

# Physiognomy, Judgment and Art in Mary Brunton's *Self-Control*

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*Self-Control* was published anonymously in 1811 to immediate acclaim. Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra saying she had tried in vain to get her hands on a copy: 'I *should* like to know what her Estimate is – but am always half afraid of finding a clever novel *too clever* – & of finding my own story & my own people all forestalled'.<sup>1</sup> The author of *Self-Control*, Mary Balfour Brunton, was born in 1778 into a well-to-do family living on Burray, one of the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland. Most of her education took place at home, where she learnt French, Italian and music, and in 1798 she married Alexander Brunton (a Presbyterian minister and later Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Edinburgh), who encouraged her studies in philosophy, literature, German and Gaelic. A second novel, *Discipline*, appeared in 1814 and the unfinished *Emmeline* was published in 1818, subsequent to her death at the age of forty after giving birth to a stillborn son.

Brunton's stated aims in writing *Self-Control* were 'to show the power of the religious principle in bestowing self-command' and 'to bear testimony against a maxim as immoral as indelicate, that a reformed rake makes the best husband'.<sup>2</sup> When the novel opens her heroine, the impecunious Laura Montreville, is in mourning for her mother and in love with the handsome and unscrupulous Colonel Hargrave who, not wishing to marry her because of her lack of a fortune, suggests she become his mistress. Laura is duly horrified, and unable to trust Hargrave's subsequent offer of marriage, insists on a two years' probation. She and her father Captain Montreville, a half-pay officer from a respectable family of limited fortune, then go to London to recover a lost annuity he had purchased for her, where they become increasingly financially embarrassed. Laura's attempts to sell some of her paintings and chalk drawings bring her to the attention of Montague De Courcy, who operates secretly to have her and her father's rent paid and to ensure that Laura's annuity is restored.

Captain Montreville, already ill, cannot survive the discovery, first, of Laura's kidnapping at the hands of their legal agent, then of the effect his selfishness has had on her own health. With her father dead, Laura is forced to live with the unprincipled Lady Pelham her aunt, and

when it is revealed that Hargrave has a pregnant mistress (whom he abandons), as well as a child by a girl he has raped, Laura is convinced that romantic love will now always be a stranger to her. As if this were not enough, Hargrave then kidnaps her and takes her to North America, from where she escapes by strapping herself to a canoe and coursing down the rapids! Realising she will never love him again, Hargrave commits suicide and Laura returns to England to marry the worthy Montague De Courcy.

*Self-Control* is set in the period when it was written. The early nineteenth century was a time of war, political agitation, industrial development and excess generally. The Church was pluralist, secularised, corrupt; the state, or parliament, unreformed; the agricultural community decimated and disordered. Mary Brunton was one of a body of conservative and didactic women novelists who deplored the decay of society and looked back to the eighteenth century and earlier. Her novels do not demand critical reevaluation as great literature, but her use of now largely forgotten theories and ideas and her assessment of their relevance to the romantic period make her work of interest to the student of literature and the history of ideas. This paper examines Brunton's use of two of these: the pseudo-science of physiognomy or the study of facial features as an indication of moral character and the pictorial representation of the classical story of *The Choice of Hercules*, discussed by Keryl Kavanagh in a paper of 1995 on Sir Joshua Reynolds and narrative portraiture.<sup>3</sup>

Both physiognomy and the Hercules motif are used to imbue the visual with a moral dimension. The former represents a scientific method for the human apprehension of a divinely constructed natural and social order, in which judgment is based on objective rather than subjective experience, on reason rather than sentiment. The Hercules motif, on the other hand, forms a contrast with the values of personal freedom and experience encapsulated in the movement we now call Romantic. For both, the material is important as an indicator of the ethical, not as an end in itself. The notion of interpretative scrutiny is the key here, both in visual art and physiognomy, and has a parallel in the Evangelical practice of self-examination. The heroine of *Self-Control* scrupulously analyses her own behaviour and thoughts, according to reason and religion.

Narrative painting and physiognomy are both allegorical modes—as is the novel itself, albeit a relatively new one in Brunton's time. Brunton extends the classical theory of *ut pictura poesis* to the new literary genre of the novel,<sup>4</sup> making it the locus of ethical contemplation

and a genre of artistic standing equivalent to poetry. The importance of prose narrative in ethical discourse had a religious precedent in Christ's use of the parable and the Evangelicals, particularly, placed great importance on scriptural study as the means for moral instruction (Laura Montreville's self-examination includes turning to passages of scripture relevant to the issue she is analysing). By drawing on traditional poetics, Brunton contrasts classical with Romantic values to make a clear case for the former: for art which instructs primarily and delights secondarily. She establishes an iconography of moral choice and examines the role of the artist and of the individual in a society with increasingly confused standards. The connection of seemingly disparate ideas in the common sphere of allegory provides the conservative, Calvinistic and didactic novelist with a vehicle for a discussion of systems of value.

In 1727 in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, the Earl of Shaftesbury wrote that 'the most natural Beauty in the world is *Honesty*, and moral *Truth*. For all *Beauty is TRUTH*. *True Features make the Beauty of a Face*'.<sup>5</sup> The notion that morality was in some way connected to appearances reached its zenith with the work of the Swiss pastor, Johann Caspar Lavater. Though not the first, Lavater was by far the most influential proponent of physiognomy whose greatest work, *Essays on Physiognomy*, went through five German language editions alone during the 1770s (by 1810, fifty-seven editions had been published, including twenty in English). According to John Graham, one of the few twentieth-century scholars to investigate physiognomy, 'the book was reprinted, abridged, summarised, pirated, parodied, imitated, and reviewed so often that it is difficult to imagine how a literate person of the time could have failed to have some general knowledge of the man and his theories'.<sup>6</sup> The statement by the *Gentleman's Magazine* of February 1801 that Lavater's works 'were thought of as necessary in every family as even the Bible itself' indicates that the work was not only popular, it was also acceptable in religious households.<sup>7</sup>

To the modern mind, the idea of judging a person's moral character from his or her appearance seems absurd and insulting, yet for long periods in history physiognomy was given credit as being a genuine and valuable science and was studied by many leading philosophers. Aristotle, Plato and Xenophon all wrote on the subject. Though the study of physiognomy in England dates back at least to Thomas Hill's *The Contemplation of Mankynd* in 1588, with interest and publications in the ostensible science growing during the seventeenth century, it

was not until the eighteenth century that English physiognomy truly flourished. In physiognomy, as in the art of painting, appearances are meaning. So in the development of characterisation in the novel, it would have seemed wasteful to ignore the many symbolic possibilities offered by a character's appearance. We are familiar with what can be suggested by fair and dark characters, and Jane Austen's rare physical descriptions of her characters serve only to heighten the significance of the few suggestions she does give. While we may not wish to extend physiognomic principles to our interpretation of people in the real world, would *Wuthering Heights* be the same if Heathcliff were short, plump and balding?

The same intellectual climate that saw a growth of interest in aesthetics saw Europe fascinated by a theory that appeared to reconcile the new experimental science with traditional ethics. Lavater was an orthodox Protestant pastor and his avowed purpose in writing the *Essays* was didactic and religious. Published (according to the subtitle) 'for the Promotion of the Knowledge, and Love of Mankind', Lavater's theories were based on theological ones: since man was made in God's image, the goodness of God was reflected in man; and since God does nothing without a purpose, the student of physiognomy could use God's creatures to understand himself and his fellow men better. And I use gender specific pronouns here advisedly. Lavater's physiognomist is always, his subject almost always a man; though married at the age of twenty-four, he announces with pride that he is 'but little acquainted with the female part of the human race' ('In my youth I almost avoided women, and was never in love').<sup>8</sup>

Lavater draws on conservative Christian doctrine to connect classical and aesthetic principles of balance and harmony to the divine order of things, including the human face: 'Each trait contains the whole character of man, as, in the smallest works of God, the character of Deity is contained. Every minute part has the nature and character of the whole'.<sup>9</sup> Convinced of an innate affection for one's fellow creatures, his opinions on the nature of man were in agreement with those of Shaftesbury and opposed to the Hobbesian belief that mankind is fundamentally selfish.<sup>10</sup> This is not the Augustan or conservative Christian position, and we note Mary Brunton's somewhat less optimistic reference to 'the natural benevolence which still affords a *faint* trait of the image in which man was made'.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of some differences, then, Brunton found Lavater's benevolent and educational intentions attractive and the allegory of appearances useful to her in her fiction. Though her descriptions of

most of the novel's characters are insignificant, the one given in free indirect speech by Montague De Courcy of Laura Montreville when he first sees her is clearly based on physiognomic principles—which is hardly surprising, given that De Courcy is a physiognomist and well acquainted with Lavater's theories. Overcoming 'his habitual dislike to staring', we are told, De Courcy rivets his eyes 'on a face, which, once seen, was destined never to be forgotten':

Her luxuriant hair, (which De Courcy at first thought black, though he afterwards corrected this opinion), was carelessly divided on a forehead, whose spotless whiteness was varied only by the blue of a vein that shone through the transparent skin. As she raised her mild religious dark gray eyes, their silken lashes rested on the well-defined but delicate eye-brow; or, when her glance fell before the gaze of admiration, threw a long shade on a cheek of unequalled beauty, both for form and colour. The contour of her features, inclining to the Roman, might perhaps have been called masculine, had it not been softened to the sweetest model of maiden loveliness, by the delicacy of its size and colouring. The glowing scarlet of the lips, formed a contrast with a complexion constitutionally pale, but varying every moment; while round her easily but firmly closing mouth, lurked not a trace of the sensual or the vain, but all was calm benevolence, and saintly purity. In the contemplation of a countenance, the perfect symmetry of which was its meanest charm, De Courcy ... suffered the stream of time ... to flow on without notice (I, 142–43).

Lavater divided the body into three sections, representing different aspects of human character. The intellectual life was supreme, occupied the head, and had the eyes as its centre. The middle or moral life was represented by the breast and had the heart at its centre. Animal life was the lowest, the most earthly, and dwelt in the lower torso. His analysis also divided the head into thirds, and he believed they held the same qualities as the corresponding part of the whole body: the upper or forehead region; the middle section around the nose; and the lower section, which featured the mouth at its centre. We can see in the description of Laura the same ordering system is followed, starting with the hair, forehead and eyes; following with the nose and cheeks; finishing with the mouth.

Brunton was well acquainted with the specifics of physiognomic theory. Applying its principles to Laura's appearance, we can not only follow Brunton's method of characterisation, but also reconstruct the ideology behind those characteristics. The *careless* arrangement of Laura's luxuriant hair and her downcast eyes when 'her glance fell

before the gaze of admiration', for example, are evidence of her lack of a vanity roundly condemned by Lavater. It was the forehead, however, that was considered the most important feature of the face, and Laura possesses the very best available in foreheads. Arching of the forehead was said to indicate mental powers and strength of character; De Courcy later comments to himself that 'I knew by the noble arching of her forehead, that she was above all vulgar prejudice' (I, 147-48). And although it is not what we would expect in a literary description of a beautiful woman, the mention of 'the blue of a vein that shone through the transparent skin' of Laura's forehead is actually a great compliment; the appearance of the vein in an open, smooth, well-arched forehead, denotes extraordinary talents and a warm, generous character.<sup>12</sup>

Laura's nose, rendered more genteelly by Brunton as 'the contour of her features', is easily interpreted. According to Lavater, the nose was the 'foundation, or abutment, of the brain', and therefore another vitally important feature to the physiognomist.<sup>13</sup> The Roman nose was considered to be a sign of energy and acuteness, but a too strongly aquiline nose could be dangerously indicative of craft, unscrupulousness and ambition. This is the worst nose of all: 'the Jewish nose', in the words of the Victorian Lavaterian C. Gurney, 'the nose of Louis Napoleon'.<sup>14</sup> Clearly Laura's is not *too* Roman, she has just as much energy and acuteness as is becoming in a female. Jeanne Fahnestock has noted that the noses of novelistic heroines are rarely described in the period, and that 'thus when the heroine's nose is being described the reader is being told something very important'.<sup>15</sup> The fact that Mary Brunton goes into such intricate detail is particularly telling.

Mouths for Lavater were symbolic of the appetite, the sensuous aspects of human nature. Gurney notes that this is because 'it is the head piece of the digestive organs'. He continues: 'character is not always determined by size; it lurks in the corners of the mouth.... Firm lips compressed, but without constraint, always denote courage and fortitude'. The description we find of Laura's mouth is a perfect match with this: 'round her easily but firmly closing mouth, lurked not a trace of the sensual or the vain, but all was calm benevolence, and saintly purity' (I, 143). The description of Laura concludes with a reflection on the perfect symmetry of the whole countenance. Again we are reminded of Lavater's belief in the importance of order and balance, and in the human form as indeed a divine creation.

According to Lavater, 'the most natural, manly, useful, noble, and, however apparently easy, the most difficult of arts is portrait

painting. Love first discovered this heavenly art. Without love what could it perform?—But what love?—And the lover—who?’<sup>16</sup> Laura Montreville is an artist, and she decides to paint a version of *The Choice of Hercules*, as a gift for Montague’s mother. To ‘make the gift the more acceptable’, the narrator informs us,

she presented in the hero a picture of De Courcy, while the form and countenance of Virtue, were copied from the simple majesty of her own. The figure of Pleasure was a fancied one, and it cost the fair artist unspeakable labour. She could not pourtray [sic] what she would have shrunk from beholding—a female voluptuary. Her drawings were always designed with the most chastened decency; and, after all her toil, even the form of Pleasure came sober and matronly from the hand of Laura (I, 247).

Her explanation for portraying herself in the role of Virtue is that ‘it would have been impossible to mould my solemn countenance into the lineaments of Pleasure’ (I, 258). Here physiognomy dictates the appearance of virtue in the most literal way.

So popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the story of *The Choice of Hercules*, and so deeply ‘had the story penetrated neoclassical culture’, as one critic describes it, that it ‘had become a universally accepted icon for difficult moral choice’.<sup>17</sup> Hercules, or Heracles, was revered not only for his immense physical strength, but also for his virtuous character. The qualities of courage and self-control were also attributed to him.<sup>18</sup> The story of *The Choice of Hercules*, or *Hercules at the Crossroads*, an allegorical representation of the dilemma of choosing between a life of vice and a life of virtue, is said to have been told by Prodicus and is recorded here by Xenophon:

Hercules ... went forth into a solitary place, and sat down, perplexed as to which of these two paths he should pursue ...

22. and ... two females, of lofty stature, seemed to advance toward him, the one of an engaging and graceful mien, gifted by nature with elegance of form, modesty of look, and sobriety of demeanour, and clad in a white robe; the other fed to plumpness and softness, but assisted by art both in her complexion, so as to seem fairer and rosier than she really was, and in her gesture, so as to seem taller than her natural height; she had her eyes wide open, and a robe through which her beauty would readily show itself; she frequently contemplated her figure, and looked about to see if any one else was observing her; and she frequently glanced back at her own shadow.

23. As they approached near to Hercules, she, whom I first described,

came forward at the same pace, but the other, eager to get before her, ran up to Hercules, and exclaimed, 'I see that you are hesitating, Hercules, ... if then you make a friend of me, I will conduct you by the most delightful and easy road, you shall taste every species of pleasure, and lead a life free from every sort of trouble ...'

26. ... 'And what, O woman, is your name?' 'My friends,' she replied, 'call me Happiness, but those who hate me, give me, to my disparagement, the name of Vice'.

27. In the meantime the other female approached, and said, 'I also am come to address you Hercules ... if you direct your steps along the path that leads to my dwelling, you will become an excellent performer of whatever is honourable and noble, and ... I shall appear more honourable and attractive through your illustrious deeds. I will not deceive you, however, with promises of pleasure, but will set before you things as they really are, and as the gods have appointed them'<sup>19</sup>

This story had become a very popular subject in Renaissance and baroque painting. In an influential treatise 'A Notion of the Historical Draught of *Hercules*', Shaftesbury discussed the possible visual representations of the theme before commissioning Paolo de Matteis in 1711 to paint his *The Judgment of Hercules* (1711), in which a very classically depicted Virtue points towards what for a Hercules 'looking very much the Georgian squire' would be, if he chose to follow her, an arduous journey.<sup>20</sup> Annibale Carracci also painted the motif and in another painting, once attributed to Rubens but more recently to Jan Van den Hock, Virtue is depicted in military terms, with armour, helmet and a horse at the ready to take Hercules off to the moral battlefields.<sup>21</sup> *The Choice of Hercules* also features in the music and in other literature of the period.<sup>22</sup> While the popularity of the theme seems to have peaked in painting in Italy in the seventeenth century and as a subject of ethical interest in England in the early and mid-eighteenth, it seems to have started to wane by the turn of the nineteenth century. Thus to its conventional moral interest for a didactic writer like Brunton should be added its historically reactionary overtones, in which a strong, 'classical' Hercules is implicitly contrasted with the 'heroes' of early nineteenth-century society.

Even before the Hercules theme is specifically mentioned in *Self-Control*, its very rhetoric has been used by the hero to describe the heroine's appearance. When De Courcy first sees Laura he is astounded by her beauty:

Her height, which certainly rose above the beautiful, perhaps even exceeded the majestic; her figure, though slender, was admirably

proportioned, and had all the appropriate roundness of the feminine form; her dress, though simple, and of matronly decency, was not unfashionable; while the dignity of her gait, and the composure of her motion, suited well with the majesty of her stature and mien (I, 141).

If we recall the description of Virtue in *The Choice of Hercules*, we can see the unmistakable similarities: Laura's height, her slender form, her simple and decent dress, her dignity, elegance, modesty and composure all correspond to the description of Virtue. Moreover, De Courcy then reflects on Laura's appearance, stressing that she is *unlike* the figure we know to be Vice: 'No side glance was sent in search of admiration; no care was taken to compose her drapery; no look of triumph accompanied her judicious remarks; no parade of sensibility disgraced her tenderness. Every charm was heightened by a matchless absence of all design' (I, 171).

Where there is Virtue, however, the temptation of Vice cannot be far away. For Laura that temptation comes in the form of Villiers Hargrave, the man she knows to be immoral but cannot help but love. A libertine himself, Hargrave tries to inveigle her into corruption and, though ultimately unsuccessful, does lead her momentarily into becoming that Vanity so tempting to Hercules. It is while she is preparing to see Hargrave, we are told, that she proceeds 'to adorn her person with a care she had never before bestowed upon it. She arranged every curl for effect; chose a dress which shewed to advantage the graceful slope of her shoulders; and heightened the whiteness of her neck and arms, by contrasting it with fillets of jet' (I, 177). This is a self-consciousness unnatural to Laura; indeed we are informed that, 'as she never used a looking-glass, unless for the obvious purpose of arranging her dress, she was insensible of the celestial charm which expression added to her face' (I, 186). The alternation and tension between Virtue and Vice implicit in these early descriptions of Laura prepare us for Brunton's use of the Hercules motif in her painting of De Courcy.

When De Courcy sees this painting he wrongly imagines that Laura is in love with him. Although this idea sends him into raptures, it also presents him with a moral dilemma, a choice between passion and duty. His father has allowed the family estate to fall into debt and disrepair, and has left Mrs De Courcy and Montague's sister Harriet unprovided for. De Courcy is presented with a Herculean choice: 'Could he forget the justice of his sister's claims, sacrifice to his selfish wishes the comfort of his mother, or wed his half-worshipped Laura to the distresses of an embarrassed fortune?' (I, 252). It is ironic indeed

that Laura's portrayal of herself as Virtue should inflame De Courcy's passions enough that she comes to represent Vice to him.

So Laura must make her other Herculean choice between the attractive but immoral Hargrave and the worthy De Courcy, a struggle that commands her attention throughout the novel. After the death of her father leaves her penniless and alone, marriage to Hargrave is even more appealing:

One path indeed invited her steps, a path bright with visions of rapture, warm with the sunshine of love and pleasure; but the flaming sword of Heaven guarded the entrance; and as often as her thoughts reverted that way, the struggle was renewed which forces the choice from the pleasing to the right. ... Had she curbed the infant-strength of [the] ... attachment ... how had she lessened the force of that temptation, which lured her from the rugged ascent, where want and difficulty were to be her companions; which enticed her to the flowery bowers of pleasure with the voice and with the smile of Hargrave! (II, 13).

Laura is consistently portrayed as a fallible, struggling Christian, not the immutable paragon she might at first seem.<sup>23</sup> For Brunton, sin is an inevitable part of post-lapsarian, everyday life: 'no Virtue without Choice'.<sup>24</sup> As Virtue seeks not a fixed state but a continuing struggle, so Laura is constantly battling with her desire for Hargrave in the knowledge that to submit would be a flagrant disregard of duty. The same is true of De Courcy's decision not to propose to Laura, a decision in which conservative Protestant theology and classical ethics coincide: virtue is the triumph of public duty over personal fulfilment.

Brunton's use of *The Choice of Hercules* is thus consistent with her own conservative Protestant theology and indeed fits well with the Calvinistic belief in the value of suffering in the development of moral character. She uses the Hercules *topos* to criticise contemporary social standards and to compare the aesthetic values of the day to those of a former time, pledging her allegiance to values which are associated with history painting and classical scholarship rather than with those of her contemporary society. Hercules is no resentful Jacobin, contemptuous and rebellious, defying conventional morality. The presentation of Brunton's hero De Courcy as a modern-day Hercules is a statement against certain versions of Romanticism and a plea for the return of social responsibility.

J. C. Lavater considered skill in drawing to be of great use to the student of physiognomy as it was 'the only means of preserving and communicating numberless peculiarities, shades, and expressions,

which are not by words, or any other mode, to be described'. Advising physiognomists to 'study the best painters; copy the best portraits, the best historical pieces', he explicitly links his science with the Puritan practice of self-examination, saying that 'an accurate and profound knowledge of his own heart is one of the most essential qualities in the character of the physiognomist'. If it is scrutiny that allows for a moral interpretation of the material, it is mimesis that connects ancient Greek philosophers, Renaissance painters, scientific enthusiasts and neo-classical writers: Prodicus's *Virtue* promises to show Hercules 'things as they really are, and as the gods have appointed them';<sup>25</sup> for Samuel Johnson 'it is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation'.<sup>26</sup> For Brunton it demands a faithful copying of reality with a view to moral illumination. Motif and physiognomy work together in *Self-Control* to allegorise the narrative of the heroine's education and promote a distrust of passion and the supremacy of the mind and duty. Brunton uses moral metaphors from other didactic discourses to support and invigorate her own, and to promote fiction as an equivalent mode of knowledge. Through a fusion of art, science, aesthetics and religion, the novel as a genre is constrained to serve a conservative ideology.

## Notes

- 1 30 April 1811. *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd ed., Oxford and New York, 1995, p.186. See also her letter of October that year: 'I am looking over *Self Control* again, & my opinion is confirmed of its' [sic] being an excellently-meant, elegantly-written Work, without anything of Nature or Probability in it' (p.234).
- 2 Brunton to Joanna Baillie, March 1811. Alexander Brunton, *Memoir of Mary Brunton* (1818), New York, 1819, p.xxxviii.
- 3 "'Towards ornamenting or teaching the *istoria*": Sir Joshua Reynolds and Narrative Portraiture', *Literature and Aesthetics* 5 (Oct. 1995): 22-41.
- 4 'Plutarch popularized the saying of Simonides that "painting is mute poetry, and poetry a speaking picture"; and this, together with Horace's phrase *ut pictura poesis*, taken out of context and misinterpreted as asserting a comprehensive parallelism between the two arts, became axioms in popular aesthetic wisdom'. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* [1953], London, 1960, p.33.
- 5 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* [1727], 3 vols, Birmingham, 1773, Vol. I, p.142.

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- 6 John Graham, 'Lavater's Physiognomy: A Checklist', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 55 (1961): 298.
- 7 *Gentleman's Magazine* 71 (Feb. 1801): 124.
- 8 *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. Thomas Holcroft [1789–93], London, 1886, p.396.
- 9 *Essays on Physiognomy*, p.145.
- 10 See *Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit*, 1699; also published in *Characteristicks*.
- 11 *Self-Control* [1811], 2 vols, New York and London, 1974, Vol. I, p.256, italics mine. All further page references will be given in the text.
- 12 *Essays on Physiognomy*, p.382.
- 13 *Essays on Physiognomy*, p.390.
- 14 C. Gurney, *How to Read the Face, or Physiognomy Explained According to the Philosophy of Lavater*, London, 1860, p.12.
- 15 Jeanne Fahnestock, 'The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Character Description', *Victorian Studies* 24 (1981): 344.
- 16 Gurney, *How to Read the Face*, pp.13–14. See also *Essays on Physiognomy*, p.394: 'Calm lips, well-closed, without constraint, and well-delineated, certainly betoken consideration, discretion, and firmness'.
- 17 *Essays on Physiognomy*, p.170.
- 18 Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* [1956], Chicago, 1968, p.193.
- 19 Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, London, 1990, p.106, n.1.
- 20 *Memorabilia*, II, i, 21–27, quoted in Shaftesbury, *Second Characters, or The Language of Forms* [1712], Cambridge, 1914, pp.30–31.
- 21 See *Looking into Paintings*, ed. Norbert Lynton, Alistair Smith, Robert Cumming and Diané Collinson, London and Boston, 1989, p.64.
- 22 Sir Joshua Reynolds parodied the *topos* by painting the actor David Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy. The pose of Reynold's Tragedy was borrowed from Benjamin West's 1764 *The Choice of Hercules between Virtue and Pleasure*.
- 23 For example, the libretto of Handel's 1750 'The Choice of Hercules' and Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel *Belinda*, where Lady Delacour makes the joke that her serving woman, Marriott, masquerade dresses in her arms, is 'standing in distress, like Garrick between tragedy and comedy', Vol. I, Ch. 2; Samuel Taylor Coleridge used the theme in his 1817 *Zapolya*, III, 1.
- 24 Cf. Katrin Burlin in "'At the Crossroads": Sister Authors and Sister Arts' in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670–1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski, Athens, Ohio and London, 1986: 'Laura ... has no choices to make. She is fixed in the ideal form of Virtue' (p.68).
- 25 Joseph Spence, *Polymetis* [1747], Bk 4, Dialogue 10, New York and London, 1976, p.140.

- 26 *Essays on Physiognomy*, pp.66, 152 (Lavater particularly recommends Mignard, Rigaud and Reynolds), 67.
- 27 *Memorabilia*, II. i. 27.
- 28 *The Rambler*, No. 4, March 31, 1750 in *Samuel Johnson*, ed. Donald Greene, Oxford and New York, 1984, p.177.