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**The Circulation of Physiognomical Discourse  
in European Theatrical Culture, 1780-1830**

Presentata da: **Maria-Christina MUR**

**Coordinatore Dottorato**

Prof.ssa Anna Paola Soncini

**Relatore**

Prof.ssa Lilla Maria Crisafulli

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## ***Dedicated to Luca***

*Dich ahnte meine Seele lange,  
Bevor mein Auge dich gesehn,  
Und selig-süße Schauer bange  
Fühlt ich durch all mein Wesen gehn.*

*Ich sog von unbekanntem Blüten  
Den Duft, der mir entgegenquoll,  
Und nie erblickte Sterne glühten  
Zu Häupten mir geheimnisvoll.*

*Doch immer sah ich deinen Schatten  
Nur trübe wie durch Nebelflor  
Dein Antlitz schien daraus in matten,  
Gebrochnen Zügen nur hervor.*

*Und als der Schleier nun gesunken,  
Der dich vor mir verhüllt – vergib,  
Wenn lang ich sprachlos und wie trunken,  
Betäubt von all dem Glücke blieb!*

(Adolf Friedrich von Schack)

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*Quotes from primary sources were not corrected and are reproduced in the original spelling. The translations of the primary and secondary sources are, if not specified differently, made by the author of this dissertation.*

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## FOREWORD

This dissertation with the title *The Circulation of Physiognomical Discourse in European Theatrical Culture, 1780-1830* discusses the relation between a philosophic, scientific concept and a specific literary genre in approximately fifty years of cultural history. In this foreword the main elements of the title are described in order to create the basis for the further explanations.

Physiognomy<sup>1</sup> is composed of the words *physis* (φύσις) and *gnomon* (γνώμων), meaning form/nature and judge/interpretation. It is presented as art, science, knowledge or study of the physical form and its interpretation of the soul and the human character. The different interpretations of Physiognomy will be a focal point in the introduction of this dissertation. The presentation of these different interpretations will bring to light a vast understanding and critique of a concept and idea thousands of years old.

The physiognomical discourse addressed in the title refers to a multifaceted analysis of the human body in relation to its soul and character. By using the term discourse, the multitude of these analyses is evoked. This term is mainly used in the purest sense of its Latin origin: *discurrere* = to run different ways (Oxford Latin Dictionary). The movement implied in this definition is directly connected to the idea of circulation. Due to the “*fashionability*”<sup>2</sup> of the expression discourse in the last decades, the reader of this dissertation might also think of a more literary theory approach. Wendell V. Harris gives ten different, though related, descriptions of discourse in the *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory*. Six out of the ten descriptions are basic ideas of the discourse definition, which underpin this dissertation: (1) Orderly, coherent thought. (2) The presentation of such thought. (7) In theory of narrative, the presentation or mode of telling of the story. (8) In a phrase like “discourse community”, a shared set of assumptions, procedures, and specifically defined terms. (9) The interaction between language and reality that

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<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid confusion with the term physiognomy for the general appearance and form of things without the scientific connotation, the science Physiognomy is written with the capital letter throughout the entire dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Hawthorn. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. London: Arnold Publishers, 2000 p.86.

produces experience or the world-as-understood. (10) A shared understanding of a significant area of social experience within a given culture at a given time in history.<sup>3</sup> Discourse means focusing on all kinds of written text in order to create a multifaceted network of information and knowledge discussed by intellectuals, scholars, philosophers and writers. The relevance of the different voices in these written texts is emphasized and it is a theoretical way of forming and shaping humans as “*subjects*”<sup>4</sup>.

The physiognomical discourse analysed in this dissertation, refers to a period in human history where an extensive transformation of science took place. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, science experienced a certain popularization. This dissertation refers more than once to the theory of public sphere by Jürgen Habermas and the fashionability of Physiognomy as scientific concept. The scientific discourse was held in many different institutions and could easily involve the public. New founded academies held, for example, public lectures; dictionaries and encyclopedias appeared on the book market and the periodical publications discussed new inventions and theories. This new approach of gaining and sharing knowledge also created a greater awareness of scientific topics and posed new questions. Physiognomy is one example of everyday use and application of scientific rules. This dissertation will question the scientific nature of Physiognomy and how the intellectuals and public referred to it. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, science also was often questioned. Older forms of pseudo-science, such as alchemy, found in chemistry a valid, much more reliable substitute. Physiognomical discourse brings together theories regarding the relation of the human body and human soul under different definitions. The theory of Pathognomy, fundamental in this dissertation, is included in the physiognomical discourse of the time and is therefore not explicitly mentioned in the title of this dissertation.

This dissertation focuses on pointing out the relevance of the theatrical production influenced by the physiognomical discourse. The analysis of the literary corpus presented in this dissertation does not follow chronological, linguistic, or national orders, but tries to emphasize the circulation of the physiognomical idea all

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<sup>3</sup> Wendell V. Harris. “Discourse.” In: *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory*. New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1992, 66 p.66.

<sup>4</sup> Paul A. Bové. “Discourse.” In: *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Edited by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. University of Chicago Press, 1995, 50-65 p.58.



over Europe in a specific time frame. The time frame is dictated by political and cultural events, which are important for our analysis. The beginning of the period chosen for our analysis is set with the year 1780. This is right after Johann Caspar Lavater's publications of the four volumes of his *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*. Lavater is *the* central figure of the physiognomical discourse of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and this dissertation will refer throughout to Lavater's theory and to the criticism it received. In the 1780s, new theatrical genres that related to an awareness of the language of the human body were introduced on the stages all over Europe. These new genres also reflected massive political and social changes in the various societies. The European political map changed the inter-relationships between the different nation states: French plays were largely translated and performed on the English stage, German plays were staged in France, and Italian dramatic and aesthetic theory spread throughout Europe. The circulation of physiognomical discourse was visible both on a theoretical and practical level. Intellectuals travelled from one country to another and shared their knowledge with one another. The end of the analysed period is set at the year 1830. Research on the presence of physiognomical ideas in the literary production of that time, showed a concentration of these ideas in the fifty-year period between 1780 and 1830. From a political and social perspective, the year 1830 represented a turning point in European international relations. In England, 1830 was the end of the reign of King George IV, in France the July Revolution introduced a constitutional monarchy and in the German states the tensions between bourgeoisie and aristocracy became greater and greater. Around 1830 many of the central figures discussed in this dissertation passed away: Ugo Foscolo in 1827, Sarah Siddons in 1831, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Unzelmann and Lemman Thomas Rede in 1832, Edmund Kean in 1833, Christian Friedrich Michaelis and Johannes Jelgerhuis in 1834, Karl August Böttiger in 1835, and Gilbert Austin in 1837.

This dissertation aims to create a general overview of the physiognomical discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by presenting examples of literary work.

## INTRODUCTION

Starting from the considerations made in the foreword about the idea of a link between the research topic and science in fiction, in this introduction an overview of the scientific nature of Physiognomy is given through examples of articles in the first dictionaries and encyclopedias and through the theories of some scientists who deal in their research with Physiognomy in general and the scientific nature of Physiognomy in detail. Furthermore, this introduction contains explanations about Physiognomy and literature in general and Physiognomy and theatre in detail. A chapter dedicated to the state of the art should lay the cornerstone for the analyses made in this dissertation. The methodology applied in this research is explained in the last chapter of this introduction.

### 1. What is Physiognomy?

#### 1.1. Dictionaries and encyclopedias

In the first part of this introduction I analyse some articles published in the first editions of dictionaries and encyclopedias. If we look at the section on “*la physiognomonie*”<sup>5</sup>, “*die Physiognomik*”<sup>6</sup>, “*la fisiognomica*”<sup>7</sup> or “*The Physiognomy*”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Larousse:

<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/physiognomonie/60614?q=physiognomonie#60236>

(18.10.2014) Physiognomonie: *nom féminin (grec phusiognômonia, de phusis, nature, et gnômôn, qui connaît) Connaissance de l'homme intérieur par l'observation de l'homme extérieur. (Au XVIII<sup>e</sup> s., J. K. Lavater a particulièrement développé le sujet.)*

<sup>6</sup> Brockhaus: <https://test2.brockhaus-wissensservice.com/brockhaus/physiognomik> (25.10.2014) Physiognomik: *Teilgebiet der Ausdruckspsychologie, das sich mit der psychodiagnostischen Deutung statischer äußerer Körperformen (insbesondere der Gesichtszüge) befasst, im Gegensatz zur Deutung des dynamischen Ausdrucks bei der Mimik beziehungsweise Pantomimik. – Eine weitgehend spekulativ-intuitive Physiognomik wurde bereits im Altertum und Mittelalter betrieben. Der älteste Versuch einer Systematisierung physiognomischer Befunde ist die anonyme Schrift »Physiognomika« aus dem 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr., auf der G. B. Della Porta (»De humana physiognomonica«, 1593) aufbaute. Della Porta beschrieb 43 verschiedene Menschentypen, wobei er neben Form und Beschaffenheit des gesamten Körpers (Gestalt) auch Körperhaltung, Gang und*

etc. in all the different modern encyclopedias and dictionaries of different languages we find different points of view, but one detail always remains the same: Physiognomy is not a science.

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*Sprache berücksichtigte. Im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert beschäftigten sich im Rahmen der Charakterologie v. a. G. C. Lichtenberg (in überwiegend ablehnender Weise: »Über Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen«, 1778), F. J. Gall (von dessen Phrenologie Impulse auf die Physiognomik übergangen), C. G. Carus (»Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt«, 1853), C. R. Darwin (»The expression of the emotions in man and animals«, 1872) sowie J. K. Lavater mit der Physiognomik, Letzterer fasste die Physiognomik vorwiegend als eine Art Kunst auf, das innere Wesen eines Menschen an seinem Äußeren zu erkennen. Die wissenschaftliche Anthropologie der Gegenwart indessen hat sich bezüglich der physiognomischen Fragestellung weitgehend von Deutungen und Spekulationen gelöst. Sie beschränkt sich im Wesentlichen auf rein statistische Korrelationen zwischen bestimmten physischen (speziell körperbaulichen) und psychischen (speziell charakterlichen) Eigentümlichkeiten des Menschen (Konstitutionslehre).*

<sup>7</sup>Treccani: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fisiognomica> (18.10.2014) *Fisiognomica: Arte, già nota agli antichi, che, studiando la correlazione tra il carattere e l'aspetto fisico della persona, si propone di dedurre le caratteristiche psicologiche degli individui dal loro aspetto corporeo, in particolare dai tratti del viso. In tale accezione il termine è stato usato per la prima volta da Aristotele ed ebbe una certa fortuna nel Medioevo (Alberto Magno), nel Rinascimento (G.B. Della Porta) e nell'Ottocento (C. Lombroso).*

<sup>8</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/458823/physiognomy> (18.10.2014) *Physiognomy: the study of the systematic correspondence of psychological characteristics to facial features or body structure. Because most efforts to specify such relationships have been discredited, physiognomy sometimes connotes pseudoscience or charlatany. Physiognomy was regarded by those who cultivated it both as a mode of discriminating character by the outward appearance and as a method of divination from form and feature. Physiognomy is of great antiquity, and in ancient and medieval times it had an extensive literature. Inasmuch as genetic flaws are sometimes revealed by physical characteristics (e.g., the characteristic appearance of Down syndrome, with up-slanted eyes and broad, flat face), some elements of physiognomy evolved in physiology and biochemistry.*

*In its second aspect—i.e., divination from form and feature—it was related to astrology and other forms of divination, and this aspect of the subject bulked large in the fanciful literature of the Middle Ages. There is evidence in the earliest classical literature, including Homer and Hippocrates, that physiognomy formed part of the most ancient practical philosophy.*

*The earliest-known systematic treatise on physiognomy is attributed to Aristotle. In it he devoted six chapters to the consideration of the method of study, the general signs of character, the particular appearances characteristic of the dispositions, of strength and weakness, of genius and stupidity, and so on. Then he examined the characters derived from the different features, and from colour, hair, body, limbs, gait, and voice. While discussing noses, for example, he says that those with thick, bulbous ends belong to persons who are insensitive, swinish; sharp-tipped noses belong to the irascible, those easily provoked, like dogs; rounded, large, obtuse noses to the magnanimous, the lionlike; slender, hooked noses to the eaglelike; and so on.*

*Among the Latin classical authors Juvenal, Suetonius, and Pliny the Elder refer to the practice of physiognomy, and numerous allusions occur in the works of the Christian scholars, especially Clement of Alexandria and Origen. While the earlier classical physiognomy was chiefly descriptive, the later medieval studies particularly developed the predictive and astrological side, their treatises often digressing into prophetic folklore and magic.*

*Along with the medical science of the period, Arabian writers such as the alchemist ar-Rāzī and Averroës also contributed to the literature of physiognomy. The medicine of systematic correspondence that evolved in China after the period of the Warring States is still associated with traditional Chinese science and has some bearing on the doctrine of yin-yang.*

*Physiognomy also is treated (in some cases extensively) by such scholars as Avicenna, Albertus Magnus, John Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas. The development of a more accurate anatomy in the 17th century seems to have dampened the scientific interest in physiognomy. In the 18th and 19th centuries physiognomy was proposed as a means of detecting criminal tendencies, but each system was examined and discarded as fallacious, and by the 20th century physiognomy—as it was known in earlier times—was largely regarded as a historical subject.*

However, in various articles that appeared in encyclopedias between 1741 and 1911 it is possible to see different views on the topic of the scientific nature of Physiognomy.

Generally, in the years under consideration there are differences between articles that deal with Physiognomy as an art, those which see it as a pure science and those which do not make a general distinction. In the first category we find *Zedler Lexikon*, 1741, where one can read: “*Physiognomie, die Kunst, welche aus der äusserlichen Beschaffenheit der Gliedmassen oder den Lineamenten des Leibes eines Menschen dessen Natur und Gemüths Disposition zu erkennen giebt.*”<sup>9</sup> (translation: “Physiognomy, the art, which shows from the external nature of the limbs or the lineaments of the body of a human being his nature and disposition of mind”).

For the writer of this article Physiognomy is definitely an art, but he is also aware of the fact that not everyone who writes on Physiognomy shares the same opinion: “*Von dem Werth dieser Kunst sind die Gedanken der Gelehrten unterschiedlich, indem einige viel, andere wenig darauf halten.*” (trans.: “Of the value of this art the thoughts of the scholars differ by some considering it a lot, others a little.”).

Almost 170 years later, in 1905 in *Meyers Großes Konversationslexikon*<sup>10</sup> one can find the same explanation of Physiognomy, seen as art.

Both articles call Physiognomy an art, but they do not criticize its purpose. On the other hand, an article published in Diderot and Jaucourt’s *Encyclopédie* in 1765, addresses the danger of judgments based on Physiognomy: “*mais il ne faut jamais juger sur la physionomie*”<sup>11</sup> (trans.: “but we should never judge on the face.”). Physiognomy is an “*art prétendu*” (“purported art”) and a “*science ridicule*” (“ridiculous science”). The aversion towards Physiognomy is explained as follows:

*Il est permis de juger à quelques égards de ce qui se passe dans l'intérieur des hommes par leurs actions, & connoître à l'inspection des changements du visage, la situation actuelle de l'ame ; mais comme l'ame n'a point de forme qui puisse être relative à aucune forme matérielle, on ne peut pas la juger par la figure du corps, ou par la forme du visage.*

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<sup>9</sup> Zedler Lexikon 1741 Vol. 27 p.2239-2241.

<sup>10</sup> Meyers Großes Konversationslexikon 1905 Vol. 15 p.850-851.

<sup>11</sup> Encyclopédie 1765 Vol. 12 p.538.

(trans.: “It is permitted to judge in some degrees what is happening in the interior of men by their actions, and knowing with the inspection of the face changes, the current situation of the soul; but as the soul has no form that can be related to any material form, we cannot judge it by the figure of the body or the shape of the face.”)

With this severe and wellargued criticism, Diderot and Jaucourt deny Physiognomy every *raison d'être* in a scientific discourse. However, in the first edition of the *Brockhaus* in 1809, for the first time we can find the word “science” without negative connotation. The article begins with the declaration of Physiognomy as an art, but continues with the conviction that the judgments made by others were often made without much reflection: “*Man fällt oft überaus schiefe Urtheile über diese Wissenschaft, über welche noch lange geschrieben werden wird, ohne daß vielleicht je ein in feinen Theilen gegründetes System derselben erscheinen dürfte.*”<sup>12</sup> (trans.: “One often makes some very wrong judgments about this science, about which will be written for a long time, without ever perhaps creating a system built on detailed parts.”).

Until then the various articles are quite short and explain in a few words their position in the discourse about Physiognomy. In 1809, in the *Krünitz Oeconomische Encyclopedie*<sup>13</sup>, the presentation of Physiognomy is more detailed.

The *Krünitz* presents a summary of ideas current from antiquity to Lavater and Gall. Physiognomy remains between science and art, but the reason is then given. A distinction is made between scholars who use reason for their observations and those who instead use magic and superstition. In 1857 the *Piers Universallexikon* adds two further ideas: knowledge and research/exploration: “*Physiognomik, im Allgemeinen die Erkenntniß des Innern oder der geistigen Eigenheiten eines Menschen durch sein Äußeres, und zwar sowohl Erkenntniß von Verstandeseigenheiten, als auch Erforschung von Neigungen und herrschenden Gemüthsstimmungen.*”<sup>14</sup> (trans.: “Physiognomy, in general, the knowledge of the Interior or the spiritual characteristics of a person by his appearance, and both knowledge of intellectual peculiarities, as well as exploration of inclinations and ruling dispositions.”).

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<sup>12</sup> Brockhaus 1809 Vol. 3 p.434.

<sup>13</sup> Krünitz Oeconomische Encyclopedie 1809 Vol.122.

<sup>14</sup> Piers Universallexikon 1857 Vol. 13 p.110.

In 1904, the *Eisler Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* also calls Physiognomy an art, a theory and a knowledge (“*Lehre oder Kunde*”, “*Kunst*”<sup>15</sup>). In 1907, a new point of view is offered by the *Kirchner Michaelis Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*. In its first part the article speaks about Physiognomy as art and supposed science (see also *L’Encyclopédie* and *L’Encyclopaedia Britannica* from 1911: “Supposed science”<sup>16</sup>), but towards the end it says, “*Die Physiognomik ist also keineswegs eine vollendete und ausgebildete Wissenschaft, sondern nur eine werdende zu nennen*”<sup>17</sup> (trans.: “Physiognomy is by no means an accomplished and fully formed science, but it needs to be called a becoming science.”). The only dictionary which frequently speaks of Physiognomy as science is the *Larousse* edition of 1874: “*Science qui enseigne à connaître le caractère des hommes par l’inspection des traits du visage*”<sup>18</sup> (trans.: “Science which teaches to know the character of men by inspecting their facial features.”).

As we have seen, the different articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias show that there are divergent points of view. In fact, although Physiognomy is seen as science, most of the time it is connected with art or with the criticism of pure science. The purpose of the presentation of different articles is to show examples of criticism of Physiognomy in some encyclopedias as an introduction to the scientific discourse. The quotations speak the language of their time, of their belonging to a particular philosophical movement as well as that of their authors.

## 1.2. Ideas of scientists

In the comments in the secondary literature one can find various explanations of this dilemma of placing Physiognomy in science or art. Various authors have written on Physiognomy and the cultural history of the past centuries<sup>19</sup>. Paolo Getrevi for example explains that in antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Physiognomy was

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<sup>15</sup> Eisler Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe 1904 Vol. 2 p.120-121.

<sup>16</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911.

<sup>17</sup> Kirchner Michaelis Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe 1907 p.442-443.

<sup>18</sup> Dictionnaire Larousse 1874 p.115.

<sup>19</sup> Flavio Caroli. *Storia della Fisiognomica. Arte e psicologia da Leonardo a Freud*. Milano: Mondadori, 1995; Paolo Getrevi. *Le scritture del volto. Fisiognomica e modelli culturali dal Medioevo ad oggi*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1991; Giovanni Gurisatti. *Dizionario fisiognomico. Il volto, le forme, l’espressione*. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2006; Patrizia Magli. *Il volto e l’anima. Fisiognomica e passioni*. Milano: Bompiani, 1995; Lucia Rodler. *Il corpo specchio dell’anima. Teoria e storia della fisiognomica*. Milano: Mondadori, 2000; Claudia Schmölders. *Das Vorurteil im Leibe. Eine Einführung in die Physiognomik*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2007.

always connected with science. Already in the Babylonian culture we speak of a “codified Science”<sup>20</sup>. Patrizia Magli dedicates a short chapter to the Arabian Physiognomy and explains that:

*[...] l'antica fisiognomica araba, il cui ruolo é stato fondamentale per la diffusione di questa scienza in Europa. La sua origine si perde nella notte dei tempi, confusa con quella della magia, dell'anatomia, della fisiologia, della filosofia, ma, soprattutto, con quella dell'arte medica. Per gli arabi la fisiognomica era, da secoli, un'arte che si possiede dalla nascita e un mestiere strettamente legato a quello del medico e dell'astronomo.*<sup>21</sup>

(trans.: “[...] The ancient Arab physiognomy, whose role has been crucial to the spread of this science in Europe. Its origin is lost in the mists of time, confused with that of magic, anatomy, physiology, philosophy, but, above all, with the art of medicine. For the Arabs physiognomy was, for centuries, an art that one has from birth and a craft closely related to that of the physician and of the astronomer.”)

In the fourth century BC, we find a study on Physiognomy that in ancient times was attributed to Aristotle, although now his authorship is much disputed. Siegfried Frey explains in his article *Lavater, Lichtenberg, and the Suggestive Power of Human Face* that the doubts on the authorship of Aristotle came to life with Georg Gustav Fülleborn's work about the history of Physiognomy (*Abriss einer Geschichte und Literatur der Physiognomik*, 1797):

*He [Fülleborn] evidently felt physiognomy had fallen into such disgrace that he had to save the reputation of its supposed founder, Aristotle. He did so by denying that Aristotle actually wrote the text on physiognomics for which he was famous. For over two thousand years, Aristotle had been hailed for his *Physiognomika*, which was regarded as the standard work on its subject. Fülleborn now found that treatise so incoherent and unsatisfactory that it could only be, he concluded, a badly corrupted text [...]. This conclusion was so readily accepted that it has since found its way into almost all modern accounts of physiognomics, which hesitate to attribute that text to Aristotle.*<sup>22</sup>

In his introduction to the publication of the text of the *Physiognomonica* by (Pseudo) Aristotle, Giampiera Raina writes that there are different points of view about the

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<sup>20</sup> Getrevis. *Le scritte del volto*. Milano, 1991 p.9.

<sup>21</sup> Magli. *Il volto e l'anima*. Milano, 1995 p.44.

<sup>22</sup> Siegfried Frey. “Lavater, Lichtenberg and the Suggestive Power of Human Face.” In: Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 64-103 p.102.

authenticity of this work by Aristotle, but that in the end to prove its authenticity does not really matter: *“Ma dire oggi se il testo di cui disponiamo sia tutto, in parte o in nessuna parte di Aristotele è un problema senza soluzione; in realtà però è forse uno pseudo-problema, perché se non è di Aristotele, è comunque aristotelico, giacché presuppone ampiamente le teorie peripatetiche.”*<sup>23</sup> (trans.: “But to say today whether the text we have is all, in part or in no part by Aristotle is a problem without a solution; in reality, however, it is perhaps a pseudo-problem, because if it is not of Aristotle, it is Aristotelian, as it presupposes widely peripatetic theories.”).

Following Raina’s quote I assume that the *Physiognomica* is Aristotle’s work. This work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter begins with a strong affirmation, which can be seen as the main idea of the whole text: *“Mental character is not independent of and unaffected by bodily processes, but is conditioned by the state of the body.”*<sup>24</sup>

Aristotle uses the expressions *pathos, soma kai psyche, kineseis*. To indicate the characteristics of Physiognomy he uses the word *technē*. This *technē* is about *“all natural affections of mental content, and also such acquired affections as on their occurrence modify the external signs which physiognomists interpret.”*<sup>25</sup>

To analyse the different characteristics, Aristotle, and as he explains also his ancestors, uses three different methods: the method of expression, the zoological method and the race method.<sup>26</sup>

The expression of a person, unconnected to present emotions, may indicate the personality and character: for example, a person may have an angry expression without being really in an angry mood. Some of the characteristics of the dispositions of human beings may be related to the personality of animals. To explain the various features as applied to men and women, Aristotle uses a dichotomous system; they can be: soft and hard, slow and fast, strong and weak, etc. with only one of the two parts having a positive connotation. Apart from the similarity between humans and animals, there are also many different types of men. Some features are typical for men belonging to particular races. Aristotle uses, but also criticizes, these three

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<sup>23</sup> Pseudo Aristotele. *Fisiognomica. Anonimo Latino Il trattato di fisiognomica. Introduzione, traduzione e note*. Edited by Giampiera Raina. Milano: BUR, 1993 p.20.

<sup>24</sup> *The Works of Aristotle*. Translated into English under the Editorship of W.D. Ross. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1913. Translated by T. Loveday and E.S. Forster.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> See A. MacC. Armstrong. “The Methods of the Greek Physiognomists.” *Greece and Rome* 5 (1958): 52-56 p.53; Magli. *Il volto e l’anima*. Milano, 1995 p.124f.



methods because individually they may not provide safe and scientific results. His conclusion is: *“In general it is silly to rely on a single sign: you will have more reason for confidence in your conclusions when you find several signs all pointing one way.”*<sup>27</sup>

Aristotle is convinced that Physiognomy is a science but he also says that it is a science based on probability and that it is not completely accurate. In the discourse of the scientific nature of Physiognomy, Aristotle is important because he introduces a fundamental idea for all successive scientists: Aristotle speaks of signs that the scientist must analyse to gain results and after him several scientists use this as justification and explanation of the scientific nature of Physiognomy.

Magli explains, that in general, physiognomic ideas did not change between Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.<sup>28</sup> The transformation of the concept of Science is visible in the High Middle Ages, when scientific knowledge is strongly connected to religion. Getrevi shows as example the *Liber de physionomia* by Michaelus Scotus (born around 1175 and died after 1232):

*Il liber si configura come un vero e proprio trattato medico, con una prima sezione ginecologica e ostetrica, una seconda imperniata sulla fisiologia dei canoni umorali e una terza propriamente fisiognomica. [...] La fisiognomica si accredita allora come la parte più eletta della medicina, anzi come un vertice della piramide scientifica, la sola che definendo il modello umano dia ragione dell'intero impianto cosmico.*<sup>29</sup>

(trans.: “The liber appears as a real medical treatise, with a first section on gynecology and obstetrics, a second focuses on the physiology of the humors and a third on physiognomy. [...] The physiognomy is credited then as the choicest part of medicine, rather like a peak of the scientific pyramid, the only one that defining the human model gives reason to the entire cosmic system.”)

In earlier modern times there are two main interpretations of Physiognomy: (1) Physiognomy is connected to psychology; (2) Physiognomy is explained through art and paintings and its use in art shows its importance (Cit. Caroli: *“Fisiognomica, scienza che si appoggia, in diverse proporzioni, ora sulla Psicologia, ora sulla*

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<sup>27</sup> *The Works of Aristotle*. Oxford 1913. Translated by T. Loveday and E.S. Forster.

<sup>28</sup> See Magli. *Il volto e l'anima*. Milano, 1995 p.157.

<sup>29</sup> Getrevi. *Le scritture del volto*. Milano, 1991 p.10.

*rappresentazione dei tratti somatici, cioè sulla Pittura.*<sup>30</sup>; trans.: “Physiognomy, science leaning, in different proportions, now on Psychology, now on the representation of somatic features, namely on Painting.”). Flavio Caroli presents two examples for the psychological-medical part and for the artistic part: Michelangelo Biondo with his *De cognizione hominis per aspectum* (1544) and Leonardo Da Vinci with the *Trattato della Pittura* (~1509-1519).

Magli adds a third interpretation to the two explained by Caroli: Astrology. (Cit. Magli: *“Il corpo e il volto dell’uomo sono la superficie privilegiata in cui vengono a iscriversi le Divine Segnature. Di conseguenza, se nella fisiognomica del periodo classico prevale l’aspetto descrittivo, nel Medioevo, e soprattutto nel Rinascimento, prende il sopravvento l’aspetto predittivo strettamente legato a queste visioni e, in particolare, all’astrologia.”*<sup>31</sup>; trans.: “The body and the face of man are the surface in which the Divine Signatures are inscribed. Therefore, if in the Physiognomy of the classical period the descriptive aspect prevails, in the Middle Ages, and especially in the Renaissance, takes over the predictive aspect which is closely related to these visions and, in particular, to astrology.”)

In his *Trattato della Pittura* Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) explains the importance of painting in comparison to literature and sculpture showing that painting is the first and only science because it shows nature. The basis of painting is always a mathematical structure: *“Il principio della scienza della pittura è il punto, il secondo è la linea, il terzo è la superficie, il quarto è il corpo che si veste di tal superficie,”*<sup>32</sup> (trans.: “The principle of the science of painting is the point, the second is the line, the third is the surface, the fourth is the body that wears this surface”). Painting can only be a science because it is connected to mathematics: *“Nessuna umana investigazione si può dimandare vera scienza, se essa non passa per le matematiche dimostrazioni; e se tu dirai che le scienze, che principiano e finiscono nella mente, abbiano verità, questo non si concede, ma si nega per molte ragioni.”*<sup>33</sup> (trans.: “No human investigation can be called true science, if it does not pass through mathematical demonstrations; and if you say that the sciences that start and

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<sup>30</sup> Caroli. *Storia della Fisiognomica*. Milano, 1995. p.81.

<sup>31</sup> Magli. *Il volto e l’anima*. Milano, 1995 p.164.

<sup>32</sup> Leonardo Da Vinci. *Trattato della Pittura*. p.45.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid* p.25.

end up in the human mind, are true, this is not allowed, but it is denied for many reasons.”).

The big difference between painting and literature is that painting shows to the senses “*more truth and certainty than the works of nature*” (Original: “La pittura rappresenta al senso con piú verità e certezza le opere di natura”<sup>34</sup>). Painting is also more useful than literature, because it communicates more and better:

*Quella scienza è piú utile della quale il frutto è piú comunicabile, e cosí per contrario è meno utile quella ch'è meno comunicabile. La pittura ha il suo fine comunicabile a tutte le generazioni dell'universo, perché il suo fine è subietto della virtù visiva, e non passa per l'orecchio al senso comune col medesimo modo che vi passa per il vedere.*<sup>35</sup>

(trans.: “That science is more useful of which the fruit is more communicable, and so it is on the contrast less useful which is less communicable. The painting has its purpose communicable to all the generations of the universe, because its purpose is subject of the visual virtue, and does not pass through the ear to common sense in the same way it passes through the eyes.”).

After the general introduction, Leonardo begins to explain every little detail of the art and science of painting: he explains the work of the young painter, structure of the paintings, all parts of the body (face, muscles, feet, etc.) as well as how the painter must draw the elderly, women, landscapes, light, shadow and perspective. In the third part of Leonardo’s treatise he is talking mainly about the face and he dedicates a short chapter to Physiognomy. He says : “*Della fallace fisonomia e chiromanzia non mi estenderò, perché in esse non è verità; e questo si manifesta perché tali chimere non hanno fondamenti scientifici. Vero è che i segni de' volti mostrano in parte la natura degli uomini, i loro vizi e complessioni;*”<sup>36</sup> (trans.: “I will not extend to the fallacious physiognomy and chiromancy because in them there is no truth; and this occurs because these chimeras have no scientific basis. It is true that the signs of the faces show in part the nature of men, their vices and complexions.”).

It is interesting that Leonardo criticizes Physiognomy but after doing that, he provides a series of examples where the face and especially the wrinkles show perfectly the character of the people. For instance, men with very pronounced faces are “*bestly and wrathful*” and those with deep wrinkles on the forehead are men that

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<sup>34</sup> Da Vinci. *Trattato della Pittura*. p.26.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid p.25.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid p.102.

complain about ridiculous things. In Leonardo's theory of painting there is not much room for Physiognomy but he analyses several facial expressions as result of changes of mind, such as when someone laughs or cries.

In the discourse about the scientific nature of Physiognomy Leonardo is still important because he emphasizes the relationship between painting as visual art and science and mathematics as pure and theoretical science. Observation is the basis of all the conclusions in all different sciences; with this idea Leonardo shows an approach in scientific work that is used by many scientists after him who write about Physiognomy.<sup>37</sup>

A turning point in the discourse around Physiognomy is presented with Giovan Battista Della Porta (1535-1615) and his work *De humana physiognomia*. Della Porta presents one of the most interesting examples of works on Physiognomy. In the introduction Della Porta reviews the history of the physiognomic idea starting from the ancient Greek and Roman writers such as Aristotle, Socrates, Cicero, Seneca, Hippocrates, then he concludes by saying that Physiognomy is still an important science and it creates a lot of interest also in his period. In six books Della Porta explains different forms and functions of Physiognomy. He starts with a predictive idea:

*Fu appresso tutte le nazioni e in tutti i tempi l'arte dell'indovinare utile, illustre e di grandissima magnificenza: né fu gente mai così barbara e selvaggia, che con acceso o sollecito ardore non abbi desiato il voler saper i futuri avvenimenti, bramando conoscer l'inclinazioni degli uomini secondo le varie naturali disposizioni de' corpi umani.*<sup>38</sup>

(trans.: "All nations and in all times were interested in the art of guessing useful, illustrious and great magnificence: neither were there ever people so barbaric and savage, who with burning ardor were not wanting to know the future events, longing to know the inclinations of men according to the various natural features of the human body.").

Moreover, Physiognomy has the function to explain the connection between body and temperament. Della Porta sees himself as a direct disciple of Aristotle, he refers to many of his ideas and he reworks them. The most important research and analysis of Della Porta is the analogy between the human character and animal

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<sup>37</sup> See Magli. *Il volto e l'anima*. Milano, 1995 p.204f.

<sup>38</sup> Giovan Battista Della Porta. *La fisonomia dell'huomo et la celeste*. Venice, 1652 p.1.

nature. Zoological preparation stays at the basis of all the results of Physiognomy: “Però colore che vogliono far profitto in questa scienza, bisogna che studiano con grandissima diligenza i libri dell’historie degl’animali, acciò siano bene informati de’costumi, de’ pensieri, delle descrizioni, et insieme delle lor parti, perché da quei dipende tutta la scienza.”<sup>39</sup> (trans.: “But those who want to make profit in this science, must study with great diligence the books of animal history, to be well informed about their costumes, their thoughts, their descriptions, and all together their parts, because on those depends all the science.”). Lucia Rodler says that the physiognomic judgment is made with selection and combination of the corporal signs of animals or men on various levels:

*Lo scienziato mette in relazione ambiti di realtà diverse, ricercando la somiglianza tra conformazioni ibride (umana e animale), oltre alla semplice identità psicofisica (tal corpo, tal anima). Proprio la teoria degli umori e dei temperamenti [...] rende possibile tale metodo associativo: le medesime cause materiali sono all’origine degli esseri viventi, mentre le differenze qualitative tra le specie sono dovute alle proporzioni degli elementi.*<sup>40</sup>

(trans.: “The scientist brings together different fields of reality, seeking the similarity between hybrid conformations (human and animal), in addition to simple psychophysical identity (this body, this soul). Just the theory of humors and temperaments [...] makes this method of association possible: the same materialistic causes are at the origin of living things, while the qualitative differences between species are due to the proportions of the elements.”)

Rodler discusses a very important idea when she speaks of the physiognomic judgment: as does his model, Aristotle, Della Porta also speaks of signs. At the end of the first chapter when he talks about the physiognomic method he says: “È dunque una scienza che impara da’ segni, che sono fissi nel corpo, e accidenti che trasmutano i segni, investigar i costumi naturali dell’animo.”<sup>41</sup> (trans.: “It is therefore a science learning from signs, which are firm in the body, and accidents that transmute the signs, investigate on the natural costumes of the soul.”). To analyse the signs, physiognomists observe reality as advised by Leonardo Da Vinci and then they use syllogisms in the tradition of Aristotle. Della Porta says for example that he observed a certain characteristic such as strength in animals, which he finds among lions, which have great extremities. So, Della Porta concluded that (A) strength is seen in

<sup>39</sup> Della Porta. *La fisonomia dell’uomo et la celeste*. Venice, 1652 p.39.

<sup>40</sup> Rodler. *Il corpo specchio dell’anima*. Milano, 2000 p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Della Porta. *La fisonomia dell’uomo et la celeste*. Venice, 1652 p.101.

(B) animals with big extremities, and (C) lions (and other animals such as horses, bulls or illustrious men) have (B) big extremities, and so they are (A) strong. Della Porta made on the one side a summary of the ideas already discussed by Aristotle and Leonardo da Vinci, but, on the other side, he also introduces new points of view on the scientific nature of Physiognomy. Generally, Della Porta is mainly focused on human similarity to animals and with that he puts himself in the tradition of (Pseudo) Aristotle. Della Porta's work was a great success because it described Physiognomy for a daily use. Lucia Rodler summarizes the great value of the text in the following way: “[...] *una dottrina di straordinaria estensione, una scienza del dettaglio corporeo, una morale incarnata in figure esemplari, una sapienza medico-alchemica in grado di suggerire la strategia curativa delle passioni.*”<sup>42</sup> (trans.: “[...] a doctrine of extraordinary extension, a science of details of the body, a morality embodied in exemplary figures, a medical-alchemical knowledge able to suggest the curative strategy of the passions.”). For Magli the work's value is shown in the direct reflections on Semiotics: “*La fisiognomica si presenta [...] come una teoria dell'interpretazione che si fonda non su singoli elementi ma sulla loro configurazione complessiva; in altre parole, è una vera e propria semiotica testuale.*”<sup>43</sup> (trans.: “Physiognomy is presented [...] as a theory of interpretation that is based not on individual components but on their overall configuration; in other words, it is a real textual semiotics.”).

The artistic transposition of the ideas of Della Porta is found with Charles LeBrun (1619-1690) and his many sketches and theoretical works (see first Part of this dissertation). A term which is used frequently in the secondary literature to speak about this period is that Physiognomy becomes more “popular”.

During the eighteenth century the physiognomic discourse turns on the publications by Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801). Lavater explains his ideas on Physiognomy in the work *Von der Physiognomik* (1772) and in the four essays *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (1775-1778). Lavater is the first scientist who is aware of the importance of the scientific idea of his work for the critical and public reception. In the

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<sup>42</sup> Rodler. *Il corpo specchio dell'anima*. Milano, 2000 p.51.

<sup>43</sup> Magli. *Il volto e l'anima*. Milano, 1995 p.174.

first volume of his *Fragmente* he dedicates a complete chapter to the question of whether Physiognomy can be called a science. In the chapter *Die Physiognomik, eine Wissenschaft* Lavater starts with the fictional assertion of the public opinion: “Aber nie, und wenn wirklich auch etwas Wahres daran seyn sollte, nie wird di *Physiognomik eine Wissenschaft werden.*”<sup>44</sup> (trans.: “Though there may be some truth in it, still, physiognomy never can be a science.”<sup>45</sup>).

Lavater’s answer is: “*Die Physiognomik kann eine Wissenschaft werden, so gut, als alle unmathematischen Wissenschaften.*”<sup>46</sup> (trans.: “[...] physiognomy is as capable of becoming a science as any one of the sciences, mathematics excepted.”<sup>47</sup>). Lavater presents in the following parts all the non-mathematical sciences: physics, pharmacology, theology and fine arts. Physiognomy is one of the four sciences and has similar properties:

*So, wie diese alle, kann sie bis auf einen gewissen Grad unter bestimmte Regeln gebracht werden, hat sie ihre bestimmbar Charaktere, die sich lehren und lernen, mittheilen, empfangen und fortpflanzen lassen. So wie diese alle muß sie sehr vieles dem Genie, dem Gefühl überlassen; hat sie für vieles noch keine bestimmte, aber bestimmbar Zeichen und Regeln.*<sup>48</sup>

(trans.: “Like all these, it may, to a certain extent, be reduced to rule and acquire an appropriate character, by which it may be taught. As in every other science, so, in this, much must be left to sensibility and genius. At present it is deficient in determinate signs and rules.”<sup>49</sup>).

With the idea of the genius and feelings, Lavater can be seen as a typical example of the period between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. In his work one can see very well the idea of *Empfindsamkeit*, and John Graham talks about the three principles with which Lavater already precedes Romanticism:

*The first is his argument that all created things are individually unique, distinct from all other things. [...] Second, he holds that «Every minute part has the nature and character of the whole [...].» The third corollary is the unity of each individual being: «[...] Each*

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<sup>44</sup> Johann Caspar Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*. Vol. 1 Leipzig, 1775 p.52.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy. For the Promotion of the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*. London, 1789 p.67.

<sup>46</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.1 Leipzig, 1775 p.52.

<sup>47</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.67.

<sup>48</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.1 Leipzig, 1775 p.52.

<sup>49</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.67

*part of an organized body is an image of the whole, has the character of the whole [...]»<sup>50</sup>.*

Lavater takes his ideas many times from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and other philosophers of the Enlightenment. One characteristic of the work of Lavater is that he summarizes all the opinions of the scientists before him, however, explaining everything more clearly and with greater simplicity. To Lavater also the scientific question of Physiognomy is very clear and simple. He says: *“Sobald eine Wahrheit, oder eine Erkenntniß Zeichen hat, so bald ist sie wissenschaftlich, und sie ist es so weit, so weit sie sich durch Worte, Bilder, Regeln, Bestimmungen mittheilen läßt.”<sup>51</sup>* (trans.: “Whenever truth or knowledge is explained by fixed principles, it becomes scientific, so far as it can be imparted by words, lines, rules, and definitions.”<sup>52</sup>).

Once again, as with Aristotle and Della Porta, the importance of the signs is clearly stated. Lavater shows as the basis of his research two principles: *“Beobachtung und Wahrnehmung”<sup>53</sup>* (“Observation and perception”). To Lavater Physiognomy must bring together science with the taste, feelings and genius<sup>54</sup> and it cannot be completely determined. With this observation Lavater defined science not as absolute truth, but as an aid to reach the center of truth. To Lavater Physiognomy must be scientific only to be more accurate, understandable, more teachable<sup>55</sup> and at the end Physiognomy leads men to know humanity better. His work is fragmentary because Lavater is still young and he can know the truth only when he sees God, as he explains in his work. The chapter ends with the formula: *“Dann werd’ ich’s durch und durch erkennen – wie ich – von Dem erkannt bin, aus Dem und durch Den und in Dem alle Dinge sind! Ehre sey Ihm in Ewigkeit! Amen!”<sup>56</sup>* (trans.: “Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as, also, I am known, by him, from whom, and through whom, and in whom are all things; to whom be glory, for ever and ever, Amen!”<sup>57</sup>).

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<sup>50</sup> John Graham. “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 561-572 p.563.

<sup>51</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.1 Leipzig, 1775 p.53.

<sup>52</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.68.

<sup>53</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.1 Leipzig, 1775 p.54.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid* p.55.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid* p.55.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid* p.56.

<sup>57</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.73.



The intention of Lavater, as his fragments tell us, is to help people to better know themselves, humanity in general and – as already seen in the German title – love mankind as God teaches us to do. Graham says that this is also the reason for the success of the work: Lavater presents a work with a certain “*scientific flavor*” that meets the public’s interest in biology, zoology, physiology, anthropology and anatomy, and it also offers the example of the “*modern man*” who reconciles the conflict between science and religion, because he brings science closer to religion.<sup>58</sup> Magli explains the importance of Lavater’s work by showing the efficiency of his doctrine: “*L’efficacia della dottrina di Lavater, infatti, consiste soprattutto nell’aver cercato di dare legittimazione scientifica a quella sorta di percezione fisiognomica diffusa che ciascuno di noi condivide con gli altri.*”<sup>59</sup> (trans.: “The efficiency of the doctrine of Lavater, in fact, consists mainly in having tried to give scientific legitimacy to that sort of widespread physiognomic perception that each of us shares with others.”).

As it has been said, Lavater’s explanations seem clear and simple but exactly this simplicity will be the prelude to the criticism of other scientists and theorists.

Opinions on Lavater are very diverse. Some authors state that, finally and fortunately, Lavater establishes Physiognomy as a science; other authors say that Lavater is only part of the group of scientists who want to justify Physiognomy as a science but do not succeed.

In the paper *Der teutsche Merkur* from 1775 one can find a review of the first volume of the *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* of Lavater where the work is explained as a “*product, one of the most important of the century*” (“eines der wichtigsten Produkte unseres Jahrhunderts”<sup>60</sup>). Lavater, presented as the top expert on the subject of Physiognomy, “*delivers fragments and materials for this new science*”. As a critique of the scientific nature of the work of Lavater one can take the articles and books of

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<sup>58</sup> See Graham. “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England.” (1961) p.562-563.

<sup>59</sup> Magli. *Il volto e l’anima*. Milano, 1995 p.309.

<sup>60</sup> *Der teutsche Merkur* 1775 p.281.

Ellis Shookman for example. He calls the Physiognomy of Lavater a “Pseudoscience”<sup>61</sup>:

*Was die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Physiognomik betrifft, ist Lavaters Werk nur als Pseudowissenschaft einzustufen. Er hat zwar immer wieder behauptet, sie sei oder werde wenigstens bald eine richtige Wissenschaft, aber mit diesem Begriff geht er sehr großzügig um, indem er empirische, logische und auch mathematische Beweise ziemlich durcheinander bringt.*<sup>62</sup>

(trans.: “As for the science of physiognomy, Lavater's work can be classified just as pseudoscience. While he has always claimed that it was or at least was going to become soon a real science, he uses this term quite liberally by messing up the empirical, logical and mathematical proofs.”).

In his opinion, Lavater has a very special definition of science: *“Physiological, intellectual, and moral physiognomy all were related in one integral whole, he explained, so the true physiognomist was a scientist, philosopher, and theologian all at once. To him, that is, “science” was something that now would be called interdisciplinary.*”<sup>63</sup>

Shookman, but also Richard T. Gray<sup>64</sup>, are convinced that the discourse of Lavater on Physiognomy is strongly connected to the semiotic idea of the philosophers of the Enlightenment (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Christian Wolff and Johann Heinrich Lambert).

Lavater's theories generate an animated and heated discussion around the scientific nature and purpose of Physiognomy. Authors of that period, as well as authors and critics in the secondary literature declare Physiognomy to be mainly pseudo-science. This declaration is based on the presumed simplification of scientific groundrules in the definition of Physiognomy.

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<sup>61</sup> See Ellis Shookman. “Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy.” In: Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 1-24.

<sup>62</sup> Ellis Shookman. “Wissenschaft, Mode, Wunder. Über die Popularität von Lavaters Physiognomik.” In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 243-252 p.245.

<sup>63</sup> Shookman. “Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder.” (1993) p.5.

<sup>64</sup> Richard T. Gray. “Aufklärung und Anti-Aufklärung. Wissenschaftlichkeit und Zeichenbegriff in Lavaters „Physiognomik“.” In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 166-178.

From Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799) onwards we find a well articulated criticism of a physiognomic science. But it is Lichtenberg who presents the first example of criticism of Lavater. In 1777 he published in the Göttinger Taschenkalender *Über die Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen*. In the introduction to the second edition Lichtenberg explains his intention before someone can misinterpret it:

*Diese [die Absicht] war gar nicht ein bekanntes weitläufiges Werk zu widerlegen. [...] Ich wollte vielmehr einigen gefährlichen Folgerungen begegnen [...]. Ich wollte hindern, dass man nicht zu Beförderung von Menschenliebe physiognomisierte, so wie man ehemals zu Beförderung der Liebe Gottes sengte und brennte; Ich wollte Behutsamkeit bei Untersuchungen eines Gegenstands lehren, bei welchem Irrtum leichter ist und gefährlicher werden kann, als bei irgend einem andern, Religion ausgenommen,<sup>65</sup>*

(trans.: "This [the intention] was not to disprove a known extensive work. [...] I wanted to address some rather dangerous conclusions. [...] I tried to prevent, that one physiognomices not for the promotion of love of mankind, as one burnt in the past for the promotion of the love of God; I wanted to teach caution in studies of a subject in which error is easier and can be dangerous, than with any other one, except religion.").

Lichtenberg does not criticize Physiognomy in general but he wants to prevent an improper use. He distinguishes between Physiognomy and Pathognomy but he also says that in his time the two words are usually put together and not distinguished one from the other. Pathognomy or "Semiotic of the affects", so the analysis of the temporary face features, is more plausible for Lichtenberg. He is convinced that there are various facial signs that someone can analyse, but he also says that the conclusions can be very arbitrary. For this reason Physiognomy can never become a real science. The character of men is more complex, being the result of several influences which means that its analysis is also more complex. Lichtenberg speaks about the word pairs "*Ideen-Assoziation*" (ideas-association). The idea that we have of a person influences the association of the characteristics: the enemy seems uglier and more terrible, the friend more beautiful and kind. The biggest problem with the credibility of Physiognomy as a science is that men are trying to analyse and understand a reality that was made by God who followed his own divine rules.

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<sup>65</sup> Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. *Über Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen. Zur Beförderung der Menschenliebe und Menschenkenntnis*. 1777 p.3.

Lichtenberg uses a metaphor to explain this conception: “[...] *beurteile Gottes Welt nicht nach der deinigen. Beschneide du deinen Buchsbaum wie du willst, und pflanze deine Blumen nach dir verständlichen Schattierungen, aber beurteile nicht den Garten der Natur nach deinem Blumengärtchen.*”<sup>66</sup> (trans.: “[...] do not judge God's world according to yours. Trim your boxwood as you want, and plant your flowers following your understanding, but do not judge the garden of nature by your flower garden.”).

Lichtenberg says that there is an insoluble problem because on the one hand Physiognomy wants to present absolute and objective results, but on the other hand the results are based on a subjective observation. Lichtenberg denies the scientific nature of Physiognomy but he still talks about the signs and Semiotics. In his opinion, the analysis of these signs is not part of science. Lichtenberg's distinction of Physiognomy and Pathognomy is of crucial importance in the following discourse around the theatre culture.

The critical observation changes when Physiognomy is put together with the Phrenology of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828). Phrenology takes an important place in medicine and since it is also based on the “reading” of signs of the characteristics of the skull, Phrenology helps Physiognomy to gain a certain status as semiotic science.

For two German philosophers, Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer, the connection between Physiognomy and Semiotics is very clear.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) talks about Physiognomy in the chapter *Die anthropologische Charakteristik. Von der Art, das Innere des Menschen aus dem Äußeren zu erkennen* (Anthropological Characteristic. On the way of recognizing the interior of a human being from the exterior) of the *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view, 1798). He defines Physiognomy as follows: “*Sie ist die Kunst, aus der sichtbaren Gestalt eines Menschen, folglich aus dem Äußeren das Innere desselben zu beurtheilen; es sei*

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<sup>66</sup> Lichtenberg. *Über Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen*. 1777 p.43.

seiner Sinnesart oder Denkungsart nach.“<sup>67</sup> (trans.: “Physiognomy is the art of judging a human being’s way of sensing or way of thinking according to his visible form.”<sup>68</sup>).

Kant doesn’t deny the existence of “*physiognomonic characteristics*” (“*physiognomische Charakteristik*”), because men will always judge each other, but this art can never become a science:

*[...] weil die Eigenthümlichkeit einer menschlichen Gestalt, die auf gewisse Neigungen oder Vermögen des angeschauten Subjects hindeutet, nicht durch Beschreibung nach Begriffen, sondern durch Abbildung und Darstellung in der Anschauung oder ihrer Nachahmung verstanden werden kann; wo die Menschengestalt im allgemeinen nach ihren Varietäten, deren jede auf eine besondere innere Eigenschaft des Menschen im Inneren hindeuten soll, der Beurtheilung ausgesetzt wird.*<sup>69</sup>

(trans.: “[...] because the peculiarity of a human form, which indicates certain inclinations or faculties of the subject being looked at, cannot be understood by description according to concepts but only by illustration and presentation in intuition of by an imitation of it; whereby the human form in general is set out to judgment according to varieties, each one of which is supposed to point a special inner quality of the human being.”<sup>70</sup>).

For Kant, observation is essential for the art of Physiognomy, but especially for painting and for the image. Kant calls Physiognomy “*Ausspähkunst*” (“the spy art”) that is based on “*involuntarily given external signs*” (“*gewisser Äußerer unwillkürlich gegebener Zeichen*”<sup>71</sup>). Kant criticizes many of the ideas on Physiognomy and especially the conception of Physiognomy as a science, but he also says that signs are significant to this art. And these signs are given involuntarily, which means they are created by nature on purpose and are not changeable.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) is even more convinced of the significance of the signs when examining human faces. In the chapter *Zur Physiognomik* in *Parerga et Paralipomena* (1851) Schopenhauer justifies the use of Physiognomy. He

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<sup>67</sup> Immanuel Kant. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. 1798.

<sup>68</sup> Robert B. Loudon. *Kant. Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. Cambridge University Press, 2006 p.195.

<sup>69</sup> Kant. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. 1798.

<sup>70</sup> Loudon. *Kant. Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. Cambridge University Press, 2006 p.196.

<sup>71</sup> Kant. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. 1798.

says that all human faces are like “*hieroglyphs*” which can be decrypted with an alphabet we carry around with us (“*Vielmehr ist jedes Menschengesicht eine Hieroglyphe, die sich allerdings entziffern läßt, ja, deren Alphabet wir fertig in uns tragen.*”<sup>72</sup>).

Already with the word “*hieroglyph*” Schopenhauer enters the discourse of signs, because a hieroglyph is like a pictogram, but “the deciphering of a face is certainly a great and difficult art, and the principles of it can never be learnt in the abstract. The first condition of success is to maintain a purely objective point of view, which is no easy matter.”<sup>73</sup> (Original: “*Allerdings aber ist die Entzifferung des Gesichts eine große und schwere Kunst. Ihre Prinzipien sind uns halb angeboren, halb aus der Erfahrung geschöpft und nie in abstracto zu erlernen. Die erste Bedingung dazu ist, daß man seinen Mann mit rein objektivem Blick auffasse; welches so leicht nicht ist.*”<sup>74</sup>).

If men look at each other with subjective eyes, the face and the hieroglyphs become “*confused and corrupt*”<sup>75</sup> (“*[...] irgend etwas Subjektives sich einmischt, verwirrt und verfälscht sich die Hieroglyphe.*”<sup>76</sup>). A completely objective look is possible only the first time. Men must be observed to see how they behave. Pathognomy is used in daily life more often than Physiognomy. Men will always try to hide their real character by changing their expressions with mimicry. Only if one observes men from a hidden position can truth be perceived. And for this reason, according to Schopenhauer, Physiognomy helps to know men better because they do not simulate. Schopenhauer thinks it is easier to know the intellectual capacity of a person than their moral character:

*Anders nun aber, als mit dem Intellektuellen, verhält es sich mit dem Moralischen, dem Charakter des Menschen: dieser ist viel schwerer physiognomisch zu erkennen; weil er, als ein Metaphysisches, ungleich tiefer liegt und mit der Korporisation, dem Organismus, zwar auch zusammenhängt, jedoch nicht so unmittelbar und nicht an einen bestimmten Theil und System desselben geknüpft ist, wie der Intellekt.*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer. *Parerga und Paralipomena* 1851.

<sup>73</sup> Schopenhauer: *Parerga and Paralipomena. A collection of Philosophical Essays*. Translated by T. Bailey Saunders New York: Cosimo, 2007 p.52.

<sup>74</sup> Schopenhauer. *Parerga und Paralipomena*. 1851.

<sup>75</sup> Schopenhauer: *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Translated by T. Bailey Saunders New York, 2007 p.52.

<sup>76</sup> Schopenhauer. *Parerga und Paralipomena*. 1851.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

(trans.: “But what applies to intellectual capacity will not apply to moral qualities, to character. It is more difficult to discern its physiognomy, because, being of a metaphysical nature, it lies incomparably deeper. It is true that moral character is also connected with the constitution, with the organism, but not so immediately or in such direct connection with definite parts of its system as its intellectual capacity.”<sup>78</sup>)

Schopenhauer never uses the word science in this chapter, but he justifies the value of Physiognomy. He is convinced that one can better understand men with this art, if it is used well. By reading the text of Schopenhauer one can see how very well Schopenhauer knows Lavater, Lichtenberg, Kant and Hegel because in many expressions he resumes their ideas or responds directly to their criticism. In addition to talking about signs, Schopenhauer also compares physiognomic analysis and research to a language. The sound of a language is only audible to one who does not understand this language, as signs of the face are visible only to those who do not know the human being.

As has been shown so far, Physiognomy had a large presence in philosophical discussions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As for the first part of the twentieth century, Claudia Schmölders demonstrates that the scientific nature of Physiognomy arrived at a climax in relation to the theories of race and of the selection of elites. Publications of Hans Günther (*Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, 1922) and Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss (*Rasse und Seele*, 1926) on the superior race were seen as a product of that pure science.

In 2004, Richard T. Gray published the volume *About Face. German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), where he explains in detail the supposed connection between race and Physiognomy. As for the scientific idea of Physiognomy in the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, he says:

*Beyond being generally accepted as a legitimate academic-scientific discipline, physiognomics also assumed the character of one of the first widely dispersed movements of modern popular culture. During this period the interpretive “reading” of the facial features of one’s social contacts acquired the status of a parlor game that was de rigueur in the social circles of emergent German civil society, and the*

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<sup>78</sup> Schopenhauer: *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Translated by T. Bailey Saunders New York, 2007p.58.

*exchange of character-revealing silhouettes as a sign of intimacy and friendship became a veritable fad.*<sup>79</sup>

In the first part of this introduction we have shown different and often contradictory ideas on Physiognomy and its importance for European culture. In the second part of the introduction we will examine further the relationship between Physiognomy and literature in order to introduce the main topics of the corpus analysed in this dissertation.

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<sup>79</sup> Richard T. Gray. *About Face. German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004 p.XXX.



## 2. Physiognomy and literature

Analysing the secondary literature about Physiognomy and its connection to literature, one can clearly see how important the influence of Physiognomy was on European literature (see State of the art). One can also clearly see, on the one hand, a peak in the reception of Physiognomy after the publications of Lavater and, on the other hand, an extreme attention on Lavater's analysis of Physiognomy and literature in the secondary literature.

Physiognomy had an influence on all types of literature: we can think about character description in the epic genre, when every feature of the human face has a social and moral importance. Or we can see how the members of the Pléiade (1550s) praise the beauty of their beloved lady:

*De grand' beauté ma Déesse est si pleine,  
Que je ne voy' chose au monde plus belle.  
Soit que le front je voye, ou les yeulx d'elle,  
Dont la clarté sainte me guyde, et meine :*

*Soit ceste bouche, ou souspire une halaine  
Qui les odeurs des Arabes excelle :  
Soit ce chef d'or, qui rendroit l'estincelle  
Du beau Soleil honteuse, obscure et vaine :*

*Soient ces coustaux d'albastre, et main polie,  
Qui mon cœur serre, enferme, estreinct, et lie,  
Bref, ce que d'elle on peult ou voir, ou croyre.*

*Tout est divin, celeste, incomparable :  
Mais j'ose bien me donner ceste gloire,  
Que ma constance est trop plus admirable.<sup>80</sup>*

In the novel we can generally see different physiognomic approaches: we can see characters who use their physiognomic knowledge to make decisions whether to trust somebody; a third person narrator can be seen as physiognomic observer; or the author simply creates the characters and the action according to physiognomical ground rules. Scientific research has already understood the importance of this phenomenon and there are numerous books, articles and papers. The impact of

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<sup>80</sup> Joachim du Bellay. *L'Olive*. Poème VII.

Physiognomy on theatre has not been studied in a very detailed way, and the following section will introduce a physiognomic analysis of the theatre.

## 2.1. Physiognomy and theatre

In this part some examples in the literature before 1780 are presented.

The ancient Greek theatre is characterized by the use of various *prosopon*, or masks, that completely cover the actor's head. The actor, called *hypocrite*, used different masks to change roles. The number of actors used on stage progressively increased: with Thespis (sixth century BC) we have the protagonist; Aeschylus (526-456 BC) adds the Deuteragonist, while Sophocles (495-406 BC) stabilizes the number to three actors with the Tritagonist. Thespis and Aeschylus, together with Choerilus of Samos<sup>81</sup>, are also nominated as the inventors of masks. Thespis invented the masks according to the Souda, and Aeschylus is nominated by Horace in his *Ars Poetica*. The three actors must represent more than one character and the use of masks helps them in their representation. Today we know about the forms and types of masks thanks to the illustrations on vases<sup>82</sup> and from an encyclopedic work in Latin. In the second century AD, Julius Pollux summarized in the fourth book of his *Onomasticon* the masks used in the Greek theatre. He said there were 28 masks for tragedy, 44 masks for comedy and for the satyr play, and 3 special masks for non-human figures. The tragic masks were divided into 17 masks for men (6 old, 8 young, 3 servants) and 11 masks for women (4 old and 7 young). The comic masks were divided into 27 male and 17 female masks.<sup>83</sup>

Giampiera Raina explicitly states in the introduction to *Physiognomonica* of (Pseudo) Aristotle that this work had a great influence on the theatre and actors. As an example she speaks of the influence of the treatise of Aristotle on plays by Menander (342-290 BC).<sup>84</sup> Menander speaks in the drama *Sicyonii* of a young man with white and beardless skin: “[...] *un giovane dalla carnagione nivea, con la pelle*

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<sup>81</sup> Vittorio Gleijeses. *Il teatro e le maschere*. Napoli: Guida Editori, 1972 p.15.

<sup>82</sup> See Luigi Bernabó Brea. *Maschere e personaggi del teatro greco nelle terracotte liparesi*. Roma: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2001; Lâtife Summerer. *Hellenistische Terrakotten aus Amisos. Ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte des Pontosgebietes*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999; Richard Weihe: *Die Paradoxie der Maske. Geschichte einer Form*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004; David Wiles. *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy. From Ancient Festival to Modern Experimentation*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>83</sup> Weihe. *Die Paradoxie der Maske*. München, 2004 p.136.

<sup>84</sup> Pseudo Aristotele. *Fisiognomica*. Edited by Giampiera Raina. Milano, 1993 p.36.

*liscia, imberbe*<sup>85</sup> (trans : “[...] a young man with white, smooth skin, beardless.”). This description is just as Aristotle described the color white as the color of pusillanimity.

Raina says that Pollux also knew the treatise of Aristotle. As an example she says that in the treatise the color red is connected to trickery and shrewdness, and in Pollux’s list all the slaves have red hair.<sup>86</sup> For Raina, the physiognomic discourse of Aristotle is also very important for the actor’s performance skills. Aristotle often explains the voice and movement. For example, he says, “*Who bends too much the body is an adulator*” (“*Chi si piega troppo con il corpo è un adulatore.*”<sup>87</sup>). The actor can take this and other indications to better play the different roles.

In the ancient Latin theatre, speaking of *personae* means to indicate the masks of the actors. Masks were used as much as in the ancient Greek theatre. In the atellanes, for example, there were four types of masks: Maccus, Bucco, Pappus, Dossennus.

Maccus was the young fool; he had a white costume and a mask that covered his hooked nose. Bucco was young and greedy with a huge mouth that made his face seem like a grinning grimace. His character was perfidious and arrogant. Pappus was old and miserly, and was half-naked which emphasized his frivolity. Dossennus was the mischievous hunchback who wanted to show off with his non-existent knowledge. After the treatise by (Pseudo) Aristotle in ancient times, we also find an anonymous treatise in Latin. In this treatise, we explicitly read that the mouth of Bucco shows his character very well: “*Quando os longe prominet et est rotundum cum crassitate labiorum et retortum, immundum, uoracem, stultum ostendit. Porcorum enim haec signa sunt.*”<sup>88</sup> (trans.: “When the mouth is very important, round with thick lips and twisted it shows a nasty, greedy, stupid person. These are actually the signs of pigs.”).

For mimed performances the actors did not use masks, but they were chosen because of their physiognomy, their beauty, but especially their deformities. To create ridiculous and amusing scenes actors with a deformity which passes unnoticed were needed.

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<sup>85</sup> Menandro. *Commedie*. Edited by Guido Paduano. Milano: Mondadori, 1993 p.553.

<sup>86</sup> Pseudo Aristotele. *Fisiognomica*. Milano, 1993 p.36-37.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid p.37.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid p.186.

In the early Middle Ages, a decline of the classical theatre can be seen. Theatrical performances change, for example by introducing a narrator who tells the story, with actors who play mute scenes. The theatre in the classical sense with regular representation in a dedicated space was almost dead.

The poet Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (~930-975) wrote some of the first medieval theatre plays, but they were destined more for reading than for representation on stage. To animate the imagination of the readers, Hrotsvitha explicitly talks about the features of the faces of the characters. For her there is a strong connection between the face and the state of mind. The play *Gallicanus* is a good example:

Gallicanus:

*Silete! Quiescite, augustus reuertit. No ut abiit obscuro, sed uultu admodu sereno.*

Principes:

*Bona fortuna!*

Gallicanus:

*Si eni ut dicit. Speculu mentis est facies. Serenitas faciei mansuetudine forte designat eius animi.*

Principes:

*Ita.*<sup>89</sup>

This is very typical for the religious and epic texts of late antiquity and Early Middle Ages.

Graeme Tytler explains in his work, *Physiognomy in the European Novel. Faces and Fortunes* (Princeton University Press, 1982), that there was a long tradition of using Physiognomy in the epic literature. Hrotsvitha's example shows a similar use of Physiognomy in theatre:

*Character description and physiognomy have been part and parcel of the epic genre since antiquity. We find rudiments of them in Homer's epics, where beauty and ugliness have a moral significance and human beings are physically compared with animals; [...] and*

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<sup>89</sup> Hrotsvitha de Gandersheim. *Gallicanus* <http://www.rarebookroom.org/Control/hvaopa/index.html> (29.05.2013). Gallicanus: Silent! The emperor returns. How dark were his eyes as he walked away, but now, as his face shines! Prince: Good luck! Gallicanus: No, it is not true, they say, the face is the mirror of the soul. Oh look, its features reflect the tranquility of a peaceful soul. Prince: Sure.

*such labeling has more or less the same symbolic function it was to have later in the medieval epic. [...] In most medieval epic verse, the face is the mirror of the soul, beauty being usually the property of Christian heroes and heroines; [...] Physiognomy in medieval literature is generally simple, and is confined mostly to references to family resemblances, nobility of features, pathognomic expressions and gestures, and, occasionally, the deceptiveness of the face.*<sup>90</sup>

Masks were not much used in the medieval theatre and they generally had a very negative connotation. They were seen as masks of the devil and to cover sins; actors who used these masks were condemned to a life outside of society.

On the contrary, in the sixteenth century one finds at the center of everyday life presentations of plays in marketplaces where actors interpreted types with a fixed character. The Italian Commedia dell'Arte, with figures such as Arlecchino, Brighella, Pulcinella, Il Dottore, Colombina, il Capitano etc., created a very important basis for presentations by travelling theatre companies all over Europe.<sup>91</sup>

In German literature one can speak of the Wanderbühne (itinerant troupes). The texts for the theatre were influenced by many elements. In the German speaking area, starting from 1568, Italian, English and Dutch troupes travelled around to show their plays in different cities on different occasions. The physiognomy of the figures is fundamental for the understanding of the play by the spectators. The spectators know, through their different masks and costumes, typical figures as the Pickelhering, Hanswurst, Stockfisch, Hans Knappkäse, Jean Potage ou Schampitasche, Jack Pudding and Signor Macaroni.<sup>92</sup>

One of the great models of the texts for the Wanderbühne is William Shakespeare, because he creates a perfect combination of the low and the high and the grotesque and the dismal. Sibylle Baumbach, in her work *Let me behold thy face. Physiognomik und Geschichtslektüren in Shakespeares Tragödien* (Heidelberg: Winter 2007), provides us with many examples where Shakespeare speaks about

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<sup>90</sup> Graeme Tytler. *Physiognomy in the European Novel. Faces and Fortunes*. Princeton University Press, 1982 p.123.

<sup>91</sup> See Nicola Fanò. *Le maschere italiane*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001; Kenneth and Laura Richards. "Commedia dell'arte." In: Joseph Farrell and Paolo Puppa (ed.). *A History of Italian Theatre*. Cambridge University Press, 2006, 102-123; Roberto Tessari. *Commedia dell'arte. La maschera e l'ombra*. Milano: Mursia, 1981.

<sup>92</sup> See Alfred Noe. *Spieltexte der Wanderbühne. Italienische Spieltexte aus unveröffentlichten Handschriften*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999; Wilhelm Herrmann. *Hoftheater – Volkstheater – Nationaltheater – die Wanderbühnen im Mannheim des 18. Jahrhunderts und ihr Beitrag zur Gründung des Nationaltheaters*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999; Bärbel Rudin. *Wanderbühne. Theaterkunst als fahrendes Gewerbe*. Berlin: Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1988.

the physiognomy of his figures. Shakespeare has a very critical view of Physiognomy as art or precise science. His doubts on the reliability of Physiognomy can be seen in many of his plays. For example, in the fourth scene of the first act of *Macbeth* (1606), Malcolm and Duncan talk about a murder:

Duncan:

*Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not  
Those in commission yet return'd?*

Malcolm:

*My liege,  
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke  
With one that saw him die: who did report,  
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons;  
Implor'd your highness' pardon; and set forth  
A deep repentance: nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it; he died  
As one that had been studied in his death,  
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd  
As 'twere a careless trifle.*

Duncan:

*There's no art  
To find the mind's construction in the face:  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust.*

Duncan is convinced that there is no opportunity to judge the character of a person by looking at its face. Facial features do not indicate “*the construction of the soul*”. Shakespeare as a writer and actor was certainly very interested in Physiognomy and its theories and he wrote a lot about it.<sup>93</sup> Baumbach highlights his importance for successive writers: “*Shakespeare’s descriptions of facial expressions reached such a level of perfection that Charles Darwin quoted from his plays to support his own discoveries.*”<sup>94</sup> While Shakespeare is familiar with Physiognomy, none of his characters are explicitly connected to this art.

One can find a direct connection between the characters and the criticism of Physiognomy as science in the tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612-13) by John

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<sup>93</sup> See Sibylle Baumbach. *Let me behold thy face. Physiognomik und Geschichtslektüren in Shakespeares Tragödien*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2007 and “Voice, Face and Fascination. The Art of Physiognomy in A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2012): 77-91.

<sup>94</sup> Baumbach. “Voice, Face and Fascination.” (2012) p.79-80.

Webster. In a dialogue between Ferdinand and Daniel de Bosola a physiognomic judgment is uttered:

Ferdinand:

*My brother here, the Cardinal, could never  
Abide you.*

Bosola:

*Never since he was in my debt.*

Ferdinand:

*May be some oblique character in your face  
Made him suspect you.*

Bosola:

*Doth he study physiognomy?  
There's no more credit to be given to th' face  
Than to a sick man's urine, which some call  
The physician's whore, because she cozens  
him.  
He did suspect me wrongfully.*

Webster puts Physiognomy on the same level as the medical analysis of urine, ridiculing both “sciences”.

This idea of the problematic nature of Physiognomy is visible also in an important author of French dramatic literature: Pierre Corneille. In the second act of the comedy *Le Menteur* (1643) Clarice, one of the main characters, explicitly speaks of the danger of judging people by their facial expressions:

**ACT II**

Clarice:

*Mais pour le voir ainsi qu'en pourrai-je juger?  
J'en verrai le dehors, la mine, l'apparence;  
Mais du reste, Isabelle, Où prendre  
l'assurance?  
Le dedans paroît mal en ces miroirs flatteurs;  
Les visages souvent sont de doux imposteurs.  
Que de défauts d'esprit se couvrent de leurs  
grâces,  
Et que de beaux semblants cachent des âmes  
basses!  
Les yeux en ce grand choix ont la première  
part;  
Mais leur déférer tout, c'est tout mettre au  
hasard:*

*Qui veut vivre en repos ne doit pas leur  
déplaire,  
Mais sans leur obéir, il doit les satisfaire,  
En croire leur refus, et non pas leur aveu,  
Et sur d'autres conseils laisser naître son feu.*

Corneille is as critical of Physiognomy as Shakespeare and Webster. Clarice does not want to marry Dorante if she does not fully know him. She doesn't want to judge him only by looking at his face.

For Shakespeare, Webster and Corneille, Physiognomy has no right to exist as pure and exact science. They all agree that there are many dangers in judgments based on physiognomic observations. Graeme Tytler notes that in the seventeenth century there are many doubts about Physiognomy: "*The dubiousness of physiognomy or the unreliability of the face had long been a theme in European literature; and despite numerous comments and discussions on the advantages of physiognomy in all genres, it has been virtually a tradition for the literary world to be cautious in its attitudes to the science.*"<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Graeme Tytler. "Letters of Recommendation and False Vizors. Physiognomy in the Novels of Henry Fielding." *Eighteenth-century Fiction* 2/2 (1990): 94-111 p.103.



### 3. State of the art

Physiognomy, as we have already seen in the short introduction and as we will see throughout this dissertation, was a popular topic in many writings during different centuries. The fascination of the topic of Physiognomy is also visible in its presence in scientific research and publications.

The most significant publications on the topic of Physiognomy and its relation to cultural history are those by Christophe Bouton<sup>96</sup>, Flavio Caroli<sup>97</sup>, John Graham<sup>98</sup>, Richard T. Gray<sup>99</sup>, Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler<sup>100</sup>, Lucy Hartley<sup>101</sup>, Andreas Käuser<sup>102</sup>, Patrizia Magli<sup>103</sup>, Juliet McMaster<sup>104</sup>, Melissa Percival<sup>105</sup>, Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt<sup>106</sup>, Christopher Rivers<sup>107</sup>, Lucia Rodler<sup>108</sup>, Claudia Schmolders<sup>109</sup>,

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<sup>96</sup> Christophe Bouton, Valéry Laurand and Layla Raid. *La Physiognomie. Problèmes philosophiques d'une Pseudo-Science*. Paris: Éditions Kimé, 2005.

<sup>97</sup> Flavio Caroli. *Storia della Fisiognomica. Arte e psicologia da Leonardo a Freud*. Milano: Mondadori, 1995.

<sup>98</sup> John Graham. "Lavater's Physiognomy in England." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 561-572; "Lavater's Physiognomy. A Checklist." *Bibliographical Society of America* 55 (1961): 297-308; *Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy. A study in the History of Ideas*. Bern/Frankfurt am Main/Las Vegas: Lang, 1979; "Contexts of Physiognomic Description. Ut Pictura Poesis." In: Ellis Shookman. *The faces of physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Casper Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 139-143.

<sup>99</sup> Richard T. Gray. "The Transcendence of the Body in the Transparency of its En-Signment. Johann Kaspar Lavater's Physiognomical 'Surface Hermeneutics' and the Ideological (Con)Text of Bourgeois Modernism." *Lessing Yearbook* 23 (1991): 127-148; "Sign and Sein. The Physiognomikstreit and the Dispute over the Semiotic Constitution of Bourgeois Individuality." *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literatur und Geistesgeschichte* 66 (1992): 300-332; "Aufklärung und Anti-Aufklärung. Wissenschaftlichkeit und Zeichenbegriff in Lavaters „Physiognomik“." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 166-178; "Physiognomik im Spannungsfeld zwischen Humanismus und Rassismus. Johann Casper Lavater und Carl Gustav Carus." *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 81/2 (1999): 313-337; *About Face. German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004.

<sup>100</sup> Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler. *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994.

<sup>101</sup> Lucy Hartley. *The Grammar of Expression? Physiognomy and the language of the emotions in nineteenth-century England*. University of York, 1995; *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression on Nineteenth-Century Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

<sup>102</sup> Andreas Käuser. *Physiognomik und Roman im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989; "Die Physiognomik des 18. Jahrhunderts als Ursprung der modernen Geisteswissenschaft." *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 42 (1991): 129-144.

<sup>103</sup> Patrizia Magli. *Il volto e l'anima. Fisiognomica e passioni*. Milano: Bompiani, 1995.

<sup>104</sup> Juliet McMaster. *The Index of the Mind. Physiognomy in the Novel*. Lethbridge University Press, 1990; *Reading the Body in eighteenth-century novel*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

<sup>105</sup> Melissa Percival. *The Appearance of Character. Physiognomy and Facial Expression in Eighteenth-Century France*. Leeds, 1999; "Johann Caspar Lavater. Physiognomy and Connoisseurship." *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26 (2003): 77-90; *Physiognomy in Profile. Lavater's Impact on European Culture*. University of Delaware, 2005.

<sup>106</sup> Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen: Zugänge zu Johann Caspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994.

Ellis Shookman<sup>110</sup>, Michael Shortland<sup>111</sup> and Graeme Tytler<sup>112</sup>. These publications show Physiognomy through the centuries. Johann Caspar Lavater is the most discussed theorist. Physiognomy is not only described in relation to philosophy, medicine, race, art and religion but also in relation to literature. The main focus in these studies is on Physiognomy and the novel<sup>113</sup>. Only very few scholars discuss Physiognomy in relation to theatre<sup>114</sup>. This dissertation will bring the connection between Physiognomy and theatre to light, by analysing both famous and almost unknown authors and their work. Some of the relations, which will be shown in detail and contextualized in this dissertation, have already been discussed by other scholars. Goethe's relationship with Lavater and their mutual influence was much

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<sup>107</sup> Christopher Rivers. "L'homme hiéroglyphié". Balzac, Physiognomy, and the Legible Body." In: Ellis Shookman. *The faces of physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 144-160; *Face Value. Physiognomical thought and the legible body in Marivaux, Lavater, Balzac, Gautier and Zola*. Madison, 1994.

<sup>108</sup> Lucia Rodler. *Silenzi mimici. Sulla tradizione fisiognomica italiana fra Cinque e Seicento*. Pisa: Pacini, 1991; *Il corpo specchio dell'anima. Teoria e storia della fisiognomica*. Milano: Mondadori, 2000.

<sup>109</sup> Claudia Schmölders. *Der exzentrische Blick. Gespräch über Physiognomik*. Berlin, 1996; *Das Vorurteil im Leibe. Eine Einführung in die Physiognomik*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2007.

<sup>110</sup> Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy." In: Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 1-24; "Wissenschaft, Mode, Wunder. Über die Popularität von Lavaters Physiognomik." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 243-252.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Shortland. "Skin Deep. Barthes, Lavater and the Legible Body." *Economy and Society* 14 (1985): 273-312; *The Body in Question. Some Perceptions, Problems and Perspectives of the Body in Relation to Character 1750-1850*. Dissertation University of Leeds, 1985; "The Power of a Thousand Eyes. Johann Caspar Lavater's Science of Physiognomical Perception." *Criticism* 28 (1986): 379-408.

<sup>112</sup> Graeme Tytler. *Physiognomy in the European Novel. Faces and Fortunes*. Princeton University Press, 1982; "Letters of Recommendation and False Vizors. Physiognomy in the Novels of Henry Fielding." *Eighteenth-century Fiction* 2/2 (1990): 94-111; "Lavater and the Nineteenth-Century English Novel." In: Ellis Shookman. *The faces of physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 161-181; "Lavater and Physiognomy in English Fiction 1790-1832." *Eighteenth-century Fiction* 7/3 (1995): 1-17.

<sup>113</sup> In addition to the references above: Patricia Blackburn. *La technique physiologique de J. K. Lavater et son influence sur le personnage de roman*. Dissertation Université du Québec, Montréal, 2008; Josh Epstein. "'Neutral Physiognomy'. The Unreadable Faces of Middlemarch." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36 (2008): 131-148; Eva Vigh. *Il costume che appare nella faccia. Fisiognomica e letteratura italiana*. Roma: Aracne, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Sibylle Baumbach. *Let me behold thy face. Physiognomik und Geschichtslektüren in Shakespeares Tragödien*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2007 and "Voice, Face and Fascination. The Art of Physiognomy in A Midsummer Night's Dream." *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2012): 77-91; Ruedi Graf. "Utopie und Theater. Physiognomik, Pathognomik, Mimik und die Reform von Schauspielkunst und Drama im 18. Jahrhundert." In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler: *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994, 16-33; Giovanni Gurisatti. "Die Beredsamkeit des Körpers. Lessing und Lichtenberg über die Physiognomik des Schauspielers." *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 67 (1993): 393-416.

discussed by the scholars in the last 220 years<sup>115</sup>. Denis Diderot, whose theatrical works will be discussed in this dissertation, is also studied in relation to Physiognomy and this relationship was analysed by Jacques Proust<sup>116</sup>. Martin Stern concentrates in his research on Friedrich Schiller's relationship with Lavater<sup>117</sup> while Wolfgang Wittowski<sup>118</sup> and August Ohage<sup>119</sup> research Lessing and Physiognomy. Thomas Holcroft's knowledge of Physiognomy and its application in his works is discussed by David Karr<sup>120</sup> and Diane Long Hoeveler<sup>121</sup>. Due to the lack of any kind of secondary literature related to discussion of Physiognomy by the authors Johann Christian Brandes, Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, Edward Morris, Vittorio Alfieri, Franz Grillparzer, René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt, Marie-Joseph Chénier and James Robinson Planché, this dissertation brings new relevance to often forgotten authors and their work. This dissertation is the first scientific research on the plays *Karl und Sophie, oder Die Physiognomie* by Bretzner, *False Colours* by Morris and *Lavater the Physiognomist, or Not a Bad Judge* by Planché.

Moreover, this dissertation wants to turn attention to theatrical performance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries throughout Europe. In past decades, many theatre and art historians, opera and dance scholars have researched staging

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<sup>115</sup> Janette Friedrich. "Le recours de Humboldt au concept de « physionomie »." *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 53 (2000): 81-99; Richard T. Gray. "Sign and Sein. The Physiognomikstreit and the Dispute over the Semiotic Constitution of Bourgeois Individuality." *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literatur und Geistesgeschichte* 66 (1992): 300-332 and *About Face. German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004; Eduard von der Hellen. *Goethes Anteil an Lavaters „Physiognomischen Fragmenten“*. Frankfurt am Main: Rütten und Loening, 1888; Karl Pestalozzi. "Lavaters Hoffnung auf Goethe." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 260-279; Hans Felix Pfenninger: "Die Freundschaft zwischen Goethe und Lavater." *Schweizer Monatshefte. Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur* 45 (1965-66): 850-860; Ellis Shookman. "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy." In: Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 1-24.

<sup>116</sup> Jacques Proust. "Diderot et la Physiognomie." *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises* 13 (1961): 317-329.

<sup>117</sup> Martin Stern. "Schiller und Lavater." In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler: *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gryter, 1994, 134-152.

<sup>118</sup> Wolfgang Wittkowski. "'Beim Mohamet, wo habe ich meine Augen gehabt!' Zur Charakterdarstellung in Lessings Miß Sara Sampson." In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler. *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gryter, 1994, 34-48.

<sup>119</sup> August Ohage. "Von Lessings «Wust» zu einer Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Physiognomik im 18. Jahrhundert." *Lessing Yearbook* 21 (1989): 55-87.

<sup>120</sup> David Karr. "'Thoughts That Flash like Lightning": Thomas Holcroft, Radical Theater, and the Production of Meaning in 1790s London." *Journal of British Studies* 40 (2001): 324-356.

<sup>121</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler. *Gothic Riffs. Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820*. Ohio State University Press, 2010.

practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most significant research was done by Elena Agazzi<sup>122</sup>, Dene Barnett<sup>123</sup>, Frederick Burwick<sup>124</sup>, Lilla Maria Crisafulli<sup>125</sup>, Paola Degli Esposti<sup>126</sup>, Cristina Jandelli<sup>127</sup>, Jane Moody<sup>128</sup>, Joseph R. Roach<sup>129</sup>, and Shearer West<sup>130</sup>. With this dissertation the work of the above mentioned scholars is enriched with a new reading and interpretation of the art of acting. The science of Physiognomy is studied in relation to the acting manuals and theoretical work on passions, emotions and affects.

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<sup>122</sup> Elena Agazzi. *Il corpo conteso. Rito e gestualità nella Germania del Settecento*. Milano: Jaca Book, 2000.

<sup>123</sup> Dene Barnett. *The Art of Gesture. The practices and principles of 18<sup>th</sup> century acting*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1987.

<sup>124</sup> Frederick Burwick. "Joanna Baillie, Matthew Baillie and the pathology of passions." In: Thomas C. Crochunis (ed.). *Joanna Baillie, Romantic Dramatist. Critical Essays*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004, 48-68; *The Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature. Vol. 1 A-G*. Wiley Blackwell, 2012; "Georgian Theories of the Actor." In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832*. Edited by Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, 2014, 177-191.

<sup>125</sup> Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilia Pietropoli (ed.). *The Languages of Performance in British Romanticism*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008; Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Keir Elam (ed.). *Women's Romantic Theatre and Drama. History, Agency, Performance*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010; Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Fabio Liberto (ed.). *The Romantic Stage. A Many-Sided Mirror*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014; "Dramatic Illusion and Sympathetic Curiosity in Romantic Drama." In: Virginia Mason Vaughan, Fernando Cioni and Jacquelyn Bessel (ed.). *Speaking Pictures. The Visual/Verbal Nexus of Dramatic Performance*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010, 164-178; "Joanna Baillie: «a female Shakespeare»." In: Joanna Baillie. *Leggenda di Famiglia*. Edited by Lilla Maria Crisafulli, Liana Battelli. Bononia University Press, 2007, 4-36.

<sup>126</sup> Paola Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). Poetiche teatrali e tecniche d'attore*. Padova: Esedra editrice, 2001; *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). I luoghi teatrali, i generi, la spettacolarità*. Padova: Esedra editrice, 2003.

<sup>127</sup> Cristina Jandelli. *I ruoli nel teatro italiano tra Otto e Novecento. Con un dizionario in 68 voci*. Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 2002.

<sup>128</sup> Jane Moody. *Illegitimate Theatre in London. 1770-1840*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>129</sup> Joseph R. Roach. *The Player's Passion. Studies in the Science of Acting*. University of Delaware Press, 1985.

<sup>130</sup> Shearer West. *The Image of the Actor. Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble*. London: Pinter, 1991.

## 4. Methodology

In this short introduction to Physiognomy, to its scientific nature and to its connection to literature, some key elements of the whole dissertation emerge: the importance of observation (see Leonardo Da Vinci, Kant) and the readable signs in each human being's face (see Aristotle, Lavater, Lichtenberg, Schopenhauer). These two elements are seen throughout the dissertation, especially in the creation of an analysed corpus of literary works and they can be brought together under the heading of the term Semiotics.

Semiotics (Greek *semeion* for "sign") – the science of signs<sup>131</sup> – has a wide usage in the text analysis. Hereafter the Semiotics of Theatre/ Theatrical Performance will be more important. The Semiotics of Theatre is a subfield of Semiotics discussed since the 1920s in different contexts all over Europe.

Keir Elam in his work *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen & Co., 1980) and the revised and extended version *Semiotica del Teatro* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988) unites different ideas and theories of Semiotics and theatre by discussing the main theorists of the twentieth century and his work is therefore used in the following explanation as basis and frame. Elam divides his analysis into two main parts by calling their content *Performance* and *Fiction*:

*«Theatre» is taken to refer here to the complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: that is, with the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and with the systems underlying it. By «drama», on the other hand, is meant that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular («dramatic») conventions.<sup>132</sup>*

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<sup>131</sup> "Unter Semiotik versteht man eine allgemeine Theorie der Zeichen." (Werner Welte. *Moderne Linguistik. Terminologie/Bibliographie*. München: Hueber, 1974 p.575.); "Semiotics can be best defined as a science dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in the society. As such it is equally concerned with processes of signification and of those of communication, i.e. the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged." (Keir Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Methuen & Co, 1980 p.1.); "Semiotics can be conceived of either as a unified theoretical approach to the great variety of systems of signification and communication, and in this sense it constitutes a metalinguistic discourse dealing with any of its objects by means of homogeneous categories, or it can be conceived as a description of those various systems insisting on their mutual differences, their specific structural properties, their idiosyncrasies - from verbal language to gestures, from visual images to body positions, from musical sounds to fashions." (Umberto Eco. "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance." *The Drama Review TDR. Theatre and Social Action Issue 21* (1977): 107-117 p.108.).

<sup>132</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.2.

The different material which needs to be analysed in his work is seen as the basis of the creation of a corpus in this research: the material is divided into “*that produced in the theatre and that composed for the theatre.*”<sup>133</sup> The material produced in the theatre is the “*performance text*” and the material composed for the theatre is the “*dramatic text*”. This division is discussed also by many other theorists who worked on the Semiotics of theatre throughout the twentieth century.<sup>134</sup>

In the first part – dedicated to performance – Elam speaks mainly of the Prague linguistic school with reference to the idea of signs, icons and symbols of Peirce, and quoting Otakar Zich, Jan Mukařoský, Jiří Veltruský and Tadeusz Kowzan. He also uses Eco’s model of elementary communication, such as Proxemics and Kinesics.

The Prague school started their linguistic work in the 1920s and mainly influenced the fields of Semiotics, Phonology and Linguistics by discussing issues such as structuralistic text analysis and development of languages in general. Otakar Zich for example states in his work *Estetika dramatického umění* (The Esthetics of Dramatic Art, 1931) that the performance has two aspects: (1) technical aspect (created on the stage) and (2) imaginary aspect (perceived by the audience)<sup>135</sup>.

Summarizing, Elam says: “*The first principle of the Prague School theatrical theory can best be termed semiotization of the object. The very fact of their appearance on stage suppresses the practical function of phenomena in favor of a symbolic or signifying role, allowing them to participate in dramatic representation.*”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.3.

<sup>134</sup> See Jean Alter. “From the Text to Performance. Semiotics of Theatricality” *Poetics Today Drama, Theatre, Performance. A Semiotic Perspective* 2 (1981): 113-139; Ruth Amossy. “Semiotics and Theatre. By Way of Introduction” *Poetics Today Drama, Theatre, Performance. A Semiotic Perspective* 2 (1981): 5-10; Elaine Aston and George Savona. *Theatre as Sign-System. A Semiotics of Text and Performance*. London: Routledge, 1991; Petr Bogatyrev. “Semiotica del teatro popolare” In: Jurij M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskij (ed.). *Ricerche semiotiche*. Torino: Einaudi, 1973, 5-25; Umberto Eco. “Semiotics of Theatrical Performance.” *The Drama Review TDR. Theatre and Social Action Issue* 21 (1977): 107-117; Erika Fischer-Lichte. *Semiotik des Theaters. Eine Einführung*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1983; André Helbo (ed.). *Sémiologie de la représentation théâtrale*. Brussels: Complexe, 1975; Patrice Pavis. *Problèmes de sémiologie théâtrale*. La Presse de l’Université du Québec, 1976.

<sup>135</sup> František Deák. “Structuralism in Theater. The Prague School Contribution.” *The Drama Review TDR. Theatrical Theory Issue* 20 (1976): 83-94.

<sup>136</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.8.

The actor is at the centre of this “*semiotization of the object*” since he is the main presence in the theatrical performance: his speech, his expression, his mimes, his gestures and his postures become “*signifying units*”<sup>137</sup>.

Tadeusz Kowzan (1922-2010) assigns the status of object in the semiotic process not only to the actor, but “*everything is a sign in a theatrical presentation*”<sup>138</sup>. These signs can be divided into natural signs and artificial signs<sup>139</sup>. The important thing for the Semiotics of Theatre is that: “*Le spectacle transforme les signes naturels en signes artificiel (l'éclair), il a donc le pouvoir d'«artificialiser» les signs. Même s'ils ne sont dans la vie que réflexes, ils deviennent au théâtre des signes volontaires.*”<sup>140</sup> (trans.: “The spectacle transforms natural signs into artificial ones (a flash of lighting), so it can «artificialize» signs. Even if they are only reflexes in life, they become voluntary signs in the theatre.”)

Kowzan developed a sign system listing 13 categories which interact with the 5 categories of theatrical codes:

1. word	I. spoken text	actor	auditive signs	time	auditive signs (actor)
2. tone					
3. mime	II. expression of the body		visual signs	space and time	visual signs (actor)
4. gesture					
5. movement					
6. make-up	III. actor's external appearance	outside	visual signs	space	visual signs (actor)
7. hairstyle					
8. costume					
9. accessory	IV. appearance of the stage	the actor	auditive signs	space and time	visual signs (outside the actor)
10. decor					
11. lightning					
12. music	V. inarticulate sounds		auditive signs	time	auditive signs (outside the actor)
13. sound effects					

<sup>137</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.9.

<sup>138</sup> Tadeusz Kowzan. “Le signe au théâtre: introduction à la sémiologie de l'art du spectacle.” *Diogenes* 61 (1968): 59-90 p.64.

<sup>139</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980: “natural signs are determined by strictly physical laws by whereby signifier and signified are bound in a direct cause- and-effect relationship; Artificial signs depend upon the intervention of human volition.” p.20.

<sup>140</sup> Kowzan. “Le signe au théâtre.” (1968) p. 68.

Kowzan's analysis is useful to our discussion because he concentrates his research on the performance and the actor. However, he leaves out the audience and its response to the performance which is also important in the analysis in this dissertation.

The work of Charles Saunders Peirce (1839-1914) is fundamental for the Semiotics of the theatre because of his triadic understanding of the sign (icon, index, symbol). The icon is relevant in Elam's work and he summarizes Peirce's explanation by saying: "*The governing principle in iconic signs is similitude; the icon represents its object «mainly by similarity» between the sign-vehicle and its signified.*"<sup>141</sup>

Elam states: "*The theatre appears, [...], to be the perfect domain of the icon: where better to look for direct similitude between sign-vehicle and signified than in actor-character relationship?*"<sup>142</sup>

Umberto Eco is one of the leading theorists of Semiotics in general and theatrical Semiotics in detail. Eco's ground rule is: "*[...] the semiotics of theatre is nothing but an arithmetic sum of the semiotics analyses of other forms of communication.*"<sup>143</sup> He explains that for the analysis of theatre we need a naive attitude towards theatre and the Semiotics of theatrical performance and he used the famous short story *La Busca de Averroes* by Jorge Luis Borges to show this attitude. Eco concludes that, "*the elementary mechanisms of human interaction and the elementary mechanisms of dramatic fiction are the same. [...] It is not the theatre that is able to imitate life; it is social life that is designed as a continuous performance and, because of this, there is a link between theatre and life.*"<sup>144</sup> Elam uses the model of elementary communication to explain his theatrical communication model:

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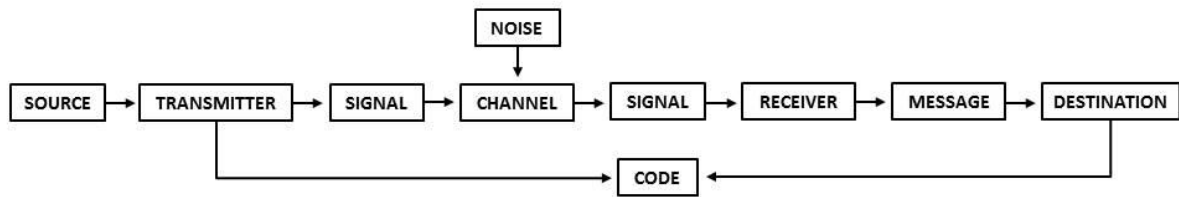
<sup>141</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.21.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid p.22.

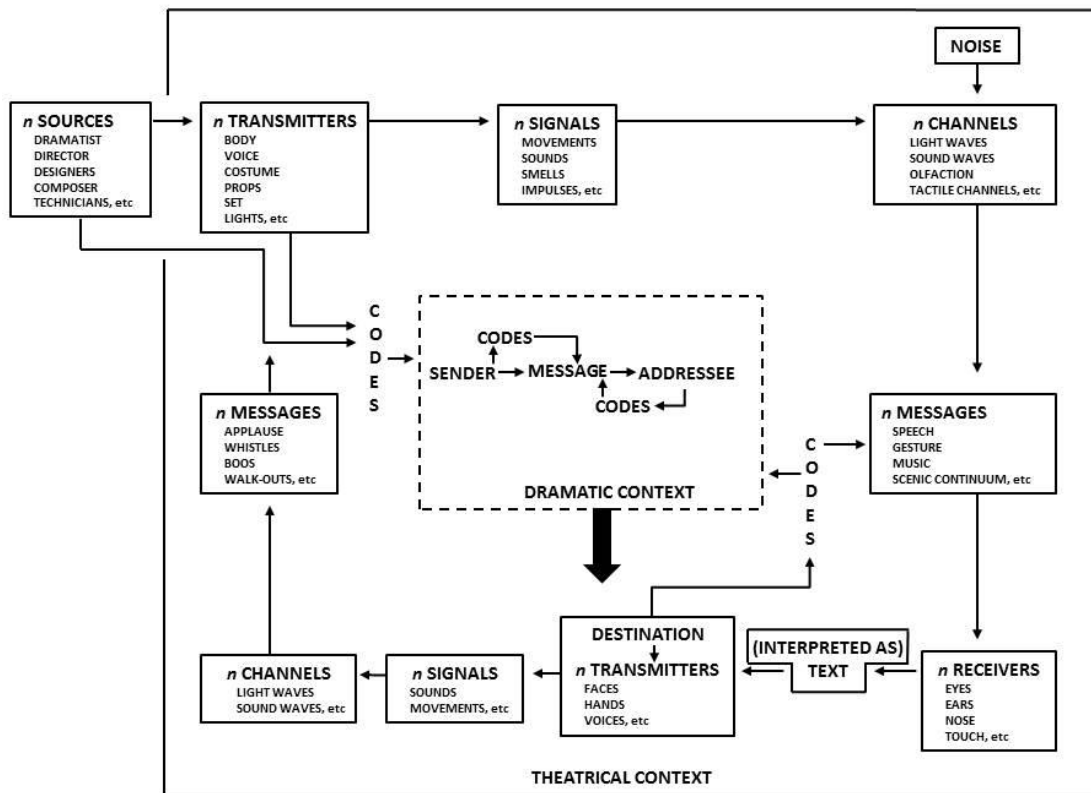
<sup>143</sup> Eco. "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance." (1977) p.108.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid p.113.





An elementary communication model<sup>145</sup>



A simplified theatrical communication model<sup>146</sup>

The connection between the two models, and the purpose of an elaborated model of theatrical communication, is that “*the performance brings about a multiplication of communicational factors*”<sup>147</sup>. Elam explains that this multiplication leads to numerous messages in the performance, which derive from the different codes at work in a performance: the theatrical codes (performance rules) and the dramatic codes (generic, structural and stylistic rules) are embedded in the “*whole framework of more general cultural, ideological, ethical and epistemological*

<sup>145</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.36.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid p.39.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid p.37.

*principles*<sup>148</sup>. Subcodes – produced by overcoding or *ipercodifica*<sup>149</sup> – are needed in order to understand the relationship between the different codes and their manifestation on the stage. The interaction between cultural codes and theatrical and dramatic subcodes is grouped following different principles: systemic, linguistic, generic intertextual, textual structural, formal presentational, epistemic, aesthetic, logical, behavioural ethical, ideological, psychological and historical principles.

Elam states that the space where the actors move and speak is extremely important in the drama and so two sciences, born in the 1950s and 1960s, need to be described and analysed: Proxemics, “*the semiotics of spatial distances*” and Kinesics, “*the semiotics of gestures and body movements*”<sup>150</sup>. Proxemics was defined by Edward T. Hall, its main theorist, as “*the interrelated observations and theories of man’s use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture*”<sup>151</sup>. Hall speaks about four types of spaces within which the individual moves:

- 1) Intimate space (closest space, includes movements such as touching and whispering)
- 2) Personal space (larger space opening towards others, in this case close friends and family members)
- 3) Social space (space containing interactions among acquainted people)
- 4) Public space (dedicated to public speaking and public representation)

These four spaces can be further subdivided into near and far, and they thus create an “*eight-point scale for the measurement of the body-to-body dialectic*”<sup>152</sup>. Elam connects the theory of Hall to drama and performance by speaking about the three “*principal proxemic «syntactic» systems*”<sup>153</sup>:

- 1) Fixed-feature (“static architectural configurations”: the theatre/playhouse itself)
- 2) Semi-fixed-feature (“movable but non-dynamic objects such as furniture”: the set, lighting)
- 3) Informal (“ever-shifting relations of proximity and distance between individuals”<sup>154</sup>: actor-actor, actor-spectator, spectator-spectator)

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<sup>148</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.52.

<sup>149</sup> See Umberto Eco. *Trattato di Semiotica generale*. Milano: Bompiani, 2002 p.135f.

<sup>150</sup> Eco. “Semiotics of Theatrical Performance.” (1977) p.117.

<sup>151</sup> Edward T.Hall. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday, 1966 p.1.

<sup>152</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.65.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid p.62.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid p.62f.

The third principle is clearly linked to Kinesics. The movements of bodies on stage are one kind of communication between individuals. Ray L. Birdwhistell defines Kinesics as “*the study of body motion, communication, and the need for the location of natural contexts of occurrence in the study of human behaviour*”<sup>155</sup>. Its object of study is non-verbal communication. Birdwhistell analyses body movement almost as a linguist would analyse language; he also divides the motions into different classes/particles: kinemes, kinemorphs, kinemorphems and a complex kinemorphic construction. Birdwhistell clearly states that in communication there are different channels, and gesture considered as body movement will never stand alone. Kinesic theory is strongly linked to deixis and the speech act, which are explained and analysed in the second part of Elam’s work.

Elam introduces the second part of his work – about Fiction – by saying that:

*The effective construction of the dramatic world and its events is the result of the spectator’s ability to impose order upon a dramatic content whose expression is in fact discontinuous and incomplete.*

*It should not be thought that a reader of dramatic texts constructs the dramatic world in the same way as a spectator: not only does the latter have to deal with more varied and specific kinds of information (through the stage vehicles), but the perceptual and temporal conditions in which he operates are different.*<sup>156</sup>

Elam decides to subdivide the second part of his work into two main areas: Dramatic Logic - where he speaks about the “theory of the possible worlds”, temporal levels, *fabula* and *sjuzet*, actantial roles; and Dramatic discourse – where he explains the speaker-listener relationship, based on deixis and the speech acts. He concludes this chapter with the proposal of an eighteen-column scheme for the analysis of dramatic texts.

The theory of the possible worlds has a long history in European philosophy starting from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and his idea that we live “*in the best of all possible worlds*” (*Essais de théodicée*, 1710). This theory had many applications in different fields; in literature it is linked to the idea of the creation of a fictional

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<sup>155</sup> Ray L. Birdwhistell. *Kinesics and Context. Essays on Body Motion Communication*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970 p.XI.

<sup>156</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.99.

world<sup>157</sup>. Elam assumes that: “A semiotic – *opposed to logical* – *theory of possible worlds is concerned with the «world-creating» operations of texts and the conceptual labour they call from their decoders (readers, spectators, etc.).*”<sup>158</sup> For Umberto Eco the possible world is a “*possible state of affairs*” and/or “*a possible course of events*”<sup>159</sup>. While analysing a drama, it is important to keep in mind that there is still a difference between a possible state of affairs, a possible course of events, an imaginary world and a “*hypothetically actual construct*”:

*Dramatic worlds [...] are presented to the spectator as «hypothetically actual» constructs, since they are «seen» in progress «here and now» without narratorial mediation. Dramatic performance metaphorically translates conceptual access to possible worlds into «physical» access, since the constructed world is apparently shown to the audience – that is ostended – rather than being stipulated or described.*<sup>160</sup>

The theory of the possible dramatic worlds introduces the discourse about time as it discusses the idea of sequences of action and events. Elam distinguishes between four temporal levels in a drama:

- 1) Discourse time: “*the temporal deixis which actualizes the dramatic world*”<sup>161</sup>
- 2) Plot time: “*It is in effect the structure of dramatic information within the performance time proper.*”<sup>162</sup>
- 3) Chronological time: “*actual temporal ordering events*”<sup>163</sup>
- 4) Historical time: “*identifies [...] the precise counterfactual background to the dramatic representation.*”<sup>164</sup>

Elam uses the explanation of the four temporal levels to introduce the distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet*, story and plot, because the chronological time is part of the *fabula*. Elam wants to show that in literature this distinction is necessary

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<sup>157</sup> See Ludomir Doležel. “Mimesis and Possible Worlds.” *Poetics Today. Aspects of Literary Theory* 9 (1988): 475-496; Umberto Eco. *The Role of the Reader*. Indiana University Press, 1979; Thomas G. Pavel: “Possible Worlds’ in Literary Semantics.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34 (1975): 165-176.

<sup>158</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.101.

<sup>159</sup> Eco. *The Role of the Reader*. Indiana University Press, 1979 p.219.

<sup>160</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.111.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid p.117.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid p.118.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid p.118.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid p.118.

and clearly visible, but this is not the case in the drama, because the representation is not linear, but discontinuous and incomplete. *Fabula* refers to “the basic story-line of the narrative”<sup>165</sup> and *sjuzet* “is the organization in practice of the narration itself”<sup>166</sup>. The main element of the *fabula* is the action, which is made of six constitutive elements: “an agent, his intention in acting, the act or act-type produced, the modality of the action (manner and means), the setting (temporal, spatial and circumstantial) and the purpose”.<sup>167</sup> From these six elements the main expressions for the distinction of action are: intention and purpose. According to different scholars action is structured in basic and compound or higher-order actions, in sequences, in series and in interactions. Manfred Pfister dedicates a whole part of his work *Das Drama. Theorie und Analyse* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1977) to the distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet*, and consequently to the action (“*Handlung*”), where he explains these different structures. The action has a triadic structure made of “*Ausgangssituation*” (“initial/starting situation”), “*Veränderungsversuch*” (“attempt of change”) and “*veränderte Situation*” (“changed situation”).<sup>168</sup> Pfister’s detailed explanations introduce terms as “*Haupthandlung*” and “*Nebenhandlung*”<sup>169</sup>, which are of crucial importance in any text analysis. The definition of open and closed drama, following the theories by Gustav Freytag and Volker Klotz, shows the composition of action.

The agent, described as one of the six constitutive elements of action, covers different roles in a play. The six actantial roles developed by Etienne Souriau in his work *Les 200.000 situations dramatiques* (1950) are: The Lion, The Sun, The Earth, Mars, The Scale and the Moon. Each role is combined with different characteristics, for example, the Lion is the protagonist and his characteristics are Love, Ambition, Honor and Jealousy.<sup>170</sup> Algirdas Julien Greimas uses this model and the one introduced by Vladimir Propp to create his six actantial roles united in pairs: the subject (*le sujet*) and the object (*l’objet*), the sender (*le destinateur*) and the receiver (*le destinataire*), the helper (*l’adjuvant*) and the opponent (*l’opposant*).<sup>171</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.119.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid p.119.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid p.121.

<sup>168</sup> Manfred Pfister. *Das Drama. Theorie und Analyse*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977 p.269.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid p.286f.

<sup>170</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.126.

<sup>171</sup> Algirdas Julien Greimas. *Sémantique structurale. Recherche et méthode*. Paris: Larousse, 1966.

The chapter dedicated to the dramatic discourse includes mainly the relationship between a speaker and a listener, the theory of deixis and the speech acts.

In the chapters about the performance, the relationship between the performer (actor) and the spectator was important. In this second part, the dramatic text is central and the relationship between speaker and listener becomes more relevant. Elam does not want to assign the roles *speaker* and *listener* but he makes a short catalogue of capacities and qualities these two must have:

- 1) A linguistic competence
- 2) A communicative and semiotic competence
- 3) A background knowledge of persons, objects and events
- 4) A social status giving the speaker authority to make certain utterances and determining the listener's duty or right to receive such utterances
- 5) A set of intentions and purposes
- 6) The ability to assume each other's roles
- 7) The capacity to create non-actual worlds
- 8) A location in an actual spatio-temporal context<sup>172</sup>

These eight capacities and qualities are central for any further consideration on the linguistic interchange between speaker and listener. The theory of deixis is one example where the above set of capacities and qualities is very important.

Deixis includes all the words which cannot stand alone in a sentence and need to be combined with others in order to be understood (context and references). In the dramatic text the main deictic expressions are: personal pronouns (The speaker, *I*, is addressing to the listener, *you*), spatial adverbs (*here*, *there*) and temporal adverbs (*now*, *then*). Elam explains the strong bond between drama and deixis as: "*Deixis, [...], is what allows language an «active» and dialogic function rather than a descriptive and choric role.*"<sup>173</sup> Gestures are relevant in the use of deictic expressions. Elam states that the dramatic discourse is "*egocentric*"<sup>174</sup> because the *I* in the *here* and *now* is more important than the *they* in *there* and *then*. As final comment Elam says that, "*spatial deixis [...] takes priority over the*

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<sup>172</sup> See Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.136f.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid p.139.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid p.143.

*temporal*".<sup>175</sup> This comment is clearly connected on the one hand to the stage as space, but also to the proxemic and kinesic idea of the *I* moving and staying in this space.

In 1955 John Langshaw Austin, in his lecture *How to do Things with Words*, develops the main and ground rules of what will be called speech act theory. Austin's aim and purpose with this lecture is to show that the assumptions of several philosophers and scholars before him are wrong: "*It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a «statement» can only be to «describe» some state affairs, or to «state some fact», which it must do either truly or falsely.*"<sup>176</sup> At first he divides statements into performative and constative sentences, but then he understands that this division is not really working because the two types are not so clearly divisible. Austin decides to organize every statement into three different kinds of acts, emphasizing the importance of the second kind:

- 1) The locutionary act ("*The act of saying something in this full normal sense*"<sup>177</sup>) is subdivided into:
  - i. Phonetic (the act of uttering certain noises)
  - ii. Phatic (the uttering of certain vocables or words)
  - iii. Rhetic act (performance of an act of using those vocables with a more-or-less definite sense and reference)
- 2) The illocutionary act ("*performance of an act in saying something*"<sup>178</sup>)
- 3) The perlocutionary act ("*Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either (C. a), only obliquely, or even (C. b), not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act.*"<sup>179</sup>)

Austin's disciple and colleague, John R. Searle, also concentrates mainly on the illocutionary act. He subdivides illocution into five classes (quoting also Austin):

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<sup>175</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.143.

<sup>176</sup> John Langshaw Austin. *How to do Things with Words. The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford University Press, 1962 p.1.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid p.94.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid p.99.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid p.101.

- 1) Representatives (“commit the speaker [...] to something’s being the case, to the truth of the expressed preposition”)
- 2) Directives (“are attempts [...] by the speaker to get the hearer to do something”)
- 3) Commissives (“to commit the speaker [...] to some future course of action”)
- 4) Expressives (“to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content”)
- 5) Declarations (“to bring about some new state of affairs solely in virtue of the utterance”<sup>180</sup>)

Umberto Eco, who applies the Speech act theory to the theatre, reassumes the ideas of Austin and Searle by pointing out that:

*In a certain sense every dramatic performance [...] is composed by two speech acts. The first one is performed by the actor who is making a performative statement – «I am acting». By this implicit statement the actor tells the truth since he announces that from that moment on he will lie.*

*The second one is represented by a pseudo-statement where the subject of the statement is already the character, not the actor. Logically speaking, those statements are referentially opaque.*<sup>181</sup>

In his examples Eco connects the speech act theory to the theory of the possible worlds, since it is the actor with his words who is creating the “possible world of performance, a world of lies”<sup>182</sup>.

Elam also simplifies the theory of Austin and Searle by stating that: “*Dramatic discourse is a network of complementary and conflicting illocutions and perlocutions: in a word, linguistic interaction, not so much descriptive as performative.*”<sup>183</sup> Speech acts are clearly linked to the ideas of action, of performance and fiction, of relationship between speaker and listener and performer and spectator and to communication flows.

To summarize his complete theory Elam presents at the end of his work the eighteen-column scheme, which “represents what is very much a micro-

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<sup>180</sup> John R. Searl. “A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts.” In: Keith Gunderson (ed.). *Language, Mind and Knowledge*. University of Minnesota Press, 1975, 344-369 p.350f.

<sup>181</sup> Eco. “Semiotics of Theatrical Performance.” (1977) p.115.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid p.115.

<sup>183</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.159.



*segmentation of the text in question*"<sup>184</sup>. Elam creates on the basis of his analysis eighteen columns, according to their semiotic functions (pragmatic, rhetorical and semantic rules). The eighteen columns are<sup>185</sup>:

- 1) Verse
- 2) Segment
- 3) Speaker
- 4) Listener
- 5) Deictic orientation
- 6) Tense
- 7) Channel
- 8) Topic/object of discourse
- 9) Illocutionary force
- 10) Explicit performative
- 11) Perlocutionary effect
- 12) Implicatures/rhetorical figures
- 13) Modality/propositional attitudes
- 14) Anaphora
- 15) Metalanguage
- 16) Other functions
- 17) Lexemes/isotopies/semantic paradigms
- 18) Cultural codes

To show clearly the use of this scheme Elam analyses the first seventy-nine lines of *Hamlet*.

This introduction to the methodology of the Semiotics of Theatre will be a central thread throughout the whole dissertation. In several parts of this dissertation, the theories introduced here will become significant for our analysis. In the first part of this dissertation – dedicated to the influence of Physiognomy on theatrical performance – the actor as object (see Prague School), the distinction between artificial and natural signs (see Kowzan), the theatrical communication (see Eco), the spatial distances (see Proxemics) and the gestures and body movements (see Kinesics) are all taken into account. In the second part – which will deal with the

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<sup>184</sup> Elam. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London, 1980 p.185.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid* p.185f.

presence of Physiognomy in the plays – crucial elements of the first part are connected to the story and plot of different plays: the actantial roles are linked to communication, the relationship between speaker and listener to Proxemics, Deixis and Speech act are clearly connected to action and interaction. Two columns of Elam's eighteen column scheme are, in particular, of great importance in the analysis of the plays:

- 7) Channel: physical channels along which the characters operate (following visual and acoustic channels linked to physical, mental and emotional communication acts). The theory of different channels is linked to the physiognomical analysis of the human face and expressions of the body movement.
- 18) Cultural codes: social, ideological, religious, moral, epistemological and intellectual norms are indicated in the dialogue. These norms are also linked to the physiognomical analysis and examination.

## PART I.

### The influence of Physiognomy on the theatrical performance

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century the theatres throughout Europe experienced many changes: some were similar in different nations, others on the contrary were very specific. In general it can be seen that the discourse around the theatre related to some main topics:

Social, political and moral changes were reflected on theatre stages, the place of theatre between entertainment and education was discussed, a new role of the actor in society and on stage was becoming important, the perfect environment for the performance on stage was sought with the creation of new theatres, the increase in theatrical production brought about new genres and the press got an important role with new literary journals.

In this part of the dissertation topics related to theatrical performance will be discussed: theories related to the actor, the art of acting, the theatre as space and the purpose of theatre. In the second part of the dissertation the theatrical play is in the centre of discussion: the genres used and the importance of the press in the understanding of the play.

Erika Fischer-Lichte describes theatre as a cultural system, based on three elements: an actor (A), who embodies a role (X), while being watched by the audience (S)<sup>186</sup>. Theatrical Codes organize the possibility that (A) embodies (X) in front of (S) and these codes can be classified. The starting point of the classification is the formula that, (A) can embody (X) in front of (S), only if (A) moves (1) in a specific way, (2) with a specific appearance (3) in a specific space.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See Fischer-Lichte. *Semiotik des Theaters*. Tübingen, 1983 Vol. 1 *Das System der theatralischen Zeichen* p.16.

<sup>187</sup> See *ibid* p.25f.

- (1) in a specific way: the movement of the actor creates visual (mimic, gestural and proxemic signs) and acoustic (linguistic and paralinguistic signs) kinesic signs;
- (2) with a specific appearance: natural and artificial signs of the actor;
- (3) in a specific space: the space, where the actor is moving, and the space where the audience is located are organized through the room concept, the decoration, setting and lighting.

As already explained in detail in the methodological introduction, all the signs related to the theatre are described in different occasions in this dissertation. The movement of the actor on stage and the creation of different kinesic signs will be discussed in the next chapters as well as the natural and artificial signs. In the following chapters the theatre is seen as specific space. In this discussion the relation between the theatre as space and the movement of the actor within this space is shown. These chapters aim at focusing on the size of the theatres and not at explaining exhaustively all the elements which constitute the theatre.

## 1. Setting the scene

*The massive political, economic, and social changes we identify with the romantic era – the American and French Revolutions, the Napoleonic wars, the Industrial Revolution, the challenges to established religion that took many forms from Unitarianism to Deism to atheism, and the threat to conventional gender norms we identify with Mary Wollstonecraft’s creation of a modern feminism – have been seen to destroy the aristocratic, sacralized world many believe is essential to tragedy.*<sup>188</sup>

Cox’s observation about the influences on tragedy may be seen as a general observation from a scrutiny of the theatrical culture of the period. This chapter aims to set the scene for our discussion about the influence of Physiognomy on performance. The “*massive political, economic, and social changes*” which occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries all over Europe should be put into literary perspective.

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<sup>188</sup> Jeffrey N. Cox. “Romantic Tragic Drama and its Eighteenth-Century Precursors: Remaking British Tragedy.” In: *A Companion to Tragedy*. Edited by Rebecca Bushnell. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 411-434 p.419.

The events of the French Revolution introduced many completely new ideas and concepts to European societies. The execution of a king appeared on the world stage and the church had widely lost its authority. With the collapse of the old social order, people turned their thoughts to more philosophic ways of classification. Without an external order, people turned their attention to themselves. The notions of horror, fear, security and safety changed as a result of experiencing the French Revolution and its consequences. The Napoleonic wars modified the European map of alliance and rivalry. Increasing nationalism went hand in hand with a growing fear of the other, the strange, the foreign.<sup>189</sup> Literature interpreted these changes and partly criticized this fast development. The stage became an important place of retreat, education, entertainment, pleasure and political information. Theatre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries mirrored the society of the era. It not only showed its ways of thinking but also helped shape it. Due to its multifaceted role, the theatre was much discussed in politics. Censorship played an important role in the creation of the repertoire of the European stage and of the value assigned to theatre.

The theatres in England were regulated through the Licensing Act of 1737. Every play intended to be staged needed to go through detailed scrutiny by the Lord Chamberlain: *“The long-term consequences of the Act were profound. One immediate impact was the effect on new writing for the theatre.”*<sup>190</sup> One effect of the Act was that it was almost impossible for a new writer to become known. If he got rejected by the patent theatres, he could not get permission to stage his play in an unlicensed theatre. The Act therefore also resulted in the slow development of a new repertoire; in fact, most of the plays staged in the eighteenth century belonged to Shakespeare and other older playwrights<sup>191</sup>. The Lord Chamberlains of the period analysed in this dissertation, are:

- \* Francis Seymour-Conway, Earl of Hertford (1766-1782 and 1783)
- \* George Montagu, Duke of Manchester (1782-1783)
- \* James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1783-1804)

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<sup>189</sup> See Peter Burke and Halil Inalcik (ed.). *History of Humanity. Scientific and Cultural Development. Volume V From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. London: Routledge, 1999 and P. Mathias and N. Todorov (ed.). *History of Humanity. Scientific and Cultural Development. Volume VI The Nineteenth Century*. London: Routledge, 2005.

<sup>190</sup> David Thomas. “The 1737 Licensing Act and Its Impact.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832*. Edited by Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, 2014, 91-106 p.99.

<sup>191</sup> See *ibid* p.101.

- \* George Legge, Earl of Dartmouth (1804-1810)
- \* Francis Ingram-Seymour-Conway, Marquess of Hertford (1812-1821)
- \* James Graham, Duke of Montrose (1821-1827 and 1828-1830)
- \* William George Spencer Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire (1827-1828 and 1830-1834)
- \* George Child Villiers, Earl of Jersey (1830)

The Lord Chamberlain would not work alone on this duty of censorship and would, therefore, appoint an Examiner of Plays. John Larpent (1741-1824) was one of the most feared examiners in the eighteenth century. The Licensing Act was followed by the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843.

In France, censorship was much changed after the French Revolution. In the *Ancient Régime* only plays staged in the three royal theatres in Paris – Comédie Française, Comédie Italienne and Académie Royale de Musique, l'Opéra – were censored. F.W.J. Hemmings points out that after the Revolution, the Boulevard theatres and theatres in the provinces were also affected by censorship. Before the Revolution, the author needed to ask permission to stage his play. After the Revolution the theatre managers had the responsibility of the permission<sup>192</sup>. Under the new ideals of the Revolution, dramatic censorship was also questioned. In the tenth and eleventh article of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, freedom of thought and expression are mentioned:

*X. Nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, même religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la Loi.*

*X I. La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'Homme : tout Citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l'abus de cette liberté, dans les cas déterminés par la Loi.*

(trans.: "X. No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established Law and Order.

XI. The free communication of ideas and of opinions is one of the most precious rights of man. Any citizen may therefore speak, write and publish freely, except what is tantamount to the abuse of this liberty in the cases determined by Law.")

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<sup>192</sup> See Frederic William John Hemmings. *Theater and State in France 1760 to 1905*. Cambridge University Press, 1994 p.46.

Censorship was officially abolished in January 1791 under the law of the Assemblée. In 1793, it was reintroduced to better organize the Parisian theatre production: unlike previously, censorship was not intended to be repressive but preventive<sup>193</sup> and was carried out “*discreetly through the agency of the Paris police*”<sup>194</sup>. The aim of this new form of censorship was to “*republicanize*”<sup>195</sup> plays and to delete any reference to royalism or the critique of the new regime. This censorship affected both new and older plays. Censorship in France was changed several times during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries following political and social changes. Napoleon, for example, introduced several limitations on the number of theatres in Paris: in 1806, a decree was passed that limited the number of theatres to twelve. In 1807, the number was further reduced to eight (Théâtre-Français, Opéra, Opéra-Comique, Opéra-Comique, Théâtre du Vaudeville, Théâtre des Variétés, Théâtre de l’Ambigu-Comique and Théâtre de la Gaîté)<sup>196</sup>.

In England, as a reaction to the French Revolution, every reference to revolution, republicanism, anti-aristocratic or anti-monarchist ideas was banished from the stage.<sup>197</sup> John Russell Stephans wisely remarks, “*Fear of the theatre as a form for inculcating revolutionary ideas was common in most of Europe*”<sup>198</sup>.

In the Austrian Empire, the reforms under Emperor Joseph II and Franz I were focused not only on a general censorship of any kind of literary and artistic production, but also on a detailed review of the theatrical culture in the whole empire. Under Joseph II, reforms already partly introduced through his mother, Empress Maria Theresia, were strengthened. In 1770, censorship related to the theatre was detached from general literary censorship. Franz Carl Hägelin became the main censor between 1770 and 1804.<sup>199</sup> His duty was to censor all the plays in Vienna. Improvisation on stage was forbidden and every excessive, suggestive gesture was

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<sup>193</sup> See Hemmings. *Theater and State in France 1760 to 1905*. Cambridge University Press, 1994 p.94.

<sup>194</sup> John Russell Stephans. “Censorship.” In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 234-239 p.236.

<sup>195</sup> See *ibid* p.236.

<sup>196</sup> See Peter Hicks. “Napoleon und das Theater.” In: Dominik Gügel and Christina Egli (ed.). *Was für ein Theater!: Krönungen und Spektakel in Napoleonischer Zeit*. Frauenfeld, Stuttgart, Vienna: Verlag Huber, 2004, 109-115 p.115.

<sup>197</sup> See Stephans. “Censorship.” (2005) p.236.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid* p.237.

<sup>199</sup> See Norbert Bachleitner. “Die Theaterzensur in der Habsburgermonarchie im 19. Jahrhundert.” *LiTheS Zeitschrift für Literatur- und Theatersoziologie* 5 (2010): 71-102 p.74.

taboo. Bachleitner describes that the period from 1790 to 1848 was characterized by the view that “the theatre was a force, which fought with religion, the existing order and the political system” (“*dass das Theater eine Kraft sei, die gegen die Religion, die bestehende Ordnung und das politische System ankämpfe*”<sup>200</sup>). In 1803, the police started to handle all the practical duties of censorship, which were related to four main areas: (1) preservation of a pure image of the Catholic church and its representatives, (2) conservation of a positive view of the Austrian Empire, its government and monarchy in general, (3) prohibition of immoral, illegal action and characters and (4) protection of the honour of specific professional and personal groups, such as members of the aristocracy and citizens of befriended nations.<sup>201</sup> Censorship affected both Austrian and foreign plays. Bachleitner gives some examples where Shakespeare’s plays were massively changed<sup>202</sup>.

Censorship in the German states was not much different from censorship in other European states. It meant to preserve religion, dignity of the state and moral codes.<sup>203</sup> Before the formation of the Rheinbund-Confederation of the Rhine (1806) or Deutscherbund-German Confederation (1815), all the German states followed their own rules of censorship. Some states were more liberal than others and guaranteed a certain freedom of thought to playwrights. One of the most decisive moments of a unified German censorship can be seen through the *Karlsbader Beschlüsse-Carlsbad Decrees* from 1819 and the laws they passed. Even though the Decrees do not mention the theatre specifically, the restrictions of the press regulated by the “Provisorische Bestimmung hinsichtlich der Freiheit der Presse” (“Press Law”) likewise had an influence on the printing and staging of plays.

Italian censorship was very similar to the French, Austrian and German situation. As in the German states, in the Italian city-states the laws were created independently. The states had the power to decide the number of theatres, the repertoire and the print of plays. In the provinces and regions under French or Austrian rule, the laws of the occupying power were applied. Religion and moral

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<sup>200</sup> Bachleitner. “Die Theaterzensur in der Habsburgermonarchie im 19. Jahrhundert.” (2010) p.76.

<sup>201</sup> See *ibid* p.79.

<sup>202</sup> See *ibid* p.85.

<sup>203</sup> See Peter Höyng: “Die Geburt der Theaterzensur aus dem Geiste bürgerlicher Moral. Unwillkommene Thesen zur Theaterzensur im 18. Jahrhundert?” In: Wilhelm Haefs and York-Gothart Mix (ed.). *Zensur im Jahrhundert der Aufklärung. Geschichte – Theorie – Praxis*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007, 99-122.



decency were the main issues for all censors. The governor, the clerical authority or the police often held the role of the censor.<sup>204</sup>

In the second part of this dissertation, we will analyse a literary corpus composed of 15 different authors. Some of these authors also experienced censorship, and their writing is clearly influenced by the political and social changes of the time: Marie-Joseph Chénier only barely survived the production of his play *Charles IX ou la Saint-Barthélémy* (1787-1788)<sup>205</sup>; Friedrich Schiller's *Die Räuber* did not only cause trouble in the German original script but also in its French and English translations<sup>206</sup>; Franz Grillparzer's *Die Ahnfrau* and *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* were massively censored by the Austrian authorities<sup>207</sup> and Vittorio Alfieri's tragedies were not staged in the 1820s because of their "*subversive allusion*"<sup>208</sup>.

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<sup>204</sup> See Carlo Di Stefano. *La censura teatrale in Italia (1600-1962)*. Bologna: Cappelli, 1964.

<sup>205</sup> Hemmings. *Theater and State in France 1760 to 1905*. Cambridge University Press, 1994 p.50f.

<sup>206</sup> See Margaret W. Cooke. "Schiller's "Robbers" in England". *The Modern Language Review* 11/2 (1916): 156-175 and Pierre Frantz. "Le crime devant le tribunal du theater. Les Brigands de Schiller et leur fortune sur la scène française." *Littératures classiques* 67/3 (2008): 219-230.

<sup>207</sup> See Bachleitner. "Die Theaterzensur in der Habsburgermonarchie im 19. Jahrhundert." (2010).

<sup>208</sup> Stephans. "Censorship." (2005) p.237.

## 2. Education or entertainment?

The previous chapter showed how much the human conception of the world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed as a result of social, political and economic developments. One can wonder why censorship was so severe when applied to theatre: What was its purpose? Should theatre teach moral and political ideals? Should theatre only entertain?

In this chapter, the theatre's purpose, balanced between education and entertainment, is briefly discussed.

In the German theatre of the eighteenth century a very animated discussion on the purpose of theatre and spectacles in general took place. The idea that the theatre should educate its audience was discussed in Germany many years before it became important in all the other European countries. Already Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) saw the theatre mainly as an educational instrument. Gottsched, analysing the performances of Johann and Caroline Neuber's company, wanted to reform – like Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) – the ridiculous characters of Hanswurst and others (for itinerant theatre companies see also introduction of this dissertation):

*Gottsched, who was classically orientated, agitated not only for serious drama after the models of the Greek dramatists – but also for comedy after the fashion either of the Latin writers of comedy, Plautus and Terence, or after the styles of the French dramatists Molière and his successors and of the Danish playwright Ludvig Holberg. Both the tragic and the comic plays which Gottsched supported could strike a philosophical, social, or didactic note. To a considerable degree, this aim was achieved through the cooperation of Frau Neuber.*<sup>209</sup>

Gottsched's theories were very influential in his time, when they were not only seen by the praise of his ideas but also by the criticism he earned. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was one of Gottsched's biggest critics and Lessing's own theatrical studies, theories and productions influenced the German and European theatre. Lessing combined in his dramas many different elements of the European theatre tradition. He was one of the main experts of the theatre productions and theories of his time;

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<sup>209</sup> Phillip Marshall Mitchell. *Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) harbinger of German classicism*. Columbia: Camden House, 1995 p.46.

he read, translated and commented many of the theoretical works by other theorists such as, for example, Denis Diderot. Gottsched argues that *“Komödie ist nichts anders, als eine Nachahmung einer lasterhaften Handlung, die durch ihr lächerliches Wesen den Zuschauer belustigen, aber auch zugleich erbauen kann.”*<sup>210</sup> (trans.: “Comedy is nothing other than the imitation of an immoral action that, by means of its ridiculous nature, can amuse the spectator, but, at the same time can also edify the spectator.”). For Gottsched, in a comedy both entertainment and education are important. Lessing, on the other hand, states that:

*Die Komödie will durch Lachen bessern; aber nicht eben durch Verlachen; [...] Ihr wahrer allgemeiner Nutzen liegt in dem Lachen selbst; in der Übung unserer Fähigkeit, das Lächerliche zu bemerken; es unter allen Bemäntelungen der Leidenschaft und der Mode, es in allen Vermischungen mit noch schlimmern oder mit guten Eigenschaften, sogar in den Runzeln des feierlichen Ernstes, leicht und geschwind zu bemerken.*<sup>211</sup>

(trans.: “Comedy is to improve us through laughter, but not through derision. [...] Its true, general value lies in laughter itself; in the exercise of our ability to notice the ridiculous; to notice it among all the disguising of passions and fashion in all mixtures with even worse or with good properties, even in the wrinkles of solemnity, easily and quickly.”)

As we will see more in detail in the second part of this dissertation, in his theoretical work, Lessing focuses mainly on the theory of tragedy, which should *“increase our ability to feel compassion”* (“sie soll unsre Fähigkeit, Mitleid zu fühlen, erweitern”<sup>212</sup>). According to Lessing, theatre in general should be the *“school of the moral world”* (“die Schule der moralischen Welt”<sup>213</sup>) and create a better human being through the demonstration of the passions. In her *Introductory Discourse*, Joanna Baillie asserts a postulate similar to that by Lessing: *“The theatre is a school in which much good or evil may be learned”*<sup>214</sup>. Lessing and Baillie are only two examples of the huge mass of literary scholars who tried to summarize the social aim of theatre. According to them, a theatrical experience serves the moral education. In the French theatre theory, the moral element seems to be even more important: *“The notion that the*

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<sup>210</sup> Johann Christoph Gottsched. *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst durchgehends mit den Exempeln unserer besten Dichter erläutert*. Leipzig, 1751 p.643.

<sup>211</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. 29.Stück 1767.

<sup>212</sup> Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker Vol.17 p.66.

<sup>213</sup> Lessing. *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. 2.Stück 1767.

<sup>214</sup> Joanna Baillie. *Plays on the Passions*. Edited by Peter Duthie. Toronto: Broadview Literary Texts, 2001 p.104.

*function of dramatic works was not primarily to move audiences or to entertain them, but rather to work for their moral improvement, was widespread among the adherents of the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century France; it underlay the thinking of Diderot, D'Alembert, Sedaine and Mercier whenever they wrote on the theatre.*"<sup>215</sup>

As for Italy, the dramatic theory of the age discusses two main questions: imitation and moral improvement through literature. The theoretical work by Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730-1808) is the most influential in answering these questions. Cesarotti describes in his *Ragionamento sopra il diletto della tragedia* (1762) first the sensation experienced by the audience who watches a tragedy, and second the purpose of such an experience. The action performed on stage causes both pleasure and pain in the spectator. The experience of pain must be above that of pleasure: "*Per ridurre i vari sentimenti di piacere ad un principio generale, io dirò che questo non può nascere che dall'accordo del risultato drammatico coll'interesse e l'istruzione morale.*"<sup>216</sup> (trans.: "To reduce the various feelings of pleasure to a general principle, I say that this can only be created by the combination of dramatic result with interest and moral instruction."). It is the playwright's duty to create the emotions of compassion, terror and tragic horror:

*La compassione è un timore mitigato dalla moralità, per una disgrazia atroce, procurata da un personaggio interessante a cagion di qualche imperfezione di cui ci crediamo capaci.*

*Il terrore è un timore violento, ma mitigato dalla moralità, per cui lo spirito si concentra in sé stesso affine di premunirsi contro l'idea di un male atroce, ch'egli potrebbe tirarsi addosso per qualche colpa o difetto.*

*L'orrore è un fremito dell'anima che tenta di respinger da sé la vista o l'idea d'un fatto atroce, in cui l'eccesso del male non è temperato da verun bene, nè compensato dalla moralità.*<sup>217</sup>

(trans.: "Compassion is a pain mitigated by morality, by a terrible misfortune, obtained by an interesting character because of some imperfection of which we believe ourselves capable.

Terror is a violent fear, but mitigated by morality, by which the spirit concentrates on itself until it protects itself against the idea of an awful evil that could pull itself on top of it for some fault or defect.

Horror is a thrill of the soul attempting to repel the sight or idea of a terrible fact from itself in which the excess of evil is not tempered by any good, nor offset by morality."<sup>218</sup>)

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<sup>215</sup> Hemmings. *Theater and State in France 1760 to 1905*. Cambridge University Press, 1994 p.92.

<sup>216</sup> Melchiorre Cesarotti. *Ragionamento sopra il diletto della tragedia*. In: *Opere scelte di Melchior Cesarotti*. Vol.4 Milan, 1820 p.299.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid p.311.

As seen earlier on, in the section about censorship, political education through theatre was much discussed in France, England, Italy, Germany and Austria.

The theatre addressed, as we have seen in this short description, many different ways of education: moral, social and political education. Each period in time draws a different form of education towards the centre of attention. The question about the purpose of theatre clearly influences the creation of genres, the assessment of the actor and the formation of the audience. In the second part of this dissertation the creation of specific genres will be discussed. In this part the focus lies on the actor and the audience. The next chapters will illustrate the relation and spatial union of the actors and their spectator. The actor's body language is crucial for the education and entertainment of the spectator.

Both education and entertainment in theatre are related, although in a broader sense, to Physiognomy and its application. The moral and social education, so often requested by the theorists, is based on the creation and presentation of passions. The passions move the body of the actor through his muscles and the observation of this movement by the spectator causes compassion and emotion. According to Lavater, the benefit and advantage of the science of Physiognomy is a better interaction between human beings due to a better understanding of the emotions and sensations: "*Die Physiognomik ist eine Quelle der feinsten und erhabensten Empfindungen. [...] Die Physiognomik ist die Seele aller Klugheit.*"<sup>219</sup> (trans.: "Physiognomy is a source of the purest, the most exalted sensations. [...] Physiognomy is the very soul of wisdom."<sup>220</sup>). The actor's physiognomical awareness during his performance, together with the presence of physiognomical references in the dramatic text, increase the moral and social education of the audience. The entertaining part of Physiognomy on stage is mainly linked to the critique of it as supposed science and the ridiculousness assigned to it. Making Physiognomy ridiculous means also making the performance of the actor funnier and more entertaining. The actor using exaggerated gestures and postures, expressing unnatural and artificial feelings, entertains the audience by laughter.

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<sup>218</sup> Translated by Rachel A. Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo's Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.17f.

<sup>219</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 1 Leipzig, 1783 p.79f.

<sup>220</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.78f.

### 3. Theatrical space

Towards the end of the eighteenth century many theatres were, for many different reasons, rebuilt, modernized and renovated. These changes in the construction reflect a growing awareness of the importance of all kinds of theatrical signs. The relation between actor and audience is of crucial importance in the following chapters, but also in the construction of the theatre building. The actors should perform their dialogues directly towards the audience by clearly showing their faces and bodies. Goethe, whose rules for the actor will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters, for example, states that the actor should be always turned towards the audience:

*Die Haltung des Körpers sei gerade, die Brust herausgekehrt, die obere Hälfte der Arme bis an die Ellbogen etwas an den Leib geschlossen, der Kopf ein wenig gegen den gewendet, mit dem man spricht, jedoch nur so wenig, daß immer dreiviertel vom Gesicht gegen die Zuschauer gewendet ist. Denn der Schauspieler muß stets bedenken, daß er um des Publikums willen da ist.<sup>221</sup>*

(trans.: "The posture of the body is straight, the chest out, the upper half of the arms up to the elbows slightly closed to the body, the head turned slightly towards the person with whom one speaks, but so little that always three quarter of the face is turned towards the audience. After all the actor must always bear in mind that he is here for the audience's sake.")

The theatre buildings should enable the actor to perform in the best possible way the roles on stage. In this chapter, the architectural changes in some of the most important theatres of that time will be illustrated in order to point out some crucial ideas related to Physiognomy.

Some of the most important theatres operating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are:

#### Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane has a long history starting from 1663, when it was known as *Theatre Royal in Bridges Street* and was managed by Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683). In 1672, the theatre caught fire and was rebuilt and reopened in 1674 with a capacity of 2,000. In 1747, David Garrick became the manager of the now

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<sup>221</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Regeln für Schauspieler*. 1803 §37-38.

Theatre Royal Drury Lane. His management lasted until 1776 and was followed by that of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816). In 1782, the Drury Lane Theatre seated over 2,300 people; it was demolished and rebuilt in 1794, when it held 3,611 people.<sup>222</sup> In 1812 the number of seats was reduced by 550 and the theatre still holds 3,060 seats today.<sup>223</sup>

### Theatre Covent Garden

In 1732 the Theatre Covent Garden opened with a capacity of 1,397 seats. The playhouse, built by architect Edward Shephard was modernized in 1784 by John Inigo Richards. In 1792 it was rebuilt following the designs of Henry Holland. The capacity was increased and the theatre held 3,000 seats. In 1808 it was destroyed by fire and reopened the year after with a capacity of 2,800 seats. In 1856 the theatre was again destroyed by fire.<sup>224</sup>

### Theatre Royal, Haymarket

The theatre at Haymarket was opened in 1720 first under the name *Little Theatre*. Until 1734 the theatre experienced many changes. This theatre was merely important because in 1766 Samuel Foote was able to obtain a patent licence which allowed to run during the summer months while the patent theatres were closed. This privilege lasted until 1843 when the theatres in London were controlled by the Theatre Regulation Act. The theatre seated around 888 people at the time.<sup>225</sup>

### Lyceum Theatre

In 1794, a building on Wellington Street was converted to a theatre. In 1817, it was known under the name *English Opera House*. In 1830 it burnt down and was reopened in 1834 under the name *Theatre Royal Lyceum and English Opera House*.

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<sup>222</sup> Lindal Buchanan. "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History." *Rhetorica. A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 25 (2007): 413-434 p.422.

<sup>223</sup> See Franklin J. Hildy. "Drury Lane Theatre." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 391-392.

<sup>224</sup> See Franklin J. Hildy. "Covent Garden." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 328-329.

<sup>225</sup> See Victor Emeljanow. "Theatre Royal, Haymarket." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 577 p.577.

The theatre was managed by Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews between 1847 and 1855, and comedies and extravaganzas were the main staged plays.<sup>226</sup>

### Théâtre de la Gaîté

The Théâtre de la Gaîté is the oldest playhouse on the boulevard du Temple and was first known as *Théâtre de Nicolet*. In 1772, it became *Théâtre des Grands Danseurs du Roi* and only in 1791 it was named Théâtre de la Gaîté. In 1808, it was rebuilt by Antoine-Marie Peyre and was able to seat over 1,800 people. From 1825 to 1835 Pixérécourt was its manager and many of his plays were staged there. The management of Pixérécourt ended after a devastating fire in 1835. The theatre was rebuilt the same year but was finally demolished in 1862 due to the renovation of the Boulevard by Georges-Eugène Haussmann.<sup>227</sup>

### Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique

The Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique was opened in 1769 on the Boulevard du Temple right next to the Théâtre de la Gaîté. Its manager Nicolas-Médard Audinot (1732-1801) first staged pantomimes, féeries and plays with marionettes. In 1771 the theatre was regulated by a decision of the Conseil, which did not allow music and dancing on the stage of the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique. Audinot was able to get an agreement with the Opéra and was allowed to stage minor musical plays. In 1786, the theatre was enlarged and was working successfully until 1799. The theatre closed for two years and reopened in 1801 by introducing the melodrama on stage. In 1827 the theatre burnt down.<sup>228</sup>

### Schlosstheater Gotha

Between 1681 and 1683 Duke Friedrich I. von Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg ordered a theatre to be built in his palace. There, between 1775 and 1778, Konrad Ekhof (1720-1778) directed the first repertory company staffed by only German actors under royal patronage. Ekhof, whose acting is described in detail in Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, changed the German theatre significantly. This theatre

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<sup>226</sup> See Michael R. Booth. "Lyceum Theatre." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 774 p.774.

<sup>227</sup> See John Golder. "Théâtre de la Gaîté." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005 p.493.

<sup>228</sup> See Nicholas Brazier. *Histoire des petits théâtres de Paris depuis leur origine*. Paris: Allardin, 1838.



is the oldest and one of the best examples of the baroque theatres and their stage technique.<sup>229</sup>

### Hoftheater/Nationaltheater Mannheim

The Nationaltheater in Mannheim started out as a court theatre under Prince-Elector Karl Theodor and was only called Nationaltheater in 1779. Starting from 1778, Wolfgang Heribert Freiherr von Dalberg managed the theatre and employed actors of the ensemble of the late Konrad Ekhof, such as August Wilhelm Iffland, Johann David Beil and Heinrich Beck. The theatre held over 1,000 spectators. In 1792 it was destroyed and was only rebuilt in 1839 as the first German theatre under municipal administration.<sup>230</sup>

### Hoftheater Weimar

This theatre was built under duke Carl August von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe directed it between 1791 and 1817. Between 1799 and 1805 Friedrich Schiller contributed to the direction. Goethe led the ensemble following his *Regeln für Schauspieler* (1803) and his influence on German theatre culture through his leadership in the Hoftheater Weimar was very significant.<sup>231</sup>

### Theater an der Wien

In 1801, Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812) inaugurated the Theater an der Wien as *Kaiserlich Königlich privilegiertes Schauspielhaus*. Its capacity was over 2,000 seats. The Theater an der Wien staged mainly operas, operettas, pantomimes and plays.<sup>232</sup>

This short, in no way exhaustive, list of theatres operating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflects the growing importance of theatres in the public cultural sphere. This involves two ideas, which are worth mentioning in this chapter: the

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<sup>229</sup> See Simon Williams. "Gotha Court Theatre." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 530 p.530.

<sup>230</sup> See Christopher Balme. "Mannheim Court Theatre." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 798 p.798.

<sup>231</sup> See Simon Williams. "Weimar Court Theatre." In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 1440 p.1440.

<sup>232</sup> See Stefan Schmidl. "Theater an der Wien." In: *Österreichisches Musiklexikon*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006.

components of the audience and the visibility of the actor's body in the continuously growing playhouse.

In the list above, we find both court and public theatres. The audiences in these two types of theatres were initially not the same. In the court theatres the audience consisted of members of the court and their noble guests. The change in the conception of the court theatre, seen through the renaming to nationaltheatre, as described for the theatre in Mannheim, shows a closer approach between aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The public theatres, on the other hand, were organized following not a hierarchical but an economic order. The public theatres were businesses with a specific economic plan: *"The court theatre was attended on a hierarchical basis, but the public theatre was established and operated in order to make money. Places were available at various prices and anyone could sit wherever his purse would allow"*<sup>233</sup>. The theatre architecture with its boxes, galleries and the pit became crowded with all kinds of spectators. Going to the theatre was more a social than an actual cultural event. It was important to see and to be seen: *"the marriageable daughter was thrust to the front of the box so that she might be viewed by the opera glasses in the pit"*<sup>234</sup>. The pit and the galleries were filled with lower class spectators who could not afford tickets for the boxes. Isabella Imperiali describes that the *"popolino"*<sup>235</sup> ("common crowd") could become a *"miscela esplosiva"* ("explosive mix") during the performance. It was common that the audience would express its favour and dislike of the performance on stage through applause, throwing of rotten fruit and vegetables, ecstatic cheering and harsh booing. Even though the performance on stage only gradually became more important for the attention of the spectator in the theatre, the actors needed to try everything to be able to capture it. The performed action and scenes should be understandable by all the different components of the audience. The social and educational background was very diverse and therefore the actors needed to appeal to the different senses of the audience. Betsy Bolton argues that:

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<sup>233</sup> Donald C. Mullin. *The Development of the Playhouse. A survey of the theatre architecture from the Renaissance to the Present*. University of California Press, 1970 p. 62.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid p.62.

<sup>235</sup> Isabella Imperiali. *La passione della mente nel teatro di Joanna Baillie*. Discorso introduttivo, De Monfort, Al lettore di Joanna Baillie. Roma: Editoria & Spettacolo, 2007 p.33.

*theatre historians generally agree that audiences grew larger and less sophisticated over the course of the long eighteenth century, and that they also grew quieter or more 'polite' during the same period. [...] As simple audiences, Georgian theatre goers retained a direct relationship to actors and theatre managers, influencing repertoire and performances with their expressions of approval and disapproval.*<sup>236</sup>

The linguistic and paralinguistic signs, as Fischer-Lichte calls them, would not always be understandable by every member of the audience, so the mimic, gestural and proxemic signs would become much more important. The mimic signs include all the movements in the face of the actor such as smiling, frowning and turning up one's nose. Each movement is linked to a specific emotion and feeling and caused by a specific passion (see next chapter). The gestural signs refer to all the movements of the human body. The following chapters will illustrate the classification, purpose and codification of these movements in the form of gestures. In this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the theatrical codes related to gestural signs are bound to the understanding of the audience. The opening up to a bigger and more diverse group of spectators implies a reform of the codes used in the theatre, and the textbooks and manuals discussed in the following chapters show a theoretical approach to this change. The proxemic signs, which are related to and often identical with the gestural signs, are illustrating the space between the actors on stage and the movement of the actors from one spot on the stage to another. The space between the actors stands for the space between the roles they embody, and the movement from one spot to another gives value to the action.

Apart from the kinesic signs, the actor's artificial and natural signs create the significance of the embodied role. The spectator will, as soon as he sees the actor in his role, identify him according to his gender, his age, his social status, his profession, his race and nationality and his type<sup>237</sup>. The process of identification is based on observation and perception which, according to Lavater, are the two key principles of the science of Physiognomy.

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<sup>236</sup> Betsy Bolton. "Theorizing Audience and Spectatorial Agency." In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832*. Edited by Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, 2014, 30-52 p.30.

<sup>237</sup> See Fischer-Lichte. *Semiotik des Theaters*. Tübingen, 1983 Vol. 1 *Das System der theatralischen Zeichen* p.94.

The theatrical space created during the eighteenth century in many European theatres, as seen above, meets, on the one side, the economic needs of the theatre managers and the growing crowd of spectators. The actors and theorists, on the other side, need to deal with a new form of expression. Frederick Burwick, who analyses in detail the theories of the actor, comes to the conclusion that not only the facial expressions, but also the expression of the whole body is important: *“The increasing size of the theatres forced the shift from facial expression to body language.”*<sup>238</sup> The concept of body language will return in this dissertation shortly.

The bigger the theatre gets, the more the intimacy between actor and spectator is lost. The actor is so far away from many of his spectators that the spoken word is almost impossible to understand and gestures become more exaggerated. Christine A. Colón describes how this exaggeration had an influence also on the repertoire of the two London stages in Covent Garden and Drury Lane:

*[...] the conditions of the two major theatres made it difficult for any serious play to succeed. Covent Garden and Drury Lane could seat around 3,000 patrons each. When the size of the theatres was combined with the bad lighting, poor acoustics, and rowdy audiences, it was a wonder that most of the audience could even tell what was being performed on stage. As a result, the acting was often exaggerated, and playwrights tended to rely more and more on spectacle so that the audience members could be entertained by sight even if they could not actually hear what the actors were saying.*<sup>239</sup>

In contrast, in Berlin, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, architect of the Berliner Schauspielhaus, tried to oppose this new development and built his theatre in such a way that the mimicry of the actors was still very visible. He declared he would build a theatre *“only in a modest size [...] to have the advantages of understanding well the voice of the actor everywhere, and of losing nothing of his facial expressions.”* (original: *“nur in einer mäßigen Größe [...], um die Vortheile zu haben, die Stimme des Schauspielers überall gut zu verstehen, und von seiner Mimik nichts zu verlieren.”*<sup>240</sup>).

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<sup>238</sup> Frederick Burwick. “Georgian Theories of the Actor.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832*. Edited by Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor, 2014, 177-191 p.183.

<sup>239</sup> Christine A. Colón. *Introduction to “Joanna Baillie-Six gothic dramas”*. Valancourt Classics, 2007 p. xi.

<sup>240</sup> Karl Friedrich Schinkel. *Berlin. Bauten und Entwürfe*. Berlin 1973, Edited by Klaus J. Lemmer p.44 quoted after Ruedi Graf. “Utopie und Theater. Physiognomik, Pathognomik, Mimik und die Reform

Returning to Fischer-Lichte's formula that the actor (A) can embody the role (X) in front of the audience (S), only if he moves (1) in a specific way, (2) with a specific appearance, (3) in a specific space, it can be seen that all three components in theatre are linked through a visible and invisible bond. The actor needs to be aware of his facial expressions, movements and gestures in order to embody an understandable and identifiable role on stage. The specific space, created for this embodiment, has an impact on the actor's performance and the spectator's understanding.

#### 4. The theory of the passions

After describing the moral, social, didactic and political purpose of the theatre, a philosophical element should be added to the discussion. Starting from the early seventeenth century one main discourse can be found in all the literary, philosophical and scientific discussion: the passions, “*the true epistemological obsession of the period.*”<sup>241</sup>

One milestone was the publication of the work *Les Passions de l'Âme* by René Descartes (1596-1650) in 1649. Descartes' definition of the passions is:

*On les peut nommer des perceptions lors qu'on se sert généralement de ce mot, pour signifier toutes les pensées qui ne sont point des actions de l'âme, ou des volontés ; [...] On le peut aussi nommer des sentiments, à cause qu'elles sont reçues en l'âme en même façon que les objets des sens extérieurs et ne sont pas autrement connues par elle. Mais on peut encore mieux les nommer des émotions de l'âme [...].*<sup>242</sup>

(trans.: “They may be called apprehensions, when this word is used in a general sense to signifie all thoughts that are not actions of the soul, or the will; [...] they may also be called resentments, because they are received into the soul in the same manner, as the objects of the exterior senses, and are not otherwise understood by her. But they may justlier be stiled the emotions of the soul [...].”<sup>243</sup>)

For Descartes, the body (“*res extensa*”) and the soul (“*res cogitans*”) are divided but at the same time the soul can interact with the body through the brain and the mind. The soul has an influence on all the body, but the main part it is influencing is the pineal gland (“*petite glande*”), a small point close to the brain.

Descartes declared that there are six “*passions primitives*”, which are the basis of all the other passions:

- (1) ***L'Admiration*** est une subite surpris de l'âme, [...] elle est causée premièrement par l'impression qu'on a dans le cerveau, qui représente l'objet comme rare, et par conséquent digne d'être fort considéré;<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Claudia Corti. “Discursive Cross-References and Genre Interferences in Romantic Theory and Practice of Dramatic Art.” In: Crisafulli, Pietropoli (ed.): *The Languages of Performance in British Romanticism*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008, 39-48 p.39.

<sup>242</sup> René Descartes. *Les Passions de l'Âme*. 1649 Première partie article XXVIII.

<sup>243</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p. 23f.

<sup>244</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l'Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article LXX.

(trans.: “**Admiration** is a sudden surprise of the soul, which causes in her an inclination to consider with attention the objects which seem rare and extraordinary to her. It is caused first by an impression in the brain that represents the object as rare, and consequently, worthy to be seriously considered.”<sup>245</sup>)

- (2) *L’Amour est une émotion de l’âme, causée par le mouvement des esprits, qui l’incite à se joindre de volonté aux objets qui paraissent lui être convenables.*<sup>246</sup>

(trans.: “**Love** is an emotion of the soul caused by the motion of the spirits which incite it to join in will to the objects which seem convenient to her.”<sup>247</sup>)

- (3) *Et l’Haine est une émotion, causée par les esprits, qui incite l’âme à vouloir être séparée des objets qui se présentent à elle comme nuisibles.*<sup>248</sup>

(trans.: “And, **Hatred** is an emotion caused by the spirits which incite the soul to will to be separated from objects represented, to be hurtful to her.”<sup>249</sup>)

- (4) *La passion du Désir est une agitation de l’âme causée par les esprits, qui la dispose à vouloir pour l’avenir les choses qu’elle se présente être convenables.*<sup>250</sup>

(trans.: “The passion of **Desire** is an agitation of the soul caused by the spirits which disposes it to will hereafter the things that she represents unto herself convenient.”<sup>251</sup>)

- (5) *La Joie est une agréable émotion de l’âme, en laquelle consiste la jouissance qu’elle a du bien, que les impressions du cerveau lui représentent comme sien.*<sup>252</sup>

(trans.: “**Joy** is a pleasing emotion of the soul, wherein consists her enjoyment of good that the impressions of the brain represent unto her as her own.”<sup>253</sup>)

- (6) *La Tristesse est une langueur désagréable en laquelle consiste l’incommodité que l’âme reçoit du mal, ou du défaut, que les impressions du cerveau lui représentent comme lui appartenant.*<sup>254</sup>

(trans.: “**Sadness** is an unpleasant languishing, wherein consists the discommodity the soul receives from evil, or defect, which the impressions of the brain represent unto her, as belonging to her.”<sup>255</sup>)

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<sup>245</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.55.

<sup>246</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l’Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article LXXIX.

<sup>247</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.62.

<sup>248</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l’Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article LXXIX.

<sup>249</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.62.

<sup>250</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l’Âme*. Seconde partie article LXXXVI.

<sup>251</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.68.

<sup>252</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l’Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article XCI.

<sup>253</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.72.

<sup>254</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l’Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article XCII.

<sup>255</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.73.

The passions are transported to the outside through the changes in the face, and especially in the eyes: “*Les principaux de ces signes [les signes extérieurs] sont les actions des yeux et du visage, les changements du couleur, les tremblements, la langueur, la pâmoison, les ris, les larmes, les gémissements et les soupirs.*”<sup>256</sup> (trans.: “The chief of these signs [exterior signs] are the gestures of the eyes and face, changes of colour, tremblings, languishing, swooning, laughter, tears, groans, and sighs.”<sup>257</sup>). Descartes described explicitly pathognomic changes in the human face, which show the passions. He never used the word Physiognomy but he referred to it in a clear way:

*Mais encore qu'on aperçoive aisément ces actions des yeux et qu'on sache ce qu'elles signifient, il n'est pas aisé pour cela de les décrire, à cause que chacune est composée de plusieurs changements qui arrivent au mouvement et en la figure de l'œil, lesquels sont si particuliers et si petits, que chacun d'eux ne peut être aperçu séparément, bien que ce qui résulte de leur conjonction soit fort aisé à remarquer. On peut dire quasi le même des actions du visage qui accompagnent aussi les passions,*<sup>258</sup>

(trans.: “But though a man may easily perceive these gestures of the eyes, and know what they signify, yet it is not an easy matter to describe them, because every one of them is composed of several alterations, which happen in the motion, and figure of the eye, which are so peculiar, and so small, that each of them cannot be discerned distinctly, though the result of their conjunction be said of the gestures of the face, which thus accompany the passions.”<sup>259</sup>)

The observation of the changes in the face, gives in some ways a clear look at the passions. Descartes' theory of the passion was influential both on the philosophical discourse of the following centuries and on the artistic outcome – in the fine arts and the literature – of this discourse.

The famous painter Charles LeBrun (1619-1690) held starting from 1667 several conferences in the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*. The conferences were then published posthumously and translated quickly in various

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<sup>256</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l'Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article CXII.

<sup>257</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.88.

<sup>258</sup> Descartes. *Les Passions de l'Âme*. 1649 Seconde partie article CXIII.

<sup>259</sup> Anonymous translator. *The Passions of the Soul*. London, 1650 p.89.



languages<sup>260</sup>. In *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* (1698) LeBrun started with the definition of the term expression:

*L'Expression, [...], est une naïve et naturelle ressemblance des choses que l'on a à représenter : elle est nécessaire et entre dans toutes les parties de la Peinture, et un Tableau ne sçauroit être parfait sans l'Expression ; c'est elle qui marque les véritables caracteres de chaque chose, c'est par elle que l'on distingue la nature des corps, que les figures semblent avoir du mouvement, et tout ce qui est feint paroît être vrai.*<sup>261</sup>

(trans.: "The Expression [...] is a naive and natural resemblance of the things that we have to represent: it is necessary and enters into all parts of the painting, and a picture does not know how to be perfect without Expression, it is that which marks the true character of each thing; it is by it that we distinguish the nature of bodies; that figures seem to have movement, and all that which is feigned appears to be true."<sup>262</sup>)

LeBrun used this first definition of the expression to explain the aim and purpose of his conference by saying that the expression shows the movement of the soul and therefore also the effects of the passions<sup>263</sup>. He wanted to use these definitions of expression and passion for the practical application in art. He referred to the theorists before him – mainly to Descartes – but also added some new components to the discussion. LeBrun followed Descartes' idea that the movements generated by the passions are transmitted by the nerves, which are connected to the brain. LeBrun added a moral connotation to the movement by saying that : "[...] *la passion est un mouvement de l'Ame, qui reside en la partie sensitive, lequel se fait pour suivre ce que l'Ame pense lui être bon, ou pour fuir ce qu'elle pense lui être mauvais;*"<sup>264</sup> (trans.: "a passion is a movement of the sensitive part of the soul, which is designed to pursue that which the soul thinks to be for its good, or to avoid that which it believes to be hurtful to itself."). As already stated by Descartes, also for LeBrun the soul has an influence on all the movements of the human body, but the pineal gland is most influenced<sup>265</sup>. LeBrun created a new theory – contradicting

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<sup>260</sup> See Stephanie Ross. "Painting the Passions. Charles LeBrun's *Conférence Sur L'Expression*." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 25-47 p.33.

<sup>261</sup> Charles LeBrun. *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*. Amsterdam and Paris, 1698 p.2.

<sup>262</sup> Translated by Benjamin Tilghman. *Reflections on Aesthetic Judgment and Other Essays*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2006 p.86.

<sup>263</sup> See LeBrun. *Conférence*. Amsterdam and Paris, 1698 p.3.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid p.4.

<sup>265</sup> See ibid p.7.

Descartes – by saying that the soul gets the impression of the passions through the brain and feels their effects in the heart<sup>266</sup>. The passions are divided into two groups: the simple passions and the mixed passions. The simple passions – Admiration, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, Grief – are created by the concupiscent appetite of the soul, the mixed passions – Fear, Hope, Despair, Anger, Boldness, Fright – are created by the irascible appetite of the soul. LeBrun followed precisely Descartes' definitions of each passion. The face shows best the movements of the passions and – opposing the idea of Descartes that the eyes reveal the most – LeBrun stated that the eyebrows are the main indicators of the passions: *“Il est vrai que la prunelle par son feu et son mouvement fait bien voir l'agitation de l'Ame, mais elle ne fait pas connoître de quelle nature est cette agitation. La bouche et le nez ont beaucoup de part à l'expression, mais pour l'ordinaire ces parties ne servent qu'à suivre les mouvemens du cœur, [...]”*<sup>267</sup> (trans.: “It is true that the eye apple shows well by its fire and its movement the agitation of the soul, but it doesn't show of what nature this agitation is. The mouth and the nose are very much involved in the expression, but usually these parts serve only to follow the movements of the heart.”).

The eyebrows show two different movements: they can move up and they can move down. The movement of the eyebrows is connected to the different kinds of passions: a simple passion generates a simple movement, a composed passion a composed movement, a soft passion a soft movement and a harsh passion a harsh movement<sup>268</sup>. Descartes – as quoted above – was convinced that it is impossible to describe the different movements of the passions as they are too complex. LeBrun – on the contrary – described in his conference more than 25 different passions – simple and composed – and their appearance on the human face. In his conclusion he even described different movements of the body connected to the visibility of the passions: *“Dans la Veneration le corps sera encore plus courbé que dans l'Estime, les bras et les mains seront presque joints, les genoux iront en terre, et toutes les parties du corps marqueront un profond respect.”*<sup>269</sup> (trans.: “In Veneration the body will be more curved than in Esteem, arms and hands will be almost put together, the knees will go unto the ground, and all parts of the body mark a profound respect.”). In the same publication about the passions, a short abstract of LeBrun's conference

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<sup>266</sup> See LeBrun: *Conférence*. Amsterdam and Paris, 1698 p.8.

<sup>267</sup> See *ibid* p.20.

<sup>268</sup> See *ibid* p.21f.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid* p.48.

on Physiognomy was also presented. His ideas and explanations about the different forms of the passions are clearly linked to the idea of Physiognomy. LeBrun himself said that, "*Les santimens que quelques naturalistes ont écrit de la Physionomie, sont que les affections de l'ame suivent le temperamment du corps, et que les marques exterieurs sont des signes certains des affections de l'ame que l'on connoist en la forme de chaque animal, ses mœurs et sa complexion;*"<sup>270</sup> (trans.: "The opinions that some naturalists have written on Physiognomy, are that the affections of the soul follow the temperament of the body, and that the external marks are certain signs of the affections of the soul that one knows in the form of each animal, its habits and its complexion;"). LeBrun's theories on the idea of Physiognomy followed in general the tradition of Aristotle and Della Porta (see introduction). With his theories on the passions and their visibility on the human face and body he enriched these theories with new approaches. His idea of Physiognomy became more complete with the knowledge about the passions.

In 1747 Samuel Foote (1720-1777) published his *Treatise on the Passions* which can be seen as the perfect link between the philosophical theories of Descartes, their artistic outcome with LeBrun and the stage indications, which will be discussed in detail in the following part.

Foote was convinced that the passions in the souls of men are always different and that there are different degrees: "*The word Passion is applied to the different Motions and Agitations of the Soul, according to the different Objects, that present themselves to the Senses; how or by what means this mutual Action, or Communication between Soul and Body is effected, remains a Secret to us*"<sup>271</sup>. Foote in some ways said as already said Descartes before him, that it is not completely known to the human mind, how the interaction between body and soul works. Foote distinguished between "*Passions of Desire: Pleasure, Pain, Love, Hatred*" and "*irascible passions: Courage, Anger, Despair*"<sup>272</sup>. These passions are the main and principal passions, on which all the other kinds could be based. It is important to understand that "[...] every Passion has several Degrees, suitable to the

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<sup>270</sup> LeBrun: *Conférence*. Amsterdam and Paris, 1698 p.55.

<sup>271</sup> Samuel Foote. *Treatise on the Passions*. London, 1747 p.10.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid p.10.

Subject it is employed about.<sup>273</sup> Foote's aim with this treatise is explained at the beginning:

*[...] the general Design of this Treatise, which is merely calculated to open the Eyes of the Injudicious, and by tracing the Rise and Progress of the Passions, together with their Effects on the Organs of our Bodies, enable them to judge how far the Imitation of those Passions on the Stage be natural, and give them not only an Opportunity of being rationally pleased, but of communicating to others, why they are so.*<sup>274</sup>

In this quotation he summarizes many ideas and questions which will be discussed in all the following treatises on the art of acting: the movement of the passions, the consequences of this movement and the imitation of the passions by the actor. Foote was convinced that, *"The Effects of the Passions, are so very different in different Men, and often so complicated and mixed, that it would be almost impossible, to trace their several Connections, and describe their various Effects, [...]"*<sup>275</sup>. The passions are influential both on the face and its expressions and on the voice and spoken word: *"[...] as the Face is the Index of the Mind, the Voice is the interpreter"*<sup>276</sup>. Foote gave direct examples of his theory by analysing Shakespearian scenes with English actors of the moment: David Garrick (1717-1779) in *King Lear*, James Quin (1693-1766) and Spranger Barry (1719-1777) in *Othello*. Foote described in detail Garrick's stature and features: *"[...] the Features of our little Hero are form'd, for what is called the Looking of a Character, his lively and piercing Eyes, are particularly happy in the Expression of sudden Joy, or quick Rage; but I cannot say they convey the Passions of Love, Grief, and Horror with equal Force."*<sup>277</sup> Foote observed Garrick's performance as Lear and compared his features to those of the other two mentioned actors. Foote's critique of Quin was quite short, as the actor was generally appreciated by the audience: *"Q. [Quinn] is the same in all Circumstances and Passions"*<sup>278</sup>. In conclusion the actor Barry is compared to the other two actors: *"B. [Barry] has more Obligations to Nature than either of these; he is tall without Awkwardness [...] and handsome without Effeminacy; his voice is sweet and permanent, but the Tone too soft for the Expression of any but the tender*

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<sup>273</sup> Foote. *Treatise on the Passions*. London, 1747 p.12.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid p.8f.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid p.13.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid p.15.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid p.15.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid p.25.

*Passions, such as Grief, Love, Pity.*<sup>279</sup> Foote being himself a playwright and actor understood the need of a good theoretical basis for the creation of a fantastic performance on stage.

Foote's treatise was published the same year as the treatise *Human Physiognomy Explain'd* by James Parsons, and Foote referred to it. In the 1740ies, the physician Parsons held several Croonian lectures on the idea of Physiognomy in front of the Royal Society. Parsons, being a physician, used medical terminology to explain the relationship between the human mind and the body. The muscles transmit the different passions to the face: "*Muscles [...] form and move the Skin of the Face, or change the Countenance; [...] Forehead, Eyelids, Eyes, Nose, Lips, and Cheeks.*"<sup>280</sup> The muscles have a double role in the movement on the face:

*Muscles act, in the several Motions of the face that express the different Passions of the Mind; for they serve two principal Ends, first, (altogether) to form the Symmetry of the Countenance, by supporting the skin of the Face, in the Manner we see it when a general Composure appears thro' the Whole; and, secondly, to express, [...] those Passions of Joy, Grief, Fury, Illnature, and such-like, as the Mind is often prone to suggest;*<sup>281</sup>

Parsons showed at the end of the second lecture several anatomic illustrations of the muscles in the face and behind the eye and different kinds of countenances (in rest, cheerful, fearful, etc.).

The discourse around the passions and their visibility introduced in the eighteenth century not only a new approach for the analysis of the human mind and body but also a new vocabulary for the discussion. The idea of the "*Symmetry of the Countenance*", for example, as used by Parsons re-appeared several times in different philosophical, ethical and medical treatises of that period, but also in the reception of literary works and, in the case of theatre, also in the critique of the performance of the actors. With LeBrun's and Parsons' lectures the connection of Art and Physiognomy and Medicine and Physiognomy was clearly shown. The main points in common regard the passions conveyed by muscles.

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<sup>279</sup> Foote. *Treatise on the Passions*. London, 1747 p.25.

<sup>280</sup> James Parsons. *Human Physiognomy explained. In the Cronian Lectures on Muscular Motion*. London, 1747 Lecture I Part V p.3.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid Lecture II Part II p.32.

Johann Caspar Lavater also spoke about the movement of the muscles in his four essays *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (1775-1778). The first volume is dedicated to a general introduction to the science of Physiognomy, as already explained in the Introduction of this dissertation. A fundamental idea is that the face and its expressions show the inner nature of every person:

*Das moralische Leben des Menschen enthüllt sich vorzüglich in den Zügen und Veränderungen des Gesichts. Die Summe seiner moralischen Kräfte und Begierlichkeiten, seine Reizbarkeit, jede Sympathie und Antipathie, deren er fähig ist, seine Macht, Gegenstände ausser ihm an sich zu ziehen und wegzustossen, mahlt sich aus seinem Gesichte, wenn es ruhig ist. Und der wirkliche Augenblick der gereihten Leidenschaft zeichnet sich in der Bewegung der Muskeln, die immer mit dem lebhaften Klopfen des Herzens so genau verschwistert ist, daß Ruhe des Gesichtes immer Ruhe in der Gegend des Herzens und der Brust voraussetzt.*<sup>282</sup>

(trans.: "The moral life of man, particularly, reveals itself in the lines, marks, and transitions of the countenance. His moral powers and desires, his irritability, sympathy, and antipathy; his facility of attracting or repelling the objects that surround him; these are all summed up in, and painted upon, his countenance, when at rest. When any passion is called into action, such passion is depicted by the motion of the muscles, and these motions are accompanied by a strong palpitation of the heart. If the countenance be tranquil, it always denotes tranquility in the region of the heart and breast."<sup>283</sup>)

This quotation explains very clearly Lavater's theory according to which the emotions and the passions leave their traces on the external features of the human being, so that every inner movement has a direct result and consequence in the expressions of the face. Lavater spoke of a direct connection between the movement of the body by its muscles (a sort of body language) and the appearance of the various passions. This concept is shown even more clearly in a quotation of the third volume of the *Fragmente*: "*Das Pathos des Temperamentes, der Moment ihrer wirklichen Gereiztheit zeigt sich in Bewegung der Muskeln, die sich in jedem animalischen Körper nach der Beschaffenheit und Form desselben richtet. Zwar ist jeder Menschenkopf aller Bewegungsarten der Leidenschaften fähig, jedoch jeder nur bis*

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<sup>282</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 1 Winterthur, 1783 p.16.

<sup>283</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.15f.

*auf einen gewissen Grad.*<sup>284</sup> (trans.: “The pathos of temperament, in the moment of irritability, shows itself in the motion of the muscles, which, in all animal bodies, is governed by their qualities and form. Every head of man, it is true, is capable of the motion of every kind of passion; but each has only this capability to a certain degree.”<sup>285</sup>). Lavater made a distinction between Physiognomy and Pathognomy, by stating that Physiognomy “teaches the knowledge of character at rest and Pathognomy of character in motion”<sup>286</sup>. (“*Die Physiognomik zeigt den stehenden, die Pathognomik den bewegten Charakter.*”<sup>287</sup>).

The relation between Physiognomy and Pathognomy is a key element of the following research. Pathognomy – as evoked by its name – is clearly connected to the theatre. *Pathos*, the emotional effect of the actor on the audience, should create the *Catharsis*, the liberation from all the passions and the purification of the effects created by *Eleos* (*pity*) and *Phobos* (*fear/terror*).

This dissertation discusses the influence of Physiognomy but also of Pathognomy. On many occasions authors and theorists use both terms for the analysis and criticism of the human countenance. In general one can see that the theoretical treatises mix the definitions of these terms and use mainly Physiognomy in the titles of their work. As already discussed in the Introduction, Lichtenberg for example judged this behaviour negatively, and tried to bring the reader closer to the art of Pathognomy, even though he still criticized this form of analysis of the human face. Lichtenberg in general was aware of a certain importance of Pathognomy in the everyday culture:

*Ohnstreitig gibt es eine unwillkürliche Gebärden Sprache, die von den Leidenschaften in allen ihren Gradationen über die ganze Erde geredet wird.[...] Sie ist so reich, daß bloß die süßen und sauren Gesichter ein Buch füllen würden, und so deutlich, daß die Elefanten und die Hunde den Menschen verstehen lernen. Dieses hat noch niemand geleugnet, und ihre Kenntnis ist was wir oben Pathognomik genannt haben. Was wäre Pantomime und alle Schauspielkunst ohne sie? Die Sprachen aller Zeiten und aller Völker sind voll von*

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<sup>284</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1829 p.13.

<sup>285</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.71.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid p.20.

<sup>287</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.1 Leipzig, 1775 p.19f.

*pathognomischen Bemerkungen, und zum Teil unzertrennlich mit ihnen verwebt.*<sup>288</sup>

(trans.: “It is undeniable that there is an involuntary sign language that is spoken by the passions in all their gradations over the whole world. [...] It is so rich that only the sweet and sour faces would fill a book, and so clear that the elephants and the dogs learn to understand the people. This has never been denied, and its knowledge is what we have called above Pathognomy. What would pantomime and all the drama be without it? The languages of all times and all peoples are full of pathognomonic remarks, and partly inseparably interwoven with them.”)

Lichtenberg brought together not only dramatic art and the art of Physiognomy and Pathognomy but also the idea that the spoken word is connected to gestures and expressions. The idea of movement and action is very relevant in Lichtenberg’s theory since he thought that every movement of the soul is visible through the movement of the muscles, and the human body in action is more expressive than the human body in rest.

The idea of movement in the soul and on the muscles is very pervasive in many theoretical works on the passions and dramatic art. Friedrich Schiller for example used in his theoretical works on the theatre the expressions “*Bewegungen des Geists*”<sup>289</sup> (“Movements of the spirit”) and “*Gemüthsbewegungen*”<sup>290</sup> (“Mind movements”) when he spoke about the phenomenon of the body. Schiller – as Lichtenberg before him and many others after him – combined the idea of the passions with the art of acting by saying: “*Gewöhnlich haben unsere Spieler für jedes Genus von Leidenschaft eine aparte Leibesbewegung einstudiert, die sie mit einer Fertigkeit, die zuweilen gar – dem Affekt vorspringt, an den Mann zu bringen wissen.*”<sup>291</sup> (trans.: “Usually our players have studied for each genus of passion a distinctive body movement, and they know how to provide it with a skill that sometimes goes ahead of affect.”).

In the following chapter – starting from the quotation by Schiller – these “*distinctive body movements*” are analysed in a more detailed way. The analysis

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<sup>288</sup> G Lichtenberg. *Über Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen*. 1777 p.54.

<sup>289</sup> Friedrich Schiller. *Über das gegenwärtige deutsche Theater*. 1782.

<sup>290</sup> Friedrich Schiller. *Über die tragische Kunst*. 1792.

<sup>291</sup> Schiller: *Über das gegenwärtige deutsche Theater*. 1782.



aims to show the importance of Physiognomy and Pathognomy for the art of acting and the awareness of this connection by the theorists and actors themselves.

## 5. The actor and the art of acting

In the previous chapters many main issues of theatre production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were illustrated. The theory of the passions and their visibility in the human face was seen to be one of the chief points of discussion in many philosophical treatises. In this chapter, treatises on the art of acting will be examined with respect to: the creation, the movement and the visibility of the passions, the movements of the muscles and the soul, the delicate balance between imitation and originality in the actor and his art, the relationship between author and performer, the personal features of the actor and the audience's response to the action on stage.

It is important to show the relationship between different countries and the rich European theatre tradition. The treatises, which will be examined in a more or less precise way, are the following:

- \* David Garrick (1717-1779): *A Short Treatise on Acting* (1744)
- \* Aaron Hill (1685-1750): *Essay on the Art of Acting* (1746)
- \* Pierre Rémond de Saint-Albine (1699-1778): *Le Comédien* (1747)
- \* John Hill (1714-1775): *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing* (1750; revised 1755)
- \* Denis Diderot (1713-1784): *De la poésie dramatique* (1772)
- \* Denis Diderot: *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* (1773-1777)
- \* Johann Jakob Engel (1741-1802): *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (1785/86)
- \* Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805): *Über die tragische Kunst* (1792)
- \* Karl August Böttiger (1760-1835): *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796* (1796)
- \* Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel (1750-1828): *Grundlinien zu einer Theorie der Schauspielkunst* (1797)
- \* Hippolyte Clairon (1723-1803): *Mémoires et reflexions sur l'art dramatique* (1799)
- \* Pierre Poupart Dorfeuille (1745-1806): *Les Élémens de l'art du comédien* (1801)
- \* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): *Regeln für Schauspieler* (1803)

- \*Gilbert Austin (1752-1837): *Chironomia or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806)
- \*Henry Siddons (1774-1815): *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action* (1807)
- \*Christian Friedrich Michaelis (1770-1834): *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation* (1818)
- \*Antoine François Riccoboni (1707-1772) and Friedrich Schröder (1744-1816): *Vorschriften über die Schauspielkunst* (1810)
- \*Johannes Jelgerhuis (1770-1834) : *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek* (1827)
- \*Leman Thomas Rede (1799-1832): *The Road to the Stage* (1827)
- \*Antonio Morrocchesi (1768-1838) *Lezioni di declamazione e d'arte teatrale* (1832)
- \*Angelo Canova (1781-1854) *Lettere sopra l'arte d'imitazione dirette alla prima attrice italiana Anna Fiorilli-Pelandi* (1839)

This chapter will not only discuss the theoretical treatises but also the actor as the performer of the act on stage. The actor is seen as the centre of the theatrical performance; his movement on stage creates the value and message of the play being performed. The personal features of the actor are important in the performance.

The actors used predefined codes in order to make their movements and their expressions of the soul and character visible and understandable for the audience. The audience of the eighteenth century was not a homogeneous group, with the implication that not everybody was able to understand the power of the spoken words, but an expressive performance helped in their understanding. Physiognomic knowledge was used both by authors and by actors. The secondary literature describes the production of theoretical treatises in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Elena Agazzi for example says that:

*Tutti i teorici che in questi anni si occupano della riforma della recitazione in Francia, Inghilterra, Germani ed Italia, concordano sulla necessità che i corpi e i volti degli attori siano ben visibili al pubblico, si presentino cioè in modo 'naturale', privi di abiti troppo sontuosi e di un trucco che impedisca di leggere sul loro volto le passioni che immediatamente debbono raggiungere lo spettatore. Senza questa condizione preliminare, le emozioni più profonde non*

*avrebbero potuto esplicitarsi attraverso i gesti e la mimica del volto e i sentimenti avrebbero continuato a portare l'anonima maschera del ruolo codificato.*<sup>292</sup>

(trans.: "All theorists that in these years deal with the reform of acting in France, England, Germany and Italy, agree on the need for the bodies and the faces of the actors to be clearly visible to the audience, that they present themselves in a 'natural' way, without too opulent clothes and makeup that one cannot read on their faces the passions that must immediately reach the viewer. Without this prior condition, the deepest emotions could not find expression through gestures and mimicry of the face and feelings would have continued to carry the anonymous mask of the encoded role.")

The codes on the faces of the actors must be readable and understandable by the audience. As said before, the size of the theatre and the stage mattered. The costumes and the makeup got a secondary role and the actor carried the whole performance not on his shoulders but on his face. Shearer West observes that:

*[...] the assessment of actors and acting became a form of connoisseurship, with its own terminology and standards of taste. The detail with which critics and biographers discussed an actor's facial expression, gesture and by-play has rarely been equaled since, and this particular obsession with the externals of dramatic action related directly to the last vestiges of Cartesian theory, which saw the movements of the soul as expressing themselves through the actions of the body.*<sup>293</sup>

As discussed above, the theory of the passions was of great importance in the creation of a philosophical background for the treatises for the actors: "*Nel corso di vari secoli, retori, antichisti, predicatori e drammaturghi si sono chiesti se fosse possibile creare una 'tavola dei gesti', tassonomizzare cioè il linguaggio del corpo, in modo da avere una base sicura dalla quale partire per spiegare il rapporto tra sentimenti, intenzioni e azioni.*"<sup>294</sup> (trans.: "Over several centuries, rhetoricians, scholars of classical antiquity, preachers and dramatists have wondered if they could create a 'table of gestures', taxonomizing body language, in order to have a secure base from which to explain the relationship between feelings, intentions and

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<sup>292</sup> Elena Agazzi. *Il corpo conteso. Rito e gestualità nella Germania del Settecento*. Milano: Jaca Book, 2000 p.166.

<sup>293</sup> Shearer West. *The Image of the Actor. Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble*. London: Pinter, 1991 p.3.

<sup>294</sup> Agazzi. *Il corpo conteso*. Milano, 2000 p.7.

actions.”). Degli Esposti adds in her description of the acting manuals that the tradition, at least in England, is that the actors transmit their knowledge orally:

*All'inizio del diciannovesimo secolo i manuali per gli attori arrivano a descrivere fino a settantaquattro tra passioni e atteggiamenti psicologici. La recitazione dell'interprete medio si basa appunto sui sintomi esteriori illustrati in questi testi; il fatto che gli attori siano spesso analfabeti non è particolarmente rilevante, visto che le indicazioni a riguardo vengono trasmesse oralmente di attore in attore, e comunque i manuali stessi non fanno che raccogliere notizie tratte dalla pratica scenica. Così, a partire dalle convenzioni espressive delle passioni, gli attori costruiscono le loro interpretazioni, e le inseriscono nel ruolo di loro competenza.<sup>295</sup>*

(trans.: “At the beginning of the nineteenth century manuals for actors come to describe up to seventyfour passions and psychological attitudes. The acting of the average performer is based on the external symptoms described in these texts; the fact that the actors are often illiterate is not particularly relevant, since the information are transmitted orally from actor to actor, and anyway the manuals collect information taken from the stage practice. So, starting from the conventions of expression of passions, actors build their own interpretations, and place them in the role of their competence.”)

Dene Barnett examines in his work *The Art of Gesture* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987) many textbooks about acting: books written by actors, theatre directors, dramaturges, teachers and theatre theorists. He introduces his elaborate study with a good summary of the eighteenth century acting:

*The detailed picture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century acting which emerges from the descriptions by actors, teachers and dramaturges of the time, reveals an art of gesture which was highly articulate and capable of both Baroque intensity and grandeur, and the legendary subtleties of body language. In addition, this art displayed a beauty, nobility, clarity and ceremony which matched that of the verse, and the music, which it accompanied, reflected and sometimes duplicated. [...]*

*The 18<sup>th</sup> century art of gesture used a vocabulary of basic gestures, each with an individual meaning known to all in advance, and all performs in accordance with given techniques and precepts of style.<sup>296</sup>*

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<sup>295</sup> Paola Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). Poetiche teatrali e tecniche d'attore*. Padova: Esedra editrice 2001, p. 43f.

<sup>296</sup> Dene Barnett. *The Art of Gesture. The practices and principles of 18<sup>th</sup> century acting*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987 p.7.

In the following paragraphs, the body language and vocabulary discussed by Barnett, will be the focus.

### 5.1. Laying the foundations

The famous actor David Garrick published *A Short Treatise on Acting* in 1744. He says that: “*Acting is an Entertainment of the Stage, which by calling in the Aid and Assistance of Articulation, Corporeal Motion, and Occular Expression, imitates, assumes, or puts on the various mental and bodily Emotions arising from the various Humours, Virtues and Vices, incident to human Nature.*”<sup>297</sup> For Garrick there are two types of exhibitions: the tragedy is the expression of the passions and the comedy is the expression of the humours. Passions and humours are strongly connected. Two years after the textbook by Garrick, Aaron Hill published his work *Essay on the Art of Acting* (1746). For Hill the passions are fundamental for theatrical representation of a play. The first rule for an actor is: “*To act a passion well, the actor never must attempt its imitation, till his fancy has conceived so strong an image, or idea, of it, as to move the same impressive springs within his mind, which form that passion when it is undersigned and natural.*”<sup>298</sup> The passion must first be in the imagination, then it is visible on the face and body through the muscles and at the end both voice and gestures must adapt the imagined passion. For Hill there are ten dramatic passions: Joy, Anger, Pity, Hatred, Wonder, Love, Grief, Fear, Scorn and Jealousy. He describes them in a detailed way and concludes by combining each passion with a movement of the muscles and an expression in the eyes:

*Joy is expressed by muscles intense, and a smile in the eye.  
Anger, by muscles intense, and a frown in the eye.  
Pity, by muscles intense, and a sadness in the eye.  
Hatred, by muscles intense, and aversion in the eye.  
Wonder, by muscles intense, and an awful alarm in the eye.  
Love, by muscles intense, and a respectfull attachment in the eye.  
Grief, by neither muscles nor eye intense, but both languid.  
Fear, by muscles and look both languid, with an alarm in eye and motion.  
Scorn, by muscles languid, and neglected, with a smile in the eye, to express the light, or a frown in the eye, for the serious species.*

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<sup>297</sup> David Garrick. *A Short Treatise on Acting*. London, 1744 p.5.

<sup>298</sup> Aaron Hill. *The Art of Acting. An Essay in which the dramatic Passions are properly defined and described*. London, 1746 p.7.

*Jealousy, by muscles intense, and the look pensive; or the look intense, and muscles languid, interchangeably.*<sup>299</sup>

Hill's treatise follows in many explanations and ideas the Cartesian theory of the passions. Both his theories and the acting of Garrick inspired many treatises written in the last decades of the eighteenth century in England. It must be underlined that the production of treatises was prolific all over Europe and one can see a certain concentration of theoretical essays between 1740 and 1830.

In German-speaking areas, for example, discourse around the theatre started to increase in the 1740s. As Graf states in his article on Utopia and Theatre – starting from a quote by Gottsched on the true nature of Drama and one by Knigge on the same idea but almost 70 years later – this period shows a turning point not only in the production of theatrical works but also in theoretical discourse about drama and performance:

*In der Zeitspanne, die zwischen Gottscheds Schauspielrede und Knigges Äußerungen über das Schauspiel liegt, verdichten sich nicht nur die theoretischen Überlegungen über Drama, Theater und Schauspielkunst, häufen sich die Verteidigungen der Schauspiele, von denen Gottscheds Rede eine der ersten in einer langen Reihe ist, auch die Produktion von Theaterstücken nimmt, mindestens seit der Jahrhundertmitte, esponentiell zu; die Tätigkeit des Schauspielers, vorher ein etwas anrühiger Gewerbebezug, erwirbt sich theoretische und künstlerische Dignität, die Bretterbuden wandernder Truppen werden nach und nach zu stehenden Theatern und die vormals umherziehenden Schauspielerbanden ziehen als angesehene Ensembles in die National- und Hoftheater ein. Sie beklatscht ein Publikum, das sich in Theaterzeitschriften über Theaterfragen informiert.*<sup>300</sup>

(trans.: "In the period, between Gottsched's drama speech and Knigge's statements about the play, not only have the theoretical considerations about drama, theatre and the art of acting become consolidated, but likewise the defenses of dramas, of which Gottsched's speech is one of the first in a long series and the production of plays increase, at least since the middle of the century, esponentially. The activity of the actor, previously a somewhat disreputable occupation, acquires theoretical and artistic dignity; the shacks of migratory troops will gradually become standing theatres

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid p.28f.

<sup>300</sup> Ruedi Graf. "Utopie und Theater. Physiognomik, Pathognomik, Mimik und die Reform von Schauspielkunst und Drama im 18. Jahrhundert." In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler: *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag.* Berlin: De Gryter, 1994, 16-33 p.17.

and the former itinerant actor gangs move as respected ensembles in the National- and Court Theatres. They are applauded by an audience that gathers information in theatre journals on theatre issues.”)

In this particular period discussion about theatre issues was seen more in written theoretical works than in real action on stage.

Johann Jacob Bodmer (1698-1783) together with Johann Jacob Breitinger (1701-1776) discussed in detail the idea of language of the signs. Bodmer explained in his *Chritische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter* (1741) – consisting of 21 parts – the signs in the human face and behaviour:

[...] es giebt in dem sichtbaren Theile des Menschen ganz deutlich ausgedrückte Merckmahle, welche uns den innerlichen Zustand des Gemüthes in Absicht auf seine Gedancken und Empfindungen nach allen seinen Veränderungen zu verstehen geben. Dergleichen Zeichen sind die Gesichtszüge, Gebehrdungen und Stellungen des Körpers, ferner die Figuren der Rede, die Sitten, die Handlungen, und die Reden der Menschen.<sup>301</sup>

(trans.: “There are in the visible part of men clearly expressed features which make us understand the inner state of the mind in regard to its thoughts and feelings in all its variations. The signs are the facial features, gestures and postures of the body, also the figures of speech, the manners, the actions and the words of men.”)

Bodmer states that the language these signs produce is universally understandable, so he directly refers to the term body language. These “*Gebehrdungen*” are described by the “*poethischen Maler*”<sup>302</sup>, the writer, and imitated by the actor. The imitation is less valuable than the creation of these signs. To show in a clearer way what kind of gestures and postures can be created, Bodmer used three examples: “*Entsetzen*” (horror), “*Zorn*” and “*Wuth*” (rage), and “*Traurigkeit*” (depression).

There was a prosper reception between different theorists of different countries. Translations, comments and reviews of the different treatises helped to create a European theatre tradition and some of these relationships will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>301</sup> Johann Jacob Bodmer. *Chritische Betrachtungen über die poetischen Gemälde der Dichter*. Zürich, 1741 p.283.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid* p.290.



In 1747, the French theorist and playwright Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine published his treatise *Le Comédien*, “the first practical-theoretical treatise in the French language devoted entirely to the art of the theatrical performer”<sup>303</sup>. The actor – in order to deceive the minds and move the hearts of the audience<sup>304</sup> – needs four main attributes: “*esprit*”, “*sentiment*”, “*feu*” and “*figure*”. Sainte-Albine dedicates to these four attributes a whole chapter in the first of the two books of this treatise. He describes the intellect, the spirit, with a metaphor, as follows: “*L’esprit est donc aussi nécessaire au Comédien, que le Pilote l’est à un vaisseau. C’est l’esprit qui tient le gouvernail; c’est lui qui dirige la manœuvre, et qui indique et calcule la route.*”<sup>305</sup> (trans.: “The intellect is therefore also necessary to the Comedian, as the Pilot is to a vessel. It is the intellect that holds the rudder; it is it that directs the maneuver, and indicates and calculates the route.”). The sentiment is of great importance in the actor and Sainte-Albine connects its importance to the passions and the face expressions:

*La signification de ce mot a beaucoup plus d’étendue, et il désigne dans les Comédiens la facilité de faire succéder dans leur ame les diverses passions, [...]. Dès qu’un Acteur manque de cette qualité, tous les autres présens de la nature et de l’étude sont perdus pour lui. Il est aussi éloigné de son personnage, que le masque l’est du visage.*<sup>306</sup>

(trans.: “The meaning of this word is much more extensive, and it shows in the actors the ease with which the various passions succeed each other in their soul [...]. Once an actor lacks this quality, all other gifts of nature and the study are lost to him. He is as far from his character, as the mask is from the face.”)

Sainte-Albine distinguishes throughout his treatise between the comic and the tragic actor. The comic actor must show a soul that everybody could have; the tragic actor must show a soul that is not common. The question about the fire in the actor is related to the idea of vehemence since both are “inflaming” the actor<sup>307</sup>. The description of fire is: “[...] *le Feu dans une personne de Théâtre n’est autre chose que la célérité et la vivacité, avec lesquelles toutes les parties, qui constituent*

<sup>303</sup> Daniel Larlham. “The Felt Truth of Mimetic Experience. Motions of the Soul and the Kinetics of Passion in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre.” *The Eighteenth-Century* 53 (2012): 432-454 p.434.

<sup>304</sup> See Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine. *Le comédien*. Paris, 1747 p.18.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid p.26.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid p.32.

<sup>307</sup> See ibid p.47.

*l'Acteur, concourent à donner un air de verité à son action.*<sup>308</sup> (trans.: "Fire in a theatre person is nothing other than the swiftness and vivacity with which all parts that make up the Actor, are combined to give a sense of truth to his action."). For Sainte-Albine the idea of truth is very important throughout the treatise. The truth, linked also to the idea of naturalness, of an action on stage is questioned. In the last chapter of the first book the figure, the appearance of the actor is analysed and discussed. Sainte-Albine starts with the perception of the audience while watching the actors on stage:

*Ainsi, du moins sur le Théâtre François, si l'on en croit une partie du Public, une figure noble et séduisante est absolument nécessaire. Les Juges éclairés ne tombent point dans cette erreur. Ils conviennent qu'il est des rôles, qui, [...] exigent que la personne de l'Acteur ait de quoi plaire. Ils ne nient point, que même dans les autres rôles on ait droit de vouloir qu'elle ne déplaise pas. Mais ils prétendent que notre délicatesse sur la regularité des traits et sur l'élégance de la taille n'est un sentiment raisonnable, qu'autant que nous le renfermons dans les bornes qu'il doit avoir. On ne peut qu'approuver la répugnance des Spectateurs pour les figures choquantes, mais il est aussi injuste que contraire à nos intérêts et aux convenances du Théâtre, de ne vouloir admettre sur la scene que des figures d'un ordre supérieur.*<sup>309</sup>

(trans.: "So, at least in the Theatre François, if you believe part of the Audience a noble and appealing figure is absolutely necessary. The enlightened judges aren't falling for this error. They agree that there are roles, which [...] require that the actor needs something pleasant. They don't deny that even in the other roles we have the right to want something not to be grievous. But they pretend that our sensitivity on the regularity of the features and the elegance of the size isn't a reasonable feeling, so far as we keep it in the limits that it must have. One can only approve the reluctance of the spectators towards shocking figures, but it is also unfair that contrary to our interests and convenience of the theatre, not wanting to admit on the stage only the figures of a higher order.")

Sainte-Albine discusses in detail the idea of deformity and of the perfect proportions in the human face and body. Facial and corporal defects cannot be tolerated in an actor. He connects the idea of perfect proportions to moral beauty and concludes that an actor should have a "*physionomie spirituelle*"<sup>310</sup>, a perfect union between his intellect, his exterior appearance and his way of moving on stage.

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid p.44.

<sup>309</sup> Sainte-Albine. *Le comédien*. Paris, 1747 p.51f.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid p.60f.

In the second book, Sainte-Albine analyses the different forms of expression, by saying that the voice can have different forms and different outcomes. The different characters represented on stage have different movements and expressions<sup>311</sup>. For Sainte-Albine the truth of the expression depends on two main elements: “*La verité de l’espression depend de la verité de l’action, et de la verité de la récitation.*”<sup>312</sup> (trans.: “The truth of the expression depends on the truth of action and on the truth of recitation.”). The truth of action refers to the features in the face, the attitudes and the gesture, and the truth of recitation refers mainly to the idea of declamation. The passions must create an expressive action for the actor, his physiognomy can help to show these passions and the gestures must be coherent.

The author, physician, pharmacist and botanist John Hill adapted Saint Albine’s treatise in English with the title *The Actor: A Treatise on the Art of Playing* in 1750. He then revised the work and republished it in 1755. Hill basically follows the main ideas of Sainte-Albine, for example the four main attributes needed by the actor, but he also introduces a new vocabulary for the art of acting. As did Sainte-Albine before him, Hill assigns the actor a double role: “*The Actor is expected to delude the imagination, and to affect the heart: and in order to his attaining to perfection in this difficult task, nature must have been assistant to him in an uncommon manner.*”<sup>313</sup> In the revised version of 1775, Hill’s approach to the topic of the actor and the art of acting is in certain ways different from that of Sainte-Albine. Hill starts with the idea that nature gives the right attributes to the actor who must be aware of this gift and use it in the right way: “*Nature is in nothing so conspicuous, nor in anything so beautiful, as in theatrical representations. [...] actors receive and establish nature as the ground-work of all; but they raise upon this basis a structure, in which art has the most considerable share*”<sup>314</sup>. Hill, being a scientist, studied Nature in many different forms, seen for example in his other works *The Vegetable System* (1759-1775) and *The Sleep of Plants and the Cause of Motion in the Sensitive Plant* (1757). For him acting is also a science: “*Playing is a Science, and is to be studied as a Science;*”<sup>315</sup>. Rules are needed in this science, both for the actor

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<sup>311</sup> See Sainte-Albine. *Le comédien*. Paris, 1747 p.137f.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid p.138.

<sup>313</sup> John Hill. *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing*. London, 1750 p.1.

<sup>314</sup> John Hill. *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing. A new Work*. London, 1755 p.6.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid p.12.

and the judge of his performance. With his treatise Hill tries to show the main elements of these rules. An actor has several qualities, and all of them are concentrated on the fact that they need to be studied and consciously applied: *“To be able to surprise, is the first quality of a player, but the next, which is of equal importance, is to know where to do it.”*<sup>316</sup> As already explained extensively in the French original and in Hill’s translation, both the voice and the gestures of the actor can be different on different occasions: *“Nature has given an actor what are called powers; that is, she has given him a strong voice and a free use of his limbs, [...]”*<sup>317</sup>, but it is then the greatness of the actor to understand how to use both of them in the right way. Imitation can be seen as the basis for the actor, but it is not enough to be a marvelous actor<sup>318</sup>. Hill keeps in the work of 1755 the four main attributes already introduced: *“The gifts of nature to the player are four: three of them regard the mind, and one the body”*<sup>319</sup>: understanding, sensibility, spirit/fire and figure. In contrast to the French text and its English translation, in this treatise Hill gives more precise indications regarding the figure of the actor:

*An elegance of person is absolutely necessary to him who represents the first characters [great and heroic], whether in comedy or tragedy; but to the rest [subordinate rank], not; on the contrary, they are singularities of figure which may be far from injurious, useful. These players are not expected to be universal;*<sup>320</sup>

Hill argues that certain roles can be easily played by deformed actors, if the character requires that. In any case it would be preferable to have an actor who has perfect forms in all the four attributes. Hill also states that a defect in the figure of actors is easier to accept than for actresses: *“[...] the audience would not bear a deformed or crooked actress.”*<sup>321</sup> For Hill the representation on stage can be made in the classical genres of comedy and tragedy, and the action by the actor must follow certain requirements for both genres. Hill argued that, even though nature is the key to the expression of passions, emotions and feelings on stage – as already explained earlier – the audience is not going to attend a representation on stage to

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<sup>316</sup> Hill. *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing. A new Work.* London, 1755 p.12.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid p.16.

<sup>318</sup> See ibid p.21f.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid p.107.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid p.138.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid p.141.

see real life and the real nature of men. The audience wants to see an imitation of nature on stage which should create a certain distance from real life:

*In comedy we expect something to entertain us, and in tragedy something that we may admire; but we shall never laugh at the drollery, while we are in pain about the person: nor can we entertain a true and pleasing pride in the dignity of our natures, while the person who is to represent it to us by his actions, reminds us by his figure that we are pitiful animals.*<sup>322</sup>

Hill's conclusion to the whole discourse around the figure of the actors is:

*The sum of the whole matter is this, an elegant person is necessary in some characters, a bad figure may be useful in some, but they are few; but altho' deformity will be of advantage in these, it will not be borne in others; and finally in the greater part of the characters of inferior rank, an absence of charms in the face and figure may be very well dispensed with. A company ought to consist of a few persons of the first kind, a very small number of the second, and the generality should be of the third.*<sup>323</sup>

A good actor is set apart from a bad actor by the ability and the knowledge to use his face and his limbs in order to form and mark the passions. In general a normal, average appearance is better than an extraordinary one. Hill introduces the discourse around the passions not only in his explanations about the actor's figure but mainly in his theory about the necessity of sensibility. Sensibility is "*a disposition to be affected by the passions which plays are intended to excite*"<sup>324</sup>. Hill's idea of the passions is linked both to the playwright and the actor: "*The business of a dramatic writer is to excite the passions, and that of the player is to represent in the most forcible manner what the other has written.*"<sup>325</sup> The actor must first understand what the author means and then he must feel the passion strongly with his sensibility. In tragedy three main passions are used: Love, Revenge and Ambition<sup>326</sup> (interestingly in the French original and his translation from 1750 the three resources

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<sup>322</sup> Hill. *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing. A new Work.* London, 1755 p.143.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid p.146.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid p.48.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid p.49.

<sup>326</sup> See ibid p.62.

for the tragic actions were: Love, Hatred and Ambition<sup>327</sup>). The actor's skill must be to regulate the outcome of his sensibility:

*It has been observed, that tho' it is very happy for the player to possess this quality of sensibility, it is necessary for him to have that command of himself, that he can keep in from interrupting his utterance, or taking away the articulation of his voice: but there are passages in which it may be allowed even this effect; and instead of a blemish it will communicate the greatest beauty.*<sup>328</sup>

Regulation and moderation are the key words in the actor's performance. The actor needs to have a certain body control in order to perform his action well and have the right response from the audience.

John Hill, in his work of 1775, not only presents the already established acting doctrine<sup>329</sup>, but he also introduces new elements into the discourse. Already the translation of the French *sentiment* to *sensibility* shows a very interesting twist in his theory:

*It brought theatrical theory in line with current science, in which vitalistic theories of bodily organization, assuming the innate capacity of matter to respond variously to stimuli, were complicating and transforming the mechanistic. This view challenged earlier theatrical theories of the passions by replacing the uniformity of the rhetorical significations or the general Cartesian templates with individual variations.*<sup>330</sup>

Hill's concentration on the sensibility of the actor made his treatise a model for other theatrical theories in the eighteenth century. The most significant relation between this treatise and another important work is with Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*.

In 1769, the Italo-French actor and writer Antonio Fabio Sticotti (1715-1772) translates Hill's treatise into French with the title *Garrick, ou les acteurs anglois*. Sticotti indicates already on the cover of his work that it is a translation from an English text and in his foreword to the reader he says: "*J'ai traduit avec beaucoup de liberté; et n'ai pû me défendre quelques observations assez utiles, peut-être, à la*

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<sup>327</sup> See Sainte-Albine. *Le comédien*. Paris, 1747 p.35 and Hill. *The Actor*. London, 1750 p.17.

<sup>328</sup> Hill. *The Actor. A Treatise on the Art of Playing. A new Work*. London, 1755 p.56.

<sup>329</sup> See Paul Goring. *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2005 p.136.

<sup>330</sup> Joseph R. Roach. *The Player's Passion. Studies in the Science of Acting*. University of Delaware Press, 1985 p.100.

*plûpart des Acteurs et des partisans du Théâtre.*<sup>331</sup> (trans.: “I translated very freely; and I was able to add some useful observations, perhaps, for the greatest part for the Actors and Theatre supporters.”).

Diderot’s *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* (written between 1773 and 1777 and published posthumously in 1830) starts with the reference to Sticotti’s work:

Premier interlocuteur:  
*N’en parlons plus.*

Second interlocuteur:  
*Pourquoi?*

Le premier:  
*C’est l’ouvrage de votre ami [1].*

Le second:  
*Qu’importe?*<sup>332</sup>

(trans.:  
Let us talk no more of that.  
Why?  
It is the work of your friend [1].  
What does that matter?)

[1] Garrick ou les Acteurs anglais

Diderot starts from Sticotti’s translation of Hill’s treatise in order to analyse the main influences and features of a good actor. For Diderot, as for Sainte-Albine, Hill and Sticotti, nature gives the right features and attributes to the actor : “*C’est à la nature à donner les qualités de la personne, la figure, la voix, le jugement, la finesse. C’est à l’étude des grands modèles, à la connaissance du cœur humain, à l’usage du monde, au travail assidu, à l’expérience, et à l’habitude du théâtre, à perfectionner le don de nature.*”<sup>333</sup> (trans.: “It is Nature that gives the personal gifts – figure, voice, judgement, finesse. It is the study of the great models, the knowledge of the human heart, the use of the world, hard work, experience, and the habit of the theatre, which perfect Nature’s gift.”). Diderot makes it clear from the beginning that even though Nature is the cause of everything given to the actor, it is still he who has to make the

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<sup>331</sup> Antonio Fabio Sticotti. *Garrick, ou les acteurs anglois. Ouvrage contenant des Observations sur l’Art dramatique, sur l’art de la representation et le jeu des acteurs.* Paris, 1769.

<sup>332</sup> Denis Diderot. *Paradoxe sur le Comédien.* Paris: A. Sautelet et C. Libraires, 1830 p.1.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid p.4.

best of it and to create a wonderful performance on stage. The difficulty of creating the performance shows one of the first paradoxes presented in the treatise: the paradox of naturalness. The actor should imitate what nature shows and gives him, but for Diderot the actor becomes a creator and he is not an imitator anymore. The actor is the creator of the representation of a play on stage and it lies in his hands how the performance turns out and how the author's intention is shown on stage: "*Le comédien imitateur peut arriver au point de rendre tout passablement; il n'y a rien ni à louer, ni à reprendre dans son jeu.*"<sup>334</sup> (trans.: "The actor imitator can get to the point to make everything tolerably; there is nothing either to praise or to blame in his playing."). Diderot discusses in detail the relation between the actor as creator and the author as creator: "*Celui qui laisse le moins à imaginer au grand comédien est le plus grand des poètes.*"<sup>335</sup> (trans.: "He that leaves least to imagine to the great comedian is the greatest poet.").

The concept of nature is also linked to the question on what is real on stage and in life. Diderot underlines the fact that there is a big difference between the life the audience sees on stage and the real life of the actors:

*Réfléchissez un moment sur ce qu'on appelle au théâtre être vrai. Est-ce y montrer les choses comme elles sont en nature ? Aucunement. Le vrai en ce sens ne serait que le commun. Qu'est-ce donc que le vrai de la scène ? C'est la conformité des actions, des discours, de la figure, de la voix, du mouvement, du geste, avec un modèle idéal imaginé par le poète, et souvent exagéré. Voilà le merveilleux. Ce modèle n'influe pas seulement sur le ton ; il modifie jusqu'à la démarche, jusqu'au maintien. De là vient que le comédien dans la rue ou sur la scène sont deux personnages si différents, qu'on a peine à les reconnaître.*<sup>336</sup>

(trans.: "Reflect for a moment on what is called the truth in theatre. Does it show things as they are in nature? Not at all. Truth in that sense would be common. What is then the truth in the scene? It is the conformity of actions, speech, figure, voice, movement, gesture, with an ideal model imagined by the poet, and often exaggerated. That's wonderful. This model not only affects the tone; it changes the approach and the support. Therefore the actor in the street or on stage is two so different characters that it is hard to distinguish them.")

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<sup>334</sup> Diderot. *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. Paris, 1830 p.4.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid p.71.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid p.21.



The second paradox presented in the treatise is the paradox of emotion: The actor should show on his face the passion, emotions and feelings which certain actions create, without being really moved by those passions:

*[...] c'est qu'il s'écoute au moment où il vous trouble, et que tout son talent consiste non pas à sentir, comme vous le supposez, mais à rendre si scrupuleusement les signes extérieurs du sentiment, que vous vous y trompiez. [...] C'est vous qui remportez toutes ces impressions. L'acteur est las, et vous tristes ; c'est qu'il s'est démené sans rien sentir, et que vous avez senti sans vous démener. S'il en était autrement, la condition du comédien serait la plus malheureuse des conditions ; mais il n'est pas le personnage, il le joue et le joue si bien que vous le prenez pour tel : l'illusion n'est que pour vous ; il sait bien, lui, qu'il ne l'est pas.*<sup>337</sup>

(trans.: "At the very moment when he touches your heart he is listening to himself, and his talent depends not, as you may think, upon feeling, but upon rendering so exactly the exterior signs of feeling, that you get tricked. [...] It is you who got all these impressions. The actor is tired, and you are unhappy. He struggled without feeling anything and you felt something without struggling. If it were otherwise, the condition of the actor would be the most unfortunate condition; but he is not the character he plays, he plays it and he plays it so well that you think he is the character : the illusion is all on your side; he knows well enough that he is not the character.")

Diderot emphasizes the fact that real talent comes from a deep knowledge of all the exterior signs of the passions and the imitation of them on stage, in order to deceive the audience:

*Qu'est-ce donc que le vrai talent ? Celui de bien connaître les symptômes extérieurs de l'ame d'emprunt, de s'adresser à la sensation de ceux qui nous entendent, qui nous voient, et de les tromper par l'imitation de ces symptômes, par une imitation qui agrandisse tout dans leurs têtes et qui devienne la règle de leur jugement ;*

*[...]*

*Celui donc qui connaît le mieux et qui rend le plus parfaitement ces signes extérieurs d'après le modèle idéal le mieux conçu est le plus grand comédien.*<sup>338</sup>

(trans.: "What then is the true talent ? The one to know the external symptoms of the soul we borrow, to address the sensation of those who listen to us, see us, and to mislead them by imitating these

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<sup>337</sup> Diderot. *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. Paris, 1830 p.15.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid p.71.

symptoms, by an imitation that enlarges everything in their minds and become the rule of their judgment;  
[...]

He, therefore, who knows best and renders best the exterior signs, by following the ideal model, is the greatest actor.”)

For Diderot there are three types of actors: First, a bad actor, second a mediocre actor, and third, an excellent actor. The way to categorize all the actors is with the visibility of their sensibility: “*C’est l’extrême sensibilité qui fait les acteurs médiocres; c’est la sensibilité médiocre qui fait la multitude des mauvais acteurs ; et c’est le manque absolu de sensibilité qui prépare les acteurs sublimes.*”<sup>339</sup> (trans.: “Extreme sensibility makes mediocre actors, mediocre sensibility which makes the multitude of bad actors; and the complete absence of sensibility makes sublime actors.”). With this classification Diderot takes Hill’s theory about sensibility to another level: as explained before, for Hill the actor needs to control his sensibility, for Diderot this is not enough. He calls for a complete lack of sensibility. Diderot connects the idea of the sensibility also to the differences between men and women in general and actor and actress in detail:

*Voyez les femmes; elles nous surpassent certainement, et de fort loin, en sensibilité : quelle comparaison d’elles à nous dans les instans de la passion ! Mais autant nous le leur cédon quand elles agissent, autant elles restent au-dessous de nous quand elles imitent. La sensibilité n’est jamais sans faiblesse d’organisation. La larme qui s’échappe de l’homme vraiment homme nous touche plus que tous les pleurs d’une femme. Dans la grande comédie, la comédie du monde, celle à laquelle j’en reviens toujours, toutes les âmes chaudes occupent le théâtre ; tous les hommes de génie sont au parterre.*<sup>340</sup>

(trans.: “See the women; they certainly surpass us, and from far, for the sensibility: what comparison of them with us in the instances of passion! But as much as we give in to them when they act, they remain far below us when they imitate. The sensibility is never without weakness of organization. The tear that escapes from the man, the real man, touches us more than all the crying of a woman. In the great comedy, the comedy of the world, the one I always come back to, all warm souls occupy the theatre; all the genius men are on the ground.”)

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<sup>339</sup> Diderot. *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. Paris, 1830 p.16.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid p.13.

A third paradox, the paradox of effect, can be described as follows: The actor should not aim for a certain reaction by the audience, but only in the moment he is not trying to create a reaction, he is really moving and touching the audience by his performing art. This paradox is linked to the other two paradoxes since it includes both naturalness and emotion: *“Mais, dit-on, un orateur en vaut mieux quand il s'échauffe, quand il est en colère. Je le nie. C'est quand il imite la colère. Les comédiens font impression sur le public, non lorsqu'ils sont furieux, mais lorsqu'ils jouent bien la fureur.”*<sup>341</sup> (trans.: “But they say, that an actor is better when he is excited, when he is angry. I deny it. It is when he imitates anger. The actors impress the audience, not when they are furious, but when the play fury well.”).

In general Diderot sees the performance by an actor as the sum of the words and the action, as a combination of thoughts and emotions transmitted by words and acted out with gestures, sounds and movements.

The analysis of Diderot's theories of the theatre can certainly not be limited just to the presentation of the *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* – probably his best known work – but must be extended to his other works. In 1758, Diderot presents his play *Le Père de Famille* together with a general treatise on the theatre (*De la Poésie dramatique*), published first in 1772. The treatise on the theatre aims to show different kinds of plays used by Diderot:

*Voici donc le système dramatique dans toute son étendue. La Comédie gaie, qui a pour objet le ridicule et le vice. La Comédie Sérieuse, qui a pour objet la vertu et les devoirs de l'homme. La Tragédie, qui auroit pour objet nos malheurs domestiques. La Tragédie, qui a pour objet les catastrophes publiques et les malheurs des Grands.*<sup>342</sup>

(trans.: “Here is the dramatic system to its full extent. The cheerful comedy, which is about ridicule and vice. The Serious Comedy, which is about virtue and the duties of man. Tragedy, which is about our domestic misfortunes. Tragedy, which is about the public catastrophies and the misfortunes of the great.”)

Diderot discusses in detail the role of the poet in the creation of different characters for the different kinds of plays. For the cheerful comedy, la Comédie gaie, Diderot

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<sup>341</sup> Diderot. *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. Paris, 1830 p.100.

<sup>342</sup> Denis Diderot. *Œuvres de théâtre de M. Diderot avec un discours sur la poésie dramatique*. Vol.2. Amsterdam, 1772 p.266.

wants the poet to be a philosopher: “*Qu’il soit Philosophe, qu’il ait descend en lui-même, qu’il y ait vu la nature humaine, qu’il soit profondément instruit des états de la société, qu’il en connoisse bien les fonctions et le poids, les inconvéniens et les avantages.*”<sup>343</sup> (trans.: “He is a philosopher; he has descended into himself, he has to get to know human nature; he was taught by the classes of society in the most accurate way; he knows their pursuits and their importance, their advantages and inconveniences.”).

The textbooks illustrated so far introduce some key concepts which become even more important and discussed in the years between 1780 and 1830. Garrick’s postulate of “*Articulation, Corporeal Motion and Occular Expression*” is as ground breaking as Aaron Hill’s theory of a clear connection of the passions and the movement of the muscles. Saint-Albine and later John Hill try to detect the truth in acting and Diderot claims the actor to be a creator.

In the following, the ideas of these preliminary textbooks and manuals are discussed in a broader sense by analysing the already mentioned categories:

- creation, movement and visibility of the passions,
- movements of the muscles and the soul,
- delicate balance between imitation and originality in the actor and his art,
- personal features of the actor,
- audience’s response to the action on stage.

At the beginning of the discussion, the theorists’ ideas and opinions of Lavater in particular and the art and science of Physiognomy in general, are illustrated.

## **5.2. Physiognomy and Lavater**

In 1785 Johann Jakob Engel published his treatise *Ideen zu einer Mimik* consisting of two parts: in the first part he presents 27 letters and 23 engravings to show his teaching on mimicry and in the second part he makes a critical review of some older treatises. Already in the first letter, Engel speaks about Physiognomy:

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<sup>343</sup> Diderot. *Œuvres de théâtre de M. Diderot avec un discours sur la poésie dramatique*. Vol.2. Amsterdam, 1772 p.267.

*Ich nenne die Physiognomik eine der Mimik ähnliche Kunst; denn beyde beschäftigen sich damit, den Ausdruck der Seele im Körper zu beobachten: nur daß jene die festen bleibenden Züge, woraus sich das Allgemeine eines Charakters abnehmen läßt, und diese die vorübergehenden körperlichen Bewegungen untersucht, die einen solchen und solchen einzelnen Zustand der Seele ankündigen.<sup>344</sup>*

(trans.: "I call Physiognomy an art similar to mimicry; because both deal with observing the expression of the soul in the body: only that the first studies the fixed permanent traits, from which the general character can be perceived, and the second studies the temporary physical movements that announce this and that single state of the soul.")

Engel is already making a clear distinction, even though not using those terms, between Physiognomy and Pathognomy. He distinguishes between the fixed and the temporary traits in the face. As will be shown in the following discussion, Engel uses many ideas directly from Physiognomy in order to give specific rules to the actor. Engel also knows Lavater's work, but he refuses to consult it for his theory:

*Lavaters Physiognomische Fragmente habe ich nicht zur Hand, und wenn ich sie auch, auf meinem Pulte vor mir sähe, würd ich sie doch nur ungerne zu Rathe ziehen. Fremde, nicht schon vorher durchdachte Ideen könnten mir leicht die ganze Folge meiner eignen verwirren. Wenn etwa Sie das Buch besitzen, so lesen Sie doch nach, was darin von den Stellungen gesagt wird. Übergangen kann diese Materie schwerlich seyn, da ich mich erinnere, daß selbst ein gewisses Charakteristische der Handschriften darinn bemerkt und mit Proben belegt worden. Auch über den Gang muß manche Beobachtung darinn vorkommen, die ich nicht nachsehen kann. Diese und einige andre Punkte sind die ungewisse Grenze der beyden Künste; ein gemeinschaftlicher Rain, der eben so wohl der Mimik, als der Physiognomik gehört.<sup>345</sup>*

(trans.: "I have not Lavater's Physiognomische Fragmente at hand, and if I would have them my desk in front of me, I would not like to consult them. Stranger, not previously thought through ideas could easily confuse the whole sequence of my own ideas. If you own the book, you can read what is said therein of the positions. This matter can be hardly overlooked, because I remember that even a certain characteristic of the manuscripts is assumed and proved with samples. Also on walking some observations must occur in it, that I can not check. These and a few other points are the uncertain border between the arts; a common uncultivated strip, which belongs to mimicry as well as to Physiognomy.")

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<sup>344</sup>Johann Jakob Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785 p.6f.

<sup>345</sup>Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785 p.115.

Physiognomy, together with mimicry, study and analyse most of the same topics, however, by using their different approaches.

Gilbert Austin speaks in the third chapter of his *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806) about the countenance. He starts his explanations by quoting Lavater and his ground rules of Physiognomy: “Upon the subject of the countenance, although we are far from intending physiognomical research, it will not be amiss to repeat a few of the observations of Lavater, who had so attentively studied all its powers. His distinction between physiognomy and pathognomy, will be found worthy the attention of the public speaker.”<sup>346</sup> Austin is especially fascinated by Lavater’s theory that a “tranquil countenance is indication of the tranquility of mind”<sup>347</sup>.

Only a few months after Austin, Henry Siddons presented his treatise *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action* (1807), based on Engel’s *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. The subtitle of the work is *Embellished with sixty-nine Engravings, expressive of the various passions and representing the modern costume of the London Theatre*. Siddons translates most of Engel’s ideas into English and transfers them to the English stage. Siddons also copies in places Engel’s opinion on Lavater. In the eighth letter he directly quotes Engel: “Lavater is a book which I have not ready at hand, and even if I had, I should not consult him very frequently.”<sup>348</sup> Siddons criticizes Lavater’s theory in an even more sarcastic and offensive way. However, he still uses, as Engel before him, Lavater’s main ideas of the body in movement and in rest in his acting theory.

Christian Friedrich Michaelis starts from Austin’s text and elaborates his acting theory in the work *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation* (1818). Michaelis shortens Austin’s theories and focuses his attention mainly on the importance of the voice in the declamation. He justifies this choice in part because many other theorists had already written about the importance of the facial features:

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<sup>346</sup> Gilbert Austin. *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*. London, 1806 p.87.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid p.87.

<sup>348</sup> Henry Siddons. *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action*. London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1822 p.53.

*Was aber dem menschlichen Antlitz und im mannigfaltigen Mienenspiel für ein reicher, bedeutender Ausdruck liege, ist von älteren und neuern Schriftstellern, z. B. Cicero, Quintilian, d. ä. Plinius, Lavater, Herder, Engel treffend bemerkt worden. Physiognomik ist (nach Lavater) die Kenntniß der äußern Zeichen von den Fähigkeiten und Neigungen der Menschen; Pathognomik die Kenntniß von den Zeichen der Leidenschaften.*<sup>349</sup>

(trans.: "But what rich and important expression lies in the human face and varied facial expressions has been accurately remarked by older and more recent writers, eg. Cicero, Quintilian, Pliny the elder, Lavater, Herder, Engel. Physiognomy is (according to Lavater) the knowledge of the outward signs of the abilities and inclinations of men; Pathognomy the knowledge of the signs of the passions.")

Michaelis, as Engel, Austin and Siddons before him, understand the difference between Physiognomy and Pathognomy and makes use of this distinction through Lavater's definition and theory.

In 1832, the Italian actor Antonio Morrocchesi published his own *Lezioni di declamazione e d'arte teatrale*. Morrocchesi dedicates his tenth lesson completely to Physiognomy and starts with a harsh critique: "*La fisionomia per vero dire, scienza fondata sul sentimento, scienza immediatamente vera per lo spirito umano quanto tutte le altre fisiche e morali, è stata dagli antichi deformata con cento errori, ed imposture, e quasi ridotta a non essere, che una somma di ridicoli paragoni, e menzogne.*"<sup>350</sup> (trans.: "Physiognomy to say it right, science founded on the feeling, science immediately true for the human spirit as all other physical and moral sciences, has been deformed by the ancients with a hundred mistakes, and impostures, and has almost been reduced to be nothing more than a sum of ridiculous comparisons, and lies."). Morrocchesi quotes several literary sources such as Quintilian and Dante to show how Physiognomy was "properly" used before. Morrocchesi calls Lavater "*insigne scrittore, e rinnovatore della scienza fisionomica*"<sup>351</sup> (trans.: "famous writer and renovator of the physiognomical science"). Physiognomy is a useful resource in the art of acting, but, as already quoted, sometimes it is misunderstood because it is taught in an ambiguous way.

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<sup>349</sup> Christian Friedrich Michaelis. *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation*. Leipzig, 1818 p.38.

<sup>350</sup> Antonio Morrocchesi. *Lezioni di declamazione e d'arte teatrale*. Florence, 1832 p.217.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid p.218.

### 5.3. The passions on stage

The theorists of the art of acting use the already established theory of the passions in their textbooks. Many of them base their whole theory of acting on the creation, movement and visibility of the passions.

Siddons starts his discussion about gestures with an introduction about different influences on the passions: *“It is very true that the inhabitants of various countries have different modes of expressing the same passions, and that this difference is often strikingly obvious.”*<sup>352</sup> Apart from the influence of the nationality on the passions, also gender, age and individual qualities of each person are important.<sup>353</sup> Siddons speaks very clearly about the changes of the face and body due to the passions. For him there are two types of changes: *“All modifications of the body, at all particular or determined, are to be divided into two ranks or classes – the gestures picturesque, and the gestures expressive. The seat of these gestures is not fixed to this or that particular portion of the body; the soul exercises an equal power over all the muscles, [...]”*<sup>354</sup> At the beginning of his teaching Siddons explains how the actors must understand and use the passions: *“The player who wishes to be accomplished in his art should not only study the passions on their broad and general basis; he should trace their operations in all their shades, in all their different varieties, as they act upon different conditions, and as they operate in various climates.”*<sup>355</sup>

Morrocchesi follows Siddons’ idea on the passions and calls them the source of all human actions: *“Le passioni sono la principal sorgente delle azioni umane, e ad esse fa d’uopo dirigerci in tutto ciò che alla pratica si riferisce. Dopo che gli argomenti e le ragioni hanno prodotto nell’intelletto l’intero effetto, facilmente la volontà s’infiama, ed allora è quando ottenere quando possiamo la mozione degli affetti.”*<sup>356</sup> (trans.: “The passions are the main source for the human actions, and that makes them appropriate to direct us in all the practical things. After that the

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<sup>352</sup> Siddons. *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action*. London, 1822 p.5.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid p.8.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid p.21.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid p.10.

<sup>356</sup> Morrocchesi. *Lezioni di declamazione e d’arte teatrale*. Florence, 1832 p.161.



arguments and the reasons produce the whole effect in the intellect, they will easily be inflamed, and then it is when we can get the motion of affection.”). According to Morrocchesi each passion is linked to a specific gesture, action and movement.

In 1801, Pierre Poupart Dorfeuille published *Les élémens de l'art du comédien* consisting of several “cahier”. The subtitle of this treatise is *Considéré dans chacune des parties qui le composent: à l'usage des Elèves et des Amateurs du Théâtre*. Dorfeuille starts his treatise with a definition of the art of acting: “*L'Art du Comédien rapporte la multitude infinie des caractères mis sur la scène a trois genres principaux; aux passions, aux sentimens, à l'esprit; et le goût orné subdivise à l'infini ces trois genres selon les personnages, les convenances et les temps.*”<sup>357</sup> (trans.: “The Art of the Actor relates the infinite multitude of characters put on stage to three main types; the passions, the feelings, the spirit; and taste divides these three types infinitively according to the characters, convenience and time.”). The passions are together with other elements, driving the human body and soul: “*Les passions, les sentimens, tous les mouvemens du cœur, ne sont point des conventions avec lesquelles on puisse composer.*” (trans.: “The passions, feelings, all the movements of the heart, are nothing else than conventions with which one can compose.”).

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published in 1803 in 91 paragraphs *Regeln für Schauspieler*. These rules speak about both the spoken word (dialects, rhythm, pronunciation) and the gestures and postures (position of the hands and arms, mimicry). Goethe gives a definition of declamation related to the passions:

*Hier muß ich meinen angeborenen Charakter verlassen, mein Naturell verleugnen und mich ganz in die Lage und Stimmung desjenigen versetzen, dessen Rolle ich deklamiere. Die Worte, welche ich ausspreche, müssen mit Energie und dem lebendigsten Ausdruck hervorgebracht werden, so daß ich jede leidenschaftliche Regung als wirklich gegenwärtig mitzuempfinden scheine.*<sup>358</sup>

(trans.: “Here I must leave my innate character, deny my nature and put myself completely in the situation and mood of the one, whose role I declaim. The words I utter must be spoken with energy and vibrant expression, so that I seem to empathize every passionate emotion as really present.”)

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<sup>357</sup> Pierre Poupart Dorfeuille. *Les élémens de l'art du comédien*. Paris, 1801 p.9.

<sup>358</sup> Goethe. *Regeln für Schauspieler*. 1803 § 20.

Goethe, as many before and after him, emphasises the fact that the actor needs to try to become a different person with a different character and to make the audience believe that this process is natural and understandable.

Michaelis related the idea of the passions to the theory of the affects. For him the expressions of the human body (voice, mime and gestures) are the signs of the affects and passions: "*Töne, Mienen und Gebärden sind die Zeichen der Affecte und Leidenschaften.*"<sup>359</sup> (trans.: "Sounds, mime and gestures are the signs of the affects and passions").

Leman Thomas Rede published in 1827 *The Road to the Stage*, a very detailed compendium of rules and advice for the actor. This textbook includes lists of theatre managers, company names, famous roles, salaries in the theatres, etc. It gives indications on makeup and costumes, famous dialogues and general behaviour at the theatre. Rede dedicates one chapter to "*Method of expressing the various passions, emotion, etc.*"<sup>360</sup>. Before listing and describing several passions in detail, Rede makes a general introduction to it:

*Many attempts have been made to arrange the passages of a play, under the head of different emotions or passions, and then, by referring them to some general rule of performance, they intimate how the whole should be executed. That this system is an erroneous one there can be no doubt; if the actor can not feel what he utters, it will be useless to attempt to make him run the gauntlet through a set of emotions by rule.*<sup>361</sup>

With this quote Rede directly contradicts Diderot's postulate of the actor not being emotional himself and not lacking sensibility. Rede in a certain sense contradicts even himself, because what follows this declaration is a detailed indication on how to act several passions. Rede's book was republished in 1868, including this time specific information of the American theatres, under the title *Guide to the Stage*. In the *Guide*, Rede adds some new ideas on the passions and emotions to the original text:

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<sup>359</sup> Michaelis. *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation*. Leipzig, 1818 p.33.

<sup>360</sup> Leman Thomas Rede. *Road to the Stage*. London, 1827 p.77f.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid p.77.

*The ten Dramatic Passions are Love, Joy, Grief, Fear, Anger, Pity, Scorn, Hatred, Jealousy, and Wonder [...]. It is the Player's Art to consider well the various circumstances of the passion he is to represent; let him place himself, in imagination, in the situation in real life; think how so situated, he would act, and endeavor, having thus fully placed before your mind's eye the conception of the part, to read the dialogue, in an easy, natural tone of voice, without any attempt to spout. Remember when studying, as a Golden Rule, that your imagination must conceive a strong idea of passions, and no idea thus sought, can be strongly conceived without impressing its own form upon the muscles of the face, and so conceived, the same impression will be muscularly given to the body at the same time.*<sup>362</sup>

The muscles, on the one side, receive the passions and, on the other side, they create the passions. It is a circular relationship of creating and conceiving.

Johannes Jelgerhuis was one of the leading actors at the Schouwburg, the theatre in Amsterdam. He gave some introductory lessons to young actors following his work *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek* (1827). His work summarizes older sources, but tries also to modernize the acting manuals. His letters are embellished with several drawings, which show in detail the right gestures and movements to use on stage. In his definition of *Gesticulatie*, Jelgerhuis speaks about the passions: "*Wij komen tot de Gesticulatie. – Dit is, zich bewegen met goed verstand op het Tooneel, en wat is dit? Niet anders dan zijne rede met meer dan gewoon, met meer verheven gevoel, door gebaren verzellen, naardat de storm der hartstogten woedt.*"<sup>363</sup> (trans.: "We now come to gesticulation. - This is, moving with good understanding on the scene, and what is that? Nothing more than to use his speech more than usually, with more exalted feeling, by telling gestures, according to the storm of the furious passions.")). Jelgerhuis' idea with his manual is to show all the different passions and how they should be expressed on stage: "*Ik heb dan voorgenomen, om hier te toonen bij de kennis der hartstogten het onderrigt in de kunstgrepen, tot de mogelijkheid om alle hartstogten door Mimiek te vertoonen, om de gebreken tot die mogelijkheid hinderlijk te leeren bedekken, te hulp komen, en te verbeteren.*"<sup>364</sup> (trans.: "I here intended to show how the knowledge of the passions had been taught in the arts, to have the possibility of showing all passions by

<sup>362</sup> Leman Thomas Rede. *Guide to the Stage*. New York, 1868 p.31.

<sup>363</sup> Johannes Jelgerhuis. *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek*. Amsterdam, 1827 p.77.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid p.120.

mimicry, to cover the defects of the opportunity of such a difficult teaching, to help, and improve.”).

#### 5.4. Movement of the muscles

As already seen, the muscles in the human body are discussed as the main connection point between the inner and outer expression of the passions.

For Engel it is of crucial importance that an actor is aware of the fact that he needs a true/real and beautiful face to show the passions, emotions and feelings in his performance. According to Engel, as to many other theorists, the soul has the power to move the passions and the muscles:

*So wie zu der Malerey, nachdem der Fall ist, der ganze Körper mit allen seinen Gliedern dienen kann; so auch zum Ausdruck der innern Operationen und Empfindungen der Seele. Der Sitz des Gebehrdenspiels ist nicht dieses und jenes Glied, dieser oder jener Theil des Körpers insonderheit. Die Seele hat über alle Muskeln desselben Gewalt, und wirkt, bey vielen ihrer Bewegungen und Leidenschaften, in alle.<sup>365</sup>*

(trans.: “As for the art of painting, the whole body can be used with all its limbs also to express the inner operations and feelings of the soul. The seat of the gestures is not this or that limb, or this or that particular part of the body. The soul has on all muscles the same force, and acts, in many of its movements and passions, in all.”)

The actor needs to know perfectly how his body and his soul work together. Every exaggeration destroys the performance and fails in showing the real intention of the playwright and, even worse, the real and true nature of men: “*Denn auch im Ton der Sprache und in der Bewegung der Glieder versieht und verfehlt, schwächt oder übertreibt die Natur, [...].*”<sup>366</sup> (trans.: “Than also in the tone of the language and in the movement of the limbs misses, weakens or exaggerates the nature.”). Engel emphasizes the fact that every passion, feeling and emotion has its movement and this movement is transmitted by different limbs. The more these limbs are mobile the more they are used to transmit the passions: “*Am leichtesten, öftesten, unverkennbarsten spricht die Seele durch diejenigen Glieder, deren Muskeln am*

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<sup>365</sup> Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785 p.61.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid* p. 19.

beweglichsten sind; Also am öftesten durch Minen des Gesichts, und unter den Minen durchs Auge; am seltensten durch veränderte charakteristische Stellung des ganzen Körpers.”<sup>367</sup> (trans.: “The easiest, oftenest, most unmistakable speaks the soul through those limbs, whose muscles are the most mobile; So most often by expressions of the face, and the expressions through the eye; least often by changing characteristic position of the whole body.”).

## 5.5. The imitation

The concept of imitation is a key element in every kind of theatrical discussion. Friedrich Schiller states that art is always an imitation of Nature:

*Die Kunst erfüllt ihren Zweck durch Nachahmung der Natur, indem sie die Bedingungen erfüllt, unter welchen das Vergnügen in der Wirklichkeit möglich wird, und die zerstreuten Anstalten der Natur zu diesem Zwecke nach einem verständigen Plan vereinigt, um das, was diese bloß zu ihrem Nebenzweck machte, als letzten Zweck zu erreichen. Die tragische Kunst wird also die Natur in denjenigen Handlungen nachahmen, welche den mitleidenden Affekt vorzüglich zu erwecken vermögen.*<sup>368</sup>

(trans.: “Art attains its end by the imitation of nature, by satisfying the conditions which make pleasure possible in reality, and by combining, according to a plan traced by the intelligence, the scattered elements furnished by nature, so as to attain as a principal end to that which, for nature, was only an accessory end. Thus tragic art ought to imitate nature in those kinds of actions that are specially adapted to awaken pity.”)

Tragedy, being the highest form of art which causes pity, is the best form of imitation of Nature. Schiller distinguishes several forms of tragedy as imitation:

*Die Tragödie wäre demnach dichterische Nachahmung einer zusammenhängenden Reihe von Begebenheiten (einer vollständigen Handlung), welche uns Menschen in einem Zustand des Leidens zeigt und zur Absicht hat, unser Mitleid zu erregen. Sie ist erstlich – Nachahmung einer Handlung. [...] Die Tragödie ist zweitens Nachahmung einer Reihe von Begebenheiten, einer Handlung. [...] Die Tragödie ist drittens Nachahmung einer vollständigen Handlung. [...] Die Tragödie ist viertens poetische Nachahmung einer mitleidswürdigen Handlung, und dadurch wird*

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<sup>367</sup> Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785 p. 64f.

<sup>368</sup> Schiller. *Über die tragische Kunst*. 1792.

*sie der historischen entgegengesetzt. [...] Die Tragödie ist fünftens Nachahmung einer Handlung, welche uns Menschen im Zustand des Leidens zeigt.*<sup>369</sup>

(trans.: "According to these principles tragedy might be defined as the poetic imitation of a coherent series of particular events (forming a complete action): an imitation which shows us man in a state of suffering, and which has for its end to excite our pity. I say first that it is the imitation of an action; [...] Secondly, I say that tragedy is the imitation of a succession of events, of an action. [...] I say, in the third place, that tragedy is the imitation of a complete action. [...] In the fourth place, I say that tragedy is the poetic imitation of an action deserving of pity, and, therefore, tragic imitation is opposed to historic imitation. [...] Fifthly, tragedy is the imitation of an action that lets us see man suffering.")

As we have seen on several occasions before, imitation is also linked to the performance by the actor. Diderot declares the actor to be the creator of the performance on stage. Other theorists have divergent ideas about the originality of the performance. Some claim that the actor should try to get the best imitation of Nature in his play, others claim the actors to be creators of their own performance through the creation of the characters.

Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel, for example, gives as one of his *Grundlinien* (1797), the indication that the actor should be more than a simple imitator: "*Der Schauspieler ist bey diesem Bestreben mehr als ein blosser Nachahmer: weil er selbst erst der Schöpfer des Vorbildes wird, welches seine mimische Darstellung leiten soll.*"<sup>370</sup> (trans.: "The actor is in this endeavor more than a mere imitator: because he himself only is the creator of the model, which is to conduct his mimic representation.").

Michaelis, on the contrary, claims the actor to be an imitator: "*Die Darstellung des Acteurs muß sich ganz an seine Rolle anschließen; er muß die Natur nachahmen, und die Züge bisweilen bis zu einer Uebertreibung beleben, um das Portrait noch auffallender zu machen.*"<sup>371</sup> (trans.: "The representation of the actor must follow his role; he must imitate nature, and animate the features sometimes up to an exaggeration to make the portrait even more striking.").

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<sup>369</sup> Schiller. *Über die tragische Kunst*. 1792.

<sup>370</sup> Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel. *Grundlinien zu einer Theorie der Schauspielkunst*. 1797 p.19.

<sup>371</sup> Michaelis. *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation*. Leipzig, 1818 p.61.

Dorfeuille argues, like Michaelis, that Nature must be imitated by the actor: *“La Nature est le livre du Comédien: cette étude est indispensable pour lui: il n’est pas un sentiment, un esprit, une sensation, un goût qu’elle n’ait créés et qu’elle ne doive animer.”*<sup>372</sup> (trans.: “Nature is the book of the actor: this study is essential for him: there is no feeling, no spirit, no emotion, no taste that she has not created and that she should not animate.”).

Goethe follows Einsiedel’s idea and also declares that the actor is more than a simple imitator: *“Zunächst bedenke der Schauspieler, daß er nicht allein die Natur nachahmen, sondern sie auch idealisch vorstellen solle, und er also in seiner Darstellung das Wahre mit dem Schönen zu vereinigen habe.”*<sup>373</sup> (trans.: “First, the actors should think, that he cannot only imitate Nature, but he should imagine her also idealistically, and he needs therefore to unite in his presentation truth with beauty.”). The actor’s imagination forms his performance and his studied acting brings wonderful results on stage: *“Dabei muß aber vorausgesetzt werden, daß der Schauspieler vorher den Charakter und die ganze Lage des Vorzustellenden sich völlig eigen mache und daß seine Einbildungskraft den Stoff recht verarbeite; denn ohne diese Vorbereitung wird er weder richtig zu deklamieren noch zu handeln imstande sein.”*<sup>374</sup> (trans.: “However, it must be assumed, that the actor completely owns the character and the whole situation of the representation doing and that his imagination works right with the material; because without this preparation, he is neither able to declaim nor to act.”).

Jelgerhuis discusses in his textbook the concept of idealization and imitation. Idealization means that, in order to create a universal known and understandable picture on stage, the actor must imitate Nature without being too realistic. The picture created by the actor should be an ideal version of the imitated Nature: *“Zoo moet ik hier doen opmerken, dat, hoe natuurlijk dit dan ook moge zijn, wij ons op het Tooneel daarvoor uitdrukkelijk moeten wagten; alles moet daar welstand zijn en natuurlijk blijven, zonder ongeschikte bogten. Zietdaar, wederom de zorg den*

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<sup>372</sup> Dorfeuille. *Les élémens de l’art du comédien*. Paris, 1801 p.37.

<sup>373</sup> Goethe. *Regeln für Schauspieler*. 1803 §35.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid §64.

*Tooneelspeeler aanbevolen, dat hij zich wachte voor al te veel waarheid;*<sup>375</sup> (trans.: “So I must remark here that, however natural it may be, we shall not do this; all must have opulence/splendor and remain natural, without all sort of unsuitable turnings. Hear again the recommendation, that the actor should not show too much truth.”).

Angelo Canova distinguishes in his *Lettere sopra l'arte d'imitazione dirette alla prima attrice italiana Anna Fiorilli-Pelandi* (1839) between copy and imitation, by emphasizing the importance of imitation in the art of acting:

*Essendo, [...] a mio parere l'arte nostra, arte d'imitazione, quest'imitazione, che s'intende dei diversi caratteri, che nella società s'incontrano, e delle passioni, che distinguono, deve essere naturale, imitando però sempre la bella natura, e togliendo tutto ciò, che può essere disagiata sulla scena, e ributtante della umana natura, come una degradazione della medesima,*<sup>376</sup>  
(trans.: “The art of imitation is, [...] I think, our art, and this imitation, which understands the different characters, who come together in society, and the passions must be natural but always imitating the beautiful nature, and taking away everything, that may be unpleasant to the scene, and disgusting of human nature, as its degradation.”)

Canova, unlike other theorists, preaches the importance of an unstudied performance. The actor must be spontaneous on stage and interpret its corporal movements of the moment:

*[...] il gesto, qualunque sia, o tragico o comico, debba essere spontaneo, e appunto quale la natura ce lo detta, esprimendo questo o quel pensiero, questa o quella passione, acciocché l'ascoltatore, anche in questa parte della declamazione s'illuda in maniera, che creda il tutto semplice conato del personaggio che si rappresenta e non cosa studiata a bella posta, ciocchè diminuisce immensamente l'interesse del medesimo.*<sup>377</sup>  
(trans.: “[...] the gesture, regardless if it is tragic or comic, must be spontaneous, and just as nature dictates it, expressing this or that thought, this or that passion, so that the listener, also in this part of declamation deludes himself by believing in the simple effort of the character that is not a thing studied on purpose, which immensely decreases the interest of it.”)

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<sup>375</sup> Jelgerhuis. *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek*. Amsterdam, 1827 p.151.

<sup>376</sup> Angelo Canova. *Lettere sopra l'arte d'imitazione dirette alla prima attrice italiana Anna Fiorilli-Pelandi*. Torino, 1839 p.41.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid p.57.



## 5.6. The actor and his appearance

As we have seen earlier, the theorists are aware of the importance of a physiognomical study related to their art of acting. Every analysis of the human face should be done by following some rules related to Physiognomy. Both gestures and mimic expressions are related to Physiognomy. The human body, which is moved by the passions, speaks through its features to the audience.

Engel summarizes very well the hierarchy of the “voices” of the facial features and body parts:

*Die sprechendsten Theile sind Auge, Augenbraune, Stirne, Mund, Nase. Dann aber dienen auch das ganze Haupt, der Nacken, die Hände, die Schultern, die Füße, die Veränderungen der ganzen Stellung des Körpers, in so ferne diese durch jene Bewegungen nicht schon mit bestimmt sind, zum Ausdruck. — Ob die Rangordnung der sprechenden Theile des Gesichts, so wie ich sie angegeben, richtig sey? mögen Sie selbst entscheiden.*<sup>378</sup>

(trans.: “The most speaking parts are the eye, eyebrow, forehead, mouth, nose. But then also the whole head, the neck, the hands, the shoulders, the feet, the changes of the postures of the body matter, if their movements have not already been caused by expressions of the first. - If the order of the speaking parts of the face, as I indicated it, is correct, you may decide it for yourself.”)

Austin has a similar approach. In his chapter about the classification of gestures, he classifies even the hierarchy of the “speaking” body parts:

*Gestures, [...], when considered in a general view, relates to all the combined efforts, motions, and expressions of every part of the body. Among the parts of the body the head and countenance hold the principal rank, and next the hands, on account of the variety of their motions and their distinguished effects. The motions of the features of the face, though sometimes included under the name of gesture, more frequently claim for themselves, at least among the moderns, the peculiar name of expression of the countenance; and are properly considered as forming a distinct class of motions.*<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785 p.62.

<sup>379</sup> Austin. *Chironomia*. London, 1806 p.385.

Austin, as we have seen also earlier, addresses Physiognomy and its understanding in the discussion around the gestures. For him the expression of the countenance is “*the very reflection of the soul in the face*”<sup>380</sup>.

Michaelis speaks about the skills, or better the features, which an actor should have in order to be able to perform the right characters on stage. He explains that the private life of a performer has an influence on his performance:

*Wessen Leben und Sitten am besten mit edeln und wohlwollenden Gesinnungen zusammenstimmen, der wird diese auch am besten in seinem Aeußern ausdrücken. Ein wirklich rechtschaffender Mann kann vielleicht den Charakter eines Schurken kräftig darstellen; aber das Gegentheil wird schwerlich statt finden, daß ein gemeiner Mensch die Rolle eines Helden, oder ein gefühlloser oder boshafter die eines theilnehmenden und wohlwollenden treffend spielen sollte. Die Kunst zu fühlen, welche am besten von der Natur und Gewohnheit erlernt wird, ist die wahre Kunst, die zum rechten theatralischen Ausdrucke führt.*<sup>381</sup>

(trans.: “Whose life and customs best harmonize with noble and benevolent sentiments, will express this best in his appearance. A truly, righteous man may perhaps represent the strong character of a scoundrel; But to the contrary it can hardly be that a mean man can take the role of a hero, or a insensitive or malicious should play a sympathizing and benevolent man. The art to feel, which is best learned by nature and habit, is the true art, which leads to the right theatrical expressions.”)

Michaelis contradicts Diderot’s idea that the actor should not himself feel the emotions and sensations he should bring on stage.

The eighteenth century stages of Europe are marked by the presence of numerous actors and actresses who were more than simple performers; they were superstars. In the last chapter of the second part of this dissertation, some of these famous actors will be discussed in detail in relation to their performance of roles in plays included in the corpus. In this section, the relation of some of the actors to acting theory will be presented.

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<sup>380</sup> Austin. *Chironomia*. London, 1806 p.385.

<sup>381</sup> Michaelis. *Die Kunst der rednerischen und theatralischen Declamation*. Leipzig, 1818 p.41.

In 1796 Karl August Böttiger published a detailed account on fourteen performances of August Wilhelm Iffland: *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796*. Böttiger claims to prepare a general overview of the art of acting of his moment through the elaborate description of Iffland's performances. Böttiger discusses, for example, the performance of Iffland as Graf Wodmar in *Der deutsche Hausvater* by Otto Heinrich Freiherr von Gemmingen, as Egmont in Goethe's *Egmont*, as Oberpriester in Kotzebue's *Sonnenjungfrau*, as Czar Peter in the play *Strelitzen* and as Franz Moor in Schiller's *Die Räuber*. Böttiger speaks in his fourteen descriptions of the physical features of Iffland, his acting talent, the reaction of the audience and the general performance of the play. For Böttiger, Iffland is one of the best, if not *the* best actor on the German stages. In his description of Iffland's performance of Graf Wodmar, Böttiger speaks in detail of his physical form, which seems perfect for the role:

*Man muss indess eingestehen, dass auch die Natur den Schauspieler gerade zu dieser Rolle vorzüglich ausgestattet hatte. Die ganze etwas untersetzte aber dabey ausgebildete und ausgearbeitete Figur, das volle Gesicht und Unterkinn, alles trägt dazu bey, uns in diesem Graf Wodmar jene genährte und gesparte Hoftaille nicht vermissen zu lassen, die auch jedermann, wer sie sah, mit Namen zu belegen, und persönlich auszudeuten wusste. Gang, Haltung des Körpers, Biegung der Hände, Stellung, der ganze Anstand des Mannes zeigte uns eine Person, die nicht erst seit heute und gestern mit der Welt und dem Hofe in Verbindung stehe. In jeder Bewegung war Grazie und jenes unnennbare Etwas, das, ein unveräusserliches Eigenthum des ersten Standes, nie von dem anhaltend sitzenden Geschäftsmann, nie von dem Gelehrten errungen werden kann.<sup>382</sup>*

(trans.: "One must admit, however, that even nature had the actor excellently equipped for this role. But the whole somewhat stocky while trained and elaborated figure, the full face and the double chin, everything contributes to not letting us miss in this Graf Wodmar that nourished waist, that everyone who saw it, would name it, and knew how to personally interpret. Walking, body posture, movement of the hands, position, the whole grace of the man showed us a person who for sure is not in connection with the world and the court just from today and yesterday. In every movement was grace and that unnameable something that is an inalienable property of the first

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<sup>382</sup> Karl August Böttiger. *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796*. Leipzig, 1796 p.9f.

class, never can it be caught by the persistently seated businessman, never by the intellectual.”)

According to Böttiger, Iffland studies each role with concentration and down to the last detail. His performance is an interpretation of the author’s creation and in some cases, as Böttiger frequently points out, Iffland improves the message and relevance of the play.

In Wolfgang Heribert Freiherr von Dalberg’s *Die eheliche Probe* Iffland takes the role of Treumund. Böttiger starts his review with a description of the makeup and costume of Iffland. In this occasion he also speaks about the visuality of the role and its connection to Physiognomy:

*Auffallend bleibt es, dass auch heute wieder mehrere Zuschauer in meiner Nachbarschaft sogleich in der Maske, in der sich uns Iffland zeigte, treffende Porträtähnlichkeiten zu finden wusste. Ein Kenner in Physiognomien entdeckte die unverkennbarste Ähnlichkeit mit einem berühmten Zahnarzt, der uns von Zeit zu Zeit hier zu besuchen pflegt.*<sup>383</sup>

(trans.: “It remains remarkable, that again today several viewers close to me did find, in the mask in which Iffland showed himself, striking portrait similarities. An expert in physiognomy discovered the unmistakable resemblance with a famous dentist who visits us from time to time.”)

Iffland is a “*Sehlenmahler*”<sup>384</sup> (“soul painter”) and “*Die höchste Kunst wird in ihm und durch ihn die lebendigste Natur*”<sup>385</sup> (trans.: “The highest art becomes in him and through him the most lively nature”).

Claire-Josèph-Hippolyte Leris de la Tude, known as Mademoiselle Clairon was one of the most famous French actresses at the Comédie-Française. In 1799, she published her *Mémoires*, where she speaks about her own career and roles, but also about some general reflections on the art of acting. She starts her explanations with the remark that it is easier to find good actresses than good actors:

*Les femmes ont plus d'avantage. A peu de chose près, l'éducation est la même pour tout le sexe qui n'est pas décidément peuple; un peu d'esprit, de figure et d'honnêteté leur acquiert presque toujours la*

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<sup>383</sup> Böttiger. *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796*. Leipzig, 1796 p.147.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid p.166.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid p.378.

*protection des femmes, et les hommages des hommes; l'indulgence et la galanterie les encouragent; les arts, les talents, s'offrent en foule à l'émulation des jeunes filles; elles sont plus facilement admises dans les sociétés des gens de lettres, et de ce qu'on nomme bonne compagnie; elles voient, elles entendent, elles peuvent comparer: leurs idées se débrouillent, leur raison se forme, leurs connaissances s'accroissent, et quand l'esprit et la beauté les secondent, leur adresse, leur sensibilité, la finesse et la vivacité de leur apperçu, quelques exemples, et ce sentiment inné chez elles qu'il n'est rien à quoi elles ne puissent prétendre, leur donnent le pouvoir de paraître tout ce qu'elles veulent.*<sup>386</sup>

(trans.: "Women have greater advantage. Education is nearly the same for all the genders; a little bit of spirit, countenance and honesty and they almost always acquire the protection of women, and the tributes of men; indulgence and gallantry encourage them; arts and talents, offer themselves in crowds for the emulation of the girls; they are more easily accepted in the *sociétés des gens de lettres*, and the so-called good company; they see, they hear, they can compare: their ideas are created, their reason is formed, knowledge accumulated, and if spirit and beauty help them, their skill, sensibility, delicacy and vivacity of their appearance, some examples, and this innates the feeling in them that there is nothing which they can't claim, it gives them the power to appear as they want.")

Clairon explains in detail the different roles the actors need to embody on stage: tyrants, kings, old and young men, mothers. The purpose of every performance is the applause of the audience. Clairon makes it clear from the beginning that this is the only purpose to follow: *"Ayez donc tout ce qu'il faut pour plaire; ne vous présentez jamais au théâtre, sans avoir reçu de la nature tous les dons que cet état demande, ou du moins sans avoir les moyens et la volonté de trouver, à force d'art et d'étude, l'équivalent de ce que la nature vous aura refusé."*<sup>387</sup> (trans.: "So, have all it takes in order to please; never show up to the theatre without having received from nature all the gifts this role demands or at least without having the means and the will to find, by the power of art and study, the equivalent of what nature refused to you."). In Clairon's various descriptions, she clearly speaks about the physical form and facial features of the actors. When she speaks of the main male roles, for example, she argues that the actors need to have the right expression in the face: *"Cet emploi demande la plus grande expression, la plus grande mobilité dans la physionomie. [...] Le visage qui reste immobile, prouve que l'ame ne sent rien. [...] La physionomie n'est expressive qu'avec de grands traits, l'œil bien ouvert, le sourcil*

<sup>386</sup> Hippolyte Clairon. *Mémoires et réflexions sur l'art dramatique*. Paris, 1799 p.32f.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid p.41f.

*marqué, la bouche un peu saillante et des cheveux bruns.*<sup>388</sup> (trans.: “This job calls for the greatest expression, the greatest mobility of physiognomy. [...] The face that remains motionless, proves that the soul feels nothing. [...] The face is only expressive with big features, the wide open eye, marked eyebrows, slightly protruding mouth and brown hair.”). Clairon not only concentrates on the expression of the actor but also on setting, costumes and makeup. She judges the use of masks very negatively, because it takes away the possibility of showing the real soul through the real face:

*Tous les mouvemens de l'ame doivent se lire sur la physionomie: des muscles qui se tendent, des veins qui se gonflent, une peau qui rougit, prouvent une émotion intérieure, sans laquelle il n'est jamais de grand talent. Il n'est point de rôle qui n'ait des jeux de visage de la plus grande importance: bien écouter, montrer par les mouvemens du visage que l'ame s'émeut de ce qu'on entend, de ce qu'on dit, est un talent aussi précieux que celui de bien dire. C'est par la physionomie seule qu'on peut fixer la différence de l'ironie au persiflage.*<sup>389</sup>

(trans.: “All movements of the soul should be read in the physiognomy: the muscles that tense up, the veins that swell, the skin that blushes, prove an interior emotion, without which there is never a great talent. There is not a role that has not the gestures of the utmost importance: to listen, show by the movements of the face that the soul is moved by what we hear, what is said, is a valuable skill as to be well spoken.

It is only through physiognomy that we can determine the difference between irony and mockery.”)

Clairon's reflections represent a vast compendium of the common rules on the French stage. She continuously tries to generalize her own ideas and experiences in order to create a perfect book of lessons for younger actors and actresses.

Friedrich Ludwig Schröder was, together with Iffland, one of the best known actors on the German stage in the eighteenth century. Schröder helped in establishing Shakespeare in the German theatres and his work at the Hamburg theatre was the most important for the following generation of actors. In 1810, Schröder translated Antoine Françoise Riccoboni's treatise *L'Art du Théâtre* into German and added his own comments to the work: *Vorschriften über die*

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<sup>388</sup> Clairon. *Mémoires et réflexions sur l'art dramatique*. Paris, 1799 p.44.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid p.57f.

*Schauspielkunst. Eine praktische Anleitung für Schauspieler und Declamatoren.* Schröder speaks in his treatise about the movements, the voice, the expressions, the feelings and emotions, the costumes, etc. In the section dedicated to expression, he says: “*Man nennt Ausdruck die Geschicklichkeit, durch die man den Zuschauer alle Bewegungen fühlen läßt, von denen man durchdrungen zu seyn scheint. Ich sage: scheint, nicht, daß man wirklich durchdrungen ist.*”<sup>390</sup> (trans.: “One calls expression the ability, by which one lets feel all the movements to the audience, of which one seems to be penetrated. I say: seems, not that one is really penetrated.”). Once again the idea of whether the actor should or should not himself feel the expressed feelings and emotions, is discussed. Schröder continues his explanations by discussing the difference between emotion and feeling. He gives a specific definition of feeling:

*Die Bewegungen, welche ohne Hülfe der Ueberlegungen schnell in der Seele entstehen, und die im Entstehen uns fast wider unsern Willen bestimmen, sind die einzigen, welchen den Namen Gefühl führen sollten. Es gibt zwey herrschende, die man als die Quelle aller übrigen betrachten kann: Liebe und Zorn. Alles, was nicht aus einer von diesen Quellen entspringt, ist von einer anderen Natur.*<sup>391</sup>  
(trans.: “The movements which arise rapidly in the soul without the help of reflection, and that determine in the creation almost against our will, are the only ones which should have the name feeling. There are two prevailing ones that can be considered as the source of all the other ones: love and anger. Everything which does not arise from any of these sources, is of a different nature.”)

Schröder intends to create a true handbook for his actors and so his rules are very practically oriented. In the section dedicated to the different characters, Schröder writes about, as had Siddons, imitation through observation:

*Man kann durchs Lesen erlernen, wie Menschen nach ihren verschiedenen Charakteren denken, aber nur, indem man sie sieht, kann man lernen, wie sie ihre Gedanken ausdrücken. Um hierin sich zu bilden, erfordert viel Studium der Welt, und man muß noch überdieß die Gabe besitzen, leicht nachzuahmen, was man an andern sieht. Der Charakter hat einen so mächtigen Einfluß auf den ganzen Körper, daß er dem, der durch ihn beherrscht wird, eine besondere Physiognomie, ein eigenes Betragen gibt, eine*

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<sup>390</sup> Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. *Vorschriften über die Schauspielkunst. Eine praktische Anleitung für Schauspieler und Declamatoren.* Leipzig, 1821 p.21.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid p.25.

*Bewegung, die durch die Art zu denken zur Gewohnheit geworden ist.*<sup>392</sup>

(trans.: “One can learn through reading how people think about their different characters, but only by seeing them, one can learn how to express their thoughts. To get trained in it, requires a lot of study of the world and one must still have the gift, moreover, to be able to easily imitate what one sees in others. The character has such a powerful influence on the whole body, that he gives to the one who is dominated by him, a particular physiognomy, an own behavior, a movement that became a habit through the way of thinking.”)

Schröder’s *Vorschriften* summarize in many ways ideas already introduced and try to consolidate their importance and relevance.

### 5.7. Audience’s response

Every discussion related to the importance and relevance of theatre in that period is also linked to the response of the audience. The discussion is about an expected response and the general purpose of the performance.

Goethe perfectly summarizes in one of his rules the role of the audience and its response: “*Denn der Schauspieler muß stets bedenken, daß er um des Publikums willen da ist.*”<sup>393</sup> (trans.: “After all the actor must always bear in mind that he is here for the audience’s sake.”). According to Dorfeuille the actor has a clear set of tasks: “*L’art et le talent du Comédien sont de toucher, d’instruire et de plaire.*”<sup>394</sup> (trans.: “The art and talent of the Comedian are to touch, to educate and to please.”).

According to Siddons, the actors are the artists who are most attached to perfection because they can immediately see the result and reaction to their art. He explains that the realization of this fact influences the representation of the play, often negatively:

*The greater part of them [the actors] are enchanted by the ignorance and bad taste of the public. They would rather (to use a forcible phrase) usurp the applause of an audience, foment theatrical cabals, and, governed by a base jealousy, seize on every principal character, whether adapted to their peculiar abilities or not, to keep their rivals*

<sup>392</sup> Schröder. *Vorschriften über die Schauspielkunst*. Leipzig, 1821 p.30.

<sup>393</sup> Goethe. *Regeln für Schauspieler*. 1803 §38.

<sup>394</sup> Dorfeuille. *Les éléments de l’art du comédien*. Paris, 1801 p.7.



*out of sight, than strive to deserve the approbation of the judicious, by the real merit of their acting.*<sup>395</sup>

Morrocchesi, who starts the explanations in his treatise with a critique of the Italian theatre and actors, is convinced that the audience is not able any more to watch and judge a theatrical performance correctly. Details are not important any more, and therefore the audience does not realize and understand many important elements of the theatre, such as, physical form and gestures: “[...] *non si osserva per ombra alla mozione degli affetti; non si fa il menomo caso se il sentimento, o l’anima, come vogliamo chiamarla, s’adopri, e se si adopri distinguendola sensibilmente dal vigore e dalla forza spiegata; non si pone mente all’essenzialismo muto linguaggio della fisonomia, nè alle forme, nè al numero, nè all’indole dei gesti.*”<sup>396</sup> (trans.: “the motion of the affections are not slightly observed; it is not noticed that the feeling, or the soul, as we call it, takes action, and if it takes action it is not distinguished significantly from the strength and the explained force; no one considers the essential mute language of physiognomy, nor the forms, nor the number, nor the temperament of gestures.”).

The following chapters show the vast discussion around the actor and his art. The textbooks and manuals are products of cultural, philosophic and social changes in the theatrical public sphere of the eighteenth century. Physiognomy as science, theory, art and fashion contributes to these changes and their reception in the theatre. The consciousness of a sign system, which classifies the facial expressions, leads to an awareness in the acting practice.

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<sup>395</sup> Siddons. *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action*. London, 1822 p.13.

<sup>396</sup> Morrocchesi. *Lezioni di declamazione e d’arte teatrale*. Florence, 1832 p.19.

## **PART II**

### **The presence of Physiognomy in the plays**

#### **1. Introduction**

In the previous part of this dissertation the theoretical background of the performances on stage was described and analysed. The examples chosen for this part are the products of a long theatrical tradition, which on the one hand differs between the European countries, but on the other hand becomes interwoven at times. An introduction to theatre productions in general in the years of reference is offered, before analysing some examples of plays which show the various influences of Physiognomy. This introduction aims to show some historical facts about theatre in relation to Physiognomy. The theatre productions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries throughout Europe follow some universal ideas and rules, but each country has some specific characteristics.

#### **1.1. New genres**

We will outline the main theatrical genres of the period and their representation on stage. Among the genres that will be discussed here are: pantomime, Bürgerliches Trauerspiel – Drame bourgeois, Comédie Larmoyante – Rührende Komödie/rührendes Lustspiel, Rührstück and melodrama. The differences, but also the similarities, between these genres will be examined as well as the influences exercised by authors from different countries on the definition and creation of these genres.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pantomime was a very popular form of theatre throughout Europe. In England for example, the actor and director of the theatres in Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn Fields, John Rich (1692-1761), was

a model for a new interpretation of pantomime where tragic scenes inspired by classical mythology themes alternated with comic scenes which were silently shown on stage. The action was often acted out with music and the comic scenes were inspired by the characters of the Commedia dell'Arte.<sup>397</sup> In England pantomime was strongly influenced by the Harlequinade – in some ways a precursor of some elements of the Pantomime seen on the English stage in the eighteenth century. Dance, mimicry and acrobatics were among the elements of the Pantomime, and only later – at the end of the eighteenth century – did words become more important. These were “initially in form of panels, and further with true jokes, always accompanied by background music” (“Tra la fine del diciottesimo e gli inizi del diciannovesimo secolo, però, comincia a farsi strada l'elemento verbale, inizialmente sotto forma di cartelli, e in seguito con battute vere e proprie, sempre accompagnate da un sottofondo musicale [...]”<sup>398</sup>). The famous actor David Garrick was involved in pantomime, although he always tried to deny this relation and the performance of this ignoble genre<sup>399</sup>. Pantomime was also linked to the ideas of ballet and the acting out of emotions, feelings and impressions with dance and with different gestures and postures. The *Theaterlexikon. Theoretisch-praktisches Handbuch für Vorstände, Mitglieder und Freunde des deutschen Theaters* published by Ph. J. Düringer and H. Barthels in Leipzig in 1841 explains the difference between pantomime and ballet by saying that, “Pantomime has the purpose of showing the living human form in its characteristic significance, but the ballet of showing the appealing significance and abundance of varying body shapes in harmonious movement, both show the poetic variety and dramatic development.” (Original: „Die Pantomime hat den Zweck, die lebendige Menschengestalt überhaupt in ihrer charakteristischen Bedeutsamkeit, das Ballet aber die reizende Bedeutsamkeit und Fülle wechselnder Körperformen in harmonisch gemessener Bewegung, beide in poetischer Mannigfaltigkeit und

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<sup>397</sup> See Emmett L. Avery. “Dancing and Pantomime on the English Stage 1700-1737.” *Studies in Philology* 31 (1934): 417-452; Paola Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). Poetiche teatrali e tecniche d'attore*. Padova: Esedra editrice, 2001; Hedy Law: “‘Tout, dans ses charmes, est dangereux’. Music, Gesture and the Dangers of French Pantomime 1748-1775.” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 20 (2008): 241-268; John Lennard and Mary Luckhurst. *The Drama Handbook. A Guide to Reading Plays*. Oxford University Press, 2002; Andrew McConnell Stott. *The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi*. London: Canongate, 2010; John O'Brien. *Harlequin Britain. Pantomime and Entertainment 1690-1760*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; Mitchell P. Wells: “Some Notes on the Early Eighteenth Century Pantomime.” *Studies in Philology* 32 (1935): 598-607.

<sup>398</sup> Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833)*. Padova, 2001 p.24f.

<sup>399</sup> John O'Brien: “Harlequin Britain. Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s).” *Theatre Journal* 40 (1998): 489-510 p.505.

dramatischer Entwicklung zu zeigen.“<sup>400</sup>). The expressions “*living human form*“ and “*characteristic significance*“ recall directly the ideas of Physiognomy and the aim to achieve expression only by non-verbal communication of the intention and character of a human being. Pantomime used codes, so that every spectator could easily understand the performed act on stage. Many of these codes are related – as has already been pointed out – to the character description of the Commedia dell’Arte, which was in the eighteenth century already an established concept.

The Commedia dell’Arte in that period was mainly known because of Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) and his reforms. Goldoni wanted to create characters with a complex psyche, who should not be as ridiculous and conventional as their models of the classical Commedia dell’Arte. Goldoni also reformed the writing of the plays, since he introduced fully scripted plays with precise indications for the actors. Goldoni was not only famous in his hometown of Venice, but also in other countries, such as France. Starting from 1761 Goldoni lived and worked in Paris, where his plays were mainly staged at the Comédie Italienne or at the court in Versailles. With his hundreds of comedies, Goldoni influenced not only the Italian but also European theatre. In France his influence and that of Pantomime in general was seen with the Opéra Comique, where different companies acted out plays written in verse form with the texts shown on panels for the audience. At the beginning the musical and mimic elements were – as we see also in the English theatre – very important. Starting from 1780 we see in France then some *pantomimes dialoguées et parlées*, *harlequinades* and *pièces féeriques*<sup>401</sup>:

*Pantomime being in dumb show, the plots had to be fairly straightforward to be understood; recourse was occasionally had to an old device, that of displaying scrolls with a few words written on them to make explicit some otherwise incomprehensible development in the action. Music was pressed into service to evoke the appropriate emotion – pathos, excitement, terror – and increasingly speech was introduced to facilitate understanding.*<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Ph. J. Düringer and H. Barthels (ed.). *Theaterlexikon. Theoretisch-praktisches Handbuch für Vorstände, Mitglieder und Freunde des deutschen Theaters am Theater zu Leipzig*. 1841 p.842.

<sup>401</sup> Winfried Wehle. “Französisches Populardrama zur Zeit des Empire und der Restauration.” In: *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft Bd.15 Europäische Romantik*. Edited by Klaus Heitmann. Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1982, 153-171 p. 160.

<sup>402</sup> Hemmings. *Theater and State in France 1760 to 1905*. Cambridge University Press, 1994 p.32.

Today it is quite difficult to reconstruct the pantomimic performances of the eighteenth century, as in most cases the acts and action were not scripted, improvisation was very frequent and the theatre reviews were very short and without detailed information. *E. Johnson's British Gazette and Sunday Monitor* (London, Sunday May 1, 1803; Issue 1226) contains a short review of the pantomimic ballet *Vologese* written by Sébastien Gallet with music by Peter von Winter: “*the Pantomime is natural and affecting; and the scenery and music superb and grand. In short, the whole is a most powerful and happy combination of melody and movement that cannot fail to interest the audience, and is highly creditable to the talents both of the Inventor and the Composer. It met with unbounded applause.*”<sup>403</sup> Pantomime was a very popular genre in the eighteenth century, and was not only influential as a pantomimic act itself but also for pantomimic elements in other performances and genres. We will see in the plays we will analyse, that both the actor and the author used their pantomimic knowledge to show the inner emotions of a character on stage. The fixed features in the face and its expressions were important.

In the eighteenth century, a group of genres which were popular on all the stages in Europe and relevant for the creation of melodrama – one of the most significant genres of the time – consists of the Bürgerliches Trauerspiel, the Drame bourgeois, the Comédie Larmoyante and the Rührstück. To define these genres is quite difficult, because the theorists of the time as well as scholars of more recent times mixed all the genres, and assigned plays and theoretical essays to more than one definition. In the following part some key elements of all the genres are presented individually and then combined to show a chronology and a web of influences.

In the 1750s a new genre was developed, which combined the idea of the human soul and its social outcome on stage: the Bürgerliches Trauerspiel.<sup>404</sup> This

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<sup>403</sup> E. Johnson's *British Gazette and Sunday Monitor*: 01.05.1803.

<sup>404</sup> See Stefano Castelvetti. *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 2013; Richard Daunicht. *Die Entstehung des bürgerlichen Trauerspiels in Deutschland*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965; Paul Fleming. *Exemplarity and Mediocrity. The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism*. Stanford University Press, 2008; James Gibbons. “Politics and the Playwright. J. M. R. Lenz and “Die Soldaten”.” *The Modern Language Review* 96 (2001): 732-746; Karl S. Guthke. *Das deutsche bürgerliche Trauerspiel*. Metzler: Stuttgart, 2006; Meg Mumford. “Bourgeois Theatre.” In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 176-177; Peter Szondi. *Die Theorie des*

genre, which had a precursor in the English domestic tragedy, was mainly developed in Germany but it also belonged to a European tradition:

*With bourgeois tragedy, one can properly speak of a European phenomenon, a period of intense cross-cultural translation and engagement, all centered on a similar aesthetic constellation: shifting the scene of tragedy from the public-political world to the domestic-private sphere, in which common life becomes the privileged - because most effective - site of tragedy. The rise of bourgeois tragedy can be read in part as a response to the prevailing normative aesthetics and its so-called "class clause", in which the genre distinction between tragedy and comedy is determined in part by the societal rank of the figures represented.<sup>405</sup>*

The term "Bürgerliches Trauerspiel" was first used by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who not only presented some theoretical background to this genre but also such famous examples as *Miß Sara Sampson* (1755) and *Emilia Galotti* (1772). Lessing, in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* describes the main elements of the Bürgerliches Trauerspiel:

*Die Namen von Fürsten und Helden können einem Stücke Pomp und Majestät geben; aber zur Rührung tragen sie nichts bei. Das Unglück derjenigen, deren Umstände den unsrigen am nächsten kommen, muß natürlicher Weise am tiefsten in unsere Seele dringen; und wenn wir mit Königen Mitleiden haben, so haben wir es mit ihnen als mit Menschen, und nicht als mit Königen. Macht ihr Stand schon öfters ihre Unfälle wichtiger, so macht er sie darum nicht interessanter. Immerhin mögen ganze Völker darein verwickelt werden; unsere Sympathie erfordert einen einzelnen Gegenstand, und ein Staat ist ein viel zu abstrakter Begriff für unsere Empfindungen.<sup>406</sup>*

(trans.: "The names of princes and heroes can lend a play pomp and majesty, but they add nothing to moving the audience. The misfortune of those whose circumstances are closest to our own must naturally penetrate our soul; and if we feel compassion for kings, then we feel it for them as humans and not as kings. If their rank often renders their misfortunes more important, this doesn't mean that it makes them more interesting. Even though entire

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*bürgerlichen Trauerspiels im 18. Jahrhundert.* Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main, 1973; Monika Ritzer. "Gewalt über unsre Leidenschaften? Pathos und Pathetik der Emotion in der Tragödienästhetik der Aufklärung." *KulturPoetik* 12 (2012): 1-40.

<sup>405</sup> Fleming. *Exemplarity and Mediocrity.* Stanford University Press, 2008 p.45.

<sup>406</sup> Lessing. *Hamburgische Dramaturgie.* 14. Stück 1767.

peoples may be involved, our sympathy demands a single object, and a nation is a much too abstract concept for our emotions.”<sup>407</sup>)

The keywords in this passage show some general elements of a tragedy and some specific elements of the bourgeois tragedy: “*Rührung*” and “*Mitleiden*” are the ground concepts of tragedies in the dramatic theory starting from Aristotle. Also the concept of identification, shown with the sentence “*Das Unglück derjenigen, deren Umstände den unsrigen am nächsten kommen, muß natürlicher Weise am tiefsten in unsere Seele dringen;*” is already known in theatre theory before Lessing. Two new concepts are revolutionary: the social status is not important (“*Macht ihr Stand schon öfters ihre Unfälle wichtiger, so macht er sie darum nicht interessanter*”) while the individual is the centre of interest (“*unsere Sympathie erfordert einen einzelnen Gegenstand, und ein Staat ist ein viel zu abstrakter Begriff für unsere Empfindungen*”). Paul Fleming comments on these new concepts as follows: “*Bourgeois tragedy marks a twofold change of scene: first, it moves the tragic from the public-political sphere to the private-domestic; and, second, the character role shifts from the heroic-sublime to the common; even if world-historical personages occupy center stage, it is not in the role of statespersons, but in domestic guise.*”<sup>408</sup>

Exponents of the bourgeois tragedy in German literature – beside Lessing – are Goethe with *Clavigo* (1774), Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz with *Die Soldaten* (1776), Schiller with *Kabale und Liebe* (1784) and Friedrich Hebbel with *Maria Magdalena* (1844). In English and French theatre it is more difficult to assign authors and their works directly to the definition of a bourgeois tragedy. In general George Lillo and his play *The London Merchant; or the History of George Barnwell* (1731) and Edward Moore with *The Gamester* (1753) are mentioned in most theoretical works of this genre. In some critical works, Diderot’s *Le fils naturel* (1757) and *Le père de famille* (1758) are described as bourgeois tragedies, but also as French *Rührstücke*. Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais’ play *L’Autre Tartuffe ou la Mère coupable* (1792) also can be seen as a bourgeois tragedy.

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<sup>407</sup> Translated by Fleming in *Exemplarity and Mediocrity*. Stanford University Press, 2008 p.46f.

<sup>408</sup> Fleming. *Exemplarity and Mediocrity*. Stanford University Press, 2008 p.48.

A linking element between the bourgeois tragedy/bürgerliches Trauerspiel and the Rührstück is in some ways the Comédie Larmoyante<sup>409</sup>, which in German literature is known as Rührende Komödie or Rührendes Lustspiel. Gustave Lanson, one of the most famous theorists of the Comédie Larmoyante describes this genre as follows:

*La comédie larmoyante est un genre intermédiaire entre la comédie et la tragédie, qui introduit des personnages de conditions privée, vertueux ou tout près de l'être, dans une action sérieuse, grave, parfois pathétique, et qui nous excite à la vertu en nous attendrissant sur ses infortunes et en nous faisant applaudir à son triomphe. [Je ne sépare pas [...] la comédie larmoyante du drame bourgeois. Il n'y pas de différence essentielle entre l'un et l'autre. La comédie larmoyante est la première forme du drame bourgeois.] La Chaussée en fut l'inventeur.*<sup>410</sup>

(trans: "The larmoyante comedy is an intermediary genre between comedy and tragedy, which introduces the characters in private circumstances, virtuous or close to being in a serious action, grave, sometimes pathetic, and that excites us by being touched by his misfortunes and by applauding his triumph. I do not separate the larmoyante comedy from bourgeois drama. There are no essential difference between the one and the other. The larmoyante comedy is the first form of bourgeois drama. La Chaussée was its inventor.")

The main theoretical essay on the Comédie Larmoyante in French literature was written by Pierre-Mathieu de Chassiron (1704-1747): *Réflexions sur le comique-larmoyant* (1749). Lessing translated both this text and the Latin essay *Pro comoedia commovente* (1751) by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert in German and published them together with his ideas and comments in *Abhandlungen von dem weinerlichen oder rührenden Lustspiele* (1754). Chassiron in his essay discusses the Ancient theatre and the importance of the comedy. He praises Corneille and Molière who finally created some interesting French comedies. The Comédie Larmoyante shows the combination of comic and tragic experiences:

*C'est sans doute un sentiment naturel de rire ou de pleurer, suivant les diverses affections du cœur : mais il n'est point dans la nature de*

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<sup>409</sup> See Stefano Castelveccchi. *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 2013; Kathleen Kuiper. *Poetry and Drama. Literary Terms and Concepts*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2011; Gustave Lanson. *Nivelle de La Chaussée et la comédie larmoyante*. 1903 Monika Ritzer. "Gewalt über unsre Leidenschaften? Pathos und Pathetik der Emotion in der Tragödienästhetik der Aufklärung." *KulturPoetik* 12 (2012): 1-40.

<sup>410</sup> Gustave Lanson. *Nivelle de La Chaussée et la comédie larmoyante*. 1903 p.1.



*rire et de pleurer dans le même instant et poursuivre notre espece de rire dans une scene et de pleurer dans une autre. Ce passage trop rapide de la joie à la douleur et de la douleur à la joie, gêne l'âme et lui cause des mouvemens désagréables et même violens.*<sup>411</sup>

(trans.: "This is without doubt a natural feeling to laugh or cry, according to the various affections of the heart, but it is not natural to laugh and cry at the same time and to continue laughing in a scene and crying in another. Moving too quickly from joy to pain and pain to joy, troubles the soul and causes unpleasant and even violent movements.")

Chassiron compares the new genre to tragedy and to its theoretical frame, by saying that the Comédie Larmoyante creates weaker impressions, since they are more distant from reality (*"En effet, si les fictions dramatiques nous affectent d'autant plus vivement qu'elles approchent plus de la réalité, celles du nouveau genre nous doivent causer des impressions d'autant plus foibles qu'elles sont plus opposées à la vraisemblance."*<sup>412</sup>). In his conclusions Chassiron quotes Horace in *Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult*, and says that this new genre tries to combine ideas and theories which cannot be brought together; and that, after all, a comedy must be comic.

Gellert refers in his essay to the French Comédie Larmoyante and its ridiculous name and tradition. He tries to justify in part the idea of the comedy, by saying that also comedies in general can move the audience: *"Ich bin zwar nicht Willens, alle und jede Stücke, welche in diese Klasse können gebracht werden, zu verteidigen; sondern ich will bloß die Art der Einrichtung selbst retten und womöglich erweisen, daß die Komödie, mit allem Ruhme, heftiger bewegen könne."*<sup>413</sup> (trans.: "Although I am not willing to defend each and every piece that can be placed in this class; but I want to save only the type of this creation itself and prove perhaps that comedy could move intensely, with all the glory."). Like Chassiron before him, Gellert tries to analyse the Ancient theatre to see if he can find some elements which justify the creation of this new genre. In contrast to Chassiron, Gellert speaks about different types of comedies in Antiquity: moral and ridiculous (*"sittlich und lächerlich"*). In his essay Gellert concentrates on the defense of the two main criticized points of this new genre:

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<sup>411</sup> Pierre-Mathieu de Chassiron. *Réflexions sur le comique-larmoyant*. Paris: Durand, 1749 p.24.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid p.54.

<sup>413</sup> Christian Fürchtegott Gellert. *Pro comoedia commovente*. 1751; translated by Lessing.

*Damit ich aber die Sache der rührenden Komödie, wo nicht glücklich, doch sorgfältig führen möge, so muß ich einer doppelten Anklage entgegengehen; deren eine dahinaus läuft, daß auf diese Weise der Unterscheid, welcher zwischen einer Tragödie und Komödie sein müsse, aufgehoben werde; und deren andre darauf ankömmt, daß diejenige Komödie sich selbst zuwider wäre, welche die Affekten sorgfältig erregen wolle.<sup>414</sup>*

(trans.: "I may lead the cause of the larmoyant comedy not happily, but at least carefully, I have to go towards a double accusation; the first is that in this way the difference, which must be between a tragedy and comedy, will be abolished; and the second is that, it is essential that a comedy would be contrary to itself when the affects would be moved carefully.")

The distinction between a comedy and a tragedy is rather clear for Gellert, even if both genres use love in their action, the prominence they give to love is different and the characters are also placed on different levels. For Gellert it does not seem a contradiction that a comedy can also move the audience with different emotions and actions. The didactic and entertaining purpose of theatre is still guaranteed.

The exponents of the Comédie Larmoyante are: Pierre-Claude Nivelles de La Chaussée (1692-1754) with *La Préjugé à la Mode* (1735) and *Mélanide* (1741), Philipp Néricault Destouches (1680-1754) with *Le Philosophe Marié* (1727), *Les Philosophes Amoureux* (1730) and *Glorieux* (1732), Jean-Baptiste Loui Gresset (1709-1777) with *Sidney* (1745), the Italian dramatist Camillo Federici (1749-1802), the Italian librettist Giovanni De Gamerra (1743-1803) and Gellert with *Die zärtlichen Schwestern* (1747). In English literature the Comédie Larmoyante is often compared to and seen as sentimental drama or comedy<sup>415</sup>. Two exponents are Richard Steele (1672-1729) with *The Conscious Lovers* (1722) and Colley Cibber (1671-1757) with *Love's Last Shift* (1696) and *The Careless Husband* (1704). Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) presented the theoretical text for this matter: *A comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy* (1773).

<sup>414</sup> Gellert. *Pro comoedia commovente*. 1751; translated by Lessing.

<sup>415</sup> See Ernst Bernbaum. *The Drama of Sensibility. A Sketch of the History of English Sentimental Comedy and Domestic Tragedy 1696-1780*. Harvard University Press, 1925; George Henry Nettleton and Arthur Ellicott Case (ed.). *British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969; George Henry Nettleton. *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century 1642-1780*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975; Joan Lynne Pataky Kosove. *The Comedia Lacrimosa and Spanish Romantic Drama 1773-1865*. London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1977; Arthur Sherbo. *English Sentimental Drama*. Michigan State University Press, 1957; Stanley T. Williams. "The English Sentimental Drama from Steele to Cumberland." *The Sewanee Review* 33 (1925): 405-426.

Both the Comédie Larmoyante or rührendes Lustspiel/rührende Komödie and the sentimental drama/comedy are related to the genre defined Rührstück, and all of them influenced the creation of melodrama, the most famous genre of the time. The Rührstück combines the sentimental elements of the comedy with the political and social issues of the moment:

*Es ist unverkennbar, dass der Kultus dieses neuen Genres, für das Diderot auch in programmatischen Schriften eintrat, mehr politischen als ästhetischen Antrieben seine Entstehung verdankte. Man entdeckte oder glaubte zu entdecken, dass im „Volk“ und im Bürgertum mehr Tugend und Tüchtigkeit, Edelmütigkeit und Menschlichkeit zu finden sei als bei den Privilegierten, allein man vergaß, dass dies für den Bühnendichter eine völlig gleichgültige Entdeckung ist.<sup>416</sup>*

(trans.: “It is obvious that the cult of this new genre, discussed by Diderot also in his programmatic writings, owed its origin more to political than aesthetic motives. It was discovered or at least believed to be discovered that the “people” and the bourgeoisie had more virtue and competence, more generosity and humanity than the privileged, but it was forgotten that this is a completely indifferent discovery for the playwright.”)

In the secondary literature, Diderot is seen as a theorist of all the genres mentioned above. In essays of his we have analysed, he speaks of the different definitions of comedy and drama in general.

The most famous and most discussed genre of the eighteenth century is without doubt melodrama<sup>417</sup>. The definition of this genre is no less complex than that

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<sup>416</sup> Egon Friedell. *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit*. Bd. 1 München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997 p.661f.

<sup>417</sup> See Jacky Bratton. “Melodrama” In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Dennis Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2005, 840-842; Peter Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination. Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. Yale University Press, 1976; Paola Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). Poetiche teatrali e tecniche d’attore*. Padova: Esedra editrice, 2001; Paola Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833). I luoghi teatrali, i generi, la spettacolarità*. Padova: Esedra editrice, 2003; Lothar Fietz. “Zur Genese des englischen Melodramas aus der Tradition der bürgerlichen Tragödie und des Rührstücks: Lillo – Schröder – Kotzebue – Sheridan – Thompson – Jerrold.” *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literatur und Geistesgeschichte* 65 (1991): 99-116; Darryll Grantley. *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre. Early Period*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013; Patrice Pavis. *Dictionary of the Theatre. Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. University of Toronto Press, 1998; Julia Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1987; Wolfgang Schimpf. *Lyrisches Theater. Das Melodrama des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988; Winfried Wehle. “Französisches Populardrama zur Zeit des Empire und der Restauration.” In: *Neues Handbuch der*

of genres we have examined so far. In fact, melodrama was the result of a mixture of different genres and combines their main elements with new forms of expression. Darryll Grantley summarizes the definition of a melodrama in the *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre*: “Narrowly the term refers to plays in which background music accompanied spoken dialogue, but it came to be applied more generally to a genre of drama that is highly sentimentalized with exaggerated plotlines, presents stark moral conflicts with a strong moralizing tendency, is populated by stock characters, and uses theatrical tricks such as eleventh-hour revelations, last-minute escapes and sudden reversals of fortune.”<sup>418</sup> The musical element – which originally gave the melodrama its name – is as important as the gestures. The sentimental aspect connected to the social environment of the characters is prominent. One of the first to use the term *mélodrame* was Jean-Jacques Rousseau referring to his play *Pygmalion* (1775) in his commentary *Fragmens d’Observations sur L’Alceste italien de M. Le Chevalier Glück*:

*Persuade que la langue Française destituée de tout accent n’est nullement propre a la Musique, & principalement au récitatif, j’ai imagine un genre de Drame, dans lequel les paroles & la Musique, au lieu de marcher ensemble, se sont entendre successivement, & ou la phrase parlée est en quelque sorte annoncée & préparée par la phrase musicale. La scene de Pygmalion est un exemple de ce genre de composition, qui n’a pas eu d’imitateurs. En perfectionnant cette méthode, reuniroit le double avantage de soulager l’Acteur par de frequens repos, & d’offrir au Spectateur François l’espece de mélodrame le plus convenable a sa langue. Cette réunion de l’art déclamatoire avec l’art musical, ne produira qu’imparfaitement tous les effets du vrai récitatif, & les oreilles délicates s’appercevront toujours désagréablement du contraste qui regne entre le langage de l’Acteur & celui de l’Orchestre qui l’accompagne,*<sup>419</sup>

(trans.: “Persuaded that the French language, destitute of all accent, is not at all appropriate for Music, and principally for recitative, I have devised a genre of Drama in which the words and the music, instead of proceeding together, are made to be heard in succession, and in which the spoken phrase is in a way announced and prepared by the musical phrase. The scene of *Pygmalion* is an example of this genre of composition, and it has not had imitators. By perfecting this method, one would bring together the double advantage of relieving

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*Literaturwissenschaft Bd.15 Europäische Romantik*. Edited by Klaus Heitmann. Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1982, 153-171.

<sup>418</sup> Grantley. *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre. Early Period*. Lanham, 2013 p.284.

<sup>419</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Fragmens d’Observations sur L’Alceste italien de M. Le Chevalier Gluck*. 1774-1775.

the actor through frequent rests and of offering to the French spectator the type of melodrama most suited to this language. This union of the declamatory art with the musical art will produce all the effects of the true recitative only imperfectly, and delicate ears will always notice with displeasure the contrast that reigns between the language of the actor and that of the orchestra which accompanies him.”<sup>420</sup>)

We can move from these introductory quotations to set up a distinction among the main elements of the melodrama that can be divided into those related to the performance and those related to the literary text. The melodramatic performance is chiefly about the music used in the play, the expressive movements by the actors, the setting on stage and the stage directions given by the author. Important details of the literary text are the setting of the action, the creation of the characters and the philosophical and theoretical background. In 1817 Abel Hugo, Armand Malitourne and J. J. Ader published *Traité du mélodrame* with indications of the main melodramatic elements. Starting from this essay of the time, those elements will now be listed and discussed.

Music plays a very important role in the melodrama. The *Traité du mélodrame* states that: “*Personne n’ignore combien la musique a de puissance sur l’âme, et comment elle lui imprime tantôt des mouvemens doux et mélancoliques, tantôt sublimes et impétueux.*”<sup>421</sup> (trans.: “Everyone knows how music has power over the soul, and how it prints it sometimes soft and melancholic movements, sometimes sublime and impetuous ones.”). Music is present in various forms: in the form of songs sung by a choir, or characters who sing some parts or instrumental accompaniment of dramatic moments. Brooks notes that: “*Music in melodrama first of all marks entrances, announcing by its theme what character is coming onstage and what emotional tone he brings to the situation.*”<sup>422</sup> For Przyboś music simply “*souligne, ponctue, met en relief les événements.*”<sup>423</sup> (trans.: “underlines, punctuates, highlights events”). Music can be used on several occasions throughout the action. Wehle sees the aim of melodrama in general as the overcoming of contradictions, contrasts and opposites. Therefore, for him the best moment for music in melodrama

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<sup>420</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings related to Music*. Translated by John T. Scott. University Press of New England, 1998 p.497.

<sup>421</sup> Abel Hugo, Armand Malitourne and J. J. Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris 1817 p.54.

<sup>422</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.48.

<sup>423</sup> Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.148.

is the celebration of such overcoming. In that case music is related to dancing and singing: “Als Ziel der Melodramen bezeichnen sie die Überwindung von Gegensätzen, die ihr Geschehen zum Vorschein gebracht hat. Deshalb ist der höchste Moment der positiven Utopie im Melodrama das Fest. Der literarische Ausdruck nimmt dafür nicht nur die archaischen Zeichen von Tanz, Musik und Gesang in Anspruch.”<sup>424</sup> (trans.: “The aim of the melodramas is the overcoming of opposites that brought their actions to light. Therefore, the highest moment of positive utopia in melodrama is the celebration/the party. The literary expression does not only involve the archaic signs of dance, music and song.”).

In the moments when music, dancing and singing are used together, the expressive movements of the actors seem more clearly visible on stage. Degli Esposti sees a strong relationship and a link between the general theory of theatre of the time and the melodramatic outcome on stage:

*La connotazioni estreme dei protagonisti inducono l'interpretazione attorica ad assumere caratteristiche particolarmente marcate dovendo comunicare emozioni intensificate, i gesti, i movimenti, le espressioni del viso e la stessa elocuzione assumono un'espressività esasperata, enfatica, attraverso codici gestuali e recitativi ben determinati. La costante presenza, nei manuali per l'attore dell'epoca, della descrizione minuta della partitura mimica relativa ad ogni singola passione rispecchia appunto l'esigenza degli interpreti di rifarsi a codici prestabiliti e riconoscibili. In essi viene dato particolare rilievo ai movimenti delle braccia e alle espressioni del viso, essenziali per dare corpo ai picchi emotivi dei personaggi.*<sup>425</sup>

(trans.: “The extreme connotations of the characters induce the actorial interpretation to take on characteristics particularly marked having to communicate intense emotions, gestures, movements, facial expressions and the same elocution assume an exaggerated and emphatic expressiveness, through gestural codes and well determined recitatives. The constant presence of the minute description of the mimic score related to each passion in the acting manuals of the time, reflects the need for interpreters to refer to established and recognizable codes. There is a particular focus on arm movements and facial expressions, essential to embody the emotional peaks of the characters.”)

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<sup>424</sup> Wehle: “Französisches Populardrama zur Zeit des Empire und der Restauration.” (1982) p.157.

<sup>425</sup> Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833)*. Padova, 2003 p. 43.

Mimicry, the gestures and postures are of great importance – as explained in the first part of this work. It should never be forgotten that no expression on stage stands alone but must be put in relation to the spoken word and its rhetoric gravity: “*Acting style was predicated on the plastic figurability of emotion, its shaping as a visible and almost tactile entity. We know something of the repertory of devices called upon to this end: the striking of dramatic postures, the exaggeration of facial grimace (including eye rolling and teeth gnashing), the use of an artificial diction to support a bombastic rhetoric.*”<sup>426</sup>

The setting of the stage mainly helps to underline the effect of gestures and postures. The costumes as well as the decoration are very important in the melodrama. Przyboś points out how every detail of the setting follows codified rules as much as the acting or the drama itself: “*Les costumes, les décors et les évolutions sur le plateau présentent tous un aspect hautement codifié [...].*”<sup>427</sup> (trans.: “The costumes, decorations and changes on the stage are all highly codified.”). No doubt, the representation of a melodrama was truly spectacular: in the period under discussion many new techniques were used on stage, such as mechanical elevators and special lighting to create given weather conditions.

The codes, mentioned by Przyboś also refer to the indications prescribed by the author or playwright for the stage actions: in melodrama the movement of the actors was of central importance. The gestures and the postures are emphasized in the stage directions as Degli Esposti well summarizes in the following quotation:

*Le didascalie dei melodramas dell'epoca danno diverse informazioni sullo stile dei loro interpreti. La mimica suggerita dalle indicazioni di scena è fatta di gesti enfatici, di movimenti violenti e talvolta isterici, e di pose significative; particolarmente interessante è che anche le espressioni del viso, che devono ricalcare l'estremismo emotivo dei gesti, siano descritte in maniera particolareggiata, ad indicare che l'espressività del volto è ritenuta importante nonostante l'ampiezza delle sale ne ostacoli la percezione da parte degli spettatori. Vi è una notevole quantità di energia, trattenuta o liberata, nei gesti descritti nelle didascalie, e tale energia è applicata anche ai movimenti sulla scena e agli atteggiamenti corporei dei personaggi, che sono spesso percorsi da tremanti convulsi, si muovono sul palcoscenico in balia di un'agitazione violenta, o compiono più in generale movimenti rapidi*

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<sup>426</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.47.

<sup>427</sup> Przyboś. *L'entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.149.

*e veementi. Naturalmente si tratta di una gestione della gestualità di elevato valore spettacolare, osservabile da tutto il pubblico in sala (con l'eccezione, naturalmente, della mimica facciale), che giunge al suo apice con l'utilizzo di finali di scena pantomimici o di tableaux.*<sup>428</sup> (trans.: "The stage directions of the melodramas of the period give different information about the acting style of their performers. Mimicry - suggested by the stage directions - is made of emphatic gestures, violent and sometimes hysterical movements, and significant poses; it is particularly interesting that also facial expressions, which must follow in emotional excess the gestures, are described in detail, indicating that the facial expression is thought to be important despite the magnitude of the theatre which could preclude its perception by the spectators. A considerable amount of energy, held or released, is displayed by the gestures described in the stage directions, and this energy is applied to the movements on stage and the body attitudes of the characters, which are often acted out with convulsive tremors, they move on stage at the mercy of a violent agitation, or perform more generally fast and vehement movements. Of course it is about the handling of gesture of a high spectacular value, visible by all the audience (with the exception, of course, of the facial expressions), that reaches its climax by the use of pantomimic endings or tableaux.")

*Tableaux* or *Tableaux Vivants* are used frequently on the stage of a melodramatic representation.<sup>429</sup> In the essay of 1817 the use of tableaux is strongly recommended: "*À la fin de chaque acte, il faut avoir soin de réunir en groupe tous les personnages, et de les mettre chacun dans l'attitude qui convient à la situation de son âme. Par exemple: la douleur placera une main sur son front, le désespoir s'arrachera les cheveux, et la joie aura une jambe en l'air. Cet aspect général est désigné sous le nom de Tableau.*"<sup>430</sup> (trans.: "At the end of each act, all the characters must unite as a group, and everyone must be in the right attitude to show the situation of his soul. For example: the pain will place a hand on the forehead, despair will tear the hair, and joy will have a leg up in the air. This general aspect is known as Tableau."). Such instructions are clearly related to the theoretical works discussed in the previous part of this dissertation. Melodrama is in general a mixture between convulsive movements and strong expressions, between harsh movements and silent attitudes, between vivid movements and characterization through stable poses.

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<sup>428</sup> Degli Esposti. *La scena del Romanticismo inglese (1807-1833)*. Padova, 2001 p. 38f.

<sup>429</sup> See Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.48. and Przyboś. *L'entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.154.

<sup>430</sup> Hugo, Malitourne and Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris, 1817 p.47.



The definition of melodrama, given so far, makes it clear that the character of this genre is very ambiguous: in every detail melodrama combines different, sometimes opposite, elements which create a special setting on stage. A quotation of the essay of 1817 summarizes this definition of melodrama in a very expressive way: “*Comédie, ballet, vaudeville, opéra, tragédie, le mélodrame réunit tout. C’est une macédoine de belles choses.*”<sup>431</sup> (trans.: “Comedy, ballet, vaudeville, opera, tragedy, melodrama combines it all. It is a medley/pot-pourri of beautiful things.”).

One of these “beautiful things” of the melodrama is the setting of the action. Analysing different melodramatic plays of the time, one can see that the setting of the action may offer a great variety: on the one hand the action is placed in exotic distant places, which can be seen as a sign of the geographical discoveries of the post-revolutionary years<sup>432</sup>. On the other hand the action is set in a European rural environment: “*La plupart des pièces, cependant, offrent un tableau de la société rurale. [...] Mais, [...] les pièces d’un Pixérécourt ou d’un Ducange présentent rarement la campagne française. Ces auteurs préfèrent situer l’action en Suisse ou en Italie, en Bavière ou en Thuringe, en Pologne ou en Hongrie.*”<sup>433</sup> (trans.: “Most plays, however, offer a picture of rural society. However, the plays of a Pixérécourt or Ducange rarely present the French countryside. These authors prefer to place the action in Switzerland or Italy, Bavaria and Thuringia, in Poland or Hungary.”). In the melodramas the exotic meets the rural everyday life, distant affairs are brought closer to the social issues in the home country. The melodrama combines both gothic and fantastic elements in the “decoration” of the action: massive sets, violent action, dramatic music, and egalitarian sentiments<sup>434</sup> show the gothic character of the melodrama. To create a fantastic setting, shadows, ghosts, phantoms, furies, and other supernatural creatures appear on stage<sup>435</sup>. One special place where many important scenes are set is the garden. In the secondary literature the garden has different nominations: “*kultivierte Idylle der Tugend*”<sup>436</sup> (trans.: “cultured idyll of virtue”) or “*space of innocence*”<sup>437</sup> or “*Lieu de transition*”<sup>438</sup> (trans.: “place of transition”) between the safe interior and the dark and dangerous exterior.

<sup>431</sup> Hugo, Malitourne and Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris, 1817 p.13.

<sup>432</sup> Bratton. “Melodrama.” (2005) p.841.

<sup>433</sup> Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.61f.

<sup>434</sup> Bratton. “Melodrama” (2005) p.841.

<sup>435</sup> Wehle: “Französisches Populardrama zur Zeit des Empire und der Restauration.” (1982) p.161.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid p.160.

<sup>437</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.29.

The creation of the characters of melodrama is related to a strict catalogue of characteristics, including the number of main characters, as follows: “[...] *on fera paraître pour principaux personnages un niais, un tyran, une femme innocente et persécutée, un chevalier, et autant que faire se pourra, quelque animal apprivoisé, soit chien, chat, corbeau, pie ou cheval.*”<sup>439</sup> (trans.: “one must present as the main characters a fool, a tyrant, an innocent and persecuted woman, a knight, and as much as possible, some tamed animal as a dog, cat, raven, magpie or horse.”). The characters of the melodrama are set by an idea of black and white, good and bad. Peter Brooks says that: “*Melodramatic good and evil are highly personalized: they are assigned to, they inhabit persons who indeed have no psychological complexity but who are strongly characterized.*”<sup>440</sup> The characters are fixed without any possibility of development or change: “*There is no tragic choice possible for the characters, who are clearly labelled as either good or bad. They are steeped in good or bad sentiment, certitudes and beliefs that leave no room for contradiction.*”<sup>441</sup> The most interesting character is the tyrant – who is in general always played by the star of the whole ensemble.<sup>442</sup> The essay from 1817 describes the tyrant as follows: “*Tout ce qu’il y a de plus cruel, de plus atroce, de plus horrible, de plus abominable sur la terre et dans les gouffres de l’enfer, voilà le tyran. [...] ses paroles sont farouches comme sa hideuse physionomie.*” (trans.: “All that is most cruel, most atrocious, most horrible, most vicious on earth and in the depths of hell, that is the tyrant. [...] His words are as ferocious as his ugly face.”). The character constellation of the melodrama is strongly connected to the simplest and most popular physiognomic idea: good is beautiful and bad is ugly (Johann Caspar Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*. Vol. 1 1775 p. 63: “*Die Schönheit und Häßlichkeit des Angesichts hat ein richtiges und genaues Verhältnis zur Schönheit und Häßlichkeit der moralischen Beschaffenheit des Menschen. Je moralisch besser; desto schöner. Je moralisch schlimmer; desto häßlicher.*”<sup>443</sup>). Not only the tyrant – through his ugliness

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<sup>438</sup> Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.114.

<sup>439</sup> Hugo, Malitourne and Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris, 1817 p.9.

<sup>440</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.16.

<sup>441</sup> Pavis. *Dictionary of the Theatre*. University of Toronto Press, 1998 p.208.

<sup>442</sup> Wehle: “*Französisches Populardrama zur Zeit des Empire und der Restauration.*” (1982) p.158.

<sup>443</sup> “*The beauty and deformity of the countenance is in a just, and determinate, proportion to the moral beauty and deformity of the man. The morally best, the most beautiful. The morally worst, the most deformed.*” Translation by Thomas Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.183.

– but also all the other characters are easily recognized: “[...] *il suffit d’un seul coup d’œil pour décider des caractères des personnages. Grâce aux costumes, le public reconnaît sans peine le traître et la victime et parvient à anticiper sur le sort réservé aux personnages.*”<sup>444</sup> (trans.: “[...] it only takes one glance to determine the nature of the characters. With costumes, the audience will easily recognize the villain and the victim and will be able to anticipate the fate of the characters.”).

Melodrama is based on many different cultural, social and philosophical backgrounds which are included in one way or another in the plays: “*Un Mélodrame doit être un tableau de mœurs et une espèce de panorama de toutes les connaissances humaines où la philosophie domine.*”<sup>445</sup> (trans.: “A Melodrama should be an array of manners and a kind of panorama of all human knowledge where philosophy is dominant.”). A main issue in the definition of melodrama is always its relationship with the more canonical genres of comedy and tragedy, and its relation to their cultural and social ground. The essay from 1817 says that melodrama is superior to tragedy because it can chose between more subjects and forms of expression<sup>446</sup>. Brooks states that: “*Melodrama does not simply represent a »fall« from tragedy, but a response to the loss of the tragic vision. It comes into being in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been violently thrown into question, yet where the promulgation of truth and ethics, their instauration as a way of life, is of immediate, daily, political concern.*”<sup>447</sup> As already said the setting of the action and the creation of the characters reflect the social and philosophical basis of this genre. In general terms a good summary of the purpose and aim of the melodrama is the article in the *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* written by Jacky Bratton:

*But the term is more useful when confined to a particular kind of staged fiction whose conventions and sensibilities began to develop in Europe in the late eighteenth century, marked by new formal characteristics which were the result of cultural shifts expressed through new emphasis upon technical interactions between theatre arts. Rather than being chiefly realized in the actors’ performance of a writer’s work, melodrama calls on all theatre systems, weaving its complexity from music, mime, comedy, and spectacle. [...] The melodramatic stage embodied the newly conceptualized inner world*

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<sup>444</sup> Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.149.

<sup>445</sup> Hugo, Malitourne and Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris, 1817 p.31.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid p.66.

<sup>447</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.15.

*of romantic psychology and the resulting changed perception of the outer world of natural wonder and exotic sensation.*<sup>448</sup>

As has been proved in this short introduction, in melodrama, there are many different connotations, influences, concepts and philosophical approaches. The melodrama of the eighteenth century reflects the acting and dramatic theory of that time and in many occasions melodrama can be used as model and example for cultural changes of the historical moment in which it has been produced. The main exponents of melodrama in France are François-René Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844), Louis-Charles Caigniez (1762-1842) and Victor Henri-Joseph Brahain Ducange (1783-1833). The English writer Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809) – inspired by the play *Coelina* by Pixérécourt – brought to the stage in 1802 the play *A Tale of Mystery*, that was the first English melodrama. In 1775 the first German melodrama *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Johann Christian Brandes (1735-1799) was staged in Gotha. August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) was influenced by the work of the French playwrights and, in turn, influenced the European melodramatic production. In Italy we cannot find any melodramas.<sup>449</sup> The operatic production has always been too strong in Italy, its country of origin, to leave any room for melodrama. Vittorio Alfieri's creation of a Tramelogedia can be seen as an exception, one of the few Italian melodramatic productions to be produced.

The genres discussed so far, along with the more classical form of comedy and tragedy were very popular at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. All these genres are linked in one way or another to physiognomic and pathognomic ideas. Pantomime, as already evoked by the name, uses the mimicry to express emotions and actions on stage.

The facial features of the performers are of extreme importance in this genre. Every facial feature expresses a different emotion. A given facial feature could create and convey ridiculous, tragic, comic, funny, hilarious, weird, absurd, strange etc. effects and give to the staged scene a particular sensation. The performer of a Pantomime could be very successful if he/she had features which were far from being regular. The sentimental drama, the *Rührstück* or the *Comédie Larmoyant*

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<sup>448</sup> Bratton. "Melodrama." (2005) p.840.

<sup>449</sup> Schimpf. *Lyrisches Theater. Das Melodrama des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Göttingen, 1988 p.48f.

forced the actor to pass rapidly from a comic to a sad and tragic expression and the outcome of this performance had to be credible for the audience in order to succeed in creating the expected catharsis. On the other hand, the characters themselves had to be credible for the reader. It was possible to describe characters that could be tragic and comic at the same time. In melodrama the roles of the characters are more clearly defined: there are the good and the bad people, while in the previous dramatic genres such as the *Comédie Larmoyante*, many protagonists have an ambiguous character. The theories about the importance of the passions and the necessity of the discernibility of the emotions on the human face are of great importance in all the above described genres.

## **1.2. The corpus**

The corpus analysed in this dissertation consists of plays in French, English, Italian and German (both Austrian and German). In the secondary literature, a network of authors and plays emerges, but a lack of detailed analyses of the theatre and its relationship to Physiognomy prompted a search for its place in European theatrical culture. Starting from German authors, such as Goethe, Schiller and Lessing, who were actually discussed in the secondary literature, I tried to find more evidence of Physiognomy in other plays written by other authors. Reading through play- and publication lists, playbills, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and biographies, sometimes an author caught my attention and sometimes a play. I wanted to create a corpus rich in authors and plays; some of them known and some unknown. Often one discovery led to another. Once some key figures of the physiognomical discourse of the period were identified, the network became clearer. I wanted the corpus to represent both the main known dramatists of each country and each language of the period, as well as lesser-known authors who were dealing with the topic of Physiognomy. I selected plays often known for other reasons, and analysed them in relation to their physiognomical references. I often selected the most famous plays by an author to show in the clearest way their physiognomical approach, which could then be found also in their lesser known plays. Sometimes I selected the less famous plays to bring new light to them and start a broader reception. In general I selected plays which not only represent the culture in a specific country but also at the European level. Plays that were often translated or adapted particularly caught

my attention. I am also proud to present some works never previously discussed in the secondary literature. The corpus contains mainly plays of the new dramatic genres which appeared around the period under consideration. In order to give a general overview of the corpus, I will present the main details of every play. The plays are presented in chronological order.

<u>Author</u>	Johann Christian Brandes (1735-1799)
<u>Title</u>	Ariadne auf Naxos
<u>Genre</u>	Melodrama in two acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Gotha, Schlosstheater – 27 January 1775
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Ariadne</b> <b>Theseus</b> <b>Eine Oreade</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Ariadne is sleeping in Naxos and Theseus is about to leave her. When she wakes up, he is gone and she is furious with anger and revenge. At the end she falls into the sea and dies.

<u>Author</u>	Christoph Friedrich Bretzner (1748-1807)
<u>Title</u>	Karl und Sophie, oder Die Physiognomie
<u>Genre</u>	Comedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	NA (published 1780 in Leipzig)
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Herr von Wandal</b> <b>Frau von Wandal</b> <b>Sophie</b> – their daughter <b>Fritz</b> – their son <b>Julgen</b> – a girl <b>Justine</b> – servant <b>Simon</b> – housekeeper <b>Mag. Ralf</b> – Fritz' teacher <b>Herr von Brennov</b> – Major <b>Karl</b> – his son <b>Jakob</b> – Herr von Wandal's groom <b>Heinrich</b> – a servant <b>Frau Marie</b> – innkeeper <b>Röse</b> – her daughter <b>Peter</b> – Röse's lover <b>Schwalbe</b> – teacher
<u>Synopsis</u>	Karl and Sophie were lovers since they were little, but the rivalry of their fathers divided them. Karl comes to Herr von Wandal's house and he reveals his identity only to Sophie. The two lovers decide to flee together. Fritz, Herr von Wandal's son, is driven by Schwärmerei and tries to kill himself, because he is not allowed to love Julgen. Herr von Wandal discusses frequently the importance of Physiognomy with Magister Ralf. During the whole action many judgements are made on physiognomic belief and in the end they are seen to be wrong.

	In the end Karl und Sophie are allowed to get married and their fathers reconcile.
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<u>Author</u>	Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)
<u>Title</u>	Die Räuber
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Mannheim, Nationaltheater – 13 January 1782
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<p><b>Maximilian</b> – Count von Moor  <b>Karl</b> – his older son  <b>Franz</b> – his younger son  <b>Amalia von Edelreich</b> – Maximilian's niece and Karl's lover  <b>Spiegelberg</b>  <b>Schweizer</b>  <b>Grimm</b>  <b>Razmann</b>  <b>Schufterle</b>  <b>Roller</b>  <b>Kosinsky</b>  <b>Schwarz</b></p> <p>} robbers</p> <p><b>Hermann</b> – illegitimate son of a Nobleman  <b>Daniel</b> – servant of Count von Moor  <b>Pastor Moser</b>  <b>A Monk</b>  <b>Band of robbers</b></p>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Franz, the younger son of the Count von Moor tries to sabotage his father and his older brother Karl. Karl, being away from home, believes that his father does not forgive him his excessive student life and he forms a band of robbers. Franz makes his father believe that Karl died and he takes over the power in the castle and tries to seduce Amalia. Karl comes in disguise with his robbers to the castle, his brother commits suicide and his father dies after his revelation. Amalia implores him to kill her; he gives in and kills her. In the end he surrenders himself to a poor man who receives the head money for his capture.

<u>Author</u>	Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781)
<u>Title</u>	Nathan der Weise
<u>Genre</u>	Ideendrama in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Berlin, Döbbelinsches Theater – 14 April 1783
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<p><b>Saladin</b> – sultan  <b>Sittah</b> – his sister  <b>Nathan</b> – jewish merchant and father of Recha  <b>Tempelherr</b> – templar  <b>Der Patriarch</b> – patriarch of Jerusalem  <b>Klosterbruder</b> – monk  <b>Recha</b> – adopted daughter of Nathan  <b>Daja</b> – servant of Recha</p>

<u>Synopsis</u>	Nathan, a rich Jewish merchant, returns to Jerusalem and he is informed of a fire in his house where his adopted daughter Recha has been saved by a templar. Saladin meanwhile asks Nathan for some financial help. The templar would like to marry Recha but Nathan doesn't allow it because he recognizes the templar as the deceased brother of Saladin. In the end it turns out that Recha and the templar are the children of Assad the brother of Saladin.
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<u>Author</u>	Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)
<u>Title</u>	Kabale und Liebe
<u>Genre</u>	Bürgerliches Trauerspiel in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Frankfurt am Main, Schauspiel – 13 April 1784
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Präsident von Walter</b> <b>Ferdinand</b> – his son, army major <b>Hofmarschall von Kalb</b> <b>Lady Milford</b> – favourite of the prince <b>Wurm</b> – the president's private secretary <b>Miller</b> – town musician <b>his wife</b> <b>Luise</b> – their daughter <b>Sophie</b> – maid to Lady Milford
<u>Synopsis</u>	Ferdinand, son of the Präsident von Walter, falls in love with Luise, the daughter of a simple town musician. Their fathers want to stop their love and Präsident von Walter tries to marry his son to Lady Milford, an influential person in the prince's court. After several intrigues Ferdinand poisons himself and Luise and in the moment of death all intrigues are revealed.

<u>Author</u>	August von Kotzebue (1761-1819)
<u>Title</u>	Menschenhass und Reue
<u>Genre</u>	Rührstück in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Berlin, Nationaltheater – 3 June 1789
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>General Graf v. Wintersee</b> <b>Die Gräfin</b> <b>Major von der Horst</b> – brother of the Gräfin <b>Lotte</b> – servant <b>Bittermann</b> – housekeeper of the Graf <b>Peter</b> – his son <b>Madam Müller or Eulalia</b> <b>Baron von Mainau</b> <b>Franz</b> – his old servant
<u>Synopsis</u>	At the court of the Graf von Wintersee lives the beautiful young Eulalia. When the brother of the Gräfin, Major von der Horst, arrives and falls in love with her, the complications begin. Eulalia is actually the Baroness von Meinau, who left her husband and her son. At the same time Eulalia's husband arrives at the Graf von Wintersee's court without revealing his



	identity. When the Major von der Horst understands the whole situation he seeks to bring together the Baron and Baroness. At the end the two are reconciled with their son.
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<u>Author</u>	Edward Morris (NA)
<u>Title</u>	False Colours
<u>Genre</u>	Comedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	London, The Haymarket – 2 April 1793
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Lord Visage</b> <b>Sir Paul Panick</b> <b>Lady Panick</b> <b>Constance Evelyn</b> <b>Harriet</b> <b>Lucy</b> <b>Sir Harry Cecil</b> <b>Captain Montague</b> <b>Grotesque</b> – caricaturist <b>Subtle</b> – servant of Lord Visage <b>Tony</b> – servant of Sir Paul <b>Robert</b> – Butler <b>Cumberland</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Constance should marry the cousin of Lord Visage, but one day Lord Visage, obsessed with Physiognomy, arrives at Sir Paul Panick's house to announce the annulment of the wedding of his cousin and Sir Paul's ward. Many confusions follow and a physiognomical analysis of almost all these characters is made.

<u>Author</u>	Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809)
<u>Title</u>	The Deserted Daughter
<u>Genre</u>	Comedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	London, Covent Garden – 2 May 1795
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Mr. Mordent</b> <b>Lady Ann</b> – his wife <b>Mrs. Sarsnet</b> – her maid <b>Joanna</b> – Mordent's daughter <b>Cheveril</b> <b>Lennox</b> <b>Item</b> <b>Grime</b> <b>Clement</b> <b>Donald</b> – Mr. Mordent's servant <b>Mrs. Enfield</b> – a brothel keeper
<u>Synopsis</u>	Joanna is secretly Mr. Mordent's daughter who gets trapped by Mrs. Enfield in her brothel. Many men try to seduce her, but she understands her situation and escapes. At the end she is reconciled with her father.

<u>Author</u>	Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827)
<u>Title</u>	Tieste
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Venice, Teatro Sant'Angelo – 7 January 1797
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Atreo</b> – king of Argo <b>Tieste</b> – his brother <b>Ippodamia</b> – their mother <b>Erope</b> – wife of Atreo and ex-lover of Tieste <b>Un fanciulletto</b> – son of Erope and Tieste
<u>Synopsis</u>	Erope is married to Atreo the king of Argo, but Tieste, his brother, and Erope were once lovers. They have also a son together. Tieste returns to Argo after some years; he wants to kill his brother. In the end Atreo killed secretly Erope and Tieste's son and tries to give his blood to Tieste to drink. When Tieste realizes the intentions of his brother he tries to kill him, but gets deadly wounded.

<u>Author</u>	Joanna Baillie (1762-1851)
<u>Title</u>	De Monfort
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	London, Drury Lane – 29 April 1800
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>De Monfort</b> <b>Lady Jane De Monfort</b> – his sister <b>Rezenvelt</b> <b>Count Freberg</b> <b>Countess Freberg</b> <b>Manuel</b> – servant <b>Jerome</b> <b>Conrad</b> <b>Bernard</b> <b>Theresa</b> – servant
<u>Synopsis</u>	De Monfort comes home after a long absence (minimum 2 years), his old friends Freberg invite him to a party in their home. Meanwhile also his enemy Rezenvelt returns home. At the party his sister Jane reveals her identity to her brother. De Monfort kills Rezenvelt because he thinks his sister and he are in love and at the end he dies too.

<u>Author</u>	René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844)
<u>Title</u>	Cœlina ou L'Enfant du mystère
<u>Genre</u>	Melodrama in three acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Paris, Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique – 2 September 1800
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Dufour</b> – Stephany's father <b>Truguelin</b> – Cœlina's uncle <b>Francisque</b> – mute man <b>Cœlina</b> – Dufour's ward <b>Stephany</b> – Dufour's son <b>Andrevon</b> – a doctor

	<b>Tiennette</b> – Dufour’s housekeeper <b>Faribole</b> – Dufour’s servant <b>Michaud</b> – a miller <b>Germain</b> – Truguelin’s servant Policemen, peasants and musicians
<u>Synopsis</u>	In the French Alps, in Savoy, lives Dufour with his son Stephany and Cœlina, his ward. Francisque, a mute man, stays at Dufour’s home. Truguelin, Cœlina’s uncle, wants her to marry his son, in order to get her wealth. After some troubles, at the end it is revealed that Francisque is the father of Cœlina and her uncle Truguelin tried to kill him eight years before. Cœlina can marry Stephany and Francisque and Dufour reconcile.

<u>Author</u>	René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844)
<u>Title</u>	L'homme a trois visages ou Le proscrit
<u>Genre</u>	Drama in three acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Paris, Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique – 6 October 1801
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>André Gritti</b> – doge of Venice <b>Rosemonde</b> – his daughter <b>Vivaldi</b> – spouse of Rosemonde, reappears under the names of <b>Edgar</b> and <b>Abelino</b> <b>Alfieri</b> – senator and friend of Vivaldi <b>Contarino</b> – procurator <b>Le comte Orsano</b> – senator and head of the conspirators
<u>Synopsis</u>	The play is set in Venice in 1537. Vivaldi, is absent for 8 years from Venice and he comes back to get his secret wife Rosemonde and to show his innocence.

<u>Author</u>	Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809)
<u>Title</u>	A Tale of Mystery
<u>Genre</u>	Melodrama in two acts
<u>Presentation</u>	London, Covent Garden – 13 November 1802
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Bonamo</b> – Stephano’s father and Selina’s guardian <b>Selina</b> – Bonamo’s ward <b>Fiametta</b> – Bonamo’s housekeeper <b>Romaldi</b> – count <b>Francisco</b> – mute man <b>Stephano</b> – Bonamo’s son <b>Montano</b> – friend of Bonamo <b>Michelli</b> – the miller <b>Malvoglio</b> – Romaldi’s servant <b>Piero</b> – servant <b>Exempt</b> Gardeners
<u>Synopsis</u>	Romaldi is coming to Bonamo’s house to arrange the marriage of his son to Bonamo’s ward Selina. Currently Francisco, a mute man, is staying at Bonamo’s house. At the end it is

	revealed that Francisco is Selina's father and Romaldi's brother, who is responsible for the loss of Francisco's tongue.
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<u>Author</u>	Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803)
<u>Title</u>	Abele
<u>Genre</u>	Tramelogedia in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	NA (published 1804)
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>La voce d'Iddio</b> <b>Lucifero</b> <b>Belzebù</b> <b>Mammona</b> <b>Astarotte</b> <b>Il peccato</b> <b>L'invidia</b> <b>La morte</b> <b>Coro d'angeli</b> <b>Coro di demoni</b> <b>Adamo</b> <b>Eva</b> <b>Caino</b> <b>Abele</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Lucifer wants to destroy Adam's family with the help of Envy and Death. Cain, the older son, kills driven by envy his younger brother Abel, who is loved more by his mother Eva.

<u>Author</u>	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)
<u>Title</u>	Stella
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Weimar, Hoftheater – 15 January 1806
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Stella</b> <b>Cäcilie</b> – at the beginning Madame Sommer <b>Fernando</b> – lover of Stella and father of Lucie <b>Lucie</b> – daughter of Madame Sommer and Fernando <b>Annchen</b> – servant <b>Karl</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Stella has been abandoned years ago by her lover Fernando. One day Madame Sommer and her daughter Lucie get to Stella's home because Lucie should work in her household. Fernando gets to a close by inn and reveals his identity to the three women. In the end Stella poisons herself and Fernando shoots himself.

<u>Author</u>	Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827)
<u>Title</u>	Ajace
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Milano, Teatro alla Scala – 9 December 1811
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Agamennone</b> <b>Ulisse</b>

	<b>Ajace</b> <b>Teucro</b> <b>Calcante</b> <b>Tecmessa</b> <b>Araldo</b> <b>Donne frigie</b> <b>Guerrieri</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	<p>After Achilles' death Ulysses and Ajace are arguing who should get his troops. Ulysses convinces Agamemnon that Ajace is not loyal enough and that he is linked to the Trojans. Agamemnon, full of hunger for power, believes Ulysses and takes Ajace's son as hostage. At the end Ajace, after hearing that Ulysses got Achilles' troops, kills himself.</p>

<u>Author</u>	Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827)
<u>Title</u>	Ricciarda
<u>Genre</u>	Tragedy in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Bologna, Teatro del Corso – 17 September 1813
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Guelfo</b> – tyrant of Salerno <b>Averardo</b> – his stepbrother <b>Guido</b> – Averardo's son <b>Ricciarda</b> – Guelfo's daughter <b>Corrado</b>
<u>Synopsis</u>	<p>Guido is in love with Ricciarda but their fathers are in a longlasting fight. Averardo wants to get back his power in Salerno and with the help of Corrado he enters the castle, where he wants to kill his stepbrother. Guelfo is pretending to kill Ricciarda in order to catch Guido, who is hiding in the castle. At the end Guelfo wounds Guido, kills his daughter and commits suicide.</p>

<u>Author</u>	Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872)
<u>Title</u>	Die Ahnfrau
<u>Genre</u>	Schicksalsdrama in five acts
<u>Presentation</u>	Wien, Theater an der Wien – 31 January 1817
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<b>Graf Zdenko von Borotin</b> <b>Berta</b> – his daughter <b>Jaromir</b> – the head of the band of robbers <b>Boleslav</b> – thief <b>Günther</b> – a servant <b>A General</b> <b>A soldier</b> <b>Die Ahnfrau des Hauses Borotin</b> – the ancestress (a ghost)
<u>Synopsis</u>	<p>Count Borotin tells his only daughter Berta the story of their ancestress, who was murdered by her husband after her betrayal and who is haunting their castle until everyone of the family dies. Jaromir, the head of the band of robbers, is coming undercover to the count's castle where he meets Berta, his</p>

	lover. At the end it is revealed that Jaromir is a robber and he accidentally wounds the count, who dies. After his death Berta commits suicide. It is also revealed that Jaromir is the son of the count and in the end he also dies.
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<u>Author</u>	Marie-Joseph Chénier (1764-1811)
<u>Title</u>	Nathan Le Sage
<u>Genre</u>	Drama in three acts
<u>Presentation</u>	NA (published 1818)
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<p><b>Saladin</b> – sultan  <b>Nathan</b> – jewish merchant and father of Zoé  <b>Olivier De Montfort</b> – templar  <b>Dom Tremendo</b> – patriarch of Jerusalem  <b>Frère Bonhomme</b> – monk  <b>Zoé</b> – adopted daughter of Nathan  <b>Brigite</b> – servant of Zoé</p>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Nathan, a rich Jewish merchant, returns to Jerusalem and he is informed of a fire in his house where his adopted daughter Zoé has been saved by the templar Olivier De Montfort. Saladin meanwhile asks Nathan for some financial help. Olivier De Montfort would like to marry Zoé but Nathan doesn't allow it because he recognizes the templar as the deceased brother of Saladin. In the end it turns out that Zoé and the templar are the children of Assad the brother of Saladin.

<u>Author</u>	James Robinson Planché (1796-1880)
<u>Title</u>	Lavater the Physiognomist, or Not a Bad Judge
<u>Genre</u>	Comic Drama in two acts
<u>Presentation</u>	London, The Lyceum – 2 March 1848
<u>Dramatis Personæ</u>	<p><b>John Caspar Lavater</b>  <b>Betman</b> – burgomaster of Nestall  <b>Madam Betman</b> – his wife  <b>Count de Steinberg</b>  <b>Louise</b> – his daughter  <b>Marquis de Treval</b>  <b>Christian</b>  <b>Zug</b> – innkeeper in Nestall  <b>Rutly</b> – sergeant  <b>Monsieur Savigny</b> – notary  <b>Fritz</b></p>
<u>Synopsis</u>	Lavater is invited to an event in Count de Steinberg's home; during his travel to Glaris he stops in Nestall, where he meets the burgomaster Betman, his wife, Zug, Louise and Christian. Lavater observes the other characters and makes conclusions because of their countenances. Louise, the Count's daughter, should marry the rich Marquis de Treval, who turns out to be Mariano Mariani, an Italian criminal, who is revealed by Lavater.

## 2. Text analysis

Given the variety of examples, the analysis of the corpus follows neither a chronological nor linguistic order but rather a structuralist method. The analysis will be divided into two parts. This division follows methodologically the theory of paratexts by Gérard Genette<sup>450</sup> and Roman Ingarden's theory of the maintext or primary text ("Haupttext") and subsidiarytext ("Nebentext")<sup>451</sup>.

The subsidiarytext is analysed in the first part. According to Ingarden the subsidiarytext consists of textsegments, which are not spoken on stage such as title, preface, dedication, foreword, prologue, list of dramatis personæ, act and scene indications and stage directions.<sup>452</sup> Ingarden's list of segments recalls in parts Genette's paratext theory. Ingarden, who clearly distinguishes between any literary text and a "*written Drama*"<sup>453</sup>, identifies stage directions as subsidiarytext. Genette on the other hand does not speak about the dramatic elements, but distinguishes further between peritext and epitext. According to Genette the peritexts are "*une élément de paratexte [...] autour du texte, dans l'espace du même volume, comme le titre ou la préface, et parfois inséré dans les interstices du texte, comme les titres des chapitres ou certaines notes.*"<sup>454</sup> (trans.: "A paratextual element [...] around the text or either in the same volume [...] as the title or the preface and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text such as chapter titles or notes."<sup>455</sup>). Epitexts are segments outside the book, which help in the understanding of the book itself: "*Autour du texte encore, mais à distance plus respectueuse (ou plus prudente), tous les messages qui se situent, au moins à l'origine, à l'extérieur du livre: généralement sur un support médiatique (interviews, entretiens), ou sous le couvert d'une communication privée (correspondance, journaux intimes, et autres).*"<sup>456</sup> (trans.: "The distanced elements [at a more respectful or more (prudent) distance] are all those messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of

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<sup>450</sup> Gérard Genette. *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au second degré*. Paris: Édition de Seuil, 1982 and Gérard Genette. *Seuils*. Paris: Édition de Seuil, 1987.

<sup>451</sup> Roman Ingarden. *Das literarische Kunstwerk. Mit einem Anhang von den Funktionen der Sprache im Theaterschauspiel*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1965.

<sup>452</sup> See *ibid* p.220f.

<sup>453</sup> See *ibid* p.220.

<sup>454</sup> Genette. *Seuils*. Paris, 1987 p.10f.

<sup>455</sup> Gérard Genette. *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Cambridge University Press, 1997 p.4f.

<sup>456</sup> Genette. *Seuils*. Paris, 1987 p.11.

private communications (letters, diaries, and others).<sup>457</sup>). Ingarden does not mention in his theory these elements outside a book in general, or drama in detail. In the first part of the analysis of the corpus both forewords, prologues, introductions, dedications etc. and epitextual comments by the authors are examined from a physiognomic point of view. Other epitexts will be examined in the last chapter of this part, where the reception of the corpus in press reviews, actor's biographies and portraits is discussed. The stage directions given by the author are very precise indications on how to act out certain passions and emotions. Often the authors try to make their characters "freeze" in a certain attitude and create *Tableaux Vivants*. This first part is clearly connected to the discussion shown in the first part of this dissertation about gesture, postures and the visibility of passions.

The second part of the analysis concentrates on the "*œuvre littéraire*" as such, or the maintext according to Ingarden. This analysis will show different physiognomic/pathognomic elements in the content. The description of the features of the different characters shows in many cases a knowledge of physiognomic groundrules. The social categorization of the general appearance and the moral interpretation of the different features are key elements in some plays. The face is often described as text, which can be read in order to understand character, soul and intention. Physiognomic elements appear in the plays in different places. The analysis will show and comment on the importance of these appearances. It will be of interest to see if these elements appear in the main or subsidiary action and are spoken by the main or secondary characters. Another section of this analysis will be dedicated to adaptations, which underline or introduce physiognomic elements. Of special significance in this part is the analysis of plays where Lavater and his "science" are directly mentioned.

## **2.1. Subsidiarytext – peritext and epitext**

The analysis of the corpus will start with a physiognomic reading of their subsidiarytext, the peri- and epitext. This reading will introduce new interpretations of well-known and put light on marginalized playwrights.

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<sup>457</sup> Genette. *Paratexts*. Translated by Cambridge University Press, 1997 p.5.



### 2.1.1. The authors and Physiognomy

This section concentrates on the authors' epitexts, such as letters, diaries, autobiographies, etc. and their relation to Physiognomy. This section, therefore, will examine the authors' biographies to show in the most detailed way the circulation of physiognomical discourse. Genette's theory of epitexts is used, however, in a very broad sense; i.e. it does not only focus on the texts related to the specific play included in the corpus but also on the degree of understanding and use of Physiognomy by the authors. Certain authors are clearly interested in Physiognomy, others are less visibly so. The circulation of the physiognomical discourse was closely linked to intellectual exchange among the authors who were referring to Physiognomy in different countries in the same period.

The selected corpus includes works by authors quite different from one another from several points of view: there are well-known and established authors who produced successful plays (e.g. Lessing and Schiller), well-known authors with less known works (e.g. Goethe with *Stella* and Alfieri with *Abele*) or unknown or very little known authors whose plays convey an interesting physiognomical discourse (e.g. Morris and Planché).

As shown in the introduction, the theory of Physiognomy used as model and example in the years under scrutiny, is strongly linked to Johann Caspar Lavater and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. Lavater's and Lichtenberg's writings, as well as their presence in the intellectual circles of the time, had a great influence on some of the authors we will discuss in the following pages.

Goethe's relationship with Lavater and his works has been considered in great detail in the secondary literature.<sup>458</sup> Their relationship can be approached from different angles: critical reception of their work, long lasting correspondence and personal meetings. Lavater noticed Goethe's work *Brief des Pastors* (1773) and tried to contact the then-unknown Goethe. They started sending each other work fragments and replied with critical reviews. Lavater tried to decipher Goethe's face

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<sup>458</sup> See State of the art.

first through a portrait and then at their first meeting. Goethe describes his relationship with Lavater in detail in his autobiography *Wahrheit und Dichtung*:

*Es dauerte nicht lange, so kam ich auch mit Lavatern in Verbindung. Der »Brief des Pastors« an seinen Kollegen hatte ihm stellenweise sehr eingeleuchtet: denn manches traf mit seinen Gesinnungen vollkommen überein. Bei seinem unablässigen Treiben ward unser Briefwechsel bald sehr lebhaft. Er machte soeben ernstliche Anstalten zu seiner größern Physiognomik, deren Einleitung schon früher in das Publikum gelangt war. [...] Dieses Hin- und Widerschreiben, so heftig es auch war, störte das gute Verhältnis nicht. Lavater hatte eine unglaubliche Geduld, Beharrlichkeit, Ausdauer; er war seiner Lehre gewiß, und bei dem entschiedenen Vorsatz, seine Überzeugung in der Welt auszubreiten, ließ er sich's gefallen, was nicht durch Kraft geschehen konnte, durch Abwarten und Milde durchzuführen.<sup>459</sup>*

(trans.: "It was not long before I made the acquaintance of Lavater. He had been much struck by passages of my "Letter of a Pastor" to his Colleague, for much of it perfectly coincided with his own views. Thanks to his unwearying activities we were soon engaged in a lively correspondence. At the time it commenced he was making preparations for his larger work on Physiognomy, the introduction to which had already been laid before the public. [...] This correspondence, vehement though it was, did not disturb the good terms we were on. Lavater had an incredible amount of patience, pertinacity and endurance; he was confident in his theory, and determined to propagate his convictions in the world. He was willing to effect by waiting and by gentle means what he could not accomplish by force."<sup>460</sup>)

Goethe calls Lavater "*merkwürdig*" ("strange"), but enjoyed his company and teaching. Goethe worked intensively with Lavater on the *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Goethe's involvement in volumes 1 and 2 consisted of two main contributions: Goethe – being a passionate silhouetteur – created several silhouettes<sup>461</sup> and copies of antique sculptures and works of Raphael and Rembrandt for Lavaters essays<sup>462</sup>. He also contributed with many physiognomical explanations for example on noses<sup>463</sup>, on animal skulls<sup>464</sup> and on many famous

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<sup>459</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. 3. Teil 14. Buch Tübingen, 1814.

<sup>460</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Poetry and Truth from my own life*. Translated by John Oxenford 1908 p. 147f.

<sup>461</sup> see von der Hellen. *Goethes Anteil an Lavaters „Physiognomischen Fragmenten“*. Frankfurt am Main, 1888 p.130f.

<sup>462</sup> See *ibid* p.75f.

<sup>463</sup> See *ibid* p.24f.

<sup>464</sup> See *ibid* p.158.

figures, like those of Homer<sup>465</sup>, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock<sup>466</sup>, Isaac Newton<sup>467</sup> and some heroes of antiquity<sup>468</sup>. Aside from these contributions, Goethe also corrected Lavater's text. Goethe describes his contribution to the *Fragmente* in his autobiography: "Das Manuskript mit den zum Text eingeschobenen Plattenabdrücken ging an mich nach Frankfurt. Ich hatte das Recht, alles zu tilgen was mir mißfiel, zu ändern und einzuschalten was mir beliebte, wovon ich freilich sehr mäßig Gebrauch machte."<sup>469</sup> (trans.: "The manuscript, with impressions of the plates inserted, was sent to me at Frankfort. I was authorized to strike out whatever displeased me, to change and put in what I liked. However I made a very moderate use of this liberty."<sup>470</sup>). Lavater concludes his first volume with a poem written by Goethe:

### LIED DES PHYSIOGNOMISCHEN ZEICHNERS

*Ach daß die innre Schöpfungskraft  
Durch meinen Sinn erschölle,  
Daß eine Bildung voller Saft  
Aus meinen Fingern quölle!  
Ich zittre nur, ich stottre nur,  
Ich kann es doch nicht lassen,  
Ich fühl', ich kenne dich, Natur,  
Und so muß ich dich fassen.*

*Wenn ich bedenk', wie manches Jahr  
Sich schon mein Sinn erschließet,  
Wie er, wo dürre Heide war,  
Jetzt Freudenquell genießet,  
Da ahnd' ich ganz, Natur, nach dir,  
Dich frei und lieb zu fühlen,  
Ein lust'ger Springbrunn wirst du mir  
Aus tausend Röhren spielen,  
Wirst alle deine Kräfte mir  
In meinem Sinn erweitern  
Und dieses enge Dasein hier  
Zur Ewigkeit erweitern.*

*den 19. April 1775.<sup>471</sup>*

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<sup>465</sup> See *ibid* p.23.

<sup>466</sup> See *ibid* p.96f.

<sup>467</sup> See *ibid* p.218f.

<sup>468</sup> The mentioned heroes are Scipio, Titus, Tiberius, Brutus and Julius Caesar see *Ibid* p.188f.

<sup>469</sup> Goethe. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. 4. Teil 18. Buch Stuttgart, 1833.

<sup>470</sup> Goethe. *Poetry and Truth from my own life*. Translated by John Oxenford 1908 p.261.

<sup>471</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 1 Leipzig, 1775 p.272. Song of a Physiognomical Artist: Oh that inner creativity / Sounding through my sense / That a succulent creation / springs from my fingers! / I only tremble, I only stammer, / I can not let it go, / I feel I know you, Nature, / And so I

This poem should summarize in a poetic way the aim of a physiognomist, i.e. the understanding of Nature.

In the third volume of the *Fragmente*, Goethe's interest in this topic is reduced and he does not want to appear as one of the collaborators in the printed version<sup>472</sup>. In both the third and the fourth volumes Goethe no longer works with Lavater<sup>473</sup>. Goethe's change of opinion about Lavater and his science can be clearly seen in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*:

*Wer die vier Bände »Physiognomik« durchblättert und, was ihn nicht reuen wird, durchliest, mag bedenken, welches Interesse unser Zusammensein gehabt habe, indem die meisten der darin vorkommenden Blätter schon gezeichnet und ein Teil gestochen waren, vorgelegt und beurteilt wurden und man die geistreichen Mittel überlegte, womit selbst das Untaugliche in diesem Falle lehrreich und also tauglich gemacht werden könnte.*

*Geh' ich das Lavaterische Werk nochmals durch, so macht es mir eine komisch heitere Empfindung; es ist mir, als sähe ich die Schatten mir ehemals sehr bekannter Menschen vor mir, über die ich mich schon einmal geärgert und über die ich mich jetzt nicht erfreuen sollte.*<sup>474</sup>

(trans.: "Whoever glances through the four volumes of the Physiognomy, and (he will not regret it) reads them, may conceive the interest of our interviews. Most of the plates contained in the book were already drawn, and part of them had been engraved. These were examined, deciding which were to be utilized, and considered ingenious devices by which those that did not fulfill the purpose for which they were intended, might yet be made instructive and therefore be inserted.

If I now look through the work of Lavater once again, a happy feeling of amusement comes over me; it seems as if I saw before me the shadows of men formerly well-known to me, who once caused me annoyance, and in whom I ought not to take pleasure now."<sup>475</sup>)

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must catch you. // When I consider how many years / my sense already open, / As where drought heather was, / Now a source of joy pleasures, / I knew, Nature, for you, / feeling free and loving, / A funny fountains will you be / playing from a thousand tubes, / Will all your powers / Expand in my mind / And this narrow existence / extend to eternity. 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1775.

<sup>472</sup> See von der Hellen. *Goethes Anteil an Lavaters „Physiognomischen Fragmenten“*. Frankfurt am Main, 1888 p.229.

<sup>473</sup> Some of Goethe's explanations about the noses sent to Lavater for the first volume were used in the third one; see von der Hellen. *Goethes Anteil an Lavaters „Physiognomischen Fragmenten“*. Frankfurt am Main, 1888 p.239.

<sup>474</sup> Goethe. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. 4. Teil 18. Buch Stuttgart, 1833.

<sup>475</sup> Goethe. *Poetry and Truth from my own life*. Translated by John Oxenford 1908 p.262.

The secondary literature tries to explain Goethe's aversion towards Lavater by the different approach they used in theological questions. Lavater believed that anyone can become like Jesus Christ and that through people Jesus Christ himself can still perform miracles on earth<sup>476</sup>. Furthermore, Lavater seemed to be obsessed by the idea that Goethe himself was the direct embodiment of Jesus Christ. Goethe – whose religious views were quite ambiguous<sup>477</sup> – disagreed with Lavater, disliking Lavater's attempts to convert him and this broke their relationship. Lavater's doctrine can be seen in Goethe's works only marginally and, when used, it is a very simple approach towards Physiognomy.

As with Goethe, Lessing and his works play a crucial and fundamental role in the discourse around Physiognomy. Throughout his life, Lessing showed an interest in Physiognomy and physiology. In his *Collectanea* he quotes several treatises and theories on Physiognomy by different authors of different periods.<sup>478</sup> He was one of the first to translate into German the work *Examen de ingenios para les ciencias* (1566<sup>479</sup> or 1575<sup>480</sup>) by Juan Huarte (~1530 - ~1592). In this treatise temperaments and physiological forms are offered together in different classifications and the focus is a physiognomic analysis: "*Il trattato di Huarte è curiosamente librato fra politica [...] e ricerca scientifica. Ma gli interessi fisiognomici sono precisi, [...].*"<sup>481</sup> (trans.: "The treatise by Huarte is curiously balanced between politics and scientific research. But the physiognomic interests are accurate.").

Lessing also studied the treatises by Johann Caspar Lavater; in several letters and notes he wrote down his ideas on Lavater and his considerations on his

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<sup>476</sup> See Karl Pestalozzi. "Lavaters Hoffnung auf Goethe." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 260-279 p.262 and Hans Felix Pfenninger: "Die Freundschaft zwischen Goethe und Lavater." *Schweizer Monatshefte. Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur* 45 (1965-66): 850-860 p.857.

<sup>477</sup> See Wolfgang Frühwald. "Goethe und das Christentum. Anmerkungen zu einem ambivalenten Verhältnis." *Goethe Jahrbuch* 130 (2013): 43-50.

<sup>478</sup> see Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker Vol. 15 p.344f. and p.417 (Johannes Valentinus Merbitz, Giovan Battista Della Porta, Alexander Achillini, Gualtherus Rivinus).

<sup>479</sup> See Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. *Johann Huarts Prüfung der Köpfe zu den Wissenschaften. Vorrede des Übersetzers*. 1752 and Ellis Shookman. "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy." In: Ellis Shookman. *The Faces of Physiognomy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993, 1-24 p.13

<sup>480</sup> See Caroli: *Storia della Fisiognomica*. Milano, 1995 p.59 and August Ohage. "Von Lessings «Wust» zu einer Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Physiognomik im 18. Jahrhundert." *Lessing Yearbook* 21 (1989): 55-87 p. 68.

<sup>481</sup> Caroli. *Storia della Fisiognomica*. Milano, 1995 p.59.

“science”<sup>482</sup>. Lessing’s relationship with Physiognomy is unclear because, on the one hand, he approved the strong connection between people’s temperament and soul and their physical forms, their features and body, but, on the other hand, he criticizes Lavater’s Physiognomy when compared with the real facts of medicine and psychology<sup>483</sup>. In two letters to Friedrich Nicolai, Lessing discusses the contradiction. In 1770, Lessing wrote to Nicolai in reference to the public discussion between Lavater and Moses Mendelssohn, a Jewish philosopher and friend both of Lessing and Nicolai. Lavater openly challenged Mendelssohn by asking him to either refute Christianity or to become Christian. Mendelssohn replied that he would never reject Judaism.<sup>484</sup> Lessing writes in his letter: “*Lavater ist ein Schwärmer, als nur einer des Tollhauses werth gewesen. Er macht schon kein Geheimnis mehr daraus, daß er Wunder thun kann, zu folge seiner meinung, daß die Wundergabe das Kennzeichen eines wahren Xsten sey.*”<sup>485</sup> (trans.: “Lavater is a dreamer, and he doubtless belongs in the madhouse. He even claims that he can perform miracles, according to his belief that the ability to do so is the sign of a true Christian.”).

Lessing thinks that Lavater is too romantic and unrealistic, and that he believes in the science of Physiognomy without taking in account real science. Some years later, Lessing researched the importance of Physiognomy in the library in Wolfenbüttel, where he collected all the books and writings he could find about this topic. In the second letter to Nicolai, Lessing wrote: “*Ich hatte ohnlängst alles auf einen Hauffen getragen, was sich von physiogn. Büchern in der Bibliothek findet. Welch ein Wust! Mit leichter Mühe hätte ich eine litterarische Geschichte der ganzen vermeinten Wissenschaft daraus zusammenschreiben wollen, wenn ich geglaubt hätte, daß es sich der Mühe verlohne.*”<sup>486</sup> (trans.: “I recently piled up every book I could find on Physiognomy in the library. What a mess! I easily could have compiled a literary history of the entire supposed science, if I had thought doing so was worth the trouble.”). Lessing concludes that Aristotle is still the authority in physiognomic writing and that the work by Marin Cureau de La Chambre (*L’Art de connoitre les*

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<sup>482</sup> See Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker Vol. 15 p.417; Vol. 16 p.250.

<sup>483</sup> See Shookman. “Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy.” (1993).

<sup>484</sup> See Johann Caspar Lavater. *Zueignungsschrift der bonnetischen philosophischen Untersuchung der Beweise für das Christentum an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin* (Zürich 1769) and *Schreiben an den Herrn Diaconus Lavater zu Zürich von Moses Mendelssohn* (Berlin 1769).

<sup>485</sup> Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker Vol. 17 p.310.

<sup>486</sup> Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Lachmann and Muncker Vol. 18 p.176.

hommes, 2 Volumes 1659-69) was an important contribution to the topic and a model for Lavater. Then he openly criticizes Lavater and his improper use of Physiognomy:

*Lavater [hat] die Physiognomik in einer Ausdehnung genommen, in welcher ihr dieser Name gar nicht zukömmt; in welcher kein einziger Schriftsteller vor ihm sie behandelt hat; in welcher vielmehr vorlängst sie Mehrere, unter dem Namen der Moralischen Semiotik, von der eigentlichen Physiognomik unterschieden haben. Und nur daher kommt es, daß Lavater das eigentlich Physiognomische, welches in alle Ewigkeit höchst unzuverlässig bleiben wird, mit so viel andern weniger streitigen oder völlig ausgemachten Dingen, hat so verkleiden und verschönigen können, daß der Verächter der Physiognomik bey ihm ein so unvernünftiges Ansehen gewinnt.<sup>487</sup>*  
(trans.: "Lavater [has] extended Physiognomy so much that this name is not appropriate; not a single writer before him has treated it in that way; but several treated it rather under the name of moral semiotics, which distinguishes it from the actual Physiognomy. And this is why Lavater has disguised and dressed up Physiognomy, which will forever remain very unreliable, with so many other things that seems unreasonable whoever despises physiognomy.")

Lessing goes on criticizing Lavater's approach to Physiognomy in various plays. All his plays cite Physiognomy or Pathognomy, but in different degrees. In *Miß Sara Sampson* (1755) Lessing refers several times to the facial expression ("Miene"):

## **ACT II – Scene 2**

Marwood:

*Ach Hannah, nun ist er da! Wie soll ich ihn empfangen? Was soll ich sagen? Welche Miene soll ich annehmen? Ist diese ruhig genug? Sieh doch!*

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## **ACT III – Scene 1**

Sir William:

*Gib auf alle ihre Mienen Acht, wenn sie meinen Brief lesen wird. In der kurzen Entfernung von der Tugend, kann sie die Verstellung noch nicht gelernt haben, zu deren Larven nur das eingewurzelte Laster seine Zuflucht nimmt. Du wirst ihre ganze Seele ihren Gesichte lesen.*

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<sup>487</sup> Lessing. *Sämtliche Schriften*. Edited by Lachmann and Muncker Vol. 18 p.177.

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## ACT IV – Scene 5

Marwood (indem sie um sich herum sieht):  
*Bin ich allein? Kann ich unbemerkt einmal  
Atem schöpfen, und die Muskeln des Gesichts  
in ihre natürliche Lage fahren lassen? Ich muss  
geschwind einmal in allen Mienen die wahre  
Marwood sein, um den Zwang der Verstellung  
wieder aushalten zu können.*<sup>488</sup>

Wolfgang Wittkowski argues that the character creation and description in *Miß Sara Sampson* can be related to Lavater's Physiognomy even though it uses more pathognomical elements<sup>489</sup>. Ellis Shookman is convinced that Lessing's critical opinion of Lavater paradoxically increased the physiognomic elements in his last play *Nathan der Weise* (published in 1779 and staged in 1783)<sup>490</sup>. Lessing, who since the fifties had discussed ideas of tolerance and freedom of religion, concluded with this work his research on deism. Interestingly, his friend Moses Mendelssohn is clearly a model for the creation of the character of Nathan. In relation to Physiognomy, Nathan is a very contradictory character since, on the one hand, he criticizes several times physiognomic prejudices and, on the other hand, he creates some physiognomic portraits (see next chapter).

Friedrich Schiller – like Goethe and Lessing before him – had an ambivalent and complex relationship with Physiognomy in general and Lavater in particular. Martin Stern analyses in detail the relation between Schiller and Lavater and he

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<sup>488</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Marwood: Ah, Hannah! He is here now! How shall I receive him? What shall I say? What expression shall I put on? Is this calm enough? Just see!;

ACT III – Scene 1: Sir William: Notice every expression as she reads my letter. In this short deviation from virtue she cannot yet have learned the art of dissimulation, to the masks of which only deep-rooted vice can have recourse. You will read her whole soul in her face.;

ACT IV – Scene 5: Marwood (looking around): Am I alone? Can I take breath again unobserved, and let the muscles of my face relax into their natural position? I must just for a moment be the true Marwood in all my features to be able again to bear the restraint of dissimulation!

<sup>489</sup> Wolfgang Wittkowski. "Beim Mohamet, wo habe ich meine Augen gehabt!" Zur Charakterdarstellung in Lessings *Miß Sara Sampson*." In: Wolfram Groddeck und Ulrich Stadler. *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gryter, 1994, 34-48.

<sup>490</sup> Shookman. "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy." (1993) p.14; Ellis Shookman. "Wissenschaft, Mode, Wunder. Über die Popularität von Lavaters Physiognomik." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 243-252 p.248f.



frequently refers to the ambiguous nature of their relationship<sup>491</sup>. Through several examples of letters, diaries and annotations, Stern shows Schiller's aversion towards Lavater's scientific research. He also places Schiller's opinion on Physiognomy in a larger context. As a young medical student, Schiller published the treatise *Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen* (1780). Towards the end of this treatise he introduces an article entitled *Körperliche Phänomene verrathen die Bewegungen des Geists. §. 22 Physiognomik der Empfindungen*. As already reported in the first part of this dissertation, Schiller concentrates on the movements of the soul and body, two deeply interwoven entities:

*Eben diese innige Korrespondenz der beiden Naturen stützt auch die ganze Lehre der Physiognomik. Durch eben diesen Nervenzusammenhang, welcher, wie wir hören, bei der Mittheilung der Empfindungen zum Grunde liegt, werden die geheimsten Rührungen der Seele auf der Außenseite des Körpers geoffenbart, und die Leidenschaft dringt selbst durch den Schleier des Heuchlers. Jeder Affekt hat seine specifiken Aeüßerungen und, so zu sagen, seinen eigentümlichen Dialekt, an dem man ihn kennt.*<sup>492</sup>

(trans: "It is the close correspondence between the two at the basis of the whole science of physiognomy. By means of this nervous connection, which, as we have seen, lies at the root of the communication of feelings, the most secret movements of the soul are revealed on the exterior of the body, and passion penetrates even through the veil of the hypocrite. Each passion has its specific expressions, its peculiar dialect, so to speak, by which one knows it.")

Every movement in the interior of the human body will be visible on the outside. Schiller, who is not sure how the transmission between the inside and the outside works, concludes that the emotion, if repeated frequently, can create a stable sign in the face:

*Wird der Affekt, der diese Bewegungen der Maschine sympathetisch erweckte, öfters erneuert, wird diese Empfindungsart der Seele habituell, so werden es auch diese Bewegungen dem Körper. Wird der zur Fertigkeit gewordene Affekt dauernder Charakter, so werden auch diese consensuellen Züge der Maschine tiefer eingegraben,*

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<sup>491</sup> Martin Stern. "Schiller und Lavater." In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler: *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994, 134-152.

<sup>492</sup> Friedrich Schiller. *Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen*. 1780 p.52.

*sie bleiben, wenn ich das Wort von dem Pathologen entlehnen darf, deuteropathisch zurück und werden endlich organisch. So formiert sich endlich die feste perennierende Physiognomie des Menschen, [...].*<sup>493</sup>

(trans.: “If the emotion which sympathetically awakened these movements of the frame be often renewed, if this sensation of soul becomes habitual, then these movements of the body will become so also. If this matured emotion be of a lasting character, then these constitutional features of the frame become deeply engraved: they become, if I may borrow the pathologist’s word, deuteropathic, and are at last organic. Thus, at last, the firm perennial physiognomy of man is formed, [...].”)

Schiller refers with these affirmations to a distinction between Physiognomy and Pathognomy as introduced both by Lavater and his opponent Lichtenberg<sup>494</sup>. Schiller agrees with Lavater by saying that the moving elements in the face can create and become some fixed features. He does not agree with Lavater on the ability of Physiognomy to create all the organic parts of the human face: “*Eine Physiognomik organischer Theile, z. E. der Figur und Größe der Nase, der Augen, des Mundes, der Ohren u. s. w., der Farbe der Haare, der Höhe des Halses u. s. f. ist vielleicht nicht unmöglich, dürfte aber wohl sobald nicht erscheinen, wenn auch Lavater noch durch zehen Quartbände schwärmen sollte.*”<sup>495</sup> (trans.: “A physiognomy of the organic parts, e.g., as to the form and size of the nose, eyes, mouth, ears, etc., the color of the hair, the height of the neck, and such like, may perhaps possibly be found, but certainly not very easily, however much Lavater should continue to rave about it through ten quarto volumes.”). Schiller like Lessing uses the same very meaningful term to address Lavater’s assumption: “*Schwärmerei*”<sup>496</sup>. As pointed out by Stern, Schwärmerei is typically used also by other thinkers of the Enlightenment.<sup>497</sup>

In 1782, Schiller includes in his so-called “Musen-Almanach” *Anthologie auf das Jahr 1782* an epigram about a Physiognomist:

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<sup>493</sup> Schiller. *Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen*. 1780 p.54.

<sup>494</sup> See Andrew Sack. “‘Der Schein ist gegen sie’. Physiognomy and Honour in Schiller’s „Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre“.” *The Modern Language Review* 101 (2006): 759-773 p.765.

<sup>495</sup> Schiller. *Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen*. 1780 p.55.

<sup>496</sup> Wörterbuch der Sittenlehre Leipzig 1834 p.241: „Schwärmerei ist ein überspannter Gemüthszustand, welcher aus einer zu lebhaften Einbildungskraft hervorgeht“.

<sup>497</sup> See Stern. “Schiller und Lavater.” (1994) p.137.

### Grabschrift eines gewissen Physiognomen:

*Wes Geistes Kind im Kopf gesessen,  
Konnt' er auf jeder Nase lesen:  
Und doch – daß er es nicht gewesen,  
Den Gott zu diesem Werk erlesen,  
Konnt' er nicht auf der seinen lesen.<sup>498</sup>*

Schiller illustrates the stupidity and blindness of the physiognomist who can read all the other human faces but not his own. The reading of the soul according to this epigram is done through the nose. This reference can be seen as a symbol for Lavater's blindness, as nobody can see his own nose, so nobody can read it<sup>499</sup>, or it can be understood as an indication of Lavater's theory in general, because for Lavater the nose holds the truth of every human soul (this will be discussed later in detail when related to the corpus).

August von Kotzebue, one of the most productive and influential authors of his time, has a more "hidden" connection to Physiognomy than the other three German authors so far discussed.

Kotzebue's father Levin Karl Christian Kotzebue died only a few months after his son's birth, so the young August found in Johann Karl August Musäus (1735-1787), his aunt's husband, a very valuable father figure, model and teacher:

*Der erste Sommer nach Kotzebue's Rückkehr von Jena war übrigens einer der glücklichsten seines Lebens. Er genoß den vertrauten Umgang und die Freundschaft des trefflichen Musäus. Täglich kam er mit ihm in seinem Garten zusammen, schriftstellerte mit ihm an einem Tische, aus einem Tintenfasse. Abends, zuweilen auch erst am Ende der Woche, las ihm Musäus gewöhnlich vor, was er den Tag über geschrieben, und es war kein Wunder, daß Kotzebue, nachdem er bereits Wieland und Brandes, Göthe und Hermes nachgeahmt hatte, auch auf den Einfall gerieth, Musäus zu copiren.<sup>500</sup>*

(trans.: "The first summer after returning from Jena was by the way one of the happiest of his life. He enjoyed the interaction and friendship of the excellent Musäus. Every day he came together with him in his garden, wrote with him at the same table, from the same inkpot. In the evening, sometimes only at the end of the week,

<sup>498</sup> Inscription of a Physiognomist: Which kind of idea in every head, / could he read in every nose / And yet - that he had not been the one, / Who God elected for this work / Could he not read on his on.

<sup>499</sup> Stern. "Schiller und Lavater." Schiller (1994) p.138.

<sup>500</sup> Heinrich Döring. *August von Kotzebue's Leben*. Weimar: Wilhelm Hoffman, 1830 p.52f.

Musäus usually read to him, what he had written during the day, and it was no wonder that Kotzebue, after he had already imitated Wieland and Brandes, Goethe and Hermes, came also up with the idea to copy Musäus.”)

Musäus was and is mainly known for his collection of fairy tales *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (1782-86), his satirical epistolary novel *Grandison der Zweite* (1760-62) and his satirical novel *Physiognomische Reisen* (1778-79). Musäus published the *Physiognomische Reisen* first anonymously but after its success he decided to declare his authorship. After Musäus death in 1787, August von Kotzebue published his *Nachgelassene Schriften*. In his introduction *Einige Züge aus dem Leben des guten Musäus*, Kotzebue dedicates a small paragraph to the *Physiognomische Reisen*:

*Wenn wir auch der Physiognomik des schwärmerischen Lavater sonst nicht viel verdanken, so ist das Verdienst doch groß genug, die physiognomischen Reisen veranlaßt zu haben. Mit diesem launichten Werke trat jetzt Musäus, doch ohne sich zu nennen, auf die Bühne der deutschen Literatur, nachdem seine Muse lange Jahre geschlummert hatte.<sup>501</sup>*

(trans.: “If we owe the Physiognomy of dreamy Lavater not much else, so the merit is but big enough to have caused the *physiognomische Reisen*. With this moody work Musäus now joined, but without revealing himself, the stage of German literature after that his muse had been slumbering for many years.”)

As Schiller and Lessing before him, Kotzebue also uses the term “Schwärmer” for Lavater. He is not convinced, like Musäus himself, that the science of Physiognomy has such importance as attributed to it by so many people.<sup>502</sup> He criticizes both Lavater for inventing, and his pupils for following, this supposed science.

Musäus studied Lavater’s works in detail in order to be able to satirize it correctly. Musäus and Lavater also met, when Lavater was travelling through Germany. Musäus said about this meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1786:

*Vormittags halb zehn Uhr wurde ich durch den Goethe’schen Bedienten aus der Schule abgerufen, der mir vermeldete, daß Herr Lavater aus der Schweiz und Herr v. Goethe vor dem Garten*

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<sup>501</sup> August von Kotzebue. *Nachgelassene Schriften des verstorbenen Professor Musäus*. Leipzig, 1791 p.8.

<sup>502</sup> See Christoph Siegrist. “Satirische Physiognomiekritik bei Musäus, Pezzl und Klinger.” In: Wolfram Groddeck and Ulrich Stadler. *Physiognomie und Pathognomie. Zur literarischen Darstellung von Individualität. Festschrift für Karl Pestalozzi zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994, 95-112.

*stunden, um mich zu besuchen. Ich eilte alsbald hinauf und fand sie im Hause. Herr v. Goethe stellte mir Herrn Lavater vor, der wenig und sehr schweizerlich sprach, daß ich ihn anfangs nicht recht verstand. Er präsentirte mir ein Büchlein in kl. Octav, wie ein Collectaneen-Buch, worin er seine Bekanntschaften auf der Reise ihre Namen verzeichnen ließ. Ich schrieb hinein: Mein Herz strebt Dir entgegen voll reiner Liebe. Schrieb's zum Andenken J. C. A. Musäus, [...]. Ich begleitete beide Herren bis auf die Brücke, wo mich Herr L. zweimal küßte.*<sup>503</sup>

(trans.: "In the morning half past nine, I was called by the servants of Goethe from the school who reported to me that Herr Lavater from Switzerland and Herr v. Goethe stood before the garden, to visit me. I hurried up immediately and found them in the house. Herr v. Goethe introduced me to Mr. Lavater, who spoke little and in a very Swiss manner, that at first I did not quite understand him. He presented me with a book in small octavo as a Collectaneen-book in which he recorded the names of his acquaintances on the journey. I wrote into it: My heart seeks towards you, full of pure love. Written for commemoration by J. C. A. Musäus, [...]. I accompanied the two gentlemen up on the bridge, where I was kissed twice by Mr. L..")

There is no evidence in the sources that Kotzebue also met Lavater during his stay in Weimar or later. Kotzebue did though meet Franz Joseph Gall in Vienna and Berlin<sup>504</sup>, and this influenced his writing in many ways; probably most significantly with his comedy *Die Organe des Gehirns* (1806). Herr von Rückenmark purchases in this three act comedy a collection of skulls, and judges every human being with the phrenological theory of Gall:

#### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Emilie:

*Lieber Ferdinand, kehre dich nicht an meinen Vater, der lästert gar zu gern unser armes Geschlecht; besonders seit er in die Schädellehre sich verliebt hat, sind ihm alle unsere Köpfe zu klein, zu schmal, er spricht, wir hätten wenig Gehirn.*<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> Moritz Müller. *Johann Karl August Musäus. Ein Lebens- und Schriftstellercharakterbild*. Jena, 1876 p.57f.

<sup>504</sup> See Döring. *August von Kotzebue's Leben*. Weimar, 1830 p.306 and Jürg Mathes: "Kotzebues Briefe an seine Mutter." *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* (1970): 304-436 p.416.

<sup>505</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Emilie: Dear Ferdinand, don't be bothered by my father, he criticizes our poor sex, even more now that he fell in love with Phrenology. All the heads are too small, too narrow, he says we have not a lot of brain.

Kotzebue criticizes both Physiognomy and Phrenology mainly because of their “blind” followers and less because of the “scientific” approaches of Lavater and Gall. He certainly criticizes their gullibility but understands also their interest in human nature and their unconventional research.

Johann Christian Brandes’ play *Ariadne auf Naxos* is the first German melodrama and it refers in many details to the French melodrama tradition and Rousseau’s *Pygmalion*: “*Die initiierende Wirkung von Rousseaus Pygmalion ist, wiewohl in den Einzelheiten ungeklärt, ganz außer Zweifel.*”<sup>506</sup> (trans.: “The initiating effect of Rousseau’s *Pygmalion* is, though unknown in detail, quite beyond doubt.”). *Ariadne auf Naxos* is a two act melodrama – also called a Duodrama – with only two main characters: Ariadne and Theseus. The music for *Ariadne auf Naxos* was written by the Kapelldirektor of the Seyler Theatregroup Georg Anton Benda (1722-1795)<sup>507</sup> and the title role was first played by Esther Charlotte (1746-1786), the wife of the playwright Brandes himself. Brandes was an actor and playwright who worked mainly in Hamburg, Kiel, Berlin, Breslau and Dresden. Brandes was much involved in the German theatre scene of his time. He knew many key figures of that period such as Lessing, Engel, Mendelssohn, Iffland, Schröder, etc.:

*[...] und zum Umgange wählte ich, [...] einen Circel von Gelehrten und Künstlern, worinn ich mir, unter andern, auch den berühmten Gelehrten und Dichter, Lessing, zum Freunde erwarb. Er gab sich viele Mühe, mich, durch seinen Unterricht, zu einem beifallswürdigen Schauspieler zu bilden; weil er aber zu diesem Fache mehr guten Willen, als wahres Talent, bei mir bemerkte, so lenkte er mich zugleich auf die meinen Fähigkeiten mehr angemessene Laufbahn eines dramatischen Dichters, und gab mir dazu die ersten richtigen Fingerzeige.*<sup>508</sup>

(trans.: “[...] as company I had a circle of scholars and artists, where I gained, among others, also the famous scholar and poet Lessing, as friends. He gave himself much trouble to make me, through his teaching an acclaimed actor; but because he saw more good will than true talent, he drew me towards – according to my skills – a more appropriate career as dramatic poet, and he gave me for that the first real hints.”)

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<sup>506</sup> Schimpf. *Lyrisches Theater*. Göttingen, 1988 p.26.

<sup>507</sup> See John John D. Drake. “The 18th-Century Melodrama.” *The Musical Times* 112 (1971): 1058-1060; Schimpf. *Lyrisches Theater*. Göttingen, 1988.

<sup>508</sup> Johann Christian Brandes. *Meine Lebensgeschichte*. Vol. 1 Berlin, 1799 p.287f.

Lessing was the godfather of Brandes' daughter Wilhelmine "Minna"<sup>509</sup>, who certainly inspired the creation of the play *Minna von Barnhelm*. Brandes' relationship with Lessing was very instructive, because Lessing did not only send Brandes feedback for his works, but Brandes also read whatever Lessing had written on the theatre<sup>510</sup>. In his autobiography, Brandes does not mention that he also read Lessing's works on Physiognomy, but it can not be excluded simply from this gap in his biography. Brandes, also knowing Engel, could easily have had access to theatrical discussion about the human body in general and the science of Physiognomy in detail.

Christoph Friedrich Bretzner was one of the most famous German librettists in the years 1780 to 1820. His musical play *Belmonte und Costanze* (1781) made him famous and was used in a revised form by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart for his *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782). Bretzner not only wrote numerous musical plays but also comedies and the novel *Das Leben eines Lüderlichen* (1787). In this satirical novel, Bretzner is inspired by William Hogarth's paintings *The Rake's Progress* (1732-33) and Daniel Chodowiecki's works. In the first volume of the novel, Bretzner refers to Lavater and his *Physiognomische Fragmente*:

*Ungeachtet nun Lavater die Physiognomien der Professionisten und Handwerker so deutlich unterscheiden kann, daß er einen Schusterkopf unter tausend Köpfen heraus suchen würde: so war die Physiognomie des Herrn Lufts so wenig vom Schneider zu sehen, daß man ihn gar leicht mit dem Kopfe eines fetten Abts oder wohlgemästeten Domherrns verwechseln konnte.*<sup>511</sup>

(trans.: "Despite the fact that Lavater can distinguish the physiognomies of professionals and craftsmen so clearly that he would find a shoemaker's head within thousand heads: the physiognomy of Mr. Luft was so little the one of a tailor, that he could very easily be confused with the head of a rich abbot or of a fat canon.")

Bretzner questions already with this small reference the reliability of Lavater's science. Bretzner, who was originally from Leipzig, worked intensively both in his home town and in Berlin. In Berlin his works were staged by Theophil Döbbelin and

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<sup>509</sup> See Johann Christian Brandes. *Meine Lebensgeschichte*. Vol. 2 Berlin, 1799 p.21.

<sup>510</sup> See *ibid* p.53.

<sup>511</sup> Christoph Friedrich Bretzner. *Das Leben eines Lüderlichen. Ein moralisch-satirisches Gemälde nach Chodowiecki und Hogarth*. Vol. 1 Leipzig, 1787 p. 217f.

he was well known in the Berliner literary and cultural scene<sup>512</sup>. In 1780, his comedy *Karl und Sophie oder Die Physiognomie* was published. Four years later, Bretzner presented a revised version with the title *Karl und Sophie oder Die Physiognomisten*. Karl Richter states in his article about Bretzner, that “*With parodies of Werther’s sentimentality, Siegwart’s Nachtschwärmerei and Lavater’s Physiognomische Fragmente is Bretzner a representative of the zeitgeist, which can be characterized by the collision of exuberance of feelings and Enlightenment culture.*” (Original: “Mit den Parodien der Wertherschen Empfindsamkeit, Siegwartischer Nachtschwärmerei und der Physiognomischen Fragmente Lavater ist Bretzner Vertreter des Zeitgeistes, der sich durch den Zusammenstoß von Gefühlsüberschwang und Aufklärungskultur kennzeichnen läßt.”<sup>513</sup>). The very fact that Bretzner published a revised version of the play shows the popularity of the topic.

The circulation of physiognomical discourse implies a real, physical circulation of literates and scientists. All the above-mentioned German authors travelled to other European countries, and they brought their aesthetic, philosophic, theoretic and moral ideas with them. Literary salons have a distinctive role in the spreading of different ideas. In his work *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (1962), Jürgen Habermas dedicates some articles to the influence of literary salons, coffee houses (*Kaffehäuser*) and table societies (*Tischgesellschaften*). Habermas explains first and foremost that, “*The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public*”<sup>514</sup> (Original: “Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit läßt sich vorerst als die Sphäre der zum Publikum versammelten Privatleute begreifen;”<sup>515</sup>). The bourgeois public sphere consists of different types: *politische Öffentlichkeit* (“political public sphere”), *repräsentative Öffentlichkeit* (“representative publicness”) and *literarische Öffentlichkeit* (“literary public sphere” or “public sphere in the world of letters”). The literary public sphere is related to a shift – not a complete separation –

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<sup>512</sup> See Berta Joncus. “„Ich bin eine Engländerin, zur Freyheit geboren“: Blonde and the Enlightened Female in Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.” *The Opera Quarterly* 26 (2010): 552-587 p.556.

<sup>513</sup> Karl Richter. “Bretzner, Christoph Friedrich.” In: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 2 1955 p.603f. online version <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd115849238.html> (06.11.2015).

<sup>514</sup> Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989 p.27.

<sup>515</sup> Jürgen Habermas. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Berlin/Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1969 p.38.



from the prince's court to the town as the centre of literary discussion and representation: *“Die literarische Öffentlichkeit ist freilich keine autochthon bürgerliche; sie wahrt eine gewisse Kontinuität zu der repräsentativen Öffentlichkeit des fürstlichen Hofes.”*<sup>516</sup> (trans.: “The public sphere in the world of letters was not, of course, autochthonously bourgeois; it preserved a certain continuity with the publicity involved in the representation enacted at the prince's court.”<sup>517</sup>). The town (*Stadt*) represents not only the financial/economical centre of the civil society, but also the essential point for the institutions of the public sphere in the world of letters<sup>518</sup>. The salons can be seen mainly as a French, the coffee houses as an English and the table societies as a German form of literary public spheres:

*Wie sehr sich Tischgesellschaften, Salons und Kaffehäuser in Umfang und Zusammensetzung ihres Publikums, im Stil des Umgangs, im Klima des Raisonnements und in der thematischen Orientierung unterscheiden mögen, sie organisieren doch allemal eine Tendenz nach permanente Diskussion unter Privatleuten; sie verfügen daher über eine Reihe gemeinsamer institutioneller Kriterien.*<sup>519</sup>

(trans.: “However much the Tischgesellschaften, salons, and coffee houses may have differed in the size and composition of their publics, the style of their proceedings, the climate of their debates, and their topical orientations, they all organized discussion among private people that tended to be ongoing; hence they had a number of institutional criteria in common.”<sup>520</sup>)

These institutional criteria are equality of the members, the transformation of culture as commodity, and the understanding of the public as in principle inclusive. The discussions in the various forms of the literary public led to a new understanding of culture (specifically of literature) and its usage and distribution. The opinion of private people on literature could become public through discussion in salons, coffee houses and table societies.

Two very interesting examples of the influence of the literary salon on the

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<sup>516</sup> Habermas. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Berlin/Neuwied, 1969 p.40.

<sup>517</sup> Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Burger Cambridge, 1989 p.29.

<sup>518</sup> See Habermas. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Berlin/Neuwied, 1969 p.40f.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid p.47.

<sup>520</sup> Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Burger Cambridge, 1989 p.36.

theatrical production of an author can be seen with the Italian authors Ugo Foscolo and Vittorio Alfieri.

Ugo Foscolo had an enormous influence on Italian literature, culture and identity of the eighteenth century. He is mainly famous for his sonnets *Alla sera* (1803), *A Zacinto* (1803), *Alla Musa* (1803), *In morte del fratello Giovanni* (1803), his carme *Dei sepolcri* (1807) and his epistolary *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802-1803). During his very exciting and eventful life, Foscolo also wrote three tragedies in the tradition of Vittorio Alfieri and his theatrical understanding: *Tieste*, *Ajace* and *Ricciarda*.

Rachel A. Walsh contextualizes Foscolo's dramatic work in her book *Ugo Foscolo's Tragic Vision in Italy and England* (University of Toronto Press 2014) by stating that Foscolo is following the tradition of three main Italian theorists and authors of the eighteenth century:

The historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) formed – through his writings as *I primi disegni della repubblica letteraria d'Italia* (1703) and *Della perfetta poesia italiana* (1706) – Foscolo's understanding of what are the requisite components of a good tragedy: the poet must create through a combination of imagination (fiction) and observation and imitation of nature (fact) a sublime, pleasurable and didactic experience for the reader<sup>521</sup>.

Melchiorre Cesarotti – intellectual, poet and linguist – helped to answer the question of why one would write tragedies, by saying that the main aim is to educate the audience by creating sensations of pleasure and pain<sup>522</sup>.

Vittorio Alfieri's classical theory of tragedy strongly influenced Foscolo's way of writing tragedies. Foscolo nearly always follows Alfieri's idea of the three unities, the use of few characters and the structure of the tragedies<sup>523</sup>.

Foscolo's tragedies show the theories and the literary spirit of his time. He shows passions and emotions as Revenge, Despair, Envy, Jealousy and Shame. Following the example of Alfieri, Foscolo creates very static tragedies with little movement. His stage directions are poor and do not indicate many gestures.

Foscolo's dramatic theory was formed not only through studying the above mentioned theorists and dramatist, but also through personal contact and exchange

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<sup>521</sup> See Rachel A. Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo's Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.14f.

<sup>522</sup> See *ibid* p.16f.

<sup>523</sup> See *ibid* p.18f.

with them. While living in Venice, Foscolo became acquainted with Isabella Teotochi Marin later Albrizzi (1760-1836). Teotochi Albrizzi was one of the most famous intellectuals in Venice at that time and she held a literary salon with influential guests, such as Melchiorre Cesarotti, Ippolito Pindemonte, Antonio Canova, Madame de Staël, Dominique Vivant Denon, Aubin-Louis Millin, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, George Gordon Byron, Walter Scott, Sir William Hamilton and Ugo Foscolo. Through Teotochi Albrizzi, Foscolo met many important people of the Venetian literary scene, whose influence can be seen both in his writings and his personal development. Teotochi Albrizzi was a very cultured and well-read young woman, who published in 1807 her work *Ritratti*. In *Ritratti* she presented several portraits and character descriptions of the people who were her guests in Venice. The work was a great success and several editions followed the first publication: “*At first glance, the fact that the collection had three subsequent editions, with eight portraits added to the original sixteen later on, indicates the ever-changing attitude toward Teotochi Albrizzi’s salon, a locus whose welcoming and inclusive nature could not be constrained within a «definitive» publication of its members’ characterization.*”<sup>524</sup>

Teotochi Albrizzi followed in many ways the ideas of Johann Caspar Lavater’s physiognomic analysis by. She also named Lavater directly in one of her descriptions: “*Lauro Quirini. Nel suo volto troverai l’apologia del sistema di Lavater [sic!]. [...] Guardalo, se nol riconosci tosto, brucia Lavater [sic!] ed il mio ritratto*”<sup>525</sup> (trans: “Lauro Quirini. In his face you will find the apology of Lavater’s system. [...] Look at him, if you do not recognize him soon, burn Lavater and my ritratto.”). Every description was accompanied by a portrait, drawn by Vivant Denon. Susan Dalton explains, correctly, that “*there was no necessary correspondence to the features she described and the engravings, and, in fact, Teotochi Albrizzi described the subjects as she remembered them*”<sup>526</sup>. Teotochi Albrizzi explains through her descriptions the presence of signs in the face which show the moral character of the described person. Teotochi Albrizzi analyses both the moveable face expressions – using a

<sup>524</sup> Marianna D’Ezio. “Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi’s Venetian Salon. A Transcultural and Transnational Example of Sociability and Cosmopolitanism in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Europe.” In: Ileana Baird (ed.). *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century. Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 175-198 p.188.

<sup>525</sup> Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi. *Ritratti*. Padova, 1808 p.11f.

<sup>526</sup> Susan Dalton. “Searching for Virtue. Physiognomy, Sociability, and Taste in Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi’s “Ritratti”.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40 (2006): 85-108 p.90.

pathognomical method – and the fixed features such as eyes and mouth – using a physiognomical method. Teotochi Albrizzi describes Foscolo's character: *“L'animo è caldo, forte, disprezzatore della fortuna, e della morte. L'ingegno è fervido, rapido, nutrito di sublimi, e forti idee; semi eccellenti in eccellente terreno coltivati e cresciuti. [...] Pietoso, generoso, riconoscente, pare un rozzo selvaggio ai filosofi de' nostri dì. Libertà, indipendenza, sono gl'idoli dell'anima sua.”*<sup>527</sup> (trans.: “The spirit is warm, strong, despiser of fortune, and death. The ingenuity is fervent, rapid, fed with sublime and strong ideas; excellent seeds planted and grown in excellent land. [...] Pitiful, generous, grateful, he seems a crude savage to the philosophers of our day. Freedom, independence are the idols of his soul.”).

Teotochi Albrizzi also uses her knowledge of reading and understanding character in a critical review of Vittorio Alfieri's play *Mirra*. Alfieri himself is discussed in one of her ritratti: *“Si direbbe quasi, che in quel volto l'immagine respiri d'una divinità corruciata. [...] Come soffio di vento, che nelle gole d'alte, ed aggruppate montagne diventa terribile, ogni passione diventa tempesta nel suo cuore. Arde se t'ama, è di gelo, se ti disprezza, e se t'odia, ... ma non odio, che il vizio, [...]”*<sup>528</sup> (trans.: “One might almost say that in this face lays the image of a worried deity. [...] As a wind, which in the throats of the high mountains becomes a terrible breeze, every passion becomes a storm in his heart. It burns, if he loves you, it freezes, if he despises you, and if he hates you ... but he doesn't hate, except the vice, [...]”).

Vittorio Alfieri's connection to Physiognomy is not only limited to his acquaintance with Teotochi Albrizzi and the other members of her literary salon, but also through his many travels to and stays in France, where he made contact with other “physiognomic” protagonists. Alfieri's biography is strongly related to that of Louise of Stolberg-Gedern, countess of Albany (1752-1824), his friend and mistress. Alfieri describes in detail in his *Vita* his acquaintance with the countess and their travels and stays throughout Europe. Alfieri got to know the countess in 1778 in Florence, where she lived with her husband Charles Edward Stuart (1720-1788). Alfieri and the countess, who could live openly separated from her husband only after his death in 1788, met Alfieri several times in Colmar in 1784, and together they travelled to Paris. After her husband's death, the countess moved with Alfieri to Paris

<sup>527</sup> Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi. *Ritratti*. Padova, 1808 p.27f.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid p.95f.

where she held a small literary salon. Due to the political tension in Paris the countess and Alfieri moved back to Florence in 1792. In Florence the countess' literary salon was bigger and attended by many European literates: Stendhal, Lord Byron, Madame de Staël, Alexander von Humboldt, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and others<sup>529</sup>. Alfieri, until his death part of this European cultural environment, preached his dramatic theories as well as receiving many ideas from other writers. During one of his stays in Alsace, Alfieri met Gottlieb Konrad Pfeffel (1736-1809), poet and translator and also a friend of Johann Caspar Lavater<sup>530</sup>.

It would be wrong to assume that Alfieri knew about Physiognomy only through these literary connections, but they certainly helped. His connections to Freemasonry in Italy would have also played an important role in his understanding<sup>531</sup>.

Hints about René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt's knowledge of Physiognomy can be found in his world famous library. Pixérécourt's library held over 2300 volumes and he was one of the founders of the Société des Bibliophiles français<sup>532</sup>.

Towards the end of his life, Pixérécourt needed to sell almost his entire library. Charles Nodier and Paul Lacroix published the sales catalogue in 1838. Lacroix mentions in the Preface the reason for Pixérécourt's decision to sell his beautiful library:

*M. de Pixérécourt, à la suite d'une grave maladie, résultat de la terrible catastrophe qui l'avait frappé dans sa fortune, crut qu'il serait forcé de se séparer de ses livres, ces amis rassemblés un à un pour devenir les compagnons de sa vieillesse, comme le dit la légende du joli écusson vert qui décore chaque ouvrage de cette bibliothèque : Un livre est un ami qui ne change jamais.*<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> See Jennifer Speake (ed.). *Literature of Travel and Exploration. An Encyclopedia. Vol. 1, A-F*. London: Routledge, 2013 p.445.

<sup>530</sup> See Lina Beck-Bernard. *Théophile-Conrad Pfeffel de Colmar. Souvenirs Biographiques*. Lausanne, 1866 p.20.

<sup>531</sup> See Carlo Francovich. *Storia della Massoneria in Italia. Dalle origini alla rivoluzione francese*. Milano: Ghibli, 2013 p.94f. and p.183f. and Vittorio Gnocchini. *L'Italia dei Liberi Muratori. Brevi biografie di Massoni famosi*. Roma: Erasmo Edizioni-Mimesis, 2005 p.9f.

<sup>532</sup> See J. Paul Marcoux. *Guilbert De Pixérécourt. French Melodrama in the Early Nineteenth Century*. Peter Lang: New York, 1992 p.20.

<sup>533</sup> *Bibliothèque de M. G. de Pixérécourt. Avec des notes littéraires et bibliographiques de ses deux excellents amis Charles Nodier et Paul Lacroix*. Paris, 1838 p.II.

(trans.: “M. de Pixérécourt, because of a serious illness, the result of the terrible disaster that had struck his fortune, thought he would be forced to separate from his books, these friends collected one by one to become the companions of his old age, as said by the legend of the beautiful green patch that decorates each book in this library: a book is a friend who never changes.”)

The catastrophe Lacroix is referring to is the fire at the Théâtre de la Gaîté in 1835, where Pixérécourt lost many of his stage settings and costumes.

Pixérécourt’s library contained two books that demonstrate some interest in Physiognomy: Juan Huarte’s *Examen de ingenios para les ciencias* (in the French translation)<sup>534</sup> and Edward Walmsley’s *Physiognomical Portraits of one hundred distinguished Characters, from undoubted originals, engraved by the most eminent British Artists* (2 volumes, 1824)<sup>535</sup>. Lacroix and Nodier – as announced in the title of the sales catalogue – sometimes added remarks to the book list in the catalogue, but in the case of the two above mentioned books, there are no comments. Pixérécourt himself did not comment this sales catalogue at all, but in 1840 he published a sales catalogue for his autographs and manuscripts. In the introduction, *Un Mot*, he states that around 1805 he decided to add autographed letters to his books instead of portraits and engravings, because they show the “*auteur lui-même*”<sup>536</sup>.

*Non seulement il a pensé cette lettre, mais sa main l'a écrite, signée, pliée, cachetée. Elle est une partie intégrante de sa personne. Quelquefois il suffit d'une seule lettre pour peindre toute une vie et tout un personnage.*

*Dans une lettre autographe, l'auteur se montre à nu, sans entraves, sans réserve, sans corrections, tandis qu'il en est tout autrement d'un livre dont le style est châtié,*<sup>537</sup>

(trans.: “Not only figured he the letter, but his hand has written, signed, folded, sealed it. It is an integral part of his personality. Sometimes it only takes one letter to paint a whole lifetime and character.

In an autographed letter, the author shows himself naked, unfettered, without reservation, without corrections, while it is quite different from a book whose style is polished;”)

In this introduction, Pixérécourt refers directly to the “science” of graphology and the ability to understand the human soul through the writing. Lavater speaks about this

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<sup>534</sup> See *Bibliothèque de M. G. de Pixérécourt. Autographes et Manuscrits*. Paris, 1840 p.19.

<sup>535</sup> See *ibid* p.58.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid* p.VI.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid* p.VI.

other form of physiognomical science in his fourth volume of the *Fragmente*. He first starts with an explication about the hand and its importance in Physiognomy as part of the whole human body:

*Daß die Hände der Menschen so verschieden und sich so unähnlich sind, wie ihre Gesichter, ist eine Erfahrungssache, die keines Erweises bedarf.*

*[...] Sie [die Hand] ist also so gut, als irgend etwas, ein Gegenstand der Physiognomik, und ein sehr bedeutsamer, und vorzüglich bemerkenswerther Gegenstand, wegen ihrer Unverstellbarkeit sowohl, als wegen ihrer Beweglichkeit. [...] Ruhend und bewegt spricht die Hand. Ruhend zeigt sie die natürlichen Anlagen, bewegt mehr die Leidenschaften und Verrichtungen des Menschen.*<sup>538</sup>

(trans.: “That the hands of people are so different and so unlike as their faces, is a matter of experience that needs no demonstration. [...] It [the hand] is as good as anything, an object of Physiognomy, and a very significant and especially remarkable object, because both of its immobility and mobility. [...] Immobile and mobile speaks the hand. Immobile it shows her natural features, mobile more the passions and actions of people.”)

For Lavater the most significant movement of the hand and fingers is writing: “*Und unter allen Bewegungen der Hand und der Finger keine [sei] so mannigfaltig, als die, welche das Schreiben verursacht. [...] Je mehr ich die verschiedenen Handschriften, die mir vor die Augen kommen, vergleiche, desto sicherer werde ich, daß sie physiognomische Ausdrücke, Ausstüsse von dem Charakter des Schreibers sind.*”<sup>539</sup>

(trans.: “And among all the movements of the hand and fingers any would be so varied, than the one which causes writing. [...] The more I compare the various manuscripts that I my eyes see, the surer I am that they are physiognomical expressions, outputs of the character of the writer.”). Graphology was to become a very popular fashion in the Nineteenth century, which can be seen – as shown by the quotes by Lavater – in relation to other pseudo-sciences such as Physiognomy and Phrenology. Juan Huarte's treatise – present in Pixérécourt's library – together with John Bulwer's *Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the hand and Chironomia, or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (1644) can be seen as two of the first extensive examinations of handwriting: “*In all the declarative conceits of gesture whereby the body, instructed by nature, can emphatically vent and communicate a thought, and in*

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<sup>538</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 4. Vienna, 1829 p.57f.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid p.66f.

*the propriety of its utterance express the silent agitations of the mind, the hand, that busy instrument, is most talkative*<sup>540</sup>. Pixérécourt's collection of autographed letters certainly demonstrates the importance and relevance of graphological analysis. Pixérécourt collected over 1000 autographed letters of famous and important people past and present (politicians, royalty, philosophers, authors, scientists, actors, dancers, singers, etc.). His list is organized alphabetically and the information contained in each listing is more or less the following: Surname, name, title, occupation of the person and date, and extent and typology of the letter. Sometimes Pixérécourt indicates with an adjective the value of the letter: *curieux, rare, intéressant, très originale*. Pixérécourt adds in only a few cases some detailed information about the person or the letter. One of these cases is Lavater's autograph:

536. LAVATER (*Jean-Gaspard*)

*29 et 30 octobre 1795; aut. – 1 pag. – Le Philosophe de Zurich a fait un beau rêve quand il a voulu deviner le caractère des hommes d'après les traits de leur figure. – Quoi qu'il en soit, ces petits paragraphes allemands sont très rares.*<sup>541</sup>

(trans.: 29 and 30 october 1795: autograph – 1 page – The Philosopher from Zurich dreamt a beautiful dream when he tried to guess the character of men according to the features of their face. – Anyway, these small German paragraphs are very rare.)

Once again, as in the critique by the German authors, Lavater is called a dreamer. Interestingly, Pixérécourt criticizes Lavater's belief of guessing human character through appearance, even though his own approach of guessing it through the handwriting can be questioned. From the sales catalogue of Pixérécourt's library we cannot see if he possessed Lavater's writings, but through this small remark about his autograph, Pixérécourt's opinion about the "philosopher" Lavater is made clear.

Pixérécourt is now not only famous for his own drama production, but also because of his wider influence on European theatre culture. Pixérécourt's play *Cœlina* inspired Thomas Holcroft's play *A Tale of Mystery*, which introduced the melodramatic genre to the English stage. Holcroft taught himself both French and

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<sup>540</sup> John Bulwer. *Chirolugia, or the Natural Language of the Hand and Chironomia, or the Art of Manual Rhetoric*. 1644 p.15.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid p.54.



German and at the beginning of his literary career he earned his living with several translations from these two languages<sup>542</sup>. Wallace argues that Holcroft's choice of works was related mainly to the financial gain he could get from it, which in turn related to the popularity of the selected works: *"Moreover, Holcroft's choices of works to translate reflect his own efforts to expand his own native rhetorical range. [...] In both content and practice, the works Holcroft selected for translation tell us something useful the self-relations of Thomas Holcroft"*<sup>543</sup>. A part from *A Tale of Mystery*, Holcroft adapted other plays from the French literary tradition to the English stage:

- \*December 14<sup>th</sup> 1784: *Follies of a Day* (Beaumarchais: *Le mariage de Figaro* – 1778)
- \*March 12<sup>th</sup> 1787: *Seduction* (Laclos: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* – 1782)
- \*February 4<sup>th</sup> 1791: *School of Arrogance* (Destouches: *Le Glorieux* – 1732)
- \*February 13<sup>th</sup> 1798: *He's Much to Blame* (Ferriol: *Complaisant* – 1776)
- \*February 24<sup>th</sup> 1801: *Deaf and Dumb* (Bouilly: *L'Abbé de l'Épée* – 1799)<sup>544</sup>

In 1789, Holcroft published his translation of Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*. It was not the first English translation, but the most successful of all the English translations<sup>545</sup>. In Elbridge Colby's *A Bibliography of Thomas Holcroft* (New York 1922) more than thirteen editions of Holcroft's translation are mentioned<sup>546</sup>. Holcroft's edition was *"a fine book by the standards of the time, but it was a smaller octavo version, more cheaply produced and more sparsely illustrated than its predecessor"*<sup>547</sup>. In Holcroft's memoirs we can find only a short reference to his translation: *"His translation of Lavater's smaller work has certainly been the means of making the English public acquainted with the system of that ingenious and lively*

<sup>542</sup> See Miriam L. Wallace. "Holcroft's Translations of the 1780s and Isabelle de Montolieu's *Caroline de Lichtfield*." In: Miriam L. Wallace and A. A. Markley. *Re-viewing Thomas Holcroft, 1745-1809. Essays on his works and life*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, 51-68 p.55.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid p.54.

<sup>544</sup> Edith Wray. "English Adaptations of French Drama between 1780 to 1815." *MLN* 43 (1928): 87-90 p.88f.

<sup>545</sup> See John Graham. "Lavater's Physiognomy. A Checklist." *Bibliographical Society of America* 55 (1961): 297-308 p.299f.; John Graham. "Lavater's Physiognomy in England." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 561-572 p.563; Joan K. Stemmler. "The Physiognomical Portraits of J.C. Lavater." *Art Bulletin* 75 (1993): 151-168 p.153; David Karr. "'Thoughts That Flash like Lightning': Thomas Holcroft, Radical Theater, and the Production of Meaning in 1790s London." *Journal of British Studies* 40 (2001): 324-356 p.341; Melissa Percival. "Johann Caspar Lavater. Physiognomy and Connoisseurship." *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26 (2003): 77-90 p.87.

<sup>546</sup> Elbridge Colby. *A Bibliography of Thomas Holcroft*. New York, 1922 p.60.

<sup>547</sup> Percival. "Johann Caspar Lavater. Physiognomy and Connoisseurship." (2003) p.87.

writer;<sup>548</sup> Holcroft did not present a faithful translation of Lavater's work, but he tried to simplify some of the philosophical and theological elements: *"In his translation, Holcroft reworked the mystical strands of Lavater's work. Eliminating many of Lavater's references to Christ, Holcroft sought to translate Lavater's themes toward a universalized program of secularized benevolence, and so join bodily transparency to social and political practice"*<sup>549</sup>. The following chapters will show not only Holcroft's use of his physiognomical knowledge in his plays, but also in an interesting review written for the *Monthly Review*. Diane Long Hoeveler calls Holcroft *"a true believer"*<sup>550</sup> in the science of Physiognomy and his literary production shows this belief.

Joanna Baillie's biography is strongly connected to medicine and research on the human body. Baillie is the daughter of Reverend James Baillie (1722-1778) and Dorothea Hunter (1721-1806), the sister of William (1718-1783) and John (1728-1793) Hunter. William Hunter was not only famous for being Queen Charlotte's physician but also for being one of the main theorists on anatomy and obstetrics. He and his brother John were both fellows of the Royal Society. William was Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy and John a member of the Company of Surgeons. John Hunter was the surgeon of King George III and Surgeon General to the British Army. Both Hunter brothers held several lectures about their research, which were groundbreaking in their fields. John Hunter's six Croonian lectures on muscular motion (1775-1782) in front of the Royal Society were very influential on the general idea of muscles and their function in the human body. Joanna Baillie's brother Matthew Baillie (1761-1823) was John Hunter's pupil and William Hunter's heir. Matthew Baillie was a physician and – like his uncles – held several lectures during his life: in 1791 he also held a Croonian lecture on muscles and in 1794 three Gulstonian lectures to the Royal College of Physicians were dedicated to the nervous system<sup>551</sup>. Matthew Baillie was very prominent in his research and

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<sup>548</sup> *Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft, written by himself and continued to the Time of his Death, from his Diary, Notes, and other Papers*. Volume 2 London, 1816 p.67f.

<sup>549</sup> Karr. *"Thoughts That Flash like Lightning": Thomas Holcroft, Radical Theater, and the Production of Meaning in 1790s London.* (2001) p.342f.

<sup>550</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler. *Gothic Riffs. Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820*. Ohio State University Press, 2010 p.155.

<sup>551</sup> See Frederick Burwick. *"Joanna Baillie, Matthew Baillie and the pathology of passions."* In: Thomas C. Crochunis (ed.). *Joanna Baillie, Romantic Dramatist. Critical Essays*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004, 48-68 p.50f.

development of pathology. John Cross dedicated to him the publication *An Attempt to Establish Physiognomy upon Scientific Principles* (Glasgow 1817): “To Dr. Matthew Baillie, F. R. S. L. & R., Physician extraordinary to the king etc. etc. etc., this book is most respectfully dedicated, by the Author”<sup>552</sup>. Cross explains in his publication the relation between physiology and Physiognomy:

*To divide and arrange the body into organs, and to ascribe to each its function, is physiology. To view all these organs in connexion, and to compute the influence of each, and the concentrated influence of the whole, in determining the great movements of the individual among other individuals, all acting their respective parts in the great struggle and bustle of life, is physiognomy. Physiognomy is just a system of corollaries arising out of physiology.*<sup>553</sup>

This distinction can be seen in an abstract way as the distinction between Joanna’s and Matthew’s understanding of the human body. Joanna knew only her uncle John and not William, but she knew both uncles’ works. In addition she was very close to her brother and lived with him until he got married<sup>554</sup>.

*These connections suggest that some intriguing in-family medico-legal exchanges may have taken place and that Joanna Baillie may have possessed, at the very least, a heightened awareness of and interest in the medico-legal questions of her day. Baillie’s literary experiment of portraying the extreme passions strongly hints that she shared the increasing awareness of the emerging psychological profession and its importance for legal determinations.*<sup>555</sup>

This dissertation focuses on the medical discourse in Baillie’s works, and in the following chapter Baillie’s dramatic program, which shows in so many ways her basic medical knowledge, will be discussed. Her “sympathetic curiosity” can be understood as key to the physiognomical observation.

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<sup>552</sup> John Cros. *An Attempt to Establish Physiognomy upon Scientific Principles*. Originally delivered in a series of lectures. Glasgow, 1817.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid p.6f.

<sup>554</sup> See Victoria Myers. “Joanna Baillie and the Emergence of Medico-Legal Discourse.” *European Romantic Review* 18 (2007): 339-359 p.341 and Judith Bailey Slagle. “Evolution of a writer. Joanna Baillie’s life in letters” In: Thomas C. Crochunis (ed.). *Joanna Baillie, Romantic Dramatist. Critical Essays*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004, 8-26 p.11.

<sup>555</sup> Myers: “Joanna Baillie and the Emergence of Medico-Legal Discourse.” (2007) p.341.

James Robinson Planché wrote during his more than four-decade career more than 170 works for the theatre in many different genres such as the melodrama, the farce, the burlesque, and extravaganzas, which seem to have been invented by him<sup>556</sup>. Planché, even though he was quite successful with his writings for the theatre, also started a career as costume designer, historian and archaeologist<sup>557</sup>. Together with Charles Kemble he introduced the “*practice of historically accurate costuming on the English stage*”<sup>558</sup>. Planché published various articles and books about costumes, such as the collections *History of British Costume from the Earliest Period to the Close of the 18th Century* (1834) and *A Cyclopaedia of Costume* (1876-1879). Planché is now mainly known for his extravaganzas published in five volumes and the English translation of *Les Contes des Fées* by Madame d'Aulnoy. Buczkowski describes Planché’s success with his extravaganzas as follows: “*Critics and audiences were pleased by the internal coherence of the extravaganza, where characters, however absurd, acted with consistent manners and motives. [...] he walked a dramaturgical tightrope between maintaining the audience’s suspension of disbelief and allowing the writing to spoof human nature or contemporary society.*”<sup>559</sup> Planché understood very well what the audience was expecting from a theatrical show and he invented many spectacular stage effects. Planché’s knowledge of history, art and fashion helped him to also develop one of the most interesting forms of Tableaux Vivants. In his play *The Brigand* (1829), he introduced three portraits by the painter Charles Eastlake (1793-1865) as Tableaux Vivants<sup>560</sup>:

## ACT I

Alessandro Massaroni discovered sleeping on the rock under the tree, C. – Maria Grazie, his wife, seated by his side, L., watching him, and a Brigand on guard, by his side, R. – Forming the first picture from Eastlake’s Series “An Italian Brigand Chief reposing”.

<sup>556</sup> See Darryll Grantley. *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre. Early Period*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013 p.336f.

<sup>557</sup> See Paul Reinhardt. “The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880).” *Educational Theatre Journal* 20 (1968): 524-544 p.524.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid p.524.

<sup>559</sup> Paul Buczkowski. “J. R. Planché, Frederick Robson, and the Fairy Extravaganza.” *Marvels & Tales. Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 15 (2001): 42-65 p.44

<sup>560</sup> See Brenda Assael. “Art or Indecency? *Tableaux Vivants* on the London Stage and the Failure of Late Victorian Moral Reform.” *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006): 744-758 p.747.

### Massaroni

Seizes his carbine and hat, and rushes down the mountain, followed by the whole of the Brigands – Maria springs upon a jutting rock, under the oak-tree, C., grasping with her left hand a branch that overhangs the precipice, and looking anxiously down the mountain. – Forming the second picture from Eastlake's Series "The Wife of a Brigand Chief watching the result of a Battle".

## **ACT II**

### Prince Biancha

Falls into the arms of his Servants, R. C. – Re-enter Massaroni, wounded, from the garden, C. F. – he attempts to rush forward with a dagger in his hand – he staggers, and sinks at the feet of Maria Grazie, who, with two or three of the band appear amongst the trees – the Soldiers that have pursued him, point to their captive, forming the last picture from Eastlake's Series "The Dying Brigand".



Illustration 1-2-3: The Dying Brigand

Planché's understanding of trends can also be seen in his choice to write about Lavater in *Lavater the Physiognomist, or Not a Bad Judge*. Even though Lavater was long dead when Planché wrote and staged his Comic Drama, his name and his legacy still meant something. The audience would still understand who this character was and the importance of his work. In Planché's biography there are no hints of why he chose to write about Lavater. He did not mention him or his work at all in his autobiography *Recollections and Reflections: A Professional Autobiography* (1872).

*Not a Bad Judge* is mentioned only once, in relation to the performance of the actor John Pritt Harley<sup>561</sup>.

Chénier, Grillparzer and Morris hide their opinions about Lavater and his science.

Chénier studied different European theatre cultures and was influenced in his writing mainly by the Greek and Roman tragedy tradition. His imitation of Lessing's most famous and revolutionary work, *Nathan der Weise*, suggests that Chénier could have also been familiar with Lessing's theatre theory and opinion on Physiognomy, although this cannot be known for certain.

Grillparzer was a regular client in many Viennese *Kaffehäuser* such as the Café Griensteidl and the Silbernes Kaffehaus. A frequent topic of discussion in this cultural context would have been the growing theory of Phrenology. Franz Joseph Gall himself lived in Vienna from 1781 to 1805 and many other physicians, such as Romeo Seligman (1808-1892) discussed the development of Phrenology in the literary public sphere.

Morris – as seen from the critique of *False Colours* (see last chapter of this dissertation) – was unknown as an author during his lifetime. His biography is not very detailed and there are no direct references to Physiognomy. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that Morris knew about Lavater, his writings and his reception.

This short biographical introduction of the authors presented in the corpus contextualizes their lives and works in the physiognomical discourse.

### **2.1.2. Introductions, prologues, dedications**

This section examines the presence of physiognomic elements in the introductions, prologues, epilogues and dedications given by the authors for the plays in the corpus. These paratexts could be expected to show the authors' intention to emphasize certain elements in their plays.

Three authors, Friedrich Schiller, Joanna Baillie and Vittorio Alfieri, start their plays with very extensive explanations of their intentions in the creation of the plays. They use their plays to illustrate a wider theoretical program.

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<sup>561</sup> James Robinson Planché. *Recollections and Reflections: A Professional Autobiography*. London, 1872 p.391.

Schiller created two prefaces for his play *Die Räuber*: *Die Vorrede* and *Die unterdrückte Vorrede*. He wanted to prepare the reader of this play for the horror and morally dubious scenes.

Schiller immediately makes it clear that the human soul in all its variations will be shown in this play:

*Man nehme dieses Schauspiel für nichts anders als eine dramatische Geschichte, die die Vorteile der dramatischen Methode, die Seele gleichsam bei ihren geheimsten Operationen zu ertappen, benutzt, ohne sich übrigens in die Schranken eines Theaterstücks einzuzäunen, oder nach dem so zweifelhaften Gewinn bei theatralischer Verkörperung zu geizen.*<sup>562</sup>

(trans: "This play is to be regarded merely as a dramatic narrative, in which, for the purpose of tracing out the innermost workings of the soul, advantage has been taken of the dramatic method, without otherwise reforming to the stringent rules of theatrical composition, or seeking the dubious advantage of stage adaptation."<sup>563</sup>)

Schiller describes his two main characters, Franz and Karl, and their vices and weaknesses. The reader – Schiller initially only intended this play to be read and not performed<sup>564</sup> – is instructed not to be affected by prejudices when he reads the play and to allow the characters to affect him in a very natural way. Schiller also emphasizes that the characters are not created following a black-white logic but that they are both developing throughout the drama. With this understanding the question of Physiognomy and predetermination of the human character gets a new reading. In the play itself – as it will be shown in the second chapter – the characters believe in a certain predetermination of their destiny through their physical appearance (see Franz's ugliness). But in the preface, Schiller challenges this idea and makes the characters changeable and also in part unstable:

*Diese unmoralische Charaktere, von denen vorhin gesprochen wurde, mußten von gewissen Seiten glänzen, ja oft von Seiten des Geistes gewinnen, was sie von seiten des Herzens verlieren. Hierin habe ich nur die Natur gleichsam wörtlich abgeschrieben. Jedem, auch dem Lasterhaftesten, ist gewissermaßen der Stempel des göttlichen Ebenbilds aufgedrückt, und vielleicht hat der große*

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<sup>562</sup> Friedrich Schiller. *Die Räuber. Vorrede geschrieben in der Ostermesse*. 1781.

<sup>563</sup> Friedrich Schiller. *Complete Works*. Translated by Charles J. Hempel. Philadelphia: Kohler, 1861 p.153.

<sup>564</sup> In this dissertation Schiller's „Lesedrama *Die Räuber. Ein Schauspiel*“ from 1781 is discussed. The two following changed versions *Die Räuber. Ein Trauerspiel* (1782: staged and printed) are not discussed.

*Bösewicht keinen so weiten Weg zum großen Rechtschaffenen als der kleine; denn die Moralität hält gleichen Gang mit den Kräften, und je weiter die Fähigkeit, desto weiter und ungeheurer ihre Verirrung, desto imputabler ihre Verfälschung.*<sup>565</sup>

(trans.: "I have made these said immoral characters to stand out favorably in particular points, and even in some measure to compensate by qualities of the head for what they are deficient in those of the heart. Herein I have done no more than literally copy nature. Every man, even the most depraved, bears in some degree the impress of the Almighty's image, and perhaps the greatest villain is not further removed from the most upright man, than the petty offender; for the moral forces keep even pace with the powers of the mind, and the greater the capacity bestowed on man, the greater and more enormous becomes his misapplication of it, the more responsible is he for his errors."<sup>566</sup>)

With this preface, Schiller makes it clear once again that he has a very ambiguous opinion about Physiognomy. As will be shown in the next section, knowledge of Lavater's theories influenced the writing of both *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe*. His vision certainly changes in these two plays, which in general have a different approach and philosophy. His Bürgerliches Trauerspiel *Kabale und Liebe* aims a quite diverse reaction from the spectator and so also the effects created through the visibility of the passions in the appearance change.

During her life, Joanna Baillie published three volumes of *Plays on the Passions* (1798, 1802, 1812) and in the introduction to the first volume she explains her poetic program. She explains that the three plays in this volume – *Count Basil* (a tragedy), *The Tryal* (a comedy) and *De Monfort* (a tragedy) – are part of an "extensive design"<sup>567</sup>. This is relatively new in English dramatic literature, as Isabella Imperiali explains in her work *La passione della mente nel teatro di Joanna Baillie. Discorso introduttivo, De Monfort, Al lettore di Joanna Baillie* (Editoria & Spettacolo: Roma 2007):

*Sebbene Baillie ritenesse che il progetto di svelare i principii che regolano la mente dominata da una passione non fosse stato mai tentato, in realtà il suo lavoro si situa nell'ambito di un progetto più vasto di riforma del dramma e di indagine dell'interiorità, intrapreso*

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<sup>565</sup> Schiller. *Die Räuber. Vorrede geschrieben in der Ostermesse*. 1781.

<sup>566</sup> Schiller. *Complete Works*. Translated by Charles J. Hempel. Philadelphia: Kohler, 1861 p.154.

<sup>567</sup> Joanna Baillie. *Plays on the Passions*. Edited by Peter Duthie. Toronto: Broadview Literary Texts, 2001 p.67.



*anche da Wordsworth con Borderers, da Coleridge con Osorio, da Shelley con The Cenci e con Hellas, da Byron con Cain, con Manfred e con altre opere drammatiche. Certamente nessuno proseguì con il rigore e la perseveranza di Baillie [...].*<sup>568</sup>

(trad.: “Although Baillie considers that the proposal to unveil the principles that govern the mind dominated by a passion had never been attempted, in fact her work is framed within a larger project of reform of the drama and investigation of the interiority, also undertaken by Wordsworth with *Borderers*, by Coleridge with *Osorio*, by Shelley with *The Cenci* and *Hellas*, by Byron with *Cain*, with *Manfred* and other dramatic works. Certainly no one proceeded with the rigor and perseverance of Baillie.”)

For Baillie this design is to show and explain the nature of man and the feelings and passions. Men are driven by a strong curiosity to know the character of others: “*From that strong sympathy which most creatures, but the human above all, feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man’s curiosity as man himself.*”<sup>569</sup>

This “*sympathetick curiosity*” that leads men is even stronger if the people observed are in an “*extraordinary situation of difficulty and distress*”<sup>570</sup>. People get excited, moved and touched when they see men acting under the influence of particular passions: “*What human creature is there, who can behold a being like himself under the violent agitation of those passions which all have, in some degree, experienced, without feeling himself most powerfully excited by the sight?*”<sup>571</sup> Every human being can relate to the passions experienced by others.

Passions are shown on the face in different forms and Baillie calls this appearance “*language of the agitated soul*”<sup>572</sup>. People who are able to read this language are not only more expert in the nature of other men but they also know themselves better: “*In examining others we know ourselves*”<sup>573</sup>. With this statement Baillie refers directly to Lavater and the purpose of his *Physiognomische Fragmente*. For Baillie, as for Lavater, observation is the basis of all knowledge acquisition and this knowledge is used to improve the individual.

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<sup>568</sup> Isabella Imperiali. *La passione della mente nel teatro di Joanna Baillie. Discorso introduttivo, De Monfort, Al lettore di Joanna Baillie*. Roma: Editoria & Spettacolo, 2007 p.13.

<sup>569</sup> Baillie. *Plays on the Passions*. Toronto, 2001 p.67.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid p.69.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid p.72.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid p.73.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid p.74.

For Baillie as a playwright, knowledge about people is even more fundamental than for novelists and poets because dramatic characters speak and act on stage: *“Under the influence of every passion, humour, and impression; in the artificial veilings of hypocrisy and ceremony, in the openness of freedom and confidence, and in the lonely hour of meditation they speak.”*<sup>574</sup>

The importance of showing the passions through the theatre is stronger with the tragedy. The educational character of the tragedy shows to the audience, with explicit images of passions, the deepest nature of men. But before Baillie, playwrights focused primarily on passions of short duration, such as Anger, Fear and Jealousy and they showed them in a fixed way. Instead Baillie reaches a new goal with her plays: *“the chief object should be to delineate the progress of the higher passions in the human breast, each play exhibiting a particular passion [...]”*<sup>575</sup>. The *“higher or stronger passions”* are Ambition, Hatred and Love. With this program Baillie thinks she has a moral effect on the audience, and not only tragedy, but also comedy, should show the stronger passions:

*It is for her [the comedy] also to represent men under the influence of the stronger passions; and to trace the rise and progress of them in the heart, in such situations, and attended with such circumstances as take off their sublimity, and the interest we naturally take in a perturbed mind.*<sup>576</sup>

Baillie subdivides comedy into: *Satirical Comedy, Witty Comedy, Sentimental Comedy, Busy or Circumstantial Comedy and Characteristick Comedy.*

In her theoretical program, Baillie explains that the passions agitate the soul and this agitation is visible in the appearance of people, in their facial expressions, in their gestures, in their language and also in their actions:

*It is not merely under the violent agitations of passion, that man so rouses and interests us; even the smallest indications of an unquiet mind, the restless eye, the muttering lip, the half-checked exclamation, and the hasty start, will set our attention [...] and with what avidity will we seize upon every recollected word or gesture, that is the smallest degree indicative of the supposed state of his mind [...].*<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Baillie. *Plays on the Passions*. Toronto, 2001 p.82.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid p.93.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid p.95.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid p.73.

The description given by Baillie certainly recall those of Descartes and others (see Part I), as signs that emerge on the faces of people. The passions in Baillie's work, as already mentioned, are divided into those "of short duration" (Anger, Fear and Jealousy) and into "higher or stronger passions" (Ambition, Hatred and Love). Baillie assigns to each play included in this collection a stronger passion:

*In the two first plays [Count Basil and The Tryal], where love is the passion under review, their relation to the general plan may not be very obvious. [...] The last play [De Monfort], the subject of which is hatred, will more clearly discover the nature and intention of my design. [...] This passion [hatred], as I have conceived it, is that rooted and settled aversion, which from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable.*<sup>578</sup>

Scholars have understood Baillie's importance for the English theatre – shown through her *Introductory Discourse* – on various levels<sup>579</sup>. Lilla Maria Crisafulli argues that, through her *Introductory Discourse*, Baillie concentrates on two elements so interestingly laid out, that they summarize perfectly the philosophical theories of her time in relation to their models. Baillie's drama highlights human action, and its relation to the character's identity while creating a complicity between actors and spectators. Two concepts of "sympathetic curiosity" underline this argument: On one side, the observation of the struggles and sufferings of others creates Rührung und Mitleid in Lessing's sense of the terms, and on the other side, the strong connection of the body and the mind is visible under the influence of the passions<sup>580</sup>. The following chapters will show in detail Baillie's understanding of passions and her dramatic output.

Vittorio Alfieri, known for his many tragedies, tried to produce a new dramatic genre with *Abele*; he called this play a Tramelogedia. In the preface to this opera he

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<sup>578</sup> Baillie. *Plays on the Passions*. Toronto, 2001 p.107f.

<sup>579</sup> See Linda Brigham. "Joanna Baillie's Reflections on the Passions. The "Introductory Discourse" and the Properties of Authorship." *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 417-437; Sean Carney. "The Passion of Joanna Baillie. Plawright as Martyr." *Theatre Journal* 52 (2000): 227-252; Andrea Henderson. "Passion and Fashion in Joanna Baillie's "Introductory Discourse"." *PMLA* 112 (1997): 198-213.

<sup>580</sup> See Lilla Maria Crisafulli. "Joanna Baillie: «a female Shakespeare»." In: Joanna Baillie. *Leggenda di Famiglia*. Edited by Lilla Maria Crisafulli, Liana Battelli. Bononia University Press, 2007, 4-36 p.9f.

explains his intention and the structure, form and purpose of this new genre. Alfieri's tragedy is combined by the *melodia* of the voices of the choir: “*lo [...] ho intarsiata la parola melo nella parola tragedia, in maniera ch'ella non ne guastasse la terminazione, non badando alla radice del nome.*”<sup>581</sup> (trans.: “I inlaid the word «melo» in the word «tragedia» so that she will not damage the termination, not minding the root of the name.”). The *tramelogedia* remains a “*genere mostruoso*”<sup>582</sup> for Alfieri, but the aim of his invention justifies this fact. Alfieri, resenting of the non-existence of a real Italian culture of tragedies, tries to use the audience's love for lyrical opera to create a “real Italian theatre” (“*un vero teatro*”<sup>583</sup>). Alfieri is faithful to the classical division into five acts and he assigns to each act a genre: the first act is an opera, the second and fifth acts are tragedies, and the third and fourth acts are “mixed tragedies”, using elements both of the opera and the classic tragedy<sup>584</sup>. In order to perform this opera two kinds of actors/performers are needed: good tragic actors are used for the heavy, pathos-loaded tragic parts, while singers embody the choirs in the play. Alfieri saw the performance of this play in a court, where the noble audience could appreciate, but also pay for the luxurious costumes and the rich setting. Alfieri used the creation of this new genre and the explanation of this enterprise for propaganda of his political interests and ideas: he finishes his explanations by saying that Italy is a nation and as such it should have its own national theatre.<sup>585</sup>

Arnaldo Di Benedetto discusses in detail Alfieri's creation of the *Tramelogedia* in his work *Vittorio Alfieri. Le passioni e il limite* (Napoli: Liguori Editore 1987). Interestingly Alfieri – “*padrone e maestro dei propri mezzi espressivi*”<sup>586</sup> (“owner and master of his own means of expression”) – needed a long time to create his *tramelogedia Abele*: from 1782 to 1796 for the first edition, and in 1798 he presented a revised edition. Di Benedetto identifies Cain as the main character of the play and he is for him “*Last of the true alferian tragic characters, [who] is also, in his subjection to passion, their ideal ancestor.*” (“Ultimo dei veri personaggi tragici alfieriani, egli è anche, nella sua soggezione alla passione, il loro ideale

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<sup>581</sup> Vittorio Alfieri. *Opere Postume*. London, 1804 p.9.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid p.10.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid p. 18.

<sup>584</sup> See ibid p.14.

<sup>585</sup> See ibid p.19.

<sup>586</sup> Arnaldo Di Benedetto. *Vittorio Alfieri. Le passioni e il limite*. Napoli: Liguori Editore, 1987 p.53.

progenitore.<sup>587</sup>). Alfieri himself wanted to show Cain's importance by initially calling the play *Caino, Tragedia musicale*<sup>588</sup>.

The paratexts found in other plays of the corpus are less detailed but are still of great significance in the understanding of these plays.

*False Colours* by Edward Morris uses as motto a quotation of Ovid's *Fasti* (verses 17-18):

*Da mihi te placidum, dederis in carmina vires;  
Ingenium vultu statque caditque tuo.  
Be mild with me, and you will empower my verse;  
My talent will stand or fall by your glance.*

Ovid used this verse in his introduction to his poem *Fasti* dedicated to Germanicus, a member of emperor Augustus' family. This verse indicates a very physiognomic/pathognomic idea, in fact that about the readability of the human face: the approval of the poem *Fasti* will be written in Germanicus' face as the approval of the comedy *False Colours* will be written in the audience's appearance.

The comedy's dedication is "*To Miss Farren; as a faint tribute, to her exquisite Performance of Constance, this Comedy is most respectfully inscribed, by her obliged and obedient humble servant, the author*". Miss Farren is the actress Elizabeth Farren (1759-1829) who worked as an actress at the Drury Lane, Covent Garden and Haymarket theatres. In his advertisement the author further thanks in general all the performers, the theatre manager and in particular John Philip Kemble "*as a scholar, and a gentleman*". Morris lets his play start with a prologue spoken by the character Sir Harry Cecil. This prologue was written by Charles Morris, Edward's brother. The prologue concentrates on the author and his intention with this play:

*Tonight, a kind reception is our aim,  
For one who on "False Colours" builds his fame.*

These two verses indicate already that Edward Morris was an unknown author on the English stage. This play, which was written and staged in a moment when "*Britain's True Colours float in martial pride*", was also meant to gain applause from the spectators:

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<sup>587</sup> Di Benedetto. *Vittorio Alfieri*. Napoli, 1987 p.59.

<sup>588</sup> See *ibid* p.53.

*With approbation crown his best endeavor,  
And grant the wish'd for passport – Public Favour.*

The epilogue was written by George Colman the Younger (1762-1836), who worked for his father George Colman the Elder at the Theatre Haymarket. Colman clearly addresses Physiognomy in his epilogue, spoken by the figure Constance:

*Faces are books where men may read strange matters;  
Of the mind's movements ev'ry feature smatters;  
As thoughts arise, though the mute tongue conceal them,  
Our eyes, cheeks, chins, and noses, all reveal them –  
Your thoughts of this our Play, then, to discover,  
I'll read, good folks, your countenances over.  
Please to hold up your heads – so – keep your places –  
Really, a fine well-printed set of faces!*

In order to criticize the misleading reading of human faces, Colman speaks in his epilogue about real books in a library, because they can really form the human mind and help to acquire knowledge.

The paratexts to *False Colours* help to understand the author Edward Morris, who remained unknown to the spectators and the critics, but they also concentrate the audience's attention on the physiognomic reading of the human face.

Thomas Holcroft uses the paratexts to *The Deserted Daughter* and *A Tale of Mystery* to illustrate his understanding of a melodrama and the application of the passions in a play. *The Deserted Daughter* is enclosed by a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue, divided into four parts, focuses on similarities and diversities in Nature and in mankind. This ambiguous character is transposed to the stage and the action shown on it. The variability in Nature can be summarized with the verse “*Each seems distinct, yet all together bound*”. The complexity of Nature is seen also in men, being “*first of the tribe, and master of the whole*”. When this ambiguous character is shown on stage, it can cause laughter, tears and applause. The passions influence the appearance related to the soul and the physical countenance of the characters on stage:

*Within his orbit other beings move;  
Some urg'd by av'rice, others spurr'd by love,*

*To aid or injure him, as passion drives;  
The worst of servants; and the best of wives.*

In the epilogue three representatives of the varied nature of mankind conclude the action on stage: Lady Ann, who stands for the loyalty of wives, Joanna for the virtue of daughters and Mrs. Sarsnet for the weakness of men.

In *A Tale of Mystery* Holcroft abstains from the use of pro- and epilogues, but focuses his theoretical program in a dedication and an advertisement. This melodrama is dedicated to Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) an Italian composer and pianist, who worked as a conductor at the Haymarket, and Holcroft praises his genius and virtue. The melodrama, so strongly connected to music, gains value with this dedication. In the advertisement, Holcroft addresses the nature of melodrama by giving a very short and tight answer:

*I should be tempted to say something of the nature, powers, and scenic effects of the Melo-Drame; but that my thoughts must necessarily be given with too much brevity and haste. Other Dramatic writers will certainly produce these effects in a much more mature and perfect state; and of the pleasures they yield I shall be happy to partake.*

Holcroft's intention with the introduction of the melodrama to the English stage is related to the discourse around the passions:

*There are few pleasures so great, or so pure, as that of being able, by a well told tale, to fix the attention, rouse the passions, and hold the faculties in anxious and impatient suspense.*

The passions are seen both on stage and in the hearts and souls of the audience when they react to the action performed on stage. Holcroft refers to his French inspiration for the play which helped him to form "*an excellent picture*". This picture contains the theme, the setting and the message of the play. With the term "picture" Holcroft also makes a reference to the staging of his play; this aspect will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 2.1.3. The stage directions

Roman Ingarden assigned stage directions to the subsidiary text of a play. Stage directions are never spoken out loud, but they give information to the actor or to the reader. Pfister speaks of three kinds of hierarchically related stage directions: “*theater-funktionale Bühnenanweisungen*” (“theatrical stage directions”) contain “*schauspieler-bezogene Bühnenanweisungen*” (“actor related stage directions”) and “*kontextbezogene Bühnenanweisungen*”<sup>589</sup> (“context related stage directions”). The theatrical stage directions give information about the actor himself (movement on stage, physiognomy, costumes and make-up, gestures, postures), his interaction with other actors, and his interaction within the optical-acoustic context (setting, lighting, music, theatre effects). Pfister speaks of three kinds of relationship between the information given in the stage directions and in the dramatic text itself: identity, complementarity and discrepancy.

#### 1) Identity:

*Die Relation der Identität macht es möglich, daß in der Mehrzahl der vorliegenden dramatischen Texte die Kenntnis des Haupttexts allein ein hinreichendes Verständnis sichert. Je mehr diese Relation dominiert, desto redundanter ist die außersprachlich vermittelte Information gegenüber dem sprachlichen Haupttext; die bereits sprachlich vermittelte Information wird nur zusätzlich in das Medium mimisch-gestischen Spiels und konkreter Gegenständlichkeit der Bühne “übersetzt.”*<sup>590</sup>

(trans.: “From the audience’s point of view, the existence of ‘identity’ means that, in the majority of dramatic texts, familiarity with the primary text is sufficient in itself to ensure a reasonable measure of comprehension. The more this relationship predominates, the more redundant non-verbally transmitted information becomes in comparison with the verbal primary text. Information that has already been mediated verbally is merely ‘translated’ into the medium of mime and gesture, and into the physical immediacy of the stage.”<sup>591</sup>)

According to Pfister, in the case of identity, the stage directions are not as important as the main text, because the information given is the same. The physiognomic or pathognomic reading of the corpus shows a relation between the physiognomic information given in the stage directions, such as the character

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<sup>589</sup> Pfister. *Das Drama*. München, 1977 p.36f.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid p.74.

<sup>591</sup> Manfred Pfister. *The theory and analysis of Drama*. Translated by John Halliday. Cambridge University Press, 1993 p.45.



description and the characterization of the gestures, and the information given in the text. Pfister uses the explanations around identity also to clarify the so-called “*implizite Inszenierungsanweisungen*”<sup>592</sup> in the maintext. An example of these “implicit staging instructions” can be seen in Grillparzer’s *Die Ahnfrau*, where it is only through Berta’s description that Jaromir’s injury is made visible:

### ACT III

Berta:

*Jaromir! – Du weichst zurück?  
Weichst vor mir zurück? – O bleib!  
Wie hab ich um dich gezittert,  
O Geliebter, wie gebebt!  
Sprich, wie fühlst du dich?*

Jaromir (scheu und düster):

*Gut! Gut!*

Berta:

*Gut? O daß ich’s glauben könnte!  
Jaromir, wie siehst du bleich!  
Gott! Am Arm die Binde*<sup>593</sup>

## 2) Complementarity:

Pfister describes two kinds of complementarity, where the maintext is enriched by information given in the stage directions. On the one hand:

*Denn die außersprachliche Informationsvergabe erschöpft sich ja nicht in der Wiederholung und Übersetzung der bereits explizit oder implizit sprachlich vermittelten Informationen, sondern ergänzt diese zu einem geschlossenen und konkreten Illusionskontinuum. Die in der sprachlichen Informationsvermittlung abstrakt bleibende Geste des fragenden Sich-Hinwendens wird durch das mimisch-gestische Spiel individualisierend und interpretierend konkretisiert, die genau räumliche Relation der Dialogpartner wird festgelegt, sie selbst erscheinen eingebettet in den kohärent konkretisierten, sprachlich jedoch nur partiell thematisierten Spielraum des Bühnenbilds.*<sup>594</sup>

(trans.: “Non-verbal information does not just involve repeating or translating information that has already been transmitted verbally – whether implicitly or explicitly. It will also always complement this to

<sup>592</sup> Pfister. *Das Drama*. München, 1977 p.37 and p.74.

<sup>593</sup> ACT III: Berta: Jaromir – you step back? Step back from me? – O stay! How did I tremble about you, Oh beloved, how trembeled. Jaromir (shy and dark): Well! Well! Berta: Well? Oh that I could believe it. Jaromir, how pale you are! God, the bandage at your arm.

<sup>594</sup> Pfister. *Das Drama*. München, 1977 p.75.

form a closed and concrete continuum of illusion. From a purely verbal point of view, the questions directed towards the dialogue partner [...] remain abstract, but with the addition of mime and gesture they become more individual and are given a particular physical interpretation. This establishes the spatial arrangement of the dialogue partners and embeds them firmly in a specific and coherent set – something that is realised verbally only to a partial extent.”<sup>595</sup>)

The second type of complementarity is of great importance in the physiognomic and pathognomic analysis of the corpus. In this second type, Tableaux Vivants are mentioned as “*example for a more general problem*”<sup>596</sup> (“Exemplum eines generellen Sachverhalts”<sup>597</sup>):

*Diese Relation findet sich vor allem dort, wo der Haupttext nur wenige implizite Inszenierungsanweisungen enthält, wo die sprachliche Informationsvergabe schon rein quantitativ gegenüber dem mimisch-gestischen Spiel an Bedeutung verliert und sich häufig wortloses Sich-Verhalten findet, oder wo sprachliche und außersprachliche Informationsvergabe sukzessive gegeneinander verschoben sind.*<sup>598</sup>

(trans.: “This is especially common in cases where the primary text contains few implicit stage-directions, or where [...] the verbally transmitted information loses significance, at least in purely quantitative terms, in favour of mime and gesture, frequently leaving the actors to act in silence, or, finally, where sequences of verbal and non-verbal information are transmitted alternately.”<sup>599</sup>)

In this first part of the analysis the presence of Tableaux Vivants will be discussed in detail. To show an example of the first type of complementarity Goethe’s *Stella* is perfect:

### **ACT III**

Madame Sommer (mit zurückgehaltener Wehmut):

*Er ist's nicht! – Ich bedaure den Mann, der sich an ein Mädchen hängt.*

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<sup>595</sup> Pfister. *The theory and analysis of Drama*. Translated by John Halliday. Cambridge University Press, 1993 p.46f.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid p.48.

<sup>597</sup> Pfister. *Das Drama*. München, 1977 p.77.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid p.76.

<sup>599</sup> Pfister. *The theory and analysis of Drama*. Translated by John Halliday. Cambridge University Press, 1993 p.47.

Fernando:  
*Madame!*

Madame Sommer (gelinde spottend, ihre Rührung zu verbergen):  
*Nein, gewiß! Ich seh ihn als einen Gefangenen an. Sie sagen ja auch immer, es sei so. Er wird aus seiner Welt in die unsere herübergezogen, mit der er im Grunde nichts gemein hat. Er betrüg sich eine Zeitlang, und weh uns, wenn ihm die Augen aufgehn! – Ich nun gar konnte ihm zuletzt nichts sein als eine redliche Hausfrau, die zwar mit dem festesten Bestreben an ihm hing, ihm gefällig, für ihn sorgsam zu sein; die dem Wohl ihres Hauses, ihres Kindes all ihre Tage widmete, und freilich sich mit so viel Kleinigkeiten abgeben mußte, daß ihr Herz und Kopf oft wüste ward, daß sie keine unterhaltende Gesellschafterin war, daß er mit der Lebhaftigkeit seines Geistes meinen Umgang notwendig schal finden mußte. Er ist nicht schuldig!*

Fernando zu ihren Füßen:  
*Ich bin's!*

Madame Sommer (mit einem Strom von Tränen an seinem Hals):  
*Mein! –*

Fernando:  
*Cäcilie! – mein Weib! –*

Cäcilie (von ihm sich abwendend):  
*Nicht mein – Du verlässest mich, mein Herz! –*  
(Wieder an seinem Hals). *Fernando!*<sup>600</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> ACT III: Madame Sommer (With restrained melancholy.): No, he is not!—I commiserate the man who is attached to a maiden. Fernando: Madame! Madame Sommer (With mild banter to hide her emotion.): Certainly not! I look upon him as a captive. They always say that it is so. He is removed from his world into ours with which he has nothing in common. He deceives himself for a time, and woe to us if his eyes are opened! After all I could be in his eyes only a blameless housewife who clung to him with the most strenuous endeavor, who tried to be agreeable to him, to be careful for him, who dedicated all her days to the advantage of her house, of her child, and indeed had to devote herself to such petty duties, that her heart and head often grew wild that she could be no entertaining companion, that he with the liveliness of his disposition could not help finding her society stupid. He is not to blame! Fernando (At her feet.): I am he! Madame Sommer (With a torrent of tears, on his neck.): My—! Fernando. Cecilia!—My wife!— Cecilia (Turning from him.): Not mine! You would leave me, my heart. (Again on his neck.) Fernando! (translated by George Barrie: Goethe's Works. Philadelphia, New York & Boston 1885).

### 3) Discrepancy:

The third kind of relationship between the information given in the stage directions and in the dramatic text itself is a development of the modern drama: discrepancy as “*a radical and unresolvable discrepancy between verbally and non-verbally transmitted pieces of information*”<sup>601</sup> (original: “[...] eine radikale, logisch nicht auflösbare Diskrepanz zwischen der sprachlich und außersprachlich vermittelten Information.”<sup>602</sup>).

The analysis of the corpus shows many different kinds of stage directions: sometimes the authors give a very detailed picture of how the actors should move or express the dialogue on stage; sometimes they leave the interpretation of the action entirely to the actor or to the imagination of the reader; and sometimes they concentrate only on giving context-related stage directions about the setting, the lighting and the music.

In this chapter, stage directions related to Physiognomy are described through different examples. The physical description of the characters, the acting of the passions and the use of Tableaux Vivants will be illustrated.

### **Character description**

All the analysed plays of the corpus introduce the characters with a list of the dramatis personæ right before the action starts. These lists are often divided into men and women. Interestingly, Alfieri divides his list in *Abele* into fantastic characters (The voice of God, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Mammon, Ashtaroth, Sin, Envy, Death, Angels and Demons) and tragic characters (Adam, Eva, Cain, Abel): “*I personaggi fantastici, i cui versi tutti son Lirici e rimati, sempre o a recitativo o ad arietta li cantano. I personaggi tragici, recitano i versi sciolti; e quando hanno alcun verso Lirico, a recitativo, lo notano.*”<sup>603</sup> (trans.: “The Phantastic personages, all of whose verses are lyrical and in rhyme, always sing them as recitatives or airs. The Tragic personages recite in blank verse and give their lyrics in recitative.”). In some cases the list of dramatis personæ also contains such further information as titles, occupation or family relations. None of the analysed lists contains physical

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<sup>601</sup> Pfister. *The theory and analysis of Drama*. Translated by John Halliday. Cambridge University Press, 1993 p.48.

<sup>602</sup> Pfister. *Das Drama*. München, 1977 p.78.

<sup>603</sup> Alfieri. *Opere Postume*. London, 1804 p.22.

descriptions of the characters; only Pixérécourt in his *Coëlina* indicates that Francisque is mute. In order to get more information about the characters one must analyse other parts of the play. In stage directions we can see few examples where the characters on stage are described. In *L'homme a trois visages* in the first act, when Vivaldi is on stage as Abelino, his costume and his face are described as follows:

### **ACT I – Scene 11**

Vivaldi sous le nom d'Abelino (Il est enveloppé dans un long manteau, sous lequel est un costume de brigand ; barbe noire, longue et épaisse, la chevelure pareille, une ceinture de pistolets, enfin un aspect effrayant.)<sup>604</sup>

Karl in *Karl und Sophie, oder Die Physiognomie* is described at the very beginning of the play:

### **ACT I – Scene 1**

Karl im runden englischen Hut und Haar.<sup>605</sup>

Since Karl is known to Sophie and her father, his dress should disguise him.

*Die Ahnfrau* creates a mysterious and gothic atmosphere through indications both in the stage directions and in the dialogue that the Ahnfrau has extremely expressive eyes, despite being dead:

### **ACT I**

Die Gestalt hat sich aufgerichtet und starrt den Grafen mit weitgeöffneten toten Augen an.<sup>606</sup>

This stage direction contains a certain level of physiognomic and philosophic reading of the external appearance of the character by stating that the eyes, a clear feature

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<sup>604</sup> ACT I – Scene 11: Vivaldi with the name of Abelino (He is wrapped in a long coat, beneath which he has a robber costume; black, long and thick beard, like the hair, a gun belt, with a frightening aspect).

<sup>605</sup> ACT I – Scene 1: Karl with the English round hat and hair.

<sup>606</sup> ACT I: The figure has raised and is staring at the count with wide open dead eyes.

of the human face, are a sign of the state of the soul – in the case of the Ahnfrau, of death. The death of the Ahnfrau is in turn related to Anger, Despair and Revenge.

The absence of indications about the physical and moral appearance of the dramatis personæ in explicit stage directions, and the presence of these indications in implicit stage directions as they are inferred from the dialogue is interesting: the character descriptions in the dialogue can be related to a physiognomic reading and judgement by the characters themselves. Messages given through these indications are much more powerful and meaningful from the physiognomic point of view.

## **Passions**

As explained in the previous part, the authors do not use the stage directions to describe their characters. The stage directions describe the movements on stage and how to utter the dialogue. This section will link, in a very precise way, to the first part of this dissertation about the passions on one side and the acting textbooks on the other.

Joanna Baillie, as described above, is *the* expert on passions in a play. In *De Monfort* she places Hatred under her dramatic scrutiny. Baillie, who describes her aesthetic and philosophic background in her *Introductory Discourse*, uses this introduction to explain the creation of her characters and she gives indications on how they should move on stage. De Monfort, being the main character, is the focus of Baillie's concern. His movement, postures, gestures and facial expressions are central to the stage directions. More than once De Monfort leans back and thinks about his feelings or envisions the implications of his intentions and actions:

### **ACT I – Scene 1**

De Monfort remains sitting in a thoughtful posture.

.....

### **ACT III – Scene 1**

De Monfort discovered sitting by a table reading. After a little time he lays down his book, and continues in a thoughtful posture.

.....

### **ACT V – Scene 2**

De Monfort is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture. He remains so for some time. His face afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one whose mind is harrowed with the severest thoughts; then, starting from his seat, he clasps his hands together, and holds them up to heaven.

This last stage direction introduces another very frequent expression: Agitation. De Monfort is restless on stage:

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gesture, and walks up and down in great agitation.

.....

### **ACT III – Scene 1**

De Monfort aside, going some steps hastily from Freberg, and rendering his cloak with agitation as he goes.

Other passions and emotions, expressed by De Monfort and the other characters on stage, are: Horror, Indifference, Fear, Despair, Dissatisfaction and Approbation. Baillie uses a variety of expressions related to these passions: *“Smiling significantly”* (ACT I Scene 2), *“smiles contemptuously”* (ACT II Scene 1), *“with a disordered air”* (ACT II Scene 2), *“Affectionately”* (ACT II Scene 2), *“with affected cheerfulness”* (ACT III Scene 1), *“with a cheerful countenance”* (ACT III Scene 1), *“with a thoughtful frowning aspect”* (ACT III Scene 3), *“with a sad rueful countenance”* (ACT III Scene 3), *“with a strong expression of disquiet”* (ACT IV Scene 1), *“with a sad countenance”* (ACT V Scene 1) and *“the fixed sorrow of her countenance”* (ACT V Scene 4). Many of these indications call to mind the text books discussed in the first part of this dissertation. Sometimes, in moments when the characters stumble or hesitate, they remain or become *“motionless”*. The Horror expressed towards the end does not only create a lot of motionless, and even speechless, moments but shows also the great power of De Monfort’s desperate expressions:

### **ACT III – Scene 3**

De Monfort comes forward to the front of the stage, and makes a long pause, expressive of great agony of mind.

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### **ACT IV – Scene 3**

His face is seen in all the strengthened horror of despair

De Monfort's Hatred, seen in his face at the beginning of the play, turns into Despair towards the end when he kills Rezenvelt and is fatally wounded. The characters who see the two dead bodies have a "*wild terrified look*".

Like Baillie, Holcroft uses the "classic" catalogue of passions in his plays. In *The Deserted Daughter* the expressed passions are: Anger, Terror, Agitation, Wild Terror, Fear, Despair and Despondency. These passions are expressed on stage through both gestures and the tone of the voice. At the end of the fourth act, Mordent and Donald, who are in general the characters who express most of the above-mentioned passions, are speaking about Joanna's destiny. Donald tells Mordent what he has seen and heard about her and the Horror and Terror between the two characters builds up to Despair and Despondency:

### **ACT IV – Scene 15**

Donald:

*It's pas! It's aw o'er! My forebodings are foofilled!*

Mordent (Alarmed):

*Have you not found her yet?*

Donald:

*Yes, yes! I hae foond her!*

Mordent:

*Have you? Where?*

Donald:

*I'ze noo indeed a rasca' go-between! (Horror)  
But what are ye?*

Mordent:

*You say you have found her?*



Donald:

*She is gone! She is ruined! Ye're a wratch: the most meeserable o' wratches!*

Mordent:

*Tormenting demon! What? Who? – Where have you been?*

Donald:

*To Dover-street!*

Mordent (Seized):

*Dover?*

Donald:

*Tul the elritch limmer Enfield.*

Mordent (With Terror):

*What do you say?*

[...]

(Pause – Despair)

Donald (Alarmed at the agony of Mordent):

*Sir! – Sir! – Maister!*

[...]

(Pause of fixed horror)

[...]

Mordent (Starting from a profound trance of despondency):

*Fly! Summon the servants! Arm yourselves!*

*Follow me to Park Lane!*

(Exit)

Holcroft uses the same passions in *A Tale of Mystery: Horror* (“*A general expression of Horror*” – ACT I), Terror and Indignation, Compassion, Apprehension, Despair (“*Attitude of Despair*” – ACT II). Interestingly Pixérécourt uses in *Cœlina* mainly the passion “*Joie*” and the expressions “*Surprise*” and “*Satisfaction*”.

A comparison of the stage directions in Pixérécourt’s *Cœlina* and Holcroft’s adaptation *A Tale of Mystery* is very interesting. Pixérécourt is very precise in his indications for the actors. The stage directions give very detailed indications on how

the actors need to move, and also what kind of reaction they should produce in the audience. He also describes in a very detailed way how the scenes are set. The setting is often connected to the passions and emotions of the characters on stage, as seen for example in the setting of the last act:

Le théâtre représente un lieu sauvage, connu sous le nom de montagne du Naut – d’Arpennaz ; dans le fond entre deux rochers très-élevés, est un pont de bois, au-dessous duquel se précipite un torrent écumeux, qui traverse le théâtre et vient passer derrière un moulin, placé à droite au second plan; la porte du moulin fait face à la coulisse, et les croisées sont vis-à-vis des spectateurs ; il y a un banc de pierre au-dessous des croisées ; à quelques pas du moulin, se trouve un petit pont tres-frèle qui communique à un sentier escarpé qui borde le torrent et mène au haut de la montagne. Des sapins répandus ça et là, semblent encore faire rassortir davantage l’aspérité de ce séjour. A gauche, vis-à-vis du moulin, est une petite masse de rochers, couronnée par deux ou trois sapins, et au-devant de laquelle on remarque une partie plate, taillée pour faire un banc.

Pendant l’entr’acte on entend le bruit éloigné du tonnerre ; bientôt l’orage augmente, et au lever du rideau toute la nature paroît en désordre ; les éclairs brillent de toutes parts, le torrent roule avec fureur, les vents mugissent, la pluie tombe avec fracas et des coups de tonnerre multipliés qui se répètent cent fois par l’écho des montagnes, portent l’épouvante et la terreur dans l’ame.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> The theatre shows a wild place known as Naut–d’Arpennaz: in the back between two rocks is a wooden bridge, beneath which rushes a stream that moves on behind a mill on the right. The door of the mill faces offstage and a casement window faces the audience: there is a bench beneath the window. Few steps from the mill, is a small-very frail bridge that leads to a steep path that borders the river and leads to the top of the mountain. Widespread pines here and there still seem to match a greater asperity of this stay. On the left, vis-à-vis of the mill, is a small mass of rocks, crowned by two or three pines, and in front of which we see a piece cut to a bench.

During the interval we hear the distant sound of thunder; soon the storm increases, and when the curtain rises all nature seems in disorder; lightnings shine everywhere, the torrent rolls with fury, the wind roars, rain falls with a crash and multiplied thunder repeated a hundred times by the echo of the mountains, carries terror and horror in the soul.

The character who is most connected to the stage indications is Francisque as he is not able to speak with the other characters and can communicate only by writing or by his facial expressions. Pixérécourt indicates very clearly how he should behave on stage:

**ACT I – Scene 5**

Francisque s'avance lentement et d'un air timide.

Francisque jette un regard expressif sur Cœlina.

.....

**ACT II – Scene 6**

Francisque paroît frappé du coup le plus sensible.

.....

**ACT III – Scene 6**

Francisque paroît souffrir.

Francisque soupire et lève les yeux au ciel.<sup>608</sup>

Pixérécourt also gives indications on movements and feelings of Francisque that need to be conveyed without words by mimics only. Interestingly, the other characters seem to understand what he is expressing:

**ACT I – Scene 5**

Francisque témoigne qu'il est incapable de mentir.

.....

**ACT III – Scene 5**

Francisque témoigne combien il est affecté de n'avoir à lui offrir qu'un aussi triste asile.

Francisque la serre vivement contre son cœur et lui exprime ses craintes de la voir un jour regretter les grands biens qu'il lui a fait perdre.

Francisque la rassure en lui annonçant qu'elle peut encore prétendre à se voir son épouse.

Francisque repète ce qu'il vient de lui dire.

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<sup>608</sup> ACT I – Scene 5: Francisque comes forward timidly. Francisque casts an expressive glance at Cœlina.

ACT II – Scene 6: Francisque seems struck by the most sensible blow.

ACT III – Scene 6: Francisque seems to suffer. Francisque sighs and looks up to heaven.

Francisque montre son cœur et le ciel, et répond qu'il réussira.

### **ACT III – Scene 6**

Francisque exprime à sa fille que c'est un commencement de justice, et qu'il ne faut jamais désespérer de la bonté divine.<sup>609</sup>

However, during the climax of the suspenseful and tragic moment in the third act when Francisque sees Truguelin in the mill, Cœlina does not understand her father:

### **ACT III – Scene 6**

Francisque sort précipitamment du moulin ; il est pâle ; l'épouvante et l'horreur sont peintes sur sa figure ; Michaud et Cœlina se lèvent et vont à lui.

Michaud:  
*Qu'avez-vous?*

Cœlina:  
*D'où naît cet effroi?*

Francisque montre la chaumière à plusieurs reprises en reculant, et leur indiquant qu'elle renferme un homme qu'il craint.

Cœlina:  
*Que voulez-vous dire?*

Michaud:  
*Cet homme vous auriot-il effrayé?*

Francisque indique que, malgré son déguisement, il l'a reconnu : il montre sa main à Michaud, et lui rappelle que c'est à ce signe qu'il auroit dû reconnoître son assassin.

Michaud:

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<sup>609</sup> ACT I – Scene 5: Francisque demonstrates that he is incapable of lying.

ACT III – Scene 5: Francisque regrets having to offer her such a dismal refuge. Francisque presses her strongly against his heart and expresses his fears that one day she regrets the great wealth that he made lose her. Francisque reassures her by telling him that she can still be his spouse. Francisque repeats what he has to say. Francisque shows his heart and heaven, and replies that he will succeed.

ACT III – Scene 6: Francisque explains his daughter that this is the beginning of justice, and she should never despair of God's goodness.

*Est-il possible! Ce seroit là Truguelin?*

Coëlina:  
*Truguelin, ô ciel !*

Francisque assure que c'est lui.<sup>610</sup>

Holcroft is not so detailed in his stage directions about the setting as Pixérécourt, but he indicates, in a very precise way, how the actors should move and/or what expression they should adopt:

### **ACT I**

FIAMETTA returns with FRANCISCO; the latter poor in appearance, but clean; with a reserved placid and dignified air.

Francisco: (a general expression of horror)  
(gesticulates violently, denoting painful  
Recollection)

### **ACT II**

Here the dancing, which should be of the gay, comic, and grotesque kind; with droll attitudes, gesticulations, and bounds, in imitation of the mountaineers, [...].

Francisco: (Attitude of despair)

In contrast to the French text, Francisco's movements and expressions are less detailed, and the stage directions suggest that he is not expressing himself as much as in the French version. Holcroft gives more freedom to the actors to express the characters on stage and to the director in staging the action. Holcroft, in contrast to Pixérécourt, gives importance to one of the main melodramatic elements: the music. Many detailed indications help the composer of the music to create the perfect tone and, thus, the reader of the play to understand the mood:

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<sup>610</sup> ACT III – Scene 6: Francisque rushes from the mill, he is pale and terror and horror are painted in his face. Michaud and Coëlina go towards him. Michaud: What's the matter with you? Coëlina: What has frightened you? (Francisque points to the mill as he draws back, indicating that a man he fears is within.) Coëlina: What do you mean? Michaud: That man has frightened you? (Francisque indicates that despite his disguise, he recognized him; he shows his hand to Michaud, and reminds him that it is by the scar that he should have recognized the villain.) Michaud: Is it possible! Could that be Truguelin in there? Coëlina: Truguelin, oh God! (Francisque affirms that it is him.)

## **ACT I**

Music to express discontent and alarm

Hunting music

Music to express chattering contention

Music to express pain and disorder

Confused music

Music plays alarmingly but piano when he enters and while he says ...

Music loud and discordant at the moment the eye of Montano catches the figure of Romaldi

Hurrying music, but half piano

Music of doubt and terror

Threatening music

Soft music, but expressing first pain and alarm; then the successive feelings of the scene

Music: terror, confusion, menace, command

Music of sudden joy

Sweet and cheerful music, gradually dying away

## **ACT II**

Joyful Music

The changing music inspires alarm and dismay

The music expresses confusion and pain of thought

Violent distracted music

The increasing storm of lightning, thunder, hail and rain becomes terrible. Suitable music

Music of painful remorse; then changes to the cheerful pastorale

Music, quick march

Music of hurry, terror,

The Curtain falls to slow and solemn music.

The music used in *A Tale of Mystery* is related to the passions expressed by the actors. Vittorio Alfieri uses his stage directions almost exclusively for indications about the music and the voices of his tragic and fantastic characters, which sets the spiritual mood for the whole scene; see the following example:

### **ACT II – Scene 2**

Adamo, siccome attor tragico, e non cantore, reciterà questi versi lirici con intonazione più

pomposa degli altri, e cantilena lirica, senza  
pur cantare.<sup>611</sup>

In *L'homme a trois visages*, Pixérécourt uses vocabulary that we know from the first part of this dissertation to be related to the capacities and abilities of the actor: “*sensibilité*” and “*émotion*”. This soul and heart-specific vocabulary is used mainly in the German literature.

In *Stella*, Goethe speaks about “*Wehmut*” (ACT III) and “*Rührung*” (ACT III) in his stage directions. Theseus looks at the sleeping Ariadne with emotion, affection and melancholy (“*Gefühl*”, “*Zärtlichkeit*” and “*Wehmut*”) in Brandes’ *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Kotzebue shows these and other passions (“*Melancholie*”, “*Schrecken*” and “*Staunen*”):

### **ACT II – Scene 5**

Gräfin zu Eulalia:

*Ist mein Wilhelm nicht recht groß geworden?*

Eulalia:

*Das süße Kind!*

Sie kauert sich zu ihm nieder und tiefe  
Melancholie überschattet ihr Gesicht.

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### **ACT IV – Scene 10**

Unbekannter tritt mit einer ernsthaften  
Verbeugung in das Zimmer. Graf geht mit  
offenen Armen auf ihn zu. Eulalia erblickt ihn,  
stößt einen lauten Schrei aus, und fällt in  
Ohnmacht. Unbekannter wirft einen Blick auf  
sie; Schrecken und Staunen in seinen  
Gebärden, rennt er schleunig zur Türe hinaus.  
Graf sieht ihm voll Verwunderung nach. Gräfin  
und der Major beschäftigen sich um Eulalien.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>611</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Adam, like a tragic actor and not a singer, should recite these verses with a more pompous intonation than the others, and in musical tones, without however singing. (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

<sup>612</sup> ACT II – Scene 5: Countess (to Eulalia): Is not my William grown very tall? Eulalia: Sweet child! (As she stoops to him, a deep melancholy shades her countenance)

ACT IV – Scene 10: Meinau enters with a serious bow. The Count walks up to him with open arms. Eulalia sees him, and falls in a swoon. Meinau casts a look on her, and, with astonishment and horror in his gesture and manner, runs suddenly out at the door. The Count looks after him with wonder. The Countess and the Major bear out Eulalia. (translated by George Papendick 1798).

Kotzebue, as Schiller, in his plays and in his theoretical works (see part I) – pays attention to the movement of the soul of the actors on stage:

### **ACT V – Scene 9**

Unbekannter in ebenso großer  
Gemütsbewegung als Eulalia, welche er aber  
zu verbergen sucht, nimmt den Schmuck mit  
weggewandtem Gesicht und steckt ihn ein.<sup>613</sup>

Schiller uses in his stage directions many different expressions for movement, which combine physical or body movement with movement of the soul and the spirit:

*Die Räuber*

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Moor (tritt herein in wilder Bewegung, und läuft  
heftig im Zimmer auf und nieder)

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### **ACT II – Scene 3**

Roller (in wilder Bewegung)

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### **ACT III – Scene 2**

Moor (der bisher in heftigen Bewegungen hin  
und her gegangen, springt rasch auf, zu den  
Räubern):

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### **ACT V – Scene 1**

Moser (sehr bedeutend)  
Franz (wirft sich in seinem Sessel herum in  
schröcklichen Bewegungen, tiefe Pause)  
Moor (in der heftigsten Bewegung)<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>613</sup> ACT V – Scene 9: Meinau, in as great emotion, but endeavouring to conceal it, takes the box with averted face and puts it by. (translated by George Papendick 1798).

<sup>614</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Moor (enters with great movement, running up and down in the room).

ACT II – Scene 3: Roller (under violent movement).

ACT III – Scene 2: Moor (who has been walking up and down in violent movement, with a sudden start to the robbers).

ACT V – Scene 1: Moser (very significantly)

Franz (throws himself about in his chair in terrible movement, long pause)

Moor (in violent movement).



*Kabale und Liebe*  
**ACT I – Scene 4**

Luise (drückt ihn von sich, in großer Bewegung):

.....

**ACT II – Scene 3**

Lady Milford (Sie hält in großen Bewegungen inne, dann fährt sie fort mit weinender Stimme.)

.....

**ACT II – Scene 5**

Ferdinand (geht schnell auf sie zu, bleibt sprachlos mit starrem Blick vor ihr stehen, dann verlässt er sie plötzlich, in großer Bewegung)

.....

**ACT IV – Scene 5**

Ferdinand (sieht ihn lange Zeit starr an):  
*Mein Vater!* (Mit stärkerer Bewegung zu ihm gehend und seine Hand fassend.)  
*Mein Vater!* (Seine Hand küssend, vor ihm niederfallend.) *O mein Vater!*

.....

**ACT IV – Scene 7**

Lady Milford (in großer innerer Bewegung herumgehend):

.....

**ACT V – Scene 5**

Ferdinand (ergreift seine Hand mit der schrecklichsten Bewegung):

.....

**ACT V – Scene 7**

Ferdinand (unter heftigen Bewegungen):

[...]

Ferdinand (fällt in fürchterlicher Bewegung vor ihr nieder):

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## **ACT V – Last Scene**

Präsident (eine schreckliche Bewegung des Arms gegen den Himmel):<sup>615</sup>

Schiller, more than anybody else, applies a wide range of passions from “*Wehmut*” to “*Zorn*” and “*Schrecken*”.

In *Kabale und Liebe* the characters use their whole body to express these passions in order to create “*innigste*” or “*heftigste Rührung*”. Their faces bear a wide range of expressions, which Schiller describes in detail and effectively in the stage directions. Schiller assigns to the facial expressions the ability to show not only the soul but also the intentions. Towards the end, Ferdinand tries to kill the Hofmarshall in a fit of violent rage. His facial expressions show his mad Anger:

## **ACT IV – Scene 4**

Ferdinand nach einem langen Stillschweigen, worin seine Züge einen schrecklichen Gedanken entwickeln.<sup>616</sup>

A recurrent stage direction used by Schiller, less so in *Die Räuber*, but more frequently in *Kabale und Liebe*, are related to smiles and laughters of the characters. Schiller lets the characters often laugh or smile in a paradoxical way:

*Die Räuber*

## **ACT I – Scene 2**

Spiegelberg (mit einem stolzen Gelächter)

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<sup>615</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Luise (disengaging herself from him, in great movement).

ACT II – Scene 3: Lady Milford (She pauses in great movements, then continues with a weeping voice).

ACT II – Scene 5: Ferdinand (goes fast towards her, he remains, staring speechless, in front of her, then he leaves suddenly, in great movement).

ACT IV – Scene 5: Ferdinand (gazing upon him for some time with a vacant stare): Oh, father! (Going towards him with great movement and grasping his hand) Oh, father! (Kissing it and falling at his feet) Oh, father!

ACT IV – Scene 7: Lady Milford (walking around in a great inner movement).

ACT V – Scene 5: Ferdinand (grasping his hand with the most terrible movement).

ACT V – Scene 7: Ferdinand (under violent movement); Ferdinand (falls with terrible movement in front of her)

ACT V – Last scene: President (a dreadful movement of arm towards heaven).

<sup>616</sup> ACT IV – Scene 4: Ferdinand after a long silence, during which his countenance forms a terrible idea.

.....  
**ACT II – Scene 2**

Franz (höhnisch lachend)<sup>617</sup>

*Kabale und Liebe*  
**ACT II – Scene 2**

Kammerdiener (lacht fürchterlich):  
.....

**ACT II – Scene 4**

Miller (Lacht voll Bosheit.):  
.....

**ACT II – Scene 5**

Miller (lacht wütend):  
.....

**ACT II – Scene 6**

Präsident (mit beißendem Lachen):  
.....

**ACT III – Scene 7**

Ferdinand (lacht erbittert):  
.....

**ACT IV – Scene 3**

Ferdinand (mit boshafem Lachen):  
.....

**ACT V – Scene 7**

Ferdinand (lacht beleidigend vor sich hin):  
.....

**ACT V – Last Scene**

Wurm (Er fängt grässlich an zu lachen.):<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Spiegelberg (with a proud laugh).

ACT II – Scene 2: Franz (sneering).

<sup>618</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Servant (laughing bitterly).

ACT II – Scene 4: Miller (laughs full of malice).

Important for a physiognomic reading of Schiller's stage directions is his frequent use of comparisons between the expression needed on stage and other appearances. In the third act of *Kabale und Liebe* the Präsident is talking to the Hofmarschall about Ferdinand's refusal. When the Hofmarschall does not know what to answer, he remains there with a "sheep face":

### **ACT III – Scene 2**

Präsident:

*Was wissen Sie hierauf zu sagen?*

Hofmarschall (mit einem Schafsgesicht):

*Mein Verstand steht still.*<sup>619</sup>

In *Die Räuber* Schweizer and Spielberg discuss Franz's letter to Karl in the first act and Schweizer calls Spielberg "sheep head": "*Was sagt der Schafskopf?*".

Lavater, referring to Aristotle and Della Porta, describes the sheep's head in his *Physiognomische Fragmente*: "*Im Schaf, welche Entfertheit von aller Menschengestalt, welche unaktive, blos duldsame Stupidität – Der oben abgerundete Kopf ist unempfänglich für Alles, was Schärfe und Scharfsinnigkeit heissen mag.*"<sup>620</sup> (trans.: "How distant is the sheep from the human figure! How inactive, how patiently stupid! The head, rounded at the top, is incapable of every thing that can be called acuteness, or penetration."<sup>621</sup>).

As shown through these examples, the authors use their knowledge of the theories on the passions and the acting manuals in their plays. The characters move on stage according to the given passion. One can see similarities and differences in the various literatures. As a last example of similarities in the vocabulary used to describe the passions and in a physiognomic reading of these stage directions, a

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ACT II – Scene 5: Miller (laughs angrily).

ACT II – Scene 6: President (with an insulting laugh).

ACT III – Scene 7: Ferdinand (laughing bitterly).

ACT IV – Scene 3: Ferdinand (with an evil laugh).

ACT V – Scene 7: Ferdinand (laughing offensively).

ACT V – Last Scene: Worm (starts laughing horribly).

<sup>619</sup> ACT III – Scene 2: Präsident: What do you say to this? Marshall (with a sheep face): I am at my wits' end.

<sup>620</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 2 Winterthur, 1784 p.171.

<sup>621</sup> Holcroft: *Essays on Physiognomy*. Vol. 2 London, 1789 p.171.

recurring expression will be discussed. In six plays of the corpus we find that a character covers his face:

*De Monfort*

**ACT III – Scene 3**

De Monfort throws himself into a chair, covers his face with his hand, and bursts into tears. After some time he starts up from his seat furiously.

*L'homme a trois visages*

**ACT II – Scene 4**

Rosemonde (se cachant le visage, et fondant en larmes)<sup>622</sup>

*Menschenhass und Reue*

**ACT III – Scene 7**

Eulalia endlich in laute Tränen ausbrechend, und mit den Händen ihr Gesicht verhüllend.<sup>623</sup>

*Die Räuber*

**ACT I – Scene 1**

Der alte Moor verbirgt sein Gesicht.

**ACT I – Scene 3**

Amalia wendet ihr Gesicht ab.  
Franz mit verhülltem Gesicht.

**ACT II – Scene 2**

Der alte Moor verhüllt sein Haupt in das Küssen.<sup>624</sup>

*Kabale und Liebe*

**ACT II – Scene 3**

Lady hat sich unterdes bis an das äußerste Ende des Zimmers zurückgezogen und hält das Gesicht mit beiden Händen bedeckt.

**ACT II – Scene 5**

Luise sinkt mit verhülltem Gesicht auf den Sessel nieder.

**ACT III – Scene 4**

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<sup>622</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Rosemonde (hiding her face and bursting into tears).

<sup>623</sup> ACT III – Scene 7: Eulalia bursting at last into tears, and hiding her face in her hands. (translated by George Papendick 1798).

<sup>624</sup> ACT I – Scene 1: The old Moor covers his face.

ACT I – Scene 3: Amalia turns away her face. Franz hiding his face.

ACT II – Scene 2: The old Moor covers his face with the pillow.

Luise hat sich im Hintergrund des Zimmers niedergesetzt und hält das Gesicht mit beiden Händen bedeckt.<sup>625</sup>

*Die Ahnfrau*

**ACT III**

Berta (In den Sessel stürzend, und die Hände vors Gesicht schlagend)

**ACT IV**

Berta (ihr Gesicht in die Kissen verbergend)

**ACT V**

Jaromir (Die Hände vors Gesicht schlagend)<sup>626</sup>

These examples show characters who, in a significant moment of the play, decide to cover their face and hide from the other characters and/or the spectator/reader. By covering their face they prevent the possibility of reading it and of drawing conclusions. Any physiognomic analysis is impossible. As seen also in other above-mentioned scenes, the face not only shows the character and soul, but also the intention of every human being. By hiding their face, the characters also hide the expressions that accompany their intentions and emotions. Often this hiding is also connected to tears – the most meaningful outcome of the soul.

## **Tableaux**

The use of Tableaux is very frequent in the theatre culture of the time, especially so around 1800. The development of Tableaux Vivants both in theatre and in everyday aristocratic and bourgeois culture is described in detail by Kirsten Gram Holmström in her work *Monodrama. Attitudes. Tableaux Vivants. Studies on some Trends of Theatrical Fashion 1770-1815* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri 1967). Holmström describes a relationship between theories which deal with passions and emotions, their artistic outcome and everyday culture. The Tableaux used in theatre have a direct connection to the theory of the passions, pantomime and dance

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<sup>625</sup> ACT II – Scene 3: Lady has meanwhile retired to the extreme end of the room, keeping her face covered with both hands.

ACT II – Scene 5: Luise falls with covered face down on the chair.

ACT III – Scene 4: Luise has sat down in the back of the room, keeping her face covered with both hands.

<sup>626</sup> ACT III: Berta (falling in the chair, covering her face with her hands)

ACT IV: Berta (hiding her face in the pillows)

ACT V: Jaromir (covering his face with his hands).

culture, as described earlier. The representation of so-called “attitudes” is of crucial importance in the development of the Tableaux in the theatre. One of the most famous attitude-artists is Lady Emma Hamilton (1765-1815). Being first the mistress and then wife of the British ambassador in Naples, Sir William Hamilton (1731-1803), Lady Emma Hamilton learned much about Greek and Roman sculptures and aesthetics thanks to the recently discovered ruins of Pompeii and Paestum, which helped her develop her unique performance. Goethe, who was Sir William’s guest during his Italian journey, attended her performances:

*Er [Sir Hamilton] hat sie bei sich, eine Engländerin von etwa zwanzig Jahren. Sie ist sehr schön und wohl gebaut. Er hat ihr ein griechisch Gewand machen lassen, das sie trefflich kleidet, dazu löst sie ihre Haare auf, nimmt ein paar Schals und macht eine Abwechslung von Stellungen, Gebärden, Mienen etc., daß man zuletzt wirklich meint, man träume. Man schaut, was so viele tausend Künstler gerne geleistet hätten, hier ganz fertig in Bewegung und überraschender Abwechslung. Stehend, knieend, sitzend, liegend, ernst, traurig, neckisch, ausschweifend, bußfertig, lockend, drohend, ängstlich etc., eins folgt aufs andere und aus dem andern. Sie weiß zu jedem Ausdruck die Falten des Schleiers zu wählen, zu wechseln, und macht sich hundert Arten von Kopfputz mit denselben Tüchern.<sup>627</sup>*

(trans.: “She lives with him [Sir Hamilton],—an English woman about twenty years old. She is very handsome, and of a beautiful figure. The old knight has had made for her a Greek costume, which becomes her extremely. Dressed in this, and letting her hair loose, and taking a couple of shawls, she exhibits every possible variety of posture, expression, and look, so that at the last the spectator almost fancies it is a dream. One beholds here in perfection, in movement, in ravishing variety, all that the greatest of artists have rejoiced to be able to produce. Standing, kneeling, sitting, lying down, grave or sad, playful, exulting, repentant, wanton, menacing, anxious,—all mental states follow rapidly, one after another. With wonderful taste she suits the folding of her veil to each expression, and with the same handkerchief makes every kind of head-dress.”<sup>628</sup>)

Attitudes show passions and emotions in an exaggerated form, as suggested in some textbooks discussed in the first part of this dissertation. In the selected corpus we find different forms of Tableaux, which will be discussed in the following section.

In the French literature we find a very explicit use of Tableaux Vivants at the end of many scenes.

<sup>627</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Italienische Reise*. Caserta, den 16. März 1787.

<sup>628</sup> *The Works of J. W. von Goethe* translated by Alexander James William Morrison.

Louis-Charles Caigniez (1762-1842), the “*Racine de Boulevard*”<sup>629</sup> or “*L’Albane du genre [melodramatique]*”<sup>630</sup>, frequently uses Tableaux in his works. In *La Folle de Wolfenstein* (Théâtre de l’Ambigu-Comique, 6 January 1813) the action of Act I finishes with a silent but effective Tableau:

Marche des instrumens villageois, pendant laquelle on voit passer dans le fond, Adolphe, Polinska, Usbald, précédés et suivis de domestiques et de paysans. Lisbeth, Saturnin et Bruno se groupent entre les fenêtres et Clémentine, de manière à la cacher aux yeux des arrivans. Adolphe, en passant, ne paraît occupé qu’à répondre aux témoignages d’affection des vassaux qui l’entourent. Il achève de passer, sans regarder vers la scène, et le rideau tombe sur ce tableau.<sup>631</sup>

Pixérécourt finishes most of his works with a “Tableau général”. In *Victor ou L’enfant de la Forêt* (Théâtre de l’Ambigu-Comique, 17 December 1802) the action finishes with:

Roger, avant de mourir, tend la main à Victor, qui se jette à genoux devant lui. Tout le monde est consterné. Il se fait un roulement. Tableau général.<sup>632</sup>

Similarly *L’homme a trois visages* end with:

Le doge lui tend les bras: Vivaldi s’y précipite ; puis il se retourne vers Rosemonde et Alfieri, qu’il presse tendrement. Tous les sénateurs paraissent partager leur ivresse et se groupent autour d’eux.  
La toile tombe sur ce tableau.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Brooks. *The Melodramatic Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1995 p.29.

<sup>630</sup> Hugo, Malitourne and Ader. *Traité du mélodrame*. Paris, 1817 p.76.

<sup>631</sup> Instrumental March of the villagers, during which we see Adolphe, Polinska, Usbald passing in the background, preceded and followed by servants and peasants. Lisbeth, Saturnin and Bruno come together in between the windows and Clementine, hides from the eyes of arriving people. Adolphe, by the way, is busy responding to the expressions of affection by the vassals around him. He passes without looking towards the stage, and the curtain falls on this tableau.

<sup>632</sup> Roger, before dying, reaches out to Victor, who throws himself on his knees before him. Everyone is appalled. Drum roll. General Tableau.

<sup>633</sup> The Doge offers him his hand: Vivaldi rushes towards it; then he turns towards Rosemonde and Alfieri, who he embraces gently. All senators share their euphoria and get grouped around them.



These end-tableaux review the main emotions and passions developed throughout the play. With these end-tableaux the passions will remain with the spectator or reader. In some French plays the Tableaux Vivants correspond to the Tableau, the change of scene. In Pixérécourt's *Cœlina ou L'Enfant du mystère* a Tableau included almost at the end of the play prepares the reader/spectator for the grand finale:

Dufour, Andrevon, Stephany et Tiennette paroissent sur le pont. Michaud voyant ce qui se passe en bas, descent rapidement, se place entre Truguelin et les paysans, et relève les armes dirigées contre Truguelin, Tableau.<sup>634</sup>

The melodrama ends with “*On forme un tableau grotesque et la toile tombe*”. It is unclear what Pixérécourt means by “grotesque”. It could refer to the exaggerated gestures used normally in a Tableau.

At the end of the first act of *L'homme a trois visages* Pixérécourt also creates a scene which culminates in a typical exaggerated Tableau:

Rosemonde, effrayée, éperdue, se sauve dans les jardins. Vivaldi ne la perd de vue que lorsqu'elle s'est éloignée ; alors il se jette à genoux au milieu de la grotte, élève les mains au ciel en signe de remerciement, et dit.<sup>635</sup>

The exaggerated gestures, albeit more subtle than in French theatre, are also visible in German and English theatre.

Holcroft, inspired by Pixérécourt not only for the theme of his first melodrama, but also for the style and layout, introduces a clear, explicit Tableau in the middle of his *A Tale of Mystery*:

Enter Malvoglio.  
He stops in the middle of the stage: the company start up; Francisco, Stephano, Selina,

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The curtain falls on this Tableau.

<sup>634</sup> Dufour, Andrevon, Stephany and Tiennette appear on the bridge. Michaud seeing what goes on, descends rapidly, and places himself between Truguelin and the peasants, and raises the weapons directed against Truguelin. Tableau.

<sup>635</sup> Rosemonde scared, distraught, escapes towards the gardens. Vivaldi doesn't lose sight of her until she is distant; then he falls to his knees in the middle of the cave, raises his hands towards heaven as a sign of thanks, and says.

and Bonamo, all with more or less terror. The peasants, alarmed and watching: the whole, during a short pause, forming a picture.

For the publication of the play in 1802, Henry Tresham (1749-1814), a well-known engraver of that period, created three engravings. Two of them show, as Tableaux Vivants, not only the main action of the first and second acts, but also events which took place before the start of the action and are only narrated in the two acts:

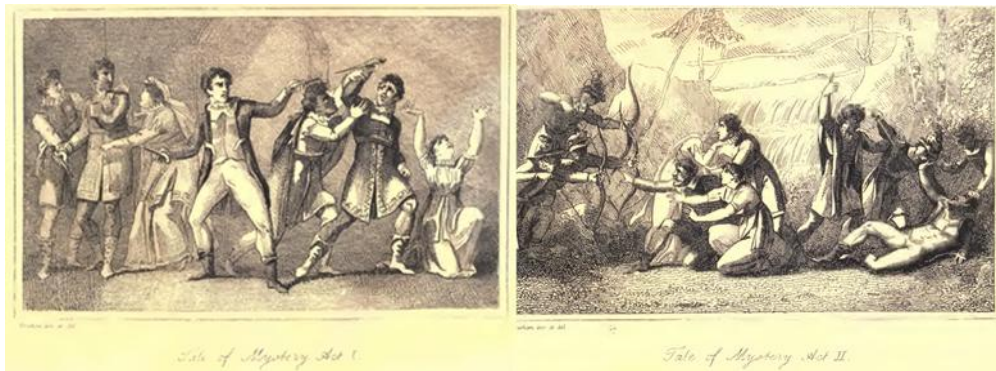


Illustration 4-5: A Tale of Mystery

Interestingly, with Holcroft's play we find a reversal idea of what we saw earlier with Planché's *The Brigand*: the engraver and the painter are inspired by the theatrical work and not vice versa. As we have seen and will see again in the following chapters, the theatre is strongly connected to art in many different ways. Tableaux Vivants are only one of these possible connections.

In his *The Deserted Daughter*, Holcroft adds a tableau-like stage direction in the fifth act to show clearly the passions of all the characters:

They pause, and gradually recover from the deep passion with which they were mutually seized.

Joanna Baillie, who shows in the most expressive way the power of the passions, presents in *De Monfort* a wonderful tableau-like end to a scene:

### ACT III – Scene 1

Jane and De Monfort look expressively to one another, without speaking, and then EXEUNT, severally.

Jane and her brother De Monfort create a mute but powerful Tableau with their expressive looks.

In the German literature we find five plays with Tableaux Vivants.

Both *Nathan der Weise* and *Menschenhass und Reue* finish in tableau-like scenes.

*Nathan der Weise* ends with: “*Unter stummer Wiederholung allerseitiger Umarmungen fällt der Vorhang*”<sup>636</sup>. This last Tableau stops the characters at the climax of their expression. This creates “Rührung” and “Mitleid” as expected by Lessing’s own theatre theory.<sup>637</sup> Kotzebue lets his Rührstück finish in a similar way:

### **ACT V – Scene 9**

Unbekannter:

*Dort herrschen keine Vorurteile; dann bist du wieder mein!* (Beider Hände liegen ineinander, beider Blicke begegnen sich wehmütig. Sie stammeln noch ein Lebewohl! und trennen sich, aber indem sie gehen wollen, stößt Eulalia auf den kleinen Wilhelm, und Meinau auf Malchen.)

Malchen:

*Vater –*

Wilhelm:

*Mutter –*

Vater und Mutter drücken sprachlos die Kinder in ihre Arme.

Malchen:

*Lieber Vater –*

Wilhelm:

*Liebe Mutter –*

Vater und Mutter reißen sich los von den Kindern, sehen einander an, breiten die Arme

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<sup>636</sup> The curtain falls whilst they repeatedly embrace each other in silence. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>637</sup> See Lessings description of the Bürgerliches Trauerspiel at the beginning of this Part.

aus, und stürzen sich einer in des andern  
Arme.

Unbekannter:  
*Ich verzeihe dir!*

Die Gräfin und der Major heben die Kinder in  
die Höhe, welche sich an ihre Eltern  
anklammern, und lieber Vater! liebe Mutter!  
rufen.  
Ende<sup>638</sup>

Kotzebue's ending also creates "Rührung" and "Mitleid".

In *Kabale und Liebe* we find two Tableaux. When Luise and Ferdinand see each other again after a long time, they remain in a kind of Tableau:

#### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Ferdinand von Walter. Luise.  
Er fliegt auf sie zu – sie sinkt entfärbt und matt  
auf einen Sessel – er bleibt vor ihr stehn – sie  
sehen sich eine Zeit lang stillschweigend an.  
Pause.<sup>639</sup>

When Ferdinand visits Lady Milford, they discuss their upcoming marriage. At the end of the scene she leaves him in a mute Tableau:

#### **ACT II – Scene 3**

Sie geht schnell ab. Der Major bleibt in  
sprachloser Erstarrung stehn. Pause. Dann  
stürzt er fort durch die Flügeltüre.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> ACT V – Scene 9: Meinau: There reigns no prejudice. Then you are mine again. (Their hands are folded in each other's, their eyes meet, they stammer out once more Farewell! And separate; but in going Eulalia turns on William, and Meinau on Emilia.) Emilia: Father. William: Mother. (They press the children in their arms, in speechless rapture) Emilia: Dear Father! William: Dear Mother! (The father and mother quit their children, look on each other, open their arms, and embrace fervently) Meinau: I forgive you. (The Countess and the Major lift the children up, who cling to the necks of their parents, and cry: Dear Father! Dear Mother) curtain drops, The end. (translated by George Papendick 1798).

<sup>639</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Ferdinand and Luise (he flies towards her – she falls back into her chair – pale and trembling – he remains standing before her – they look at each other for some moments in silence – Pause.

<sup>640</sup> ACT II – Scene 3: She exits quickly. The Major stands still in speechless stupor. Pause. Then he rushes away through the swing door.

Likewise, in *Die Räuber* one of the final tragic scenes creates a tableau-like atmosphere:

### ACT V – Scene 2

Der alte Moor gibt seinen Geist auf.  
Amalia steht stumm, und starr wie eine  
Bilsäule. Die ganze Bande in fürchterlicher  
Pause.<sup>641</sup>

Probably the most subtle way of introducing Tableaux Vivants is in Grillparzer's *Die Ahnfrau*. The gothic and mysterious atmosphere is sometimes interrupted by pauses, where the terror created by the Ahnfrau becomes more visible for the spectator and reader. In the first act for example, the appearance of the Ahnfrau is described in a very slow and flowing way:

### ACT I

Pause – Die Ahnfrau, Bertan an Gestalt ganz  
ähnlich, und in der Kleidung nur durch einen  
wallenden Schleier unterschieden, erscheint  
neben dem Stuhle des Schlafenden und beugt  
sich schmerzlich über ihn.<sup>642</sup>

The terrifying aura that surrounds the Ahnfrau is made clear with this tableau-like stage direction. In the fourth act, while Berta and Günther are listening to the sounds coming from the next room, their tension is shown through another tableau-like scene: "*Pause – Beide horchen mit der gespanntesten Aufmerksamkeit. Berta richtet sich langsam auf.*"<sup>643</sup>

The fourth act ends with a group Tableau when the Graf is about to die: "*Pause – Alle stehen in stummen Entsetzen.*"<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> ACT V – Scene 2: Old Moor expires.

Amalia stands silent and transfixed like a statue. The whole band are mute. A fearful pause. (translated by Henry G. Bohn 1853).

<sup>642</sup> ACT I: Pause – The ancestress, being similar to Berta's shape, distinguished in the clothes only by a flowing veil, appears next to the chair of the sleeper and leans over him painfully.

<sup>643</sup> Pause – Both listening with the greatest tension. Berta raises slowly.

<sup>644</sup> Pause – all stand in silent horror.

## 2.2. Maintext

In the second part of the text analysis the maintext is discussed. As explained before, the maintext is formed by the dialogue between the different dramatis personæ.

### 2.2.1. The face as text

One recurrent theme in many plays of the corpus is the reading of the human face. Signs printed on the features of the face by Nature and/or God reveal the truth of the human soul. Its characteristics and intentions are written on every line in the face.

In this section, different scenes will be discussed: we can see physiognomical portraits of some of the characters through explicit stage directions; outer beauty is related to inner beauty; facial colour indicates physiognomic and pathognomic information; revelations are made based on the readability of the face; betrayal and the intentions are written in the face.

The analyses in this chapter fall between two contrasting examples: The first, where a dramatis persona speaks directly about the text in the face, is *Stella* by Goethe. The importance of visual signs for knowing men's souls is fundamental to *Stella*: "*O, mich dünkt immer, die Gestalt des Menschen ist der beste Text zu allem, was sich über ihn empfinden und sagen läßt.*"<sup>645</sup> (ACT II). The signs of the human body are like a text that the analyst can read and interpret. These signs can be hidden or easily shown on the face. In contrast to this example there is the opinion that the appearance of every single person is deceptive. Daja clearly says this in *Nathan der Weise*: "*Die Menschen sind nicht immer, wie sie scheinen*"<sup>646</sup> (ACT I – Scene 6). The following chapter discusses both the readability and reliability of the signs in the human countenance and the wrong assumptions and ungrounded beliefs built on the study of the face.

### Physiognomical portraits

The list of dramatis personæ and the stage directions do not give detailed information about the appearance of the characters. The corpus contains some

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<sup>645</sup> ACT II: Stella: Oh, it always seems to me that the form of man is the best text for all that can be felt and said about him! (translated by Barrie 1885).

<sup>646</sup> ACT I – Scene 6: Daja: Men are not always what they seem. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

examples of physiognomical portraits made by the characters themselves which contain not only some helpful information for the staging but also for the “reading” of these characters’ souls. This “reading” is done both by the other characters and by the audience or reader. Sometimes the character who creates the portrait adds a certain physiognomical judgement, sometimes the judgement can be added later by the reader.

Lavater dedicates several articles in his four *Physiognomische Fragmente* to the main features in the human face: forehead, eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, lips, teeth and chin.

He says about the forehead: “*Die Gestalt, Höhe, Wölbung, Proportion, Schiefheit und Lage des Schädels der Stirn zeigt die Anlage, das Maaß der Kräfte, die Denkens- und Empfindungsweise des Menschen.*”<sup>647</sup> (trans.: “The form, height, arching, proportion, obliquity, and position of the skull, or bone of the forehead, show the propensity, degree of power, thought, and sensibility of man.”<sup>648</sup>). Lavater links the eye colour to the character and temperament, by saying that brown or black eyes show strength and power and blue eyes weakness and vulnerability. The eyebrows show the mental capabilities of every person: “*Ich habe noch keinen tiefen Denker, auch nicht einmal einen sehr festen oder klugen Mann mit schwachen hohen Augenbrauen gesehen, die die Stirn gleichsam in zwei gleiche Theile theilten.*”<sup>649</sup> (trans.: “I never yet saw a profound thinker, or even a man of fortitude and prudence, with weak, high, eyebrows, which, in some measure, equally divide the forehead.”<sup>650</sup>). About the nose, the most important feature in the human face, Lavater notes the following:

*Ich halte die Nase für die Wiederlage des Gehirns. [...] Denn auf ihr scheint eigentlich alle die Kraft des Stirngewölbes zu ruhen, das sonst in Mund und Wange elend zusammenstürzen würde. Eine schöne Nase wird nie an einem schlechten Gesichte seyn. Man kann ein häßliches Gesicht haben und zierliche Augen. Aber nicht eine schöne Nase und ein häßliches Gesicht.*<sup>651</sup>

(trans.: “I hold the nose to be the foundation, or abutment, of the brain. [...] for upon this the whole power of the arch of the forehead

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<sup>647</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.163.

<sup>648</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.163.

<sup>649</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.182.

<sup>650</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.182.

<sup>651</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.185.

rests, and without it the mouth and cheeks would be oppressed by miserable ruins. A beautiful nose will never be found accompanying an ugly countenance. An ugly person may have fine eyes, but not a handsome nose."<sup>652</sup>)

Lavater's judgement of the mouth and the lips is easily summarized: "*Alles liegt in dem menschlichen Munde, was im menschlichen Geiste liegt. [...] Wie die Lippen, so der Charakter. Feste Lippen, fester Charakter. Weiche und schnell bewegliche Lippen, schnell beweglicher Charakter.*"<sup>653</sup> (trans.: "Whatever is in the mind is communicated to the mouth. [...] As are the lips so is the character. Firm lips, firm character; weak lips, and quick in motion, weak and wavering character."<sup>654</sup>). The teeth being so visible show in one of the clearest ways the human character. The chin can be projecting or retreating like the character itself.

These descriptions can be seen in many cases as the basis for the physiognomical portraits of the dramatis personæ.

In *Nathan der Weise* Lessing inserts a kind of physiognomical portrait with the description of Recha's rescuer through Nathan's eyes, which demonstrates in detail a Lavaterian kind of characterization:

## ACT I – Scene 2

Nathan:

*Sieh! eine Stirn, so oder so gewölbt;  
Der Rücken einer Nase, so vielmehr  
Als so geführt; Augenbraunen, die  
Auf einem scharfen oder stumpfen Knochen  
So oder so sich schlängeln; eine Linie,  
Ein Bug, ein Winkel, eine Falt', ein Mahl,  
Ein Nichts, auf eines wilden Europäers  
Gesicht: – und du entkommst dem Feur, in  
Asien!  
Das wär' kein Wunder, wundersücht'ges Volk?  
Warum bemüht ihr denn noch einen Engel?*<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.185.

<sup>653</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.189 and p.192.

<sup>654</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.189 and p.192.

<sup>655</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Nathan: See, then, a forehead vaulted thus or thus, / A nose of such a shape, and brows that shade / The eye with straighter or with sharper curve, / A spot, a mole, a wrinkle, or a line-- /A nothing--in an European's face, /And you are saved in Asia from the flames! /Is that no wonder, wonder-seeking folk? / What need to summon angels to your aid? (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).



When Nathan sees the templar coming, he observes his movements and features. He presumes that his outer roughness is deceptive:

### **ACT II – Scene 5**

Nathan:

*Fast scheu' ich mich des Sonderlings. Fast macht  
Mich seine rauhe Tugend stutzen. Daß  
Ein Mensch doch einen Menschen so verlegen  
Soll machen können! – Ha! er kömmt. – Bey  
Gott!  
Ein Jüngling wie ein Mann. Ich mag ihn wohl  
Den guten, trotz'gen Blick! den prallen Gang!  
Die Schale kann nur bitter seyn: der Kern  
Ists sicher nicht. – Wo sah ich doch  
dergleichen? –  
Verzeihet, edler Franke ...<sup>656</sup>*

As already said, Lessing's knowledge of Physiognomy helped to create some elements of *Nathan der Weise*.

With *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe* Schiller also creates some physiognomical portraits. In *Die Räuber* the brothers Franz and Karl are characterized through their physical appearance. Franz himself discusses this issue at the beginning of the play:

### **ACT I – Scene 1**

Franz:

*Ich habe grosse Rechte, über die Natur  
ungehalten zu seyn, und bey meiner Ehre! ich  
will sie geltend machen. – Warum bin ich nicht  
der erste aus Mutterleib gekrochen? Warum  
nicht der Einzige? Warum mußte sie mir diese  
Bürde von Häßlichkeit aufladen? gerade mir?  
Nicht anders als ob sie bey meiner Geburt  
einen Rest gesetzt hätte? Wann gerade mir die  
Lappländers Nase? Gerade mir dieses  
Mohrenmaul? Diese Hottentotten Augen?  
Wirklich ich glaube sie hat von allen*

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<sup>656</sup> ACT II – Scene 5: Nathan: I almost shrink from meeting this strange fellow-- / Recoil from his rough virtue! That one man / Should ever make another feel confused! / But see, he comes! he seems a noble youth; / Looks like a man. I like his daring eye, / His honest gait. Although the shell is bitter, / The kernel may not be so. I have seen / One like him somewhere. Pardon, noble Frank... (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

*Menschensorten das Scheußliche auf einen Hauffen geworffen, und mich daraus gebacken. Mord und Tod! Wer hat ihr die Vollmacht gegeben jenem dieses zu verleyhen, und mir vorzuenthalten? Könnte ihr jemand darum hofiren, eh er entstand? Oder sie beleidigen, eh er selbst wurde? Warum geing sie so parteylich zu Werke?*<sup>657</sup>

Franz's ugliness is related to his terrible character filled with Jealousy and Revenge. As he says, Nature marked him to be bad. His description contains many racial references: "*Menschensorten*", "*Lappländer*", "*Mohren*" and "*Hottentotten*".

Lavater speaks in detail about the national physiognomies, even each province and town has its own physiognomy: "*Jedes Land, jede Provinz, jede Stadt, jedes Dorf hat seinen besondre Physiognomie und seinen besondern Charakter, der dieser Physiognomie offenbar angemessen ist.*"<sup>658</sup> (trans.: "Each country, province, town, and village, has its peculiar physiognomy and character; and a character which manifestly is conformable to this physiognomy."<sup>659</sup>). Lavater compares "negros" to Englishman and "Laplander" to Italians<sup>660</sup>.

Karl on the other hand is described as angel-like in appearance with a beautiful soul written in the eyes (this will be discussed in the next paragraph).

In *Kabale und Liebe* Miller's description of Wurm shows a physiognomical portrait:

## **ACT I – Scene 2**

Miller:

*Ein konfiszierter widriger Kerl, als hätt ihn irgend ein Schleichhändler in die Welt meines Herrgotts hineingeschachert – Die kleinen tückischen Mauseugen – die Haare brandrot – das Kinn herausgequollen, gerade als wenn die Natur für purem Gift über das verhunzte*

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<sup>657</sup> ACT I – Scene 1: Franz: No small cause have I for being dissatisfied with dame Nature, and, by mine honour, I will have amends! Why did I not crawl the first from my mother's womb? Why not the only one? Why has she heaped on me this burden of deformity? On me especially? Just as if she had spawned me from her refuse. Why to me in particular this snub of the Laplander? These negro lips? These Hottentot eyes? On my word, the lady seems to have collected from all the race of mankind whatever was loathsome into a heap and kneaded the mass into my particular person. Death and destruction! Who empowered her to deny to me what she accorded to him? Could a man pay his court to her before he was born? Or offend her before he existed? Why went she to work in such a partial spirit? (translated by Henry G. Bohn 1853).

<sup>658</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.124.

<sup>659</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.124.

<sup>660</sup> See Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente* Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.85.

*Stück Arbeit meinen Schlingel da angefasst  
und in irgend eine Ecke geworfen hätte.*<sup>661</sup>

Just as with Franz Moor's ugliness, Wurm's is ugliness given by Nature. As already discussed in the previous chapter, Schiller uses different animal analogies in his descriptions: "Schafskopf" (*Die Räuber*) and "Schafsgesicht" (*Kabale und Liebe*). As seen above, in *Kabale und Liebe* he speaks also about "Mauseugen". In *Die Räuber* people appear as "Krokodilbrut" and they can have a "Hasenherz" or "Löwenmuth" (ACT II – Scene 1).

In *De Monfort* we find several descriptions of the appearance of the characters. At a certain point in the play Lady Freberg tries to understand the appearance of the unknown person at her door (it is Lady Jane De Monfort). Lady Freberg asks her servant about the physical form of the unknown person to gauge her identity, but the responses are not very useful:

#### **ACT II – Scene 1**

Lady Freberg:

*How looks her countenance?*

Page:

*So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,  
I shrunk at first in awe; but when she smil'd,  
For so she did to see me thus abash'd,  
Me thought I could have compass'd sea and  
land to do her bidding.*

Lady Freberg:

*Is she young or old?*

Page:

*Neither, if right I guess; but she is fair:  
For Time hath laid his hand so gently on her,  
As he too had been aw'd.*

Lady Freberg:

*The foolish stripling!  
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in  
stature?*

Page:

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<sup>661</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Miller: An ugly, contraband knave, smuggled into the world – with his malicious little mouse eyes – red hair – the bulged chin, just as if Nature, enraged at such a bungled piece of goods, had seized the ugly monster by it, and flung him aside.

*So stately and so graceful is her form,  
I thought at first her stature was gigantick;  
Next on a near approach I found, in truth.  
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.*

Lady Freberg:  
*What is her garb?*

Page:  
*I cannot well describe the fashion of it.  
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,  
But seems to me clad in the usual weeds  
Of high habitual state; for as she moves  
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,  
As I have seen unfurled banners play  
With a soft breeze.*

Lady Freberg:  
*Thine eyes deceive thee, boy;  
It is an apparition thou hast seen.*

Lord Freberg starting from his seat, where  
he has been sitting during the conversation  
between the lady and the page:  
*It is an apparition he has seen,  
Or it is Jane De Monfort. (Exit, hastily.)*

The page's characterization of Lady Jane De Monfort is more a blason-like homage to her character and soul than a detailed description of her physical appearance. De Monfort is obsessed by Rezenvelt and he defines his countenance, driven by Hatred. He is convinced that his nemesis is the devil and that his evil character is visible in the signs of his face:

## **ACT I – Scene 2**

De Monfort:  
(alone, tossing his arms distractedly)  
*Abhorred fiend! He hath a pleasure too,  
A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!  
Oh! The side glance of that detested eye!  
That conscious smile! That full insulting lip!  
It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.  
What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo  
my hate?*

At the end of the tragedy when De Monfort has murdered Rezenvelt and is himself dead, Bernard describes for the last time De Monfort's countenance. The description is not focused anymore on Hatred in the face of De Monfort, but Bernard sees Despair:

### **ACT V – Scene 5**

Bernard:

*But see, I pray!*

*Here lies the murderer. What thinkst thou here?*

*Look on those features, thou hast seen them often.*

*With the last dreadful conflict of despair.*

*So fix'd in horrid strength.*

*See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;*

*The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distant;*

*That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,*

*In agony, to gnash the nether lip.*

*Thinkst thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife*

*Was such a death as this?*

*Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!*

In Pixérécourt's *Cœlina* we find a description which lacks a clear physiognomical indication of the relation between the inner and outer appearance. In general the characterization of the figures performing on stage is made through the impression they make on the other characters. Only once is a character described in detail by another figure:

### **ACT III – Scene 3**

L'exempt lit:

*François Truguelin, âgé de quarante-sept ans, taille de cinq pieds trois pouces, front élevé, sourcils et cheveux châtons, yeux noirs et caves, nez aquilin, bouche moyenne, menton rond, visage long, la voix forte, et la démarche hardie, habit vert galonné, une large cicatrice sur le revers de la main gauche.*<sup>662</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> ACT III – Scene 3: Officer (reads): François Truguelin, age forty-seven; height, five feet, nine inches; raised frow, eyebrows and hair, chestnut brown; eyes black and hollow; nose, aquiline; mouth,

The description of Truguelin contains the most important physiognomic readable sings: the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth and chin. Truguelin's features are the norm, that is to say he has no special features which indicate his greedy and villainous character.

### **Inner beauty – outer beauty**

The new genres, as discussed earlier, show some of the clearest and most popular physiognomical ideas: Beauty shows a good character, ugliness a bad character. Lavater discusses this topic in detail in the chapter *Von der Harmonie der moralischen und körperlichen Schönheit* in the first volume of the *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Lavater is aware that a statement such as “*The morally best, the most beautiful. The morally worst, the most deformed*” will find many critics, but he has the perfect explanation for it: “*Tugend verschönert; Laster macht häßlich; Aber sie sind es nicht allein, die auf Schönheit und Häßlichkeit Einfluss haben.*”<sup>663</sup> (trans.: “Virtue beautifies, vice deforms; but these are not the sole causes of beauty and deformity.”<sup>664</sup>). Other causes are education, climate, environment, diseases, destiny, etc. God's goodness and Nature's maliciousness are the best explanation for the relation between inner and outer beauty:

*Vorausgesetzt daß wir das Werk einer höchsten Weisheit sind – fällt's nicht sogleich auf, daß es unendlich schicklicher ist: daß zwischen physischer und moralischer Schönheit Harmonie sey – als daß keine sey? Daß es schicklicher sey: Der Urheber aller moralischen Vollkommenheit drücke sein höchstes Wohlgefallen daran durch eine natürliche Übereinstimmung der physischen mit der moralischen aus? [...]*

*Sondern es ist so die die allgemeine Einrichtung der Natur der Dinge, daß, wo die höchste moralische Vollkommenheit ist, die höchste moralische Unvollkommenheit zum Vorschein komme, [...]* Daß die ganze Natur darauf eingerichtet sey, das, was der Gottheit das Liebste, und an sich das Liebenswertigste ist, gleichsam mit dem Siegel seines Mißfallens zu stempeln.<sup>665</sup>

(trans.: “It being granted that man is the work of supreme wisdom, is it not infinitely more conformable to wisdom that a harmony between

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medium; chin, round; long face; strong voice and sturdy gait; a coat trimmed with gold braid; a large scar on the back of the left hand. (translated by J. Paul Marcoux 1992).

<sup>663</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 1 Winterthur, 1783 p.184.

<sup>664</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.184.

<sup>665</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol. 1 Winterthur, 1783 p.176.

physical and moral beauty rather should than should not exist ; and that the Author of all moral perfection should testify his high good pleasure by the conformity between the mental and bodily faculties? [...]

it was a general law of nature, that where the highest moral perfection was, there all physical imperfection should be; [...] that God should deny all beauty to virtue, lest it might be thereby recommended; that what was most loved by the Deity, and was in itself most lovely, should be stamped with the seal of divine disapprobation?"<sup>666</sup>)

Several plays from the corpus use the idea of the relation between moral and physical beauty to create the characters. The selected corpus contains both plays that follow Lavater's theory and plays that contradict it. In *Menschenhass und Reue* for instance we see both:

#### **ACT I – Scene 5**

Franz:

*Ich sah sie einigemal im Garten; sie ist eine schöne Frau.*

Unbekannter:

*Desto schlimmer! Schönheit ist Larve.*

Franz:

*Bei ihr scheint sie Spiegel der Seele.<sup>667</sup>*

The analogy between face and mask is a recurring idea and will be discussed on more than one occasion. Kotzebue shows through the two characters in this dialogue the opposing sides of the discussion: Beauty is only a mask, and a beautiful appearance shows a beautiful soul.

In *Karl und Sophie* Magister Ralf quotes directly Lavater's comparative sentence:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 7**

Mag. Ralf:

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<sup>666</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1789 p.176.

<sup>667</sup> ACT I – Scene 5: John: I have seen her several times in the garden. She is a beautiful woman. Stranger: So much the worse. Beauty's a mask. John: In her it seems the mirror of her soul. (translated by George Papendick 1798).

*Je lasterhafter der Mensch, je häßlicher; und je tugendhafter, je schöner! Ha Laster und Tugend! Ihr seyd mit bleibenden Zügen ins Antlitz der Menschen geschrieben.*<sup>668</sup>

As already seen, in *Die Räuber* it is Franz himself who relates his ugliness to his vicious character and soul. His brother is described as an angel:

### **ACT II – Scene 2**

Maximilian von Moor:

*Er war ein Engel, war Kleinod des Himmels!*<sup>669</sup>

Also in *Karl und Sophie*, Sophie is described as an angel:

### **ACT III – Scene 7**

Hr. von Brennov:

*Laß mich dein Gesicht sehen, Mädchen.*

*(Sie hebt die Kappe auf)*

*Rein, wie ein Engel!*<sup>670</sup>

In *Nathan der Weise* and *Nathan Le Sage* the analogy between a character and an angel is at the centre of most of the discussions.

Nathan returns home after a business trip and his daughter Recha tells him, that she was saved from a fire by an angel. Recha is convinced that God sent angels to save her from the fire and Nathan from drowning. Nathan knows already that the rescuer was a templar:

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Recha:

*Er, er trug Euch und den Nachen  
Auf Flügeln seiner unsichtbaren Engel  
Die ungetreuen Ström' hinüber. Er,  
Er winkte meinem Engel, daß er sichtbar  
Auf seinem weißen Fittiche, mich durch  
Das Feuer trüge –*

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<sup>668</sup> ACT IV – Scene 7: Mag. Ralf: The more vicious the man, the uglier; and the more virtuous, the more beautiful! Hah vice and virtue! You are with lasting features written in the face of people.

<sup>669</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Old Moor: Oh he was an angel, a jewel from heaven.

<sup>670</sup> ACT III – Scene 7: Hr. von Brennov: Let me see your face, girl! (she lifts her cap) Pure as an angel.



Nathan:  
*(Weißem Fittiche!*  
*Ja, ja! Der weiße vorgesprenzte Mantel*  
*Des Tempelherrn.)*

Recha:  
*Er sichtbar, sichtbar mich*  
*Durchs Feuer trüg, von seinem Fittiche*  
*Verweht – Ich also, ich hab' einen Engel*  
*Von Angesicht zu Angesicht gesehn;*  
*Und meinen Engel.*

[...]

Nathan:  
*Doch hätt' auch nur*  
*Ein Mensch – ein Mensch, wie die Natur sie*  
*täglich*  
*Gewährt, dir diesen Dienst erzeigt, er müßte*  
*Für dich ein Engel sein. Er müßt' und würde.*

Recha:  
*Nicht so ein Engel; nein! Ein wirklicher;*  
*Er war gewiß ein wirklicher!<sup>671</sup>*

For Recha it seems of crucial importance that the angel was visible to her and took physical form in order to carry her out of the fire. When Nathan tries to persuade her that it was a human being, and that it is normal that she would pay tribute to him by calling him an angel, she remains convinced of her vision: a rescuer with such a good soul can only be a supernatural being. Recha's angel combines visibility and transcendence, the physical form with the wonder.

Chénier's *Nathan Le Sage*, consisting of three acts, imitates the play by Lessing ("imité de l'Allemand de Lessing"). There are many differences in the importance given to religion and to the role of Nathan in Jerusalem. As in Lessing's text, in the first act Nathan comes home after his travels and hears about the fire in his house, where his adopted daughter Zoé was almost killed. Brigitte, Zoé's maid,

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<sup>671</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Recha: And thank our God, who bore you on the wings / Of unseen angels o'er the treacherous streams, / And bade my angel bear me visibly / On his white pinion through the raging flames. Nathan (aside): On his white pinion! Ha! I see; she means / The broad white fluttering mantle of the Templar. Recha: Yes, visibly he bore me through the flames, / O'ershadowed by his wings. Thus, face to face, / I have beheld an angel--my own angel. [...] Nathan: And yet methinks, dear Recha, if a man- / Just such a man as Nature daily fashions- / Had rendered you this service, he had been / A very angel to you. Recha: But he was / No angel of that stamp, but true and real. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

tells him about the rescuer and says, that Zoé thinks it was an angel. When Nathan sees his daughter she repeats what Brigitte said, and Nathan tries to convince her that the rescuer, as a result of his action, just seems to be an angel:

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Zoé:

*Un ange protecteur, aussi jeune que beau.*

[...]

Nathan:

*Zoé, c'est un jeune homme avec l'âme d'un ange.<sup>672</sup>*

The angel is beautiful because his soul and intention are beautiful. The templar becomes angel-like because of his good actions.

### **True colours**

Lavater speaks on many occasions about the “*Physiognomik der Farben*”<sup>673</sup>: the colours of the body result from the mixture of blood, each temperament has its colour, the eye and hair colour design the character. The play *False Colours* addresses this topic in the clearest way, but other plays of the corpus also refer to it. The references made are in general of a more pathognomic nature, although they are relevant also for the fixed features in the face. Blushing and getting pale are the most important outcomes of the Physiognomy of colours.

In *Nathan der Weise* and *Nathan Le Sage* we have several instances of blushing. In scene 7 of the last act, Saladin speaks to Recha about her father and proposes himself as her new adoptive father:

### **ACT V – Scene 7**

Sittah:

*Mach sie nicht erröten!*

Saladin:

*Das hab ich allerdings mir vorgesetzt.  
Erröten macht die Häßlichen so schön:*

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<sup>672</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Zoé: A guardian angel, so young as beautiful.

Nathan: Zoé, he is a man with the soul of an angel.

<sup>673</sup> See Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente* Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.20.

*Und sollte Schöne nicht noch schöner  
machen?  
Ich habe deinen Vater Nathan; und  
Noch einen einen noch hierher bestellt.  
Errätst du ihn? Hierher! Du wirst mir doch  
Erlauben, Sittah?*

Sittah:  
*Bruder!*

Saladin:  
*Daß du ja  
Vor ihm recht sehr errötest, liebes Mädchen!*

Recha:  
*Vor wem? erröten? ...*

Saladin:  
*Kleine Heuchlerin!  
Nun, so erblassse lieber! Wie du willst  
Und kannst!<sup>674</sup>*

Saladin expects Recha to blush in order to show her intentions. The red colour in her face would make her more beautiful and more truthful. To become pale is the complete opposite, it does not show anything. In *Nathan Le Sage*, for Dom Tremendo, the patriarch, and for the other characters, lying is connected to blushing; the face will show, through this pathognomic outcome, the truth:

#### **ACT III – Scene 4**

Dom Tremendo:  
*Mais il tremble, il rougit ; il ne sait point  
mentir.<sup>675</sup>*

Saladin rescued Montfort because he looks like his dead brother Assad. When Saladin understands that Montfort is much more intolerant towards Nathan than his brother could have been, he changes his opinion on Montfort:

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<sup>674</sup> ACT V – Scene 7: Sittah: You make her blush! Saladin: Why that was half my scheme. / Blushing becomes plain features, and will make / A beautiful cheek more beautiful. My commands / Are given to bring your father, Nathan, here. / Another comes as well. You'll guess his name? / Hither they come! Will you allow it, Sittah? Sittah: Brother! Saladin: And when he comes, maid, you must blush / To crimson. Recha: Sittah! wherefore should I blush? Saladin: You young dissembler, you will else grow pale! / But as thou wilt and canst. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>675</sup> ACT III – Scene 4: Dom Tremendo: But he trembles, he blushed; he does not know how to lie.

### **ACT III – Scene 5**

Montfort:

*J'en rougis à tes yeux; je me sens bien coupable,  
Si ton Assad en moi n'est plus reconnaissable.*

Saladin:

*Ta crainte et ta pudeur me l'ont déjà rendu.  
Celui qui sait rougir aime encore la vertu.<sup>676</sup>*

Blushing will bring out the virtues in every human being.

A contradictory idea can be seen in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*. Ferdinand, who is sometimes betrayed by Luise's and his own face (this will be discussed in detail in a following section), feels deceived:

### **ACT IV – Scene 2**

Ferdinand:

*Sie hat meine ganze Seele gesehn. Mein Herz trat beim Erröten des ersten Kusses sichtbar in meine Augen – und sie empfand nichts?<sup>677</sup>*

His heart and feelings are shown through blushing on his face. Schiller combines in Ferdinand's statement physiognomic with pathognomic elements: his blushing made the movement of his heart visible in his eyes. At the end of the play, when Luise lies dead in front of Ferdinand, he says:

### **ACT V – Scene 2**

Ferdinand:

*Bleich wie der Tod! – Jetzt erst gefällt sie mir, deine Tochter! So schön war sie nie, die fromme, rechtschaffene Tochter – Mit diesem Leichengesicht – – Der Odem des Weltgerichts, der den Firnis von jeder Lüge streift, hat jetzt die Schminke verblasen, womit*

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<sup>676</sup> ACT III – Scene 5: Montfort: I blush in front of your eyes; I feel very guilty / If your Assad is no longer recognizable in me. Saladin: Your fear and your modesty have it already shown to me. / One who knows to blush still likes virtue.

<sup>677</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Ferdinand: She has seen my whole soul. My heart was shining in my eyes at the blush of our first kiss – and she didn't feel anything?

*die Tausendkünstlerin auch die Engel des Lichts hintergangen hat – Es ist ihr schönstes Gesicht! Es ist ihr erstes wahres Gesicht! Lass mich es küssen*<sup>678</sup>.

Luise's pale dead face shows her real beauty and character.

Lavater speaks about the appearance of dead people and how they finally show their true face:

*So viele Todte ich gesehen, hab' ich dabey die einförmige Beobachtung gemacht, daß sie etwa 16, 18, 24 Stunden nach ihrem Tode (je nachdem sie eine Krankheit gehabt hatten) eine schönere Zeichnung hatten, als sie in ihrem Leben niemals gehabt hatten, viel bestimmter, proportionirter, harmonischer, homogener – edler, viel edler, erhabner.*<sup>679</sup>

(trans.: "Of the many dead persons I have seen, I have uniformly observed that sixteen, eighteen, or twenty-four hours, after death (according to the disease) they have had a more beautiful form, better defined, more proportionate, harmonized, homogeneous, more noble, more exalted, than they ever had during life."<sup>680</sup>)

The ancestress in *Die Ahnfrau* looks with expressive dead eyes:

## ACT I

Die Ahnfrau erscheint: Die Gestalt hat sich aufgerichtet und starrt den Grafen mit weitgeöffneten toten Augen an.

Graf:

*Und noch haften*

*Deine starren Leichenblicke*

*Mir gleich Dolchen in der Brust.*

Berta:

*Meine Blicke?*

Graf:

*Deine Blicke!*

*Zieh nicht staunend auf die Augen!*

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<sup>678</sup> ACT V – Scene 2: Ferdinand: Pale as the death. Now your daughter pleases me best. She, the demure and virtuous daughter, had never been so lovely – with this corpse face - - The blast of the day of judgement, which strips the varnish from every lie, has wasted the painted colours from her cheek, or the juggler might have cheated even the angels of light. This is her fairest countenance. For the first time it is a truthful face. Let me kiss it.

<sup>679</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente* Vol. 3 Winterthur, 1787 p.146.

<sup>680</sup> Holcroft. *Essays on Physiognomy*. London, 1804 p.146.

*Siehst du, so! doch nein, viel starrer!*<sup>681</sup>

In *Die Räuber*, Franz pales at the end, because of the shock of seeing his brother:

### **ACT V – Scene 1**

Daniel:

*Ihr seyd todenbleich, eure Stimme ist bang und lallet.*<sup>682</sup>

Daniel himself paled when he was giving wine to Franz and was suspected of betrayal:

### **ACT IV – Scene 2**

Franz:

*Gift hast du in den Wein geworfen! Bist du nicht bleich wie Schnee? Gesteh, gesteh! Wer hats dir gegeben? Nicht wahr, der Graf, der Graf hats dir gegeben?*<sup>683</sup>

Amalia's feelings for Karl are all seen in her face colour and movement. Her shame at still being in love with Karl after the terrible news she got of his life as a robber makes her blush:

### **ACT I – Scene 3**

Amalia:

*Ich müßte feuerroth werden vor Scham, wenn ich an Karl denke, und mir eben einfiel, daß du mich nicht hassest.*<sup>684</sup>

Every movement, every change in the human soul will be reflected with a colour on the face. Blushing is a much stronger outcome than becoming pale. The human face becomes like a blank sheet, where Nature can write its signs on it. The colour change shows a change in character, temperament and humour:

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<sup>681</sup> ACT I: The ancestress appears: Her form has straightened up, staring at the Count with wide open dead eyes. Count: And now your corpse glances are like daggers in my chest. Berta: My glances? Count: Your glances! not drawing towards your astonished eyes! You see, that! but no, much more staring!

<sup>682</sup> ACT V – Scene 1: Daniel: You are pale as death, your voice is weak and faltering.

<sup>683</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Franz: You poisoned the wine. Are you not as white as snow? Confess, confess! Who gave it to you? The count? The count gave it to you?

<sup>684</sup> ACT I – Scene 3: Amalia: I should blush with shame, if, while thinking of Karl, it should enter my mind that you don't hate me.

## ACT III – Scene 2

Schwarz:

*Moor! Moor! Was zum Henker? – wie er seine  
Farbe verändert!*

Grimm:

*Alle Teufel! Was hat er? Wird ihm übel?*<sup>685</sup>

In contrast to the above-mentioned plays, in Foscolo's *Tieste* Ippodamia, Atreo's and Tieste's mother shows her true expression through her pale face:

## Act II – Scene 4

Ippodamia:

*Non vanno in ciel le colpe; e i numi sono  
Del male, e del ben memori: punirci  
A loro spetta. Ah! se a lor pene aggiungi,  
Che pur son tante, i tuoi gastighi, lassa!  
Che fia di quella dolorosa donna? –  
Vedila come i suoi passi strascina  
Pallida, muta; e di sua colpa ha in viso  
L'orror.*

Atreo:

*A sue querele altre più tristi  
Deh! non v'aggiunger, madre.*<sup>686</sup>

Ippodamia feels guilty and the horror is shown in her pale face. As she says, she is "muta" but her face speaks instead to the observer.

Again in *Ajace*, the paleness of one character speaks an important body language which cannot be misinterpreted. In the second act, when Agamennone is speaking with Calcante about the division of Achilles' troops, Agamennone says that the white and pale colour of Calcantes face and hair produced a great pity in his heart:

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<sup>685</sup> ACT III – Scene 2: Schwarz: Moor! Moor! What the hell? How his colour changes! Grimm: By all the devils! What ails him? Is he ill?

<sup>686</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Ippodamia: Guilt does not go to heaven; and the Gods are mindful of good and bad deeds: Our punishment is their duty. Ah! if you add to their penalties which are already several, your punishment, leave it! What happened to that sorrowful woman? - Look as she drags her feet. Pale, silent; and the horror of her guilt in the face. Atreo: Do not add anymore sad thoughts to her pain, mother.

## Act II – Scene 1

Agamennone:

*quelle bianche chiome*

*E il tuo pallore di piet  m'han vinto.*<sup>687</sup>

The use of white in theatre as a sign of innocence was already known in the ancient Greek theatre, as described in the introduction. Agamennone, one of the most famous Greek characters uses the same idea to express and explain his feelings and impressions of Calcante.

### Revelations

The quotations seen above elaborate the idea of the face as text. In the same moment, the face uncovers and hides the human soul. The face both reveals the truth and betrays with untruthfulness. In this section the trustworthiness of the face will be discussed; the revelations of the soul, the uncertainty of physiognomical judgement and the assumptions and conclusions made after a physiognomical observation are the centre of discussion.

In *Nathan der Weise*, when Nathan asks for the templar's name he intensifies his look at him and feels to have been "read in his soul":

## ACT II – Scene 7

Tempelherr:

*O ja! hier waren,*

*Hier faulen des Geschlechts schon mehrere.*

*Mein Oheim selbst, – mein Vater will ich sagen,*

*Doch warum sch rft sich Euer Blick auf mich*

*Je mehr und mehr?*

Nathan:

*O nichts! o nichts! Wie kann*

*Ich Euch zu sehn erm den?*

Tempelherr:

*Drum verla *

*Ich Euch zuerst. Der Blick des Forschers fand*

*Nicht selten mehr, als er zu finden w nschte.*

*Ich f rcht' ihn, Nathan. La t die Zeit allm hlig,*

*Und nicht die Neugier, unsre Kundschaft*

*machen.*

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<sup>687</sup> ACT II – Scene 1: Agamennone: This white hair and your paleness gained my pity.



Er geht.

Nathan der ihm mit Erstaunen nachsieht:  
»Der Forscher fand nicht selten mehr, als er  
Zu finden wünschte.« – Ist es doch, als ob  
In meiner Seel' er lese! – Wahrlich ja,<sup>688</sup>

Recha sees the templar the first time after her rescue and they start to get to know each other. They try to read each other's faces, in order to understand their souls and characters:

### ACT III – Scene 2

Recha:  
Nun, Ritter? – Was? – Ihr kehrt Euch von mir ab?  
Wollt mich nicht sehn?

Tempelherr:  
Weil ich Euch hören will.

Recha:  
Weil Ihr mich nicht wollt merken lassen, daß  
Ihr meiner Einfalt lächelt; daß Ihr lächelt,  
Wie ich Euch doch so gar nichts Wichtigers  
Von diesem heiligen Berg' aller Berge  
Zu fragen weiß? Nicht wahr?

Tempelherr:  
So muß  
Ich doch Euch wieder in die Augen sehn. –  
Was? Nun schlagt Ihr sie nieder? nun verbeißt  
Das Lächeln Ihr? wie ich noch erst in Mienen,  
In zweifelhaften Mienen lesen will,  
Was ich so deutlich hör', Ihr so vernehmlich  
Mir sagt – verschweigt? – Ah Recha! Recha!<sup>689</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> ACT II – Scene 7: Templar: Yes, many of the name were here--rot here, / My uncle even--I should say my father. / But wherefore is your eye so fixed on me? Nathan: I know not; but I love to look on you. Templar: Therefore I take my leave. The searching eye / Will oft discover more than it desires. / I fear it, Nathan; so, farewell. Let time, / Not curious prying, make us better known. (Exit.) Nathan (looking after him with astonishment): „The searching eye will oft discover more / Than it desires.“ As if he read my soul! (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>689</sup> ACT III – Scene 2: Recha: You turn away! / Why do you turn, Sir Knight? Nay, look at me. Templar: I wish to hear you rather. Recha: I perceive, / Because you do not wish that I should see / You smile at my simplicity. You smile / That I have not some more important thing / To ask about the holy hill of hills. / Is it so? Templar: Must I meet those eyes again? / And now you cast them down, and check your smile. / How can I in those changeful features read / What I so plainly hear--the truth your words / So audibly declare, and yet would hide? (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

Lessing directly addresses the dubious facial expressions and how they can change so quickly (“*zweifelhafte Mienen*”). This quick change is seen also in another scene: Recha comes to the palace to speak to Sittah and is then introduced to Saladin. She lies on the floor, crying and weeping and is desperate about her love for the templar, whom her father will never allow her to marry. She fears Saladin’s judgement, but hopes to see his good soul in his face:

### **ACT V – Scene 7**

Recha:

*Ich steh nicht auf! nicht eher auf! – mag eher  
Des Sultans Antlitz nicht erblicken! – eher  
Den Abglanz ewiger Gerechtigkeit  
Und Güte nicht in seinen Augen, nicht  
Auf seiner Stirn bewundern ...<sup>690</sup>*

Saladin’s good soul is visible in his forehead and his eyes.

In *Nathan Le Sage* the reading of the face is mainly connected to Saladin and Montfort. When Saladin asks Nathan about the true religion, he immediately makes it clear that the answer will not be written in his eyes:

### **ACT II – Scene 2**

Saladin:

*Sans doute, tu connais la meilleure  
croyance?  
[...] Te voilà tout-à-coup rêveur,  
silencieux!  
Ta réponse n’est pas écrite dans mes  
yeux.  
Je le vois, ma demande a surpris ton  
oreille.  
Les sultans ne font pas de question  
pareille.<sup>691</sup>*

Nathan’s surprised facial expression shows Saladin that his question about the true religion moves Nathan.

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<sup>690</sup> ACT V – Scene 7: Recha: No, I'll not rise--not rise nor even look / Upon the Sultan's countenance, nor wonder / At the bright lustre of unchanging truth / And goodness on his brow and in his eye, / Before- (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>691</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Saladin: No doubt you know the true faith? / [...] So you dreamer are all at once silent! / Your answer is not written in my eyes. / I see my request surprised your ear. / The sultans normally don't ask such a question.

At the end of the second act Zoé meets Montfort and they declare their love to each other. Zoé is described by Montfort as sweet, beautiful, sensible and graceful:

#### **ACT II – Scene 4**

Montfort:

*Ah! votre ame est sensible autant que  
votre voix.*

*[...] Ce reproche m'enchante.*

*Que ses regards sont doux ! que sa voix  
est touchante !*

Zoé:

*Ces regards, cette voix vous ont cherché  
long-temps :*

*Vous étiez occupé de soins plus  
importans ;<sup>692</sup>*

Montfort uses the same expressions when he talks to Nathan about Zoé:

#### **ACT III – Scene 1**

Montfort:

*Sa grace, sa beauté, sa candeur ingénue  
Ont porté dans mon ame une ivresse  
inconnue.<sup>693</sup>*

Zoé's beauty and purity reveal not only her beautiful soul, but also Montfort's feelings for her. The "revelations" through the face are double: the soul and character of the described person are revealed, but also the feelings this character and revelation create.

The revelations of the soul are often linked to the idea that the face remains always recognizable, because the fixed features are not changeable. In some plays of the corpus some figures come home after a period of absence. The reactions of the people at home are multiple: they recognize them because their features never

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<sup>692</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Montfort: Ah! your soul is sensitive as much as your voice. / [...] this reproach enchants me. / That her eyes are soft! That her voice is touching! Zoé: These glances, this voice you searched for a long time: / You were busy with more important matters.

<sup>693</sup> ACT III – Scene 1: Montfort: Her grace, her beauty, her ingenuous innocence / have brought an unknown euphoria to my mind.

really changed; they recognize them at all, but not their facial expression; and they do not recognize them, even though their facial expression did not change.

In *Menschenhass und Reue*, Major von der Horst speaks with Baron von Meinau about his changed expressions and his way of hiding the face:

## ACT IV – Scene 2

Major:

*Alles, was ich von dir sehe, alles, was ich von dir höre, ist mir ein Rätsel. Du bist es, dein Gesicht schwebt vor mir, aber das sind nicht die Züge, welche einst unsere französischen Mädchen bezauberten, Freude in jede Versammlung brachten, dir Freunde erwarben, ehe du noch den Mund auftatest.*

Unbekannter:

*Du vergissest, daß ich sieben Jahre älter geworden bin.*

Major:

*Freilich, dann bist du ein paar Jahre über dreißig. – Warum vermeidest du mich anzusehn? ist Freundesantlitz dir zuwider geworden? oder bist du scheu, dein Auge zum Spiegel deiner Seele zu machen? Wo ist der offene Feuerblick, der sonst in aller Herzen las?*

Unbekannter bitter:

*Mein Blick las in aller Herzen?<sup>694</sup>*

Also in Baillie's play we have De Monfort who comes home after some absence. *De Monfort* shows the tyranny of Hatred and how De Monfort is changed by this strong passion. In the first act the servant Manuel describes the face of his master:

## ACT I – Scene 1

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<sup>694</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Major: All I see is a mystery, and all I hear from you a riddle to me. It is you. It is my Meinau that stands before me. But those are not the happy cheerful features that once so captivated our gay French women; that brought mirth into every company where you came, and acquired you friends before you had opened your mouth. Meinau: You forget that I'm grown seven years older. Major: You are then but two-and-thirty. – But why do you turn thus from me? Is the face of a friend become disgusting to you? Or dare you not let your eye be the mirror of your soul? Where is that open manly look that used to penetrate into every heart? Meinau: My look penetrate into every heart? (translated by George Papendick 1798).

Manuel:

*Once on a time I serv'd a noble master,  
Whose youth was blasted with untoward love,  
And he, with hope and fear and jealousy  
For ever toss'd, led an unquiet life:  
Yet, when unruffled by the passing fit.  
His pale wan face such gentle sadness wore  
As mov'd a kindly heart to pity him.  
But Monfort, even in his calmest hour.  
Still bears that gloomy sternness in his eye  
Which powerfully repels all sympathy.*

Already De Monfort's face shows his Hatred and mysterious and terrible state of mind. Baillie refers to her characters as personifications of the passions.

Vivaldi, l'homme à trois visages (being also Edgar and Abelino), returns to Venice after eight years but is convinced that his facial features are always the same:

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Vivaldi:

*Si huit années d'exile et de malheurs ont pu  
changer mes traits au point de me rendre  
méconnaissable, au moins mon cœur est-il  
toujours le même.*<sup>695</sup>

Vivaldi with his three faces and his three identities is a character conflicting with the logic of Physiognomy; he does not use masks, but everyone in the melodrama is convinced that he is always someone else. He is Edgar or Abelino or Vivaldi. His face always appears different according to the different characters he embodies.

In *Die Räuber*, Karl von Moor is recognized as the head of the band of robbers by people who never saw him before, but Amalia who loves him, does not recognize him:

### **ACT III – Scene 2**

Moor (näher kommend):

*Kennen Sie auch den Hauptmann?*

Kosinsky:

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<sup>695</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Vivaldi: If eight years of exile and misfortune have changed my features as to make me unrecognizable, at least my heart is always the same.

*Du bist – in dieser Miene – wer sollte dich ansehen und einen andern suchen? (starrt ihn lang an)<sup>696</sup>*

In *Karl und Sophie*, Karl is recognized by neither his lover Sophie, nor her father nor his own father. In contrast to these figures who spent some time away, Karl bears a kind of mask; smallpox changed his face, but apparently not the facial expression:

### **ACT V – Scene 7**

Herr von Wandal:  
*Ists wahr? Ist ers,  
Ist ers, Alter? – Ha, nun ist alles  
Verziehen, nun ist alles vergeben!  
Herzensguter bester Karl! Sagt ichs nicht,  
sein Gesicht ist groß, edel und gut,  
obs gleich durch die Blattern verhunzt ist.<sup>697</sup>*

In *Die Ahnfrau* Jaromir recognizes some features typically belonging to Berta in the ghost of the ancestress:

### **ACT II**

Jaromir:  
*Und ein Antlitz tauchet auf  
Mit geschlossenen Leichenaugen  
Mit bekannten, holden Zügen,  
Ja, mit deinen, deinen Zügen.  
Jetzt reißt es die Augen auf,  
Starrt nach mir hin, und Entsetzen  
Zuckt mir reißend durchs Gehirn.<sup>698</sup>*

The figures themselves are aware of the language of the signs on the faces. Ferdinand for example sees in Luise's face that something bothers her:

### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Ferdinand:  
*Rede mir Wahrheit. Du bist's nicht. Ich  
schaue durch deine Seele wie durch das klare*

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<sup>696</sup> ACT III – Scene 2: Moor (coming closer): Do you know the captain? Kosinsky: Thou art he! In those features – that air – who can look at thee, and doubt it? (He stares at him for a long time).

<sup>697</sup> ACT V – Scene 7: Herr von Wandal: Is it true? Is it him? – Ha, now everything is forgiven! Dearest Karl! Didn't I say it, his face is great, noble and good, even though the smallpox ruined it.

<sup>698</sup> ACT II: Jaromir: And a countenance appeared with closed corpse eyes with known sweet features. Yes with your features. Now it opens the eyes, stares at me and horror passes my thought.

*Wasser dieses Brillanten. (Er zeigt auf seinen Ring.) Hier wirft sich kein Bläschen auf, das ich nicht merkte – kein Gedanke tritt in dies Angesicht, der mir entwichte. Was hast du? Geschwind! Weiß ich nur diesen Spiegel helle, so läuft keine Wolke über die Welt. Was bekümmert dich?*

Luise (sieht ihn eine Weile stumm und bedeutend an, dann mit Wehmut):  
*Ferdinand! Ferdinand! Dass du doch wüsstest, wie schön in dieser Sprache das bürgerliche Mädchen sich ausnimmt –*<sup>699</sup>

The count Freberg understands that De Monfort has some obscure and wild thoughts:

### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Freberg:  
(shaking his head). *Ah no, De Monfort! something in thy face tells me another tale. Then wrong me not:  
If any secret grief distract thy soul.  
Here am I all devoted to thy love:  
Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?*

Berta and Jaromir discuss his guilt and she will not believe him because of the expression in his face:

### **ACT II**

Jaromir:  
*Glaube mir –*

Berta:  
*Ei, glauben, glauben!  
Besser stünd' es dem zu schweigen,  
Der nicht weiß wie Liebe spricht:  
Kann der Blick nicht überzeugen,  
Überred't die Lippe nicht.*<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Ferdinand: Tell me the truth. You are not. I see through your soul as clearly as through the water of this brilliant. (pointing to his ring) No spot can harbor here unmarked by me – no thought can come to your countenance, that I don't see. What is it? Quick! Did I only knew this mirror to be unbroken, no cloud would wander in the world. What afflicts you? Luise (looks at him in silence for a few moments, then with melancholy): Ferdinand! Ferdinand! Could you but know how such discourse exalts the bourgeois girl.

When Guelfo and his brother and arch-enemy Averardo come together, Guelfo curses Averardo and his son Guido because of their hostile face features:

### **Act III – Scene 6**

Guelfo:

*A entrambi io scorgo  
Non so che in volto di superbo e astuto -  
Ma tu più molto, o eroe nuovo d'Italia,  
Co'sensi tuoi, col mal represso orgoglio,  
Con quegli sguardi che pietoso ad arte  
A Ricciarda volgevi, in cor mi svegli  
L' infame figlio d'Averardo, e insieme  
Tutto il mio sdegno - e tal... ch'io t' abborriva  
Com' io ti vidi.<sup>701</sup>*

It is written in Averardo's and Guido's face that they betrayed Guelfo and he immediately judges them on their appearance.

In *Ajace*, Ajace himself reads the face expressions of Calcante and judges his appearance:

### **Act II – Scene 7**

Ajace:

*Orribile un arcano  
Io leggo già sul tuo volto smarrito. –  
Onta resti a chi teme illustre tomba.  
Già i miei fati m'incalzano: se fissa  
Han la rovina mia, tu pur che m'eri  
E padre e specchio di virtù fra tanta  
Comun viltà, tu i fati miei seconda.<sup>702</sup>*

According to Ajace, Calcante bears a mystery in his face, which he explains as part of his betrayal.

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<sup>700</sup> ACT II: Jaromir: Believe me – Berta: Ey, believe, believe! It would be better, for whom who doesn't know how love speaks, to remain silent. If the glance can't convince, the lips will not persuade.

<sup>701</sup> ACT III – Scene 6: Guelfo: In both of your faces I see, a certain feeling of arrogance and slyness. But more in you, new hero of Italy! With your senses, with your poorly suppressed pride, how pitiful you glimpsed at Ricciarda; that made me realize in my heart that you are the infamous son of Averardo, and all the scorn which I abhor, appeared as I saw you.

<sup>702</sup> ACT II – Scene 7: Ajace: Horrible mystery I read on your face – disgrace remains to those who fear the illustrious tomb. My spirits chase me; if they seek my ruin, you, who was father and mirror of virtue in an ocean of cowardice, obey my spirits.



At the end of *Abele*, when Eva finds her dead son Abel and her mourning husband and when she understands that Cain killed his brother, she says:

### **Act V – Last Scene**

Eva:

*Abele, Abele...*

*Ah! Più non m'ode...Un traditor, tel dissi,*

*Un traditor tra ciglio e ciglio ognora*

*Io vedeva in Caino.<sup>703</sup>*

*Abele* is all built on the idea that both brothers were “signed” from the beginning and that their destiny was already predetermined.

In the first act Lucifer and his sons and daughters *Il Peccato*, *L'Invidia* and *La Morte* are discussing how to destroy the harmony and peace in Adam's family. Together they decide to send *L'Invidia* and *La Morte*:

### **Act I – Scene 3**

Lucifero:

*Entrambe intanto lo squallor natio*

*Ammantate or di falso e blando aspetto:*

*Tu, dai serpenti, un giovenil tuo brio*

*Fingi, e in somma beltade un molle petto:*

*Tu, dalla falce, le ignude ossa e il rio*

*Tuo ceffo appiatta in matronale assetto;*

*Madre e figlia parrete.<sup>704</sup>*

In the meantime, in the second act Adam and Eva are waiting at home for the return of their sons: Cain is working in the field and Abel is tending the sheep. It is clear that Eva prefers Abel over Cain because he has a more loveable character (*“indole amabil del mio Abele”* – *“sweet and gentle character of Abel”*):

### **Act II – Scene 1**

Eva:

*Tra queste*

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<sup>703</sup> ACT V – Last Scene: Eve: Abel, Abel ... / Alas, he hears me not!... – I ever told thee, / That I discern'd a traitor's mark, yes traitor's, / Between Cain's eyebrows. (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

<sup>704</sup> ACT I – Scene 3: Lucifer: Your innate squalor ye must both disguise, / And cover with an aspect false and fair:/ Thou with the snakes, in youthful lively wise / Must feign to be a maid of beauty rare:/ Thou with the scythe, beneath a matron's guise / Thy naked bones and foul face hiding there; / Mother and daughter seeming to the view. (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

*Mie braccia Abele io l'ultimo portava;  
 Ei quindi in me più tenerezza desta,  
 Non già più amore. È ver, che s'io d'entrambi  
 Madre non fossi, un non so che in Abele  
 Di più innocente e docile, più forza  
 Fariami al cor, che il ruvido maschio aspro  
 Contegno di Caino. Or dimmi; un certo  
 Non so qual tetro inesplicabil segno,  
 Come se fosse una nube di sangue,  
 Non ti sembr'egli pur tra ciglio e ciglio  
 Veder scolpito di Caino in fronte?<sup>705</sup>*

Cain has a predefined sign since his birth in his face which makes him less loveable than his younger brother. Also in the dialogues which follow, Abel is shown as more sensible and fragile, than his slightly cold-hearted brother Cain. When, in the third act, *L'Invidia* and *La Morte* arrive at Adam's home, there is in fact something in Cain's face which makes him the perfect victim for the leading role in the devilish plan:

### **Act III – Scene 1**

L'Invidia:

*Ecco mia preda: questi,  
 Che qui supino dorme:  
 Truci in volto ha le forme:  
 Vada, vada, e si annesti  
 Seco, ed al cor ben ben se gli avviticchi,  
 Questa mia serpe, e gliel rosicchi a spicchi.<sup>706</sup>*

Cain, disturbed by envy, leaves his parents' home during the night. In the morning both his parents and his brother Abel are looking for him. In the fourth act Abel finds his brother, who accuses him of being a traitor. Cain threatens Abel and a long quarrel begins. Abel, not understanding why his brother is so envious, tries to appeal to his good heart and his reading of Abel's face:

### **Act V – Scene 1**

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<sup>705</sup> ACT II – Scene 1: Eve: 'Twas Abel that I last bore in my arms; / Therefore in me more tenderness he wakes. / But not more love. 'Tis true that, were I not / Mother of both, in Abel there's a something / More innocent and docile, which appeals / More to my heart, than the rough masculine / Harsh look of Cain. But say: does it not seem / To thee that on Cain's forehead is impress'd, / Extending from one eyebrow to the other, / A certain dark inexplicable mark. (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

<sup>706</sup> ACT III – Scene 1: Envy: This one shall be my prey, / Now sleeping on his back: / His face is mark'd with passions black. / Quick, quick, good snake, away! / And round his inmost heart entwine, / And gnaw it into atoms fine. (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

Abele:  
*oh Dio! Sovra il mio volto,  
Negli occhi miei, ne'detti, nel contegno,  
Non ti si affaccia or l'innocenza mia?*<sup>707</sup>

Cain does not trust the face and words of his brother, and wounds him mortally. When Adam finds the dying Abel, he curses Cain, but still in his darkest moment Abel shows his beautiful character by forgiving his murderer.

It is interesting that Cain already has a sign in his face before he even wants to kill his brother; in the Bible (Genesis 4.15) God marks Cain after the murder: *“Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him”*. Both brothers have their fate already written in their faces.

## **Betrayal**

With both Ajace and Abele the idea of betrayal was introduced: the face can betray and also be a clear sign of betrayal.

Stella understands and is convinced of the readability of the face but gets betrayed by it. Stella talks to Madame Sommer and Lucie about Fernando and the features of his face. Stella tells them, by showing his portrait, that his face does not fully show his grandeur:

## **ACT II**

Stella:  
*So! – So! – Und doch nicht den tausendsten  
Teil, wie er war. Diese Stirn, diese schwarze  
Augen, diese braune Locken, dieser Ernst –  
Aber ach, er hat nicht ausdrücken können die  
Liebe, die Freundlichkeit, wenn seine Seele  
sich ergoß! O mein Herz, das fühlst du allein!*<sup>708</sup>

All of Fernando's facial features would lead to the conclusion that he is a trustworthy person, but the end of the play reveals that Stella was mistaken, therefore betrayed, by Fernando and his face. Fernando lied to Stella by words, but especially by the

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<sup>707</sup> ACT V – Scene 1: Abel: Upon my face, / And in my eyes, and words, and countenance, / Does not my innocence reveal itself? (translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring 1876).

<sup>708</sup> ACT II: Stella: Yes, yes! and yet it does not give a thousandth part of an idea of him as he really was. That brow, those black eyes, these brown curls, that earnest face! But alas! the painter could not express the love and the friendliness that he showed when his soul overflowed! Oh, my heart, thou alone canst feel that! (translatey by Barrie 1885).

features in his face. Stella is not the only character who was blinded by a lover. In *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Kabale und Liebe* we find the same plot, even though the gender of the betrayed person changes. The second act of the Duodrama *Ariadne auf Naxos* is concentrated on Ariadne after Theseus leaves. When she awakes from her sleep, mixed feelings overcome her: she dreamt about Theseus leaving her and she now anxiously waits for him to come back from hunting. When the nymph tells her that he has left, and when she sees his ship on the horizon, she sinks to the ground full of Despair and Anger. She immediately calls him “Verräther” (“traitor”) and thinks about the injustice she is experiencing. She recalls the moment she first saw him:

## **ACT II**

Ariadne:

*Weh mir! Weh mir! Warum mußst ich ihn sehn?*

*Als er nach Creta kam, Alcidents Freund, so tapfer, so vollkommen! Sein Angesicht so männlich schön! Sein Haar so lockicht! Solch ein edler Stolz in seinen Blicken, solche stille Grösse, selbst bey der äussersten Gefahr! Wer hätt' ihm widerstanden?*

*Wie hob sich diese Brust! Wie wallte sie, wie bebte sie, von Lieb und Mitleid!*

*Nun bezwang ich mich nicht mehr; floh seinen Armen zu, schlang mich um seinen Hals und weinte!<sup>709</sup>*

The expression Theseus shows Ariadne during their first meeting makes her believe that he is not capable of bad things and fraudulent behaviour. His exterior beauty should display his inner beauty, and his masculine expression show his inner peace.

In *Kabale und Liebe* it is Ferdinand who feels betrayed by the angel-like face of Luise. Ferdinand finds the fake love letter from Luise to the Hofmarshall and is really surprised by it. He thinks that her face could not hide such an evil soul:

## **ACT IV – Scene 2**

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<sup>709</sup> ACT II: Ariadne: Poor me! Poor me! Why did I have to see him? When he came to Crete, Alcidents friend, so brave, so perfect! His face so masculine, so beautiful! His hair so curly! Such a noble pride in his eyes, such a silent strenght, even in extreme danger! Who would have resisted him? How his chest moved! How it was trembling and shaking, of love and compassion! I no longer controlled me; I fled to his arms, threw me around his neck and wept!

Ferdinand:

Ferdinand allein, den Brief durchfliegend, bald erstarrend, bald wütend herumstürzend.

*Es ist nicht möglich. Nicht möglich. Diese himmlische Hülle versteckt kein so teuflisches Herz – Und doch! doch! Wenn alle Engel herunterstiegen, für ihre Unschuld bürgten – wenn Himmel und Erde, wenn Schöpfung und Schöpfer zusammenträten, für ihre Unschuld bürgten – es ist ihre Hand – ein unerhörter ungeheurer Betrug, wie die Menschheit noch keinen erlebte! – Das also war's, warum man sich so beharrlich der Flucht widersetzte! – Darum – o Gott! jetzt erwach ich, jetzt enthüllt sich mir alles! – Darum gab man seinen Anspruch auf meine Liebe mit soviel Heldenmut auf, und bald, bald hätte selbst mich die himmlische Schminke betrogen!<sup>710</sup>*

Ferdinand feels deceived: on the one hand by Luise and on the other hand by himself and his own face. He thinks about Luise's expressions when they first stayed together and calls them "Grimassen". He thinks that her affection was just a show. He feels also betrayed by his own face: "*Sie hat meine ganze Seele gesehn. Mein Herz trat beim Erröten des ersten Kusses sichtbar in meine Augen – und sie empfand nichts?*"<sup>711</sup>. His heart and feelings are shown through blushing. By calling Luise's expression "Grimassen", a distorted face, Ferdinand puts in perspective his earlier judgment. Luise does not show her real face, but hides it under a grimace and this grimace already implies a distorted face as well as a misinterpreted reality.

As seen in the above-quoted scenes, the idea of betrayal is linked in many ways to appearance and facial expressions. Passions seem to be responsible of this betrayal. The scenes above show this movement due to Love, but Hatred, Revenge,

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<sup>710</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Ferdinand (alone, hastily reading the letter, at one moment being petrified at the next running around with fury): it is not possible. Not possible. Such a heavenly form cannot hide so a devilish heart. And yet! And yet! If all the angels would descend on earth and proclaim her innocence – when heaven and earth, the creator and the created get together and proclaim her innocence – it is her hand, a monstrous, infernal treachery, humanity has never witnessed before! – This, then was the reason she opposed our flight! – This is why – oh God! Now I awake, now everything becomes clear! – This is why she surrendered with so much seeming heroism her claims on my affection, and all but cheated me with her heavenly make-up.

<sup>711</sup> She has seen my whole soul. My heart was shining in my eyes at the blush of our first kiss – and she didn't feel anything?

Envy and Jealousy can also be seen in the corpus. In *Die Räuber* for instance, Karl von Moor understands Amalia's reaction to his portrait as a sign of Love:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 2**

Moor:

*Sie liebt mich, sie liebt mich! – Ihr ganzes Wesen fieng an sich zu empören, verrätherisch rollten die Tränen von ihren Wangen.*<sup>712</sup>

In the same scene, Franz von Moor tries to detect the betrayal by the servant Daniel:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 2**

Franz:

*Sieh mir fest ins Auge! Wie deine Knie schlottern! Wie du zitterst! Gesteh Alter! Was hast du gethan?*<sup>713</sup>

The whole body is in agitation and every outer movement shows an inner conflict. Schiller uses the double meaning of the word “Verrat” in a combined way: revelation and betrayal. Amalia and Daniel are betrayed by their facial features, and in Daniel's case this shows an actual betrayal of his master.

In *Ricciarda*, in the last scene of the first act, Guelfo is suspicious that his daughter is in contact with his brother Averardo:

#### **Act I – Scene 4**

Guelfo:

*Qui dunque innanzi di tua madre all'urna,  
Ti fai men grave fra non molto udirmi -  
Ma ch'io mal non sospetti, assai n'e prova  
Quel traditor, che qui notturno errava.  
Tu il sai?*

Ricciarda:

*Rumor men venne . . .*

Guelfo:

*E se nel viso*

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<sup>712</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Moor: She loves me, she loves me! Her whole being started to tremble, the traitor tears rolled down her cheeks.

<sup>713</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Franz: Look me steadfastly in the eye! How your knees knock together. How you tremble! Confess, old man! What have you done?

*Ben ti discerno, di pietà confusa  
E di terror pel rischio suo ti fai -  
E sai che ignoto dileguossi e illeso? -  
Ne sarai lieta.*<sup>714</sup>

Guelfo's suspicion is based on his daughter's facial expression, which he can clearly read as a mixture of pity and terror. In act two his reading of his daughter's face continues:

### **Act II – Scene 2**

Guelfo:  
*Un tempo,  
Un tempo fu ch'io mi pascea di liete  
Lusinghe anch'io! ma nel mio seno allora,  
Gioia e dolcezza il tuo sguardo spandea:  
Eri innocente allor; nè m'irritava  
Una lagrima tua, nè sul tuo volto  
Mi sforzavi a spiar nuovi e crudeli  
Indizj, e a paventar d'esser tradito.*<sup>715</sup>

Ricciarda has changed over the years and her father does not really trust her anymore. Her facial features and expression, which were once connected to the feelings and emotions of her father, have become more complex and subtle. Guelfo calls the signs in Ricciarda's face "indizi", so his reading is an inquiry to understand the crimes of her heart and soul.

### **Intentions**

The previous sections spoke about "zweifelhafte Mienen" (Nathan der Weise) and "crudeli indizi" (Ricciarda) in the faces of some characters. The facial features and expressions do not only show the passions, character and soul, but also the intentions. In the discussion about stage directions connected to the passions, Ferdinand from *Kabale und Liebe* is described while picturing the murder of the Hofmarschall. The whole scene concentrates on his Desperation and Anger related

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<sup>714</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Guelfo: Here, then, before your mother's urn, you listen to me with less difficulty. – I have no wrong suspicion, but rather proof of the traitor who wandered here during the night. You know him? Ricciarda: I heard about a rumor... Guelfo: And I perceive in your face a confused pity and terror for his risk – and you know that he disappeared unrecognized and unharmed? You would be pleased.

<sup>715</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Guelfo: In the past, at one time, I was also fed off nice flatteries! But in my breast joy and tenderness were spread by your gaze: You were innocent then, your tears did not irritate me, I did not need to spot new and cruel signs in your face, and I did not fear being betrayed.

to the loss of Luise. While his words express this Desperation and Anger, his facial and physical expressions show his terrible intention:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 4**

Ferdinand (nach einem langen Stillschweigen, worin seine Züge einen schrecklichen Gedanken entwickeln):

*Verloren! ja, Unglückselige! – Ich bin es. Du bist es auch. Ja, bei dem großen Gott! Wenn ich verloren bin, bist du es auch! Richter der Welt! Fordre sie mir nicht ab. Das Mädchen ist mein. Ich trat dir deine ganze Welt für das Mädchen ab, habe Verzicht getan auf deine ganze herrliche Schöpfung. Lass mir das Mädchen. – Richter der Welt! Dort winseln Millionen Seelen nach dir – Dorthin kehre das Aug deines Erbarmens – Mich lass allein machen, Richter der Welt!*

(Indem er schrecklich die Hände faltet.)

*Sollte der reiche vermögende Schöpfer mit einer Seele geizen, die noch dazu die schlechteste seiner Schöpfung ist? – Das Mädchen ist mein! Ich einst ihr Gott, jetzt ihr Teufel!*

(Die Augen grass in einen Winkel geworfen.)

*Eine Ewigkeit mit ihr auf ein Rad der Verdammnis geflochten – Augen in Augen wurzelnd – Haare zu Berge stehend gegen Haare – auch unser hohles Wimmern in eins geschmolzen – Und jetzt zu wiederholen meine Zärtlichkeiten, und jetzt ihr vorzusingen ihre Schwüre – Gott! Gott! – Die Vermählung ist fürchterlich – aber ewig!*

(Er will schnell hinaus. Der Präsident tritt herein.)<sup>716</sup>

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<sup>716</sup> ACT IV – Scene 4: Ferdinand (after a long silence, during which his countenance forms a terrible idea): Lost! Yes, unfortunate! – We both are lost and unfortunate! Yes, by the Almighty God! If I'm lost, you are it aswell. Judge of the world, ask her not from me! The girl is mine. For her sake I renounced to the whole world, abandoned all the glorious creation. Leave me the girl, Judge of the world. There are millions of souls whining, turn on them your eye of compassion. Leave me, judge of the world. (folding his hands) Should the Creator be covetous with one miserable soul, the worst of his creation? The girl is mine. Once I was her god, now I am her devil. (the eyes terribly fixed) An eternity passed with her upon the rack of everlasting perdition! Eye in eye – hair standing on end – our hollow whimper melted into one. And then to repeat my affection and to sing to her my vows of love. God! God! The union is dreadful – but eternal! (he wants to rush off. The President enters).



In *Tieste* for instance, in the second act, when Ippodamia is discussing with her son Atreo the future and destiny of Tieste, facial expressions and fixed features in the faces of the two brothers are mentioned. Ippodamia, seeing Atreo, says:

#### **Act II – Scene 4**

Ippodamia:

*Figlio, qual nube d'oscuri pensieri  
Ti siede in fronte! Ah! ti serena omai;  
Ed una madre, che suoi giorni visse  
Sì gran tempo infelici, afflitti e rei,  
Deh! una volta rallegra.*<sup>717</sup>

His cruel intentions – changed by Envy and Revenge – are shown on his forehead and they have also changed his character. The “*oscuri pensieri*”, the mental elaboration of a devilish plan is “written” on the face of Atreo. As quoted before, the face of Atreo’s mother Ippodamia also reveals the passions and emotions that drive her soul:

#### **Act II – Scene 4**

Ippodamia:

*Che fia di quella dolorosa donna? –  
Vedila come i suoi passi strascina  
Pallida, muta; e di sua colpa ha in viso  
L'orror.*<sup>718</sup>

This quotation already predicts the excessive horror scenes which will follow later in the play, when Atreo wants Tieste to drink the blood of his son. Blood in general is used on several occasions in this play to express horror, but also other passions and characteristics. In the second act in the fifth scene for example, Atreo states that he might have the same blood as his brother but his character and his soul are not the same:

#### **Act II – Scene 5**

Atreo:

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<sup>717</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Ippodamia: Son, which clouds of dark thoughts are on your forehead! Ah! Be calm; A mother, whose days have been sad and worried for a long time, cheer up.

<sup>718</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Ippodamia: What happened to that sorrowful mother? Look as she drags her feet. Pale, silent; and the horror of her guilt in the face.

*E sì crudel sarommi,  
Che alla gentile un dì mia sposa, or d'altri,  
Porger io voglia acerba morte? Eppure  
L'avrei dovuto; ma se con Tieste  
Comune ho il sangue, non però comuni  
Ho colpe ed alma.<sup>719</sup>*

Blood also appears in one of the scenes in the fourth act, the Despair of Erope's and Tieste's tragedy:

#### **Act IV – Scene 2**

Erope:

*Di morte tu parli? Ebben la bramo;  
Ma da tue mani: svenami, il ridico,  
Svenami, e fuggi. – Gli estremi momenti  
Non funestar di mia misera vita;  
Io te l'offro; ella è tua... Sia tutto tuo;  
Ma va, ch'io non ti vegga.*

Tieste:

*Ombra... gigante  
Qui dinanzi non vedi? Ha fiamma il crine,  
Sangue negli occhi bolle, e di atro sangue  
Sprazzi li grondan dalla bocca; mira...  
Sul mio volto gli slancia. Ella mi tragge  
Pel braccio. – Vengo, vengo.<sup>720</sup>*

Foscolo tries to create two feelings and emotions in the audience's response to the tragedy: compassion and terror. The two female characters Erope and Ippodamia are shown as two miserable and pitiable mothers who ask for death rather than a tragic life. The male characters Atreo and Tieste are shown as two passionate and presumably strong men, who fight against their own passions and those of their siblings.

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<sup>719</sup> ACT II – Scene 5: Atreo: And if I would be so cruel one day to desire a bitter death for my spouse and others? And yet, I should have; but if I have in common with Tieste the blood it does not mean that we have in common also guilt and soul.

<sup>720</sup> ACT IV – Scene 2: Erope: You speak about death? Well I desire it, but from your hands: slash my veins, I say it once more, slash my veins and flee. – In these extreme moments, do not cry over my miserable life. I offer it to you, it is yours... it is all yours. But go, I may not behold you. Tieste: Giant shadow, don't you see it here before us? Flames in the hair, blood boils in the eyes, and blood splashes are dripping from the mouth; It aims at my face. It catches me by the arm. – I am coming, I am coming.

All the above mentioned examples exhibit different approaches and opinions on the readability of the human face. The authors of the corpus insert physiognomical elements on many diverse occasions and situations, in both the main and subsidiary action, spoken by the main and secondary characters.

### **2.2.2. Lavater and his “science”**

The previous chapters showed a certain physiognomical knowledge by the authors, which influenced the creation of the setting, the characters and the plot. This knowledge comes from the philosophical and scientific discussions of that time, but it is also often linked directly to the debate around Lavater and his “science”. This chapter will show the five plays of this corpus that address directly Lavater’s ideas on Physiognomy. The analysis shows both plays which are convinced of the value and importance of a physiognomical science and those which criticize it, mainly in a satirical mode.

Lavater’s works and theories had a first very intense reception in Christoph Friedrich Bretzner’s *Karl und Sophie, oder Die Physiognomie* (1780). The entire play puts Physiognomy at the centre of discussion. The two love stories in the play, Karl and Sophie, and Röse and Peter, are related to physiognomical readings and judgement. The main physiognomist is Magister Ralf, who teaches and preaches his ideas to Baron von Wandal and the teacher Schwalbe. The play begins with Karl’s revelation towards Sophie and their oath of eternal love. Fritz, Sophie’s younger brother, also takes an oath of love and gives a silhouette of himself, made by the Magister Ralf, to his beloved Julgen. The fourth scene of the first act is entirely dedicated to the physiognomical studies of Magister Ralf and the Baron von Wandal:

#### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Zimmer des Herrn von Wandal.  
Baron von Wandal und Magister Ralf  
(sitzen am Tische, auf welchem Lavaters  
physiognomische Fragmente aufgeschlagen  
liegen, nebst verschiedenen Kupfern und  
Silhouetten)

Herr von Wandal:

*Nimmer, nimmer, lieber Magister, das bereden Sie mich nicht! Den Kerl um der Nase, den Menschen um der Stirne willen zu verdammen? Bey meiner Seele! Ich lass mein Leben für die Physiognomik, sie ist mein Steckenpferd, das wissen Sie lieber Magister: aber zum Henker! Wenn sie das lehrte, den Augenblick ins Feuer mit all dem physiognomischen Kram.*

[...]

Ralf:

*Verzeihen Sie Herr Baron, was das Studium der Physiognomik betrifft, da sind Sie nur noch ein Laie. Welcher wahre Physiognomist wird bey der Form einzelner Gesichtstheile stehen bleiben? Diese dienen ihm dazu, das Total des ganzen Physiognomietons zu erklären – Die Modification der –*

Herr von Wandal:

*Ums Himmels willen nur keine gelehrte Erklärung! Sie wissen, ich hasse den verbrämten Ton wie die Sünde. Sprechen Sie mit mir natürlich, wie jeder Mensch spricht, wie jeder versteht. – Lassen Sie uns Beyspiele nehmen.<sup>721</sup>*

This first scene sets already the following debate about the value and truthfulness of Physiognomy. Baron von Wandal is very skeptical of physiognomical judgements, even though he claims to be so attached to Physiognomy that he would even die for it. Ralf is the academic counterpart; being a Magister he has a scientific approach to Physiognomy and he concludes that all its products must be true. The baron is much more down to earth and wants an explanation of this science based on examples.

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<sup>721</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Room of the Herr von Wandal. Baron von Wandal and Magister Ralf (Sitting at the table, on which Lavater's Physiognomical Fragments are layed open, along with different engravings and silhouettes). Herr von Wandal: Never, never, dear Magister, you do not convince me! To condemn that guy because of his nose, people for the sake of their forehead? By my soul! I would let my life for Physiognomy, it is my hobbyhorse, you know that dear Magister: but the hell! If it taught that I would throw all the physiognomic stuff in the fire. [...] Ralf: Forgive me Herr Baron, but you are only an amateur in the study of Physiognomy. Which true physiognomist would stop at one single face feature? These serve him to explain the totality of all the Physiognomy – The modification of – Herr von Wandal: For heaven's sake, no intellectual explanation please! You know, I hate this embellished tone like sin. Speak to me naturally, like every human being speaks, as everyone understands. - Let us take examples.

Together they discuss and debate the appearances of Karl, Jakob, Justine and Simon.

Karl's face was the reason the baron welcomed him in his house. Ralf wants to make him believe that he was fooled by the face:

#### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Ralf:

*Gebe der Himmel, daß ich mich irre, daß ich Unrecht habe! Aber, – hier ist seine Silhouette, – fanden Sie je diesen Umriß der Stirne in einem Gesicht, das Sie sich zu ihrem Freunde wünschten? Fanden Sie?*

Herr von Wandal:

*Auf euren Papieren vielleicht nicht: aber in der Natur?*

*[...]*

*Ich hab' den guten Jungen auf sein Gesicht genommen, auf sein ganzes Gesicht, und hätt' ihn mit diesem Gesicht genommen, wenn er auch auf der Stirne gebrandmarkt gewesen wäre. Zum Henker! Sehn Sie ihn doch nur an. Welche Offenheit, Redlichkeit, Größe der Seelen und wahre reine Empfindungen les' ich in seinem Gesichte!<sup>722</sup>*

The baron discusses the difference in the perception of the real person and their silhouette. Lavater discusses the relation between original and copy in his *Physiognomische Fragmente*: “Nicht Alles – oft sehr viel, oft aber auch nur sehr wenig, kann aus einem genauen Schattenrisse von dem Character eines Menschen gesehen werden. [...] Wer Alles aus dem blossen Schattenrisse sehen will, ist so thöricht, wie der, der aus dem Wasser eines Menschen alle seine Kräfte und Schwachheiten, wirkliche und mögliche Beschwerden errathen will.”<sup>723</sup> (trans.: “Not all, often very much, often but little, can be discovered, of the character of a man, from his silhouette. [...] Who wants to see everything from the mere silhouette, is as

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<sup>722</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Ralf: Heaven grant that I am mistaken, that I am wrong! But - here is his silhouette – Have you ever found this outline of the forehead in the face of a friend? Did you? Herr von Wandal: On your papers maybe not: but in nature? [...] I've taken the good boy because of his face, of his entire face, and I would have taken him with this face even though he would have been marked on the forehead. What the heck! Just look at him. This openness, honesty, size of the soul and true, pure emotion I read in his face!

<sup>723</sup> Lavater. *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Vol.2 Winterthur, 1776 p.114.

foolish as the one who wants to guess out of the water of a man all his strengths and weaknesses, real and possible problems.”).

Already with the example of Karl, the reader can see a clear difference in the baron’s and Ralf’s opinions. Both disagree on all the following physiognomical judgements. Jakob, the baron’s groom, has according to Ralf a “*Galgenphysiognomie*” (“Physiognomy of the gallow”) and should immediately leave the baron’s house. Justine, the servant, on the contrary has according to the baron a “*Katzenphysiognomie*” (“cat Physiognomy”) and her soul is insidious. The housekeeper, Simon, is seen by Ralf as the truest of all people living and working in the baron’s house:

#### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Ralf:

*Der Verwalter ist der ehrlichste Kerl, den je ein physiognomisches Auge gesehen hat.*

Herr von Wandal:

*Nun beym Henker so hab‘ ich keins! Hab‘ den Kerl für den größten Spitzbuben gehalten.*<sup>724</sup>

The baron calls Ralf at the end of their debate “*König aller Physiognomisten*” (“king of all physiognomists”), but he still does not believe in all his readings. The physiognomical judgement given by Ralf will be shown as completely wrong at the end of the play, and every good soul he described turns out to be bad. The baron, seeing Karl, is more than ever convinced of his own reading of Karl’s face; he sees both his good soul and his tragic and sad past in his countenance. Not only was Karl welcomed in the baron’s house because of his innocent look, but also the little Julgen had the right physiognomy to be trusted:

#### **ACT I – Scene 8**

Frau von Wandal:

*Sie haben das Mädgen ins Haus genommen, ihrer guten Physiognomie wegen ins Haus genommen.*<sup>725</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Ralf: The housekeeper is the truest man, my physiognomical eye has ever seen. Herr von Wandal: What the hell? I don’t have one, I thought he was the worst villain.

<sup>725</sup> ACT I – Scene 8: Frau von Wandal: You took the girl in the house due to her good physiognomy.

The baroness does not trust the baron's judgement, because it seems to be Julgen's fault that their son Fritz tries to commit suicide over his love for her. The baroness wants Julgen to leave.

Ralf does not describe himself any time, but his actions would demonstrate that he is a slimy type. He courts Justine and tells her how beautiful her countenance is, than kisses her fiercely. Justine herself thinks that he gets fooled by his "art":

### **ACT II – Scene 3**

Ralf:

*Wenn diese kleinen lieben schelmischen Augen nicht wären.*

Justine:

*Die armen unschuldigen Augen! Da hintergeht Sie Ihre Kunst gewiß.<sup>726</sup>*

Throughout the play, Physiognomy is called "Kunst": "*schwarze Kunst*" ("black art": ACT III – Scene 5) and "*schwankende, trügerische Kunst*" ("unsteady, deceptive art": ACT IV – Scene 9). The baron continuously doubts the truthfulness of the physiognomical reading suggested by Ralf, but his indecisive character makes him ask for it again and again:

### **ACT II – Scene 4**

Herr von Wandal:

*Vielleicht wird's einer der nichtswürdigen Buben, über den der Vater die Hände zusammenschlagen möchte: doch nein nein, da wär' er nicht so gebildet, nicht mit diesem Auge, nicht mit dieser Stirne, nicht mit diesem Feuerblick, der gleich aufs Herz wirkt, gleich uns den Buben zum Freunde macht. – Und meynen Sie nicht auch Magister, wenn einer ein Bösewicht wird, waren immer Eltern und Erzieher zur Hälfte schuld daran?<sup>727</sup>*

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<sup>726</sup> ACT II – Scene 3: Ralf: If only would not be these little mischievous eyes. Justine: These poor innocent eyes, your art fools you.

<sup>727</sup> ACT II – Scene 4: Herr von Wandal: Maybe it is one of the worthless boys whose father throws his hands up in despair: but no no, because he was not so educated, not with this eye, not with this forehead, not with this firing look that has an immediate effect on the heart and which immediately makes the boy our friend. - And do not you think Magister, if one becomes a villain, his parents and teachers were always to blame for half of it?

The baron needs Ralf's confirmation of his assumptions.

The third act concentrates the action in Marie's inn. Her daughter Röse would like to marry Peter, but the teacher Schwalbe read in his face that he is a rogue. Marie tells Röse about Schwalbe's knowledge:

### **ACT III – Scene 1**

Marie:

*Der Herr Schulmeister ist dir ein grundgelehrter Mann, der weiß dir Dinge, davon unser einer sein Lebtage nichts gehört hat. Da hat er auch unter andern die Fisominik gestudirt, da kann ers einem gleich im Gesichte ansehen, was einer im Schilde führt. Da hatt er dir da letztlich ein großes großes Buch, das ihm der Magister Ralf, der Hofmeister aufm Rittersitze bey unserm gnädigen Herrn ist, gegeben hatte. Ach lieber Himmel! Da waren dir mehr als tausend Gesichter drinnen; und immer die Beschreibung dabey.<sup>728</sup>*

Through Marie, Röse and Peter, the play shows the opinion of normal, modest people towards Physiognomy. Marie, as we see in her description, does not even know what to call Physiognomy, but she blindly believes in its results. Interestingly, Röse and Peter question Physiognomy much more than the educated characters do. Röse discusses her doubts with Schwalbe:

### **ACT III – Scene 2**

Röse:

*Aber Herr Schulmeister, seh er doch nur an; was kann denn nun Peter dafür, daß er so ein Gesicht hat?*

Schwalbe:

*Er würde es nicht haben, wenn er kein Bösewicht wär.<sup>729</sup>*

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<sup>728</sup> ACT III – Scene 1: Marie: The schoolmaster is a learned man who knows things, which one of us has never heard. He studied Physiognomy, he can immediately see in the face what one is up to. He lately had this big big book that the Magister Ralf who is Hofmeister at our Lord's palace, had given him. Oh my goodness! There were more than a thousand faces inside; and always with their description.

<sup>729</sup> ACT III – Scene 2: Röse: But, Mister schoolmaster, how can it be Peter's fault that he has such a face? Schwalbe: He would not have it, if he were not such a villain.



When Röse tells Peter that they cannot get married because of his facial expression, he immediately asks the same question, and Schwalbe gives the same very simple answer:

### **ACT III – Scene 3**

Peter:

*Was kann ich denn für die Nase? Weißt du denn nicht, daß ich einmal vom Heuboden geradt auf die Nase gefallen bin?*

Röse:

*Sieht ers Herr Schulmeister, Peter kann nichts dafür; er ist vom Heuboden auf die Nase gefallen.*

Schwalbe:

*Heuboden hin, Heuboden her! Er wäre nicht herunter gefallen, wenn er kein Bösewicht wäre.<sup>730</sup>*

Peter tells the baron about Schwalbe's judgement and wants him to intervene. The baron and Ralf ask Schwalbe about his opinion on Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*:

### **ACT IV – Scene 5**

Schwalbe:

*Der Herr Magister Ralf ist so gütig gewesen, mir des großen Herrn Lavaters Physiognomik zu communiciren –*

Ralf:

*Gefällts Ihm Herr Schwalbe?*

Schwalbe:

*Wem könnte auch das nicht gefallen! Aus meiner Seele geschrieben! – Das ist ein Werk, das ist ein Werk! – Ich wette, ich wette, in hundert Jahren wird mans erst nach Verdienst schätzen lernen.<sup>731</sup>*

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<sup>730</sup> ACT III – Scene 3: Peter: How can I help for my nose? Don't you know that I once fell on the nose from the hayloft? Röse: You see Mister Schoolmastr, Peter can't help it, he fell from the hayloft on his nose. Schwalbe: Hayloft or not, he would not have fallen down, if he weren't a villain.

<sup>731</sup> ACT IV – Scene 5: Schwalbe: Magister Ralf was so kind to give me Mister Lavater's Physiognomy – Ralf: Do you like it? Schwalbe: Who would not like it! Written right out of my soul – This is such a masterpiece! – I bet that in one hundred years one will only learn to appreciate it.

Schwalbe is the first to directly address Lavater, his success and reception. In 1780, when this play was first published, Lavater was still alive. It could be assumed that with Schwalbe's remark the author wanted to refer to the ambivalent reception of Lavater's ideas by his contemporaries. Schwalbe, to convince the baron of his reading of Peter's appearance, gives him a silhouette of his own face, but the baron's reaction is not as expected:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 5**

Herr von Wandal:

*Ach pfui lieber Schulmeister! Was denkt er? –  
Das ist ein hämisches Gesicht! Der Ausdruck  
eines wahren Schurken.*

Schwalbe:

*Ey, ey, gnädiger Herr, das bin ich selbst!*

*[...]*

*Vielleicht haben sich der gnädige Herr geirrt.  
Betrachten, doch Ihro Gnaden nochmals den  
Schattenriß mit Aufmerksamkeit; ziehen doch  
Dieselben ohnmaßgeblich die sehr ansehnliche  
Nase in Erwägung.*

Herr von Wandal:

*Was hilft die Nase, wenn's Ganze nichts taugt.  
Weiß Er was lieber Schwalbe, das Beste ist,  
wir wollen thun, als ob wir uns beyde geirrt  
hätten: ich mich in dem Urtheile über Ihn, und  
Er sich mit dem Urtheile bey Petern. Wir lassen  
die beyden jungen Leute einander heirathen –*

*[...]*

*Lieber Herr Schwalbe in Zukunft laß ers  
physiognomisiren bleiben. Man kann ein  
trefflicher Schulmeister seyn, ohne ein  
Fünkgen Physiognomik zu verstehen.<sup>732</sup>*

The baron criticizes both Ralf and Schwalbe for relying only on the face. For the baron the human character is shown by the facial expression but also by the actions.

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<sup>732</sup> ACT IV – Scene 5: Herr von Wandal: Oh no, dear schoolmaster, what are you thinking? That is a malicious face. The expression of a real villain. Schwalbe: Ey, ey, Sir, that's me. [...] Maybe Sir you are mistaken. Please observe, Sir, again the silhouette with much attention. Please look at the well formed nose. Herr von Wandal: What about the nose, if the whole thing doesn't work. You know, dear Schwalbe, what would be the best, we pretend that we were both mistaken, I in my judgment of you and you in your judgement of Peter. Let the young couple marry each other. [...] Dear Mister Schwalbe, in the future don't physiognomize anymore. One can be a wonderful schoolmaster, without understanding Physiognomy.

He defends Peter because, when he asks if Peter also behaves badly, Schwalbe says it is only written in his face. The baron wants to see the human being as the union between outer appearance and action. Both Ralf and Schwalbe criticize the baron for putting his heart in his judgements, but in fact their own judgements are made for their own convenience: Ralf wants to marry Justine, so she is beautiful in his eyes; Schwalbe wants to marry Röse so Peter is punished with a bad nose.

As seen with above quotes, the baron has a very ambivalent opinion of Physiognomy and he trusts Ralf's judgement more than his own intuition. When he hears about Sophie and Jakob leaving he immediately thinks of his misreading in Karl's and Jakob's faces and the deceptive nature of Physiognomy:

### **ACT IV – Scene 9**

Herr von Wandal:

*Schwankende, trügerische Kunst. Wie kannst du uns irre führen! Ich bin der Thor, dem die Augen geblendet waren, daß er Redlichkeit und Tugend zu sehen wähnte, wo Falschheit und Laster gezeichnet war. Hat mir der Magister nicht alles vorher gesagt, mich nicht für beyden Verräthern gewarnt, für Karl und Jakob? Wohl hatte er recht, wenn er sagte, daß das bloße Urtheil des Herzens täuschte.*

[...] (Nimmt Karls Silhouette)

*So sieht also ein Verräther; dieß find also die Züge die einen Bösewicht bezeichnen? – O du großer Meister unser aller! wie tief, wie geheimnißvoll ist deine Kunst! und wir Schwache wännen sie zu verstehen?<sup>733</sup>*

The baron invokes Lavater as master and he admits his failures in trying to understand this most difficult art. In the following scenes, the baron changes his opinion on Physiognomy many times, which shows even more clearly his fickle character. When he sees the small boy Hänsgen he speaks about his beautiful soul written in his face:

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<sup>733</sup> ACT IV – Scene 9: Herr von Wandal: Unsteady, deceptive art. How can you fool us! I was the fool whose eyes were blinded in seeing honesty and virtue where falseness and vice was painted. Did not the Magister tell me everything before, did he not warn me of the two traitors Karl and Jakob? He was sure right by seeing that the pure judgement of the heart deceives. [...] (he takes Karl's silhouette) This is how a traitor looks like, how the features of a villain are designed? – Oh great Master of us all. How deep, how mysterious is your art. And we weak try to understand it.

## ACT IV – Scene 10

Herr von Wandal:

*Welche Treuherzigkeit und Unschuld in diesem kleinen Gesicht gezeichnet ist!*

[...]

*Wenn in diesem kleinen Gesicht nicht die herrlichsten Anlagen zu Redlichkeit und Tugend liegen.<sup>734</sup>*

In the next scene, the baron criticizes a physiognomical approach, when he gets a letter from Jakob hidden under a formal letter:

## ACT IV – Scene 11

Herr von Wandal:

*Aber nun seh ich wohl, sowohl dich als deinen Brief darf man nicht nach der Außenseite beurtheilen: denn dein Brief hat die völlige Physiognomie eines Gevatterbriefs.<sup>735</sup>*

At the end, when he realizes that all the judgements he initially made of the people who surround him are true, the baron comes to one final conclusion:

## ACT V – Scene 10

Herr von Wandal:

*Ich dächte lieber Magister: wir ließen Physiognomie, Physiognomie seyn. Redlich und rechtschaffen gelebt, Kinder, giebt die beste Physiognomie!<sup>736</sup>*

Bretzner satirizes in parts the physiognomical judgement of the characters in this play, but he also shows the truth in some of the physiognomical reading. He gives much more credit to the modest, simple characters such as Röse and Peter than to the educated characters such as Ralf and Schwalbe. This play reveals also the general reception of Lavater: Marie the innkeeper is a symbol for many other contemporaries of Lavater and Bretzner, who speak about Physiognomy and its

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<sup>734</sup> ACT IV – Scene 10: Herr von Wandal: Which honesty and innocence are painted in this little face! [...] This little face bears the best features for honesty and virtue.

<sup>735</sup> ACT IV – Scene 11: Herr von Wandal: But now I understand, that a letter should not be judged by its cover. Your letter has the physiognomy of a letter by a godfather.

<sup>736</sup> ACT V – Scene 10: Herr von Wandal: I thought, dear Magister, that we decided to let Physiognomy be Physiognomy. Living upright and honest is the best Physiognomy.

truthfulness without even being able to pronounce the word properly. The fashion of collecting and analysing silhouettes and portraits was widespread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The secondary literature discusses in detail the popularity of Lavater and his science.<sup>737</sup> The play by Bretzner shows this popularity in an artistic way.

Two years after Bretzner's play, Schiller refers in *Die Räuber* directly to Physiognomy and its reception. In the second act the robber Spiegelberg tells stories about his thieving past. When Razmann asks him what a good robber needs, he replies "*ein eigenes National-Genie*" ("*national genius*") and "*Spitzbuben Klima*" ("*Rascal climate*", ACT II – Scene 3). Spiegelberg then continues with specific indications about who can become robbers:

### ACT II – Scene 3

#### Spiegelberg:

*So ist dein erstes, wenn du in die Stadt kommst, du ziehst bey den Bettelvögten, Stadt-Patrollanten und Zuchtknechten Kundschaft ein, wer so am fleissigsten bey ihnen einspreche, die Ehre gebe, und diese Kunden suchst du auf – ferner nistest du dich in die Kaffeehäuser, Bordelle, Wirthshäuser ein, spähst, sondirst, wer am meisten über die wolfeile Zeit, die fünf pro cent, über die einreissende Pest der Policeyverbesserungen schreyt, wer am meisten über die Regierung schimpft, oder wider die Physiognomik eifert und dergleichen, Bruder! das ist die rechte Höhe! die Ehrlichkeit wakelt wie ein holer Zahn, du darfst nur den Pelikan ansetzen.*<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> See John Graham. *Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy. A study in the History of Ideas.* Bern/Frankfurt am Main/Las Vegas: Lang, 1979 p.61f.; Ellis Shookman. "Wissenschaft, Mode, Wunder. Über die Popularität von Lavaters Physiognomik." In: Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (ed.). *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen. Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994, 243-252 p.244f.; Graeme Tytler. *Physiognomy in the European Novel. Faces and Fortunes.* Princeton University Press, 1982 p.78f.

<sup>738</sup> ACT II – Scene 3: Spiegelberg: Well, when you get into a town, the first thing is to fish out from the beadles, watchmen, and turnkeys, who are their best customers, and for these, accordingly, you must look out: - then ensconces yourself snugly in coffee-houses, brothels, and beer-shops, and observe who cry out most against the cheapness of the times, th reduced five per cents, and the increasing nuisance of police regulations; who rail the loudest against government, or decry physiognomical science, and such like! Those are the right sort of fellows, brother! Their honesty is as loose as a hollow tooth; you have only to apply your pincers. (translated by Henry G. Bohn 1853).

By directly addressing Physiognomy and its critics, Schiller links immoral behaviour to the denial of Physiognomy as science. This indication could be seen as a slight acknowledgement of Physiognomy, because it is followed by honest and moral people, who are not robbers-to-be. Earlier in the same act, Schiller lets Franz von Moor speak about another element related to Physiognomy. In his monologue, Franz mentions the relation of body and soul and his description refers to Schiller's *Physiognomik der Empfindungen*:

### **ACT II – Scene 1**

Franz von Moor:

*Philosophen und Mediziner lehren mich, wie treffend die Stimmungen des Geists mit den Bewegungen der Maschine zusammen lauten. Gichtrische Empfindungen werden jederzeit von einer Dissonanz der mechanischen Schwingungen begleitet – Leidenschaften mißhandeln die Lebenskraft – der überladene Geist drückt sein Gehäuse zu Boden – Wie denn nun? – Wer es verstünde, dem Tod diesen ungebahnten Weg in das Schloß des Lebens zu ebenern? – den Körper vom Geist aus zu verderben – ha! ein Originalwerk! – wer das zu Stand brächte? – Ein Werk ohne gleichen!*<sup>739</sup>

The union between body and soul allows the possibility of destroying the body through changes and agitations in the soul. Franz's quote can be seen in relation to Schiller's general theory of the human body and character, discussed on many occasions in this dissertation.

In 1793, the comedy *False Colours* premiered at the Haymarket Theatre in London. Its author, Edward Morris, was unknown to his contemporaries but he put on stage a well known topic: Physiognomy.

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<sup>739</sup> ACT II – Scene 1: Franz: Philosophers and physiologists teach us how close is the sympathy between the emotions of the mind and the movements of the bodily machine. Convulsive sensations are always accompanied by a disturbance of the mechanical vibrations – passions injure the vital powers – an overburdened spirit bursts its shell. Well then – what if one knew how to smooth this unbeaten path, for the easier entrance of death into a citadel of life? – to work the body's destruction through the mind – ha! An original device! – who can accomplish this? – a device without a parallel! (translated by Henry G. Bohn 1853).

This play shows one of the most interesting characters of all: Lord Visage, whose name already evokes his passion. He arrives at Sir Paul Panick's house and he makes all his considerations based on the physiognomy of the people. Before he arrives, the two servants Tony and Subtle discuss the passion/obsession of Lord Visage:

## ACT I

Tony:

*[...] – and tell us, is my lord as great a phyzzionomite as he used to be – eh!*

Subtle:

*As great? Why man, he has had the whole household shaved bald as coots, to shew the shape of their foreheads, and wears his wig full two inches in arrera to display his own.  
[...]*

Subtle:

*[...] have a care when his lordship comes, or egad he may detect you.  
[...] By your face, to be sure. Why man, the features are his alphabet, and he reads characters at sight.*

Subtle makes an introduction to all the servants before Lord Visage enters, to prepare them for the reading of their traits in the face. Lord Visage enters and he already begins doing his job. He immediately finds two thieves by analysing their ears and noses:

## ACT II

Subtle:

*Have a care, my boys, here come his lordship. Now, as I know you are all of you given to lying, drinking, wenching, and such elegant accomplishments, I would have you keep in the back ground – and above all, put on your best look, or you are undone: his lordship, you know, reads faces, and within his last month, on the bare evidence of their noses and chins, he has detected five felons.*

Lord Visage:

*[...] Subtle, I don't like that fellow's ears; there is a want of firmness about them that is ominous.*  
*[...] Sly thief; but I mark'd him, nature has mark'd him; and the police will mark him - his face is an overt act.*  
*[...] that nose is of itself a verdict, and your voice would pronounce sentence against you in any court of Christendom. – If that fellow dies a natural death, I'll give up Physiognomy and burn Lavater.*

With this first presentation of Lord Visage one understands immediately that he takes his physiognomic ideas from Lavater.

Lord Visage argues with Sir Paul about the value of Physiognomy:

## **ACT II**

Sir Paul:

*I am not distemper'd with physiognomy like you, at least, my lord: I don't trot about, picking up hooknos'd Cæsars, wry-necked Alexanders, and pick-pockets for peripatetics.*

Lord Visage:

*Gross misrepresentations!*

Sir Paul:

*Why, the very cut of your wig betrays you: exposing your ears, you'll certainly lose them the next hard frost.*

Lord Visage:

*Ridiculous!*

Sir Paul:

*Nay, did not I detect one of your housemaids – a face, you said, innocent and spotless as a vestal – did not I detect her breaking her vow with one of the postillions? Did you not marry your wife for her physiognomy? Was not that a trick of your favourite science?*

Lord Visage:

*A trick indeed; but I was then a novice, and have long since forgiven it.*



Sir Paul criticizes Lord Visage's blind belief in the science of Physiognomy and the mistakes coming from it. Sir Paul himself interprets Lord Visage's ears; not on a physiognomical level, but more on a practical, aesthetic level: sooner or later Lord Visage will lose his bat ears with the cold.

Lord Visage seeks to convince Sir Paul that there is a conspiracy going on against him, because he reads the signs on the faces of the servants (*"the chin of the coachman, the brow of the butler, and the nose of the cook"*). Lord Visage leaves Sir Paul with some important advice:

## **ACT II**

Lord Visage:

*Read Lavater, – Sir Paul, – read Lavater; – I  
should never sleep peaceably in my bed, if I  
had not read Lavater.*

The caricaturist Grottesque is called by Lady Panick because she would like to commission some portraits. Lady Panick also intends to put a version of *Romeo and Juliet* on the stage of her personal theatre. When Lord Visage understands that she wants to take the role of Juliet, he says:

## **ACT II**

Lord Visage:

*[...] why the devil should you play Juliet?  
[...] Read Lavater – every feature is ludicrous –  
there is visible rotundity in your nose – a  
whimsical leer in your eye.*

Grottesque tells Lord Visage that he has studied the science of Physiognomy and that he has published several books on it:

## **ACT II**

Grottesque:

*I have just published a new edition, pared  
down to a brace of quarto's.*

Lord Visage:

*Eh! What? I perceived something scientific  
floating in your eye, though I could not exactly  
tell what. Where is it? Have you a copy with  
you?*

Grotesque:

*Never travel without one, my Lord.*

Together they analyse the face of Tony:

### **ACT III**

Grotesque:

*Sit down, Tony, sit down; keep that attitude; for your life, don't shake a muscle.*

Lord Visage:

*You see, Tony, I have distinguished you as a fit subject for philosophical research – To destroy one or two prominent features in a countenance, then to compare its expression in that mangled state, with what it was in the natural, would be a fine experiment.*

[...]

*Did you observe what a judicious hind-head? Very extraordinary, as he is certainly a sad stupid dog, and has scarcely a grain of common sense.*

Lord Visage offers to contribute some advice to Grotesque for his next book. Grotesque seeing this great passion and obsession of Lord Visage says: “[...] *my lord bit by Physiognomy*” (ACT III). Physiognomy seems like a disease transmitted by a wild animal.

Lord Visage is shown as a fool, who thinks only of Physiognomy and has completely lost all sense of reality. He is so obsessed with the science of analysing the features on the faces of people that he does not understand when he is tricked.

Sir Harry Cecil and Captain Montague have switched identities and this creates some confusion. Lord Visage reads both faces and his conclusions reveal the unsoundness of Physiognomy. He meets first Sir Harry Cecil, thinking he is Montague:

### **ACT III**

Lord Visage:

*I can read gambler in your Countenance.*

Sir Harry:

*It is a Cross-reading then, my Lord, I assure you.*

Lord Visage:

*You smile, Sir; you are witty, Sir, but I have detected and will expose you to the whole family; you shall not stay in the house another hour – don't think to hector me, Captain Montague.*

[...]

*What a treacherous blackness between the eyes! As Lavater says – that disturbed walk – that twirling of the hat – that biting of the nails – Grotesque, don't you see villain panting in that muscle?*

Sir Harry:

*That muscle lies then, my Lord.*

Lord Visage:

*Here's a fellow! A muscle lie! Why it is impossible: read Lavater.*

Lord Visage projects his own assumptions about Montague onto the face of Sir Harry, and his reading becomes determined by it. When he sees Montague, thinking that he is Sir Harry, he starts another misreading:

#### **ACT IV**

Lord Visage:

*Aye, there is the character of the Cecils in your countenance.*

Montague:

*You are too good, my Lord. I fear not,*

Lord Visage:

*Yes, there is – the prominent eye –*

Montague:

*You flatter, my Lord – I have not the vanity –*

Lord Visage:

*Then, above all, that curvature of the nose. My old friend, your father, Sir Harry, had a very peculiar nose.*

Montague tries to convince Lord Visage that the heart is more valuable than the face, but Lord Visage replies with a simple “*Read Lavater. I myself should be deceived every instant if I had not read Lavater.*” (ACT IV).

This comedy discusses not only Physiognomy but also other important topics of that moment, such as the passions, the union of heart, soul and body, and the current theatrical performances on different levels. Grottesque uses the art of caricature to characterize people through Physiognomy. With Sir Paul, Grottesque even uses a wordplay to describe his countenance:

## **ACT II**

Grottesque:

*[...] you cannot escape – you are a marked man.*

Sir Paul:

*A marked man!*

Grottesque:

*Yes, Sir, half the Caricaturists in town have sworn to have you – your time is come – you’re a marked man, you are indeed – remember, I tell you, you are what we call a marked man.*

Sir Paul is marked by Nature with the features in his face, but he is also marked by the caricaturists, i.e. he is seen as prey in the realization of a good caricature of a well-known public figure. Sir Paul himself does not understand the value of his face in relation to both markings.

Apart from the already mentioned reference to *Romeo and Juliet*, this comedy discusses on several occasions and in different ways, theatrical elements: Montague and Sir Harry play roles, Lady Panick is, according to Lord Visage, “*born for burlesque*” and “*boys and men are the only dramatis personæ of the present day*”. The play-within-a-play refers also to the physiognomical idea of the readability of the human face and the masks that everybody wears.

The play ends with the solution of the masquerade of Sir Harry and Montague and the exposure of Lord Visage:

## **ACT V**

Lord Visage:

*Ah, Sir Harry, if I had but seen that mole, or the dimple in your chin – But I was caught by that fellow’s cursed nose.*

Grotesque:

*Aye, my Lord, they certainly changed noses as well as characters.*

[...]

Constance:

*And then, you know, he [Montague] never read Lavater, my Lord.*

Sir Paul:

*No, no. Come, come, my Lord, you give up your system? (to Lord Visage)*

Constance:

*Give up his system! Heaven forbid! ‘Tis yours, Sir Paul – ‘tis mine – we are all physiognomists; you have made us so. (To the audience)*

*In your countenances we have ever traced that candour and indulgence which softens the rigid sentence of criticism, and welcomes an endeavor to please, with the kind suffrage of partial friendship.*

THE END

This play satirizes Physiognomy and its improper use. Lavater is mentioned several times and Lord Visage, the main physiognomist, is shown as his direct pupil. The last comment by Constance shows on the other side that Physiognomy is a much more widespread concept, and that in a certain sense everybody is a physiognomist. Every attempt to understand people and to trace their soul and character in their face is a kind of physiognomical study.

Compared to Bretzner’s play where Physiognomy was called an art, in Morris’ comedy it is called a science. Grotesque once refers to it as a science “*yet in infancy*” (ACT III). In both plays the problems related to the exclusive reliance on the human face is discussed. The actions and the heart, i.e. the emotions and feelings, must be analysed with the same intensity.

Thomas Holcroft wrote a detailed critique of *False Colours* in *The Monthly Review*, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This article is the main critical reception we have of *False Colours* and it also brings together Holcroft's own physiognomical knowledge and understanding and the presence of Physiognomy in other plays. In 1795 Holcroft's *The Deserted Daughter* was first staged at Covent Garden. In this chapter, Lavater and his science in the play will be discussed.

Joanna, the deserted daughter, is in Mrs Enfield's brothel – without knowing that it is a brothel – and she wants to work for her accommodation:

## **ACT II – Scene 2**

Joanna:

*Well, well! Courage! You must let me work. I'll earn what I eat. I love you for your kindness, but I will not be dependent.*

Mrs. Enfield:

*Since you will! You say you can draw?*

Joanna:

*It has been my delight. I have studied the human countenance, have read Lavater.*

Mrs. Enfield:

*Anan! Will you copy the engraving I shewed you?-*

Joanna:

*What, the portrait of that strange?*

Mrs. Enfield:

*Mr. Mordent. (Handing down a frame)*

Joanna:

*Mordent?*

Joanna expresses her aversion towards Mr. Mordent and Mrs. Enfield asks, how this aversion can be explained. Joanna justifies both her aversion towards Mr. Mordent and her doubts about Mrs. Enfield herself with her reading of their faces:

Mrs. Enfield:

*Can you judge so certainly?*

Joanna:

*Looking at such a face, who can fail?  
(Examining Mrs. Enfield) You are a worthy  
lady; a kind lady; your actions bespeak it: and  
yet – Don't be angry – there is something about  
your features that I don't like!*

Mrs. Enfield:  
*Bless me, dear!*

Joanna:  
*I must be wrong, because you are good: but  
you have not a good countenance.  
That's strange! I never saw such a thing before!  
– And the more I look the less I like.*

Mrs. Enfield: (aside)  
*Does she suspect me?*

Joanna:  
*If ever I draw your face, I'll alter some of the  
lines, I'll make them such as I think virtue ought  
to have made them; open, honest, undaunted.  
You have such a number of little artful wrinkles  
at the corners of your eyes! – You are very  
cunning!*

Joanna is not sure whether to trust her physiognomic instinct or not. At the end of the scene, she says:

Joanna:  
*You are too generous to injure the helpless,  
and the forlorn: and the lines in your face are  
false!*

Joanna meets first Grime, then Lennox and then Mordent. When she sees Mordent in person she refers to her reading of his face through the portrait:

### **ACT III – Scene 9**

Mordent:  
*Pardon my intrusion, madam: I am a stranger  
to you, but...*

Joanna:  
*Not entirely,*

Mordent:  
*Not! ...*

Joanna:  
*I have been studying you all the morning.*  
[...]

Mordent:  
*My portrait? [...]*

Joanna:  
*It speaks volumes: yet not so much as the original.*

Joanna sees clearly in his face that he has “*flattered, promised, deceived and betrayed more poor girls than one*”. This remark by Joanna refers probably to her own mother, who was left by Mordent. Even though Joanna sees that Mordent has these evil features she does not fear him: “*What should I fear? Besides, you have not the features of revenge*”.

At the end Mordent is revealed as Joanna’s father. Neither the last verses nor the epilogue make any references to Joanna’s physiognomic analysis of both Mordent’s and Mrs. Enfield’s faces. Her reading was correct: even though Mordent turns out to be her father, he still has a certain wildness and wickedness in his character as shown on his face.

Holcroft makes the character of Joanna more intelligent and intellectual, because she knows Lavater and his science. Her reading of the faces prevents her from getting hurt and fooled.

In 1848, James Robinson Planché dedicated an entire play to Lavater, his reception and success: *Lavater the Physiognomist, or Not A Bad Judge*. The action of this two act comedy is set in Switzerland and it is the only example where Lavater is present as an actual character on stage. Lavater, on his way to Glaris to visit the Count de Steinberg, stops at a tavern in Nestall. Lavater is described as observing silently the action and conversations going on in the tavern. His first words to the people present in the tavern are very mysterious to them:

### **ACT I**

Lavater appears at the door of the Inn, and after examining the exterior, enters slowly

Lavater (Smiling):  
*Good morning, Master Zug.*



Zug:  
*Do you know me?*

Lavater:  
*Not at all. I never saw you before.*  
(Turns and looks at Betman)

Zug:  
*Never saw me before. Then how did you...*

Betman:  
*Who is this individual? What are you staring and [Lavater smiles] smiling at? Do you know, sir, that you are actually smiling?*

Lavater:  
*I beg your pardon, Monsieur Betman. (Bowing)*

Betman:  
*He knows my name, too! Do you know me?*

Lavater:  
*Not at all. I never saw you before.*

Lavater explains how he was able to figure out the evidence by just opening his eyes and making some consequential conclusions:

Lavater (Alone, and seated):  
*Ha, ha, ha!*  
*How easily a man may pass for a conjuror, if by the simple use of his eyes and ears he can so astonish unthinking people. How much more astonished would they have been if I had added – Master Zug, you are a coward! – Master Burgomaster, you are a jealous old fool. “What do you mean, sir a coward?” – “I a jealous blockhead?” – “How can you tell, sir?” Because, my good friends, I read it in your faces;*

Lavater describes himself as “*something of a physiognomist*” and throughout the whole play he does what a physiognomist is supposed to do: observe and judge.

When Lavater first sees Christian, he summarizes his impression and his process of understanding him, as follows:

Lavater: (Seeing him.)

*Ah, a stranger – a good-looking youth, and good as he is good-looking! I like that face—every line in it.*

[...]

*There's honesty there—and kindness—and courage!*

[...]

*Generosity—affection! I never saw a better face; but it is overcast by sorrow—he is suffering acutely.*

[...]

Christian:

*Oh, sir, you have indeed concluded rightly.*

Lavater:

*I have concluded naturally. There is nothing marvelous about it.*

Lavater observes the people who surround him and decides immediately whether to trust them. His first impression of Louise, the daughter of Count de Steinberg, is another fine example of Lavater's observation and judgement:

Louise:

*At Glaris! O heavens! and there is no one here to protect – to defend me.*

Lavater: (Advancing.)

*You are mistaken – I will defend you.*

Louise:

*You, sir!*

Betman:

*Heyday ! Heyday! What's that you say?*

Lavater:

*I say this young woman is innocent.*

Betman:

*Oh, you do, do you. Upon my word! And upon what evidence?*

Lavater:

*The evidence of those features. Look well in her face, Burgomaster; you will perceive alarm, occasioned by her position. Horror caused by the terrible accusation unexpectedly brought*

*against her. But where do you see the slightest mark of the passions that could prompt such a crime – of the consciousness – the remorse that would follow it? Take my word for it, Mr. Burgomaster, whatever she may be, this young woman is no murderess.*

Lavater seems more a private detective than a physiognomist, he does not really read the soul of people but rather their intentions (see the hidden affection between Madam Betman and Rutly) and events that happened to them. He seems a kind of Sherlock Holmes. When Louise is accused of murdering the baby Bridget, Lavater reveals step by step that she is innocent.

When Lavater gets to Count de Steinberg's home they discuss together the importance of Lavater's work. The following dialogue summarizes in detail Lavater's real reception and legacy:

## **ACT II**

Count de Steinberg:

*[...] the great philosopher, the profound physiognomist, who can read the human heart like a book.*

Lavater:

*Alas! it is sometimes a very bad book, Steinberg!*

Count:

*Then it is not like yours, which is exciting the curiosity of all Europe, translated into every language.*

Lavater:

*To make me enemies in every country.*

Count:

*Only the rogues it enables you to unmask, the hypocrites who tremble at your marvellous power.*

Lavater:

*Oh, marvellous!*

Count:

*Certainly. Is it not so to be able, at the sight of the mere portrait of a man, to tell what are his*

*virtues, his vices, his talents, or his tastes? Nay, more – from the description of his character and abilities, to be able to sketch the likeness of a person you never saw.*

Lavater:

*Ah, you have heard of my portrait of Mirabeau; and yet have been often puzzled – for instance, that bust of Socrates, which you must remember in our old school-room-when I recall that low forehead, those sinister eyes, that vulgar mouth, I ask myself, “Can they have belonged to the martyr-sage – to the profound philosopher and the intrepid soldier who saved Alcibiades and Xenophon? Is Art faithful? or History in error?”*

Count:

*Then you do not firmly believe in your own science?*

Lavater:

*Not believe? I have never been deceived in a friend. Who can say as much? Not believe? Ha, ha, ha! I selected my last servant from a gang of robbers?*

Count:

*Absurd!*

Lavater:

*It’s a fact. Four years ago, on the road to Lucerne, I fell in with some infuriated peasants who were about to hang, without trial, three fellows whom they had captured, after a desperate struggle, with the whole band. Two of them deserved hanging, no doubt; but something, in the face of the third, induced me to interfere. I succeeded in persuading the peasants to release him; and offered to engage him at thirty florins a month. He agreed, and has lived with me ever since – the best servant I ever had in my life.*

Lavater is able to read other people’s facial expressions, but he is also not able to hide his own:

(Enter Louise in ball-dress)

Count:

*Here she is*

Louise: (Aside, and starting at the sight of Lavater)  
*Heavens!*

Lavater: (Aside.)  
*What do I see!*

Count: (Observing Lavater's emotion.)  
*What's the matter? You appear moved. I trust, that in the features of this dear girl you see nothing to -*

Lavater: (Earnestly.)  
*Nothing but beauty, innocence and affection.*

When Lavater sees the Marquis de Treval he has a very strong resistance towards him. Louise sees this resistance and assures him that the Marquis is a good person. Lavater's response is:

*And this Marquis de Treval has really acted so nobly – so generously! Humph! If so, I am a purblind blackhead and my boasted science is delusion – the dream of a simple enthusiast.*

Lavater is asked to draw the face of Mariano Mariani, an Italian criminal, following the description of his character. This is quite different from what the real Lavater actually did: he described the character of people by reading their silhouettes and portraits, and not the other way round:

Lavater:  
*With dark eyes and olive complexion – all together an Italian head; but the expression – there in lies the likeness. His frequent impostures, his dexterity at play, and his escape from prison, prove him to possess an astuteness, which must be indicated by a certain line of the lip, and a peculiar, but almost imperceptible contraction of the left eyelid. Yes, something like this. [Drawing] Then there remains to be expressed the viler portions of the character; treachery and [stealing a glance at the Marquis] cowardice.*

In the end his drawing shows the face of the Marquis de Treval. Lavater and the Marquis finish up in conflict, where Lavater accuses him of being Mariano Mariani.

The Marquis tries to convince everybody else of his innocence by showing the dangers of Lavater's "science":

Marquis:

*Seriously, gentlemen, I beg you to observe the extent to which infatuation can carry a man, who upon a few lightly considered circumstances, the result of mere accident, builds up a wild theory, which he dignifies by the term of science, and ends in being its only believer. Did it ever occur to him that his speculations might inflict a mortal injury, fix an indelible stain upon an innocent person? He knows I cannot appeal to the sword; his sacred protection shields him from the punishment that would await another slanderer.*

The Marquis addresses some very interesting doubts concerning Physiognomy and his arguments are reasonably convincing. This monologue is the first and only example where the responsibility of physiognomical judgements is discussed. At the end, when it is revealed that the Marquis is actually Mariano Mariani, all these concerns about a physiognomical misreading vanish. The play ends with Lavater's remark:

Count:

*Lavater, what do we not owe to you?*

Lavater:

*The free hand of Louise which may now accompany her heart, the continuance of your friendship, and the admission of all present that I am not a bad judge.*

This last comment shows a very flamboyant Lavater, who wants to earn respect from everybody present at the event.

Planché shows one last, but probably the most interesting, example of the reception of Lavater in theatre. As already discussed, in 1848 Lavater was long dead and his works were less present in public than 30 years earlier. So it is very interesting to see a playwright who places Lavater within the plot of his comedy, and being understood by his audience. Lavater is introduced as a physiognomist, but neither he nor his science is described in detail at the beginning of the play. This

indirectly shows that Lavater was still a known name and his Physiognomy was a known concept or idea.

### 2.2.3. Adaptations

This chapter discusses a kind of case study of four plays of the selected corpus. It aims at showing through some examples, how the physiognomical elements of one play are adapted, transformed, or imitated in another play. It will show the adaptation/imitation of *Nathan der Weise* in *Nathan Le Sage* and the adaptation/transformation/imitation of *Coëlina* in *A Tale of Mystery*.

The methodological background of this chapter is Gérard Genette's theory of hypertexts: "*J'entends par là [hypertextualité] toute relation unissant un texte B (que j'appellerai hypertexte) à un texte antérieur A (que j'appellerai, bien sûr, hypotexte) sur lequel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire.*"<sup>740</sup> (trans.: "By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary."<sup>741</sup>). Genette defines two main relations between text B and text A: transformation and imitation ("*J'appelle donc hypertexte tout texte dérivé d'un texte antérieur par transformation simple (nous dirons désormais transformation tout court) ou par transformation indirecte: nous dirons imitation.*"<sup>742</sup> – trans.: "What I call hypertext, then, is any text derived from a previous text either through simple transformation, which I will call from now on *transformation*, or through indirect transformation, which I shall label *imitation*."<sup>743</sup>).

#### ***Nathan der Weise – Nathan Le Sage***

*Nathan Le Sage* is one of Marie-Joseph Chénier's works which was posthumously published. Chénier published some plays and poems during his lifetime but the largest part of his works is posthumous. Marie-Joseph Chénier is now well known, not only due to the popularity of his older brother André Chénier (1762-1794) but also because his writings had a greater influence on his descendants than on his

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<sup>740</sup> Genette. *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au second degré*. Paris, 1982 p.11f.

<sup>741</sup> Genette. *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*. Translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. University of Nebraska Press, 1997 p.5.

<sup>742</sup> Genette. *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au second degré*. Paris, 1982 p.14.

<sup>743</sup> Genette. *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*. Translated by Newman and Doubinsky. University of Nebraska Press, 1997 p.7.

contemporaries. His work is revolutionary, criticized through censorship and always of political interest. Chénier focuses on historical figures of antiquity, with *Brutus et Cassius* (1790), *Caius Gracchus* (1792) and *Tibère* (1819) and with characters known in the literature such as *Œdipe roi* and *Électre*. Chénier has a very classical approach to Physiognomy, which means he uses the face features of his characters to explain their character, as seen for example in *Cyrus* (1804):

#### **ACT IV – Scene 1**

Mandane:

*L'intérêt le plus tendre. Que j'éprouvais de joie à le voir, à l'entendre, A retrouver les traits du héros généreux, Du héros...! [...] En ces momens affreux, Ces traits, ces nobles traits que ma douleur adore, sur son front, dans ses yeux, je les retrouve encore.*<sup>744</sup>

Chénier adds to the title of *Nathan Le Sage* the indication “*imité de l'Allemand de Lessing*”. His *Nathan Le Sage* is an adaptation of Lessing's play, which contains some major changes: the names of the dramatis personæ, the length of the play (from five to three acts) and the change from prose to verse. The following analysis attempts to emphasize, through the description of the templar, the physiognomical approach of the two authors.

Nathan hears from his daughter Recha and her maid Daja that Recha had been saved by an “angel”. This angel is actually a templar who came to town some days before and was reprieved by Saladin, because he reminded him of his dead brother:

#### **ACT I – Scene 2**

Daja:

*man sagt  
Zugleich, daß Saladin den Tempelherrn  
Begnadigt, weil er seiner Brüder einem,  
Den er besonders lieb gehabt, so ähnlich sehe.  
Doch da es viele zwanzig Jahre her,  
Daß dieser Bruder nicht mehr lebt, – er hieß,  
Ich weiß nicht wie; – er blieb, ich weiß nicht wo;  
So klingt das ja so gar – so gar unglaublich,  
Daß an der ganzen Sache wohl nichts ist.*

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<sup>744</sup> ACT IV – Scene 1: Mandane: The most tender interest. I felt joy to see, to hear, in the features of the generous hero ... of the hero! [...] In those awful moments, these features, those noble features which my pain loves, on his forehead, in his eyes, I still found them.



Nathan:

*Ei, Daja! Warum wäre denn das so  
Unglaublich? Doch wohl nicht – wie's wohl  
geschieht –  
Um lieber etwas noch Unglaublichers  
Zu glauben? – Warum hätte Saladin,  
Der sein Geschwister insgesamt so liebt,  
In jüngern Jahren einen Bruder nicht  
Noch ganz besonders lieben können?  
Pflegen  
Sich zwei Gesichter nicht zu ähneln? – Ist  
Ein alter Eindruck ein verlornen? – Wirkt  
Das nämliche nicht mehr das nämliche?  
Seit wann? – Wo steckt hier das Unglaubliche?  
Ei freilich, weise Daja, wär's für dich  
Kein Wunder mehr; und deine Wunder nur  
Bedürf ... verdienen, will ich sagen, Glauben.<sup>745</sup>*

By saying that there is nothing extraordinary or unbelievable in the fact that two faces can be similar, Nathan makes a clear statement against one of the ground concepts of Physiognomy: every face is different because every character is different. Throughout the play the templar's similarity to Saladin's brother is physiognomically discussed:

### **ACT I – Scene 5**

Klosterbruder:

*Daß Euch nur darum Saladin begnadet,  
Weil ihm in Eurer Mien', in Euerm Wesen,  
So was von seinem Bruder eingeleuchtet.*

Tempelherr:

*Ah! wäre das gewiß! Ah, Saladin! –  
Wie? die Natur hätt' auch nur Einen Zug  
Von mir in deines Bruders Form gebildet:  
Und dem entspräche nichts in meiner Seele?  
Was dem entspräche, könnt ich unterdrücken,*

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<sup>745</sup> ACT I – Scene 2: Daja: 'Tis but report indeed, but it is said / That Saladin gave freedom to the knight, / Moved by the likeness which his features bore / To a lost brother whom he dearly loved, / Though since his disappearance twenty years / Have now elapsed. He fell I know not where, / And e'en his very name's a mystery. / But the whole tale sounds so incredible, / It may be mere invention, pure romance. Nathan: And why incredible? Would you reject / This story, Daja, as so oft is done, / To fix on something more incredible, / And credit that? Why should not Saladin, / To whom his race are all so dear, have loved / In early youth a brother now no more? / Since when have features ceased to be alike? / Is an impression lost because 'tis old? / Will the same cause not work a like effect? / What, then, is so incredible? My Daja, / This can to you be no great miracle; / Or does a wonder only claim belief / When it proceeds from you?

*Um einem Patriarchen zu gefallen? –  
Natur, so leugst du nicht! So widerspricht  
Sich Gott in seinen Werken nicht! [...]*<sup>746</sup>

The templar speaks about the combination of facial and moral traits: his appearance being similar to Saladin's brother makes his soul similar to his. The beauty of his face shows the beautiful character of Saladin's brother, who Saladin desperately misses.

Nathan and Saladin speak about the templar and Saladin wants to show his sister the similarity between the templar and their dead brother. When Saladin hears about the rescue of Recha he once again draws a comparison between the beauty of the templar's soul and that of his brother:

### **ACT III – Scene 7**

Saladin:

*Er? Hat er das? – Ha! darnach sah er aus.  
Das hätte traun mein Bruder auch getan,  
Dem er so ähnelt! – Ist er denn noch hier?  
So bring ihn her! – Ich habe meiner Schwester  
Von diesem ihren Bruder, den sie nicht  
Gekannt, so viel erzählet, daß ich sie  
Sein Ebenbild doch auch muß sehen lassen! –  
Geh, hol ihn! – Wie aus Einer guten Tat,  
Gebär sie auch schon bloße Leidenschaft,  
Doch so viel andre gute Taten fließen!  
Geh, hol ihn!*<sup>747</sup>

Sittah, Saladin's sister finds a portrait of their dead brother and Saladin plans to match the portrait to the physical appearance of the templar:

### **ACT IV – Scene 3**

Saladin:

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<sup>746</sup> ACT I – Scene 5: Friar: It is affirmed the Sultan spared your life / Merely because your voice, your look, your air, / Awoke a recollection of his brother- Templar: He knows all this, and yet?- Ah, were it true! / And, Saladin, could Nature form in me / A single feature in thy brother's likeness, / With nothing in my soul to answer it? / Or what does correspond, shall I belie / To please a Patriarch? No, surely Nature / Could never lie so basely! Nor, kind God, / Couldst thou so contradict Thyself! (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>747</sup> ACT III – Scene 7: Saladin: Ha! did he so? He looked like one that would! / My brother, too - his image - would have done it. / Is he still here? Bring him to me at once. / I have so often spoken to my sister / Of this same brother, whom she never knew, / That I must let her see his counterfeit. / Go, fetch him. How a single noble deed, / Though but the offspring of the merest whim, / Gives birth to other blessings! Bring him to me. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

*Ich muß das Bild doch mit  
Dem jungen Tempelherrn vergleichen; muß  
Doch sehn, wie viel mich meine Phantasie  
Getäuscht.<sup>748</sup>*

When Saladin then sees the Templar, he sees his brother before him:

#### **ACT IV – Scene 4**

Saladin:

*Ich habe mich mit dir in nichts  
Betrogen, braver junger Mann! Du bist  
Mit Seel und Leib mein Assad. Sieh! ich  
könnte  
Dich fragen: wo du denn die ganze Zeit  
Gesteckt? in welcher Höhle du geschlafen?  
In welchem Ginnistan, von welcher guten  
Div diese Blume fort und fort so frisch  
Erhalten worden? Sieh! ich könnte dich  
Erinnern wollen, was wir dort und dort  
Zusammen ausgeführt. Ich könnte mit  
Dir zanken, daß du Ein Geheimnis doch  
Vor mir gehabt! Ein Abenteuer mir  
Doch unterschlagen: – Ja, das könnt' ich;  
wenn  
Ich dich nur säh', und nicht auch mich. – Nun,  
mags!  
Von dieser süßen Träumerei ist immer  
Doch so viel wahr, daß mir in meinem Herbst  
Ein Assad wieder blühen soll.<sup>749</sup>*

In the last scene, all the characters come together and Recha's and the templar's real identities are revealed. Before the revelations however, the templar is still very dubious about the Jew Nathan. Saladin does not like seeing the templar's reaction, because it is not in line with the character of his dead brother. Saladin tells Recha, that if he is not reacting in the expected way, he will just carry his brother's mask and not his true soul:

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<sup>748</sup> ACT IV – Scene 3: Saladin: But be that as it may, I must compare / This portrait with the Templar, that I may / Observe how much my fancy cheated me. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>749</sup> ACT IV – Scene 4: Saladin: You valiant youth! I have not gauged you ill: / In soul and body, you are truly Assad. / I fain would learn where you have been so long / Concealed. In what dim cavern you have slept? / What spirit, in some region of the blest, / Has kept this beauteous flower so fresh in bloom? / Methinks I could remind you of our sports / In days gone by; and I could chide you, too, / For having kept one secret from my ear, / For having dared one gallant deed alone. / I'm happy that so much of this deceit / At least is true, that in my sear of life / An Assad blooms for me once more. And you, / You too are happy, Knight! (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

### **ACT V – Scene 8**

Saladin:

*Komm, liebes Mädchen,  
Komm! Nimms mit ihm nicht so genau. Denn  
wär'  
Er anders; wär' er minder warm und stolz:  
Er hätt' es bleiben lassen, dich zu retten.  
Du mußt ihm eins fürs andre rechnen. –  
Komm!  
Beschäm ihn! tu, was ihm zu tun geziemte!  
Bekenn' ihm deine Liebe! trage dich ihm an!  
Und wenn er dich verschmäht; dirs je vergißt,  
Wie ungleich mehr in diesem Schritte du  
Für ihn getan, als er für dich ... Was hat  
Er denn für dich getan? Ein wenig sich  
Beräuchern lassen! ist was Rechts! – so hat  
Er meines Bruders, meines Assad, nichts!  
So trägt er seine Larve, nicht sein Herz.  
Komm, Liebe ...<sup>750</sup>*

Saladin negatively judges the templar's reaction to the revelation that he and Recha are siblings and he says:

### **ACT V – Scene 8**

Saladin:

*Denn alles ist erlogen  
An dir: Gesicht und Stimm und Gang! Nichts  
dein!<sup>751</sup>*

As in the play by Lessing, in *Nathan Le Sage* many physiognomical assumptions are connected to the description of the templar who saved Zoé, Nathan's daughter. Montfort, the templar, tells Frère Bonhomme about how he was saved by Saladin:

### **ACT I – Scene 3**

Montfort:

*Un moins s'est à peine écoulé*

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<sup>750</sup> ACT V – Scene 8: Saladin: Come, sweet maid! / Be not reserved towards him. Had he been so, / Were he less warm, less proud, he had held back, / And had not saved you. Weigh the former deed / Against the latter, and you'll make him blush! / Do what he should have done! confess your love! / Make him your offer! and if he refuse, / Or e'er forget how infinitely more / You do for him than he has done for you- / For what, in fact, have been his services, / Save soiling his complexion? a mere sport- / Else has he nothing of my Assad in him, / But only wears his mask. Come, lovely maid. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

<sup>751</sup> ACT V – Scene 8: Saladin: All is deceit in you: / The voice, the gesture, and the countenance, / Nothing of these is yours. (translated by R. Dillon Boylan 1878).

*Depuis qu'en combattant, par le nombre  
accablé,  
Je fus conduit captif au soudan de Syrie.  
A ses yeux, dans sa cour, j'allais perdre la vie ;  
Le col nu, le front calme, et d'un œil sans effroi  
Je contemplais le fer déjà levé sur moi.  
Ma jeunesse, un maintien que n'ont pas les  
esclaves  
Frappent son ame altière : un brave aime les  
braves.  
Fixant bientôt sur moi des regards attendris,  
Il crie : « Assad ! mon frère ! Arrêtez. » A ces  
cris  
[...] En te voyant j'ai cru revoir mon frère.  
[...] jeune homme, ce front où se peint le  
courage  
Ne m'aura pas en vain présenté son image.  
Ses traits, ses traits chéris, dont je te vois paré,  
D'un chrétien qui me hait font un être sacré.<sup>752</sup>*

Saladin combines Montfort's exterior appearance and his soul and character and saves him. Saladin further explains this similarity to Nathan:

## **ACT II – Scene 2**

Saladin:  
*Comme son regard fier annonce sa valeur !  
Mon frère, mon Assad, dont il offre l'image,  
Aurait eu, comme lui, ce généreux courage.<sup>753</sup>*

When Saladin sees Montfort again after their first meeting he remembers the surprise of seeing his dead brother:

## **ACT III – Scene 5**

Saladin:  
*Voilà bien mon Assad ! C'est son image  
entière ;*

<sup>752</sup> ACT I – Scene 3: Montfort: A month has barely passed / Since that battle, overwhelmed by the number, / I was captured in South Syria. / In front of his eyes, in his court, I was going to lose my life; / The naked neck, calm forehead and one eye without fear / watched the iron already upon me. / My youth, something that slaves don't have / Hit his noble soul: a brave loves the brave. / Staring at me soon with tender looks, / He screams : "Assad, my brother! Wait!" / [...] By seeing you I thought to see my brother. [...] Young man, courage is painted on your forehead / and it did not vainly presented his picture. / His features, his beloved features, I see you wear, / From a Christian who hates me makes it a sacred thing.

<sup>753</sup> ACT II – Scene 2: Saladin: How his proud look announces his value! / My brother, my Assad, who offers his picture, / Would have had, like him, this generous soul.

*C'est sa voix, son courage, et sa franchise  
altière :  
Tel que je l'ai connu, je le retrouve en toi.  
Je puis te dire : Assad, qu'as-tu fait loin de  
moi ?<sup>754</sup>*

Saladin expects Montfort to be exactly like his dead brother Assad, and he is disappointed when Montfort does not behave as he should. Montfort continuously criticizes the Jew Nathan and he wants to convince Saladin that Nathan is a false person with many faces (*"imposteur d'une sagesse austere"*):

### **ACT III – Scene 5**

Montfort:

*Trop souvent le même homme a  
différentes faces.*

Saladin:

*Attachons-nous au fond et non pas aux  
surfaces.<sup>755</sup>*

Interestingly, Saladin urges Montfort to be more accurate in his judgment of the human face even though he himself is not at all accurate.

As described earlier on, Lessing uses several physiognomical references in his play because of his declared interest in the human face and soul, which is seen through his extensive reading and research. Chénier imitates Lessing's discussion about the religions and the debate about a better harmony between members of different religions. His description of the templar is very similar to the description given by Lessing. He also partly imitates Lessing's physiognomical perspectives on what the human face unveils or hides. Nonetheless, Chénier's approach remains more unconscious and less articulated than that of Lessing. Chénier refers mainly to some generally known physiognomical rules, rather than to any newly introduced readings. The comparison between these two plays shows how physiognomical knowledge was engaged and was accepted and transposed in the dialogues of the dramatic characters. Lessing's play would not work without Lessing's knowledge of

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<sup>754</sup> ACT III – Scene 5: Saladin: That's my Assad! That's his whole picture; / It is his voice, his courage, and his noble honesty: / As I knew it, I found in you. / I must say: Assad, what did you do away from me?

<sup>755</sup> ACT III – Scene 5: Montfort: Often the same man bears different faces. Saladin: Let us focus on the substance and not on the surface.

Physiognomy and Chénier's play would lose much of its interest without the examples given by Lessing.

### **Cœlina – A Tale of Mystery**

In 1802 Thomas Holcroft staged *A Tale of Mystery*, claimed to be the first English melodrama. In his advertisement, as already quoted, he says: “*I cannot forget the aid I received from the French Drama [...]*”. This refers to all the main elements of his adaptation of *Cœlina* by Pixérécourt: plot, dramatis personæ, stage directions, and other genre-related features. In this section, the character descriptions of the antagonists Francisque/Francisco and Truguelin/Romaldi will be compared from a physiognomical point of view.

*Cœlina ou L'Enfant du mystère* is now known to be the first real French melodrama. Pixérécourt adapted the novel with the same title by François Guillaume Ducray-Duminil (1761-1819), published in 1798 for the stage at the Boulevard. The novel was an already successful literary publication: “*Ce roman, qui fut beaucoup lu dans sa nouveauté comme tous ceux de l'auteur, rappelle le genre d'Ann Radcliff ; il est intéressant, rempli d'imagination, et on lui pardonne en faveur de ces qualités, tout ce qui peut lui manquer du côté du style et de la vraisemblance.*”<sup>756</sup> (trans.: “This novel, which was widely read in its novelty as the others by this author, recalls the genre of Ann Radcliffe; it is interesting, full of imagination, and we can forgive him for its qualities, all that may lack on the side of style and plausibility.”). As was the novel, this melodrama was an immediate success and it was shown nearly fifteen hundred times in Paris and the provinces<sup>757</sup>.

In the first act the main characters are introduced and the audience can immediately understand the gathering of characters: Dufour is the noble guardian of Cœlina, who is wise and good-natured, Truguelin is the greedy uncle, who puts his interest before anything else. Cœlina and her father Francisque are the innocent victims. In the first dialogue between Cœlina and the housekeeper Tiennette this constellation is visible:

### **ACT I – Scene 1**

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<sup>756</sup> Theatre choisi de G. de Pixérécourt. Volume 1 Nancy 1841 p.4.

<sup>757</sup> Marcoux: *Guilbert De Pixérécourt. French Melodrama in the Early Nineteenth Century*. New York, 1992 p.55.

Tiennette:

*Ces Truguelins, je les crois jaloux, faux et mechans.<sup>758</sup>*

When Tiennette needs to defend Francisque she tries to make Dufour understand that he is a poor innocent, but noble person:

### **ACT I – Scene 3**

Tiennette:

*Je ne sais qui il est, cet homme ; j'ignore jusqu'à son nom ; mais il a une physionomie si douce, des yeux où se peignent si bien la caudeur de son ame, un maintien si décent, il jette sur moi des regards si expressifs ... qu'on ne peut s'y méprendre ... Oui, monsieur, je me connois en physionomie, je vous réponds que c'est un honnête homme et qu'il a éprouvé de grands malheurs.<sup>759</sup>*

The eyes of Francisque reveal his good soul and his tragic history. Francisque's tongue was cut, so his only way to express himself is with the use of gestures. Also Cœlina has a special bond with Francisque that even she does not know yet, that he is her father:

### **ACT I – Scene 4**

Cœlina:

*Souvent je le vois me fixer en cherchant à lire dans mes yeux ce qui m'occupe ou m'intéresse. Quand il croit l'avoir deviné, il me quitte et revient bientôt m'apporter ce qu'il suppose l'objet de mes desirs. Lorsqu'il a réussi, la joie la plus vive brille dans ses yeux, il semble tout fier d'avoir pénétré ma pensée, et me demande d'un air suppliant, de lui permettre de baiser ma main qu'il baigne de ses larmes. O mon oncle ! on ne peut être un méchant homme avec un si bon cœur.<sup>760</sup>*

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<sup>758</sup> ACT I – Scene 1: Tiennette: These Truguelins are envious, deceitful and wicked.

<sup>759</sup> ACT I – Scene 3: Tiennette: I do not know this man. I know only his name, but he has such a nice appearance, his eyes reflect the innocence of his soul, he looks at me with such expressive eyes that there can be no mistake. Yes, Monsieur, I understand physiognomy, I tell you that this is an honest man who has suffered great misfortune.

<sup>760</sup> ACT I – Scene 4: Cœlina: Often I see him staring at me as if to read my thoughts. When he thinks that he understood it, he leaves me and returns bringing whatever he supposes to be the object I



As Tiennette says, she can read the physiognomy of people in order to understand their souls and intentions. So she describes Dufour in the same way she does with Francisque:

### **ACT I – Scene 3**

Tiennette:

*Car, malgré ce dehors brusque et quelquefois repoussant, vous avez un bon cœur.*<sup>761</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Holcroft's adaptation of the plot differs significantly from the original play: Romaldi – in the French text Truguelin – is Francisco/Francisque's brother, who commits the crime of cutting out his brother's tongue and who is saved at the end by Francisco and Selina. The villain Romaldi is thus shown in a different way than in the original text; he questions his actions and their consequences much more. Francisco is shown as even more gentle and noble than in the original text, since he saves his brother in the end, by standing between him and the archers who try to arrest or kill him.

In the first act both Francisco and Romaldi are introduced through the description of the other characters:

Speaking of Romaldi:

### **ACT I**

Selina:

*I shudder, when I recollect the selfishness of his views, and the violence in his character.*

Stephano:

*Add, the wickedness of his heart.*

.....  
Speaking of Francisco:

### **ACT I**

Selina:

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have been thinking about. When he succeeds, joy lights up his face, he seems to be proud of having read my thought. And he asks me imploringly, to allow him to kiss my hand he wets with tears. Oh my uncle! A man with so a good heart cannot be evil.

<sup>761</sup> ACT I – Scene 3: Tiennette: Despite that you are sometimes brusque and repulsive, you have a good heart.

*Think, my dear uncle, how grateful and kind is his heart!*

Stephano:  
*And that he is a man of misfortune.*

[...]

Selina:  
*His manners are so mild.*

Stephano:  
His eyes are so expressive!

Selina:  
*His behaviour so proper!*

Fiametta:  
*I'll bound, he is of genteel parentage!*

Bonamo:  
*Who told you so?*

Fiametta:  
*Not he, himself, for certain; because poor creature he is dumb. But only observe his sorrowful looks.*

In contrast to the French play, Fiametta or Tiennette does not have the role of the physiognomic reader. The description of both characters is a combination of all comments of all the other characters. In general Fiametta is shown in a very interesting way. She complains publicly about her master and she does not respect his authority. This creates in some parts of the play some very funny and amusing elements:

## **ACT II**

Montano:  
*Count Romaldi, is a villain.*

Fiametta:  
*There! There!*

Stephano:  
*You hear, Sir!*

Fiametta:

*I hope I shall be believed another time.*

Bonamo: (greatly interested)

*Silence, woman!*

*By a man like you, such an accusation cannot be made without sufficient proofs.*

Montano:

*You shall have them. Be attentive.*

Fiametta:

*I won't breathe! A word shan't escape my lips.*

[...]

Fiametta:

*So, so ! The rock of Arpennaz ! You hear ! But I'll not say a word.*

Montano:

*Two men, wild in their looks, and smeared with blood, passed hastily by me, with every appearance of guilt impressed upon their countenances.*

Fiametta:

*The very same ! Eight years ago! The rock of Arpennaz ! The ...*

Bonamo:

*Silence!*

Fiametta:

*I'll not say a word. Tell all, Sir I' am dumb.*

[...]

Fiametta:

*It's all true! 'Twas I! I myself! My cries made Michelli come! Eight years ...*

Bonamo:

*Again?*

Fiametta:

*I've done.*

[...]

Fiametta:

*Now are you convinced! [...]*

Bonamo:

*You are not to be silenced.*

Fiametta:

*No; I'm not. [...]*

Bonamo:

*Pray, good woman, hold your tongue.*

The two plays, the original and the adaptation, paint the characters according to a black-white or stereotyped scheme: Francisque/Francisco is good, Truguelin/Romaldi is bad. The characterization is strengthened by the description of the external features of the two antagonists. The physiognomical reading of their faces illustrates their true essence. Both authors are aware of the importance of the facial features and expression in the presentation of the characters. Francisque/Francisco is one of the characters of the whole corpus who is more related to Physiognomy. The creation of this character would not be the same without a general knowledge of Physiognomy both by the authors and their readers and audience. One very interesting example, which shows the awareness of the authors of the importance of the exterior features of their dramatic characters, is the description of Truguelin/Romaldi made by the officer. In *Cœlina*, through an implicit stage direction the character is physically described:

### **ACT III – Scene 3**

L'exempt lit:

*François Truguelin, âgé de quarante-sept ans, taille de cinq pieds trois pouces , front élevé, sourcils et cheveux châtain, yeux noirs et caves, nez aquilin, bouche moyenne, menton rond, visage long, la voix forte, et la démarche hardie, habit vert galonné, une large cicatrice sur le revers de la main gauche.*<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> ACT III – Scene 3: Officer (reads): François Truguelin, age forty-seven; height, five feet, nine inches; raised frow, eyebrows and hair, chestnut brown; eyes black and hollow; nose, aquiline; mouth, medium; chin, round; long face; strong voice and sturdy gait; a coat trimmed with gold braid; a large scar on the back of the left hand. (translated by J. Paul Marcoux 1992).

Pixérécourt indicates in detail the facial features, hair, voice and attitude of Truguelin. Holcroft has a completely different approach to this detailed description. He rather uses the stage direction to provide Romaldi's characterization:

## **ACT II**

Exempt (read):

*Five feet eight* (etc. the description must be that of the actor's voice, size and person: to which add) *with a large scar on the back of the right hand.*

Holcroft does not want to fix Romaldi's character to specific face features; he leaves the choice to the performers themselves to decide on how to interpret it and who would do it in the best way. Interestingly he changes the hand on which Romaldi has its sign from left in the French text to right in his play.

A close reading of these two melodramas shows different approaches to the importance of Physiognomy, but a general awareness of it. Both Pixérécourt and Holcroft know about the theories of Physiognomy and apply them in their plays.

### 3. Reception

After discussing the subsidiary- and the maintext, the reception of the plays of the corpus will be examined in this part. Reviews of the plays and the performance of the actors as delivered by the press or discussed in biographies are here taken into account and studied. The reviewers of the analysed plays not only show their physiognomical knowledge, but they also use this knowledge in a very accurate and natural way to describe the performance given on stage. This implies also a general understanding of the topic by the reader of these reviews. This section will demonstrate the wide circulation and impact of the physiognomical discourse in the theatrical culture of the time. An excursus at the end of this part, will show a relation between the performance on stage and its artistic interpretation.

The reception is visible in the press and in some biographies of famous actors of the time:

*Writing about the theatre took the form of newspaper article, pamphlet or biography. These sources of comment can be further sub-divided into 'high' and 'low' forms, although these categories do not so much define the audience of the publication as the tone which the publication adopts. [...] journalistic analyses and one-off pamphlet literature adopted tones of excitement, dismay or outrage commensurate with their status as sensational, ephemeral pieces, reacting to topical events. [...] Biographers were under hard cover and more expensive and enduring. They were therefore obliged to adopt a more serious tone than pamphlets and to present a studied argument. Despite their different tones, newspapers, pamphlets and books were all addressing the same audience, and their messages were often the same.<sup>763</sup>*

The reviews of a play and its performers use in many cases vocabulary linked to the debate about passions, emotions, gestures and Physiognomy. The following analysis will not only show the success or failure of a play, but also the importance of the voice of the reviewer in detail and the press in general. This chapter underlines once again the importance of the public literary sphere, public opinion and the creation of a popular theatre culture. As already mentioned in the introductory presentation of the genres of the time, the melodrama, the Pantomime, the

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<sup>763</sup> West. *The Image of the Actor*. London, 1991 p.8.

Bourgeoise Theatre and the Comédie Larmoyante perfectly match the need of the audience. The theatre was seen differently at that time and the press played an important role in this change of perspective. Julia Przyboś describes the importance of the journalist as follows: “*Le journaliste est donc un personnage influent. Son impact sur l’opinion publique est généralement reconnu et les auteurs et directeurs de théâtre cherchent à s’assurer de sa bienveillance.*”<sup>764</sup> (trans.: “The journalist is an influential figure. His impact on public opinion is generally known and authors and theatre directors are looking to secure his benevolence.”). The profession of journalist is clearly supported by the growing press culture in the eighteenth century. Andrew Pettegree and others<sup>765</sup> have shown in their work the development of the press and its influence on public opinion:

*The eighteenth century witnessed a spectacular rise in the periodical press. As the century wore on, newspapers would comprise only a small portion of this. Instead, the new century saw the establishment of a large number of other publications presented in serial form for a regular subscribing readership: literary, cultural, scientific and learned journals circulating on a weekly or monthly basis. The new periodicals proved to be enormously popular. This was an era of rising prosperity, and rising literacy.*<sup>766</sup>

Combined with the importance of the press, the success of the actors as stars of the moment will be discussed in the following section. West states that a reason for the actor’s biographies is that, “*the actor’s constant public presence led many to consider their private lives as equally open for scrutiny*”<sup>767</sup>. This causes or is caused by two things: “*the conflation of the actor’s personal life with his or her role*” and the “*mythologizing of the actor’s life*”<sup>768</sup>.

Apart from the newspaper reviews and the biographies, some actors’ portraits will be briefly discussed in the last section of this chapter. West dedicates a central

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<sup>764</sup> Przyboś. *L’entreprise mélodramatique*. Paris, 1987 p.24.

<sup>765</sup> See Claude Bellanger. *Histoire générale de la presse française. Vol. I Des origines à 1814*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969; Stephen Botein, Jack R. Censer and Harriet Ritvo. “The Periodical Press in Eighteenth-Century English and French Society: A Cross-Cultural Approach” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981): 464-490; Jack R. Censer. *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*. London: Routledge, 1994; Margot Lindemann and Kurt Koszyk. *Geschichte der deutschen Presse Vol. I Deutsche Presse bis 1815*. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1969; Katherine Kirtley Weed and Richmond Pugh Bond. *Studies of British Newspapers and Periodicals from their Beginning to 1800. A Bibliography*. University of North Carolina Press, 1946.

<sup>766</sup> Andrew Pettegree. *The Invention of News. How the world came to know about itself*. Yale University Press, 2014 p.269.

<sup>767</sup> West. *The Image of the Actor*. London, 1991 p.15.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid p.15.

chapter to actors' portraits in his work *The Image of the Actor*, and he distinguishes various forms: "*Theatrical portraits in the 18th century took many forms – paintings, prints, book illustrations, sculpture, porcelain and even playing cards. Familiar images of actors were repeated in all these media, and they represented one of the most widespread categories of portraiture.*"<sup>769</sup> West understands the problem of the interpretation of these portraits, as they are often shown out of context and the scenes, costumes and settings are not always of that specific time. To get a correct interpretation of the portraits, West speaks of recognizing the strong link between the theatre and the fine arts: "*Only when the relationship of painting and engraving with the theatre itself has been examined can these images be properly understood. Paintings and engravings of actors did not convey the specific nature of performances, but were coded responses to the performances which had as much to do with prevailing tendencies in art as with the minutiae of theatrical presentation.*"<sup>770</sup>

The following chapters will analyse these different forms of reception from a physiognomical point of view and summarize many ideas already introduced earlier in this dissertation.

### 3.1. Press reviews

In this chapter the press reviews of most of the plays in the selected corpus will be discussed. These press reviews refer to the premiere, the first years of staging or to the publication of the written text of the play. This section does not aim to illustrate all the press reviews of all the plays, but to show how the physiognomical discourse is seen in these reviews. The plays *Abele* and *Nathan Le Sage*, which were posthumously published and not staged are therefore not included in this section. The physiognomical discourse in these reviews refers to the plot, the setting of the action on stage, the playwright and the actors and actresses involved in the performance. The reviews of the plays are discussed in chronological order of appearance.

The premiere of *Ariadne auf Naxos* was successful. In the journal *Der Teutsche Merkur* the critic praises the acting of Charlotte Brandes, wife of the

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<sup>769</sup> West. *The Image of the Actor*. London, 1991 p.26.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid p.26.



playwright: “[...] *Ariadne, ein Duodrama des Herrn Brandes, mit musikalischen Accompagnemens von Herrn Benda; ein Stück, das in Gotha außerordentliche Sensation gemacht hat, und worinn Madame Brandes als Ariadne den Beyfall des dasigen Publikums mit dem Tonkünstler theilt, und ihn vornehmlich durch ihre Kunst, die Leidenschaft zu nuancieren, verdient.*”<sup>771</sup> (trans.: “[...] *Ariadne, a duodrama by Mister Brandes, with musical accompaniment by Mister Benda; a play, that made a sensation in Gotha, in which Mrs Brandes as Ariadne divides the applause with the sound artist. She deserves it, because of her art to nuance the passions.*”). The reviewer emphasizes the ability of Charlotte Brandes to “nuance the passions”, which are the driving force of this Duodrama.

*Nathan der Weise* was discussed in great detail in the press, because of the fame of its author and also because having chosen religion as topic. In the *Berlin Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* between 1780 and 1781, thirteen letters to a certain Madame B. analysed in an extended way the main elements of the play. In the third letter, the physiognomical elements are addressed for the first time:

*Finden Sie nicht in der Erzählung physiognomischer Merkmahle den schönsten Anticlimax, wie es einige Kunstrichter nennen; oder die schönste Abstufung vom Grossen zum Kleinen? Um nichts von der Wärme der Sprache, und von der Lebendigkeit des Numerus im Versbau zu sagen. Eine Stirne ist schon mehr bezeichnend, als der Rücken einer Nase; dieser mehr als Augenbrauen, und so fallen die angeführten Merkmale immer mehr ins Kleine, werden immer unwichtiger bis auf ein Nichts; und dann mit einemmale der wunderbare Erfolg dieser Kleinigkeiten: Und du entkommst dem Feur in Asien!*<sup>772</sup>

(trans.: “Do you not find in the narration of physiognomic features the finest Anti Climax, as it is named by a few art critics; or the finest gradation from large to small? To say nothing of the heat of the language, and the vibrancy of the numerus in versification. A forehead is already more significant than the back of a nose; this more than eyebrows, and so the listed characteristics become more and more small, less important, to meaning nothing; and then all of a sudden the wonderful success of these little things: *And thou—art saved, in Asia, from the fire!*”)

This text analysis refers to the second scene of the first act, when Nathan describes in a physiognomical way the appearance of the templar. In the sixth letter the

<sup>771</sup> Der Teutsche Merkur: Theatralische Neuigkeiten C.H. Schmid 1775 p.184.

<sup>772</sup> Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung: 06.01.1781 p.14.

references to Physiognomy are much clearer and they are actually questioning more the reliability of this supposed science:

*Wie edel hat dies Lessing ihn ausdrücken lassen! Und wie fein ist in seinen Gedanken die physiognomische Wahrheit angedeutet, daß jedem Zuge des Körpers etwas in der Seele entspreche! Denn so unsicher und schwankend auch immer noch die physiognomische Theorie ist, und vielleicht auch immer bleiben wird, so ist doch jener Lehrsatz für mich wenigstens vollkommen überzeugend. Zu der grossen Kunst unsers Dichters gehört auch die Geschicklichkeit, speculative Wahrheiten so treffend zu benutzen, daß sie zur Rührung des Herzens und zur Ergötzung des feinsten Geschmacks mit wirken müssen.<sup>773</sup>*

(trans.: “How noble let Lessing express him this! And how fine is the physiognomic truth, that any part of the body corresponds to something in the soul, intimated in his thoughts! But nevertheless how insecure and unsteady the physiognomic theory still is, and will perhaps always remain, that doctrine is at least totally convincing for me. The great art of our poet also includes the talent, to use speculative truths so accurately that they must contribute to the emotion of the heart and delight of the finest taste.”)

In this letter the questionable truth of Physiognomy is discussed together with Lessing’s approach towards it. The speculative character of Physiognomy is used by Lessing to arouse emotion. With this letter not only is the relation between *Nathan der Weise* and Physiognomy addressed, but also the “science” of Physiognomy itself. This letter, written only few years after the publication of the last volume of Lavater’s *Fragmente*, refers to the reception and understanding of Physiognomy. The “physiognomic theory” is mentioned without any kind of further explanation and description; this shows indirectly the supposed knowledge of the reader of the newspaper.

The history of the reception of Bretzner’s *Karl und Sophie* is difficult to reconstruct because there are not many secondary sources available. It is not known when and where the play was first staged, so to collect any kind of press reviews is impossible.

As previously pointed out, *Die Räuber* was judged rather scandalous in the years of the first print version and the first performance. For the present discussion

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<sup>773</sup> Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung: 03.02.1781 p.75.

the print version is of greater importance than the stage version, since the physiognomical elements were included only in the first and completely deleted from the second. Christian Friedrich Timme reviewed the print version in 1781 for the *Erfurtische Gelehrten Zeitung*. Timme calls Schiller a “German Shakespeare” (“teutscher Shakespeare”) and describes in detail the plot of the play. He makes a very precise description of the characters:

*Die Charaktere sind gröstenteils meisterhaft geschildert, kün angelegt, und treu ausgeführt, vorzüglich Karl Moors Charakter, der ein wahres Meisterstück ist. [...] Franz, der schleichende heuchlerische Bösewicht, und Karl, der seltne grose Mann, der unter andern Verbindungen die Bewunderung der Völker gewesen wäre, den man aber auch itzt als Mörder und Räuber, indem man seine Schadtaten hasst und verabscheut, noch bewundern, bedauern und lieben mus. Bis an das Ende bleibt er sich gleich; gleich gros, gleich liebens- und gleich verabscheungswürdig. [...] Das gilt auch von Franzens Handlungen. Dessen Charakter ist nicht so schwer, weil er nicht so zusammengesetzt ist. Er ist blos abscheulich, bleibt sich aber auch immer gleich.<sup>774</sup>*

(trans.: “The characters are mostly masterfully portrayed, boldly created, and faithfully carried out, especially Karl Moor’s character, which is a true masterpiece. [...] Franz, the creeping hypocritical villain, and Karl, the rare greater man who would have been under other circumstances admired by the nations, who also now as murderer and robber by hating and despising his deeds, must be admired, felt sorry for and loved. Up to the end he remains the same; equally great, equally lovable and equally despicable. [...] This is also true with Franz’s actions. His character is not so difficult, because it is not so complex. He is merely abhorrent but he also always remains the same.”)

Timme does not refer directly to Physiognomy in his review but, by arguing that the two brothers remain always the same and do not change their characters and characteristics, implies the physiognomic understanding of predestination.

The reviews of *Kabale und Liebe* either praise Schiller’s genius or criticize his youthful approach towards important topics such as love and state affairs. Some reviews stress again that Schiller can be considered the German Shakespeare<sup>775</sup>. The reviews do not mention Physiognomy and its impact and influence on the plot,

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<sup>774</sup> Erfurtische Gelehrte Zeitung: 21.07.1781.

<sup>775</sup> See Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek. Volume 58 1784 p. 478 and Gothaische Gelehrte Zeitungen. 29.05.1784 p. 362.

but the reviewer in the *Gothaische Gelehrte Zeitungen* refers to the character creation and mentions indirectly elements inherent to the newly established genre:

*Aber es hat wirklich herrliche Scenen, und die Charaktere sind vortrefflich durchgeführt. Sollte der Präsident und der Hofmarschall, jener zu abscheulich, und letzterer für ein Trauerspiel zu komisch scheinen, so erwäge man, daß die Charaktere auf der Schaubühne etwas übertrieben seyn müssen, und daß man, wie Lessing einmal sagte, auch im Trauerspiel lachen dürfe.*<sup>776</sup>

(trans.: "But it has really wonderful scenes, and the characters are carried out excellently. Should the Präsident and the Hofmarschall seem, the first too abhorrent and the latter too funny for a tragedy, so one must consider that the characters on stage must be slightly exaggerated, and that, as Lessing once said, one could also laugh in a tragedy.")

The characters might be judged exaggerated both because their speeches but also for their physical form and appearance.

Kotzebue's Rührstück *Menschenhass und Reue* is called by one reviewer "ein dramatisches Meisterstück"<sup>777</sup> ("a dramatic masterpiece"). Kotzebue, who was much appreciated by the reviewers, is not mentioned by the press in detail, since he was already known and his talent was not questioned. The reviews focus therefore on the actors. Friedrich Schulz for example wrote two reviews in the *Neue Berlinische Dramaturgie*, emphasizing the importance of the choice of the actors:

*Der General Wintersee des Herrn Unzelmann ist vom Scheitel bis auf die Ferse ein Meisterstück der Darstellungsgabe dieses Schauspielers; alles, bis auf die kleinsten Kleinigkeiten, ist charakteristisch, alles hat Physiognomie und Bedeutung, jede Nüanze ist ein nothwendiger Pinselstrich zur Vollendung des Gemählde, und doch ist alles so frei, so ohne Zwang, so höchstnatürlich, daß man glauben sollte, das Naturell dieses Schauspielers treffe hier mit dem darzustellenden Karakter in allen seinen Weisen und Eigenthümlichkeiten zufällig zusammen.*<sup>778</sup>

(trans.: "The General Wintersee of Mr. Unzelmann is from head to heel a masterpiece of the gift of presentation of this actor; everything down to the smallest details is characteristic, everything has physiognomy and meaning, each shade is a necessary brush stroke to complete the painting, and yet everything is so free, so without coercion, so very natural that one would think the temperament of

<sup>776</sup> Gothaische Gelehrte Zeitungen: 29.05.1784 p. 362.

<sup>777</sup> Raisonirendes Journal vom deutschen Theater zu Hamburg 1800 p.92.

<sup>778</sup> Neue Berlinische Dramaturgie: 07.05.1798.

this actor met here with the displayed character in all his ways and peculiarities randomly.”)

Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Unzelmann (1753-1832) seems to incorporate perfectly both the character and the physical form of General Wintersee. Schulz is convinced that his performance is well studied and full of meaning. The word “Physiognomie” has here the connotation of “general appearance or form” and does not refer directly to the science of Physiognomy, even though it makes it clear that Unzelmann’s physical form corresponds to the characteristics of General Wintersee.

A few weeks after this review, Schulz published another review which praises Iffland in the role of Bittermann:

*Menschenhaß und Reue. Ueber dies Stück ist in unsern Blättern schon gehandelt worden. Die heutige Vorstellung wurde durch das Spiel des Hrn. Iffland, der uns den Haushofmeister Bittermann gab, interessant. Sein Spiel war, bis auf die kleinsten Züge, musterhaft durchgeführt. Ein kleiner angebrachter Zug, da er den kleinen Kindern des Barons die Hand küßt, ist ganz aus der Physiognomie der Seele eines hochgräfl. Verwalters gestohlen. Auch die Kleidung war, ohne Karrikatur ganz dem Charakter gemäß.<sup>779</sup>*

(trans.: “Menschenhaß und Reue. This piece is already been treated in our paper. Tonight’s performance became interesting because of the performance by Mr. Iffland, who did the Haushofmeister Bittermann. His performance was exemplary carried out down to the smallest features. The small appropriate movement of kissing the little children of the Baron’s hand, is completely stolen out of the physiognomy of the soul of a housekeeper. Also the clothes were, without caricature, appropriate for the character.”)

Iffland seems perfectly able to enact Bittermann and perform his role. His careful acting uses typical features and gestures belonging to a Haushofmeister. The concept of Physiognomy as science was known to the reviewer and it can be seen through his use of the word “Physiognomie”. It can be argued that he uses it in a slightly incorrect way, but that was quite common in the eighteenth century as we have already seen.

The reviews of Edward Morris’ *False Colours* provide much information about the author, the play and its critic which without these reviews would be unknown. As mentioned earlier, there is no known biography of the playwright Morris. In the

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<sup>779</sup> Neue Berlinische Dramaturgie: 24.05.1798.

reviews we find the information that he was unknown also to his contemporaries as well as a few, quite insignificant details about his education. In the *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* of 4 April 1793, the reviewer of the play, staged in the Haymarket Theatre the night before, notes *"The Play is said to be written by a Mr. Morris"*<sup>780</sup>. This review focuses all its attention on Sir Paul Panick as physiognomist without directly referring to Lavater or mentioning Lord Visage or Grotesque. The *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post* calls Morris a genius, without knowing his identity: *"This is evidently a work of genius – We know not the author; but this we know, the materials of which the play of last night is composed, are of that special quality which cannot fail to secure to the possessor of them great share of public favour;"*<sup>781</sup>. The review points out that the plot was created around the characters and not the other way round. According to the review the play was a great success. The *Morning Post* describes in detail the actors and actresses who played the roles. It also mentions for the first time the Epilogue and Prologue: *"False Colours is the production, we understand, of Mr. Morris, who has before favoured the Public with the pleasant farce of the Adventures. His brother, Mr. Charles Morris, has furnished the Prologue and Epilogue"*<sup>782</sup>. It seems that Edward Morris is better known to the reviewer; he does not even need to mention his first name. Only a few weeks after the premiere, the *Gazetteer and Daily Advertiser* adds to Edward Morris' name the description *"Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge"*<sup>783</sup>. The *Courier* from 5 April concentrates the review completely on Lavater and how his legacy is treated:

*This Comedy of Mr. Morris was played again last night, with effects amended by omission, transposition, and change. And they, perhaps, laughed at LAVATER, who had never understood nor read a single line of him – "Whose curious eyes first say the manners in the face!" Eloquent and subtle LAVATER – with thee at Zurich – with the classic wit of the HISTORIAN at Lausanne, happy are they who can philosophize and feel with you in such scenes of kindred excellencies - of Amenity and Grandeur, of Liberty and Peace!*<sup>784</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post: 02.-04.04.1793 p.4.

<sup>781</sup> London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post: 03.-05.04.1793 p.1.

<sup>782</sup> Morning Post: 04.04.1793.

<sup>783</sup> Gazetteer and Daily Advertiser: 24.04.1793.

<sup>784</sup> Courier: 05.04.1793.

This review argues that Lavater's work is known to many people without being familiar to them: he is quoted, discussed and mentioned without being extensively read or really understood.

Thomas Holcroft starts his review in *The Monthly Review* with a quite harsh critique of the playwright and his play. He then continues with defending the science of Physiognomy, which is much satirized in the play:

*Lord Visage, we think particularly objectionable. He is a physiognomist, and in his character Lavater is satirized, or, to speak more accurately, burlesqued. A poet, who does not deeply consider the moral effects of his satire, is, in our opinion, highly culpable. Any attempt to make men believe that the countenance of man does not bear visible signs of individual propensities, and of vicious or of virtuous habits, is immoral, because it is false; and though there may be persons who pretend to more physiognomical science than they have acquired, and who therefore individually may deserve ridicule, yet, to ridicule the science itself without this discrimination, or without making the audience understand that the satire is levelled at such mistaken individuals but not at the science itself, is equally censurable.*<sup>785</sup>

That Physiognomy is a science is unquestionable for Holcroft; every improper use is shameful and immoral.

Holcroft's own play *The Deserted Daughter* was also discussed in detail in *The Monthly Review*. After a detailed description of the characters of Mr. Mordent, Donald, Item and Mrs Sarsnet, Joanna's character is described: "As to Joanna, the deserted daughter, she forms an amiable and interesting character, in the delineation of which there is some novelty: but we much question, whether it be natural; for, to make 'a simple girl' an adept in the science of physiognomy, by studying Lavater, is surely to outrage probability."<sup>786</sup> In this review Physiognomy is clearly called a science. Many reviews do not approve of the choice by Holcroft to add this extra layer of characterization to Joanna. The review in the *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, for example, states the following: "And we believe some of the physiognomy is given in language, too coarse and plain. We grieve that a child must tell a father, though unknown, that he has an artful, cruel and betraying face."<sup>787</sup>

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<sup>785</sup> The Monthly Review. May 1793 p.410.

<sup>786</sup> The Monthly Review. June 1795 p.190.

<sup>787</sup> Oracle and Public Advertiser: 04.05.1795.

In 1816 the play was published with remarks by Elizabeth Inchbald. She also refers to Lavater and the introduction of his theories in the play:

*The deserted daughter herself is not of so high importance in the drama as the author might have made her – she is interesting, but not sufficiently so. Perhaps her affected knowledge in the mysteries of Lavater, and the unfeeling and ill-bred manner with which she tells her friends, they bear signs of guilt in their features, may diminish that concern for her situation, which the proofs of a better understanding and more sensibility of heart might have excited.*<sup>788</sup>

According to the reviewers Holcroft forces the introduction of physiognomical elements too much in the play; it seems neither logical nor necessary.

When Foscolo was only nineteen years old, his first play *Tieste* was performed in the Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice. *Tieste* was a great success on the stage in Venice and several reproductions and representations followed the premiere. The cast included Giulio Domenico Camagna as Tieste, Gaetano Businelli as Atreo and Anna Fiorilli Pellandi as Eroepe. Fiorilli Pellandi (1772-1841) was one of the most famous actresses of her time. She came from a family of actors and comedians and had performed already as young girl on the stages of Venice. She and her performance were praised by many of the intellectual spectators, such as Melchiorre Cesarotti, who dedicated to her his translation of the play *L'Oracolo* by Georges Saint-Foix<sup>789</sup>; he stated that “*nature spoke in her heart*”<sup>790</sup>. Antonio Colomberti, a contemporary of hers, describes her physical form:

*[...] non bella, ma di volto estremamente simpatico; era di statura giusta, di carnagione bianchissima, e di capello castagno. Aveva occhi neri, grandi e vivaci, naso profilato, e bocca bella, con magnifica dentatura. L'insieme del suo volto, era mobile all'estremo, e a seconda delle passioni che esprimeva, mostrava allo spettatore il dolore, la giocondità, l'ironia, l'estremo affetto, il furore, e la ferocia.*<sup>791</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> Thomas Holcroft. *The Deserter Daughter. A Comedy in five acts as performed at the Theatre royal, Covent Garden*. Printed under the Authority of the Managers From the prompt Book with Remarks by Mrs Inchbald. London: Longman, 1816 p.3.

<sup>789</sup> *L'Oracolo*. Farsa del Signor Saint-Foix. Traduzione inedita dell'abate Melchiorre Cesarotti. Venezia 1797 p. 22.

<sup>790</sup> See Corrado Ricci. “The Art of Scenography.” *The Art Bulletin* 10 (1928): 231-257 p. 255.

<sup>791</sup> Antonio Colomberti. *Notizie storiche dei più distinti comici e comiche che illustrano le scene italiane dal 1780 al 1880*. Roma 1881 p.141 (see: <http://www.istitutointernazionaleperlaricercateatrale.it> 18.06.2015).



(trans.: “not beautiful, but with an extremely likeable face; she had the right height, white complexion, and chestnut hair. Her eyes were black, large and bright, she had an outlined nose, beautiful mouth, with magnificent teeth. The totality of her face, was movable to the extreme, and depending on the expressed passions, showing the audience pain, the cheerfulness, irony, extreme love, rage, and ferocity.”)

Many sources state that the success of *Tieste* was due to the presence of Pellandi Fiorilli on stage.<sup>792</sup> Leo Pollini says in his introduction to the plays by Foscolo that the actress “*commosse con la sua arte il pubblico, nelle cui simpatie era da tempo per la sua bellezza*”<sup>793</sup> (trans.: “She moved with her art the audience, in whose likings she had long been for her beauty”). The reviews of *Tieste* do not speak directly about Physiognomy, but with the discussion of the actress Pellandi Fiorilli’s physical form and features a certain physiognomical understanding is introduced.

Like the reviews of *Tieste* which are related mainly to the actor’s performance, the reviews of Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort* focus on the performance of the title role and that of Jane De Monfort. In the next chapter Kemble’s and Siddons’ interpretation of these two roles will be discussed in the actors’ biographies. In the press the reviews mention mostly that Kemble adapted the play for the stage of the Drury Lane theatre: “*It is to the taste and judgment of Mr. Kemble, that the public are indebted for the present display of the fatal effects of one of the most violent impulses that can destroy the relations of social life, and deaden every tender and noble feeling. Impressed with the beauties of the original, he undertook to adapt it to the stage,[...]*”<sup>794</sup>. The acting of both Kemble and Siddons is mostly judged positively. A review printed in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, the *True Briton* and the *General Evening Post* praises the acting skills of the siblings: “*The acting of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons was perfect in its kind. The Characters they supported seem expressly to have been written for them, and certainly could not be better adapted to draw forth their respective powers.*”<sup>795</sup> The reviews do not refer to the physical form of the two actors or the physiognomical value of their appearance. They do refer to Baillie’s

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<sup>792</sup> See e.g.: Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo’s Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.31; and <http://www.istitutointernazionaleperlaricercateatrale.it> .

<sup>793</sup> Ugo Foscolo. *Poesie e tragedie*, Edizioni A. Barion: Sesto San Giovanni-Milano, 1937 p.239.

<sup>794</sup> Evening Mail: 28.-29.04.1800 and Times: 30.04.1800.

<sup>795</sup> Whitehall Evening Post: 29.04-01.05.1800, True Briton: 30.04.1800 and General Evening Post: 29.04-01.05.1800.

theory of the passions with her collection *Plays on the Passions*: “to illustrate distinct passions”<sup>796</sup>, “illustrative of the operation and influence of different passions on the human breast”<sup>797</sup>, “to illustrate distinct Passions of the Human Mind”<sup>798</sup> and “passion in the human heart”<sup>799</sup>.

Pixérécourt was, as already explained on several occasions, very successful, the critics enjoyed his plays and discussed them with admiration in the press. For his melodrama *Cœlina* he was even praised by the author of the novel on which the play is based, François Guillaume Ducray-Duminil (1761-1819):

*Nous nous contenterons de dire que l’auteur a tiré un parti étonnant de ce roman, qui offrait les plus grandes difficultés pour être mis à la scène, et ce sont ces difficultés vaincues avec art qui font du drame de Cœlina le meilleur ouvrage qui ait été joué aux boulevards, et le rendent digne de nos premiers théâtres, tant par l’intérêt qu’il présente que par la manière habile avec laquelle il est conduit.*<sup>800</sup>  
(trans.: “We will simply say that the author has taken an astonishing part of this novel, which offered the greatest difficulties to be brought to the scene, and it is these difficulties which were overcome with art that make the drama of *Cœlina* the best work played on the boulevards, and make it worthy of our first theatres, both by the shown relevance and by the skilful manner in which it is conducted.”)

The press appreciated the performance by the actors: “Il faut rendre justice aux acteurs qui l’ont secondé, entre autres à Mesdames Corsse et Lévèsque, et aux citoyens Tautin et Boicheresse ; ce dernier surtout a montré beaucoup d’intelligence dans le rôle du muet.”<sup>801</sup> (trans.: “We need to do justice to the actors who assisted, among others, Mesdames Corsse and Lévèsque, and the citizens Tautin and Boicheresse; especially the latter showed great intelligence in the role of the mute.”). The role of Francisque is particularly difficult, as it only relies on the gestures and physical features, and it is therefore praiseworthy.

*L’homme a trois visages* is today much less known than it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was staged 378 times in Paris and 644 times

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<sup>796</sup> Whitehall Evening Post: 29.04-01.05.1800 and True Briton: 30.04.1800.

<sup>797</sup> Evening Mail: 28.-29.04.1800 and Times: 30.04.1800.

<sup>798</sup> General Evening Post: 29.04-01.05.1800.

<sup>799</sup> Star: 01.05.1800.

<sup>800</sup> Theatre choisi de G. de Pixérécourt. Volume 1 Nancy 1841 p.5.

<sup>801</sup> Courrier des Spectacles: 03.09.1800.

in the provinces (a total of 1,022 performances)<sup>802</sup>. *L'homme a trois visages* was based on the German novel *Abällino der große Bandit* (1793) by Heinrich Zschokke and adapted to the French stage with some modifications and changes. The main character Vivaldi is the most discussed in the press reviews of the time. Like *Coëlina*, where the difficulties of performing a mute character are pointed out, in *L'homme a trois visages* the press focuses on the three faces of Abelino: “*Celui d’Abelino est admirable; c’est lui qui a contribué surtout au grand succès de la pièce. [...] Le citoyen Tautin a mieux rendu le rôle d’Abelino que ceux de Vivaldi et d’Edgar.*”<sup>803</sup> (trans.: “The one of Abelino is admirable; it is he who has contributed mostly to the great success of the play. [...] The citizen Tautin has rendered the role of Abelino better than of Vivaldi and Edgar.”).

The press reviews of both *Coëlina* and *L'homme a trois visages* do not refer directly to Physiognomy and its presence in the melodramas. They concentrate though on the two most physiognomical characters of the plays: Francisque and Vivaldi/Abelino/Edgar. In both melodramas these roles are played by the actor Tautin.

Thomas Holcroft’s *A Tale of Mystery*, even though inspired by Pixérécourt’s *Coëlina*, was discussed differently in the press. The novelty of the genre being introduced on the English stage was the main point of interest: “*An attempt is here made by Mr. Holcroft, to introduce on the British stage, a species of entertainment hitherto unknown to it. The attempt is not without success.*”<sup>804</sup>. In the *E. Johnson’s British Gazette and Sunday Monitor* from Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1802 the critic says that:

*Last night a new entertainment in two acts consisting of speaking, dancing, and pantomime, was produced at this theatre [the Covent Garden]; [...] it is very properly described as a Melo Drame, or mixed Drama, as it is composed of Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, and Ballet. The latter is most prevalent, and from it the greater part of the interest arises. [...] We think it likely to have a run, more from its novelty than intrinsic merits.*<sup>805</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Theatre choisi de G. de Pixérécourt. Volume 1 Nancy 1841 p.LIX.

<sup>803</sup> Courrier des spectacles: 06.10.1801.

<sup>804</sup> The Poetical register: January 1803 p.455.

<sup>805</sup> E. Johnson’s British Gazette and Sunday Monitor: 14.11.1802.

The combination of music, pantomime, dance and acting form a “*excellent picture*”<sup>806</sup>. The *Monthly Review* summarizes the novelty of the play with a brief description of its main elements: “*It may be described, in brief, as a pantomime with the admission of dialogue: for so much depends on the music, the scenery, and the gesticulation of the actors, that this term must form its pincipal characteristics.*”<sup>807</sup> The reviewers focus falls on the physical interpretation of the play and not its dialogue. The performance is more important than the action. The vocabulary used to describe this first English melodrama is different than in the French press, which discusses Pixérécourt’s plays. The pantomime, as already explained at the beginning of this part of the dissertation, had a long history on the English stage and so Holcroft’s melodrama is discussed in relation to it. Physiognomy is not mentioned directly but the consciousness of the reviewers of the actors’ bodies and their movement on stage refer indirectly to the science of the meaningfulness of exterior signs.

Goethe’s *Stella* was reviewed in the press mainly with a tone related to its genre description: *Schauspiel für Liebende*. The love triangle between Stella, Fernando and Cäcilie is discussed with all its moral and social implications. The author Goethe is praised for his wise understanding of the triangle:

*[...] er schürzte den Knoten mit seiner Meisterhand, zog aus diesem Stoffe die herrlichsten, interessantesten Scenen, traf die Gesinnungen und Sprache der Natur äußerst glücklich, belebte alles mit seiner so fruchtbaren Phantasie, wußte alles so einnehmend und täuschend zu machen, und Charakteren, von denen man nach etnigen Handlungen, die sie sich erlaubten, unmöglich vortheilhaft denken kann, doch so viel Anstrich von Gutherzigkeit zu geben, daß man geneigt wird, ihren Leichtsinn zu entschuldigen; kurz, er wußte dies ganze Subjekt so einzuleiten, daß die Zerschneidung des Knoten am Ende weniger befremdend und anstößig wird, als sie an sich ist.*<sup>808</sup>

(trans.: “[...] He tied the knot with his master's hand, took out of this material, the most glorious and most interesting scenes, caught the sentiments and language of nature extremely well, live up all with his so fertile imagination, he knew how to make everything so engaging and deceptive, and characters of which you can impossibly think in a good way, after several actions that they did, were painted by him

<sup>806</sup> The British Critic: June 1804 p.676.

<sup>807</sup> The Monthly Review 1803 p.330.

<sup>808</sup> Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek 1777 p.495f.

with much kindness, that you will be inclined to excuse their carelessness; short, he knew how to introduce this whole subject so that the cutting of the knot at the end seems less strange and offensive, as it is in itself.”)

As discussed in the previous chapters, Stella’s miserable destiny is linked to Physiognomy in a broader sense, because her misunderstanding of Fernando’s character is caused by ambiguous facial features. The press reviews do not mention this implication.

In 1811 Foscolo’s second tragedy *Ajace* premiered at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. In contrast to *Tieste*, *Ajace* was a disaster for Foscolo. The play was not well received and the critique blamed only Foscolo. *Ajace* is composed of five acts, and as with *Tieste*, also in *Ajace* Foscolo follows mostly the Alfierian model: six characters speak on stage, the main character is introduced in the second act and the unity of time is important. Agamennone and Ajace are also typical Alfierian characters, since they represent Tyranny versus Liberty.<sup>809</sup>

Anna Pellandi Fiorilli is seen on the stage of the Teatro alla Scala as Tecmessa, Ajace’s wife. The character of Tecmessa and Pellandi Fiorilli’s performance got the only positive critique of the play<sup>810</sup>. The other roles are played by Pellandi Fiorilli’s actor colleagues of the Compagnia Reale: Paolo Belli Blanes plays Ajace, Giovanbattista Prepiani, Agamennone, Alberto Tessari, Ulisse and Giovanni Bettini, Calcante.<sup>811</sup>

Two years after the disaster with *Ajace*, Foscolo’s third and last play *Ricciarda* staged in Bologna at the Teatro del Corso. In *Ricciarda*, Foscolo wanted to show in a very dramatic way the question of loyalty and betrayal: Guido and Ricciarda are in love, but their fathers Guelfo and Averardo are fighting against each other for power in Salerno, so their love is at risk. Foscolo spoke about his last play in several letters to his friends, and wanting to avoid a debacle like *Ajace*, he also concentrated on the performance of the play on stage and wrote specific stage directions for each

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<sup>809</sup> See Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo’s Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.48.

<sup>810</sup> See Thomas E. Peterson. “Justice, Modesty and Compassion in Foscolo’s “Ajace.” *MLN* 116 (2001): 74-97 p.97 and <http://www.istitutointernazionaleperlaricercateatrale.it>.

<sup>811</sup> See Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo’s Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.156.

actor.<sup>812</sup> Foscolo was not at all happy about the premiere of his play and he mainly criticized the actors of the Compagnia Reale and the audience:

*La Tragedia fu pessimamente recitata. [...] Guelfo avrebbe fatto eccellentemente se non avesse voluto far troppo; Ricciarda pareva una ragazza sentimentale, anzichè una principessa innamorata altamente; piacque nondimeno al pubblico; a me spiacque moltissimo. Averardo fu sostenuto ragionevolmente. Ma Guido fu recitato in modo ch'io stesso che lo aveva mediato e scritto e riletto non intendeva ciò che quel disgraziato fantoccio vestito in scena da Eroe volesse mai dire. E se si vuol dire il vero, quel mio Guido è carattere che mi piace ognor di meno; parla e non opera; è cagione di tutti i guai, e non può, nè sa, nè medita mai di recarvi rimedi; e se non trova un attore il quale con la sua immaginazione animi i versi del poeta, Guido, ho paura, sarà carattere Don-Chisciottescamente petrarchesco: ridicolo insomma; e Dio mi faccia tristo profeta: in questo esperimento peraltro non ho per anche potuto assolutamente decidere intorno a sì fatto personaggio, perchè nè il pubblico nè l'attore intesero una parola da lui pronunziata.*<sup>813</sup>

(trans.: "The Tragedy was badly acted. [...] Guelfo would have done excellently if he had not wanted to do too much; Ricciarda seemed a sentimental girl, instead of a princess in love; nevertheless the audience liked it; I disliked it very much. Averardo was reasonably supported. But Guido was played so that I myself who had invented and written and re-read him I did not understand what that wretched puppet dressed in a scene as hero ever wanted to say. And if I must be honest, that Guido is my character that I like evermore less; He speaks and does not operate; he is the cause of all the trouble, and is never able, neither knows, nor thinks to fix them; and if he does not find an actor who by his imagination reanimates the verses of the poet, Guido, I fear, will be character in the manner a Don Quixottesque Petrarch: in short, ridiculous; and God makes me a sad prophet, in this experiment, however, I have not even been able to absolutely decide around this character, because neither the audience nor the actor understood a word he uttered.")

It is interesting to see that Foscolo criticizes the fact that, on the one hand, the actor who plays Guelfo is exaggerating ("*avrebbe fatto eccellentemente se non avesse voluto far troppo*" – "*he would have done excellently if he had not wanted to do too much*") and, on the other, the actor who plays Guido is not moving in the right way on stage ("*Parla e non opera*" – "*he speaks and does not operate*"). Unfortunately at

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<sup>812</sup> See Walsh. *Ugo Foscolo's Tragic Vision in Italy and England*. University of Toronto Press, 2014 p.71f.

<sup>813</sup> Rachel A. Walsh. "Theatrical Spinning: Ricciarda and Ugo Foscolo's Campaign for Fame." *MLN* 124 (2009): 137-157 p.140f.

the end of the premiere, the stage caught fire and this accident ruined completely the possibility of any objective critique of the play by the audience and the critics. Foscolo's plays are never discussed in the press from a physiognomic point of view. Foscolo and his critics only refer sometimes to the exaggerated action and gesture.

Franz Grillparzer is one of the most famous Austrian playwrights of the nineteenth century. His play *Die Ahnfrau* is classified as Schicksalstragödie, fate-tragedy, which tells the story of the ancestress of the house Borotin. Grillparzer, who was inspired by a bohemian legend, creates a scenario of horror and dread, as we have discussed earlier. Several Viennese newspapers and journals discuss in detail this fate-tragedy by referring to the omnipotence of destiny. In the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* from March 22th 1817 for example the author's choice is much questioned:

*Die darin herrschende Idee vom Fatum finde ich durchaus verwerflich, theils weil, um ein Verbrechen zu sühnen, wieder neue Verbrechen begangen werden müssen; theils weil der durch Sinnenrausch ganz verblendete Hauptmissethäter den Händen der strafenden Gerechtigkeit entzogen und gleichsam durch eine überirdische Macht einer friedlicheren Heimath zugeführt wird.*<sup>814</sup>

(trans.: "Its prevailing idea of fate I find quite objectionable, partly because to atone for a crime again new crimes must be committed; partly because of the rush of the senses the blinded main malefactor is removed from the hands of the penal justice and, is put by a supernatural power to a more peaceful home.")

The play was performed at the Theater an der Wien by the royal actors and their performance helped in overcoming the quite harsh critique of the young playwright Grillparzer:

*Die Hauptrollen dieses Trauerspiels wurden gegeben von Hrn. Lange (Graf Bdenko), Hrn. Heurteur (Jaromir) und Madame Schröder (Bertha). Die mittlere Rolle ist überaus stürmisch und erheischt mehr als gewöhnliche Kraftanstrengung, in welcher Rücksicht jedoch Herr Heurteur vollkommen befriedigte. Bertha, ein junges liebendes Mädchen, wurde mit vieler Täuschung vorgestellt. [...] Nach dem Schlusse der Vorstellung erschien Madame Schröder und erbat dem aufgeführten Trauerspiele als dem ersten Versuche eines jungen Dichters die Nachsicht des Publikums.*<sup>815</sup>

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<sup>814</sup> Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode: 22.03.1817.

<sup>815</sup> Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode: 05.02.1817.

(trans.: “The main roles of this tragedy were given by the Hrn. Lange (Graf Bdenko), Hrn. Heurteur (Jaromir) and Madame Schröder (Bertha). The middle part is very stormy and demands more than ordinary effort, in which, however, Mr Heurteur completely satisfied. Bertha, a young loving girl, was presented with a lot of deception. [...] After the conclusion of the performance appeared Madame Schröder and asked for indulgence by the audience for the performed tragedy being the first attempt of a young poet.”)

Sophie Schröder (1781-1868) was one of the most influential actresses of her time and her passionate acting was much appreciated by the audience and the playwrights.

By analysing the reception in the press of a play such as *Lavater, The Physiognomist or Not a Bad Judge* by Planché, which is mostly unknown to the secondary literature, new perspectives are gained. Two new pieces of information came to light only through the analysis of the press reviews. Firstly, this comic drama seems to have been based on a French model. Secondly, the play was performed in two theatres almost simultaneously. It was staged with the title *Not a Bad Judge* at the Lyceum Theatre, and with the title *Lavater, the Physiognomist, and a Good Judge Too* at the Haymarket. Throughout its performances in these and many other theatres, the play is always discussed in the press. The reviews refer in a very natural way to the historic figure, on which the whole plot is based: Johann Caspar Lavater. *Bell's New Weekly Messenger*, for example, refers to the philosophic content of the comic drama in two acts:

*Lavater's powers as a physiognomist form the main incidents of the plot; and by his powers in discovering, from certain outward signs, the deeper mystery that is not palpable to the less shrewd observer, he brings things to light that conduce to the working out of a tolerably interesting story. There is a little touch of philosophy in this idea that is very agreeable, albeit it is the philosophy of the French school, and not the German.*<sup>816</sup>

Lavater seems to be still a well known name in the press and his person and legacy do not need any further explanation. Lavater is played by Charles Mathews in the production at the Lyceum and by Benjamin Webster at the Haymarket. The press continuously compares the two performers. Webster gets a very good review from

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<sup>816</sup> Bell's New Weekly Messenger: 05.03.1848.



*Bell's New Weekly Messenger*: "Webster [...] makes it a studied character; there is meaning and purpose in all he does, and the Philosopher, who is an enthusiast in his theory, seems to draw his conclusion from deep research."<sup>817</sup> Mathews' performance is praised as "one of the most perfect examples of masterly comic acting on the modern boards"<sup>818</sup>. Mathews seems to capture perfectly the comic nature of the representation of Lavater's science:

*Charles Mathews plays the part of Lavater to perfection, maintaining the cool, observant air of the philosopher with great tact, while his confidence in the truth of his favourite science, even in the face of denial the most positive, and a crowd of facts hard to be disputed, is expressed with all the composure of conviction. His performance, indeed, is masterly throughout, and may well be applauded.*<sup>819</sup>

Mathews appears even in front of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in the role of Lavater in a presentation of the play at Windsor Castle on Friday, 16 January 1852. According to the press reviews the play was a huge success and reflected perfectly the audiences' taste and need for a comic interpretation of scientific theories.

The press reviews discussed in this chapter reflect the wide range of circulation of physiognomical discourse. The vocabulary with which these plays are reviewed differs in the different countries and the reviewers point out a very diverse catalogue of qualities and traits related to Physiognomy. Lavater, his theory and critical reception are often mentioned and discussed, without adding further details to his persona. Lavater seems therefore to be a well known philosophical and scientific personality of that time. Even decades after his publications of the *Physiognomische Fragmente* and his death, he still is known to the audience of the staged plays and the readers of the press reviews.

### **3.2. Actors' biographies**

In this chapter, some biographical notes on the performance of three actors in two plays of the corpus, are analysed. Also this section should be seen as a case study

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<sup>817</sup> Bell's New Weekly Messenger: 02.04.1848.

<sup>818</sup> London Evening Standard: 28.02.1867.

<sup>819</sup> London Evening Standard: 03.03.1848.

meant to demonstrate how and when the physiognomical discourse also entered the actors' biographies.

### **August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor**

August Wilhelm Iffland (1759-1814) was one of the most famous German actors of his time and he also wrote many plays, which were staged during his lifetime. Many biographies dealt with Iffland and his art of acting<sup>820</sup>. Höcker describes Iffland's face features in detail:

*Ifflands Persönlichkeit war von der Mutter Natur durchaus nicht verschwenderisch bedacht worden. [...] Sein Gesicht war voll und gerundet, die Nase kräftig, aber in richtigem Verhältnis stehend; seinem großen schwarzen Auge fehlte zwar das Durchdringende, doch wußte er es in einer Weise zu gebrauchen, die seiner vielbewunderten Mimik sehr zu Hilfe kam. Sein Sprachorgan war nicht klangvoll, aber weich und biegsam und durch eine meisterhafte Beherrschung jedes Ausdrucks fähig, ohne daß es bei Ausbrüchen der Leidenschaft einer gewaltsamen Anstrengung bedurfte.*<sup>821</sup>

(trans.: "Iffland's personality had been by no means considered lavishly by Mother Nature. [...] His face was full and rounded, the nose vigorously, but standing in due proportion; While his big black eye lacked being penetrating, but he knew how to use it in a way that his very much admired facial expressions came to his help. His speech organ was not sonorous, but soft and pliable and capable of every expression through a mastery control, without that it required a violent effort in case of outbreaks of the passion.")

This description is made in a physiognomical way, as each feature of Iffland's face is also related to the expression of his mind and soul. Höcker continues his description by analysing in detail Iffland's use of gesture and mimicry:

*Seine Gebärdensprache war oft noch beredter als das gesprochene Wort; seine Mimik und Gesticulation hätten hingereicht, ihn zum großen Künstler zu machen, selbst wenn er stumm geboren worden wäre; schon die leisesten Krümmungen seiner Finger sagten etwas, sie sprachen und deklamierten. Jedes seiner Worte begleitete er mit*

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<sup>820</sup> See August Ferdinand Bernhardi. "Über Ifflands mimische Darstellungen" In: *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks* 5 (1799): 18-34; Karl August Böttiger. *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796*. Leipzig, 1796; Zacharias Funk. *Aus dem Leben zweier Schauspieler: August Wilhelm Iffland's und Ludwig Devrient's*.1838; Gustav Höcker. *Die Vorbilder der deutschen Schauspielkunst. Schröder, Iffland und Ludwig Devrient. In biographischen Erzählungen*. 1899; Wilhelm Koffka. *Iffland und Dalberg*. 1865.

<sup>821</sup> Höcker. *Die Vorbilder der deutschen Schauspielkunst*. 1899 p.208.

*einer treffenden, durchdachten Mimik. [...] Er übte eine unbedingte Herrschaft über das Publikum, er mochte nun sprechen oder schweigen.*<sup>822</sup>

(trans.: “His sign language was often more eloquent than the spoken word, and his facial expression and gesticulation would have been sufficient to make him a great artist, even if he had been born dumb; even the slightest bends of his finger said something, they spoke and declaimed. Each of his words was accompanied with an appropriate, thoughtful expression. [...] He had absolute control over the audience, whether he was talking or silent.”)

Iffland studies every single element of the role he plays and he is totally wrapped up in it. He is able to embody many different characters and his skills as a playwright help him in the understanding and interpretation of all the differences. In the first part of this dissertation, Böttiger’s detailed description of Iffland’s performances was put in relation to other theoretical treatises on the art of acting.

Iffland plays Franz Moor in the premiere of Schiller’s *Die Räuber* at the Nationaltheater of Mannheim in 1782. Schiller made several significant changes to the plot of the tragedy he had published the year before. A lot of the most scandalous scenes and dialogues had been deleted and most of the physiognomic references had disappeared. The play was well received by the audience, mainly because of the skilled acting of Iffland and the other actors. Höcker describes Iffland’s performance in his biography:

*Mit gutem Bedachte hatte er sich nicht durch Kostüm und Maske verhäßlicht, war er nicht mit dem Judaszeichen der roten Haare erschienen; er glaubte des äußeren Zusatzes abschreckender Häßlichkeit entbehren zu können, wo er durch innere Kraft auszureichen vermochte. Er milderte das Grelle, ohne der Wahrheit zu nahe zu treten, und machte sich zum psychologischen Verteidiger dieses schrecklichen Characters.*<sup>823</sup>

(trans.: “With good caution he had not made himself ugly through costume and mask, he had not appeared with the Judas mark of red hair; he believed that he could spare the outer extension of the dissuasive ugliness, where his inner strength could be sufficient. He softened the harsh, without coming too close to the truth, and he made himself the psychological defender of this terrible character.”)

Höcker describes an interesting choice by Iffland: he wants to rely just on his ability as actor to show a bad character, not through his face, but more through his

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<sup>822</sup> Ibid p.209.

<sup>823</sup> Höcker. *Die Vorbilder der deutschen Schauspielkunst*. 1899 p.159.

expressions. Franz Moor is, it seems according to Höcker, too ugly, terrible and repulsive for Iffland and consequently also for the audience.

Böttiger also discusses the ugliness of Franz Moor and Iffland's choice to not overembellish it with masks and costumes. Böttiger remarks on the relation between Franz Moor's character and appearance:

*Nach einem vom Dichter selbst gegebenen Wink soll Franz Moor durch einen Höcker auf dem Rücken verunstaltet seyn; und wenn nach Diderot so scharfsinniger Bemerkung dem Dichter die treffendsten Züge erst dadurch gelingen, dass er zwischen der Physiognomie, womit er in der Phantasie seine Personen ausstattete, und ihren Handlungen eine geheime Verwandtschaft ahndet, so muss man gestehen, dass Schiller das Verwachsene und Verschrobene im Charakter des Franz Moor sehr gut mit seiner körperlichen Verkrüppelung in Verbindung gedacht habe, [...].<sup>824</sup>*

(trans.: "According to a hint given by the poet himself, Franz Moor is said to be disfigured by a hump on his back; and if according to Diderot's so perceptive remark, that the poet succeeds with the most relevant features, only by creating a secret relation between the physiognomy, which he endowed his figures in the imagination, and their actions, we must confess that Schiller very well thought of a conjunction of the eccentric and quirky character of Franz Moor and his physical deformity.")

Böttiger directly refers to the well-known theory of Physiognomy, that the human character and soul is written in the facial features.

### **John Philip Kemble as De Monfort and Sarah Siddons as Jane De Monfort**

Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) is now known to be one of the most popular actresses of the British scene of her time. People used "Mrs. Siddons"<sup>825</sup> to address her and to talk about her greatness in theatrical performances. Positive but also negative criticisms often used her face to explain her strengths and weaknesses. For example when she made her debut on the stage of Drury Lane theatre in 1775 in the role of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, just a few days after the birth of her second son, she was harshly criticized:

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<sup>824</sup> Böttiger. *Entwicklungen des Ifflandischen Spiels in vierzehn Darstellungen auf dem weimarischen Hoftheater im Aprilmonath 1796*. Leipzig, 1796 p.294.

<sup>825</sup> Russ McDonald. *Look to the Lady. Sarah Siddons, Ellen Terry and Judi Dench on the Shakespearean Stage*. University of Georgia Press, 2005 p.8.

*On before us tottered rather than walked, a very pretty, delicate, fragile-looking young creature, dressed in a most unbecoming manner, [...]. She spoke in a broken tremulous tone; and at the close of a sentence her words generally lapsed into a horrid whisper, that was absolutely inaudible. [...] Altogether, the impression made upon the audience by this first effort was of the most negative nature.*<sup>826</sup>

The harsh critique influenced the appearance of Siddons on the stage in London, but in Bath and Bristol she quickly became a star. Her return to the stage of Drury Lane in October 1782 is completely different: her role as Isabella in *Isabella. Or The fatal marriage* by Thomas Southerne (1758) gains her the audience's love and admiration. Siddons' ability to illustrate and show the passions is often described in the newspapers: "*The Dublin Evening Post* found her figure "elegant and interesting in the extreme" and especially noted that her eyes pointed up "the full force and meaning" of the several passions the role required."<sup>827</sup>

Siddons had a very pronounced nose, a weak physical form, large and expressive eyes and she used precise and discreet gestures. Her facial expressions show different passions, as described by her son Henry Siddons.

The audience generally loved to see Siddons in all different roles but maybe mostly as Lady Macbeth or Isabella. She was able to express in a very convincing way the sufferings of her female characters to the point that her audience were deeply moved by their sorrows: "*Audiences were moved to tears by her heart-rending grief and pathos in roles such as Isabella in The Fatal Marriage and Belvidera in Venice Preserved.*"<sup>828</sup>

The secondary literature is full of examples of the praise of Sarah Siddons' acting skills. She was an icon in her time and started a real "*Siddons fever*"<sup>829</sup> with fainting and hysteric excitement as result. Siddons had such a great influence on the English stage that she became also a model for other actors – female and male – in different acting and rhetorical manuals; for example, the one by her son Henry, as well as the treatise *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806) by Gilbert Austin. Austin compares Sarah Siddons to her brother John Philip Kemble

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<sup>826</sup> Quoted after a contemporary journal in Thomas Campbell. *Life of Mrs. Siddons* Vol. 1 London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1834 p.68f.

<sup>827</sup> Philip H. Highfill. *A biographical dictionary of actors, actresses, musicians, dancers, managers and other stage personal in London 1660-1800*. Vol.14 SIU Press 1991 p.11.

<sup>828</sup> Heather McPherson. "Picturing Tragedy. Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse Revisited." *Eighteenth-century Studies* 33/3 (2000): 401-430 p. 412.

<sup>829</sup> Sandra Richards. *The Rise of the English Actress*. NewYork: St.Martin's Press, 1993 p.79.

(1757-1823) and states that she is equal to her brother. Kemble “*exhibits the majesty of the drama, the perfection and glory of art, so finished that every look is a commentary, every tone an illustration, every gesture a model for the statuary, and a study for the painter.*”<sup>830</sup> His acting is more controlled than passionate, in contrast to that of his sister. For most of his career Kemble is called “*Last of the Romans*”<sup>831</sup>. His best known roles are Cato, Brutus and Coriolanus, but also Hamlet and Macbeth. These roles fit perfectly the heaviness of his movements and expressions. William Macready (1793-1873), who is to a certain extent his successor, describes in detail a presentation of Kemble as Cato:

*As he sat majestically in his curule chair, imagination could not supply a grander or more noble presence. In the face and form he realized the most perfect ideal that ever enriched the sculptor’s or the painter’s fancy, and his deportment was in accord with all of outward dignity and grace that history attributes to the patres conscripti...The tragedy, five acts of declamatory, unimpassioned verse, the monotony of which, correct as his emphasis and reading was, Kemble’s husky voice and labored articulation did not tend to dissipate or enliven, was a tax upon the patience of the hearers. [...] his attitudes were stately and picturesque, but evidently prepared;*<sup>832</sup>

Kemble prepares every movement and follows the acting rules in every single action. The few times he exaggerates, he gets harsh criticism. Kemble’s acting style, called “*teapot*”<sup>833</sup>, is very precise, very studied, very strictly regulated and controlled. The exaggeration in his movements is well accepted, but also, much criticized. His interpretation seems no longer natural, but too conventional and with little passion. William Hazlitt criticizes this side in Kemble’s acting of King John:

*It was well done and skillfully, according to the book of arithmetic; but no more. [...] Through most of the whole scene this celebrated actor did not seem to feel the part itself as it was set down for him, but to be considering how he ought to feel it, or how he should express by rule and method what he did not feel. He was sometimes slow, and sometimes hurried; sometimes familiar, and sometimes*

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<sup>830</sup> Gilbert Austin. *Chironomia. Or a treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*. London, 1806 p.279.

<sup>831</sup> Alan S. Downer. “Players and Painted Stage. Nineteenth Century Acting.” *PMLA* 61/2 (1946): 522-576 p.528.

<sup>832</sup> Quoted in Downer. “Players and Painted Stage.” (1946) p.523-524.

<sup>833</sup> Downer. “Players and Painted Stage.” (1946) p.528.

*solemn; but always with an evident design and determination to be so.*<sup>834</sup>

During the 1799-1800 season at the Drury Lane Theatre, John Philip Kemble put *De Monfort* on stage several times. His biographer James Boaden says about the qualities of Kemble in the role of De Monfort: “*The acting of Mr. Kemble was amazingly powerful; and he showed how well he could conceive and display the features of a passion, from he was personally more free than most men of his time.*”<sup>835</sup> With Kemble in the role of De Monfort, his sister Sarah Siddons plays Lady Jane De Monfort. Thomas Campbell criticizes in his biography of Sarah Siddons the choice of Joanna Baillie to concentrate only on one passion in each play. In order to be staged, the play should show more passions: “*John Kemble thought that De Montfort would suit the stage: and his acting in the piece, as well as Mrs. Siddons’s, was amazingly powerful.*”<sup>836</sup> Campbell sees a direct connection between Sarah Siddons and Lady Jane De Monfort. He says, that “*Joanna Baillie had left a perfect picture of Mrs. Siddons in her description of Jane De Monfort*”<sup>837</sup> and quotes for the purpose of showing his idea the conversation between the page and Lady Freberg in the first scene of the second act (quoted earlier in this dissertation). Andrea Peghinelli is convinced that Sarah Siddons features and appearance were perfect for Jane de Monfort: “*L’aspetto austero di Siddons le consentì di calarsi in modo perfetto nei panni di Jane De Monfort, e le caratteristiche di questo personaggio in parte corrispondevano anche alle sue doti umane.*”<sup>838</sup> (trans.: “The austere appearance of Siddons allowed her to perfectly play the role of Jane De Monfort, and the characteristics of this character in part also corresponded to her human qualities.”). The two siblings seem perfect for both roles. Not only because of their physical forms but also their dramatic style is perfect for the incarnation of the De Monforts.

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<sup>834</sup> William Hazlitt. *View of the English Stage or A Series of Dramatic Criticism*. London, 1821 p.384.

<sup>835</sup> James Boaden. *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble including a History of the Stage*. Philadelphia, 1825 p. 402.

<sup>836</sup> Thomas Campbell. *Life of Mrs. Siddons* Vol. 1 London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1834 p.255.

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid* p.257.

<sup>838</sup> Andrea Peghinelli. “Gli interpreti di Monfort.” In: Isabella Imperiali. *Le Passioni della mente nel teatro di Joanna Baillie*. Roma: Editoria & Spettacolo, 2007, 287-302 p. 291.

### 3.3. Excursus – artistic interpretation

Throughout this dissertation the importance of the visuality of theatre is underlined. As pointed out by West, the interpretation of actors' portraits starts by recognizing the strong link between painting, poetry and theatre. Claudia Corti argues in her article *Discursive Cross-References and Genre Interferences in Romantic Theory and Practice of Dramatic Art* that the Romantic discourse around the "sister arts" or "mimetic arts" – poetry and painting – combines "two aspects which are peculiar to and distinctive of the essence of theatre: on one hand, there is its stance to imitate nature and reproduce reality, and on the other hand – corollary to the former – is its capacity to represent and enhance the passions, the true epistemological obsession of the period"<sup>839</sup>. Vocabulary related to painting is introduced in the discussion of theatrical performances, as seen in many cases in this dissertation: Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery*, for example, presents the audience with an "an excellent picture" according to the review in *The British Critic* and the actor Kemble moves with "picturesque attitudes", as described by Macready. The introduction of Tableaux Vivants represents surely a climax in this movement towards the sister arts. The creation of specific actors' portraits is strongly connected to acting manuals and illustrations of physiognomical textbooks. The passions and emotions related to a role or character are shown with the same philosophical background and knowledge as in the illustration of basic acting manuals and theory books on the art and science of Physiognomy.

This last chapter is in a broader sense a text analysis. Painters, engravers and caricaturists analyse the plays and create their vision of the story and figures. They use the passions described in the stage directions and dialogues as inspiration for their paintings, engravings and caricatures.

In this chapter some examples are illustrated, where the passions are most visible and the physiognomical discourse is most present.

#### **Charlotte Brandes as Ariadne**

The famous painter Anton Graff (1736-1816) made in 1776 a portrait of the actress Charlotte Brandes in the role of Ariadne, which than later was used by the engraver

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<sup>839</sup> Corti. "Discursive Cross-References and Genre Interferences in Romantic Theory and Practice of Dramatic Art." (2008) p.39.



Heinrich Sintzenich as a model for his engraving. Charlotte Brandes' husband himself ordered the engraving<sup>840</sup>. The painting/engraving shows the moment when Ariadne realizes that Theseus has left her. Johann Georg Meusel writes in the critique of the painting:



Illustration 6-7: Esther Charlotte Brandes as Ariadne

*Es ist die Stelle, wo sie die traurige Überzeugung erhält, von ihrem Theseus verlassen zu seyn, wo also das Hauptinteresse des Stücks anfängt, welches von nun an immer zunimmt, je höher Angst und Schrecken bey jener anwächst. Es ist daher kein schon ausgeweinter Schmerz; Ariadne steht vielmehr wie in Jammer versunken, ganz vom Schrecken betäubt, staunend über dies unerwartete Schicksal da. Von Ruhe ist hier keine Spur, wohl aber von der äußersten Verlegenheit alle Kennzeichen vorhanden.<sup>841</sup>*

(trans.: "It is the moment when she gets the sad conviction, that she was abandoned by her Theseus, when the main interest of the play begins, that from there on always increases, the higher fear and terror grow. It is therefore not an already cried out pain; Ariadne is rather as if lost in grief, quite deafened by terror, astonished over this unexpected fate. There is no trace of rest, but all the characteristics of extreme embarrassment are visible.")

Fear, Terror and Grief are the main passions described in Brandes' Duodrama and are used in the creation of the painting and engraving. Charlotte's posture recalls in many ways the illustrations in the acting manuals by, along with others, Engel, Siddons and Jelgerhuis:

<sup>840</sup> see Gotha'sche Gelehrte Zeitungen: 25.03.1780 p.208.

<sup>841</sup> Johann Georg Meusel. *Miscellaneen artistischen Inhalts*. Erfurt, 1779 p.49.



Illustration 8-9-10: Schmerz, Terror, Schrik

**Engel: LVIII Schmerz:** “Alceste [...] hob den matten Arm und legte, im Gefühl ihrer Verwirrung, die Hand vor die Stirne”. (trans.: “Alceste [...] raised her dull arm and put, with the feeling of confusion, her hand before her forehead.”)

**Siddons: XXIII Terror:** “He should [...] shut his eyes, covering them at the same time with one hand.”

**Jelgerhuis: XLII Schrik:** “Maar de herneming van den schrik of bedaring nog vol ontoernis, doet ons de handen op het hart en het hoofd liggen, als de plaatsen waar ons gevoel het meest van den schrik geleden heeft, en wij trachten dan nedertezitten of ergens op te leunen.” (trans.: “But the recovery from terror or calming down still full of emotion, makes us place our hands on the heart and the head, as the places where our feelings have suffered most from the terror, and we then try to sit down or lean on something.”)

### **August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor**

As described in the previous chapter, August Wilhelm Iffland played Franz Moor in *Die Räuber*. The painter, illustrator and engraver Meno Haas (1752-1833) drew Iffland as Franz Moor. Franz Ludwig Catel (1778-1856) then used these drawings to create in 1806 two engravings:



Illustration 11-12: August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor

Iffland's costume is a recreation of the dresses of the fifteenth century, because Wolfgang Heribert Freiherr von Dalberg (1750-1806), the intendant of the Nationaltheater in Mannheim, wanted Schiller to set the story in the fifteenth century in order to avoid a contemporary interpretation of the scandalous facts shown on stage. The two paintings/engravings show Iffland at the beginning of the first act, when Franz is cursing Nature for his ugly appearance, and destiny for his unfortunate fate. In the painting by Heinrich Anton Melchior (1771-1796) the same scene is shown with more provocation and anger in Iffland's face:



Illustration 13: „Warum gerade mir die Lappländersnase?“ August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor

### August Wilhelm Iffland as Bittermann

In August von Kotzebue's *Menschenhass und Reue* Iffland takes the role of the housekeeper Bittermann. It is a secondary role in the Rührstück, but Iffland embodies the housekeeper with much passion and dedication, as we see from the praise in the press previously quoted. An undated and anonymous sketch of Iffland in the role shows the subservience and dignity of Bittermann:



Illustration 14: August Wilhelm Iffland as Bittermann

This sketch shows not a specific passion, but a specific attitude: the attitude of the flattered servant. This attitude and its attached posture reminds us of Engels' description and illustration of the “*respectful friendly flatterer*” (“*ehrerbietig freundlicher Schmeichler*”):



Illustration 15: Schmeichler

**Engel: XLVI Schmeichler:** “*der sich bückende, ins Knie sinkende, ehrerbietig freundliche Schmeichler*” (trans.: “the bending forward, in his knees sinking, respectfully friendly flatterer”)

### **Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble in *The Stranger***

In 1798 Benjamin Thompson (1776-1816) translated *Menschenhass und Reue* into English and called it *The Stranger*. When the play was performed at Dury Lane Theatre, Sarah Siddons played the role of Mrs. Haller and her brother John Philip Kemble played the title role, the stranger. Both siblings were also portrayed in their roles:



Illustration 16: Sarah Siddons as Mrs. Haller

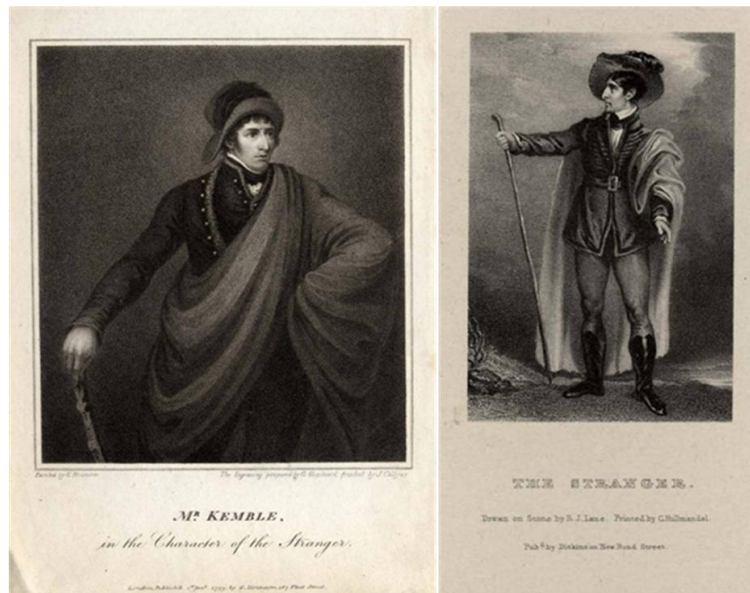


Illustration 17-18: John Philip Kemble as The Stranger

Siddon's portrait focuses on her expressive eyes and Kemble's on his stable acting and thoughtful movement. Both actors are shown in specific costumes.

### **Charles Farley as Francisco and *The Monster Melodrama***

With Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* we have already seen a specific artistic connection through the illustrations by Henry Tresham. But this melodrama also inspired other artists. The painter Samuel de Wilde (1748-1832), for example, created a painting of the actor Charles Farley (1771-1859) in the role of Francisco. The painting shows the moment when Francisco writes down his tragic past:





Illustration 19: Charles Farley as Francisco

De Wilde made several other actors' portraits and was well known during his lifetime. In 1807 he created the print *The Monster Melodrama* and published it in *The Satirist*:



Illustration 20: The Monster Melodrama

This satirical print is often used in the secondary literature to discuss the critique of the melodrama in the English press and society. In *The Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature* we find a very detailed description of the print:

*The cartoon presents melodrama as, literally, a monstrous form – a monster with a number of heads, three of which are identifiable as*

those of Sheridan (indicating the influence of his Pizarro on the new dramatic form), John Philip Kemble (the manager at this time of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden), and Joseph Grimaldi (the pantomime clown). Making use of a rather poor pun, the monster's tail has 'A Tale of Mystery' written upon it. The hybrid monster suckles a number of playwrights, including Holcroft, Matthew Lewis, Lumley Skeffington (the author of *The Sleeping Beauty. A Grand Legendary Melodrama: Drury Lane, 1805*), and Frederick Reynolds. [...] As the monster moves forward, it tramples the work of Shakespeare with its back paws and, with its front paws, that of William Congreve, John Fletcher, and George Colman the Elder.<sup>842</sup>

Jane Moody gives this print a very significant meaning and value. She argues in her work on the illegitimate theatre in London that “*the grotesque maternity depicted here implicitly represents melodramatic authorship as a form of quasi-incestuous sexual deviance. Moreover, the cartoon cleverly blurs distinctions between writing and production, between melodramatic authorship and performance: the textual and the corporeal seem to have become indistinguishable.*”<sup>843</sup>

### **Daniel Chodowiecki's illustrations of German plays**

Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801) was the most famous German etcher of the 18th century. His works include illustrations for literary as well as for scientific publications. In 1773, Johann Caspar Lavater asked for Chodowiecki's collaboration in his forthcoming publications *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*<sup>844</sup>. Chodowiecki in the end created 81 etchings for Lavater's work. Some critics argue that Chodowiecki's own artistic style was much influenced by the collaboration with Lavater<sup>845</sup>.

Chodowiecki created several etchings for three plays present in the corpus: *Die Räuber*, *Kabale und Liebe* and *Stella*.

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<sup>842</sup> Frederick Burwick (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*. Vol. 1 A-G. Wiley Blackwell, 2012 p.855.

<sup>843</sup> Jane Moody. *Illegitimate Theatre in London. 1770-1840*. Cambridge University Press, 2000 p.55.

<sup>844</sup> See Thomas Kirchner. “Chodowiecki, Lavater und die Physiognomiedebatte in Berlin.” In: Ernst Hinrichs and Klaus Zernack (ed.). *Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801). Kupferstecher, Illustrator, Kaufmann*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997, 101-141.

<sup>845</sup> See Werner Busch. “Chodowieckis Darstellung der Gefühle und der Wandel des Bildbegriffes nach der Mitte des 18.Jahrhunderts.” In: Wilfried Barner (ed.). *Tradition, Norm, Innovation. Soziales und literarisches Traditionsverhalten in der Frühzeit der deutschen Aufklärung*. München: De Gruyter, 1989, 315-343; Kirchner. “Chodowiecki, Lavater und die Physiognomiedebatte in Berlin.” (1997).



For Schiller's *Die Räuber*, Chodowiecki created six representations of various scenes which were engraved afterwards. These six scenes were published in the *Gothaer Theater Kalender* of 1783:



Die Räuber.  
 Erfunden und gestochen von D. Chodowiecki.  
 „Theaterkalender auf das Jahr 1783. Gotha, bey Carl Wilhelm Ottlinger.“  
 (Landesbibliothek, Weimar.)

Illustration 21: Die Räuber

Chodowiecki chose six very different scences from the second, third, fourth and fifth act. Interestingly he did not choose a scene from the first act which, as we have seen with the representation of Iffland as Franz Moor, is the one most used by other

artists. These scenes show Amalia's desperation, the old Moor's grief, the monk's horror and the cruelty of the last scenes of the fifth act.

For Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, Chodowiecki creates 12 engravings (a selection):



Illustration 22: Kabale und Liebe

With these engravings Chodowiecki tries to recreate the atmosphere of the theatre. The dark background is a strong contrast to the lighter action in the front. As already with the engravings for *Die Räuber*, here Chodowiecki quotes directly from the text and aims for a good understanding of the whole play through these short examples. The movement by the figures shown in the engravings recall in many ways the

movements described in the acting manuals: the figures point at each other with much meaning, and Horror and Terror make them cover their eyes.

For Goethe's *Stella* he creates only the title vignette:



Illustration 23: Stella

Stella and Fernando embrace with much love. With this vignette Chodowiecki captures the essence of Goethe's tragedy. Love and Grief are much intertwined in the whole play and this embrace releases both.

These examples of the artistic reception of several plays of the corpus should demonstrate once again the widespread circulation of physiognomical discourse in the society of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Physiognomy, with its detailed description of every feature in the human face and its link to the soul and the emotions, creates a perfect environment for the discussion of portraits. The artists not only use a new vocabulary in their work, but also new techniques of showing the human soul through their work. The concentration on specific facial features, such as the eyes is one of the many results of this new awareness. Through Physiognomy's influence and impact on the theoretical discussion of acting, the importance of gestures and postures is also illustrated through art. This last chapter, on the one hand, is meant as a summary and conclusion of the many concepts illustrated before, but, on the other hand, it is an excursus which opens towards new research and relevance. Theatre portraits should be much more contextualized, in order to create a wider discourse. This chapter can be seen as one first attempt of contextualisation.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation started with many preliminary ideas and thoughts on the scientific understanding in the public sphere at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The concept of Physiognomy was connected to a broader sense of scientific research in that period. The scientific nature of Physiognomy was proved not only by the definitions in encyclopedias and dictionaries of that time, but also by the theoretical work of many different scholars. This introduction made it clear that the research on Physiognomy leads to a multidimensional discourse involving many different key figures of cultural history of the last 2,500 years. All the different theories of Physiognomy have in common the continuous research for a scientific explanation of the readability of the human soul.

The human soul with its feelings, emotions and passions becomes significant in any research on cultural production, and this dissertation focuses in particular on theatrical production. The first part shows how much the discourse on the passions is linked in general to physiognomic and pathognomic issues and in detail to the theatre. Many of the discussed textbooks and acting manuals would not be possible without the widespread discussion on the passions. The preliminary theoretical works on Physiognomy introduce a completely new vocabulary for the discussion about the passions and emotions. By pointing out the link between the inner and the outer characteristics of the human body, Physiognomy makes every description of the body's movement and language richer, more scientific (although we should say pseudo-scientific) and more philosophic.

The awareness of Physiognomy as science is not only important in the performance text but also in the dramatic text, which is described in detail in the second part of this dissertation. The text analysis of twenty selected plays exemplifies the many different approaches towards Physiognomy in the written text. The text analysis makes it clear that many of the plays would not be possible without the previous knowledge of their authors of Physiognomy and its reception. Many plays offer a richer text and plot thank to the physiognomical elements they bear. This dissertation focuses also on the reception of these plays in the period taken into consideration. The reception both in the press and by the audience shows how fashionable Physiognomy was.

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<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/physiognomonie/60614?q=physiognomonie#60236> (18.10.2014)

- \* Karl Richter: Bretzner, Christoph Friedrich In: Neue Deutsche Biographie 2 1955  
p.603f. online version <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd115849238.html>  
(06.11.2015)
- \* Treccani: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fisiognomica> (18.10.2014)

## List of illustrations

\* Illustration 1-2-3: The Dying Brigand p.189

1: Painter: Charles Eastlake; Printer: William Say

Date: 1824

Technique: mezzotint

Dimension: 334 x 390 mm

2: Painter: Charles Eastlake; Printer: Charles Taylor; Publisher: Hurst, Robinson & Co.

Date: 1824

Technique: mezzotint, etching

Dimension: 325 x 227 mm

3: Painter: Charles Eastlake; Printer: Samuel Williams Reynolds; Publisher: Hurst, Robinson & Co.

Date: 1826

Technique: mezzotint

Dimension: 366 x 419 mm

1-2-3: Source: The British Museum. Collection online ([www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org))

\* Illustration 4-5: A Tale of Mystery p.226

Painter: Henry Tresham; Printer: Thomas Davison; Publisher: Richard Phillips

Date: 1802

Technique: etching

Source: Thomas Holcroft. *A Tale of Mystery*. Second Edition London, 1802.

\* Illustration 6-7: Esther Charlotte Brandes as Ariadne p.337

6: Painter: Anton Graff

Date: 1776

Technique: oil on canvas

Dimension: 124 x 94 cm

Source: Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung der Universität Köln (Theatre Collection of the University of Cologne)

7: Engraver: Heinrich Sintzenich

Date: 1781

Technique: engraving

Dimension: 43,5 x 28,6 cm

Source: museum-digital sachsen-anhalt (<http://www.museum-digital.de>)

\* Illustration 8-9-10: Schmerz, Terror, Schrik p.338

8: Source: Johann Jakob Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785.

9: Source: Henry Siddons. *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action*. Second edition London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1822.

10: Source: Johannes Jelgerhuis. *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek*. Amsterdam, 1827.

8-9-10: Technique: engraving

\* Illustration 11-12: August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor p.339

11: Engraver: Meno Haas

Date: 1806

Technique: copperplate engraving

Source: Goethezeitportal ([www.goethezeitportal.de](http://www.goethezeitportal.de))

12: Creator: Franz Ludwig Catel

Date: 1806

Technique: drawing

Source: Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek ([www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de](http://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de))

\* Illustration 13: "Warum gerade mir die Lappländersnase?" August Wilhelm Iffland as Franz Moor p.339

Painter: Heinrich Anton Melchior

Date: around 1790

Technique: oil on canvas

Source: [www.morgenweb.de](http://www.morgenweb.de)

\* Illustration 14: August Wilhelm Iffland as Bittermann p.340

Anonymous and undated

Source: Digitaler Potraitindex ([www.portraitindex.de](http://www.portraitindex.de))

\* Illustration 15: Schmeichler p.341

Technique: engraving

Source: Johann Jakob Engel. *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Berlin, 1785.

\* Illustration 16: Sarah Siddons as Mrs.Haller p.341

Painter: Thomas Lawrence; Engraver: James Thomson; Publisher: Simkin & Marshall and Chapple

Technique: engraving

Date: 1820

Source: University of Illinois Theatrical Print collection (<http://imagesearch.library.illinois.edu>)

\* Illustration 17-18: John Philip Kemble as The Stranger p.342

17: Painter: George Hounsom; Engraver: George Shepheard and Joseph Collyer

Technique: engraving

Date: ca. 1815

18: Creator: Richard James Lane; Printer: Charles Hullmandel

Technique: Lithograph

17-18: Source: University of Illinois Theatrical Print collection  
(<http://imagesearch.library.illinois.edu>)

\* Illustration 19: Charles Farley as Francisco p.343

Painter: Samuel de Wilde

Date: 1802

Technique: oil on canvas

Dimension: 69 x 90 cm

Source: My Art Prints ([www.myartprints.co.uk](http://www.myartprints.co.uk))

\* Illustration 20: The Monster Melodrama p.343

Painter: Samuel de Wilde; Publisher: S. Tipper

Date: 1807

Technique: etching and hand-coloured

Dimension: 183 x 347 mm

Source: The British Museum. Collection online ([www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org))

\* Illustration 21: Die Räuber p.345

Engraver: Daniel Chodowiecki

Date: 1783

Source: Goethezeitportal ([www.goethezeitportal.de](http://www.goethezeitportal.de))

\* Illustration 22: Kabale und Liebe p.346

Engraver: Daniel Chodowiecki

Date: 1786

Source: Goethezeitportal ([www.goethezeitportal.de](http://www.goethezeitportal.de))

\* Illustration 23: Stella p.347

Engraver: Daniel Chodowiecki

Source: Wikipedia ([www.wikipedia.de](http://www.wikipedia.de))



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