, such features are too much determined by the ambient world, climate in particular, to be indicative of internal works.

On the whole, zoological physiognomy relies on recognizing the characteristics of certain animals as they are manifested on the human visage or body. Ps-Apuleius provides greater clarity on this method than ps-Aristotle:

The ox is an animal with a big head, a broad forehead, big eyes, a wide mouth, a broad nose, large flanks, and a rather round belly. Men who are likened in appearance to this animal will be unteachable, lacking in practical wisdom,

attributed to an anonymous Latin writer. See Mladen Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, pp. 86-89. Since this chapter primarily discusses the work of ps-Aristotle among these three, the debate is of little consequence.

⁵ Many critics throughout the twentieth century, including Armstrong, turn to R. Foerster’s assemblage *Scriptores physiognomonici*, which contains all three writers mentioned above and is written in Latin. Though authenticity is always in question, many critics for the majority of twentieth century believed that physiognomic texts were correctly attributed to Aristotle. However, current scholarship tends to ascribe the two Aristotelean physiognomic texts called *Physiognomonica* to pseudo-Aristotle, and later critics tend to cite S. Hett’s *Minor Works*, which is in English. Following this trend, this study will use Hett’s work when quoting *Physiognomonica*. Given that a number of these works do not come from the ancients, but later imitators, I use the abbreviation “ps-“ to denote pseudo.

slothful in speech and action, rather slow, more fit to be ruled than to rule, but decent, honest, and courageous. (trans. Armstrong 54)

For ps-Aristotle, the problem with this method is in the distilling of characteristic traits into animals because an animal's significance can vary over time and across cultures. Sybille Baumbach offers ps-Aristotle's example of the raven, which has been seen as both "a symbol of prudence and helpfulness . . . [and] as a harbinger of mischief" (28). Therefore, a physiognomist should look at the parts of the animal. For example, soft hair suggests cowardice, since sheep and deer are not brave. On the other hand, coarse hair reflects bravery as in the lion and boar. In the end, this method, though considered best, is questioned since no human being looks exactly like an animal.

For most Arabic medieval philosophers, Polemo serves as the primary physiognomist since he provides the most comprehensive list of body parts and their shapes, along with their significance. While ps-Aristotle mentions the mean between the extremes of excess and defect, Polemo explores this much further in his treatise, articulating (as Aristotle does with ethics) that "[the] physiognomical mean is sometimes put not exactly in the middle but nearer one of the extremes. Thus a little and a big mouth are both bad signs, but the best mouth is the one which is slightly larger than the pure mean, as is shown by the lion" (Armstrong 55-56). Despite this influence of Polemo, the physiognomic texts that made its way into medieval Europe are predominantly composed by later, ps-Aristotelian writers, or new works that collect and comment on the works of ps-Aristotle or Polemo.

For example, the Latin ps-Aristotelian text *Secretum secretorum* survives in about 500 manuscripts, dating from the twelfth century onwards. The Middle English *Secretum secretorum* has seven manuscripts from the late fourteenth century to the second half of the fifteenth, and

two in print from the sixteenth. The Latin is a translation of the Arabic *Kitab sir al-asrar* (or *The Book of the Secret of Secrets*), and while the English versions derive primarily from the Latin, the French versions have influence as well (Manzalaoui ix).⁶ The *Secretum* was intended to be used by princes throughout Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries since it instructs on matters of governance, presenting itself as a letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. However, the text also details the methods for recognizing friends and enemies through a person's affective responses. Nonetheless, it still offers much in explicating humoral physiognomy. Additionally, the text has multiple entries regarding health, hygiene, and even diet. According to Denis Lorée, the encyclopedic form of this text, along with its moral nature, prompted its spread throughout Europe in the centuries after its introduction:

À l'origine *speculum principis* arabe, il est traduit en latin au XIIIe siècle et diffuse dans toutes les cours princières occidentales. Les deux siècles suivants voient émerger des traductions dans la plupart des language vernaculaires européennes. Une des explications d'un tel succès tient à son contenu hétéroclite. Ce n'est pas plus seulement un miroir des princes, mais une pseudo-encyclopédie pratique contenant des chapitres de morale. (87)

⁶(1) *Certeine Rewles of Phisnomy and A Calculation to Know by of Tuo Men Feghtynge Togidre, Wheþhe Sale be Ouercomen*, late fourteenth century, British Library MS. Sloane 213, ff. 118^v -121^r; (2) *Regimen Sanitatis: The Booke of Goode Covernance and Guyding of þe Body*, a fifteenth century version of Johannes Hispaniensis, Bodleian MS. Rawlinson C. 83; (3) The "Ashmole" Version *The Secrete of Secretes*, soon after 1445, Bodleian MSS. Ashmole 396 and Lyell 36; (4) *De Priuyté of Priuyteis*, English translation by Joannes de Caritate, around 1484, now the property of Mr. Robert B. Honeymoon, Jr., of Rancho Los Cerritos, San Juan Capistrano, CA; (5) *De Secrete of Secretes, and Tresore Incomperable*, around 1448 in the hand of John Shirley, Bodleian MS. Ashmole 59, ff. 1-12^v; (6) *The Governace of Kynges and of Prynces Cleped the Secrete of Secretes*, about 1450, translation by John Shirley from a French version presumed to be that in Cambridge University Library MS. Ff.I.33, transcribed from British Library MS. Add. 5467, ff. 211-224^v; (7) *The Booke of the Gouvernaunce of Kinges and Princes Called the Secret of Secretes*, translation from a French version of the Abbreviated Tripolitanus text, second half of fifteenth century, University College Oxford MS. 85 fols. 36-68; (8) Robert Copland, *The Secrete of Secretes of Arystotle*, printed 1528, Cambridge University Library STC 770; (9) Sir William Forrest, *The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practise*, printed 1548, British Library MS. Royal 17.D.iii.

Speaking broadly, modern critics who make use of affective physiognomy in their arguments often cite the *Secretum* as the authoritative voice on the subject because of its breadth and number of manuscripts.

Another influential work is *The Wise Book of Philosophy and Astronomy*, which is an entirely English invention. Carrie Griffin notes that there are thirty-three surviving manuscripts, ranging from the early fifteenth century to the sixteenth century (“Good Reder” 20). Unlike *Secretum*, *Wise Book* does not claim to be the work of Aristotle, but, rather, the anonymous author announces himself as an Englishman in Greece who is the heir to Aristotle’s wisdom. Jeanne Krochalis and Edward Peters highlight that the book resembles Bartholomeus Anglicus’ eighth book of *De proprietatibus rerum*, and John Trevisa’s late fourteenth century translation into Middle English probably prompted its composition. However, Krochalis and Peters describe *The Wise Book* as less philosophical and intended for a less learned audience (3).⁷ The book explains to the reader what the heavenly bodies are and the ways in which they affect the lives of humans. The concluding section to *Wise Book*, in three of its extant versions, is titled *The Book of Physiognomy* and consists of two parts: first, it delineates the facial features and personality traits of people born under a certain planet, and, second, it lists the parts of the head and their signifying characteristics (“Good Reder” 52). Both *Secretum* and *Wise Book* are crucial to this chapter since I rely on the former for affective physiognomy and the latter for humoral. Indeed, both texts are heavily referenced throughout scholarship on the subject of physiognomy in Britain.

⁷ Bartholomeus, a thirteenth century English philosopher and teacher, is believed to have composed his Latin compendium *De proprietatibus rerum* (*On the Properties of Things*) during the 1230s, with the earliest manuscript dating to 1240. Trevisa’s Middle English translation, from the late 1300s, is extant in eight manuscripts. The eighth book relates the powers of the heavenly bodies on human life. It follows books on the natures of God, angels, the human soul, physiology, day-to-day life, and poisons. For more, see M. C. Seymour’s commentary on Trevisa’s text in “A Note on the Text,” pp. xi-xix.

Nonetheless, physiognomy in medieval Europe is often glossed over by critics of late medieval and early modern literature, who mention its transmission from Arabic learning, utility in performing biblical exegesis, and even uses in literature, but do not relate it to medieval drama. In fact, Baumbach argues that after the classics, the next major date for physiognomy is in 1586 with Giambattista Della Porta's *De humana physiognomonia* (28-29). Even within medieval studies, physiognomy's influence on medieval literature, including drama, receives little attention, prompting Griffin to note as recently as 2011 that "[p]hysiognomies in Middle English survive in comparatively great numbers, yet remain understudied both in terms of their cultural significance and the influence on thought, ideas, and creative literature" (26).⁸ However, Walter Clyde Curry lists a host of sources on the subject made available to medieval English writers in *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences*. Listed among these sources are the already mentioned *Secretum*, ps-Aristotle (57); *De proprietatibus rerum*, Bartholomeus Anglicus (60); and even *Proverbs of Alfred*, ascribed to Alfred the Great who may be a partial source, but his name was most likely used for its authority (82). While Curry does name these, he limits his application of medieval physiognomy to fixed features of the face, such as complexion, structure of facial features, and even branching out into metoscopy, which considers moles, warts, and lines and was often fused with physiognomy by medieval practitioners. Thus, he serves as an excellent source for humoral physiognomy, which later critics build upon for their articulation of affective physiognomy.

Nonetheless, a more thorough consideration of physiognomy in drama remains unexplored, as Griffin admits, and thus this chapter seeks to first acquaint readers with humoral and affective physiognomy, and then relate these studies to the generic purposes of late medieval

⁸ George Keiser's *Manual* lists eighteen physiognomic texts in the vernacular from before 1500. Orlemanski's research at the British Library finds twenty-three Latin physiognomic manuals. (See the first endnote in Orlemanski's article for more specifics regarding both Keiser and her own search, p. 215.)

drama. The York Cycle's *Conspiracy* depicts a Judas who must manipulate in order to acquire an audience with Pilate and is often considered a prototype for later dramatic villains. Therefore, the first section examines humoral physiognomy to reveal how Judas bears the mark of Mars, explaining what that would mean to a contemporary audience. I argue, therefore, that physiognomy is an important element for audience participation within the play, thereby asserting the practice's notable presence in medieval England. Moreover, humoral physiognomy articulates the complex notion of interior versus exterior in an approachable manner. *Mankind*, a morality play and the subject of the second section, has an uncommon villain in Titivillus, who not only outshines the greater Vice named Mischief, but also remains unseen to the protagonist. Thus, *Mankind* cannot read Titivillus, and with the absence of a bodily text, the play centers on more internality and affective readings, as highlighted through one of Mercy's speeches. I contend that affective physiognomy allows present day readers to view the bodies of *Mankind* and Mercy as texts, which encourages audiences to interpret the body in such a way as to achieve true piety. Generally, this chapter focuses on audience involvement or compliance, a generic goal in both biblical and mortality plays. Therefore, I argue that physiognomic readings heighten the audience's participatory role in medieval drama. In addition, the themes of internality and subjectivity remain deeply imbedded within this chapter, and, certainly, throughout this dissertation. Physiognomy is interested in reading the soul through the body, and the trans-historical arrangement of these chapters allows us to consider the ways in which the perceptions of interiority develop over time.

Humoral Physiognomy

In the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer describes Alisoun, the Wife of Bath, “gat-toothed was she, soothly for to say” (468).⁹ Thus readers know that her teeth are set noticeably apart. Chaucer offers no commentary on the significance of this portrayal, thereby leaving his audience to speculate. To modern readers, such teeth may portend rural, rustic living, or perhaps poor hygiene. However, as Curry asserts, “whenever Chaucer takes the trouble to impress upon his reader’s notice the special physical peculiarities of his Pilgrims . . . he intends for them to be straightaway interpreted in terms of character” (74). To Chaucer’s contemporaries, gapped teeth revealed an “envious, irreverent, luxurious, bold, faithless, and suspicious nature” (109).

Moreover, the Wife of Bath has a red face: “Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe” (GP 458). Jill Mann maintains that Chaucer employs humoral physiognomy for satiric effect insofar as it demonstrates how characters project one disposition with their words, but their faces suggest another (125). Indeed, in the General Prologue the Pilgrims do not speak for themselves, but the irony persists since Chaucer concludes Alisoun’s physical description with “She was a worthy woman al hir lyve” (459). Curry delineates this red, which appears not only in her face but also in her stockings mentioned in line 456, as indicative of immodesty, loquaciousness, and drunkenness (108). Furthermore, Griffin insists that “the complete image undercuts Alisoun’s own sense of herself as ‘worthy’” (31).

Mahmoud Manzalaoui defines Chaucer’s use of humoral physiognomy as “an objective correlative to the inward characteristics of the pilgrims” (“Chaucer” 228). Therefore, the pilgrims—and even the narrator at times—offer more subjective reviews of character. Both

⁹ All quotations from *The Canterbury Tales* are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson, Oxford UP, 2008.

Mann and Griffin insist that Chaucer's audience must have known the principles of physiognomy in order to recognize the incongruity between physical description and dialog when both attempt to reveal internality. Griffin concurs with Mann's argument in the context that Chaucer shows little hesitancy in explaining the studies of astronomy elsewhere, but he never explains the significance of his physical descriptions (32).¹⁰ As referenced in the introduction, Curry lists the sources Chaucer probably studied for his conception of humoral physiognomy, but, in addition, Peter of Abano wrote a compendium of physiognomy during the 1290s, which wove together the works of Avicenna, Philemon, and Aristotle, a work that Alexander Roob describes as an attempt to bring all sources "into one lucid and perfect doctrine," which later writers followed throughout the Middle Ages (101).¹¹

Such works of physiognomy rely heavily on physical descriptions of faces, which, again, are understandably rare in drama. When such instances occur, they usually appear before a character enters the stage and offer the audiences a preview of character. For example, in the late medieval play *Fulgens and Lucrez*, Henry Medwall explores the issue of nobility during a time when humanist education was being questioned by aristocrats, presumably the 1490s.¹² Greg Walker insists that the play's central question is "does true nobility lie in aristocratic birth and lineage or in personal virtue?" (305). Lucrez, Latin for heir, has been given the power to select her own husband and must decide between the high-born Cornelius and low-born Gayus. Before she enters the stage, Lucrez' father Fulgens, Latin for shining or illustrious, describes her to the audience,

¹⁰ Additionally, Griffin writes, "Chaucer allows physiognomic observations on various pilgrims to pass without significant authorial comment or interpretation, and we can only assume that a contemporary reading audience would have realized his intentions and appreciated the humour and significance" (31).

¹¹ For more medieval sources of physiognomy, particularly those joined with works of medicine, science, and astronomy, see *Works of Science*, edited by George Keiser, 1998, vol. 10 in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, edited by Albert E. Hartung, Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967-2005.

¹² All quotations for *Fulgens and Lucrez* are from *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, edited by Greg Walker, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 307-47.

Men seyth she is as lyke me in visage
As though she were evyn myn owne ymage,
For the whiche cause nature dooth me force and bytide
The more to favour and love her in my mynde. (254-57)

From this brief description, we find that she has more masculine features like her father, suggesting that her nobility is apparent. Moreover, resembling her father demonstrates that she is able to take over her father's role in selecting a husband. Fulgens has deep respect for this daughter since Nature, or the sway of the physical universe, propels him to favor and love her (256-7).¹³

A foil to Lucre's nobility is her maid named Joan, thereby implying her lower social ranking. Prior to her first entrance, she is described by a potential suitor, simply named B:

It is a lytyll praty moucet,
And her voyce is as a doucett
And as swete as rest porke.
Her face is some what brown and yelow,
But for all that she hath no felow
In syngyng hens to Yorke. (839-44)

Joan's voice is as sweet as rancid pork, and despite her facial coloration, she has no peer in singing from here to York, which B finds incomprehensible, thereby creating humor through physiognomic irony—he takes the signs of poor voice and diseased coloration as foretelling a beautiful person rather than their literal interpretations. She should be seen as shrill and intolerable from her voice, and possibly suffering from disease as signified by yellowed skin.

¹³ In the next section of this chapter, I explore the role of Nature and its use as a term nearly synonymous with material determinism, which argues that the physical world determines the soul's disposition to the point that free will becomes difficult to maintain.

The Ashmole *Secretum* states the following with regard to yellow skin: “Fle þerfor fro all men of feble and yalow colour, for he is enclnyed to vices and to lechery” (Manzalaoui 91).¹⁴

Nonetheless, these announcements of women’s faces help establish the theme of nobility. Lucre is elevated in nobility, while Joan is derided by a negative depiction of femininity.

The Conspiracy

Biblical plays, also referred to as mystery plays, enjoyed a lengthy history in England. Richard Beadle and Pamela M. King note that the York Cycle had a run from the late fourteenth century to the time of Shakespeare (ix). In summary, this form of drama had several objectives in its depiction of Christian history, which was taken both from the Bible and apocryphal accretions: “Its spiritual purpose was the glorification of God, and its didactic intention to instruct the unlettered in the historical basis of their faith, but there is no doubt that the cycle was also intended to reflect the wealth and prestige of the city” (ix). Various trade guilds would perform the plays based on their occupation, such as the shipwrights performing *The Building of the Ark*, or the pinners with *The Crucifixion*. Aside from York, other cycles include Chester, Towneley (associated with Wakefield), and N-Town—so called because it is believed to have been performed at different towns; however, there is current debate as to whether these are really cycle plays, Towneley and N-Town in particular, or compilations of plays that are not as closely connected as once thought.¹⁵

¹⁴ Johannes de Caritate’s translation reads, “Fle þan fro euiry yelow-blo man, for sqwyche be redi to vicis and to leccheri (Manzalaoui 198). Copland writes, “Yf thou se a man with salowe coloure / flee his company / for he is inclined to the synne of lechery” (Manzalaoui 379).

¹⁵ For more, see Peter Happé’s *Cyclic Form and the English Mystery Plays: A Comparative Study of the English Biblical Cycles and Their Continental and Iconographic Counterparts*. Chapters one and six pertain to the cycle form in particular.

Regarding York specifically, the individual pageants would be performed on wagons, moving along to designated stations with different audiences. Greg Walker explains that the plays began on Corpus Christi day, starting with *The Fall of the Angels* around 4:30 a.m. Walker comments on the need to keep audiences' attention and remarks how each station would have its own social and political significance, or as he phrases it, resonance, thereby attracting certain spectators (5). Likewise, Griffin asserts that topical issues appeared within the plays as a means for audience engagement, and this currency within such matters reveals "much about common superstition, folkloric knowledge and popular culture, symbols and signifiers, and scientific ideas" ("Lynes" 25). Specifically, physiognomy "was also well known and popular amongst a probably largely illiterate public" (26).

The prospect of reading people while being unable to read texts may have proved delightful and may be why the York Realist included it within *The Conspiracy* by means of a lowly janitor who performs the physiognomic reading. Moreover, Claire Jones argues that there was a readership of medical and scientific texts, including physiognomies, and that the very notion of "readership" is anachronistic in medieval England since "literacy was still extremely restricted . . . and access to texts did not depend on the individual's ability to read for him or herself" (23-24). Therefore, Jones insists we think of larger discourse communities regarding texts, including physiognomy, which would have been disseminated through social interaction. Moreover, Griffin concludes that the folkish nature of physiognomy as a science would have been very attractive, since it did not rely on intricate knowledge of the stars, but rather a more pedestrian subject: the human face ("Lynes" 41-42). Both Griffin and Jones build upon the earlier scholarship of Brian Stock, who, in his book *The Implications of Literacy*, demonstrates that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, "oral discourse effectively began to function within a

universe of communications governed by texts On many occasions actual texts were not present, but people often thought or behaved as if they were” (3). Thus, despite a lack of readership in the modern sense, literacy on the subject of physiognomy could still thrive.

As Curry posits, a likely source for Chaucer’s physiognomy would be Bartholomeus’ *De proprietatibus rerum*, which, as earlier stated, Trevisa translated into Middle English and was circulated starting in 1397. After Chaucer’s literary career, the translation became widely popular in England, as noted by Griffin. In this lengthy work, Bartholomeus quotes Aristotle, writing that “þe disposiciouns of þe membres of þe body tokeneþ and bodeþ þe affeciouns and wil of þe soul . . . for þe body chaunginges of þe soule ben ofte ilkned and iknowe by þe chaunginges of þe body, as whytw wyn takeþ þe liknes and colour of þe rede glas 3if it is þerinne” (193-94).¹⁶ Just as white wine takes the form and (seems to adopt) the color of the red glass, the outside remains indicative of the inside. Shortly after this translation, the York Realist (an anonymous playwright who added plays to the York Cycle most likely in 1425) composed *The Conspiracy* (Davidson 270). Many critics have used the title “York Realist,” attributing the name to J. W. Robinson, and Beadle and King describe the dramatist’s works as “pervaded by a powerful sense of atmosphere, and often achieve great emotional intensity in their realization of dialogue, character, and action. Like all great dramatists, the Realist creates an internally consistent and recognizable ‘world’ in each of his plays” (125). Moreover, the playwright appears to demonstrate the widening popularity of physiognomy in Middle English.

¹⁶ This excerpt comes from book five and relates the significance of the members of the human body. It follows the book on the four humors and thus relates physiognomy more to the humors than the macrocosm—a more traditional, classical approach to physiognomy. *Wise Book*, for the most part, mimics book eight of *De proprietatibus* in its explanation of the universe, but the concluding chapter of *Wise Book* fuses together the humoral physiognomy of *De proprietatibus* (in book five) with the influence of the universe (in book eight). In other words, Bartholomeus bases his understanding of physiognomy on the humors and the elements, while the author of *Wise Book* uses the heavens. To reiterate, the classical approach to physiognomy dealt more with the humors while the late medieval conception moved to astrology. With that said, Bartholomeus does include physiognomic language within his discourse planets, usually through paraphrasing Ptolemy; however, he relates most of the planets’ influence to physiology, such as hot and cold, dry and moist, and the humors.

Specifically, the York Realist would have been writing during the time *Wise Book* entered circulation, and the Latin *Secretum* would have already made its initial rounds throughout Europe. In light of this exposure, Ziegler dates the start of the “acceptance of physiognomic thought by ecclesiastical writers” within the early thirteenth century (“Text” 181). Physiognomy, albeit indirectly, encouraged introspection and a desire to establish nobility despite one’s birth and physical appearance.¹⁷ Ziegler thus argues, “For if *mores* and not birth determine nobility, one can easily add to the noun ‘*mores*’ the adjective ‘Christian’ and thus recruit physiognomy to the ecclesiastical programme which sought to enforce Christian ethics everywhere and on all levels of society” (181). However, even if physiognomy can encourage people to resist the damaging personality traits marked on their faces, the character of Judas certainly appears unwilling to learn from the physiognomic reading of his face.

The play centers on Judas’ rationalization and execution of his betrayal of Jesus. Judas enters the scene with a soliloquy, explaining why he has chosen to leave Christ: the handling of funds. Seeking an audience with Pilate, Judas stops at the door, and a janitor refuses to let him in since Judas’ face implies treason. The pageant creates tension since it appears that this doorman will prevent Judas from initiating the Passion, but ultimately, the conspiracy does take place. In my reading of this play, I focus on the interaction between Judas and the Janitor, stressing the humoral, physiognomic reading performed by the Janitor. But first, a brief consideration of both context and generic conventions is in order.

The locution in focus for *The Conspiracy* is quite brief. The interaction between Judas and the Janitor occurs after the first scene between Pilate and Caiaphas, and before the scene in

¹⁷ Ziegler begins his argument by pointing out how physiognomy seems inconsistent with free will. If the heavens determine dispositions, then no one has the ability to control one’s life. The conclusion of this section explores free will more directly, but for now, in summary, one could escape the fate of the cosmos through discipline and Divine Grace.

which Judas interacts with these leaders. Judas requests entry, stating, “Goode sir, be toward þis tyme, and tarice nocht my trace, / For I have tythandis to telle” (159-60a).¹⁸ The janitor does not immediately grant entry, finishing Judas’s alliterative line:

3a, som tresiunem I trowe,
For I fele by a figure in your fals face
It is but foly to feste affecioun in 3ou.
For Mars he hath morteyseed his mark,
Eftir all lynes of my lore,
And sais 3e are wikkid of werk
And bothe a strange theffe and a stark. (160b-66)

Perceiving a “figure” in Judas’s “fals face,” the Janitor relies on the “lynes of [his] lore” to determine that Mars has imprinted his mark.¹⁹ In other words, the Janitor’s lore consists of his knowledge in physiognomy, of which the audience, as previously argued, would have had knowledge. Judas’ inner character appears through his exterior, thereby making him a text that the Janitor reads commandingly for the audience’s benefit.

Griffin provides an excellent collection of her own transcriptions of medieval texts that delineate Mars’ influence on both behavior and physical appearance, and she foregrounds her argument on physiognomy with the following:

[W]hen the gatekeeper refers to Mars having ‘morteysed his mark’ on the face of Judas, he is indebted to a large body of received lore associated with popular discourses and textual traditions, the invocation of which would have required

¹⁸ All quotations for *The Conspiracy* are from *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*. Edited by Greg Walker, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 80-88.

¹⁹ According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, *figure* has an application relating to the heavens: “a configuration of heavenly bodies, a constellation, a horoscope,” s.v. “figure,” n. 7 (a).

little detailed explanation for a contemporary audience, who would have been cognizant with the principles, if not the specifics, of the art of face reading.

(“Lynes” 24)

Much of her research centers on Middle English texts that deal with astronomy, astrology, and physiognomy, as evidenced through her transcription of the Middle English *Wise Book*, including *The Book of Physiognomy*. All three versions of this concluding section describe Mars and his influence on one’s disposition born under his constellation or on a Tuesday:

Mars a bittir and malicious planet hit is. Under þe constellacioun of whom batellus^[20] kynges be borne; cursynge a man schal be that is born vndir him, and mysledynge and slye. For þei wol gladly deceyue, and þei be couetouse of praysynge, and bostynge of here owne werkys and preysynge, and deprauynge of oþer men werkis or defylyng. And holde þis for verrey trewth, þat what man that is bore vndir þe planet of Mars, wheþer he be kyng or pore man, he schal be hasty and batellous; his hondis schal be azens al men, and al men azens hym.

(238)²¹

The influence of Mars suggests brains and brawn, with success in not only battle, but also with deceit. Therefore, many texts concerned with the planets include ways of recognizing persons with the mark of Mars, among other planets as well. Generally speaking, most associate Mars with the color red, and to little surprise, Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomeus confirms this linkage:

²⁰ *batellus*: “excelling in combat, martial”, *Middle English Dictionary*, bataillous adj.(a).

²¹ Most quotations from *Wise Book* are from “*A Good Reder*”: *The Middle English Wise Book of Philosophy and Astronomy*,” pp. 226-44, unless otherwise noted. Griffin’s transcription is from the following manuscript: New York, Columbia University, MS Plimpton 260, fols 77^v-78^r. Other manuscripts of the Middle English *Wise Book* that include physiognomy are (1) London, University College, Anglia MS 6 (fols. 1^r-1^v) and (2) Cambridge University Library, MS Ll. 4. 14 (fols 153^r—159^f).

an hoot planete and drye, male, and a nyȝt planete, and so haȝ maistrie ouer colera and fire and colerik complexions, and disposith to boldnesse and hardnesse, and to desire of wreche. Perfore he is iclepid god of bataille and werre Also as Ptholomaeus seiȝ, vndir Mars . . . is conteyned were and bataille, prisoun, and enemye, and he tokeneȝ wraȝpe and swiftnesse and woodnesse, and is redde, and vntrewe, and gilefulle. (481)

The description begins with cholera and choleric complexions, then ends with a red coloring, paired with the inward traits of both untruthfulness and guilefulness. Generally, references to humors or physiology often coincide or are augmented with discussions of planets and physiognomy.

The notion that Mars is exclusively associated with red, ruddy complexions and red hair or beards seems appropriate. However, the physiological reaction, and therefore facial composition, to the influence of Mars within physiognomic traditions “of the later Middle Ages . . . [has] little or no mention of the colour red . . . ; rather, the colour most associated with Mars is black” (“Lynes” 35). In other words, while Mars demonstrates an affinity for red, those afflicted by this planet do not reveal red in their physiological reactions. In following, *Wise Book* outlines the physical appearance of Mars’ sway:

The tokenes of Mars in a mannes bodie ben þese: a blak face and a lene, a muche mouthe, and ofte open to stryues and to bakbytingis, a longenose and knobbid in þe myddil; and holde þis for verrey treuth, þat what man þat haȝ a longe nose and lifte vp in þe myddil like an eren or a kyte, he is naturalliche fals. (*Wise* 238-9)

In the Cambridge manuscript of the Middle English *Wise Book*, the conclusion on physiognomy differs slightly but contains many of the same ideas. Krochalis and Peters include

this version in their work *The World of Piers Plowman* since this manuscript contains both *Wise Book* and *Piers Plowman*:

Mars makyth a man lyght, wytty, bacbytynge, lene, ffytthyng, myssaynge,
covetyous of wurschepe, bostyng of here owen dedis, undernemyng other
ffolkis, ianglyng, moch wakyng [T]he signes of Mars and þe complexions
beth þese: a brode ffronte; ryth browis and scharge eyne; a long fface, and a lene;
a longe nose, and boccy; a moch mouþe, and ofte opeyd; long teth [H]e
shall love reed cloþis. (220)²²

In this passage, those affected by Mars are noted to be intelligent or cunning, as well as backbiting, and thus receive a long catalog of facial features in order to help readers avoid interacting with such people. Krochalis and Peters include the Cambridge manuscript's *Book of Physiognomy* because it delineates the physiognomic significance of such features, and they argue that *The Book of Physiognomy* concludes the *Wise Book*, in this manuscript, in order to demonstrate the relationship between the cosmos and the person, or the macrocosm and the microcosm (218-19). Specifically, the marks of Mars include the following significations, the long face points to "a prout man, noble of witte and of wille, bostinge more of him self þan of oþer; moche fflaterere he is"; a long nose betokens "a man þinkyng many þingis"; a broad forehead is less admirable, meaning "gay, lygh, unstable, almeset of no ffith [faith] in wordis"; and perhaps the worst sign, the straight eyebrows signifies "a man swithe cruell in rith gladeliche purschinge worschipe, backebitinge and enviouse, gladelishe grauntinge for wurscheepe" (225-27).

²² Krochalis and Peters offer the following glosses: *myssaynge*, as "evil speaking"; *undernmyng* as "reproving"; *boccy* as "swollen"; and *cloþis* as "clothing" (220).

Indeed, the Janitor does not go into great detail in his description of the physical traits of Judas' face; however, the initial exchange between Judas and the Janitor does relate a physiognomic reading: "Judas: Sir, þus at my berde and 3e berk, / It semes it schall sitte yow full sore" (167-68). Judas reacts to the Janitor's "lynes of . . . lore" mentioned just a few lines before, by stating that if the janitor reads into his beard too much, he will be full "sore," thereby completing the rhyme. Judas' retort is interesting for two reasons. First, those under Mars prefer praise and do not want to be caught in their wit or guile. Thus, Judas attempts to shift focus through wrath, another of Mars' marks. Second, Griffin considers the portrayal of Judas as having red hair and beard, and dismisses this particular complexion's presence in the play given the overwhelming portrayal of darkness for Mars in the *Wise Book* manuscripts ("Lynes" 37). Furthermore, Donald Schüler argues that the red associated with Judas was not always ascribed to his hair or complexion, but rather when he tears out his hair and is covered in blood at the end of his life, as depicted in the earliest surviving ballad of Judas in Middle English (840). Irit Kleiman concurs, maintaining that early paintings of Judas as "red" were because of blood, following the gospels of Mark and Matthew in which Judas buries the thirty pieces of silver in the blood acre (19). Nevertheless, depictions of a red-haired Judas persisted throughout the Middle Ages, but as Schüler and Griffin maintain, a more dark-featured Judas could have existed on a York pageant wagon.²³ Moreover, as the *Wise Book* argues, those under Mars are drawn to red, rather than being red.

The Janitor's retort suggests that the beard is of little consequence since he is drawn more to Judas' brow:

Say, bittilbrowed bribour, why blowes þou such boste?

²³ See also Marie Channing Linthicum, "Something Browner than Judas's." *PMLA*, vol. 47, 1932, pp. 905-07. Most importantly, her title comes from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, 3.4.10, when Celia recounts Orlando's hair.

Full fals in thy face in faith can I fynde.

Pou arte combered in curstnesse and caris to þis coste,

To marre men of might haste þou marked in thy mynde. (169-72)

Say, beetle-browed villain, why do you blow such boasts? Truly, I see utter treachery [marked] in your face. You are burdened with villainy, and [have] come here intending to ruin great men. (Trans. by Walker, p. 84)

The beetle-brow points to a gloomy and sullen visage, connoting a more darkened appearance. Moreover, the Janitor states that Judas' grim gaze gives him heartburn: "Thy glyfftyng [glaring] is so grimly þou gars my harte grow" (158). Despite these facial warnings, the Janitor inevitably announces Judas to Pilate, who asks the doorkeeper why this visitor has arrived. But the Janitor explains that he does not know nor understand Judas since he is covered in a cloak: "I kenne hymm nought, but he is cladde in a cope, / He cares with a kene face, uncomely to kys" (200-1).²⁴ Thus we have a villain who tries to obscure not only his intentions, but also his physical appearance. Nonetheless, the Janitor is able to read what little Judas makes available.

Pilate agrees to meet Judas, but before he enters, the Janitor advises the traitor, "Comes on bylyve to my lorde, and if þe[e] liste to lepe, / But uttir so thy langage that þou lette nought þare blys" (204-5). The Janitor merely gives Pilate's qualification for Judas' entry: "so no open langage be goyng amys," or if none of his words offend (203). With such a requisite, Judas realizes that Pilate is affected by flattery and enters saying, "That Lorde, sirs, myght susteyne 3oure seele / Pat floure is of fortune and fame"—May the Lord, who is the flower of fame and fortune, keep your authority (206-7). These words please Pilate, who responds "Welcome, thy wordis are but wele" (208). However, not all accept Judas' presence. Caiaphas reprimands him

²⁴ The word *kenne* may mean *know*, *understand*, or *teach* in Walker's glossary (p. 628). Given that Pilate asks *why* Judas has come, *kenne* as *understand* makes most sense.

for not kneeling before Pilate in the next line, but Pilate has already been won. The soldiers later read Judas as a traitor since he plans to commit treason against his lord: “Take per of, a traytour tyte!” (237). In the end, Judas has won himself an audience and convinced both Caiaphas and Annas of his scheme, but the audience, the Janitor, and the soldiers remain unconvinced of Judas’ plot.

Beadle and King point out that before conversing with the Janitor, Judas “in an insinuating soliloquy explains his motives to the audience and established himself as a very early example of a familiar type of English stage villain” (125). They also argue that like the later morality play, biblical plays situate the audience in a position between good and evil, thereby implicating the spectators in the sins seen on stage until they are faced with the ultimate decision in *The Last Judgement*:

One of the principal effects of the cycle as a whole in performance was to place the audience in a position of God-like omniscience as regards to the continuing history and nature of their spiritual predicament on earth. Out of this arose a need for them to examine their consciences and to decide where their allegiance lay in the conflict between good and evil for possession of the souls of the human race—the need for such a decision being finally borne in upon them personally and urgently by the stark choice presented in the Last Judgement play. (xi)

King and Beadle repeatedly relate the biblical plays to the morality plays, both in the compliance of the audience and in the soliloquies of the villains, including Satan, Herod, and Judas. I expand their argument by including the theme of internality and externality as highlighted by physiognomy. Judas attempts to hide his sin with both cloak and argument, ultimately

convincing Pilate, but he fails in convincing the lowest of characters, the Janitor and soldiers, who rely on the lines of his lore and their understanding of honor, respectively.

Judas fails to acknowledge his proclivities as one marked by Mars, which raises the question of free will and determinism. Ziegler recalls that the fusing of physiognomy with astrological theory appears unmatched in Europe before the thirteenth century (“Phisonomia” 361). Under such a paradigm, both virtue and vice were physical and material entities that resided outside the control of a person, extending beyond the earth to the heavens: “[I]f we analyse the role of nature in the physiognomic texts from the late thirteenth century onwards[,] we confront what seems to me an unprecedented view of mankind governed entirely by nature which imposes universal and powerful material principles on the very essence of each human being” (364).²⁵ As a result, medieval commentary on physiognomic texts often includes a discussion of free will.

Ziegler points out that according to physiognomy, “one’s behaviour is determined in birth, [and] there is little place for free will or voluntary choice and the consequences for Christian pastoral theology are dire” (“Text” 161). While Ziegler illustrates this point with commentary throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, Roger Bacon provides a British example through his gloss of a Latin *Secretum* from the thirteenth century. Bacon does not deny the efficacy of physiognomy; however, he insists that one must not come to conclusions when *reading* Christians, and, more importantly, physiognomy only relates the natural tendencies of a person, which can be overcome through grace (163).²⁶ Also in the thirteenth century, the German

²⁵ Indeed, the role of *nature* as it interacts with subjectivity persists throughout the Renaissance. In my third chapter, I highlight the resistance to *nature* as a means to explain, not only physiognomy, but also human anatomy and physiology.

²⁶ The Latin text Ziegler provides is the following: “nec de Christianis debet aliquis judicare nisi aptitudinem naturalem ad mores, non quod talis erit, quia gracia Dei gratum faciens potest vincere malam dispositionem animi

friar and bishop Albertus Magnus maintained that physiognomy only related the conditions and qualities of both blood and spirits within the body, but, in addition to grace, he advocated that these entirely physical and natural inclinations could be held back by reason: “retineri possunt freno rationis” (162). Modern readers may be tempted to view the medieval soul as excessively passive, but as Albertus’s commentary suggests, reason can save a soul from a seemingly fatalistic universe.²⁷

Therefore, Judas appears as a felicitous choice for incorporating humoral physiognomy. He is a well-known figure who chose greed and treachery over loyalty to his lord. Nonetheless, the mind of Judas is not fully showcased other than in his introductory soliloquy. In the next section, I consider affective physiognomy and then explore the morality play *Mankind*. This dramatic pairing proves useful in examining interiority, for while *The Conspiracy* provides a face or text being read, *Mankind* provides the subject of such a text—the human soul. In this latter play, audiences witness the passivity of the human soul as well as the body and its spirits; however, such a depiction of compliance only heightens the importance of place, iconography, and scrutiny. The body may be subject to a variety of influences, but, as Mercy in *Mankind* advocates, the soul should look beyond the material body.

ad quam excitatur ex complexione et compositione corporis et ceteris proprietatibus” (163). I have paraphrased Ziegler’s translation.

²⁷ Readers may wonder why medieval thinkers would provide so much apologia on the subject of physiognomy. Ziegler does cite other writers and theologians aside from Bacon and Albertus. However, in his article “Measuring the Human Body in Medieval and Early Renaissance Physiognomy,” he reminds us that in medieval thought, the authority of the ancients outweighed empirical evidence. Therefore, physiognomy was already a given that was not to be discredited through observation in light of Christian teaching. Rather, “they commented the ancient authoritative texts, trying to harmonize them and to remove apparent contradictions between them and the natural reality familiar to them; but they were not interested in putting the authoritative signs [of physiognomy] to the test, or in collecting new data” (351).

Affective Physiognomy

This section focuses on *Mankind*, dated from 1465-70 (Walker 258). The chief villain named Titivillus is cloaked in invisibility to the titular Mankind, making an on-stage humoral reading impossible for the protagonist. The audience, however, has direct engagement with this demon: before Titivillus enters the stage, one of the vice-lieutenants announces, “We intende to gather mony, yf yt plesse yowr neclygence, / For a man wyth a hede þat [is] of grett omnipotens” (461-2).²⁸ This man with a large head is Titivillus, whom Walker asserts is wearing “an elaborate mask,” which could allow the audience to perform a humoral reading (258). However, the mask’s appearance and even the mask itself remain subject to speculation. Nonetheless, *Mankind*, despite its theatrics and comedic antics, centers its holy message more on internality. In order to probe this inward significance, I argue that a focus on affective physiognomic language highlights the importance of discernment in medieval piety. As with the previous section, affective physiognomy receives its first illustration here through referencing Chaucer.

Chaucer writes of Lucrece that “Hyre contenance is to hire herte dygne, / For they acorde bothe in dede and sygne” (1738-39).²⁹ In *The Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer mentions many men with fair faces who deceive and ruin good women. However, in “The Legend of Lucrece,” Chaucer reserves his only mention of female, face-to-heart relationship for Lucrece. In a work such as *Legend*, whose purpose scholars have long debated, Chaucer’s use of physiognomy seems to suggest that there is no real relationship between face and one’s inner life since so many good and honest-looking men are neither good nor honest. Nonetheless, physiognomy for medieval English literature has one of its strongest presences in Chaucer’s writing. Moreover, the transition of physiognomy from a science to a literary convention for

²⁸ All quotations from *Mankind* come from *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, edited by Walker, 259-79.

²⁹ All quotations from *The Legend of Good Women* are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*.

English literature appears clearly within his many texts. A consideration of poetry proves vital in understanding drama since physiognomy provided a dramatic language to poetic works; instead of having a narrator describe a character's thoughts and disposition, writers could describe facial features and actions in particular, thereby making poetry more dramatic and less narrated. Medieval readers attuned their reading practices to consider interpreting bodies, thereby recognizing bodies as texts.

Critics after Curry seek to include affective physiognomy in their analysis of Chaucer's work, or at least acknowledge the distinctive traits of affective physiognomy, which considers the ways the body reacts to internalized stimuli, and Friedman argues that this idea resembles modern thought: "Today the idea is as current as it ever was, for we believe that a person's inner state can be read in his face or 'body language' and that it can affect his health" (142). Friedman and Laurel Braswell-Means both insist that affective physiognomy was conceived by medieval thinkers from reading ps-Aristotle's work. Friedman describes this type of physiognomy as hinging on the fact that "man's soul follows the changes in his body and that his body follows the changes in his soul" (141). Braswell-Means considers affective physiognomy as "a particular aspect of humoral theory which treats the responses to experience or 'affection' and the resultant imprints from such changes of the soul upon facial features" (268).

The introduction of *Physiognomonica* suggests that affective physiognomy is a given since it serves as a major premise for Aristotelian logic. Ps-Aristotle claims, "Dispositions follow bodily characteristics and are not in themselves unaffected by bodily impulses Conversely, that the body suffers sympathetically with affections of the soul is evident in love, fear, grief, and pleasure" (85). While *Physiognomonica* deals primarily with humoral physiognomy, or the ways in which facial features can help discern a person's humoral composition, it also affirms the

importance of body language. Moreover, in the Middle English *Secretum*, another ps-Aristotle writes to Alexander in *Certejne Rewles of Phisnomy*, advising Alexander that is possible and prudent to read the character of a man based on affective responses.³⁰ In his edition of *Secretum*, Manzalaoui affirms that *Certejne Rewles* was written by a fourteenth-century hand and should be dated no later than 1400, since later parts of the manuscript have a clear fifteenth century hand (xxvi); therefore, it is almost certainly in existence around the time of Chaucer. In this letter, Aristotle gives advice to Alexander on how to evaluate both threatening and loving or respectful men:

If þou se any man haunte to loke on þe, and when þou lokes uv-on him, he es sumdele agaste þer-of an blenches, name if þou be wrothe, he sighes and teres schewes in his eighne, þat man lufes and dredes þe; and if þe contrary happen, þan þat man has evny to þe and despises þe. (11)³¹

Through the reference to *blenches* and *teres*, Aristotle encourages an affective reading of a man's face, rather than looking at racial or zoological features. Along with facial coloration, the movement of eyes and sighing are both "standard referents for affective physiognomy . . . [, which] reveal the attitude of the subject" (Friedman 144).³² While the majority of the text covers eyes, hair, and skin color, the discussion of affects appears to be one of the first in any English physiognomic text.

While physiognomy has been considered in medieval literature, the bulk of past scholarship deals primarily with humoral physiology, the ways in which the face's structure

³⁰ See footnote 5 for specifics regarding manuscript.

³¹ The *Middle English Dictionary* provides the following definitions: *haunte*, "continue"; *name*, "namely or especially"; *wrothe* "angry, grieving, sad"; *dredes*, "fears, has awe or respect for."

³² In his work "Chaucer and the Physiognomists," Friedman makes this assertion based on several other fourteenth-century works, including an anonymous work, once thought to be by Thomas Vicary, which states that the "cheefe beauteie in a man is in the cheeks; and there the complexion of man is most knowen . . . And as Auicen sayth, the cheeks doo not only shewe the diuersities of complexions, but also the affection and wil of the hart," F. J. and P. Furnivall, eds., *The Anatomie of the Bodie of Man by Thomas Vicary*, rpt. Millwood, 1975, p. 41, (Friedman 144).

points to the dominant humor in a person. Curry certainly follows this trend in his work, and in like manner, Baumbach excludes affective physiognomy in her overview of physiognomy's history outside of the sixteenth century, which largely discounts examples from the Middle Ages but does briefly consider Chaucer's use of humoral physiognomy in *The Canterbury Tales*. Braswell-Means does acknowledge affective physiognomy, but she ultimately claims that more can be done with humoral physiology, particularly regarding the diagnosis of disease. However, humoral physiognomy appears most clearly in characters who are more static, lacking any development or change in mood or disposition. This chapter has already considered the Wife of Bath, but other pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* demonstrate this idea, such as Chaucer's Summoner, whose black brows show both violence and rashness; and the Pardoner's yellow hair, paired with his goatish appearance, which suggests that he too suffers from the same humoral influence.³³ The problem then arises as to how a writer can express the inner life of characters who are noble, either in spirit or in title, or at least more dynamic in their dispositions. Friedman asserts that the answer lies in affective physiognomy.

He argues that in addition to encyclopedic works, Chaucer probably learned of affective physiognomy through reading and translating French romances, which "relied heavily on facial description, color change, and motion of the eyes to show the inner state of the heart" (144). Looking at the General Prologue, as well as *Parliament of Fowls* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, Friedman contends that Chaucer uses humoral physiognomy for commoners and affective physiognomy for nobility (147). These lowly characters suggest fixation without much development and are thereby signified by fixed signifiers found on the face. Those characters who have complex inner lives cannot be expressed in such a way; therefore, affective

³³ For a deeper look at humoral physiognomy in Chaucer's pilgrims, see Braswell-Means and Friedman. Curry provides a list of features and their significance as well, but both Braswell-Means and Friedman engage with his findings throughout their individual essays.

physiognomy remains the only means to demonstrate their inner lives at any given moment.³⁴

While he and Braswell-Means do excellent work pointing to moments of affective physiognomy throughout Chaucer's works, they do not explore a text that has as its narrative foundation a theme of misreading bodily appearances: *The Legend of Good Women*.

Looking back to Lucrece, before Chaucer clearly states that her face fully represents her inner spirit, the poet does not describe her facial features through humoral physiognomy. Instead, her dutiful and loving soul appears through her actions:

And therwithal ful tenderly she wep,
And of hire werk she tok no more kep,
But mekely she let hyre eyen falle;
And thilke semblaunt sat hire wel withalle.
And eek hire teres, ful of honeste
Embelished hire wifly chastite. (1732-37)

This description of Lucrece comes after she begins to lament the absence of her husband and fears for his safety. Chaucer employs several affective references, such as the use of tears and downward eye moment, suggesting both love and submission. However, rather than letting affective physiognomy relate her inner-workings, the narrator explains to the audience, "Hyre contenance is to hire herte dygne, / For they acorde bothe in dede and sygne" (1738-39).

Interestingly, the men in *Legend* do not receive such affirmation from the narrator. Eneas in *The Legend of Dido* receives the description of "lyk a knyght" (1066), "lyk to been a verray gentil man" (1068), "hadde a noble visage [but only] for the nones [i.e. occasion]" (1070), and "wel a lorde he semede for to be" (1074). The narrator consistently reminds the reader that he

³⁴ It may be beneficial also to see humoral physiognomy as more indicative of a deterministic worldview, while affective physiognomy allows for more personal liberty and dynamism.

only appears noble, and it is this assumed nobility of both body and spirit that leads Dido to pity him since he is a stranger in foreign land, underserving of his fate because of his nobility. We see in Dido, however, a true reaction worthy of pity: “she kneleth, cryeth” and “falleth hym to fote and swouneth ther / Dischevele [with hair hanging loose], with her bryghte gilte her” (1311, 1314-15), which for the narrator “routhe [pitiable] is to devyse” (1311).

Jasoun receives harsher criticism from the narrator for his “statly aparaunce” and his “contrefeted peyne and wo” (1372, 1376). Regarding Theseus, “a semely [handsome] knyght” (2075), the narrator states that “whoso hadde seyn his contenance, / He wolde have wept for routhe of his penaunce” (2076-77). In summary, we see genuine wretchedness and assumed nobility in the men, but in Lucrece and Dido, as well as many of the other women in *Legend*, we see genuine, bodily affectations that properly point to their true characters.³⁵ The overall narrative of *Legend* consists of men who are pitied by the women in these tales because of their more fixed appearance, and we find that the titular women of *Legend* misread these men. Therefore, Chaucer appears to privilege affective physiognomy, insofar as his heroic women have their true character revealed by demeanor, rather than facial features.

Affective physiognomy thereby accentuates this theme of inner/outer quite well. Chaucer does not employ humoral physiognomy as often in *Legend* as he does in *The Canterbury Tales* because the humoral approach diminishes the overall reception of the nobility of characters. In dealing with well-known characters from antiquity, Chaucer must avoid mere facial description that “is associated with simple and lowly characters who act in the world of the fabliau”

³⁵ Regarding Hypsipyle and Medea, their stories show both actions and words to demonstrate their upright character. Hypsipyle writes a letter of reproof, in which she states that she hopes her children are like Jasoun except that they are not able to beguile. In deed, she remains chaste as his wife for her entire life. Medea also writes a letter of reproof in which she regrets falling in love with his yellow hair (a possible humoral reference), and Chaucer leaves out her deed of killing their children, though it is alluded to in Hypsipyle’s letter. Ariadne both pities and assists Theseus, tears at her hair, and runs barefoot on the beach to show her distress.

(Friedman 149). Moreover, the nature of affections suggests movement, gestures, or changes in complexion, making its transition to the stage felicitous. The stage, like affective physiognomy, relies on the body's movements as well as physical reactions. Therefore, the shift from Chaucer to drama need not be too swift a change since like Chaucer's narratives, morality plays have characters both virtuous and vicious, and like the good women, the Everyman figure often misreads the Vice and his lieutenants. Moreover, what makes drama particularly appropriate for affective physiognomy is its use of actual human bodies, which characters and audiences alike must interpret. In what follows, I consider Mankind's prayer in the field, as well as Mercy's lament for Mankind's fall.

Mankind

Mankind follows a man of the same name who is tempted to stray from righteousness by Mischief and his vice-lieutenants Newguise, Nowadays, and Naught. Being unsuccessful, these vice characters call upon the demon Titivillus, who makes the virtue of industry difficult for Mankind, thereby causing him to fall into idleness. In this state, Mankind becomes lazy both in prayer and church attendance, falling deeper into sin. Titivillus and the vices hope for his despair, encouraging him to take his own life, but through the intervention of Mercy, he is restored and reunited with faith. The play combines comedy and seriousness, with the vice characters and Mercy, respectively, and the diction and versification match these low and high matters, making the play more intricate than many of its counterparts. Cameron Hunt McNabb explores the use of language to signal virtue and vice to the audience. She recalls the influence of vice figures in biblical plays as being significantly alliterative which manifests in the speeches of *Mankind's* villains (69). With alliteration known more as an English, or vernacular, convention,

Mercy provides a more Latinate verse. As McNabb highlights, the titular character even mimics the vice characters in his own speech, or in other words, Mankind sounds like the vice characters while fallen, and “When Mankind is in a state of grace, he mimics Mercy’s Latinate diction and ababbcbc rhyme scheme. Mercy’s opening sermon uses this register, stretching the first forty-four lines” (78).

Considering genre broadly, the tradition of the morality play includes showcasing an Everyman hero, who falls victim to temptation and is in need of repentance in order to receive redemption. Walker asserts that the audience members have an active role in the drama since they are “drawn to share that experience of fall and rise through the manipulation of their affiliations with the characters” (259).³⁶ For example, in *Mankind*, Mercy’s rather pedantic sermon at the start of the play is meant to fall short in captivating the audience when the comedic antics of the vice characters begin, depicting how folly and idleness can lead Christians astray.³⁷ Additionally, throughout the play, we are given physical evidence to show that the vices should not be followed. For example, after Mankind’s fall, we see the once playful figures of New Guise and Mischief appear with a broken halter and chains, respectively. The true intentions and rewards of sin become fully clear when Mischief tries to convince Mankind to consider suicide as a response to despair. While these visual and verbal cues are apparent to modern readers, the

³⁶ As before, all quoted material from *Mankind. Medieval Drama: An Anthology*. Edited by Greg Walker, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 259-79.

³⁷ One of the antics near the start of the play is Nowadays’s question as to “who was þe most master” between him and his wife, named Rachell, when betwixt the two there “was a gret batell” (138, 136). Interestingly, in the latter portion of *Certeine Rewels of Phisnomy*, ps-Aristotle provides a model of numerology, through which “Alixander þe grettest conqueroure þat euer was ouercome many batayles” (15). In short, one is to add the numeric values of all the letters of a person’s name, and for wedded folks, divide that number by seven. The number that remains reveals the outcome. Rachell as a value of 113 (R, 13; A, 3; C, 22; E, 25; L, 22; and L, 22). Nowadays has a value of 47 (N, 15; O, 8; W, no value since not in Roman alphabet; A, 3; D, 14; A, 3; Y, 3; and S, 11). Rachell’s remainder is one and Nowadays’s is 5. Regarding these numbers, ps-Aristotle writes, “One and fyue: he þat has one sale ouercome” (15). Thus, this portion of the play could stress the influence of such works as the *Secretum*, which legitimized both numerology and physiognomy. In my third chapter, I cover the doctrine of correspondence, which further unites both practices.

principles of affective physiognomy demonstrate Mankind's folly much earlier in the play through a close examination of his prayer in the field.

After having some trouble with the earth and his spade, thanks to Titivillus's making the ground too firm, Mankind decides to no longer work, and, instead, he decides to pray:

To occupye my body I wyll not put me in dever

I wyll here my ewynsonge here or I dissever.

Thys place I assyng as for my kyrke.

Here in my kerke I knell on my kneys.

Pater noster qui es in Celis. (551-55)

Though his intentions appear honorable, Mankind occupies his body in the motions of prayer, but he has not taken the proper steps to legitimize his prayer as will be demonstrated below. To compound the matter, Titivillus affirms the efficacy of his prayer by whispering in Mankind's ear "A schorte preyer thyrlyth Hewyn; of þi preyere blyn. / Þou art holyer þen ever was ony of þi kyn" (559-60). Titivillus interrupts the prayer by claiming that short prayers work best and that Mankind is holier than any of his kindred; however, he induces Mankind to defecate, thereby ending the prayer altogether. This part of the drama proves relevant to the study of affective physiognomy because it demonstrates the importance of discerning not only proper prayer, but also sensations incurred from prayer.

Scholars have thoroughly investigated the heresy of Mankind's approach to prayer, but nonetheless, it remains important to demonstrate that the audience must understand that Mankind's prayer is not orthodox, which can be discerned through Mankind's affective response. Eccles, in his edition of *The Macro Plays* comments in an endnote that "[the] Lollards believed, according to the trial of William and Richard Sparke for heresy in 1457, that 'a prayer made in a

field or other unconsecrated place is just as efficacious as if it were made in a church” (223, for l. 552). Lynn Forest-Hill, in her article “Mankind and the Fifteenth-Century Preaching Controversy,” places *Mankind* in its historical contexts, regarding the play’s East Anglian derivation and portrayal of Lollard tenets. Forest-Hill holds that *Mankind* creates “a dramatization of specific, or perhaps allegorical contexts” in which the audiences of East Anglia could see the errors of Lollardy, and just as Mankind is redeemed, the playwright does not seek to condemn Lollards, but rather portray the “Christian desire to recover ‘lost sheep’” (19, 22). However, Mercy is absent during Mankind’s prayer and, moreover, never reproves this specific heresy in the act; therefore, the audience must be able to make this judgment, which I argue becomes apparent, though easily ignored, through Mankind’s affects.

The audience’s understanding of Titivillus’s relationship must be detailed as well. According to Margaret Jennings, Titivillus was extremely popular in European literature, starting in the thirteenth century as an unnamed demon, and first encountered by name in fourteenth century sources (5). Lester, in his introduction to *Mankind*, expands upon this popularity, pointing to widespread sermons that would mention “the sack in which he [i.e. Titivillus] collects the syllables and syncopated words and verses which clerics steal from God by lazily omitting them from their prayers” (xxii). In this play, however, Titivillus does not have a bag to collect such omissions—though he has a net—but he does seem to thrive on shortened prayers, which we see by his recommendation of short prayers and his avowal of Mankind’s piety. With these ideas in mind, the demonic influence on Mankind may be enough for the play to maintain its didacticism: the prayer is not of God. However, given the play’s attention to language and discernment, a closer look at Mankind’s body during and after prayer in the field awards a rich text for the audience to read.

Affective responses are important in understanding successful prayer in medieval theology, and Niklaus Largier, in his article “The Art of Prayer,” argues that the affective experiences of prayer come from a unique pairing in which the internal and external experiences translate one another. Therefore, the external must be rightfully perceived through “artifacts, by texts, images, and music in close correspondence with the liturgy and the space of the church” (61). Without the presence of such materials, prayer misses its corporeal and sensual elements. A field, not having any of these sensual things, offers the ones at prayer with nothing sacred to internalize cognitively, leaving the one at prayer susceptible to other sources of stimuli either demonic or from nature. Jeffrey Hamburger, in his chapter “Idol Curiosity,” examines the shift from medieval to early modern conceptions of imagery as it relates to the church, noting in particular the fine line between curiosity (i.e. spiritual inquiry) and idolatry. Curiosity is an exercise in expanding one’s knowledge of the spiritual world, while idolatry does not use the material or sensual as a point of departure, but rather it becomes the end in itself. Like Largier, Hamburger insists that translation between the internal and external must occur for idolatry to be avoided. He cites the works of Gertrude of Helfta, a thirteenth century mystic and theologian, who sought to justify sensory experience in her works: “as invisible and spiritual things cannot be understood by the human intellect except in visible and corporeal images, it is necessary to clothe them in human and bodily forms” (Gertrude, as quoted in Hamburger 38). Thus, having Titivillus remain invisible to Mankind accentuates the importance of having holy objects that are perceptible. Mankind does not have the luxury of reading this spiritual troublemaker, and without any stimulus from the Church, he is vulnerable.

Mary Carruthers considers the importance of imagination in affective piety in *The Book of Memory*, in which she contends that meditative prayer recognizes that “the products of fantasy

and memory are the matrix and materials of all human thought,” and that “those products are fictive images – not words and not concepts but images and pictures, constructions, that you can hear, smell, taste, touch, and above all *see* mentally” (58). For Carruthers, sensations become sensibility, and aesthetics become affects, generating appropriate emotional responses. In summary, under this conception of *translation*, the body has sensations from the ambient world (ideally a church or a cell for monks), which are translated into a spiritual experience through the mind, which, in turn, produce bodily, affective responses that should lead the one at prayer closer to God. However, bodily responses must be suspect lest their origins be not divine, but may, in fact, be demonic.³⁸ Largier holds that each moment of bodily “sensation and emotional intensity [while in prayer] has to be evaluated and justified, that is, each moment of sensation is in itself the place of a drama where the good has to confront the evil” (68). In comparison to the previous section, humoral physiognomy demonstrates the power that the physical universe has on the soul of humanity. However, through affective physiognomy, we find the importance of surrounding oneself with the proper materials, and what is more, the magnitude of assessing bodily responses to affirm holy and pious experiences.

Mankind makes no such attempt to discern good and evil during his prayer in the field.

Moreover, he refuses to attend church:

Ewynsong hath be in þe saynge, I trow, a fayer wyll.

I am yrke of yt; yt ys to longe be on myle.

Do wey! I wyll no more so oft ouer þe chyrche-style.

Be as be may, I xall do anoþer.

³⁸ As an example of a discerning spirit, many critics turn to Saint Antony the Great, including Largier in his article, since Saint Antony’s life is one of the first to articulate the acts of discrimination necessary to recognize and rebuke the devil. Saint Antony’s life as a model is ubiquitous in articulating monastic life because of his ability to quickly discern the temptations of Satan.

Of labure and preyer, I am here yrke of both;

I wyll no more of yt, thow Mercy be wroth. (582-7)

The use of “wroth” recalls the *Secretum*, in which Aristotle states that when Alexander is “wroth” he should interpret his subjects’ reactions in order to discern true loyalty. Mankind has thus presented himself as one who wants to avoid his master in such a state. After this admission, Mankind has made himself vulnerable to Titivillus, and the demon then gives him a vision in which Mercy is hanged for stealing a horse. Once again, Mankind has failed to discern the godly from the demonic influence. However, Mankind’s failure to differentiate does not mean that the audience does not have the ability to do so. First, audiences see Titivillus whisper to Mankind that both his prayer is effective and that Mercy has fallen. More importantly, audiences witness Titivillus’s inducement of bodily sensation, which is the need to relieve himself in the midst of a seeming prayer.

Mike Jones points out the repeated association of Lollardy and early reformers with defecation, citing Chaucer, *Friar Daw’s Reply*, and Sir Thomas More. Lollard teaching had hoped to elevate simplicity so that one could pray in a field or read the scriptures in the vernacular. Those opposed would often deride the Lollards’ simplicity, but rather their baseness, thereby “associating the Lollards’ claim to wisdom with excrement [Such a technique] takes the idealized, spiritualized rhetoric of simplicity found in the Lollards’ self-fashioning as ploughman and ‘poor men’ and reiterates the tradition that associated those ‘poor men’ with the body, with the habitual, the domestic and the ‘lowly’” (75). Here Lollards, known to alter their appearance to look like laborers, have their rhetorical devices and sartorial rhetoric turned against them. Mankind, attempting to labor in the field, then tries to simply pray in the field and is shortly stricken with the need to relieve himself. Susan S. Morrison also notes the association

of Lollardy with excrement, particularly around the issue of the Eucharist. Lollards, opposing transubstantiation, would commonly posit that if the Host were the body of Christ, then once digested, His body would become waste. While this is a common argument for many sectarians, Morrison specifically considers the Lollard Trials of 1428 to highlight the associations made between Lollards and filth (80-81).³⁹

Mankind's bodily response, which Lester says causes him to "get up, in obvious discomfort," provides the audience with an opportunity to read Mankind affectively (35). The obvious reading would be that he must relieve himself from that which nature compels, thereby prompting laughter either from the baseness of the action or the association with the Lollards. A more studious reading would be to discern that Mankind is not praying correctly since his body's reaction is entirely corporal, rather than spiritual. However, the audience is certainly tempted to avoid studying this prayer in such a way by the laughter that would erupt, therefore reinforcing earlier themes in the play of dismissing dogma in favor of base comedy. Rather than a fusion of body and soul, or a translation as Largier maintains, we see that Mankind's prayer appears entirely corporeal, lacking any spiritual influence. Additionally, the notion of "inner-life" appears to be parodied, since Mankind's innards attempt to expel their contents on stage.

Looking at Mankind's person as a depiction of the grotesque body further accentuates the play's moral elements. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White consider Bakhtin's classical and grotesque bodies in their book *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* in order to discriminate historical hierarchies of "low" and "high" regarding both literature and cultural events. For them,

³⁹ Protestants during the early modern period appear to have internalized this language of waste, turning the rhetoric again to their favor if it derives from the derision of Lollards. See Michael C. Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*. Cambridge UP, 1999. He argues that from Spenser to Milton, Christians were urged "to conceive all acts of ingestion and excretion as very literal acts of self-fashioning" (11). Examining waste and pains in digestion should encourage self-reflection, thereby allowing people to improve their lives through dietary regimen.

Bakhtin's classical body "denotes the inherent *form* of the high official culture . . . [and] was elevated, static and monumental" (21). The grotesque body, on the other hand, has as its focus "gaps, orifices and symbolic filth . . . , physical needs and pleasures of the 'lower bodily stratum', materiality and parody" (23). Given the long critical history of the language of *Mankind*, we can see the parallel structure of classical and grotesque with the linguistic markers including Latinate and English vocabulary, as well as four-line Virtue stanzas and eight-line Vice stanzas.⁴⁰ Mercy's opening sermon represents elevated speech, with both its Latinate vocabulary and four-line stanza structures. According to Walker, "the distinctive rhythms and cadences of the spoken word alert the audience at all times to the fortunes of the hero and the status of his soul" (259). The focus of the soul reiterates the importance of reading internality, and such a task becomes even more apparent through the consideration of physiognomy.

Just as language helps determine virtuous and vicious moments in the play, so do bodily movements, which appear to follow either the tenets of the classical or the grotesque. In reading Mankind's body after prayer, we see his physical discomfort, which implies natural needs of the "lower bodily stratum," orifice, and most importantly, parody of the true affects of prayer. In short, the body of Mankind, as a text, informs audiences that his body does not participate in effective prayer. His prayer is a lowly imitation that does not compare to prayer's true form.

Mercy's body, however, demonstrates a valid example of a classical body, so much in its monumentality that it proves difficult or unable to produce bodily affectations. Upon seeing the fall of Mankind, Mercy exclaims

My mynde ys dispersed, my body trymmelyth as þe aspen leffe.

The terys xuld trekyll down by my chekys, were not yowr reverence.

⁴⁰ McNabb provides a thorough literature review of articles that pertain to the language of *Mankind* as she makes her own argument on the active and idle use of language, as well as the perversion of language, vernacular or Latinate. See her chapter "Language Geoth Before a Fall: *Mankind*."

Yt were to me solace, þe cruell vysytacyon of deth.

Wythout rude behaver I kan [not] express þis inconvenyens.

Wepygne, sythyng, and sobbyng were my suffycyens [sustenance];

All naturall nutriment to me as caren ys odybull [odious as carrion].

My inwarde afflixcyon ʒeldeth me tedyouse wnto yowr presens.

I can not bere yt ewynly þat Mankynde ys so flexybull. (735-42)

Mankind as “flexybull” means that he is spiritually and mentally susceptible to outside influences, thereby reasserting the differences between Mercy’s classical and Mankind’s grotesque bodies.⁴¹ Mercy states that his internal life matches the external trembling of his body. However, he fails to produce any additional responses, only stating them instead. Tears, weeping, sighing, and sobbing—Mercy references all, and each has its place in affective physiognomy, as seen in texts from ps-Aristotle to Chaucer. Mercy apologizes to the audience for his lack of decorum, but not without stating that genuine, emotional responses should be his sustenance, rather than natural nutriment, which he regards as odious carrion. Mercy treats the language of affect as nutriment, without the mention of digestion, even calling all other food rotten flesh. Where Mercy ingests, Mankind excretes.

Therefore, Mercy represents a classical body. Eccles, John C. Coldewey, Walker, and Lester all refer to Mercy’s appearance as an old cleric who is to teach in elevated (if not dull) language. Eccles, however, is singular in noting that “Mercy appears in an unusual guise, not as the feminine, the daughter of God, but as the masculine, the father confessor of Mankind” (xlili).

⁴¹ The *Middle English Dictionary* provides the following definition for *flexybull*: “mentally or spiritually pliable, yielding, inclined.” flexible (adj.) (b).

Coldewey portrays Mercy as a manly foil to the fun-loving vice-figures, with Mercy as masculine in order “to establish his humorless credential” before Mischief enters to tempt the audience with a life of not only fun, but also humor, in both senses: comedy and physiological depictions of humoral excess (106). Although characters called Mercy appear in many plays as daughters of God who actively plead and defend humanity, often with emotionally charged words, the Mercy of *Mankind* still exhibits a healthy emotional life despite his seeming stoicism.

In an anonymous tract mistakenly attributed to Thomas Vicary, a fourteenth-century physician writes that the “cheefe beautie in a man is in the cheeks; and there the complexion of man is most knowen. . . . And as Auicen sayth, the Cheekes doo not only shewe the diuersities of complexions, but also the affection and wil of the hart” (41). *Complexion*, to the physician, means the sum of the traits and humoral composition of a person.⁴² The tears that should be on Mercy’s cheek reflect this understanding of tears and cheeks, as well as the use of tears on the face from *Secretum*.⁴³ But Mercy does not give tears, and aside from trembling, he does not show signs of emotion, but, rather, he only states them. If we regard Mercy’s body at this point in the play as a text, we find that he illustrates to the audience a healthy emotional and spiritual response. Returning to Largier’s understanding of translation, Mercy has perceived actions in the world and has internalized them. Moreover, Mercy has scrutinized these feelings as appropriate, so much in fact that they are better than any gastronomical nourishment. As Largier and Hamburger posit, bodily affections of the inner life should always be held suspect. Mercy appears to agree since he refuses to execute such responses in front of the audience, out of

⁴² The *OED* defines complexion from this time period as “The combination of supposed qualities (cold or hot, and moist or dry) in a certain proportion, determining the nature of a body, plant, etc.; the combination of the four ‘humours’ of the body in a certain proportion, or the bodily habit attributed to such combination; ‘temperament’.”

⁴³ As cited earlier, *Certheyne Rewles* states that if “he sighes and teres schewes in his eighne, þat man lufes and dredes þe” (11).

respect and reverence, and furthermore, he preaches to the audience how the internalization of these events effects a response more important than anything earthly or material.

Mercy does eventually produce tears, but still, they are internal. Upon being reconciled with Mankind, Mercy, who should be the one “wroth,” is the one exhibiting bodily affects. Mankind refuses Mercy’s command to arise, arguing, “Te se yowr solaycyose [comforting] face I am not worth to dysyere” (815). Mercy replies, “Your crymynose compleynt [guilty confession] wondyth my hert as a lance” (816). The emotion builds as Mankind continues to suffer in his guilt, prompting Mercy to cry, “O, Mankend, my singler solas, þis is a lamentabyll excuse. / The dolorus [sorrowful] terys of my hert, how þei begyn to amownt” (824-25). Not only do we see the internalization of affection in Mercy, but we also see a physiognomic reversal. Mercy should be “wroth” and demand obedience from Mankind; however, Mercy asks Mankind to rise and once again employs the affective physiognomic language with tears. Being in a position of power, Mercy should look for blanching, blushing, and tears from Mankind, but the nature of Mercy reverses these roles.

The bodies of Mankind and Mercy present two bodily, affective responses that are extremely different in their portrayals. Mankind’s prayer is ineffective: it is too much a part of the ambient world. Mercy’s, on the other hand, transcends the physical world, disdaining physical nutriment in favor of the spiritual responses that produce bodily sustenance. In her book *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Caroline Walker Bynum reminds modern readers that medieval piety does not mean overall disdain for the body. Instead, spiritual means nourish the body, just as physical food does. Moreover, the body’s sensations should be explored “to its full sensual and affective range to soar even closer to God” (295). For Bynum, the body comes into being only from the soul’s blueprint. Therefore, the body at moments of prayer or intense spiritual sensation

should be a model to achieve higher understanding of God. Mankind seems unaware of such a reading at first; however, Mercy demonstrates a cognizance of the relationship between body and sensation for a higher purpose and even existence. The body's affective responses, when deemed godly, should be a person's source of nourishment.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have argued that scholars should have an increased acknowledgment of the physiognomic language present in medieval drama; from biblical plays to morality plays, both humoral and affective references appear with different implications. In plays such as *The Conspiracy*, the details of Judas' face are left to inference, requiring audiences to note the specifics of the references. Therefore, as Griffin and Clair Jones advocate, the common people attending York's cycle would have had a working knowledge of physiognomy. Additionally, the presence of humoral physiognomy constructs the frequent theme of inside versus outside, demonstrating how to differentiate vice and virtue within a person through external means.

However, as Chaucer demonstrates, fixed facial features can be misleading. Moreover, they work best when revealing the inner natures of more static characters. For figures like Lucrece, who show nobility and a more dynamic internality, affective physiognomy proves more useful. Thus, *Mankind* presents a more complicated theme of internality. To be sure, the more rudimentary aspects of humoral physiognomy appear with the vice-lieutenants, but the invisibility of Titivillus requires Mankind to perform introspection, at which he fails. More importantly, however, the bodies of Mankind and Mercy serve as texts, both corporeal and responsive to the world around them. Mercy's reaction to Mankind's fall contains an abundance of affective terms found in physiognomic texts, while Mankind's bodily response is base. Such

juxtaposition requires the audience to compare and evaluate each body, therein which lies a very moral lesson guided by Mercy's teaching. Therefore, the body of Mercy reminds the audience of the importance of appropriate, internal passion or emotion as a means of spiritual nourishment. Lastly, the reversal in physiognomic reading roles between Mankind and Mercy highlight the very nature of Mercy, tempering his depiction as scholarly, aloof, and reserved.

In the sequence laid out for this chapter, I have outlined the transmission of physiognomy from science to literature. In addition, the efficacy of both morality plays and biblical plays rests largely on audience participation. Therefore, while the characters throughout my examples read or misread the bodies of others, audiences and readers alike are encouraged to interpret in conjunction with those on the stage, square, or even pageant wagon. The next two chapters explore these themes surrounding reading internality in the works of Shakespeare as well as the Restoration, uniting physiognomic readings with specific generic conventions.

Looking to the Renaissance in particular, we find that despite the rise and prominence of Calvinism (with its teachings of election and predestination), the popular physiognomic texts promote self-fashioning, not unlike the Lollards. Physiognomy during this time, however, was separated from the cosmos, permitting persons to project ideal images of themselves, which creates new tensions in Shakespeare's problem plays. The certainty of humoral physiognomy has given way to manuals of bodily rhetoric, requiring readers and audiences to discern genuine internality—a task that Shakespeare, in particular, problematize

Chapter Two:

“What pale again?”—or “Where is thy blush?”:

Physiognomy in Shakespeare’s Problem Plays *All’s Well that Ends Well* and *Hamlet*

Introduction

The desire to read an exterior in order to know the interior does not reside solely within the scope of human bodies. Indeed, objects present readers with similar opportunities. The proverbial notion of “all that glitters is not gold” undeniably recalls, among other sources, Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, in which we find potential suitors of Portia who must successfully read the outside of caskets to receive her hand in marriage. Morocco chooses the golden casket, only to discover “carrion Death.” Arragon, on the other hand, selects the silver to receive an image of “a fool’s head.” As a matter of genre, however, Crystal Downing suggests that the play itself seems to reside somewhere between the carrion death of tragedy and the fool’s head of comedy, depending on the situated-ness of the reader or audience (167).¹

As Mary E. Cregan points out, the first published version of *Merchant* from 1600 offers the play as a “most excellent history” regarding the “extreme cruelty of Shylock the Jew toward the said merchant in cutting a just pound of flesh”—the implication being that perhaps Shylock is a wandering, carrion of death. The first folio in 1623, to the contrary, positions the play within

¹ Downing does not consider the genre of problem play explicitly in her article “Text as Test.” Nonetheless, the introduction to this chapter is indebted to Downing’s argument. She contends that *Merchant* leaves modern readers uncomfortable with its portrayals of misogyny and anti-Semitism as we know them presently. This discomfort may lead to anachronistic apologia in trying to reconcile Shakespeare’s ethics with those of today—or, in other words, the self-interest of readers and critics alike, has often led to biased or inaccurate readings of *Merchant*. Overall, she maintains that the play appears to thrive in its ethical ambiguities.

Shakespeare's comedies, along with other *fools' heads* such as Feste. Beyond publication, the controversy concerning the genre of this play manifests itself throughout the history of producing and staging Shakespeare. Dramatist Nicholas Rowe edited Shakespeare's works in 1709, observing of Shylock that "tho' we have seen . . . the Part of the Jew perform'd by the Excellent Comedian, yet I cannot but think it was design'd Tragically by the Author" (qtd. in Stirling 14-15). Downing notes that it took another century before "Edmund Kean, an actor admired by the likes of Keats, Byron, Shelley, and Coleridge, portrayed Shylock with unprecedented dignity, eliminating the conventional red wig that former actors had employed to enhance Shylock's comical villainy" (168). John Gross insists that it is not until the mid-Victorian era that we find "the idea of an impressive, half-sympathetic Shylock was well established" (128).

In summary, *The Merchant of Venice*, which contains the reading test of the caskets within it, appears to be itself a reading test for Shakespeare's plays in general and his problem plays in particular.² The golden casket states, "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire" (2.7.5).³ Desire certainly influences interpretation, and reading a subject through the lens of desire suggestively leads to death. A character on Shakespeare's stage may interpret the body of another character with the hope of discovering an internality that is attractive, yet Shakespeare appears to warn against this method of reading: "All that glisters is not gold, / Often have you heard that told; / Many a man his life hath sold / By my outside to behold" (2.7.65-68). Hamlet, for example, desires a Claudius whose spirit is sullied and will be damned to hell for his sins, and therefore misses out the opportunity to kill him while he kneels seemingly at prayer.

The silver casket offers "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves" (2.9.50). Arragon dismisses the first casket because he refuses to "choose by show" (2.9.26). Moreover,

² The label of *problem play* will be fully defined in its own section of this chapter.

³ Quotations of Shakespeare's work follow *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al, Norton, 1997.

Arragon proclaims as he considers the silver casket, “Let none presume / To wear an undeserved dignity. / O that estates, degrees, and offices / Were not deriv’d corruptly, and that clear honor / Were purchas’d by the merit of the wearer” (2.9.39-43). Arragon alludes to sumptuary laws in his metaphoric rumination, suggesting that the outside clothes should match the honor and dignity within. In other words, a person should have the exterior that he or she deserves. However, this suitor is duped by the silver casket, despite the fact that “[t]he fire seven times tried this [casket]: / Seven times tried that judgment is, / That did never choose amiss” (2.9.63-65). The casket continues that despite being tried and judged, a wise, and even silver-haired person can still be a fool. Arragon, thus, interprets the casket based on what he thinks he deserves. The King in *All’s Well* believes that he has tried Helena’s spirit, and has received a well-deserved healing by her science. However, his reading of Helen proves false since her true, inner motives have led her to dupe him for political and marital leverage.

The third casket, made of lead, gives a warning to the suitors: “Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath” (2.7.9). While Morocco shudders at such cautioning, Bassanio selects the “meagre lead, / Which rather threaten’st than dost promise aught” (3.2.104-5), and he receives Portia, whom he calls his fortune, as affirmed by the scroll’s proclamation: “You that choose not by the view / Chance as fair and choose as true. / Since this fortune calls to you, / Be content, and seek no new . . .” (3.2.131-34). The play, as a whole, appears to reward those who hazard. Antonio hazards his wealth and well-being to allow Bassanio to pursue Portia. Though Portia provides a subtle hint to all suitors that they must hazard, only Bassanio appears to approach reading a text, i.e. casket, as a hazard itself.⁴ As he makes his decision, he ruminates

⁴ Morocco is told, “[A]fter your dinner / Your hazard shall be made” (2.1.44-45); Arragon is reminded, “To these injunctions every one doth swear / That comes to hazard for my worthless self” (2.9.17-18); and Bassanio is implored to “pause a day or two / Before you hazard” (3.2.1-2). However, Peter Seng points out that Portia does offer Bassanio further assistance through her the rhyme of her song: “Bassanio is partly led into their [i.e. the

aloud his thoughts on both law and religion, two disciplines known for their close reading, and he ponders the ways in which they can be perverted by ornament, or “[t]he seeming truth which cunning times put on / To entrap the wisest” (3.2.100-101). He rejects the golden casket, referencing Midas’ desire for gold, and then he promptly denies the silver casket, referencing the desert of laborers, who receive silver for their work.

This theme of hazarding oneself persists in the ring test, performed by Portia in the fourth act. When Bassanio offers payment to Portia dressed as Balthazar, she refuses all offers but the ring that he was sworn to keep as a condition to his new marriage. First, Portia employs desire: “I will have nothing else, but only this; / And now methinks, I have a mind to it” (4.1.428-29). When that does not work, she turns to deserts: “And know how well I have deserved this ring” (442). However, it takes Antonio’s plea to convince Bassanio to offer up the ring. Just as the merchant hazarded all for his friend, Bassanio denies arguments of desire and deserving, but yields to the prospect of hazarding his bride and new life in order to pay the legal debt of his friend—a bond that Portia must later temper in the final act.

The symbolism of caskets as related to bodies appears self-evident within *Merchant*. Each container is a material object that contains an abstraction—death, foolishness, and love—much as the body contains the spirit. Interestingly, the *OED* cites the first metaphoric use of *casket* to refer to a human body in Shakespeare’s *King John*, believed to be written the same time

caskets’] secret, since he hears with them, ‘bred, head, nourishéd’ and ‘fed’” (192). All rhyme with *lead*. However, J. R. Brown asserts that Bassanio does not pay attention to Portia; instead, he appears aloft, considering the options (235). S. F. Johnson lists many ways that Portia informs Bassanio’s choice in order to accentuate the play’s overall theme of overleaping boundaries, whether parental or judicial. See his chapter “How Many Ways Portia Informs Bassanio’s Choice” (pp. 144-47). The discussion of Portia’s hint has persisted long since Seng’s initial note. Herbert Donow insists that “Bassanio’s success demonstrates that he sees the world as Portia’s father had,” which means that both reject the materialism (91). So rather than Portia’s assisting, Bassanio views the world similarly to Lord Belmont. Alice Benston nonetheless maintains that Portia must manipulate “the outcome of the casket choice by providing Bassanio with musical cues” in order to retain her position in the play as the central figure who works her way through and around the law (371).

as *Merchant*: “They found him dead. An empty Casket, where the Jewell of life. was rob'd, and tane away” (*King John* 5.1.40).⁵ In the casket episode in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare appears to suggest that external appearances are often deceiving and that the self-interest of readers can lead to misinterpretations: the mind fancies what it desires or deserves, but without hazarding this self-interest, meaningful reading cannot occur.

This chapter, therefore, explores two of Shakespeare’s other problem plays: *All’s Well that Ends Well* and *Hamlet*. Like *King John* and *Merchant*, the plays are contemporary with one another and include similar issues, structure, and tropes throughout. In what follows I examine the ways in which the physiognomic readings of characters produce misreadings or incomplete readings, which in turn aids our ability to articulate the defining characteristics of problem plays. First, I will explore physiognomy in the sixteenth century, noting in particular its use in conduct manuals. Early Moderns were concerned with how others would interpret them, and, therefore, many tracts appeared to help the English become better prepared to project an image they would find desirable. After considering multiple passages from critics, I define and explore the modern label of “problem play” in order to explain how physiognomy can assist in understanding this genre. I then focus on *All’s Well that Ends Well*, observing its generic difficulties, as well as establishing the groundwork for a conversation on character semiotics. Finally, I explore the ways in which *Hamlet* demonstrates many of the same concerns as *All’s Well*, showing how both plays showcase a preoccupation with reading the body. Perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, *All’s Well*, considered primarily a comedy, presents a greater number of misreadings, while *Hamlet* highlights many more accurate readings while retaining its label of tragedy. Nonetheless, I hold that understanding the body as a literary convention proves vital to comprehending generic ends. Through accentuating the importance of the textual body, I see a common theme of

⁵ “casket, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 13 July 2016.

interpretation. Physiognomy can tempt readers and characters alike with a quick and ready way to obtain what they desire or think they deserve—but then again, all that glitters is not gold.

Early Modern Physiognomy

The work of codifying the practice of physiognomy received new life during the sixteenth century. Not since antiquity had the science received so much attention to its particulars, as evidenced by the large indexes of facial features and their meanings. As Martin Porter reminds us, physiognomy helped constitute the curriculum of a variety of disciplines across Europe during the Late Middle Ages (75); however, Baumbach attributes the rise of physiognomic treatises to the printing press (*Shakespeare* 29). If, as Porter argues, the university taught physiognomy in conjunction with other subjects such as astronomy, chiromancy, and metoposcopy, the printing press gave the occasion to isolate physiognomy, thereby disconnecting it from other practices. Certainly, we do find a greater number of indexes on the subject, providing images of faces to correlate with scientific texts so that would-be practitioners could participate in reading the face. Baumbach maintains that the sixteenth century notes a shift toward an epistemological and rational approach to physiognomy due to the writings of Giambattista Della Porta, Thomas Hill, and Bartolommeo della Rocca Cocles (*Shakespeare* 29-30). No longer tied to the fate-determining stars, a face served as an actual text that provided observers with verified and codified signs of inner-life through very earthly, tangible means.

To obtain a broad understanding of physiognomy during the English Renaissance, two factors must be understood: anti-physiognomic sentiments and the rise of conduct manuals. For certain, writers of the art did distance themselves from other sciences and practices, such as palm reading and astrology; however, darker associations of the craft arose, which shall be delineated

in this section. In addition, Erasmus's popular conduct book for boys *De civilitate morum puerilium* served as a model for later writers such as Wright and Hill who delineate physiognomy—to varying degrees—in their own works because of its merits in assisting the English to better engage in civil, social discourse and discursive practices, such as alterations in facial expressions and voice. Erasmus's work, first published in 1530 with the English translation arriving in 1532, went through twelve editions in its first year, and its English counterpart was reprinted three times in the sixteenth century. In this work, Erasmus instructs that “[t]he external decorum of the body proceeds from a well-ordered mind” (273). He largely singles out the head, noting the importance of the face and its affects, eyes in particular, but also includes the brows, nostrils, mouth, teeth, and hair. In essence, a boy should take the steps necessary to present his body and face in such a way as to announce the soundness of his mind. Regarding the eyes, they should be “calm, respectful and steady: not grim, which is mark of truculence; not shameless, the hallmark of insolence; not darting and rolling, a feature of insanity; not furtive, like those of suspects and plotters of treachery” (274). While Erasmus does not engage with physiognomy directly, the poor reputation of the science found its cure in a rhetorical shift: the spinning of physiognomy into an art that can teach its pupils social propriety.

For a direct text on physiognomy, Della Porta, known as a scientist, polymath, and even playwright, wrote *De Humana Physiognomoniam* in 1586, and is often cited as the best source for physiognomy since the ancients. In its third book, *Physiognomoniam* appears much like the writings of pseudo-Aristotle, in that it applies zoological physiognomy to a variety of faces (including famous men such as Socrates and Dante) depicted on the pages. A man with a face like an owl resides next to an image of an owl, with the text explicating the correlations in both appearance and behavior. In fact, Della Porta coordinates the writings of Aristotle, Galen, and

Polemon, alongside medieval thought on the subject. Providing his own commentary, Della Porta expands on previous theories when he deems necessary and often evaluates their analyses.

Nonetheless, the influence of Della Porta on the English Renaissance stage, despite his career in the theater, is minimal and difficult to trace. However, several prominent early modern writers did discuss the subject of physiognomy in their works. Many contemporary critics have cited Thomas Hill's *The Contemplation of Mankind*, 1571, while examining the four humors in early modern literature, particularly the humors' relations to the traits of hot, cold, moist, and dry.⁶ But, Hill does treat the subject of physiognomy later in the work, after discussing the importance of a complexion's color in determining a person's humoral influence. Hill examines all parts of the body, noting what they signal for a person's disposition, starting with the head and making his way down. Hill often relies on hot and cold in relation to size, since heat causes dilatation or expansion, while cold causes contraction or shrinkage. The susceptibility of the face is most prominent because "Mans face (after the minde of the Methaposcopier) is thinne and very passible," and therefore, "no part there is of mans bodie, which like expresseth and uttereth the passion of the minde, as the face properly doth" (93). Hill continues by listing the parts of the face, from lips, to ears, to nose, to forehead—even to tongue and pitch of voice—in order to chronicle all the physiognomic traits, such as shape, color, and size.

Like the works of Hill, Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde*, 1601, also receives contemporary attention regarding humoral physiology, and again, like Hill, Wright includes physiognomy in his cataloguing. In summary, Wright contends that the human body is subject to the passions, which are determined by one's physiological reactions to the ambient world.

⁶ There appears to be a discrepancy as to the author of this text. Despite having Hill's name on the title page, some critics argue that *Contemplation* is just a re-printing of Hill's earlier, 1556 translation of Bartolommeo della Rocca Cocles' 1504 work, *A Brief Epitome of the Whole Arte of Physiognomy* (originally *Chiromantia Acphysionomia Anastasis*). Others maintain that *Contemplation* is modeled after, but not a translation of della Rocca's work. See Kahn p. 43 and Baumbach (*Shakespeare*) pp. 29-31, respectively.

However, Wright does warn his readers that men may try to disguise their outward appearance as a means to deceive. While the English are naturally and physiologically inclined toward virtue, they must learn to recognize the signs of those more prone to cheat and mislead. The means to safeguard one's self, Wright assures, rests in the ability to recognize this facial rhetoric, or "a certaine politique craftinesse," and to learn how to control the face as to combat such shysters (introduction, n.p.). In other words, Wright recognizes that other climates produce people who can deliberately alter their countenance in order to deceive, and the unfortunate English, who are so tied to honesty, must dutifully learn "by wit and will" the art of masking one's inner character (149). Moreover, both Wright and Hill hold that those skilled in the art of physiognomy should be able to perceive fleeting glances of a man's true passions, despite any effort to cover them up. Wright, however, asserts several times throughout the text that only God can know the true heart of any man.⁷

With the proliferation of physiognomic texts in the sixteenth century, we find (as with the theater) resistance in the form of anti-physiognomy sentiments. Largely due to its associations with the occult, physiognomy was consistently under attack and even outlawed. In Britain, Henry VIII executed a statute that prohibited the practice of physiognomy for profit. In his prominent volume *Popular Law-Making*, Frederic Jesup Stimson recalls the emergence of gypsies, or, as a 1530 statute calls them, "outlandish people called Egyptians," and, with them rose complaints about a greater number of beggars and vagabonds who sought income by using physiognomy to perform a variety of services, including fortune telling. Somewhat unexpectedly, another of Henry VIII's statutes from the same year mentions "Scolers of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge that go about begging not being authorized under the seal of the said Universities"

⁷ It is important to note that for during the time for both Wright and Hill, the term *man* was used to signify all human beings. Indeed, these principles apply to both sexes, as this chapter demonstrates the affective physiognomy of women. See also footnote 8 for comments on Elizabeth I's own concerns with physiognomic readings.

who play “subtile, crafty and unlawful games such as physnomye or palmestrye” (qtd. in Stimson 82). Here a long history of contention seems to end. Throughout the Middle Ages, physiognomy was often called *fisnamy*; however, under this name the practice had the connotation of fortune telling, despite being considered a science. Stimson appears to treat Henry’s statute as an attack on *fisnamy* through its association with a list of statutes against gypsies.

In his expansive collection *The English Drama and Stage under the Tudor and Stuart Princes*, W. C. Hazlitt provides a catalog of laws that pertain to the stage. Within this record, he lists a decree from Elizabeth, dating 1597, which echoes her father’s statute 60 years prior:

That all psones calling themselves Schollers going about begging, all Seafaring-men ptending losses of their Shippes or Goodes of the sea going about the Country begging, all idle psons going about in any Country eyther begging or using any subtile Crafte or unlawfull Games and Playes, or fayning themselves to have knowledge in Phisiognomye Palmestry of other like Craft Scyence . . . shall be taken adjudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabondes, and Sturdy Beggars, and shall susteyne such Payne and Punyshment as by this Acte is in that behalfe appointed. (37-38)

The association of scholars with idleness, adducing physiognomy as an illustration, identifies physiognomy as somewhere between science and the occult, or between science and vagabondage.

The relationship between this science and dark magic appears more directly in King James’s *The First Daemonologie*, published in the same year. James firmly proclaims that

. . . these formes, wherein Sathan oblishes himselfe to the greatest of the Magicians, are wouderfull curious; so are the effects corresponent vnto the same: For he will oblish himselfe to teach them artes and sciences, which he may easelie doe, being so learned a knaue as he is; To carrie them newes from anie parts of the worlde, which the agilitie of a Spirite may easelie perform; to reueale to them the secrets of anie person, so being they bee once spoken, for the thought none knows but G O D; except so far as yee may ghesse by their countenance, as one who is doubtleslie learned inough in the Physiognomie.⁸ (30-31)

At first glance, it seems that James views guessing through physiognomy as a better alternative to relying on familiars in order to read a person's character or mind. However, earlier in the *Daemonologie*, he makes the distinction between astronomy, a lawful science, and astrology, an unlawful one. He lists the various branches of astrology, including "Cheiromancie [palmistry], Geomantie [reading the future through the earth], Hydromantie [the same but by water], Arithmantie [similar to numerology], Physiognomie: & a thousand others," and blasts them as "vtterlie vnlawful to be trusted in, or practized amongst christians, as leaning to no ground of natural reason" (24). Therefore, it appears that James treats physiognomy as both the deciphering of countenance in order to learn secrets and the predicting of the future.

Such evaluation appears ambivalent at best, censorious at worst. Therefore, it should be no surprise that Wright distances himself, as much as possible, from openly discussing physiognomy directly in his *Passions of the Minde*. Instead, Wright appears to present this

⁸ In *Shakespeare*, Baumbach treats James's *Daemonologie*; however, in her truncated quotation, she misses James's distinction between relying on spirits and employing physiognomy to determine one's inner thoughts: "For he [Sathan] will oblish himselfe to teach them arts and sciences [...] the thought none knows but GOD; except so far as yee may ghesse by their countenance, as one who is doubtleslie learned inough in the *Physiognomie*: Yea, he will make his schollers to creepe in credite with Princes, by fore-telling them manie greate thinges [...]. And yet are all these thinges but deluding of the senses, and no waies true in substance" (30).

“science” as a rhetoric of the face and its affective responses, a practice of which Elizabeth I made frequent use.⁹ Moreover, we find that the English stage makes little reference to physiognomy directly, despite its apparent popularity. We find no physiognomists expressly named on Shakespeare’s stage, but his characters implicitly follow its procedures. Nonetheless, as with many other theories, the stage served as a genial way to explore, interrogate, and test—and physiognomy is certainly no exception. Given the very nature of performance, actors are cognizant of the fact that audiences read their faces and bodily maneuvers. Additionally, the regal attacks on physiognomy point to idleness, often directed at scholars. While these edicts undeniably refer to idleness in reference to proper employment, it nonetheless serves as an image of the dangers of physiognomic readings, one the playwrights seem to capitalize on for dramatic effect: physiognomy promotes an easy way, or perhaps a shortcut, to read into a person’s inner life when there are much more labor-intensive and accurate means to understanding—a theme recurring within plays on the early modern stage.

Moreover, a consideration of the art of playwriting parallels the practice and goals of physiognomy. Playwrights must keep the stage and actors in mind while composing a play, imagining how to make certain characteristics move from page to stage through dialog and action. Audiences quickly attempt to read characters in terms of conventional roles, such as determining protagonist, antagonist, clowns etc. Therefore, playwrights should seek to exploit physiognomy in order to quickly relay such foundational and expositional information. Characters’ readings of other characters’ bodies that display noticeable, fixed, facial features serve as a means to establish character roles. To complicate this idea, we find throughout early modern drama characters who struggle with their identities in a variety of forms, such as

⁹ For specifics regarding Elizabeth’s practices, see Susan P. Cerasno and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., *Gloriana’s Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance*. Wayne State UP, 1992.

suffering from a misreading of guilt or treason, or the struggle with maintaining a visor of falsity, or overcoming prejudices of class and gender. I argue that when we view the body as a text, we are able to isolate the struggle with signification. We realize that characters recognize the methods by which they are interpreted or read, and they may eradicate or conceal the features that led to such readings, or they may altogether re-write the textual aspects of their bodies. The benefits of approaching the body as a text, decoded through physiognomy, are primarily two-fold. First, it allows us to recognize that the process of reading the face replicates the very act of play production. In effect, characters, words, and symbols are taken from a text, be it from a page or a face, and transformed to living actors. The words of a play construct personalities just as facial features and affective responses do. Second, such an approach allows us to see how bodies work within generic conventions. Just as characters and even fates follow generic convention, so should faces and their readings.

To illustrate this latter idea, I assert that scholars have mostly divorced physiognomy from its formalist and generic traits. I do not undermine the importance of these works, but rather I wish to highlight that bodies-as-texts serve a more foundational role in narrative. First, most contemporary critics agree that Shakespeare and most early modern playwrights were skeptical toward the efficacy of physiognomy. Michael Neill explores the tension between the desire to know one's inner character and the shortcomings of physiognomy, particularly with Othello, who eventually and tragically accepts the physiognomic readings of others: "The tortured logic that issues from Othello's sense of heightened visibility means that his colour—far from acting as protective camouflage, like Aaron's [Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*] black face—seems to render him transparent . . . [and] Othello comes to internalize the white reading of his own black face" ("Look" 119). Coppélia Kahn points toward the discrepancy between physiognomy's goals

and the ability of humans to “render their bodies and faces opaque to decoding” (46). In her chapter titled “Physiognomy,” Sibylle Baumbach positions “the ambivalence arising from the contemplation of the body as index of the mind” as being “nowhere more obvious than in the context of theatrical play” (583). In her monograph *Shakespeare and the Art of Physiognomy*, she concludes that “Shakespeare’s theatrical scheme [is to] draw...attention to the physiognomic discourse that emerges in his plays and sheds some new light on his stage techniques as well as his control of audience response” (179)—or otherwise stated, Shakespeare employs axiomatic truths at the start of the play only to dissect them as the play progresses. Indeed, Shakespeare appears wary of physiognomy in one of the selected texts for this study: *All’s Well that Ends Well*. The King admits, “I am not a day of season, / For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail / In me at once” (5.3.33-35). Here, the King proves difficult to read because of competing signs appearing simultaneously.

By focusing on the failures of physiognomy, current criticism on physiognomy has often been concerned with issues contemporary to Shakespeare, and even today. Neill interrogates the relationship between race and physiognomic readings. Kahn employs physiognomy to comment on the early modern fascination with self-fashioning. Throughout her works on the subject, Baumbach repeatedly turns to Shakespeare’s use of physiognomy and female characters “who quite frequently take on the role of physiognomist and thereby subvert male authority and challenge male authorship” (*Shakespeare* 182). Indeed, all these critics do mention the importance of physiognomy as it relates to acting practices on the early modern stage, but a more profound look to the body as text in relation to the more formal elements of drama still needs consideration.

In order to begin a physiognomic reading of an early modern text, it is useful to define the words frequently used: *face*, *countenance*, and *visage*. Each has connotations that direct us toward a specific way of reading. *Face*, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is “The front part of the head, from the forehead to the chin, and containing the eyes, nose, and mouth; the countenance, visage.”¹⁰ This usage dates as early as the twelfth century and refers primarily to the fixed features. *Countenance*, however, has a more emotive connotation: “Bearing, demeanour, comportment; behaviour, conduct.”¹¹ Deriving from Latin for a term regarding self-restraint, *countenance* appears as less fixed and more responsive. Throughout the late medieval and early modern period, *countenance* took on the additional meaning of volition, or the willful change of face, which correlates with the importance of making-face as seen with Elizabeth I and the many behavioral manuals. Beginning in the fourteenth century and continuing until the seventeenth, *visage* departed from being a mere synonym of *face* to mean “An assumed appearance; an outward show; a pretense or semblance.”¹² An air of deceit becomes associated with this word that does not appear with the others. Given the various natures of these words, paying attention to diction within dialog offers readers and audiences alike a keen insight into the physiognomic approach being undertaken. In essence, the face is diverse in its uses, and Shakespeare is wise to use this range throughout various genres, problem plays included.

The Problem Play

Shakespeare did not set out to write a problem play. Moreover, critics for over a century have contested the constituents of this modern classification. The traditional labels have

¹⁰ “face, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2015. Web. 29 January 2016.

¹¹ “countenance, n.1.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2015. Web. 29 January 2016.

¹² “visage, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2015. Web. 29 January 2016.

remained: histories, comedies, tragedies, and romances; however, according to F. S. Boas, who in 1896 first coined the term *problem play*, not all of Shakespeare's plays, including *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Hamlet*, fit neatly into such headings:

All these dramas introduce us into highly artificial societies, whose civilization is ripe unto rottenness. Amidst such media abnormal conditions of brain and emotion are generated, and intricate cases of conscience demands a solution by unprecedented methods. Thus throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths, and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raise preclude a completely satisfactory outcome Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies. We may therefore borrow a convenient phrase of the theatre of to-day and class them together as Shakespeare's problem-plays. (345)¹³

For Boas, problem plays exist for two reasons: to probe problems either moral or psychological. *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* contain moral conundrums, in which the lines between right and wrong seem blurred. *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* present psychological problems insofar as audiences remain uncertain as to the mental processes of the leading characters. However, later critics have emended or amended Boas's seminal work, *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*, contending that since Boas's definition of *problem play* varies in its application to different plays, no solid definition exists.

¹³ For Boas, the term *problem-play* refers to plays that showcase contemporary problems to his day, such as the works of Ibsen and Shaw.

Over thirty years later, W. W. Lawrence proposed a more concrete, less protean definition. He thus omitted *Hamlet*, and focused primarily on the comedies, naming problem plays “a kind of bastard brother of tragedy” (233). For Lawrence, plays like *All’s Well* and *Measure for Measure* remain too serious for comedy, but lack the pity and sense of loss found in tragedy. Instead, he argued that ethics remain central in Shakespeare’s problem comedies: “This special treatment [of problem plays] distinguishes such a play from other kinds of drama, in that the theme is handled so as to arouse not merely interest or excitement, or pity or amusement, but to prove the complicated interrelations of character and action, in a situation admitting of different ethical interpretations” (4). The ethical dilemma presented in a problem play, therefore, does not have a single answer, but rather multiple resolutions. However, Lawrence does appear inconsistent. For example, he insists that the blurring of ethical values Boas associated with the “problem plays” would have been interpreted differently by Shakespeare's intended audience. Instead of feeling shock at Helen’s actions, an Early Modern audience would probably have admired her ingenuity as a clever wench who fulfills her impossible missions.¹⁴

E. M. W. Tillyard acknowledges the inherent path to inconsistency that emerges with an all too stringent definition of *problem play*, admitting that the term is vague and broad: “It is anything but a satisfactory term, and I wish I knew a better. All I can do now is to warn the reader that I use it vaguely and equivocally” (1). However, he does refine his definition by mapping out two ways in which a drama can be a problem play. First, the play may present problems, or the play proves too difficult to properly label: “*Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* are problem plays because they deal with and display interesting problems; *All’s Well* and *Measure for Measure* because they *are* problems” (2). Under his argument, *Hamlet* is restored to the list not for psychological but rather for political reasons.

¹⁴ See Schanzer, pp. 3-4 for a more thorough critique of Lawrence’s apparent irreconcilability.

A decade after Tillyard's work, Ernest Schanzer reaffirms portions of Lawrence's argument by restricting the defining quality "to moral problems," thereby excluding plays concerned "with problems that are psychological, metaphysical, social or political" (5). Thus, the list for Schanzer includes only *Measure for Measure*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In summary, his definition is "a play in which we find a concern with a moral problem which is central to it, presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable" (6). He does agree with Lawrence about the ambiguity of the moral values examined in a problem play, but seeks to remove his discrepancies through limiting the parameters to matters dealing exclusively with ethics.

Richard Wheeler, however, returns the list to solely comedies, arguing that the problem resides in genre. In other words, the problem plays dwell somewhere between festive comedies and romances, and include only *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well*. His argument insists that these plays must be situated within Shakespeare's overall development as a writer, and these two works help us understand his transition from festive comedies to romance. Neither play fits the mode of festive, since "in the festive comedies, social and internal obstacles to love impeded the movement toward marriage; the action culminates when obstructed love relations are consummated in marriage arranged or completed in the closing scene" (3). With the marriage in *All's Well* relegated to inciting action, the play is clearly excluded from such a model. For *Measure*, Angelo has long been engaged to Mariana when the bed trick is performed, and Isabella remains famously silent upon the Duke's proposal of marriage at the end of the play. What is more, the Duke administers his justice through the forced marriages of both Angelo and Lucio. Romances, according to Wheeler, "emphasize the recovery of family and friendship

bonds that have been disrupted in ways often reminiscent of the violent rendings of the tragedies” (14). As before, *All’s Well* fails to meet the criteria for a romance since the loss and recovery of Bertram lacks the ferocity of tragedy. Within *Measure*, the audience knows that Claudio was not executed well before Isabella does, diminishing his “recovery.” Moreover, the reuniting of Angelo with his estranged fiancée hardly appears ideal, inciting concern for Mariana’s well being with such a villainous man.

Again, *Hamlet* does not appear in the list of problem plays for Vivian Thomas, who includes only *Troilus and Cressida*, *All’s Well*, and *Measure for Measure*. He removes *Hamlet*, in part because of Lawrence’s stipulations, and, like Lawrence, Thomas adds that Shakespeare’s audiences would have not been so puzzled by the play’s form: they would have immediately recognized it as belonging to the mode of the popular revenge tragedy (4). Thus, his designation relies on “fundamental problems relating to personal and social values within a framework which makes the audience acutely aware of the problems without providing amelioration through the provision of adequate answers or a dramatic mode which facilitates a satisfactory release of emotions” (21).

Starting in the 1980s, questions of form emerged from interrogating the problem plays, which led Leo Salingar to include his essay “Is *The Merchant of Venice* a Problem Play?” in his collection titled *Dramatic Form in Shakespearean and the Jacobean*. Critics had begun to include *Merchant* in the category of problem play, but Salingar insists that it is a romance that hints toward the later problem plays. He encourages scholars to ignore the tension that comes from “the contradictions between irrational emotion impulses and social rationality as expressed (for example) by law” (30). In other words, the idealism of Portia paired with her cold application of law to Shylock is not reason enough to conclude that *Merchant* is a problem play

because the issue of Shylock as a potential tragic figure has been dissolved (rather than resolved) before the final act. Form is key in understanding this genre. Frank Kermode agrees with Salinger, maintaining in his 2001 book *Shakespeare's Language* that the play is best considered as a prototype of the later problem plays, but he admits that *Merchant* does rest, based on its form, between The Old Law of Christianity (relating to tragedy) and The New Law (connoting romance). Kermode appears to altogether dismiss problem plays, arguing that *Merchant* “has a scheme [or form] anticipating those of the so-called problem plays” (71). Nevertheless, he insists that genre remain central in understanding and discussing problem plays.

More recent criticism, however, has returned to a focus on political tension as a means for classification, and thus often includes *Merchant*. In his edition of the play, John Drakakis affirms the play as a problem play since “whichever way we view the formal harmony of the ending of the play, its investments are social and political, domestic and public, and the discomfort that these tensions generate exceeds the capacity of the genre to contain them” (112). In essence, Drakakis rejects the formalist argument, relying instead on tensions that remain unresolved. Following this guideline, David Margolies posits that the “contradictions [in problem plays] are created in such a way that they cannot be resolved” by generic conventions (2). He admits that “the approach to the plays that would seem to make most sense is to look at them in terms of the response they generate, and how Shakespeare engineers that response” (9). Margolies does temper Drakakis’s argument by stressing the importance of genre and form, but rather than relying on conventions to *resolve* issues, Margolies insists that scholars should focus on how Shakespeare *creates* tension through generic means.¹⁵

¹⁵ Though concerned primarily with the problem *comedies*, French criticism has examined the influence of art movements, arguing that the tension between Mannerist and Baroque techniques produces complexity. See Jean-Pierre Maquerlot’s *Shakespeare and the Mannerist Tradition*, Cambridge U P, 1995; and Gisèle Venet’s “*Twelfth*

Critics have thus sought to articulate the opaqueness surrounding these plays and have answered this question in a variety of ways: politics, generic form, and even combinations of the two. My readings of *All's Well* and *Hamlet* center on the genre of the problem play, and while the conversation has been long and ongoing, I wish to contribute by expanding Boas's premise of psychological problems, insofar as physiognomy's aim remains to explore the interiority of a person. However, Boas, along with Schanzer, Thomas, and Lawrence, insists that problem plays rely on social and ethical rather than psychological problems. I find that their arguments, and even those of Margolies and Drakakis's, focus too heavily on audience response. Thus, I endorse the formalist approach of Wheeler, Salingar, and Kermode, arguing that the characteristics that identify a problem play are contained within the play itself; however, rather than using genre and form to disqualify works as problem plays, I contend that physiognomy provides the language necessary to convey the central component of a problem play, which many critics have referred to loosely as tension.

First, I assert that both *All's Well* and *Hamlet* are preoccupied with reading the body as a text. The plots of both plays depend on physiognomic readings to incite the action, and, therefore, Shakespeare construes the plays in such a way that either physiognomy appears as a reliable means for reading bodies or is tested before being believed. Second, I posit that the disquiet at the end of both plays derives from incomplete physiognomic readings. In *All's Well*, Helen serves as a consistently misread text, only to have Shakespeare defer a definitive reading of her character for a time after the play has concluded. The same proves true for *Hamlet*, in which Shakespeare demonstrates physiognomy's validity throughout the first three acts of the play, only to have its efficacy undermined with Hamlet's inadequate readings of both Claudius

Night et All's Well That Ends Well: Deux Comédies que tout oppose, ou deux moments d'une même esthétique?"
Etudes Anglaises: Grande-Bretagne, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, no. 3, 2005, pp. 276-92.

and Gertrude. As in *All's Well's* treatment of Helen, *Hamlet* concludes without a clear and definitive reading of Gertrude's inner-life.

With these ideas in mind, I have included these two works primarily because they are often considered problem plays—but for various reasons. I follow, in part, the criteria first established by Boas, and emended or altered by later critics, which is to say that problem comedies are concerned with ethical problems, and problem tragedies are concerned with problems of psychology. First, I explore *All's Well*, a comedy that has been labeled a problem play not only because it is a mixture of romance and festive comedy, but also because it presents unresolved ethical issues to its audiences. I have also included *Hamlet* since, although it aligns with tragedy, and its conclusion leaves fewer ethical concerns than the comedies, audiences are left with questions regarding the psychological states of Hamlet, Ophelia, and even Gertrude. However, in this chapter I argue that both plays create tension within the audience not primarily through their ethical dilemmas or their problems with genre, but rather through their inconclusive physiognomic readings since both plays conclude before such character-based appraisals can be affirmed or discredited.

All's Well that Ends Well

The source of *All's Well* has a long history of focusing on the themes of seeming and deception. The narrative in its various iterations often raises the question of what is virtuous and what is vicious. Shakespeare's is no exception: while talking of Bertram in *All's Well*, two French lords discuss the relationship of virtue and vice within a single human, and they employ Bertram as an example since his military services in Florence prove valiant, while at his home in France they appear as a disgrace. The first lord ponders how one action can produce such different reactions, and the second replies: "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill

together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not, and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtue” (4.3.71). With this statement, Shakespeare foregrounds for the audience the problem of reading into people. Through self-fashioning, deceit, and misreadings, the plot of *All's Well* demonstrates the use of physiognomy; however, its use does not seem to reach a satisfying conclusion, which has left it labeled as a problem play since “the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome” (Boas 345). In examining this work, I will first explore its various manifestations before Shakespeare’s play to demonstrate that the story has appeared in various genres and through different mediums—all of which focus on the theme of semblance. Then I will analyze Shakespeare’s play to reveal how Shakespeare uses the reading of the face to achieve his generic and thematic goals.

All's Well that Ends Well presents as an excellent case study of physiognomy. First, the play itself is a re-writing of genre. Katherine Eisaman Maus recalls the common narrative in which “an unknown or lowborn young man of great courage, intelligence, or expertise addresses himself to a serious peril: a dragon no one can slay, a riddle no one can solve, a wound no one can cure. The grateful recipient of his aid—a king or mighty duke—rewards the youth with marriage to a princess who would ordinarily be far above his station” (2193). While this is a typical trajectory for romance, Maus relates the plot to the Cinderella myth, arguing that the story “retells this popular tale [a romance] with the gender roles reversed” (2193). In other words, the plot presents a low-born maiden who seeks the love of a high-born male through deeds of great courage, rather than a lowly knight in service to a great lady. While the plot does seem to contain elements of romance, the narrative has its origins in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, in which the theme relates primarily to religious pretense rather than love, and it certainly had many reiterations before reaching Shakespeare’s pen. Indeed, Shakespeare’s source derives from

William Painter's re-telling in the *The Palace of Pleasure*, but considering the story in its earlier forms reveals a common concern with semblance or falsity.

In Boccaccio's version, Giletta, the heroine, demonstrates her worth by managing her husband's house very well, turning it from being in arrears to becoming well-organized and profitable—a feat Helen does not undertake in Shakespeare's play. In his book *The All's Well Story from Boccaccio to Shakespeare*, Howard C. Cole points out the error in viewing Boccaccio's tale as merely a conventional folk tale, in which “a bed trick...is a convention of romance” (13). Cole suggests that Boccaccio crafted Giletta's actions into a “part of a satirical whole that repeatedly unmasks religious rationalizations” (13). Through using religion as a means to justify her actions, Giletta can perform a bed trick guilt-free. In the *Decameron*, Giletta receives her prize because of her “cleverness, not goodness” (28). For Cole, this fits well with the other tales from the third day in the *Decameron*, which all have “a sexual goal with a religious pretense” (21). In the case of Giletta, she applies this religious pretense when she claims to heal the King through the grace of God, but in reality she simply employs her father's studies to have an excuse to go to Paris to see Beltramo, her beloved; having the King offer her a husband remains a benevolent consequence. Furthermore, she justifies her following of Beltramo by presenting it as a type of pilgrimage, and the bed trick has merit because “it was perfectly fair to arrange for the countess to win back her spouse” since marriage constitutes a holy sacrament (Boccaccio 238).

Rather than using religion as a cover-up for Giletta's actions, a French romance by an unknown author called *Le Chevalereux Comte d'Artois* follows Boccaccio's story, but idealistically employs religion and virtue to effect a happy resolution. The editor as well as Cole point out that the story was popular with French Huguenots, and possibly made its way to

England and even to Shakespeare's notice.¹⁶ In his introduction to *Le Chevalereux*, Joseph Barrois mentions the importance of chivalry to knights, but also adds the importance of Christian faith, thereby making Boccaccio's original spin problematic: "*l'établissement du christianisme dans les Gaules y changea les moeurs, les institutions, aussi bien que la littérature, et le guerrier chrétien revêtit un caractère tout nouveau*" (v). This French soldier places high value on honor, virtue, and religion, and, because of this, the author had to make major revisions to the story to fit such a model. The hero, named Artois, performs many valiant acts at the beginning of the tale, earning the respect of the Kings of France and Castile. He eventually meets and falls in love with an honorable countess, and they marry; however, the marriage produces no children so he leaves his wife, vowing never to return until she can provide him with three things: his charger, his most prized diamond, and a child. The Countess, with the help of *le gentilz Oliver*, dresses as a man and names herself Philippot. Through Providence and God's planning, she becomes the most trusted servant to her husband, and in this position, she is able to obtain his charger, his diamond, and arrange a bed trick. For the Countess, God has ordained all her actions: "*Dieu...cognoist me bonne et léalle pensée*"—thereby suggesting a strong influence of Calvinism (159). Cole examines this tale as well, and concludes that Artois "eventually see[s] God's hand in the events his wife has so skillfully managed" (Cole 44). By displacing the acts of deception onto the master plan of God, and by devoting much of the narrative to Artois's heroics, the author absolves all the sins of both parties involved. In essence, *Le Chevalereux* idealizes the religious aspect of Boccaccio's tale.

Rather than venerating religion, Bernardo Accolti's early sixteenth-century play *Virginia* "becomes a satir[e]...that unmasks religious rationalizations" (Cole 55). Following Boccaccio's

¹⁶ Shakespeare's interaction with French Huguenot Christopher Mountjoy is covered in Reuben Post Halleck's treatment of C. W. Wallace's discoveries of public records in *Halleck's New English Literature*, American Book Company, 1913, pp. 180-82.

narrative closely, Accolti alters the story primarily by adding more characters and by giving lines to every minor character mentioned in the *Decameron*. Furthermore, he pejoratively exploits a dimension of the miracle plays to indict the use of religion to cover up deceptions. In the end, Virginia's sins are exposed and "the Prince is obliged to follow the examples of the kings and gods and beasts" (62) with his punishment—yet with sweeping sentimentality, Virginia escapes her doom by stating that if the Prince cuts open her breasts as punishment, he will find his name inscribed on her heart (67). Although all ends well, Accolti has taken Boccaccio's tale of virtue and divine industry, mixed with religious pretense, to create a work full of affectations and ironies. Cole suggests that the relative obscurity to *Le Chevalereux* compared to the popularity of *Virginia* suggests that most readers prefer Italian mischief to Burgundian idealism (69).

Through this tale's evolution, the story has been presented as satire, romance, and even borderline sentimental drama, but all manifestations of this story deal with deceit and its rationalization or justification. I assert that Shakespeare, rather than try to make Helen's guile attractive, showcases the overall effects of a person who is misread and then actively deceives. Moreover, a problem play, as we know it today, proves the most effective way to transmit this theme.

Shakespeare's play begins with a physiognomic misreading of Helen. The Countess observes Helen's grief and infers, "The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihoood from her cheek.—No more of this, Helen. Go to, no more, lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have—" (1.1.43-46). The Countess believes she knows the derivation for Helen's tears, the death of her father, but, as Helen later admits, she has forgotten her father because her "imagination / Carries no favour in't but Bertram's" (1.1.77-78). Following the tendency to look to the cheek, as demonstrated by

medieval romance, the Countess warns Helen that people may come to question her sincerity, believing she only mourns her father to make a show. Helen does not correct the Countess, but allows this reading to prevail.

Immediately following Helen's admission of love for Bertram, Paroles enters, and believes her to be "meditating on virginity" (105), given her emotional appearance. As with her interaction with the Countess, Helen's conversation with Paroles does not suggest that he is wrong in her assessment. Moreover, if Helen's appearance did not resemble thoughtful, maiden-like sentiments, Paroles's entrance would seem forced, with the comedy poorly wedged into the conversation. If, however, we view this as another misreading, uncorrected by Helen, it follows the general trajectory of misinterpretation present in this play. Helen should look as though she is pondering love, romance, chastity, or virginity. If this were not a habit, Paroles should not be so familiar as to make such a guess. In fact, Paroles asserts, "Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek" (1.1.146-47). Referencing the general facade of virginity, Paroles obscenely insists that her virginity is best put to use not in her appearance or cheek, but rather through practical activity: finding a lover. He seems certain in his reading of Helen.

In the next scene, the misreading continues, but, this time, between Bertram and the King, who declares, "Youth, thou bear'st they father's face. / Frank nature, rather curious than in haste / Hath well composted thee. Thy father's moral parts / Mayst thou inherit, too. Welcome to Paris" (1.2.19-22). Already the King assumes Bertram possesses the fundamental elements of his father's moral character. In her article "Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg and Descartes," Margreta de Grazia examines at the etymology of *character*, remarking on typographical connotations of the word as well as its reference to a person's inner attributes. De Grazia maintains that humans are both the result of imprinting as well as being printers, being

characterized as well as characterizing. Such a relationship appears most apparent with the production of offspring; Baumbach relates that the “physiognomic likeness between parent and child first and foremost serves as means of identification” (*Shakespeare* 103). Though not dealing with progeny, Neill iterates the common early modern hope that the inner characteristics of a person actually become etched upon a person’s face through nature. For Neill, physiognomy remained deeply connected to the desire to make sound judgments of a person’s morality before placing trust (“A Book”). In the character of a King, we encounter a ruler who hopes desperately that the youth will follow the example of his father: “Such a man / Might be a copy to these younger times, / Which followed well would demonstrate them now / But goes-backward” (1.2.45-48). The King makes a typical, generational commentary: the youth of today regress from the ideals of the past. However, Bertram’s father proved stalwart in his ideals, and the King believes he has stamped these characteristics on Bertram’s visage, and this noble look would serve well as a specimen to all of France’s youths.

As the action progresses, the King discovers Bertram’s lack of gratefulness and honor. Bertram is exposed as a cad when he soon flees France and his wife. However, the Countess learns much sooner that her initial understanding of Helen is incorrect. Much like Hamlet with the *Mousetrap*, the Countess performs a bit of playacting to catch Helen’s true intentions.¹⁷ Upon hearing from Reynaldo (recalling Polonius’s own servant/spy) that Helen loves her son, the Countess gauges Helen’s reactions through dialog that plays with the connotation of *daughter*, thereby implying incest as the fruition of Helen’s desired relationship with Bertram. When Helen is instructed to call the Countess mother, the Countess exclaims, “When I said ‘a mother’, /

¹⁷ In her article, “Reading Faces in *Hamlet*,” Kahn argues that “the device on which the entire play hinges, ‘The Mousetrap,’ depends on Hamlet’s expectation that Claudius’s ‘occulted guilt’ will, when he sees his crime enacted onstage, break down his customary composure as one who ‘may smile, and smile, and be a villain’, to become fully visible in his face” (41).

Methought you saw a serpent.” (1.3.124-25). Insisting that Helen call her “daughter,” she continues, “What pale again? / My fear hath catched your fondness. Now I see / The myst’ry of your loneliness, and find / Your salt tears’ head” (1.3.153-56). The loss of color in the cheek reveals the ultimate source of Helen’s earlier emotions. Once aware, the Countess demands, “Come, come, disclose / The state of your affection, for your passions / Have to the full appeached” (1.3.172-74). By performing an affective physiognomic reading, the Countess has determined the true state of Helen’s emotional life. Such a reading serves as an inciting action in the plot since it is with the Countess’s approval that Helen approaches the king. Unfortunately for Helen, however, misreadings and deception continue.

Aside from fixed, facial imprints and affective readings, Shakespeare also early incorporates another aspect of physiognomy between the King and Helen. In his *Contemplation of Mankinde*, Hill grants an entire chapter to the qualities of voices. He breaks down the physical mechanism of voice, from lungs to tongue, and asserts that the features of the face dictate voice, and, therefore, can be read just like the face. For example, “The person which hath a bigge voyce, is noted to be injurious, applied unto the form of an asse” (132), and “the voyce decerned soft, without retching doth indicate such a person to be gentle and tractable; applied unto the sheep” (134). Hill catalogs much of this speech, and consistently argues that screeching and high-pitched voices are the worst for women since these are signs of vanity and ire. Providing less of a catalog, Wright in *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* explains the importance of the voice, along with the face:

For action is either a certain visible eloquence, or an eloquence of the beodi, or a complet grade in deliuering conceits, or an external image of an internall minde, or a shadow of affections, or three springs which flowe from one founatine, called

vox, vultus, vita, voice, countenance, life; that is the affection poureth forth it selfe by all meanes possible, to discover vnto the present beholders and auditors, how the actor is affected, and what affection such a case and cause requireth in them.
(176)

The importance of voice appears inherent for both Wright and Hill; therefore, it should be no surprise that the reading of voices appears in the work of Shakespeare. Unlike Bertram, Helen does not have the luxury of the King's friendship with her own father, leaving facial imprints nearly impossible. However, her voice is effective in convincing the King to give her healing methods a try: "Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak, / His powerful sound within an organ weak" (2.1.174-75). As Hill comments, voice has much to do with physiology, and women's "weaker" organs, or lungs, exclude them from the ideal voices. However, in his assessment of Helen, the King asserts her authority, perhaps her authoritative tone and knowledge: her legacy from her father that rests not in her face—as does Bertram's—has swayed the king.

The King has ascribed a masculine tone to Helen's voice, which nullifies the Countess's earlier fears: "How shall they credit / A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools, / Embowelled of their doctrine, have left off / The danger to itself?" (1.3.225-27). The King has thus projected his self-interested perceptions unto Helen; he cites her voice as an authority of the healing arts believing that he deserves good health. However, he is not merely a patient since Helen negotiates a deal. Therefore, while she appears to be humble subject, she is actually a broker. In fact, this performance by Helen can be seen as a rehearsal of her later performance as a pilgrim, in which she appears pious in her travels, but actually seeks to claim her rights as a wife. Helen is a character who is continually read but mostly misread. Moreover, her husband has given her

the task of acquiring the signs of wifedom, his ring on her finger and his child in her womb, before he will ever bed her. In other words, she must imprint the signs of a fruitful marriage before she will ever have such a marriage. While this task seems impossible, she employs her wit to accomplish it.

Under a panoramic view of genre, comedies generically end with wedlock once the characters exhibit both the internal and external features of companionate marriage. The men may learn to be respectful, thereby having their handsome, noble outer features match their inner qualities, while the women, at times, resume their feminine costume, so that their outer garments reflect their gender. In other words, outside matches inside. In tragedy, after the tragic figure's moment of clarity, characters achieve cognizance of their inner natures and match their inner selves to their outer appearance, and usually die shortly thereafter. As mentioned earlier, many critics who have employed physiognomy comment on Shakespeare's hesitance to totally accept physiognomy as a means to match inner and outer appearance. However, if we see bodies as texts, we discover that some characters never have their exterior match their interior throughout Shakespeare's plays, and, only at the end, do characters rectify this dissonance, prompting either marriage (in comedy) or death (in tragedy).

To examine this notion further, we must identify character semiotics. Barbara Johnson employs semiotic language to discuss the motivated sign: the "inner self (the signified) is considered transparently readable from the beauty of [the] outer self (the signifier)" (2261). An unmotivated sign, however, occurs when a character appears to have a certain type of nature, usually discerned through outward appearance, but acts in the opposite way. Looking at characters in such a linguistic way, Johnson maintains that "to describe perfectly, to refer adequately, would be to 'hit' the referent and thus annihilate it; . . . to know completely would be

to obliterate the very object known” (2266). Johnson bases her argument on the principles of post-structuralism, which hold that a sign consists of both the signifier (word, utterance) and signified (idea). Signs point toward the object in reality, which is called the referent. When Johnson uses words such as *annihilate* or *obliterate*, she does not mean that the reference as an object in the world is destroyed, but rather that our ability to understand the object disappears. In other words, there is no need for language to attempt to describe or assist in reaching understanding: perfect understanding would be more intuitive rather than deductive. In post-structuralism, language thus operates in ambiguity; words, or signs, do not have a direct connection to their referent, but rather require readers to make cognitive decisions in order to decipher an imperfect understanding. Johnson thus applies this insight to characters, and suggests that once a character has reached the status of a motivated sign, in which the inside matches the outside, the referent, or the character within the narrative, no longer exists. Therefore, “textual” characters must give up their referential capabilities if the character is to persist.¹⁸

Before returning to Helen in *All's Well*, some illustration proves helpful. Looking at current scholarship on physiognomy, I will turn to the physiognomic readings of Kahn, Neill, and Baumbach to demonstrate how these scholars showcase Johnson’s character-based semiotics. First, Kahn contends that Claudius and Hamlet are parallel since “both men’s faces hide the truth of their souls” (41). Throughout the play, both men obscure their true intentions, either to mask the truth or to find it. The characters persist as long as they are misread: Claudius lives because Hamlet misreads his uncle’s prayer, while Hamlet survives because he is perceived as mad. However, once Claudius’s identity as a murderer is openly announced, he dies—just as

¹⁸ Johnson illustrates this idea with Billy Budd from Melville’s *Billy Budd* in “Melville’s Fist: The Execution of *Billy Budd*.” In it she asserts that when Billy reaches true understanding of Claggart as sign, Billy kills Claggart with his fist. Once Vere understands Billy as a sign, Vere kills him with a verdict.

when Hamlet finally actuates his inner avenger, he too dies.¹⁹ For Neill, in “The Look of Othello,” the protagonist gradually internalizes the physiognomic misreadings of others, and has rationalized his actions in the name of justice. He remains an unmotivated sign because his actions do not correlate or signify his understanding of righteousness. However, once he realizes the true content of his deeds, he comes a motivated sign—one which recognizes its evil acts, thus prompting him to end his life. Finally, regarding comedy, Baumbach in “Voice, Face and Fascination,” examines the physiognomic readings of many characters in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; however, singling out Hermia and Helena in particular, she notes that they appear to be defined by their physiognomic differences, regarding hair color and height in particular. What is more, the face of Demetrius suggests love of Hermia, but it is not love but a desire to gain favor with the Duke. Through the intervention of Puck, inward desires of love are muddled even further, with the characters’ true desires and actions all distorted. In the end, the signs concur with their true referents, ending in multiple marriages. When sign concurs with referent, the referent ends, either through death or through the union of two becoming one, or rather, the woman becomes cloaked by the man.²⁰

In the final scene of *All’s Well*, Helen, presumed dead, enters the court of the King, who asks if his eyes deceive him, to which Helen replies, “No, my good lord, / ’Tis but the shadow of a wife you see, / The name and not the thing.” (5.3.302-4). Throughout the play Helen has primarily been read inaccurately or has hidden her true appearance from others. At the end, she reveals that she has obtained Bertram’s signs of a wife: the ring and child. However, she calls

¹⁹ *Hamlet* is consistently read as a problem play, due in part to the unresolved questions of Gertrude and Ophelia, particularly their genuineness as to whether they are virtuous or sane, respectively. Thus, their ambiguity renders much of the play problematic.

²⁰ It is also interesting to note the use of self-fashioning and physiognomy with cross-dressers, such as Rosalind and Viola, who are certainly unmotivated signs, and who, upon revealing their true identity and becoming motivated signs, are quickly cloaked or dissolved through marriage.

herself merely the “word” and not the thing. She is a sign that has not reached its referent. From being read as mourning a father while she actually mourns an impossible love, to being read as contemplating virginity while pondering the opposite, to being seen as a healer when she is a negotiator, to being viewed as a pious pilgrim when she is actually a manipulator, Helen has not been a motivated sign throughout the entire play—save for the moment when the Countess reads her cheek as a sign of her love of Bertram. However, this happens in the opening scenes of the play, as does the marriage, and these two scenes serve as the inciting action and the climax respectively.

Perhaps Shakespeare is being emblematic with the character Paroles, whose name means *words* in French and who, despite being the perverter and troublemaker, stands on the stage in the final scene with his come-uppance continually deferred. Words or signs abound, but little meaning occurs on the stage. In fact, the final scene is full of riddles and equivocation on the part of both Paroles—“What an equivocal companion is this,” the King says to Paroles” (5.3.250)—and Diana, who calls Helen the embodiment of her puzzle: “So there’s my riddle; one that’s dead is quick. / And now behold the meaning” (5.3.300-01). The language throughout the final scene leads to confusion, with meaning postponed to a time and place after the play has ended. While the audience, through dramatic irony, already knows the plight and deeds of Helen, it is left to ponder if Helen is indeed virtuous, despite her falsity, and if Bertram is a proper husband or just a cad. In the end, Helen remains an unmotivated, ambiguous sign, one persisting well beyond the final page. Neither death nor marriage ends the play—and even the idea of reconciliation seems parodied or insincere, since Bertram’s love is conditional: “If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly / I’ll love her dearly, ever ever dearly” (5.3.312-13). In fact, the King descends from his throne for the epilogue, reminding the audience that he, himself, is an unmotivated sign,

being kingly on the outside, but idle on the inside: “The King’s a beggar now the play is done” (Epilogue 1). Helen, perhaps, may be considered a synecdoche for the play as a whole. *All’s Well* can indeed be seen as an unmotivated sign; its signifier, or outside, is comedy, but there is little of comedic convention within it, which might explain why this work of Shakespeare continues to puzzle.

Hamlet

This chapter has already considered *Hamlet* in light of a character-based, semiotic reading, and in this section I will further review moments of reading the body. As David Bevington asserts, “A recurring motif in *Hamlet* is of a seemingly healthy exterior concealing an interior sickness” (546). Indeed, *Hamlet* showcases great concern with the relationship between inside and outside, and while I will analyze a number of scenes within this play, my primary focus provides a detailed, close reading of the second act, from Polonius’s covert meeting with Reynaldo, to Hamlet’s soliloquy after his initial engagement with the players. By closely reviewing this act, I hope to profile the ambiguity regarding Gertrude’s guilt or innocence. Shakespeare explicitly foregrounds physiognomic readings with great certainty in the first and second acts. First, characters proudly assert the epistemological value of physiognomy, and second, through dramatic irony, audiences repeatedly see physiognomic ventures receiving validation. However, Shakespeare seems to undermine the validity of physiognomy through the ambiguous nature of Hamlet and Gertrude’s interaction in her chamber, thereby cementing the play’s status as problem play.

Maus positions *All’s Well* within Shakespeare’s tragic period, alongside *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*: “Editors conjecture that all three plays were written between

1602-1606, a period in which Shakespeare was largely preoccupied with tragedy: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* are roughly contemporaneous compositions” (2193). A quick re-cap of *Hamlet* and *All’s Well* reveals their similarities. For example, both plays begin with the loss of a patriarch, leaving the children to fulfill their own destinies. Polonius and the Countess both offer familiar benedictions to their sons, both of whom leave for service in France, and both parents exhibit concern with their son’s reputations abroad. Helen and Hamlet both contrive performances to fulfill their goals: a bed trick and a mousetrap, respectively. And, as I will argue, both dramatic pieces reveal a deep anxiety over reading into characters, usually through bodily affects.

Considering his sources, Shakespeare makes significant changes to the story of *Hamlet*, which create greater ambiguity, and while this uncertainty adds depth to the plot in a variety of ways, it adds credence to the larger theme of hesitation when it comes to reading the bodies in *Hamlet*. Additionally, this vagueness encourages empirical observation, by characters and audiences, to fill in the gaps of the play, which, I contend, includes physiognomy. Kermode offers a history of the Hamlet story, observing that *Ur-Hamlet* (1580s, anonymous, now lost) contains the first mentioning of a ghost, and that “it is generally known that Claudius killed Hamlet’s father” (“Introduction” 1136-37). Stephen Greenblatt posits that the tension in Saxo Grammaticus’s twelfth-century account of Amleth rises from the young prince’s physical and social inability to exact revenge: “His task, then, is to survive until he is capable of killing his uncle, but his uncle knows the social code perfectly well and can be expected to snuff out Amleth’s life at the first sign of menace. Amleth’s solution is to feign madness” (205). Saxo’s chronicle obtained newfound popularity in François Belleforest’s 1582 translation, with an English translation arriving in 1608, after Shakespeare’s play. Reviewing the texts of Saxo,

Belleforest, and *Ur-Hamlet* heightens the ambiguities that Shakespeare creates through his edits and omissions, much like *All's Well*, and thus, I provide an account of these in the paragraphs that follow.

Saxo's history of Amleth, or Hamlet, presents clear distinctions from Shakespeare's text. First, the history has two clear parts, Amleth's life and adventures before and after enacting revenge. Saxo begins with Amleth's lineage; his father, named Horwendil, was valiant in war and received the position of governor of Jutland by King Rorick for slaying the King of Norway. In addition to power, the King also gave his daughter Gerthua to be Horwendil's wife. After Amleth reaches adulthood, the governor's brother Feng kills Horwendil in private out of jealousy; however, the entire court knows of Feng's guilt, but largely pardons him not only out of fear but also since Feng cites Horwendil's abusive nature toward Gerutha as cause for murder. Amleth desires revenge but cannot pursue his revenge openly. Thus, he feigns dullness and lethargy to avoid suspicion as he contemplates his stratagem. Feng and his court become fascinated with his change in disposition, and, under the supervision of Feng, members of the court test the sincerity of Amleth's portrayal of a simpleton. Whenever he is asked a question, he replies in seeming madness, but Saxo makes sure that Amleth never lies. For example, Feng commissions that Amleth's foster-sister, a "fair maid," should be used to provoke Amleth's lust, or "if his lethargy were feigned, he would seize the opportunity, and yield straightaway to violent delights" (105).²¹ The two meet and have intercourse, after which Amleth asks her to deny this meeting. When Feng's spies ask if he had given way to love, Amleth says "yes," and when asked where he did the act, he replies "upon the hoof of a beast of burden, upon a cockscomb, and also

²¹ All quotations from Saxo and Belleforest are from Israel Gollancz's *The Sources of Hamlet: With an Essay on the Legend*. Cass, 1967.

upon a ceiling” (111). To avoid lying, he placed fragments of these items under his pillow, and when his foster-sister denies their having sex, Amleth appears even more genuinely mad.

Feng, dissatisfied with the conclusion, sends more spies, one of which Amleth stabs, cuts into pieces, and feeds to some pigs by way of the sewer. He then approaches his mother, who ultimately supports his quest for revenge. However, Feng immediately sends Amleth to Britain with two royal retainers who carry instructions written on a piece of wood that he is to be slain upon arrival. Amleth swaps the wood carving with one of his own making, which commands the execution of the retainers, thereby saving his own life. Saxo details his time in Britain, including the manner in which he wins the favor of the King through his wit and truthfulness, despite appearing listless, and as recompense for his counsel, Amleth takes the King’s daughter as his wife. When the King of Britain finally executes the retainers, Amleth feigns offense, which prompts the King to give him gold, which Amleth melts and pours into hollow sticks.

Amleth returns to Denmark and stumbles into his own funeral banquet. He is immediately asked where his travelling partners are, and he responds by stating that they are within the sticks, referring to the gold. Encouraging revelry, Amleth has the men in the hall drink until they are stupefied, and he traps them in a netting made by his mother, which he commissioned during their pre-Britain meeting. However, seeing that some are able to escape, he burns the entire building down, and with no one to stop him, he finally reaches his uncle’s chamber where he finally exacts his long-delayed revenge. After becoming governor, Amleth enjoys victory, until King Rorick dies, and his successor Wiglek views Amleth as a usurper. Wiglek, though first suffering losses, eventually raises an army large enough to defeat and kill Amleth.

Belleforest's translation includes many changes, and critics often describe it as an embellishment. First, Belleforest moralizes the story throughout, providing apologia for the pagan and uncivilized Danes in particular. Moreover, he provides much in the way of character development, primarily through speeches, particularly with Feng as he contemplates murder and Geruth's rationalization for marriage to and support for Feng. However, the most important changes in plot include the following: (1) Feng kills his brother in public during a banquet and has accomplices, and (2) the narrator implies through the court's gossip that Geruth had an incestuous affair with Feng prior to her husband's death, prompting many Danes to believe that she was partly responsible for the murder since it allowed her to enjoy her adultery more openly. For more subtle changes, the shrewdness of Amleth's madness, i.e. never lying, appears "bungled" as Geoffrey Bullough phrases it:

Belleforest does not say clearly that Amleth possessed the girl, though he asserts that she would have wished it In Saxo, having had the willing girl, Amleth says so and is mocked when the girl denies it. In Belleforest the girl denies it but he affirms 'in subtlety', and is disbelieved. It is not clear whether he told a lie or not; Saxo's Amleth never lies By omitting the fantastic details Belleforest has diminished the power of the incident." (12-13)

However, Belleforest does add greater psychological depth to Geruth, particularly in the closet scene when Amleth confronts her after killing the spy. Belleforest adds a long speech in which Geruth defends her forced marriage, and offers counsel to Amleth for avenging his father's death:

te jurant par la haute majesté des Dieux, que s'il eust esté en ma puissance de resister au tyran, et qu'avec l'effusion de mon sang, et perte de ma vie, j'eusse

peu sauver la vie de mon seigneur et espoux, je l'eusse fait d'aussi bon coeur, comme depuis j'ay plusieurs fois donné empeschement à l'accourcissement de la tienne . . . je voy les moyens plus aysez de la vengeance de ton pere. (220)

Swearing to you by the high majesty of the Gods, that if it had been in my power to resist the tyrant, and with the pouring of my blood and loss of my life, I could have saved the life of my lord and husband. I would have done it with such a good heart, as since I have several times given impediment to the shortening of yours . . . I see the best means for avenging your father. (translation mine)

She warns that Feng is excellent at dissembling love toward Amleth and herself, but that this show would quickly change should Amleth demonstrate any sign of wisdom or policy.

Throughout her speech, she explains that she has been living in fear, and only able to help Amleth subtly by tempering Feng's rage.

The similarities between these two texts and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* remain clear; however, any discussion of these distinctions should highlight the ambiguity Shakespeare introduces into his play. Bullough lists them as follows: "the Ghost, the method of murder, the play-within-the-play, the name Claudius and the Pyrrhus speech, the prayer-scene, the political topicalities, Hamlet's adventure with the pirates, the fencing match and the end of the tragedy" (24). The setting of regicide in particular reveals Shakespeare's creation of ambiguity. Equally important, I would add, is the omission of the queen's speech in her bedroom, from Belleforest's version in particular. Just as the audience does not fully know Claudius's guilt until the *The Mousetrap* and his later confession at prayer, the audience in Shakespeare's play never hears such a confession or commitment to aid from Gertrude. Contrarily, in Saxo and Belleforest, the

murder of the King is well known, whether done in private or in public, and Belleforest embellishes Geruth's involvement, despite her well-meaning intentions.

The appearance of the ghost, however, does not seem to be Shakespeare's invention. We know little of *Ur-Hamlet*, but critics have reconstructed some of its attributes. First, from the writings of Thomas Nashe, who goes on a tirade about poor tragedians in his "To the Gentlemen Students of Both Universities," we know that plays about Hamlet existed as early as 1589:

It is a common practice now a dayes amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every Art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevours of Art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck verse if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca* read by Candlelight yeelds many good sentences, as *Blood is a begger*, and so forth; and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, hee will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of Tragicall speeches. (315)

Many scholars, thus, attribute *Ur-Hamlet* to Thomas Kyd (or an imitator), and, indeed, *Hamlet* has many characteristics of a Senecan tragedy through its parallels to Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Bullough lists twenty similarities between these works of Shakespeare and Kyd, such as the avenger meditating suicide, dissimulation, discussions of the art of theatre, and a play within a play, to name a few (17). Aside from the influence of Kyd's play in general, we know that *Ur-Hamlet* had a ghost calling for revenge. In Thomas Lodge's *Wits Miserie*, a devil is described "as pale as ye Visard of ye ghost which cried so miserally at ye Theator, like an oister wife, *Hamlet, revenge*" (62). In absence of a script of the play, the influence of the lost *Ur-Hamlet* on Shakespeare's play must remain only conjecture.

Shakespeare offers his readers and viewers no affirmation of Claudius's guilt in either the expository information, or within the first two acts of the play. Therefore, readers must conjecture with Hamlet, thereby prompting audiences to read reality with the Prince of Denmark. One of the means by which characters construe understanding of one another includes physiognomy. Therefore, I will first look at the entire play, discussing how Shakespeare integrates aspects of the early modern physiognomic tracts discussed earlier. I will then focus on Hamlet's inadequate readings of both Claudius and Gertrude in the third act. Then, in conclusion, I will argue that the play's second act reveals how Hamlet came to be so certain of his skills in physiognomy, which only accentuates his failures in reading a number of characters, but Gertrude in particular. On the whole, I find that Hamlet's reading of his mother proves to be problematic, thus situating the work within Shakespeare's problem plays.

Physiognomy at Large in Hamlet

The play opens with a question of identity:

Bernardo: Who's there?

Francisco: Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

Bernardo: Long live the King!

Francisco: Bernardo?

Bernardo: He. (1.1.1-4)

Recalling Hill's *Contemplation*, physiognomic manuals place emphasis on the voice in addition to facial and bodily mannerisms. Here a character achieves recognition, presumably, through his voice alone.²² This acknowledgment proves vital because in the Globe, audiences would be

²² Admittedly, line 5 reveals Francisco's anticipation: "You come most carefully upon your hour." Moreover, as Greenblatt points out in his footnotes to the *Norton Complete Works*, "Francisco, as sentry on duty, is responsible

accustomed to seeing actors double in their roles. Indeed, costume would facilitate audiences' discerning of differing characters despite the presence of the same body, but voice, as the manuals maintain, remains equally important. Baumbach adds another important element to voice. She posits that "with regard to Shakespeare's physiognomic theatre, actors would be expected to adjust their pronunciation to avoid creating a comic gap between their own manners of speech and, for instance, the 'soft, gentle, and low' tone of voice which King Lear holds in high esteem and which distinguishes Cordelia" (*Shakespeare* 92). In summary, in Shakespeare's Globe, voice distinguished the doubling of character roles, as well as making gender more believable. It is important to consider these facts in light of *Hamlet's* directorial advice in the third act: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you—trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as life the town-crier had spoke my lines" (3.2.1-4). The play itself remains concerned with the importance of voice and speech, both in the world on the stage and in the reality of the theatrical production.

After this vocal recognition, the next few scenes reveal an implicit enthrallment with physiognomic language. Hamlet refers to *visage* in the second scene, explaining to his mother that his exterior does not *seem* to reflect his interiority, but actually accurately reflects it. He enumerates all the methods in which his sorrow manifests itself, from inky cloaks, to sighs, to tears, thereby listing affective physiognomic reactions. Not only these but also "the dejected haviour of the visage" helps identify grief, but what Hamlet experiences "passeth show" (1.2.81, 85). Recalling that *visage* refers to the intentional manipulation of the face, often suggesting masking and deceit, Hamlet wishes to distance himself from a visage that merely *seems* to denote grief. Therefore, it *seems* fitting that Claudius should be a master of his visage since we are

for challenging anyone who appears" (1696). However, Shakespeare's decision to have two questions of identity—also the "Stand! Who's there?" (1.1.11)—should be considered important in establishing themes. Many critics, including Greenblatt and Kermode, note the significance of these questions in their introductions to *Hamlet*.

introduced to him with the lines “it is us befitted / To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom / To be contracted in one brow of woe” (1.2.2-4). Here Claudius requests that all his subjects come together in a unified show of support for Denmark’s loss of King Hamlet. He overtly plays on the image of a brow that recoils upon itself in an expression of mourning—a national visage. In contrast, Hamlet and Horatio employ *countenance* at the end of the same scene when speaking of the Ghost who bears the likeness of the deceased king:

Hamlet: Then saw you not his face?

Horatio: O yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.

Hamlet: What looked he? Frowningly?

Horatio: A countenance more

In sorrow than in anger.

Hamlet: Pale or red?

Horatio: Nay, very pale. (1.2.227-30)

With this exchange, Hamlet implicitly communicates his concern with the face, seemingly pleased that the beaver is up as to reveal the Ghost’s complexion so that he may inquire further.

In the next scene, Ophelia references “countenance” when she explains Hamlet’s authenticity to Polonius: “And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord, / With all the vows of heaven” (1.3.13-14). It is important to recall that *countenance* may refer to the face’s ability to reveal will and desire, thereby relying on the affective or temporary gestures and movements of the face. Greenblatt, in his edited version of *Hamlet*, glosses *countenance* as *authority* (1709), and such a gloss appears accurate because Ophelia claims that the speech is augmented with “all the vows of heaven.” However, Polonius counters that “When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul / Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter, / Giving more

light than heat . . . / You must not take for fire” (1.4.116-18, 120). His reference to the relationship between soul, tongue, and blood suggests a very real, physiological and bodily response. Moreover, *blaze* refers to “A sudden kindling up of passion as of a fire; a violent outburst,”²³ as well as a facial feature: “A white spot on the face of a horse or ox. Also of other animals.”²⁴ The doubled-nature of the language, i.e. *countenance* and *blaze*, seems fitting, mirroring the word play between Hamlet and his mother and uncle in the previous scene.

We see the *visage* of Claudius and *countenance* of Ophelia coalesce in the third act. Polonius provides instruction to Ophelia, tutoring her on the methods of effective deceit:

Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.—Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this:
Tis too much proved that with devotion’s visage
And pious action we do sugar o’er
The devil himself. (3.1.45-51)

To such words Claudius offers this aside:

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience.
The harlot’s cheek, beautied with plastr’ing art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word. (51-54)

²³ “blaze, n.1.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 27 July 2016.

²⁴ “blaze, n.2.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 27 July 2016.

Ophelia must effect a seeming devotion that does not appear false by overacting. In addition, Claudius unites physiognomic language with makeup, or a way to cover the face's true nature, which has meaningful connection to the theater as well as to physiognomic readings.

Baumbach examines the dispute among critics as to whether actors on Shakespeare's stage used make-up to enhance their appearance or not, regardless of the genders they assumed (*Shakespeare* 88). Tanya Pollard, on the other hand, recalls the anti-theatrical tracts to assert a more gender-neutral connotation to make-up in the theater, thereby suggesting that actors did, in fact, use make-up routinely regardless of the gender they portrayed. For Pollard,

The significant role given face-paints and scenes of painting within plays call attention to the painting, costuming, and self-metamorphosing that constitute theatrical productions. Both metonymically and metaphorically, face-paints come to stand for the theater itself; as crucial theatrical props, they represent the mechanics of the stage, and as a means of deceiving and seducing spectators they embody the spirit of theatrical illusion. (199)

Under this assumption, make-up becomes a synecdoche for the evils of the theater.

Hamlet affirms this more gender-less application of the word *make-up*, relating it instead to deceit, like the visage. In other words, the accusations of cunning and guile directed at the theatre parallel the willful deception enacted with the face. Indeed, the sugaring over first applies to Ophelia, then Claudius relates it to himself. Later in the same scene, Hamlet exclaims to Ophelia, "I have heard of your paintings, too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another" (3.1.142-43). While the meaning of Hamlet's words remains ambiguous, he adapts a forthright, misogynistic tone, asserting that all women are false since they cover their countenances and therefore hiding their genuine feelings from men. Moreover,

in the final act of the play, Hamlet commands the skull of Yorick, “Now get you to my lady’s chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come” (5.1.178-79). On the whole, *Hamlet* refers to covering the countenance with make-up without regard to typical gender roles, which suggests that the play is more concerned with a universal falsity, whether through putting on powder or manipulating the face.

Misreadings of Claudius and Gertrude

Before performing a close reading of the second act, this section links Hamlet’s misreading of Claudius at prayer with his potential misreading of Gertrude in her chamber. Upon witnessing Claudius’s ineffective prayer, Hamlet decides to delay his revenge and seek his mother. As is well known, Hamlet jumps to the wrong conclusion regarding Claudius’s assumed piety and humility, or as Kahn puts it,

Hamlet takes Claudius’s hasty departure from “The Mousetrap” as absolute confirmation of his guilt, and thus warrant for his long awaited revenge on the king Yet in the play’s greatest irony, when a few moments later he comes upon the king kneeling in prayer, Hamlet misinterprets Claudius’s face and body, which leads him unwittingly to pass up what he apparently considers the perfect occasion for revenge. (47)

While this prayer scene has received much attention as it relates to his hamartia, Hamlet’s discourse with his mother also reveals his errors in judgment.

When Gertrude implores Hamlet to inform her of the particulars of her offense, he replies that it is “[s]uch an act / That blurs the grace and blush of modesty” (3.4.39-40). In this instance, *blur* refers to the act of obscuring or sullyng the original beauty, and *blush* suggests an

appropriate response to a horrible situation.²⁵ However, the “act” he mentions has left modesty incapable of blushing. While Kahn does not examine Gertrude in this manner, I insist that Hamlet has projected an “inky cloak” of guilt around Gertrude’s modesty. In Gertrude’s room, Hamlet repeats his earlier infatuation with blushing: “O shame, where is thy blush?” (72). It appears that Hamlet looks for a reaction in his mother, and upon seeing none, he assumes that her grace and purity are gone, that she has become so tainted that she is incapable of producing such a reaction. However, Gertrude could simply be innocent, and she does not make the connection between remarriage and murder that Hamlet accepts as truth. Perhaps Hamlet has become so certain in his abilities to effect affective responses in others that he does not consider that his readings may be incorrect.

Ewan Fernie describes shame as a reaction that requires an audience. It may also consist of self-reflection, which for Shakespeare repeatedly mandates the presence of mirrors (81). However, Gertrude does proclaim, “Thou turn’st mine eyes into my very soul, / And there I see such black and grained spots” (3.4.79-80), suggesting an internal investigation. However, the nature of the “spots” remains unclear: murder or marrying her husband’s brother? Fernie further suggests that Gertrude is conditioned to feel shame for having sexual desires, an instillation that intends to keep women who have power in check, and Hamlet appears to use this strategy to restrain Gertrude as he seeks his revenge (74). Regardless of what Gertrude sees and feels, Hamlet represents an audience who does not perceive the bodily affects he desires, and Gertrude,

²⁵ Robert Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* treats blushing as a symptom with many causes, including the imagination or conceit of a person, vainglory, body melancholy, head melancholy, and maids/nuns/widows melancholy, among others. However, regarding shame, he writes, “Bashfulnesse and blushing, is a passion proper to men alone, and is not only caused for some shame or ignomy, or that they are guilty vnto themselves of some fowle fact committed, but as *Fracastorius* well determines, *ob defectum proprium et tumorem. from feare, and a conceit of our defects, The face labours and is troubled at his presence that sees our defects and nature willing to helpe sends thither heat, heat drawes the subtilest blood, and so we blush*” (265). For Burton, blushing from shame belongs to men alone, and is a physiological reaction, sending heat to help the face. For more on shame, see Baumbach, *Shakespeare*, pp. 81-86, and Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare*, pp. 74-135.

with no mirror present outside of Hamlet's words, sees herself in his tirade. In this manner, the audience experiences the scene as Hamlet does. He yearns for a physical, perceptible response, but finds none. The audience hears an expression resembling shame and remorse, but does not have a soliloquy nor an aside from the Queen to fully reveal the root of her seeming disgrace.

The role of questioning in *Hamlet* has received much attention by critics, and Hamlet's question of "where is thy blush?" must be situated within this line of reasoning. Mack in "The World of *Hamlet*" explains why the construction of Shakespeare's Elsinore proves so different from his other plays. He provides multiple reasons for the play's difference from *Othello* or *King Lear*, but first he contends that "Hamlet's world is pre-eminently in the interrogative mood. It reverberates with questions, anguished, meditative, alarmed," and even that "Hamlet's world is a world of riddles" (49). Bevington affirms that questions highlight Hamlet's passivity, particularly regarding "the enigmatic commands of the ghost" (550).²⁶ In other words, Hamlet's interaction with the Ghost has aroused many questions in his mind, and he must thoughtfully seek answers before acting.²⁷ Greenblatt focuses on the opening of the play, suggesting that questions allow speakers to reflect lines of inquiry back on themselves, as with Horatio who is prompted to ask "What art thou . . .?" to the ghost (1.1.44). Horatio also "tremble(s) and look(s) pale," when Marcellus asks, "Is it not like the King?"—to which Horatio replies, "As thou art to thyself" (51, 57-58). Greenblatt maintains that this exchange "raise(s) the possibility of a difference between oneself and oneself," and Gertrude definitely questions herself in Hamlet's presence (*Purgatory* 211). Harry Levin famously posits that *Hamlet's* primary mood is interrogatory, rather than exclamatory (31). More recently, Aaron Landau suggests that the

²⁶ Bevington attests that Hamlet seeks balance among extremes. On one side, he should not be rash and overly resolute like Laertes and Fortinbras. Nor does he want to be overly passive like Ophelia and Gertrude (549).

²⁷ Bevington lists the following questions surrounding Hamlet's interaction with the Ghost: "Say, why is this? Wherefore What should we do?" (1.4.57), p550.

abundance of questions in the play mirror the rise in epistemological skepticism of the Renaissance. For Landau, *Hamlet* “far from representing a systematic or even coherent line of thought, virtually subsumes the intellectual confusion of the age” (218).

However, Hamlet’s question to Gertrude, “O shame, where is thy blush?” appears quite different from many of the other questions in the play. First, it opens with an exclamation—“O shame”—and appears more rhetorical than interrogative. Moreover, Hamlet seems excessively rash, going beyond the Ghost’s command for passivity with Gertrude: leaving her to heaven. Thus Hamlet gives the impression that he has abandoned all skepticism concerning the validity of the Ghost by the time he visits Claudius and Gertrude in the third act. He believes the Ghost, has murdered an innocent man, and judges his mother to be guilty. How has Hamlet become so rash?—the second act demonstrates the erosion of skepticism, in both Hamlet and potentially in the audience, particularly surrounding questions of physiognomy’s efficacy; the characters have tacitly accepted physiognomic readings as a true, empirical means to uncover truth. Following the characters’ example, the audience witnesses these physiognomic hypotheses’ corroboration, and viewers become conditioned to accept physiognomy as a valid means to discern the rottenness that dwells inside.

In Gertrude’s closet, Hamlet seemingly refuses to accurately read his mother, believing that he deserves a guilty mother to chastise. In fact, within the discourse of his infatuation with blushing, Hamlet continues to reference physiognomy in describing his mother’s deed, without mentioning murder or remarriage: “Heaven’s face doth glow [blush], / Yea, this solidity and compound mass [the earth] / With tristful visage, as against the doom, / Is thought-sick of the act” (3.4.47-50). The *OED* defines *thought-sick* as “sick with anxiety,” and paired with the looming, final Judgement Day, a connotation of attrition appears: Heaven’s countenance

sincerely blushes at Gertrude's act, but the lowly earth dons a sad visage, perhaps only regretful because it has not escaped the eye of God.²⁸ In the midst of this judgment, Hamlet claims that Gertrude is either incapable or unwilling to read Claudius; Hamlet thus provides a physiognomic reading of both King Hamlet and Claudius, which affirms his assurance with the practice:

Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow—
Hyperion's curls, the front [forehead] of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten or command,
A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man. (3.4.52-61)²⁹

²⁸ "thought, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. Web. 28 February 2017. Additionally, Gertrude's response to Hamlet's tirade proves useful for two reasons. She replies, "Ay me, what act, / That roars so loud and thunders in the index?" (3.4.50-51). First, it resembles her earlier command to Polonius, when his preface to the cause of Hamlet's madness runs on too long: "More matter with less art," perhaps suggesting her sincere confusion (2.2.96). Second, her use of *index* could mean "table of contents; preface" as Greenblatt glosses, but it could also foreshadow, or at least influence Hamlet's response, in which he delineates those elements of King Hamlet's face that indicate, or serve as index, to his inherent superiority to Claudius. The *OED* also describes *index* as "That which serves to direct or point to a particular fact or conclusion; a guiding principle" and provides the following as its first example: "1597 M. Drayton *Englands Heroicall Epist.* f. 2^v, Least when my lispng guiltie tongue should halt, My lookes should be the Index to my fault." "index, n." *OED Online*. Oxford U P, December 2016. 28 February 2017.

²⁹ Shakespeare's blazon speaks largely for itself, but an astrological physiognomic reading could prove useful. As mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, physiognomy was separated from the other sciences in the early modern period. Indeed, astrology continued to explain the influence of the heavens on the individual, or, in other words, related the macrocosm to the microcosm; however, rather than delineating the physical manifestation of such influence, astrologers often related the affiliation in terms of physiology. For example, John Dee, astrologer to Elizabeth I, explained, "[R]adiation from Mars might hearten a timid man but enrage a choleric one" (207).

Nonetheless, if we assume that physiognomy and astrology persisted in common, general discourse, the teachings of such books as *The Wise Book*, referenced in the first chapter, prove useful here: (1) Jove's forehead is "a brode fforhed," and denotes being "gracious, havynge lordschepe" (Krochalis and Peters 220); (2) Mars' eyes are "scharpe eyne" (Krochalis and Peters 220), and of monarchs denotes "batellus [excelling at battle] kynges" (Griffin 238); (3)

Of Claudius's appearance, Hamlet only states that he is "like a mildewed ear," or rotting ear of grain (3.4.63).

Thus, I argue that in order to understand Hamlet's interactions with Claudius and Gertrude, we must consider the second act. In the paragraphs that follow, I will locate instances of physiognomic readings that bolster Hamlet's certainty of his ability to decipher one's internal thoughts from his/her outward appearance, relating these locutions to his tête-à-tête with his mother.

Physiognomy and its Accuracy in the Second Act

The two scenes of second act acquaint readers and audiences with the interpretive objectives of both Polonius and Hamlet. I will begin with the first scene, in which Polonius commissions Reynaldo to spy on his son Laertes. The act opens with a father sending money and notes to his son and commissioning Reynaldo to investigate Laertes's behavior in Paris. In the dialog that follows, Polonius provides a script, as well as acting directions: "Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him" (2.1.13). Reynaldo should therefore pretend to have little knowledge of him, in hopes to provoke genuine responses from Laertes's acquaintances in Paris—not ones that might be skewed should they know their reports would go to Polonius. Joseph Pierce calls this exchange a lesson in "the art of espionage, telling [Reynaldo] how to deceive with deftness and dexterity and how to subvert with subtlety and suggestiveness" (xxiii).

Mercury's stance refers to the "well shape" or being well built, and denotes being "of good witte and of better mynde" as well as "walkynge diverse kyngdoms" (Krochalis and Peters 221). Admittedly, Hyperion's, or the Sun's, curls are not mentioned in any surviving version of *The Wise Book*. However, we do know from Horatio's descriptions of the Ghost, the King's beard was black and grey "Hamlet: His beard was grizzly [gray], no? / Horatio: It was as I have seen it in his life / A sable silvered" (1.2.239-41). Of grey and curly hair, *The Wise Book* reads, "And þe here be criske [curly] and hore [grey], he is avisid [well-advised, discreet] in his dedis. And þe here be blake hoore [black grey], and picke, it betokenyth a man disposing [ordering of events] in all þingis, and disceyve [deceit, trickery, treachery]" (Krochalis and Peters 225). Thus, the Ghost may contain the signs of a guileful soul prone to treachery.

Reynaldo, whose name derives from *king* but also puns on the French *renard* or fox, should temper his audiences in Paris by fabricating tales in order to acquire elicited responses of either rejection or affirmation, or, as Polonius states, “Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth” (2.1.62).

Not only does this scene serve as a prologue for Polonius’s directions to Ophelia, but also for Hamlet’s to the players. Additionally, this exchange sheds light on Hamlet’s interaction with his mother in the next act. Polonius thus appears much like Hamlet who crafts and directs a script of his own in order to prompt and then to gauge a response. Hamlet fashions a scenario in which his mother does not remarry out of love for Claudius, for at her age “the heyday in the blood is tame, it’s humble” (3.4.68). And when Gertrude fails to blush, Hamlet acknowledges this absence. In essence, Gertrude does not affirm nor deny Hamlet’s script, either in word or facial expression. It is important to note that only a few lines after Gertrude’s repeated pleas for Hamlet to stop, after line 93, the Ghost appears to end Hamlet’s interrogation, saying, “Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works” (104). With the word *conceit*, the Ghost refers to either the falsities of Hamlet or the imagination of Gertrude. Either way, Hamlet’s script appears to have gone too far.

Returning to the second act, the second scene proves more ambiguous than its predecessor, but, nonetheless, it offers much insight into the play’s theme of reading bodies. The scene opens with Claudius’s instructions to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern concerning how to best engage with Hamlet so that they may be most successful in their espionage, thus mirroring Polonius in the prior scene. An apparently mad Hamlet enters with book in hand and explains the matter of his book: “Slanders, sir; for the satirical slave says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber or plum-tree gum, and that they have

a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams” (2.2.196-99). Here, Hamlet provides a physiognomic summary, noting skin, eyes, hair, and even stance. Additionally, he adds that the book states that old men are not wise despite the gray hair, which mimics the silver casket in *Merchant*. While Hamlet agrees with the text, he admits it is not honorable to write down such offensive matter. Nonetheless, he ends with a jab at Polonius, stating that the Counsellor could be as old and wise as Hamlet should he go backwards, as a crab. However, their exchange is interrupted by the entrance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Hamlet remarks to his friends, “You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft to colour” (2.2.279-80). Kahn insists that “The embarrassment evident in their faces has revealed, despite their courtly attempts to ‘craft’ the appearance of disinterested friendship, that they are serving the king’s purposes” (40). Such an accusation alerts the audience to the accuracy of Hamlet’s interpretation since the audience just witnessed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s plotting with Claudius. Hamlet’s confidence in his ability to discern modesty appears later in his accusation to his mother: “Such an act / That blurs the grace and blush of modesty” (3.4.39-40). Therefore, Hamlet appears to believe that modesty serves as a plumb line of sorts into the reading of characters. Its presence suggests innocence, and its absence points to guilt. As with Polonius, Hamlet’s discourse with his friends ends abruptly with yet another entrance.

First, upon the flourish that announces the approach of the players, Hamlet addresses his friends and mentions the importance of keeping up appearances: “Gentlemen [i.e. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern], you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come. Th’appurtenance of welcome is *fashion* and *ceremony*. Let me comply with you in the *garb*. Lest my *extent* to the players—which, I tell you, much show fairly *outward*—should *appear* more like *entertainment*

than yours” ([emphasis mine] 2.2.353-57). Hamlet shows concern that his appearance may be deemed more appropriate and genuine with the players than with his friends. *Entertainment* could also very well be a pun, with the meaning of warm welcome, as well as performance.

The players eventually fulfill their flourish, or outward show, and enter the stage. Hamlet’s welcome quickly resolves into to a facial reading: “Welcome, good friends.—O, my old friend! Thy face is valanced since I saw thee last” (406-7).³⁰ The once boy-actor who played the roles of women now has a beard, and Hamlet jokingly expresses his feeling of betrayal prompted by the boy-actor’s face. The prince quickly pleas with the first player to perform Aeneas’ recounting of Priam’s death, reciting some lines to refresh the player’s memory. Interestingly, Hamlet recites lines that include much language of humoral and affective physiognomy in describing Pyrrhus. First, the assassin is likened to “th’Hyrcanian beast,” or tiger (430). Della Porta summarizes Aristotle’s assessment of tigers, arguing that nature has given them stiff necks, which makes it difficult for them to move their gaze or attention, suggesting stubbornness (271). Gregory Des Jardins points out the association of this beast with a stiff-necked tiger that never gives up its desire for revenge, like Fortinbras, perhaps; however, in the Virgilian text, *Aeneid* 2, the beast is used to describe Aeneas, who desires retribution for the murder of Priam, but ultimately forgoes this commitment. Des Jardins suggests that Hamlet’s speech, with its switching the simile from Aeneas to Pyrrhus, provides an implicit admission of Hamlet’s own inability to follow Aeneas’ example (124-25); Hamlet does not want to forbear revenge, which his soliloquy at the end of this act proclaims. In other words, the Prince of Denmark wishes to mirror Pyrrhus, rather than Aeneas, but as the play progresses beyond Act 2,

³⁰ Hamlet’s only other use of the interjection “O” to another person on stage is with Gertrude, and both instances reflect ideas of being betrayed by the face.

we do find that Hamlet resembles Aeneas, forgoing revenge and needing multiple prompts to stir his spirit to revenge.

Hamlet's lines refer to Pyrrhus' "black complexion smeared / With heraldry more dismal" (2.2.435-36). Just as a visage or with make-up, Pyrrhus' complexion is covered with the dried blood of his victims, making a true physiognomic reading impossible. However, his "eyes like carbuncles," or glowing gems, do provide a clear window to his intent (443). Baumbach reveals that burning or glowing eyes in the physiognomic tradition point to "a hot temper, a choleric disposition or a mind enflamed by anger" (*Shakespeare* 79). Interestingly, Polonius interjects, praising Hamlet's "good accent and discretion," a discernment of voice (446-47).

The first player then resumes where Hamlet had stopped, and when the actor arrives near the moment of the assassination, he recites,

his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seemed i'th'air to stick,
So as a painted tyrant, Phrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing. (4.2.457-62)

The "milky head" recalls Hamlet's earlier reading regarding the silver hair of old men. Moreover, it foreshadows Hamlet's later opportunity to kill Claudius, who indeed, will look reverent at prayer. Hamlet stands behind the King, and, like Pyrrhus, pauses with sword in hand. He ruminates on salvation and his desire to send Claudius to hell, rather than heaven. The parallel between the two assassins could not be clearer; however, Hamlet leaves Claudius at

peace, but not, like Aeneas, who forwent revenge. Rather, Hamlet wishes to elongate retribution, extending it from this world to eternity.

After the Player speaks the lines describing the slaughter of Priam, Polonius once again interjects, stating “This is too long” (4.2.479), but Hamlet encourages the player to continue. Shortly after the player resumes with the description of Hecuba, Hamlet questions his word choice, inquiring, ““The mobbled queen?”” (483). Hecuba apparently is veiled, thereby hiding her face from demonstrating true reactions, at least at first. Perhaps Hamlet associates this hiding of the face with his own mother’s ability to hide her lack of true mourning for King Hamlet. As the player finishes his lines recounting Hecuba’s reaction to the scene of her husband’s death, all the while having “a clout [cloth] upon that head / Where late the diadem stood” (486-87), Polonius once again interjects, “Look whe’er he has not turned his colour, and has tears in ‘s eyes. [To First Player] Prithee, no more” (499-500).

Polonius interrupts this exchange often, and with his final outburst, he makes a request to check the color and eyes of a male on the stage. The stage directions do not state who the recipient of his command is, and most scholars have suggested that Polonius desires to know about the complexion and eyes of the first player. However, I posit that Polonius’s concern could be directed toward Hamlet. The whole second act has been set up to foreground the theme of espionage and gauging reactions. Moreover, Hamlet may have chosen Aeneas’ story not understanding how it would resonate with his current situation. Polonius’s repeated interruptions imply that he could very well be nervous—does this scene reflect Claudius’s action on King Hamlet? Could it give Hamlet ideas of regicide? Does Hamlet see Gertrude in Hecuba? Finally, Hamlet later scorns Polonius for his lax nature in compensating the players—“God’s bodykins,

man, much better”—so it could be questioned whether Polonius would bother showing concern for a player and his craft, thus implying that his alarm could be directed toward Hamlet (508).

A number of critics have commented on the psychological toll this scene potentially has on Hamlet. Fernie contends that Hamlet sees his own “deed undone” in this recitation, and, therefore, feels shame—a shame that is meant to keep him in stasis since Fernie maintains a Foucauldian definition of shame, insofar as it is forced upon people as a means to exert power (122-123). Martin Dodsworth asserts that Hamlet feels less effective than a player since both Pyrrhus and the player cause Hamlet to look impotent. Dodsworth also argues that this feeling of inadequacy ultimately spurs Hamlet into action (90). Contrarily, according to T. McAlindon, Hamlet judges both the character and actor overly passionate and violent, and his revulsion is compounded by the Ghost’s command to avenge—or to be as violent and passionate; thus, Hamlet channels his violence into a play (112).

Admittedly, Hamlet does mention the players’ “conceit,” or re-creation of Hecuba’s experience, and its power to make the player’s “visage wane” and place “[t]ears in his eyes,” suggesting a gradual shift from counterfeit *visage* to genuine *countenance*, thereby stressing the primacy of the player’s face (530 531, 532). This shift in the player serves as a prototype for the reaction Hamlet hopes to effect in Claudius. Without doubt Hamlet read into the player’s face, and he marveled at fiction’s ability to produce such a response. He immediately becomes envious that he does not have the ability to express such emotion, but “must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words” (563). It is the player’s authenticity of emotion even within his affectations that Hamlet envies and desires, leading the audience to infer that Hamlet has entered the world of seeming.

Nonetheless, I maintain that the turn in Hamlet's soliloquy—from his resentment of the player's liberty to express his feelings without restraint to the power of a play to bring about facial revelation—proves lacking in logic if we do not consider the potential affective responses during the player's recitation. How does Hamlet call his brain into action?—"About, my brain," moving from awe to the actor's performance, to realizing that "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (581-82)? Or, in other words, how does Hamlet make the leap from the weeping engendered by the fiction of a player, to a person's facial manipulations when forced to face their guilt enacted on the stage?

To answer such a question, we must consider the second act as a whole. This act has already been full of script writing, first with Polonius and Reynaldo, and later with Claudius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Furthermore, I have pointed out instances of physiognomic readings prior to the entrance of the players. Once Hamlet "abouts" his mind, he recalls that "I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play / Have at the very cunning of the scene / Been struck so to the soul that presently / They have proclaimed their malefactions" (566-69). Hamlet has just done that himself. He has literally proclaimed his desire for vengeance upon seeing the player perform lines about hesitation and vengeance: Hamlet saw himself in those lines and his face could have shown it, and Polonius's forced interruptions within the performance could derive from his reading of Hamlet's physiognomic expressions. Moreover, Polonius's repeated disturbances could also point to his own culpability; Shakespeare never reveals Polonius's involvement with any of the actions prior to the play. However, in Claudius's speech to the court in the first act, he acknowledges the support he has received from the time of his brother's death to his marriage to Gertrude: "Nor have we herein barred / Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone / With this long affair" (1.2.14-16). While such a vague expression of gratitude could

be directed to Polonius for his counsel, we cannot know for certain if he was involved in the fratricide. Nonetheless, this servant to the king has demonstrated his capacity to script scenes of his own in order to read others.

The physiognomic readings within the second act demonstrate the importance of interpreting bodies to many of the characters, but, more importantly, Hamlet appears convinced of his abilities to decode the countenances and visages of others well before conceiving his trap for Claudius. The audience sees that Hamlet's assessments of both Claudius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are accurate: Claudius is guilty of regicide, and Hamlet's schoolmates value their own personal advancement over both the good of the state and their friendship for the Prince. But still, it is Claudius's reaction to *The Mousetrap* that provides Hamlet with enough resolve to approach his mother. Nonetheless, Hamlet's reading of his mother proves quite inadequate, and the audience and Hamlet never receive solid affirmation of her guilt. She remains an unmotivated sign due to her failure to express interiority, despite Hamlet's lengthy interrogation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to point out the similarities between *Hamlet* and *All's Well*, insofar as both include analogous scenes and a shared representation of physiognomic readings. Both are problem plays, given that both conclude before the final confirmation of some of the characters' inner-selves can be revealed. However, in *All's Well*, we find a number of misreadings, while, by comparison, *Hamlet* possesses more accurate readings, despite the hero's fatal misreading of both Claudius and Gertrude. One might be lured into believing that misreadings would lead to tragedy, as in *Othello*, in which trust and suspicion are wrongly

placed. But taking a step back and scrutinizing the characteristics of the problem play, we discover that both the audience and the other characters in the play *desire* confirmation of the inner nature of the drama's central figures. Both *Hamlet* and *All's Well*, as I have detailed, show this infatuation with decoding interiority. Moreover, both works fail to give audiences their just *deserts*: assurance that readings are complete or correct. The trajectory of these problem plays follows the acts of interpretation made by characters, appealing to feelings of desire and deserving within both the characters and the audiences—only to question the foundational premise that we can even read into a character's mind through any means. In *Hamlet*, we are led to believe that physiognomic readings lead to truth, only to have this hope fail with our protagonist, whose downward spiral could very well begin with his misinterpretations of Gertrude and Claudius. In *All's Well*, we observe misreadings, which nevertheless fabricate a “happy ending.” Both plays, in effect, reverse the expected outcome of accurate and inaccurate readings, leaving audiences to question the efficacy of even attempting to read into a person's soul: both Helen and Gertrude, in particular, remain unmotivated signs.

In the introduction I listed the difficulties in categorizing *The Merchant of Venice*, and even the hazards of portraying Shylock. This play demonstrates an infatuation with interiority, from the casket scenes to Shylock's question “If you prick us do we not bleed?”—a plea to recognize a similar interior between Jews and Gentiles (3.1.60-1). Like *Merchant*, both *All's Well* and *Hamlet* confront similar issues with their labels as problem plays. However, this chapter has attempted to explain that a problem play can be better understood as a coagulation of the following: (1) a struggle to discern what is inside the central characters, (2) a frustration when inside does not match outside, and (3) an emptiness when questions of characters' inner-natures remain unanswered. The characters in the play and the audiences watching the play may

interpret the leading figures and their actions according to what their minds desire or think they deserve, and while problem plays encourage physiognomic readings, they decline to satisfy such yearnings for closure. While I inherently consider audience response in my definition of a problem play, my definition does not solely rely on the audience's relating the play's problems to topical, ethical issues; rather, I focus on audience reactions to the narratives of the plays themselves. Perhaps we can view problem plays as a leaden casket, asking audiences to hazard self-interest, and just as Portia is the prize for such risk taking despite her problematic lack of sympathy and playful, costumed deceit, so too might the prize of problem plays be an admission, effected through the dissolving of our own self-interest, that we cannot fully read into the souls of others.

Thus we see a shift from the medieval application of physiognomy, in which the celestial bodies determined appearance *and* affects could be taken at "face" value. In *The Conspiracy*, we are offered hope insofar as a lowly janitor reads Judas' true character through the Mark of Mars, despite Judas' conning of Pilate and members of the Sanhedrin. Within *Mankind Mercy* establishes that affects are true and sincere, as prescribed by books such as the *Secretum*. During the Renaissance, however, physiognomic tracts suggest that the passions may be controlled and manipulated, thereby crafting an ideal self through proper conduct and training. Although such guidance from Erasmus, Wright, and Hill is intended for honorable purposes, particularly for the naturally virtuous English, their advice tacitly admits that one's looks can be false and misleading, insofar as one can rehearse how to appear more virtuous, thereby establishing a model for actors on the stage. In these problem plays Shakespeare heightens the dangers of failing to read others correctly. Whether it be Portia who speaks of mercy as a man of law but does not offer any to Shylock, or Helen who assumes the appearance of a pilgrim with no

intention of piety, or Hamlet who even admits, “My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites” when discussing his interaction with Gertrude, these problem plays reveal the fissures between inside and outside (3.2.367). Perhaps such plays are a sign that the certainty provided by the medieval belief that the macrocosm reflects the microcosm has waned, and, with this loss, the problem plays demonstrate their potency since they reveal the birth pains of an evolving world picture—a mercurial episteme that continues its development through the Restoration stage, a world in which the animated universe of medieval and Renaissance philosophy has become mechanical.

Chapter Three:

“For though there may / Be made a rule for colour or for feature / There can be none for liking”;

Or “’tis inconsistent with the punch bowl”: Physiognomy and Love Intrigues in Dryden and

Behn’s Tragicomedies *Marriage a-la-Mode* and *The Widow Ranter*

Introduction

In the first chapter, I explore the practice of using humoral physiognomy, or the interpretation of fixed facial features, to read common or low characters, as well as the use of affective physiognomy, which was reserved for the discerning of more noble characters. Critics have claimed that this English literary practice began with Chaucer, and appears, once again, within the literature of the Restoration. More conservative, or royalist, writers of the time exhibit profound concerns with class, questions of Divine Rule, and anxieties over the noise of the rabble, and thus it makes sense that physiognomy would appear in matters of hierarchy like these, although physiognomy does appear less frequently in the Restoration than it did during the Renaissance. Such a trend can best be understood by reviewing the changes in science, epistemology, and even aesthetics. In brief, the popular medieval conceptions of physiognomy that persisted through the Renaissance, albeit revised, had to be reconciled with developments in the philosophy of the mind, and even with shifts in empiricism, which this chapter will explore.

Nonetheless, Restoration writers certainly knew about physiognomy and its appearance within the science and literature of the past. The two writers considered in this chapter, John Dryden and Aphra Behn, are no exception. In the early novel *Oroonoko*, Behn seeks to create a

titular character who is not only sympathetic, but also relatable to European audiences because of his nobility, and to accomplish this task, she often employs physiognomic language so that her audience may properly read the regal slave.¹ Despite its negative connotations as a pseudoscience in opposition to proper empiricism, humoral physiognomy does inform our reading of her initial description of Oroonoko; Behn offers a catalog of his facial features, including his complexion, eyes, teeth, noting that “his nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat” (81). Such a nose suggests sagacity and nobleness, and, in fact, Behn later calls him a warrior, or “our young Mars,” expanding further his Roman characteristics (81).

Nonetheless, Behn employs more affective physiognomy throughout the text, including with Imoinda, who after becoming victim to the King’s desires, would “vent her griefs and moans with sighs and tears,” reminiscent of Chaucer’s Lucesse from my first chapter (87). Behn consistently employs such language to depict the love intrigue between Imoinda and Oroonoko as appropriate to their inherent regality. She references Imoinda’s “love-darting eyes,” describing how Oroonoko’s eyes “answered hers again, as much as eyes could do And ’twas this powerful language alone that in an instant conveyed all the thoughts of their souls to each other” (88). Under the intrusive gaze of the King, the two lovers must remain covert in their discourse, and the silent eyes prove useful as they regard each other’s subtleties, including changes in color. Nevertheless, Behn does anticipate the doubts of more skeptical readers, who might contest that ebony skin cannot even produce affectations of color, admonishing such critics, “’tis a very great error in those who laugh when one says, a Negro can change color; for I have seen them as frequently blush, and look pale, and that as visibly as ever I saw in the most beautiful white” (88).

¹ References to *Oroonoko* are from *Aphra Behn: Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works*. Edited by Janet Todd, Penguin, 2003, 73-141.

Behn's work provides an excellent example of using physiognomy to extend a reader's sympathies. However, this art can also accentuate a character's flaws, as evidenced by Dryden's satire. In *Oroonoko*, physiognomy demonstrates the seriousness of nobility in spite of racial differences between characters and original audiences. Within burlesque, however, solemnity is destabilized for parodic effect. Indeed, the use of wit to attack adversaries, whether political or literary, appears throughout Restoration literature, and Dryden demonstrates this application through his burlesques in particular. Unsurprisingly, in his preface to *Fables Ancient and Modern*, Dryden links Chaucer to della Porta, whose work *De humana physiognomonia* I reference in the previous chapter.² In praising Chaucer's ability to capture the manners and humors of all the English, Dryden writes, "Not a single character has escaped him. All his Pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them"³ (562).³ Thus, Dryden is aware of physiognomy's literary presence, and he employs it, albeit with greater irony, in some of his own writings.

In his *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden creates Achitophel as a mirror of the Earl of Shaftesbury, who encouraged rebellion within the mind of Charles II's bastard son, the Duke of Monmouth, who is represented by Absalom. Introducing Achitophel, Dryden points out that he has "A fiery Soul, which, working its way, / Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay"⁴ (156-7).⁴ Here Dryden introduces the soul/body relationship: Achitophel is depicted as twisted, crooked, just

² Admittedly, *Fables* comes near the end of Dryden's life, being published only two months before his death in 1700. However, K. J. H. Berland argues that della Porta's influence preceded this publication by at least two decades.

³ Preface in *John Dryden: The Major Works*, edited by Keith Walker, pp. 552-570. All subsequent quotations from Dryden come from *The Works of John Dryden* (the California Dryden).

⁴ *The Works of John Dryden*, edited by H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., vol. 2, pp. 2-36.

like his soul that molded his body into such a fitting shape. Absalom, on the other hand, initially had a noble and pure spirit before the influence of such bad counsel: “His motions all accompanied with grace; / And *Paradise* was open’d in his face” (29-30). Dryden must remain careful not to paint too negative a portrait of the King’s son, of course, but other characters do not receive such tempering. The character Corah, for example, represents the historical Titus Oates, known for fabricating the “Popish Plot” that suggested Catholics were planning to kill Charles II. Dryden’s treatment of Corah in the text proves complex, since it not only employs physiognomic readings, but also a great deal of irony:

This Arch-Attestor *for the Publick Good*,
By that one Deed Enobles all his Bloud.
Who ever ask’d the Witnesses high race,
Whose Oath with Martyrdom did *Stephen* grace?
Ours was a *Levite*, and as times went then,
His Tribe were Godalmightys Gentlemen.
Sunk were his Eyes, his Voyce was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither Cholerick was, nor Proud:
His long Chin *prov’d his wit*; his Saintlike Grace
A Church Vermilion, and a *Moses’s Face*. (640-9; emphasis added)

While Oates attested to saving the King from the popish enemy, he actually produced chaos and mass fear of Catholics; although he appears noble, he actually has deceitful intentions—a contradiction that Dryden capitalizes on in this passage. According to della Porta, sunken eyes suggest villainy, and a loud voice reveals that he is choleric, as does the red of the church vermilion used to describe his saint-like grace. The long chin points to audacity or rudeness, not

wit, and certainly the connection to Moses suggests irony.⁵ Dryden describes his villain one way, while suggesting the opposite in his delineation of Corah's physiognomic traits. In summary, Dryden uses humoral and affective physiognomy to attack his opponents; however, rather than merely relying on humoral physiognomy to burlesque his opponents, Dryden mockingly uses affective physiognomy to make base and deprived men appear ironically noble. In other words, just as Oates is not a Moses, leading the English away from the evils of Catholicism, so too the references to affective physiognomy do not directly reveal any nobility. Thus, the use of this literary device for ironic purposes assumes a general knowledge of the physiognomic categories Dryden employs.

In the literature of the Restoration, we find a heightened awareness of form, and physiognomy reflects this mindfulness as well. Specifically, the use of physiognomy appears to focus frequently on emotion or temperament, whether it be love or anger. While Dryden and Behn both exhibit humoral and affective physiognomy in their non-dramatic works, the plays I consider in this chapter center on love. Thus, in this chapter I analyze two Restoration tragicomedies: Dryden's *Marriage a-la-Mode* and Behn's *The Widow Ranter; or The History of Bacon in Virginia*. As with previous chapters, I begin with a history of the use of physiognomy in the era, then I progress to discuss each play. Within my discourse on each play, I consider the genre of tragicomedy. This type of drama has produced considerable scholarship regarding its combination of high and low plots; therefore, I insist that focusing on the body as text—through affective physiognomy in particular—provides a dialectic among the various plots that often departs from more traditional, political readings of the genre. Critics have largely commented on the ways in which the multiple plots within plays impart commentary on issues, including

⁵ Here I rely on Berland's reading of della Porta in Dryden's works.

politics, race, and gender.⁶ I contest, however, that the tragicomic form and its didactic tendencies (insofar as these plays provide social observations) are manifested within the actual reading of bodies. Simply stated, the methods characters use to read one another connect the various plots, thereby providing a path to a more formalist approach to uniting the narratives. The means of interpretation exhibited by the characters unite the plots, and, in some instances, directly comment on one another. Such an approach does not dismiss political readings of the plays, but rather provides a point of departure from which political readings can emerge, ones that are firmly grounded in the plot itself. While these plays do contain several forms of physiognomy, my focus remains primarily on the affective responses of characters contained within the stories' love intrigues.

Restoration Physiognomy

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, physiognomy underwent a rhetorical shift, moving from a science to a means to alter one's appearance for social advancement, and this trend persisted in the first half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, the anti-physiognomy sentiments mentioned in the Renaissance likely persisted under Cromwell's 1650s rule, though such a claim remains entirely speculative. However, one short tract from 1644 appears to have made its rounds, an anonymous, royalist piece that predicts the outcome for Charles I in the midst of civil war: *A Prognosticall Prediction of Admirable Events that are like to Happen within His Majesties Dominions*. Near the end of its long title, the page reads, "*Besides such as have any skill in Physiognomy, may by beholding certaine Pictures here, discover the malicious mindes, and prevent the pernicious practices of many that has as base Hearts, though not so*

⁶ Within my analyses of Dryden and Behn's plays, I integrate literature reviews that recap the political readings of these plays in relation to their genre.

brave habits.” The author claims to have come to these predictions through the stars and through a deep knowledge of the exceptional qualities of a king’s body. The apologia at the beginning of the tract is reminiscent of James I’s *Daemonology*, insofar as it separates faulty predictions from those that are valid, perhaps an implicit appeal to Charles’s Stuart lineage.

Beyond the predictions, the author provides descriptions of men throughout history who have sought to harm their kings. Listing facial features and even manners of walking, the writer hopes to give a general means for reading men who might harm Charles I, which echoes Dryden’s portrayal of Achitophel, only that *humours* stand in place of Dryden’s *soul*: “you shall here see the Pictures of some great ones, whose malignant humours so atler’d their complexions, before they were drawne, that no honest man but will take ’em to be Turks when (alas) they were bred and born in England and past for Christians a long time” (6).⁷ The verbal portraits that follow urge readers to discern treachery through both humoral and affective physiognomic means, but with a direct purpose: to protect the King. It appears that the war brought pragmatics to the study of physiognomy.

Focusing on the nuance of expressions, primarily gestures of the hand, John Bulwer in his 1644 text titled *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand*, believes that the hands reveal “the habits of the minde” more than the face or tongue, since “impetuous affection” appears most frequently and without adulteration through the hands (3).⁸ In the closing of his introduction Bulwer writes,

⁷ *Turks* refers to licentious, deceitful people because of their humors.

⁸ The title continues: *Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof. Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuell rhetoric. Consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chieftest instrument of eloquence, by historicall manifesto’s, exemplified out of the authentique registers of common life, and civill conversation. With types of chyrograms: a long wish’d for illustration of this argument.*

the Hand is so ready and cunning to expound our intentions, abounding in a sense so copious and so connaturall a kind of eloquence, wherein all things are lively express the Hand seems to enter contestation, and to vie expresses with the Tongue, and to over match it in speaking labours, and the significant varietie of important motions, that it almost transcends the faculty of Art to enumerate the postures of the Hand, and the discoursing gestures which present the interpretation of the Minde. (8)

For Bulwer, the hands provide a direct connection to the human mind when it is stimulated since their actions are a pure reflection of the mind's affects. He insists that hands provide a universal language understood by all humanity, offering evidence from the Scriptures and antiquity. Though he does not deal openly with physiognomy, he insists on the primacy of the hands over the face, which can be obscured in a variety of ways. His diagrams and descriptions codify the motions of the hand into a codex of manual rhetoric; however, he asserts the genuineness of the hand while also maintaining that one may train the mind to operate the hand in an intentional way as to improve self-expression. Thus, Bulwer's work nicely parallels Wright's *The Passions of the Minde*: Wright maintains that the English have a facial honesty, but should nonetheless learn facial manipulation. Bulwer argues that the hands provide a more legitimate means to read the mind, but can nonetheless be trained in Art. However, a modification occurs: while Wright and Hill concern themselves with passions and humors, Bulwer appears to be more concerned with the mind or soul as it moves the hands.

However, Bulwer did not ignore the face for long, and in 1649 he published *Pathomyotomia: Or a Dissection of the Significant Muscles of the Affections of the Minde*. The title continues to read that it is an "Essay to a new Method of Observing the most Important

movings of the Muscles of the Head, as they are the nearest and Immediate Organs of the Voluntarie or Impetuous motions of the Mind.” In his introduction, Bulwer contends that the proximity of the face to the mind should warrant greater observation of the muscles, and he ponders the lack of discourse on the subject by physicians, both his contemporaries and the ancients. He displays a fascination with the physical motions of the mind and desires a means to interpret such movements. Thus, the face, perhaps even more than the hands after all, presents the best subject:

for, what is more easie than to discern the parts manifest to Sense, and the fidelity of an Ocular assurance? that are so subject to our touch, that in the semblances of those motions wrought in the parts by the endeavor of the Muscles, we may not only see, but as it were feele and touch the very inward motions of the Mind To observe the scheme or outward figure of each Affection in the Countenance? That is the situation of each in its motion, as it is drawn by the Muscles, and to read their significations couched in their names? So that observing these accidents of the Head and Face, the Types and representations of the Affections which are accidents of the Mind, according to the nature of Correlatives, we may find out one by the other. (Introduction, n.p.)

The motions of the head or face, therefore, correlate with the inward movements of the mind, which serves as the primary purpose for Bulwer’s essay. Moreover, the “ocular assurance” resonates with Sir Francis Bacon’s demand for inductive reasoning facilitated through observation, as outlined in his 1620 work *Novum organum*.

The different parts of the body, for Bulwer, “are not endued with any Cognoscent powers; for so every animated part were to have a proper Soule” (28). Instead, Bulwer agrees

with the late sixteenth-century physician Giovanni Marinelli “that it behoves not there should be a soul in every part, but that it exist in some *Principle* or chief part of the Body” (29). In other words, physiognomy and even anatomy historically relied on deductive reasoning, which privileges major premises, and in this case, the major premise would be that the body is affected by a network of souls. Bulwer maintains that the mind controls the body and the movements of the face can explain how the mind does so. To begin, he insists that the imagination and appetite stimulate the soul to move the body, and Bulwer likens this relationship to a machine, thereby implying a mechanized rather than an animated view of the body since the body does not contain multiple souls: “The *principle* of all motion is the *Appete*: whence the sense offering what is desired, the motions are done no otherwise then as you see in Machins” (17)

Bulwer’s reliance on diction related to mechanics raises questions as to what he is opposing. Keith Thomas insists the Neoplatonism of the Renaissance “fostered a disposition to blur the difference between matter and spirit” (233). With such a worldview, the universe consisted of animated spirits whose powers could be diverted through natural philosophy, which we would call science today, but during this time, it would include magic as well.⁹ In Renaissance thought, these powers would be referred to as *Nature*. Thus, Bulwer maintains that “the Soule alwaies *commands* the *motion*, and the parts moveable do not performe their worke from Nature,” and he even makes the distinction that some contemporary philosophers “useth the word *Nature* for the *Soule*” (29). As Thomas posits, an animated universe “was an organic unity

⁹ Indeed, the term *Neoplatonism* is broad and requires clarification. Thomas uses *Neoplatonism* in reference to a specific branch present during the English and Italian Renaissances. In summary, Neoplatonism in Italy fused the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Church. In fifteenth century Italy the Cult of Hermes Trismegistus (who is the Latin syncretism of the Egyptian god Thoth) arose because of Marsilio Ficino’s Latin translation of Thoth’s teachings, titled *Corpus hermeticum*. This newfound hermeticism, as it is now called, quickly influenced many Neoplatonists who saw it as a detailed method for reaching ideal forms. Essentially, hermetic thought argued that humanity could repossess power over Nature that was lost after the Fall. Cornelius Agrippa, in particular, is credited with the spread of hermeticism in Northern Europe, and many English practitioners merely reiterated continental writings, adding little of their own scholarship (Thomas 233-5).

in which every part bore a sympathetic relationship to the rest” (233). From this relationship rose the doctrine of correspondence, which Bulwer contests and reworks as correlation. The principles of correspondence, founded in medieval thought and reaffirmed through Neoplatonism, insisted that the macrocosm was reflected in the microcosm. Or, as Thomas phrases it, “just as an individual was believed to mirror the world in miniature, so the hand [as in palmistry] or the face [as in physiognomy] mirrored the man” (233). Bacon appears to be the most vocal skeptic of the nature of correspondence, finding it an arrogant substitution for the labor of observation (235). By the middle of the seventeenth century, “most serious scientists were moving over from an animistic universe to a mechanistic one,” culminating in the works of Sir Isaac Newton (236). Thus, it appears that Bulwer attempts to revise physiognomy in light of a more mechanized human physiology.

The effects of Neoplatonism’s decline is illustrated through the treatment of physiognomy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, physiognomy became separated from other forms of divination that were solidified by the Neoplatonic principle of correspondence, including chiromancy and palmistry. However, by the time of the Restoration, we find that such works have once again reunited. Richard Saunders’s popular *Palmistry, The Secrets thereof Disclosed* had its fourth reprinting in 1676 after first being printed in 1652. Within this work Saunders includes many observations on physiognomy and insists that humanity, made in God’s image, should not be denied divination, and much of his work pertains to discerning the future. However, when Saunders arrives to his section on physiognomy, which is larger than his treatment of palmistry, he uses the language of Neoplatonism:

The inclination of the mind follows much the constitution and temperament of the Body, Amongst whom Plato the most eminent in his Physiognomie, writeth in

these words, Homo qui membra habet similia alicui Animali, illius sequitur naturam; That Man who is composed in his Members, like any Animal, hath inclinations answerable to the Nature of that Creature. (136-37)

Aside from the departure from his earlier argument that humanity resides higher than animals, Saunders relies heavily on correspondence, implying the animation of *members* of the body through the inclusion of *nature*. Through the marriage of physiognomy to palmistry and the inclusion of Plato, Saunders's work embodies the aspects of physiognomy incongruent with a more mechanical picture of the world, which has led several scholars to explore its absence in Restoration literature. In other words, I assert that Saunders's work was essentially a relic of the past during its publishing, having no credence in the intellectual community, but nonetheless popular because as evidenced by its republishing.

Scholars of the Long Eighteenth Century have considered physiognomy's practice in several genres, but seldom with the theater. Graeme Tytler offers a history of physiognomy's revival during the Eighteenth Century, which emerged from "the growth of empiricism in science and philosophy and . . . fresh developments in aesthetics" (97). Looking primarily at the novels of Henry Fielding, Tytler bases his argument on the notion that physiognomy had nearly disappeared during the Restoration, mostly due to the emergence of Enlightenment thinking and Hobbesian empiricism, which dismissed it for lack of evidence and its questionable status as a science. The later manifestation of empiricism, one that prizes perception, coexisting with a newfound aesthetic of sentimentality, encouraged thinkers and writers later in the era to relate facial observations within a pleasing, aesthetic mode, thereby reigniting an interest in scrutinizing the face, and through this association, physiognomy became rejuvenated in the 1700s. Barbara Benedict concurs with Tytler, providing an excellent catalog of physiognomy in

late eighteenth-century sentimental novels. In her history of the science, however, she notes that physiognomy's "claim to foretell the future was quickly ridiculed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but sentimental novelists use it to indict a society where a good face means a bad fate" (312).

Yolanda Caballero Aceituno also considers the sentimental, but rather than focusing on the novels of the late 1700s, she concludes that Restoration writers still maintained physiognomy's basic principles, despite a lack of direct references to physiognomy itself. Thus, she proposes a new set of physiognomic terms in order to facilitate a postcolonial understanding of reading the face of the Other: sensual physiognomy, legitimating physiognomy, clandestine physiognomy, and emancipating physiognomy (23). She applies these terms to better understand how white Europeans engaged with interpreting the faces of both slaves and Indians in the New World.¹⁰

Nonetheless, the former understanding of face as signifier of the soul did persist, albeit detached from any assurance in its efficacy in the real world, and K. J. H. Berland insists that Dryden knew of physiognomy's literary merit through reading and translating Chaucer, and he used Chaucer's typical applications of humoral (low characters) and affective physiognomy (high characters).¹¹ However, Berland limits his scope to poetry, not mentioning any of Dryden's plays.¹² Nonetheless, the question of what happened to physiognomy (outside of Saunders's attempt for revival) remains, and a look at the development of interiority and emotions in philosophical thought from the seventeenth century illuminates this inquiry. In the paragraphs

¹⁰ I do use her term "legitimizing physiognomy" later in this chapter, regarding the Indian Queen in Behn's *Ranter*.

¹¹ Berland does hold that Dryden would invert Chaucer's approach as a way to produce a tone of mock-heroism. For example, in *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden applies humoral physiognomy to high characters as a means to bring them down, a method he calls "satiric typology" (194).

¹² As with most critics, Berland admits the dearth of physiognomic texts during the Restoration. However, for a list of articles on physiognomy in the arts in other countries beyond Le Brun, see his seventh footnote.

that follow, I will briefly outline the trajectory of the philosophy of the mind, which provides a context demonstrating how physiognomy transformed from a way of reading interiority to a means of physical description. I will leave the works of Bulwer since his influence on the Restoration does not appear as instrumental as the writings that emerged from France.

To reiterate the Renaissance view of the animated universe, John Donne incorporated the conception of animal spirits in his poem “The Ecstasy”: “As our blood labours to beget / Spirits as like souls as it can, / Because such fingers need to knit / The subtle knot that makes us man” (61-64).¹³ For early modern thinkers, the animal spirits, running through our blood and nervous systems, worked with our rational, human souls. Usually the human soul would restrain the passions of the animal soul, differentiating humans from beasts. But as Donne states, these spirits are like souls and are capable of thought, intentionally helping to make humans what they are. The animal spirits communicate the desire to procreate to the rational soul, and, as Donne asserts, this yearning is fully human. However, the interaction between animal and rational souls provides the foundation of Descartes’s 1649 *Treatise of the Passions of the Soul* (written the same year as Bulwer’s essay on the muscles of the head), which emerged as the collection of his letters to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia. Amending his previous work in *Meditations*, Descartes scrutinizes the composition of the passions as they relate to the soul. Given his skepticism toward external perceptions, Amelie Oksenberg Rorty describes Descartes’s conception of passions: “Instead of being reactions to invasions from something external to the self, passions became the very activities of the mind [i.e. human soul], its own motions” (159).

However, Descartes does not dismiss the animal spirits, arguing that they do send information to the pineal gland, which serves as the point of contact for body and mind, and the mind uses these passions to will the appropriate response:

¹³ Taken from *John Donne: The Major Works*, edited by John Carey, Oxford UP, 2008, pp. 121-23.

l'usage de toutes les passions consiste en cela seul, qu'elles disposent l'ame a vouloir les choses que la nature dicte nous estre utiles, et a persister en cette volonte; comme aussi la mesme agitation des esprits, qui a coustume de les causer, dispose le corps aux mouvemens qui servent a l'execution de ces choses.

(Article 52)

The use of the all the passions consists in only this, that they dispose the soul to will those things that nature tells us are useful, and to persist in this volition; also, the same agitation from the [animal] spirits, which usually brings about the passions, positions the body to the movements that serve to create those things.

(translation mine)

At the center, passions reside in the mind alone. They are unclear abstractions that do not directly relate to any specific object outside of the body. For example, if a body perceives a shark in the water, the nerves and the animal spirits relate this event to the mind, which in turn, effects the passion of fear. This fear has no direct correlation with the shark; however, this blurred feeling allows the mind to focus on what to do, such as assess the quickest way out of the water or recall previous experiences observed in order to preserve the body. Oksenberg Rorty again provides a more generalized reading of Descartes and his understanding of the passions:

Joy and grief, hate and love, wonder and desire and all the indefinite number of passions compounded from these are ideas in the soul. It is the soul and not the body that grieves, fears, loves; but it is the body—our own body—that produces these passions in the soul, in the usual way, through the nerves and the animal spirits affecting the pineal gland. But unlike perceptions and kinesthetic sensations, the passions do not refer to or represent their bodily causes. They are

confused ideas that cannot become clear because they are not ideas *of* anything in particular. 163

David Freedburg examines Descartes's *Passions of the Soul* as a starting point for understanding the shift in physiognomy in the seventeenth century, suggesting that "the great separator of mind and body . . . implied that the soul was represented by and readable through the body" (301). However, Descartes merely implies the efficacy of physiognomy, and later writers expand. Marin Cureau de la Chambre, for example, wrote a series of pieces that include discussions of physiognomy: *The Characters of the Passions* (1640), *Treatise on the Knowledge of Animals* (1648), *The Art of Knowing Men* (1660), *The System of the Soul* (1665), and *Discourse on Friendship and Hatred between Animals* (1667). His work laid the foundation for further exploration on emotions, particularly regarding how the physical body can be a text for an immaterial soul that responds to animal spirits. Freedburg affirms that his works began the empirical codification of passions or emotions in France.

The importance of Descartes and de la Chambre in relation to physiognomy is twofold. First, the theory that passions, or emotions as we call them today, are contained entirely within the mind led to the rise of subjectivity. Rudiger Campe and Julia Weber summarize the distinctions between the pre-modern and modern body succinctly: "From antiquity to early modernity, affects or passions were mostly conceived of either as external physiological forces that act on a passive subject and provoke it to engage in certain actions or as scene-like situations in which the affected person responds to an ensemble of other actors under specific circumstances" (1). Indeed, both Wright and Hill primarily concern themselves with passions over physiognomy, but nonetheless, physiognomy provides a way to read the body as a passive subject affected by "an ensemble" of influences. However, as the seventeenth century

progressed, “emotions [were] located within the subject as an important category that crystallized, together with other elements of psychic life, to form the core of individuality” (1). Charles Taylor also considers the vast implications of interiority that began during this time. Although he ultimately questions its longevity, he affirms that “the inside-outside plays an important role [in our modern self-understanding]. We think of thoughts, ideas or feelings as being ‘within’ us, while the objects in the world which these mental states bear on are ‘without.’” (111). Taylor traces this line of thinking from the seventeenth century and follows its spread throughout the world.¹⁴ Moreover, Oksenberg Rorty links Rousseau’s romanticizing of the individual directly to Descartes.¹⁵

Secondly, divorcing the passions from the body led to an interest in the organization of facial affects for more aesthetic reasons. Following Descartes and de la Chambre, Charles Le Brun lectured on the bodily expression of passions to the French Academy of Painting starting in 1668. In summary, Le Brun sought to codify emotions, joining them with their facial expressions, thus creating indexes that enjoined outward expression to inner emotion or passion, not humors nor anything physiological. Rather than pointing to the soul, facial readings provided only the state of the soul or mind at that time: an attempt to observe and label passions became the subject rather than a means to better understand the soul.

¹⁴ Admittedly, there are many resources on emotion and cognition. However, many scholars begin with the seventeenth century as the start of interiority, primarily because of Descartes. Other important works include William M. Reddy’s *The Navigation of Feeling*, which looks to the rise of sentimentalism and emotion, leading to the individualism that preceded the French Revolution, Cambridge UP, 2001. For medieval understandings of emotions, see Barbara H. Rosenwein’s *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Cornell UP, 2006. For certain, cognitive theory has much to offer regarding how understandings of perception have affected the delineations of emotion. Therefore, for a more phenomenological approach to the history of emotion, see Francisco Varela, et al. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, MIT Press 1991; Antonio Damasio. *The Feelings of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, Harcourt, 1999; and Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, Oxford UP, 2005.

¹⁵ For the influence of Descartes in German Romanticism, see Bernhard Greiner, “Constructions of Interiority around 1800” and Julia Weber, “Mediating Interiority in E. T. A. Hoffman’s *Rat Krespel*.” Both in *Rethinking Emotion: Moving Beyond Interiority*. Edited by Rudiger Campe and Julia Weber, de Gruyter, 2014, pp. 137-71 and pp. 172-86.

Line Cottegnies investigates the Restoration's understanding of physiognomy through the lens of French art and therefore credits the rise of physiognomy during the late seventeenth century in France to the lectures on aesthetics given by Le Brun, which quickly made their way to England. In short, physiognomy became less of a science and more of a vehicle for art under Le Brun. Rather than determining the inner nature of one's soul, Le Brun emulates previous works of physiognomic texts in that his sketches provide a wide range of faces bearing various emotions, but rather than discriminating character, Le Brun argues for the detainment and understanding of the forms of human emotions, nothing else: the face has lost its place as an index for the soul. According to Cottegnies, Le Brun was liberated through the works of Descartes and de la Chambre, particularly because they both held that all passions were "seen . . . as equally good because they served the conservation of life" and revealed the "close articulation between body and soul" (142, 43). Rather than a reading of the soul, physiognomy became more about the technicalities between body and soul, or grew more concerned with the mechanics between immaterial and material. For example, the question of physiognomy changed from "how does this affect or feature relate the inner workings of the rational soul when stimulated by the ambient world" to "what lines, curves, and facial movements best display a certain emotion that can be perceived and understood with certainty?"¹⁶ Thus, under Le Brun's approach, physiognomy does not openly relate to the soul or the mind of a person as previously believed: the facial features and common affects of a person do not exhibit a physiological susceptibility to certain dispositions, but rather facial expressions and bodily gestures serve as an index for passions. The goal was then to capture the form. Domenico Laurenza explains that

¹⁶ Cottegnies largely argues that Le Brun had a profound impact on acting, first in France, then later in England, particularly with the display of emotions on the stage. Rather than following conventional moves and gestures, acting should be seen as a soul moving a body.

In the 17th century Descartes served as the inspiration for Le Brun's academic synthesis of physiognomy and art, undertaken in the spirit of a rationalist classicism (geometric analysis of faces and expressions). From the point of view of Cartesian philosophy, however, the clear separation of soul and body, thought of as a machine, constituted a moment of abrupt rupture in the unitary conception that had been characteristic of classical physiognomic thought. This rupture rendered subsequent reemergences of classical physiognomy [e.g. Saunders's work] partial and problematic. (726)

Evaluating Le Brun's influence, Freedburg points out that "[t]he passions of the soul constituted a system that could be read by signs expressing the fixed correlations between inner feeling and outward expression. Le Brun and his followers aimed to provide quick and easy guides to the identification of the emotions; but very soon the editions of these guides became little more than objects of fashion" (301). (Indeed, both Dryden and Behn appear to question the superficial fashionableness of reading emotion in their plays.)

As with the previous chapter that looked at definitions of facial words, a quick consideration of words relevant to the topic highlights the evolution of interiority in English. Interestingly, during the seventeenth century several words relating to physiognomy changed their meanings regarding interiority. *Emotion* originally meant "an agitation of mind; an excited mental state," which implies a passive subject that receives stimulation. However, shortly after, it evolved to mean also "strong feelings, passion; (more generally) instinctive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge," thereby relegating emotion to the mind, along with reason.¹⁷ While this distinction for *emotion* began earlier in seventeenth the century, the word

¹⁷ "emotion, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016, accessed 12 December 2016.

air shifted its meaning to reflect this change as well. Highly fashionable because of the French, *air* appears frequently in Restoration literature, and the stage is no exception. Originally, the word pointed to the “[o]utward appearance, impression, or look; apparent character or manner,” but in the 1660s, it changed to mean “expressing the personal quality, emotion, or impression conveyed by a person's manner.”¹⁸ Therefore, a person’s *air* became a sign of the emotion within rather than character.

Just as emotion signals an abstraction inside the mind, so does allegory operate, but instead characters serve as outward signs for abstractions. Within Restoration studies, critics who focus on allegory must consider the long established view that the era rejects this literary practice. Maureen Quilligan, in *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Drama*, famously claims that allegory during the Restoration languished. Alan Roper qualifies this claim, calling for the distinction between *parallel* and *application*. For many Restoration writers, allowing audiences to *apply* connections between a text and its symbolism denied the writer power. In other words, allegory could only be fashionable in the Restoration if the writer crafted a parallel between a dramatic plot and the current political climate. Connie Capers Thorson affirms this idea, pointing out that there was a thriving market for allegory regarding anti-Catholic sentiments.

However, Mita Choudhury focuses on early heroic plays of the 1660s—ones that crafted too close a parallel, or over embellished the plot with allegory, so that they fell out of favor. Particularly, she considers the works of Roger Boyle, who used historical figures to provide an over-the-top panegyric for Charles II. Gordon Tesky also articulates this concern, particularly with Dryden’s disdain for the absurd, which he thought too often derived from allegory. Moreover, Tesky maintains, allegory was viewed in the Restoration as a means to present a less

¹⁸ “air, n.1.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. Web. 12 December 2016.

complex understanding of the self, and a jejune representation of the self was not desirable in the Restoration and throughout the Enlightenment. Specifically, personified characters rely on their actions for meanings, but, as he asserts, writers of the Long Eighteenth Century, including Dryden, preferred characters who contained meaning within themselves, rather than being defined by their symbolic actions.

The infrequency of physiognomy during the Restoration has several proposed causes. Both allegory and emotion/interiority provide reasons, and they each have correlations with my selection of plays for this chapter. Dryden's *Marriage a-la-Mode* demonstrates a preoccupation with reading the *airs* of others. Behn's *The Widow Ranter* has long raised the question as to what the historical character Bacon represents in her contemporary England.

The thesis of this chapter is not to argue that Behn and Dryden adopt a Cartesian understanding of the passions or the soul. In fact, I agree with critics who stress Lucretius' influence on Dryden in *Marriage*. Nevertheless, this section provides a context for the volatility surrounding the questions of the soul and the passions. If we accept that changes in perceptions of interiority emerged in the seventeenth century and were later solidified, then we can view the Restoration stage as place of transition, not unlike the Renaissance. Therefore, both plays should be approached as exploratory pieces that scrutinize the reading of the body and its passions. While my central argument remains that physiognomic readings of these tragicomedies provide a more foundational, formalist approach to dialectics, it nonetheless comments on the issues surrounding emotions.

Marriage a-la-Mode

In this section I will map out how Dryden depicts methods of reading the body on the Restoration stage by using his 1671, tragicomedy *Marriage a-la-Mode*. But before turning to the text, a discussion of the plot and this literary genre proves useful in perceiving Dryden's application of physiognomy's (albeit revised) principles.

To start, Dryden's plot is complex. We find two dominant narratives, which critics of the genre have titled comedic and heroic, making it a tragicomedy. The heroic plot centers on Polydamas, the usurper and current king of Sicily, and his long-lost daughter Palmyra (raised in a humble village and unaware of her true parents) with her love interest Leonidas, the true heir to the throne of Sicily (but born and raised in obscurity as Palmyra's brother, so his lineage remains unknown to him). The comedic plot follows four lovers, Rhodophil and his wife Doralice, as well as Palamede and his betrothed Melantha. In true libertine fashion, neither pair is content with its match. Therefore, each of the four spends the majority of the play seeking covert *amours* with a member from the other pair—all of which are continually foiled until they conclude that it is most virtuous to stay with their spouses or betrothed.

Many critics have commented on the efficacy and aesthetics of the tragicomedy form, and their understandings of the formal elements prove useful in understanding the body as text. Laura Brown surveys the aesthetics and form of the divided plot, arguing that the high-and-low or heroism-and-comedy approach to interpreting tragicomedies divides the plots; however, both plots in *Marriage* can be codified as love intrigues. With Fletcher's works as the primary English predecessor of the Restoration tragicomedy, Brown's conception of *intrigues* consists of a significant pattern in plot, which includes accidents, hidden identities, coincidences, nighttime revelries—but all is “resolved by the neat and symmetrical matching of the appropriate couples”

(69). The differences in plots, therefore, is not a matter of form, but of content. Judith Kalitzki, on the other hand, does not find unity in the form (or if it exists, it is coincidental and isolated), but contends that tragicomedy allows playwrights to explore paradoxes, thereby offering “a balanced view of human nature” (66). The comedic plot exists to present cavalier sentiments (e.g. the libertine), which are then checked by the heroic plot that affirms the ideals of aristocratic standards (e.g. the noble).

Laura Rosenthal views the divided plot as a means to discuss power structures on the individual (comedic) and state (heroic) levels. The sex-driven plot “by extension and analogy, or direct link, challenge[s] traditional authoritarian structures in general” (7). Applied to *Marriage*, the dissatisfaction of mates in the lower-class plot is analogous to the dissatisfaction of citizens with a usurper on the throne. In other words, within the plot of *Marriage*, marital vows are arbitrary and can be broken for love, just as despots can be disobeyed since their rule has no real foundation. Jason Denman agrees that the divided plots work together thematically rather than formally: he rests the validity of the divided plot on its unique ability to disrupt and frustrate timing. With Dryden’s play, Denman insists that the intersection of sexual and political timing continually defers satisfaction for the audience, or as Dryden states in his epilogue, “You sigh’d when I came in to break the sport, / And set your teeth when each design fell short” (ll. 27-28).¹⁹ Dryden thus explicitly mentions in these lines the effects of his timing in the play, which would have proved more difficult to execute had there only been one dominant plot.

The tragicomedy form of Dryden’s comedy, I suggest, plays an important role in understanding the use of physiognomy to read the body. I posit that Dryden’s staged execution of reading the body as text serves in unifying these plots, much like other critics have done in their

¹⁹ *Marriage a-la-Mode* in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 11, edited by John Luftis and David Stuart Rodes, pp. 221-316.

scholarship of Restoration tragicomedy. However, I further avow that to understand the thematic unity engendered by physiognomy in this work, we must turn to Dryden's work with Lucretius. Laura Linker asserts that "Dryden had planned to translate Lucretius' *De rerum natura* much earlier than 1685, when his partial translation of the text appeared," and she firmly maintains that Lucretius informed Dryden's portrayal of and scruples about pleasure-seeking. Moreover, James Anderson Winn contends that Dryden's interest in Lucretius began in the late 1660s, when he retired from London amid political tension, and thoughts of translation allowed him to avoid politics for a short while (171).

On the surface, Epicurean ideals appear more clearly within the comedic plot since its characters seek pleasure above all else. However, Dryden's translation of Lucretius limits itself more to matters of life, death, and love, which relates more closely to the heroic plot. My analysis of *Marriage*, therefore, centers heavily on Lucretius' understanding of souls and love. Thus we must consider Epicurus' atomism (as presented by Lucretius), which affirms that the soul's nature is constituted not by the body, but rather by the soul's own atoms. Unlike limbs and organs, the soul lies hidden, and its constitution determines personality. The relationship between the soul and body often appears in airy metaphors, such as air, wind, or breath since they are unseen, but their effects known: "There is much cold breath, the companion of fear, / which stirs up trembling in the limbs and rouses parts of the body. / There is also too that state of peaceful air, / Which occurs when the breast is calm and the face serene" (3. 290-93).²⁰ Moreover, Lucretius writes that just as a tree belongs to earth and not the sky, so do souls belong to certain bodies. For example, the nature of animals rests not in their blood, as Aristotle would argue, but rather in their souls: the soul of the cow "is situated in between both deer and savage lions . . . ,"

²⁰ References to Lucretius are from *On the Nature of Things*, translated by Walter Englert unless noted otherwise. (I have not yet cited Dryden's translation because he did not translate the complete text. When Dryden's portions of *De rerum natura* may be used, I will use his own translations.)

and the same holds true for humans, though “a standard education may make some people fairly polished, / it still leaves intact those original traces of the nature of each person’s mind” (3.306, 307-9).

In his commentary on Lucretius’ atomism, as it relates to physiognomy, George Boys-Stones reiterates that “the soul’s character is explained by the nature of its own atoms, and not (not even indirectly) by those of the body” (76). This idea, therefore, helps explain why *physiognomy*, as a term, is almost entirely absent in Hellenistic thought. In other words, the soul is detached from the body, and instead of seeking outward signs of inner character, one should instead look for body types that attract certain types of souls, or, as Boys-Stones puts it, “It is rather the case that a certain kind of soul just ‘naturally’ belongs in a certain kind of body” (77). He continues that if Lucretius “could have used physiognomical evidence . . . one might have expected him to do so” (77).²¹ Otherwise stated, in Lucretius, Dryden finds a classical mind/body dualism that already has a long aesthetic history.

Therefore, in this section, I posit that Dryden employs an epicurean understanding of the soul through which he unites the divided plot. I agree with Brown and Rosenthal that the two plots do work together thematically since the intrigues of both requires characters to read souls. The usurper is looking for a noble soul in his long lost child, perhaps reflecting the mind. The courtly lovers look for an air that is pleasing to their bodily, sexual urges—and in order to complete their tasks, they must interpret (and even misinterpret) bodies.

The play begins with Doralice lamenting the loss of passion in her marriage to Rhodophil through music. By chance Rhodophil’s friend Palamede meets Doralice as she sings, and unaware that this is his friend’s wife of two years, he states, “I thought good voice and ill faces

²¹ It remains important to note that Boys-Stones argues the dangers of calling ancient Greek thinkers physiognomists. However, he seeks in this chapter to outline the relationship between character and appearance in ancient texts before the proliferation of physiognomical texts. See pp. 77-78 for his detailed qualifications.

had been inseparable; and that to be fair and sing well, had been onely the priviledge of Angels” (1.1.25-27).²² Palamede believes he has found a paradox: a beautiful voice and face in Doralice. Her husband, however, does not find her singing pleasant. In the third act, the stage directions read, “*They [Palamede and Doralice] walk contrary ways on the Stage; he, with his hands in his pocket, whistling: she singing a dull melancholy Tune,*” which prompts a harsh reply from Rhodophile: “Pox o’ your dull tune, a man can’t think for you” (3.1.38). Therefore, we see two readings of Doralice. The implications of breath as spirit suggests the movement of the soul while singing, which entices Palamede but deters Rhodophile.

After the initial exchange within the comic plot, the play turns to the heroic, with the usurper, Polydamas, searching for his long-lost heir. Prompted by an alleged sighting in a nearby hamlet, he claims that those men he employed “made a discovery / Of some young persons, whose uncommon beauty / And graceful carriage, make it seem suspicious / That they are not what they seem” (1.1.305-8). Polydamas knows that his wife fled from him during the deposition, and only a recent recovery of jewels and a torn letter written by his wife have led him to learn that she was pregnant when she absconded and died shortly after while in childbirth. The letter, in fragments, does not state whether the king has a son or daughter. Hermogenes, the foster-father to Leonidas and Palmyra, claims the two as his own children, but the members of the court marvel at their beauty, dismissing any notion that peasants could produce such grace. The king looks earnestly, according to Dryden’s stage direction, and declares, “Of different sexes, but of equal form: / So matchless both, that my divided soul / Can scarcely ask the Gods a Son, or Daughter” (331-33). The king, then, stands marveled at the youths, and announces the

²² The face remains a critical means of interpreting character throughout this scene. Palamede argues that her face declares a strong wit, more so than a face from other countries, to which Doralice replies that he has the air of a man who has spent too much time in Italy or Spain because of his forwardness (1.1.48-53). Rhodophil enters after Doralice exits, stating that he must “set a good face” when he and his wife are in company, as to keep up the appearance of a happy marriage (1.1.152).

effect on his soul. Upon threat of torture, Hermogenes admits that Leonidas is Polydamas's son and claims that Leonidas's general air of nobility, as well as his resemblance to the king, proves it. Polydamas willingly agrees.

Within the first act, we find that readings of the body and face provide the inciting actions for both plots: first, in creating the love interest between Palamede and Doralice, as well as in finding the king's heir. However, these readings are later problematized when Palamede discovers his would-be mistress is Rhodophile's wife and when Polydamas discovers that Leonidas is not his son, but rather the son of the king he dethroned, while Palmyra is his actual child.

In the first scene of the second act, Dryden further attunes his understanding of a person's "air." The character Melantha, an affected woman according to the "Persons Represented," begins with a summary of her intrigue with Rhodophil and arranged marriage to Palamede, whom she has not yet met. Her lady states that Melantha "understands and values the *French ayr*" (2.1.6). Melantha laments that no Sicilian can have the *ayr* of a Frenchman, and such islanders appear as asses when they attempt to imitate French nobility. In short, she can only be happy with a Frenchman: "O *Venus*, a new Servant sent me! and let me die, but he has the ayre of a gallant *homme*" (28-29).

Melantha remains certain of her ability to read a person's *ayr*, so much so that she interrupts and finishes the sentences of others throughout the play. For example, Melantha and Doralice discuss the new prince, Leonidas:

Mel. I'll tell you, my dear, the Prince took me by the hand, and press'd it *al a derobbée*, because the King was near, made the *doux yeux* to me and, *in suite*, said a thousand Gallantries, or let me die, my dear.

Dor. I understand then, that –

Mel. You are mistaken, my dear.

Dor. What, before I speak?

Mel. But I know your meaning; you think, my dear, that I assum'd something of *fiertée* into my Countenance, to *rebute* him; but, quite contrary, I regarded him, I know not how to express it in our dull *Sicilian* Language, *d'un ayr enjouué*; and said nothing but *ad autre, ad autre*, and that it was all *grimace*, and would not pass upon me. (2.1.196-208)

Indeed, not only does Melantha read Doralice's reaction, but she also recounts how she read the prince who was reading her. Throughout *Marriage*, Melantha proves to be the character most aware of the affections of others, despite appearing to be the most melodramatic.

Leonidas, on the other hand, appears unwilling to read faces so conventionally. When introducing Leonidas to his regal wife-to-be, the king says, "View well this Lady, / Whose mind as much transcends her beauteous face" (2.1.288-89). Polydamas appears to recognize the soul's separation from the body since the intended wife, Amalthea, was described earlier as being quite beautiful. Leonidas explains why he does not love Amalthea by posing a question first: "Why minds are bent to one, and fly another?" (303). He continues, "Ask why all beauties cannot move all hearts / For though there may / Be made a rule for colour or for feature / There can be none for liking" (304-7). Leonidas recognizes that facial features can serve as indicators of minds through rules—like le Brun—but, still, his soul is not stirred by Amalthea—like Lucretius.

Dryden's treatment of Lucretius assists our understanding of how the determining of character through reading the body is worded under Epicureanism, which has no word for physiognomy. Thus, it is appropriate to visit Dryden's translation. Linker asserts that Dryden

feels Lucretius' writings were abused "by debauchees who used Epicureanism as an excuse for sexual, drunken, and sometimes violent effusiveness" (49). In sum, she demonstrates that Dryden wanted to focus more on the kinetics of love and love making, the ways in which both exhaust the spirit and body as described in the fourth book of *De rerum natura*. While I agree with Linker, I wish to focus more on the mechanics of love and sex as described in book four, highlighted by both Dryden's professed interest in the subject as outlined in his preface to his own translation and by the fact that this is the book for which he translates the greatest number of lines.

First, considering what selections Dryden translates, we find that he chooses the topic of death in book three, and love and sex in book four. The former discusses how matter, or atoms, are neither created nor destroyed, but revolve in a circle of life, or, as Dryden puts it, "for we are only we / While souls and bodies in one frame agree. / Nay tho' our Atoms shou'd revolve by chance, / And matter leape into the former dance" (17-20).²³ The de-arrangement of death precedes the re-arrangement of procreation in Dryden's translation. However, looking at what comes before Dryden's excerpt from book four sheds significant light on the more mechanical nature of the soul and its relation to love and sex. Thus we must consider what Dryden has left out.

Book four starts with a re-cap of book three: "And since I have shown what the nature of the mind is / ... / and in what way, when separated, it returns to its first beginnings, / now I will begin to treat for you what closely relates / to these things" (26, 28-30). Lucretius begins by talking about images, what we see directly and even in reflections: "Therefore since awnings emit color from their outer surfaces, / all things must also emit fine semblances, / since in both cases they are throwing off from their surfaces" (83-86). He spends a considerable number of

²³ *Sylvae* in *The Works of John Dryden*, edited by Earl Miner, vol. 3, pp. 2-90.

lines discussing physical images and the methods of how they are perceived, including optical illusions. He covers the senses of perception, hearing and smell, before returning to images and thought. From there, he ponders sleep and dreams.

Sometimes, the soul is unable to move the limbs, which is a sign of sleepiness, and thus Lucretius moves on to dreams, and the ways in which the soul stirs while in this state. The soul retreats within and may even exit during sleep since a “larger part of it is sent outside,” which effects both dreams and movements in sleep that are similar to how one may act in daily life (960). For example, a lawyer may move limbs as though pleading a case because he dreams it (966). He catalogs the types of sleep and dreams until he reaches the wet dreams of youth, from which he turns to love. In describing the pathology of love, he posits that “the body seeks that by which the mind is wounded with love” (1048), whether the wound comes from “a boy with womanly limbs” or “a woman radiating love with her whole body” (53, 54). For Lucretius, this pathology is the mind or soul’s recognizing an image of an ideal soul or the body that attracts such a soul. The womanly nature of the boy or the actual woman radiating love is what prompts the soul to release seed in order to procreate, thereby starting the atomization anew.

Dryden begins his translation of book four at the start of this pathology: “Thus therefore, he who feels the Fiery dart / Of strong desire transfix his amorous heart, / Whether some beauteous Boys alluring face, / Or Lovelier Maid, with unresisted Grace” (1-4). Dryden then details the ill effects of love, delusions of love, mutual pleasures of love, heredity, and causes of infertility. In describing the soul’s attempt to read another soul, Dryden provides,

Form, feature, colour, whatsoe’re delight

Provokes the Lovers endless appetite,

These fill no space, nor can we thence remove

With lips, or hands, or all our instruments of love:
In our deluded grasp we nothing find,
But thin aerial shapes, that fleet before the mind. (57-62)

In a larger context, the text compares hunger and thirst for nutriment to love's desire. Food and drink take up physical space, but love has only airy shapes and therefore cannot satiate love's hunger. This seemingly unending hunger proves injurious for men in particular, who dwindle fortunes in the name of love: "Their frugal Fathers gains they mis-employ, / And turn to Point, and Pearl, and ev'ry female toy" (105-6).²⁴ Then love may turn to jealousy, and the lover "watches closs her amorous eyes, / And in the act of ogling does surprise; / And thinks he sees upon her cheeks the while, / The dimpled tracks of some foregoing smile" (119-22). The speaker concludes, "Thus, as I said, 'tis better to prevent, / Than flatter the Disease, and late repent" (128-9). From this point, *De rerum natura* turns to a nobler outcome of love, the soul's work in procreation, which I will delineate later in the chapter, but, on the whole, we discover that the lower plot of *Marriage* finds itself centered on reading the airy shapes of love, while the higher plot centers on matters of heredity.

The fourth act of *Marriage* explores what happens to lovers when the aerial shapes are gone: disguises abound and identities are mistaken throughout the action, testing the limits of the souls' abilities to attract one another. Most of the action revolves around a masquerade. In a reversal of fortune, Leonidas's true parentage surfaces, making him an enemy of the state, while Palmyra has become the heir to Sicily's throne. In scene two, Palmyra enters the stage in costume, and Leonidas, in disguise, announces, "I know her by a thousand other signs, / She cannot hide so much Divinity. / Disguis'd, and silent, yet some graceful motion / Breaks from

²⁴ *Point* refers to lace. During the Restoration, it would be fashionable to refer to a specific lace as "point de" and then provide the location where the lace was manufactured.

her, and shines round her like a Glory” (4.2.11-14). The *Oxford English Dictionary* shows that the English adopted *glory* as a synonym for *halo* in the 1640s, as evidenced in Sir Thomas Brown’s *Pseudodoxia epidemica*, and this term is used also to describe the light perceived to be coming from a countenance, usually reserved to describe portraits.²⁵

It seems that love has helped him find his beloved; however, Palmyra does not have such skill it seems, or rather she is caught unawares and not able to fully discern. The lovers meet and arrange a secret rendezvous while costumed, but Palmyra does not recognize the difference between Leonidas and her newly appointed betrothed, Argaeon, who is dressed similarly. Argaeon approaches Palmyra because “One of her Maids betray’d the habit to [him]” (4.2.40), so, unlike Leonidas, he needs assistance outside of love to recognize her. When he approaches Palmyra, being similar in both shape and costume with Leonidas, she queries, “*Leonidas*, what means this quick return?” (68), and their intrigue is discovered, which ultimately leads to a hasty revolt that ends Polydamas’s reign and reinstates the line of Leonidas.

But before this insurgency, the next scene turns to the comedic plot, which is similar regarding its use of disguise. The two pairs of lovers decide to ignore their vows and meet their *amours*. However, to complicate their meeting, the two women (independent of one another) decide to dress as boys in order to spy on their men. Neither Rhodophil nor Palamede recognize their beloved, and Doralice, as a boy, states to Palamede, “Were I a woman, Oh how you’d admire me! Cry up every word I said, and scruce your face into a submissive smile; as I have seen a dull Gallant act Wit, and counterfeit pleasantness” (4.3.6-8). After a battle of wits, Palamede replies, “I could know her in any shape: my good Genius would prompt me to find out a handsome woman: there’s something in her, that would attract me to her without my

²⁵ “glory, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 10 March 2016.

knowledge,” to which Doralice asks, “Then you make a Load-stone of your Mistris?” (53-56). Palamede believes his spirit would prompt him to the correct woman were she in disguise, and Doralice applies a metaphor of a magnet to describe this natural attraction. In the end, the men’s failures proves as the turning point in this plot since after this charade, the two sets of lovers decide it would be best to honor their vows.

Like many of the other critics, Brown in particular, I argue that divided plots work together. Indeed, they both explore issues of love, but, as I have demonstrated, the two plots both employ reading the body, seeking for the certain types of souls that attach themselves to certain bodies, whether they be regal or lustful bodies. Structurally, the Epicurean correlative of physiognomy unites the form of each plot, inciting action, creating problems, and reaching climaxes. At times, the reading of bodies in each plot serves as a foil, distinguishing genuine love from lust. At other times they do not correlate thematically, with the comic plot concerned with romance and the heroic concerned with matters of state. However, as Rosenthal maintains, the two are intertwined since both deal with issues of authoritarianism. I would further argue that premises aside, Dryden’s understanding of the body as text, informed through Lucretius, aids us in understanding how the tragicomedy works at a, perhaps, *atomized*, formalist level. Dryden’s craft rises when we consider how reading the body works similarly in both plots.

However, Richard Kroll offers a solid argument against the unities of the divided plot. In sum, he contests that post-Romantic ideals of dialectics prompt such efforts to unite when this task would not have even been considered during the Restoration. In fact, tension was a rhetorical tool of sorts intended to prompt self-scrutiny within the text itself. Michael McKeon offers a similar understanding of tension, but he does lean toward the dialectic mode of thinking regarding aristocratic and bourgeois ideals. He holds that the two plots destabilize one another so

that the aristocratic milieu appears as dying as the proto-bourgeoisie ethos emerges. Kroll, however, looks to the means of obtaining knowledge as presented in each of the two plots, with the comedic plot relying on a false sense of empiricism, even creating its own language, while the heroic plot centers on Polydamas, the usurper, who “speaks of the epistemological problem of interpreting scattered clues about the past as ‘the dark riddle’”—i.e. recovering his lost heir, first Leonidas, then Palmyra (57). Kroll maintains, therefore, that the heroic plot is epistemological, with the comedic plot romantic since it relies more on heavily romanticized ideals rather than empirical evidence.

The two plots do center on interpretation, and I do not disagree with Kroll’s analysis of the language used during acts of interpretation within the two plots. However, regarding form, Kroll’s method produces additional tension.²⁶ For example, Polydamas recovered the fragmented letter off stage, thereby moving the clue’s presence to merely expository information. Therefore, the inciting action of the heroic plot begins with the recognizing of faces and bodies, ones that connote nobility. Moreover, these readings prove inaccurate since Leonidas is not Polydamas’s son—though there is the irony that he is the son of the rightful king. Nonetheless, Polydamas has romanticized the situation, believing that Leonidas is his son. Undeniably, the king is in old age and desires an heir, and a male heir would secure his lineage more than a female would. Again, I do not disagree that the heroic plot does take on the rhetoric of a more firmly-grounded empiricism, but the epistemology is influenced by a romanticized view of heredity, which Dryden translates in book four of *De rerum natura*. The nature of procreation and heredity resides in the atoms, or “the genial atoms of the seed” (222). Such a love makes the females of all species set aside their acts of dissimulation: “Nor always do they feign the sweets of love”

²⁶ In fairness, I realize that under Kroll’s model tension is of little concern since it is a means for self-scrutiny. Any irony present in the plot merely directs to self scrutiny.

since “From every part, e’en to their inmost soul, / They feel the trickling joys, and run with vigour to the goal. / Stirred with the same impetuous desire, / Birds, beasts, and herds, and mares, their males require” (189, 193-96). Regarding men, “Nor can the vain decrees of powers above / Deny production to the act of love / Or hinder fathers of that happy name” (237-39).²⁷ The aging despot moves from the death of book three, to the hope of new life in book four, just as Dryden places them within his abridged translation. Moreover, the heroic plot centers mostly on the intrigue between Leonidas and Palmyra, with the two not able to be lovers because they are first siblings, then separated by class, and finally as the children of enemies.²⁸ In the end, the lodestone metaphor proves valid for all the plots. Polydamas was drawn to the rightful heir to the throne, Leonidas and Palmyra discover their attraction is not incestuous, but righteous, and all involved in the comedic plot are led back to their virtuous pairings. Social and political distinctions dissolve when characters effectively read, knowingly or not, the bodies of others.²⁹

I have by no means exhausted *Marriage a-la-Mode*'s examples of reading the body. Throughout the text Dryden places multiple humoral and affective references to the body, particularly the face. From blushing, to feigning, to imprinting, Dryden understands the importance of the face. I have, therefore, sought to localize my analysis to instances that relate to reading the “air” of a character, relying on Dryden’s own rendering of Lucretius into English, to suggest that the divided plots are bound by a mutual desire to see beyond the physical surface of the body. Admittedly, Dryden appears hesitant to openly discourse on the mind/body divorce,

²⁷ Dryden’s translation on heredity begins in the fourth book, lines 189-298.

²⁸ I would argue that the heroic plot is a romance, with its bent toward reconciliation. Polydamas does not die in the end because Leonidas offers leniency on behalf of Palmyra. Moreover, it is discovered that the rightful queen, mother of Leonidas, did not die, but has been hidden away at a “Religious house” (247).

²⁹ While thoroughly conjecture, it may be felicitous to view Dryden’s adoption of Lucretius as a synthesis of the old and new epistemes surrounding internality. An atomized view of the soul provides a language of mechanics, but, nonetheless, allows for a more spirit-driven form of motivation. Indeed, neither Lucretius nor Dryden possessed the language of neuroscience to fully adopt a mechanized discourse of internality, tied to electric currents and neurons, but the mechanization of the universe appears to start in the seventeenth century. Rather than fully embrace such a worldview, Dryden appears to cling to work that has hues of atomization and spirit.

but nonetheless, as I have demonstrated, his treatment of romantic love and heredity lead readers back to Epicureanism and, perhaps, even a newer comprehension of emotion.

The Widow Ranter

Like Dryden's *Marriage a-la-Mode*, Behn's *The Widow Ranter* contains several plots within its tragicomedy form.³⁰ Behn weaves together the love stories of three main couples: the General Nathaniel Bacon and the Indian Queen Semernia, a New-World transplant named Hazard and Madame Surelove, as well as the Widow Ranter and Lieutenant Daring. The level of nobility seemingly decreases, with Bacon and Semernia serving as the highest ranking couple and Ranter and Daring providing a more comedic, lower-ranking intrigue. However, I contend that Behn provides no true picture of nobility within any of these three plots, but rather she presents the shallow appearance of nobility in the first couple and the rejection of such semblance in the third: Behn purposefully creates a Virginian colony with a power vacuum in need of an honorable governor, and the characters either exploit this interregnum to appear noble, or use this liberty to fully actuate their inner selves. The scarcity of aristocracy becomes most apparent by following the ways in which the lovers read one another—or, posed as a question, how do characters read one another and project themselves as texts when the typical restraints and orders are absent? As in the previous section, I will provide an interpretation of Behn's play that focuses on physiognomic readings of the body in order to demonstrate how the plots relate to one another regarding the issues surrounding the royalist desire for a well-placed ruling class. First I will consider the tragicomic form, then provide a close reading of the wooing

³⁰ Although numerous plots exist, the main three I consider, as do other critics, include primarily Bacon/Semernia, Hazard/Surelove, and Ranter/Daring. Indeed, the Friendly/Christante intrigue exists, albeit passively through Hazard/Surelove, and there are numerous adventures among the lowest characters, including Timorous, Whimsey, Whiff, and Boozer.

and love-making among these three couples to highlight the unification of these plots. Just as with Dryden's play, Behn accentuates the language of courtship as it relates to attraction, which, in turn, unites the various plots by providing a dialectic that comments on the absence of true nobility in the colony, with Ranter the only character who uses the liberty of the colonies appropriately.

The play follows General Bacon who, in the absence of a formal militia, raises arms against the Indians since England fails to provide protection.³¹ Although he proves successful, many of the colony's councilmen, constituted by characters not only named Wellman and Downright, but also Timorous, Whimsey, Whiff, and Boozer, affirm that Bacon should be punished for his presumption. In negotiating a peace treaty with the natives, Bacon meets and falls in love with the Queen, which generates tension in the already volatile relationship between peoples. The plot becomes complicated as Bacon is arrested on for treason, eventually escaping and raising a rabble to combat the council. To make matters worse, the peace treaty with the Indians ends, and all three groups prepare for combat.

The other plots consist first of Hazard who comes to Jamestown in search of fortune, having lost his wealth through gaming. Immediately upon his arrival, he meets his old friend Friendly, who reveals that there is a soon-to-be widow named Surelove who would make an excellent wife and source of wealth. Hazard meets her and professes his love. However, the disruption of peace in Jamestown, and Surelove's husband's continued life, defer any progress with this intrigue. For the other intrigue, the Widow Ranter, who arrived as an indentured servant but married into money, enters the narrative as a boisterous woman who loves to smoke and

³¹ While the actual revolt led by Nathaniel Bacon in 1676 proves as a source to the play, many scholars admit that the other plots, including Bacon's love interest with the Queen (the real Bacon was married), have no direct source, though speculation abounds. See Janet Todd's introduction to the play in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, vol. 7, Ohio State UP, 1996, pp. 287-91, as well as Charles L. Banter, Jr.'s "The Source of Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*," *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, 13 (1), 1974, pp. 12-19.

drink, providing comic relief throughout the first half of the play. Eventually, she reveals her love for Bacon's lieutenant Daring, and rather than woo him during the disorder of combat, she dresses as a man literally to fight Daring, proving her potential value as a wife to a war hero. Despite the name of the play, Behn actually focuses on *Ranter* the least, but she nonetheless remains a memorable figure.

Janet Todd, in her introduction to *Aphra Behn: Oroonoko, The Rover, and Other Works*, maintains that Behn vehemently opposes Whiggish doctrine, which professes that political and economic progress can occur through common people. Instead, Behn shows in *Ranter* specifically “no belief in the political abilities and rights of the common people, who in her view needed enlightened aristocrats to prevent their degenerating into a mob” (17). Without doubt, the allegorical appearance of characters such as Boozer and Timorous serving as Justices of the Peace reminds us of the bad counsel of the morality plays. Todd also points out that *Ranter*, along with *Oroonoko*, demonstrates the evils of democratic rule. Behn had sympathy for rulers such as Charles I and James II, who succumbed to “unworthy popular rule” (Todd, *Secret* 418). In fact, “had the noble Governor, the King’s vice-regent, been present in Surinam [for *Oroonoko*] or Virginia the tragedies would not have occurred. Neither Indians nor slaves would have rebelled” (418). Todd treats Bacon as a noble; however, in the text both the Deputy Governor, named Colonel Wellman, and Colonel Downright, suspect Bacon’s motives. Downright even declares that Bacon “did not demand a commission to serve us, but to satisfy his ambition” (261), while Wellman, the highest-ranking official on the stage, agrees to Bacon’s seizure for trial.³²

³² All quotations from *The Widow Ranter* comes from *Aphra Behn: Oroonoko, The Rover, and Other Works*, ed. Janet Todd, Penguin, 1992, pp. 249-325.

Todd holds that Bacon ultimately serves as a sympathetic depiction of innate nobility within the play: he, like Charles I and James II, receives unfair treatment from mob rule. However, other critics differ on Bacon's presence within the play. George Woodcock points out that many theatregoers of the seventeenth century would have been familiar with Behn's source: *Strange News from Virginia being a full and true Account of the Life and Death of Nathaniel Bacon, esq.* (1677).³³ Therefore, they would have known that the historical Bacon led two massacres against the Indians, despite the denials of commission from Governor Berkeley, who was not only present during all of Bacon's actual rebellions but also ultimately banished Bacon from the colony. (The Governor is left out of Behn's play.) However, Bacon gathered a rabble of men who lost their fortunes and good names in the Civil War, primarily through his Puritan rhetoric. Together, they refuted the Governor's decree and with Bacon fought the official army, pushing them out to sea. Then, behind a shield of women, Bacon entered Jamestown, burning it to the ground. In summary, many critics explore Behn's reasons for making Bacon her hero and altogether leaving Berkeley out of her play since the Governor's trial runs more parallel to Charles I and James II, especially when noting that the Glorious Revolution effectively overthrew James II in February 1689, the same year *Ranter* was produced and published.

Woodcock posits that Behn sought to create a struggling hero with tragic flaws, and the backdrop of an inept and crooked council aids his image (215). Bridget Orr points to the nobility of the Indian King and Queen, as well as Bacon, suggesting that all three are meant to create a sense of nostalgia. Just as all three are marked for death, so does the Stuart line come to an end—or as she states, “an elegiac pathos informed also by Behn's nostalgia for the fading order of the

³³ Heidi Hutner agrees with Woodcock (103). However, Adam R. Beach holds that the English public had little concern for Virginia, and “only a small percentage of Londoners would have known much about an obscure rebellion that took place in Virginia some thirteen years before” (216).

Stuarts” (236).³⁴ Heidi Hutner attests that the play reveals Behn’s doubt surrounding absolutes, or as she words it: “*The Widow Ranter* marks the destabilization of fixed meaning, the blurring of categories and boundaries” (106). She traces the alteration in plot to Behn’s growing concern with James II and England’s colonial expansion. Peter Herman takes this further, arguing that Behn attempts to create a Virginia that is cut off from its Englishness, thereby making Virginia “a separate cultural space, different from and possibly superior to England” (254). For Herman, *The Widow Ranter* projects the first step of making a colony its own country. While Hutner does not include Behn’s reaction to such a process, Jeffrey Pusch insists that Behn desires to end such an idea “by killing characters that are purposefully trying to turn that idea [of separating from England] into a reality” (53).

On the whole, critics must often hedge their readings of Bacon since he does act above the law within the play. However, I argue that a consideration of genre, the tragicomedy, assists in understanding Bacon’s function. Moreover, a critical eye to the physiognomic readings performed by the characters of the various plots not only allows readers to perceive the thematic unity of the play, but also to consider Bacon’s role as a tragically flawed hero, among many other flawed characters, except Ranter, whose lack of presumption models the traits of an ideal “commoner.”

Speaking broadly of the double-plot formation, William Empson famously states that it “gives an impression of dealing with life completely,” which has led some early critics to claim that a play such as “*Henry IV* deals with the whole of English life at some date, either

³⁴ Indeed, many critics have explored natural nobility with the natives, and have paired the depiction of Indians with Oroonoko. For more on this subject see the following: (1) Margo Hendricks. “Civility, Barbarism, and Aphra Behn’s *The Widow Ranter*,” in *Women, “Race,” and Writing*, edited by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, Routledge, 1994, pp. 225-42; (2) Visconsi Elliott, “A Degenerate Race: Barbarism in Aphra Behn’s ‘Oroonoko’ and ‘The Widow Ranter.’” *ELH*, 69 (3), 2002, pp. 673-701; (3) Yolanda Caballero Aceituno, “Anti-Slavery and Sentimentality in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*. *The Grove*, 2006, pp 19-28.

Shakespeare's or Henry's; this is palpable nonsense, but what the device [i.e. the double plot] wants to make you feel" (29-30). The Restoration tragicomedy, known for its multiple plots, has received much attention and complication since Empson's work. Kroll, in his book *Restoration Drama and "The Circle of Commerce,"* delineates the factors of the genre, which makes tragicomedy "distinguished by enormous internal tensions, in which a technically comic ending seems often violently threatened in the course of the action, in which many different genres and plots compete for attention, and in which the normal demands of probability frequently appear irrelevant" (2). Thus, the characteristic mark is tension, largely because of the shift from tragedy to comedy. Nonetheless, Kroll maintains the importance of multiple plots in helping create this sense of apprehension.

As with Dryden's works, Behn's use of the form has been considered in light of the dialectical (or dynamic), thematic interaction between and among the various plots. Following Empson, Duane Coltharp holds that the relationship between the high and low plots creates the "appearance of dialectical wholeness [, which] is itself a strategic fiction, a rhetorical effect" (418). In other words, the multiple plots produce an illusion in which audiences may compare ideals from various classes, but the depiction of reality remains entirely fictitious. Coltharp uses this idea as his foundation in exploring Royalist tendencies throughout the genre.

Though Coltharp's criticism does not include a discussion of Behn, Adam R. Beach does apply this idea to her works, *Ranter* in particular: "Behn uses the high plot to raise, if only provisionally, the idea of English heroism in America" (220). Therefore, Beach attests that Behn's use of tragicomedy extends sympathy to the colonies since her heroic plot leaves out much of Bacon's actual crimes, and the comedic plot lacks explicit references to lewd and degenerate behavior usually associated with the New World. Nonetheless, the comedic plot

parodies the heroic plot, which actually causes “the colonial rogues, in some respects, [to be] wrenched upward,” particularly through their military service to Jamestown (221). On the whole, the tragicomic guise allowed Behn to portray the “degenerates” in a form familiar to theatregoers, but the dialectic effect actually helped raise these characters.

To be fair, not all critics agree. Beach’s reading serves as a direct response to Derek Hughes’s argument in *The Theatre of Aphra Behn*. He provides a darker transition between the various plots, juxtaposing “festivity with the darker disorders which it so closely imitates” (184). For Hughes, the various plots do not comment on one another, aside from superficial satire, which stresses the importance of a governing force. In other words, the plots do not relate to one another, but point to the power vacuum. He states, “In an endless circle, Bacon and the rogues each parody each other, without any reference to a fixed moral norm. The center is hollow; for the true governor is absent” (184). Some critics, as articulated by Anita Pacheco, have offered readings of *Ranter* that suggest the play represents concerns with the Exclusion Crisis, which denied the Catholic James II his hereditary prerogative (43). However, she departs from usual readings of *Ranter* by relating the dynamics among the various plots, including genres like history, festive comedy, and tragedy, and argues that by fusing these various generic elements, Behn creates “a model for dramatizing a national emergency with a surprising lack of partisan zeal” (44). Again, I posit that the plots relate to one another not through political ends regarding rule, but rather Behn constructs her characters in such a way that they comment on one another within the topic of attraction and love, and from this unification, a clearer political commentary emerges. Put simply, rather than focusing on political topics to unite, the text unites itself first through the reading of bodies, which the next three sections outline.

Bacon and Semernia

Bacon and Semernia first appear in the second act, after the audience views a Jamestown in disarray, lacking a governor. Some residents within the first act have declared Bacon a hero, while others view him as presumptuous for taking the matter of Indian attacks into his own hands. Despite this tension, Bacon has effected a truce between the colonists and the natives, and the second act begins with the Indian King and Bacon discussing battles and ancestry, but ultimately celebrating peace. Bacon has difficulty keeping his affection for the Queen to himself, but the King remains unaware. As a dance begins, Bacon's fear of having his love discovered is relieved since attention has been drawn away from him, and he pines, "my very soul was hovering on my lip, ready to have discovered all its secrets. But oh! I dread to tell her of my pain, and when I would, an awful trembling seizes me, and she can only from my dying eyes, read all the sentiments of my captive heart" (270). And with that, Behn has introduced a sentimental hue to love on her stage, one that repeatedly manifests in the multi-layered plot. After Bacon offers audiences this aside, Semernia covertly ponders, "The more I gaze upon this English stranger, the more confusion struggles in my soul. . . . And ever when he spoke, my panting heart, with a prophetic fear in sighs replied, I shall fall such a victim to his eyes" (270). The Queen thus fears that she has revealed her inner thoughts through her affective sighs and blushes. Behn places particular attention to the souls of both Bacon and Semernia, and how bodily responses reveal the soul's current state.

However, Bacon's ability to read comes into question immediately following this interaction. Back in Jamestown, the council has agreed to retain Bacon while he awaits a fair trial, but the justices of the peace wish to ambush him, killing him before any trial could commence. The council sends Duncie to deliver a letter that asks Bacon to return to Jamestown.

Bacon fails to perceive this treachery, despite the wise council of Fearless and Daring, both of whom should serve as willful participants in danger, but nonetheless advise their leader not to follow Dunces's advice. Upon hearing Bacon read the letter from the council, Fearless proclaims, "Sir, I fear the hearts and pen did not agree when this was writ," but Dunces claims that "'tis for noble ends you're sent for, and for your safety I'll engage my life." Nonetheless, Bacon surmises, "Your [Dunces's] zeal is too officious now: I see no treachery, and feel no danger" (271). The audience knows from the previous scene that Fearless and Daring are correct—and while Bacon appears knowledgeable in love, he seems inept in discerning both politics and war.

After this exchange, only Semernia and Bacon remain on the stage. The Queen wishes to temper the Jamestown vigor toward war, but Bacon immediately turns to the language of love. The Queen, however, lacks the refined, classical knowledge of love, and must therefore receive instruction from Bacon, regarding this physiological response to love. Bacon declares, "Beauty has still a power over great souls, and from the moment I beheld your eyes, my stubborn heart melted to compliance, and from nature rough and turbulent, grew soft and gentler as the god of love" (273). Semernia replies, "The god of love! What is the god of love?" (273). Bacon describes this god through bodily language, including "the gaze from fine eyes," "bashful looks," making the beloved "sigh" and "pant," and even "stop[ping] the breath." He continues with the "feeble languishment," including dying eyes, pallid cheeks, faltering tongue, and fainting body (273). This knowledge of love frightens the Queen, who asks that they communicate at a distance, since looks and touches appear to be the means of transmitting the contagion of affection.

At first, Bacon seems remiss in his duties as a leader, deferring talks of peace for romance. Todd describes Bacon as "a poetic style in a world of prose" (*Aphra Behn* 20). She

likens his portrayal to the idealized protagonists of heroic drama, giving up empire for love, thus appearing “to be [a character] out of an older dramatic mode, adrift in rather sordid comedies of later debased social manners” (20). Calling upon heroic drama from the first decades of the Restoration, Behn does appear to model Bacon in the heroic mode. However, Bacon in these scenes can easily be read as a character of sentimental literature, which, according to Markman Ellis, “entail[s] an active participation in the reform of society” (129), colonization and slavery in particular. Benedict links sentimentalism and physiognomy, positing that physiognomy “shares with sentimentalism a value for responsiveness, a disregard for social categories, and a faith in the sign,” which praises “the unity of signifier and signified” (312). In other words, sentimentality sought to bridge the gap between slave and colonist, other and English, and physiognomy allows one to read the inner soul, despite complexion and social standings. Thus, physiognomy presents “the ideal character, rather than the character determined by social circumstance” (314).

Although Caballero Aceituno does not consider *Ranter* in her codification of Restoration physiognomy, I suggest that this instance illustrates her notion of legitimating physiognomy, which “is based on the idea that the slaves, when placed in their native environment, can master their own destinies by using a specimen of body language characterized by a sincerity and lyricism which is missing in the oppressive contexts” (24). According to this model, Bacon appears to recognize Semernia’s native affectations, but he nonetheless colonizes her in the western tradition of love’s body language. Indeed, Semernia appears confused, not having the words to describe her bodily reaction, but Bacon instructs her, and ruins her and her tribe in the process. Interestingly, before Bacon’s lesson, Behn includes a dance sequence: “*Enter Indians that dance antics*” (270). Todd notes that the *antics* refers to “fantastic and grotesque dances”

(374). Indeed, the dances would appear foreign to British audiences, yet, as Caballero Aceituno maintains, the body language in a native environment is sincere. Bacon, however, attempts to transform this language more to his habits.

Hazard and Surelove

In the next scene, Hazard meets Surelove and professes his immediate love while at a party with numerous guests—but only after admitting that his sighs have already betrayed him: “I know you’ve found the secret out already from my sighs” (274). Despite Surelove’s gentle rebuke of “Forbear sir,” Hazard believes his love is reciprocated: “Whate’er denials dwell upon your tongue, your eyes assure me that your heart is tender” (275). Indeed, Surelove is married to an ailing husband who has returned to England for his health; however, his death remains imminent in the minds of most of Jamestown’s inhabitants. But what good society denies in open dialog, Hazard discerns from her eyes. Certainly Hazard’s infatuation remains obvious, since the Widow Ranter announces that she “bar[s] love-making within [her] territories,” since “’tis inconsistent with the punch bowl” (276). She comically diminishes the romance on stage by arguing that if partygoers do not drink in merriment, then there is no point for their presence and they should “be gone” (276). Moreover, earlier in the scene, she addresses Dullman when he proclaims his love for Christante: “Thou art any thing, but what thou shouldst be . . . Thou has a countenance like an old worm-eaten cheese” (275). She sees through his guise by reading his humorally affected face, a feat that the nobles of the council, including Colonels Wellman and Downright, cannot perform.

Behn introduces the Sureloves within the first pages of the text, with Friendly admitting that he loves Christante, a wealthy heiress, whose father “indeed has an implacable hatred to”

him (255). Christante resides with Madam Surelove, and Friendly hopes to arrange a love intrigue between Hazard and Surelove so that Hazard can manage an amour between him and Christante. To effect this plot, Friendly has secured a letter from Mister Surelove who is in England, which is “easily counterfeited and will be of great use to” Hazard and Friendly (255). Friendly proposes to write “another letter writ like this character” or handwriting, which states that Hazard is Surelove’s kinsman and should stay with Madame Surelove and Christante (255).

The plan seemingly backfires, since later in the play, Friendly notes, “[Surelove] regards thee with kind eyes, sighs and blushes” (290). Hazard agrees: “Yes, and tells me I am so like a brother she had” (291). Beach places Hazard and Friendly in the *mid-plot*, which according to his argument “destabilizes both” the high and comic plots “by playing them against each other: the heroic high plot and anti-colonialist low plot wither and give way to the productive center plot and its pro-colonial, pro-colonialist ideology” (221). Both men make their way through colonial life, seek to regain their fortunes, pursue love, and fight in battles to control Jamestown. If tempted with the either/or argument of a privately-motivated leader like Bacon, or a rabble council, Beach suggests that the mid-plot offers an alternative, the “sensible, manly efforts of an effective, emerging class of colonial leaders” (222). While I agree with Beach’s assessment as it pertains to bravery in battle, Hazard and Friendly appear to be rather unsophisticated in the antics of love.

Behn does appear to undercut this intrigue at the very end of the play. The final scene of the fifth act announces the death of Colonel Surelove, to which Wellman advises: “You should not grieve when men so old pay their debt to Nature, you are too fair not to have been reserved for some young lover’s arms” (323). While this statement seems to facilitate Surelove and Hazard’s marriage, she admits, “The way to oblige me to’t is never more to speak to me of love

till I shall think it fit” (323). This exchange is the last we hear of Hazard’s love intrigue with Surelove—the relationship deferred indefinitely off the stage. However, Friendly, who has done little to develop his amour with Christante, unexpectedly receives her hand in marriage. Her father, Downright, asks, “Christante, do you love Friendly? Nay, do not blush—till you have done a fault, your loving him is none—here, take her young man and with her all my fortune” (323). For Downright, Christante’s blush is enough to confirm her love, yet Downright believes she is shamed by it. Christante does not verbally confirm nor deny, yet her physiological response and its reception by her father provides Friendly with wife and wealth. In essence, Hazard has done all the work with Friendly’s stratagem, but Friendly merely needs to be present at the right time to reap the reward.

Ranter and Daring

Despite being the titular character of the play, the Widow Ranter has fewer appearances than the characters of the other intrigues. We already know that she despises love-making from the party scene at the Sureloves’ residence, but she still seeks marriage with Lieutenant Daring, whom she believes to be in love with Christante. When speaking to her servant of her strategy to win Daring by dressing as a man and sparring with him, she argues, “Why should I sigh and whine, and make myself an ass, and him conceited?” (307). Ranter avoids inflating the ego of a man by not partaking in flattery; moreover, she seeks to “beat him” in battle, thereby belying his heroism. However, should she fail in fighting him, she plans to make the duel comical: “as much in love as I am, I do not intend to die its [Love’s] martyr” (307). Ranter acknowledges, as she did before, the affects of love and wants nothing to do with them. Instead, she plans to demonstrate her innate value and genuine character. Already known as a woman who smokes and drinks,

Ranter decides that dressing as a man and fighting remain the best way to honestly woo her beloved. Once her identity is revealed, the two comically agree to marry, with Daring admitting, “I never liked thee half so well in petticoats” and “I find you can bear the brunt of a campaign you are a fit wife for a soldier” (310,323).

Though brief, the Widow’s presence on the stage helps us to conclude that she rejects the language of love adopted within the previous intrigues. First, regarding Hazard and Surelove, Ranter takes on the role of a soldier, a lie like Hazard’s professed kinship with Colonel Surelove; however, Ranter crafts her image to bear the likeness of her actual, inner character. She does not rely on sighs, but rather on steadfastness and action to obtain what she desires. Ranter thus comments on all of the other plots. Todd maintains the Behn “burlesques” Bacon through Ranter’s “exploits in martial cross-dressing” (*Secret* 416). She refuses to die a martyr, unlike Bacon and Semernia. Additionally, Ranter admonishes the lovers of the middle plot with their preference of affectations over punch—but perhaps most importantly, she reprimands the characters in the lowest of the plots by lecturing Dullman when he shares his desire for Christante, using his cheese-like face as the basis for her assessment.

With this last love-plot, I have sought to introduce the dialectic that exists among all the plots, given that *Ranter* is a tragicomedy. Therefore, I place Ranter as the ideological center of the play, insofar as she most directly comments on and tempers the reading of bodies in matters of love. Not once does she deny her original status as indentured servant, and she openly admits that her suitors are attracted to her inheritance: “If it were not for that [i.e her wealth], I might sit still and sigh and cry out, ‘a miracle! a miracle!’ at sight of a man within my doors” and “we rich widows are the best commodity this country affords” (266, 267). Certainly, other critics have noted Ranter’s centrality. Beach demonstrates that while the “Widow maneuvers between and

effectively critiques both the upper and lower social stratum, her enormous fortune of fifty thousand pounds reinforces a main idea of Behn's play, that it is decidedly easy for English people of all stripes to make their fortune in Virginia and to partake of the vast material abundance of the New World" (223). Ultimately, Beach argues that the other plots dissolve, leaving Behn's social criticism on the emergent class of leaders in the colonies. Building on Beach, Pacheco contends that the clowns (i.e. those in the lowest plot) in *Ranter* are modeled after Shakespeare's Falstaff, and of all the clowns, Ranter "serves as the focus for Behn's uncharacteristic blurring of class boundaries" (53). Though speaking in general of the comedic scenes, Cynthia Richards maintains that we should laugh with the comedic characters at times, especially Ranter, when they discredit "stale heroics" (361). Since Ranter encounters or comments on the inherent themes of all the plots, her remarks and observations make her an essential figure in spite of her few appearances and comedic air.

These last three examples of love intrigues illustrate how the reading of bodies is referenced in the three main plots within the play. Rather than focusing on policy and governance, I assert that *Ranter's* tragicomic plot works to comment on reading bodies. Though it may appear that I focus on matters of romance, I maintain that Behn comments on something much broader: social mobility in the New World. We find that Bacon possesses a classical understanding of love, even conflating the body language of love with the god of love. He disseminates this teaching to Semernia, who fully accepts this method of reading love. In her final scene, the Queen finds herself torn between her desire to remain virtuous to her husband, or to follow her heart with Bacon. Though she dresses as a male soldier, Semernia nonetheless believes her "fears and blushes will betray" her should she meet Bacon (316). Continuing with her warrior rhetoric, she asserts that she has "no Amazonian fire," only "sighs and tears" to

protect her virtue (317). Through such ruminations, her adoption of Bacon's view on love appears evident. However, Bacon does not recognize her soon enough and mistakenly kills the one he loves. Thus Bacon leads Semernia to ponder love and its effects on the psyche without actually starting a relationship. As Bacon earlier focused on reading Semernia, rather than peace talks, so too does Semernia focus on her affective manifestations of love rather than the battle at hand.

In similar manner, Hazard has worked so hard to read Surelove that he failed to realize that he himself was read by her. Surelove sees him as a brother, mistaking his romantic love for love of kin. Moreover, he fails to read Surelove's genuine love for her husband, and thus must wait to see if she overcomes her loss before resuming his goal of marriage. While Friendly appears victorious in his scheme, Downright qualifies his approval of marriage: "...with her all my fortune—when I am dead, sirrah—not a groat before—unless to buy ye baby clouts" (323). The colonel asserts that Friendly will not receive his desired wealth, and any money shared will be used toward the colonel's blood-related heirs—his grandchildren.

The Bacon-Semernia story, paired with the love woes of Hazard and Friendly, suggest that love and marriage do not always lead to societal benefits or advancement. It remains important to recall that the only marriage within the text actualizes between Ranter and Daring. Unlike the other stratagems, Ranter rejects old-world rules of courtship, which includes reading the body, and, instead, she transforms her outer appearance, not for espionage, but rather to illustrate her true inner character. She never bothers to read Daring, but rather conforms her appearance to reflect her true, inner self. Though Daring admits he knew by instinct that it was she all along, his comrades nonetheless must inform him.

Beach, Pacheco, and Richards all point out the New World's ability to blur boundaries, and Ranter epitomizes this capacity. Hutner maintains that colonial women found themselves in a unique situation, constantly teetering between empowerment and victimization because of this lack of social norms (104).³⁵ Indeed, Bacon does take women hostage in the play, holding them for ransom without compromising their chastity, while the actual Bacon used them as human shields. Semernia comes to her death through dressing as a man, while Ranter achieves her goal through the same stratagem. In the end, I argue, Ranter proves successful because she fully rejects the physiognomic, affective language of the Old World, embracing the New World's lack of sturdy boundaries. The other characters, contrarily, persist in their more traditional readings. Bacon views himself as a noble leader, despite his rejection of traditional authority. Both Hazard and Friendly depart from England in financial and social ruin, and they attempt to recreate a New England in Virginia, an England in which they stand at the top. Semernia, perhaps the most sympathetic character of all, reveals the dangers of such blurred lines of identity—gender and class in particular—while Ranter benefits from these blurred lines. While, Semernia attempts to hide her true self, even as she herself wavers between love and hatred for Bacon, Ranter perseveres in her resolve, and through the freedom Virginia offers, she is able to actualize her true self—a woman not afraid of her power, nor too timid to drink, smoke, and forbear the wearing of petticoats.

Conclusion

Like the problem plays of Shakespeare, the tragicomedy form has been associated with a broad conception of tension, whether this anxiety emerges from the interaction of generic forms,

³⁵ Hutner considers the actual role of the governor's wife, Lady Berkeley, as an example of female authority, embodied through Ranter in the play. See pp 89-106.

or the actions contained within the plots. Often, political readings of such plays have sought to unite the themes through a dialectic—a stratagem that I have used as a point of departure for analyzing these texts through a physiognomic lens. Therefore, this chapter has considered how the plots in Dryden's *Marriage* appear less distinct with regard to empiricism; Dryden fused the narratives, I contend, through his understandings of Lucretius by depicting consistent readings of the body. Behn relies more heavily on the dialectic nature of the multi-plot form; however, the political tension surrounding Bacon and the colonists dissipates when we consider the Widow as the play's center. Through focusing on her commentary regarding courtship and semblance, we find that true liberty emerges when a person actuates her true character. In the absence of a legitimate government, we find that many of the men are either remiss or presumptuous. Bacon falls short of being a true leader, focusing on romance over politics, and Hazard has fallen victim to his own stratagem. Therefore, I have not divorced either play from its political readings, but nonetheless, both works unite through their depictions of reading the body and its emotions.

Nonetheless, the appearance of physiognomy on the Restoration stage emerges obliquely, due in part to its alleged decline during this time. As I have argued, the mind/body separation mandates that emotions be contained within the mind, rather than physiological. We see this in Dryden's work through his thematic inclusion of Lucretius. With Behn, we discover a near obsession for reading the soul through emotional sighs and glances. Perhaps the Restoration is best understood as a time that straddles between the pre-modern and modern worldviews of the soul, interiority, and individuality. Physiognomy was potentially deemed a relic of the past, whether as a debunked science, or a literary tool for medieval writers, but the desire to read others persisted, and as scholars have noted, physiognomy returns later in the era with much greater forthrightness.

Physiognomy during the Restoration must not be omitted entirely. As I have outlined, characters read one another, and while much of the recent discourse on physiognomy has focused on the act of reading and how it conflicts with science and empiricism, I attest that we should instead view the reader and subject being read as changing, rather than the process of interpretation itself. To clarify, the principles of correspondence that anchored physiognomy through the late Middle Ages and Renaissance asserted that the body could serve as an index for the soul. With the philosophical and anatomical writings of Descartes and Bulwer, the soul and its network of causation have changed, belying the base of physiognomy's original legitimacy. While this shift certainly affects the methods of physiognomy, it may be more felicitous to focus our engagement with physiognomic readings not on *how* but on *what* is being read and *who* is reading. To illustrate, the medieval body and mind are more passive to the influences of the cosmos. For the Renaissance, the body and mind retain a level of passivity, but under the Neoplatonism revival during the sixteenth century, both body and mind participate in a more dynamic relationship within the animated universe. As a result, Renaissance texts assert that humans have the ability to change how they are interpreted, provoking writers like Shakespeare to showcase misconstrued or incomplete readings.

By the time of the Restoration, emotions are contained within the mind alone, separating the soul and body both from each other and the animated cosmos with its heavenly influences through the passions. Therefore, we find a more modern conception of subjectivity, and, as the Restoration stage demonstrates, stratagem and dissemblance abound more openly. Of course, such themes existed in prior literature; the Antichrist, Judas, and the Vice characters disguise their true intents, and Shakespeare capitalizes on such tension in his problem plays. The primary difference in the Restoration Period can be seen within the role of the individual. As earlier

advocated, the Romantic concept of selfhood emerged, in part, from Descartes and Bulwer. In Restoration drama, the characters are reading one another—not the Mark of Mars, nor the influence of passions. The rise of subjectivity suggests that each body or text is unique and cannot be interpreted entirely through an index, as Le Brun’s drawings showcase. The emotion is the text being read, which potentially illuminates the disposition of the bearer.

To expand upon the Restoration’s transitivity, Jenny Davidson conveyed the growing concern surrounding Restoration studies in 2016: “It has been a topic of discussion, among scholars in our field in recent years, what place the literature of the Restoration holds in curricula and institutions, sandwiched as it is between a thriving early modern field and a smaller but still lively ‘long eighteenth century’” (714). She even references the work of “an admirable group of activists [who] were able to push back successfully against the MLA’s recent effort to eliminate the Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature division” (714). In light of such a situation, this chapter not only situates the Restoration apart from the Long Eighteenth Century in its use of physiognomy, but also explicates the Restoration’s status as a time of development in the understanding of interiority that is distinctly apart from the late medieval and early modern periods. To be specific, this chapter has linked the physiognomy of the early moderns to those in the Restoration, thereby filling a gap that has largely been ignored, claiming a “re-emergence of physiognomy” within the eighteenth-century mode of sentimentality.

Regarding the romanticized individual, I selected the works of Dryden and Behn in particular because both are royalist writers and provide an excellent intersection for subjectivity and subjugation. Therefore, they remind us that our present-day understanding of subjectivity has not yet been fully crystallized during the Restoration. Dryden, through Lucretius, attempts to champion ideas of Divine Rule and hereditary nobility while maintaining a more mechanized

understanding of the universe and even emotions. Behn, on the other hand, does not deny subjectivity, but she insists that one should know one's station and project only the appropriate image. She does not deny her characters the liberty for effecting their social images—but transgressing social lines does not come without a price.

Nonetheless, this chapter would be remiss if it did not comment on the candidness of emotion that both plays exhibit. The works of Le Brun conclude a decades-long journey in understanding the passions as emotions, or an interior creation of the mind, rather than a physiological response to outward stimuli. However, as the Restoration progressed, physiognomy as detector of passions or emotions became little more than fashionable. Certainly, Melantha portrays the *en vogue* nature of reading sighs and faces, commanding the audience to recall French aesthetics. In Behn's play, both Hazard and Friendly present themselves as aristocratic, with a profound knowledge, not only of economics but also of love. Thus, they attempt to employ their worldly knowledge for their own advancement, including a superficial understanding of eyes and sighs, which ultimately leads to the undetermined deferral of their rewards. In summary, both plays might have their similarities and differences epitomized by two characters as the title of this chapter outlines: Dryden's Leonidas and Behn's Ranter. In the former, we find a rejection of rules and art as the spring of attraction, and, instead, the Prince follows the attraction of two souls, a heroic depiction: "For though there may / Be made a rule for colour or for feature / There can be none for liking"(2.1.305-7). Likewise, Ranter rejects the artificial mandates of courtship that focus too much on bodily affects; however, rather than adopting a romanticized view of romance and the reading it entails, she turns more to pragmatics, rebuffing all that is "inconsistent with the punch bowl" (*Ranter* 276). Perhaps these

two characters serve as synecdoche for competing ideas within Restoration drama: the idealized hero and the matter-of-fact protagonist.

Conclusion

This dissertation maintains that the body as a textual or literary construction, deciphered through physiognomy, offers modern readers a contextualized perception of interiority ranging from the late medieval period to the Restoration. Otherwise stated, by using physiognomy to read the body of persons within plays, we learn of pre-modern interiority following this trajectory: (1) In medieval drama we discover that the mind is passive, easily influenced by the cosmos, climate, humors, and even demons. However, this passivity does not lead to pure determinism. Instead, good Christians must be mindful of their surroundings so that they are not improperly influenced. Moreover, humoral physiognomy serves as a means for one to learn of his or her shortcomings and overcome them through discipline and God's grace. (2) During the Renaissance, we see that self-fashioning dominates the discourse surrounding physiognomy. Indeed, one is still under the sway of the four humors, but through education, one may orchestrate the circumstances in which interpretation occurs. Moreover, physiognomic manuals of the time stress the importance of ethics, insisting that those people outside of England are often vicious in their self-fashioning, while the English are naturally inclined toward virtue. (3) The Restoration, after Descartes' separation of body and soul, relegates the passions or emotions entirely to the mind, divorcing outside influences such as the cosmos, climate, and even, to a certain extent, humors from the mind. As a result, emotions become something more flippant or even a fashionable topic as demonstrated in Dryden's *Marriage a-la-Mode*. The selected

Restoration plays reveal the hesitancy in accepting a more modern conception of subjectivity, particular among Royalist writers such as Dryden and Behn.

Equally important, and perhaps unique to this study, the exploration of genre unites the physical body to its textual situated-ness. In each chapter, I join the bodies being read or misread to generic ends. First, *The Conspiracy* and *Mankind*, as biblical and morality plays respectively, rely heavily on audience participation for their efficacy. While allegory and historical context have long been treated in deciphering the didactic natures of such plays in the past, physiognomy uncovers how bodies can serve as instruments of learning. In *The Conspiracy*, the folkish nature of physiognomy demonstrates how the janitor could be seen as a common member of the audience. Moreover, Judas fails at or avoids interpreting his own Mark of Mars, thereby allowing his natural tendency for treachery to flourish—a warning for the audience to set aside pride and admit their deficiencies. In *Mankind*, we find no active reading on the stage since such interpretation is left for the audience. Being tempted with the humor of Titivillus, as well as Mischief and his vice-lieutenants, members of the audience fail to properly read *Mankind*, and through the lines of Mercy, they learn of not only repentance, but also the nature of mercy itself as demonstrated through affective physiognomic language.

With Shakespeare's problem plays, I enter a persistent conversation as to what constitutes a problem play. As Sybille Baumbach posits in her *Shakespeare and the Art of Physiognomy* (2008), Shakespeare uses physiognomy near the beginning of his plays to create axioms that are questioned throughout the plot. Therefore, the problem play seems like a fitting home for physiognomy given Shakespeare's approach to the science. My argument remains that Shakespeare creates unmotivated signs in the characters of Helen and Gertrude since both women have their actual interiorities obscured, and they are never clarified before each plot ends.

Moreover, each play demonstrates a fascination, if not fetish, with reading and interpreting others, often through physiognomic means.

In the third chapter, I demonstrate that physiognomy unites the multiple plots within Dryden's and Behn's tragicomedies. While much criticism has already been written on the subject, many works seek to fuse or fissure the multi-plot structure through themes or political and social topics. My attempt to bring these storylines together relies solely on the actions within the plots themselves: interpretation through physiognomy. In Dryden's play, the high and low plots revolve around love and courtship. The low plot fixes itself upon pleasure while the high plot relates more to heredity. Both storylines uncover Dryden's understanding of Lucretius, which informs my conception of physiognomy in his play. In Behn's *Ranter*, even more plots emerge, broadening the scope of high and low social interaction. Despite this range, Behn has the Widow as her anchor since she provides direct and indirect commentary on the physiognomic practices present within each love intrigue. Furthermore, it is my hope that this work adds legitimacy to the distinction of Restoration studies, apart from the Renaissance and Eighteenth Century; my work not only situates the Restoration apart from the Long Eighteenth Century in its use of physiognomy, but also explicates the Restoration's status as a time of development in the understanding of interiority.

To speak generally of the potential contributions that this dissertation can make to critical endeavors, I offer the following. First, I provide a trans-periodization approach to the evolution of physiognomy. While a growing number of critics are writing on the practice, their histories are often fragmented in their time frames and often consider only dominant tracts and manuals. I, instead, lengthen this history and consider multiple players in this science's progression, such as theology, philosophy of the mind, politics, and even human anatomy and physiology. Second, I

demonstrate the ways in which physiognomy can serve a variety of methodologies. I touch on issues related to Marxism (literacy in medieval England), feminism (the readings of Helen and Gertrude), deconstruction and semiotics (Barbara Johnson's character semiotics), and also post-colonialism (Semernia in *The Widow Ranter*), much like how other scholars of embodiment theory have used physiology and anatomy, particularly within early modern studies. Lastly, my inclusion of internality situates the relationship between interior and exterior in a more literary and literacy-based structure.

I would be remiss if I did not mention how other scholars or I might further this discussion. To begin, physiognomy can certainly expand to other genres and periods. This study does not engage with Tudor drama, nor does it consider at length tragedy and comedy. Renaissance histories, in particular, present a terrain that has not been adequately explored, neither by myself nor other critics such as Neill, Baumbach, and Khan. Beyond genre, however, physiognomy is not the only lens through which we may view the body as text. At its outset, this dissertation had the intention of including four chapters: physiology, physiognomy, anatomy, and allegory. Clearly each can produce its own dissertation or volume. Nonetheless, the principles and organization that I have laid out could easily be applied to any of these three other methods. Indeed, the body as text has numerous, potential tributaries beyond the scope of this study.

In conclusion, the relevance of physiognomy extends to the present even though this pseudo-science may go by different names. The art and history of physiognomy appears within social media through tests and articles that delineate facial movements and postures that denote liars and cheaters. The subject of racial profiling on our streets, at our borders, and in our airports reminds us of the gravity within the act of interpreting the mind through bodily means. Moreover, despite its fall from the status as a legitimate science, physiognomy has received

validation through recent studies in neuroscience.¹ If, as the saying goes, hypocrisy is the tribute paid by vice to virtue, then we may find some meaning in the benedictions of Shakespeare's Polonius and Countess despite these characters' proclivity for play-acting and semblance. In *Hamlet*, Polonius's timeless words may suggest how we should present ourselves as texts to the world: "To thine own self be true" (1.3.78). However, when reading others, it could be best to follow the directions of the Countess in *All's Well that Ends Well*: "Love all, trust a few, / Do wrong to none" (1.1.57-58). Nonetheless, as Shakespeare's plots within these plays suggest, such aphorisms prove difficult to actuate.

¹ For more information on the advances in physiognomic studies regarding neuroscience, see David Freedburg's "Feelings on Faces" in *Rethinking Emotion* pp. 289-323.

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