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## Physiognomy in Ancient Philosophy

Some philosophers in antiquity believed that appearance and character necessarily tracked each other -- or tended to do so. This is a comprehensive study of the theoretical (psychological, metaphysical) underpinnings of this view, covering Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the medical tradition (especially Galen), and the Neoplatonists.

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# Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul

Polemon's *Physiognomy*  
from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam

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## Physiognomy and Ancient Psychological Theory

*George Boys-Stones*

Of all animals, human beings display the most remarkable tendency towards perversity of nature. But more than this, human beings display the most remarkable *variety* of perversion. It is as Aristotle said: virtue is simple, but vice takes many forms.<sup>1</sup> No two people are unnatural in quite the same way (one is more cowardly, another more lecherous, and so on), and while one can generalize about the way humans *ought* to be, there is only a limited extent to which one can generalize about the way they *are*.

In a sense, then, it is easier to talk about virtue than to talk about vice, and this is reflected in ancient discussions of ethics, which naturally focus, first and foremost, on what it would be like to be a well-functioning individual. But, particularly in a context in which virtue, happiness, and what is 'natural' for a human being coincide, as they tend to do in ancient philosophical thought, there is a real and interesting philosophical question raised by the fact that people fail so regularly to achieve the ideal, and specifically a question about what it is that directs them down their particular path of vice. Is this to be explained purely by the education and habituation people receive in the course of their upbringing? Or is the inclination to form a certain kind of moral character to some extent innate—part of what makes them individual humans in the first place? And if innate, is there a link between physical peculiarities and moral character? Again, many ancient philosophers think that there must be, since our souls (as the locus of impulse) are intimately linked with our bodies, and the greater part of our moral character is constituted by our attitude to specifically bodily demands. When one looks at the question from this perspective, it is not so hard to see how the distinctive tradition of Greek ethical philosophy opens the way quite naturally to what we might describe as physiognomical speculation. Depending on the explanation given for the link between the body and the soul, a philosopher might easily find himself committed to the position that there is a regular correspondence between the two such that one could, in principle at least, tell what a person is like from the way he or she looks.

It is important to recognize how naturally the course of ancient psychological thought leads into the territory of the physiognomist because it is something that existing studies of physiognomy in antiquity have tended to ignore.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *NE* 2. 6, 1106<sup>b</sup>35; and cf. Anon. *Lat.* 44.

The typical assumption is rather that 'physiognomy' in some form or other (whether as a practical activity or a sociological prejudice) influenced philosophy, in the sense that it presented itself as a set of empirical truths to be accepted and explained by philosophers. The focus of such studies tends, then, to be either a 'demonstration' of the influence of physiognomy through the identification in theoretical texts of passages which coincide with material from the surviving physiognomical handbooks,<sup>2</sup> or else an investigation into the particular question of physiognomical semiology—how inferences from appearance to character are developed and structured by philosophers.<sup>3</sup> But the assumption that philosophers felt compelled to take physiognomy seriously, or that they were at all in this sense 'influenced' by physiognomy, is not one that stands up to any prolonged scrutiny. It is a plain and simple matter of fact that not every philosopher or philosophical school in antiquity displayed any theoretical commitment to physiognomy at all; and when one asks what makes the difference, what led some philosophers to an interest in physiognomy and not others, the answer in every case comes down to whether the theoretical possibility of physiognomy followed from beliefs they already held about the nature of the soul.

My aim, then, in the present study is to look at physiognomy in ancient theoretical thought as it arose in philosophical discussion, and without a prejudicial notion of what constitutes 'physiognomy' imported from other texts and contexts. (As such, the study is intended to be as much a contribution to ancient psychological thought as to ancient thought about physiognomy.) All this, I hope, will help to explain features of it which might seem eccentric or deficient if it is judged by the standards of the existing literature on physiognomy. For a start, I have nothing to say about the earlier practice of physiognomy and its origins.<sup>4</sup> This might seem perverse: one might have

thought that a history of physiognomical theory ought to take into account pre-existing practice, just as a history of medical thought might take primitive medical practice as its starting-point. But medical and physiognomical theory turn out to be rather different cases. Medical theory presumably was built on the empirical success of practical therapy, and represents in some sense an attempt to understand why certain treatments worked while others failed. My argument is that physiognomy, on the other hand, was never the empirical starting-point for philosophical speculation: no philosopher ever appears to have assumed that it worked, such that it needed explanation. Indeed, in its first appearance in philosophical literature, physiognomy attracted guffaws of laughter from a sophisticated audience, who presumably were rather surprised to be told that it could be justified by Socrates' views of the soul.<sup>5</sup> Those philosophers who accept the possibility of a physiognomy consistently do so from within a theoretical model of human nature which they would have developed had physiognomists never existed. For these philosophers, the pre-existence of physiognomy as a practice does little more than to provide a ready-made vocabulary in which to describe one consequence of their speculation on the relationship between body and soul—namely the consequence that one can in principle deduce people's character from their appearance.

Secondly, and relatedly, my study of individual philosophers and schools is not conducted with a view to understanding the role that physiognomy (explicit or implicit) played in shaping their thought. The reason, again, is that I do not assume that physiognomy in fact played an active role in shaping philosophical thought. Rather, my study looks at the psychological theories of various thinkers with a view to understanding what this implies for their view about the relationship between individual character and appearance, and whether it allows them something that they would be prepared to describe as a physiognomy. For this reason too, I preface each section with a list of explicit mentions of physiognomy relevant to the individuals and schools under discussion; and, although I by no means assume that 'physiognomy' is inoperative as a category in the mind of a writer simply because the word is absent, my discussion privileges these texts, which perform form the touchstone for any wider judgements. If all this seems to amount to an unnecessarily austere approach, I can only respond that one of the primary conclusions of the study as a whole is a direct consequence of it: for it turns out that not everyone whose philosophy implies the expectation that a person's character will be predictable from his or her appearance does think of it as physiognomical. In ancient philosophical contexts, the word seems to be reserved specifically for the belief that appearance is a guide to *innate* as opposed to acquired character. Thus (as I shall argue) Phaedo of Elis, Aristotle, Posidonius, Galen, and (at least some) later Platonists accept physiognomy as a consequence of their psychological thought, but Plato and the earlier Stoics do not—even though both Plato and the Stoics (unlike, for example, the Epicureans) accepted that people often develop characters

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Evans (1935), (1941), (1969); Pack (1941; for Artemidorus); Opeku (1979; for Apuleius); André (1981) 9–15; Mason (1984; for Apuleius again); Gleason (1990, esp. 393, 399–400 for Dio Chrysostom); Weiler (1996); Horstmannshoff (1999; for the medical writer Caelius Aurelianus); Bost-Pouderon (2003; for Dio Chrysostom). Compare the wide range of passages collected at Foerster (1893) ii. 237–352.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Burnyeat (1982), 228–30; Granarolo (1985); Dagron (1987); Gleason (1990); Sassi (2001), 35–6, 69–71. Cf. Vogt (1999), 108–13, 145–63.

<sup>4</sup> For the record, the evidence for early (pre-Aristotelian) practitioners of physiognomy in Athens includes Phaedo's account of Zopyrus (see Section I), and perhaps the Syrian magus of D.L. 2. 45 = Aristotle fr. 32 Rose<sup>3</sup> (both of them, historical or not, evidence for physiognomical activity at the time of Socrates); also the man who compared all human faces to those of two or three animals mentioned by Aristotle at GA 769<sup>b</sup>20–1. Beyond this it is in any case hard to go. Physiognomy is frequently spotted in earlier Greek literature (notably Homer's description of Thersites in *Iliad* 2. 211–19; cf. Misener 1924: 103–4; Thalmann 1988; Weiler 1996: 162–3). But such identifications are always highly tendentious and question-begging. (In the specific case of Thersites, one might take his ugliness as further proof of the gods' disfavour towards him, rather than an indication of his character. In any case, Homer's imagination can compass men whose looks betray the truth of their character; cf. esp. Sassi 1992: 358, citing *Iliad* 2. 673–5 and *Odyssey* 8. 169 ff; to which might be added *Iliad* 3. 43–5 and 216–24.) The fact that our explicit evidence for early physiognomical activity in Greece involves a Syrian magus and the putatively Persian Zopyrus (cf. n. 9) lends some credibility to attempts to trace the practice of physiognomy back to cognate practices in the Near East. On this, see F.R. Kraus (1935); Bottéro (1969), (1974); André (1981), 9; Barton (1994b), 100; Böck (2000); but also Lloyd (1991b) for the general theoretical difficulties involved in such claims.

<sup>5</sup> The narrative is from the *Zopyrus* of Phaedo of Elis. For more details, see Section I.

which, non-coincidentally, are predictable from their appearance. This is not only an important conclusion to feed into our wider understanding of physiognomy in the ancient world, but provides a useful sidelight on aspects of ancient psychological theory too.

Finally, I appeal to my focus on strictly theoretical discussions of physiognomy to excuse the relative depth and breadth of discussion in the Sections that follow. I have, for example, a lot to say about Plato and the early Stoics even though my conclusion will be that they do *not* think of themselves as accepting the possibility of physiognomy; but I have a lot to say precisely because it is interesting and illuminating to see why they do not. On the other hand, my discussion of medical thought in Section V is much less wide-ranging than might have been expected—indeed, it is almost (though not quite entirely) concerned with Galen. There is a simple reason for this, which is that, before the subject was taken up in the Arabic tradition (discussed in Ch. 6 by Antonella Ghersetti), Galen was pretty well the only medical writer whom we know to have engaged with physiognomy at a theoretical level at all—and then scarcely *qua* medic. A similar desire to cut my discussion according to the material is my excuse for a discussion of later Platonism in Section VI which generalizes over a wide range of thinkers who, so far as their psychological thought is concerned, deserve rather more careful discrimination. But the fact is that discussions of *physiognomy* in Platonism are not so nuanced: indeed there are, strictly, no *discussions* of it at all, only an apparent acceptance of its possibility. In this case what I have tried to do is to highlight themes in Platonist psychology that show an interest in engaging with earlier writers who discuss physiognomy, and suggest that, insofar as any particular Platonist agrees with the relevant principles, we can understand how they might accept the—physiognomical—consequences.

There is scope for the kind of discussion of physiognomy in ancient philosophy and medicine that I do not cover here: for further examination of physiognomical semiotics; for further studies of the influence of non-theoretical physiognomical thought on philosophical theory in ways which are not necessarily explicit or obvious. But such discussions are for other occasions: it is vital, to begin with, to establish that there is a difference between explicit reflection on physiognomy and the implicit, perhaps even unconscious, influence of physiognomy in other contexts. My aim has been, very narrowly, to isolate the former: to establish what ancient philosophers themselves understood by the word 'physiognomy', and why those who accepted it did so.

## I. THE CIRCLE OF SOCRATES (1): PHAEDO OF ELIS

Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in Socratic writers. (a) Antisthenes: SSR VA 41. 12 (= DL 6. 16); 63 (= Athenaeus 14. 74. 11, 656F). (b) Phaedo of Elis: fr. [ed. Rossetti] 6 (= Cicero, *On Fate* 10), 8 (= scholion to Persius, *Satires* 4. 24), 10 (= Alexander, *On Fate* 171. 11–12 Bruns; quoted at Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 6. 9. 22), 11 (= Cassian, *Conferences* 13. 5. 3), 19 (= Origen, *Against Celsus* 1. 33).

One day, a foreigner named Zopyrus arrived in Athens. Like visitors to Athens in the Socratic dialogues of Plato (think of the *Protagoras*, for example, or the *Ion*), this foreigner had a wonderful skill to exhibit: he claimed that he could divine a man's character from his physical appearance. Finding himself somehow faced with Socrates amid a group of Socrates' friends, he demonstrated his art on Socrates and offered a diagnosis. Socrates was, he declared, a man possessed of 'many vices'; the thickness of his neck indicated that he was 'stupid and dull'; his eyes showed that he was a womanizer—or else, depending on whom you read, a pederast. In either case, Socrates' companions, and Alcibiades in particular, had reason to laugh. The Socratic dialogue as a genre is not without an element of hagiography: the reader knows that Socrates is a paragon of virtue and abstinence, a seeker after the truth, and the wisest man alive. Zopyrus' diagnosis must be wrong: the whole episode a typical example of a sophist deflated, of false claims to knowledge exploded. But there is a surprise in store. The onlookers laugh at Zopyrus, and the reader laughs with them; but Socrates tells us all to stop: 'This is how I am,' he said (or something like it: see further below); 'but through the practice of philosophy I have become better than my nature.'

Such is our evidence for the most famous incident in a dialogue, the *Zopyrus*, by the Socratic writer Phaedo of Elis.<sup>6</sup> Apart from the intriguing, but obscure, title of a work by his fellow-Socratic Antisthenes (the 'founder' of Cynicism),<sup>7</sup> it constitutes our earliest evidence from the Classical world for the encounter between philosophy and physiognomy.<sup>8</sup> And the grounds for Phaedo's interest in the subject are very important. In the course of this study, I hope to show that physiognomy attracted the interest of ancient philosophers not as a matter of idle curiosity; and not (for example) because of the value they or their culture might have placed on the ability to 'read' the character or intentions of others. Such an ability would clearly be a wonderful thing to have, and the aspiration to it is something on which the surviving handbooks of physiognomy trade. But, as I suggested in the Introduction, philosophers were interested in physiognomy (when they were) insofar as it represented a consequence of their central concern with the nature of the soul and its relationship with the body. It is possible that the character of Zopyrus represents the arrival in Greece of

<sup>6</sup> Testimonia and fragments of Phaedo's works in SSR IIIA, with discussion at iv. 115–27. Giannantoni is rigorous in excluding texts that do not name Phaedo; a more generous collection of testimonia for his *Zopyrus* is collected and discussed at Rossetti (1980) 183–98. With most commentators (including Giannantoni himself: SSR iv. 126), I assume as the only serious hypothesis available for their provenance that the fragments describing the famous encounter between Zopyrus and Socrates (= fr. 6–11 Rossetti) ultimately derive from this work—although it is true that Phaedo is mentioned in none of them. On Phaedo generally, cf. von Fritz (1938); Rossetti (1973) (a revised version of which = 1977: 121–53); (1974); Toole (1974–5); Montuori (1976); Dušančić (1993); Kahn (1996) 11–12; Nails (2002) 231; Boys-Stones (2004). On the afterlife of this particular anecdote in the physiognomical tradition, see Ghersetti below, pp. 282–3, 465.

<sup>7</sup> *Physiognomical Treatise On the Sophists* (*Peri tōn sophistōn physiognōmonikos*): D.L. 6. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Zopyrus appears actually to have been referred to as a 'physiognomist' (*physiognōmōn*): fr. 6, 10, 11 Rossetti; cf. *physiologos* (presumably a misreading) in fr. 8.

a practice born in the East;<sup>9</sup> but it was readily taken up (when it was) because and insofar as the theoretical consequences of taking it seriously converged with native interests. It is, in fact, appropriate, and perhaps less than a coincidence, that a serious engagement with physiognomy should first surface among the followers of Socrates, to whom the later psychological tradition looked as the proximate source of this inquiry. If Phaedo was interested in physiognomy, it was *because* he was a Socratic, and because he held a view of the soul which physiognomical evidence could be held to support.

But how do we know, first of all, that Phaedo *did* 'seriously' engage with physiognomy? It could be that Socrates' defence of Zopyrus was ironic; that (did we but have the whole dialogue) it would be the ridicule of Zopyrus that remained in our minds. To answer this question we need context; and it so happens that the one other fragment of the *Zopyrus* we have might provide it. We know that someone in the *Zopyrus* told the following story (fr. 1 Rossetti = SSR IIIA 11):

They say, Socrates, that the youngest son of the King [sc. of Persia] made a pet of a lion cub... And it seems to me that it was because the lion was brought up with the child that it followed him wherever he went even when he was a young man, so that the Persians said that it was besotted with the boy.

The story is preserved for no better reason than that the grammarian Theon thought it a happy illustration of the change from indirect to direct speech in narrative. It is lacunose; we do not know who told it (though Zopyrus seems the best guess on the face of it);<sup>10</sup> and, most importantly, we have nothing at all to suggest where and how the telling of this story stood in relation to the physiognomical episode. But despite all this, it is hard to ignore the powerful thematic connections linking this narrative to the physiognomical episode. In both cases, the ostensible moral is, or involves, the possibility that a creature's nature can be changed—in particular that savage and brutish inclinations can be tamed. In the one, we learn that someone as stupid and licentious as Socrates can become a chaste philosopher; in the other, that a member of the wildest species of animal can become as tame and broken as a besotted lover.

Evidence that just such a moral is one that his readership might have expected from Phaedo comes from the Emperor Julian (*Epistle* 82,

<sup>9</sup> That Zopyrus was from outside Athens is clear from fr. 9 Rossetti ('When he [sc. Socrates] was alive, a man called Zopyrus came to Athens...'). He would have come 'from Syria' if he is to be identified with the magus who predicted a violent end for Socrates (Aristotle fr. 32 Rose<sup>3</sup> = D.L. 2. 45). Others have thought him a Persian on the basis of his name, and the circumstantial detail that someone in the *Zopyrus* told a story concerning a Persian prince. (The story is quoted below in the text; for the argument, cf. Rossetti 1977: 145–6.) But the name is not distinctively Persian (cf. *LGN* s.v.); and nothing independently tells in favour of a link between Zopyrus and the story of the Prince (see next note).

<sup>10</sup> But the reference to Persia could as well be in deference to Zopyrus' presence as an indication that he was the narrator; and then again, it could be incidental (since the identification of Zopyrus' nationality itself rests in part on the reference to Persia here). Socrates himself is not ruled out by the fact that the story is addressed to him: the Platonic Socrates, anyway, is quite capable of relating stories as told to him, or discussions he has had with others. He is, for example, regularly addressed within his own account of discussions with Diotima at *Symposium* 201 D ff.

445 A = SSR IIIA 2):

Phaedo... supposed that nothing was beyond the cure of philosophy, but that everyone can be purified of any kind of life through it—of their behaviour, desires, everything, in a word, of the sort. If it helped only the well-born and well-brought-up there would be nothing amazing about what it did, but if it brings people in such a bad state to the light, it seems to me surpassing wonderful.

There is no way of telling on which of Phaedo's works Julian based his assessment;<sup>11</sup> but it does seem to be the case that the *Zopyrus* offered at least one candidate to whom such a moral would be particularly appropriate. For there is one further link between the two episodes of the *Zopyrus* I have been considering: the person of Alcibiades. According to fr. 6 and 8 Rossetti, it was Alcibiades in particular who laughed at Zopyrus' diagnosis of Socrates; and, although we have no information that he was there to hear the story of the lion-cub, we might remember for ourselves that Alcibiades compared himself and was compared by others to a lion.<sup>12</sup> The possibility of this connection is surely strengthened by the fact that Alcibiades had a tutor who shared his name with the dialogue's eponym: Zopyrus. Indeed, it might not be too fanciful to suggest that the first readers of the *Zopyrus* were supposed to assume from the title that they were purchasing yet another dialogue about Alcibiades and his education.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the truth of the matter, the important conclusion for now is that such evidence as we have for the *Zopyrus* aside from the physiognomical episode suggests a remarkable degree of convergence with a reading that treats Zopyrus' diagnosis seriously, not ironically. It starts, in other words, to look as if one of the themes of the *Zopyrus* was the transforming power of philosophy, and that the *Zopyrus* as a whole is best served if Zopyrus really did get Socrates right. Phaedo's Socrates, then, was not being ironic in defending him and confessing to a wicked nature: the *point* is his reform through philosophy. But if this should be accepted, then we can go further and ask by what mechanism Phaedo might have explained all this. What might Phaedo have believed about the soul to lead him to the conclusion that 'natural' character manifested itself in physical appearance, but was the kind of thing which philosophy could overcome?

There is, of course, no reason at all to suppose that Phaedo ascribed to Zopyrus a theoretical view of the soul's relationship with the body, or that this is what Socrates was supposed to be in agreement with him about. In fact, the dynamic of the dialogue would be better explained if Zopyrus had no *theory*

<sup>11</sup> The *Zopyrus* is a possibility: so von Fritz (1938) 1540, and Kahn (1996) 12; but Nails (2002) 231 suggests that he may have read no genuine works of Phaedo at all.

<sup>12</sup> Alcibiades' leonine nature is suggested by Plato (*Alcibiades* 122 B–123 A; cf. Denyer 2001: 186), Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1431–2), and Alcibiades himself at Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 2. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Rossetti supposes that Alcibiades' tutor (for whom see Plato, *Alcibiades* 122 AB) was the dialogue's eponym (1973: 371; more cautiously at 1977: 145; cf. also Nails, 2002: 305 s.v. 'Zopyrus'). But this seems unlikely if Phaedo's Zopyrus was a stranger in Athens at the time of his encounter with Socrates (and impossible if one thinks that Zopyrus was a Persian: see again n. 9 above). For Alcibiades as a stock figure of the Socratic dialogue, cf. Denyer (2001), 5. Denyer notes that Alcibiades played a role in Plato's *Protagoras* and *Symposium*; and that Aeschines (D.L. 2. 61), Antisthenes (ibid.; also D.L. 6. 18), and Euclides (D.L. 2. 108) as well as Plato, and Phaedo himself (*Suda* s.v. *Phaidōn* = φ 154) are all credited with dialogues called *Alcibiades*.

at all. If Phaedo's dialogues were anything like Plato's, Socrates would have spent a good deal of his time talking precisely to people whose abilities ran ahead of their capacity to give them a theoretical underpinning—whose 'skills' and 'virtues' were empirical, where they should have been knowledge-based.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps Zopyrus was like this: a capable enough physiognomist but, like those sophists in Plato whose discourse was also about the soul (cf. *Phaedrus* 271 CD), lacking in an understanding of the virtues and vices of the souls he judged. Knowledge about the soul, then, is what Zopyrus leaves for Phaedo's Socrates to explore. Socrates for his part need not be expected to *reject* physiognomy (as Plato's Socrates does not exactly *reject* rhetoric), but he might want to show how it is only a worthwhile pursuit if it can be made philosophical, grounded on knowledge about the soul. Perhaps this is why he stopped his companions from laughing.

But what, then, did Phaedo's Socrates think about the soul? The question is complicated by the fact that our sources differ over what, exactly, he replied to his companions' mirth at Zopyrus' diagnosis. In particular, there is a difference over whether Socrates thought he had *changed* his natural character (and so, whether one's nature is changeable) or whether he rather thought that he acted in spite of it (so that one's 'nature' turns out to be something immutable but non-determinative).

Cicero certainly talks as if he saw the former model in his source. According to him, Socrates admits to having been *born* with the vices identified by Zopyrus, but states that he managed to *rid himself of them* through the practice of philosophy:

[Of the vices ascribed to Socrates by Zopyrus:] It is possible that they were born from natural causes; but it is not due to the power of natural causes that they were rooted out and altogether removed so that he himself was called away from those vices to which he had been prone (fr. 6 Rossetti = Cicero, *On Fate* 10).

[Zopyrus was defended by Socrates]... who said that, although those vices had been implanted in him, he had cast them out of himself by reason (fr. 7 Rossetti = Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4. 80).

The fact that Zopyrus was able to get at the nature with which Socrates was born would suggest that the body is somehow or other a force that predisposes one's irrational nature to develop in a certain way, or lays down its 'default'; but it cannot *determine* one's nature, which is open to the healing influence of reason as well.

Cicero, however, is at odds with the majority of our fragments; and, while a head-count is no way to make a judgement in these cases (we have no way of knowing whether or when our fragments are based on a reading of the original, and no evidence for their source if they are not), the principle of *cui bono?* speaks against him too. For one thing, the bipartite psychology implied by

<sup>14</sup> The bravery of Laches, despite his inability to define bravery in the *Laches*, would be a good example. Cf. for the theoretical point the two types of physician at Plato, *Laws* 720 AB, who share the same title 'whether they are free men, or whether they are slaves and acquired their skill by obeying and observing their masters, and by experience—rather than from the study of nature, which is how free men learn it themselves and how they teach it to their own sons.'

Cicero may come close to his own preference in the area.<sup>15</sup> For another, such a psychology provides him with the most robust stand-point in the particular polemical context from which his evidence comes.<sup>16</sup> It seems more plausible all round, then, to prefer the testimony of the remaining fragments, which all imply that Socrates somehow *retained* the evil nature identified by Zopyrus, but did not let that interfere with his life:

fr. 8 (= *Scholia to Persius* 4. 24; Socrates speaks): 'I am indeed libidinous; but it is in my power to overcome that very libido.'

fr. 9 (= Ps.-Plutarch, *Peri Askēseōs* f. 179; Socrates speaking):<sup>17</sup> 'In actual fact, this man has not got it wrong, because by nature I am very much inclined towards lust [sc. for women]; but through careful practice I am as you know me.'

fr. 10 (= Alexander, *On Fate* 6): He would have been like this, as far as his nature was concerned, but through the practice of philosophy he became better than this nature.

fr. 11 (Cassian, *Conferences* 13. 5. 3): 'I am [sc. what Zopyrus says I am], but I abstain.'<sup>18</sup>

'I am', says Socrates (fr. 8, 11); 'I do incline' (fr. 9); Socrates has become *better* than a nature which he nevertheless retains (fr. 10).

My suggestion, then, is that we can, on the basis of the evidence, ascribe the following claims to Phaedo: (1) that each person has a 'nature' which encompasses his or her irrational impulses; (2) that this 'nature' is related to the body in such a way that an expert in the matter could deduce the former from the appearance of the latter; and (3) that one's 'nature', though ineliminable, does not determine behaviour, for people who engage in philosophy, at least. If this is right, then it suggests that Phaedo is working with a bipartite model of human behaviour of a kind that, in its general outlines, is quite familiar from post-Socratic philosophy: a model according to which a person's actions might be explained *either* by non-rational desires ('nature'), or by rational decision, operating independently of desire. What is most striking about Phaedo's model, though, is that it does not seem to allow that the non-rational desires are susceptible to training or rehabilitation. Their persistence is betrayed even in the case of Socrates—whose success as a philosopher, as someone who has brought his behaviour under the control of reason, is presumably not in serious doubt. The non-rational impulses are tied to

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bobzien (1998), 298. We know that Cicero shared Carneades' inclination towards a more or less Peripatetic ethics (e.g. *On Duties* 1. 2 with *Academica* 2. 139 and Goulet 1994 for the 'Calliphon' mentioned there); this may well have been associated with an inclination towards a more or less Peripatetic psychology.

<sup>16</sup> Cicero, at *On Fate* 10, is arguing against the Stoics' claim that action is predetermined because an inevitable consequence of one's nature. His reply is not to deny that nature determines action (which, for the Stoics at least, is the guarantee that an agent is *responsible* for what he does), but to deny that our natures are themselves predetermined. We have, he says, the freedom through reason to make them what we wish—witness Zopyrus and Socrates. See again Bobzien (1998), 297–8.

<sup>17</sup> The work is preserved only in Syriac. Rossetti prints (and I translate) the German rendering of Gildemeister and Bücheler (1872), 527: 'In Wirklichkeit hat dieser Mann nicht gelogen, denn von Natur neige ich sehr zur Begierde, durch angewendete Sorgfalt aber bin ich, wie ihr mich kennt.'

<sup>18</sup> It might be relevant that Cassian gives Socrates' response in Greek (*eimi gar, epechō de*), before translating it into Latin, which suggests that he is quoting the original (or thinks he is, or wants us to think that he is).

the body, in fact, and no more educable than the set of the eyes or the shape of the neck. But how could Phaedo claim this?

It might be tempting to suppose that Phaedo's bipartite model of human behaviour must be a bipartite model of the *soul*, in the sense that he thought (a) that the soul was an entity substantially distinct from the body; and (b) that the soul was composed of two parts, one rational and one not. But in this case, we should have to suppose that Phaedo thought that there was something about the irrational part of the soul which made it cling so closely to the body: not just an affinity of sorts with the body, but also a perfect inertia against any attempt of reason even to change, let alone eradicate, the habits it derived from the body. It seems to me highly unlikely that Phaedo could have believed this. For one thing, it is a position with no parallels in antiquity; but for another, it is unclear what possible explanatory advantage Phaedo might have gained, in a case where the irrational was so fully determined by the body, from asserting that any substantial difference between them existed at all.

A more attractive possibility, then, would be that Phaedo held something like an 'emergentist' view of the soul. The idea would be that 'psychological' functions (including both desire and reason) are not *substantially* different from the body at all. Rather, they somehow 'supervene' on physiological activity. A case could easily be made that some supervenient qualities (for example the desires) remain fully determined by the nature of the physiological activity on which they depend, while others (including reason) acquire a degree of causal independence. Reason would always owe its existence and capacities to the relevant physiological factors, but in operation might possess a degree of autonomy, perhaps a very large degree of autonomy, that desire altogether lacks.

Such a view undoubtedly has greater philosophical credibility; and indeed I think it cannot be positively ruled out for Phaedo. But it also has historical problems to contend with: for the only (other) evidence for emergentist theories of soul in antiquity suggests that they post-date Aristotle and, more than this, that they were inspired by him.<sup>19</sup> The form of epiphenomenalism known to Plato and Aristotle, on the other hand, seems to have relied on a simple identification of the soul with a 'harmony' of physical elements; to have been a form of reductionism which left no room for the independent activity of reason so essential for Phaedo.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The earliest example would be Aristotle's pupil Dicaearchus, if Sharples (2001) is right to ascribe an emergentist position to him (but see against this Caston 2001; and cf. Gottschalk 1971). For post-Aristotelian debates over the nature of the soul more generally, see below, Section III (esp. references in n. 69), and Section V. ii (for the important evidence supplied by Galen).

<sup>20</sup> For Plato, see the theory posited by Simmias at *Phaedo* 85E–86D (refuted by Socrates at 91B–95A). For Aristotle, see *DA* 1. 4, 407<sup>b</sup>27–408<sup>a</sup>30; also fr. 45 Rose<sup>3</sup> (from his lost dialogue, the *Eudemus*). Arguments *ex silentio* are never ideal; but if Phaedo had been an emergentist, and Plato knew it, his decision to make Phaedo the narrator of the *Phaedo* (a decision about which I have more to say below) would have been very strange indeed. The attack on reductionism so important for establishing the immortality of the soul would be fatally undermined by the constant reminder: that Phaedo himself held an alternative form of epiphenomenalism less vulnerable to much of Socrates' argument.

If this is right, then we are left with a third possibility, which falls somewhere between the first two and has, it seems to me, the best measure of philosophical and historical plausibility. It could be that Phaedo believed in an independent, rational soul on the one hand, substantially distinct from the body; but explained desires on the other as physiological epiphenomena. Such a model would explain why physical appearance can be used as a guide to the character of one's desires (one's 'nature'): they are little more than an aspect of the body itself. It would also explain why reason could have no effect on them: one could no more change one's 'nature' through reason than one could improve one's physical appearance by thinking about it. But what reason can do, as an independent entity, is to take charge: people can make a rational *choice* to organize their lives in any way they see fit, *despite* the predispositions written into their physiology: reason is precisely *not* determined by the body in which it (merely) resides. And it seems to me that there is a substantial piece of evidence which lends its support to this reconstruction—though, oddly enough, it is evidence that is generally ignored in discussions of Phaedo. For the position I have ascribed to Phaedo as the most plausible explanation of the fragments surviving from dialogues written by him converges to an extraordinary degree with the psychological model championed by Socrates in another dialogue of which he is the narrator: I mean, of course, Plato's *Phaedo*.

It seems to me that the possibility that the *Phaedo* can be used as evidence for the views of the historical Phaedo should be taken seriously not simply because the dialogue is narrated by Phaedo—though indeed Plato goes out of his way to draw attention to the fact that it is, even making explicit his own absence from the discussions narrated<sup>21</sup>—but also because of the extent to which the psychological model assumed by Socrates within the dialogue is (or anyway *looks*) rather different from anything we get in other Platonic texts. This is true particularly in Socrates' treatment of desire—desire, that is, for corporeal stimulation or satisfaction. According to the 'standard' Platonic account, this sort of desire forms a distinct part of the soul, of which another part is reason. Like reason (with which it may conflict), such desire is a psychological determinant of action. What makes this a plausible account of desire is, first, the very fact that it is one source of impulse for a body whose life and activity depend on the presence of the soul; and, secondly, the fact that the *pleasure* posited by desire as the end of human activity is itself something that registers in the soul.<sup>22</sup> In the *Phaedo*, however, Plato appears to be trying something different. According to the Socrates of the *Phaedo*, desire is not of the soul at all, but of the body. It has an impact on the soul (which in essence is pure reason); but as a distraction to it, not as a wayward part of it. The idea seems to be that, once animated by the directive presence of reason, the needs and the satisfaction of the body assert themselves as appropriate objects of reason's care. In many

<sup>21</sup> Phaedo is made to say that Plato was prevented by illness from being present (59B 10). Note also the emphatic assertion at the very opening of the dialogue of Phaedo's right to narrate as a witness of Socrates' last discussions: "Were you yourself there, Phaedo?" "I was there myself, Echechrates."

<sup>22</sup> Compare esp. *Philebus* 21A–D (for the mental dimension to pleasure); 35CD (for the location of desire and impulse in the soul).

cases, reason (brought through incarnation to forgetfulness of its proper, divine sphere) actually goes so far as to identify its own interests with those of the body. Nevertheless, the body, and the desires that come from it, are properly alien to the soul, which stands to them as a guard to his post (cf. 62 B), or a man to his cloak (cf. 87 B-E)—or, indeed, perhaps, as the condemned Socrates to the cell in which this dialogue is set.

It would be wrong to deny the familial resemblance between the *Phaedo* and other dialogues in which Plato discusses the character of the soul. In particular, Plato never denies the primacy of reason;<sup>23</sup> and if, in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, desire is so far from being alien to the soul that it seems to be an essential and immortal component of it, in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* Plato takes what might be thought of as the middle ground between this view and that of the *Phaedo*. According to these dialogues, desire is of the soul, indeed, but as accident not essence, so that it becomes a 'mortal' accompaniment to immortal reason which might (in images convergent with the dominant theme of the *Phaedo*) eventually be 'purged' of it.<sup>24</sup> Just as importantly, Plato never denies the crucial role played by the body in *shaping* desire, or the irrational soul more generally. Even if the desire for pleasure springs from the soul, the body, as the means by which the pleasure is attained, naturally has a significant input into the shape taken by an individual's desires. But this is *all* the body can do in the 'standard' Platonic account (I shall return to the point in more detail in Section II). It can *shape* the direction that irrational impulse takes; but desire (and the irrational soul more generally) consistently remains *distinct* from the body, and not necessarily determined by it.

This, then, is where the model presented in the *Phaedo* is unique. There is, to be sure, no clear case for thinking that Plato actually changed his mind over the nature of the soul. It might be, for example, that the model we are presented with in the *Phaedo* is intended to explore certain specific features of Plato's 'standard' psychological theory, not to challenge it altogether.<sup>25</sup> But the differences in presentation remain striking enough, even if that is all they are. On a straightforward reading of the *Phaedo*, desires *are* presented as functions of the body, and nothing else; desires can be resisted, but not, during life, eliminated. There is no scope for 'harmonizing' them with reason or

<sup>23</sup> Johansen (2000, at 109 with n. 34) notes references to our rational nature as 'original' in the *Republic* (611 D) and *Timaeus* (42 D, 90 D).

<sup>24</sup> *Republic* esp. 10. 611 B–612 A; *Timaeus* esp. 41 D; 69 CD (42 B for the escape of the just soul from incarnation).

<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, for example, we just have to accept that the soul manifests its nature differently in its incarnate and discarnate states so that 'desire' can be thought of as the operation of the soul in respect of the body—an essential and immortal capacity of the soul, but one which is, as it were, actualized only during incarnation so that it can also, from a certain perspective, be thought of as mortal (its actualization does not outlast connection with the body). In this case, Plato is not contradicting himself, merely considering the soul from different perspectives as it fits the needs of different dialogues. So e.g. Archer-Hind (1973) 27–31; cf. Bluck (1955) 2–5; Gerson (1987); Rowe (1993) 9; Johansen (2000). It does not affect my argument, that the *Phaedo* has an intertextual relationship with the historical *Phaedo*, whether these differences are philosophically substantial or simply a matter of perspective. Even differences of perspective need to be explained.

subduing them by it, because there is, more generally, no possibility for uprooting them from the body. And this suggests a further divergence from the 'standard' Platonic model. For according to the standard model, in which desires are properly part of the soul, one's natural character can be worked on and improved: desire can come under the influence of reason and be trained to a better state. But as far as the *Phaedo* is concerned (at least on a straightforward reading of it), one's natural character is ineliminably inscribed in one's body. Of course reason can resist: desire does not determine behaviour.<sup>26</sup> But reason cannot eradicate inclination. In these terms, people have control of their behaviour, but not their character or 'nature'. But, according to my earlier reconstruction, this is exactly what *Phaedo* of Elis seems to have thought. In other words, it seems to me that what is distinctive about the *Phaedo* might be explicable by the views of the historical *Phaedo* whom Plato chooses to narrate it.

It will be objected that my use of Plato's *Phaedo* as evidence for the views of *Phaedo* of Elis cannot be quite right—or what becomes of Plato himself in that dialogue? Surely *Phaedo* is some kind of spokesman for Plato? But my answer to this is that we need take seriously *both* the fact that Plato in fact wrote the work, *and also* the pointed and emphatic manner in which he places his authorial voice in the mouth, not just of a friend, of another member of Socrates' circle, but actually of a fellow-writer of Socratic dialogues. This suggests to me that we need to read the *Phaedo* as a strongly intertextual dialogue: in other words, that the question of *whose view* is expressed in Socrates' theory of the soul in the *Phaedo* is crudely put. It is not Plato's or *Phaedo*'s view: it is Plato's view *in engagement* with that of *Phaedo*. A significant number of commentators have explained the idiosyncratic psychological theory of the *Phaedo* as Plato's exploration of his psychological model *from a particular point of view*.<sup>27</sup> All I am suggesting, in effect, is that we can be more specific about what that point of view is: that the *Phaedo* is written from the point of view of Plato's engagement with *Phaedo* in tackling the issues raised by those who deny the soul's immortality. As I have suggested elsewhere (Boys-Stones 2004), the reason that Plato might want to invoke *Phaedo* in this arena is precisely because his main interest is in proving the immortality of the rational soul in particular, and especially in proving its immortality against the 'harmony-theorists' who take the soul in its entirety to be an epiphenomenon of the body. *Phaedo* provides an ideal standpoint from which to conduct his argument: for he agrees with Plato that reason is immortal; but he also agrees with the harmony-theorists that some psychological functions are epiphenomena of the body. In *Phaedo*'s voice, then, Plato criticizes the way in which the harmony-theorists extend a *plausible* claim that desires are epiphenomena of the body into an *untenable* claim for the mortality of reason

<sup>26</sup> Despite the apparently compelling nature of desires which leave no room for philosophy (66 B–D), and the unavoidable demands of pleasure and pain which 'rivet' the soul to the body (83 B–D), reason maintains control in the end. To think elevated thoughts in the grip of acute agony, for example, might not be within one's power; but reason can remodel one's life by avoiding situations in which intense pleasures and pains are likely to feature (83 B), so that one's behaviour comes to display the virtues of true courage, temperance, and justice (68 B–69 C).

<sup>27</sup> See again n. 25 above.

as well. Plato himself does not believe that desires are epiphenomena of the body, something that is clear in his investigation of the topic in other works; but in the *Phaedo* he can argue that *even if one thinks of them that way* (i.e. rather as *Phaedo* does) it gives no more weight to the suggestion that reason is an epiphenomenon of the body as well.

I have been at pains to make this point partly because in discussing Plato in the next section I shall need to claim that the *Phaedo* cannot be taken straightforwardly as evidence for Plato's views about the relationship between the body and soul—between physiology and character. But for now, of course, the important issue is what *Phaedo* believes; and this, I suggest, can be summarized from my survey of the *Phaedo* taken along with fragments of his own lost dialogues, as follows. According to *Phaedo*, desires and emotions are epiphenomena of physiological states. To this extent, *Phaedo* can understand the force of the epiphenomenalist claim. But he argues that one must not be misled (perhaps by the economy of the thought) into thinking that *reason* comes about in the same way. In fact reason is a qualitatively different feature of human activity, and something that is in no way defined by, or dependent on, or even (therefore?) confined to the body—as emotions and desires obviously are. When the activity of reason is correctly analysed, when one considers its capacity to *oppose* the body and corporeal desires in directing action (might one read the argument at *Phaedo* 93 A with the moral of the *Zopyrus* in mind?), one sees that it must be something distinct, and free, and immortal.<sup>28</sup>

The conclusion of all of this is that *Zopyrus'* diagnostic abilities must be limited: he cannot, after all, tell just by looking what people are *like* in the sense of telling *how they tend to behave* because there is nothing in their physical appearance to betray their education and philosophical attainment. But *Phaedo* can give him the theoretical underpinnings for the expectation that he will be able to discern exactly their *non-rational inclinations*—the 'natural' character of the irrational soul—given that this is an epiphenomenon of the very physiology which explains their outward appearance as well.

There is a tendency in contemporary scholarship to side with those who laughed at *Zopyrus*: to assume that physiognomy is successful only when it accurately captures the way someone actually is, rather than (if this should be different) his or her original or underlying nature. This tendency is supported by the fact that it is a selling-point of the handbooks that physiognomy is useful precisely because it can do this; also by the occasional use of the word physiognomy (outside philosophical contexts) to refer, not to innate character, but to current disposition.<sup>29</sup> However, we shall see that such a use of the word was, for philosophers, strictly secondary. Physiognomical handbooks improve

<sup>28</sup> And perhaps *Phaedo* spoke of its 'purification' (*katharsis*) in much the terms used by Socrates *passim* in the *Phaedo*. In any case, we have the evidence of Julian (as cited above) that *Phaedo* believed in the purifying power of philosophy: 'Phaedo... supposed that nothing was beyond the cure (*aniaton*) of philosophy, but that everyone can be purified (*kathairesthai*) of any kind of life through it.'

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Demosthenes, *Against Aristogeiton*, 98: the crowd outside the courtroom will be able to tell by physiognomy (*physiognomonēsousi*) how the jurors have voted.

on *Zopyrus* by looking at traits—expression and movement, for example—which might betray modifications of innate character. But such modifications are not the substance of 'physiognomy' properly (or anyway philosophically) so called. It will become increasingly apparent that, at least in philosophical contexts, 'physiognomy' is restricted precisely to the claim that one can tell from appearance the *innate* character of a person or of his or her irrational soul. This becomes apparent from the fact that claims to physiognomy are altogether absent in philosophers who do not believe that the soul *has* an innate character—even when their psychological theory leads them to expect that character tends to develop in ways predictable from the individual's appearance. Among those philosophers who do embrace physiognomy, conversely, there is a consistent tendency to suppose that the soul has an innate character, even though it might be non-determinative for behaviour.

In what follows, I shall gather evidence for this position by looking in turn at Plato (glancing briefly at Antisthenes and Xenophon on the way), Aristotle, and the Stoics; I shall return to the question at the end of Section IV, before tracing physiognomy through the evidence of later antiquity. In order to be clear about *Phaedo*, however, I shall anticipate here my conclusion: all the thinkers just mentioned reflect on the link between appearance and character; but only Aristotle (in addition to *Phaedo*) lays claim to physiognomy; and the reason for this is that only he, to this extent like *Phaedo*, thinks that the link is with *innate* character. If *Zopyrus* deserves ridicule, it is only because he does not possess the theoretical grounding for the empirical connections he has observed. This theoretical grounding, I suggest, was supplied by *Phaedo*, for whom physiognomy—the diagnosis of specifically irrational character from outward appearance—was a natural consequence of his psychology.

## II. THE CIRCLE OF SOCRATES (2): PLATO

*Phaedo* of Elis was not the only Socratic philosopher to be interested in the nature of the soul and its relationship with the body: far from it. But as far as we can tell, he was the only Socratic philosopher who made the soul—at least the irrational part of the soul, the locus of moral character—directly a function of the body. It is, then, I wish to suggest, no coincidence that for *Phaedo* alone of pre-Aristotelian philosophers we can reconstruct a positive attitude towards physiognomy. It is true that Xenophon, while conceiving of the soul as something essentially distinct from the body in its irrational as well as its rational aspects, has Socrates encourage the painter Parrhasius to think that he can capture the character of the soul (*to tēs psychēs ēthos*) in his portraits.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Memorabilia* 3. 10. 3. This chapter (whose dualism, by the way, is seen as anomalous by Claus 1981: 159–60; cf. 109) is the only passage on which a serious argument for a philosophically reflective physiognomy in Xenophon could be based. So Foerster (1893) ii. 249, inviting us to compare *Memorabilia* 3. 10. 5 with Ad. B28 and Anon. Lat. 50; also Métraux (1995) 3, suggesting 'affinities' with the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomy*. Evans (1969) 46 and Misener (1924) 106 also see physiognomical influence in Xenophon's descriptions of Virtue and Vice in his narrative of the

But he does not do this by suggesting that a person has a natural psychological character that in some way is linked to the natural physical characteristics that distinguish him or her as an individual. Rather, he argues that a person's character or state of mind will tend to manifest itself through physical expression and posture—a very different proposition, and one that Xenophon does not encourage us to think of as physiognomical.<sup>31</sup> It is also true that Antisthenes wrote a work with 'physiognomy' in the title (*Physiognomical Treatise On the Sophists* DL 6. 16). But we know nothing of the content of this work that could justify our using its title as evidence that Antisthenes thought he could supply theoretical grounds for a physiognomy.<sup>32</sup> In fact the likelihood is that Antisthenes denied the existence of the irrational soul altogether, in which case he could hardly have supposed that physical appearance was a guide to innate character or inclination.<sup>33</sup>

It would be wrong, then, to think that the evidence of Phaedo is enough to predispose us to the assumption that Plato, as a fellow-member of Socrates' circle, is interested in physiognomy. Indeed, what Plato has to say about beauty already suggests rather an anti-physiognomical strain to his thought. For Plato makes great play of the gap that exists between the beauty of the body and the beauty of the soul—the fact that outward manifestations of beauty are no guide to the inner man. Socrates is the supreme example of this: unusually ugly to look at, but unusually beautiful of soul. (Alcibiades famously compares him to a statue of Silenus which opens up to reveal an image of God inside: *Symposium*

choice of Heracles at *Memorabilia* 2. 1. 22, though they rather seem to me allegorical. (In particular, the 'plumpness', *polysarkia*, of Vice is probably better understood as indicating physical decadence than a deficiency in perception or intelligence, as Evans suggests on the basis of e.g. Ps.-Aristotle 807<sup>b</sup> 19–28.) Xenophon's famous descriptions of Socrates (esp. *Symposium* 5. 5–7; cf. 2. 19; 4. 18) are linked to no analysis of his character (pace again Evans, *ibid.*). The specific point that is made at *Symposium* 5. 5–7 is how useful Socrates finds his snub nose (for smelling) and bulging eyes (for seeing all around); the serious philosophical message, precisely that one should judge a body by its suitability for the purposes of the soul, not by its appearance (and cf. next note).

<sup>31</sup> Socrates gets Parrhasius to agree in turn to the propositions: (1) that humans cast sympathetic or baleful looks which can be depicted by the painter as well as the eyes can; (2) that joy and sorrow cause different facial expressions, so that these too can be reproduced; and finally, (3) that 'magnificence and liberality, baseness and illiberality, temperance and wisdom, violence and vulgarity shine through the face and the attitudes of men whether they are at rest or moving.' The point of all this for Xenophon is (not the coincidence of character between soul and body, but rather) the fact that one can tell from modifications of the body that the soul uses it as a tool. In the same passage, Socrates teaches a sculptor that he can capture the 'activities of the soul' in his work (*ta tēs psychēs erga*: *Memorabilia* 3. 10. 8), and a breastplate-maker that the ideal breastplate is not the most obviously beautiful, but rather the one best suited to the particular body (3. 10. 9–15). The moral is obviously the related one, that the body too should be judged by how useful it is for the soul's purposes, not by how attractive it is.

<sup>32</sup> For discussion, see Giannantonio, SSR iv. 281–3. The single fragment of the work that we have is ultimately unilluminating (SSR VA 62 = Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 14. 74. 11, 656 F: 'For they force-feed their porkers'). It is worth noting that there is no evidence of a claim to physiognomy among all the adherents of the Cynical movement, which traced its origins back to Antisthenes.

<sup>33</sup> As later Cynics, and like the Stoics, Antisthenes thought virtue sufficient for happiness (D.L. 6. 11)—which suggests that he, like them, saw the soul as essentially rational. (For the link between the Stoics' denial of an irrational soul and the absence from their thought of anything they would recognize as 'physiognomy', see Section IV.)

215 AB.) And Socrates is not the only person for whom external and internal beauty fail to coincide. The beauty of the youths who populate Plato's dialogues is often remarked on;<sup>34</sup> but quite apart from the fact that their physical beauty is subject to change and decay, and so could not, as such, be a reliable reflection of a settled good nature (cf. *Cratylus* 439 D), their very youth means that their achievement inevitably lags behind their looks. For them, in fact, physical beauty is not a mark of virtue, but at best an emblem or symbol for the *potential* that they, and all the young, have for virtue.<sup>35</sup> (Socrates finds *all* youths beautiful, presumably because he can see the potential in all: *Charmides* 154 B.) Whether this potential is fulfilled is another question altogether: it was not in the glamorous Alcibiades;<sup>36</sup> it might have been in the ugly Theaetetus (cf. *Theaetetus* 142 CD with 143 E–144 B). 'An evil soul might well reside in a fine body' (*Gorgias* 523 C): the determining factor in any case is the education a boy receives, not his birth. There is, to be sure, a hint in the dialogue named after him that Charmides might have *inherited* a noble character along with his good looks: at least, Socrates suggests that his ancestry makes it likely that he is virtuous as well as beautiful (157 D–158 B). But if the point is not that the family has a tradition of raising their children well, there is a touch of irony here. The official position is that, while one might be born more or less *intelligent*, virtue in all its forms is acquired, not innate (*Republic* 518 D–519 A). This being the case, of course, there is no reason to hope that any expertise for its recognition exists (*Meno* 89 AB).

It will be objected, and reasonably so, that all this is compatible with the claim that Plato accepted some form of physiognomy. Physiognomy, after all, is not so simply a matter of aligning beauty with virtue and ugliness with vice. Beauty supervenes on the arrangement of individual physical peculiarities: in the sensible world at least it is in the eye of the beholder (cf. esp. *Republic* 474 DE), and its very relativity thus rules it out as a potential physiognomical sign. Physiognomy, rather, is a matter of establishing the character of an individual's psychology on the basis of the physical peculiarities themselves. However, there are two reasons why I make the point. One reason is that Plato has surprisingly little to say about individual peculiarities of appearance. The very strong sense of a fully developed visual world that one might come away with from the dialogues is conjured up precisely by the kind of general background of interest in beauty that I have discussed, set off by the lightest touches of detail. The second reason is that, when Plato does discuss detailed features of appearance, it seems impossible to derive a physiognomical conclusion from them—and

<sup>34</sup> To cite just those after whom dialogues are named (references are to the eponymous dialogue): *Charmides* (154 B–D), *Euthydemus* (271 B), *Lysis* (204 B, 207 A), *Meno* (76 BC), *Phaedrus* (243 E, 252 B). Cf. also Alcibiades (104 A). Phaedo has beautiful hair (89 B).

<sup>35</sup> Pausanias (*Symposium* 181 DE) rather piously suggests that there should be a law against falling in love with a youth before he is old enough to grow a beard, precisely on the ground that it will not be clear whether the boy is destined for virtue or vice. He misses the point, of course: the right lover will be in a position to tip the balance, and ensure that when the youth has lost his physical beauty, he will be left with (the much more valuable) beauty of soul. (It might be significant that Socrates seems to have followed the pattern recommended by Pausanias in pursuing his most conspicuous failure—Alcibiades: cf. *Alcibiades* 103 AB with *Protagoras* 309 AB.)

<sup>36</sup> For a précis of Alcibiades' career, cf. e.g. Denyer (2001) 1–3.

it might not be going too far to say that they carry with them an anti-physiognomical message.

To make the point, I here list all cases where Plato indulges in a description of the kinds of physical characteristic that could conceivably provoke a physiognomist's interest. By this qualification, I mean to exclude not just people who are said merely to be 'beautiful' (for reasons already discussed), but in general those whose descriptions involve markers of age or status or fashion rather than their essential distinguishing features. This exclusion would embrace the 'thinnish' (*sklēphros*) Critobulus who is contrasted with the more 'developed' (*prospherēs*) Euthydemus at *Euthydemus* 271 B (the point seems to be the speed at which the two boys have developed physically); the aged Parmenides who is 'very grey' (*sphodra polios*: *Parmenides* 127 B),<sup>37</sup> along with the 'tall and graceful' Zeno who accompanies him (*ibid.*);<sup>38</sup> Alcibiades in his first beard at *Protagoras* 309 A; Phaedo with his long and beautiful hair (*Phaedo* 89 B: it was obviously a matter of choice or convention that he wore it long).<sup>39</sup> Socrates' mother Phaenarete is described as 'noble and tough' (*Theaetetus* 149 A: *gennaias te kai blosyras*), and it is possible that the second of these words is supposed to refer to her appearance ('burly' would be a possible translation). But even if it does (and it seems unlikely),<sup>40</sup> it tells us rather little: was she naturally burly or did she become so as a result of her profession?

Finally, there are people in the dialogues whose appearance suggests something like 'respectability', as when Parmenides (again) is described as *kalos de kagathos tēn opsin* (*Parmenides* 127 B; similarly Euthydemus at *Euthydemus* 271 B, and Lysis at *Lysis* 207 A). Perhaps in Parmenides' case, his grey hair contributes to the impression; otherwise Plato has nothing specific to say about what does. By my reckoning, in fact, Plato comments on the distinctive physical traits of just three of the characters mentioned in the dialogues; in addition to this, of one purely stereotypical human being, one god (imaginatively rendered), and two horses (likewise imaginary):

1. *Meletus*. Anytus' partner in the accusation brought against Socrates is described by Socrates in these terms (*Euthyphro* 2 B): 'He seems to me someone young and unknown... His deme is Pitheus, in case you know

<sup>37</sup> It could not even be argued that Parmenides' greyness shows that he avoided baldness in later life (which in itself might have led to conclusions, e.g. about his sexual vigour: cf. Aristotle, *HA* 3. 11, 518<sup>b</sup>24–5; *GA* 4. 5, 774<sup>a</sup>36–<sup>b</sup>2). A man with little enough hair to qualify as 'bald' man might yet have enough to show that he is grey; and even a completely bald man might have a grey beard.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Denyer (2001) 86 on *Alcibiades* 104 A 5.

<sup>39</sup> Convention if it is supposed to indicate that Phaedo was still a boy at the time of the dialogue (e.g. Burnet 1911 on 89 B 2, and Bluck 1955: 34; but against this see Robin 1926: p. x, followed by Rossetti 1977: 122–6, and Rowe 1993: 212); choice if it is an indication of pro-Spartan affiliation (e.g. Parmentier 1926: 22–3; Montuori 1976: 35–6; Nails 2002: 231). Perhaps it is not significant of anything in particular (Giannantonio in SSR 4. 119). Less likely is the possibility that it is a hangover from the time Phaedo is supposed to have spent as a prostitute (Davidson 1997: 332 n. 56; for the story, see the accounts at SSR IIIA 1–3).

<sup>40</sup> Plato uses exactly the same phrase at *Republic* 535 B as is used here of Phaenarete, and there he is talking precisely and explicitly about the psychological character needed by those due to be educated as rulers. Among other things, they must be 'noble and tough' (*gennaios te kai blosyros*) in their character (*ēthē*).

one Meletus of Pitheus: he has long straight hair, not much of a beard, and an aquiline nose (*epigrypon*).<sup>41</sup>

2. *Theaetetus*. Theodorus enthuses to Socrates about a remarkable youth he has met. He worries that Socrates would suppose that he was in love with the youth—if the youth were beautiful. 'But,' he continues, 'as it is—don't be annoyed—he isn't beautiful, but his snub nose (*simotēta*) and bulging eyes (*to exō tōn ommatōn*) make him look like you. But these features are less pronounced than with you' (*Theaetetus* 143 E). Later on, Socrates himself notes that the description 'snub-nosed and with bulging eyes' (*simon te kai exophthalmon*) could apply equally to himself or to Theaetetus (209 C).
3. *Socrates*. See above on Theaetetus for the only direct mentions in Plato of Socrates' physical attributes; but the implication of *Phaedo* 102 B may be that Socrates was, in addition, short in stature.<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, Meno compares him to a sting-ray 'in appearance (*eidos*) and in other respects' (*Meno* 80 A); and Alcibiades says he is just like Silenus, or the satyr Marsyas (*Symposium* 215 AB). For completeness (and because physiognomists are particularly interested in the eyes), it might be added that Socrates had, at times, a very direct way of looking at you (*Phaedo* 86 D); perhaps, at times, a menacing gaze.<sup>43</sup>
4. A *stereotype*. At *Republic* 495 E, Socrates is explaining the bad reputation in which philosophy is held. It happens, he says, because the best men are corrupted away from the practice of philosophy, which gets taken over by pretentious second-raters. 'Do you think,' Socrates continues, 'that they [i.e. pretentious second-raters] look any different from a bald-headed little coppersmith who has come into some money, recently come out of prison, has washed at the bath and put on a new cloak like someone intending to

<sup>41</sup> Note that the nose is the one relevant feature here: Meletus' sparse beard is an indication of his age, his hair-length a matter of choice; neither tell us about his physical type. Physiognomical prejudice (or perhaps an assumption about ancient physiognomical prejudice) often misleads translators into representing Plato's description of Meletus as inherently unattractive (e.g. Nails 2002: 202: 'long hair, scraggly beard and somewhat hooked nose'). But nothing in the Greek gives licence to this. The point of Meletus' long hair and aquiline nose is rather that they suggest his aristocratic background. It is true that long hair could have negative moral (or political) connotations for Athenians (cf. Manitheus' concern that his long hair will prejudice the jury against him: *Lysias*, *Pro Manitheo* 16. 18–19). But this is precisely because it is a *deliberate* signal of aristocratic affiliation, something which might well provoke suspicion (cf. Hall 1995: 51–3, esp. 52). It might even be that Plato is playing to this prejudice in drawing specific attention to Meletus' long hair; but it should also be remembered that he is very much of the class himself, and is able to present a sympathetic portrait of at least one other long-haired young aristocrat, namely Phaedo (cf. above with n. 39).

<sup>42</sup> Relatively short, anyway, since what Socrates tells us is that he is shorter than Simmias, who is in turn shorter than Phaedo (*Phaedo* 102 BC). It should be remembered, however, that Socrates is 70 years of age, while Simmias and Phaedo are nearer their physical prime, so it is not clear that the passage should be used as absolute evidence for Socrates' diminutive stature (pace Evans 1969: 21).

<sup>43</sup> When asking the jailer if he might pour a libation from his cup of poison we are told that he 'glowered at the man, as he used to do, like a bull' (*Phaedo* 117 B). The context makes this difficult, though: is it only at this man (the jailer) that he used to look thus? Is the gravity implied by Plato's description to be taken seriously? (The question which accompanies it here is not without humour.)

- get himself a wife, and is about to marry his master's daughter because she is poor and abandoned?
5. *Eros*. In the course of his speech on the god, Agathon describes Eros in these terms (*Symposium* 196 A): 'He is very young and soft (*hapalōtatos*); in addition his appearance is supple (*hygros to eidōs*)—for if he were stiff (*sklēros*), he would not be able to enfold a soul completely or escape notice when he first entered it or withdrew. Besides, his graceful good looks (*euschēmosynē*) prove that he is balanced and fluid in his nature. Everyone knows that Eros has extraordinary good looks,<sup>44</sup> and between ugliness and Love there is unceasing war.'<sup>45</sup>
  6. *Metaphorical horses*. Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (at 246 AB) famously compares the soul to: 'an inborn faculty consisting of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. The horses and charioteers of the gods are all themselves good, and of good parentage, but everyone else has a mixture. First, our driver is in charge of a chariot and pair; secondly, one of his horses is noble, and of noble stock, but the other is the opposite of noble, and of opposite stock.' (In terms of the psychological model outlined in the *Republic*, the good horse represents the spirited part of the soul, the bad horse the desiring part; and the charioteer represents reason.) A little further on (at 253 DE), we get more detailed descriptions of the horses. The good horse is 'upright with well-articulated limbs, has a high neck (*hypsauchēn*), is aquiline (*epigrypos*), white in appearance, with eyes that are black; he is a lover of honour, and moderate and modest; a friend of true glory; not needing the whip, he is guided by verbal command only.' The bad horse, on the other hand, is 'crooked, lumbering, ill-made, with a stout, short neck (*kraterauchēn*), is snub-nosed (*simprosōpos*), black, with grey, bloodshot eyes; is a friend of outrage and boastfulness; is shaggy around the ears, deaf, and scarcely yields to whip and goad combined.'

What should we make of these characterizations? The description of the coppersmith, first, has nothing to do with physiognomy, but must represent an appeal on Plato's part to the snobbery of his audience. This is very clear, not just because we have no physiognomical text that links baldness (or short stature) with the desire for upward mobility that characterizes the coppersmith: that might or might not be relevant. What certainly is relevant, however, is something that Plato himself says later in the very same work (the *Republic*). For Plato explicitly tells us that no psychological difference is indicated by a man's being bald or long-haired: they have the *same nature* (*Republic* 454 c).<sup>46</sup> 'Physiognomy' in any but the crudest sense of the word is similarly beside the point in understanding Agathon's description of Eros as 'supple in form'.

<sup>44</sup> In fact not everyone does know this, as it happens: Socrates argues that Eros, as *desiring* beauty, is himself neither beautiful nor ugly (*Symposium* 202 AB).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Lysis* 216 CD for a similar characterization of beauty.

<sup>46</sup> The point of this passage, by the way, is to suggest that there is no more basis for discriminating between men and women in the division of tasks than between the bald and the hirsute. Taken as a whole, it might be noted that the argument already suggests that the 'nature' of a person is independent of any physical differentia they might possess.

The word *hygros* (literally 'moist') does, to be sure, have a certain currency in medical circles, where it is a quality taken to be more characteristic of the flesh of women, for example, than of men;<sup>47</sup> and there are physiognomical consequences one can draw from it.<sup>48</sup> But much more to the point is the fact that the flesh of children is also taken to be 'moister' (or 'more supple') than that of adults.<sup>49</sup> Rather than constructing a physiognomical picture of Eros (there is too little said about his appearance for this to be a realistic motive in any case), it is clear that Agathon is providing us with an interpretation of Eros' iconography. Eros is depicted as young and (therefore) supple (or moist): why? Because 'if he were stiff (*sklēros*, or 'dry'), he would not be able to enfold a soul completely or escape notice when he first entered it or withdrew'. Eros' youthful suppleness is allegorical, not physiognomical.<sup>50</sup>

The descriptions which have received the most attention, as evidence for Plato's physiognomical interests, are the horses in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>51</sup> This, as I shall suggest, is in fact entirely appropriate—though not for the reasons usually adduced. For it seems to me that to see Plato's account of the horses as *physiognomical* once again would be to miss his point. In particular, it misses the subtle blend of convention and subversion in the horses' portraits. For these portraits are *boringly* conventional, insofar they do little more than to establish the horses as, respectively, good and bad horses. In particular, its 'upright' bearing, high neck, and aquiline nose would all serve to make the good horse recognizable as such to any rider.<sup>52</sup> Given this perfectly innocent explanation for Plato's descriptions, it is impossible to say without begging the question that he intended their details to apply to good and bad human beings as well.<sup>53</sup> The fact that the terms of his descriptions turn up in later physiognomical handbooks only tells us that the Greeks used the same vocabulary to describe the physical attributes of humans and animals. The fact that some of them answer in those

<sup>47</sup> e.g. Hippocrates, *AWP* 10. 32–3; Aristotle, *HA* 538<sup>b</sup>9–10 (and cf. Ps.-Aristotle 809<sup>b</sup>11); Dean-Jones (1994), 46.

<sup>48</sup> It is mostly a good sign in Ps.-Aristotle: e.g. 807<sup>b</sup>12–13 (with the same combination of 'moist' and 'soft'), 808<sup>a</sup>25. Cf. 813<sup>b</sup>7–35 (with Vogt 1999: 459–61 ad loc.), where moistness of flesh (associated with cold) is one of the factors that affects the flow of the blood, and so the character of the individual.

<sup>49</sup> e.g. Hippocrates, *Regimen* 1. 33. 1 (and cf. Galen, *On Medical Method*, x. 195. 9–11 Kühn).

<sup>50</sup> An alternative explanation of Eros' being soft and supple is hinted at in Plutarch (*Table-Talk* 622 D): when a stingy man falls in love, he melts like iron in the fire, and becomes 'soft and supple and more pleasant' (*hapalos kai hygros kai hēdion*). (Other examples of *hygros erōs*, though much later, and both in a literally humid context, are Oppian, *Halieutica* 4. 2; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 16. 65, 40. 560.) For an altogether different interpretation of Eros' iconographical youth, cf. Cornutus, *Introduction to the Traditions of Greek Theology* 25, 47. 4–5 Lang, where it symbolizes the folly of the lover.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. esp. Misener (1924), 106–7, and Evans (1969), 21. Foerster cites the passage at (1893) ii. 252–3.

<sup>52</sup> This text of the *Phaedrus* was in fact read this way by the author of the *Hippiatrica* (cf. fragmenta Anatolii de equis 2). Cf. already e.g. Xenophon, *On Horsemanship* 1. 8 (and note that the features listed here are marks only of a good *physical* type: this is, as Xenophon says at 1. 1, all one has to go on with an unbroken horse, for whose 'soul' there are 'no clear signs').

<sup>53</sup> That the 'form of the description is that commonly used in later physiognomical handbooks' (Evans 1969: 21) is neither here nor there. It is more likely, in any case, that both rely on standard diagnostic patterns.

handbooks to features of character appropriate to the corresponding horse<sup>54</sup> tells us no more than the fact that some of them do not.<sup>55</sup>

In the context of Plato's own writing, however, the portraits he paints of the *Phaedrus* horses are also strikingly subversive—subversive, that is, of any thought that one can take the link between character and appearance ascribed to these horses beyond the frame of the comparison and into the human world. For (whatever comparisons one might make with later textbooks) there is one outstanding feature of each horse which suggests a link with human characters described by Plato himself: the nose. The good horse, we are told, is aquiline (*epigrypos*), the bad horse is snub (*simprosōpos*). Yet, as have seen, it is the one evil-doing youth in Plato, Meletus, who is aquiline (*epigrypos*), while Socrates and the most promising of his young acquaintances, Theaetetus, are snub (*simoi*).<sup>56</sup> Given how little delineation of human features there is in Plato, and given the fame of Socrates' snub nose, it is hard not to see here almost a deliberate warning *against* drawing physiognomical conclusions. The truth, in any case, is that Meletus and the good horse look noble; Socrates, Theaetetus, and the bad horse do not.

For physiognomy to work, there has to be a stable relationship between the sign and the signified; if apparent exceptions emerge, they have to be resolved (as we have seen that, in the *Zopyrus*, Phaedo points up the apparent exception of Socrates in order to resolve it). Plato allows beauty to be emblematic of virtue or promise; but his (three) concrete descriptions are all exceptional. Personal

<sup>54</sup> For the good horse, Evans (n. 31) compares its description as 'upright' (*orthos*) with Ps.-Aristotle 807<sup>a</sup>31–2 and 808<sup>a</sup>19–20 (1969: 21 n. 31). For the bad horse, she compares 'crooked and lumbering' (*skolios, polys*) with Ps.-Aristotle '807b' (sc. '29–31?') (n. 36). Evans further suggests that *polys* 'is related to' *polysarkia*, a sign of insensibility, and compares Ps.-Aristotle '807a' (i.e. 807<sup>a</sup>19–28?) (n. 37).

<sup>55</sup> The following are examples from Evans's own references where the handbooks suggest an association of character at odds with what Plato says of the horses. First, the 'high neck' of the good horse (*hypsouchēn*): Evans compares signs of *arrogance* at Ad. B39–40 (1969: 21 n. 32). The 'stout, short neck' (*kraterauchēn*) of the bad horse, conversely, suggests *bravery*: Evans (n. 38) compares Ps.-Aristotle 811<sup>a</sup>10. But then again, the handbooks would also see signs of *cowardice* in both horses (though cowardice is not obviously a feature even of the bad horse): the good horse because of its black eyes (*melanommatos*: Evans n. 35 compares Ps.-Aristotle 812<sup>b</sup>1; though she also notes Ad. B36, where a black eye is a sign of tameness); the bad horse because of its grey eyes (*glaukommatos*: Evans n. 40 compares Ad. B33), because it is 'shaggy' (Evans n. 41 cites Ps.-Aristotle '812b', though there is nothing here corresponding to Plato's specification 'around the ears'), and finally because it is 'black' (*melanchrōs*: Evans n. 39 compares Ps.-Aristotle '811b' (though 812<sup>b</sup>12, '1–2 would be more to her point; cf. also 808<sup>a</sup>17), and Ad. B25).

<sup>56</sup> The word *epigrypos* is used in Plato only of Meletus and the bad horse—though *grypos* occurs at *Republic* 474 D, in a list demonstrating how a keen lover will find quite opposing characteristics attractive in different cases. The word *simos* appears in the same list, but otherwise is used only in Plato's descriptions of Socrates and Theaetetus, and as part of the compound word *simprosōpos* (literally 'snub-faced') used to describe the bad horse. Two more speculative observations might support my suggestion that the bad horse is supposed to look like Socrates. First, the *igula concava* observed in Socrates by Zopyrus (*Phaedo*. *Zopyrus* fr. 6 Rossetti; Kahn 1996: 11 translates 'bull neck') might recall the bad horse's thick neck (*kraterauchēn*). Secondly, it might be significant that one distinctive physical feature of Socrates does *not* find its way into the description of the horses: his bulging eyes (*Theaetetus* 209 C: *exophthalmos*). Could it be that they are absent because they would have to be a feature of the good horse (Xenophon, *On Horsemanship* 1. 9: *exophthalmos*)?

appearance is a shifting, unstable, unreliable guide to the truth: a very Platonic, but a fatally anti-physiognomical, conclusion.

I take it, then, that Plato was resistant—and perhaps consciously so—to the idea of physiognomy. But there is more to this resistance than a desire to reinforce the familiar lesson that, as philosophers, we should shed our fixation with the perceptible and search for a grasp of the underlying realities in their own terms. A sceptical attitude towards physiognomy is in fact a natural consequence of Plato's psychological theory, and in particular his beliefs about the relationship between soul and body. The reason for this is that physiognomy acquires theoretical credibility only if moral character and physical development are supposed to be related (e.g. at the level of physiology). But in the normal run of Plato's theory, there is no causal relation between body and soul which makes this inevitable. The growth and character of the body can be explained by physical causes; but the soul pre-exists (the soul, in fact, is immortal), and comes into the body with its own history, and a (moral) character developed through its previous experiences of incarnation and the world beyond. There is actually no reason why the body *should* look like the soul, or why it should be any guide to the characterful individual which inhabits it.

It is always dangerous to generalize across Plato's works, and it is certainly possible to appeal to texts in which this rather severe generalization is qualified; but none challenges the basic premise. In fact it is only in the *Phaedo* that we are presented with a psychological model according to which moral character (that is, roughly speaking, non-rational inclination) is rooted in and derived from the body—and the psychology of the *Phaedo*, as I argued in the last section, seems to owe this much at least to Plato's engagement with Phaedo of Elis in that dialogue, and cannot therefore be read as a straightforward account of his own considered judgement.

Nevertheless, Plato clearly did take seriously the effects that the body could have on the soul. A small but significant number of texts state or imply that the body and the physical environment more generally can affect the character of the soul. A temperate climate can be used to explain the superior intellectual powers of the inhabitants of Greece, and had formed the backdrop to the excellent natures of the inhabitants of Atlantis.<sup>57</sup> Despite his commitment to the transmigration of souls,<sup>58</sup> a number of passages attest to Plato's belief that

<sup>57</sup> *Timaeus* 24 C = Foerster (1893) ii. 251–2 (on the character of the Greeks); *Critias* 111 E (on the Atlantans); also *Republic* 435 E = Foerster (1893) ii. 249–50 (of northern races such as Thracians and Scythians); and cf. *Laws* 747 DE = Foerster (1893) ii. 251. In this context, Foerster lists *Laws* 705 A = Foerster (1893) ii. 250–1, where the Athenian Stranger warns against the foundation of cities near the sea. But this passage makes no allusion to the effects of the climate on character: rather, it argues that people living on the sea-board are unduly exposed to, and tend to become unduly attached to, novelty, luxury, and alien patterns of thought.

<sup>58</sup> The Stoics at least appear to have thought that the phenomenon of inherited character sat uneasily with transmigration (Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1053 C); but in fact there are ways of reconciling the two, as Neoplatonists proved (see further Section VI). *À propos*: it has sometimes been assumed that passages in Plato which suggest transmigration between species provide evidence for his interest in physiognomy (e.g. *Phaedo* 81 E–82 B = Foerster 1893: ii. 253; and cf. Evans 1969: 22). There is of course (and was already in antiquity) a question over whether Plato

psychological character is inherited, just as physical character is,<sup>59</sup> and he might have thought that there was some physical basis for this.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, in an article on the *Timaeus*, Christopher Gill has argued that Plato in that dialogue systematically ascribes psychological failings—from madness to sexual excess—to the constitution of the body, so that one precisely can talk of character in reductionist terms as ‘body-based character’. (Gill, in fact, appeals to the reductionist reading of this dialogue by Galen.)<sup>61</sup>

There is, however, an important qualification to be made of Gill’s account of the *Timaeus*, and it is one whose conclusion applies to all the texts mentioned. In brief, whatever influence Plato ascribes to physical factors in the development of the non-rational soul, he never says that they *determine* its character (or in any sense its nature) from the start. Indeed, they may never, in fact *should* never, have any effect at all, since they are counterbalanced by the positive effect on character of reason in shaping a person’s upbringing. Plato is careful to say that a person becomes bad (i.e. acquires a particular irrational character) because of a bad state of body *and* an ‘upbringing without education’ (86 E); or where a poor state of body *combines with* a poor government and poor parenting (87 AB); the route to happiness, conversely, involves both physical *and* intellectual training (88 BC). The result of all this is that Plato is not quite so Galenic as Gill implies. For Galen (as we shall see in Section V), the character of the soul is (somehow or other) a *function* of the temperament of the body; for Plato, the body is only one influence on the character of the non-rational soul.<sup>62</sup>

meant this literally; but even if he did, the point is that one’s soul migrates into the body of an animal which one comes to resemble in behaviour, not looks (*Timaeus* 42 C; and note the diverse range of forms which might fall to the conventionally just man: a wasp or ant in *Phaedo* 82 B, but a bird in *Timaeus* 91 DE).

<sup>59</sup> So *Charmides* 157 D–158 B; *Cratylus* 394 A; hence also the possibility of breeding for good character: *Republic* 375–6, 459; *Politicus* 310 and *Laws* 773 AB; cf. *Critias* 121 AB.

<sup>60</sup> In the context of the *Timaeus* this seems likely. The parent, *qua* begetter (not *qua* educator: that is considered separately) takes more responsibility for the evil character of the child than the child itself (*Timaeus* 87 B).

<sup>61</sup> See Gill (2000), 62. (For Galen’s reductionist reading of Plato, see further Section V.) Cf. *Timaeus* 86 C–E (an excess of seed around the spinal marrow leads to a foolish soul); 86 E = Foerster (1893) ii. 252 (poor physical condition, like maleducation, might be the cause of vice); 87 A (humours cause ill temper, melancholy, rashness, cowardice, forgetfulness, stupidity in the soul); 88 AB (a strong body making a weaker soul dull and stupid and ignorant). Cf. also *Laws* 728 DE (a moderate body has best effect on soul); 790 E (fearfulness is a morbid condition which arises when the soul is dominated by movement of body). Alcohol, of course, provides good proof that the soul’s activities can be impeded by the body: *Laws* 645 DE (and cf. Ps.-Aristotle, *Physiognomy* 805<sup>a</sup>2–4).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Lloyd (1987), 28–30 n. 89. Gill recognizes (2000: 60), but plays down (61) the significance of educational and political influences on psychological development. I also disagree with him about the effect of the physical environment on reason. Gill assumes that the state of reason, and so one’s ability to apply a positive control on the development of one’s character, is itself at the mercy of physiology. It seems, however, only to be the case that certain pathological states are able to *disrupt* the normal course of reason to cause madness and ignorance. (Plato would, I assume, think that the people suffering mental illnesses of this kind can and should be placed, like children, under the protective rationality of others. In this way, even *their* character can be protected from strictly unnatural influences.)

It might be objected that this misses the point: that ‘reason’ (particularly when it is someone else’s reason, e.g. that of our parents) is, as it were, a corrective, and that the physical forces on our development represent what would be the ‘natural’ state of our character were the artifice of reason not to be applied. But Plato is, on the contrary, clear that philosophy is an entirely natural factor in our development: a *natural* counterweight to the influence of the body on the irrational soul. This is so not just in the sense that it is a naturally occurring feature of the environment, but in the very strong sense that a tendency to do *and to be receptive to* philosophy is itself part of the physical construction and development of the individual’s body—every bit as much as (and probably, in fact, more than) an inclination towards the various forms of vice. As a human being grows, the overwhelmingly disturbing influences of the infant body tend to decline, and education (physical as well as philosophical) is supposed to kick in to ensure a healthy state of soul *and* body (44 BC; cf. 88 BC); and man’s philosophical destiny (cf. 42 AB) is an explanatory factor behind, for example, the structure of the sense-organs (47 B–E), the mouth (75 E), and even the gut (72 E–73 A).<sup>63</sup>

The point of all this, so far as I am concerned, is that, while the character of the irrational soul can certainly be influenced by the body (even, when unchecked, to the extent of disabling reason), and while it might be true that every negative characteristic of the soul has a physical cause, it would not be right to say that the *natural* character of the irrational soul is determined by the body (nor, then, by any external factor which might have an influence on the body). It is not the case, for example, that the body determines the nature of the soul (as it does in *Phaedo*), and philosophy is awakened later on in reaction to the psychological ‘diseases’ this entails. Rather, an individual’s *natural* state consists in a proper equilibrium of the irrational soul as it is held in balance between, on the one hand, the requirements of physical existence and, on the other, the controlling force of reason. (It makes no difference that this reason, in the first place, is that of the educators.) Rather than saying that the character of the soul is naturally determined by the body, the most we can say is that, *if something goes wrong*, in particular if the appropriate (natural) educational forces are not in play, then the soul will tend to acquire a character which can be explained by the individual’s physiology.<sup>64</sup>

Still, it might be said, this is not bad going. If we assume that *appearance* is in any case determined by physiology, then we should be able to make a reasonable judgement of a person’s character in every case where the proper educational system was lacking. Since the proper educational system is (in our sorry times) almost *always* lacking, our success rate is likely to be high. A refusal to credit

<sup>63</sup> Cf. on this Johansen (2000) 109–10; Steel (2001).

<sup>64</sup> Note that this is subtly, but importantly, different from the common Neoplatonist line explored in Section VI, according to which irrational inclinations are written into the body, to manifest themselves as psychological affections in the absence of reason’s control. Plato merely says, at most, that the body tends to influence the character of the irrational soul.

Plato with a physiognomy starts, after all, to look rather forced.<sup>65</sup> But it looks forced, as I am arguing, only if we make assumptions about the meaning of the word 'physiognomy' for ancient philosophers. If I am right that ancient philosophers reserved the notion of physiognomy for the claim that a *natural* state of character could be deduced from the natural appearance of the body (and not just for any claim that mental state and appearance are linked) then Plato is not properly considered, and certainly would not consider himself, an ally of physiognomy. In this respect, as I shall suggest at the end of Section IV, his thought has some interesting parallels with that of the earlier Stoics—and when we have seen what they think, and why, in particular, they did not think of themselves as physiognomists, it will be possible to understand Plato's position more clearly. However, it is also necessary first to be clear about what the acceptance of physiognomy *does* involve for a philosopher; and this is something we can see if we turn now to the most influential of ancient physiognomical theorists: Plato's own pupil Aristotle.

### III. ARISTOTLE AND HIS SCHOOL

Peripatetic works of physiognomy: Ps.-Aristotle, *Physiognomy* (805<sup>a</sup>1–814<sup>b</sup>9 Bekker); Loxus (fragments: Origen, *Against Celsus* 1. 33; Anon. Lat. 1, 2, 12, 48, 80–1, 89, 117, 133).<sup>66</sup> References to an Aristotelian *Physiognomy*: DL 5. 25; Anon., *Vita Menagiana Aristotelis* A. 97 Rose; Anon. Lat. 1, 48, 55, 72, 83–9, 117; Adamantius A1; Galen, *QAM* 57. 7–9 Müller; Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 47. 6. 1–20, i. 301. 23–302. 17 Wachsmuth (quoting the surviving *Physiognomy* 805<sup>a</sup>1–18); Pollux, *Onomasticon* 2. 135. 7 Bethe (cf. Suetonius, *de blasphemis* 4. 70 Taillardat) (cites 811<sup>a</sup>17). Occurrences of *physiognōmon* in Aristotle (other than the *Physiognomy*): *Prior Analytics* 2. 27, 70<sup>b</sup>7, 13–14, 25–6, 32; *GA* 4. 3, 769<sup>b</sup>20. Citations of Aristotelian physiognomy from works not named: Pliny, *Natural History* 11. 273 (= Aristotle, fr. 286 Rose<sup>3</sup>); cf. Pompeius Trogus, *On Animals* fr. 10 Seel [not naming Aristotle, but cf. *HA* 491<sup>b</sup>11–26]. References under this description to physiognomical passages in known Aristotelian works other than the *Physiognomy*: Antigonos, *Collection of Amazing Stories* 114a–c Giannini [not naming Aristotle; but cf. *HA* 491<sup>b</sup>11–26, 492<sup>a</sup>34–<sup>b</sup>3, 572<sup>a</sup>8–13]; Galen, *QAM* 51. 12–57. 6 Müller [*PA* 648<sup>a</sup>2–13, 650<sup>b</sup>14–651<sup>a</sup>17; *HA* 491<sup>b</sup>11–492<sup>a</sup>12, <sup>a</sup>34–<sup>b</sup>3]; Ammonius, *On the Prior Analytics* iv. 6. 7. 16 Wallies [from the proem, with *Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>7–38 in mind]; Philoponus, *On the Prior Analytics* xii. 2. 483. 22–4, 484. 8–11, 485. 5 Wallies [*Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>7–38]; *Commentary on the Generation of Animals* xiv. 3. 185. 13 Hayduck [on *GA* 769<sup>a</sup>9, with 769<sup>b</sup>20–1 in mind]; cf. *Commentary on the De anima* xv. 155. 22 Hayduck [commenting on *DA* 408<sup>a</sup>34–<sup>b</sup>2]; Latin Scholia to the *Prior Analytics* 370–1 Minio-Paluello [*Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>7, 11]. Occurrences of *physiognōmon* in other Peripatetic writers: Alexander, *On Fate* 171. 11–12 Bruns (also quoted at Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 6. 9. 22).<sup>67</sup>

The single most influential work of physiognomy written in antiquity was the *Physiognomy* which circulated (and survives) under the name of Aristotle.

<sup>65</sup> One should, of course, keep in mind the fact that Plato never once offers us an example of a link between a particular trait of appearance and a particular psychological trait; the position would have to be that physiognomy is *implicit* in Plato.

<sup>66</sup> For Loxus' Peripatetic credentials, see subsection (iii) below.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander was once erroneously credited with a commentary on Aristotle's *Physiognomica*: see Foerster (1893) i, pp. xxxiii f. (The 'physiognomical' passages Foerster himself identified in Alexander, given *ibid.* 283, are also drawn from a spurious work: see Rose 1863: 216–19; Cranz 1960: 126–35.)

Apart from the fact that the name of Aristotle did a certain amount in its own right to advertise and lend credibility to the study of physiognomy in Classical antiquity and beyond,<sup>68</sup> the work apparently asserted itself as the principal work of reference for all subsequent writing on physiognomy. The two later handbooks which survive from Classical antiquity, those by Polemon and the anonymous Latin writer, draw heavily on it; Galen seems to have had it in mind when engaging in his own theoretical discussion of physiognomy, and may even have intended to invoke it in the opening sentence of the *Powers of the Soul* [*QAM*] (as I suggest in Section V n. 184 below). Antonella Gherseffi shows, in Ch. 6, how the work, read through Galenic lenses, was received in the Arabic tradition as the foundational text of a 'scientific' physiognomy.

But it is not only the case that the later tradition looked back to Aristotle for the definitive, or at least the seminal, account of physiognomy as a practical science; it is also the case that most later theoretical discussions of physiognomy in the Classical world in particular depend more or less directly on a reading of Aristotle for their account of how body and soul interact in such a way that physiognomy becomes a possibility in the first place. This might seem slightly more surprising, since Aristotle's hylomorphic model of the soul did not have a significant take-up among post-Aristotelian thinkers—at least not in the terms we would find it historically appropriate to reconstruct for him. But it happens that Aristotle came to be read in some quarters as an advocate of *epiphenomenalism*, the theory that psychological functions are explicable in terms of a person's physiological state.<sup>69</sup> Since, as I shall argue, such a reading was made possible by those very features of his psychology that open the way to physiognomy, it is after all no surprise, even if it is not exactly inevitable, that

<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that, conversely, Aristotle's forays into physiognomy can be used to undermine his credibility—as in the case of the (Epicurean?) critique of Aristotle's natural history which deploys physiognomical material from *HA* 1. 10 (see Section IV n. 132 below). Even among those who are sympathetic to Aristotle, not everyone finds this material easy to swallow: Pliny confronts it with an exasperated *mirror* (*Natural History* 11. 273–4 = Aristotle, fr. 286 Rose<sup>3</sup>; cf. *HA* 493<sup>b</sup>32). The immediate object of Pliny's concern here are signs of longevity, not character, but he goes on at 11. 275–6 to assimilate these to more conventional physiognomical observations which he quotes from Pompeius Trogus, but which mostly draw on Aristotle, *HA* 491<sup>b</sup>11–26. (Pliny's distaste for physiognomy here is not, by the way, inconsistent with *Natural History* 11. 138 = Foerster 1893: ii. 327, which is about facial expression, not physiognomy as such.)

<sup>69</sup> So already, in the generation after Aristotle, Dicaearchus (fr. 14–28 Mirhady/7–12 Wehrli); Aristoxenus (fr. 118–20 Wehrli); Strato (fr. 118 Wehrli). Later on, Andronicus (quoted semi-approvingly by Galen at *QAM* 44. 12–20 Müller); Boethius (see esp. Gottschalk 1986); Nicolaus (Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 353. 12–354. 18 Wachsmuth); Alexander of Aphrodisias (see his surviving work *On the Soul*). Cf. generally Caston (1997). For Dicaearchus in particular: Caston (2001) and Sharples (2001). For Andronicus, Alexander, and their relationship to Galen: Donini (1971); (1974) 127–85; Moraux (1973–84) i. 132–6 (Andronicus); ii. 740–2, 773–85 (Galen); Thillet (1981); Sharples (1987), esp. 1202–4; Gottschalk (1987); Blumenthal (1996) 15–16; Sorabji (2000) 254–63, 266–7. Aristotelian teleologists include Theophrastus (cf. fr. 269 FHSG with commentary at Huby 1999: 18; also Blumenthal 1996: 10; Lennox 1985) and Eristratus (cf. von Staden 1997); later on, cf. Aspasius (*Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* 1. 14–19 Heylbut) and Xenarchus of Seleucia (see Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 320. 5–8 Wachsmuth). Cratippus does not count here: although he supposed that the intellect was prior to the body and separable from it, the non-rational soul, as being concerned with physical functions, is inseparable, and perhaps not prior. See Cicero, *On Divination* 1. 70–1.

it should be philosophers influenced by epiphenomenalist thought who were inspired by Aristotle to consider physiognomy a serious theoretical possibility.<sup>70</sup>

In the *Prior Analytics* (at 2. 27), Aristotle has a certain amount to say about the practicalities of physiognomy: how, once one has established the right sort of connection between body and soul, one might go about isolating signs for the condition of the latter in the appearance of the former. I shall have a little to say about this in the Appendix to the present section when I consider the affinities between Aristotle himself and the authors of the Aristotelian *Physiognomy*. (For reasons discussed in subsection (ii) below and in the Appendix, I am assuming with the majority of scholars that the work is pseudonymous, and in fact a composite of works by two different Peripatetic writers.) In what follows immediately, however, this is not what interests me. Rather, my immediate intention is to consider two questions which are prior to this, and actually more important for the broader understanding of theoretical discussions of physiognomy in antiquity: how, exactly, Aristotle himself conceived of the soul such that its relationship with the body would lead one to hope that physiognomy might be a practical possibility; and how the underpinnings Aristotle thereby gave to physiognomy might have led to an association between physiognomy and epiphenomenalism in the minds of later philosophers.<sup>71</sup> Following this, in parts (ii) and (iii), I shall look at the evidence we have for the psychological models assumed by thinkers in Aristotle's school who wrote on physiognomy. I shall argue that we know of three such thinkers: not only the two anonymous authors whose work was combined to produce the surviving *Physiognomy*, but also Loxus 'the physician', who was used as a source by the author of the anonymous Latin *Physiognomy*. The evidence for the psychological basis of their interest in physiognomy is poor and does not allow for certainty; but it may suggest that two of them at least already exemplify the tendency towards the association between an interest in physiognomy and an epiphenomenal view of the soul which in later Sections we shall see in later authors.

<sup>70</sup> There are two exceptions to this generalization: one may be the author of the first part of the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* (see further subsection (ii) below); the other certainly is the Platonist Aristides Quintilianus, whom I discuss in Section V. Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus was a teleologist (cf. n. 69 above), but not a physiognomist—albeit his *Characters* is frequently used to support a claim that he was: e.g. Petersen (1859), 92; Misener (1924), 107; Currie (1985); Vogt (1999), 196; cf. Herzog (1991), 170; Degkwitz (1996b), 28; Lombardi (1999). In fact nothing in the *Characters* suggests that Theophrastus had a theoretical interest in physiognomy (as opposed to an ethical interest in manners, for example); nor is there any other evidence that he had such an interest. Indeed, Theophrastus is excluded even from Evans's rather catholic view of physiognomy (cf. 1965: 39: 'no passages of strict physiognomical significance occur').

<sup>71</sup> Evidence that Aristotle was committed to the possibility of physiognomy, given that I do not assume him to have been the author of the surviving *Physiognomy*, include his discussion of physiognomical signs at *Prior Analytics* 2. 27 (albeit hypothetical in character: cf. Ross 1949: 498–502; Burnyeat 1982); and the many physiognomical assertions in his biological works (e.g. HA 1. 8–10, 491<sup>b</sup>10–492<sup>a</sup>12; 15, 493<sup>b</sup>32–494<sup>a</sup>1; 494<sup>a</sup>16–18; PA 4. 10, 686<sup>b</sup>21–7; GA 2. 7, 747<sup>a</sup>15–19; 4. 5, 774<sup>a</sup>36–b2; 5. 7, 786<sup>b</sup>34–787<sup>a</sup>2; and cf. Lloyd 1983: 23–4).

### (i) Aristotle

If it is a matter of historical fact that most philosophical accounts of physiognomy in antiquity explained the relevant features of the soul by the peculiar character of the body, it is not a matter of theoretical necessity that this should have been so. An equally systematic basis might be given to physiognomy on the assumption that the peculiar character of the body was determined by the nature of its soul. Indeed, in Section VI we shall meet one thinker who took just such an approach (the Platonist Aristides Quintilianus); and at first glance, we might be tempted to think that this was precisely how Aristotle himself was able to justify physiognomy. Aristotle, after all, took the soul to be a *form*—'the form' (as he says) 'of a natural body potentially having life' (DA 412<sup>a</sup>20–1). The very word 'form' (*eidos*) already suggests appearance; and one might readily assume that, just as the form of a statue both describes and explains the way a statue looks, so the form of a human individual both describes and explains the way that the individual looks. In this case, Aristotle would be committed to physiognomy for the simple reason that the individual's soul is precisely what determines his or her appearance.<sup>72</sup>

Things are not quite so simple, however, because if Aristotle can be thought of as *extending* the explanatory purpose of the soul to cover appearance as well, there is, paradoxically, a certain *restriction* in the relationship Aristotle posits between the soul and a person's psychological character. It is in fact one of the central insights of Aristotelian psychology that the soul is not an independent locus of psychological functioning or psychological character, as one might think of it in Plato, for example. Rather, the 'soul' explains what it is to be something that *has* these functions. Aristotle is clear that particular events that we might have thought of as 'psychological' events are not activities of the soul itself, but are the activities of an ensouled body (DA 408<sup>b</sup>11–15). It is a person, not a soul, that has a psychological character.

This might seem a nice distinction; but it is one that rules out the possibility that Aristotle took the short route to physiognomy when he made the soul the 'form' of a human being. The reason for this is that, even if we were tempted to maintain the identity of 'soul' and physical shape (though here too one should be careful to say, not that the soul is a human being's shape, but an *explanans* of it) we can no longer be sure that it is the *only* determinant of his or her character. There is scope to think that there might be aspects of human beings, and therefore of their psychological character, that are to be explained by something else—for example, the material out of which they are made. It is true that it must be the soul that explains why there is a human being here at all (and not, for example, a dog), and to do this, the soul must explain everything that is characteristically human about both their psychology and their appearance. But the lower-level characteristics that mark a thing out, not just as a human being,

<sup>72</sup> In slightly more sophisticated terms, the idea would be that the soul, as the form of the individual, explains his or her peculiar physical disposition (and so appearance) insofar as that disposition realizes the natural behavioural capacities specified in the form.

but as *this* human being (for example, Socrates as opposed to Callias) might be explicable as modal variations of the form's activity required by the particular matter out of which Socrates is made.

In brief, then, the question for us is whether the soul-form is supposed to explain all aspects of character and appearance that distinguish an individual as such, or whether it is rather meant to explain only those that distinguish it as a member of a particular species (e.g. as a human being).<sup>73</sup> This matters a great deal for our understanding of physiognomy in Aristotle and beyond, because if we wish to be able to say more of a person on the basis of appearance than that he or she is human, it is precisely these *individual* characteristics in which we shall be interested. What we need to establish, then, is how Aristotle explains these; and in order to do that, we need to look more closely at his account of how an individual comes to be in the first place.

As I have already indicated, it is uncontroversial that species traits, both 'psychological' and physical, are explained by a thing's form. This, at least, does follow from Aristotle's definition of the soul as the 'form of a body potentially having life',<sup>74</sup> since what this tells us is that the form is as such responsible for all those traits that specify for a thing what it requires in order to be alive. Since terrestrial life is defined in terms of such things as self-nourishment, growth (and decay), locomotion (and rest), perception and thought (DA 413<sup>a</sup>22–5), it is for these things that Aristotle must posit a formal cause. But there is more than this that needs to be said. One cannot possess the capacity for self-nutrition unless one possesses the capacity for nourishing oneself in a *particular, determinate way*—given that there are any number of models for a self-nourishing organism, and nothing could exist whose soul was *merely* nutritive, i.e. nutritive without qualification. These determining characteristics must, then, also be explained by a thing's form: the ability to photosynthesize, for example; or to feed off plants, or flesh; in the case of animals, the ability to feel, to see, etc. But they will also include characteristics that a different kind of psychology

<sup>73</sup> The question is related to the question, raised by Aristotle's discussions of form in the *Metaphysics*, whether each individual is supposed to have its own ('individual') form, or whether forms exist only at the level of the species. Clearly, it is the case that if all forms are species-forms, only those psycho-physical traits shared in common by all members of a given species will be open to teleological explanation. But note that, even if one doubts that there exists any such entity as a 'species form', so that forms exist as particulars, one for each individual, it does not follow that they are *formally* or *essentially* distinct from each other in a way that would allow us to identify them as the cause of the individual's distinguishing characteristics. Indeed, one might think that such a step would undermine the notion that members of the same species are the same in essence—or even the very notion of a species. A more natural assumption might be that individual forms are distinguished one from another only incidentally—that is, by the fact that they are the forms of numerically different individuals; or, to put this another way, by the fact that they are instantiated in different parcels of matter. One might in this case be able to say that the characteristics of the individual are 'incidental' characteristics of the individual's form (as, analogously, Aristotle is able to say that soul moves incidentally in virtue of the movement of the composite of which it is the soul: cf. DA 1. 3, 406<sup>b</sup>5–10); but the form would as such provide the explanation only for traits they shared with the rest of the species. Cf. on this Frede (1987), esp. 77; (2000) 21–6; also Frede and Patzig (1988), i. 48–57.

<sup>74</sup> Though cf. e.g. Caston (1997) 331, arguing that the Aristotelian soul 'supervenes' on the body.

might distinguish from these as 'character-traits'. The essence or form of a lion, for example, must explain its characteristic 'bravery',<sup>75</sup> since a lion is not merely appetitive, but *bravely* so: it is prepared to fight for its food, and its preparedness to fight is every bit as important as its having teeth to eat the food with. Bravery, then, has a formal cause for a lion.<sup>76</sup> But since we know that a lion has just that physical structure necessary for the realization of those characteristics for which there is a formal cause, we can expect that it will be possible, at least in theory, to identify physical features of a lion that will bear witness to its bravery. They will be just those physical features which enable it to be brave, or are a necessary consequence of physical features which allow it to be brave. (In just the same way, one can identify physical features which bear witness to the fact that a lion is sighted and appetitive.)

Aristotle's commitment to physiognomy involves him in the belief that one can perform very much the same sort of exercise at the level of the individual: that is, one can identify physical traits in the individual which are associated with particular traits of character. This above all, perhaps, is what makes it tempting to suppose that Aristotle simply extended down to the level of the individual the scope of what formal causality explains in a creature. The idea would be that the physical and psychological traits of an individual have the same cause as their species traits (namely, a formal cause), so that we should expect to find exactly the same correlations at the level of the individual as we find at the level of the species. In both cases alike, the relevant aspects of the animal's physical structure would be due to the teleological activity of their form. It is true that this move has certain metaphysical implications which not all readers of Aristotle would want to accept: it implies (a) that forms exist as individuals, and (b) that individual forms are *formally* distinct from one another (distinguished, that is, by characteristics that explain the variations between individuals). But against these concerns, it might be argued that Aristotle's account of natural generation shows directly and explicitly that he did in fact make this move. For Aristotle is clear about one thing in the process of generation: that the father provides the form for the new child, while the mother provides only the matter. As he spells out elsewhere, one of the things that this means is that any resemblance a child might have to its parents must be due to the action of the father.<sup>77</sup> The obvious way of understanding this is to suppose that the child's appearance quite generally, both as a human being and as *this particular* human being, is due to the activity of form, so that its individual characteristics are *part* of its form and have a formal explanation just as its characteristics as a member of the (human) species.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>14–15.

<sup>76</sup> Aristotle is explicit in thinking that animals share not only psychological affections (cf. e.g. NE 3. 2, 1111<sup>b</sup>12), but also 'moral' traits with humans. See HA 8. 1, 588<sup>a</sup>16–26; 9. 1, 608<sup>a</sup>11–17, with Fortenbaugh (1971); Lloyd (1983), 24–6.

<sup>77</sup> e.g. GA 1. 20, 729<sup>a</sup>9–11; 4. 1, 766<sup>b</sup>12–14; cf. Cooper (1988), esp. 19–21.

<sup>78</sup> So Balme (1987a) 11, 18–19; (1987c); Dean-Jones (1994) 193–5 (suggesting that, in explaining inherited resemblance, Aristotle 'has to depart from the theory upheld in the main body of his philosophy' to assert the existence of individual forms); Cooper (1988) (arguing at 35–7 that form is

Such a position quickly runs up against difficulties, however. One is a straightforward biological difficulty: if the father provides the form for the child, and the form accounts for individual (as well as species) characteristics, then we would expect every child to look like its father. But children often look like their mother as well or instead—a fact of which Aristotle is well aware.<sup>79</sup> The second major difficulty is textual: a passage of the GA (5. 1, 778<sup>a</sup>30–5) which seems to rule out explicitly the possibility that we can give a *formal* explanation for *individual* (as opposed to species) characteristics:

Of those things which are neither common works of nature nor proper to each species, none is or becomes the way it is for the sake of anything. The eye is for something, but it is not blue for any purpose—*unless this is a condition proper to the species*. Neither do some such cases<sup>80</sup> have anything to do with the account of the animal's essence but, as coming about by necessity, their causes must be referred to the matter (*hylēn*) and the moving principle (*tēn kinēsan archēn*).

Just to make the point clear, individual characteristics are not only denied formal explanation here, but are given an alternative explanation involving a kind of necessity: 'matter', and 'the moving principle'. In other words, the possibility that individual characteristics have a teleological explanation seems to be explicitly ruled out—and with it, we might note, the possibility that physiognomy can be founded on the teleological model suggested by the explanation of species-traits. But how, then, are individual characteristics to be explained?

It is possible on metaphysical grounds to understand why Aristotle might want to make the distinction in the kinds of explanation to be given to species and individual traits suggested by the GA passage just quoted. Species characteristics, after all, determine an animal as a particular thing, namely a

not responsible for 'biologically superficial characteristics like eye-colour, pitch of voice', etc., and so is not exactly individual form; but is responsible for 'whichever properties of the father's body the movements in his blood contain *specific information* for' (his italics), and so are 'universals of a much lower order of generality than has been thought'. My objection to these positions is not, it should be noted, an objection to the claim that forms are, substantially speaking, individual, but rather to the suggestion that forms are individuated by differences that are *essential* (and hence that we can appeal to formal or final causality to explain differences between individuals). See again n. 73 above.

<sup>79</sup> e.g. GA 4. 3. (Even though resemblance to one's mother is strictly *unnatural*—even being female is unnatural in this sense of unnatural: 767<sup>b</sup>8–9—it still has to be explained.) Cf. Dean-Jones (1994), 195 for a statement of the problem (though it will become apparent that I disagree with her evaluation of Aristotle's solution, according to which the semen is 'mastered' by the movements of the menses, as '*ad hoc*').

<sup>80</sup> The word 'neither' (*oute*) which introduces this clause might be read, as it were, epexegetically: 'Blue eyes do not have a final cause unless common to the species; *which is to say that they have no connection with the account of the animal's essence.*' But why, if this is correct, the restriction to 'some cases' (*ep' eniōn*)? If this clause merely amplifies what precedes it, then it would apply to all cases covered there. So the clause must be read as a *further qualification* of what has just been said, viz.: 'Blue eyes do not have a final cause unless common to the species; *and not even then* will they have a final cause in all cases.' It is a necessary condition for a trait to have a final cause that it be common to the species; it is not, however, a sufficient condition. (As a matter of interest, Aristotle supposes that eye-colour does tend to be constant within species: humans are unusual in this respect: HA 1. 10.)

member of a particular species, and so form part of its essence. Individual characteristics, on the other hand, are incidental at least in the sense that one does not have to have them in order to be a particular kind of thing. But if individual characteristics are 'incidental' rather than essential, this does not of course mean that an individual can avoid having any such characteristics at all. On the contrary, every individual must have *some* individual characteristics, for just the same kind of reason that an individual wall, though its essence makes no reference to its being red or brown or grey, must nevertheless be some colour or other if it is to take its place in the world. In the case of individual human beings, then, we should perhaps accept that it is no part of their formal account that they have the particular characteristics they do have; but they must nevertheless have *some* such characteristics. To borrow the example Aristotle gives in his discussion of physiognomy at *Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>14–17, it is not specified in the form of any human individual (as it is for every lion) that he or she should have large extremities, or should be brave. However, each individual must nevertheless have extremities of *some* size, and lie *somewhere* between the extremes of cowardice and rashness in order to take his or her place in the world. There is something, in other words, that determines, that makes concrete, what the form explains at a more general level; something that explains why, when a human being is produced, it is a human being of a particular size, shape, and behavioural disposition. And Aristotle, in the passage just quoted, specifies what: it comes down to the *matter* from which the new human will be made, and the *moving principle* which does the making.

It is important to note that there are *two* additional factors listed here. Focus is frequently directed onto matter alone. In Aristotle's example of an eye which is blue, but not through formal causality, the point is taken to be that it is blue just because only a *blue* eye could be made out of the material available for making the eye. (Technically speaking, the matter is said to make the blueness of the eye an issue of 'hypothetical necessity'.)<sup>81</sup> In the case of a child, similarly, we can say that it is the character of the particular blood out of which a child is to be made that helps to explain its individual characteristics. But a little thought in this case will show that matter is not nearly enough on its own. If matter were the sole determining factor for individual characteristics, then one of the original problems we faced would simply be turned on its head. Instead of expecting all children to look like their fathers, we should now expect them to resemble their mothers, since it is from the mother that their matter derives.<sup>82</sup> This is why Aristotle reminds us that we have to take into account the activity of the father as 'moving cause' as well. For the active partner in the process of generation is *not* (as one might be tempted to say) the form, but the father. To be sure, he acts in virtue of having the form (this goes back to the point I made at the beginning

<sup>81</sup> 'Hypothetical' because there is no absolute necessity for there to be an eye; but if there is to be an eye in this case, then the nature of the matter makes it necessary that it should be blue. See in general PA 642<sup>a</sup>7–9; *Metaphysics* Δ5; *Prior Analytics* 94<sup>b</sup>36 with J. Barnes (1994), 232–3; cf. Balme (1972), 76–84, with the corrective remarks of Gotthelf (1987) 234–5 and Cooper (1987) 267.

<sup>82</sup> As Galen already noted: *On Seed* 2. 1. 54–7, and further Section V below.

of the discussion); but he acts as himself a determinate individual.<sup>83</sup> And being a determinate individual, not a mere form, the father of course has his *own* individual characteristics. These, of course, will colour the way in which he conducts the business of procreation as they colour all his activities. Thus a child might look like its mother in virtue of the matter of out which it is made; but it might also look like its father in virtue of his activity in shaping that matter.

For reasons that will emerge shortly, it is necessary to emphasize here that the father is responsible for the shaping of the matter. As we have seen, Aristotle is clear that the father does the crafting of *every* characteristic of the child, even those which it shares with its mother, and whose explanation therefore involves the nature of her matter too.<sup>84</sup> The mother's influence, then, turns out to be slightly indirect. Rather than acting directly to bring about replicas of her own features in the embryo, Aristotle argues that the mother has instead to, as it were, persuade the father to do it for her. The idea seems to be that the mother's blood cannot initiate generative activity. (If it could, there would be no need of the father at all.) But it nevertheless has its own structure or determination in virtue of which it is naturally inclined to support an organism of precisely the mother's characteristics. In some cases it turns out that the paternal semen is too weak to 'master' or 'prevail over' this inclination (Aristotle's word is *(epi)kratei*: see GA 4. 3, e.g. 768<sup>a</sup>34–b1). Like a carpenter who has to modify his design in the face of a piece of wood whose grain and knots prove intractable to him, the semen is instead 'mastered' and 'prevailed over' by the blood. It modifies its activity—though the activity is still *its* activity, just as the form taken by the carpenter's table is precisely the form given to it by the carpenter (the wood did none of the work).<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> 'For,' as Aristotle says, 'it is a man that generates a man': *Physics* 194<sup>b</sup>9–13; cf. 194<sup>b</sup>29–31 (and cf. *Metaphysics* H4, 1044<sup>a</sup>34–6, where the 'moving cause' is distinguished from formal and final: listing them, Aristotle posits an identity between the latter two only). In more detail, Aristotle thinks that the father uses his semen to craft the blood in the mother exactly as a carpenter uses his tools to craft wood: GA 1. 22, 730<sup>b</sup>11–22. The idea behind this is that the semen is produced by the father as concocted blood with its own generative principle of motion. Since blood in general has the job of building and sustaining the individual, one can understand the semen to be doing something analogous in crafting an individual which is, as far as it is capable of it, just the same as the father. See all of GA 1. 19, 726<sup>b</sup>13 ff. (726<sup>b</sup>19–21 for the generative 'principle of movement'; cf. 1. 20, 729<sup>a</sup>10–12; 4. 3, 767<sup>b</sup>18–20). Cf. in general Lloyd (1991c), suggesting that there is a difference of emphasis between Aristotle's biological and metaphysical works over the status of the moving cause.

<sup>84</sup> References in n. 77 above. I can, by the way, see no basis for Cooper's claim: (1988: 35–6) that there are 'biologically superficial characteristics' (he mentions eye-colour, pitch of voice, and the natural quality of the hair) for which the father is not responsible.

<sup>85</sup> So when Aristotle says that semen contains 'in actuality' the movements required to make a copy of the father, but also contains 'potentially' the movements 'of the female and her remoter ancestors' (GA 4. 3, 768<sup>a</sup>11–14), what he must mean is that the semen is *capable* of reproducing traits from the mother's side of the family (as the carpenter is *capable* of producing features that are not part of his normal style)—only that it would not do so normally, and has to be prevailed upon to do so. Cf. Dean-Jones (1994), 195–8 (but *pace* Dean-Jones 2000, esp. 109, according to whom the movements of the mother compete with those of the semen once it has initiated the process of embryonic development; *pace* also De Lacy 1992: 222 *ad* 154. 9–10, suggesting that the mother's movements 'take over' in cases where the semen fails to prevail). The notion of 'prevailing' is helpfully assimilated by Cooper (1988: 31–3) to the notion of 'reciprocal action'—for which

All this might seem to amount to an unnecessary complication to the central and important point, which is just that every case of human generation involves a father and a mother, some semen and some blood, and that the particular nature of the child that results depends to some extent on the particular nature of each of these. But part of the reason for the complication is very important for the present study: Aristotle's need to maintain the priority of form in the process. For it is in virtue of form (namely the form of human being) that there is any case of generation at all. But what the form does is to explain the activity of a determinate individual, namely the father, as Aristotle supposes. So the father must be thought of as *doing the generating*—all of it. The mother needs to have her say as well; but her contribution cannot be in any sense the source of this activity. This is why Aristotle supposes instead that, just as the father's activity *qua* generator is filtered through his own nature as an embodied individual, so it is modified in the face of the particular characteristics of the matter with which he has to work.

And this, at last, allows us to understand how it is that physiognomy becomes a live possibility for Aristotle. As we have seen, Aristotle has a ready account for the congruence between the psychological and physical traits of species in the fact that they both have a formal cause: an animal is structured in just the way necessary to realize its nature as a member of a particular species. Individual characteristics, on the other hand, are explained by 'hypothetical necessity': the characteristics of the determinate individuals responsible for the generation of the individual. But if species and individual traits have different *explanations*, they nevertheless come about as the result of the same real-world *causes*. In particular, both are due to the craftsmanship, that is, the generative activity, of the father. He acts primarily (in virtue of form) to create a certain *kind* of creature; but in order to do this, and in order to do it with the matter to hand, he sets about to craft an *individual* with certain determinate characteristics. And the fact that species and individual characteristics are unavoidably consequences of the very same causal activity, because the father's production of the latter is the means by which he produces the former, is what guarantees that the correspondences between psychological and physical characteristics at the level of the species will obtain at the level of the individual as well. This is no kind of coincidence: as resulting from a single creative activity they are the *very same* correspondences.

This not only explains in general terms how it is that Aristotle can consider physiognomy a theoretical possibility, it also underpins the practical investigation of physiognomical signs that he suggests in *Prior Analytics* 2. 27. For he says in this passage that physiognomy will be a possibility precisely if one can isolate the psycho-physical traits which differentiate species. The idea is that, when a physical trait distinctive of one species crops up as something that distinguishes

cf. *Generation and Corruption* A 324<sup>a</sup>5–b13. Note, by the way, that it is only 'things whose form is in matter' (324<sup>b</sup>5–6) which are reciprocally affected in action. In practice, this confirms that we should focus our attention on the father/semen as moving cause, and away from the 'form' considered in isolation.

an individual member of another species, we can expect that individual to possess the corresponding psychological characteristic (70<sup>b</sup>14–26):

For if a characteristic [*pathos*] belongs to one individual species, as bravery to lions, it is necessary that there will be some sign as well: *ex hypothesi* they change along with each other. Let this sign be having large extremities—which cannot belong to any other complete species, for (as we are used to saying) a sign is proper in this way when it is proper to a whole species, and not to an individual. And when this sign appears in another species, you will have a brave man (or whatever other type of animal). But he will have the sign: for there is a one-to-one correspondence. If all this is right, and we can gather such signs for those animals which have only one characteristic, and each has its sign, since it is necessary to have one, we shall be able to do physiognomy...

One might have wondered why Aristotle does not recommend collecting groups of men known for (e.g.) their irascibility to see whether there is a distinctive physical trait they share in common; or why in general he makes the distinction between species and individuals and starts the investigation from the species.<sup>86</sup> Part of the answer to this will, no doubt, be practical: for one thing, individuals can change or dissemble their character. But there may be another reason too, one that recognizes the difference in status (the difference in their respective explanations) between species and individual traits. For the connections between psycho-physical traits at the level of the species are guaranteed by the fact that they are teleologically grounded (it is *because* a lion is to be brave that it has large extremities). The fact that a man with large extremities will tend to be braver than other men is, on the other hand, more or less contingent on the physical processes that led to his having large extremities. What guarantees the connection in this case is just the fact that that process is the *same* as the process that led to the realization of species traits. Since it is, in this sense, the correlations between character and appearance at the level of the species that guarantee correlations that can be made at the level of the individual, it makes a certain amount of sense for Aristotle to suggest starting with species traits.

To spell this out in slightly different terms provides an answer for the second question I raised at the beginning of this section as well. I noted then that physiognomy after Aristotle tended to be associated with an epiphenomenalist, not a teleological model of the soul. A possible reason for this starts to emerge if one considers that, while teleology remains the ultimate guarantee for Aristotle that physiognomy can be given a secure explanatory grounding, the link between teleology and the production of individual characteristics is at best indirect. At best we can say that teleology explains the causal processes which are in operation such that particular individual characteristics come about in

<sup>86</sup> In fact he does appeal to individuals in the practical investigation of signs, but only when brought to *aporia* by the examination of species: 'But if the whole species has two "proper" characteristics, as a lion might be brave and generous, how shall we know which of the signs following "properly" signifies which characteristic? Perhaps as follows: if both occur in part of some other species, and in those species in which each is found though not in the whole of it, and whenever a member has one but not the other: for if someone is brave but not liberal, and has just one of these two signs, it is clear that this is the sign of bravery in the lion' (*Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>26–32).

particular instances of generation. But for someone who focuses on *individual* traits (i.e. the kind with which the physiognomist deals), this is not very far from saying that the proper explanation for the psychological and physical traits possessed by individuals is a 'bottom-up' explanation, one grounded in the physical processes of generation and growth. I shall defer until Section V a fuller account of the considerations moved by each side of the argument (epiphenomenalist and teleological) in the interpretation of Aristotle's psychology. It becomes most relevant in the case of Galen, who is the clearest example of someone who associates physiognomy with an epiphenomenalist reading of Aristotle, and whose work in any case provides us with the best available evidence for the debate. But to anticipate the conclusion I shall come to there: teleology is most seductive to those most impressed by the constancy and functional adaptation of *species* as such; but those who consider that an *individual's* character and capacities are explained by a physical process conducted between two physical individuals, and that, on the physical plane, these are the means by which species traits are generated, might start to wonder what space is left for the supposedly prior activity of a metaphysical 'form'. It turns out, in other words, that the attractions of epiphenomenalism are bound up with just that aspect of Aristotle's psychology which explains individual characteristics and so, in the end, underpins his physiognomy.

## (ii) Two Anonymous Aristotelians: the Authors of the Physiognomy

I have suggested how Aristotle's psychological (and, for that matter, biological) theory provides the theoretical opening for his investigation into physiognomy insofar as it explains why we should expect there to be correlations between the psychological and physical traits of individuals. What is more, we have seen that these correlations are exactly the same as correlations between physical and psychological traits characteristic of different animal species. This fact allows Aristotle to see the way forward to identifying which physical characteristics signal the presence of which psychological traits. I shall return to the subject in the appendix to this section but, in brief, the idea is that if two or more species share just one physical characteristic (Aristotle's example at *Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>14–17 is large extremities) and one psychological trait (bravery), it can be inferred that *wherever* in the animal kingdom that characteristic is found, it will be indicative of the same psychological trait—whether it is found in another species or (more to the point) in an individual member of a species not otherwise distinguished for large extremities or bravery. Whether Aristotle himself made a systematic attempt to follow through the procedure he recommends to produce a systematic catalogue of physiognomical signs is a moot point: there is a scattering of physiognomical observations through his biological works,<sup>87</sup> and one might be tempted to put some faith in the fact that a *Physiognomy* was ascribed to him in the ancient catalogues of his works, whatever one thinks of the pseudonymous treatise that survives under his name (but see further the Appendix below, nn. 119–20). We do, however, know of

<sup>87</sup> Cf. again n. 71 above.

three members of Aristotle's school who produced works of physiognomy. In subsection (iii) below I shall argue that one of these is Loxus, one of the sources used by the compiler of the anonymous Latin *Physiognomy*. Before that, though, I shall consider the two anonymous authors whose works survive in the composite *Physiognomy* which comes to us (and was already circulating in antiquity) under Aristotle's name. Since it is the theoretical underpinning rather than the practical conclusions of physiognomy that interests me in this study, I do not intend to examine as such the practical aspects of any of these writers (though in the appendix to this section I consider aspects of practice in the *Physiognomy* precisely to show how differences at this level do not undermine the essential unity of purpose and direction that they share with Aristotle himself). But it does seem worthwhile to consider whether anything of their theoretical background (i.e. their respective psychological models) can be discerned in what survives from them. The evidence is not all that good; but what there is might suggest that already among Aristotle's immediate successors, physiognomy was tending to become linked to an anti-teleological view of his psychology.

One of the clearest reasons for supposing that the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* is a composite of two texts (which following Foerster, I shall refer to as [Treatise] A and [Treatise] B respectively) is the fact that there is a very clear break at 808<sup>b</sup>11, where the treatise begins as it were all over again with a new preface which, though different from it, covers much the same ground as the preface at the beginning of the work. In particular, both prefaces cover the methodological question of how one goes about establishing which physical traits are signs for which psychological traits—they converge, to this extent, with Aristotle's own discussion in *Prior Analytics* 2. 27. (Again, I shall have more to say about this in the appendix to this section.) The importance of this is that, very much like Aristotle in the *Prior Analytics*, neither part of the composite treatise is interested in establishing *why* there is a relationship between body and soul such that physiognomy becomes a possibility. The question has no bearing on the task at hand: the attempt to identify physiognomical signs only requires *that* we accept a close enough relationship between the two. In other words, although the authors of the two treatises must have held views about the nature of the relationship between body and soul which led them to an interest in physiognomy, there is no particular reason why they should here betray what those views were. Indeed, given that the question is not immediately relevant, one might think that the authors of A and B would have had a positive motive to avoid putting themselves in a position where they might have to explain or justify the psychological model they as a matter of fact assume. Aristotle himself in *Prior Analytics* 2. 27 studiously avoids hinting at any tendentious views of his own about the causal hierarchy between body and soul. All he says is that 'physiognomy is possible if one allows that, at least in respect of their natural characteristics, body and soul change together' (70<sup>b</sup>7–9). So when Treatise A and Treatise B insist that body and soul are in a relationship whereby they are *mutually affected* (the word both use is *sympatheia*: A at 805<sup>a</sup>6; B at 808<sup>b</sup>11, 19) we should not be tempted to suppose that this represents a particular theoretical

position on the nature of the relationship between soul and body. It is rather an assertion *that* body and soul are related in such a way that physiognomy becomes possible. In fact Aristotle too talks of the *sympatheia* of body and soul in this context (*Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>16 *sympaschein allelois*)—and apparently means nothing more than he meant earlier by saying that the two 'change at the same time as' each other (*hama metaballein* at 70<sup>b</sup>7–8).

The examples of *sympatheia* offered by A and B confirm the non-theoretical intent of the word: they largely consist of particular events which one might normally have thought of as primarily physical events (illness and drunkenness at A, 805<sup>a</sup>2–4; diet and medication at B, 808<sup>b</sup>21–4) or as primarily psychological events (e.g. experiences of love, fear, pain, and pleasure at A, 805<sup>a</sup>5–8; grief and joy at B, 808<sup>b</sup>14–15), but which turn out to be associated with (respectively) psychological and physical changes as well. They talk, in other words, about *operations* of the soul and body, but say nothing about the causes of the characters or capacities in virtue of which they operate.

But this does not quite exhaust the examples we are given. In fact each Treatise offers *one* example or claim which is of a rather different order, and may after all hint at their respective authors' underlying psychological position. Alongside the examples of psycho-physical events, Treatise A offers, in fact begins with, what is apparently a perfectly general statement about the nature of the mind (*dianoia*):

That minds follow their bodies and are not isolated and unaffected by the changes of the body is something that becomes very clear...<sup>88</sup>

On its own, this would not be very significant, since the Treatise goes on to 'prove' the point by appealing to physical *events* which are associated with psychological change, and then to show that 'the opposite' is equally true (there are psychological events, such as occasions of emotion, with physical implications). But a little further on, we are told something that makes it look as if these examples are misleading if read as a gloss on the original statement. For we are told that the *type* of *dianoia* any animal has as a member of a particular species 'follows', is a consequence of, the kind of body it has (805<sup>a</sup>11–14).<sup>89</sup>

No animal has ever been born that has the appearance of one animal but the mind (*dianoia*) of another, but soul and body are always of the same animal—so *that*, necessarily, such-and-such a mind follows such-and-such a body.

<sup>88</sup> The passage in fact reads, impossibly, *hoti hai dianoiar hepontai tois somasi... touto de delon* ('That minds follow their bodies... and this is clear...'). For discussion, cf. Vogt (1999) 289. Our translation follows Foerster, who athetizes the 'and' (*de*); but it is just possible that more has dropped out between this opening statement and that the examples that follow were never intended as a direct demonstration of the opening statement at all. (This would be quite consistent with the understanding of the passage I develop in what follows.)

<sup>89</sup> Note that the word 'follows' (*hepesthai*) (also at 805<sup>a</sup>1 as quoted above) recurs centrally, and perhaps not coincidentally, in Galen's discussion of the soul's relationship with the body. For its implication and use by Galen, see below, Section V, esp. n. 184. (Treatise B also uses the terminology of 'following' at 808<sup>b</sup>20, but claims that the body 'follows' the soul as well as vice versa: 'each follows the other'.)

Of course there are physical and psychological events which are associated with each other: no theory of the soul ever tried to deny that, and only the most reductionist epiphenomenalism would wish to deny that the soul might have a causal impact on the body. This does not demonstrate that there is a causal equality between body and soul. The real question is whether the *capacities* or distinguishing characteristics of the soul are explained by the body or themselves explain the way the body is. From what he tells us, the author of Treatise A seems fairly clearly to take the former line: the soul *as such* 'follows' the body.

My claim, then, is that the author of Treatise A was an epiphenomenalist of some kind: that he took the individual's body to be explanatory of his or her psychological capacities and character, and that it is on this basis that he would have justified his hope that physiognomy might be possible. Treatise B on the other hand, looks as if its author might have taken the opposite view. Having asserted and provided examples to show that change in the state (*hexis*) of the soul are reflected in the appearance (*morphē*) of the body, and that changes in the form of the body are, equally, reflected in changes in the state of the soul (808<sup>b</sup>12–14), B goes on to make this rather striking claim (808<sup>b</sup>27–9):

It is quite clear that the appearances (*morphai*) which come to supervene on (*epiginontai*) bodies are similar to the powers of the soul.

This is, to be sure, very little to go on; but the most natural reading of the sentence is that the appearance of the body is posterior to the soul, by whose powers it is explained.

I emphasize that neither A nor B seems too keen to make his treatise hang on the position he takes on the relationship between body and soul; and neither of the passages I have highlighted (particularly the one from B) is conclusive. Nevertheless, it is worth noting, as all that it is possible to note, that it looks a little bit as if the author of Treatise B might be a teleologist at least in his account of species traits—perhaps then, an orthodox adherent of Aristotle's own hylomorphism—while the author of Treatise A is already evidence for a trend we shall start to see of an attachment to epiphenomenalism among philosophical writers who deal with physiognomy. A 'trend' already, perhaps, because the one other Aristotelian physiognomical writer for whom we have evidence seems to have been epiphenomenal in his psychology as well: I mean Loxus 'the physician'.

### (iii) Loxus 'Medicus'

Loxus, known to us as a source of the anonymous Latin *Physiognomy* and from a passing reference in Origen, has always been a difficult figure in studies of physiognomy. His name alone is a curiosity,<sup>90</sup> though it is appropriate enough

<sup>90</sup> Foerster (1886: 6 n. 1) compares the female name *Loxō* (e.g. Callimachus, *Hymns* 4. 292). Rose conjectures that it represents a corruption of *Eudoxus* (1864: 82, and further below), though this is made unlikely by its appearance in Origen as well as Anon. (*Against Celsus* 1. 33: 'Suppose that the views of the physiognomists are granted, of Zopyrus, Loxus, or Polemon... that all bodies conform to the habits of their soul...').

since it is itself a term of physiognomical analysis,<sup>91</sup> and also suggests a connection with Apollo *Loxias*—Apollo being patron of medicine (supposed to be Loxus' own profession: cf. Anon. Lat. 1, where he has the epithet *medicus*) and of the interpretation of signs.<sup>92</sup> But if his name has exercised commentators, his philosophical affiliation has been the subject of even greater controversy. Rose (1864: i. 82) suggested that 'Loxus' was a corruption of 'Eudoxus', and that our author was the famous and wide-ranging scientific writer Eudoxus of Cnidus, a rough contemporary of Plato's;<sup>93</sup> but this view was attacked by Foerster (1888a, esp. 509–10), primarily on the grounds that Loxus' use of 'animal' signs was not cruder (so Rose 1864: i. 81) but actually richer and more subtle than that of Ps.-Aristotle. Since (Foerster continues) Aristotle himself treats the use of such signs as a practice in its infancy, Loxus must be later than he; and Foerster in fact compares Loxus' psychological theory (I shall return to the details myself below) with that of the Stoics Cleanthes and Diogenes of Babylon, which placed him squarely in the later part of the third century BC (1888a: 510–11).<sup>94</sup> Misener (1923) returned to Rose's view that Loxus' theory was 'antiquated' (showing in the process how subjective such judgements can be) and placed him once again before Aristotle: more precisely, between Empedocles and Aristotle (1923: 9–10). As I have already indicated, however, it seems to me that we do not need to look so far afield as either for the key to Loxus' position and age. To judge by the evidence supplied by Anon., Loxus stands every bit as close to the Aristotle of the biological works as the Aristotelian authors of the *Physiognomy*. Loxus, I contend, is a writer of clear Peripatetic affiliation.

The first twelve chapters of the anonymous Latin *Physiognomy* constitute an eclectic 'introduction' to the work as a whole, and much of the material has close or exact parallels in Polemon and Adamantius (cf. on this Misener

<sup>91</sup> *Loxos* means 'slanting' or 'ambiguous' in Greek. It occurs in a physiognomical context, of the head at Ad. B30, 60; but cf. also Gleason (1990) 413, who thinks that it 'seems to mean "he who looks sidewise suspiciously"' (and so is appropriate rather to the practitioner than the subject of physiognomy).

<sup>92</sup> In particular, of course, Apollo is associated with the prediction of the future, and one of the things we learn from Anon. is that Loxus (like Polemon) believed that physiognomical signs could be used to make such predictions (Anon. Lat. 133): 'Polemon and Loxus advanced this discipline to such an extent that they affirmed it could even predict some things in the future.' (However, the treatise ends—or, rather, breaks off—shortly afterwards, in the middle of giving examples from Polemon's treatise. There is no more information on the nature of Loxus' predictions, and it is worth bearing in mind that for all Anon. tells us, his prognostications might have been of a different order or kind to those of Polemon; conceivably, they might, for example, have been medical prognoses.)

<sup>93</sup> Eudoxus' dates are not certain, but he appears to have born between 400 and 390 BC. See on this, and more generally on Eudoxus, Schneider (2000), 293–302.

<sup>94</sup> Foerster also notes that Loxus uses the example of the Celts (cf. Anon. Lat. 9) in place of the Scythians who appear at Ps.-Aristotle 805<sup>a</sup>27. He suggests that this might be linked with the Celtic incursions into Greece in 280 BC (1888a: 510–11; cf. also Evans 1969: 11). However, as André points out, the 'Celts' were known already in the 5th c. (1981: 25, citing Herodotus 2. 33 and 4. 49).

1923: 16–17). There are, however, two passages in which Loxus is explicitly introduced.<sup>95</sup> For reasons which will become apparent, I shall start with the second of those two passages (Anon. Lat. 12, tr. Repath)—in which, by the way, I take *anima* (translated here as ‘soul’) to be synonymous with *animus* (here ‘spirit’):

But before we come to individual signs or signals, it must be known that the blood, in which Loxus placed the seat of the soul, if it is copious, provides the body with bulk and redness, the hair with strength and thickness, but constricts, dulls, and obstructs the senses and the sharpness of the human intellect, whereas if it is thin and not abundant, it weakens the body, mars the colour, thins and diminishes all bodily parts, but fosters the character of the mind and excites the sharpness of the spirit and does not block off its mobility and movement, and finally it confers speed on all the organs of sense which are situated in our faces, the ears, eyes, tongue, nose, and whatever blood vessels there are. And so a balanced temperament of the body indicates a perfect spirit, and that spirit is perfect which is as brave as it is wise. And so it is that the whole character [sc. of the soul] takes its rise from the type and temperament of the blood.

If one had not been told that this was Loxus, one might well have thought immediately of Ps.-Aristotle 813<sup>b</sup>11–35, whose author shares the thought that the heat of the blood is a crucial factor in determining intelligence. Heat, we are told, assists blood flow, and so helps the ‘movements’ of the blood reach the ‘organ of intelligence’ quickly and without distortion (cf. 813<sup>b</sup>20). It is as such conducive to speed of thought—while cold tends to produce dullness of the senses. Ps.-Aristotle introduces a second term of comparison, this time a factor strictly extrinsic to the quality of the blood, but nonetheless essential to its *flow*: the *size* of the body.<sup>96</sup> The larger the body, the further the blood has to go, so that a large body slows thought down while a small one speeds it up. (A small hot man is so flighty in his thought as to be equally ineffective with a large cold man.) Ps.-Aristotle concludes as follows (813<sup>b</sup>28–35):

So we have discussed how excess or deficiency in physical size make for effective or ineffective bodies. But someone whose nature falls in the mean between these points has the keenest senses and is most effective. For the blood does not have far to go in order to reach the mind; but nor does lack of space force it away from the mind again. This is why a moderate size makes for efficiency and the keenest senses.

Before passing further comment, we should also look at what Aristotle himself had to say; for at PA 2. 2, he also correlates character against two axes

<sup>95</sup> Specifically: Anon. Lat. 2, 12. Loxus is also mentioned explicitly at ch. 81 (on the eyes), 117–31 (on animal types), 133 (on his belief in prediction). It is a reasonable conjecture that chs. 13–15 (on the hair) also derive from Loxus: they draw on Loxan terms of analysis (e.g. the paucity of blood which explains thin, pale hair in ch. 14: cf. ch. 12, and see Foerster 1888a: 537–8). Occasionally, ‘where I have found the translation or interpretation difficult’ (ch. 1), Anon. Lat. notes the terms which he found in his Greek sources. For what it is worth, the following terms are quoted from Loxus: *oinōpos* (14); *charopos*, *aigōpos*, *traulos* (81); *lichnos*, *philēnkēmōn* (123), *glauz* (129), *alektruōn* (131).

<sup>96</sup> I shall suggest that Loxus himself does something similar: cf. below in the text on Anon. Lat. 2.

representing features of physical constitution, and more particularly characteristics of the blood. So 648<sup>a</sup>2–11.<sup>97</sup>

The thicker and the hotter blood is, the more conducive is it to strength, while in proportion to its thinness and its coldness is its suitability for sensation and intelligence... Best of all are those whose blood is hot, and at the same time thin and pure. For such are suited alike for the development of courage and of intelligence.

Each of these three passages differs from the other two, but it will be seen that Loxus is if anything closer to Aristotle than is the Ps.-Aristotelian writer of the *Physiognomy*. Aristotle names three qualities of the blood that are relevant (its thickness, heat, and clarity: cf. also PA 651<sup>a</sup>12–17): Ps.-Aristotle shares with him only one (its heat; his other consideration is the length of its course as determined by the size of the body), but Loxus shares two (in referring to the quantity and thickness of the blood). Indeed, there might be evidence that he shares all three. If we take it, as commentators generally do, that Loxus is behind the discussion of hair types in chs. 14–15 of the anonymous Latin *Physiognomy* (it follows directly on from the passage of Loxus currently under consideration), then Loxus too associated ‘cold’ (and thin) blood with intelligence, and hot blood with bravery (and lesser intelligence). There is something further to note, if this is right. Aristotle, Ps.-Aristotle and Loxus would agree on this single fact, that the temperature of the blood is relevant to the intelligence of the person; but Aristotle, and Loxus line up *against* Ps.-Aristotle in thinking that colder blood is better on this score.<sup>98</sup>

On the evidence of Loxus’ physiognomical analysis of blood, there are, then, no grounds for supposing that Loxus is any less Aristotelian than Ps.-Aristotle. The conclusion to which his analysis points is soundly Aristotelian as well. Loxus, like Aristotle and Ps.-Aristotle, looks for his ideal in someone who combines a quality somewhat like strength with a quality somewhat like intelligence; like them, he looks for this ideal somewhere in the middle of the physical extremes outlined. It is sometimes suggested that a characteristic feature of Loxus’ physiognomy is his claim that ‘that soul is perfect... which is as strong as it is wise’ (as above), a claim echoed in an intrusive line in ch. 10: ‘a good character is constituted in no other way than with the strength of the masculine and the wisdom of the feminine’.<sup>99</sup> We can now see, however, that this conclusion is as Aristotelian as can be.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. also 2. 4, 650<sup>b</sup>19–651<sup>a</sup>19; cf. HA 3. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Note, though, that Aristotle himself can be selective about the range of relevant physiological factors he invokes in any given context. See e.g. van der Eijk (1997), showing that the blood is itself not, in Aristotle, the only factor relevant to the determination of psychological character. It is worth noting, by the way, that Aristotelian discussions of blood quality, and its effect on character and appearance makes it all the easier for Aristotelian physiognomy to be received into humoral medicine later on: cf. Section V; also Ghersetti below, p. 289.

<sup>99</sup> Gleason contrasts Loxus on one side with Polemon and Aristotle on the other for according the feminine a positive role in the mix (1990: 391). The thought that intelligence is a feminine quality is, however, perfectly Aristotelian (whether or not Mayhew 2004: 94–6 is right to say that Aristotle himself has a particular, and rather low-grade, form of intelligence in mind). So HA 9. 1, 608<sup>a</sup>23–8: ‘In character, females are softer, more quickly tamed, inclined more to allow themselves to be touched, and easier to teach (*mathētikōteron*). Female Laconian dogs, for example, are better-natured

But this, I said, was the *second* passage of Anon.'s introduction to mention Loxus. The first is as follows (Anon. Lat. 2; tr. Repath, modified):

Loxus established that the blood is the dwelling-place of the soul,<sup>100</sup> and moreover that the whole body and the parts of it which give signs give different signs according to the liveliness or inertia of the blood and whether it is thinner or thicker or according to when it has free and direct or crooked and narrow channels. (But others think that, just as the soul is the shaper of the body, so the soul derives its appearance from the quality of the body.) Just like liquid in a small vessel which derives its appearance from the vessel, and just like air breathed into a pipe, aulos, or trumpet: although the breath is uniform, a trumpet, pipe, and aulos make different sounds.

There is a contrast here between Loxus on the one hand, and others (*ceteri quidem*) on the other. But who are these 'others'? It looks very much as if Anon. is here attempting to summarize what he sees as the characteristic doctrine of the Aristotelian *Physiognomy*. Compare the passage just quoted with Ps.-Aristotle 808<sup>b</sup>11–15:

Soul and body seem to me to affect each other sympathetically (*sympathein allēlois*). A change in the state of the soul alters the appearance of the body, and, conversely, when the appearance of the body changes, it changes the state of the soul as well.

It is, I assume, the fact that Loxus is here *contrasted* with a position like that of Ps.-Aristotle which has tended to blind commentators to his theoretical affinity with Peripatetic physiognomy. But two considerations show that this conclusion is hasty. One is the simple fact that different members of the same school, particularly of the Peripatos, might think different things about the relationship between body and soul. Aristotle was (basically) a teleologist, but we know that some of his followers (including some who were interested in physiognomy) were epiphenomenalists. Indeed, I have suggested that the two parts of the surviving Peripatetic *Physiognomy* might themselves differ from each other in this matter. Anon. himself does not tell us that Loxus and the 'others' are members of different schools, and we should not just assume that they are.

It might be argued that the contrast suggested by Anon. between Loxus and the 'others' is strong enough to show that he does think of them as coming

[or 'cleverer': *euphuēsterai*] than the males.' (HA 9 is certainly Aristotelian, by the way, even if is not by Aristotle: see Lloyd's cautious discussion at 1983: 21–2; for a more robust defence of its authenticity, Balme 1991: 1–13.) One might compare PA 648<sup>a</sup>2–11 (intelligence linked with thin cool blood) with GA 765<sup>b</sup>15–18 (the blood of women is cooler than that of men—though admittedly not thinner according to HA 521<sup>a</sup>21–4). The general principle that the best nature involves a blend of opposites was widely accepted: cf. already Plato, *Politicus* 309 E–311 C; *Laws* 773 AB; later on, e.g. the Stoic Cornutus, *Introduction* 16, 19 (26. 1–2, 34. 12–20 Lang); and cf. the anonymous Platonist *Commentary on the Theaetetus* at cols. 9. 25–10. 7.

<sup>100</sup> Note that Loxus does *not* say that the blood is the seat of consciousness or of thought—an over-translation that led Foerster, and after him Misener, to argue against the connection with Aristotle, and ultimately to locate him rather earlier (so Misener 1923: 9: 'With Loxus we return to the primitive conception of Empedocles') or rather later (Foerster 1886: 6 n. 1; 1888a: 510; and cf. Evans 1969: 11). There is, in fact, nothing here to suggest that Loxus means anything substantially different from Aristotle's belief that the quality of the blood underlies the psychological as well as the physical characteristics of an individual. (I shall, however, argue below that Loxus was a psychological epiphenomenalist, which would introduce differences at some level in the explanation of the claim.)

from quite distinct philosophical backgrounds. But this leads to my second consideration, which is that we have a very good reason not to trust Anon.'s judgement in this matter. This is not because of any obvious failing on Anon.'s part, but simply because he presumably does not have better evidence for the relative positions taken on physiognomy by Loxus and the 'others' than the two texts he has in front of him. On the reading of these that would be most natural to him they would indeed appear to be taking rather different theoretical positions.<sup>101</sup> I suggested in subsection (ii) above that the two parts of the Peripatetic treatise in fact held different views on the question of the relationship between body and soul, but that they were careful not to make the relevance of their respective discussions rest on the particular view one takes. Both parts, then, talk about the relationship in terms of *sympatheia*—a word which, I have suggested, is precisely supposed to avoid signalling the theoretical mechanism that underlies the relationship, and to focus instead on the simple fact that the soul and body do (one way or another) interact in the relevant way. But a reader of the treatise who did not recognize its dual authorship, a reader like Anon., who thought that the whole treatise was by Aristotle himself, would naturally get the impression that the term *sympatheia* was meant to be a term of art—that it named the theory upon which the physiognomy of the treatise was built.

This is why Loxus looks so different from Anon.; for Loxus avoids the term *sympatheia* altogether. More than this (and the reason for it), Loxus seems to have been specific in aligning himself with an epiphenomenalist view of the soul. This, at any rate, seems to be suggested by his claim that the blood is the 'dwelling-place' of the soul. He appears to mean by this that the quality of the blood is *responsible* for the character of the soul: the blood is, as it were, not just where the soul lives, but actually where it *comes from*. This seems to be what he means when he calls the blood the 'seat' (*sedes*) of the soul in Anon. 12 (quoted and discussed in the foregoing), and it seems to be confirmed in the examples that follow.<sup>102</sup> These examples express the differences in character

<sup>101</sup> I assume that Anon. used a text of Ps.-Aristotle that was at least a version of the dual-authored text that we know. For evidence that makes it reasonable to assume this, see references in the appendix to this section, n. 119.

<sup>102</sup> In taking these examples to come from Loxus, rather than the 'others', I am following Foerster (1888a) 511, *pace* e.g. André (1981) 51; Raina (1993) 127; and Repath in this volume. My reason for taking the text this way is the fact that the images in question illustrate the effect specifically of body on soul, rather than the *mutual* interaction of body and soul which was the point of introducing the 'others'. Foerster sees a resemblance between these images for the soul and an image attributed by Seneca to the Stoic Cleanthes (Seneca, *Letter* 108, 10 = SVF I. 487), a fact which he uses to support his dating of Loxus to the 3rd c.; but it is important not to exaggerate how close they are. Loxus (always assuming it is he) says that the effect of the body on the soul is as that of a (musical) pipe whose shape makes the same breath sound *different*; Cleanthes says only that our breath sounds *louder* when it passes through a trumpet. There is certainly nothing here to encourage the thought that Loxus was a Stoic—and the second image (again, if it is his) positively militates against the possibility. Here, the soul is compared to 'liquid held in a vessel' (*vasculum*) which changes its shape according to the vessel'. It is true that a Stoic might say that the body is *metaphorically* the 'vessel' of the soul (cf. references at Görler 1997: 207), but only insofar as the body represents the soul's location. The *manner* of the soul's relationship within the body is quite different. Hierocles, for

that blood of a given kind takes on as it flows through the body;<sup>103</sup> and the point of the metaphors of 'shape' and 'tonality' invoked here seems to be precisely that this is one way in which we can understand the *epiphenomenal* nature of the soul. Psychological differences between individuals are expressions of differences in the quality of the blood as it flows through the body. Where the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* appears to talk of a reciprocal relationship between body and soul, Loxus is clear that the body has causal priority.

In short, Anon. has no reason to think that Loxus is coming to physiognomy from the same theoretical position as (what he considers to be) Aristotle. On the contrary, his clear commitment to epiphenomenalism suggests to Anon. a striking contrast with the apparently Aristotelian 'theory' of *sympatheia*. But (and quite apart from the fact that this on its own is no very good reason to deny Loxus a Peripatetic affiliation) if I am right about the different psychological positions in fact taken by A and B, the very contrast which Anon. sees between Loxus and the *Physiognomy* evaporates. For Loxus lines up precisely with the position I attributed to the author of Treatise A by grounding his faith in physiognomy on an epiphenomenalist view of the soul. And in this, as we shall see, he is part of a trend that unites the majority of post-Aristotelian philosophers who discuss physiognomy.

#### Appendix: The Aristotelian *Physiognomy*

In the body of this section, I have assumed (with most, though not all commentators) that Aristotle was not the author of the *Physiognomy* that comes down to us under his name; and I began to argue (in line with most, though again not all, commentators) that the *Physiognomy* in any case represented two works on physiognomy by two different Peripatetic authors, who might be distinguished from each other by their underlying psychological beliefs. In this appendix, I want to provide some further justification for these assumptions; but I also want to show that, despite the differences between them, there is a very close affinity between Aristotle and the authors of Treatises A and B in the direction each takes towards the development of a practical physiognomy.

(i) *From Theory to Practice*. Studies of the *Physiognomy* often begin with apparent differences between A and B in the methodological principles by which they seek to construct their catalogues of physiognomical signs, and move on to differences between the catalogues themselves.<sup>104</sup> In particular, it is often noted

example, explicitly says that 'the soul is *not* contained in the body like liquid in a vessel' (IV. 4-5); and the reason for this is presumably that, as Posidonius makes clear, it is the soul that holds that body together rather than vice versa (F149 EK; contrast the position and language of the Epicureans: e.g. *Letter to Herodotus* 65-6; Lucretius 3. 440, 555, 936).

<sup>103</sup> For the introduction of *extrinsic* characteristics of the blood here—the nature of its course through the body—cf. Ps.-Aristotle 813<sup>b</sup>11-35 as discussed in the text above.

<sup>104</sup> Other noticeable differences, apart from the difference in underlying psychological theory I suggested in III. ii above, are differences in expression and terminology (see further below), and apparent differences between Aristotle and Treatise B (at 813<sup>b</sup>7-35) over the qualities of blood each

that the author of Treatise A seems more interested in developing a catalogue of signs based on a study of animal species, while B sets out by making a grand division of animal characteristics into those characteristically 'male' and those characteristically 'female'.<sup>105</sup> This fact is, it seems to me, significant not only in confirming the impression that two distinct works went to form the surviving *Physiognomy*, but also that they were written by two different people.<sup>106</sup> It does not strike me as being of any special *theoretical* significance, however.<sup>107</sup> On the contrary, it is quite possible to read the different ways in which A and B go about isolating physiognomical signs as variants of each other, and actually complementary rather than contradictory. (Their being complementary could even explain how it is that Treatises A and B came to be put together, despite the superficial differences between them.) And if A and B go about their work in different ways, what is much more striking is the fact that they seem to share a common starting-point for this stage of the work; and, furthermore, that they seem to share this starting-point with Aristotle's discussion of how one would go about establishing a physiognomy in *Prior Analytics* 2. 27.<sup>108</sup> Given that all three do believe that body and soul are related in such a way that physiognomy becomes, at least in principle, a possibility (despite, that is, the differences I have mooted in the details of their underlying psychological models), their views on how one would go about translating this possibility into practice are remarkably convergent. To make the point, on the following pages, side by side, I give Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* 2. 27, and the prefaces to Treatises A and B. (For reasons of space, some sections have been summarized rather than translated; in these cases they appear in square brackets.)

thinks relevant to the explanation of psycho-physical characteristics (see again III. ii above). Vogt (1999) 190-1 notes in more general terms that Treatise A focuses more on 'theoretical' issues, which B on the whole avoids, and expresses greater caution.

<sup>105</sup> B at 809<sup>a</sup>28 ff. (and see further below).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Rose (1854) 221-5, (1863) 697-8; Foerster (1888b) 285-90, (1893) i, p. xix (concluding in both cases that both authors must have read Aristotle); *pace* Vogt (1999) 191-2. Vogt deduces from the lack of theoretical contradiction between A and B to the possibility that they are the works of the same author working on different occasions with different purposes. I agree with her (and argue further below) that there is no methodological conflict between A and B; but I think this to the extent that I cannot see how a difference in *purpose* would explain the differences in practical approach exhibited by them. This, in addition to the apparent, and if real then theoretically significant, divergence between A and B over the nature of the soul discussed in III. ii above, leads me to assume that the authors of A and B are in fact distinct.

<sup>107</sup> *Pace* e.g. Sassi (2001), 35 n. 2: 'The differences between the two subsections [sc. of Ps.-Aristotle], which are also significant from a theoretical point of view, are rightly stressed by Raina' (the reference is to Raina 1993: 24 ff.). This is not to say that there *are* no theoretically significant differences: the difference between their respective psychological models would be an example, if my reconstruction in III. ii above is right.

<sup>108</sup> *Pace* Vogt (1999) :91, who sees a parallel only between Treatise A and the *Prior Analytics*.

*Prior Analytics* 2. 27, 70b7–32

## TREATISE A

## TREATISE B

Physiognomy is possible if one allows that, at least in respect of their natural characteristics, body and soul change together. For perhaps someone learning music changes his soul a bit; but this characteristic is not one of the ones natural to us, as are things like (among natural movements) cases of anger and desire.

So if this is allowed, and there is one sign for one characteristic, and we can grasp the characteristic and sign proper to each species, we shall be able to do physiognomy.

For if a characteristic belongs to one individual species, as bravery to lions, it is necessary that there will be some sign as well: *ex hypothesi* they change along with each other. Let this sign be *having large*

That minds follow their bodies and are not isolated and unaffected by the changes of the body is something that becomes very clear in cases of drunkenness and illness: for states of mind appear to change a great deal through the affections of the body. And correlatively, the body is clearly affected along with the affections of the soul in cases of love and fear and grief and pleasure. Again, among things that come about by nature one might especially see that the body and soul are connate with each other to the extent that in the case of most affections they are causally active on each other.  
[An animal never came about such as to have the form of one animal and the mind of another; and there are experts in judging the character of animals from their appearance.]

If these things are true (and these things are always true), there can be physiognomy.

[Three methods of physiognomy have been tried: (i) from resemblance to animal species; (ii) from resemblance to human races; (iii) from appearance of emotional states. Difficulties with all of these.] But is he any better off if he takes every genus by itself and selects signs that are peculiar to each?

Soul and body seems to me to affect each other sympathetically. A change in the state of the soul alters the appearance of the body and, conversely, when the appearance of the body changes, it changes the state of the soul as well. [Emotional states involve changes in the body, and there are physical cures of 'mental' illnesses.]

It is quite clear that the appearances which come to supervene on bodies are similar to the powers of the soul, so that all the resemblances in animals are indicative of some identity. Again, in the case

*extremities*—which cannot belong to any other complete species, for (as we are used to saying) a sign is 'proper' in this way when it is proper to a whole species, and not to an individual. And when this sign appears in another species, you will have a brave man (or whatever other type of animal). But he will have the sign: for there is a one-to-one correspondence. If all this is right, and we can gather such signs for those animals which have only one characteristic, and each has its sign, since it is necessary to have one, we shall be able to do physiognomy.

But if the whole species has two 'proper' characteristics, as a lion might be brave and generous, how shall we know which of the signs following 'properly' signifies which characteristic?

Perhaps as follows: if both occur in part of some other species, and in those species in which each is found though not in the whole of it, and whenever a member has one but not the other: for if someone is brave but not liberal, and has just one of these two signs, it is clear that this is the sign of bravery in the lion.

of animal behaviour, some traits are proper to a particular species, others common to several; and the proper activities of the soul are accompanied by proper physical traits, common activities by common traits. Examples of common characters are insolence, which is found in all animals with bushy tails, and violent sexual excitability, which is found alike in asses and in pigs: whilst on the other hand railing is a character peculiar to dogs, and insensibility to pain is peculiar to the ass. It has already been explained how common and proper characters are to be distinguished.

Surely not, for he cannot tell what they are signs of. They ought to be signs of peculiar characteristics, but we have no right to assume that there are any mental characteristics peculiar to the different kinds of animals that we examine in physiognomy. Courage is not confined to the lion, but is found in many other creatures; nor timidity to the hare, but it shares this quality with numberless other creatures. Thus it is equally fruitless to select the common and the peculiar features, and we must abandon the attempt to proceed by an examination of every kind of animal singly.

Rather, we ought to select our signs from all animals that have some mental characteristic in common. For instance, when investigating the external marks of courage, we ought to collect all brave animals, and then to inquire what sort of characteristics are natural to all of them but absent in all other animals. For if we were to select this or that as the signs of courage in the animals chosen in such a

way as not to exclude the possibility of the presence in all these animals of some other mental characteristic, we should not be able to tell whether our selected marks were really signs of courage or of this other character. The animals from which we choose our signs must be as numerous as possible, and they must not have any mental characteristic in common except that one of which we are investigating the signs.

[Additional remarks:

- (a) Transitory physical signs of no use the physiognomist.
- (b) Changes in the soul which leave no observable mark in the body: e.g. the acquisition of knowledge or skills...

Here I may mention a possible method of physiognomy which has never yet been tried. Suppose, e.g., that irascibility and morose sulkiness necessarily involve an envious disposition, and that the physiognomist could, without any bodily signs of the last character, deduce its presence from the presence of the other characters, we should then have a method peculiarly appropriate to masters of philosophy, since it is, we suppose, the peculiar mark of philosophy to be able to tell that, when certain premisses are given, something necessarily follows. But this method which considers the interrelations of mental characteristics and that which proceeds by observation of animals sometimes arrive at contrary conclusions &c.<sup>109</sup>

[Additional remarks: (a) The need for experience and subtle discrimination; (b) the importance of *epiprepeia*...]

Deduction also should be used in the selection of signs, whenever possible. In the deductive procedure we attach to our data known attributes of them. For instance, if we have it given that a man is shameless and giggling, we can add that he will be a thief and a miser, the one as a consequence of his shamelessness, the other as a consequence of his giggardliness. In all such cases we ought to include the deductive method in our procedure

<sup>109</sup> The idea (explained at 807<sup>a</sup>3–10) is that if character trait *x* necessarily is accompanied by character trait *y*, then physical indicators of *x* will also signal the presence of *y* (i.e. even if there is no causal link between the physical sign of *x* and the psychological characteristic *y*). For a practical

At a linguistic level, there are differences and similarities here which one might note.<sup>110</sup> These, of course, are not without significance. But what is much more interesting is the degree of convergence in the argument of each of the writers. I do not wish to exaggerate the extent to which they overlap, or the extent to which the overlaps I have suggested constitute exact parallels. But it is significant that they overlap as much as they do; and, more than this, that where they do not overlap, or where the overlaps represent a similarity rather than exact coincidence, they complement each other rather well. There is a close similarity in the overall structure of their respective arguments (all three passages begin from an assertion of the intimate connection between body and soul, and move towards a physiognomy based on signs derived from a study of animal species); and it is, in fact, remarkably easy to imagine a single, coherent *U7*-discussion of which they might all be thought of as descendants:

1. There is a *sympatheia* of natural physical and psychological characteristics ('natural' here excluding acquired characteristics such as learnt skills).
2. To appreciate how intimately the two are connected, consider:
  - (a) the physical effects of occasions of anger, desire, etc. which we normally regard as 'psychological';
  - (b) conversely: the 'psychological' effects that can be brought about by physical changes—as madness can be cured through the use of drugs.
3. If there is a one-to-one correspondence of observable physical sign and psychological correlate, physiognomy will be possible.

example, cf. perhaps PA 3. 4, 667<sup>a</sup>19–21 where, if we follow Peck's Loeb translation (in Peck and Forster 1955), animals 'whose cowardice is either outright or else betrayed by their mischievous behaviour' (my emphasis) have big hearts. (However, Aristotle might have meant something more like 'animals which are clearly cowardly or made mischievous through fear have large hearts': *megalas tas kardias echousi... panth' hosa phanerōs deila ē dia phobon kakourga*.)

<sup>110</sup> Differences include the following: Treatise A alone talks of *dianoiai* ('minds': e.g. 805<sup>a</sup>1) and psychological *ēthē* ('characters': 805<sup>a</sup>27 &c.); Treatise B alone of the soul's *hēxis* ('state': e.g. 808<sup>b</sup>12) and *dunamis* ('powers': 808<sup>b</sup>28). B is also unique in using the notion of *epiprepeia* (first at 809<sup>a</sup>13; cf. n. 113 below). Both parts of the *Physiognomy* use the language of 'following' to describe the relationship of body and soul (albeit the relationship they describe is rather different: see again III. ii above): A at 805<sup>a</sup>1, B at 808<sup>b</sup>20–1. As to similarities: all three texts use the word *sympaschein/sympatheia* to describe the relationship between body and soul (Aristotle at 70<sup>b</sup>16, Treatise A at 805<sup>a</sup>6, B at 808<sup>b</sup>11, 19)—a word which, in this usage, is first attested in these texts. All use the notion of a sign 'proper' to a species (*idion*; as opposed to a sign 'common' to many species: *koinon*); and both Aristotle and Treatise B excuse their failure to explain the meaning of the term: Aristotle appeals to school usage (70<sup>b</sup>20), B appeals to previous discussion ('it has already been explained' at 809<sup>a</sup>—though in fact it has not been 'stated' anywhere at all in the *Physiognomy*). And there is an unmistakable resemblance between the conclusion to Aristotle's opening remarks ('if this is allowed, and there is one sign for one characteristic, and we can grasp the characteristic and sign proper to each species, we shall be able to do physiognomy': 70<sup>b</sup>11–14) and the comment made by Treatise A in the same context ('If these things are true, and these things are always true, there can be physiognomy': 805<sup>a</sup>17–18).

4. Three previous approaches to physiognomy have been tried, all with their difficulties:
  - (a) from animals; but this has been done crudely, and is prey to these objections:<sup>111</sup>
    - (i) if you appeal to signs shared in common with other species, it will be impossible to say that a man sharing the sign is more like one species than another;
    - (ii) if you appeal to signs peculiar to one species, it will be impossible to know what they are signs for—unless there are *characteristics* peculiar to the species as well, which there rarely if ever are;<sup>112</sup>
    - (iii) if you appeal to signs peculiar to one species, it will be impossible to know *which* of its characteristics the sign is a sign for.
  - (b) from human racial types, but: <understand the same kinds of theoretical problem as with (a)?>
  - (c) from expressions associated with particular emotions, but:
    - (i) the same facial expression may be common to different characters;
    - (ii) a man can assume an expression not normally his own;
    - (iii) the number of inferences that can be drawn from facial expression is small.
5. A refined form of animal physiognomy is the only way forward: one must choose a sample group of animal species that have one and only one physical characteristic in common, and one and only one psychological characteristic.
6. Further considerations:
  - (a) signs liable to alteration are of no help;
  - (b) there is a practical need for subtle discrimination in signs;
  - (c) a note on *epiprepeia*;<sup>113</sup>
  - (d) physiognomical conclusions can be extended syllogistically.
- (ii) *Physiognomical Signs in Ps.-Aristotle*. The above sketch of a Peripatetic *Ur*-discussion should be regarded more as a thought-experiment than as serious reconstruction. Nevertheless, the fact that it is possible makes very clearly the

<sup>111</sup> Cf. perhaps GA 4. 3, 769<sup>b</sup>20–1, where Aristotle mentions a physiognomist who compared human faces with those of two or three animals.

<sup>112</sup> There is an apparent contradiction between Treatises A and B over whether there are any psychological characteristics peculiar to individual species; but note that Treatise A does not *deny* the existence of such characteristics; it merely says that we have no right to assume their existence. In fact one could easily imagine a perfectly Aristotelian reflection lying behind both passages—e.g.: 'We have no right to assume that there are any psychological characteristics peculiar to the different kinds of animals that we examine in physiognomy—unless one thinks that railing is peculiar to dogs, and insensitivity to pain is peculiar to asses; though such cases will be rare.'

<sup>113</sup> For the term *epiprepeia*, see Appendix n. 7. It is used in slightly different senses by Ps.-Aristotle and later physiognomical authors. For Ps.-Aristotle it seems to refer to the 'fit' or 'congruity' between individual signs and the traits they signify; for Anon. Lat. and Adamantius, on the other hand, it refers to the 'overall appearance' of a person, something that supervenes on the totality of his or her physical characteristics (cf. Anon. Lat. 45; Ad. B1).

point which seems to me most significant, namely that there is a strong familial resemblance between A, B, and Aristotle himself in their approaches to physiognomy as a practical art. And this resemblance continues to link the specific recommendations each makes for establishing physiognomical signs. In saying this, I do not, again, wish to deny the obvious differences identified here by many commentators. In particular, the author of Treatise A confines himself to the comparative study of animal species suggested in the text already quoted, while B goes on to introduce the idea that the relevant differentials can be classified according to a gendered polarity (809<sup>a</sup>26–30):

Now, first of all, I shall try to distinguish among animals which ones stand out as being brave or cowardly or just or unjust. The whole animal kingdom is to be divided into two types (*morphai*): male and female, and what is appropriate (*prepon*) associated with each type...

B, then, does something rather different from anything we can find in A or the *Prior Analytics*.<sup>114</sup> But while fully recognizing this, what I again wish to focus on is the fact that differences between A and B are not of a kind which suggest that they are the product of distinct theoretical traditions. Indeed, as I suggested above, it is possible to read them as positively complementary.

Take, to begin with, the approach apparently preferred by Treatise A (and perhaps Aristotle himself), which is to classify psycho-physical traits on the basis of a study of animal species. In this case, the idea is one should try to find sets of non-human animal species (i.e. at least two of them) which have one, but only one physical trait in common, and one, but only one psychological trait that they share to exclusion of all other animal species. The resulting psycho-physical correlation can be applied to individual humans: any human with the physical trait identified, will, so far as the natural state of the soul is concerned, possess the corresponding psychological trait as well.

This is A's approach, and it makes sense as far as it goes. But it should be clear that its execution would be by no means a simple task. Not the least of the problems facing someone who wishes to construct a physiognomy this way is the fact that not all physical similarities between any given species will be of any physiognomical significance at all. There is a striking example of this in Aristotle, who gives the hairiness of the ears as an example of a physical trait that signifies nothing about character.<sup>115</sup> It would be easy to multiply examples by looking at smaller and smaller details.

My suggestion is that B approaches the subject of physiognomy with difficulties such as this in his mind. The way he tackles them is as follows. He realizes that the only secure way to identify physiognomically relevant signs will involve an understanding of what links a given sign, a given physical trait, with the psychological trait that it signifies. He also knows that this will involve an analysis of the blood. The reason for this is that, in Aristotelian biology, it is

<sup>114</sup> It should, however, be noted that B's generalization about male and female types has parallels elsewhere in Aristotle: cf. e.g. PA 3. 1, 661<sup>b</sup>32–4; also HA 9. 1 (though cf. n. 99 above on the authenticity of this book).

<sup>115</sup> HA 492<sup>a</sup>32–4; though other physiognomical authors do not agree: see Anon. Lat. 82.

the quality of the blood that determines *both* the psychological operation of a creature (as we have already seen to some extent in III. iii above), *and* also its physical appearance.<sup>116</sup> Whether this is made explicit or not, blood is, in fact, the common term of all inference in Aristotelian physiognomy.

In principle, then, we know that any physical trait explained by qualities of the blood (as its heat, consistency, etc.) which also have significance for psychological functioning is a physiognomically relevant trait. But how do we establish correlations between blood-type and psycho-physical trait? Surely the matter becomes hopeless when we reflect that we do not even have direct access to the quality of the blood, but can only deduce this from its psycho-physical effects?

There is, in fact, just one way of making progress: we have to hope that nature provides us with at least *one* example of clearly contrasting sets of psycho-physical attributes that might reasonably be thought to track blood quality between the possible extremes of (say) hot and thick at one end to cold and thin at the other. Treatise B thinks it does: this is precisely the polarity traced by the difference between the sexes. Like other terms of differentiation, the difference between the sexes must relate directly to differences in blood quality (cf. Aristotle himself, e.g. *HA* 521<sup>a</sup>21–4); but unlike other terms of differentiation, it constitutes a polarity common to just about every species (809<sup>a</sup>28–9). In every species, he thinks, one encounters the same *kinds* of differentiation between the psycho-physical properties of males and females: males, for example, are generally larger and fiercer, females smaller and tamer. In this way, sexual differentiation provides a secure and easily accessible empirical basis for the construction of a scale mapping out physiognomically relevant physical and psychological attributes, a scale that can be employed with confidence across species.

Commentators sometimes talk as if the author of B were interested in sexual differentials *instead* of species differentials; but this is true neither in theory nor in practice. It is not theoretically true, because (on my account, anyway) his interest in sexual characteristics is *the very same* interest as a concern with species differentials. The reason for this is straightforward: the sexes are differentiated in exactly the same ways as are species (at least insofar as the differences are physiognomically relevant). In both cases, the differences can be referred to differences in blood quality, and manifest themselves in exactly the same psycho-physical correlations. But it is practically untrue as well, because in fact B still cannot, and does not, think that he can determine particular psycho-physical correlations without a study of animal species. So far I have suggested how he might have constructed a scale stretching from characteristically 'masculine' attributes of body and soul to those that are characteristically 'feminine'; but this does not suffice to establish which *particular* physical attributes are indicative of which *particular* psychological attributes. In order to do this, B has to follow precisely the procedure recommended by Aristotle and exemplified in Treatise A as well: he compares different species in order to find uniquely shared

<sup>116</sup> See B, 813<sup>b</sup>7–35 with III. iii above. For Aristotle's use of blood to explain differences between different species, see e.g. *PA* 648<sup>a</sup>2–11, 651<sup>a</sup>12–17; *GA* 765<sup>a</sup>15–18.

psycho-physical traits. Something else which commentators often assume is that B makes an arbitrary assignment of different animal species to the masculine or feminine ends of his sexual polarity: the evidence for this is his claim that the lion is the most perfectly masculine of animals, while the leopard is the most perfectly feminine (809<sup>b</sup>14–810<sup>a</sup>13). It is true that he calls the lion the most perfectly masculine type; but in fact he does *not* say that the leopard represents a perfect 'feminine' type. What he actually says of the leopard is this (809<sup>b</sup>36–7):<sup>117</sup>

*Of all animals accounted brave, the leopard approximates most closely to the female type—save in its legs, which it uses to perform any feat of strength.*

All he means by this, of course, is that the physical characteristics of the leopard generally stand in the same relation to those of other animals 'accounted brave' as typically 'masculine' characteristics stand to typically 'feminine' characteristics. To this extent, then, we can expect the leopard to exhibit psychological traits which relatively speaking are more like those characteristic of females in general. But this is not the point of the example: for one thing, it is something we could learn from observation of the leopard's behaviour without reference to its appearance; and for another it tells us nothing about which of the leopard's 'feminine' physical characteristics correspond to which of its 'feminine' psychological traits. The point of the passage lies rather in the qualifications: 'of all animals accounted brave'; 'save in its legs'. What this tells us is that there is just *one* physical characteristic which the leopard shares with other species united by the psychological trait of courage, namely it has large extremities. It is from this that we can draw a useful physiognomical conclusion: that, of all 'masculine' (and to this extent physiognomically relevant) traits, it is powerful legs which betray the psychological quality of courage. This, it might be noted, is a conclusion that is not dissimilar from the connection Aristotle himself posits between courage and large extremities at *Prior Analytics* 70<sup>b</sup>14–17.

In the end, then, B's procedure is not so very different from that of A, or from that recommended by Aristotle in the *Prior Analytics*. All three seek to isolate physiognomical correlations by a comparative study of animal species: all three look for sets of species which share a single physical and a single psychological trait in common. The difference with B is merely that it offers a common scale of empirically accessible and physiognomically relevant terms by which his study can be guided.

(iii) *Conclusion* In subsection (i) above I showed that the prefatory discussions of Treatises A and B seem to converge with Aristotle's discussion of a physiognomical methodology in *Prior Analytics* 2. 27; in subsection (ii), that the systems built on the back of these discussions in A and B are perfectly complementary. I repeat that, in making these observations, I do not wish to play down the differences between the three texts under consideration: they are differences which (quite apart from the tentative evidence I adduced in III. ii

<sup>117</sup> Contrast Polemon, who *does* say, *simpliciter*, that the leopard is the 'most feminine in appearance' (Leiden, ch. 2; Ad. A2; cf. Swain below, pp. 180, 189).

above for differences in their underlying psychological models) seem to me to place the onus of proof squarely on the shoulders of anyone who should wish to deny that the three texts are the works of three distinct authors. Nevertheless, I think it just as clear that the three authors share more in common than is sometimes appreciated. Indeed, a case could easily be made that they represent three developments of the very same original discussion of the topic of physiognomy.<sup>118</sup> My comparison of the three texts above would seem to rule out the *Prior Analytics* as itself the original source (it emerges from the comparison looking itself like a fragment of some broader discussion). I doubt too that there ever existed a physiognomical treatise written by Aristotle himself which we have now lost. There is, in any case, no external evidence for an Aristotelian *Physiognomy* significantly different from the surviving composite of A and B,<sup>119</sup> and this composite treatise presumably came into circulation reasonably early on.<sup>120</sup> But it is perfectly plausible to think that A, B, and *Prior*

<sup>118</sup> Cf. again the conclusions of Rose and Foerster (references in n. 106 above).

<sup>119</sup> It is true that we find references to 'Aristotle's *Physiognomy*' which have no parallels in the surviving text. See in Anon. Lat., for example (references are to chapter and line number as printed in this volume): 83. 3–8; 85. 1–8, 9–13 (cf. Ps.-Polemon 428. 12–13 [Foerster]); 35. 15–86. 2; 86. 7–13; 87. 6–9; 88. 3–5. Further references, with parallels in different Aristotelian texts, are Anon. Lat. 86. 4–7 (cf. HA 492<sup>b</sup>2–3); cf. Ps.-Polemon 431. 3–5 (cf. HA 494<sup>a</sup>16); Pliny, *Natural History* 11. 273–4 = Aristotle fr. 286 Rose<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the core of Polemon's treatise (and so, derivatively, that of Anon. Lat.) shows significant overlap with material in both parts of the surviving *Physiognomy*: the list of character types at Polemon, Leiden chs. 53–66 and Anon. Lat. 90–9 and 105–15 substantially relies on Treatise A 807<sup>a</sup>31–808<sup>b</sup>9 (cf. Swain below, p. 193), while the discussion of body parts at Polemon, Leiden 3–52 (cf. Anon. 49–72, though with inversions of Polemon's order) reflects Treatise B, 810<sup>a</sup>14–813<sup>b</sup>6 (cf. Swain below, p. 179). Other references to an Aristotelian *Physiognomy* in antiquity similarly presuppose access to (something like) A and B indifferently. For A, see Anon. Lat. 84. 6–14 (cf. perhaps 808<sup>b</sup>17–19); 87. 3–6 (cf. 808<sup>b</sup>32–3); 88. 1–3 (cf. 808<sup>a</sup> 31–2); Stobaeus, *Eclogae* i. 47. 6, 301. 23–302. 17 Wachsmuth (quoting, 'from Aristotle's *Physiognomy*', 805<sup>a</sup>1–18). Cf. Ps.-Polemon 427. 1–10 F (808<sup>b</sup>19–24, 32–3); 428. 8–9 F (808<sup>b</sup>18–19). (The opening line of Galen's *QAM* also looks to me like an allusion to the opening of A, and so the *Physiognomica* as a whole: see Section V, n. 184.) For B, see Anon. Lat. 83. 1–3 (cf. 812<sup>b</sup>34–6); 8–9 (811<sup>a</sup>33–6); 9–10 (cf. 811<sup>b</sup>23–4); 10–11 (812<sup>b</sup>6–7); 11–13 (812<sup>b</sup>11–12); 84. 1–3 (cf. 812<sup>b</sup>24–5); 3–4 (813<sup>b</sup>4–6); 4–6 (811<sup>a</sup>17); 85. 13–15 (813<sup>a</sup>14–15); 87. 1–3 (811<sup>a</sup>26–8); 7–9 (cf. 810<sup>a</sup>28–30); 9–10 (812<sup>b</sup>13–14); 10–13 (810<sup>b</sup>1–4); 88. 1–3 (808<sup>b</sup>31–2); 5 (813<sup>b</sup>7); 5–6 (813<sup>b</sup>11–16); 6–8 (813<sup>b</sup>16–20); 11–13 (813<sup>b</sup>20–3); 13–15 (813<sup>b</sup>23–5); Pollux, *Onomasticon* 2. 135. 7 (811<sup>a</sup>17; cf. also Suetonius, *de blasphemis* 4. 70 Taillardat, leading Vogt 1999: 200–1 to suggest the 1st-c. bc grammarian Didymus as his immediate source). Cf. Ps.-Polemon 427. 11–428. 7 (cf. in order: 808<sup>b</sup>4–6, 810<sup>a</sup>30–1, 812<sup>b</sup>13–14, 811<sup>a</sup>37–<sup>b</sup>3, 812<sup>b</sup>11–12); 428. 10–11 (cf. 808<sup>b</sup>6–7); 428. 16–18 (cf. 811<sup>a</sup>24–6); 429. 1–2 (cf. 811<sup>a</sup>29–30); 429. 3–4 (cf. 811<sup>a</sup>28–9); 429. 6–8 (cf. 811<sup>b</sup>2–3); 429. 8–10 (cf. 811<sup>b</sup>3–4); 429. 11–17 (cf. 811<sup>b</sup>4–9).

<sup>120</sup> At least there is no solid evidence that it was predicated by the independent circulation of either part of the composite—or of any other treatise ascribed to Aristotle. (See again n. 119 above; and note that the citations of material not in our treatise are relatively late, and of the kind of material which might have crept into 'our' text—that they are not, in any case evidence for a different and certainly not for an earlier Aristotelian *Physiognomy*.) It is worth noting that a *Physiognomy* is listed in the catalogues of Aristotle's works: cf. D.L. 5. 25; *Vita Menagiana* (i.e. *Vita Hesychii*) no. 97 (Düring 1957 at 80–92). The latter gives the work as being in two books; the former in one, and Moraux (1951) 203 uses this as evidence that the bipartite treatise we have was compiled as late as the 2nd c. AD. One might think, however, that the two catalogues simply counted the same work differently (do we think it is one book or two?). Cf. in any case J. Barnes (1997), 39–44 for a salutary

*Analytics* 2. 27 might all depend on unpublished work conducted by Aristotle in the Lyceum: that they are different recensions or versions or records, developed to practical conclusions in different degrees and in different ways, of lectures or notes by Aristotle which were available to his early followers.<sup>121</sup>

#### IV. THE HELLENISTIC SCHOOLS

Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in evidence for Hellenistic philosophers: Posidonius, F169. 85 EK (= Galen, *PHP* 5. 5. 22. 2). Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in fellow travellers of the Stoa: Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams* 1. 164; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 4. 87.<sup>122</sup>

If the frequency of occurrence of the word 'physiognomy' in our surviving evidence is a reasonable measure of interest in the subject, it will be immediately apparent from the list at the head of this section that the Hellenistic schools provide thin pickings for the historian of the subject. Physiognomy was clearly not unknown in the third and second centuries: at least some of the work that came out of Aristotle's school must have been done in this period. But there is little evidence of interest in the subject on the part of the new movements and schools which dominated Hellenistic philosophy—especially the Stoa, the Epicurean Garden, and the Academy in its Sceptical incarnation. An interest in physiognomy is explicitly ascribed to only one philosopher of the period, namely the Stoic Posidonius. For the sake of completeness, I have included the (single) occurrences of the word in the later writers Philo of Alexandria and Dio Chrysostom, since both authors had an interest in Stoicism and sometimes provide valuable evidence for earlier Stoic thought.<sup>123</sup> But their references to physiognomy, as it happens, suggest distance rather than

reminder of how difficult quite generally it can be to relate the ancient catalogues to the Aristotelian corpus as it survives.

<sup>121</sup> And for the (congenial) relationship between the *Physiognomy* and undisputed works of Aristotelian biology, see Lloyd (1983), 24; Vogt (1999), 195.

<sup>122</sup> Artemidorus of Daldis has been suspected of Stoicism (e.g. Hopfner 1937: 2240 with further references; cf. Kenner 1939: 455), in which case cf. *Oneirocritica* 2. 69. 10. But the association is without serious support: see Flamand (1989) 612.

<sup>123</sup> It might also be worth noting Polemon's Stoic connections in this context: he was taught by Dio Chrysostom (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* i. 539. 23–5 Kayser), and could trace his pedagogical lineage back through Timocrates and Euphrates (535. 32–536. 20; cf. Frede 1997, esp. 2, 9–10; Swain below, p. 187) to Musonius Rufus (Fronto, *Letters* 135. 3–4 van den Hout<sup>2</sup>, with Frede 1997: 1–2). (In the other direction, his pupil Herodes Atticus—e.g. Philostratus, *Lives* 536. 28–537. 11—taught the Stoic Emperor Marcus Aurelius.) There is, however, nothing, either about Polemon's writing a *Physiognomy*, or about the *Physiognomy* he writes, that could support the view that he is himself influenced by Stoicism. Within what we know of the *Physiognomy*, the only tendentious doctrinal position Polemon adopts is the claim that reason lies in the breast: Leiden ch. 1, A5, cf. ch. 15. This is indeed something maintained by the Stoics (against Plato, for example); but it more probably comes to Polemon from Aristotle, who believed the same thing.

affinity: it is invoked as a study comparable with, but in some way different from, what 'we' do.<sup>124</sup> They mention the word; they are far from providing evidence that 'physiognomy' was an active category of Stoic, or generally of Hellenistic, research.<sup>125</sup>

In the case of Epicureanism, the reason for the absence of reference to physiognomy is fairly clear. Epicureanism insists that body and soul are closely intermingled in operation,<sup>126</sup> but it also insists on their substantial independence from each other.<sup>127</sup> The soul's character is explained by the nature of its own atoms, and not (not even indirectly) by those of the body.<sup>128</sup> It is true that there is a perfectly regular correlation between the growth and powers of soul and body at the level of the species; but even this is emphatically not because

<sup>124</sup> Philo compares his work of textual exegesis with the activity of physiognomists: in both cases, something underlying and invisible is deduced from what is apparent (*On Dreams* 1. 164). For remarks in Dio Chrysostom convergent with observations in the physiognomical handbooks, see Barton (1994b), 104; Evans (1941), 101 n. 21; Gleason (1990), 393; Bost-Pouderon (2003) (on *Oration* 33 in particular). It is worth noting, though, that most of these concern acquired or acquirable traits (cf. Bost-Pouderon 2003: 160, quoting Clement of Alexandria advising the Christian to acquire them at *Pedagogue* 3. 11. 61. 8; and further below, with n. 133, on the sneeze at *Oration* 33. 53); and there is, in general, nothing to argue Dio's philosophical or theoretical commitment to physiognomy, e.g. on the grounds of a particular theory of psycho-physical interaction. In other words, if Dio has the Sophist's interest in appearance and is familiar with physiognomical practice, he provides no evidence for its philosophical understanding, let alone for its place in Stoic thought. It might also be noted that, in the one passage in which Dio refers explicitly to physiognomists, he is contrasting himself with them. This is partly because, while they deduce a man's character from his form, he rather intends to present portraits of men according to what he knows of their character; but it is also because his portraits will capture this character symbolically (see *Oration* 4. 85–8). To this extent, he compares himself to a painter approaching the visual representation of a divinity. In other words, he presents what he is doing here as a kind of allegory rather than a kind of physiognomy.

<sup>125</sup> And cf. perhaps Epictetus, *Dissertation* 4. 5. 20, making the point that being virtuous ('being a human being' in a strict sense) is not a matter of the kind of eyes or nose one has: you must see whether the person has the judgements that belong to a human being. This in fact echoes Cleanthes at SVF i. 517: 'uneducated people differ from animals only in form.'

<sup>126</sup> See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 3 *passim* (e.g. in particular 168–76, 323–69, 445–525, 558–79, 688–97, 741–71, 824–9). In arguing this side of the question, Lucretius comes quite close at times to the attempt by the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* to prove the 'sympathy' between soul and body: he draws attention to the disturbance of the soul in someone drunk or sick (3. 463–86; cf. 805<sup>a</sup>2–4), and to the physical medicines by which mental afflictions can be cured (3. 510–25; cf. 808<sup>b</sup>21–7). He also appeals to the perfectly regular correlation at the level of species between an animal's psychological and physical character. (That the form of the argument, and even the example, namely the invariable spirit of the hunting-dog, suggests allusion to and so perhaps awareness of the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* is no argument that Lucretius followed that treatise to its conclusion: see *On the Nature of Things* 3. 741–53 with Ps.-Aristotle 805<sup>a</sup>11–17.)

<sup>127</sup> See esp. Lucretius' attack on those (epiphenomenalists) who view the soul as a 'harmony' at 3.98–135. In contrast to the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* now, it turns out that the soul can suffer and act without any corresponding affection in the body (or indeed spirit) at all (3. 145–51; contrast 805<sup>a</sup>1–2).

<sup>128</sup> So Lucretius 3. 258–322, where the ferocity of lions, the velocity of deer, and the placidity of cattle are explained by the quality, not of (e.g.) the blood, as Aristotle would have said, but of the atoms that make up the soul. It is true that the body can *disrupt* the activity of the soul (cf. e.g. Lucretius 3. 463–505); but, as we saw in respect of Plato's *Timaeus*, something which has the ability to *disrupt* the soul is not *ipso facto* the *explanans* of its character.

either in any sense *causes* the other to be a certain way. It is rather the case that a certain kind of soul just 'naturally' belongs in a certain kind of body, as trees belong on the earth, not in the sky.<sup>129</sup> (This in turn will be explained by no mechanism beyond the fact that, at an earlier stage of world history, the combination of *this kind of soul* with *this kind of body* happened to prove successful in the fight for survival, and the two have since been reproduced in tandem.)<sup>130</sup> Nothing in any of this suggests reasons, even incidental reasons, why below the level of the species a soul of *this particular character* should reside in a body of *this particular appearance*.<sup>131</sup> It is striking, anyway, that in the course of his attack on the belief in the transmigration of souls, Lucretius appeals to species-level correlations between body and soul, but not correlations at the level of the individual. Strictly speaking, this means that he shows only that souls could not migrate outside their species. If he could have used physiognomical evidence to show that they could not migrate between individuals *within* species, one might have expected him to do so.<sup>132</sup>

Things are slightly more complicated for the early Stoics, however, because they do have a certain amount to say about the correlation between individual appearance and character—enough to make a plausible case for supposing that the absence of the *word* physiognomy from our evidence might in this instance be accidental. This, then, is something I wish to consider in subsection (i) below. And although I shall conclude that the silence of our evidence is, in fact, very eloquent (that the early Stoics were not and could not have thought of themselves as 'physiognomists'), the study will lead to two important results. One will be, at last, an understanding of what the word 'physiognomy' was in fact taken to mean by ancient philosophers, such that it would be wrong to think that the early Stoics were physiognomists. The second result will be to show the danger to us of using the word more freely than the ancient philosophers of whom we use it. For in subsuming every case in which appearance and character

<sup>129</sup> At Lucretius 3. 94–7, the soul is said to be part of a person rather as a hand, foot, or eye is. These too, I suppose, are not caused by the body (of which they are organs), but have their place in nature as parts of it. For the trees that could not be found in the sky, see Lucretius 3. 784–9 (where they are in fact used to make a broader point, viz. that souls quite generally are naturally and necessarily found in bodies).

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Lucretius 5. 837–77.

<sup>131</sup> It is true that both physical (see Lucretius 4. 1208–32) and psychological (cf. 3. 741–7) character are inherited from one's parents; but again there is no reason to suppose that there is a correlation between *which* psychological peculiarities and *which* physical peculiarities one inherits from a given parent.

<sup>132</sup> The closest Lucretius comes to such an argument is *On the Nature of Things* 3. 760–4. But the point here is one concerning character. It is not, in other words, the point that metempsychosis might force a soul into a body physically suited to a soul of a different character. Rather, Lucretius' concern is with the absurdity of thinking that a rational soul would of necessity end up in the body of a pre-rational child. There might be evidence of positive Epicurean opposition to Aristotelian physiognomy in the mocking use of physiognomical material from HA 1. 10, 491<sup>b</sup>34–492<sup>a</sup>12 at Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 8. 48, 353 BC. The provenance of this polemic, which is part of a larger broadside against Aristotelian natural history, is not given; but it is immediately followed by anti-Aristotelian remarks which are ascribed to Epicurus.

are said to be linked under the single heading of 'physiognomy', we are at risk not only of misunderstanding the intention behind the statement and exploration of such links, but also of confusing what turn out to be (from a theoretical point of view) very different phenomena.

### (i) The Older Stoics

The superficially plausible case for ascribing an interest in physiognomy to the Stoics at large rests in large part on a series of fragments whose form very closely suggests the kinds of judgement made by attested practitioners of the art (numbered for ease of reference in what follows):

T1. It is said that some young men set out to play a trick on Cleanthes, who followed Zeno in claiming that character (*ēthos*) could be grasped from appearance (*eidos*). They brought to him a man who was sexually deviant, but toughened up through his work in the fields, and they demanded that Cleanthes should declare his character. He could not make it out, and he told the man to go away. But as the man was going, he sneezed, and Cleanthes said 'I have him! He's dissolute.' (DL 7. 173 = SVF i. 618; part = i. 204).<sup>133</sup>

T2. Zeno of Citium seems to sketch a beautiful and properly loveable image of a young man. He sculpts him like this: Let his countenance be pure; his brow not relaxed; his eye not wide open nor half-closed; his neck not thrown back; nor the limbs of his body relaxed, but keyed up like strings under tension; his ear cocked for the *logos*; and his bearing and movement giving no hope to the licentious. Let modesty and a manly look flower upon him, but away with the excitement of the perfumers' shops and goldsmiths and wool shops—and indeed all the other shops where women spend the whole day adorned like courtesans, as though they were sitting in a brothel (SVF i. 246).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> 'Sexually deviant' = *kinaidos*; 'dissolute' = *malakos*. (I owe to Thomas Hubbard the observation that it is tendentious to translate this passage as if the man's presumed homosexuality were the point.) For the story, see parallels at Dio, *Oration* 33. 53, and Anon. Lat. 11, *ad fin.* (which Foerster 1893: i, p. lxxi, thinks might come from Loxus; cf. also Pack 1978: 121, tracing the sneeze back to Aristotle). Dio's version comes from an oration set in Tarsus, and the fact that he attributes the diagnosis to a 'local' led von Arnim to identify Chrysippus (who came from nearby Soli) as its author in this case (see SVF ii. 10a with comment on i. 618). But the explicit naming of Cleanthes in the present text has led to much greater speculation about his interest in physiognomy: see e.g. Foerster (1888a) 511; Misener (1923) 3 (cf. 17); Evans (1969) 10–11. Barton (1994b: 101) uses the present text as the point of departure for her imaginative claim that the 'third-century B.C. Stoic physiognomist Cleanthes makes it his business to unmask charlatans, effeminates, and adulterers'. Cleanthes' association with physiognomy has been further supported by a superficial similarity between an image he uses for the soul at SVF i. 487 and an image reported (probably from Loxus) at Anon. Lat. 2. The similarity is not, however, as close as it at first seems: see again Section III n. 102.

<sup>134</sup> The translation is taken from Schofield (1991), 116. His claim at 115 that the passage is 'one of our best pieces of evidence for Stoic physiognomics' is made immediately questionable by the fact that it describes a pose that anyone (more or less; but cf. n. 135 below on the 'tension' of the limbs) could adopt without sharing the character it is supposed to imply. Nearer the point might be Gleason (1990) 403, who sees it as *advisory*: the passage shows how a 'well-schooled young man would know how to avoid body language that might signal sexual availability'.

T3. Chrysippus says that goods and evils are perceptible, writing this in his *On the End*, book 2: 'The following is a sufficient basis for us to be able to say that goods and evils are perceptible: for not only are passions perceptible, along with their species, such as grief, and fear, and the like, but so also is it possible to perceive theft and adultery and similar; and, in general, folly and cowardice and many other vices; not only joy and good works and many other right actions, but also wisdom and courage and the rest of the virtues' (SVF iii. 85; similarly SVF iii. 84).

T4. The Stoics think that the sage can be grasped as such through perception, using his appearance (*eidos*) as evidence (SVF i. 204).

On the face of it, the language in these texts obviously does coincide with language found in unambiguously physiognomical texts: note especially, for example, the claim in T1 that character (*ēthos*) can be discerned in physical appearance (*eidos*). But it fairly quickly becomes evident that none of these texts refers to, or seems to rely on, anything about the natural geography of the physical body from which their deductions are drawn—the shape of the nose, or the breadth of the forehead: the sort of evidence on which Phaedo and Aristotle relied for their physiognomy, so described. T1 actually seems to rule such evidence out (Cleanthes was baffled when presented with the mere appearance of the man); and both T1 and T2 appeal to movement or posture rather than the shape of bodily parts. As to T4: we know that there are no such physical attributes that distinguish a sage. Apart from anything else, one's physical features do not change when one *becomes* a sage (despite the fact that one is supposed at that moment to become 'beautiful' where one had been ugly before: see Plutarch, *That the Stoics Talk More Absurdly than the Poets* 1058 A).

The key to all of these texts, then, seems to be T3: the quite general claim that virtue(s) and vice(s) can be discerned. It is tempting to explain this in turn by the fact that, according to the Stoics, qualities are corporeal: we might suppose that they can therefore be seen in, as it were, their own right. This cannot exactly be wrong; but at the same time it is important to remember that qualities are not entities separable from the bodies in which they occur. It is probably best, then, to think of them in terms of secondary physical characteristics, encompassing such things as expression and posture (T2).<sup>135</sup> This would fit in with the implication in T3 that they are perceptible in just the way and presumably for just the sort of reasons that emotions are manifest in a person's appearance.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. also Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 11. 15 (the eyes and voice of a man should betray his goodness; see Rutherford 1989: 95–6 with n. 13). It might be proper to think of these 'secondary' characteristics as the manifestations of an individual's *tonos*: compare the youth with limbs 'keyed up like strings under tension' (T2 above). Cf. also Hierocles V. 11–15 (which, as the example shows, is clearly about bearing not physical features as such): 'It is not impossible that someone sufficiently capable in the judgement of characters (*pr(os) e(pi)krisin ēthō(n)*) could, standing near people when asleep, tell from the manner in which a person sleeps what sort of disposition (*d(ia)the(s)is*) the sleeper had—whether it was strong and full of tension (*tonou pl[ē]rēs*) or softer than it ought to be. For those expecting to die [...] even have concern for their corpses to fall decorously, as the girl in the tragedy; so much more will the proofs of their disposition (*tekmēria t(ēs) d(ia)th(es)eōs*) pass over the bodies of those who sleep.' (The 'girl in the tragedy' is Polyxena: cf. Euripides, *Hecuba* 569, with Bastianini and Long 1992: 427–8.)

My conclusion about these texts is that, if they are to be considered evidence for 'physiognomy', it is physiognomy in rather a different sense from what we have seen in Phaedo or Aristotle, in particular because they none of them concern the shape of the body or its parts. But if these texts can fairly quickly be dismissed, they are not the only fragments which constitute our evidence for the Stoics' thinking about the relationship between appearance and character. It happens that the Stoics did also have things to say about the relationship between character and the shape of the body and its parts. In particular, we have clear evidence that Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Panaetius, at least, recognized and addressed the fact (much discussed, as we have seen, by Aristotle) that children tend to resemble their parents in appearance and character. Here is the evidence for Cleanthes and Panaetius—I shall quote and discuss our evidence for Chrysippus at greater length below:

Cleanthes has it that the parents' likeness is reflected in their children—not only through the cast of their body (*corporis lineamentis*), but also the characteristics of the soul (*animae notis*) (SVF i. 518, from Tertullian, *On the Soul* 5).

Not only, says Cleanthes, do we become like our parents in body, but also psychologically, in our passions (*pathē*), characters (*ēthē*), and dispositions (*diatheseis*) (SVF i. 518, from Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man* 2, 20. 14–17 Morani).<sup>136</sup>

Panaetius has it... that souls are born, as our similarity to our parents makes clear—a similarity which appears in our characters (*in ingeniis*), not only our bodies (fr. 83 van Straaten = Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1. 79).

It is nowhere explicit in our texts how the Stoics accounted for the psychological resemblance of children and their parents, but on the basis of what we have seen in Plato and Aristotle there would seem to have been two kinds of approach available to them. One would be to say that the soul acquires its individual character *from* the body. (There is no problem, at least in principle, in explaining why a child has *physical* resemblance to its parents; and if the soul takes its character one way or another from the body, then we can understand how it comes to acquire psychological resemblance to them as well.) In fact I think this must be right, and I shall return to the detail below. But on the face of it, it might seem that the other kind of approach has more going for it. This approach is to say (rather more in the terms of Aristotle) that the lines of causality which lead to psychological similarity with one's parents are *parallel* with the lines of causality which lead to physical similarity with them. This looks like a plausible way of understanding the Stoic claim that children resemble their parents in character as well as appearance because the Stoics did, after all, think that a child's soul is a chip off the old block in as near a literal sense as any

<sup>136</sup> Von Arnim includes a third passage at SVF i. 518 (like the first passage, from Tertullian—this time *On the Soul* 25): 'How can we explain in addition the similarity of psychological character that, according to Cleanthes' testimony, a person shares with their parents if we do not appeal to the seed of the soul?' But note that Cleanthes here is only being invoked as a witness to psychological affinity between parent and child, not for the view that the similarity is traced to the seed. Apart from anything else, this view is associated by Tertullian with a belief in the origin of the soul at conception, a belief not held by the Stoics (as we shall see).

theory of generation has ever allowed. The soul of a child is made out of a piece (or 'fragment': *apospasma*) of the very 'breath' (*pneuma*) from which its father's soul was made (SVF i. 128). It is true that the Stoics talk as if there were an element of *discontinuity* here as well: the *pneuma* inherited from the parents' soul does not, properly speaking, constitute a soul in the embryo, which is conceived of as a kind of 'plant', sustained by 'nature' (*physis*: SVF ii. 806). (We cannot call the *pneuma* which directs the development of the embryo and foetus a 'soul', presumably because the foetus does not have the capacities of perception and impulse characteristic of an animal.) But one might easily think of this as a technicality. When a child is born, its 'soul' is the result of the 'tempering' of its nature, of this very parcel of *pneuma* as it comes into contact with the cold air outside the womb. It is 'tempered' (the comparison is with steel) in a way that allows the creature to take control of itself (SVF ii. 806 again), and it changes from plant to autonomous animal. The idea would be that in some way the unique character of the individual soul is captured and fixed in this process as well. A more elaborate account might describe this character in terms of the 'tension' (*tonos*) transmitted as part of the *pneuma* from parental soul through the embryo's 'nature' to the 'soul' of the child. In any case, there is very clearly a line of physical continuity which the Stoics might have exploited to explain the inheritance of psychological as well as corporeal character.

Whatever the attractions of such a story, however, it is clear that it cannot be right. There are, in fact, two reasons to think that the Stoics did not believe that a person's character was somehow inscribed in the physical nature of the *pneuma* that makes a child's soul. One is a text (not quoted above) which shows that Chrysippus, at least, did not as a matter of fact think it; the other is a consideration from Stoic psychology which makes it impossible that any of the older Stoics might have done. Consider, then, first of all, what Plutarch says of Chrysippus:

Chrysippus adduces as proof that the soul has come into existence, and comes into existence later [sc. than the body], the fact that children become like their parents both in their manner (*tropos*) and their character (*ēthos*) (SVF ii. 806 = Plutarch, *Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1053 CD).

Attempts to deal with this rather obscure passage have tended to operate as if it presents us with two psychological facts which we need to reconcile: (1) that the soul comes into being later than the body;<sup>137</sup> and (2) that children resemble their parents. But these are not two facts in search of reconciliation: they are parts of an argument. The fact that children resemble their parents is *evidence* that the soul comes about later than the body, and this alone seems to forbid us to explain the resemblance by the material substrate of the child's soul. If the character of the soul were explicable by the material from which it was made, then similarity between parent and child could be made *consistent* with the later genesis of the soul, but there is no reason at all why it should be taken to *prove* it. On the contrary: the fact of such similarity would encourage one to suppose that

<sup>137</sup> It is not part of the present argument, but we know from the passage of Plutarch immediately following that it is as late as the moment of birth: *Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1053 CD.

the soul was engendered at conception, or a little later, or at any point in the process whatsoever. I conclude from this that the character of the soul is not straightforwardly to be explained by (or as) some quality of the material from which it is made. There are, in other words, no psychological continuities between the character of the child and that of its parents at all—despite the fact that their respective souls are made out of the same material.

So how does a child acquire the character of its parents if not from the stuff of its soul? I take it that the answer comes in Chrysippus' emphasis on the fact that the soul comes to be *after* the body. If this is supposed to be implied by the fact of psychological resemblance, then it looks very much as if Chrysippus must have thought that the soul derives its character (at least insofar as the child's character is like that of its parents) from the body. The idea would have to be that there is some link between the appearance of the body and the character of the soul so that, insofar as a child's body is like that of its parents, its character comes to be like theirs as well.

One can see the attractions of this solution for him. For one thing—and I take it that this is a large part of the point behind his argument—it would explain why a child comes to resemble its *parents*; that is to say, its *parents* rather than just its father. According to the Stoics, it is from its father's semen that a child grows.<sup>138</sup> But, like Aristotle, the Stoics know that a child can resemble its mother instead of (or as well as) its father, and the way they address this, at least as far as physical resemblance is concerned, is to say that the mother also produces seed which plays a role in the process of gestation. When the male seed is received into the womb, it is brought under the influence of this female seed: Zeno says that it is 'taken hold of by another *pneuma*, part of the female soul' (SVF i. 128). The female seed is not capable of initiating embryonic construction (or of becoming a child); however, it does have its own ideas of how one might go about building a human being and, much as in Aristotle, it occasionally 'prevails' over the father's semen (SVF ii. 749):<sup>139</sup>

The woman too emits seed: and if the woman's seed prevails (*epikratēsēi*), the offspring resembles the mother; but if the man's prevails, it resembles the father.

A child, then, might look like its father and/or mother. But it is presumably a little time after conception that the influences of their various principles start to operate; and a while longer before the direction of embryonic development is

<sup>138</sup> 'Seed' is carefully defined by the Stoics not in terms of its material substance, but in terms of the capacities or principles (e.g. SVF i. 128) for which the moisture acts as a vehicle; which is why the seed might properly be thought of as a fragment of the father's soul or *pneuma* (SVF i. 128; cf. ii. 741).

<sup>139</sup> This, presumably, is the answer to the conflict Diels saw between D.L. 7. 159 (where female seed is said to be 'unproductive', *agonon*) and the fragment that follows (= Aetius 5. 11. 3; see Diels 1879: 423. 5–8 with n.; cf. also von Arnim's n. on SVF ii. 749, §4). Note that all of this is only the start: the Stoics adopted a system very closely analogous to that of Aristotle which involves not only the idea of 'prevailing', but also of 'regression', according to which the characteristics of remoter ancestors can skip generations to recur further down the line. This works for the Stoics because every individual, and so, of course, the seed of every individual, contains the 'principles' of his or her forebears and siblings: to be *this* person is precisely to be the result of a specific line of couplings, so that the principles of all one's ancestors are implied in one's own unique blend. So anyway SVF ii. 747.

fixed in a way which makes it clear which are in the ascendancy. If the character of the soul were to be determined at any point before this (e.g. at conception) then it would be hard to see how a child might be equally disposed to become like its mother *or* its father. In order for this to be possible, it must take the body for whose character they are jointly responsible as its reference-point; and so it comes about later.

It will be objected to my claim (i.e. that the soul must derive its character from the body, at least insofar as its character is like that of its parents) that it leaves open the possibility that Chrysippus might have thought that the soul comes about *with* the body; that its character is determined in *parallel* with the body through the very same process of gestation. Why does Chrysippus insist that psychological resemblance proves that it comes to be *afterwards*? The answer to this involves the consideration that I alluded to earlier as ruling out the possibility that any Stoic might have thought that the material substrate of the soul carries encoding for its character. This is the fact that the Stoics gave a purely *cognitive* account of character. It was simply not open to the Stoics to say (as Aristotle, or again as Phaedo of Elis said) that character is imprinted in the irrational soul at the same time as the body is formed, because they believed that to have any sort of psychological character at all—in the sense of *moral* character, in any case<sup>140</sup>—is to have concepts and beliefs. And concepts and beliefs are not inherited or inheritable or part of your physical development as such. When you are born, your soul is a *tabula rasa*, identical, as far as character is concerned, with everyone else's (SVF ii. 83). And there is more. Not only is the soul empty of cognitive content at birth, but we also know that there is nothing about its physical structure (e.g. its 'tension') that determines its cognitive development—certainly not, for example, anything that would determine *whether or not* a child became vicious in the first place. The Stoics are adamant that the causes of vice are *external* (SVF iii. 228–36; esp. e.g. 235: *all evil comes into the soul from outside*).<sup>141</sup> The provenance of a child's soul turns out to be of no assistance in explaining how the child comes to resemble its parents in character.

And yet we are told that children resemble their parents in psychological character as well as physical appearance. It seems to me that there is only one way left to explain this. If it is due, not to the soul's provenance, but to the beliefs it goes on to form, and given that we can explain by straightforward inheritance how a child comes to *look* like its parents, then it must be the case that the individual's body has an influence on its cognitive development. How this happens is what I now want to investigate.

The body does not generally play a conspicuous role in accounts of the Stoic theory of rationality. When we talk about the development of rationality, we focus on the terms of their empiricism most familiar, perhaps, to us: the *tabula rasa*, the soul's acquisition of primary concepts, and finally the articulation of

<sup>140</sup> This is not to say that the Stoics did not recognize 'natural' differences between people in respect of their mental abilities. So SVF iii. 136–7: among 'preferable' features of the soul are such things as memory and mental acuity.

<sup>141</sup> To talk about the distinctive character of an individual is, of course, to talk of his or her vices: there is only *one* way of being virtuous for the Stoics as for Aristotle (cf. again NE 1106<sup>b</sup>35).

these concepts into a cognitive network capable of active rational analysis (SVF ii. 83). Everyone recognizes that the body has *some* role to play in all of this: it provides the organs of sensation and the means of locomotion; it gives the soul access to the external world on which its cognitive development is based. But I wish to suggest that it does rather more than this too. For a start, it does not merely provide organs of sensation, as if it stands as the soul's window on external events. The body is itself the first *object* of the soul's perception. Furthermore, it is constantly present as an object of perception in *all* (further) acts of perception. The Epicureans, with whom the Stoics explicitly contrast themselves on this score, do indeed believe that perception implies the impact of the external world on an animal's constitution so that it is, from the very first, perception of the external world (cf. Cicero, *On Ends* 1. 30). But the Stoics argue that *self-perception* is a necessary precondition for perception of the world (cf. Cicero, *On Ends* 3. 16). In order to register visual information, for example, I have first to perceive my eyes (and perceive them as mine), and I have to keep perceiving them as I perceive the world through them (Seneca, *Epistle* 121, esp. 5–13).

The Stoics have a technical word to refer to perception which involves self-perception in this way (i.e. all perception of the external world): *synaisthēsis*. The importance of this word, and the theory it identifies, is sometimes obscured by commentators who take it mean 'consciousness' or 'self-awareness' (concepts for which there is in fact little evidence in ancient thought).<sup>142</sup> More recently, A. A. Long has created something of a consensus with his argument that *synaisthēsis* is a straightforward synonym of *self-perception*, explained by him as the Stoic answer to the modern technical notion of 'proprioception'.<sup>143</sup> But the Stoics have other, clearer ways of saying 'self-perception'.<sup>144</sup> The very formation of *synaisthēsis* already suggests something more like 'co-perception', i.e. the perception of one thing along with another, and such a meaning is in fact demanded by the principal evidence we have for the word's use. Consider, for example, the following passage from the *Ethical Principles* by the Stoic Hierocles (who was probably writing in the second century AD). It comes in the context of a discussion by Hierocles of the importance of self-perception. Every animal, he says, perceives *that* it has certain limbs; but it also perceives *what these limbs are for*. He invokes features of ordinary experience to support his point (I. 55–II. 3):

We ourselves [perceive] our eyes and ears and the rest. And so, when we want to see something, we strain our eyes towards the visible thing, not our ears. And when we want to hear, we direct our ears, not our eyes. When we wish to walk, we don't use our hands

<sup>142</sup> 'Consciousness': e.g. Pembroke (1571) 119; cf. Sorabji (1990) 312; 'self-awareness' e.g. Watson (1971) 220.

<sup>143</sup> See esp. Bastianini and Long (1992) 396 on i. 38–9 ('sinonimo'); and wider discussion of the concept of self-perception at 380–90. Cf. Long (1993).

<sup>144</sup> 'Perception of self' being the most obvious: e.g. (ai)stha[n]et(ai) [hea]utou at Hierocles I. 38, etc.; *sensus sui* at Cicero, *On Ends* 3. 16. The Stoics also talked about an animal's perception of its constitution, or of its limbs (or 'parts'). So in Hierocles: to i[on] me[r]r[on] heaut[on] (ai)sthanesth(ai) (I. 48; cf. 51); cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 121. 9 *omnibus constitutionis suae sensus est*. Finally, Hierocles talks about the 'apprehension' an animal has of itself or its limbs/parts: [tēs heaut[on]... a[n]tilēpseōs at V. 30 (cf. I. 44–6).

for this, but our feet and the whole of our legs. In the same way, we don't use our feet but our hands when we want to take or give something. Hence the first proof that an animal perceives its whole self is co-perception (syn(ai)sthēsis) of the limbs and the functions for which they are provided.

*Synaisthēsis* is introduced here as a *proof* of the primacy of self-perception—not as a synonym for it. And the proof is precisely that our perception of external objects *involves* or *could not happen without* perception of our organs as well.<sup>145</sup>

Co-perception, then, is an important concept in the Stoic understanding of perception quite generally. But, as will quickly become apparent, there are implications here that go well beyond the science of perception. In particular, co-perception might also help us to explain the characters that animals display by helping to explain the evaluations they make about the world. Cicero notes at the beginning of his account of Stoic ethics (*On Ends* 3. 16) that an animal is no sooner born than it is concerned for its own preservation; by extension it is attracted to things necessary for its survival (the Stoic term for this attraction, applied primarily to the animal's constitution, and derivatively to the things that benefit it, is *oikeiōsis*, usually translated as 'appropriation'). Correlatively, an animal hates and avoids things which are harmful to it. But how does it know which things are harmful and which beneficial?<sup>146</sup> It must be through co-perception, since the notions of 'benefit' and 'harm' are, of course, relative to the individual constitution. The impression a panda receives of bamboo, for example, will be a favourable one, because the external data reporting the bamboo registers along with the panda's perception of itself as a constitution in need of the sustenance bamboo can provide. There is nothing mysterious about this: a panda is constitutionally adapted to benefit from bamboo, and its being so adapted (its constitution) is the very thing that makes the external data (the appearance, texture, taste, etc. of the bamboo) register as a favourable impression. Or, to put it another way (and from the subjective viewpoint), the panda *co-perceives* the bamboo as something beneficial. A fox has a different constitution, and bamboo registers less favourably with it than chickens... and so on. It turns out, in fact, that one has a remarkably rich sense of one's

<sup>145</sup> A further demonstration that *synaisthēsis* means 'co-perception' rather than 'self-perception' can be found in the fact that the word can have as its stated object *either* the animal's constitution, *or* the feature of the external world perceived in relation to it. So at *Ethical Principles* II. 37–8, the toad is said to have *synaisthēsis* of a distance: *tou poson ek[te]inct[ai] (ai) d[ia]stēma syn(ai)sthanet(ai)* (the idea being that it can perceive without calculation whether it is capable of leaping that far). In this case, one would produce nonsense if one translated the word as 'self-perception'. It is true that, when Hierocles introduces a subsection purporting to show that co-perception continues uninterrupted (III. 55–6), his conclusion is that *self-perception* continues without a break (IV. 44; cf. V. 30). But this only shows that self-perception is of real interest to Hierocles insofar as it is entailed by co-perception: his demonstration that co-perception continues shows *a fortiori* that self-perception does.

<sup>146</sup> Here and in what follows I am speaking a bit loosely: animals do not strictly 'know' anything at all; nor do they conceptualize the objects of the perception in the rational terms implied by my description (e.g. SVF ii. 83). On the other hand (as the same fragment makes clear), 'animal' perception is the first stage on the route to the acquisition of human rationality, and we might think of the mental disposition of the animal relative to the object of its (co-)perception as the primitive precursor of rational concepts.

relationship with the external environment in virtue of co-perception. In a famous example from Hierocles, a chick does not need to learn that weasels and hawks are dangerous, but *perceives* them as such from the start—though it remains unflustered in the presence of a bull.<sup>147</sup>

In general, it seems that the 'character' of animals, expressed in the elemental terms of their inclinations to pursue and avoid certain things, can be understood in terms of the co-perception each has of the world—which is to say, in terms of the impressions that external data make when viewed through the filter of their particular physical constitution. Animals, it is true, do not have *moral* characters: they lack the rationality necessary to make judgements about what is, in a strict sense, 'good' or 'bad'. But it is a small step to suppose that the judgements individual human beings make about the good and the bad are based in precisely the same way on their (co-)perception of what is harmful and beneficial to them. In this case, we can see at last how the moral character developed by an individual might be based precisely on their experience of their physical constitution.<sup>148</sup>

It might seem that this immediately provides an opening for a Stoic physiognomy (assuming, anyway, that the relevant features of the individual's constitution have manifestations in his or her outward appearance). But before hastening to this conclusion, there is a vital qualification to be made. I have suggested that the development of rationality in human beings allows them to redescribe what is constitutionally beneficial and harmful for them as what is, respectively, 'good' and 'bad'. The trouble is that rationality, when it develops, is itself part of the nature of human beings and something that enters into their co-perception of the world. And it is not just a part of their nature, but (once they have it) their defining feature. As such, mature human beings are supposed to care above all for the preservation of themselves as *rational beings*—even if this is at the expense of their physical constitutions. What is co-perceived as 'good' ought to be just what is conducive to a rational life: and what is conducive to a rational life is virtuous action. Humans, then, are supposed, by the very process of co-perception and appropriation I have been outlining, to develop the belief that virtue, and virtue alone, is good, and that vice alone is bad. To this extent, differences in physical constitution can make no difference to the moral character individuals develop—at least in the sense that they cannot determine whether a person becomes virtuous or vicious at all.

<sup>147</sup> Hierocles III. 40–3; the example recurs at Seneca, *Epistle* 121. 18 (and cf. perhaps Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals* 9. 40 for a similar point).

<sup>148</sup> Hence there are texts which say that one's physical temperament influences one's character; and we can now see why this would not contradict their insistence that character is a matter of the rational beliefs one holds. So e.g. Chrysippus at SVF ii. 950–1 (= Cicero, *On Fate* 7–9; cf. Sedley 1993: 331 for the alternative suggestion that the atmosphere may have a *direct* effect on the *pneuma* constitutive of one's soul and thereby on one's character); Panaetius fr. 76 van Straaten = Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 162. 11–15 Diehl (arguing for a literal interpretation of Plato's claim that intelligence might be causally related to the nature of the environment); Seneca, *On Anger* 2. 19 (*et morum varietates mixtura elementorum facit*; cf. Klíbanky, Panofsky, and Saxl 1964: 56).

This qualification is very important; but it by no means undermines the role that perception of the body plays in *shaping* the character of someone who has, by whatever cause, become vicious. There is an interesting parallel here with Plato, which may help to understand the point. As we saw in Section II, Plato too denied that one's moral character was in any absolute sense determined by the body, since physical influences on character were (supposed to be) counterbalanced by the activity of reason. But he also thought that the body *becomes* a determining factor in the development of moral character if and when reason was weakened or undermined by, for example, a bad education. Something similar, I suggest, is the case with the Stoics. In the 'normal' case, i.e. the case in which everything happens as it ought, and one grows up with right reason, the Stoics argue that there is no room at all for the development of vice. We should expect in this case that everyone would grow up with an identical moral character, namely a virtuous character. But suppose now that something goes wrong: that a person is subject to, for example, a bad education which positively leads him or her away from the insight that virtue alone is good (see again SVF iii. 228–36 as cited above). What fills the void? What *does* such a person start to think is 'good'? Presumably, just those things that were the object of appropriation in his or her pre-rational life.<sup>149</sup> In general, what such people in their pre-rational lives co-perceived (rightly) as harmful and beneficial with respect to their physical constitution will become in their mistaken view of things 'evil' and 'good' respectively. This will explain the diverse range of moral characters that manifest themselves even among groups of people whose educational influences have been broadly identical. All of them have been diverted from achieving the proper understanding of themselves as essentially *rational* creatures (that is, creatures able to direct their activities according to a rational understanding of the wider cosmos). This means that their self-understanding is *retarded* in a certain way: although it has become rational, it remains fixated on the local needs of the physical constitution, not the capacities engendered in the organism by the very presence of reason. But, as individual physical constitutions differ from each other, so then will the beliefs individuals start to form about what is good and bad. Those who perceive themselves as rather weak might become more timid, because they will co-perceive more things in the world as potentially harmful; others (one might think of the example in Plato, *Timaeus* 86c of a person suffering from a

<sup>149</sup> It might be objected that a better answer will be found in the very features of the person's education that led them off course in the first place: as, for example, a person might become not just vicious but *greedy* because they were brought up in a society that placed a high value on wealth. This is relevant, but it cannot be the whole story, or even the greatest part of it. For one thing it fails to account for the fact that people become *ceteris paribus* like their parents; for another, it leaves us to explain why, in such a society, one person becomes *greedier* than another. In general, the idea seems to be that a society can very easily stop a person from reaching the 'natural' conclusion that virtue is (the only) good; but only because it has all the years until the development of his or her rationality to do so—which means at least 7 years (SVF ii. 83), and perhaps 14 (when rationality is 'perfected': SVF ii. 764). Its scope to come between a person and his or her self-perception as a *physical* creature is rather less broad, however, since this is something that begins from the moment of birth.

super-abundance of seed) might become rather lustful if they see the world through the filter of their constitutional inclination to sexual activity... and so on.<sup>150</sup>

One's constitution, then, cannot cause one to stray from the path of virtue; but if external influences nudge one away from it, it will, through the mechanism of (co-)perception, play the leading role in shaping the vicious moral character one forms instead. And if physiognomy featured in the thought of earlier Stoicism, this must have been its opening: this is the only way that a Stoic could have supposed that differences between the characters of individuals might exhibit any sort of regular correspondence with differences in their physical attributes. But did the early Stoics themselves recognize the opening and commit themselves to physiognomy? My answer will be that they did not—and (as it will turn out) for illuminating reasons. But in order to see what these reasons were, it is first necessary to consider the different approach to psychology adopted by the one Stoic who, we are told, did make use of physiognomical data: Posidonius of Rhodes (c.135–51 BC).

## (ii) Posidonius

The extent of Posidonius' disagreement with earlier Stoics has become a matter of hot debate. Galen, on whom we are heavily dependent for our evidence, has an axe of his own to grind and a motive to exaggerate any difference there might have been, leading to a real question over the degree to which his testimony can be trusted.<sup>151</sup> But unless one takes the extreme (and unkind) view that Galen has not just exaggerated, but actually fabricated the existence of any theoretical difference between Posidonius and his predecessors at all, there is one respect in which it seems that he must have differed—the only, or the simplest way to explain all other differences rightly or wrongly ascribed to him. On my view, he must have differed in his analysis of 'appropriation'.

<sup>150</sup> Another example: anger is defined as the desire to punish perceived offenders (SVF iii. 395, 398). It is also understood to be a boiling of the blood about the heart (SVF ii. 878; 3. 416; cf. 2. 886 and 900 for our *synaisthēsis* of activity in the chest during occasions of anger). So what makes one non-sage more inclined to anger than another? (A sage, as it happens, never thinks anger appropriate.) I am suggesting that it is the fact that his or her blood is, for example, hotter—in any case, readier to boil. This makes such folk constitutionally more inclined to initiate themselves the punishment which even the cool-headed might wish for their enemies. For this reason, they value enacting the punishment: they *desire* to do the punishing. It might be thought tempting to phrase these examples more simply in terms of the *pleasure* produced in different constitutions by different activities. (Cf. perhaps Cicero, *On Fate* 8; SE, PH 1. 80; also Aristides Quintilianus, *On Music* 2. 8, 67. 15–68. 13 Winnington-Ingram.) In this case, we could say that the coward takes greater pleasure in comfort, the pugilist in the adrenalin rush of danger and extreme physical activity, and so forth. However, this would, according to the normal meaning of 'pleasure' in the context of ancient philosophy, be misleading. In fact the Stoics supposed that even fools act to preserve their *nature* as they understand it (albeit their understanding is wrong). Only incidentally is it *ever* *pleasure* they seek.

<sup>151</sup> See especially Kidd (1971); Cooper (1998); Gill (1998); Sorabji (2000) 93–32, 255–60; Tieleman (2003), esp. chs. 4–5. Of these, Tieleman is most extreme in denying significant doctrinal divergence between Posidonius and Chrysippus.

As we saw above, the earlier Stoics thought that appropriation was directed towards a single goal: the preservation of one's nature. This is the object of appropriation for every animal, and it is the object of appropriation from the moment of birth. But in the case of human beings, most strikingly, this has the effect (as we have seen above) that the particular objects of our striving change as our nature, or more precisely our perception of our nature, changes. This is most striking in the case of human beings because the development of rationality between the ages of 7 and 14 constitutes the most radical change undergone by any animal in the course of its natural development. The result of it ought to be that we come to perceive ourselves as rational beings and to value only what preserves our rational natures—*whatever the consequences for our bodies*. It is true that as a matter of fact most adults care as much about their physical well-being as any animal or child; but this does not undermine the position that appropriation is directed towards the preservation of one's nature: it only shows that they have somehow become confused about their nature.<sup>152</sup>

Posidonius, it seems, did not agree with this analysis of appropriation. From the first, he argued, appropriation is directed not towards *nature*, under that description, but towards *pleasure* and *victory* (158, 160, 161 EK). Assuming that Posidonius based his understanding of appropriation on co-perception, as the earlier Stoics did, we can rephrase this by saying that, according to Posidonius, an animal does not co-perceive things as beneficial to its nature as a certain kind of animal; rather, it co-perceives them as satisfying specific constitutional needs—the need to make good some lack, for example; or to secure itself against a potentially hostile environment.

The difference in Posidonius' analysis of appropriation is no doubt to be explained in part by reflection on the grammar of impulse and appropriation, the proper terms in which to describe their objects;<sup>153</sup> but it has advantages for his ethics more widely as well. For one important consequence of replacing appropriation towards 'nature' with appropriative inclinations towards victory and pleasure in explaining the behaviour of young children is that one does not have to think of the changes that come about with the development of reason in terms of their *modification*.<sup>154</sup> Rather, Posidonius is able to suggest that what happens at this point is that the creature (now an adult human) acquires an *additional* object of appropriation, namely the good. In virtue of their

<sup>152</sup> Note that I am not ascribing to Chrysippus a view that one ever loses concern for one's own physical constitution or self-preservation, in a way sometimes suggested by his critics, as in Cicero, *On Ends* 4, esp. 26–9. (Galen's claim that Chrysippean *oikeiōsis* is only directed towards the *good* involves exactly the same distortion: cf. Tieleman 2003: 221–2.) But what does happen, ideally, is that one changes and enlarges one's view of what the physical constitution is *for*, what constitutes its proper use and preservation.

<sup>153</sup> He might have considered, for example, that although the term 'natural' is an important part of the extensional description of the objects of our appropriation, it is wrong to think of it as relevant to their intensional description. One desires things under the description of them as 'pleasurable', or 'noble', not as 'natural'—even though it might turn out that it is their being natural that explains why they seem pleasurable or noble to us.

<sup>154</sup> They can be modified, though, viz by habituation (e.g. F165. 172–89 EK)—and hence indirectly by reason (among other things).

rationality, adult human beings co-perceive external objects not only in terms of the pleasure and security that they might bring to their physical constitution, but also in terms of whether their pursuit of them will satisfy the wider good (what is good for the cosmos as a whole) with which rationality is properly concerned. Like the earlier Stoics, Posidonius thinks that a rational being should come to see that his nature enables him to do what is, objectively speaking, 'best' despite the subjective inclinations of his constitution, and that to live consistently in this way is the only path to happiness (cf. F185–7 EK); but unlike them, he thinks that even someone who succeeds in doing this, even a sage, will retain his or her original senses of appropriation towards pleasure and victory, his or her co-perception of the world in these terms.

All this enables Posidonius to explain much more satisfactorily (as he thinks) some key phenomena of our mature ethical lives, in particular the vexed question of why people so consistently become vicious when vice is supposed to be the one evil recognized by a rational nature. If the earlier Stoics were right, said Posidonius, it ought to be no easier to corrupt people into vice than to convince them that pain is desirable (cf. F35, 169. 1–77 EK). Posidonius' explanation for this simply involves appeal to our continuous appropriation towards pleasure and victory, our co-perception of the world in these terms as well as in terms of what is 'good'. For the fact that we *always*, continuously, perceive the world in these terms just because we (co-)perceive the world through a particular constitution, the fact that we thereby have an inclination towards pleasure and victory which is ineliminable whatever our understanding of what is *good* and *right*, leads to our having what Posidonius calls 'affective movements' (*pathētikai kinēseis*: F169. 101–3 EK)—something like *inclinations* to act in a certain way, namely just the way in which an animal or child would act in pursuit of pleasure or victory.<sup>155</sup> It is important that although, on my account, these movements must be strictly *non-rational* (animals and children have them too), they are nevertheless based in cognitive processes, specifically the process of (co-)perception. It would be wrong, then, to think of them as distinct, *ir-rational* powers, as Galen implies. Nor do they constitute distinct sources of *impulse* in adult humans: we know that Posidonius agreed with earlier Stoics that impulse required rational assent and to this extent remained squarely in the hands of reason.<sup>156</sup> But they do form an important and persistent part

<sup>155</sup> Posidonius seems himself to have talked of an 'emotional pull': so Galen at F 169. 80 EK (*pathētikē holkē*), but also Seneca at F170. 16–17 (*non irriterant tantum animos sed adtrahentem*). Cf. F186, where Posidonius makes it part of the definition of virtue that one is 'led (*agomenon*) by the irrational part of the soul in nothing'. One can believe, by the way, that all this enables Posidonius to refine the Stoic account of emotions (i.e. by taking these 'emotional pulls' into account when explaining their origin, object, and intensity) without being seduced by Galen into thinking that Posidonius actually *broke* with the account of the emotions given by Chrysippus. To this extent, I agree with Tieleman (2003), chs. 4–5—who argues, however, that there is, in effect, no difference between them at all.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. F154 EK with Tieleman (2003) 278–83; also Cooper (1998), esp. 87–8 with note 37, defending the received text of *PHP* V 5. 21, 320. 23–8 De Lacy against emendations at F169. 77–82 EK which force it to provide the only evidence that affective movements could, after all, initiate impulse. Sorabji (2000) 104–5 suggests that Posidonius 'denied judgement in some cases of emotion,

of our perception of the world, a real bias in the information used, in the case of rational creatures, as the basis for decision-making. This is why there is no need to appeal to external pressures, by which the earlier Stoics (as we saw) had to explain the birth of vice in an individual: the 'affective movements', the inclinations to action born of our co-perception of the world, exert an *internal* pressure on reason to accede in valuing the objects of their inclination (F35 EK).

But there is more to be said than this. If it turns out that there is an internal cause of our deviation from the path to virtue, that very cause also explains the character of our deviation. As in general co-perception means that we see certain things in the world as pleasurable and glorious, so the particular things in which individuals glory or take pleasure will depend on their particular way of co-perceiving the world—the variable factor being their self-perception, the character of their physical constitution as they perceive it. In this case, it is no surprise if Posidonius thought that the environment could affect character, just insofar as it affects our constitution (F169. 88–96; tr. Kidd 1999: 234, modified).<sup>157</sup>

And environment contributes to considerable differences in human character with regard to cowardice, daring, love of pleasure or toil; the grounds for this are that the affective movements of the soul follow always the physical state, which is altered in no small degree from the temperature in the environment. For he [sc. Posidonius] makes the point too that even the blood in animals differs in warmth and coldness, thickness and thinness, and in a considerable number of other different ways, a topic which Aristotle developed at length.

If all this is right, then the psychology of Posidonius seems to be a little closer to that of Phaedo of Elis (at least as described in Section I) than to that of Plato. It is not a thoroughgoing reductionism, since reason remains free; but the appropriative inclinations towards pleasure and victory *are* determined by the body. And in the passage immediately preceding that just quoted, we learn that Posidonius produced evidence to support his revised psychology—evidence, that is, from physiognomy (F169. 82–8 EK, tr. Kidd):

Posidonius said that, while a creature's impulse was sometimes born in the judgmental decision of the rational faculty, most often it occurs in the movement of the emotional faculty (*kinēsei tou pathētikou*). Posidonius reasonably attaches to this discussion physiognomical evidence (*ta kata tēn physiognōmonian phainomena*): all broad-chested

but saw judgement as being present in the standard cases'; but the text on which he bases this qualified claim (F34. 9–12 EK) only says that emotions are not, and do not supervene on, judgement as the earlier Stoics thought. This is quite right, since emotions *as such* (and as opposed to *merely* false judgement) are rather (and always) determined by the presence of an affective movement. The fact that animals and children are subject to emotions without judgement—cf. Sorabji (2000) 127–9—does not prove that the same will be true of adult humans. Aristotle at least supposed that the non-rational parts of the soul which govern animal behaviour cannot dictate impulse in the presence of deliberate choice—hence the problem, for him, of *akrasia*.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. also 153 EK. One might—though I am suggesting there is no need to—be suspicious of the implication that this represents Posidonius fairly, not least because of Galen's own sympathy for the kind of reductionist psychology implied here (cf. Section V).

and warmer creatures and humans are more spirited by nature, the broad-hipped and colder, more cowardly. And environment...

### (iii) Physiognomical Conclusion

Physiognomy, then, supports Posidonius' psychology. But note that, on my account, Posidonius' understanding of the differences between different characters, and the reasons why these differences will tend to align with differences in physical appearance, is not the same as that of the earlier Stoics. Posidonius, it turns out, is committed to the belief that an individual has an innate, non-rational character rooted in the body. (This for him is what it would mean to say, as on my reconstruction he might have done, that our senses of appropriation to pleasure and victory are based on our co-perception of the body.) The earlier Stoics rejected altogether the notion of an 'innate' character, let alone one that was inscribed in the individual's physiology. All they were prepared to say was that co-perception of the body will often help explain the vicious character we acquire—if, owing to a corrupted upbringing, we acquire any vicious character at all. In fact the difference between them on the question of character-formation is very closely akin to the difference we have already seen between Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle (and Phaedo, for that matter; and both like Posidonius) thought that character was innate, and Aristotle's thinking this is at the root of his exploration of physiognomy. Plato, on the other hand (and like the earlier Stoics) believed that the body could influence the direction in which the vice developed, but could not account for the appearance of vice in the first place. Is it coincidence, then, that Posidonius and Aristotle explicitly accept 'physiognomy' as a consequence of their respective psychologies, while the word is absent from all of our evidence for Plato and for earlier Stoicism?

As I observed when discussing Plato, the ability to say what a person would tend to be like if he or she happened not to be virtuous is not a bad starting-point for someone wishing to make a living by predicting character from appearance: most people are not virtuous, after all. And we do in fact have evidence that the Stoics recognized the ability of the sage to make predictions about how a person might turn out on the basis of physical appearance (SVF iii. 716):<sup>158</sup>

The sage will love young men, those displaying through their appearance a nature well-disposed towards the acquisition of virtue (*tōn emphainontōn dia tou eidous tēn pros aretēn euphuian*)—as Zeno says in his *Republic*, Chrysippus in *On Lives* 1, and Apollodorus in his *Ethics*.

<sup>158</sup> This fragment, then, is different in kind from those (discussed earlier) in which the sage is said to be able to perceive actual virtues and vices. It might be thought that the term *euphuia* itself represents a quality—perhaps the pre-rational analogue to virtue in a rational adult. But the similarity of language with that used in the Stoic definition of love at SVF iii. 650 suggests that the children the Stoics have in mind here are themselves old enough (i.e. at least 14) to be intellectually mature. Cf. perhaps also SVF iii. 690 (certainly referring to adults): 'Anyone who is intelligent will rule, at times, and live with a king who displays both a good nature and a love of learning (*kai eiphuian emphainonti kai philomatheian*).' Cf. on the term Ioppolo (1980) 120–3.

The idea, I take it, is that the sage would tell from the physical appearance whether the particular vices towards which the youth will tend (given that he is vicious) are of such a character or of such intensity as to prevent a realistic hope of rehabilitation.<sup>159</sup> (We shall see something very similar among Neoplatonists later on.) And again, this fragment could be adduced in support of the position that the Stoics were physiognomists. Yet the more such evidence is produced (and we have seen quite a lot by now, albeit drawn in fact from rather different contexts) the more striking is the absence of the word 'physiognomy'; and the comparison with Plato, and the contrast with Phaedo, Aristotle, and Posidonius, may now suggest a reason why we should never have expected it in the first place. It seems that '*physio*-gnomy' (etymologically speaking, the knowledge of someone's *nature*) is restricted to cases which involve the discussion of a *natural* or innate moral character—something whose existence is denied by Plato and the earlier Stoics. Physiognomy is about the way someone is constitutionally set up to be and not, as we might have been inclined to suppose, whatever character a person happens to have acquired.

As Phaedo well knew, a person's character, or at any rate behaviour, might change—something which the handbooks of practical physiognomy have to take into account, which is why they do indeed encourage us to look at things such as gait and gesture which might be thought to develop in the wake of, and so provide evidence for, the development of character. The fact that Phaedo, Aristotle, and Posidonius accept 'physiognomy' does not mean that predictions of character made on the basis of their psychological model would be any more successful (that is, successful more often) than predictions made on the basis of Plato's psychology, or that of the Stoics. Nevertheless, it makes complete sense from a theoretical point of view that the word is restricted to their systems. What is philosophically interesting about physiognomy is not so much the question of whether the state of soul can affect the appearance of the body, but the question of how, and how closely, the individual soul is bound up with the individual body at a fundamental level. In this case, of course, what is intriguing is precisely the possibility that there might be some correlation between involuntary physical characteristics (the size of limbs and the colour of the eyes) and the 'original' character of the soul. It is the elucidation of such correlations which distinguishes physiognomy properly speaking.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>159</sup> The Stoics debated among themselves how quickly to give up: SVF iii. 366 asks whether sages are born or made as well (by which, presumably, we should understand the question whether the ability to overcome the corruption of society is equally present in everyone), and suggests a division between Stoics who thought that a 'favourable disposition' and 'good breeding' (*eugeneia*) are innate, and those who thought that these first steps towards virtue could be taught as well.

<sup>160</sup> This narrower technical understanding of 'physiognomy' might, then, be compared with cases in the Arabic tradition where 'physiognomic inference cannot be based on signs that do not belong to the realm of temperament': see Ghersetti below, p. 304.

## V. MEDICAL WRITERS

Medical writers of works on physiognomy: Loxus (fragments: Origen, *Against Celsus* 1. 33; Anon. Lat. *Physiognomy* 1. 2, 12, 48, 80–1, 89, 117, 133); Adamantius. Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in medical writings: Hippocrates, chapter titles to *Epidemics* 2. 5 and 6; fragment ap. Ps.-Galen, *Prognostica de decubitu* xix. 530. 5–6, 9, 10 Kühn; Galen, *On Temperaments* i. 624. 3 Kühn; QAM 54. 20, 55. 8, 63. 1–2 Müller; PHP 5. 5. 22. 2; cf. *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics* VI, 7–8 (53) Ghersetti 1999a (=426. 37–8 Wenkebach and Pfaff) (fīrāsa). De Lacy. Palladius, *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics* ii. 124. 32, 195. 11 Dietz. Stephanus, *Commentary on Galen's Book on Therapy 'For Glaucon'* i. 252. 2 Dietz. Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in contexts possibly derived from medical sources: SE, PH 1. 85; Suda s.v. *diathesis* (δ 556). Other occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in contexts linking physiognomy and medicine: Clement, *Stromata* 1. 21. 135. 2. 3; Fulgentius, *Contents of Virgil* 84. 10–11 Helm.

## (i) The Hippocratic Corpus

The meagre evidence we have might be taken to suggest that the notion of physiognomy as a practical art was reasonably familiar in Athens as early as the fifth century BC;<sup>161</sup> but in the course of this study, I have argued that it became an object of theoretical interest only in the fourth century, when developments in philosophical psychology led to a new interest in the relationship between the soul and the body. (Even then, I have argued, physiognomy did not present itself as a given, a system of *data* to which philosophers felt they had to argue. Rather, the theoretical possibility of physiognomy emerged as a consequence of a certain kind of view of the soul: specifically, a view of the soul according to which its 'natural' character was linked in a fundamental way with the natural character of the body.)

There is, however, a case to be made for a slightly different view of the matter. It is, in fact, commonly assumed that the emergence of physiognomy in a theoretical context is rather older than I have argued, and that the context into which it emerged was not (as such) philosophical, but *medical*.<sup>162</sup> Galen actually tells us that physiognomy was invented by Hippocrates;<sup>163</sup> the word 'physiognomy' appears to have its first attestations in Hippocratic literature;<sup>164</sup> and there is a wealth of apparently 'physiognomical' material scattered throughout the Hippocratic Corpus. On numerous occasions from numerous different angles

<sup>161</sup> See again Introduction n. 4.

<sup>162</sup> e.g. Foerster (1893) i, pp. xiv f.; Misener (1924) 104; Megow (1963) 220; Evans (1969) 17–18; André (1981) 9, 16; Stok (1992) 506; Raina (1993) 13–19; Barton (1994b) 97–9, 169–70; Degkwitz (1996b) 25–7; Böck (2000) 62. Vogt (1999) 108–13 gives the most realistic (because the most non-committal) overview of the relationship between physiognomy and medicine.

<sup>163</sup> For the claim see QAM 57. 11–13. 6 Müller. For the highly selective reading of *Airs, Waters, Places* [AWP] that follows, see esp. Lloyd (1988) 23, 28–31 (and cf. Flashar 1966: 27; Singer 1992: 136).

<sup>164</sup> 'Appears', because none of the (three) occurrences of the word (in chapter titles to *Epidemics* 2. 5 and 6, and in a Hippocratic fragment ap. Ps.-Galen, *de decubitu* xix. 530. 5–6, 9, 10 Kühn) are beyond the suspicion of inauthenticity. See further below.

<sup>165</sup> e.g. *Internal Affections* 48; *Aphorisms* 2. 33, 6. 23. Cf. esp. Di Benedetto (1986) 35–69; Gundert (2000), esp. 30–1 with notes.

the relationship between the physical and the psychological is explored: certain physical pathologies have psychological symptoms, for example;<sup>165</sup> and psychological activity, conversely, can have an effect at the physiological level.<sup>166</sup> The treatise *On the Sacred Disease* famously provides a physiological basis for psychological activity quite generally; and it is not the only work to suggest that aspects of psychological character are linked to particular physiological dispositions.<sup>167</sup> On occasion, Hippocratic texts even tell us how aspects of a person's character can be discerned from rather specific physical traits.<sup>168</sup>

There is, however, a significant gap between the material identified as 'physiognomical' in the Hippocratic Corpus and the philosophical discussions of physiognomy which are supposed to follow in its wake. For one thing, this material is largely premised on an interest in correlations between *mental activity* and *physiology*, and it is not at all clear that this is the same thing as, or even very similar to, the physiognomist's investigation of links between *psychological character* and *outward appearance*. It is easy to underestimate the importance of this point, because one might think that it is precisely the suggestion that there is a link between mental activity and physiology that represents the theoretical breakthrough for physiognomy. The trouble is that this would be so—that it would be *physiognomy* for which it represented a theoretical breakthrough—only if the Hippocratic texts *also* offered a general explanation of physical appearance in terms of a person's underlying physiology. In this case, of course, we should be able to see that something linked appearance and mental state (namely the underlying physiology of the individual). This is just the sort of explanation we find later on in Galen and after him (as Antonella Ghersetti shows in Ch. 7 of this volume) in the Arabic tradition. But the truth is that there is nothing of the sort in the Hippocratic corpus.<sup>169</sup>

There are, to be sure, occasions when (quite apart from claims about the person's underlying physiology) outward appearance *is* linked to psychological characteristics; but these cases, now, are too isolated to amount to anything

<sup>166</sup> e.g. *Epidemics* 2. 4. 4; 6. 5. 5. Fuller lists at Gundert (2000) 29–30 with notes.

<sup>167</sup> According to *The Sacred Disease*, thought (*phronēsis*) is a product of air, whose primary seat in the body is the brain (esp. 19); if the brain is diseased, then psychological functions are disturbed (cf. on this e.g. Hüffmeier 1961, esp. 51–61). In *Regimen* 1, the soul is a blend of fire and water (1. 7, 25) which determines both how 'feminine' or 'masculine' the soul is (the moister it is, the more feminine: 1. 27–8, 34), and how intelligent (1. 35). A looser correlation between racial characteristics of body and soul is suggested in the second part of AWP—at least, the environment is a factor in shaping each; though the author of AWP does not invoke a mechanism connecting psychological and physiological changes (cf. Lloyd 1988: 28–9). Further on the relationship between the 'psychological' and the 'physical' in the Hippocratic corpus (though emphasizing that the categories are not clearly distinct for its authors): Miller (1948); Pigeaud (1981); (1987); Gundert (2000).

<sup>168</sup> e.g. *Epidemics* 2. 5. 16; 2. 6. 1 (unblinking eyes: the same word, *askardamyktos*, occurs in Ad. A21); 2. 6. 14 (but only if one takes it, as some in antiquity did, that the word *katakorea*, applied here to the chest, means 'hairy' rather than 'congested' or suchlike: see Galen, *Commentary on Epidemics* 1 and 2 384. 11–14. Wenkebach and Pfaff); 6. 4. 19 (cf. prominent veins at Ps.-Aristotle 812<sup>a</sup>29); 6. 7. 6.

<sup>169</sup> For Galen (as for the Arabic tradition which relies on him) it is the (temperament of the humours which is the denominator common to physi(ologi)cal and psychological types; but no such connection is made even in those Hippocratic works which employ humoral theory. See on this e.g. Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saül (1964) 8–15; Flashar (1966) 21–46 (esp. 35).

one might think of as indicative of 'physiognomical' interest. They are neither empirically systematic, nor theoretically significant.<sup>170</sup> Of course, it would be possible for someone acquainted with 'physiognomy' from other contexts (for example the systematic claims of practitioners such as Zopyrus) to use the word in describing aspects of Hippocratic medicine insofar as they happen to resemble it. Indeed, this might be precisely what is happening when the word 'physiognomy' is used in the titles of two chapters of the *Epidemics* (2. 5 and 2. 6) which happen to contain examples of diagnosis in which the patient's mental state can be deduced from their appearance.<sup>171</sup> It might also be the best way to explain a notorious passage in Ps.-Galen, *de decubitu* xix. 530. 5–10 Kühn, where Hippocrates is quoted as having said that 'the judgement of those who practise medicine but have no share in physiognomy (*physiognōm* < *on* > *ie*) rambles in the dark getting old and sluggish'.<sup>172</sup> The passage is difficult, because Ps.-Galen takes this reference to 'physiognomy' as evidence for Hippocrates' interest in *astrology*, but we could perhaps understand what is going on if we imagine that early physiognomical practitioners did as a matter of fact link a person's character and appearance with his or her astrological chart.<sup>173</sup> In this case, 'Hippocrates' could have used the word 'physiognomy' in a loose sense as a kind of shorthand for his interest in the effects of the environment, including the heavens, on the psycho-physical nature of an individual.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Particular examples of supposedly 'physiognomical' inference in Hippocrates are either impressionistic (as *Regimen* 1) or else sporadic (examples as in n. 168 above; also *Epidemics* 2. 5. 1 and 2. 5. 6). For the lack of a theoretical mechanism on which a physiognomy might be based, see again n. 169 above. Hippocratic writers who tackle the question of how the physical characteristics of an individual arise explain them in terms of a child's resemblance to its parents through the theory of 'pangenesis' (according to which seed from the parents is drawn from all parts of their respective bodies). However, none of the texts which discuss this theory (*On Seed*; cf. AWP 14, *Sacred Disease* 5; possibly *Regimen* 1. 7; cf. Dean-Jones 1994: 162 n. 46) links the child's particular physical characteristics with its particular psychological state.

<sup>171</sup> The title to *Epidemics* 2. 5 is *Physiognōmonīē* (Littre's apparatus says 'φυσιογνωμῖα aut φασιογνωμοσύνη L'); that to 2. 6 is *Physiognōmonikon* (and in the apparatus: 'φασιογνωμονικός C—φασιογνωμονικός δεύτερος D'). The word *Physiognōmonīē* has authentic dialectal form, but it is nevertheless possible to doubt that the titles are original. In particular, Galen shows no indication of knowing them. One might think that he could have appealed to them in support of his claim in QAM that Hippocrates invented physiognomy; but he mentions them neither in his commentaries on the *Epidemics*, nor in his discussions of physiognomy.

<sup>172</sup> Again, the authenticity of the quotation is open to suspicion (Diels 1910; Heeg 1911); though there is no urgent reason to doubt it, and it is presumably not an invention of Ps.-Galen, at least, since is not obviously to his point. He is attempting to demonstrate the importance of astrology in medicine, and to make use of this quotation has to argue further that enthusiasm for 'physiognomy' implies enthusiasm for astrology too (cf. Schöne 1910; Wellmann 1913).

<sup>173</sup> An early example of predictive physiognomy might be D.L. 2. 45 = Aristotle fr. 32 Rose<sup>3</sup>, of a Syrian magus who 'among other things' predicted a violent end for Socrates. Later on, Loxus and Polemon both thought that physiognomy could reveal a person's fate as well as character (cf. Anon. Lat. 133).

<sup>174</sup> For a later way of making the link between appearance, climate, and astrology, cf. Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 1. 2; cf. also Section VI n. 227. For a parallel use of the word 'physiognomy' in the loose sense I am suggesting for Hippocrates here, cf. Fulgentius, *Contents of Virgil* 84. 10–11 Helm: his claim that Virgil, *Georgics* 2 is 'all about physiognomy and medicine' (*omnis physiognomicus et medicinalis*) must be based on Virgil's description of the type of men bred by Italian soil (cf. esp.

But of course none of this makes Hippocrates (or any Hippocratic writer) a 'physiognomist', any more than members of the crowd outside the Athenian court-room are made physiognomists by Demosthenes' remark that they will 'physiognomize' the expressions of the jurors as they leave (Demosthenes, *Against Aristogeiton* 98. 4).

There is an obvious objection to all this: that we should not use later philosophical standards to judge the physiognomy of earlier medical texts. The original claim was only that physiognomy took its rise in the medical tradition, not that it became systematized there. Instead of expecting a fully-fledged Hippocratic physiognomy (the objection would continue), one should rather be looking to see how Aristotelian physiognomy was only made possible by the pioneering work of Hippocratic writers on human nature.

The trouble with even such a moderate view, however, is that it implies either that medical writers established an interest in the relationship between (for example) the body and the character of a person, and that this interest was taken up and pursued by philosophers; or at the very least that medical writers somehow established a way of looking at human nature such that philosophers following in their path naturally turned to consider the relationship between body and character in a certain light. But neither of these claims can be justified on the basis of our evidence. In the first place, it seems fairly clear that philosophy and medicine, particularly in their approach to the analysis of human nature, developed as theoretical disciplines in *parallel* with each other from an intellectual background which, in crucial respects, they shared in common. Alcmeon, Diogenes of Apollonia, Empedocles, Anaxagoras: the same figures stand behind medical and philosophical thought about the material world in general and the nature of man in particular.<sup>175</sup> The importance of this is that it is hasty to suppose that all similarities between medicine and philosophy in their theories of human nature must be the result of direct influence between the two later traditions. In particular, there is nothing very

*Georgics* 2. 167–74; 130–5 for medicine). Finally, for an interest in the (psycho-)physical effects of the environment in the Hippocratic Corpus, see e.g. *Nature of Man* and AWP (the latter, not coincidentally, being an important text in Galen's representation of Hippocrates as a physiognomist). It should, however, be noted that in all this I am taking the reference to 'physiognomy' in the Ps.-Galenic fragment much more seriously than most scholars think it can be taken at all. Schöne already suggested that it is meant as a simple equivalent for *physiologia*, the 'study of nature' (1910: 419; see now esp. van der Eijk 2000–1: ii. 136 on Diocles fr. 64. 9–16, with his references). Such a position would, of course, be entirely consistent with my overall argument; but it also seems to me that it goes too far in suggesting a meaning for the word 'physiognomy' here that is not only different from, but actually cannot be related to any other attested occurrence of it.

<sup>175</sup> The Hippocratic treatise *On Ancient Medicine* deplores the influence of philosophical 'hypotheses' in medicine, which had a long and independent tradition of practice behind it—but thereby gives direct evidence of the importance of Presocratic thought in medical theory, and its recognition by medics themselves. Cf. variously Celsus, *On Medicine*, proem 7–8; Edelstein (1952); Longrigg (1989) (esp. 13, 16, and 19 for the philosophical debt owed by the author of *Ancient Medicine* himself); (1993); van der Eijk (1999) (esp. 9–11 for the relationship between medicine and philosophy in ancient medical historiography, including the passage of Celsus cited). The parallel development of medicine and philosophy is argued in Orelli (1998; cf. 138 'Affinität statt Abhängigkeit') and Jouanna (1992).

surprising at all in the fact that medical writers and philosophers develop accounts of the interaction of mind and body which have formal similarities. This is not, of course, to deny that philosophers were aware of the medical tradition and influenced by it; it is only to say that such influence as medical theory had on philosophical thought about human nature must have been, at best, incidental to the development of the conditions under which philosophers became interested in physiognomy.

As to the possibility that medicine fed physiognomy directly into the philosophical tradition (perhaps in embryonic form as a question about the relationship between physical and mental states): there are a number of indications that this cannot be right. Most importantly, there is no evidence that it was a perceived correspondence between behavioural patterns and physical traits which led philosophers to develop their accounts of body and soul. On the contrary, this seems to have been a secondary question that emerged on the back of psychological theories developed to explain human motivation and activity more generally. In any case, we have seen that an interest in physiognomy was not systematic among philosophers, and that where it emerges it can be understood as the consequence of (not the motivation for) their particular psychological theory. The next point to consider is that, where we do have evidence for philosophers looking to medical texts for inspiration, it is not for inspiration about the relationship between body and soul that they are looking. Indeed, we have seen that Plato, who was both unusually sensitive to medical thought, and decisive in developing Socrates' work towards a distinctively philosophical tradition of psychological analysis, carefully avoids, or even subverts, any suggestion of physiognomy in his own work.<sup>176</sup> Finally, all our evidence for theoretical physiognomy (i.e. in the philosophical tradition) comes in the context of a model of human nature that is already distinctively different from any found in the Hippocratic tradition. In particular, it seems to rely on a systematic distinction between body on the one hand and soul as the locus of moral agency on the other—a distinction which seems in turn to be related to the focus in Socratic philosophy on human moral character, and was in any case not clearly drawn *before* Socrates.<sup>177</sup> It might, of course, be a freak of evidence that theoretical discussions of physiognomy are always associated with a dichotomous model of body and soul along these lines; but one can see how the two go very well together. Physiognomy, like Socratic philosophy, has as its object the judgement of human moral character. Physicians might talk about (what we should class as) psychological phenomena, but not because they are concerned with the 'soul' as such. This is clear from the surviving evidence; it is explicitly remarked on as a characteristic of Greek medicine

<sup>176</sup> See again Section II. For the influence of the medical tradition on Plato's psychology, e.g. Poschenrieder (1882); Jouanna (1966); Claus (1981), esp. 177–8 (which give an interesting argument that medical thought provided the *indirect* impulse towards Plato's development of a dichotomous model of the soul).

<sup>177</sup> Claus (1981, esp. ch. 5) argues that the distinction was not made until Plato's Middle Period. For 'soul' generally in the Hippocratic corpus—or, rather, for the absence of a systematically dichotomous notion of soul—see e.g. Müri (1947); Moraux (1973–84) ii. 781; Pigeaud (1981) 32–47; Gundert (2000), esp. 33–5; Singer (1992).

by Plato;<sup>178</sup> and it is actually the basis invoked by a medical writer of later antiquity precisely to explain why it is that Hippocrates, despite the occasional coincidence of material, cannot be considered a real physiognomist. Commenting on a passage from the *Epidemics* (6. 7. 6) in which Hippocrates says that a person who naturally has the kind of voice or eyes that one has when one is angry is naturally irascible, the sixth-century physician Palladius says this (*Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics*, ii. 195. 10–17 Dietz):

There are *real* physiognomists (*ēsi gar tines ontōs physiognōmones*) who make predictions about the character of the soul from the face. If they see someone with eyebrows drawn up, they call him 'shameless'; if with eyebrows drawn down, they call him 'liberal'.<sup>179</sup> They look for these things so that they can grasp the character of the soul (*to tēs psychēs ēthos*); but Hippocrates looks for them in order to grasp the disposition of the body (*tēn tou sōmatos... diathesin*).

I am assuming that the *practice* of physiognomy in Greece began outside the theoretical context either of medicine or of philosophy, and I am arguing that it became an object of theoretical study in the hands of philosophers, who were motivated in particular by their interest in ethical character. That there is a certain overlap between philosophy and medicine in the treatment of the mental and physical aspects of human nature tells us something about the direction from which philosophy was coming when it started to explore physiognomy: it does not tell us where it was when it did. The specific interest of philosophy in physiognomy was, in the end, all its own; and whatever one thinks about the earlier practitioners of physiognomy (such as Phaedo's Zopyrus), it is, I suggest, no coincidence that we first hear about them in philosophical texts. Nor is it coincidence that, when a medical writer finally turned to discuss physiognomy, it was on Aristotle that he relied for the basis of his theory.

## (ii) Galen

Galen's reflection on the nature of the soul is not, or is not presented as, the starting-point for his theory of human nature. Rather, he starts from a *physiological* theory: a general theory of the composition of bodies. Famously, Galen developed from his reading of Hippocrates an explanatory model based on the belief that all organic bodies were composed of a certain 'mixture' or 'temperament' (Greek *krasis*, Latin *temperamentum*) of four fundamental

<sup>178</sup> *Charmides* 156E (Socrates citing a Thracian physician): 'One should not try to cure... the body without the soul. This is also why most diseases escape Greek physicians: they don't look to the whole, which ought to be the subject of their care...' (This is not contradicted by *Phaedrus* 270C, where the 'whole' in which Hippocrates is said to be interested is the whole body—used, indeed, as an *analogy* for investigation of the whole soul in this case. In general, it might be noted that Plato's frequent invocation of medical science as an analogy for what a science of the soul might be is its own argument for the difference in emphasis between the two.)

<sup>179</sup> Cf. perhaps Aristotle ap. Anon. Lat. 85; though Palladius' point is presumably that this kind of observation was a physiognomical 'standard' (and it might not be coincidence that we find Aristotle's remarks on eyebrows at *HA* 1. 9, 491<sup>b</sup>14–18 quoted both by Galen, at *QAM* 55. 17–21 Müller, and also by the paradoxographer Antigonos, at *Collection of Amazing Stories* 114a).

'humours', viz. blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm.<sup>180</sup> Roughly speaking, if the balance of these humours was as it should be in an individual, then they would *ipso facto* be healthy; disease on the other hand was to be explained by some imbalance in the humours.

So much at least could, Galen thought, be demonstrated to the point of certainty (*On My Own Opinions* 15. 2); and, from a clinical point of view, the immediate consequences of the doctrine are straightforward enough: the role of the doctor would be to identify and rectify any humoral imbalance in their patients. However, rather more work needed to be done if one wished to understand the precise causal processes linking humoral temperament to the development and sustenance of the individual's constitution. In particular, Galen was unsure whether an organic constitution should be explained as the natural product of matter having a certain humoral temperament (the kind of thing into which matter of such a nature would naturally be expected to develop), or whether it was necessary to appeal in addition to a teleological principle which operated *through* matter of such a nature in constructing an animal, and which would be the true explanatory cause for the existence of an animal of a particular kind.<sup>181</sup>

The obvious attraction of the teleological option is that it immediately allows one to explain the orderliness of nature, including what might otherwise seem the miraculous suitability and purposiveness of the organic structure of living things. This, anyway, is how it seemed to Galen. Having established to his own satisfaction that the humours constituted the material basis for animal physiology, he saw the difficulty of supposing that their mixture could, with no further comment, be sufficient to explain the intricate construction of a living organism, as a strict reductionism would imply. One can view a house as the organization of some basic materials; but to explain how this organization comes about requires reference to its builder. For the body, similarly, some 'constructive power' (*diaplastikē dynamis*) seems needed in addition to the humours themselves to explain *how* they mix and operate to form a body in just the way they do.

Reasoning along these lines takes Galen along the road to a teleology, since it makes sense to suppose that the 'constructive power', the 'craftsman' of our bodies, uses the humours as its instruments, so that its existence as a psychological force is independent of, and prior to them (*On Temperaments* i. 635–6 Kühn). Yet there is immediately a problem here as well, for the model attributes an extraordinary intelligence to the soul—the intelligence to be able to plan and construct a living body according to some particular intention for its functioning; and such intelligence is not there to be seen in animals or children at all. Indeed, the craftsmanly understanding of the body exhibited by the

<sup>180</sup> For the development of humoral theory see references in n. 169 above and Nutton (1993).

<sup>181</sup> In general for Galen's agnosticism on the nature of the soul and its relationship with the body, see esp. his *On My Own Opinions* 7. 1–2, 76. 25–78. 11 Nutton (1999), with Nutton's commentary at 160 (on 78. 6–10), and at 142 (on 60. 3–6). Cf. also *Construction of the Embryo* iv. 700. 2–6 Kühn. In some works (such as the *QAM*) Galen argues strongly for reductionism; in others (e.g. *Usefulness of Parts*) he makes an equally strong case for teleology. A work like *On Temperaments* lies somewhere in between. See generally Lloyd (1988); Singer (1997b) (536–40 for *On Temperaments*); Caston (1997) 351–2.

constructive power remains inaccessible even to the most thoughtful and reflective of adults. If the teleologists were right, basic self-awareness should do perfectly for all of us what the science of anatomy imperfectly does for very few (*Construction of the Embryo* iv. 692. 18–693. 9, 700. 15–17 Kühn).

Teleological explanation has another great weakness in Galen's mind as well—one more directly pertinent to the present study—and that is that the explanatory power that makes it so attractive reaches down only as far as the level of the species. When we marvel at the 'craftsmanship' apparent in nature, at how well constructed and well adapted to living a creature is, we are not focusing on characteristics peculiar to the individual. It is the *species* that is well constructed and well adapted to life: the individual is so only incidentally. (It is not, for example, the irascibility of individuals which inspires a teleologically inclined wonder, but, more generally, their capacity for thinking and moving in ways which will procure nourishment and self-preservation.) Yet the world is populated by individuals; and when one considers what makes them individuals (i.e. their individual peculiarities) the attractions of teleology start to pall.

In my account of Aristotle, I argued that he, at least, felt able to provide an explanation for individual peculiarities within a teleological model, and that he did it through a framework of hypothetical necessity. But Galen (and one might imagine that his arguments are based in the strong tradition of epiphenomenalism within the Peripatetic school itself) balks at this account. He interprets Aristotle's invocation of (a) teleology qualified by (b) hypothetical necessity as the claim that (a\*) *form* is responsible for species characteristics (e.g. a nose), while (b\*) matter determines what kind of a nose it is going to be. But in this case there are two serious problems. First, form could not even *start* building a nose without any idea of what sort of a nose to build. The sculptor Polyclitus might change his designs for the nose on a sculpture in the light of the materials he finds himself working with; but he needs to *have* designs before he can begin to wield his chisel. The second problem is that, if matter is supposed to be responsible for the characteristics of the child, we should expect (since form comes from the father and matter from the mother) that a creature would always look like its mother, and never like its father.<sup>182</sup>

This, of course, is an issue of which Aristotle was well aware; and on my reconstruction of his account, Galen's dilemma seems to rest on a more or less crude misunderstanding of his hylomorphism. Galen talks as if the form were supposed to be the thing that does all the work (like Polyclitus), whereas actually Aristotle knows very well that it is not the *form* of human being that does the work, but a particular human father. And a particular human father *does* aim to create a determinate kind of nose—namely, just the kind of nose that he has himself. But we can still explain how resemblance to the mother comes about: the matter supplied by the mother has some influence on the new child, insofar

<sup>182</sup> See *On Seed* 2. 1. 51–3, iv. 605. 16–606. 10 Kühn for the former point; 2. 1. 54–7, iv. 606. 10–607. 6 Kühn for the latter (apparently using Aristotle's example): if the artisan is responsible for kind, the matter for qualities ('in the same way that the eye is made by the moulding power but is made either blue or black by the matter'), then all children would resemble their mothers; and if the artisan is responsible for the qualities too, then all would resemble (only) their fathers.

as the father (or, more precisely, his semen) 'gives in' to it, or fails to 'master' it. It is thus that a child can come to look more or less like both its father and mother.

Perhaps, however, the move Aristotle makes in this response precisely constitutes for Galen the move away from teleology. What we learn from Aristotle's account (as I have presented it) is that in particular cases of generation, the protagonists are *already determined*. Indeed, we can say that in order for there to be a particular case of generation, the protagonists must already be determined. A child is not made from the coincidence of pure form and pure matter; it is made from the encounter between one person's semen and another's blood. Its constitution, in other words—or, to speak in terms more Galenic than Aristotelian, its temperament—is determined by the temperaments of mother and father. And this begins to sound like a reductionist position. Aristotle could maintain his analysis of events in terms of the teleological action of form under conditions of hypothetical necessity; but given that form never does act outside the conditions of hypothetical necessity, i.e. that the activity which it is supposed to explain is always and necessarily the activity of a determinate individual, it becomes unclear that we have any licence to posit its existence as a genuine entity or as something prior to the activity of individuals at all.<sup>183</sup> It looks more like a way of describing their activity than of explaining it; it certainly does not have the substantial status accorded to the 'constructive power' whose hypothesis is needed to make teleology an attractive possibility for Galen.

In the light of these difficulties, then, Galen was prepared to take seriously the possibility of a non-teleological biology, taking his lead from those of Aristotle's pupils who saw him not as a teleologist but as a reductionist. He was, to quote the opening line of one of Galen's most important works on the subject, prepared to entertain the possibility 'that the powers (*dynamis*) of the soul follow the temperaments of bodies' (QAM 32. 1–2 Müller).<sup>184</sup> The idea, in a

<sup>183</sup> One of Aristotle's own pupils, Dicaearchus of Messene, seems to have made a cognate point in arguing his own reductionism (fr. 8g Wehrli = 26 Mirhady): 'The Eretrians abolish qualities, as having nothing in the nature of substance in common, but subsist by themselves and in combination in particulars. And Dicaearchus, for the same reason, agrees that there is an animal, but abolishes the soul as its cause.' Aristotle's form-soul evaporates into a kind of universal: it is susceptible to just the type of argument he himself applies to Platonic forms. It might be worth noting that there are modern commentators who deny that Aristotelian forms have substantial or prior existence. Cf. e.g. Caston (1997), 33; or again Pavlopoulos (2003). Pavlopoulos argues that 'forms' do not account for why creatures of a certain kind exist in the first place, but constitute a metaphysical principle which explains why 'once life has occurred—be it a unique occurrence lasting a very short while—this same life should go on indefinitely' (2003: 180). If Pavlopoulos is right, the disagreement between Galen and Aristotle here would be over whether such a model could form the basis for a meaningful teleology, or whether it should rather have led Aristotle to embrace reductionism.

<sup>184</sup> The terminology of 'following' is, perhaps significantly, used in this sense (of psychological dependence on the body) by the Aristotelian *Physiognomy*—indeed, it would not be absurd to imagine that the opening line of that work (ὅτι αἱ διάνοιαι ἕπονται τοῖς σώμασι κτλ.) lies somewhere behind the first line of the QAM as quoted (τοῖς τοῦ σώματος κράσεσιν ἕπεσθαι τὰς δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς). Exactly what Galen intends by the word 'follow' is, as Geoffrey Lloyd has shown, subject to 'a certain vagueness' (see Lloyd 1988: 33–7; and cf. Singer 1997b: 535; also Caston 1997: 352). It turns out that Galen is not only uncertain about reductionism as an approach

nutshell, is that individual creatures can be explained from the bottom up by appeal to the matter out of which they are made. Matter of the necessary complexity is supplied by the parents and, given the kind of matter it is, it undergoes certain physical changes: it develops into a 'construction' (*diaplasia*) of a certain kind.<sup>185</sup> But it happens that one set of properties possessed by this sort of material is what we think of as its 'psychological' properties, including (most importantly) psychological powers or capacities. These psychological properties vary according to the temperament of the material, and so (*a fortiori*) vary in step with the different biological constructions produced by materials of different temperament. Indeed, one might think of them as marks of the kind of material it is, such that it develops in a certain way. The construction of the animal thus *appears* to work in the light of its psychological capacities. In fact, the psychological capacities are expressions of the material which forms the basis for just that construction.

Although Galen's explorations of psychological teleology and reductionism find their expression in both cases as interpretation of Aristotle,<sup>186</sup> Galen does not go so far as to attribute to Aristotle his humoral analysis of biological matter. Nevertheless, he thinks that Aristotle held a view that, in theory at least, worked to much the same effect. When Aristotle said that the soul was the 'form' of the body, we are now supposed to understand him to have meant that the soul is the 'temperament' or 'mixture' of hot, cold, wet, and dry in the body (QAM 37. 5–24 Müller). In this way, 'Aristotle too believes that the soul's faculties depend upon the mixture of the mother's blood from which, in his opinion, our blood derives' (QAM 51. 12–15 Müller). To support this claim, Galen appeals to HA 1 (54. 21–55. 4 Müller). As becomes apparent there (says Galen):

Aristotle would have it that the construction (*diaplasia*) of the whole body comes about as appropriate to the characteristics and faculties of the soul in each genus of animal—e.g. the birth of blooded animals is from the blood of the mother, and the psychological characteristics follows its mixture (as has been shown in the foregoing). But the construction of the organic limbs comes about as appropriate for the characteristics of the soul.

to psychology, but also (and less overtly) inconsistent in how strong he believes a reductionism has to be: at times he is eliminativist (the soul is *nothing more than* temperament), at times emergentist (the soul somehow emerges from the constitution of the body and is perhaps influenced, though not determined in its character by it). For details of the stronger line as Galen derives it from Plato and Aristotle in the QAM see 37. 5–24, Müller (Aristotle; and cf. PHP 5. 5. 27. 1–28. 1 De Lacy); 42. 3–45. 3 Müller (Plato and Aristotle). (Gill, 2000: 66–7 with n. 30, reads the latter passage as a *rejection* of strict reductionism, but whatever the details of interpretation, this conclusion cannot be right, since Galen is quite explicit about the matter at the end of the passage: 'it is not open to us to say that it [the soul] is anything other than the temperament'. Cf. also Sorabji 2000: 255.)

<sup>185</sup> Galen explains a child's resemblance to either or both parents by supposing that *each* contributes to the matter (as, in the slightly different explanatory model of the *On Seed*, each contributes a portion of both matter and moving principle: e.g. *On Seed* 2. 2. 19–24, iv. 614. 5–615. 14 Kühn).

<sup>186</sup> Aristotle is obviously Galen's starting-point for thinking about physiognomy, but he does not acknowledge the real gaps that also exist between their respective models (a fact which is, of course, significant for the way in which the two were read together in the Arabic tradition). See Lloyd (1988) 25–8.

If it seems to be the case that the organic construction of an animal is directed towards the realization of its capacities for living in a certain way (its psychological powers broadly construed), this is in a certain sense correct.<sup>187</sup> But it is not because the capacities constitute a teleological force acting upon the matter, or add up to a 'constructive power'; it is rather because those capacities spell out, as we might say, the nature of the mixture such that it develops the way it does. A given kind of blood constitutes the material necessary to support a particular way of living; and this is one way of looking at (and to this extent explaining) the fact that its inherent movements lead to the formation of a particular kind of organic structure—namely one that embodies this way of living.

The process so far gives an explanation of two crucial phenomena. One is the fact that the psychological character of an animal corresponds exactly to its physical structure. (Those powers are an expression of the material's being such as to develop into this physical structure.) The other (and here the theory starts to go beyond what Galen believes a teleology can explain) is the fact that, for all their generic resemblance to other members of the same species, it is its parents that a creature most closely resembles.<sup>188</sup> The reason for this, of course, is that its construction is explained by precisely the temperament which explained their construction.

But Galen does not stop here; he also considers what will happen if the temperament of the animal is somehow *altered* by external factors—something to which it would seem, as a physical rather than a metaphysical principle, to be susceptible. The effects of climate, for example, or of a person's diet could make a difference to their temperament, and so (independently of their genetic inheritance) to their psycho-physical character. This point might seem innocuous; but, apart from the fact that it has certain physiognomical implications, which I shall consider below, it might turn out to be important to the plausibility of his reductionist model at large that Galen make this distinction between, on the one hand, the temperament a creature inherits from its parents in the material from which it starts to grow, and, on the other hand, further modifications to which its temperament might be subject in the course of its life. The reason that this might be important is because one criticism that was levelled against reductionism in antiquity was precisely that, in the absence

<sup>187</sup> Cf. QAM 37 Müller: it is to the 'homogeneous and simple kind of body, devoid of organic composition... that activities (*energeiai*) primarily belong'—i.e., again, the *diaplasia* is 'for' the activities already expressed in the humoral temperament. (For a slightly different view of the matter, see *On Temperaments* i. 566.17–567.14, 635.2–636.2 Kühn.) More details of the process of construction are given in the *Art of Medicine*, which describes the development of the four 'principal parts' of the body (brain, heart, liver, testicles), whose character in turn determines the final character of the various regions of the body in which they are situated. (The purpose of this work is to allow one to apply this understanding to the diagnosis of the principal parts in an individual from external physical signs. Not coincidentally, Galen comes closest here to practical 'physiognomical' observations—something of which he seems conscious in issuing a disclaimer at i. 336.15–337.2 Kühn: the fact that we can amend our characters through philosophy ensures that our 'innate' character is never fixed.)

<sup>188</sup> Note that Galen took the fact that a child tended to resemble its parents (the one fact explained by the reductionist qualification of Aristotle's psychology) to be an argument for the reductionist position: *Construction of the Embryo* iv. 700. 12–14 Kühn.

of some constraining force (such as the 'constructive power' posited by Galen in teleological mood), a strict identification of soul and temperament might leave no room for talking about an individual's nature as anything other *than* individual—the result of a particular set of circumstances which includes but in no way privileges the temperament of the parental material in which it began life. Just as teleology might be criticized for failing adequately to explain individual characteristics, so reductionism might be accused of failing to delimit the nature of an individual, to secure its nature as a particular kind of thing at the level of the species. To put this bluntly: if soul just is temperament, and the nature of a thing is the kind of soul it has, then any change in temperament would mean a change in soul—and this in turn would mean a change in its nature, the kind of thing it is. The argument takes satirical form in Nemesius (*On the Nature of Man* 2. 24. 21–4 Morani):<sup>189</sup>

Again, if the soul is a temperament, and temperaments change according to age, season, and diet, the soul changes. And if it changes, we do not have the same soul, but, according to the temperament, sometimes that of a lion, sometimes that of a sheep, sometimes that of something else. Which is absurd.

Galen already was aware of just such a line of reasoning,<sup>190</sup> and it seems to be in an attempt to head it off that he is careful to make a distinction between the temperament of an animal's original constitution, on which is based its construction (*diaplasia*), and further modifications to the temperament which might occur during its life. The idea must be that an animal's nature is determined and delimited by its original temperament, so that we can say that it is just the kind of animal that its parents were, and that further modifications of this temperament (due *in primis* to climate and diet) can never be so severe as to change its nature. Such a claim would not be *ad hoc*, but underwritten by sound biological considerations. Once the process of organic construction is under way (i.e. as soon as parental material begins the process of development into a new animal), any influence on the animal which might in principle be strong enough to change its temperament into a mixture suitable for a different kind of construction would bring its temperament into conflict with its actual psycho-physical construction. The result of this would not be a *change* in its nature

<sup>189</sup> It is worth observing here that Nemesius gives no indication that he is aware of, or interested in, theories of physiognomy—despite a common assumption to the contrary. Evans, for example, refers to *On the Nature of Man* as 'one of the most important documents of the fourth century' in this context (1969: 80). But as her own discussion goes on to show, Nemesius is important rather in more general terms for his discussions of the relationship between body and soul, and for the evidence he supplies for earlier views on the subject. It is true that, when Nemesius discusses Galen, the views he talks about happen to have been relevant to their author's physiognomical interest as well. But even in this case Nemesius makes no mention of the fact.

<sup>190</sup> Against people who think that in the case of cross-breeds it is the mother that determines the species, on the grounds that things change according to their nutrition, he says: 'The Persian plant, when transported to Egypt, did not become different in kind, but on receiving good nutriment bore edible fruit, its fruit not being edible before; and sheep when moved at some time to a different pasture did not become similar to the goats formerly pastured there, just as the goats did not become similar to sheep or asses or horses' (*On Seed* 2. 1. 4–2, iv. 603. 10–15 Kühn as translated by De Lacy 1992).

(it is too late for that), but a *conflict* between temperament and construction which would manifest itself in disease and, ultimately, death: the *destruction* of the animal.<sup>191</sup> So we can say that the 'nature' of the animal (both psychologically and physically) is exhibited in and determined by its physical construction and the causes which underlie that, *not* immediately in its temperament.

All of this has implications for the view Galen has of physiognomy, for we can now distinguish *two* kinds of physiognomical sign on the basis of the reductionist model he offers. There are, first of all, those signs associated with its construction (*diaplasia*): the psycho-physical manifestations of the temperament of its original (parental) material. These correspond to the animal's nature as a member of a particular species, and also (in fact *a fortiori*) its nature as the offspring of particular parents. The shape of its nose might be an example of a physiognomical sign under this heading: an animal will have a nose that is like that of others of its species just insofar as it is like that of its parents; and there will no doubt be features in a description of its psychological character to which the nose corresponds. (At the level of the species, a particular kind of nose will, trivially, indicate the power of smell, and perhaps the degree of the animal's sensitivity to smell; if, like its parents, an animal's nose is a bit more snub than usual, it might indicate a lascivious tendency shared with them.) But then we can also look for psycho-physical manifestations of those modifications of its temperament caused by environmental factors of whatever sort (modifications which the animal can support just insofar as they do not come into conflict with the needs of its *diaplasia*). We shall see below that this is a tricky area, but an example for now might be the effects of a diet which caused an individual to become hotter in constitution and so redder in the face and more inclined to anger than he or she would otherwise have been. In fact it is this very point—the double nature of physiognomical signs—which the QAM passage quoted earlier on is introduced as explaining. Here is the same passage again, in its wider context (54. 6–55. 11 Müller, beginning with a quotation from Aristotle, PA 651<sup>a</sup>12–17):<sup>192</sup>

'The nature of the blood is the cause of many things to do with an animal's character and perception. This is reasonable, for it is the matter of the whole body (for nourishment is matter, and blood is the ultimate nourishment). So it makes a great difference whether the blood is hot or cold, or thin or thick, or pure or dirty'. Aristotle says other things in the works on animals and in the *Problems*, but it seems to me superfluous to write out everything: it is sufficient for me to show what Aristotle thinks about the temperaments of the body and about the faculties of the soul. Nevertheless, I shall add things that are spoken about in *Historia Animalium* book 1, some of which lead immediately to temperament (*krasis*), some through intermediate physiognomical signs [according to Aristotle himself]. For Aristotle would have it that the construction (*diaplasia*) of the whole body comes about as appropriate to the characteristics and faculties of the soul in each genus of animal—e.g. the birth of blooded animals is from the blood of the mother, and the psychological characteristics follow its mixture (as has been shown in the

<sup>191</sup> Cf. *Art of Medicine* i. 310.8–311.3 Kühn; *On My Own Opinions* 15. 2–4.

<sup>192</sup> In the translation that follows, the phrases in square brackets are athetized by Müller (but note that they are present in the Arabic translation, pp. 58/26 ed. Biesterfeldt).

foregoing). But the construction of the organic limbs comes about as appropriate for the characteristics of the soul [; very much so, according to Aristotle]. And, in line with this, there are quite a few indications of psychological character and physical temperament. Some of the physiognomical signs indicate temperament directly and immediately—such as those dealing with colour<sup>193</sup> and hair, but also voice<sup>194</sup> and the movements of the limbs.

Construction (*diaplasia*) provides *indirect* signs of temperament (and hence psychological character); what I have characterized as modifications of construction give more direct signs of the same thing.<sup>195</sup>

Galen, then, gives a solid theoretical basis for physiognomy. But it is important even in his case not to exaggerate the importance to him of physiognomy as such. For one thing, even Galen is never a physiognomical *determinist*. He usually allows that rational thought, at least, is an emergent activity, which can overcome the natural disposition determined by temperament with no corresponding trace in the physical character of the individual.<sup>196</sup> This, to be sure, does little to undermine the theoretical status of physiognomy—or even its practical uses, given how little inclined most people are to philosophy (and the same point could in any case be made for Phaedo and Aristotle). There are more significant considerations, however. One is the fact that physiognomy is clearly of interest to Galen only as a consequence of a reductionist psychology, not as an end in itself—something immediately apparent in the fact that Galen's 'physiognomical' speculation is all concentrated in 'reductionist' contexts.<sup>197</sup> This is a significant restriction on its significance for him, because although Galen has reasons to be attracted to psychological reductionism (for one thing, it promotes his attempt to present medicine as a kind of master science if ethical character turns out to be a function of a person's

<sup>193</sup> Cf. *On Temperaments* i. 627–8 Kühn, on the usefulness of skin in inferences to the underlying temperament: since skin 'in our part of the world' is well-balanced, it 'gives a good indication of the parts beneath—though even here this relationship is not straightforward, the above applying only to those parts which have the same mixture as that of the skin.'

<sup>194</sup> In *Art of Medicine* i. 350–1 Kühn, *loudness* of voice is an innate, not an acquired characteristic; but note that it is there explained *indirectly* by the influence of heat on the (*diaplasia* of the) windpipe. So perhaps we should understand that in some aspects the voice functions as a direct sign of temperament, while in others (including loudness) it is an indirect sign.

<sup>195</sup> It might be worth noting, as perhaps another indication that Galen is aware of the Aristotelian *Physiognomy* (cf. n. 184 above) that in that work considerations of colour, hair, movement, and voice (in that order) are listed together *after* the survey of body parts (812<sup>a</sup>11–end; cf. Polemon, *Leiden* chs. 31–52; *Anon. Lat.* 73–9).

<sup>196</sup> e.g. at *Art of Medicine* i. 336.16–337.2 Kühn; cf. *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul* v. 37.11–14 Kühn (nature is dominant in youth, beliefs and habit—*ta te dogmata kai tēn askēsin*—later on). But for the vacillation in the rigour of Galen's reductionism, see again n. 184.

<sup>197</sup> There is no explicit mention of physiognomy anywhere else in his corpus either in 'neutral' contexts, or where teleology is to the fore. Of the six occurrences of the word 'physiognomy' (and its cognates), four come from the QAM and one from *On Temperaments*. The remaining example is his reference at PHP 5. 5. 22. 1 to Posidonius, whose appeal to 'the physiognomists' evidence' likewise came in an explicitly reductionist context (cf. PHP 5. 5. 23 with discussion in Section IV. ii above).

physiological state),<sup>198</sup> his commitment to it is, in terms of his wider output, rather limited.

Even within his reductionist explorations, however, Galen's theoretical enthusiasm for physiognomy does not as a matter of fact translate into an argument for its use in practice, and examples of physiognomical inferences in his voluminous works are vanishingly few.<sup>199</sup> He supports the possibility of a physiognomy based on zoological typology, assuming the appropriate theoretical constraints,<sup>200</sup> but he starts to lose interest where he might be expected to move beyond theory, and readers who want to know more are referred to Aristotle (*On Temperaments* i. 624. 17–625. 1 Kühn; similarly *On Epidemics* VI, 7–8 (53) Ghersetti 1999a). Perhaps it is precisely because in his view physiognomical inference collapses with diagnosis of more fundamental physiological states—whether the state of the principal organs, as in the *Art of Medicine*, or of the underlying temperament itself—that it could have very little independent clinical value.

<sup>198</sup> The more one's character is brought under the influence of physical, and especially dietary and environmental, factors, the greater the scope and importance of medicine in human life—to the extent that it can subsume even philosophy. This point has not been lost on commentators: see Donini (1974), 144; Ballester (1988), 129; and esp. Lloyd (1988). This consideration will also help to explain why, despite Galen's obvious reliance on Aristotelian thought, Galen is keen in the QAM to provide his psychology and physiognomy with a lineage that goes back through Aristotle himself (and Plato too), to an origin in Hippocrates.

<sup>199</sup> I know of two candidates for passages in Galen not already discussed. First, a quotation from al-Mas'udi (which, as Vivian Nutton has suggested to me, perhaps derives from Galen's lost *Commentary on the AWP*). In the translation of Meynard and Courteille (1861) 163–4 this reads: 'Galen signale dix propriétés particulières aux noirs, à savoir: les cheveux crépus, les sourcils rares, les narines dilatées, les lèvres épaisses, les dents aiguës, la puanteur de la peau, la noirceur du teint, la longueur des pieds et des mains, le développement des parties génitales et une pétulance excessive. Cet auteur explique cette dernière qualité chez le noir par l'organisation imparfaite de son cerveau, d'où résulte la faiblesse de son intelligence.' This adds nothing substantial to what we have already seen; though it might be interesting to note that the link between stupidity and an 'ill-formed neck' is one that Zopyrus is supposed to have applied to Socrates (Phaedo, fr. 6 Rossetti). A second passage which might provide evidence for Galen's interest in physiognomy is *To Glaucôn on Medical Method*, xi. 11 Kühn (= *On Crises* ix. 627 Kühn). 'It is necessary', Galen says, 'to make distinctions in the case of the eyes especially. For it is possible to get evidence from them of the character (*êthos*) of the soul in those who are healthy; and in the ill, the signs are clearer for one able to see accurately.' Barton uses this passage (and only this passage) to justify her claim that 'it is difficult to draw the line between the two types of examination of the body [viz. diagnosis and physiognomy] at times' (1994b: 98, with n. 18). But the value of the claim is vitiated by the fact that Galen does not tell us what to look for in the eyes. It might be humoral temperament, so that the eyes would be physiognomical signs in a sense recognized by Galen's theoretical model for the science (contrast *Art of Medicine* i. 329–31 Kühn, where the size, colour, and moisture of the eyes might reflect the humoral state of the brain); but it might just be that we should look for signs of mental activity in them.

<sup>200</sup> *On Temperaments* i. 624 Kühn. The constraints are: (a) that one has a causal explanation to hand for the link mooted between physical and psychological traits (Galen thinks that this is something neglected by many physiognomical practitioners); and (b) that one does not generalize too quickly from individual limbs to the character of the body as a whole. This latter point, says Galen, was not even lost on the non-philosophical practitioners (cf. n. 113 to Section III, appendix, on *epiprepeia*; also e.g. Polemon, Leiden ch. 1, A16)—and elsewhere he has his own contribution to make towards explaining the problem. In the *Art of Medicine*, he notes that the state of one of the principal organs can have knock-on effects on parts of the body under the more direct influence of another of the principal organs: e.g. at i. 333 Kühn, heat in the heart can lead to a smaller head—though the organ primarily responsible for the character of the head is the brain.

It is not, though, only pragmatic considerations that limit Galen's interest in making a practical study of physiognomy. For when Galen looks more closely at the detailed workings of humoral theory in a reductionist context, serious obstacles to physiognomical diagnosis emerge. For it turns out that the very same outward, physical effects can be the result of quite diverse, even opposing influences on the temperament. In particular, the effects of climate on appearance and character might not be consistent with the effects of the inherited temperament. So, for example, there are outward signs of a naturally 'hot' or 'cold' temperament (perhaps darker or paler skin respectively). But the effect of a particularly cold climate is not (as one might have hoped) to make its inhabitants colder than they would otherwise have been in temperament and paler in appearance.<sup>201</sup> Rather, the cold is supposed to drive their innate heat inwards, making them *hotter* in psychological character, but *paler* (as if colder) in appearance. In a hot climate, conversely, people's heat is 'drawn out', making them look 'hotter' still, but leaving them with little internal heat, and psychologically cooler. (See on this *Temperaments* i. 627–8 Kühn.) So in general, Galen says, one needs to ask whether the visible signs of heat in a body are signs of *external* heat or of heat which belongs to the body (i. 628.13–15 Kühn; cf. also *Art of Medicine* i. 341. 14–18 Kühn). This is a fatal blow. However much theoretical interest physiognomy might have in certain contexts, it could not have significant diagnostic value even for Galen.

### (iii) Other Medical Writers

As Antonella Ghersetti shows later on in this volume, the materials Galen provided in the QAM for reading Aristotle's *Physiognomy* through his own humoral theory were eventually adopted and developed systematically in the Arabic medical tradition. But their immediate impact was altogether less impressive. In fact, Greek medicine after Galen proved no more interested in physiognomy as such than it had been before him. Before him, the only medical writer on physiognomy we hear about is Loxus, used as a source by the author of the anonymous Latin treatise from whom he earns the epithet 'medicus'. But, as we have already seen in Section III. iii, there is nothing characteristically 'medical' about the fragments of Loxus' work: nothing, in fact, that distinguishes it from a work like Ps.-Aristotle's *Physiognomy* at all.<sup>202</sup> The only other physician

<sup>201</sup> 'Cold' and 'hot' climates here are relative to the 'well-tempered' climate of the middle regions of the world (such as Greece), which have a neutral effect as such on physiological temperament: see *On Temperaments* i. 627. 5 Kühn (and cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 24 CD; Aristotle, *Politics* 7. 7, 1327<sup>a</sup>23–33; but contrast on this AWP 12. 6).

<sup>202</sup> In general, Anon.'s choice of Loxus, Aristotle, and Polemon, and his characterization of them as physician, philosopher, and orator respectively (Anon. Lat. 1), is clearly meant to impress us with the seriousness of physiognomy and the breadth of its appeal. In fact it tells us nothing about the theoretical scope of physiognomical writing. On the contrary, it only becomes clearer how those who seriously engage with physiognomy as a theoretically grounded discipline rely heavily on Aristotle (or Aristotelians) in doing so. A physician, like an orator, might conceive an interest in physiognomy or find a use for it; but there is no more (discernible) input into the physiognomical tradition from the medical community as such than there is from the rhetorical community as such.

we know to have written on physiognomy is Adamantius; but his surviving work is merely an epitome of Polemon's physiognomical treatise.<sup>203</sup> Again, it contains nothing distinctively medical, nothing that cannot be explained by reference to the Peripatetic tradition.

Medics writing as such naturally continued to be interested in the psychological effects of physiological dispositions as symptoms of physical illness which could be used in diagnosis. They were also, of course, interested in mental illness as something which could be explained by physical causes.<sup>204</sup> But despite the occasional coincidence of material between medical observations and the sort of psycho-physical correlations posited in the surviving physiognomical handbooks,<sup>205</sup> despite the opening given by Galen for physiognomy in medical discussion, there is in all of this scarcely any explicit or systematic discussion of physiognomy. Palladius sets the tone in his comment on *Epidemics* 6.7.6, as quoted above. There, he carefully distanced medicine from physiognomy at a point where Galen, in his commentary on the same passage (*On Epidemics* VI, 7–8 (53) Gherse 1999a), had sought to bring them together. Physicians, says Palladius, sometimes use the same materials as physiognomists; that does not make them physiognomists. Indeed, the most striking thing is (as so often in this study) the *absence* of explicit reference to physiognomy, the *absence* of systematic discussion of evidence we might class as physiognomical. Even when physiognomy and medicine are spoken of in the same breath, as occasionally they are, it tends to be in somewhat non-technical contexts, where both can be linked with other forms of predictive art as well.<sup>206</sup> As far as the medical authors of antiquity themselves are concerned, physiognomy as a category of thought seems generally to hold very little interest.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Adamantius is normally identified with the Adamantius called 'Sophist' (at Aetius, *Iatrica* 3. 163. 1, 8. 29. 2) who wrote *On the Genesis of the Winds*, *On the Origin of Dreams*, and *On the Signs given by Stars*. Cf. Follet (1989).

<sup>204</sup> For the debate over whether physical indisposition always underlay mental illness, see esp. the surviving works of Caelius Aurelianus in the 5th c. (though he relies to a greater or lesser degree on the 2nd-c. physician Soranus), with T. M. Brown (1993), esp. 439–40. For the history of *melancholia* (an archetypal mental illness, along with *mania*), see esp. Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl (1964); Flashar (1966). (Cf. also Swain above p. 11 for the possible influence of contemporary interest in mental health on Polemon.)

<sup>205</sup> Cf. again Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl (1964), arguing for convergence between medicine and physiognomy in the evolving concept of *melancholia*; also Horstmannshoff (1999), on Aurelianus' treatment of emotion (but note the important qualification in his claim at 267: 'Ses observations, la première source de sa description, s'accordent parfois mot pour mot avec la tradition physiognomonique, même si l'on ne peut pas fournir les preuves d'un emprunt direct' [my emphasis]).

<sup>206</sup> Clement, *Stromata* 1. 21. 135. 2. 3 (*hoi physiognōmonourtes iatroi te kai manteis*); Fulgentius, *Contents of Virgil* 84. 10–11 Helm as cited in n. 174 above.

<sup>207</sup> Sextus Empiricus at *PH* 1. 85 says that 'the body is the stamp of the soul, as physiognomy shows' and Galen's rather dismissive comments on the mass of physiognomists, that they lack an explanatory basis for their predictions (*On Temperaments* i. 624 Kühn), might be taken as evidence that most were not only empirical in their approach but Empiricist in their philosophy. But this would be taking evidence to the limits of optimism; and (pace Barton 1994b: 99) Sextus himself was certainly speaking *ad hominem*, using Dogmatic positions to refute Dogmatic positions. (The fact that he refers to physiognomy as a kind of 'wisdom', *physiognōmonikē sophia*, shows irony,

## VI. POST-HELLENISTIC PLATONISM

Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* in the writings of Platonists: L. Calvenus Taurus ap. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 1. 9. 2; Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 13. 2; 54. 14 Nauck; Aristides Quintilianus, *On Music* 3. 8, 106. 6 Winnington-Ingram; Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life* 17, 71. 13–14; 74.3 Klein; Ammonius, *On the Prior Analytics* 7. 16 Wallies; Proclus, *On the Cratylus* 88. 6 Pasquali; Olympiodorus, *On the Alcibiades* 13. 19; 97. 6, 12 Westerink; *On the Gorgias* 5. 3. 14 Westerink; Philoponus, *On the Prior Analytics* xiii. 2, 483. 22–4, 484. 8–11, 485. 5 Wallies; *On the Generation of Animals* iv. 3, 185. 13 Hayduck; *On the de anima* xv, 155. 22 Hayduck. Occurrences of *physiognōmon-* (and *metōposkop-*) in the writings of fellow travellers:<sup>208</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams* 1. 164,<sup>209</sup> Galen, *On Temperaments* i. 624. 3 Kühn; *QAM* 54. 20, 55. 8, 63. 1–2 Müller; *PHP* 5. 5. 22. 2 De Lacy; Clement, *Stromata* 1. 21. 135. 2. 3; *Pedagogue* 3. 3. 15. 2 (*metōposkopos* glossed as *physiognōmōn* in the scholia ad loc., 336. 10 Stählin-Treu); Hippolytus, *Refutation* 1. 2. 5, 4. 15. 3 (*metōskopie manteia*); Origen, *Against Celsus* 1. 33. 14.<sup>210</sup>

Physiognomy as a theoretical concern in the philosophy of antiquity starts with Phaedo, flourishes in Aristotle's school, and ends, one might fairly say, with Galen. By this I mean that we have evidence for the theoretical discussion of physiognomy as such in no other philosopher. The story has a continuation, however; for while there is no reflection on the nature of physiognomy in the surviving works of later Platonist thinkers, it is clear that many of them accepted

not respect, if it shows anything at all.) There, is by the way, no evidence, nor is it likely, that the word *typos* ('stamp') used here to describe the relationship between body (as sign) and soul (as signified) was one used in other contexts by Empiricists to denote the relationship between two things experienced in conjunction (though it does recur in physiognomical contexts to describe the relationship between soul and body; e.g. Ps.-Aristotle 806<sup>32</sup>; cf. Phaedo fr. 18 Rossetti = Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertations* 25. 3).

<sup>208</sup> There are those who might want to add Posidonius to this list as well; though his use of Plato seems to me thoroughly Stoic (see Section IV. ii above; cf. Boys-Stones 2001: 99–100 with n. 3).

<sup>209</sup> Philo, however, gives no clear indication that he believes in the art (see again Section IV n. 124); and the extent to which it is appropriate to see him as part of the mainstream Platonist revival is a moot point (cf. Boys-Stones 2001: 100–1).

<sup>210</sup> It is worth noting how little direct, theoretical discussion of physiognomy there is among Christians. Origen is the only Christian writer to show awareness of the theoretical history of the subject (see n. 233 below). Ambrose in the 4th c. believes that gait and gesture reveal the soul, so that correction of one's psychological nature needs to underlie correction of manners (*On the Duties of the Clergy* 1. 18. 71–5; 1. 19. 84). This is at a little distance from the tradition of philosophical reflection on physiognomy (for one thing, it is *manners* he is speaking of, not physical features); but even so unusual in how near it gets. Clement of Alexandria, who had earlier on spoken about how Christians should order their public appearance (cf. *Pedagogue* 3. 11–12), was clear that an ability to tell people's character from the way they dress and so on is *like*, but is not, 'metoposcopy' (i.e. physiognomy: *Pedagogue* 3. 3. 15. 2). That the theoretical issues here are skirted around by Christians is probably to be explained on pragmatic grounds. Not only might Christians find physiognomy pedagogically unhelpful (at least when the accent is on the possibility of change: cf. Origen, *Against Celsus* 3. 66, 69), they might shrink from unnecessary association with an art that sometimes attracted scorn for its pretensions (cf. Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 2. 69. 10), and may have been thought to rely for its successes on daemonic influence (as in the case of other forms of prognostication: cf. e.g. Clement, *Stromata* 1. 21. 135. 2; Hippolytus 4. 15. 3). But for a fuller and more positive assessment of early Christian attitudes to physiognomy, see Parsons (2006), esp. ch. 2 ('Physiognomy in Jewish and Early Christian Literature').

it as a theoretical possibility.<sup>211</sup> There might be no evidence that Plato was interested in the art, but Platonists knew that Aristotle was;<sup>212</sup> they explained Socrates' attraction to Alcibiades as an example of physiognomy in practice;<sup>213</sup> and they attributed its invention and use to Pythagoras.<sup>214</sup>

As with every other thinker I have considered, Platonists could accept the possibility of physiognomy insofar as it arose as a consequence of their beliefs about the relationship between the body and the soul. That they did not feel the need to argue or discuss it as a consequence of these beliefs is presumably due to the fact that, as far as they were concerned, the subject had been adequately covered by earlier thinkers in whose footsteps they thought of themselves as following: that a sympathetic attitude to physiognomy enters Platonism with their reception of, in particular, Aristotle. But here we encounter a problem: for, as we have seen, especially in Galen, it turns out that Aristotelian physiognomy quickly came to be thought of as consequent on a specifically epiphenomenalist interpretation of his psychology. According to this interpretation, the body was a guide to the character of the soul insofar as the activity of the soul could be explained as a product of the body's functioning. The problem comes because one might assume that Platonists would want to be very careful to avoid associating themselves with such a view. It is central, not only to the psychology, but actually to the entire metaphysical system of Platonism, that soul is *immortal, independent* of the corporeal world, and (at least logically) *prior* to it. It would be anathema to suggest that the soul relied for its nature on the physical circumstances of its instantiation. Already Apuleius, for example, warning that we should not prejudice a person's character by place of birth, explains that local environmental conditions can make a difference to the taste of vegetables and quality of vines but, since the soul comes into the body from outside, such things could make no difference to its virtue.<sup>215</sup>

This point has a particular sensitivity, since Plato himself at one point appears to explain the superior intelligence of the Greeks by the temperate climate of their country (*Timaeus* 24c), and this passage was seized on by some commentators as support for claims that the soul was dependent to some extent

<sup>211</sup> A rare and, in any case peripheral, exception is the Platonizing Sophist Maximus of Tyre who, at *Oration* 25. 3, calls Zopyrus' art 'obscure divination' (*manteian asaphē*) and asks (rhetorically) to what kind of co-mingling (*epimixia*) the body and soul owe their similarity. The mainstream answer to this question will emerge in what follows.

<sup>212</sup> In fact they rarely mention Aristotle's physiognomical interests; but it becomes unavoidable in commentaries on the *Prior Analytics* (cf. e.g. Ammonius, *On the Prior Analytics* 7. 16 Wallies; Philoponus, *On the Prior Analytics* xiii. 2, 483. 22 Wallies).

<sup>213</sup> Proclus, *On the First Alcibiades* 94. 4–15 Westerink; cf. Olympiodorus, *On the Alcibiades* 13. 19 Westerink; also Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 4. 1. Cf. Apuleius, *On Plato* 1. 1 for Socrates' identification of the infant Plato.

<sup>214</sup> Pythagoras is supposed by Platonists to have used physiognomy in choosing friends and pupils (in line with Adamantius' recommendations, by the way, A2). See Calvenus Taurus ap. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 1. 9. 2 (§8 for Taurus as the source); Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 13. 2–14. 1, 54; Iamblichus, *Pythagorean Life* 17. 71–4 Klein; Olympiodorus, *On the Gorgias* 5. 3. 14 Westerink (with which cf. Iamblichus, *The Pythagorean Life* 25. 112 Klein). Cf. also Hippolytus, *Refutation* 1. 2. 5. 2.

<sup>215</sup> *Apology* 24 *enimvero animo hominis extrinsecus in hospitium corporis immigranti quid ex istis addi vel minu: ad virtutem uel malitiam potest?*

on the body.<sup>216</sup> Galen, indeed, had suggested that one could not be a true Platonist if one thought otherwise (*QAM* 64. 19–65. 9 Müller):

Some of those who call themselves Platonists think that the soul can be impeded by the body during illnesses, but performs its proper activities when the body is well, being neither helped nor hindered by it. So I shall transcribe some remarks of Plato's where it is clear that men are helped or harmed where intelligence is concerned by the temperament of the locality, even when the body is not sick. In the *Timaeus*, early in the dialogue [i.e. at 24c], he writes: 'The goddess first organized you according to this complete arrangement and design when she established your city; and she chose the place in which you would be born with an eye to the fact that its seasons were temperate (*tēn eukrasian tōn hōrōn en autōi katidousa*) and would bear the wisest men.'

Proclus has a sharp rejoinder to this. In his own discussion of *Timaeus* 24c, he says that the literal reading of it was upheld by 'Panaetius and other Platonists' (*On the Timaeus*, i. 162. 11–15 Diehl). As we shall shortly see, he was certainly not ignorant of Galen's position, and it seems odd that Galen's name is absent here—until one thinks what it might mean for Proclus to appeal to the Stoic Panaetius as a 'Platonist'. His point is precisely directed at Galen's controversial remark: if it is 'Platonists' who believe in a literal reading of *Timaeus* 24c, they are Platonists like Panaetius: that is, no Platonists at all.<sup>217</sup>

Not all of Proclus' attacks on Galen are so indirect. Indeed, Galen becomes for him the archetypal adherent of the reductionism that Platonists in fact wish to avoid, and Proclus' attacks on reductionist theories of soul often name him, or allude to the *QAM*. So, for example, when he is explaining the fact that people become wiser and more considerate as they mature, Proclus contrasts his view of the relationship between body and soul with that of Galen, encapsulated by the opening (and programmatic) statement of the *QAM* (*On the Timaeus* iii. 349. 21–30 Diehl):

Galen would say that *the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body*... But it is not right to make the immortal soul, which exists before the body, think through the body; we should rather say that the body sometimes becomes more of a distraction to the soul in its attempt to live a well-ordered life, sometimes less disturbing.

There is an allusion to the same line in his defence of the soul's immortality in his *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* (1014. 28–36 Cousin):

If the soul is not immortal... it will in addition be mixed with bodies and enmattered, and it will not be able to rule them or lead them where it wishes, but will follow the temperaments of the body.

<sup>216</sup> Apuleius may be issuing a tacit warning about the passage when he says that the environmental determination of moral character is disproved by the fact that *not all Athenians are clever* (as, correlatively, not all Scythians are stupid: *Apology* 24).

<sup>217</sup> This passage then, which appears to give textual comfort to those who would like to see Panaetius as a 'Platonist', in fact proves the very opposite (and cf. Boys-Stones 2001: 99 with n. 3). In addition to giving his own view, Proclus lists alternative readings of *Timaeus* 24c from Longinus, Origen (i.e. the pagan), Porphyry, and Iamblichus (*On the Timaeus* i. 162–5 Diehl).

And again, *On the Republic*, i. 249. 21–3 Kroll:

So let us not accept that argument—when someone says that *the powers of the soul follow the quality of the temperaments of bodies*...

Compare *On the First Alcibiades* 226. 16–18 Westerink (against those who have the soul 'completed' by its association with the body):

This kind of 'completion' is corporeal and enmattered, and posits a *completion of the soul which follows the temperaments of the body*...

Proclus expresses in these passages the hostility of Platonism at large to the kind of reductionism in psychology evident to him in Galen's *QAM*. But since, as we saw in Section V, the *QAM* is the very text in which Galen argues for the close association of reductionism and physiognomy, does this mean that when Platonists accept the possibility of physiognomy it must be under the assumption that it is the *soul* that is somehow responsible for the physical character of the *body*?

There is, in fact, one Platonist thinker who goes some way towards such a position: the music theorist Aristides Quintilianus.<sup>218</sup> According to Aristides, the soul 'when it is far from the things of earth and associating with the almighty' is purely rational, and free of all desire (*On Music* 2. 8. 1–3). At a certain point, however, the time comes round for its descent into the corporeal world. A 'need' arises in the soul for a body—and a 'suitable' body at that (2. 8. 3–5). As we shall see, this is familiar enough territory for a Platonist (though there is a slight eccentricity in the way Aristides characterizes the soul's desire as the desire for a specifically masculine or feminine body).<sup>219</sup> Aristides is not even out on a limb when he goes on to suggest that things can go wrong for the soul, which might fail to acquire a body suitable for it. Other Platonists worried about just such a possibility.<sup>220</sup> But not only does Aristides seem to think that the

<sup>218</sup> Aristides is known only through his work *On Music* (translated in Mathiesen 1983), from which he appears to be a Pythagoreanizing Platonist, probably writing in the late 3rd or early 4th c., though an earlier date is possible. See Jahn (1882); Jan (1896); Zeller and Mondolfo (1932–8) iii/6. 1 n. 1 (associating him with the 'scuola di Porfirio o forse anche di Giamblico'); Festugière (1954) (suggesting, at 71, a pre-Plotinian milieu for his work); Zanoncelli (1977); Barker (1982); Mathiesen (1983) (10–14 for his life and date); Centrone (1989). Although, as we shall see, Aristides appears to support the possibility of physiognomy, he only uses the word once, at *On Music* 3. 8. 106. 5–6 Winnington-Ingram, where he calls the art of painting a 'conversion (*antistrophē*) of the physiognomists' art'. (The idea is that physiognomists use appearance to get at the underlying character, while the painter uses his knowledge of a person's character in constructing his portrait. Mathiesen (1983) 172 n. 121 compares Ps.-Aristotle, *Physiognomy* 806<sup>a</sup>19<sup>b</sup>3; but Aristides might also, or rather, have had in mind Socrates' discussion with the painter Parrhasius described at Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3. 10. 3; and there is an even closer parallel with what Dio Chrysostom says at *Oration* 4. 85–8. For these passages see respectively Section II and Section IV n. 124 above.)

<sup>219</sup> *On Music* 2. 8. 16–18. The idea that a soul might be more or less 'masculine' or 'feminine' (or, strictly, in Aristides' case, might be characterized by masculine or feminine desires) is one that appears already in Hippocrates (cf. Section V n. 167 above); within the Platonist tradition, cf. e.g. Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 283. 12–284. 12 Diehl.

<sup>220</sup> For the importance of the soul's choosing a body suited to it (and the possibility of its failure to do so), Plotinus 3. 4. 5. 10–19; Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 163. 31–164. 3 Diehl; iii. 279. 14–15 (but attributed by Diehl); Olympiodorus, *On the Phaedo* 7. 4. 8–9 Westerink.

resulting mismatch is not altogether uncommon, he also thinks (and here he does start to diverge from other Platonists) that when things do go wrong in the allocation of body, the soul can do something to put it right (2. 8. 66. 25–67. 3 Winnington-Ingram):<sup>221</sup>

If souls do not naturally gain this kind of body [i.e. the kind they desire], they remodel it themselves according to their own characteristics (*tais sphēterais tropais*) and make it into something like themselves (*to hautais homoion*). This is how men come to have a feminine appearance, in which one can see the kind of life they lead; and it is how, conversely, women come to have a masculine appearance, by which we conjecture that they have that sort of character (*to ethos homoion*). Thus there are smooth men and hairy women; and a man might have a melting look, a woman a steely gaze—so that you will find that the particulars of people's characters (*ēthē*) are in harmony with their appearance (*morphē*).

It is, of course, a commonplace of physiognomy that a man might have 'feminine' characteristics, and a woman 'masculine' characteristics,<sup>222</sup> but Aristides' development of the theme is distinctive in the way that he reconciles the insight with a Platonic tripartition of the soul. In particular, he associates femininity of nature with the appetitive urges of the soul, a 'masculine' nature with the 'spirited' part of the soul, and encourages his readers to think about the myriad ways in which appetite and spirit might combine to constitute an individual's character (2. 8. 67. 3–14 Winnington-Ingram):<sup>223</sup>

From its passionate attachment to the masculine or feminine, or both, passions come to be established in the soul. The feminine is highly unrestrained, and the appetitive part of the soul (*to epithymetikon*) answers to it; the masculine, on the other hand, is vigorous and active, and the spirited part of the soul (*to thymikon*) is like this. In the feminine part of the soul, and in feminine people, pains and pleasures proliferate; in the masculine, anger and boldness. Again, there are combinations of these things: of pains and pleasures; of anger and boldness; of boldness with pleasure and pain; and then of anger with each of them. And again, there are mixtures of each with one or more of the others. One could find thousands of images of these passions as they are considered in their variety.

Plato's apparatus for psychological analysis is, in other words, translated here into the terms by which a soul imposes the nuances of its peculiar character onto

<sup>221</sup> Plotinus talks at 3. 4. 5. 10–19 of a good soul having the capacity to improve a poor body (and a bad soul to make a good body worse); and, like subsequent Platonists, he thinks that the soul has some ability to calm the passionate inclinations of the body (e.g. 1. 2. 5. 21–31). This, though, seems rather more limited than the sort of change envisaged by Aristides, who is unique in implying that the *appearance* in the sense of the structure of the body will be affected by the character of the soul (though Plutarch talks of the soul imparting the colour of its passions to the body: *On those to Whom Divine Retribution Comes Slowly* 565 c; *Table Talk* 5. 7. 681 d).

<sup>222</sup> For 'sexual' characteristics in the Aristotelian tradition, see Ps.-Aristotle, *Physiognomy* 5. 809<sup>a</sup>26–810<sup>a</sup>13; Polemon, *Leiden* ch. 2, pp. 393–5; Anon. Lat. 3. Aristides does not develop a systematic table of correspondences whose dependence on this tradition we could check; but it might be worth noting that, whereas he *opposes* the *hygros* and the *gorgos* (in my translation 'melting' and 'steely') as characteristically 'feminine' and 'masculine' ways of looking, Adamantius thinks that the two adjectives go together as a positive feature of the eyes (A16, B32, 44).

<sup>223</sup> For the idea, cf. Clement, *Stromata* 3. 13. 93. 1–3, where references to 'male' and 'female' in a saying of Jesus taken from the *Gospel of the Egyptians* are understood to mean respectively spirit (*thumos*) and desire (*epithumia*).

the essentially masculine or feminine body to which it was (as such) attracted. Here, for the first time in ancient philosophy, is a system, or the beginnings of a system, clearly designed to support a physiognomy led by the character of the individual soul.

It also happens to be the last time: Aristides is exceptional among Platonists, as he is exceptional in the surviving evidence for physiognomical theory at large.<sup>224</sup> This is not an accident of our evidence: most Platonists have very good reasons to doubt whether the soul can affect the character of the body. Indeed, the very independence of the soul makes such a position untenable. For the soul is generally taken to exist not just prior to the body whose soul it becomes, but independently of *any* particular body. It does not, for example, exist actually or potentially in the individual's parents (as in some sense the Aristotelian soul might be taken to do). But in this case the soul lacks any real *opportunity* to direct the development of the new body—or so, at least, Porphyry argues in the *ad Gaurum* (esp. 2. 2–3). On the one hand, he says, it is absurd to suppose that the soul slips into the parental seed during sex: it would have to come in time to direct the conception and development of the embryo, but without being so early that it could be thought to have come from one or other of the parents.<sup>225</sup> If, on the other hand, the soul were to wait until conception before it entered, it would be too late to be of any explanatory use: the physical process of growth is already under way, and clearly does not require a soul to continue.<sup>226</sup> In short, if there is commensurability between body and soul, it cannot be (*pace* Aristides) because the soul in any way influences the natural shape of the body.

All this adds up to what, *prima facie*, appears a dilemma for Platonists, who want to ensure the soul's separability and autonomy on the one hand, while explaining its compatibility with and responsiveness to its embodied environment on the other; a tension, crudely put, between the best in the opposing models of psychological epiphenomenalism and teleology. Their response to it was to find a middle way. Instead of arguing that the fit between body and soul was explained, in one direction or the other, by their union, they argued that their union is explained by their fit. When a soul 'descends' to a body, it is because their

<sup>224</sup> Plotinus notoriously appears to equivocate over the possibility that there are forms of individuals (cf. e.g. Blumenthal 1966); and if (or when) he believes this (cf. esp. *Ennead* 5. 7), one might be tempted to think that an individual's form lies somewhere behind an explanation of his or her psycho-physical peculiarities. But in fact Plotinus is clear that individual characteristics are due, not to individual form, but to the particular material circumstances of the instantiation of the species form (1. 8. 9. 11–14; 5. 9. 12, the clearest proof-text for a denial of individual forms; cf. also 5. 7. 2). Even if individual forms exist, A. H. Armstrong (1977) rightly argues that they would individuate at a much higher ontological level (viz. 'wherever a real formal difference can be detected, as it can be clearly in the case of the true, higher selves of individual men': 58). They would not, in other words, be responsible for a person's physical appearance—let alone moral character.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. Longinus ap. Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 51. 9–13 Diehl (= fr. 27 Brisson–Patillon); and Proclus himself, *ibid.* iii. 322. 24–9.

<sup>226</sup> Like the Stoics, to this extent, Porphyry believes that the embryo is in strict truth a plant, and that the soul does not enter the body until the moment of birth (the proof of this being, in fact, the main purpose of the work *ad Gaurum*). For the entry of the soul at birth, cf. also Porphyry 266F Smith (from Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus, *Eclouge* i. 381. 2–6 Wachsmuth); Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 322. 18–19 Diehl.

respective natures, independently considered, make them 'suitable' for each other.<sup>227</sup> This is how Plotinus describes it:

The souls of men see their *images* as if in the mirror of Dionysus and come to be on that level with a leap from above... (4. 3. 12. 1–2).<sup>228</sup>

Each soul comes down to a body made ready for it according to its *resemblance* to the soul's disposition (*kath' homoiōsin tēs diatheseōs*). It is carried there to that *to which it is made like* (*hōi an homoiōtheisa ēi*)... (4. 3. 12. 37–8).

There is a different time for each soul, and when its time comes, as if at the call of a herald, it descends and enters into the *appropriate* body (*to prosphoron sōma*) (4. 3. 13. 8–10).

Despite appearances, it should be noted that, strictly speaking, the 'resemblance' here does not refer in the first place to resemblance between the body and the *soul*—that is, if we think of the soul in its truest sense as an incorporeal 'mind' or intellect. The soul in this sense does not necessarily *have* a character in terms of which it would make any sense to talk about its resemblance to this or that body in the first place. (Many Platonists believe that, at least the first time a soul 'descends' to a body, it does so in a state of moral purity.)<sup>229</sup> Rather, the resemblance is primarily that between the body and the

<sup>227</sup> Cf. also e.g. Porphyry, *ad Gaurum* 11. 2 (where *sympatheia* is the means by which body and soul are thoroughly bound together). For the relationship of the individual soul with the preformed body in Plotinus, cf. Blumenthal (1971b) with Corrigan's rejoinder (1985) (esp. 46 for what he argues is the Peripatetic vocabulary of 'suitability'). Since the character of the body is determined by its temperament, which in turn is susceptible to environmental influences, it is subject to change over time as well: cf. e.g. Plotinus for the effect of diet (3. 1. 1. 33–6) and climate (3. 1. 5. 24–33; 4. 3. 7. 20–6). It is worth noting, then, that the 'suitability' of a particular body for a particular soul relies on a diachronic understanding of what it is to be a body: it is a life, not a moment, to which the soul descends. Cf. Plotinus 2. 3. 15; also Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 163 Diehl. Accounts of the path taken by the soul in its descent towards the body through the zones of the zodiac and the spheres of the planets is a way of explaining (or expressing) how its inclinations are commensurate not just with the synchronic state of the body at which it arrives, but with the diachronic fate of that body (e.g. Porphyry 271F Smith; Macrobius, *On the Dream of Scipio* 1. 12; and for the influence that the stars have at least on one's physical temperament, cf. Celsus ap. Origen, *Against Celsus* 6. 21; Plotinus 3. 1. 6. 3–11; 4. 3. 7. 20–3; Porphyry, *Cave of the Nymphs* 22–3 = Numenius fr. 31. 10–26 des Places; Proclus, *On the Republic* ii. 54–65 Kroll). This explains how Plotinus can know something of a person's (character and) fate from his or her body (2. 3. 7. 8–11), while at the same time denying (since the practice of philosophy gives one freedom from physical inclination) that astrology is determinative (3. 1. 5. 55–7 and 3. 1. 6. 3–11 with 2. 3. 12; also Olympiodorus, *On the Gorgias* 48. 5 Westerink; cf. Proclus, *On Providence* 3. 14–18, 20). It also explains why Proclus thinks physiognomy a 'murky syllogism' when applied to the newborn, whose temperament has yet to stabilize (*amydros syllogismos*: *On Plato's Cratylus* 88. 6 Pasquali).

<sup>228</sup> On the image of the 'mirror of Dionysus', see Pépin (1970).

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Alcincus, *Didaskalikos* 25. 6, 178. 36–7 Hermann (souls descending according to natural sequence or divine will); Celsus ap. Origen, *Against Celsus* 8. 53 (souls descending 'for the administration of the world'); Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus, *Eclouge* i. 380. 6–9 Wachsmuth (some souls 'come down in order to bring salvation and purification and perfection to things in this world, and make an unsullied descent'); also Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 295. 15–20 Diehl (the moral purity of the soul on its first descent ensures that it will not enter the body of an animal). Iamblichus, however, contrasts Cronius, Numenius, and Harpocration, who think that 'every embodiment is evil' (ap. Stobaeus, *Eclouge* i. 380. 14–19 Wachsmuth = Numenius fr. 48 des Places; cf. also fr. 32 and 38); and Plutarch too perhaps thought that every descent begins with something like carnal desire (*Divine Retribution* 565 D–566 A; cf. again also Aristides Quintilianus, *On Music* 2. 8).

soul's 'vehicle'—the astral or pneumatic body with which it is provided as a means of establishing its presence in the physical cosmos.<sup>230</sup> For the body and the soul's vehicle do share something in virtue of which they can be said to resemble one another: a material and irrational nature.<sup>231</sup> It is true that the body's nature is the more intrusive, as its greater density and complexity makes it more sensitive to external forces and more determinedly inclined to act in certain ways in respect of them. The body's behavioural inclinations are, indeed, strong enough to be considered quasi-moral, and even came to be classified as 'virtues' and 'vices' of a kind, albeit a low-level kind.<sup>232</sup> Nevertheless, the vehicle has a certain (irrational) sensitivity too; and it is in terms of the congruence between this and the irrational nature of the body that we can understand the attraction between a particular soul and a particular body. The soul, in short, is attracted to a particular body by the 'fit' it recognizes between the body which it is due to control and the vehicle through which it will exercise that control.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Iamblichus claims that 'most Platonists' think that the soul joins directly with the body (ap. Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 385. 1–10 Wachsmuth), though in fact, our evidence includes only two notable exponents of such a view: Plutarch (for whom cf. n. 231 below); and, apparently, Alcinoüs, who seems to think that the roots of irrational desire are part of the soul itself (cf. *Didaskalikos* 25. 7, 178. 39–46 Hermann), actualized when it swaps its star for an earthly body as its 'vehicle' (16. 2, 172. 2–19 Hermann). Note, however, that where there is no danger of ambiguity it is quite usual for Platonists to apply the term 'soul' to the combination of soul (properly speaking) and vehicle; or even to the vehicle on its own (cf. Plotinus 1. 1. 12. 21: *allo psychēs eidos*). For Numenius, at the other extreme, the vehicle actually is another soul, of the same substance as the evil world soul posited by his dualism: see esp. fr. 44 des Places.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. esp. Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 385. 1–10 Wachsmuth (but for the text see Festugière 1953: 237 with nn.; cf. Finamore and Dillon 2002 ad loc. with discussion at 184–5); Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 234. 8–237. 6 Diehl, variously encompassing the views of Albinus, Atticus, Porphyry, and Syrianus. Proclus himself posits two vehicles: one properly irrational and perishable; the other containing 'roots' of irrationality (*akrotêtes tēs alogou zōēs*), a view which Dodds (1963) 307 thinks might have been suggested by Plotinus 6. 7. 3 ff.; but cf. already Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos* 25. 7, 178. 39–46 Hermann. In Plutarch's distinctive psychology, the individual soul is already involved with the material and the irrational since it represents the organization of *true* soul, which for him is irrational (*On the Generation of the Soul* 1014 DE). Although its activity is made essentially intellectual through its organization by the Demiurge, it goes on to acquire an irrational nature when and insofar as it descends into the body and becomes like it (*exomoioiousthai*: *On Moral Virtue* 450 E; *On the Sign of Socrates* 591 DE).

<sup>232</sup> The notion of 'physical virtue' (and vice) becomes part of a standard Neoplatonic scheme with Iamblichus, assuming him to be behind the whole of Damascius, *Commentary on the Phaedo* (versio 1), §§138–43 Westerink. Cf. later on, and just for example, Olympiodorus, *On the Phaedo* 8. 2. 1–7; Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man* 2, 25. 20–4 Morani; and already Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos* 1.4, 152. 23–9 Hermann; Apuleius, *On Plato* 2. 6. All of this formalizes a distinction that can be found readily enough in Plato: e.g. *Republic* 518 D–519 A.

<sup>233</sup> This is sometimes expressed as the allocation by Providence of a soul to a particular body, which in turn allows the process to be described as a matter of the soul's 'punishment' or 'cure'. Cf. e.g. Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus, *Eclogue* i. 380. 9–14 Wachsmuth; also Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's First Alcibiades* 94. 4–15 Westerink quoted below in the text. There is of course no contradiction with the idea that the process is also *natural*, since nature is understood to be an instrument of providence. Compare also Origen, *On First Principles* 1. 8. 1; *Against Celsus* 1. 32–3 (better souls are allotted better bodies according to certain 'esoteric principles'). Note that this latter passage is supported by appeal to Zopyrus, Loxus, and Polemon, who, in Origen's report, thought that 'all bodies are appropriate for their souls' (1. 33. 14). (This is scarcely evidence for close engagement

There are, of course, implications here for physiognomy—though somewhat negative, in the first place since, given that the soul might not be morally tainted when it descends to the body, there should be no absolute expectation that one could discern the moral character of the soul from the appearance of its body (though one might expect, less interestingly, to learn something about its vehicle). However, it turns out that the soul is rather rarely innocent of moral character when it descends. Most incarnations are *reincarnations*, and motivated precisely by the fact that a soul in its previous life acquired an attachment to the material—acquired a moral character.<sup>234</sup> And in this case, the way to physiognomy seems to be opened up at last; because the moral disposition acquired by the soul will precisely be a reflection of the non-rational character of its vehicle, whose similarity with the new body again explains their union. This is inevitably true, because it is in the soul's identification of itself with the body it previously inhabited, mediated through the congruent passions of the vehicle, that the soul's character is established.

It needs to be emphasized that there is no external necessity that can lead the soul to acquire a tainted moral character. Indeed, the soul, as an essentially intellectual and incorporeal entity, is normally (certainly after Plotinus) taken to be strictly *impassible* throughout: immune to the shocks which affect the body and the passions they arouse in it. Nevertheless, as the soul is aware of what is happening with the body, what tends to happen is that it becomes so engrossed in it that it starts to mistake the passions of the body for its own:

It is as if someone standing on a promontory should cause his image and shape to appear in a flowing river, keeping his face still while the stream as it moved changed his image every which way so that it presented it in different ways at different moments—skewed and straight, fragmented and whole, as chance would have it. Seeing this, the man might think that he was really undergoing these things, though he was only looking at his shadow in the water; and the thought would make him anguished, disturbed, perplexed, frustrated. The soul is in the same case when it sees its image in the body being carried along in the river of becoming and changed all the time by passions arising from within and by external forces. The soul is actually unchanged, but it thinks itself changed because it does not know itself and thinks that it is its own image. It becomes disturbed, perplexed, and bewildered. (Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 330. 10–24 Diehl.)

When the soul does this, when it comes to identify itself with the physical passions of the body, we can talk of it as having, to this extent, a moral character. And the moral character it acquires, its desires and concerns, etc., will of course be precisely those of its body, and (what amounts to the same thing) of its vehicle, through which it perceives the body. Furthermore, since the soul retains its vehicle after death, it will retain the character it acquired when during life it came to identify itself with it. When it next descends to a body we will no longer

with the theory of physiognomy on Origen's part, by the way, but it does show an awareness of the texts which is unusual among Christians—cf. above n. 210. It also helps in general to confirm the relevance of physiognomy within theoretical discussions of body and soul.)

<sup>234</sup> And so the soul might be said to be *inclined* to (re)incarnation (sc. in a certain sort of body) by its own passions: cf. Plutarch at *Divine Retribution* 566 A and 567 A; Celsus ap. Origen, *Against Celsus* 8. 53; cf. Proclus, *On the Timaeus* iii. 293. 26–9 Diehl.

be able to make a distinction between the moral character of the soul and the inclinations of the vehicle: they will have become the same thing. The similarity between the soul and the body to which it is next attracted will not only be a congruence between the character of the vehicle and that of the body, but also a congruence between the inclinations of the body and the character—the *moral* character—of the soul.

Since Platonists came to rely for their understanding of the physical nature and development of the body on medical texts, and particularly on Galen, all of this represents a convergence of sorts (albeit from a very different direction) on the reductionist position we have seen described by Galen in the QAM. The Platonist position is that the body's character is a function of its physical temperament, and that the soul's moral character, assuming it is not perfectly virtuous, is acquired through identification with the body. It follows, then, that in a certain sense we can after all say that the moral character acquired by the soul is *consequent on the body's physical temperament*. Olympiodorus sees an analogy for the process in the way in which the same water takes on different characters according to the nature of the earth through which it flows (*Commentary on Aristotle's Meteora* 148. 21–4 Stüve):

Consider the case of souls, which change according to the underlying temperament of the body if they don't have reason in charge of the reins. When reason is present, on the other hand, the soul does not serve the body's temperament.

Plotinus too talks about how the soul might lose its freedom, more or less, when it enters the body. Then its passions are stronger in relation to the body's physical temperament (1. 8. 8. 28–38), which can compel the compliant soul to feel lust, anger, wretchedness in the face of poverty, or pride at wealth and power (3. 1. 8. 14–20).<sup>235</sup> A particular quality of the bile and blood might explain irascibility (4. 3. 23. 42–7; 4. 4. 28. 40–5, 49–52); desires in general have their origin in the body (4. 4. 20. 28–36; 4. 4. 21; 4. 8. 2. 42–5), specifically the area around the liver (4. 4. 28. 17).<sup>236</sup> All this (to pick up another theme we have seen to be important in the discussions of Aristotle and Galen) helps explain why children tend to take after their parents psychologically as well as physically (2. 3. 12, 14. 5–9); it also explains how environmental factors, which, as we saw above, affect physical temperament, might thereby influence a person's moral development as well. When Plotinus says that 'the soul is open in many ways to being moulded by the nature of places and waters and air; and the locations of cities differ as do the temperaments of bodies' (4. 3. 7. 22–5), there might be an allusion to Galen's reading of the Hippocratic AWP as a text demonstrating the

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Plotinus 1. 8. 14; 4. 8. 2. 42–5. Even intelligence can be hampered to some degree by the body; but it is very important that the embodiment precisely *obstructs* the soul to differing degrees in this case: we should not wish to say that the power of thought was *given* by the body in various degrees—pace Galen, of course. Cf. Plotinus 4. 3. 26. 12–14 on memory in particular; also Longinus at Proclus, *On the Timaeus* i. 162. 15–27 = fr. 36 Brisson–Patillon (part); Proclus himself at *On the Timaeus* iii. 349. 28–350. 8 Diehl.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. generally 2. 3. 8. 13–16; 4. 4. 28. 40–5; 4. 7.

dependence of temperament, and so character, on the environment (cf. QAM 57. 14–62. 22 Müller).

Given the explicit aversion we have seen to Galen's reductionism in the writings of Proclus, this might seem surprising. But the invocation of Galen does not, of course, now suggest approval of the claim that the soul, or any part of the soul, is to be *identified with* physical temperament; nor, more generally, that the character of the soul is somehow determined by the body. Such a 'strong' reading of Galen's thesis has been roundly rejected. Nevertheless, it is open to Platonists to appropriate Galen's language for another, weaker reading of the relationship between body and soul, one which suits their purposes rather well.<sup>237</sup> When Galen says that 'the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body', it is possible to read 'follow' in a sense less than deterministic: to use Galen's considerations in order to support a model according to which, although the soul remains independent of the body, it can nevertheless choose, by the acquiescence of reason, to 'follow' the body—i.e. to identify its interests with it. Proclus himself, therefore, despite his rejection of a strict reading of the opening line of Galen's QAM, can now, with suitable qualification, quote it more favourably (*On the Republic* i. 222. 14–15 Kroll, referring back to ll. 4–6, where the Galenic quotation is unabbreviated):

In the uneducated, the powers [sc. of the soul] follow the temperaments [sc. of the body].

The same allusion (with the same qualification) is to be found in Olympiodorus (*On the Gorgias* 49. 6. 7–9 Westerink):

It is said that the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body; but we must add 'unless philosophy counteracts their effect'.

Galen, similarly, must lurk behind the 'doctors' attacked by Philoponus in his *Commentary on the De Anima* (xv. 50. 16 ff. Hayduck). These doctors are in fact invoked twice: first after a survey of ways in which passions seem to be the result of physical states (including disease or diet at 50. 16–51. 3); and then in a discussion of various ways in which mental operations too seem to be determined or affected by the state of the body and the nature of diet (51. 3–51. 15). On both occasions (with an insignificant change of word-order) Philoponus says:

This is why the doctors have said that the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body.

Similarly at 155. 31–4:

That souls are suited for different things, and have tendencies to particular passions, is because of their relationship to the body and their sympathy with it—which is why some people have thought that the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body.

<sup>237</sup> And remember that Galen himself equivocates over the sense he gives to 'follow' in his claim that 'the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body': cf. again Section V n. 184.

And, finally, cf. 183. 30–4, which shows that they are, to this extent and with the appropriate qualification, right to think it:

When intellect, the natural leader, is not in charge, order is overthrown and *the powers of the soul follow the temperaments of the body*.<sup>238</sup>

People who *have* a peculiar moral character have it because they have acquiesced in the inclinations of their bodies, and to this extent their character is explained by their temperament—by the very feature of their physiology which, as Galen described in the *QAM* and as the Platonists must therefore have been fully aware, was responsible for the appearance of their body as well.

To the extent, then, that most people fail to preserve the original purity of their souls, and identify themselves with their bodies, we can understand how it is that a person's moral character will be predictable from his or her appearance: both are underwritten by bodily temperament through a process similar in crucial respects to the mechanism spelt out by Galen. Of course, a person can improve, more or less, through philosophy, or become worse by embodiment in a life that allows wider scope to develop his or her passions. The change of moral state (of the degree of identification with bodily passions) will, in any case, be carried forward after death, to form the basis for the next choice of life. Perhaps the most striking and specific example of physiognomy in a Platonist text comes (again) in Proclus—his description of Socrates' selection of Alcibiades as a pupil. Alcibiades, it seems, had through previous lives acquired a moral character close to perfection, and in receiving now a body appropriate to its nature enabled Socrates to see that he could be helped towards the ultimate achievement (*Commentary on Plato's First Alcibiades* 94. 4–15 Westerink):

Socrates saw many wonderful indications in Alcibiades that he was capable of virtue. His very size and beauty were signs of the outstanding power, strength, and preeminence of his soul; but nature, who crafts the body as a tool [*sc.* for the soul], attached further symbols of these traits to his appearance as well. When Socrates saw these, he understood that the boy was worthy of his care and attention. He derived this custom from the Pythagoreans, who would judge whether those who came to them were capable of the greater life on the basis of physical signs. The idea is that nature constructs bodies which are suitable for the particular souls which will use them as their tools, and sets out images (*eikonas*) of these souls in the bodies. Through these images, someone clever at recognizing such things can uncover the individual characteristics of particular souls.

Socrates was disappointed, of course; but he was no more wrong to see a noble nature in Alcibiades than Phaedo's Zopyrus had been to see a vicious character in Socrates. Alcibiades really did have a promising soul, which earned him a wonderful body. He squandered his opportunity.

It is necessary to end this section with a word of qualification. As I suggested at the beginning, there is not a great deal of physiognomy in Neoplatonist works, and the range of such physiognomical passages as we have is surprisingly narrow, the bulk of it being constituted by reports of its use by Pythagoras and

<sup>238</sup> Cf. *On the De anima* xv. 52. 7, 388. 25 Hayduck; *On the Physics* xvi. 191. 18 Vitelli. For the same claim, but in language not so obviously alluding to Galen, Simplicius, *On the De anima* xi. 19. 4–6 Hayduck.

Socrates (though one might be tempted to find more, unsignalled examples in the biographical works of Plutarch).<sup>239</sup> Significant too is the real emphasis placed on the ability of physiognomy to discover the character of someone's soul in the sense of his or her *potential*: *potential* as a Pythagorean recruit, for example; or *potential* for learning from Socrates. The fact that Socrates picks out Alcibiades as well as Plato as promising youths reminds us (as I said) that potential can go unfulfilled. This is important because there are aspects of Plato's inheritance which stop the Platonists from spending too much time on the subject. For a start, if I am right that 'physiognomy' properly describes the discovery of *innate* psychological character (rather than, for example, character acquired under the influence of the body), then the term should not be used of 'pure' souls in their first descent to the body, even when (as often) they quickly succumb to the body's influence. It should instead be restricted to subsequent cases of descent where the soul *has* a moral character independently of the body to which it is joined. But it is, of course, hard to know which is which. And in any case, the practical focus of Platonist ethics demands that we concentrate on the soul's potential for purity, its capacity for free action, undetermined and uncoloured by the body. Physiognomy as a practice thrives on the suggestion that the soul is constrained by the body, but we should actually be concentrating our thoughts on the freedom we have to release ourselves from it: the freedom *not* to identify ourselves with passions that have their roots in the body (cf. Plotinus 1. 2. 5. 12–15; 1. 2. 5. 21–31; 3. 1. 7. 13–20; 3. 6. 3), a freedom which we acquire when we turn away from the body and back towards the intellectual realm (Proclus, *On Providence and Fate* 20). The Platonist soul might

<sup>239</sup> As do e.g. Misener (1924) 110–11; Evans (1935) 57 with n. 3; (1941) 104–5; Métraux (1995) 3–4. On the other hand, Sassi (1992) concludes that Plutarch is *antifysiognomiko*—that he is aware of and uses 'physiognomical' associations on some occasions, but deliberately avoids or subverts them on others. Sassi's view is undoubtedly based on a more sophisticated view of Plutarch; nevertheless it might be too pessimistic. We know that Plutarch had a mechanism by which he could explain the union of soul and body by their similarity (see again n. 231 above); we know that other Platonists accepted the possibility of physiognomy under these conditions; and we know, finally, that it is quite standard for a philosopher to accept physiognomy as a means of ascertaining a person's innate disposition without believing that behaviour is in any way determined by physical constitution. This could account for the practical 'ambivalence' in Plutarch's use of physiognomical evidence as outlined by Sassi; it would also explain how he could, without inconsistency or opportunism (*pace* Wardman 1967), argue in one place that sculpture cannot capture a man's 'character and way of life' (*to ethos kai ton tropon*: *Cimon* 1. 2–3), yet elsewhere find statues that do reflect his subject's character (as *Marius* 2. 1), and can even use sculpture as *evidence* for character (*Themistocles* 22. 3; *Aratus* 3. 2; cf. perhaps *Alexander* 1. 3). It might simply depend on the person and whether his or her success involved overcoming or exploiting innate disposition. For the record, then, Plutarch finds reflections of character in the looks of the following (with references to the eponymous *Life* unless otherwise stated): Sulla (2. 1. 6. 6–7; cf. his meeting with a Chaldean, characterized, though not described, as a physiognomist at 5. 5–6), Pompey (2. 1), Alexander (4. 1–2; cf. *Pompey* 2. 1), Timoclea (*Alexander* 12. 4), Demetrius (2. 2–3), Antony (4. 1), Pyrrhus (3. 4), Marius (2. 1), and Aratus (3. 2). (For completeness, other characters whose physical features are described are: Cocles, *Publicola* 16. 4–5; Themistocles at 22. 3; Pericles at 3. 2; Alcibiades at 1. 3–4; Lysander at 1. 1–2; Agesilaus at 2. 2; Diocles, *Aratus* 20. 1; Galba at 27. 2; also Cyrus, *Precepts of Statecraft* 821 E. Less pertinently, Clearchus' facial expression at *Table-Talk* 620 D; Sertorius' single eye at 1. 4; Fabius Maximus' wart at 1. 3.)

become brutish, literally or metaphorically;<sup>240</sup> but Platonist ethics is geared towards making us see that this is an eradicable fault.

In short, then, Platonists appear to accept that those aspects of the body which at the same time attract a soul with a particular character and also give rise to particular desires and passions in the resulting living compound have discernible tokens, and thus allow the physiognomist to see how people will *tend* to be. However, their actually being this way is ultimately up to them: their body at best mirrors the state of their soul at the time of incarnation and, however difficult it makes things, cannot prevent psychological self-reform and purification. Platonists clearly accept the possibility of physiognomy in a way that Plato does not; but they take its conclusions to be provisional for reasons of which he would thoroughly approve. In proportion as they focus on the freedom of the soul, so they say very little about the practicalities of physiognomy. The whole point of this philosophy is to concentrate the mind upwards, not down to the compound about which physiognomy speaks.

<sup>240</sup> On the question of whether transmigration crossed species boundaries, or whether Plato was speaking metaphorically when he talked of the reincarnation of the wicked in animals, see e.g. Olympiodorus, *Commentary on the Phaedo* 124. 13–20 Norvin; Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man* 2. 34. 24–35. 11 Morani. Given the general account of (re)incarnation outlined in this section, one might expect it to be the case that animal reincarnation, if it occurs, fulfils the conditions that make human physiognomy possible: i.e. a person will enter an animal psycho-physically suitable for his or her moral state. If this is right, then Platonists who believed in animal transmigration might have used the fact to guarantee the relevance of a study of animal species in collecting physiognomical signs. But we have no evidence that anyone did this.

Earlier drafts of material from this study have been presented at seminars in Durham, Reykjavík, Warwick, London (at the Institute of Classical Studies), and Austin, Texas: my thanks to the organizers and audiences in each case. I am very grateful as well to Simon Swain for asking me to think about this interesting topic; and to Christopher Rowe, both for his comments, and for his support at Durham, where most of the work was done. Vivien Nutton and Philip van der Eijk suffered a too early draft of Section V, which was greatly improved in the light of their generous comments.

## 3

Polemon's *Physiognomy*

Simon Swain

This chapter offers an interpretation of Polemon's *Physiognomy* in its second-century context. Why was it written and how did contemporaries read it from the perspective of their own cultural horizons? The *Physiognomy* survives in two complementary versions, Adamantius' Greek abridgement and the Leiden Arabic translation. The closeness of these makes it reasonable to follow Foerster in holding that Adamantius' Greek text is very similar to Polemon's own. In the previous chapter George Boys-Stones has explored the earlier literature on which the *Physiognomy* builds. Polemon was influenced by Ps.-Aristotle and (perhaps) Loxus and no doubt by other lost writings and oral traditions. But his work is very far from being a summary of his predecessors. Rather, Polemon develops his thoughts within the cultural system of his day. He offers his readers a physiognomical handbook which is illustrated by a range of examples drawn from his peers. He runs through the parts of the human body, paying especial attention to the eye, and maps onto these parts or sub-parts particular moral and political qualities. The examples of real enemies and acquaintances which survive in the Leiden (especially in the section on the eye and in the final chapters only preserved in the Arabic) put flesh on the bones. This observation of morally bad and (to a far lesser extent) good types places the *Physiognomy* firmly within the culture of inspection and moral evaluation that is visible in so much of the literature of Polemon's time and which is arguably a product of the competition and rivalry of elite life. By grouping appearances and qualities the *Physiognomy* may even be read as implicitly telling readers what they should be like, just as contemporary moralists make their descriptions of anger, greed, and so on the basis of self-reflection and moral improvement.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the *Physiognomy* provides important information on Polemon's attitude to Rome and the emperor Hadrian, and in general terms offers valuable commentary on the character of political and civic life in the Greek world of the second century.

The culture of observation and evaluation among Polemon's peers is the focus of the first two sections of this chapter. Section I introduces the links between rhetoric and politics, the phenomenon of classicism, and the competitiveness of the elite. Section II looks at particular issues of moral conduct, specifically the regulation and control of male behaviour including correct sexual relations and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, 195–7. Moralists: Plutarch's *Absence of Anger*; below, 138–40, 191–2 for anger, etc. in the *Physiognomy*.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Ad. = Adamantius, *Physiognomy*

Anon. Lat. = Anonymus Latinus, *Physiognomy*

ANRW = *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*

Aristotle:

DA = *De anima*

GA = *De generatione animalium*

HA = *Historia animalium*

NE = *Nicomachean Ethics*

PA = *De partibus animalium*

CMG = *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*

CPh = *Classical Philology*

CQ = *Classical Quarterly*

DL = Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*

EI = H. A. R. Gibb et al., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*<sup>2</sup>, 12 vols. (Leiden, 1960–2004)

EK = L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd (eds.), *Posidonius*, i: *The Fragments*<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge, 1989)

FHSG = W. W. Fortenbaugh, P. H. Huby, R. W. Sharples, and D. Gutas (eds.),  
*Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*,  
2 vols. (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1993)

Freytag = G. W. Freytag, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, 4 vols. (Halle, 1830–7)

Galen:

QAM = *Powers of the Soul* (*Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur*)

PHP = *de Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*

GALex = G. Endress and D. Gutas, *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon* (Leiden, 1992–)

GAS = F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967–)

Hippocrates: AWP = *Airs, Waters, Places*

IGR = R. Cagnat et al., *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (Paris, 1906–27)

IK = *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* (Bonn, 1972–)

JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

Kazimirski = A. de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1860)

Lane = E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93)

LGPN = P. M. Fraser et al., *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (Oxford, 1987–)

LIMC = *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, 9 vols. (Zurich, 1981–97)

OLD = P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1968–82)

Payne Smith = R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford, 1879–1901)

PCPhS = *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society*

Philostratus: VS = *Vitae sophistarum*

- PIR<sup>2</sup> = *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* (2nd edn.)  
 QSA = *Quaderni di studi arabi*  
 RE = A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Berlin, 1893–1980)  
 RhM = *Rheinisches Museum*  
 SE = *Sextus Empiricus*  
 PH = *Pyrrhoniac hypotyposes*  
 SSR = G. Giannantoni, *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae*, 4 vols. (Naples, 1990)  
 SVF = *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim, vols. i–iii (Stuttgart, 1903–24); vol. iv (indexes) by M. Adler  
 TAPhA = *Transactions of the American Philological Association*  
 TLG = *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* CD Rom # E (Irvine, Calif., 1995)  
 Wehr = H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. M. Cowan (Wiesbaden, 1979)

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