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## A Page from the History of Commonsense, or Physiognomy in Literature

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Józef Bachórz

## A Page from the History of Commonsense, or Physiognomy in Literature

Minister Jaszuński, impressed by Nikodem Dyzma's "vigorous" entry into high society in the Hotel Europejski, says to Col. Wareda: "Yes, that must be a strong character. I believe in phrenology. The head is forward and the jaw developed. I believe in phrenology." The Colonel's wonders whether the minister has gotten „plowed" at the reception: "What does character have to do with chronology?"<sup>1</sup>

T. Dołęga-Mostowicz—like a good hunter—has struck several targets with one shot; he creates a portrait of Dyzma, sheds light on the type of the Minister's intellect (it is almost as if Jaszuński declared a belief in chiromancy or astrology), and shows us the colonel's civilian erudition and style of reaction to "intellectuality." Also, one more piece of information that today's reader can gain from reading this scene is that even before the war it was possible not to know what phrenology is.

If the author of *Nikodem Dyzma's Career* had written this type of novel a hundred years earlier, he would not have ascribed such unconsciousness even to member of the cadet corps, and perhaps even to the occasional recruits that frequented social conversations and read newspapers. For, summaries of phrenological studies appeared regularly as did notices of „cranioscope" societies and other sensations in the newspapers of the first half of the 19th century. For example, one about the peculiar entrance examinations given by Rossini ("the famous Rossini accepts no student who does not

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<sup>1</sup> T. Dołęga-Mostowicz, *Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy*, Warszawa 1972, p. 21.

have a certain bump as a sign of the gift of music”<sup>2</sup>). Phrenological practices turned up in the most varied circumstances. T. T. Jeż mentions that in 1850 a Swiss doctor aboard the ship transporting Polish military emigrants from Turkey to England felt the heads of all willing and brave (passengers) and gave diagnoses.<sup>3</sup>

The fascination with phrenology was a part of the 19th-century renaissance of interest in physiognomy. It was a renaissance because the belief that the physical shape of a person has a connection with his spiritual qualities is one of the oldest in the European cultural orbit. The formula “the ancient Greeks” would be completely justified.<sup>4</sup> In the classic Greek and Roman statues the beautiful faces of the gods and heroes were supposed to express their inner attributes. Clearly, a non-physiognomic tradition also existed, that was particularly evident during the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages. However, with the passage of time the physiognomic trend gained strength in Medieval art, and during the transition to the Renaissance became dominant again. In the Marian altar of Wit Stwosz the Apostles and the Virgin Mary are captivatingly beautiful, but the myrmidons and devils have frighteningly repulsive, branded, rough mugs.

Renaissance humanism, like the ancients having uncovered the beauty of the human body, favored its literary and artistic exposition. They were not always expositions that suggested its spiritual values; however, as a whole the Renaissance encouraged physiognomy and the creation of physiognomic doctrines. One such doctrine was developed by Jan of Głogów, a professor at the Cracow Academy. In his work *Quaestiones librorum De anima magistri Joannis Vertoris* (at the beginning of the 16th century) he contains thoughts recalled years later by proponents of phrenology. Near the end of the 16th century the Italian naturalist G. della Porta gained renown for promoting ancient animal physiognomy in his treatise *De humana physio-*

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<sup>2</sup> [An untitled note] *Rozmaitości*, 1841, no. 32, p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> See *Burzliwe życie T. T. Jeża (Stormy Life of...)*, From the memoirs, writings and letters ed. S. Strumph-Wojtkiewicz, Warszawa 1961, pp. 94–95.

<sup>4</sup> The profession of physiognomist existed in Greece and Rome and physiognomic treatises were written. See J. Białostocki, *Teoria i twórczość (The Theory and the Creativity)*, Poznań 1961, p. 72; J. Pastuszka, *Historia psychologii (The History of Psychology)*, Lublin 1971, p. 441.

*gnomia* (1586). It based prognoses of character on similarities of the profile of human faces and the contours of the heads of certain animals. Porta's strange engravings later inspired caricatures and illustrations of fairy tales, such as those by Grandville. The popularity of physiognomic proposals like Porta's is illustrated by the author of *Nowe Ateny* (*New Athens*) who cites the Italian master. Thus, Chmielowski has:

Soft hair denoting a timid man since it is similar to the fur of timid animals (deer, rabbits, sheep) [...] He frequently blinks indicating a short life, for the delicate muscles. [...] He who has black [eyes] is a prisoner of love and passionate. The dry eyes are humorous, whoever does not close his eyes while sleeping has the nature of a rabbit, timid.

Thanks to learned writings and artistic works physiognomic pronouncements about people became an increasingly common habit of popular thought and an integral part of the "obvious" treatment of human reality, an element of common sense.

During the Enlightenment, when nearly everything that had been gathered through experience and conviction was ordered and rationalized, the most complete of existing physiognomic theories was formulated. Although this occurred when trust in Reason began to recede, it was still under its sponsorship. The latter was only partial (much like it was for mesmerism), but it sufficed to convince the majority of the public of the scientificness of physiognomy. The father of the renewed doctrine was Johann Kasper Lavater (1741–1801), the pastor from Zurich and author of the four huge tomos of *Physiognomische Fragmente*,<sup>5</sup> with hundreds of illustrations by outstanding artists, such as D. Chodowiecki. The author's fame (he was visited by many European dignitaries) fulfilled the legend of Archimedesian death: he died of wounds inflicted while he was performing his philanthropic duties by a French soldier. Although Lavater's volumes mainly contain practical physiognomic directions and not a systematic, theoretical discussion, some systematic assumptions are concealed within it. Among them is the physiognomists' requisite external axiom that regular (discoverable and formulateable) relation-

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<sup>5</sup> J. K. Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beforderung der Menschenkenntniss und Menschenliebe*, vol. 1–4, Leipzig–Wintertur 1875–1878.

ships and dependencies between the body and spirit exist. Lavater assigned primacy to the spirit; it determined, so to speak sculpted and modelled, the shape of its material host. Physical charm then derived from spiritual beauty; according to Lavater Christ must have had an ideally beautiful physiognomy.

For the physiognomic tradition, the strong side of Lavaterism was the comprehensive treatment of appearance as an expression of spiritual characteristics. The individual parts of the face had the role of signs of specific traits, but they had to be read in a synthetic, mutual conjunction. According to Enlightenment anthropology Lavater emphasized the "contents" of the spirit, and in connection with this he directed attention to the physiognomic function of permanent elements of appearance. He dispensed with those elements of earlier physiognomy that too strongly suggested divining or other varieties of fraud. He retained in revised or kernel form a number of beliefs deeply embedded in the popular consciousness and thus having some sense of probability.

Of the elements of appearance the most essential ones in Lavater's physiognomy were: the nose (its privileged place was frequently ridiculed by his opponents), the forehead, the eyes, the mouth, and the chin. Their dimensions, shape, proportions, locations (the Lavaterian „ideal type" had three equal sections of a vertical line: the forehead, nose and chin with the mouth) against the background of the other anatomical parts, mimicry, movement, and voice made it possible to map out the entire inner spirit. Lavater regarded mistakes in readings as a necessary price that must be paid during the early stages of the development of his science.<sup>6</sup> He believed that the collection of empirical data, the establishment of definite, detailed relations between the spirit and the body and the growth of physiognomic research would improve the discipline in the future.

The weak point of Lavaterism, which was immediately raised by

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<sup>6</sup> Lavater practised physiognomy not only on the basis of facial examinations but of portraits (engravings) as well. To the great pleasure of his opponents, the news spread through Europe that he had identified a picture of a criminal as that of Herder. In Poland, this was reported by K. Brodziński, among others, who was at times favorable toward physiognomy (though not without reservations), in an article "Lavater," *Magazyn Powszechny Użytecznych Wiadomości*, 1835, no. 60, p. 480.

his contemporaries, consisted of the problem of the inborn characteristics of external appearance which provoked many difficult questions from the scientific point of view. Without falling into conflict with his intense religiosity, Lavater could not, in view of his assigning primacy to the spiritual element, adequately respond to the question of the inheritance of physical qualities. This question was asked from the point of view of biology, among others. Ambiguity regarding what is recognizable on the basis of appearance was no less a weakness of Lavaterian physiognomy, though it was not noticed so quickly. Earlier physiognomists formulated the question variously: that the characteristics of the mind, that the emotional "nature", that the character (usually understood as a complex of moral-social qualities), that the spirit... Lavater was a maximalist. He wanted to read the entire spiritual structure, the mental characteristics, the moral silhouette, the intelligence, the will, the experiences, temperament (emotional predispositions)—everything that modern psychological terminology calls the psyche or in the terminology of one branch of psychology would be called the "personality". But he did not develop a typology of this phenomenon.

Thus, critical continuation of Lavaterism went in two directions. One of them aimed to create a scientific basis for physiognomy by freeing it from spiritualism and basing it on anatomy and physiology. The other aimed to develop a precise conceptual frame of the "mental faculties." In time this second direction evolved toward various currents of psychology, and the author of *Charaktery rozumów ludzkich* (*Characters of human minds*), Wiszniewski was one of its representatives. Both directions converged in "physiologizing" physiognomy and limiting Lavaterian maximalism. This was the case with Gall, Lichtenberg, Carus, and many other 19th-century adepts of physiognomy.

Franz Josef Gall (1758–1823), the Viennese doctor who practiced in Paris and is still valued today for inspiring works on brain anatomy, constructed a hypothesis of anatomical conditioning of drives, feelings, and mental abilities. He called it organology; his students propagated the name "phrenology". Drawing on the traditional theory of the brain as the seat of the "mental faculties," he conducted a number of observations of the brain cortex and reached the conclusion that centers for various psychic predispositions are

localized in different locations. The lobes and more developed fragments of the cortex correspond to specific protuberances of the skull. On the basis of these protuberances (bumps) it is possible to determine a person's inborn inclinations and talents. Twenty-seven of them appear on Gall's map of the head; thirty-two, on Spurzheim's; and more than sixty, on some late 19th-century ones.

Lichtenberg's correction of Lavaterian physiognomy, called pathonomy, reduced physiognomists' competence to "discovering the stronger, transitory elations and passions," that freeze in the muscular facial features.

Physiognomy and phrenology had their determined opponents, even enemies (especially among the natural scientists), but they could not hamper the spread of these beliefs among artists, writers, and some philosophers. They did not hinder, even in a sense helped, the spread of these beliefs in newspapers.

Goethe had a favorable view of Lavater, and Kant took up physiognomy with hope. Near the end of the 18th century Lavaterism became fashionable throughout Europe. In France several outstanding writers succumbed to it. In the 19th century, for example, Madame de Staël, then de Maistre, Balzac (with great enthusiasm), and after him Flaubert and Zola.<sup>7</sup> In Poland Jędrzej Śniadecki wrote a serious study of phrenology. During the first half of the 19th century it is difficult to find a writer who did not at least mention Lavater or Gall.<sup>8</sup> A similar situation also existed during the positivist period when popular outlines of physiognomy and phrenology based on foreign academic authorities began to appear.<sup>9</sup>

The simplest and most obvious symptoms of the presence of physiognomy in literature are mentions of its creators (for example, comparison of careful observers and knowledgeable people to Lavater

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<sup>7</sup> See Ph. Van Tieghem, *Les Influences étrangères sur la littérature française (1550–1880)*, Paris 1967, pp. 220–223.

<sup>8</sup> There is no way to mention everyone (but among them are Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Norwid), but it is worth mentioning that a curious interpretation of external appearance as an expression of social origins (the higher the social origin the more handsome) was given by H. Rzewuski in his sketch "Baragolstwo," [in:] *Mieszaniny obyczajowe (Custom Mixtures)*, vol. 1, Vilna 1841, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> See for example: A. Ysabeau, *Lavater, Carus, Gall. Zasady fizjognomiki i frenologii*.

in conversations in novels) or phrenological explanations of events (for example, in one of Kraszewski's works a suicide is explained by a developed "suicide organ" in the skull of an unhappy woman). Humorous comments on the unfounded ambitions of provincial Lavaters occur also. Today these types of literary uses are only historical curiosities.

Physiognomy exerted much more significant influence on literature on another plane, so to speak. This influence was most evident (though not restricted to) in narrative prose, especially in the presentation of human characters. Without reference to physiognomy it would be difficult to understand the majority of realistic and naturalistic novelists.

And important element of 19th-century realistic novels is the peculiar manner of describing reality. In prerealistic novels, especially 18th-century didactic prose, numerous, unusual adventures, strange events, and strongly typed characters (frequently almost schematic, usually just a last name, for instance "Doświadczyński", indicating their uncomplicated personality) were favored. Not probability but rather attractive illustration of particular moral principles was vital. The realistic novel changed this tradition. Its characters were given much richer personalities, and the plot thinned and was stamped with the seal "reflects reality." The reader received a more modest repertory of events (but more detailed), analytical descriptions (usually in a style related to contemporary scientific prose).

In his old narrative convention Voltaire describes the scholar Martin (Candide's friend) in two sentences without worrying about "truth" or details, attempting instead a humorous face of a definite type of custom:

Ce savant, qui était d'ailleurs un bon homme, avait été plévoar sa femme, battu par son fils, et abandonné de sa fille qui s'était fait enlever par un Portugais. Il venait d'être privé d'un petit emploi duquel il subsistait, et les prédicants de Surinam le persécutaient parce qu'ils le prenaient pour un socien<sup>10</sup>.

This presentation suggests a posthumous biographical relation rather than a description. Physical appearance is absent (if it

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<sup>10</sup> Voltaire, *Candid ou L'Optimisme*, Paris 1947, pp. 82–83.



appears in other characters in this work, it does not have physiognomic connotations). No other incidental information that would distract the reader's attention away from the picture of the helpless philosopher is given either.

The realistic descriptive ritual, which is recalled here by a rather lengthy (though shortened) fragment from *The Human Comedy*, has a completely different appearance than in the didactic-prose tradition:

David avait les formes que donne la nature aux êtres destinés à de grandes luttes, éclatantes ou secrètes. Son large buste était flanqué par de fortes épaules en harmonie avec la plénitude de toutes ses formes. Son visage, brun de ton, coloré, gras, supporté par un gros cou, enveloppe d'une abondante forêt de cheveux noirs, ressemblait au premier abord à celui de chanoines chantés par Boileau; mais un second examen vous révélait dans les sillons des lèvres épaisses, dans la fossette du menton, dans la tournure d'un nez carré, fendu par un méplat tourmenté, dans les yeux surtout! le feu continu d'un unique amour, la sagacité du penseur, l'ardente mélancolie d'un esprit qui pouvait embrasser les deux extrémités de l'horizon, en pénétrant toutes les sinuosités, et qui se dégoûtait facilement des jouissances tout idéales en y portant les clartés de l'analyse. Si l'on devinait dans cette face les éclairs du génie qui s'élançait, on voyait aussi les cendres auprès du volcan; l'espérance s'y éteignait dans un profond sentiment du néant social où la naissance obscure et le défaut de fortune maintiennent tant d'esprits supérieurs.<sup>11</sup>

This manner of presenting a character presumes that the reader will accept the information given as agreeing with the requirements of reality, with social experiences, and even with the authority of science. The writer tells the reader of the "penetrating thought" evident in the cleft of the chin and the shape of the nose of David Sechred, with the same conviction as for instance in another place in the same novel he explains the storage and use of printing fonts. The reader therefore should not perceive sentences with physiognomic contents differently than other describing empirically verifiable facts. The novel's plot confirms the physiognomic prediction: David's history proceeds closely in agreement with the prescriptions revealed in his physiognomic portrait.

This type of characterization, though with many individual variations from the Lavaterian norms, is the property peculiar to the

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<sup>11</sup> H. Balzac, *La Comédie humaine: Les Deux poètes*, Bibliothèque de la Pleiade, vol. 4. p. 485.

19th-century realistic convention. Even writers like Kraszewski who placed little faith in Lavater's pedantic formulas usually succumbed to the enticing prospect of describing faces on the basis of the "spiritual nature" looking out... Readers of Orzeszkowa, even of Prus (although he violated the physiognomic rules of play and customs more than once), and especially of Sienkiewicz, generally know well in advance what to expect for example from a young woman who "has a small, thin, somewhat snub nose, with moveable, constantly flaring nostrils, and a cleft in her chin." There was added needlessly that they were a "sign of a pleasant disposition."

A literary historian cannot resist asking himself the question; what factors caused physiognomy to be so attractive for so many writers and why was it so universally annexed to such a long term of service to novel writers?

It appears that such attributes of physiognomy as its communicativeness in common-sense terms, as its presence among commonly accepted truths (without reference to the common sense of reality it would be difficult to imagine realistic prose) and also the freshly embossed mark of scientificness were primarily responsible for the attraction. The successes of the natural sciences contributed to the fame of physiognomy. The works of Buffon, Cuvier, Lamarck and also later Darwin<sup>12</sup> (and many other biologists) solidified the great social authority of the natural sciences. Writers turned to them with the hope of explaining the rules of reality and the puzzle of life and for models of research methodology, such as typological criteria, which were so important in discussions of typologies of the human world in fiction. Some of Gall's and Carus's enthusiasts believed even that phrenology was a further stage in the methodology of science; without resigning from physiological empiricism, cognitive results can be achieved by imposing an *a priori* order on facts and forcing them to submit to the requirements of conceptual thinking. In this way the traditional contradiction between idealism and realism and between humanism (philosophy) and biology could be overcome.

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Darwin took up a thread related to physiognomists' interest (departing from them) on a naturalistic plane in his work *On the Expression of Feelings in Man and Animals*.

The majority of literary-realism doctrines, ranging from *Physiologie du mariage* (physiology!) to the naturalists, are declarations of dependence on the achievements of the natural sciences. The recognition of physiognomy and phrenology as so essential as obviously complementary to these achievements was, truly, not in harmony with the intentions of the pastor from Zurich (though it agreed with the views of Gall and his students). But such an interpretation was required to substantiate the pseudo-scientific, veristic ambitions of the novelists. Sentimental and romantic interpretations also endowed physiognomy with literary possibilities, but these interpretations did not go together with the mimetic or pseudo-scientific programs. The romantics suspicious of all material shells could not employ physiognomy without reservations. Thus, in their works we encounter either exploitation of only some elements of the physiognomic maps of the face (characteristically not the "abstract" nose but the eyes occupy the most privileged position) or with a peculiar distrust of external beauty (satanic beauty). The realistic trust in physiognomy facilitated the cleansing of the novel of both Enlightenment syntheticity and its didactic principles of separating types as well as from sentimental overemphasis of emotional motives and romantic suspiciousness of everything external and subject to empirical study. The realistic novel manifest its faithfulness to truth and contact with life by treating physiognomy as a branch of empirical knowledge. Lavaterism together with its phrenological additions thus understood served to rebuild the gravity of the genre that had been so damaged by the gothic-romance and entertainment-didactic abuses.

But this would not have been sufficient for the blinding career of physiognomy. Lavaterism's favoring of the classic-aristocratic ideal of beauty helped to promote its career, too. Since Greek times, the axiom of classic-aristocratic ideal of beauty has been proportion, harmony, symmetry, and careful detail. In this conception of beauty there is no place for tolerance of overly large ears or an irregular forehead.

It is unnecessary to explain how far from universal this ideal of beauty is. However, it would not be remiss to recall that in Europe it first solidified its position in those spheres and groups that could cultivate the ancient "beauty of life" earliest in the modern era. Returns to ancient classicism were usually elite in social character

so that they avoided the plebeian. As a result folk art clearly retained its independence from the classic understanding of beauty for a relatively long time. It retained its independence not only in its literary presentation of plebeian wisemen, all those "fat and ribald" Tills, whose wisdom, even goodness, did not go together with the "wisdom" of the forehead or the perfectness of the shape of the nose. It also maintained its independence in old painting on glass or the sculpture of roadside peasant shrines; the sharp features of the faces were not solely the result of unskilled hands.

The realistic novel, connected, and properly so, with the birth of a new public, ennobled a new social milieu. Lavaterian physiognomy met the needs of the democratic "spirit" of the genre. The novel's democracy (but not just the novel's) lay among other things in making common things the elite regarded as their privilege. The novel, even in its prerealistic and more so in its realistic stage made the sublimation of feelings, for example, common by giving heroes from outside the elite the ability to experience it. In other words the novel advanced the low and the common to the level of the exclusive. It commanded the bourgeoisie to love no less intensely and deeply than earlier literature had princesses. It assured the bourgeoisie women or even their provincial imitators that their beauty matched that of the great ladies, and it endowed them with spiritual assets which their physical beauty conditioned and signaled.

Thus, the physiognomic imagination was one of the elements of the democratizing process in literature, for it introduced the elite vision of beauty into common circulation. It gave personalities to those who previously only had faces and assured everyone who had a regular face that his spirit was equally beautiful.

For narrative prose it was of no small importance that physiognomic description seemed to deepen fiction's vision of the world, to overcome pure descriptiveness and simple listing, and to provide insurance against the charge of shallowness. Physiognomic descriptions were and were not shallow simultaneously. The small prose forms were rescued gratefully with its help, especially sketches, which having no or little plot had little chance of avoiding accusations of a shallow vision of life.

Modern literary history would not be imagineable without realistic prose. This prose has preserved previously existing physiognomic

beliefs, popularized them, and extended their life far beyond the time of any hope for their scientific future. The crisis of naturalists' trust in this discipline, which suffered from the professionals' serious doubts from the beginning, quickly led to its conclusive rejection. The situation of phrenology was somewhat more complicated, especially in America where it had deep roots,<sup>13</sup> but its prognostic content too was questioned (which has not prevented Gall from receiving due credit for his technical discoveries and laying the foundation under the fertile thesis of localization of mental functions). In any case the rapid development of psychophysiology at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century occurred in all of its versions (from Wundt's to Pavlov's) by forcefully breaking with the problems and traditions of physiognomy. Even Kretschmer's constitutionalism, at times associated with physiognomy, sharply broke with the style of studies characteristic of Lavater and physiognomists. "That way leads to nothing," wrote Kretschmer.

Now the role of the new inspiration of literature and function of cocreator of its breakthrough to overcoming realistic conventions fell to psychoanalysis. There is not enough space here (nor the competence) to summarize the powerful, omnipresent influence of psychoanalysis on the 20th-century revolution in the novel. But inasmuch as the word psychoanalysis has appeared here, it is necessary to state clearly; its significance for the worldview of the new novel seems far greater than physiognomy's for the realistic novel. Moreover, any comparison of the roles of Lavater and Freud could satisfy only the shallowest taste in comparisons. There is no doubt about one thing; not behaviorism, not constitutionalism, but psychoanalysis decreed the irreversible demise of physiognomy's importance in literature.

The demise of its importance does not by any means denote the end of its existence. What the history of science has deemed pseudo-

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<sup>13</sup> There—as in Scotland—phrenological societies were founded. Phrenology attracted interest for a long time in criminology as an additional method for finding criminals. In American literature the authority of phrenology was built up by Walt Whitman, an ardent disciple of Gall's system because of peculiarly egoistic reasons (his head was highly praised by phrenologists). Without a phrenological commentary it is impossible to understand many poems from *Leaves of Grass* (see M. Gardner, *Pseudoscience and Pseudoscholars*).

-science and a blind alley (fully realizing that the risk of error is inseparable from the searching, and mistakes are the price of progress), has retained its vitality in the eyes of the readers of the realistic novel. 19th-century prose still remains an attractive item for the mass reader today. It is too important a page in the history of literature for anyone to ignore it in today's educational programs. Moreover, for many years it has been rather more overvalued than undervalued. In this situation we inculcate realistic conventions as the "natural" way of describing the world from childhood. This scholastic characterization of the heroes in novels and stories silently trains us in a physiognomic view of man.

The history of illustrations is also inextricably intertwined with the physiognomic tradition. In our first booklets the wicked old hag has a distorted, repulsive face and Cinderella is far more beautiful than her stepsisters. Bad boys must have disheveled hair and an overly large upturned "potato" nose and ugly distorted mouth. Later it is difficult for us to appreciate modern art which long ago broke with the physiognomic ideal of good and beauty.

The modern followers of realism assure it of an unbroken tradition. We can seek physiognomic portraits of characters in avant-garde prose in vain. If we do find something that suggests them in Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk* for example, it is a parody and mockery of the physiognomic tradition. More frequently there are descriptions or rather mentions of elements of the external appearance without physiognomic intent of interpretation. But we can find physiognomic-type portraits in works like *Noce i dnie* (*Nights and days*) by Dąbrowska without difficulty although they are broken into several fragments. One can risk the claim that the presence or absence of physiognomic characteristic is one of the indicators of the degree of traditionality in 20th-century prose.

The popular novel, especially the romance and thriller-criminal stories, provides physiognomy with an extremely secure asylum. Thriller stories cultivate the heritage of earlier mystery stories, born during the era of fascination with Lavaterism. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle demonstrated the usefulness of physiognomic knowledge in detection: Sherlock Holmes himself not only has extremely positive phrenological characteristics, but he is also a penetrating observer of people's faces. In many of the newer criminal stories

detective puzzles are solved by using physiognomic observations, sometimes by finding exceptions to the physiognomic rules, but rarely by questioning physiognomic rules for evaluating people. It is not difficult to notice that creators of comics, criminal films, popular television serials, theatrical spectacles take this fact into account. This, however, is part of the continuing tradition of physiognomy outside of literature; the intention here has been to sketch the literary career of physiognomy.

Transl. by *John Lee*