Laurence Sterne's Textual Commerce

Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil)

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Abstract.

Laurence Sterne's Textual Commerce provides a study of Laurence Sterne as a commercial writer. It demonstrates how his correspondence and transactions with booksellers in York and London, his methods of self-promotion, and his early critical reception as a writer of 'great oeconomy' shaped his authorial practice as provisional and, in Thomas Keymer's terms, open to 'determination from without'. In examining commercial exigency in relation to Sterne's authorship between 1759-1768, I combine two areas of enquiry that can appear distinct: studies of writers' interactions with the book trade, which often appear under the rubric of 'book history', and studies of the affinity between 'fictionality' and 'credit', which often perform at a more abstract conceptual level. I argue that, within Sterne's career and writings, each illuminates the other: the terms of credit he negotiates with his booksellers mark the precise point at which the material fabrication of his books meets abstract concerns with reputation and value in his fiction.

Chapter 1 examines Tristram Shandy's function as a publishing protagonist. It shows how Sterne's correspondence with bookseller Robert Dodsley changes the purview of his writings from a Swiftian satire on ecclesiastical intriguing to a 'general' and (within the context of the mid-century marketplace) 'more sale<b>~a~ble' (*Letters,* 97) fiction where readers no longer pursue coded real-life scandals behind parodies. Instead, readers engage sympathetically with a 'creditable' quasi-person, who, because he resists being 'unlocked' by keys or reduced to assorted referents, can be named and perform for Sterne as a publisher in advertisements for his *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760).

Chapter 2 addresses Sterne's chaptering in relation to the shifting term 'oeconomy'. Chaptering allows Sterne at times to figure his text within a domestic architecture, at others to order a repository for his imagined Shandean archives. This connects Sterne's chapters to older conceptions of 'oeconomy' as the management of household resources. Yet Sterne also explores how arranging a fiction using chapters might affect its market value. Inventorying chapters allows him to create a structure of deferred value in his serial text, strengthening his credit with readers at a time when *Tristram Shandy*'s continuation under new bookselling arrangements is not assured. At other points, Sterne self-consciously claims to exchange or reorder chapters with the aim of eliding affective and commercial value.

Chapter 3 focuses on Sterne's exchanges with the mid-eighteenth century's critical reviews. Published serially, *Tristram Shandy*'s instalments are subject to unprecedented

scrutiny from these new market-driven periodicals. The long-running dialogue that ensues between Sterne and the reviewers centres on questions of taste and on the respective credit each holds with their commercial readerships. As a metaphor, taste makes readers consumers. Moreover, like credit, the discourse of taste relies on an elusive *je ne sais quoi*, or tipping point, which emerges from aggregate experience, but is irreducible to any exact set of experiences. For Sterne, it also holds a bifurcated temporality. The critical 'tasting' of his fiction marks a present moment of discrimination that augurs its consecration in history.

Note on References and Abbreviations.

The city of publication in my footnotes is London unless otherwise stated. Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press are abbreviated to CUP and OUP, respectively.

The following abbreviations are used for parenthetical references throughout:

ASJ—Sterne, Laurence. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Edited by Melvyn New *et al*. Vol. 6, *A Sentimental Journey*, edited by Melvyn New and W.G. Day. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002.

CR—The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature. R. Baldwin, 1756-1790.

CWJS vol. 1—Swift, Jonathan. *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift*. Edited by Claude Rawson *et al*. Vol. 1, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, edited by Marcus Walsh. CUP, 2010.

GM—The Gentleman's Magazine; or, Trader's Monthly Intelligencer. 1731-1907.

Letters—Sterne, Laurence. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Edited by Melvyn New *et al*. Vols. 7-8, *The Letters*, edited by Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009.

MR—The Monthly Review. R. Griffiths, 1749-1789.

MW—Sterne, Laurence. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Edited by Melvyn New *et al*. Vol. 9, *Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by Melvyn New and W.B. Gerard. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2014.

Sermons—Sterne, Laurence. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Edited by Melvyn New *et al*. Vol. 4, *The Sermons*, edited by Melvyn New. Vol. 5, *Notes to the Sermons*, edited by Melvyn New. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.

TS—Sterne, Laurence. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Edited by Melvyn New *et al*. Vols. 1-2, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*: *The Text*, edited by Melvyn New and Joan New. Vol. 3, *The Notes*, edited by Melvyn New, Richard A. Davies and W.G. Day. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1978-2009.

In line with the *Shandean* journal, references to the text of *Tristram Shandy* are to the original volume and chapter, followed by page number in the Florida Edition; thus '*TS*, 2.2.98' means: volume 2, chapter 2, Florida Edition p. 98.

Note on Publications.

Sections of this thesis which discuss *Tristram Shandy*'s earliest advertisement in the *York Courant* first appear in 'Sterne, Textual Commerce, Public Judgement'. *The Shandean* 26 (2015): 27-47.

The opening and other sections of Chapter 1 inform 'Textual Commerce and Character: Publishing Protagonists in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*'. *The Shandean* 30 (2019): 43-72.

Chapter 2 appears in a shortened form as '(O)economy and Order: Laurence Sterne's Chaptering'. In *Sterne's Sentimental Journey: A Legacy to the World*. Edited by M-C Newbould and W.B. Gerard. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, forthcoming 2020.

List of Illustrations.

Fig. 1. Advertisement for *Tristram Shandy*, *York Courant*, Tuesday 11 December 1759.

Fig. 2. Contract signed between Laurence Sterne and James Dodsley on 8 March 1760.

Fig. 3. No. 43: J.M. Coetzee's contribution to the Laurence Sterne Trust's 'Black Page' exhibition (recto and verso).

Fig. 4. Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, 5th ed. (John Nutt, 1710), 184.

Fig. 5. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 86 88 [108].

Fig. 6. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 91 [114] 93.

Fig. 7. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 88 90 [110].

Fig. 8. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 30 [48].

Introduction.

I. *Tristram*'s Birth.

On 11 December 1759, an advertisement for the first two volumes of a new fiction appeared in the *York Courant*. The advertisement and the newspaper in which it appeared were printed by Anne Ward, who had inherited her husband Caesar Ward's business following his death earlier that year. December late-year advertisements for novels had, by 1759, become an accepted means of prolonging interest in their novelty by extending their initial publication cycle (including critical responses) across two calendar years. Tobias Smollett's *Critical Review* in 1756 described these advertisements' appearance as 'generally usher[ing] in the Winter as *snow-drops* do the *Spring*' (*CR* 2, 1756: 276). Likewise, the title of this fiction—with its biographical '*Life and…*' focusing on a fictional minor '*Gentleman*'—also appeared conventional. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767) provided only a slight variation on a typical 'Life and Adventures of *Minor Aristocrat*' formula that most fiction-readers would have recognised and perhaps even, by 1759, seen as hackneyed. In its issue for 2 November 1756, for example, the *York Courant* had similarly advertised Edward Kimber's *The Juvenile Adventures of David Ranger, Esq* (1756).[1]

If aspects of the advertisement such as its timing and the title of its master-text seem unremarkable, its discovery in 2013 by the Laurence Sterne Trust provides further support to Lewis P. Curtis and Kenneth Monkman's widely accepted theory that the first edition of the first two volumes of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* was printed in York and that York bookseller John Hinxman and its author allowed the text to circulate amongst that city's literati prior to its first London sales.[2] The fiction it announced would, however, quickly become a fashionable publication sensation in both York and London. Only a few months later, the anonymous authors of *The Clockmakers Outcry Against the Author of The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1760) would lament that 'Our manner and speech at present are all *be-Tristram'd*. Nobody speaks now but in the *Shandean* style'.[3]

The advertisement and the two volumes it announced marked the result of at least half a year's worth of negotiations between Sterne and his booksellers: John Hinxman in York, and Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper in London. In a letter dated 23 May 1759, Sterne

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[1] *York Courant* (Tuesday 2 November, 1756).
[2] Lewis P. Curtis, 'The First Printer of *Tristram Shandy*', *PMLA* 47, no. 3 (1932): 777-79; Kenneth Monkman, 'The Bibliography of the Early Editions of *Tristram Shandy*', *The Library* S5-XXV, no. 1 (1970): 11-22.
[3] *The Clockmakers Outcry Against the Author of The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (J. Burd, 1760), 43.

initially offered a single volume of 'the Life & Opinions of Tristram Shandy' (the exact relation between this volume and the two that eventually appeared remains unknown) to Dodsley for a proposed price of '50 pounds' at the 'very handsome Recommendation of M^{r} Hinksman' (*Letters*, 80). Hinxman was a former apprentice to Dodsley and, prior to *Tristram Shandy*'s appearance, had recently worked with him alongside booksellers in Oxford and Cambridge on the publication of William Weston's *The Safety and Perpetuity of the British State* (1759). Hinxman had taken over John Hilyard's bookselling firm based in York's Stonegate thoroughfare on the latter's decease; that firm had previously published a sermon preached by Sterne in 1747 printed by local printer and stationer Caesar Ward. Anne Ward's late husband, Caesar, had been a prominent Tory in York and had overseen the *York Courant* with the financial backing of John Burton, who later provided Sterne partial inspiration for *Tristram*'s Dr. Slop.[4] Sterne had been involved in founding a pro-Walpole rival newspaper, the *York Gazetteer*, with his uncle Jaques Sterne in March 1741.[5] Despite being on opposing sides of the political divide in the 1740s, Caesar Ward had printed Sterne's earlier sermon and his failed satire *A Political Romance* (1759). Mary Cooper—probably the least involved in negotiations—was one of London's most prominent trade publishers, having taken over her husband Thomas Cooper's business at his death in 1742.[6] At her own death in 1761, Cooper's business was subsumed by Hinxman's through his marriage to her sister.[7] So with *Tristram*, Sterne had been proposing to work within a network in part familiar to him in Ward and Hinxman, in part unfamiliar in Dodsley and Cooper, with Hinxman providing the venture's connective tissue. For Sterne, Dodsley appears to have been the most significant unknown quantity and the person in this network with whom correspondence regarding the negotiations of 1759 survives.

Dodsley declined Sterne's first offer but appears to have given him some encouragement. At the time of their initial correspondence, Dodsley was in the process of handing over his business to his brother James. He saw the expenditure of £50 as, in Sterne's quotation of his reply, 'too much to risk on a single Vol.' (*Letters*, 96) by an unknown author, despite Sterne's assurance that a '2^{d} volume' of *Tristram Shandy* would be 'ready by Christmas, or Nov^{r}' (*Letters*, 80) of the same year. Sterne's letter of 23 May 1759 remains,

[4] Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years* (Methuen & Co., 1975), 92.
[5] *Ibid.*, 87
[6] See James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 172.
[7] *Ibid*., 214.

despite this rejection, a testament to his confidence in the market value of his work. 'If this 1st Volume has a run', which it could not fail to do, Sterne argued, 'We may both find our account in it' (*Letters*, 80). 'The Book will sell', he insists, although 'What other Merit it has, does not become ∧ me ∧ either to think or say,—by all Acc^ts You are a much better Judge—the World however will fix the Value for us both' (*Letters*, 80). Sterne's attempt at flattery intriguingly cedes the judgment of literary and artistic 'Merit' to Dodsley as bookseller whilst claiming the absolute knowledge that 'The Book will sell' for the author. This confidence in *Tristram*'s marketability resurfaces in his follow-up to letter Dodsley of 7 October 1759. 'You need not be told by me, How much Authors are inclined to over-rate their Productions', Sterne argued; however, 'for my own part I hope I am an exception' (*Letters*, 96). To prove his point, Sterne proposed to print 'a lean Edition in 2 ∧ small ∧ Vols, of the Sise of Rasselas, & on the same paper and Type,—and at my own expense merely to feel the Pulse of the World' and so that he and Dodsley should be able to gauge 'what Price to set upon the Remaining Volumes' (*Letters*, 96). The initial risk and loss if the book failed was to fall on Sterne—probably, according to Arthur H. Cash, with the assistance of a loan from William Philips Lee, a friend of John Fountayne the Dean of York.[8] The production would remain local before being shipped to London: 'The book shall be printed here, & the Impression sent up to You; for as I live at York & shall correct every Proof myself, it shall go perfect into the World' (*Letters*, 97). Indeed, Sterne argued that the volumes would be printed 'in <a> so creditable a way as to Paper Type &c—as to do no Dishonour to You, who I know never chuse to print a Book meanly' (*Letters*, 97). No signs of its provincial manufacture appeared in its title-pages. If the volumes were to 'go perfect' into the world, they would also—perhaps to maximise potential sales—arrive in London bearing no trace of their home city.[9]

When the advertisement for those volumes appeared on the *York Courant*'s front page two months after Sterne's letter of 7 October, it may have been easy to overlook save for one prominent, unconventional detail. Below its title, and enjoying almost a quarter of the advertising space, is *Tristram Shandy*'s now-famous Greek epigraph, taken from the Stoic discourses of Epictetus and commonly translated as 'It is not things themselves, but judgements concerning things, which disturb men' (**Fig. 1**). As W.G. Day notes, the appearance of Greek type in a provincial press notice presents both an aesthetically striking and remarkably uncommon choice. Indeed, in all extant issues of the *Courant*, Greek type is

[8] Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 294.
[9] Sterne's dedication to Pitt which reveals that *Tristram Shandy* is produced in 'a bye corner of the kingdom' (*TS* 'Dedication') appears in the first London edition.

never again used to advertise a fiction. Day further notes that the font in which the quotation appears in the advertisement differs from that used in *Tristram*'s first edition—a minor but telling detail.[10] The quotation as typeset was not simply lifted from the forme used for printing the first edition's title-page, but rather composed and set specifically for the advertisement. This suggests that the decision to include the quotation in Greek was a deliberate and even mildly time-consuming one. It can, therefore, be read as an early attempt to determine the protocols of its master-text. With D.F. McKenzie and Jerome J. McGann's shared focus on 'the processes of [textual] transmission' in mind, the advertisement can take its place alongside compositor, printer, and bookseller as a textual 'transmitter' and a determining aspect of what McGann terms the 'plural identity' of the author.[11]

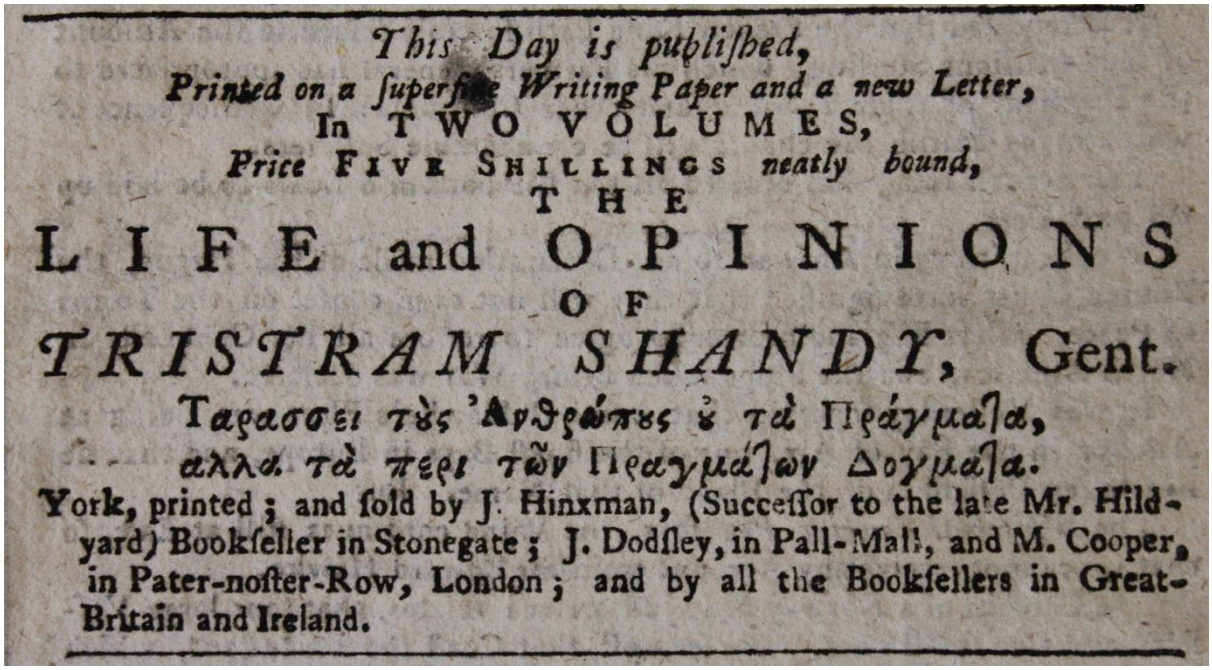

This Day is publiſhed,
Printed on a ſuperfine Writing Paper and a new Letter,
In TWO VOLUMES,
Price FIVE SHILLINGS neatly bound,
THE
LIFE and OPINIONS
OF
TRISTRAM SHANDY, Gent.
Ταρασσει τὰς Ἀνθρώπους ὰ τὰ Πράγματα,
ἀλλα τὰ περι τῶν Πραγμάτων Δογματα.
York, printed; and ſold by J. Hinxman, (Succeſſor to the late Mr. Hildyard) Bookſeller in Stonegate; J. Dodſley, in Pall-Mall, and M. Cooper, in Pater-noſter-Row, London; and by all the Bookſellers in Great-Britain and Ireland.

Fig. 1. Advertisement for *Tristram Shandy*, *York Courant*, Tuesday 11 December, 1759.

McGann's concept is helpful given that, without any extant correspondence, we cannot ascribe the quotation's inclusion to any individual. Perhaps the *Courant*'s printer Anne Ward was eager to display her possession of a well-cast Greek font; perhaps Hinxman decided to market the fiction to a wealthier learned readership; Sterne's intent to 'correct every Proof' of the opening volumes suggests a strong controlling hand over the initial print run which may extend to advertising. The decision is least likely to have been Dodsley's,

[10] See W.G. Day, 'The First Publication of *Tristram Shandy*', https://goodhumour.laurencesternetrust.org.uk/exhibition/year-1759/publication-of-tristram-shandy/, last accessed 14/01/2020.
[11] D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (CUP, 1999), 16; Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 75.

considering his multiple concerns in London and the fact that the quotation does not feature in the first London advertisements. The *Courant*'s advertisement forms, in any case, one part of a composite picture. Acknowledging it as part of the aggregate textual apparatus that surrounds *Tristram Shandy* allows us to re-read its master-text with a better idea of what Sterne and his associates were asking of their readership in 1759. Given contemporaneous debates surrounding Elizabeth Carter's popular translation of Epictetus—debates that questioned both the safety and legitimacy of addressing 'heathen' works to unschooled English readers—the Greek epigraph appears to send a clear message: this work is submitted to the judgement of a learned world and a public at least in part refined by author and bookseller.[12] Considered alongside the *Courant*'s advertisement and the promise to 'correct every Proof myself', Sterne's earlier assertion to Dodsley that 'the World […] will fix the Value [of *Tristram Shandy*] for us both' gains new significance. It would be going too far to suggest that Sterne and Hinxman fixed the boundaries of their readership (the 'world' in which the text would be received) in the same manner that Tristram himself attempts to draw a circle of four miles' diameter around the provincial world of his tale. But we can nevertheless ask whether such fastidious advertising of a limited and expensive press run might complicate John Mullan's description of *Tristram* as a fiction simply 'let loose in the world—subject to no official control'.[13]

Although the second edition's dedication to Pitt seems to support Mullan's notion of *Tristram Shandy* as a foundling text that 'must protect itself' (*TS*, 'Dedication') as it goes into the world, to take this at face value would be to occlude a significant level of narrative and paratextual control wielded by Sterne, Hinxman, Dodsley, and Ward as collaborative agents of plural authorship. The use of the Greek quotation in the advertisement appears to establish an authenticating code or shibboleth through which readers must pass before they in turn can pass judgement. Indeed, we might read the *Courant*'s use of Greek text as an arcane jest in the tradition of learned wit. Only those capable of translating the text are given licence to

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[12] A useful reading of the stylistic decisions discussed by Carter and her associate Thomas Secker appears in E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 167-70. Clery outlines how Carter's original proposal to translate Epictetus into an ornate, or 'feminised', prose gave way to Secker's call for a more forceful, or 'virile', style. Secker's concern was that an Epictetus rendered in too familiar an idiom would persuade its fashionable readership to accept uncritically the text's 'heathen' aspects. Carter later wrote an introduction to her work to 'show how deficient' Epictetus's 'heathen' principles are compared to those of Christianity. See *The Grand Magazine of Magazines; or Universal Register* (J. Staples, 1758), 42. There is no evidence to suggest that Sterne or his associates engaged in this debate; however, the decision to advertise in Greek appears all the more prescriptive in light of anxieties raised by proposals for 'familiar' or 'popular' classical translations.

[13] John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 149.

consider what is being offered up for judgement. In four lines, the advertisement succinctly constructs the reader who will buy *Tristram* and judge its worth: a reader equally equipped to navigate the idiosyncrasies of Yorkshire dialect ('Shandy' being a local term for an oddity or a crack-brain), to translate Greek, and to recognise the quotation from Epictetus and its significance. The *Courant*'s advertisement adroitly collapses hierarchies of language and temporality whilst also reasserting their importance. The colloquial English of daily Yorkshire life sits above the timeless precepts of classical Stoicism, but its little world of 'Shandies', country 'Gentlemen' and 'Opinions' floats free of historical significance without the underpinning wisdom of the ancient philosopher, whose words are withheld from all but the scholar. In the ephemeral and public act of declaring its sale, *Tristram* already appears to declare as a touchstone its timelessness through the language of a learned coterie.

Yet the advertisement also leaves room to read it as a tongue-in-cheek comment on similar apparently exclusivist marketing practices; how many of the *Courant*'s readers truly could be expected to translate the quotation? Is the iteration of Epictetus's lofty precept in the service of selling a mere novel justifiable? And to tie this together, is it prose fiction, bookselling practices, or the learning and comprehension of York's reading public that the advertisement purports to offer up for the judgement of the learned? Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, M-C Newbould, and Helen Williams argue that

> when situated within the broader context of novel-advertising the Greek type was, perhaps, less an invitation for an elite readership than an innovative take on the eye-catching gestures that booksellers typically deployed to detain readers who skimmed the newspapers.[14]

This analysis provides a 'broader context' that detracts from what Sterne and his associates attempted more locally. Within the narrow context of advertising featured in the *Courant*, there are no further fictional works advertised using the learned language of Greek type either prominently or otherwise in the copies extant up to 1759. Latin was occasionally used in later issues, as, for example, in the *Courant*'s 1760 advertisement for 'Chrysal: Or, The

[14] Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, M-C. Newbould, and Helen Williams, 'Advertising Sterne's Novels in Eighteenth-Century Newspapers', *Shandean* 27 (2016): 33.

Adventures of a Guinea' which quotes Cicero's dictum '*Qui capit ille facit*'.[15] The use of Greek, however, appealed to a level of education beyond the rote-learning of Latin truisms. What is true is that the *Courant*'s readers would not have needed to be able to decipher the Greek text to be drawn to its learned pretensions.

The shrewdness of *Tristram Shandy*'s first advertisement lies in how it could have it both ways: it appeals both to the learned readers whom Sterne and his associates perhaps considered best qualified to judge his works, and to those who aspired to be so and who could appreciate the advertisement's apparent exclusivity. Whilst exemplifying Jon Stobart's claim that eighteenth-century provincial advertisements often aimed to resituate commerce within the bounds of the polite, the *Courant*'s advertisement upsets any notionally uniform sense of transmission.[16] It is public and it excludes; it offers low and high, local Shandies and cosmopolitan learning, jest and self-examination, all at once. As a mediator of forms, it does much the same cultural work as that of Sterne's fiction-proper, fashioning an authorial voice capable of asserting form in formlessness, sincere precept in ironic pose, and lasting value in the ephemeral. As a paratext operating in what Gérard Genette describes as a liminal zone of public transaction and commercial strategy, it confidently posits textual commerce as a negotiation reliant on its participants being 'in the know'.[17] Within the *Courant*'s pages, Tristram competes with other texts on offer to unite his own circle, claiming exclusivity whilst inviting the *Courant*'s broader readership to acculturate itself to his offerings.

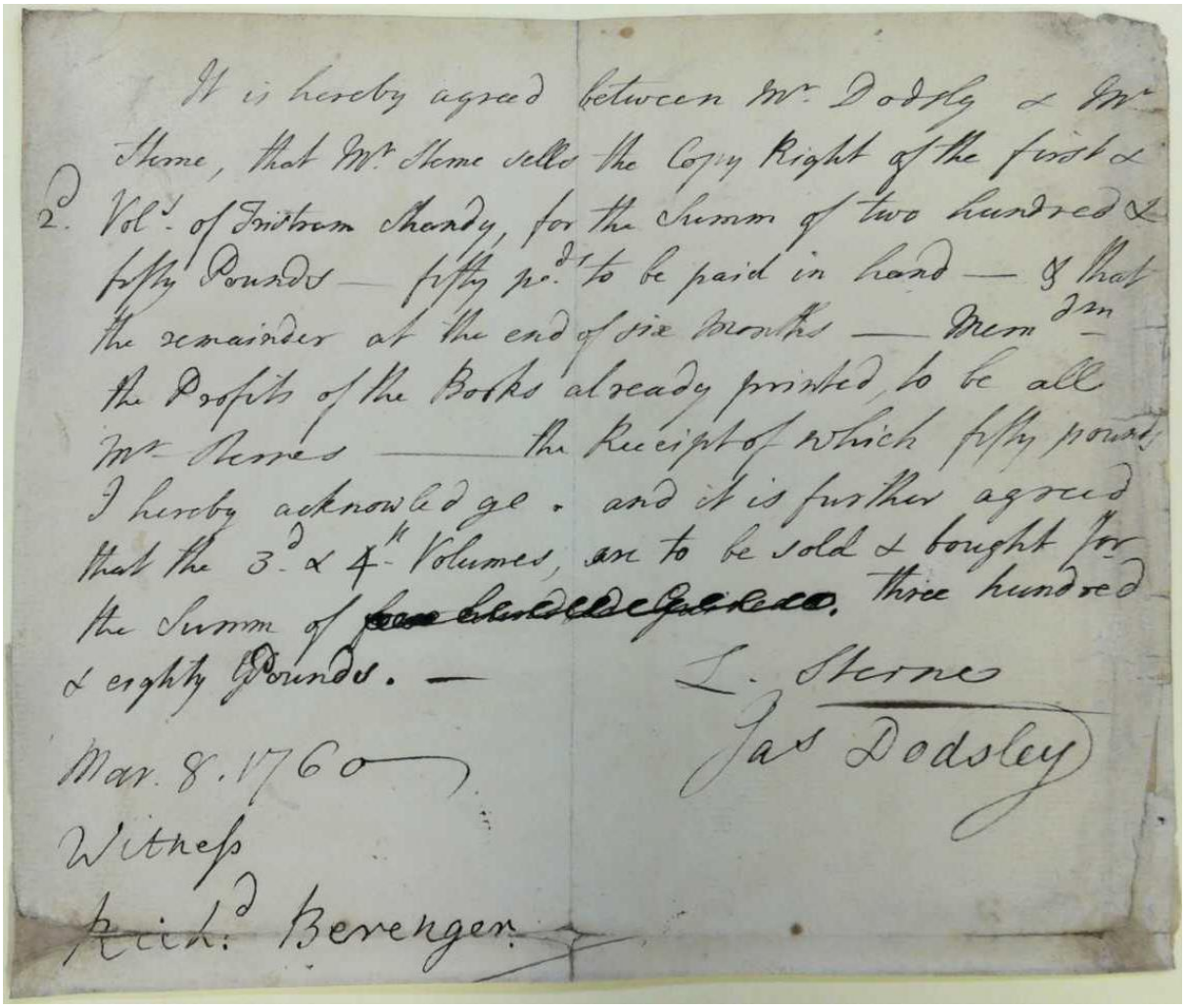
This commercial savviness is born of Sterne's need to prove the worth of his project and, in his own blunt terms, his claim that 'The Book will sell'. As it transpired, Sterne's negotiations and his bid to 'feel the Pulse of the World' paid off dramatically. The Dodsleys agreed to sell the books printed by Ward in London on commission. By the time of Sterne's visit to London in early March, the Dodsleys' shop had sold out of any remaining copies; Sterne was informed 'by the Shopman', according to John Croft, the brother of Sterne's friend Stephen, 'that there was not such a Book [titled *Tristram Shandy*] to be had in London either for Love nor money'.[18] In a letter to actress Catherine Fourmantel shortly after his arrival, dated 8 March 1760, Sterne appears happily ensconced in his new *milieu*, boasting

[15] *York Courant* (Tuesday 13 May, 1760). The dictum was well-known and commonly used on frontispieces. See, for example, Colley Cibber, *The Careless Husband: A Comedy* (1710) and Alexander McDonald, *Alexis; or, the Young Adventurer. A Novel* (1746).
[16] Jon Stobart, 'Selling Through Politeness: Advertising Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England', *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 3 (2008): 313.
[17] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (CUP, 1997), 2.
[18] Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Later Years* (Methuen & Co., 1986), 3.

that his new acquaintance David Garrick 'leaves nothing undone that can do me either Service <or>~&~ Credit'; furthermore, he asserts that Garrick has 'undertaken the whole Management of the Booksellers, & will procure me a great price' (*Letters*, 127). In a letter to another new acquaintance in London, Richard Berenger, of the same date, Sterne is already avidly making plans to maximise his asset, asserting that 'I would give ^ both ^ my Ears (If I was not to lose my Credit by it) for no more than ten Strokes of Howgarth's witty Chissel, to clap at the Front of my next Edition of *Shandy!*' (*Letters*, 130). Further letters to Fourmantel from the same sojourn seek to assure 'you my Kitty, that Tristram is the Fashion' (*Letters*, 135) and promise 'to make the most of myself, & sell both inside & out' (*Letters*, 140).

If Sterne's letters to Fourmantel present somewhat vainglorious attempts to impress a possible lover, they also show the scale of his ambitions at this point, his brazenness in promoting his interests, and the influential new allies he had already made in London. With or without Garrick's intervention, Sterne on 8 March finalised a new deal with the Dodsleys for *Tristram Shandy*'s first London edition and for a further instalment, alongside a separate agreement for two volumes of sermons. Prior to his trip to London, Sterne had already placed an advertisement in the *York Courant* for 4 March 1760 seeking subscribers for a series of 'Dramatick' sermons 'Published by Tristram Shandy, Gentleman'.[19] His deal with the Dodsleys for these volumes is no longer extant, but Sterne later asserted to his banker Robert Foley that 'the last sermons sold for 400 Guineas' (*Letters*, 300). If true, this is, as Cash notes, a remarkable sum, given that Sterne also received income from its subscribers.[20] Considering that the letter to Foley involves Sterne negotiating the value of a proposed third and fourth volume of sermons, his sum of 400 Guineas may be exaggerated. The second improved contract for *Tristram* does survive and is now in the New York Public Library's Berg Collection (see **fig. 2.**) The agreement is written in Sterne's hand and, as Cash speculates, may have been drafted in advance and brought by him to the meeting at Dodsley's shop.[21]

[19] *York Courant* (Tuesday 4 March, 1760).
[20] Cash, *Later Years*, 39.
[21] *Ibid.*, 9.


It is hereby agreed between Mr. Dodsley & Mr. Sterne, that Mr. Sterne sells the Copy Right of the first & 2d. Vol.s of Tristram Shandy, for the Summ of two hundred & fifty Pounds — fifty pds. to be paid in hand — & that the remainder at the end of six Months — Item — the Profits of the Books already printed, to be all Mr. Sternes — the Receipt of which fifty pounds I hereby acknowledge. and it is further agreed that the 3d. & 4th. Volumes, are to be sold & bought for the Summ of ~~two hundred pounds~~ three hundred & eighty Pounds. —

L. Sterne

Jas Dodsley

Mar. 8. 1760

Witness

Richd. Berenger

Fig. 2. Contract signed between Laurence Sterne and James Dodsley on 8 March, 1760.

The contract is witnessed by Berenger, so we can conjecture that the Hogarth woodcuts Sterne proposed in his letter of the same day were raised at the meeting and quickly mooted to form part of the first London edition. Indeed, the Florida editors of Sterne's correspondence have suggested that he wrote the letter to Berenger in the hours immediately following the meeting with plans for the first London edition newly solidified (*Letters*, 132). The other salient details of the agreement are that James Dodsley was to pay 'the summ of two hundred & fifty Pounds' for the 'Copy Right' to print and sell the first London edition of *Tristram Shandy*'s opening two volumes, £50 of which was to be 'paid in hand' with the remaining £200 to be paid within six months; the profits of the York edition printed by Ward were to remain 'all M^{r} Sternes'. Finally, it concludes, 'the 3^{d} & 4th Volumes' of *Tristram* were to be the exclusive concern of the Dodsleys, with the copyright 'sold & bought for the Summ of […] three hundred & eighty Pounds'.

II. Commerce and Credit.

Tristram Shandy's instant success following its advertisement in the *Courant* had, then, helped Sterne to negotiate highly favourable terms with the Dodsleys by March 1760, inflating its value from an initial £20 to a total of £650 within six months. As Sterne desired, he also garnered Hogarth's 'witty Chissel' for the first London edition. The exact scene of 'Trim's reading the sermon to my [sic] Father &c' that Sterne proposed 'w^{d} do the Business' (*Letters*, 131) featured on its frontispiece. If Sterne seems remarkably confident and single-minded in achieving such feats from an unpropitious clerical post in rural Yorkshire, his narrator, Tristram, is a similarly unapologetic proponent of textual commerce, one who banks on 'writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year;----which, if I am suffered to go on quietly, and can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live' (*TS*, 1.14.42). Tristram's is a life not just of writing but, specifically, of writing to publish—and of securing advantageous deals for those publications. Sterne himself, as we have seen, equated 'mak[ing] the most of [himself]' with 'sell[ing] both inside & out'. There is a pointed absolutism in the terms with which both Sterne as author-proper and Tristram as his author-protagonist discuss their relation to the bookselling business. Commerce, Paul Keen argues, came to be aligned in the eighteenth century with 'a whole range of social interactions'; it no longer represented a 'discrete realm' of exchange 'which individuals might choose to enter' but becomes, for many writers, 'a byword for the totality of relations which society itself comprised in a modern transactional world'.[22] David Hume writes in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1738) that

> the commerce of mankind is not confin'd to the barter of commodities, but may extend to services and actions, which we may exchange to our mutual interest and advantage […] All this is the effect of natural and inherent principles and passions of human nature.[23]

Just as, for Hume, commerce represents the full manifestation of 'natural and inherent principles' and the 'passions of human nature', so for Sterne it permeates 'inside' and 'out'

[22] Paul Keen, *Literature, Commerce, and the Spectacle of Modernity* (CUP, 2012), 10.
[23] David Hume, *Oxford Philosophical Texts: A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, 2 vols. (OUP, 2000), 1:334.

and, in doing so, collapses any distinction between them. For his protagonist, Tristram, it defines every aspect of the work that defines his life; if 'tolerable bargain[s]' with booksellers continue to be settled, nothing should prevent him from publishing until his death.

There is, however, a discrepancy between this totalising vision and the provisional nature of the actual deals Sterne secured. As we have seen, Sterne proposed the original York edition of *Tristram Shandy*'s opening volumes as a means to take 'the Pulse of the World' at one particular location and juncture. The conceit is intriguing and by no means unique to Sterne. As I argue in Chapter 1, he may even have deliberately borrowed it from critic James Ralph's *The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade* (1758). What is telling in the diagnostic figure is its temporary and conditional nature. The world's 'Pulse' is mercurial and prone to change quickly; Sterne and his booksellers would have to act fast if they were to capitalise on his exploratory work in York.

Having demonstrated some pseudo-diagnostic success, Sterne was able to obtain better terms for *Tristram Shandy*'s opening volumes and secure an agreement from the Dodsleys for a further two. Yet, understandably, this is the full extent to which the Dodsleys would contractually commit their support. If Sterne, like his protagonist, also aimed at 'writing and publishing two volumes of [Tristram's] life every year', he would need to retake 'the Pulse of the World' again and again. Further agreements would need to be secured to maintain *Tristram*'s value. As events transpired, and for reasons that remain unknown but which may relate to volume 3 and 4's poorer sales, those were to be the final volumes of *Tristram* published by the Dodsleys before Sterne sought a new association with rival London booksellers Thomas Becket and Peter de Hondt.[24] Again, this association appears to have been provisional and ad hoc. As Cash notes, the earliest advertisements for volumes 5 and 6 in the *London Chronicle* (Tuesday 24 and Thursday 26 November, 1761) and the *York Courant* (Tuesday 1 December, 1761) do not mention any bookseller and it is likely that Sterne finalised publication details only in December.[25] Embarking on this new partnership meant, in terms of financial arrangements and market strategy, starting again; as with the York edition of volumes 1 and 2, Sterne again shouldered much of the risk, buying the paper

[24] There is no conclusive evidence why Sterne switched booksellers from volume 5 onwards. The Florida editors speculate that 'perhaps it had something to do with Dodsley's handling of the second edition of III and IV. Or perhaps it was Sterne's concern about the future, for his ill health drove him to France only two weeks after V and VI appeared' (*TS*, 'Introduction to the Text', 826). It is also feasible that the Dodsleys instigated the break. In my conversations with Peter de Voogd, he has speculated that volume 3's labour-intensive marbled pages in the first edition may have made *Tristram*'s second instalment less profitable than hoped.
[25] Cash, *Later Years*, 111.

and arranging for the printing of volumes 5 and 6 with London printer William Strahan. If money was the motivation for his breach with the Dodsleys, Monkman estimates that the income from 4000 copies of volumes 5 and 6 would be approximately £800 with an outlay of just over £180, leaving over £600 to be divided between Sterne and his booksellers.[26] Sterne may have sought a larger share of those profits than the Dodsleys were willing to offer.

Despite no contract between Sterne, Becket, and de Hondt remaining extant, we know some of the details of Sterne's self-financed involvement from Monkman's discovery of the following entry in one of Strahan's ledgers held at the British Museum: 'Dec^{r} Rev^{d} M^{r} Sterne Tristram Shandy, Vol. 5 & 6th 20 sheets No 40000 @ £2: 10: 0'.[27] Five months later, Sterne wrote to Becket:

> M^{rs} Sterne will be in London <in> ~at~ Midsummer' and If you will be so good, betwixt now & then, to collect what is due from the Trade on my Acc^{t}—& after paying my Printer & Stationer & y^{r}self—to pay what remains into M^{rs} Sternes hands—her Rec^{t} will be sufficient for what money you pay her<e> (*Letters*, 261)

Sterne, this letter shows, was in reality acting as his own publisher, with Becket his agent, Strahan his printer, and William Edmonds his stationer. Sterne calculated his credit with 'the Trade' on the expectation that '3000' copies of volumes 5 and 6 would have been 'disposed of' (*Letters*, 261) by May 1762—in fact, 2827 had been sold (*Letters*, 316). In part, this estimation relied on a new strategy of authorial ownership. Stung by the appearance of a counterfeit third volume of *Tristram Shandy* in 1760 (prior to his own continuation) and perhaps also by another offshoot, *The Life and Amours of Hafen Slawkenbergius* (1761), Sterne advertised that 'Every Book' of the fifth volume would be 'signed by the Author'.[28] As an attributional shift from author-protagonist to author-proper, Sterne's signing of the volumes as 'L. Sterne' appears to be a makeshift response to the threat of further inauthentic continuations. The outline of its first forays into the world and its always provisional means of continuation thus demonstrate how, in Thomas Keymer's terms, *Tristram* existed in a

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[26] Monkman, 'Early Editions of *Tristram Shandy*', 27-28.
[27] *Ibid.*, 25—quoted in Cash, *Later Years*, 111.
[28] *General Evening Post* (Thursday 17 and Saturday 19 December, 1761); *Whitehall Evening-Post* (Thursday 17 and Saturday 19 December, 1761); *Public Ledger* (Friday 18 and Thursday 24 December, 1761)—quoted in Brandtzæg, Newbould, and Williams, 'Advertising Sterne's Novels', 41.

'rolling state of openness to determination from without'. If, as Keymer argues, *Tristram*'s serial form is 'something we need to view more as an unstable process than as a static product', that instability is often attributable to Sterne's reactive commercial manoeuvres and his need to retain his credit as an author-publisher feeling his way into a new trade.[29]

Tristram Shandy's 'rolling state of openness' and the immediacy of Sterne's metaphorical 'pulse-taking' evince, more broadly, a 'presentistic' view, which, in J.G.A. Pocock's terms, treats 'nothing but the moment and its strategies as providing the context in which the effort [...] to regulate must be made'.[30] For Pocock, such 'presentism' is tied to a view of political economy as 'consisting of exchange rather than inheritance'—what Hume describes as wealth transferable 'within an instant' that confers 'no hereditary authority of credit to the possessor'.[31] The only form of credit it can confer is provisional and ever-open to renegotiation. Pocock's examinations of modes of political and historical time and movable property together suggest that presentism as an economic worldview becomes contradictorily a means of imaginatively evacuating the present. The concept of public credit, when extended to the limits of a National Debt, becomes an appeal to pure imagination, asking its investors to buy into the fantasy of a future full repayment that necessarily cannot occur. It is as compensation for his faith that the investor is allowed to use the tokens of this imagined future repayment in his daily affairs.[32] On one hand, the subject remains locked in the present, or the 'Pulse of the Times', refitting self and commercial strategy to each succeeding moment; on the other, 'he does not even live in the present', Pocock argues, 'except as constituted by his fantasies concerning a future'.[33] In the case of *Tristram Shandy*, each two-volume instalment and the deals that facilitate it are deeply provisional; each is also produced, however, with the overarching aim of continuing to publish, in Tristram's words, for 'as long as I live'.

Credit in the eighteenth century provides a specific paper-mediated form of monetary and transactional relation typically treated within (or against) general accounts of 'commerce' as 'natural and inherent'. Hume as a case in point often identifies paper-money as an

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[29] Thomas Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel* (OUP, 2002), 86.
[30] J. G. A. Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time in Early Eighteenth-Century England' in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (CUP, 1985), 95.
[31] David Hume, *Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley (OUP, 1996), 209.
[32] J.G.A Pocock, 'The Mobility of Property and the Rise of Eighteenth-Century Sociology' in *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 112-113.
[33] *Ibid.*, 112.

'artificial' as opposed to a 'natural' fiction in his political economy.[34] But although 'credit' and 'commerce' are not synonyms, the former often strongly determines the workings of the latter and, in the case of Sterne, defines the type of specifically textual commerce in which he engages. Relying also on forms of writing, credit is textual *and* promissory and, as with Sterne's fiction, the terms of its promises and the types of promise made can change over time. What often initially appears as categorical can later be revealed as conditional and vice-versa. As Pocock's argument stresses, within the 'commerce of mankind's' often gnomic, or timeless, treatment (as in Hume), credit provides a temporal (we might say, narrative) dynamic in the present moment of exchange and the expectation, or imagination, of future fulfilment. Sterne calculates his credit with his banker, various members of the bookselling trade, and even his wife based on future volume sales. This affects his compositional practice and his correspondence with other actors in the textual marketplace such as book reviewers. Correspondingly, the ways in which Sterne's fictions engage with their readers are also time-sensitive. When Tristram promises particular chapters or affecting episodes to his readers, those promised versus those realised differ in relation to the reader in 1761—for whom *Tristram* is a serial fiction in process in which they have invested—and the reader in 1768 or in 2020, for whom it can be bought as a 'Complete' set or single volume respectively.[35] One can, however, always be held to account for original promises or proposals not fulfilled. In its review of *Tristram*'s final volume, the *Monthly Review* succinctly outlines this gap in the credit Sterne negotiates with his readers: 'what is *proposed*, and what is *done*, are, with this Author, points as little connected as the south pole is with the North' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93). Thinking in time-sensitive terms of credit, then, allows us to circumvent the age-old question as to whether Sterne conceived of and completed *Tristram Shandy* as a whole.[36] Instead, we can think in terms of when it is useful for Sterne to present authorship to his readers as essayistic, open-ended, and contingent on external factors, and when it suits better to present it as planned, closed, and systematic.

Pocock's suggested conceptual link between credit and eighteenth-century imaginative writing as ways of living through fiction has opened up a vital tranche of literary

[34] C.f. C. George Caffensis, 'Fiction or Counterfeit? David Hume's Interpretations of Paper and Metallic Money' in *David Hume's Political Economy*, ed. Carl Wennerlind and Margaret Schabas (Routledge, 2008), 163.
[35] It is first advertised in 'Complete Sets in 9 Vols.' in the *Public Advertiser* (Thursday 29 January, 1767)
[36] See, most famously, Wayne C. Booth, 'Did Sterne Complete "Tristram Shandy?"', *Modern Philology* 48, no. 3 (1951): 172-183.

criticism to which this thesis is indebted. Colin Nicholson's *Writing and the Rise of Finance* argues that for 'Opposition writers' during the early eighteenth-century Whig ascendancy

> traditional emphases of a humanist and Machiavellian vocabulary become the vehicle of a basically hostile perception of early modern capitalism, a hostility grounded in awareness of the elaborate conventions of public credit rather than of the more direct interchanges of the market.[37]

Nicholson's focus is on writers living through and responding to the 'institutionalising phase' of new instruments of credit, public debt, insurance brokerage, and, more broadly, 'monetary policy' in the early-century period.[38] Such instruments, Nicholson argues, saw private individuals for the first time entering into a contractual relationship with the state, allowing shareholders to perceive it as 'marketable property'.[39] This fundamentally 'transformed the relationship of the citizen to the state' in that it opened up 'a destabilising gap [...] between individual self-awareness on the one hand and a changing consciousness of property, society, and history on the other'.[40] Because this new moneyed interest in the National Debt challenged the traditional basis of wealth in 'freehold and real property' as the 'guarantee of a civic virtue that enabled the citizen as head of his *oikos* or household to rule and be ruled', the Tory neo-classicists who maintained such civic-humanist views began to regard the state 'as no longer able to control its own history or resist its own corruption'.[41]

Nicholson argues that the 'uncertainty and flux' inherent in the new credit economy challenged the 'hierarchical values' of writers such as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift.[42] Works such as Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712-17)—which draws 'commodity fetishism' as also a 'psychic fetishism' of imaginative investment—and, later, Swift's *The Bubble* (1720) and *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (1726) deployed 'stock markets, share-dealing, paper money, and public credit' as recurrent tropes in a satirical conflict of 'attitude

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[37] Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (CUP, 1994), 2.
[38] *Ibid.*, 12, 4.
[39] *Ibid.*, 6.
[40] *Ibid.*, 4, 2-3.
[41] *Ibid.*, 4, 3.
[42] *Ibid.*, 5.

and action' within an emerging context of 'political and economic transvaluations'.[43] Swift's *The Bubble*, which he later revised as *The South-Sea. 1721*, responded almost in real time to the collapse of South Sea stock, the first large-scale crisis of the nation's new fiscal instruments. *The Bubble* presents, Nicholson suggests, a powerful concatenation of figures that draws optimism in this new speculative economy as variously an occult trick ('What Magick makes our Money rise' (198), a proto-Gulliverian illusion of scale ('Put on what Spectacles You please, / Your Guinnea's but a Guinnea still' (121-122), and as a mythological flight of fancy ('On *Paper* Wings [the investor] takes his Flight' (45).[44] The pointedly '*Paper*'-credit wings of the investor's ill-fated Icarian adventure is stitched into the poem's surreal patchwork of 'absurd' disaster and 'comic fraud' which incorporates fantastical visions and pseudo-biblical aphorisms:

> While some build Castles in the Air,
> *Directors* build 'em in the Seas;
> *Subscribers* plainly see 'em there
> For Fools will see as Wise men please (165-168).

The poem envisages an economy of paper instruments in apocalyptic crisis; credit built upon 'Castles in the Air' sinks into water, becoming 'The Bubble' of Swift's title. The evocation of 'Castles' as solid properties dissolved into 'Seas' of speculation figures the erosion of classical civic-humanist values in a new uncertain medium that appears to engulf everything.

Despite his concern that 'the Wealth of the Nation, that used to be reckoned by the Value of Land' was now being 'computed by the Rise and Fall of Stocks', one of the reasons Swift could write so convincingly about this new economy as an invasive and impenetrable 'Complication' of 'Knavery', 'Couzenage' and 'unintelligible *Jargon* of terms' was that his own finances were deeply imbricated in speculative investment and, in particular, South Sea stock.[45] Despite coining the term 'the Monied Men' as a semi-pejorative description of those who 'raised vast sums by trading with Stocks and Funds', Swift himself frequently 'acted the part of a 'moneyed' man, making loans on mortgages, investing in South Sea stock, and

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[43] *Ibid.*, 9, 24.
[44] Quotations and line numbers are from Jonathan Swift, *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis (OUP, 1967).
[45] Jonathan Swift, *Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis *et al.*, 16 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939-1975), 3: *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710-1711*, ed. Herbert Davis (1966), 6-7—quoted in Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance*, 15.

owning outright no land to speak of'.[46] He wrote—often in opposition—from inside the credit economy's 'institutionalising phases' and within its early crises as someone who had invested and sometimes lost significant sums.

Nicholson's focus provides a minor literary variant on Pocock's: on the way that early-century 'Oppositional' writers addressed what Sandra Sherman terms the 'high political implications' of the emerging credit economy at the level of subject-matter.[47] Sherman's own study, *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century*, proposes a closer formal 'homology [...] between "financial" and "literary" texts in the market' as part of a 'shared financial/literary discursive'.[48] Sherman thus argues that long-term credit instruments *as* written texts 'implicated' eighteenth-century English culture in their own form of 'narrativity' since 'promises in stocks, annuities, and negotiable instruments were verifiable only with time'—which often extended into a distant future.[49] When Defoe writes in the *Review* in 1711 that 'all our Capital Branches of Income, are actually mortgag'd for an Hundred Years' and that the whole nation would subsequently bear the 'Chains' of this 'Entail'd Debt' for decades to come, he neatly encapsulates 'credit's defining crux' for the individual: that one 'is enmeshed, inscribed into a narrative [...] written on others' behalf; one's volition is (con)scripted by the market'.[50] At a more experiential-phenomenological level than that of Pocock and Nicholson, Sherman argues that the 'congeries of bills, notes, stocks, annuities, reports on the National Debt' that formed the early eighteenth-century market required various professional readers to navigate 'an equivocal, impenetrable textuality' which came to occlude any 'visible, originary Fund' just as 'fiction proliferates fiction to hide fictionality'.[51] Both credit and fiction in this account 'produce[d] signs without referents, ciphers with no payoff in the world of phenomena'; both constructed and relied on a 'normative [...] conditionality' that was shifting and contingent.[52]

Crises such as the South Sea Bubble revealed early in the English Financial Revolution that 'apparent value' could be 'time-sensitive' or even illusory, and, moreover,

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[46] Jonathan Swift, *Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 6: *Political Tracts, 1711-1713*, ed. Herbert Davis (1951), 10; Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance*, 70.
[47] Sandra Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe* (CUP, 1996)
[48] *Ibid.*, 4-5
[49] *Ibid.*, 5.
[50] Daniel Defoe, *A Review of the State of the British Nation*, 7:137 (8 February, 1711), 546—quoted in Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 14; Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 15.
[51] Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 1-2.
[52] *Ibid.*, 16, 6.

that it could be manipulated through the creative use or withholding of opaque texts and doubled accounting books.[53]

> The [South Sea] Company's books were rogue texts, which unlike the contracts for exchange of *issued* stock, lacked even the color of law as justification. The books were pure, unmediated fiction, drawn up to *produce* a law favourable to their authors.[54]

Despite this impenetrability, Sherman argues that writers such as Defoe value credit's resistance to strict empirical observation because it induces creative ways of imagining one's relation to the future: 'In a credit economy, imagination supports the suspension of disbelief underlying investment. It initiates economic narrative'.[55] One of Sherman's strongest readings is of the figure of Lady Credit, which appears repeatedly in Defoe's periodical writings. Defoe reifies his own fiction's lack of textual-generic fixity, Sherman argues, in Lady Credit's inherent mutability. Suspended between personification, allegory, proto-novelistic 'character', and neo-classical '*Fortuna*', Lady Credit resists any reductive status as a 'static signifier with limited narrative potential'.[56] Able beyond any mythological precedent to survive rape as a virgin and 'career through [her tale] as chaste, whore, and chaste again', Lady Credit flouts any strict cause-and-effect narrative logic and, in doing so, 'implicat[es] authorial latitude in the shiftiness of the markets'.[57] A 'substantial Non-Entity' that is 'all Consequence, and yet not the Effect of a Cause', credit exists apart from all observable 'Phaenomena in Nature' as the 'Emblem of a something, tho' in it self nothing'.[58] In this sense, Lady Credit inscribes the original 'nothing' at the centre of value-forming substitutions and displacements, becoming, Sherman argues, a heuristic device in Defoe's writings for navigating literary and financial texts that convey 'neither obvious Lie nor verified Truth'; texts that function conditionally and through their readers' provisional investment.[59]

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[53] *Ibid.*, 29.
[54] *Ibid.*, 35.
[55] *Ibid.*, 37.
[56] *Ibid.*, 42.
[57] *Ibid.*, 42-43.
[58] Defoe, *Review*, 6:31 (14 June, 1709), 122—quoted in Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 46.
[59] Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 47.

Credit nevertheless often figures in its Lady Credit guise as a hysteric *Fortuna* in the early-century writings of Defoe and Addison—a passive 'Valetudinarian' whose changes in health could make or break the nation.[60] Sherman's more optimistic reading of Lady Credit's creative relation to an imagined futurity indicates the ways in which prose fictions of the 1740s later provide imaginative models for credit's rehabilitation within the domestic sphere. Conversely, this could entail its stabilisation. James Thompson has shown how Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749) legitimises bank papers as symbolic markers of aristocratic inheritance in its central tale of loss and restitution, with Allworthy's recognition of the 'Bank Bills' he previously issued to Tom providing the prompt to recall and recount 'the whole Affair' during Fielding's final revelatory act.[61] The restitution of Tom's bank bills occurs, Thompson argues, within 'a traditionally fixed, hierarchical (and agricultural) economy, where real property is the essential model for all other types of property, especially currency'.[62] Credit provides the creative impetus and drive towards the sense-making ending of the fiction, which in turn secures credit's status. Fielding, in this account, inscribes credit within a conservative nexus of property and ownership by introducing it as a narrative instrument within a traditional tropology of 'lost and found' tales.[63] When Tom returns Sophia's £100 bill in the belief that 'you will find it of the same Value, as when it was lost'—a belief that is borne out as the fiction concludes—Fielding ascribes bank paper 'real value in a social order that is largely fixed'.[64]

In a more radical reading of credit as legitimised within the proto-bourgeois sociable sphere, Catherine Ingrassia presents the heroine of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) as its author's ideal 'domestic stockjobber', who persuades Mr B. to invest in a value system based on a 'speculative economy' of future return.[65] In Ingrassia's reading, Pamela's letters themselves become an analogous cache of promissory notes, assuring the safety of Mr B's investment through the 'credible' narrative of honest virtue that they tell, and exploiting the familiar letter's iconographic currency as a window to the soul.[66] The

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[60] See Erin Mackie, *Market à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in the Tatler and the Spectator* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 127-133.
[61] Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Fredson Bowers, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 2:920.
[62] James Thompson, *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 133.
[63] *Ibid.*, 133.
[64] Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones*, 2:731; Thompson, *Models of Value*, 134.
[65] Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (CUP, 1999), 138.
[66] *Ibid.*, 138-165

metaphorical level of this speculative-epistolary economy, Ingrassia argues, is subservient to its function 'as a vehicle for transformative cultural practice'.[67] The 'key terms of speculative finance' such as 'credit, interest [and] project' all 'appear in Richardson's novel and indicate the inextricable connection between the practices of divergent domestic and financial fears'.[68] Sherman and Ingrassia's approaches work at the level of form as well as of subject-matter. They suggest that, like instruments of credit, fiction can reproduce speculative forms of provisional investment *as*-text, rather than, in the case of Thompson's reading of Fielding, merely *in*-text in the fiction's diegetic world. The fictional letters that materially frame *Pamela*'s narrative themselves work within a structure of deferred value.

Thompson and Ingrassia's readings of Fielding and Richardson both relate to the broader terms in which Catherine Gallagher situates the modern credit economy as integral to her account of the rise of 'fictionality' in the mid-eighteenth-century novel. For Gallagher, the cultural naturalisation of fiction and the credit economy both rely on a controlled suspension of 'literal truth claims' and a concomitant epistemological attitude in readers that Gallagher terms 'ironic credulity':

> Novels seek to suspend the reader's disbelief, as an element is suspended in a solution that it thoroughly permeates. Disbelief is […] the condition of fictionality, prompting judgments, not about the story's reality, but about its *believability*, its plausibility. Novels promoted a disposition of ironic credulity; one is dissuaded from believing the literal truth of a representation so that one can instead admire its likelihood and extend enough credit to buy into the game […] The same suspension of literal truth claims helped even common people to accept paper money: too wise to believe that the treasury held enough specie to cover all of their paper at once, they instead understood that the credit they advanced collectively obviated the need to hoard precious metals privately […] The spirit of "ironic" assent thus became a universal requirement. Indeed, almost all of the developments we associate with modernity—from greater religious toleration to scientific discovery—required the kind of

[67] *Ibid.*, 139.
[68] *Ibid.*, 139.

> cognitive provisionality one practices in reading fiction, a competence in investing contingent and temporary credit.[69]

Gallagher's appraisal situates this 'cognitive provisionality' as ubiquitous and essential to social imaginaries; it likewise situates the aptitude for ironic assent in fiction-reading as psychologically contiguous rather than simply analogous to crediting a bill's endorsement. This too entails a form of ironic assent, Gallagher argues, because, just as eighteenth-century readers of prose fiction rarely believed that the characters about whom they read were 'real' in a historical sense, so eighteenth-century tradesmen were not (à la Walter Shandy) nominative determinists. To extend credit to the endorser on a bill of exchange is only ever a provisional act; a 'good name' is as good as each transaction completed or debt repaid.

For this reason, Gallagher sees fiction's shift from 'truth-as-historical-accuracy to truth-as-mimetic-simulation' as occurring within a paradigm of credit; 'one is dissuaded from believing the literal truth of a representation so that one can instead admire its likelihood'.[70] In doing so, she situates credit's speculative economy as a key determinant within Michael McKeon's account of the dialectic movement from early-modern historicity—its two modes in dialogue being 'naïve empiricism' and 'extreme skepticism'—to the enlightenment conception of probability as 'a kind of "aesthetic" truth, aware of its own fictionality, and detoxified of crude empiricist illusion'.[71]

The most detailed and historically attuned reading of the dual emergence of credit and 'fictionality' is Mary Poovey's *Genres of the Credit Economy*. Poovey reads fiction's projection of 'a non-factual form of representation that was nevertheless *not a lie*' as the literary management of a 'problematic of representation' that it shares 'both historically and theoretically' with writing *on* money and writing *as* money: 'the gap that separates the sign from its referent or ground (or value or meaning), whether the gap takes the form of deferral, substitution, approximation, or obscurity'.[72] At the beginning of the century, Poovey argues, writing on money (e.g. treatises on political economy), writing as money (e.g. bank paper,

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[69] Catherine Gallagher, 'The Rise of Fictionality' in *The Novel, Volume I: History, Geography, and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 346-347.
[70] Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 67.
[71] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 48, 63.
[72] Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 6, 5.

bills of exchange), and imaginative writing formed part of a wide and largely unspecialised continuum that mediated value—that is, 'all this writing helped make the system of credit and debt usable and the market model of value familiar'. These three forms of writing were not 'consistently differentiated' from one another at this juncture and, indeed, were not yet distinct enough to be identified by generic categories.[73] The eighteenth century, Poovey argues, sees the gradual naturalisation of writing as money to the extent that its original status *as* written recedes; bills, bank notes, and other forms of paper-credit become 'so familiar that [their] writing has seemed to disappear and [they have] seemed to lose [their] history as (various forms of) writing'.[74] These texts begin to pass beneath 'the horizon of cultural visibility'; the naturalisation of paper-credit within an economy makes its inscribed paper appear 'like an instrument instead of something that was made to be used'.[75]

For Poovey, this naturalisation is unique to writing as money and marks the splitting-up of the early-century continuum of texts that mediated value. Whilst writing as money came to be used in purely instrumental terms, writing on money 'came to seem most credible when its writing appeared to be *transparent*—that is, when texts seemed simply to describe or refer to economic and financial matters rather than calling attention to themselves as writing or as books'. At the same time, fiction 'increasingly succeeded precisely to the degree to which its writing was not transparent and, sometimes, primarily because of its material embodiment'.[76] In the process of branching off into distinct genres and, by extension, disciplines, literary writings and theoretical writings on political economy both lose their affinity to the monetary texts with which they originally mediated value.

Poovey's example for 'writing that was not generically marked, as subsequent writing was [and that] could mediate value without distinguishing between facts and fictions' is Defoe's early writings on finance, credit and stockjobbing—works such as 'The Villainy of Stock-Jobbers Detected' and various pieces for *The Review*.[77] Like Sherman, Poovey focuses on Defoe's figure of 'Lady Credit'; as a pseudo-allegorical *Fortuna*, Lady Credit features within a rhetorical-explanatory mode, Poovey argues, that 'depends on association and amplification rather than analysis'.[78] Any 'quasi-precision', use of figures, or calculations in

[73] *Ibid.*, 2.
[74] *Ibid.*, 3.
[75] *Ibid.*, 4.
[76] *Ibid.*, 4.
[77] *Ibid.*, 15.
[78] *Ibid.*, 95.

Defoe's argument is subservient to the cluster of tropes—the tides, puppeteering, the fickle nature of the feminised 'Lady Credit'—that coalesce to 'engage the reader imaginatively' rather than 'break down information in simple, discrete parts'.[79] Poovey terms this approach 'elaboration' through 'amplification, association, and metaphor' and contrasts it with later economic accounts which proceed 'by subdividing, simplifying, and clarifying a phenomenon at a relatively abstract level'.[80] The role of metaphor and rhetorical figures is key to Poovey's account of the early-century continuum of value; Defoe's descriptions are in one basic sense abstract in their use of personification, but they are not capable of working or analysing at a general level 'in order to construct a formal model'.[81] As such, they are neither abstract nor specific to the degree that later writings outlining economic models would be. This may, Poovey argues, reflect the epistemic limits of Defoe's readership; 'Defoe's account might well have been effective because readers did not see *the market* as an abstraction that they could hope to understand by analysing its underlying laws'.[82] Yet because such descriptions nevertheless '*functioned* as explanation' and their 'situation[s] [are] not wholly imaginary', neither can they be categorised as fictions in a modern sense.[83] We must instead read such explanation-by-amplification as belonging to a continuum 'that did not distinguish clearly between fact and fiction'.[84]

Poovey argues that Defoe's later finance writings such as his *Essay on Public Credit* (1710) show signs of the particularisation and explication of general principles that we begin to associate with later writings on finance; the continuum of texts that mediates value is already showing some trace of its breaking apart. She identifies the 1740s as the decade by which the '*naturalized generic divide*' between the three strands of (1) fiction, (2) writing on money, and (3) writing as money that emerged from the early-century continuum is more or less entrenched. At this point, writing as money has 'lost [its] status as writing and [come] simply to embody value' whilst writing on money has become increasingly transparent, particular, and abstract. In contrast, fictions of the 1740s often distinguished themselves 'precisely to the degree to which [their] writing was *not* transparent and, sometimes, primarily because of [their] material embodiment in [...] beautiful or rare book[s]'.[85]

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[79] *Ibid.*, 96, 97.
[80] *Ibid.*, 98.
[81] *Ibid.*, 99-100.
[82] *Ibid.*, 101.
[83] *Ibid.*, 97, 99.
[84] *Ibid.*, 97.
[85] *Ibid.*, 4

Eighteenth-century imaginative writers, Poovey argues, 'increasingly denied that their work had any meaningful connection to matters economic or financial'; fiction lost its relation to other texts in the early-century continuum as mediators of value, developing instead a 'distinctly *critical* relation to the credit economy'.[86] By the mid-eighteenth century, fiction had come instead to promote a 'form of textual autonomy' and an aesthetic non-market value that occludes its earlier role in inculcating readers to the credit economy.[87]

Poovey's study fits with two further analyses of fiction's development in the mid-eighteenth century. Christina Lupton describes fictions of this period as characterised by a 'flat style of reflexivity' less concerned with generic or rhetorical self-definition than with the 'actual conditions and materials of writing'.[88] One sign of a '*naturalized*' generic divide is that genre becomes a lesser reflexive concern precisely because generic categories are broadly accepted. Instead, the material book as a 'non-transparent' and socially constructed surface comes to the fore as a mark of literary distinction, and fiction's relation to increasingly particular and abstract models of economic value begins to recede. McKeon, who is interested in genre's relation to divisions of knowledge, locates this new aesthetic distinction of 'fictional' as opposed to 'factual' value in *Joseph Andrews*' claim to 'describe not Men, but manners; not an individual, but a Species […] to hold a glass to thousands in their closets'.[89] Fiction that is in these terms 'general', McKeon argues, can implicate individuals in a virtual community that is non-referential and presents itself as operating within a realm distinct from factual history. 'In confining itself to the realm of the general', fiction, McKeon argues, 'does not necessarily lose touch with the particularity of private individuals'.[90] Rather, it 'engages that particularity by offering readers a concrete individual, a fictional character, from whom they can learn through an equalizing process of identification'.[91] For McKeon, fiction's separation of 'concrete' from 'actual' particulars that becomes entrenched in the 1740s relates analogously to the market, which, unlike older commercial models, conceives value as 'a general and homogenous category available through the equalization of particular and distinct commodities'.[92] It thus 'invite[s] the figure

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[86] *Ibid.*, 8.
[87] *Ibid.*, 8.
[88] Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 4.
[89] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1967), 189.
[90] Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 108-109.
[91] *Ibid.*, 109.
[92] *Ibid.*,106.

of the general as a concrete but virtual space composed of many actual particulars'.[93] The market and mid-century fiction, then, both abstract and generalise—in the case of the market, from 'actual'; in the case of fiction, from 'concrete' particulars.

What emerges in McKeon's account is an idea that fiction and speculative commerce exist, by the 1740s, in a figurative-analogous relation; as in Poovey's account, they no longer serve the same function or exist in the same value-continuum. Where McKeon differs from Poovey is in the extent to which he sees fiction, the market, and writing on economy as all operating at a more abstract level emerging from either concrete (fiction) or actual (the market) particulars by the mid-century period. Poovey views such abstraction as distinct to writing on money. She argues that terms such as 'credit' and 'value' held, by the 1740s, their position across these genres' lexicons only as 'switchpoints' or discrete 'sites of overlap' between texts that are now otherwise largely incommensurable in terms of form and ambit.[94] As in Ingrassia's analysis of *Pamela*, the genres appear to relate to one another only figuratively—externally, we might say, rather than inside the same continuum. This is intriguing considering that Poovey situates Defoe's early writings on credit *within* the early-century continuum precisely through its own internal use of metaphor, personification, and an 'elaborate cluster' of figures which produce its imaginative appeal through 'amplification, association, and metaphor'. As writings on money lose this explanatory mode, they begin themselves to relate to imaginative writing through only the figurative-analogous 'switchpoints' of 'credit' and 'value', which no longer mean precisely the same thing across those genres.

Sterne's negotiating of his fiction's position in the marketplace at times supports, but at others destabilises, these accounts. In *Tristram Shandy*, the shift towards Lupton's flat reflexivity entails *at the same time* attempts to inflate its own value. When Sterne's fiction presents itself as a socially constructed surface, it is often imaginatively to stage scenes of bargaining and exchange. Volume 1, chapter 9, for example, presents Tristram auctioning his 'Virgin-Dedication' to potential patrons (*TS*, 1.9.15); he promises the successfully bidding Lord that 'in the next edition care shall be taken that this chapter be expunged, and your Lordship's titles, distinctions, arms and good actions, be placed at the front of the preceding chapter' (*TS*, 1.9.16). In principle, Tristram reduces his dedication to a fungible component within the text that can be switched for another of higher value, and it is precisely through

[93] *Ibid.*,106.
[94] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 7.

alterations to the socially constructed material text that he proposes to complete this exchange. Similarly, when in the second volume Tristram proposes leaving 'places purposely open' (*TS*, 2.2.97) for critics 'by occupation' around the text, he imagines the surface of its pages as a 'table' at which critics are invited to 'sit down without any ceremony, and fall on heartily' (*TS*, 2.2.97). In leaving 'six places' (*TS*, 2.2.97) open at his 'entertainment' (*TS*, 2.2.97) for professional critics, Tristram defines his decision to host them as one of the investments, or 'expence[s]' (*TS*, 2.2.97), of publishing that attempts to ensure that potential competitors in the marketplace do not 'run it down' (*TS*, 2.2.96).

Although my focus is not, like Poovey's, on the wider development of generic categories in the eighteenth century, there are nonetheless links between *Tristram Shandy*'s reflexive discussions of marketability and genre. In attempting to ensure its projected 'hypercritick' does not 'run it down', Tristram fears that the modern critic's extreme 'presentistic' view refuses to disassociate the diegetic 'present' of the fiction narrated from the actual present moment of reading, and that this will 'damn me biographically, rendering my book, from this very moment, a profess'd Romance, which, before, was a book apocryphal' (*TS*, 2.8.120). By reducing the criteria of 'biographical' (*TS*, 3.23.244) fiction to immediacy and probability, the hypercritick consigns Tristram's work to the archaic and altogether less marketable genre of 'Romance' from which he attempts to salvage the reputation—indeed, we might say the credit—of his text in the following chapter.

Such conceits often work at the figurative level posited by McKeon and Poovey; Sterne presents his narrative as an 'entertainment' and the material text as a 'table' at which to negotiate the fiction's value. Yet in his dealings with booksellers, Sterne also treats the functioning of text-as-credit in more literal terms. If we return to the correspondence of 1759, we can see how 'concern with the materials' of printing directly relates to the credit of those involved. *Tristram Shandy*'s 'Type', 'Paper', and octavo format will, Sterne avers, be selected and produced in 'so creditable a way' as to uphold Dodsley's standing as a bookseller. Credit, then, marks for Sterne the precise point at which the material construction of the book meets abstract commercial concerns such as reputation and value. In McKeon's terms, it is where 'general' value as a 'virtual' measure emerges from the 'actual' particulars of the material text as well as from the 'concrete' particulars of the fiction's diegetic world. The reversal of these terms illustrates the 'textual condition' of Sterne's commerce; the text and its value 'cannot *be* known', in McGann's terms, 'apart from [its] specific material

modes of existence/resistance'.[95] The relation in this instance is not one of metaphor; there is nothing figurative in Sterne's insistence that the physical appearance of his books will be 'creditable' to his bookseller. Rather, his promise to Dodsley shows how, even as the deals Sterne secures remain provisional, his conception of textual value is bound to considerations of format, typography, and, more broadly, distributions of textual material.

Sterne, this thesis argues, provides a case study of how densely imbricated credit's speculative economy is at every level of his authorial and self-promotional practice. If we return to the correspondence from the months following volume 1 and 2's publication, we see that Sterne's praise of Garrick is as an acquaintance who, since Sterne's arrival in London, has performed to his 'Service <or>~&~ Credit'. Parenthetically, Sterne in his letter to Berenger wryly restrains himself from 'giv[ing] ^ both ^ [of his] Ears' for Hogarth's engravings only because he might 'lose [his] Credit by it'. Writing after credit's 'institutionalising phase', its early crises, and its normalisation in the mid-century period, Sterne nevertheless remains immersed in its language, using its terms liberally to discuss his reputation and his marketability. The standing of his credit is also a major subject of Sterne's correspondence with Becket, the bookseller with whom he appears to have dealt in greatest financial detail. In the text of another letter from May 1762 preserved through auction catalogues, Sterne begins by promising Becket that 'You should begin to get my money in yr hands, when the credit promised is expired [...] In July, we shall settle acc^{ts}—& not before—nor shall I want any money in ye mean time' (*Letters*, 257). The letter suggests Sterne's confidence in negotiating 'time-sensitive' terms of credit with his bookseller at this stage in his career, and how those timings dovetail with *Tristram Shandy*'s serial publication.

At a conceptual and at a material level, I demonstrate that Sherman's 'homology' between fiction and financial texts persists in Sterne's writing through his dealings with booksellers and critics. His particular and abstract models for textual commerce and his distinctly *un*critical relation to the credit economy pertain to booksellers and reviewers in ways that Poovey claims are, by the 1750s, generically anti-fictional, and that exceed the 'switchpoints', or vestigial traces, of a broken continuum. In highlighting such a link, this thesis combines two areas of enquiry that can be made to look distinct: studies of authors' interactions with the book trade, which often appear under the rubric of book history, and studies of the affinity between fiction and credit, which often perform at a more abstract-

[95] McGann, *Textual Condition*, 11.

conceptual level. Sterne's interactions with booksellers and reviewers and his fiction's relation to credit, I argue, illuminate each other. If we return to Sterne and his booksellers' response to *Tristram Shandy*'s pirated third volume, we can trace how closely Sterne's signing of the fifth volume prompts the same qualitative evaluation of the writer's 'good name' inherent also in handling instruments of paper-credit. Sterne, like the endorsers on a bill of exchange, adds his signature as an authenticating guarantee that the reader can safely invest in the volume. Just as with a bill of exchange, the assent of readers—their investment in the text as in some means authentic—must be provisional and based upon a 'normative [...] conditionality', in Sherman's terms. That provisionality, or 'ironic credulity', also relies on apparent value being 'time-sensitive', i.e. that a previously established 'good name' guarantees the future repayment of a debt. Sterne's signature pledges that, unlike the pirate third volume, volume 5 will fit into *Tristram*'s completed whole once its serialisation concludes in the future. There is another layer of 'conditionality' at work in that Sterne and his associates sought to guarantee the 'authenticity' of a fictional continuation. This volume, Sterne's signature asserts, represents a 'real', or 'authentic' fiction, unlike the 'false' fiction sold by counterfeiters. It thus verifies *Tristram*'s status as 'a non-factual [...] representation that [is] nevertheless *not a lie*'; it supports the fiction's claim to truth-as-mimesis and the likeliness of its authorship as 'a kind of "aesthetic" truth'. Sterne's signature lends his name to the credence of Tristram's 'true' fiction, but his name as a public guarantor is at this stage largely predicated on the prior success of that fiction; 'fiction proliferates fiction to hide fictionality' just as credit piles upon credit to hide any 'visible, originary Fund'. As a technique of inducing consumer confidence, this does not place *Tristram* in a figurative relation to bills, notes, or other instruments of credit. It provides no mere lexical 'switchpoint' in Poovey's sense, but rather a structural homology in seeking to elicit the same attitude of 'ironic credulity' that a reader would assume towards bank paper, bills of exchange, and other promissory texts of credit.

That this slippage between the figurative and the literal is also a negotiation between old and new models of commerce becomes apparent in Sterne's relation to '(o)economy' as a shifting term that, like 'credit', relates in complicated ways to eighteenth-century 'commerce'. To borrow Marc Shell's definition, 'oeconomy' originally refers etymologically to 'the conventions (*nomoi*) of and distribution (*nemesis*) within the household (*oikos*)'.[96] As Nicholson's study demonstrates, many of the oppositional writers of the early eighteenth

[96] Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 89.

century criticised new instruments of credit and speculative investment as breaking the bond between the state and this older propertied basis of 'oeconomy'. When *Tristram Shandy*'s first reviewer, William Kenrick, describes Sterne as a writer who 'husbands his adventures with great oeconomy' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561), he aligns Sterne's writing and publishing practices with the wise distribution of household resources—much in the vein of the civic-humanist model of landed virtue. In Kenrick's sense, *Tristram*'s composition bears a figurative-analogous relation to a traditional civic-humanist view of oeconomy as the wise management of an estate. It does so in two ways: first, by presenting its own text metaphorically as a household replete with pseudo-domestic thresholds, chapters featuring as contiguous rooms inhabited by different readers, and the elision of textual and architectural 'passages'. Second, in Tristram's use of chaptering as a means of distributing intra-texts from an imagined Shandean family archive of writings on domestic management—most notably, the contract that binds Mrs Shandy to Shandy Hall for the term of Tristram's birth.

Yet Sterne's fiction also appears at a terminological fault line in which the economic comes to describe wider, abstract forms of market equivalence during the eighteenth century. This development towards our modern understanding of the economy as a virtual space of self-regulating production and exchange appears to supersede its etymological origins, the household being the one domain that, as Charles Taylor argues, 'could never be seen as self-regulating'.[97] It also, in Poovey's argument, functions at a discursive level that is more specialised, abstract, and totalising than prior explanations by association, amplification, and metaphor; it breaks down its information into discrete parts so as to begin to conceive of *the* economy as a 'single objectified reality' in Taylor's terms.[98] Adam Smith is often seen as the originator of this conception of the economy as the organisation or condition of economic factors in relation to human society-qua-structure. As my second chapter argues, however, the grounds for the market economy develop throughout this period prior to Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), and, to perplex matters further, are at times presented as a form of all-encompassing commerce that threatens older ideals of domestic 'oeconomy'. *A Sentimental Journey*'s chapter 'The Sword. Rennes' provides, in the Marquis d'E****'s struggle to retain his sword, a prime example of how what we would now identify as a market economy—entailing an abstract exchange value and the circulation of commodities—could be seen as a

[97] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 103.
[98] *Ibid.*, 70.

totalising ‘resource’ of ‘commerce’ that threatens to encroach upon ‘simple œconomy’ (*ASJ*, 107) as the more discrete and aristocratic domain of estate-management.

When Tristram justifies the removal of a mooted chapter in volume 4 as necessary to prevent the ‘depreciating [of] every other scene’ and to maintain the ‘equipoise and balance […] betwixt chapter and chapter, from whence the just proportions and harmony of the whole work results’ (*TS*, 4.25.374), the invocation of individual chapters as pseudo-theatrical ‘scenes’ still works at the explanation-by-amplification level of metaphor, but the structuring of the text as a whole no longer functions as analogous to household management. Tristram may use terms such as ‘harmony’ that look back to neo-classical deliberations on the artful proportioning of parts, yet his discussion of ‘depreciation’ as, in Johnson’s *Dictionary* definition, ‘to bring a thing down to a lower price’ or ‘to undervalue’ also situates the episode in a more modern explanatory model.[99] Tristram aims to fix a measure of value across his work by insisting that even momentary excellence should yield to commercial equipoise. That measure of stylistic value and focus on the potential for ‘depreciation’ does not function at the level of figurative association, but rather, in terms of value-form, at the level of abstraction; it constructs an abstract model of value using the simple, discrete details of textual structure. This is McKeon’s bifocal particular-abstract logic of the market in miniature: Tristram ascribes an abstract value to the overarching text, which he derives from the ‘stile and manner’ of its myriad constituent chapters. Crucially, where McKeon distinguishes between fiction and the market as abstracting from ‘concrete’ and ‘actual’ particulars respectively, Tristram here projects abstract value from the ‘actual’ chapters of the material text, which he measures in terms of ‘style’ rather than through concrete details of the diegetic tale. In order to maintain this valuation’s consistency as a virtual measure, he sloughs off any individual chapter that threatens to deviate from, or, in Smith’s later parlance, ‘derange’ its internal ‘distribution’.[100]

This demonstrates how Sterne’s textual commerce complicates the too-neat dividing line between ‘actual’ and ‘concrete’ particulars on which McKeon bases his analogy between mid-century fiction and the market and, by extension, Poovey’s suggestion of a solely

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[99] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in Which the Words Are Deduced from Their Originals and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers* (J. and P. Knapton, T. and T. Longman, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, A. Millar, and R. and J. Dodsley, 1755), s.v. ‘DEPRE'CIATE’.

[100] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, 2 vols. (OUP, 1976), 2:630.

analogous or metaphorical link between the three distinct strands of fiction, writing as money, and writing on money that emerge from the early-century continuum. *Tristram Shandy*'s favourite tropes of syllepsis and metalepsis blur the line between the concrete details of its fictional world and the actual details of the material book: the scene produced and its materials of production. Moreover, as Christopher Ricks argues, 'whatever else a metaphor may be, it is a relation'—one in which 'we speak of one aspect or part of the metaphor as the metaphor or as metaphorical'.[101] We use 'metaphor' not only to identify the whole relation, but also one of its parts: the metaphorical 'vehicle' to the literal 'tenor'. In the case of Kenrick's civic-humanist description of Sterne's 'oeconomy', the metaphorical relation is between household estate and text, yet *Tristram* at times appears *as* the house Tristram has built and at others as a repository *for* his estate. *Tristram*'s unstable shifting between amplification and abstraction thus doubles within the metaphor of 'oeconomy' itself, which raises the question as to whether, for Sterne, the totalising terms of textual commerce—his aim to 'sell both inside & out' (*Letters*, 140)—transcends any distinction between the figurative and the literal and, furthermore, between the discrete generic strands of 'credit' and 'fiction' Poovey views as largely entrenched by 1759.

For Gallagher, the legacies of Derridean deconstructionist thought have prompted literary scholarship to engage with the economic logic of substitution, supplementation, and deferral that itself slips into literary discourse.

> The stress that deconstruction placed on displacement in the literary text—the unstable connection between signifiers and signified and the relational nature of all meaning—[brings] the economic logic of substitution much closer […] to the dynamics of textual analysis.[102]

Far from diminishing, the affinity between fiction and credit is further heightened in Sterne's mid-century use of serialisation to defer narrative consumption and, by extension, the complete valuation of his text. In volume 4, Tristram provides a reckoning of the chapters he has promised his reader versus those few that Sterne has so far delivered. Only in time and within the narrative of Tristram's provisional publication can the chapters be delivered to the

[101] Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (OUP, 2002), 245, 247.
[102] Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9.

reader and Tristram's promise fulfilled. As this thesis shows, such theoretical concerns about the structural affinity between fiction and credit run always into the pragmatics of Sterne's negotiations with his booksellers. To the reader in 1761, Tristram's chapter list summarised over a year's worth of narrative promises, many remaining unfulfilled until an as-yet unknown date. Tristram's inventorying of his promised chapters at this juncture gains a keener significance given that, as we know, Sterne did not at the time of its composition have any agreement with a bookseller that would ensure *Tristram Shandy*'s continuation. The structure of displacement and substitution—the promise of chapters and their inventorying in lieu of the chapters themselves—works at the broader discursive level of fiction in relation to genre and forms of knowledge as analysed by Sherman, Poovey, and McKeon. It also evinces practical and material considerations. Between volume 4's inventory of chapters and *Tristram Shandy*'s continuation in volumes 5 and 6, Sterne had to negotiate a new deal with new booksellers; in doing so, he also had to extend his 'Trade' credit with 'Printer[s] & Stationer[s]' in order to deliver on Tristram's promise of further material for his readers.

III. Thesis Outline.

This thesis focusses on the often-dense imbrication between Sterne's market-driven dealings with booksellers and critics, and the composition of his fictions as provisional and time-sensitive, promissory, and open to 'determination from without'. It takes the pragmatics of Sterne's textual commerce and examines them at Keen's broader 'transactional' level. I begin by examining Sterne's connection with a key early-century antecedent, Jonathan Swift, via correspondence with his first bookseller, Robert Dodsley. Chapter 1 addresses the revisions Sterne indicates for Dodsley on 5 October 1759 that 'All Locality is taken out of [*Tristram Shandy*]—the Satyr general [...]—& the whole made more sale<b>~a~ble—' (*Letters*, 97) and his concomitant promise in his letter-book to maintain a 'due distance' (*Letters*, 84) from the writings of Swift. 'Swift sais 500 things, I dare not say,—unless I was Dean of Saint Patricks' (*Letters*, 84), Sterne asserts in a letter first drafted as an authorial *apologia* in May 1759, suggesting that it is not writerly compunction so much as professional status that requires Sterne downplay any association with his Anglo-Irish forbear. Sterne's need to keep Swift at arm's length goes, however, beyond any latitude for excess that professional status might protect. By equating the 'general' with the 'saleable', Sterne, I argue, moves away from Swiftian forms of '*Parod*[y]' which '*personate*[d] *the Style and Manner*' of specific

local satirical targets '*whom* [Swift] *ha*[d] *a mind to expose*' (*CWJS vol. 1,* 7)—a satirical mode that characterises Sterne's early failure, *A Political Romance* (1759).

Claude Rawson argues for a generic affinity between *Tristram Shandy* and Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* as 'mock editions' that both deploy a 'buttonholing excess' of print forms as a means to scrutinise 'confessional [modes of] self-promotion'; he even goes so far as to characterise Swift's *Tale* as proleptically Shandean.[103] By contrast, I argue that *A Tale*'s shapeshifting and fragmentary '*Parodies*' of authorial 'persons' seek to undermine Lockean bases of credit during an 'institutionalising phase' of the English Financial Revolution that does not form part of Sterne's immediate context. The mode of knowledge that John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* designates as '*Belief, Assent,* or *Opinion*', and which ranges in 'degrees of Assent' from 'full *Assurance* and Confidence, quite down to *Conjecture*, *Doubt* and *Distrust*', is crucial to the sort of provisional judgement, or sifting of investment options, that underlines 'system trust', the shift from 'facework commitments' to 'faceless commitments' that Carl Wennerlind argues took hold across the English Financial Revolution.[104] This sea change, and its resultant 'epistemology of credit', relies on the Lockean logic of qualitative probabilistic reasoning in which public opinion ('credit-ability') is assessed and invested with 'trust' through the balance of interpersonal attributes such as 'reputation […] manners, [and] virtue'—attributes we collectively refer to as 'character'.[105]

In setting out to personate '*the Style and Manner*' of specific targets, Swift's *Tale* demonstrates, as Marcus Walsh notes, a scepticism towards complete systems and also, I argue, towards their underlying logic of system trust: the provisional confidence through reputation and second-hand testimony that underpinned the expansion of paper-credit, investment, and public debt in the early eighteenth century. In doing so, *A Tale* promotes discrete, local annotation over summation; 'it offers itself […] in its semantic atomization, to the microscope of explanatory editorial wit […] The fragmented forms of annotation are tools which perfectly fit [its] awkward and particular shapes'.[106] Swift's anonymous Taleteller, a

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[103] Claude Rawson, 'The Mock Edition Revisited: Swift to Mailer' in *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book*, ed. Paddy Bullard and James McLaverty (CUP, 2013), 236.
[104] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 665; Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620-1720* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 95. Wennerlind adopts his theory of 'system trust' from sociologist Niklas Luhmann.
[105] Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, 96.
[106] Marcus Walsh, 'Telling Tales and Gathering Fragments: Swift's *Tale of a Tub*', in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fifth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Hermann J. Real (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008), 160.

loose amalgam of many '*personate*[d]' voices that never attains the status of a quasi-person, invites the subsequently published *Key* that reduces the Taleteller to various referents and identifies *A Tale* itself as the work of multiple authors. It stages a crisis in authorial character by imagining its 'thorow comprehension' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27) between author and reader as a 'faceless' transaction that is unstable precisely *because of* its printedness. At the historical juncture during which Poovey's fact-fiction continuum binds imaginative writing and writing as money as mediators of value, *A Tale* suggests that both provide dangerously volatile textual forms of mediation. Conversely, Tristram's usefulness to Sterne as a stable promotional tool and as a publishing protagonist rests, I argue, on his resistance to being 'unlocked' or reduced to the sum of his referents. There is never any comparable suggestion in Sterne's critical heritage that *Tristram Shandy* is the work of more than one author, and whilst Sterne wrote his Swiftian *A Political Romance* to be published with an accompanying '*Key*', there is no '*Key to Tristram Shandy*'. In his reassurance to Dodsley that *Tristram* would remain both 'general' and 'saleable', Sterne makes a commercial bid to dissociate his new work from local and specific ecclesiastical intrigue following the failure of the *Romance*. Quite possibly on Dodsley's advice, he instead commits to a concrete but non-referential protagonist who, despite growing reader familiarity, remains no-one in particular.

In 'confining itself to the realm of the general', McKeon argues, mid-eighteenth-century fiction 'engages [the] particularity [of private individuals] by offering readers a concrete individual, a fictional character, from whom they can learn through an equalizing process of identification'.[107] McKeon's account suggests that the generalising turn of mid-century fiction is also a stabilising one; unruly and often scandalous real-life details give way to more manageable 'concrete' ones from which fiction can emerge as an 'abstract' and 'probable' model. In this concrete virtuality, *Tristram Shandy* provides its readers with a 'faceless' and open-ended textual system in which they can provisionally invest their credence. Tristram transcends the sum of any specific referents to make an aggregative claim on the sympathy of his reader and this allows him, I argue, to function for Sterne as a new type of publishing protagonist; coming after credit's rehabilitation in fictions of the 1740s, *Tristram Shandy* endorses its protagonist's strategies of self-promotion and presents Tristram as a 'credit-able' commercial author-protagonist in ways that would have been anathema to Swift. Sterne is therefore able to use Tristram to advertise further works such as his *Sermons*

[107] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 106.

(1760) as 'Published by Tristram Shandy, Gentleman'.[108] Because Tristram's character emerges at a concrete yet general level and does not stand simply for a plethora of other '*personate*[d]' figures, he is able to transcend the bounds of his fiction to promote further works by his author. I conclude by revising David. A Brewer's focus on the 'afterlife' of character by examining how Tristram 'migrates' from the pages of his fiction to perform this function a mere two months after *Tristram*'s first two volumes had been published and long before Sterne completed *Tristram*'s final volumes in 1767.[109]

Chapter 2 takes as its starting point the earliest known critical response to *Tristram Shandy*: William Kenrick's review for Ralph Griffith's *Monthly Review*, which describes Sterne as a writer of 'great oeconomy' who sows his narrative 'so extremely thin' across the divisions of his works that 'in the manner he has begun, his narrative may very last as long as he lives' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561). Where Kenrick's appraisal, I argue, posits a figurative-analogous relationship between Sterne's fiction and traditional civic-humanist notions of 'oeconomy' as the wise distribution of a landed estate's resources, Sterne's fiction in fact sits at a terminological fault line in the mid-eighteenth century whereby the economic comes also to describe wider, more abstract models of market equivalence. We see a prime example of how Sterne negotiated this fault line, I argue, in *Tristram Shandy*'s chaptering: an oft-overlooked 'fact […] of texture', in Nicolas Dames's terms, which Sterne self-consciously plays with to negotiate different orders of literary (o)economy.[110]

In terms of Kenrick's figurative-analogous relation—which provides an example of Poovey's explanation by 'amplification, association, and metaphor'—*Tristram Shandy*'s chaptering functions in two ways: first, in its early volumes it imagines its own material-textual form across a sinuous domestic architecture. Invitations for readers to 'Shut the door' before they can proceed through a chapter, the presentation of further chapters as contiguous rooms occupied by different male and female readers, and the elision of household and textual 'passages' in Tristrams instruction for 'Madam' to 'turn back […] as soon as [she reaches] the next full stop' (*TS*, 1.20.65) show how Tristram divides his narrative across imagined textual thresholds and partitions. Second, chaptering allows Sterne to present examples of the 'oeconomic' management—and, at times, mismanagement—of Shandean

[108] The first advertisement for Sterne's *Sermons* advertises them as 'Published by Tristram Shandy, Gentleman'. *York Courant* (Tuesday 4 March, 1760).
[109] See David A. Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), esp. Chapter 5.
[110] Nicholas Dames, 'Trollope's Chapters', *Literature Compass* 7, no. 9 (2010): 855.

household resources. In Walter Shandy's use of chapters as gaps in his books to probe with his 'forefinger', Tristram's ominous caveat that such book-handling entails no 'compressive violence' (*TS*, 5.33.118) suggests the opposite: that, as we see elsewhere, Walter's library and his stock of literature lie in ruin, continually marred by his reading habits. In Tristram's own reflexive discussion of where to begin and end chapters, how copious, and how varied the matter apportioned to each chapter should be we see also, in Keymer's terms, the way that chaptering continually prompts measurements and calculations about structure.[111] At its closest to Kenrick's analogy, such structural calculations see Tristram using chaptering precisely to interpolate various intra-texts, 'rolls', and 'records' (*TS*, 1.14.41) from the Shandean family archive such as Yorick's sermon, the 'Memoire presenté a Messieurs les Docteurs de Sorbonne' and its 'Réponse' (*TS*, 1.10.67-70) and, most notably in terms of domestic constraint, the agreement that binds the period of Mrs Shandy's lying in to Shandy Hall. This helps to create what Carol Watts terms Sterne's 'montage' effect, a 'juxtaposition of temporal zones' and intra-texts that distributes 'images of social discourse' such as homilies and legal proceedings throughout the tale.[112] In each of these instances, Sterne maintains his fiction's figurative-analogous relation to older forms of 'oeconomy' at a discrete and local level, whether, as in the first set of examples, the text itself figures *as* the structure of a house, or, as in the second set, as a repository *for* a household's textual archive.

Yet if this 'oeconomic' interest in the material apportioned to each chapter suggests that *Tristram Shandy* adheres to Lupton's flat reflexivity, *Tristram*'s chaptering also functions in a more complex pragmatics of textual negotiation in relation to bookselling. In his first volume Tristram auctions his 'Virgin-Dedication' to a successfully bidding Lord (*TS*, 1.9.15), allowing in theory one chapter to be exchanged in later editions for another of higher value. In the fourth volume, he requests that his chairman enter a bookshop with the offer of 'a crown' to any '*day-tall* critick' (*TS*, 4.13.340) willing to complete a chapter that has been troubling his narrative progress. In both examples, Tristram posits chaptering as a means to divide authorial labour; the lord will provide recommendatory 'titles, distinctions, arms and good actions' (*TS*, 1.9.16) in exchange for the dubious honour of being Tristram's public patron, whilst the '*day-tall* critick' will discover a way to put 'Walter and Toby [...] to bed' in exchange for a crown. In each instance, Tristram as author-narrator does not simply outline

[111] Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 52.
[112] Carol Watts, *The Cultural Work of Empire: The Seven Years' War and the Imagining of the Shandean State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 56.

the chapter in question in terms of its raw materials—although he may do this also—but rather ascribes a value-form by which, to paraphrase Lynn Festa, value not only inheres within the single chapter, but also outside it, and in its differential relation to other chapters as commodities.[113] In these latter instances, chaptering's 'economy' no longer holds the figurative-analogous meaning of wise household distribution; it does not work at the level of 'amplification, association, and metaphor' but instead as an abstract model where 'value' as a textual measure emerges from negotiations over the 'actual' details of Tristram's chapters.

This 'abstract' as opposed to 'amplificatory' model for a textual (o)economy reaches its apogee in volume 4's purported missing chapter. Considering the necessity of expunging a chapter 'so much above the stile and manner of any thing else' (*TS*, 4.25.374) in the fiction, Tristram argues that its inclusion would only have 'depreciat[ed]' the overall value of the work. If there is a figurative connection to 'economy' at work here, it is not that of analogy or metaphor but pleonasm or 'performed pun'; in order to maintain the fiction's commercial 'equipoise', Tristram 'perfects' his work by erasing the chapter that most nearly approaches perfection. In doing so, he ascribes a value to the overarching text which emerges as an aggregate from its individual chapters; the material text informs an economic model that is both abstract yet also detail-oriented and that, crucially, no longer functions via analogy or loose association to older civic-humanist commercial models. By this logic, Tristram seeks to maintain his text's value at the particular level of switching or expunging individual chapters that may negatively affect it. Intriguingly, this entails a form of abstractive prolepsis; although an ongoing provisional work due to Sterne's negotiations with his real-life booksellers, Tristram as author-protagonist must project his work as an already completed whole in order to ascribe an overarching value to its constituent parts. Sterne represents Tristram's chapters as remarkably fungible in this regard: they are cut, put up for auction, repositioned, even outsourced for completion. I end by considering whether Tristram's apparent strategies as author-protagonist in any way correspond to Sterne's as author-proper; whether Sterne composed his fiction using discrete chapters capable of being switched, traded, or expunged so as to 'economise' his narrative. There are, so far as we are aware, no surviving manuscripts for *Tristram Shandy* against which to test this premise; however, a fair copy in Sterne's hand used by the printer of *A Sentimental Journey*'s first volume (referred to

[113] Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 16.

as *S1* in scholarly editions) is extant at the British Library. Chapter 2 concludes with a new reading of this manuscript.

Chapter 3 shifts focus to a discussion of commercial readerships. It provides a study of Sterne's commerce with authors and early institutions of eighteenth-century criticism. Here, I revise Frank Donoghue's assertion that Sterne's ongoing engagement with critics provides 'a study in alienated labor' in which Sterne 'entered the literary culture […] naively [and] at a period when that culture was rapidly becoming more complex'. Against the narrative of shock, 'trauma', and retreat in London's marketplace that Donoghue outlines, I argue that Sterne early on recognised the significance of criticism to the commercial success of his works.[114] *Tristram Shandy* at its outset aims to incorporate criticism and, more specifically, critics 'by occupation' (*TS*, 2.2.97) into its serialised structure as a way of examining the possibility (or otherwise) of authoritative readings in an increasingly diffuse marketplace. Prior even to publication, Sterne's correspondence suggests that he sought criticism in reformulating *Tristram*'s scheme and in making the decision to publish at all. The first 'criticks' whom Sterne cites are often professional contemporaries active in York's public affairs, such as Marmaduke Fothergill, Esq.[115] In his letter of approach to Dodsley, Sterne assures that 'If this Ist Volume has a run (w^{ch} such Criticks as this Latitude affords<)> say it can't fail of) We may both find our Account in it' (*Letters*, 80). Sterne accepts a disparity between the book markets of provincial York and metropolitan London, whilst also arguing that success in one will translate to the other: critics 'such […] as this Latitude affords' are the best assurance Sterne has that 'The Book will sell' (*Letters*, 80). In his second known letter to Dodsley, Sterne again anticipates that criticism will play an integral role in *Tristram*'s success in the marketplace and, more importantly, in his ability to negotiate better terms with the bookseller:

> If my Book sells & has the run our Criticks expect, I purpose to free myself of all future troubles of this kind, & bargain with You, if possible for the rest as they come out which will be every six Months (*Letters*, 96)

[114] Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 85.
[115] For details on Fothergill, Esq and Sterne, see Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 92; Ian Campbell Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life* (OUP, 2001), 204.

Should the York edition of *Tristram*'s opening volumes perform in line with its positive critical response, this would allow Sterne to depart from the risky model of self-financing he had hitherto undertaken. The terms of further volumes—at the time, he appears still to have a biannual publication scheme in mind—would be negotiated directly with the Dodsleys and, as it transpired, with Becket and de Hondt on the rolling basis of *Tristram*'s continued critical and commercial success. Sterne understands the necessity of meeting the expectations of 'our Criticks' in laying out his timetable for publication, even if, by the time he introduced Tristram to the world, that publication scheme had changed.

The chapter examines Sterne's playful seriousness regarding *Tristram Shandy*'s early critical reception, focusing on his hitherto unexplored engagement with early-to-mid-century critical discourses of taste. In *Tristram*'s second volume, Tristram invites both 'critick[s] (by occupation)' and 'gentry of refined taste' (*TS*, 2.2.96-97) to imagine his books as a table around which to 'sit down without any ceremony, and fall on heartily' (*TS*, 2.2.96-97). An example of what Lupton describes as *Tristram*'s 'flat' reflexivity, Sterne's fiction presents itself as a socially fabricated surface on which to stage an exemplary instance of its own consumption.[116] In doing so, it literalises one aspect of 'taste' as figuring the immediate affective response to literary works. The metaphor of 'taste' in this scene provides both the 'critick (by occupation)' and the polite 'gentry' with a respective share in Tristram's *Life* but it also, in insisting on the parity of those shares, collapses any distinction between them. In claiming to host 'Sir Critick' (*TS*, 2.2.97) and the critic 'by occupation' side-by-side and without 'ceremony', Sterne, I argue, situates those of 'occupation' within the bounds of the polite and, in doing so, courts the favour of an increasingly professionalised type of 'critick': the anonymised writers for Ralph Griffiths and Tobias Smollett's *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews. As *Tristram* develops as 'an unstable process' rather than 'a static product', its serial form allows Sterne to interpolate and respond in each two-volume instalment to each preceding critical response from those reviewers. In its very first instalment, Tristram justifies their 'entertainment' as a necessary publishing 'expence' to ensure that its first readers do not 'run it down' (*TS*, 2.2.96). Sterne thereby demonstrates an acute understanding of the role that reviewers are beginning to assume as, in the *Monthly*'s terms, 'tasters to the public' (*MR* 13, 1755: 399). The *Monthly* here uses the metaphor of taste to outline its main duty as sifting

[116] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 4-5.

the textual marketplace to present texts fit for wider consumption. In this sense, criticism as public 'tasting' is equivalent to judicious selection in an ever-expanding marketplace and prior to any ensuing cultural consecration.

To see how it allows Sterne to explore the possibility (or otherwise) of providing authoritative readings within an increasingly diffuse commercial readership, I examine 'taste' as a moral and early aesthetic category within the rise of literary criticism. Marking a shift from the assessment of texts by standards of reason toward the emotional response of readers triggered by affective qualities inherent within literary works, 'taste' in the eighteenth century could function as a standard of social distinction, refined conduct, and subjective yet cultivated evaluative skills. From the early critical works of Joseph Addison, whom Johnson considered 'as deciding by taste rather than by principles', 'taste' as a 'mental faculty' and as a metaphor for proto-aesthetic response mediates, as Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins notes, between the 'internal workings of reason and external displays of behavior'.[117] Providing a proprietorial-commercial model for critical appreciation, it transforms 'the act of seeing and incorporating objects as part of the mind's mental storehouse of ideas' into the 'basis of social status'.[118] Alexander Pope's ideal critic is 'blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd' (639-40), and this perception that 'taste' could be both normative and free from political faction provides a potent means of self-fashioning.[119] This normalising discourse could also hide underlying commercial imperatives. As a metaphor, 'taste' makes critics and readers consumers; as James Noggle notes, one could only develop 'taste' into 'a taste' through the judicious investment of time and wealth.[120] For Noggle, the Addisonian conversational style that predominates in periodical criticism for much of the century evinces but also disturbs Pocock's 'presentistic' attitude of credit and exchange, which takes 'nothing but the moment and its strategies as providing the context in which the effort [...] to regulate must be made'.[121] In its immediacy, modern eighteenth-century 'taste' could subsume the historical 'tastes' of '*Criticks* both Ancient and Modern' in its drive towards 'imagination, fantasy or passion'; Addison's examination of taste serves as the prelude to his discussion of the

[117] Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 3:33; Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, *A Taste for China: English Subjectivity and the Prehistory of Orientalism* (OUP, 2013), 70.
[118] Zuroski Jenkins, *Taste for China*, 70.
[119] Quotations and line numbers are from Alexander Pope, *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope*, ed. John Butt (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989).
[120] James Noggle, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (OUP, 2012), 15.
[121] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time' , 95.

pleasures of the imagination.[122] The eighteenth-century metaphor of taste shares another structural relation to credit: as present cumulative 'standards' based on experience, both evoke an undefinable *je ne sais quoi* as, in Richard Scholar's terms, 'an artificial sign of quality' and, in the case of credit, by which quantity becomes quality.[123] Like other complex or non-linear models, credit and the standard of taste emerge from aggregate experience but cannot be reduced to any particular set of experiences.

Noggle argues that this forms a bifurcated discursive-temporal structure; taste 'lives in the moment, in particular sensibilities' but it also, in discussions of 'public' or even 'national' standards of taste, identifies 'slowly evolved, collective processes and outcomes'.[124] This bifurcation of criticism filters into it at a formal level; the eighteenth century, argues James Engell, 'sees for the first time, what has become an entrenched phenomenon throughout the world of modern literature—a discrepancy [...] between books of criticism, books about "literature" [...] and shorter, more popular critical forms: single essays, reviews, and commentary in periodicals'[125] Crucially, for Noggle, however, the responses of immediate or even ephemeral reviews as 'tasters to the public' could be ingratiated as 'a little piece of [the] historical process' defined in longer forms. Even as it seeks immediately to respond to and anticipate its reviewers, the form of criticism as consumption that *Tristram Shandy* imagines becomes 'conceiv[able] metonymically', in Noggle's terms, as one particular instance of sociable 'tasting' that evinces *Tristram*'s entrance into a developing canon, or 'empire', of 'biographical freebooters' (*TS*, 3.23.244).[126]

My thesis ends with a coda that examines Sterne's legacy via the miscellaneous magazines and registers that critically received, reprinted, and, more broadly, reframed sections of his fictions. If, as Michael Bell argues, Sterne can be said to prefigure the aesthetic as a disinterested autonomous field by showing how episodes of feeling 'may be variously modulated for different orders of meaning', such varieties of modulation derive from the question, posed by taste-making magazines and anthologies, of how reader discernment relates to the positioning of textual selections within larger collections.[127] Bell

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[122] Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 3:530; Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time', 98.
[123] Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (OUP, 2005), 284.
[124] Noggle, *Temporality of Taste*, 1.
[125] James Engell, *Forming the Critical Mind: Dryden to Coleridge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 168.
[126] *Ibid.*, 3.
[127] Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 72.

elsewhere argues that Sterne's sentimental episodes intuit, or anticipate, 'a demonstrative discrimination' between the 'honorific and pejorative possibilities' of 'feeling for its own sake'.[128] Yet it is in dialogue with critics and editors who seek to select from and to determine the finer qualities of his writings that Sterne hones this intuition into sentimental scenes that posit differing responsive registers depending on the circumstances in which they are read. Sterne's 'intimations' of the disinterested category of the aesthetic thus emerge, I argue, within a sphere of textual commerce which is, by definition, one of competing interests.

[128] Michael Bell, 'Laurence Sterne and Intimations of the Aesthetic', *Shandean* 29 (2018): 18.

The ‘Satyr general’ and ‘the whole made more sale<b>~a~ble’: Tristram Shandy as a Publishing Protagonist.

I. A Black Page and a Keyhole without a Key.

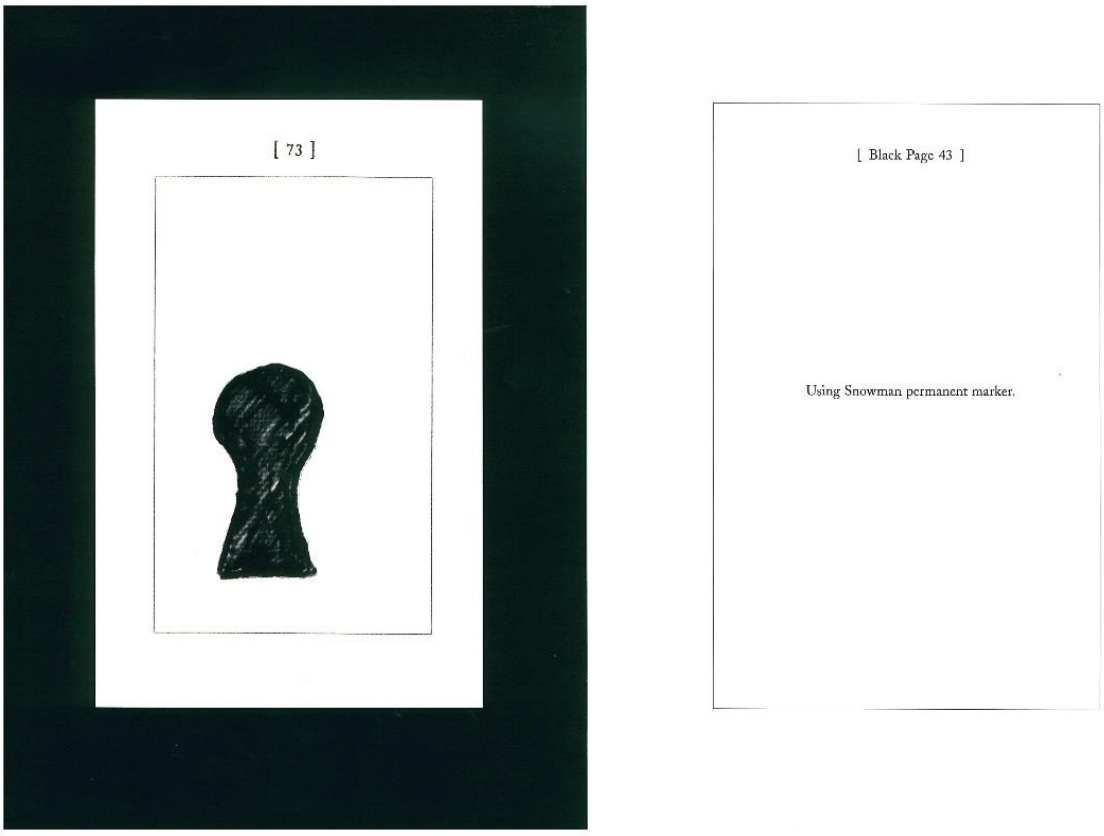


Fig. 3. No. 43: J.M. Coetzee’s contribution to the Laurence Sterne Trust’s ‘Black Page’ exhibition.

In 2009, J.M. Coetzee contributed to the Laurence Sterne Trust’s Black Page exhibition, which brought together seventy-two authors and artists to contribute their own response to the famous typographical feature in *Tristram Shandy*’s first volume: a loosely sewn page printed black on recto and verso that marks the death of Parson Yorick (*TS,* 1.12.37-38).[129] Appropriately for Coetzee, who elsewhere characterises Sterne’s fiction as the ‘hide-and-seek of the *I*’, the Trust revealed which black page belonged to which contributor only after the exhibition had concluded, allowing each artist to hide in plain sight whilst gallery viewers

[129] As Peter de Voogd notes, ‘because my 1759 copy is still in its original condition as it came from the printer, uncut, in a blue wrapper, loosely sewn and ready for final binding, we can be certain that the black leaf, like the marbled one, was separately produced and loosely sewn, here into the E gathering.’ Peter de Voogd, ‘The Black Page’ in *Things and Images in 18th and 19th Century British Literature*, ed. Grażyna Bystydzieńska (Warszawa: Pracownia “Ośrodek Studiów Brytyjskich”, 2016), 149-150.

sought to unpick the authorship of each work.[130] Listed No. 43 in the catalogue, Coetzee's contribution is a black and white illustration drawn, as Coetzee states on the reverse, 'Using Snowman permanent marker' (**Fig. 3.**). The illustration appears modest in intent and plain in execution, perhaps reflecting Coetzee's more muted approach to the use of graphic and typographic art in his own fiction compared with Sterne's.

Coetzee's contribution is nonetheless notable in that it reverses an eighteenth-century trend wherein typographical features and fonts were often designed, as Christina Lupton notes, to 'reproduce the effect of handwriting' or manuscript transcription.[131] Lupton outlines how such counterfeits of penmanship could serve as a 'guarantee of meaning and labour' even as they remediated that labour through print's reproductive technologies.[132] Simulated print handwriting could evoke authorial character as an end-product of individuated labour. *Tristram Shandy* itself plays with this concept in its depiction of the circulation and reading of Parson Yorick's sermon, '*For we* trust *we have a good Conscience*' (*TS*, 2.17.142). Yorick, Tristram avers, 'popp'd his sermon, as soon as he had made [i.e. handwritten] it' into a copy of '*Stevinus*' (*TS,* 2.17.166), a technical book on the engineering of fortifications that the parson had previously borrowed from Toby.[133] Here it lies lost before its rediscovery at Shandy Hall, and a sociable re-reading delivered by Trim that Tristram claims to recount and thereby render in print. Tristram's ensuing account of how the 'Ill-fated' sermon is then lost for a second time, 'dropp'd thro' an unsuspected fissure in thy master's pocket' and 'trod deep into the dirt' (*TS*, 2.17.166) by Yorick's horse, situates the sermon and its peregrinations within what Karen Harvey describes as *Tristram*'s 'manuscript hinterland': the 'rolls, records, documents, and endless genealogies' (*TS*, 1.14.41) that form Sterne's fictitious 'Shandy family archive' of professional and domestic handwritings.[134] At the same time, Sterne often displays Tristram himself as a visible body in the process of handwriting his narrative. Authorial interjections such as '—And this moment that I last dipp'd my pen into my ink' (*TS,* 3.28.254) imaginatively minimise the delay between pen-and-ink composition

[130] J.M. Coetzee, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 86.
[131] Christina Lupton, 'Creating the Writer of the Cleric's Words', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 2 (2011): 168. Lupton's article provides several examples of this phenomenon.
[132] *Ibid.*, 168. Lupton posits her analysis of the 'traffic between technologies of voice, handwriting, and printing' within the conceptual framework of 'remediation' as developed in Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
[133] As the Florida edition notes, Toby's book is probably meant to be Simon Stevin's *Nieuwe Maniere van Sterctebou door Spilshuysen* (1617).
[134] Karen Harvey, 'The Manuscript History of *Tristram Shandy*', *Review of English Studies* 65, no. 269 (2016): 282.

and the moment of reading. In doing this, Lupton argues, Sterne makes himself visible through Tristram 'as an author gathering readers around his desk', allowing us to witness the work of handwriting within the fiction's diegetic scenes of narration.[135]

Yet the black page that Coetzee reimagines is not an attempt to simulate handwritten script on Sterne's part. On the contrary, its printedness as a double-sided typographical feature is evident and forms part of what Peter de Voogd terms Sterne's 'co-existential verbo-visual' compositional mode in which 'verbal and visual elements are so intimately interwoven that they form an aesthetic whole'.[136] Framed centrally across recto and verso within clear margins, the black page has the appearance of two densely set blocks of text composed in formes. To achieve this effect, the printer would have used an inked wood or metal block roughly the size of the type area for one side of a page. The colour saturation is uneven and only approaches pure black in patches around the margins' edges. This density and colour distribution indicates the type of relief printing (employing movable type and woodblocks rather than engraved plates) used on a letterpress, where ink is unevenly dispersed and tends to gather into a greater density around the edges of the type area, or forme.[137] As de Voogd notes, 'Sterne set the printer a hard task by wanting a recto and verso type-area completely saturated with printer's ink'.[138] Ink was typically a mixture of linseed oil and ground soot and would have been applied unevenly to the block using a pair of leather pads stuffed with straw, wool, or horsehair, and affixed to wooden cups and handles.[139] Coetzee imitates the resultant patched shading in his illustration, replicating by hand the uneven saturation of black ink that eighteenth-century print technologies produced on Sterne's page. Whereas the shading of Sterne's black page is darkest towards the edges of its margins, Coetzee leaves the space towards the edges of his margins white, including only a lightly sketched black line on each side of his page to indicate their presence. The shape that Coetzee shades is off-centre; its position and colour density within the frame are attributable to artistic caprice rather than technological determinants.

Coetzee transforms a technologically delimited aspect of Sterne's page into a hand-drawn exploration of print's capacity for reflexive self-expression; integral to *Tristram*

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[135] Lupton, 'Cleric's Words', 178.
[136] Peter de Voogd, '*Tristram Shandy* as Aesthetic Object' in *Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy: A Casebook*, ed. Thomas Keymer (OUP, 2006), 109-110.
[137] I am grateful to Peter de Voogd and Oxford-based printer Richard Lawrence for confirming these details.
[138] Peter de Voogd, 'A singular stroke of eloquence: *Tristram Shandy*'s typography', *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 17, no. 1 (2018): 75
[139] See Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 1995), 126.

Shandy's verbo-visual mode is, as Claude Rawson intimates, the way in which Sterne deploys a 'buttonholing excess' of often-conventional printed textual forms as a means of scrutinising 'confessional [modes of] self-promotion'.[140] Coetzee's reimagining of the black page and Rawson's account of Sterne's 'mock edition' both address the material and artefactual nature of authorial self-promotion in *Tristram*. The shape that Coetzee inscribes in black marker appears to represent either a keyhole or a black pawn, with also some resemblance to the silhouette of a front-on head and shoulders. The keyhole without a key, however, is the dominant visual cue, and this image invokes Coetzee's notion of Sterne's 'poetics of failure' as 'a program for constructing artifacts out of an endlessly regressive, etiolated self-consciousness'.[141] As Freya Johnston notes, the textual 'key' as a publication device 'for encrypting or decrypting a code' was used throughout the eighteenth century for the 'further concealment or discovery of uncertain meaning'.[142] The bookseller Edmund Curll, for example, published keys claiming to unlock coded meaning within satirical works including Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712-17) and Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704-10). As Johnston outlines, these keys work through the circuitous logic 'that there is a natural reference from the work to the life and back again'.[143] Coetzee's reimagining of Tristram's black page as a keyhole without a key suggests something different: that the artefacts of print provide no straightforward referential route for mapping the 'I' of the author-protagonist onto that of the author-proper.

The authorial 'I' that, in Coetzee's terms, hides and is sought within the deictic-discursive 'I-you' situations of Sterne's fiction 'seems to refer', as John Frow observes, but 'does so to *varying* referents'.[144] As with all deictic terms, it 'discharge[s] [its] referential function in [its] use', but (and this is unique to the 'I') it does so 'both as referent and referee' and only within 'the utterance, unique each time, that contains [it]'.[145] Following Hume's assertion that the referent of the 'I' cannot be 'something simple, and continu'd' because no such entity is locatable within the 'perpetual flux [of] perceptions', Sterne, Coetzee suggests, constructs a receding text in which print continually fails to encompass, or unlock, the 'I' that

[140] Rawson, 'Mock Edition Revisited', 236.
[141] Coetzee, *Doubling the Point*, 87.
[142] Freya Johnston, 'Alexander Pope: Unlocking the Key', *Review of English Studies* 67, no. 282 (2016): 897.
[143] *Ibid.*, 912.
[144] John Frow, *Person and Character* (OUP, 2014), 151, 152.
[145] *Ibid.*, 153, 157.

both refers and is referred to, and that shifts position between author-protagonist and author-proper.[146]

This chapter examines how Tristram's usefulness for Sterne as a publishing protagonist and, in this role, as a promotional tool, relates, as Coetzee's illustration suggests, to his ability to resist being 'unlocked' or reduced to the sum of his referents. Tristram is an unapologetic proponent of textual commerce who banks on 'writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year;----which, if I am suffered to go on quietly, and can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live' (*TS*, 1.14.42). His is a life, not just of writing, but specifically of writing to publish; his books are presentations of a selfhood defined by bargains cut with booksellers. Sterne put Tristram's recognisable name to use in this capacity. Following his promise of 'a handsome volume' of sermons 'at the world's service' (*TS*, 2.17.167) in *Tristram Shandy*'s second volume, Sterne advertised his first collection of sermons under the Yorick pseudonym as 'Published by Tristram Shandy' in the *York Courant* (4 March 1760), only four days prior to the meeting with James Dodsley in which he would secure £380 for *Tristram*'s next instalment.[147] Tristram's capacity to be named and to function as the publisher of Sterne's sermons lies at the crux of a question posed by Shaun Regan regarding *Tristram*'s belated position in the tradition of learned wit: 'what changes in the movement from [Scriblerian satire] to Sterne?'[148] One answer is that Tristram as an author-protagonist does not invite reduction to reference and annotation as the Taleteller does, but somehow transcends his particular referents so as to lay a claim upon his reader's sympathetic engagement. That is not to say that Tristram is not also 'susceptible to […] scholarly annotation' as the teller of Swift's *Tale* is, only that it is not the activity he primarily induces in readers.[149] Despite Tristram's own promise to provide a 'key to such passages, incidents, or inuendos as shall be thought to be either of private interpretation, or of dark or doubtful meaning' (*TS*, 1.13.40) in a projected twentieth volume, there is no *Key to Tristram Shandy*. This chapter will explain why that is. To understand this shift, we first need to examine the different ways in which authorial protagonists, and, in turn, the representations of readerly sympathy with those characters,

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[146] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1:165—quoted in Frow, *Person and Character*, 151.
[147] *York Courant* (Tuesday 4 March, 1760).
[148] Shaun Regan, 'Novelizing Scriblerius: *Tristram Shandy* and (Post-)Scriblerian Satire', *Shandean* 17 (2006): 9.
[149] *Ibid.*, 11.

function in early eighteenth-century satire and, in particular, within the text commonly cited as one of Sterne's most influential (if also attributionally problematic) models.[150]

II. Swift's Taleteller, Parody as Personation, and Locke's Epistemology of Credit.

For Rawson, who yokes *A Tale of a Tub* and *Tristram Shandy* together as 'mock editions', Swift's early satire is proleptically 'Shandean' in that it seeks to skewer precisely the sort of confessional self-promoter that Tristram later appeared as in the 1760s: a monomaniacal author-proprietor that in the 1690s existed only *in potentia* as the logical extension of commercial print forms. Rawson's argument can be summarised thus: although Swift had specific targets in mind as he wrote *A Tale* such as Roger L'Estrange, John Dunton, and John Dryden, there is something excessive in how its author-narrator flaunts his wares and positions himself as the confessional centre of his own work that anticipates Sterne more than it properly accounts for its contemporaries.[151] What is Shandean in Swift, as Rawson sees it, is the impulse to trace the progress of a book as singular physical embodiment of its author-proprietor through a world of textual commerce. Rawson reads Sterne's 'mock edition' as the positive corollary to *A Tale*'s negative, seeking to unparody its parodic predecessor. It is this notion of the Swiftian parodic approach towards its source material and its later reversal, or undoing, in *Tristram* that provides a crucial distinction between Swift and Sterne's approach to authorial character. Regardless of the extent to which it overshoots them, *A Tale* works by imitating a specific array of satirical targets that it also names in later editions. The 'Apology for the, &ct.' dated 3 June 1709 that Swift added to the 1710 expanded fifth edition posits a clear referential relation between the Taleteller's character and the authors his work imitates. '*Parodies*', the Apology asserts, are moments wherein the author '*personates the Style and Manner of other Writers, whom he has a mind to expose*'. As Michael McKeon observes, Swift emphasises how successful parody 'achieves the effect of something like auto-exposure, imitating so slavishly the "style and manner" of its adversary that it can make criticism appear to emerge from the very nature of the object being criticized'.[152] This auto-exposure works to the extent of a compulsion, the 'Apology' argues, whereby any '*judicious*'

[150] The difficulty of precisely outlining *Tristram*'s indebtedness to *A Tale* is summed up in the introduction to the Florida *Notes*: 'Few would deny that *Tale of a Tub* [is] in the background of *Tristram Shandy*; but the verbal echoes are rarely sufficient to allow positive assertions, as with Burton or Rabelais' (*TS, Notes*, 21-22).
[151] Rawson, 'Mock Edition Revisited', 238.
[152] Michael McKeon, 'Swift's Debt to Marvell: Parody, Figuration, Religion, and Print Culture' in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Sixth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Kirsten Juhas, Hermann J. Real, and Sandra Simon (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013), 149.

reader '*cannot but have observed*' (*CWJS vol. 1,* 7) the tension between imitation and criticism at play in *A Tale*'s parodies.

Reframing particular authorial '*Style*[s]' and '*Manner*[s]' rather than ranging across abstracted genres, parody as personation relies on a specificity of reference and temporality that we can distinguish from the pronominal and situational ('I-you') specificity of deictic discourse. This referential specificity when identified in other texts often becomes a butt of the satire itself. Take, for example, the vision of author-reader sympathy that the Taleteller outlines in his 'Preface'. It is introduced contradictorily as a 'general Maxim' that also specifically appeals to 'the Taste of Wit, calculated to the present Month of *August*, 1697', significantly the time at which Dryden's *Aeneid* is published as well as a month of economic upheaval during which, as J.A. Downie notes, the English Treasury defaulted on its payments and the Bank of England agreed to remit £200,000 to fund England's wars in Flanders:

> Whatever Reader desires to have a thorow Comprehension of an Authors' Thoughts, cannot take a better Method, than by putting himself into the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that the writer was in, upon every important Passage as it flow'd from his Pen; For this will introduce a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's between the Reader and the Author (*CWJS vol. 1,* 27).[153]

This passage posits a transactional relationship between author and reader in which material investment in a work corresponds to an imaginative investment in its author-protagonist, for whom the text's form must constantly shift so as to manifest the flux of his innermost 'Thoughts'. To read a modern work, *A Tale*'s 'Preface' argues, is to insinuate oneself into 'every important Passage' as it succeeds from the last, a process that concomitantly demands continuous reinvestment in its central author figure and his array of artifices. The act of authorial composition as related to the progress of time resembles not so much creative intervention as interpolation; *A Tale*'s author refits self and textual strategy to successive moments as they arise. The 'Preface' thus advances a 'thorow Comprehension' between

[153] J.A. Downie, 'The Topicality of *A Tale of a Tub*' in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Sixth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Kirsten Juhas, Hermann J. Real, and Sandra Simon (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013), 141.

reader and writer based on their shared passage through a commerce-driven structure of chronometric time: the regular division and uniform passage of minutes, days, and weeks.[154]

The passage works as a reasonably direct sally against two of Swift's contemporaries: John Dryden and John Dunton. In the case of Dunton, Swift strengthens his attack with the earlier inclusion of a mock-catalogue of 'Treatises wrote by the same Author' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 4) situated prior to *A Tale*'s title-page. This list of fictitious intertexts includes

> *A Character of the present Set of* Wits *in this Island*.
>
> *A Panegyrical Essay upon the Number* Three.
>
> *A Dissertation upon the principal Productions of* Grub-street.
>
> *Lectures upon a Dissection of Human Nature* (*CWJS vol. 1*, 4)

Deriding texts which act principally as advertisements for other texts, *A Tale* evokes the weightless concatenation of curios that distinguishes much of Dunton's periodical output and that in later works he attributes solely to his own prolific genius.[155] The weak semantic links that bind the articles featured in such catalogues concede their disposable appeal to an immediate consumer desire for novelty. Dunton often brandishes this principle as a guiding light, claiming 'to Treat of Subjects that are most Surprising' and to conceive projects the likes of which, he asserts, have never before been seen in print.[156] The early eighteenth century's influx of commercial press products exemplified by Dunton's *Athenian* press works to impose the temporal structure Swift satirically heightens by accentuating a latent characteristic of all print forms: planned obsolescence. Such texts posited each day or week as a regular unit of time and as an organising principle, asking that all their readers undergo

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[154] Walter Benjamin later famously terms this 'homogenous, empty time'. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (Fontana/Collins, 1973), 264.

[155] See, for example, Dunton's later publication *The Bull-Baiting* (1709), which lists under a subsection titled '*Athenianism, Or, the New Projects of* Mr. John Dunton' such upcoming 'projects' as '*The Mathematick Funeral*', '*Double Hell: Or an Essay on Despair*', and 'The Royal Violet: Or, Purple Monarch. A Poem'. John Dunton, *The Bull-Baiting* (John Morphew, 1709), 37-42.

[156] John Dunton, *The Art of Living Incognito* (A. Baldwin, 1700), Sig. B^{v}. The mock-catalogue as a subgenre is not Swift's invention and is not limited to attacks on '*Athenian*-ism'. Walsh cites editions of the *London Spy* and Charles Leslie's *A Catalogue of Books of the Newest Fashion* (1694) (*CWJS vol. 1*, 317) as examples that refer also to listings for book auctions. Swift is nonetheless notable in associating his mock-catalogue with an author-protagonist who flaunts his mastery of such ephemeral writings as an 'honourable Privilege' in his claim for 'Despotick Power' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 85) over London's book trade.

the same ritual of renewal week-in, week-out. For Stuart Sherman, this perception of 'time as measured but blank' in ephemeral writings becomes a 'field open for self-creation by self-inscription' during the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[157] It allows Dunton to style his outpourings as the immediate back-and-forth across a mostly fictive 'Athenian Society', a pretence to learned discourse and collaborative cultural regulation that barely masks his commercial rationale. The *Athenian Gazette*'s—and later the *Athenian Mercury*'s—regular twice-weekly publication runs and pseudo-catechistic format purport to answer questions posed by readers as they arise across daily life.

In *A Tale*'s shared author-reader revelation of 'this Minute I am writing' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 23), Dunton's society through letters becomes so absurdly speculative and provisional as to make a mockery both of its author's profession and of its reader's credence. As if to impress its own impending obsolescence as a product, *A Tale*'s narrator warns us that most of its passages are written so precisely for their moment and *milieu* that they will 'grow quite out of date and relish with the first shifting of the present Scene'. *A Tale*'s confessional mode of self-promotion claims to propagate itself through textually orchestrated coincidences of 'Time, Place and Person' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27) in which the reader for a brief moment enjoys 'a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's' with their author. This is the double-logic of remediation wherein a fantasy of improved immediacy relies on the proliferation of intervening textual forms and strategies.[158] As so often with Swift, such fantasies are indulged at a cost. The collapsing of 'Time, Place and Person' between author and reader necessarily reduces the text's entire perspective to the present moment; both reader and writer float free of historical significance, bonding through a shared cultural myopia. This, *A Tale* argues, is the corollary of writing only to the 'Minute': a textual state-of-nature that cannot recognize the authority or value the wisdom of its antecedents.

Key is the disjunction whereby *A Tale* is precise in its referents and in the exact dating of its composition and consumption, yet strikingly imprecise in the manner in which it postulates its model for author-reader reciprocity. A brief comparison with Sterne's later version of the above passage proves revealing. *Tristram Shandy*'s own opening affirmation of author-reader sympathy reads as follows:

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[157] Stuart Sherman, *The Telling of Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 22.

[158] I here paraphrase Kevis Goodman's, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (CUP, 2004), 26. As with Lupton, Goodman adopts this concept from Bolter and Grusin.

> As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship.——*O diem præclarum!*——then nothing which has touched me will prove trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling (*TS,* 1.6.9).

Tristram often addresses his reader singular directly ('as ***you*** proceed further with me') through a deictic-discursive language of demonstrative pronouns and adverbial indicators. Here, he couples a simple future tense to a rhetorical climax ('[our] slight acquaintance […] ***will*** grow into familiarity […] ***will*** terminate in friendship') to assert sympathy between reader and author as an aggregative relationship that cannot but emerge as each specific reader progresses through the incremental stages of his text. Only in a subordinate aside ('unless one of us is in fault') does Tristram admit the notion that this affinity between author and reader may read more like an abstract ideal than a concrete inevitability. Part of the joke is that Sterne's fiction ensures that the reader finds themselves 'at fault' by overloading him or her with more circumstantial detail than can possibly be cognitively retained.

A Tale's relative pronoun 'Whatever' coupled to the floating referent 'Reader' lacks the pronominal specificity of Sterne's direct appeal to 'you', the reader, creating a scattergun approach to inclusivity; *A Tale* flails to find its readers where *Tristram* addresses them directly. Indeed, *A Tale*'s preface provides not so much an assertion of the sympathy that *will* develop as a specific reader progresses through its narrative as an uncertain attempt to envisage an exchange its narrator fervently hopes *can* result should *A Tale*'s readers adhere to the text's ideal transactional 'Method'. The Taleteller thus appears resigned to an obvious unknown: to paraphrase Darnton and de Certeau, the material that readers 'poach' may be possible to identify after the fact, but their motivations and methods of 'poaching' remain manifold and difficult to anticipate.[159] The bookseller's art, *A Tale*'s conclusion reflects in mordant jest, is that of mitigating this unknown to the extent of measuring a book's '*Bulk*' against the appropriate 'Climate' or 'Season' in which it will '*take*' with its reader (*CWJS vol. 1*, 134). *A Tale* thus remains concerned from its opening to its ending with the ways in which its own presence as a physical object extends or limits its capacity to mediate

[159] Robert Darnton, 'What Is the History of Books?', *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 74; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 165-176.

commercial transactions. Yet Swift has a larger satirical point at stake in the preface: the modern hack writer-for-hire, in equal parts motivated and hamstrung by a 'Great want of Money' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27), has grown bold in presuming some form or other of author-reader reciprocity, yet singularly fails to imagine any specific reader, patron, or, in broader terms, owner for his work.

Likewise, where Tristram proclaims a narratological politesse in which matters are 'halve[d] amicably' and his reader is left 'something to imagine, in his turn' (*TS*, 2.11.125), *A Tale* puts the entire onus of imagination on its readers, who must somehow place themselves into the author's 'Circumstances and Postures of Life'. Swift here orchestrates a structural *aporia*—a 'blocking of escape routes and saving possibilities', to quote Rawson—that ensnares *A Tale*'s readers through their own self-investment in the text.[160] In order to achieve the promised 'Parity' and 'thorow' understanding of its author's interior life, *A Tale*'s reader must imaginatively collapse the conditions of textual production and consumption. This evokes a type of 'horrid sympathy' between author and reader in which each exposes the other's poverty and lack of form.[161] Its 'shrewdest Pieces', *A Tale* informs us, were first 'conceived in Bed, in a Garret', their author's hackwork inspired by pangs of 'Hunger' and a painful 'Course of Physick' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27). Brandishing the fiscal and corporeal crises of a Grub Street economy, Swift's *Tale* insists that its sympathetic reader cannot but exist in the same state of material and intellectual squalor as its author. The act of reading as sympathetic exchange—as 'Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's'—reduces temporality to a *nunc-stans* and interrelation to mutual indigence, cutting hack-author and reader adrift amidst what Swift neatly terms the 'Abyss of Things' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 21).

A Tale's intertexts and referents are likewise, it implies, cut adrift from any lineage of forbears. Eschewing any entry tariff of learning and appealing only to their moment of authorship, the products of Grub Street hold no intrinsic value. They merely circulate through heterogeneous spaces in which value is extrinsic and therefore always up for renegotiation. The Taleteller's impersonal, imprecise, and presumptuous approach to textual exchange is, when coupled with the relationship of horrid sympathy it evokes, again an attack on a specific target: Dryden. In the 'Epistle Dedicatory to His Royal Highness, Prince Posterity' (*CWJS*

[160] Claude Rawson, *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 33.
[161] I borrow the term 'horrid sympathy' from Jonathan Lamb, *The Evolution of Sympathy in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Pickering and Chatto, 2009), 105-128. Clement Hawes also recognises Swift's skill for imaginatively collapsing the means of textual production and consumption into one another. Clement Hawes, *Mania and Literary Style: The Rhetoric of Enthusiasm from the Ranters to Christopher Smart* (CUP: 1996), 101-128.

vol. 1, 20), the Taleteller extols Dryden's translation of *The Aeneid* as so indistinct and short-lived in fame that it becomes doubtful whether its author was ever 'actually in being' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 23).[162] If *A Tale*'s preface indiscriminately addresses itself to 'Whatever Reader[s]' it can muster, its internal division into 'forty Sections' each addressed to one of 'a Multiplicity of *God-fathers*' again evinces a short-term opportunism regarding textual promotion, ownership, and resale. This is cynical textual apportioning, unambiguous in its attack on the subscription model used by Dryden and Tonson to finance their translation of *The Aeneid*.

As well as containing a wry dig at 'Our famous *Dryden*' in the text-proper, Swift pre-empts the hermeneutic apparatus of *A Tale*'s *Key* by inserting the following reference in its margin: '*See* Virgil *translated*, &c.' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 45). Dryden and Tonson had, in fact, printed the names of one-hundred-and-one primary subscribers below *The Aeneid's* plates, these having donated three guineas in advance of the translation's completion. Furthermore, both primary and secondary subscribers (who each paid a single guinea) received a fine-paper copy of superior quality to the trade edition.[163] *The Aeneid* could thus claim, in Swift's sense, over three-hundred-and-fifty '*God-fathers*'—with one-hundred-and-one identified specifically as patrons of the work—whose status as investors in cultural capital is affirmed in the lavish appearance of the books they received. Swift appears to have viewed Dryden's subscription scheme less as an enhanced model of patronage, more as a hawking of his text to anyone with a guinea or three to spare. The abstract cultural value bestowed through literary patronage, *A Tale* insinuates, is debased by Dryden and Tonson's indiscriminate acceptance of investment from whomsoever is willing to invest. *The Aeneid's* extensive paratextual apparatus and list of subscribers betray, for Swift, its status as a product of promissory notes and quid-pro-quo investments.

Returning to *A Tale*'s preface, and, in particular, its satirically artless attempt to evoke sympathy for an impecunious author labouring under illness, we can observe how it imitates and takes aim at the postscript to *The Aeneid* in which Dryden lays open the burden of translating Virgil 'in [his] Declining Years: strugling with Wants, oppress'd with Sickness, curb'd in my Genius'.[164] *A Tale*'s preface in this sense functions as a parodic supplement to

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[162] It is characteristically Swiftian to be particular about knowing authors only to affirm their nonexistence in relation to the present 'Minute'. C.f. Bickerstaff's treatment of the astrologer John Partridge. Jonathan Swift, *A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq.* (1709), 6-8.

[163] I draw these details from David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 52.

[164] John Dryden, *The Complete Works of John Dryden*, ed. E.N. Hooker *et al.*, 20 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961-2000), 5-6: *The Works of Virgil in English*, ed. William Frost (1987), 807. That Swift

one of the key texts of its moment. True, as Rawson argues, Dryden's petitioning in regard to his authorial circumstances didn't extend to the 'intrusively inappropriate precision' of the Taleteller's 'Month of *August*, 1697'.[165] Yet its garrulousness and self-involvement are undoubtedly meant reflect qualities in Dryden's works. Swift likely viewed Dryden's confessional *apologia* as a self-serving strain of the obsequiousness that his dedications became infamous for and which Samuel Johnson later claimed 'disgrace[d]' his 'genius'.[166] If, after all, Dryden appears candid in disclosing his financial hardships and physical ailments, the underlying message is one of self-aggrandisement: he has, nonetheless, completed his translation heroically in the face of adversity. As Dustin Griffin notes, Dryden's vacillation between pride and flattery makes both traits appear as two faces of the same coin.[167] *A Tale* duly censures his dedicational practice as exemplary of an author 'carried […] as far as [he] would go' by dint of self-assurance and by presuming to impose upon his readership an endless array of '*Prefaces, Epistles, Advertisements, Introductions, Prolegomena's, Apparatus's, To-the-Reader's*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 85).

Swift portrays Dryden's proliferation of paratextual forms as a restlessly servile need to invent new ways to adulate his betters, and also as a form of effrontery: his readers are subjected to ever more schemes for self-promotion. There may be for Swift a sense that, as Griffin again observes, Dryden's dedicatory rhetoric is self-consciously epideictic; it is concerned less with explicating an argument and more with refining what Dryden himself defines as the 'art of praising' in an 'Epistle Dedicatory' to *Plutarch's Lives* that may inform *A Tale*'s mock dedication.[168] When *A Tale* identifies its own provisional art of 'this Minute I am writing' as 'a Specimen of our Learning, our Politeness and our Wit' composed in the manner of 'a certain Poet called John Dryden' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 23), it seeks to expose Dryden's politesse as, in Laurence E. Klein's terms, a set of strategies, skills and devices employed to gratify others in pursuit of self-gain.[169] The overarching sense is that, even within a work ostensibly presented as a textual monument to the wisdom of the Ancients, Swift saw a duplicitous bid to pass off Dryden's pursuit for fame as the repayment of a longstanding

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viewed Dryden's 'incredible Success' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 85) as emblematic of commercial authorship's deficiencies is a critical commonplace. C.f. Robert Phiddian, *Swift's Parody* (CUP, 1995), 131.

[165] Rawson, 'Mock Edition Revisited', 239.

[166] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 2:95—quoted in Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England 1650-1800* (CUP, 1996), 70.

[167] Griffin, *Literary Patronage*, 71.

[168] Dryden, *Works of Virgil*, 229. Griffin incorrectly quotes this as 'art of pleasing'. Griffin, *Literary Patronage*, 72.

[169] Lawrence Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18, no. 2 (1984-5): 190.

'Debt […] ow'd the Publick'.[170] Hence, *A Tale* contorts Dryden's post-scriptural *apologia* into its parodic double bind, with Swift's insinuation being that *The Aeneid's* extensive (para-)textual apparatus does not serve to immortalise its poet so much as inflate the immediate return for its translator within London's textual marketplace.

A Tale may comment on the wider movement Brean S. Hammond identifies away from an early modern 'regulatory' conception of authorship and towards the mid-century period's proprietorial models, but it does so by mounting these discrete and specific attacks on pivotal author-proprietor figures such as Dunton and Dryden.[171] Arguably, its parody of personation presents both as symptomatic of the same trend, which is probably less fair to Dryden. Certainly Dunton, who vaunted the *Athenian*'s superiority through his claim to possess 'Thoughts that are Wholly New', appears to provide the more pernicious example informing the Taleteller's bid for 'Despotick Power' and 'an absolute Authority in Right, as the *freshest Modern*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 85) to reign over London's textual marketplace.[172] Self-promotion and its continuous bending to the public demand for novelty, *A Tale* warns us, reduces authorship to a dog-eat-dog matter of who can 'lay hold' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 85) to what from moment to moment, a wasteful and violently possessive *écriture* under constant self-erasure. Dunton and *A Tale*'s anonymous author-proprietor protagonist both situate themselves as auto-productive cores within ever-expanding textual rosters. Within Swift's broader satiric world, this is to resemble the *Battel's* spider, '*which feeding and engendering upon it self turns all into Excrement and Venom*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 151).

In its very specificity of attack, however, *A Tale* encapsulates that which Swift derides most: the over-abundance of particularity. *A Tale* is ostensibly told to distract a Leviathan-state of textual commerce that threatens to '[toss] and [play] with all other Schemes of Religion and Government' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 25), yet the problem Swift portrays is, if anything, more insidious. It is not that Grub Street has become a centralised power: an accountable, or, at least, identifiable collective authority in which people can invest, but rather that it is a decentralised and all-pervasive monoculture of excessive difference. 'Section X' of *A Tale* concludes with the Taleteller's appeal to 'the Nation of Authors […] worthy Brethren and Friends at *Will's Coffee-House*, and *Gresham-College*, and *Warwick-Lane*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 117) et cetera, but, as Pat Rogers observes, the Taleteller here succeeds only in exhaustively

[170] Dryden, *Works of Virgil*, 807.
[171] Brean S. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670-1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (OUP, 1997), 23
[172] John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton, Late Citizen of London* (S. Malthus, 1705), Sig. A4r.

listing a topography of disparate interest-groups.[173] Grub Street does not feature on the author's list, not because its influence is in doubt—quite the contrary. Grub Street's ubiquity is presumed; behind London's textual commerce lays its subculture of atomised and unassimilable particularity. In this textual state of nature in which continuity is fractured into 'forty Sections' for forty '*God-fathers*', 'author-ity' amounts to who can claim what from moment to moment. As Jonathan Lamb suggests, the Taleteller imagines a nation of author-proprietors without any cultural memory, extended across a self-erasing palimpsest that continuously rewrites today's press products over those of yesterday:

> the authority of [the Taleteller] is defined by a series of failures to own anything, to identify a reader he can trust, or to set his writing credibly within any system of meaning. All he can do is write, and all he can affirm is that, from moment to moment, he is writing.[174]

Within this zero-sum vision of authorial ownership, what Robert Phiddian describes as the 'expressive and affective dimensions' of Swift's satire amplify and act in tension with its formal elicitations of disgust and fear.[175] *A Tale*'s aforementioned treatment of sympathy is a case in point. If, as Lamb argues, the positive estimation and pervasiveness of sympathy as a social force negatively correlates to the stability of personal identity, strong association with that which is beyond us implies a recoil-effect of feeling.[176] This is selfhood as easily impressed upon and in a state of potentially constant flux. In *A Tale,* a co-action occurs in which the impressionable self discovers itself in sympathy with that which also lacks fixed form: an author-protagonist who shapeshifts as Grub Street's exigencies demand. The question this poses is how imaginative investment can betray its subject into an association, or even complicity, with a state-of-being abhorrent to itself. This issue has a material crux: to place oneself into the Taleteller's precise 'Circumstances' is to find oneself confined to the garret and consigned to his provisional truths of 'this Minute I am writing', existing from one crisis to the next and refitting both self and textual strategy to appease prevailing fashion.

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[173] Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (Methuen, 1972), 231.
[174] Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 182.
[175] Robert Phiddian, 'The Emotional Contents of Swift's *saeva indignatio*' in *Passions, Sympathy and Print Culture*, ed. Heather Kerr, David Lemmings, and Robert Phiddian (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 47.
[176] See Lamb, *Evolution of Sympathy*, 105.

The Taleteller may, therefore, present sympathetic engagement with his text as a practised 'Method', but, Swift shows, its operation within the reader is involuntary—even mechanical: an ordeal the sympathising subject endures or to which he or she is subjected. In these terms, and prior to Hutcheson, Hume and Smith's understanding of 'sympathy' as antecedent to moral sense, *A Tale*'s sympathies are of its moment. Milton's use of 'horrid sympathie', as Lamb notes, entails a 'rupture in the scheme of resemblance': a sudden shrinking experience of becoming like something terrible with which one has never before experienced any affinity.[177] This relates also to the Shaftesburean perception of sympathy as a disruptive force: the 'infectious spread of passions [and] capricious emotions igniting each other' that places persons 'beyond themselves' within the social order.[178] Such a 'going-beyond' is doubly troubling in that it raises the question of whether sympathetic identification with something awful is in-and-of-itself degenerative, or whether it accentuates a corruption latent within the sympathising subject. The hidden and unfathomable nature of sympathy's operation also features within works of quackery such as Kenelm Digby's *Sympathetick Powder* (1669) and H.M. Herwig's *Art of Curing Sympathetically* (1700), which present sympathy as operating in Lucretian terms through 'a material and corporal participation of the things we are sensible of'.[179] 'Atomes, which are drawn from [....] Bodies', Digby argues, filter through a principle of '*Attraction*' or 'secret *Sympathy*' into our sensory organs, 'which serve them as funnels […] to the brain and the imagination'.[180]

A Tale's sole explicit use of the term 'sympathy' further strengthens this Lucretian-materialist reading, appearing as it does in Section IX's '*Digression concerning* [...] *Madness*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 105). Within that section's ironic extolment of '*Films*', '*Images*' and '*Superfices* of Things' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112), the Taleteller ascribes the success of 'great Prescribers' in enlisting their 'implicite Disciples' to 'a peculiar *String* in the Harmony of Human Understanding, which in several individuals is exactly of the same Tuning'. This 'secret necessary Sympathy' acts, like that outlined in *A Tale*'s 'Preface', as a snare wherein the 'Skill or Luck' of 'Circumstance' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 108) determines whether the hack-writer projects his madness onto others physiologically receptive to it, or is otherwise consigned to the madhouse. This, as Lamb intimates, is the touchstone of *A Tale*'s horrid sympathy: just as

[177] Preparing to proclaim victory over God's creation, the rebel angels of Milton's Hell are transformed into 'a crowd of ugly serpents' through a 'horrid sympathie', 'for what they saw, / They felt themselves now changing'. Milton, *Paradise* Lost, X.538-41—quoted in Lamb, *Evolution of Sympathy*, 114-115.
[178] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, 26.
[179] Kenelm Digby, *Of the Sympathetick Powder: A Discourse* (John Williams, 1669), 180.
[180] *Ibid.*,180.

'it is not the image of matter but a thin film of matter itself' that strikes the senses, so it is 'not the effect of passion but passion itself' which binds reader to author.[181] Swift distils sympathy—the faculty that places us 'beyond ourselves'—to a radical sameness: the matter to which we all can be reduced.

That sympathy features within *A Tale*'s '*Digression concerning* [...] *Madness*' proves apt. More than any other section of the work, the '*Digression*' encapsulates how Swift's parody as personation ranges across an array of voices that evoke various texts, including, as Marcus Walsh notes, 'the recipes of hermetic writings, digressions, accounts of Royal Society experiments, 'full and true accounts'[of] any number of historical events and lurid crimes […] and much else'.[182] We see this in the extended passage beginning and ending so:

> when a Man's Fancy gets *astride* on his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is Kickt out of Doors; the first Proselyte he makes, is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others; A strong Delusion always operating from *without* as vigorously as from *within* […]
>
> He that can with *Epicurus* content his Ideas with the *Films* and *Images* that fly off upon his Senses from the *Superfices* of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called, *the Possession of being well deceived*; (*CWJS vol. 1*, 110-112)

Swift initiates his sequence of voices in the mode of a garret philosopher airily constructing gnomic aphorisms to elucidate the process whereby errant imagination hijacks the operation of reason.[183] Establishing an erratic jostling of oppositions that will continue throughout—'*without*' and '*within*', imagination and memory, and so on—the passage's opening subordinating conjunctions create a tone of mock-syllogistic reasoning that concludes in

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[181] Lamb, *Evolution of Sympathy*, 25.
[182] Marcus Walsh, 'Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and the Mock Book', in *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book*, ed. Paddy Bullard and James McLaverty (CUP, 2013), 102.
[183] Swift's source-texts here are, as Walsh notes, Plato's *Phaedrus* and Henry More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (*CWJS vol. 1*, 436).

praise of '*Things conceived'* (produced in the '*Womb*' of the imagination) versus '*Things past*' (consigned to the '*Grave*' of history) (*CWJS vol. 1*, 111).

Within a few sentences, this conclusion is arbitrarily upended and the operations of 'Reason' re-established 'in the Right' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112). Phasing into the voice of a Royal Society empiricist, the narrator abandons his encomium to the imagination's inner-life in favour of a pseudo-scientific examination of outward forms. Recalling the punitive flaying of a prostitute, he employs a grim litotic formulation to draw the reader into complicit *un*-feeling: 'you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112). If the horror of this observation resides, as Rawson notes, in the terseness of its gratuity, it lies also in its void of meaning—an effect Swift later sustains in *A Modest Proposal* (1729).[184] Travestying the Royal Society's 'parajuridical' process of collective knowledge-production by which, as Bruno Latour argues, 'credible, trustworthy, well-to-do witnesses gathered at the scene of the action can attest to the existence of a fact, the matter of fact, even if they do not know its true nature', this public display of suffering serves only to affirm a slew of empty maxims such as 'Reason is certainly in the Right' and the '*Outside* [is] infinitely preferable to the *In*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112).[185] Swift contorts the interplay of axiom and observation into a contradiction; the distance of the empiricist's voice brings home the extreme *un*reason of torturing a woman in order to illustrate the operation of reason.

In its final strait, the passage returns to a gnomic voice that, contrary to its opening gambit, acclaims a thesis in praise of '*Films*', '*Images*' and '*Superfices* of Things' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112). As mentioned in the Taleteller's discussion of sympathy, the key source text switches to Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* and specifically Book IV's treatment of 'de Simulacris' or '*Images* of Things; / Which like *thin films* from bodies rise in streams, / Play in the Air' (IV, 37-39).[186] Here, *A Tale*'s line between ironizing distance and anguished critique becomes particularly unclear. One simple point Swift may be making is that, despite its radical or fashionable appearance, contemporary Libertine Epicureanism presented its followers with nothing new. If *A Tale*'s author seeks to be crowned 'the *freshest Modern*', he is unwittingly several hundred years too late. In this interpretation, the narrator's

[184] Rawson, *Gentle Reader*, 34.
[185] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 17-18.
[186] These lines are taken from Titus Lucretius Carus, *The Epicurean Philosopher: His Six Books De Natura Rerum*, trans. Thomas Creech (Oxford: Anthony Stephens, 1682). There are many translations of *De Rerum Natura* available. I have opted to cite Thomas Creech's 1682 English verse translation, which remained prominent throughout the eighteenth century.

philosophical investment in Epicureanism provides another example of his cultural myopia.[187] We might otherwise consider whether the text orchestrates a momentary coincidence of 'Time, Place and Person' in which *A Tale*'s 'I' narrative voice phases into alignment with Swift's own ambivalent association with Lucretian thought. Certainly, it is difficult to dismiss this part of the digression as, in Charles Scruggs's terms, merely 'one more patch on [*A Tale*'s] crazy-quilt fabric' in disparagement of its mad narrator.[188] Its final raft of conclusions—that sublimity lies not in transcendence but across the surface of things, that nature's mechanisms are unfathomable and terrible, and the happiest state is that of mental oblivion—is too disconcerting. Instead, I would suggest that Swift's fascination with Lucretianism as a source of 'sublime' oblivion evinces a tipping point in his satire: the Taleteller's excessive self-absorption shifts from being aesthetically dubious to ontologically disturbing. Confined to his garret through illness and indigence, the impoverished hack-writer is locked in a solipsistic loop. His musings on corporeal need and mental lucidity teeter on the brink of reducing selfhood to a collision of micro-processes.

As we emerge from Section IX's Lucretian event horizon, we find a larger cohesion between form and content. The text's probing of surface, depth, and matter mirrors a coaction between surface-discourse—the strategic 'blocking of escape routes'—and Swift's submerged ideal, often glimpsed only in its photo-negative. As Rawson argues, where Swift's 'I' narrators are concerned, it is useful to think less in terms of changing personae, more in terms of 'a continuous shifting interaction between […] surface voice and at least one beneath it'.[189] What Rawson intimates is Swift's wider aesthetic. We can recognise within *A Tale*'s shapeshifting 'I' narrative a series of discrete satirical forays; however, Swift's overarching narrative fragmentation is itself a critical conceit. The preceding passage works through a double-back logic of misshapen rhetorical registers: reason is first overthrown, next re-asserted as 'reasonless' in its banal cruelty, before being overthrown again in favour of self-deceiving sensuousness. As Howard D. Weinbrot notes, *A Tale* works through a compositional technics of 'satire by addition' in which voices, intertexts, and fragments are adjoined to one another without synthesis.[190] Whilst Phiddian argues that Swiftian parody adheres to a logic of supplementation, appending itself onto and thereby decentring its

[187] This is the argument of David Oakleaf's *A Political Biography of Jonathan Swift* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 56-57.
[188] Charles Scruggs, 'Swift's Use of Lucretius in *A Tale of a Tub*', *TSLL* 15 (1973): 40.
[189] Claude Rawson, *Swift's Angers* (CUP, 2014), 145.
[190] Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 115.

master-discourses, *A Tale* achieves this effect through intra-supplementation.[191] Its miscellany of voices, fragments, and print artefacts accretes into a critical mass, destabilising the text's notional schema. Swathes of the central allegory shapeshift into digression and vice-versa.

In developing this fragmentary aesthetic, Swift scores a wider point. If we return to the 'Preface's' outline of author-reader sympathy, what form of 'thorow Comprehension' can *A Tale*'s reader hope to ascertain from this collocation of disparate narrative voices? What stable notion of 'character' or 'reputation' can we aspire to invest in? If we return also to the Taleteller's topical dating of that passage as '*August*, 1697', a month that augured both the developing reach of the Bank of England and the publication of Dryden's *Aeneid*, we discover another point of engagement in Swift's satire: the types of belief and provisional truth claims that new models of credit required from investors in both fiscal and cultural capital. The key thinker on this new 'epistemology of credit' is, as Carl Wennerlind shows, not Hobbes but Locke.[192] The mode of thought that Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) designates as '*Belief, Assent,* or *Opinion*' and which ranges in 'degrees of Assent' from 'full *Assurance* and Confidence [...] down to *Conjecture*, *Doubt* and *Distrust*', is critical to the sort of provisional judgement, or speculative sifting of investment options, that underlines 'system trust': the shift from 'facework commitments' to 'faceless commitments' that takes hold across the English Financial Revolution.[193] This sea change, and its resultant 'epistemology of credit', relies on a Lockean logic of qualitative probabilistic reasoning in which public opinion ('credit-ability') is assessed and invested with 'trust' through the balance of interpersonal attributes such as 'reputation […] manners, [and] virtue'—attributes we collectively refer to as 'character'.[194]

'System trust', faith in second-hand testimony, and their concomitant, the 'faceless commitment', are now accepted as integral phenomena within the expansion and flourishing of commercial societies. As J.G.A. Pocock's essay on the rise of movable property emphasises, the concept of public credit when extended to the limits of the National Debt becomes an appeal to pure imagination, asking investors to buy into a fantasy of future full repayment that by necessity cannot occur. As compensation for this faith in the fiscal state

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[191] Phiddian, *Swift's Parody*, 100.
[192] Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, 89-92
[193] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 665; Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, 95. Wennerlind adopts the theory of 'system trust' from sociologist Niklas Luhmann.
[194] Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, 96.

and its gold reserves, the investor can use tokens of this imagined future repayment (cash, bonds etc.) in his daily affairs.[195] The Dryden-Tonson subscription scheme worked through a scaled-down version of this logic: pooling the 'reputation' and 'character' of its listed subscribers into an aggregative form of patrimony, it also sought immediate investment from those subscribers in advance of a future product. *A Tale*'s fragmentary aesthetic and vision of an ethically questionable author-reader sympathy, however, reveal a double-logic. The 'faceless commitment' to (or 'system trust' in) an anonymising institution, whether it be the Royal Society, the fiscal state, or the congers and book-producing businesses of Grub Street may rely on Lockean qualitative categories of representation that posit a stable sense of 'self', 'character', or 'reputation', yet even as it asserts the pre-eminence of such categories, commercial discourse carries the potential to simulate or disrupt their signifiers through corporate identity and practices such as the division of labour. If *A Tale*'s 'thorow comprehension' between reader and writer amounts to a 'faceless' transactional relationship mediated through its pages, it acquires (as Swift well intuits) what Mary Poovey terms a 'problematic of representation'.[196]

This is the problem of how one can positively assert authorial character within an emerging social order that values it more highly than ever yet also provides elaborate new ways to undermine it. It is one that also perplexes Swift's contemporaries. Shaftesbury's neo-Stoic ideal of authorial 'character', for example, encompasses, as Laurence Klein notes, 'the qualities of consistency, unity and autonomy […] that [define] the philosophical being and moral actor', yet its persistence relies on an aristocratic enjoyment of space, leisure-time and financial independence. Together, these factors grant Shaftesbury's author the corresponding prerogative to mould his public at arm's length.[197] The cutthroat business of Grub Street inverts Shaftesbury's model; the harsh realities of eking out a living compel its author to protean feats of shapeshifting as he is 'turned and modelled […] by the public relish'.[198] Starker still is one anonymous appraisal of Daniel Defoe's pamphleteering that decries him as 'An *Animal* who shifts his Shape oftner than *Proteus* […] a thorough-pac'd, true-bred *Hypocrite*, an *High-Church Man* one Day, and a *Rank Whig* the next'.[199] Such a mercurial

[195] Pocock, 'Mobility of Property', 112-13.
[196] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 5.
[197] Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (CUP, 1994), 91.
[198] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (CUP, 1999), 118.
[199] *Judas Discuvr'd, and Catch'd at last: Or, Daniel de Foe in Lobs Pound* (1713), 3—quoted in J.A. Downie, 'Public Opinion and the Political Pamphlet' in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (CUP, 2005), 555.

figure is *A Tale*'s anonymous author-protagonist, who similarly appeals to the 'public relish' within 'the present Scene'. Living moment-to-moment a mayfly's existence of provisional truths, his willingness to present himself as 'which ever of the Wits shall happen to be that Week in the Vogue' and his pride in having authored 'Fourscore and eleven pamphlets [at] the service of six-and-thirty factions' (*CWJS vol. 1,* 134) dismantles our confidence in qualitatively evaluating 'character' as a verifying principle.

In confining itself to '*personat[ing] the Style and Manner*' of its specific targets, *A Tale*'s awkward, shapeshifting, and fragmentary aesthetic evinces, as Marcus Walsh notes, Swift's scepticism towards complete systems and also, I have argued, towards the Lockean epistemology that underlines 'system trust': the mode of collective provisional belief through reputation and secondary testimony that underpinned the expansion of credit, investment, and public debt during the English Financial Revolution. Localised parody that '*personates*' and that veers across '*Style and Manner*' as it imitates an array of '*other Writers*' instead invites, as Walsh further notes, discrete and local annotation over summation:

> it offers itself […] in its semantic atomization, to the microscope of explanatory editorial wit […] The fragmented forms of annotation are tools which perfectly fit the awkward and particular shapes of such texts as Swift's *Tale*. The *Tale,* like many texts, is characterized by just that vertical plenitude which annotation reveals.[200]

A Tale's satire by addition offers myriad particular details whilst refusing to aggregate into any meaningful whole; the anonymous Taleteller, an amalgam of these '*personate*[*d*]' voices who never really attains the status of a quasi-person himself, invites yet perhaps already renders redundant the *Key* that reduces him to a collection of referents. The text already contains its own mock-apparatus of notes and comments; as Johnston notes, it is 'gasping under the weight of its own interpretations' even before the 'Commentators' arrive whom the Taleteller predicts will seek to illuminate its 'dark points' (*CWJS vol. 1,* 73).[201] The more elaborate and lengthier these interpretations are, Swift implies, the greater the deluge of ephemera beneath which Grub Street will sink. When Curll's *Key* appears on cue, it attributes *A Tale*'s composition to two 'reputed Authors', positing Jonathan's cousin Thomas Swift as

[200] Marcus Walsh, 'Telling Tales and Gathering Fragments', 160.
[201] Johnston, 'Unlocking the Key', 902.

the 'regular' author of *A Tale*'s central pseudo-allegory, and Jonathan himself as the more wayward author of the preface, dedications, and four digressions.[202]

The *Key*'s confident divvying-up of its master-text—and its total inaccuracy in doing so—conversely evinces this cultural anxiety over how to define and ascribe authorial ownership. The particular and referential nature of *A Tale*'s parodies (qualities Swift derides in the products of Grub Street themselves) is formally bound with its critique of commercial authorship as it shifted from a regulatory to a proprietorial mode of ownership during the early to mid-eighteenth century. The flaw that parody as personation accentuates within the 'system trust' that underpins both authorship and credit—that of how one locates and assesses character within a nebulous economy of meaning that allows every opportunity to simulate or disrupt its signifiers—relates finally, for Swift, to their shared mediation in print. As McKeon observes,

> Swift's problem with parody is largely a function of its printedness […] writing for print requires the author to personate not someone else but himself—and therefore to depersonalize and abstract himself from his actual, face-to-face speech context—in order to address a virtual readership that consists of no one in particular.[203]

The reader's 'thorow comprehension' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27) of *A Tale*'s author is unstable, in other words, precisely *because of* its printedness. The shift from 'facework commitments' to 'faceless commitments' that accompanies the increasingly large-scale experience of public debt during what Colin Nicholson terms the early century 'institutionalising phase' of new instruments of credit, public debt, insurance, and, more broadly, 'monetary policy' similarly relied on the proliferation and second-hand testimony of printed forms, which, even as they asserted a stable relationship between authors and readers, offered little solid evidence regarding 'the Circumstances and Postures' of either.[204] As Sandra Sherwin argues, the 'congeries of bills, notes, stocks, annuities, reports on the National Debt' that together formed the early eighteenth-century market required various professional readers to navigate 'an

[202] *A Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub; with Some Account of the Authors* (Edmund Curll, 1710), 4, 2-4.
[203] McKeon, 'Swift's Debt to Marvell', 151.
[204] Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance*, 2.

equivocal, impenetrable textuality' which came to occlude any 'visible, originary Fund'.[205] *A Tale* duly constructs an 'equivocal, impenetrable textuality' which occludes any 'visible, originary' author. At the juncture during which Poovey's fact-fiction continuum binds imaginative writing, writing on money, and writing as money as mediators of value, *A Tale* presents all three as volatile forms of textual mediation.

III. Tristram Shandy as a Publishing Protagonist.

Midway through J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*, Coetzee's own publishing protagonist 'JC' ponders how to rejuvenate what he fears to be his increasingly ossified worldview: 'where does one go to find up-to-date opinions? […] Can one buy fresh opinions in the marketplace?'[206] In posing this question as to how novel opinion can enter the same marketplace from which it draws its materials, JC sums up the apparent contradiction with which Tristram was first accepted as an author-protagonist by his readers. Tristram evinces 'such original and uncommon abilities' in his 'manner of writing', according to one letter to the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* (April 1760), yet also self-consciously recycles the mannerisms and subject matter of his forbears.[207] 'Oh rare Tristram Shandy!—Thou very sensible—humorous—pathetick—humane—unaccountable', effused an unsigned notice in the *London Magazine* in February of the same year, 'what shall we call thee?—Rabelais, Cervantes, What?'[208] Tristram is 'unaccountable' in that his first volumes' claim to originality within the marketplace transcends the sum of their borrowed parts, and yet Tristram's influences, as the *London Magazine*'s rhetorical question suggests, are clear and worn on his sleeve. Somehow Sterne's patchwork of borrowings appears to organise into something original that exceeds its quantifiable particulars; somewhere Tristram Shandy emerges as the individuated protagonist that Sterne can name in the *York Courant* as the publisher of his sermons.

The way in which Sterne navigates his relation to Swift tells us something about how this occurs. Although Sterne's pledge to maintain a 'due distance' from Swift's scabrous pen is oft-quoted, his rationale is frequently omitted: 'Swift sais 500 things, I dare not say,—unless I was Dean of Saint Patricks' (*Letters,* 84). For Sterne, it is not writerly compunction

[205] Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 1-2.
[206] J.M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (Harvill Secker, 2007), 143.
[207] *Laurence Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Alan B. Howes (Routledge, 1974), 63.
[208] *Ibid.*, 52.

so much as professional circumstance that requires him to limit any association with his Anglo-Irish forbear. Sterne's eagerness to distinguish himself by degree against Swift is dated 1 January 1760 in his letter book (the date of entry, rather than that of initial composition), a mere three weeks following *Tristram Shandy*'s first advertisement in the *York Courant*.[209] This suggests, as noted by the Florida editors, immediate post-publication intent; Sterne possibly redrafted the letter as an *apologia* to pre-empt the periodical reviews. Other versions of this passage appear in variant letters printed posthumously in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1779) and from a copyist's manuscript in 1894, further suggesting that Sterne was reconsidering his own authorial sympathies with Swift whilst he was negotiating the early reception of *Tristram Shandy*. Both Lewis P. Curtis and the Florida editors date earlier drafts of this passage to the summer of 1759 following Sterne's initial rejection by Dodsley (*Letters*, 85). At the time during which scholars agree Sterne was redrafting *Tristram*'s first instalment, he seems to have been anticipating any potential for comparison between himself and Swift at this stage of his writing career as something of a bugbear—even a hindrance to success. The passage also reveals the frustration of Sterne the professional clergyman, now acutely aware that he has reached the pinnacle of his church career. Only in his correspondence with Eliza Draper, written several years into the serial publication of *Tristram* and after he has cemented his new status as a professional author, does Sterne disclose a certain pride in having met Allen Bathurst, one-time patron of Pope and Swift (*Letters*, 540-542).

The fate of Sterne's first publication and *Tristram Shandy*'s immediate predecessor contextualises his reticence to be overly associated with Swift. *A Political Romance* (1759) is, like Swift's *A Tale*, introduced in its title through the indefinite article ('*A*' *Romance*, rather than '*The*' *Romance*) but likewise proves to be a pointed and specific ecclesiastical satire, in this instance on the abuses of preferment for legal offices within the Diocese of York. It works—again, in clear imitation of *A Tale*—through a pseudo-allegorical history of an 'old Watch-Coat' (*MW*, 96), which provides its title as *The History of a Good Warm Watch-Coat* when it is first published in 1769 following Sterne's death (*MW*, 95). The *Romance* unfolds in a parish identified in one of six original copies of the text as 'Cocksbull near Canterbury' (*MW*, 148), a barely veiled treatment of Sterne's own parish of Coxwold (not in Kent, but in North Yorkshire) wherein, as Marcus Walsh notes, the aforementioned watch-coat represents 'the patent for the commissaryship of the Exchequer and Prerogative

[209] C.f. Alexander Hardie-Forsyth, 'Sterne, Textual Commerce, Public Judgement', *Shandean* 26 (2015): 27-47.

Court', whilst other ecclesiastical offices likewise figure as various sartorial adornments.[210] Its central protagonist is 'Master *Trim* […] the [parish] Sexton' (*MW*, 96)—a quite different Trim to the amiable corporal that later appears in *Tristram*—who sets his eye on the watch-coat 'in order to have it converted into a *warm Under-Petticoat* for his Wife, and a *Jerkin* for himself, against Winter' (*MW*, 96). The episode situates in a domestic context the question of whether church offices should be considered as part of one's family planning and estate management; Trim's proposed acquisition of the watch-coat to support himself during the winter represents the use of the contested commissaryship as essentially a retirement plan.

The real-life episode that the *Romance* miniaturises as its parochial dispute over a watch-coat remains best outlined by Sterne's biographer, Arthur H. Cash. Francis Topham, the incumbent Commissary and Keeper-General of the Exchequer and Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of York and the figure represented in the *Romance* by Master Trim proposed to have the post he held bestowed as a reversionary patent. This would have promised his son a professional office in the church prior to its becoming vacant.[211] Such patents were not wholly without precedent and Topham was apparently confident of success; however John Fountayne, the dean of York figured in the *Romance* as '*John*, the Parish-Clerk' (*MW*, 96), refused to support Topham's bid and this appears to have frustrated Topham to the extent that he published his grievances (which included accusations that a previous promise of preferment for the Pickering and Pocklington Court had been breached) in a pamphlet entitled *A Letter Address'd to the Reverend the Dean of York; in which is given a full Detail of some very extraordinary Behaviour or his, in relation to his Denial of a Promise made by him to Dr. Topham* (1758). To the charges contained therein, Fountayne responded in print in his *Answer to a Letter address'd to the Dean of York, in the Name of Dr. Topham* (1758) and Cash speculates that Sterne may have contributed to the dean's riposte.[212] Both the address and its reply were printed by *A Political Romance*'s printer, Caesar Ward, a prominent Tory who oversaw York's first and at the time most prominent newspaper the *York Courant* with the financial backing of John Burton.[213]

In the *Romance*'s rendering of the episode, the parish parson who represents the Archbishop of York, John Gilbert, agrees to reward Trim for his otherwise diligent service by

[210] Marcus Walsh, 'Scriblerian Satire, *A Political Romance*, the 'Rabelaisian Fragment', and the Origins of *Tristram Shandy*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne*, ed. Thomas Keymer (CUP, 2009), 22.
[211] Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 269.
[212] *Ibid.*, 270.
[213] *Ibid.*, 92.

examining whether the watch-coat would be 'fit for such a Purpose' i.e. fit for bestowal as a reversionary patent (*MW*, 97), but is later greeted at his house by the presumptuous sexton, who, much like the enthusiast Jack in Swift's *Tale*, has already 'ripp'd and cut' (*MW*, 98) the coat in advance of taking it to the tailor. Trim, who is recognised throughout 'Cocksbull' as a 'little, dirty, pimping, pettifogging, ambidextrous Fellow' (*MW*, 99), is unable to defend his actions to the parson and is discharged of his office. With his plans to secure the watch-coat as a provision for the winter stymied, Trim decides publicly to vent his spleen against John the Parish-Clerk, who by way of contrast '[bears] an exceeding good Character as a Man of Truth' (*MW*, 99) within the parish. Sterne thus designed the *Romance* to make a witty and decisive contribution in favour of his ally Fountayne within the debate over the rights to preferment initiated by Topham.

A Political Romance in fact bears only a rudimentary resemblance to Swift's substantially more intricate text. It contains neither *A Tale*'s concertina tale-digression-tale-digression structure nor the same sustained and coherent level of satire directed against the print culture of its time. Yet unlike Sterne's two later fictions, and in a clear attempt to simulate Scriblerian textual reception, the *Romance* was to be published from the outset alongside its own *Key* (*MW*, 109-116)—one that in true Scriblerian fashion dissembles and conceals as much as it reveals. The *Romance*'s *Key* presents itself as a debate amongst the members of a 'Political Club' in York. Anticipating the found-document motif Sterne later uses for Yorick's sermon, it opens with a member of the club having chanced upon the manuscript of the *Romance* after it has been 'dropp'd' (presumably by its author) 'in the *Minster-Yard*' (*MW*, 109). Quickly concluding between themselves that the discovered text is 'a *Political Romance*', the members of the club set about discussing which 'State or Potentate' (*MW*, 109) it properly can be said to depict. Various theories emerge: that its central allegory represents contemporaneous wars on the continent with 'Trim' standing for the King of France; that the tearing of the watch-coat represents either 'the Houses of *Bourbon* and *Austria*' working 'in […] abominable Coalition' or the '*Partition-Treaty*' of King William's wars (*MW*, 110-111). Interjecting in the dispute, 'a Gentleman of the Law' (*MW*, 112) informs the company that they have hitherto been 'looking too high' for its meaning, arguing that the *Romance* instead expounds 'upon Temporal, but altogether upon Church-Matters' (*MW*, 113) and in particular those pertaining to disputes over '*Lease* and *Release*' (*MW*, 114). The party next unsuccessfully attempts to apply the *Romance*'s dispute to local political considerations in and around York, and eventually disbands with each man

having 'turn'd the Story to what was swimming uppermost in his own Brain' (*MW*, 115). The final word in the company's debate is left to the otherwise silent Whitesmith, who reveals the *Key* as nominally an interpretative tool for 'unlocking' the single meaning of its master-text to be (as readers should surely by now suspect) no such thing:

> In troth you might have said a whole Bunch of *Keys*, quoth a Whitesmith, who was the only Member in the Club who had not said something in the Debate: But let me tell you, Mr. President, says he, That the *Right Key*, if it could but be found, would be worth the whole Bunch put together (*MW*, 116).

The dialogue's suggestion of a '*Right Key*' coupled with *A Political Romance* pseudo-allegory itself was enough, however, to bind the text to a specific ecclesiastical dispute that did Sterne the professional clergyman no favours. If the passage in Sterne's letter book seems tinged with professional envy in its regard for Swift's audacity as a satirist prepared to name names, his ambivalence is understandable: the *Romance* was finally aborted pre-publication, and would only emerge into wider circulation after Sterne's death. The burning of all but a handful of copies of Sterne's most Swiftian composition marked the bitter end to his own hopes for further preferment. Later that year, Sterne wrote to Robert Dodsley with a newly clear sense of how to market his writings. Dodsley initially rejected Sterne's proposed price of '50 pounds' (*Letters*, 80) for the copy of *Tristram Shandy*, which Sterne (apparently not quite having learned his lesson) seems to have at first proposed as another ecclesiastical satire, this time targeting the abuses of exegeses. In Sterne's initial schema, by which he designed the text as an 'Allegory […] up on the Writers on the Book of Job' according to an anonymous letter dated April 1760 and later published in *St. James's Chronicle,* Tristram was originally to have as his 'private Tutor' the 'great and learned Dr. W——'.[214] 'Dr W' is William Warburton, who was topically made Bishop of Gloucester in 1759 and with whom Sterne later corresponded. In its earliest conception, Sterne appears to have intended *Tristram* to provide a satirical commentary on the theological back-and-forth that followed the incomplete publication of Warburton's *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (1738-

[214] *St. James's Chronicle; or, British Evening-Post* (Tuesday 22 and Thursday 24 April, 1788)—quoted in Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 279.

41), with Warburton, as Melvyn New notes, likely mooted as 'a primary symbol of the gravity and prudery' against which Sterne was to sharpen his wit.[215]

Sterne discarded this outline and on 5 October 1759 wrote to assure Dodsley that 'All Locality is taken out of the Book—the Satyr general,—Notes are added where wanted—& the whole made more sale<b>~a~ble' (*Letters*, 97). Crucially, Sterne now conflates the 'saleable' with the 'general', and, in doing so, begins to reconceive literary value as a 'homogenous category', in Michael McKeon's terms, that 'invite[s] the figure of the general as a concrete but virtual space' composed of many particulars.[216] If this assurance to Dodsley confirms Sterne's commercial bid to dissociate his work from local and specific ecclesiastical intrigue following the abject failure of the *Romance,* it likewise augurs a break from Swiftian modes of invective. Sterne's new stance is quite possibly in response to Dodsley's now-lost reply; the notion that Sterne reworked the scheme of his fiction to address Dodsley comments is strengthened by Dodsley's own earlier aim in his *Trifles* (1745) to be a 'general satirist, yet not rude nor ill-natur'd'.[217] Dodsley as a bookseller would have understood how ill a Swiftian imitation of parody as personation would fare in the fiction market of the mid-century period, and Sterne seems by October 1759 to be following his advice. Earlier in the same letter, Sterne proposes to print 'a lean edition' of *Tristram Shandy*'s first two volumes 'at my own Expense merely to feel the Pulse of the World' (*Letters*, 96), providing another note of contrast with Swift, who famously argued in a letter to Alexander Pope that the 'Men of Genius' of their age should unite in order to 'drive the world before them'.[218] Where Swift albeit wryly situates 'the world' as something external that should bend to Scriblerian superiority (as Griffin notes, to 'drive' was a much severer verb in Swift's time 'as if "the world" were nothing more than a herd of beasts to be expelled with force or compelled to submit'), Sterne adopts a closer pseudo-medical stance by which, in proto-sentimental style, he seeks to measure its heartbeat and synchronise his publishing output to its pulse.[219]

The metaphor Sterne uses is neither new nor unique to his thoughts on bookselling. The critic and polemicist James Ralph wrote in *The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade* (1758) the year prior to Sterne that

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[215] Melvyn New, 'Sterne, Warburton, and the Burden of Exuberant Wit', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15, no. 3 (1982): 246-247.
[216] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 106.
[217] Robert Dodsley, *Trifles: Viz. The Toy-Shop* (R. Dodsley, 1745), 8.
[218] *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (OUP, 1956), 2:199.
[219] Dustin Griffin, *Swift and Pope: Satirists in Dialogue* (CUP, 2010), 77.

> The sagacious Bookseller feels the Pulse of the Times, and according to the Stroke prescribes; not to cure, but flatter the Disease: as long as the Patient continues to swallow, he continues to administer; and on the first Symptom of Nausea, he changes the Dose. Hence the Cessation of all Political Carminatives, and the Introduction of Cantharides, in the Shape of Tales, Novels, Romances &c.[220]

Given the similarity between the two passages, it is tempting to suggest that Sterne may have been alluding to Ralph's well-known treatment of professional authorship so as to bolster his reputation for commercial insight with London's leading bookseller. Certainly, he was not above 'flatter[ing] the disease' in his dealings with significant acquaintances such as Dodsley and David Garrick. The truth may be, however, that the expression was simply current at a time when, as Paul Keen notes, 'pseudo-medical diagnoses of cultural pathologies' were becoming prevalent as a way of anatomising a new commercial 'structure of feeling' attached to the commodities of art and literature.[221] Such descriptive designations as the *cacoethes scribendi*, or 'rage of writing', through to the masturbatory compunctions of *bibliomania* render in medical terms what we would now identify as commodity fetishism coupled with information overload. This figurative idiom imagines authors and booksellers as doctors trapped in the dizzying act of interpreting public opinion as an endlessly symptomatic body. The 'Pulse of the World' – desire is naturally configured through blood and circulation – threatens to change at any moment, so both must attune themselves to its rhythm as quickly as possible.

In any case, Sterne's new proposal to Dodsley initially appears to support Rawson's thesis that his approach to *Tristram Shandy* was that of unparodying, or taking seriously, the confessional mode of authorial self-promotion mocked in Swift's *Tale*. The Taleteller's willingness to refit self and textual strategy to whatever 'happen[s] to be that Week in the Vogue' looks in a less stable and more pessimistic sense a lot like Ralph and Sterne's vision of booksellers and authors, both of whom likewise attune themselves to a 'Pulse' of public

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[220] James Ralph, *The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade, Stated. With Regard to Booksellers, the Stage, and the Public* (R. Griffiths, 1758), 21—quoted in Jerome Christensen, *Practicing Enlightenment: Hume and the Formation of a Literary Career* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 196.
[221] Keen, *Literature, Commerce, Modernity*, 103; the term 'structure of feeling' I borrow from Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (OUP, 1977), 128-135.

approbation that might alter at any moment. Certainly, Sterne's aim to 'feel the Pulse of the world' speaks more of his talent for writing provisionally to the 'Minute' rather than for posterity. What is less clear is whether such unparodying was Sterne's deliberate technique and intent. On the one hand, Sterne clearly did revise his specific and local 'satyr' into a more 'general' fiction at the same time that he was seeking to distance himself from Swiftian parody as personation. On the other, Swift's fragmentary satire by addition and its favouring of the specific, referential, and local over the aggregative and summative sought to undermine the Lockean bases of credit during an 'institutionalising phase' of the English Financial Revolution that is not part of Sterne's immediate context. The Taleteller's ever-changing situation as an author who appeals solely to 'the present Scene' and writes for as many as 'six-and-thirty factions' undermines the qualitative probabilistic reasoning that underpins system trust, second-hand testimony, and more broadly, the 'faceless' transactions that new innovative monetary policies demanded. Poovey argues that by Sterne's mid-century period a '*naturalized generic divide*' is more or less established whereby fiction, writing *on* money, and writing *as* money has splintered from an earlier fact-fiction continuum that mediated value in the early eighteenth century.[222] The latter strand of writing as money has, Poovey argues, by this point become naturalised to the extent that its original status *as* writing recedes; bills, bank notes, and other forms of paper-credit begin to 'lose [their] history as (various forms of) writing'.[223] The 'cognitive provisionality' that Swift portrays *in extremis* as a deranged form of characterless hack-authorship has, by this juncture, settled into what Catherine Gallagher terms an attitude of 'ironic credulity' which suspends literal truth claims in favour of extending 'contingent and temporary' credence to the 'likelihood' of an account.[224]

Sterne's emphasis on the 'general' and its suspension of a literal, referential truth is crucial to synthesising these accounts. The two aforementioned letters reveal two different relationships he navigated within literature's commercial world. The assertion of a 'due distance' between himself and Swift shows him anxious to lighten the weight of an early century forbear whose mode of specific satiric attack had served him badly. At the same time, his bid to keep his satire 'general' and therefore 'sale<b>~a~ble' shows him striving to broaden his fiction's appeal following its rejection by one of London's leading booksellers. Taken together, however, these two quotations suggest the beginnings of a shift in Sterne's

[222] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 4, 2.
[223] *Ibid.*, 3.
[224] Gallagher, 'Rise of Fictionality', 346-347.

strategic purview that more closely aligns him with *Joseph Andrews*' profession to 'describe not Men, but manners; not an individual, but a Species […] to hold a glass to thousands in their closets'.[225] If Fielding here purloins a metaphor from Swift, he retools it to establish an idiom for a prose fiction that no longer demands its reader decode specific referents. Swift's famous mirror of self-exculpation in which the '*Beholders*' of satire '*do generally discover every body's Face but their Own*' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 142) becomes, for the emerging novel form, a generalised trope of sympathetic exchange that, in its reach of 'thousands', provides a positive rendering of print's address to 'no one in particular'. As McKeon explains,

> In confining itself to the realm of the general, satire does not necessarily lose touch with the particularity of private individuals. Rather, it engages that particularity by offering readers a concrete individual, a fictional character, from whom they can learn through an equalizing process of identification[226]

By this argument, Sterne begins to downplay the sustained referentiality of parody as personation through which *A Tale* invites the kind of annotation provided in Curll's *Key* or, indeed, within its own interpretive apparatus. Proto-novelistic fictionality—still, however, nominally treated as a form of 'satire/Satyr' by Fielding and Sterne—instead defines itself through a sympathetic association between the reader and a concrete, largely non-referential protagonist who can become, in the case Tristram, also a 'creditable' publishing protagonist.

The question, then, is how Sterne achieves this shift in his writing and, as Judith Hawley and others note, adapts his satire on the abuses of learning to create characters whose departures from 'the main highways of thinking' celebrate 'a certain freedom and individuality in their mental makeup' in a way that Swift's clearly do not.[227] How does a fiction which self-consciously recycles extensive quantities of material and, moreover, even doubles its own recycled learning as a performed pun by plagiarising Robert Burton's musings on plagiarism, construct a singular protagonist lauded as 'sensible—humorous—pathetick—humane—unaccountable'? One way into this is to examine Tristram's own economic presentation of character and how it provides a variation on *A Tale*'s Lucretian

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[225] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 189.
[226] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 108-109.
[227] Judith Hawley, 'Sterne and the *Cyclopaedia* Revisited', *Shandean* 15 (2004): 71.

reduction of personhood to a collision of micro-processes. Early on in volume 1, Tristram requests that the female-reader he addresses as 'Madam' turn back the page and re-read the previous chapter. His rationale for correcting 'Madam' is as follows:

> [the] vile pruriency for fresh adventures in all things, has got so strongly into our habits and humours […] that nothing but the gross and more carnal parts of a composition will go down:—the subtle hints and sly communications of science fly off, like spirits, upwards;—the heavy moral escapes downwards; and both the one and the other are as much lost to the world, as if they were still left in the bottom of the ink-horn (*TS*, 1.20.66)

Tristram frames the episode as a 'rebuke' to those readers who follow the new 'vicious taste' (*TS*, 1.20.65) in reading for the plot. It is therefore a rebuke of reading for a 'life and adventures' or for a personal history of one character's progress through the world—that of a *Tom Jones* (1749), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), or a now lesser-known *Jerry Buck* (1754) or *David Ranger* (1756)—a glut of which, Tristram later claims, are being peddled to his readers across a 'vast empire of biographical freebooters' (*TS*, 3.23.244). Critics of Sterne have long struggled to locate any categorical allusions to novelistic contemporaries in his work, yet here we find Sterne wryly immersing himself, if obliquely, in a mid-century textual marketplace that does not always clearly differentiate between such fictions and real-life memoir or 'Life and Adventures' accounts. If Tristram's 'vast empire' reads like an amorphous and unwieldy body-politic of *écriture* analogous to Swift's 'Nation of *Authors*', it is framed in a lexicon quite specific to Sterne's context. It is the compulsion to read continuously in a straight line in search of surprising events, untold twists, and the anticipation of retrospection that Tristram characterises as a 'pruriency for fresh adventures'.

Sterne's Lucretian allusion is less explicit than those in Swift's *Tale*. Indeed, a sort of doubling occurs in that the above passage's own 'subtle hint' towards *De Rerum Natura* threatens to 'fly off' into the air, unacknowledged by all but the most perceptive readers. One could plausibly argue that Sterne appears to refer to Lucretius via Swift, who more precisely describes '*Films* and *Images*' that 'fly off' upon the senses (*CWJS vol. 1*, 112). If the allusion is cloaked as a doubled reference, its implications are clearer: when Tristram's insinuations do not gain weight with his readers, they fly free from their pages and are lost to a chaos of

unpredictable collisions (some of Tristram's more lascivious jibes do indeed collide publicly with the authors of *The Monthly Review* and *The Clockmakers Outcry*). In the other direction, when readers take the moral of Tristram's work too gravely (i.e. when it carries too much weight) it sinks beneath them. In both instances, reader interest is limited to a zone of narrative progress and ultimately, Tristram laments, only the middle-weight particles of 'plot' and 'character' remain to be sifted. Tristram's genre and mode—the version of himself that he sells—are defined by the physical weight of his words or lack thereof; philosophy, theology, and ingenious satire are, he worries, modes of writing beyond him purely because they will not register in a world adept only at measuring 'lives and adventures'. Sterne over-literalises the act of reading as the gauging of a text's value: *Tristram Shandy*'s ideal reader must be more refined in the exact art of weighing words than the average novel-reader.

In consigning 'plot' and 'character' to a homogenous middle-zone of textual value and in constraining any latitude for deviation, Tristram heightens the stress on our ability to sift and differentiate between characters to a potentially absurd degree. As Deidre Shauna Lynch argues, we can even reduce this play on sameness-difference to a technological determinant. The printed page as a standard of textual uniformity (however exaggerated), Lynch argues, makes 'deviation and difference' appear 'both more significant and more scarce'.[228] Textual production, in Lynch's argument, distils both reproduction and reciprocity to a Lockean 'instance of semiosis' in which displaying personhood becomes a matter of impressing resemblance and form on the page.[229] Hence, many of the initial continuations to *Tristram Shandy* such as *The Life and Opinions of Miss Sukey Shandy* (1760) follow imagined near-relatives—figures who congenitally resemble Tristram, yet are not him. This fosters a conception of 'character' as an economy of features or 'strokes' that relies on producing 'surplus' to stress difference.[230] We find this in volume 2's deconstruction of *aposiopesis*, one of Tristram's most prevalent rhetorical devices. Herein lies also a more overt connection to Swiftian-Lucretian atomism. Transparent or naked communication, Tristram argues, perversely demands that his reader be continually attentive to those 'small particles [upon which] your eloquence and your fame depend' (*TS*, 2.6.116), a cautionary

[228] Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 48.
[229] *Ibid.*, 51
[230] *Ibid.*, 58

address that, as Thomas Keymer notes, aligns the slipperiness of language and meaning with 'the materiality, or otherwise, of personal identity and its external corollary, reputation'.[231]

The passage provides another example of Tristram's direct 'I-you' address to the individuated reader, which, as we have seen, distinguishes the deictic specificity of Tristram's author-reader sympathy from the referential specificity of Swift's satire. Tristram seems now partly to be revising that earlier outline. The affinity between author and reader that once appeared as the certain endpoint of reading 'unless one of us is in fault' now seems a more fragile affair when even the tiniest circumstantial detail holds the potential to upend it. On the one hand, the question of how to micromanage one's stock of language remains firmly a question of how to provide the line of least resistance between reader and character in terms of sympathetic engagement, so that naturalness and ease of sentiment can, conversely, be precisely cultivated. On the other, Tristram's injunction to the reader poses a problem of scale. His ironic grappling with an obscure need to define entirely the inexpressible manifests itself as an impossibly precise micro-economy of sameness-difference: a preoccupation with the overbearing significance of small things. As in Lynch's outline, character delineation for Tristram becomes an obsessive weighing of 'the *Poco piu* and the *Poco meno* […] the insensible More or Less' (*TS*, 2.6.115), only the precise balance of which will provide the 'true swell' or 'true pleasure!' (*TS*, 2.6.116) to his reader.

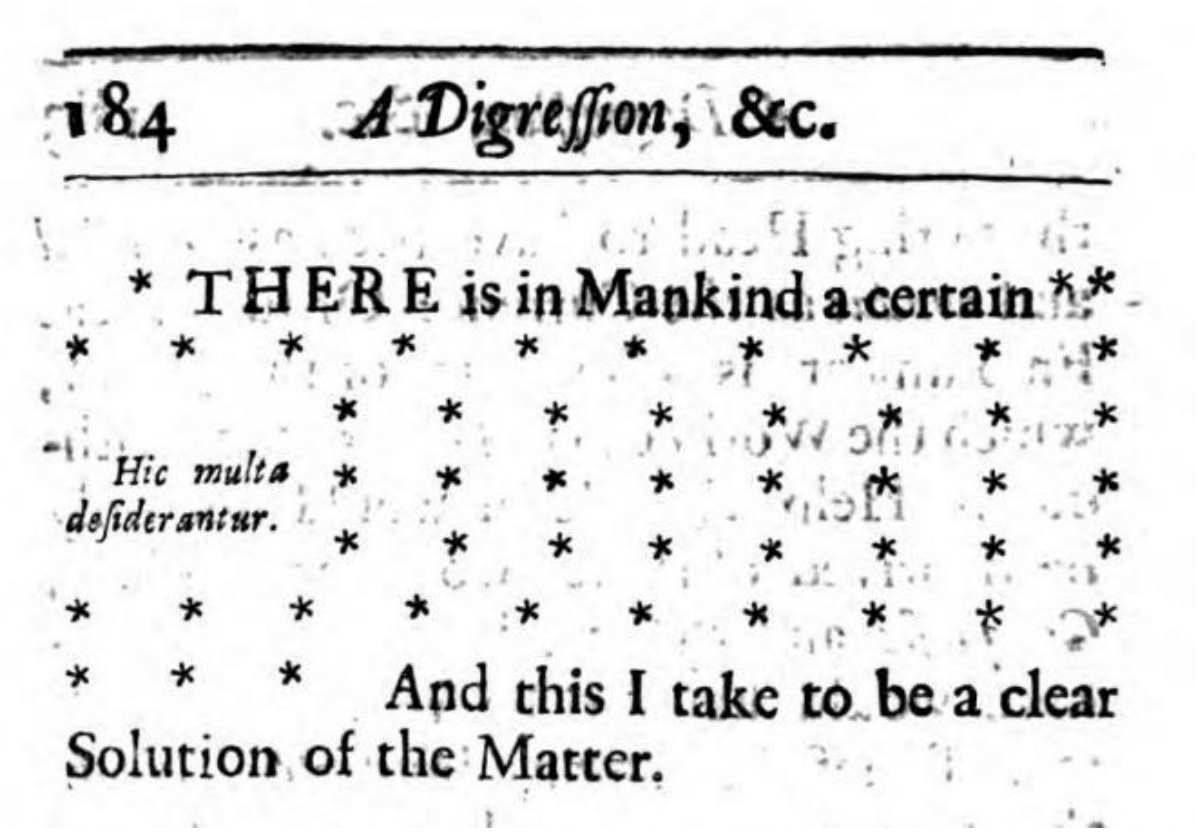
If this measuring of character strokes and the weight of the author's words represents a heightening of the Taleteller's obsession with the material '*Bulk*' of his text, the obvious innuendo of Sterne's 'true swell' marks also its difference from Swift. Tristram's text warns of its tendency toward micro-deviations in communication that threaten to change its entire composition—the principle of *clinamina*, in Lucretian terms—yet it also takes prurient joy in playing with the productive capacity of this principle:

> I will not say whether my uncle Toby had compleated the sentence of or not;—'tis for his advantage to suppose he had,—as, I think, he could have added no One Word which would have improved it.

[231] Thomas Keymer, 'Small Particles of Fame: Subjectivity, Celebrity, Sterne' in *Sterne, Tristram, Yorick: Tercentenary Essays on Laurence Sterne*, ed. Melvyn New, Peter de Voogd and Judith Hawley (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2016), 12.

> If, on the contrary, my uncle Toby had not fully arrived at his period's end,—then the world stands indebted to the sudden snapping of my father's tobacco-pipe, for one of the neatest examples of that ornamental figure in oratory, which Rhetoricians stile the *Aposiopesis* (*TS*, 2.6.115).

The tonal distinction between Swift and Sterne's use of lacunae in their 'mock editions' is revealing in terms of their approach to character. The gaps in Swift's satire tend to be larger, non-specific in size, and harder for the reader to quantify. The digression on madness, for example, breaks off in the midst of the Taleteller's gnomic pronouncements on mankind so:


184 A Digreſſion, &c.

* THERE is in Mankind a certain *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * *

Hic multa * * * * * * * *

deſiderantur. * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * And this I take to be a clear

Solution of the Matter.

Fig. 4. Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, 5th ed. (John Nutt, 1710), 184.

As Stephen Karian notes, these larger lacunae nonetheless hold a specific target in Swift's text as 'a parody of pedantic textual scholarship', which, within *A Tale*'s early-century context, is analogous 'to both the narrator's unreliable mental state and the anarchic cultural landscape he inhabits'.[232] The Latin note '*Hic multa desiderantur*' [here there is much to be

[232] Stephen Karian, *Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript* (CUP, 2010), 198.

desired] refers us to an incalculable quantity of material missing. The lacuna emphasises the wholesale failure of the text as a transmitter of meaning and, therefore, also the particular failure of pedantic editorial practices to produce any form of meaningful text.

Tristram's lacuna is a *textually specific* four asterisks in length and is imagined as containing an antic fecundity of meaning. In contrast to Christopher Flint and Valentine Cunningham, who present the gaps in Sterne's texts as traumatic fissures of 'fragmentation, loss [and] incommunicability' around which 'calamity' gathers, Tristram's use of *aposiopesis* more often enlivens Sterne's sexually provocative mode of comic writing.[233] The gaps in his text often suggest an over-abundance of potential meaning rather than, as with Swift, the book's complete material failure in communication. *Tactus Interruptus*, as W.G. Day notes, is one of Sterne's favourite comic techniques and *aposiopesis* is a figure of its expression. Words, sentences, and even chapters are chipped or fall away into incompletion, with Tristram, as in the passage quoted, often highlighting the resulting lacuna's fertile ground as a producer of suggestive meaning.[234] The asterisks that remain unfilled in Sterne's text are ostensibly open to varying degrees of reader input, but it is the sexualised reading that is typically encouraged to prevail. The use of the conditional clause in the above passage quoted helps guide the reader down the bawdy route. In dwelling on what *could* have occurred, we are invited to adopt this interpretation as that which probably *did* occur i.e. that it was only the snapping of Walter's tobacco pipe which interrupted Toby's chain of thought, leaving the identification of Mrs. Shandy's '****' incomplete.

We can read this tonal distinction between Sterne and Swift as indicative of two different approaches to textual commerce: *Tristram Shandy* teases and whets its reader's desire for more explicit information rather than vilifying its own conditions of production. Where *A Tale* speaks in the passive of 'much to be desired' it does not figure readerly desire into its asterisks and lacunae, which present only the disintegration of the text rather than inviting alternate meanings or innuendos. Of greater importance is that Sterne gives his missing 'particles' of text an exact size and weight of four asterisks. This may blur the line between the text and the diegetic world it depicts, yet it does not refer to any specific external or real-world practice in the same way that Swift and Pope's lacunae attack the scholarly pretentions of William Wotton or, later, Lewis Theobald. Instead, the exact gap in Sterne's

[233] Christopher Flint, *The Appearance of Print in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (CUP, 2011), 144; Valentine Cunningham, *In the Reading Gaol: Postmodernity, Texts, and History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1994), 217.
[234] W.G. Day, '*Tactus Interruptus* as Sternean Trope' in *Hilarion's Asse: Laurence Sterne and Humour*, ed. Anne Bandry-Scubbi and Peter de Voogd (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013), 93-106.

text, which raises questions over whether Toby completes his sentence and whether or not Walter deliberately interrupts the train of conversation, provides a small but animating detail within the diegetic world of Shandy Hall—one that alludes to both Toby's naivety and Walter's nervous modesty within that fictional *milieu*. Such details, which together form a 'virtual space composed of many [...] particulars', are the domain of a proto-novelistic rather than of early eighteenth-century satirical discourse, one which, in McKeon's terms, purveys a 'kind of "aesthetic" truth, aware of its own fictionality, and detoxified of crude empiricist illusion'.[235] In blurring the line between the fiction's diegetic world and the material text that frames it in instances such as these, however, Sterne disturbs the too-neat distinction between concrete (of the fiction) and actual (of the textual commodity) particulars that McKeon's purely analogous relation between fiction and the market rests upon.

This more 'general Satyr' is invested in the detail and internal solidity of its diegetic world rather than the sort of annotative and referential truths decoded by keys. It navigates the shift from 'facework commitments' to 'faceless commitments' that, as we have seen, accompanies the expansion of commerce and print by asking its reader to engage in a process of probabilistic reasoning contiguous with how one provisionally extends credit. As Blakey Vermeule argues, the development of character within novelistic fiction performs a heuristic function in that it trains readers in the sort of 'mind reading'—'both reasoning about social information and having to do so with little access to other people's consciences'—required to negotiate the complex semiotics of commercial society.[236] Such mind-reading does not entail the search for or decoding of hidden referents beneath a textual façade, as in Swiftian parody, so much as assessment of whether the characters who occupy and interact in the fiction's diegetic world appear coherent, or 'credible', figures in whom to invest our credence.

Tristram as a narrator expends much effort on assisting his reader in this process of mind-reading. A later example of this comes in volume 5 after Tristram recounts how news of the death of Walter's firstborn son, Bobby Shandy, reaches Shandy Hall. Returning to his bedrock of classical learning, Tristram observes that

[235] McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 63.
[236] Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 58.

> When *Agrippina* was told of her son's death, *Tacitus* informs us, that not being able to moderate the violence of her passions, she abruptly broke off her work—My father stuck his compasses into *Nevers*, but so much the faster.—What contraries! his, indeed, was matter of calculation—*Agrippina*'s must have been quite a different affair; who else could pretend to reason from history? (*TS*, 5.2.417-418)

As the editors of the Florida edition note, the passage, which, as with much of *Tristram Shandy*, closely follows an encyclopaedic reading of grief in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, takes us through the sequence of borrowings that inform Walter's oration and that continue into the following chapter. Tristram's concluding remark ('who else could pretend to reason from history?') raises a double-concern: is Walter's technique of 'reasoning from history' so wholly singular that it becomes an equally eccentric endeavour for *Tristram*'s reader to 'reason' using historical precedent in their attempt to understand Walter's character? Insisting that the subject deserves 'a chapter to itself' (*TS*, 5.2.418) and continuing to purloin his sources from Burton, Tristram barrels through a host of references that he claims support the naturalness of weeping over the loss of one's child:

> 'Tis either *Plato*, or *Plutarch*, or *Seneca*, or *Xenophon*, or *Epictetus*, or *Theophrastus*, or *Lucian*—or some one perhaps of later date—either *Cardan*, or *Budæus*, or *Petrarch*, or *Stella*—or possibly it may be some divine or father of the church, St. *Austin*, or St. *Cyprian*, or *Barnard*, who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children (*TS*, 5.3.418)

This dense paragraph of references ends with the admission that 'My father managed his affliction otherwise; and indeed differently from most men either ancient or modern' (*TS*, 5.3.418). In order to account for 'what otherwise would seem very inconsistent in my father's domestick character' (*TS*, 5.3.418), Tristram (and by extension his reader) must put Walter's source-texts to a different use: instead of sifting them to decode an explanation of his father's behaviour, he instead outlines how the act of collating these sources itself permitted Walter to orate his way through grief: 'it [oration] was indeed his strength—and his weakness too.——

His strength—for he was by nature eloquent,—and his weakness—for he was hourly a dupe to it' (*TS*, 5.3.418).

For Jesse Molesworth, Tristram's focus on his father's need to comprehend Bobby Shandy's death through pseudo-scholarly commonplacing holds a grim irony: 'in describing Walter's inability to confront the reality of his son's death […] Tristram himself avoids talking about what is surely the most important detail related to the event: what has caused his brother to die?'[237] As such, Molesworth argues, Sterne leaves a structural trauma at the centre of Tristram's narration; Tristram himself can handle the sheer irrational arbitrariness of his brother's death only by circling incessantly around his father's own sublimating use of commonplacing. The episode does indeed reveal as much about Tristram's confrontation with the inexplicability of death as it does Walter's, yet Molesworth misses one of the ways in which Sterne examines randomness and probability through the qualitative evaluation of character. The extensive list of references within this short passage is easy enough to trace in Sterne's source-texts (mostly Burton; also Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon and others), but they do not prompt—or certainly do not provide—explanation by annotation in the same manner that Walsh argues *A Tale* does. Rather, they collectively add detail and texture to the figure of Walter and, more importantly, help Tristram outline how an 'otherwise […] inconsistent' trait of his father's character is, when properly accounted for, consistent with his idiosyncratic approach to the world. It is not the information contained in various referent texts that provides a key to 'unlocking' Walter, but rather his method of collating and adapting those texts to the crisis at hand which evinces a quixotic independence of character. The opening chapters of Volume 5 thus become an exercise in rendering that which at first seems improbable about Walter's character probable—even necessary should the reader be given enough information to take Walter's habits and cast of mind into consideration.

This is one example of mind-reading using circumstantial details provided that Sterne encourages the reader to attempt despite Tristram's earlier caution against the 'vile pruriency' of reading for character and plot. But how do we begin to read the character of the author-protagonist himself? Molesworth's account suggests that Tristram's character is often revealed as a peripheral image through his narrative treatment of the other characters who inhabit his life's story. By rendering other characters probable through detail, Tristram's own buttonholing obsessions appear themselves the more credible. From the outset, Sterne directs

[237] Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (CUP, 2010), 195.

our attention to the ways in which Tristram claims to economise the various 'familiar strokes' that delineate other tangential characters within the text. Indeed, Tristram asserts, a strict economy is built into the 'whole machine' of his character narration, which reconciles contrary motions in being both 'digressive and progressive' (*TS*, 1.22.82) at the same time:

> I was just going [...] to have given you the great outlines of my uncle *Toby*'s most whimsical character;—when my aunt *Dinah* and the coachman came a-cross us, and led us a vagary some millions of miles into the very heart of the planetary system: Notwithstanding all this, you perceive that the drawing of my uncle *Toby*'s character went on gently all the time;---not the great contours of it,—that was impossible,---but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it, were here and there touch'd in, as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my uncle *Toby* (*TS*, 1.22.80).

Tristram's oblique stroke-by-stroke technique of drawing Toby, Walter and others without ever explicitly filling out their 'great contours' provides a mimetic view of Shandy Hall where the reader learns of its environs and occurrences through myriad discrete episodes: often the reading aloud of other texts within the diegetic world of the fiction or else the relating of previous incidents and overheard conversations. Together, these episodes provide a rich plenitude of peripheral detail that allows Tristram, as William Kenrick put it, to '[husband] his adventures with great oeconomy' and to '[sow] them so extremely thin, that, in the manner he has begun, his narrative may very well last as long as he lives' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561). This is not the same 'vertical plenitude' that characterises Swift's *Tale*, and that directs us through parody as personation to an array of real-life referents. Instead, it is the kind of thick description of the fiction's diegetic world that belongs to the emerging novel.

Sterne's ability to extract through the 'digressive and progressive […] machinery' of narration a plethora of concrete details that illustrate and draw out the life of its author-protagonist is remarked upon by contemporaneous critics and imitators. *The Life, Travels, and Adventures, of Christopher Wagstaff, Gentleman, Grandfather to Tristram Shandy* (1762) is a repackaging of John Dunton's *Voyage Round the World: Or, a Pocket-Library* (1691) timed to ride the fashion for Shandean imitations and sold by Sterne's first York bookseller, John Hinxman, following his inheritance of Mary Cooper's business (see 'Introduction', 2). Its editor describes Sterne's approach to fiction as 'a method of

protraction' that draws out its thin narrative resources as far as is palatable for the reader.[238] Prolongation, or 'protraction', which is related to Sterne's repeated use of pleonasm in that it seeks to create a surplus of narrative meaning from the barest of materials, is, from the outset, the stated strategy of Tristram as a publishing protagonist. As we have seen, Tristram is an unequivocal proponent of textual commerce who claims to compose his life-writings with a continual view towards publication. His plan of 'writing and publishing two volumes of [his] life every year' for 'as long as [he] live[s]' (*TS*, 1.14.42) relies on a confidence in being able to 'make a tolerable bargain with [his] bookseller (*TS*, 1.14.42), which is also a confidence in continuing to make 'sale<b>~a~ble' (in Sterne's terms) the raw material of his life. As such, McKeon's notion of the diegetic world as a 'virtual space composed of many […] particulars' is built into Tristram's (and, indeed, Sterne's) programme for serial publication from the outset. The presumption of author-reader sympathy is also a commercial calculation that nothing howsoever small relating to its central author-protagonist will be thought 'trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling'. It is through the accretion of such particulars that the reader is brought to invest their credence in the four miles diameter that constitutes most of Tristram's diegetic world, the force of this accretion being what Jerome Christensen in his treatment of Byron's *Don Juan* (1819-24), terms a 'circumstantial gravity', which 'impinges on a reader and inexorably draws [them] into its discrepant world'.[239]

This suggests that the generalising turn of mid-century fiction is also a stabilising one; unruly and often scandalous real-life details give way to more manageable 'concrete' ones from which Gallagher's vision of 'fictionality' can emerge. Tristram's progressive-digressive machinery that accrues circumstantial detail yet also remodels that detail at a 'general' level thus begins to resemble a 'faceless' character-system in which the reader can provisionally invest their credence. This at first appears counterintuitive. There are many references to 'system' and 'systematic' thinking in *Tristram Shandy*—most of which are pejorative in relation to character. Walter is early on identified as both 'serious' and 'systematical' in his theorising, 'and, like all systematick reasoners, he would move both heaven and earth, and twist and torture every thing in nature to support his hypothesis' (*TS*, 1.19.61). Walter's characterisation as a 'philosopher in grain,—speculative,—systematical' and his development

[238] *The Life, Travels, and Adventures, of Christopher Wagstaff, Gentleman, Grandfather to Tristram Shandy* (J. Hinxman, 1762), xi.
[239] Jerome Christensen, *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), xvii. Byron famously described *Don Juan* as 'a poetical Tristram Shandy'. George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 12 vols. (John Murray, 1973-82), 10:150.

of a Copernican/'*Shandean System*' to explain 'the backslidings of [Tristram's] aunt Dinah' (*TS*, 1.21.76) holds intriguingly modern implications given that, as Siskin notes, the association of 'system' with philosophical discourse dates only to Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1673).[240] *Tristram* often takes avuncular joy in debunking the development of such systems as explanatory models or as ways of communicating and creating. Walter's *Tristrapædia* is designed to work as an entire 'system of education' for Tristram's formative years yet wholly fails to fulfil that purpose. Elsewhere, 'system' features as 'a studied system of cruelty' (*TS*, 2.17.161) in Yorick's sermon, as absurd 'systems of noses' (*TS*, 3.40.281) in Walter's studies, and as a 'mode' of obstetric 'enquiry' (*TS*, 5.39.479) in Slop's botched delivery of Tristram. Sterne typically associates 'system' with eccentric or impractical trains of thought, and concomitantly with moments of disillusionment. 'With all my precautions, how was my system turned topside turvy in the womb with my child!' (*TS*, 4.19.355) Walter rues in considering Tristram's birth. Tristram himself pales at the thought of relating Toby's death in the narrative future, when 'in spight of his philosophy [...] all my father's systems shall be baffled by his sorrows' (*TS*, 6.25.545).

Nonetheless, 'system' as a genre for communicating empirical connections between things and people also functions within *Tristram Shandy*'s structure of deferred value. Tristram teasingly anticipates that the tale of Toby's amours with Widow Wadman will provide 'one of the most compleat systems, both of the elementary and practical part of love and love-making, that ever was addressed to the world' (*TS*, 6.36.562). Although the amours fail to realise this ideal, the promise of 'system' serves the purpose of sustaining reader-interest. As Siskin's studies show, *Tristram*'s serial composition across the 1760s coincides with the 'extraordinary moment' during which 'system' as a mediating genre became 'load bearing' and 'each individual act of mediation worked not only on its own terms but also as part of a cumulative, collaborative, ongoing enterprise'.[241] During this period, Siskin argues, 'the genre that was used to trump system was system' as writers scaled it up.[242] We see this logic in Tristram's treatment of Walter's grief: Walter's response to the loss of Bobby is to attempt to systematise his authorities on the naturalness of weeping, but this response is only properly justified in Tristram's wider explanatory model. Tristram's character-system for mind-reading often supervenes to explain his father's myriad systems—another example being Walter's system for generating modes of possibility from auxiliary verbs that concludes

[240] Clifford Siskin, *System: The Shaping of Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 99.
[241] *Ibid.*, 72.
[242] *Ibid.*, 115.

volume 5. This form of scaling up is intriguing given how Siskin argues that 'system' comes in the eighteenth century to function as the genre of 'things as they are' against 'history' as the genre of things and persons as they develop through time: 'With system now mediating the empirical connection to things—absolving history of that function—this was the moment in which temporality completed its move to history's core'.[243] The example Siskin cites of an author who contrasts 'system' and 'history' as genres is Fielding, who asserts in *Tom Jones* that 'I am not writing a System, but a History, and I am not obliged to reconcile every Matter to the received Notions concerning Truth and Nature'.[244] Fielding invokes system as a genre that's explanatory power lies 'very much in the present' against which to distinguish *Tom Jones* as a mock-epic in prose and as a developmental 'History' of a foundling.[245]

For *Tristram Shandy*, which modulates the 'History of' or 'Life and Adventures' formula common to fiction into a '*Life and Opinions*', system as 'the empirical connection' between characters, opinions, and 'things' comes to be embedded in its progressive-digressive 'machinery' (the term 'machinery' implies wheels within wheels, whilst to continually move forward and sideways at the same time describes a circle) and leads to a curious stasis, or ahistoricity. McKeon suggests this when he describes *Tristram* as collapsing a diachronic narrative of patrilineal inheritance into a 'synchronic animation of concrete virtuality' in which the family is valued 'not as an ongoing public institution but in the affective ties that bind it together in the synchronic space of a single generation or two'.[246] The implication is that the 'concrete virtuality' of Sterne's fiction acts in the same way as 'system' in creating complex interconnections between characters 'as they are' rather than over time. Indeed, for fictions in which satire becomes subservient to celebrating characters with 'a certain freedom and individuality' in their make-up, it is notable the extent to which Sterne's fictions are anti-developmental. Sterne's characters do not change through time so much as undergo ordeals that evince their engrained hobby-horsical inconsistencies time and again. The claustrophobia that permeates his fictions begins with Tristram's conception of the homunculus as an already complete character-in-miniature and culminates at the end of *A Sentimental Journey*'s first volume with Yorick reflecting on Walter Shandy's theory that 'children, like other animals, might be increased almost to any size, provided they came right into the world' (*ASJ*, 80). According to Walter, only the rooms in which children are confined

[243] *Ibid.*, 56.
[244] Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 2:651.
[245] Siskin, *System*, 157.
[246] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 673, 680.

limit the extent of their growth, a theory that Yorick considers but refuses to pass judgement on in his observations of a Parisian dwarf. It is an oddly deathly vision of the human potential for growth: one in which characters are preformed, encased in and stunted by their environs.

Tristram Shandy illustrates, then, what Siskin describes as the generic embedding of system. Siskin's foremost example for this occurring in a fiction is William Godwin's *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794). 'The embedding of system in *Caleb Williams*', he argues, 'put[s] the concept of character itself into a new relationship to the "things" ordered by system'. Systems are characterised by the way in which they speak to themselves and, as a result, Godwin's novel becomes a feedback loop in which 'the more Caleb tries to "vindicate" his character, the more "things as they are" erase it—requiring, in turn, more vindication'.[247] For Siskin, this 'specific mix of novel and system' highlights 'an incongruity between character and "things as they are"'.[248] In arguing this, he implicitly contrasts the novel as the genre of 'character' as it develops in narrative time with 'system' as the genre of 'things' as they presently exist interconnectedly, arguing that one acts in productive tension with the other. Yet, I would argue, a form of double embedment occurs in *Tristram Shandy* in relation to character. Whilst Siskin argues that 'system failure often configure[s] both the portrayal of characters within novels and the overall shape of the novels themselves', his research suggests another reason why *Tristram* as a character-system exists in stasis, continually circling before ending without ending back at Shandy Hall with Yorick, Obadiah, Suzannah, and Slop.[249] *Tristram* embeds not only 'system' but also, as we shall examine in Chapter 3, the genre that Siskin sees at its antipole as conversely characterised by 'irregularity and fragmentation' and into which systems are themselves frequently embedded toward the end of the century: the essay. In these terms, we need to consider 'incompleteness as a generic feature' that distinguishes essays from systems and that features in Tristram's tendency, when describing character, to fall into aposiopesis.[250] The result of introducing 'system' into essays, Siskin argues, is that systems function in a new way, becoming discrete, circumscribed, and incomplete. This effect also emerges when 'system' and the essay are introduced together in fiction. By embedding aspects of both complete 'system' and incomplete, or open-ended, 'essay' into its treatment of character, *Tristram* manages

[247] Siskin, *System*, 161.
[248] *Ibid.*, 163.
[249] *Ibid.*, 157.
[250] *Ibid.*, 132.

productively to balance its 'atomistic and holistic impulses', in Harvey's terms.[251] Indeed, as its treatment of aposiopesis demonstrates, incompleteness itself adds circumstantial detail and becomes part of *Tristram*'s system-like 'concrete virtuality'.

The threat posed by the gravity of circumstantial particulars is that its excessive pull may destabilise or unbalance Tristram's digressive-progressive system.

> —was every day of my life to be as busy a day as this—And why not?—and the transactions and opinions of it to take up as much description—And for what reason should they be cut short? As at this rate I should just live 364 times faster than I should write—(*TS*, 4.13.341-342)

The accumulation of detail impels a form of description so thick and densely imbricated that narrative movement begins to buckle under its inertia. Tristram's inability to match his compositional rate to the pace of his life lived suggests, also, that circumstantial gravity gathers through a non-linear process whereby, despite one's vigilance for the 'small particles [upon which] your eloquence and your fame depend', authorial character strangely appears to escape authorial intention. If we return to Tristram's inaugurating assertion of author-reader sympathy, we see that, in contrast to the Taleteller's model which refuses to coalesce beyond the local and the discrete, authorial character and our investment in it emerge as aggregates through incremental change: 'As you proceed further with me', Tristram insists, 'the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity'; eventually, this 'will terminate in friendship' and this marks the tipping-point at which 'nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling' (*TS*, 1.6.9).

In a schematic rendering of Sterne's '*Life and Opinions*' formula, Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* divides across three textual threads: one of 'Opinion', two of connected 'Lives'. Alan, one of the *Diary*'s interlocutors with its publishing protagonist JC, takes issue with the notion that 'the economic dimension' is 'but the sum total of extensions from our individual dimensions, our dreams and opinions and so forth'.[252] Instead, he argues for a process whereby 'datum start[s] its life in the individual dimension [...] before it can migrate to the

[251] Harvey, 'Manuscript History of *Tristram Shandy*', 298.
[252] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 80.

economic. But then something happens. Once a critical mass of data is reached, quantity becomes quality. So the economic not only sums up the individual, it also transcends it'.[253] Alan presents a Shandean-inflected aggregative model whereby opinions extend themselves via their collective mass into the market's abstract grid of equivalence, which supersedes any individual who may claim to own them. Authorial character here occupies a position in the public sphere that transcends the sum of the individual's parts or referents; it emerges through a non-linear mechanism of self-organisation, the conception of which, as Sheehan and Wahrman have shown, began to take hold during the early eighteenth century as 'a large and growing number of people were touched by matters of credit, trade, or finance'.[254]

It is within this increasingly large-scale national experience of credit, public finance, and moveable property that writers such as Daniel Defoe, Bernard Mandeville, and later David Hume begin self-consciously to address 'questions of complexity, causality, agency, randomness, and chance'.[255] Alan's tipping point at which opinion accrues into a 'critical mass' and 'something happens' relies, as do Defoe and Hume's respective treatments of credit and the mind examining its own actions, upon an elusive or 'Invisible, *Je ne scay Quoi*' regarding which ''tis impossible to give any definition or description, but which every one sufficiently understands'.[256] Tristram's version of this aggregate in which 'trifling' details and opinions coalesce at an unlocatable point into sympathetic character accords also with Lynch's notion of character differentiation emerging through 'surplus': a logic of 'overexpression' that Julia H. Fawcett claims Sterne takes from Colley Cibber's *Apology for the Life* (1740).[257] *Tristram Shandy*, Fawcett argues, adopts 'a method of characterization that arrives at concealment through the illusion of openness and hides the self under an excess of self-revelations'.[258] Tristram's associative-confessional drive to reveal every 'circumstanc[e] relating to myself', in Fawcett's account, provides also a means of obfuscation; the excessive personal detail of his account becomes white noise, concealing him as well as—perhaps better than—too little. Tristram claims that the minutiae of the lives of Walter, Toby, Corporal Trim, and others accrete into the moments that determine his own. He trains his

[253] *Ibid.*, 81.
[254] Jonathan Sheehan and Dror Wahrman, *Invisible Hands: Self-Organization in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 52.
[255] *Ibid.*, 52.
[256] Defoe, *Review*, 6:31 (14 June, 1709), 122—quoted in Sheehan and Wahrman, *Invisible Hands*, 50; Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1:74.
[257] Julia H. Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances: Celebrity and Privacy, 1696-1801* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 99.
[258] *Ibid.*, 106.

readers in a form of mind-reading that renders their characters, and his own by association, 'probable', or mimetically true, yet the distinctive contours of his life are thereby lost in theirs. Curiously, this concealment may not impede the creation of sympathy between author and reader but rather aid it. Unborn and remaining, despite his gentlemanly status, an absent presence, or, in Catherine Gallagher's terms, a 'conjectural, suppositional identit[y]' for much of his own story, Tristram as a 'nobody' remains all the more open to sympathetic appropriation.[259]

Within such overexpression, what parts and 'particles' are identifiable as formative of Tristram's character is a question that in true Shandean buttonholing fashion absorbs the expressive minutiae of syntax and punctuation. Frow, for example, argues that Tristram's idiosyncratic use of dashes as 'site[s] of [...] missing syntactic connection' gives his prose a distinctive paratactic structure that allows him to switch between the preterite of narration and the deictic addresses to the reader which distinguish him from Swift's Taleteller.[260] Tristram's syntax, Frow argues, is 'aligned less with association by cause and effect […] than with association by contiguity and by resemblance and contrast'.[261] In another example of doubling, Tristram's stylistic character as an author-protagonist is distinct in the way it distinguishes character semiosis in terms of form and resemblance. With 'its air of being dashed off in the spontaneous flow of writing,' Tristram's dash, argues Frow, also draws the reader back to the body of the writer: 'a writing machine designed to evoke sympathetic response to a minutely explored interiority'[262] In this argument, the dash in Tristram's writing functions like the detailed descriptions of Trim's pose in reading Yorick's sermon; both invoke physiological signs through writing to draw sympathetic character yet also rely on the gap between how the bodies of characters interrelate and any full elaboration of interior life. This raises the issue as to whether novelistic character functions as an external principle of differentiation (in this case physical) or if it is instead a quality owned and evinced by the opinions one also owns as it is for Walter, who, according to Tristram, 'pick'd up an opinion, Sir, as a man in a state of nature picks up an apple.—It becomes his own' (*TS*, 3.34.262-263).

The most prominent writer who informs Sterne on character differentiation is Locke. As the Florida editors of *A Sentimental Journey* note, Yorick's later observation that ''tis certain the French conceive better than they combine' (*ASJ*, 112) quite possibly alludes to

[259] Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, 168.
[260] Frow, *Character and Person*, 55.
[261] *Ibid.*, 55.
[262] *Ibid.*, 58, 59.

Locke's description of wit and judgement as respectively the combining and separating of ideas. In *Tristram Shandy*, Tristram uses his 'Author's Preface' to collapse the Lockean distinction between wit and judgement as 'two operations differing from each other as wide as east is from west' (*TS*, 3.20.227). Tristram argues that Locke's distinction is nonsensical given that wit and judgement do not occupy separate 'receptacles […] of our brains' (*TS*, 1.20.228) but are instead distributed as complementary adornments in 'a flowing kind of decent and creditable plenty' (*TS*, 1.20.232). Authorial character is here a matter of economising and distributing the qualities that evince it, yet the notion that judgement itself should be measured out in 'creditable' quantities is problematic given that judgement is (as we see in Wennerlind's analysis of Locke) itself necessary in establishing the basis for credit. If the *Journey's* later example is, as appears, an allusion to Locke, it invokes another dichotomy in his thought: that of sensation, or the 'several distinct *Perceptions* of things' versus reflection, which allows the mind to combine impressions into complex experience through observing 'its own Operations within it self'.[263] What Yorick defines as the French 'character' lies in the predominance he claims the French grant to immediate sensation over reflection; it is this disinclination to combine reflectively that evinces also an inability to differentiate. The Count with whom Yorick converses struggles to distinguish between the historical Yorick who lies outside his sensory perceptions and the Yorick immediately present to him: ''Twas all one' (*ASJ*, 112). Yorick later outlines a further distinction between the English and the French national 'character' which, as if folding the principle of differentiation in on itself, relies on differing potentials for individuation. The French, argues Yorick, have reached such a degree within the 'progress of their refinements' that, like coins 'jingling and rubbing one against another for seventy years together […] they are become so much alike, you can scarce distinguish one shilling from another'. The English, conversely, are 'like antient medals, kept more apart, and passing but few peoples hands' and it is this propensity to remain separate that preserves the 'first sharpnesses which the fine hand of nature has given them' (*ASJ*, 119).

As Lynch observes, Yorick's distinction between the distinctive English and the indistinct French predicates its argument on the suspension of money 'between proprietorship and exchange' wherein coins hold value either intrinsically (like a cherished 'antient medal') or extrinsically—i.e. as tokens of exchange.[264] The one form of value is balanced yet

[263] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 105.
[264] Lynch, *Economy of Character*, 115.

incommensurable with the other. In formulating Yorick's distinction so, Lynch argues, Sterne allegorises sentimentalism's approach to character, which 'personali[ses] it by detaching it from the social text' yet simultaneously envisages it as emerging from the social marketplace as a self-organising quality.[265] This apparent contradiction by which character competes within an economy from which it aggregates, and yet is also seen as qualitatively distinct from that economy also interrogates levels of embeddedness: how characters are situated both in relation to the diegetic *milieus* of texts and to real-world referents. Alex Woloch, in his attempt to posit a 'distributional matrix' that balances 'character-space' with 'character-system', argues that to formulate such a framework entails 'establishing a relationship between the referential elaboration of a character, as implied individual, and the emplacement of a character within a coordinated narrative structure'.[266] As we have seen, across the fiction's 'coordinated narrative structure' Tristram's authorial character in particular is formed obliquely through many character-relations. *Tristram Shandy*'s issue of how original authorial character can enter the marketplace from which it draws its second-hand material suggests, however, a different relation to reference: one in which authorial character necessarily resists any complete 'referential elaboration', including that drawn from biographical details of the author-proper.

Because Tristram as an author-protagonist is finally 'unlockable' and resists any strict 'referential elaboration', he cannot be read as any straightforward cypher for his author-proper. This allows him to perform an interesting role for Sterne. At the conclusion of Trim's reading of Yorick's sermon, Tristram argues that 'by laying open this story to the world' he has gained 'an opportunity of informing it […] that there are now in the possession of the Shandy Family, as many [of these sermons] as will make a handsome volume, at the world's service' (*TS* 2.17.167). Given that it occurs during the events leading up to Tristram's birth, the recounting of Yorick's sermon in all its somatic intricacy provides many of the sort of details that Tristram asks his reader not to find 'trifling' or 'tedious'. At the same time as it contributes to the texture and circumstantial gravity of Tristram's tale, the episode's function as an advertisement for Sterne's first collection of sermons comes front and centre in Tristram's concluding remarks—an example of *A Tale*'s 'buttonholing excess' of detail now played not for parody but straightforwardly as a means of self-promotion. Again, the tonal divergence from Swift's aim to 'drive the world before [him]' is key: mirroring Sterne's

[265] *Ibid.*, 116.
[266] Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 20-21.

earlier bid ‘to feel the Pulse of the World’, Tristram now genuflects ‘at [its] service’. His playful obsequiousness in serving the world may, perhaps, overvalue the *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760). Nonetheless it proved an effective marketing strategy. Sterne followed up this hint to the reader with the actual advertisement for the ‘Dramatick’ sermons of Parson Yorick, to be ‘Published by Tristram Shandy, Gentleman’ in the *York Courant* for 4 March 1760. The advertisement evinces how quickly Tristram’s name had embedded itself within York’s reading public and Sterne’s confidence that it would do so. In this sense, to borrow David A. Brewer’s term, Tristram has already partially ‘migrated’ from the pages of his originating fiction, occupying the imagined position of a publishing protagonist after only two months in print.[267]

The *Sermons’* introduction stresses Tristram’s importance to Sterne’s marketing:

> the reason of printing these sermons, arises altogether from the favourable reception, which the sermon given as a sample of them in Tristram Shandy, met with from the world;—That sermon was printed by itself some years ago, but could find neither purchasers nor readers, so that I apprehended little hazard from a promise I made upon its republication, “That if the sermon was liked, these should be also at the world’s service;” which, to be as good as my word, they here are (*Sermons,* 1)

Referring to the original small-scale publication of *The Abuses of Conscience* (1750) and the little impact it made pre-Tristram, Sterne iterates Tristram’s claim to offer up his sermons ‘at the world’s service’ and, like Dryden, frames their publication as a debt to the public paid.[268] How has this imaginative ‘migration’ occurred such that Tristram stands as the more successful publisher of Sterne’s sermons and Sterne, in turn, imitates by quotation his own creation? Brewer’s study of character afterlife posits one theory: that the extent to which characters in the eighteenth century were open to migration and appropriation correlates to the number of textual variants in which the fiction that first introduces them appears:

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[267] See Brewer, *Afterlife of Character*, esp. Chapter 3: ‘Character Migration, Detachability, Old Friends’.
[268] The sermon was printed by Caesar Ward for John Hildyard—see Cash, *Early to Middle Years*, 234.

> the more material manifestations a text took, the less [character] was regarded as immanent in any particular manifestation [...] the more a text was disseminated (both in terms of number and variety of formats), the more potentially detachable its characters could seem.[269]

In other words, the extent to which a character can be owned or appropriated by its readers depends on how tied that character is to a specific range of variants. The wider the range of variants and the harder they are to enumerate, the less a character is seen as attached to any single variant and the easier it becomes for readers and writers to co-opt them for other uses.

Brewer's engagement with Sterne is knotty: on the one hand, he argues that 'more than any other writer before him, Sterne built opportunities for imaginative expansion into his work' through innovative devices such as volume 6's blank page and through Tristram's pledge to always leave the reader 'something to imagine, in his turn'.[270] On the other, Sterne often designs such gestures to cajole the reader into ceding overall authority to himself. There are noticeably few readers willing to accept Tristram's invitation to 'paint [Widow Wadman] to your own mind as like your mistress as you can——as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you' (*TS,* 6.38.556)—perhaps because Tristram makes reader interaction a question of conscience, perhaps because to follow his instruction would be to erase a blankness that is itself expressive. At the centre of Brewer's argument, however, is the notion that Tristram is situated in an ambivalent relation to his books' materiality. The marbled page—the centrepiece of Sterne's 'verbo-visual' mode—exemplifies this. Tristram's adopting of it as his 'motly emblem' (*TS,* 3.36.268-269) ties him to the material book through one of its most labour-intensive graphic features. The page indicates each copy's role as a singular transmitter of meaning. No two copies of *Tristram Shandy*'s third volume, it reminds us, will appear or persist alike; there is no *urtext* that we can seek to abstract from material conditions. At the same time, the very fact that each marbled page is unique makes 'the entire print run […] in effect, an *édition variée*', meaning that, in terms of character migration, no single material copy of volume 3 can be said to contain the definitive emblem of 'Tristram'.[271] Likewise, Brewer argues, Sterne's proclivity to 'Shandy it away' (*Letters*, 242) in performing as his characters grants him a kind of 'dispersed presence' in them: if Tristram

[269] Brewer, *Afterlife of Character*, 95.
[270] *Ibid.*, 155.
[271] *Ibid.*, 177.

and Yorick are partially detachable from their originating fictions, so by association is Sterne, and, conversely, bound to those characters through this mutual detachability.[272]

Sterne's decision to advertise his sermons as 'Published by Tristram Shandy, Gentleman' exemplifies this ambivalence. Tristram as an author-protagonist has migrated from the pages of Sterne's fiction, but only to the extent of promoting further works by the author-proper. As a named 'publisher', he has achieved only a quasi-detachability—one that is permitted by the shift from 'facework commitments' to 'faceless commitments' entailed in publishing, which deals in the proliferation of print and the extension of professional credit. We see this quasi-detachability also in the adaptations and imitations that followed Sterne's first two volumes. These either, like the pirate third volume originally attributed to John Carr, recede further into Tristram's family history, or else, like *Sukey Shandy* or *Christopher Wagstaff*, claim to follow tangential adventures of an invented near-relative. None truly appropriates Tristram as its own. Yet the primary reason that Tristram can function in this intermediary role as a publisher is because, unlike Swift's Taleteller, he is a concrete quasi-person whose diegetic world is drawn through circumstantial details. Because Tristram does not primarily refer, because we do not search for any real-life figures behind him, and because, unlike the Taleteller, he is not unlockable or reducible to referents, he holds a solid yet indistinct presence—like Coetzee's illustration, both a keyhole without a key and a silhouette without defined features. This is what grants Tristram his quasi-detachability in March 1760, prior, we should note, to the publication of the marbled and blanks pages integral to Brewer's account. It is not so much afterlife, then, as Tristram's complex associative pre-life that grants him commercial mobility.

One final complication: once Tristram has attained through the accretion of particulars his status as a partially detachable quasi-person, Sterne in later instalments employs a formalising economy of paring back to create an impression of Tristram's authorial character as existing prior to the text. Take, for example, Tristram's lament for Uncle Toby in volume 6, which uses digression as an economising descriptive form. During an address to the absent figure of Corporal Trim, Tristram anticipates 'that future and dreaded page, where I look towards the velvet pall, decorated with the military ensigns of thy master' (*TS* 6.25.545). As Judith Hawley notes, the apostrophe to Trim 'reconciles […] contrary motions by moving backwards and forwards at the same time'; it looks proleptically towards

[272] *Ibid.*, 180

Tristram's authorial treatment of Toby's death and retrospectively upon the event itself.[273] Sterne collapses the time of composition and publication (the reader's present and future) into the time of narration (the preterite of the story). In doing so, he creates one of *Tristram Shandy*'s most affecting scenes, one which reminds readers that most of its central characters are long-since deceased and much of Tristram's effort as an author-protagonist is now expended on preserving their memories. The episode also stresses the extent to which Tristram's narration of his past and anticipation of his future creates a claustrophobic, janus-faced present that compulsively looks backwards and forwards simultaneously. In collapsing its temporal thread to the moment of composition, Sterne's fiction heightens the sympathetic engagement between the reader and an author-protagonist who struggles through his commitment to memorialisation to get 'farther than my first day's life' (*TS*, 4.13.341).

The apparent digression reveals Tristram as the last survivor and displaced centre of his narrative, which appears similar to preceding and exceeding it. Earlier in volume 6, Sterne constructs an anaphoric sequence of imperatives that challenges the reader to discard any extraneous matter from his work. He thereby posits materially extended 'book' and 'author-protagonist' effectively as synonyms. With all else stripped away, it is only authorial character, Sterne argues, that remains printed indelibly, the progress of Tristram's books marking the progress of their author through the world:

> Leave we then the breeches in the taylor's hands [...] Leave we my mother […] Leave we *Slop* likewise […] Leave we poor Le Fever to recover, and get home from Marseilles as he can.——And last of all,—because the hardest of all——Let us leave, if possible, *myself*:——But 'tis impossible,—I must go along with you to the end. (*TS*, 6.20.533-534)

At the same time stung by the appearance of a counterfeit third volume of *Tristram Shandy* in 1760, Sterne advertised that 'Every Book' of the fifth volume in the third instalment would

[273] Judith Hawley, 'Digressive and Progressive Movements: Sympathy and Sexuality in *Tristram Shandy*; or, Plain Stories' in *Digressions in European Literature: from Cervantes to Sebald*, ed. Alexis Grohmann and Caragh Wells (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 23.

be 'signed by the Author'.[274] At the precise moment when he posits Tristram as essential and antecedent to the material text, Sterne for the first time explicitly acts as the authorial guarantor of that text and of Tristram's fiction in the marketplace.

For Fawcett, given that Sterne 'transform[ed] his text into [an] accompaniment to his "manner"' and often performed as extensions of his fictional counterparts, this is a logical development.[275] It entails, however, the same provisionality which characterises all of Sterne's considerable commercial dealings. Sterne's text might work as an 'accompaniment' to his own performances, but, as we have seen, Tristram as author-protagonist cannot be reduced to a straightforward cypher for Sterne as author-proper; there is, in Johnston's terms, no 'natural reference from the work to the life and back again'. Instead, author-protagonist and author-proper assure each other's names through substitution and deferral. We can observe how Sterne's signing of *Tristram Shandy*'s fifth volume prompts the same qualitative evaluation of an authorial 'good name' inherent in handling instruments of paper-credit. As an attributional shift from author-protagonist to author-proper, Sterne's signing of the volumes as 'L. Sterne' appears to be a makeshift response to the threat of further inauthentic continuations following the pirate third volume of 1760 and another offshoot, *The Life and Amours of Hafen Slawkenbergius* (1761). At the same time, it marks also the point at which Sterne began again to act as his own publisher, with Thomas Becket his agent, William Strahan his printer, and William Edmonds his stationer. Just as he sought to extend his domain and bolster his credit as an author-publisher with London's book producers, Sterne, like the endorsers on a bill of exchange, adds his signature to *Tristram*'s fifth volume so that his readers can safely invest in it. As with a bill of exchange, the assent of the reader—their investment in the text as some way authentic—can only be provisional and based upon a 'normative [...] conditionality', in Sandra Sherwin's terms.[276] That provisionality, or 'ironic credulity', is a case of 'apparent value' being (again, in Sherwin's terms) 'time-sensitive' i.e. that Sterne's 'good name' guarantees the future repayment of Tristram's debt; Sterne's signature pledges that, unlike the pirate volume 3, volumes 5 and 6 will fit into Tristram's completed text once its serialisation concludes at some point in the future.[277]

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[274] *General Evening Post* (Thursday 17 and Saturday 19 December, 1761); *Whitehall Evening-Post* (Thursday 17 and Saturday 19 December, 1761); *Public Ledger* (Friday 18 and Thursday 24 December, 1761)—quoted in Brandtzæg, Newbould, and Williams, 'Advertising Sterne's Novels', 41.
[275] Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances*, 120.
[276] Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality*, 6.
[277] *Ibid.*, 29.

There is another layer of conditionality at work in that Sterne and his associates sought to guarantee the 'authenticity' of a fictional continuation. This volume, Sterne's signature affirms, represents a 'real' or 'authentic' fiction, unlike the 'false' fictions propagated by counterfeiters. In doing so, it supports *Tristram Shandy*'s status as 'a non-factual form of representation that [is] nevertheless *not a lie*'; it bolsters the fiction's claim to a truth-as-mimesis, or probability as 'a kind of "aesthetic" truth'.[278] Sterne signature lends his name to the credence of Tristram's 'true' fiction, but his name as a public guarantor remains largely predicated on the prior success of that fiction; 'fiction proliferates fiction to hide fictionality' just as credit piles upon credit to occlude any 'originary Fund'. Sterne and Tristram are not one and the same; ergo Tristram can act as Sterne's publisher just as Sterne can later intervene to guarantee the authenticity of Tristram's text. The arrangement works for as long as readers will invest in both.

[278] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 6.

(O)economy and Order: Laurence Sterne's Chaptering.

I. *Tristram*, Divided.

Tristram Shandy's sixth volume opens within the now-familiar figuration of fiction-reading as a journey.[279] An invitation for readers to look back across the text they have traversed introduces a hiatus in narrative progress:

> ——We'll not stop two moments, my dear Sir,—only, as we have got thro' these five volumes, (do, Sir, sit down upon a set——they are better than nothing) let us just look back upon the country we have pass'd through.—— (*TS*, 6.1.491).

Tristram's text encounters the books that determine its presence, the resulting suspension between states remaining unresolved. The narrative is simultaneously whole and fragmented; at once a scene apprehended totally with the eye, yet also situated across a stack of objects within that scene. As with volume 3's 'motly emblem' (*TS*, 3.36.268), *Tristram*'s books play with their own extension by collapsing exterior into interior. In a neat paradox, Sterne invites us to close his books and perch on a pile of them so as to survey the narrative landscape that lies between their covers.

The jest is intricate and works three ways: first, Sterne invites his readers to treat *Tristram Shandy* for the first time as 'a set' singular and as a work more than the sum of its parts. At the time of composition, Sterne may have envisaged the Dodsleys arranging to print a new edition of *Tristram*'s volumes to date and advertising them together as 'a set'. His decision to open the sixth volume with this gambit instead now appears to stress the fiction's continuity as a publication process, or 'journey', at exactly the time that Sterne is embarking on a new relationship with Becket and de Hondt (who would eventually advertise *Tristram* in 'Complete Sets in 9 Vols.' in 1767).[280] Second, *Tristram*'s volumes function in their own diegetic world as inert props rather than as 'expressive forms'. The phrase is one popularised by D.F. McKenzie, who especially lauds Sterne's marbled page as a 'forceful […] innovative example of expressive form'.[281] It thus appears in retrospect a droll move on Sterne's part

[279] Critical works that examine this trope in relation to Sterne's writings include Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 39-46; Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 35-41.
[280] *Public Advertiser* (Thursday 29 January, 1767).
[281] McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 36.

that, when *Tristram*'s 'expressive' books appear *as* books within their own narrative landscape, they barely pass as furniture. Finally, Sterne's method of serialisation allows him to introduce and so disarm a common criticism of his fiction: that it exemplified the spurious practice of selling meagre content apportioned across increasingly thin volumes. Even to function as furniture, a trade-off is required: Tristram's volumes are portable enough that the reader can carry a 'set' of them across the 'country' of their narration, yet when measured spine to spine, the first five volumes provide a seat of around three inches in height. In terms of offering a view 'across the country' through which 'we have [just] pass'd', a stack of *Tristram*'s volumes may be 'better than nothing', but, Sterne self-deprecatingly implies, only just.

Commentary on the paucity of Sterne's volumes dates to *Tristram Shandy*'s earliest reception, when reviewers evoked parallels between the size of the books and their author's slender frame. The unidentified contributor of 'Animadversions on Tristram Shandy' to the *Grand Magazine* (April 1760) asks

> Did you ever see *Shandy*?—Why, if he does but twist his nose on one side, there's humour in the distortion—and one cannot help laughing at his joke, even before he opens his mouth.—I only wish he was fatter—He looks as meagre as if he had pored over the metaphysical lamp, and made sermons, in good earnest[282]

Owen Ruffhead, writing for the *Monthly Review* (February 1761) goes further in his own animadversion, dismissing Tristram's debut as 'two pigmy octavos, which scarce contained the substance of a twelve-penny pamphlet' (*MR* 24, 1761: 104). Both reviewers voice a prevalent eighteenth-century complaint: writers valued primarily for their novelty stoked an unnatural appetite in the reading public for books containing little actual substance.

Tristram Shandy's slenderness and narrative diffuseness could also, however, be cast in more favourable light. William Kenrick's early appraisal for the *Monthly Review* posits Sterne as a frugal author who 'husbands his adventures with great oeconomy', such that they may provide for him for 'as long as he lives' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561). Kenrick's stress on how *Tristram* might support its author's livelihood is unusual for reviews of fiction and appears to

[282] Howes, *Critical Heritage*, 66.

be a jobbing reviewer's appraisal of narrative returns that discovers an affinity between Sterne's serial form and periodical publication—one that I will explore in Chapter 3. Kenrick's chosen term of appraisal is also intriguing. To borrow Marc Shell's definition, 'oeconomy' refers etymologically to 'the conventions (*nomoi*) of and distribution (*nemesis*) within the household (*oikos*)'.[283] As Karen Harvey outlines, whilst the term came to encompass new modes of production, distribution, and regulation during the late-century's nascent industrialisation, it continued into the early nineteenth to connote the wise distribution of household resources.[284] Kenrick likens Sterne's narrative and publishing practices to good household management, exemplifying how the language of domestic 'oeconomy' was often made to legitimize the middling sort within the public sphere.[285] *Tristram Shandy* largely unfolds within a domestic architecture and speaks accordingly through a domestic idiom, yet it does so, Kenrick implies, so as to reconcile its reader to the author's public displays of self-promotion. Adept at literary husbandry, Sterne 'sows' *Tristram Shandy*'s narrative 'so extremely thin' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561) across the divisions of his work that it bears him the most advantageous return when his books enter the marketplace.

Although the 'oeconomic' as discursive terrain remained predicated upon principles of domestic management, the public-facing aspect of Sterne's practice as an author who writes 'not to be *fed*, but to be *famous*' (*Letters*, 116) whilst also using that fame to 'sell both inside & out' (*Letters*, 140) situates him at a terminological fault-line whereat the economic comes also to describe wider, more abstract models of market equivalence in which various particular commodities are equalized in their exchange value. It is such abstract exchange values that allow something as nebulous as 'fame' to be monetised to provide for Sterne for 'as long as he live[s]'. Adam Smith is often seen as the originator of this conception of the economy as the organization or condition of economic factors in relation to human society-qua-structure. John Gray argues that, in Smith's hands, political economy becomes truly 'systematic and comprehensive', and, in his recent analysis of 'system' as a genre, Clifford Siskin outlines how Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* used 'system's scalable architecture' as a

[283] Shell, *Economy of Literature*, 89.
[284] Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (OUP, 2012), 25. Johnson defines 'Economy' as 'The management of a family; the government of a houshold', 'Frugality; discretion of expence; laudable parsimony', and, in its abstract form, as the 'distribution of every thing active or passive in its proper place'. Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. 'ECO'NOMY'.
[285] *Ibid.*, 26.

means to transform multiple systems of political economy into one single 'Master System'.[286] What previously appear as competing interests and idiolects are, in the *Wealth of Nations*' Master System, channelled towards a commonality through their engagement in the market as a 'sphere of production and exchange'. As Lisa Herzog argues:

> [Smith's] division of labour depends on markets, because people who specialize in one branch of industry have to acquire all other goods they need by exchange. When specialized workers exchange their products among each other, trade is no longer a zero-sum game.[287]

Tony Aspromourgos notes, however, that as far back as the late-seventeenth century, early thinkers on political economy such as William Petty articulated the 'potential for labour specialization to increase productivity per worker', as well as linking such divisions of labour to market scale.[288] The conditions for the market economy, then, develop through this early to mid-century period leading up to Smith, and, to complicate matters further, are at times described as a form of all-encompassing commerce that threatens older ideals of domestic 'oeconomy'. As we shall see, *A Sentimental Journey*'s digressive episode 'The Sword. Rennes' provides a narrative example of how what we would now identify as a market economy—entailing an abstract exchange value and the circulation of commodities—could be seen as a totalising 'resource' of 'commerce' that threatens to encroach upon 'simple œconomy' (*ASJ,* 107) as the more discrete and aristocratic domain of estate-management.

The eighteenth-century development towards our modern understanding of *the* economy as a virtual space of self-regulating production and exchange appears to supersede or even contradict its etymological origins, the household being the one domain that, as Charles Taylor argues, 'could never be seen as self-regulating'.[289] Yet this social imaginary arguably relied on the particulars of household management to take hold, even as it masked them in abstract terms. As Taylor further notes, Smith bases his conception of the economy

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[286] John Gray, *Liberalism*, ed. Frank Parkin, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 25; Siskin, *System*, 41, 118.
[287] Lisa Herzog, *Inventing the Market: Smith, Hegel, and Political Theory* (OUP, 2013), 31-32.
[288] Tony Aspromourgos, *The Science of Wealth: Adam Smith and the Framing of Political Economy* (Routledge, 2009), 140-141.
[289] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 103.

as ‘single objectified reality’ on a principle of mutual benefit by which actions and attitudes hold ‘systematically beneficent results for the general happiness, even though these are not part of what is intended in the action or affirmed in the attitude’.[290] Such is the figure of Smith’s ‘invisible hand’ by which the investor is ‘led […] to promote an end which was no part of his intention’.[291] Smith’s example of a ‘mutual and reciprocal’ division of labour is a market that balances interests of the town with those of the country: ‘The country supplies the town with the means of subsistence, and the materials of manufacture. The town repays this supply by sending back a part of the manufactured produce to the country’.[292] In this way, the market economy attains its harmony as ‘an exchange of advantages’ from the competing interests of individually managed domestic estates and manufacturers, each benefitting from the other’s output.[293]

As we shall see, Sterne’s chaptering often presents itself within analogous models of equivalent value, albeit not at Smith’s level of abstraction or self-regulation. In the case of *Tristram Shandy* it cannot, for the narrative turns and gaps that Sterne stages frequently arise from his author-protagonist attempting to micro-manage every aspect of textual transmission. Tristram provides his text’s sole position of interest and, correspondingly, its single—and singularly odd—idiolect. (O)economy provides, therefore, a useful dual-approach to examine Sterne’s use of chapters; it marks the point at which material considerations of how to ‘husband’ or distribute one’s narrative resources meet the question of how that distribution might affect a work’s value.

This shift from ‘oeconomy’ as management to the ‘economy’ as a grid of equivalence ostensibly looks like the shift from Mary Poovey’s early century continuum of value—in which the ‘elaboration’ of financial matters occurs through ‘amplification, association, and metaphor’—to later economic explanations which proceed ‘by subdividing, simplifying, and clarifying a phenomenon at a relatively abstract level’.[294] In Kenrick’s older sense, *Tristram*’s composition bears a figurative-analogous relation to a traditional civic-humanist view of oeconomy as the wise management of an estate. It does so in two ways: first, by presenting its own text metaphorically as a household replete with pseudo-domestic thresholds, chapters featuring as contiguous rooms inhabited by different (and differently gendered) readers, and

[290] *Ibid.*, 70.
[291] Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 1:456.
[292] *Ibid.*, 1:376.
[293] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 70.
[294] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 98.

the elision of textual and architectural 'passages'. Second, in Tristram's claims to use chaptering as a means of distributing intra-texts from an imagined Shandean family archive of writings on domestic management—most notably, the contract that binds Mrs Shandy to Shandy Hall for the term of Tristram's birth. When Tristram produces valuations of chapters, the text appears to shift from metaphorical 'amplification' to 'abstraction', wherein Tristram manipulates chapters as particular units of text in order to regulate an economy of style.

Yet this clean distinction between amplification (using metaphor and association) and abstraction does not hold. As Christopher Ricks notes, 'whatever else a metaphor may be, it is a relation'—one in which 'we speak of one aspect or part of the metaphor as the metaphor or as metaphorical'.[295] We use 'metaphor' not only to identify the whole relation, but also one of its parts: the metaphorical 'vehicle' to the literal 'tenor'. 'Metaphor' is thus both inside and outside of itself, just as volume 6's opening hiatus situates us both inside and outside of the text. Sterne is skilled at problematizing such relations through other figures such as syllepsis and metalepsis. In the case of Kenrick's older version of 'oeconomy', the metaphorical relation is between household estate and text, yet *Tristram* at times appears *as* the figurative house Tristram has built and at others as a more literal repository *for* his estate. *Tristram*'s unstable shifting between amplification and abstraction thus doubles within the metaphor of 'oeconomy' itself, which raises the question whether, for Sterne, the totalising terms of textual commerce—his ambition to 'sell both inside & out' (*Letters*, 140)—complicates any distinction between the figurative and the literal. In doing so, it disturbs also the too-neat dividing line between 'actual' and 'concrete' particulars on which McKeon bases his analogy between mid-century fiction and the market and, by extension, Poovey's suggestion of a solely analogous or metaphorical link between the three distinct generic strands of (1) fiction, (2) writing as money, and (3) writing on money that she sees as largely entrenched by 1759.

It is worthwhile, then, briefly to examine the elisions of textual and household 'passages', and the architectural-textual thresholds that present *Tristram Shandy as* a household. In volume1, chapter 4, the fiction further sub-divides its own internal division. Readers may have ventured thus far through the chapter, yet, Tristram cautions at the halfway point, 'the remaining part of this Chapter' has been written 'only for the curious and inquisitive'. Those seeking admittance to Tristram's more salacious tales must first

[295] Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets*, 245, 247.

_____ Shut the door. _____

(*TS*, 1.4.6)

before Tristram will proceed. The instruction establishes a relationship of confidentiality between Tristram and the 'curious and inquisitive' reader. *Tristram*'s spatial extension of cognitive acts of reading is flattened across the surface of the page; the dividing line presents a graphic wall and the gap containing Tristram's request to 'Shut the door' functions as a discursive threshold through which the curious are admitted to what remains of the chapter.

As a performative injunction that establishes a space for authorial self-fashioning, Sterne's threshold may lightly allude to Alexander Pope's *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735) which opens with the lines

> Shut, shut the door, good *John*! fatigu'd I said,
>
> Tye up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead, (1-2)[296]

There are nonetheless crucial distinctions between the two gestures. Pope's poem, as Pat Rogers notes, begins in jagged cadences in *medias res*, with the opening spondee and the metrical inversion on the second line ('Tye up') intensifying the immediate necessity of its imperative.[297] The address also differs in terms of specificity. Pope's poem appears almost to misidentify its main identified interlocutor (John Arbuthnot) in its injunction to '*John*' his servant. It situates the rest of the poem's readership—most of whom, it imagines, are would-be poetical imitators or satirical respondents—on the other side of the door. Of course, the poem gains its dramatic and satiric impetus from the very perviousness of the boundaries it

[296] Quotations and line numbers are from Pope, *One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope*.
[297] Pat Rogers, *Essays on Pope* (CUP, 1993), 93.

establishes.[298] Already by its seventh line, Pope's fortifications are failing and his pastoral retreat sits ready to be breached:

> What Walls can guard me, or what Shades can hide?
>
> They pierce my thickets, thro' my Grot they glide (7-8)

As Helen Deutsch argues, the imminent collapse of the walls Pope has raised augurs his *apologia*'s central conceit: the 'Bedlam, or Parnassus' (the dwellings of the mad and the home of poetry become interchangeable) unleashed by Pope's poetry has spawned an unwieldy profusion of doubles and imitators, disorder amidst whom reflects and perpetuates Pope's struggle for 'an integral self'—one born for something other than 'to write', able to live in 'dignity and ease' without 'a poem in [his] head'.[299] Yet James McLaverty also suggests that Pope consciously helped to fashion his imitators and antagonists and, in doing so, his own case to answer in the public sphere. Evidence suggests that Pope arranged for the publication of Mary Wortley Montagu's *Verses to the Imitator of Horace* (1733) which may have been written with Lord Harvey and to which *Arbuthnot*—particularly in its figures of 'Sappho' (Montagu) and 'Sporus' (Harvey)—in part responds.[300] By thrusting what was initially a manuscript attack on his poetic pretensions into publication, Pope establishes his opponents in print so that he can reply to them on his own terms. He instigates one of the public tumults against which the epistle claims to shut its doors.[301]

Sterne does not shut his doors to allow Tristram to recommit to the authorial fray as with Pope in *Arbuthnot*. He does not immediately open with a command to 'Shut the door', but rather establishes a productive space of innuendo and suggestion into which he soon after invites his readers to enclose themselves. Where Pope appeals specifically to John Arbuthnot as an ally amidst a profusion of writing and writers run riot (in part at his own instigation),

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[298] Paul Baines, *The Complete Critical Guide to Alexander Pope* (Routledge, 2000), 111.
[299] Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 205.
[300] James McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* (OUP, 2001), 176-185. McLaverty uses '*Verses to the Imitator of Horace*' to refer to both editions of the poem, which have slightly different titles.
[301] McLaverty argues: 'the episode is suspiciously shaped to Pope's convenience. That the poems should be published was essential to justify a reply. That Lady Mary [Wortley Montagu] should be identified as the author was necessary to justify Pope's attacks. That Pope should know immediately of the publication of the *Verses* [*to the Imitator of Horace*] and be immediately prepared to exploit it […] requires some special explanation' (180).

Tristram appeals to all 'curious' readers as confidants. As Siskin suggests, where for Pope the mysterious force within *Arbuthnot* is the apparently unstoppable proliferation of *writing itself*, for Tristram it is the ability furtively to appeal *through writing* to a vast commercial audience of nobody in particular within his text's pseudo-domestic confines.[302] The typographical line that marks the chapter's internal threshold leaves also a pause after Tristram's courting of the 'curious and inquisitive' reader, suggesting a wry solicitation to 'shut the door' rather than an urgent command. The door is not shut against Tristram's misbehaving readers but rather closed behind them. His instruction does not launch us into the midst of a narrative or poetic tumult; the 'delicious riot of things' (*TS*, 7.14.595) into which Tristram will later rush does not arrive until his seventh volume. Instead, Sterne brings us to the brink of narrative expectation; it is a controlled suspension of the readerly desire to be 'let into the whole secret' (*TS*, 1.4.5) as much as *Arbuthnot*'s opening is a controlled bid to strengthen its author's integral powers against a host of would-be poets and interlocuters.

There is another important distinction between *Arbuthnot* and *Tristram Shandy* regarding the specificity of the space that each delimits. In the case of *Arbuthnot*, 'All [of Pope's imitators and antagonists] fly to *Twit'nam*' (21), whilst the church, the 'Grot', and the pastoral surroundings of Pope's villa sustain the mock-attack. In contrast, it remains unclear to which doorway Tristram is referring. In deictic terms, the 'here' or 'there' of Tristram's invitation and the space into which we are requested to close ourselves remains indistinct. The space Tristram indicates in his invitation is, I would suggest, more textual than diegetic. The fiction's expositions on Walter, Suzanna, Toby, and Trim that turn into its main actions occur, for the most part, in and around the domestic confines of a fictive Shandy Hall, which later provides the name of Sterne's real home in Coxwold, North Yorkshire. *Tristram* often vividly evokes its fictive Shandy Hall's archaic, almost Gothic design and its descent into dilapidation in the squeaky hinges that rouse its inhabitants, the various thresholds through which characters misconstrue (and occasionally injure) one another, and the impotent bull that stalks its grounds. Neither this nor Sterne's real-life Shandy Hall are educed as specific spaces when Tristram asks his reader to 'shut the door'. Rather, Tristram situates his reader within the architecture of the text itself. Chapters are partitioned and arranged as contiguous rooms; sentences form passages between interstices such as volume 4's missing chapter.

[302] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 34.

Divisions such as volumes and chapters provide Sterne a means of arranging this domestic-textual architecture and marshalling the narrative resources it contains. Midway through volume 1, Tristram orders the intradiegetic female-reader he refers to as 'Madam' to 'turn back […] as soon as [she reaches] the next full stop' (*TS*, 1.20.65) so as to pick her way back through the passages of the preceding chapter. As Tadié observes, Tristram's address to 'Madam' presents a moment of tension 'between [a] conversational trend, and that of the printed text' in that Tristram uses the full stop as an inscribed way-marker that can neither be voiced nor heard.[303] Sterne maps the act of reading across a sinuous domestic architecture that contrasts with the wide affective landscape that opens volume 6; conversational dialogue phases into textual structure and vice versa. The 'full stop' marks the terminus of a textual passageway; the female-reader occupies herself in an adjacent chapter, or room, whilst Tristram entertains his male-reader elsewhere with a private address. Sterne here overproduces sentimentalism's scenes of affective reading and their somatic codes to extraordinary effect. The text claims to register the correct way of reading itself in present time and through the distribution of readers across chapters. Overproduction, however, implies also prolixity and tautology, which feature in Tristram's pleonastic refusal to apologise to 'Madam' when she 'returns back' (*TS*, 1.20.65).

In the case of Sterne's '(o)economic' composition which lies between metaphor and abstraction, such doubling recurs at various structural levels. Volume 6's opening metaphor provides a corrective to Lupton's assertion that *Tristram Shandy* is 'the story of *a* book' (italics mine)—it represents, rather, the progress of nine individual volumes, each of which we should consider as discrete if also part of an interconnected 'set'.[304] Kenrick's appraisal of how Sterne husbands narrative such that it maximises the returns for its writer invites us to examine how the text's further subdivision into chapters provides Tristram, and therefore Sterne, with an instrument with which to order and (o)economise narrative material in pursuit of that interest. *A Sentimental Journey*'s chaptering provides continuity with *Tristram* but also a refinement of technique. Whilst Tristram functions as a self-conscious textual arranger, 'constantly […] stressing his presence in the workshop of narration' in Alexis Tadié's terms, Yorick rarely deconstructs how the *Journey* divides across chapters; nor does he bind narrative economy to the material book to the same extent.[305] Yet, as James Chandler notes,

[303] Alexis Tadié, *Sterne's Whimsical Theatres of Language: Orality, Gesture, Literacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 144.
[304] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 33.
[305] Tadié, *Whimsical Theatres*, 83.

the *Journey* is, if anything, even more preoccupied with 'ambiguities about "order," ordonnance, and causality'—near-concerns to those of narrative distribution.[306] The 'order' of its constituent 'matter' (*ASJ*, 3) is of prime concern from the opening pronouncement that launches Yorick's sojourn in France.

Shifting Sterne's focus from temporal to spatial arrangement, *A Sentimental Journey*'s division into what critics describe as 'scenes' or 'vignettes' helps form the '*Vehicle*' (*ASJ*, 15) through which Yorick's travels are conveyed. Its boxed divisions, or 'frames', construct a newly productive tension between circulation and stasis; they facilitate narrative movement between scenes whilst also offsetting those scenes with what Barbara M. Benedict terms 'spectatorial distance'.[307] At the same time, Sterne's focussing of the *Journey*'s vignettes on particular objects and locales evinces another type of narrative 'economy': less that of stretching one's narrative resources to their full extent than of a stylistic paring of narrative to scenic arrangement. The adjectival construct of a 'sentimental' journey as reconciling emotional with temporal and spatial movement requires that the *Journey*'s chapters also 'economise' in a broader sense this relation between inner and outer; in episodes such as 'The Sword. Rennes', chapters disconnected by location are placed next to each other to optimize their *affective* value. Whilst we have few insights into Sterne's compositional practices for *Tristram Shandy* outside his correspondence, the fair copy of the *Journey*'s first volume provides a test-case as to whether the principles of (o)economy and order that Sterne portrays in his fiction are traceable in his final stages of manuscript transcription.

'(O)economy' is not a new lens through which to read Sterne's *oeuvre*. Critics have previously read *Tristram Shandy* as a tale of the Shandy family's dysfunctional oeconomy: most notably McKeon, who argues that Sterne collapses a diachronic narrative of patrilineal inheritance into a 'synchronic animation of concrete virtuality' in which the family is valued 'not as an ongoing public institution but in the affective ties that bind it together in the synchronic space of a single generation or two'.[308] More recently, Harvey has examined *Tristram*'s 'manuscript hinterland', positing the idea of an imaginary 'Shandy family archive' of male domestic writing as a means to interrogate the 'atomistic and holistic impulses' that

[306] James Chandler, *An Archaeology of Sympathy: The Sentimental Mode in Literature and Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 185.
[307] Barbara M. Benedict, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction*, 1745-1800 (New York: AMS Press, 1994), 9.
[308] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 673, 680.

underlie Tristram's use of writing as a tool for self-management.[309] This is the text acting as a repository *for* the household that, as we have seen, provides one pole of its relation to older civic-humanist ideals of estate management. Neither McKeon nor Harvey, however, explores how Sterne embeds (o)economy as a dual-principle not only *in*-text in its diegetic scenes, but also *as*-text. Situating Sterne's chaptering within eighteenth-century generic and economic frameworks shows not only how Sterne 'rais[es] the feature into consciousness as a strategy of print', as J. Paul Hunter asserts, but moreover how it becomes integral to his handling of narrative resources and, in turn, of readerly desire, constructing a textual-libidinal economy that channels the interplay of atomism and holism identified by Harvey.[310] Central is the question imbedded in the term '(o)economy' of where material-textual management meets Tristram's (and Sterne's) more abstract concern with how his work is valued.

II. Chaptering in Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction.

To describe how Sterne's chaptering remodels that of his forbears first requires a brief history of the eighteenth-century chapter as a print strategy, as an organising principle, as a measure of composition and consumption, and as, in Nicholas Dame's terms, an often-overlooked 'fact […] of texture'.[311] As Dames outlines, the origins of the term 'chapter' reveal a shift in its use. Once an early type of paratext that indicated how each following segment of text should be read, the term later came to refer to the units of textual division themselves.[312]

> The chapter is an invention of antiquity [that] stems from the practice in Roman legal texts of prefacing sections with *capitula* ('head,' or 'heading'), brief introductory summaries of what follows. The notion of the *capitulum* was imported into Biblical manuscripts in late antiquity, and by the early thirteenth century 'chapters' were standardized forms within Western European bibles. A gradual shift took place, in

[309] Harvey, 'Manuscript History of *Tristram Shandy*', 282, 298.
[310] J. Paul Hunter, 'From Typology to Type: Agents of Change in Eighteenth-Century English Texts' in *Cultural Artifacts and the Production of Meaning: The Page, the Image, and the Body*, ed. Margaret J.M. Ezell and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 52.
[311] Dames, 'Trollope's Chapters', 855.
[312] Gérard Genette defines the 'paratext' as a liminal zone of public 'transaction' and commercial 'strategy': a 'privileged place of a pragmatics'. Genette, *Paratexts,* 2.

> which the term 'chapter' came to refer to the segmented unit of text, while a new term—'argument'—came to refer to the summary heading itself[313]

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* similarly identifies the root of the word in the French '*chapitre*' (little head) and the Latin '*capitulum*'. By the eighteenth century the movement from paratext to unit of division is near enough complete, Johnson's definition of the chapter being simply 'A division of a book'.[314] Chaptering outside of prose fiction was thus familiar to most eighteenth-century readers. The English Bible had been divided into chapters and verses since the popular 1560 Geneva translation. Likewise, an assortment of aids, concordances, and indices drew upon and often remain bound alongside the Geneva and King James versions, linking to their chapter-and-verse formulation as a near-standardised referencing apparatus.[315]

This presentation of scripture was not without controversy. As late as 1707, Locke criticised aspects of the practice, describing English texts of the Pauline epistles as '*so chop'd and minc'd*' that even a learned reader could mistake them for a miscellany of '*distinct Aphorisms*'.[316] Just as all ideas, for Locke, derive from sensory experience, so the reader's eye perceives the 'standing and separation' of scripture as coming 'loose' from the page, the text appears as '*so many distinct Fragments*', and this disrupts the reader's '*Discourse of dependent Reasonings*'.[317] Sean Silver argues that Locke's theory of knowledge acquisition operates through a metaphor of the cabinet as 'a stable system of storage' which accumulates and contains experience—what he describes as 'Locke's figure of the mind as a collection'.[318] In Silver's analysis, Lockean epistemology evinces its author's embeddedness within a 'cognitive ecology' of curation, Locke's habits of thought being bound to his 'habits of work' and 'haptic practice[s]' as a collector.[319] However, Locke here cautions his reader against conceiving of scripture as a collection of separable components; he presents Biblical chaptering as the dispersal of a once-unified discourse rather than as a piecemeal form of

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[313] Dames, 'Trollope's Chapters', 856.
[314] Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. 'CHA'PTER'.
[315] For details on the Geneva Bible's innovative use of chaptering and textual apparatuses, see Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible', in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. Jenny Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 42-79.
[316] John Locke, *An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles* (Awnsham and John Churchill, 1707), vii.
[317] *Ibid.*, vii.
[318] Sean Silver, *The Mind is a Collection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 25.
[319] *Ibid.*, 25-26.

arrangement. Sterne, as we shall see, later envisages chaptering within a textual economy that *does* cohere, albeit amidst the process rather than after the fact of composition.[320]

Within the context of prose fiction, of the nearly five hundred fictions Leah Orr identifies as published between 1690 and 1730, few considered either as canonical or as bestsellers (by Orr's definition, those that reached five editions or more) are arranged using chapters.[321] Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), for instance, divides across 'sections' that alternate between its central mock-allegory and various digressions; François Fénelon's popular *Telemachus* (1699) divides into five lengthy books, *The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle* (1726) into four, and *The Hermit* (1727) into three; Elizabeth Singer Rowe's *Friendship in Death* (1728), like numerous early-century fictions, appears as a series of letters; Defoe noticeably tells his stories in single blocks divided only into paragraphs. Of the major chaptered fictions often reprinted in English during this period, two are works in translation: Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605-15) and Alain-René Lesage's *Gil Blas* (1715-35), both of which were influential on Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett (who translated both), and, in the case of Cervantes, Sterne. The few bestselling English chaptered fictions of this period include John Arbuthnot's *Law is a Bottomless Pit* (1712), Penelope Aubin's *The Noble Slaves* (1722), and Swift's *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (1726).

Chaptering is, however, otherwise prevalent at this time in treatises, theological and philosophical works, and in various 'lives and adventures'. Shaftesbury claims its use for 'miscellarian authors', arguing that chapters permit the reader to 'renew his application' after 'frequent intervals of repose'.[322] This 'post way' of writing aligns chaptering, as Eve Tavor Bannet notes, with commercial interest: frequent breaks for 'a change of [...] subjects [sic] or direction' permit readers to commit a business-like 'application' to miscellaneous reading.[323] Another loose literary category that frequently appears in chapters during this period is the 'memoir', a term which, Orr shows, could apply as readily to fiction as to works of history and life-writing.[324] Chaptered 'memoir' or 'life of' titles were available for prominent figures such as the divine Thomas Halyburton (1714), and, most infamously, Colley Cibber (1740),

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[320] Scripture's division into '*distinct Aphorisms*' from which one can draw lessons is, of course, helpful for writing sermons. See, for example, Sterne's 'Case of Hezekiah and the Messengers' (*Sermons*, 157-166).
[321] Leah Orr, *Novel Ventures: Fiction and Print Culture*, 1690-1730 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 4, 185-189. Orr's research suggests that during this period at least ¼ of fictions did not reach a second edition (56).
[322] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 460.
[323] *Ibid.*, 350; Eve Tavor Bannet, *Eighteenth-Century Manners of Reading: Print Culture and Popular Instruction in the Anglophone Atlantic World* (CUP, 2017), 175.
[324] Orr, *Novel Ventures*, 19-20.

but also for fictional characters and scenarios such as Captain Macheath (1728) and the Court of Lilliput (1727). Their similar presentation as chaptered works aids the lack of any generic distinction between real and fictive accounts. By 1741, the year prior to Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (which is often credited as innovating their use in fiction), Alexander Pope's *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* was already parodying the use of chaptering in memoirs. Pope promises his reader, perhaps in imitation of Cibber's notoriously disjointed style in his *Apology for the Life* (1740), that 'whenever [the reader] begins to think any one Chapter dull, the style will be immediately changed in the next', suggesting a continual shifting of scene, sentiment, and style across chapters as an antidote to readerly malaise.[325] The passage intimates how chaptering might stave off a text's impending obsolescence and, relatedly, how chapters could be severed from their original context and redeployed in new ones—the obverse of *A Tale of a Tub*'s warning that most of its passages are so precisely tooled to their moment and *milieu* that they will 'grow quite out of date and relish with the first shifting of the present Scene' (*CWJS vol. 1*, 27).

The commentary that introduces chapter 14 of Scriblerus's *Memoirs* suggests also how chaptering might allow booksellers and co-authors to carve up a text's production:

> *N.B. The style of this Chapter in the* Original Memoirs *is so singularly different from the rest, that it is hard to conceive by whom it was penn'd. But if we consider the particular Regard which our Philosopher had for it, who expresly directed that* not one Word of this Chapter should be alter'd, *it will be natural to suspect that it was written by himself, at the Time when* Love […] *had somewhat tinctur'd his Style*[326]

Despite explaining away any stylistic anomalies in the chapter with a hackneyed 'the-author-was-in-love' line, Pope's hint that readers might reasonably query '*by whom it was penn'd*' suggests that, even for the most ostensibly personal of memoirs, it might prove difficult to discern where other writers had a hand in completing sections. Pope hereby introduces chaptering within a mid-century satirical trend which presents such divisions of labour as

[325] Alexander Pope, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, ed. Charles Kerby-Miller (OUP, 1988), 94.
[326] *Ibid.*, 143.

fracturing professional authorship into marginal specialisations.[327] Works of this order include Fielding's *Author's Farce* (1730), which names its dramatis personae of '*Scriblers*' after various micro-functions of writing ('Dash', 'Blotpage' etc.), and Oliver Goldsmith's periodical *The Bee*, which describes how the roles performed by jobbing writers become progressively entrenched according to the particular skill with which each is identified.[328]

My brief history so far qualifies two assertions made by Hunter: (1) that chaptering emerged as a distributive tool just as prose fictions 'extended their lengths to match the narrative needs of [private] readers'; and (2) that Fielding's apparently innovative use of chapters is 'more an adaptation of a feature already standard in Richardson than it is a new discovery'.[329] As the long-running success of Fénelon's *Telemachus* shows, it was not necessarily the case that lengthy unchaptered works failed to find a market. Nor did the use of chaptering initially bestow much advantage; many of the chaptered memoirs published during the early decades of the century reached only one or two editions. Whilst it is correct to view Fielding's chaptering as an adaptation of earlier techniques, there are precedents for its use beyond epistolary fiction—not least English translations of Cervantes and Le Sage, and Cibber's *Apology for the Life*, which became one of Fielding's satirical targets in *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741)

As chaptering in prose fiction becomes more prevalent from the 1740s onwards, fiction writers begin also to examine how it might affect the experience of reading. *The History of Charlotte Summers* (a now lesser-known anonymous work from 1750), for example, introduces the character of Arabella Dimple, an intradiegetic reader within the narrative who calls for her maid to bring her 'the first Volume of the Parish Girl I was reading in the Afternoon'.[330] As Lupton observes, the episode works through a Cervantic conceit in which 'the fictional world of the novel's second part includes the presence of the first part'—although, unlike *Don Quixote*, *Charlotte Summers* introduces this device before

[327] C.f. John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (HarperCollins, 1997), 128.
[328] Henry Fielding, *Plays*, ed. Thomas Lockwood, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 1:227; Oliver Goldsmith, *The Bee. Being Essays on the Most Interesting Subjects* (J. Wilkie, 1759), 6.
[329] Hunter, 'Typology to Type', 50-51.
[330] *The History of Charlotte Summers, the Fortunate Parish Girl*, 2 vols. (Corbett, 1750), 1:67. *Charlotte Summers* is attributed to Sarah Fielding in British Library and Bodleian catalogues; however, most scholars more prudently cite it as an anonymous work. See, for example, Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 21.

even reaching its second volume.[331] In a witty metatextual exchange, Arabella and her maid dispute where to take up the continuation of their reading:

> ——Pray, Ma'am, where shall I begin, did your Ladyship fold down where you left off?——No, Fool, I did not; the Book is divided into Chapters on Purpose to prevent that ugly Custom of thumbing and spoiling the Leaves; and, now I think on't, the Author bid me remember, that I left off at the End of——I think it was the 6th Chapter.[332]

As Lupton further notes, *Charlotte Summers* displays a more material reflexivity than that of *Don Quixote*, appearing to be alert 'not only to its own existence but also to its own […] condition' as a paper product, as well as to the ways in which its division across chapters allows readers to consume it.[333]

Arabella Dimple refrains from keeping her place in the text by thumbing or turning down page corners. She attempts instead to memorise it using the numbers and headings provided. The episode unpacks by example a hint given in *Joseph Andrews*'s chapter '*On Divisions in Authors*' in which Fielding lists amongst the 'Benefits' of chaptering that 'it prevents spoiling the Beauty of a Book by turning down its Leaves', a method otherwise necessary to those 'Readers, who […] are apt […] to forget where they left off'.[334] *Charlotte Summers*' division into chapters removes, in Arabella's account, any need manually to keep track of one's place in the text, thereby preserving its pages and, in Fielding's terms, the 'Beauty of [the] Book'. The novel transforms into farce what Fielding affirms sportingly: Arabella comes comically unstuck attempting to recall where and when the author directs her to leave off and take up her reading. If Arabella appears also a modish reader given that she fashions her practice in opposition to 'ugly Custom', she nonetheless uses the textual apparatus provided as a means to preserve and refine the consumption of reading material in which she has invested. Despite the hay made at her expense, this is sound domestic oeconomy, although we might wonder why bookmarks do not feature in this account.

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[331] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 33.
[332] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:68.
[333] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 33.
[334] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 90.

Charlotte Summers opens with an introductory essay '*On the use of Chapters and the Advantage of Natural Stupidity*' in which its narrator argues that the public are now so inured to the 'Convenience' and the 'Utility' of 'these kind of Divisions' that she 'need not offer at any Apology' for their inclusion.[335] Similarly, Francis Coventry's *Pompey the Little* (1751) wryly asserts the following year that 'no Person hereafter should presume to write a Novel' without following Fielding 'the Lawgiver's […] Edict' at least to include prefatory chapters. Any writer failing to follow this now-standard convention would, in Coventry's parajuridical conceit, be sentenced as 'a blockhead' and guarantee his or her own commercial failure.[336] The function of chapters, according to *Charlotte Summers*' narrator, is twofold: first, chapters introduce points of relaxation, allowing fiction-writers to indulge their 'digressing Privilege'; each new chapter can start with 'a Page or two' of 'familiar Discourse with our Readers' before the narrative 'Thread' continues.[337] As Joseph Drury notes, this concern with introducing relaxation points in the narrative conversely shows the extent to which fictions are required to serve some useful disciplinary or didactic purpose by the mid-eighteenth century.[338] Second, their role is to resemble the 'Acts and Scenes of a play' and to 'give Time for shifting of the Scenes and conveying the Audience without hurry or apparent Absurdity to and from the several Places and Apartments, where the Poet has laid his action'.[339] Chaptering not only refines textual consumption as in Arabella's encounters; it also permits convincing transitions, allowing the reader to navigate across the various domestic interiors in which the fiction is set. Major transitions require a new book (act); minor ones require only a fresh chapter (scene).

Chapter divisions appear, by this account, to mediate a transverse simultaneity that is, in Benedict Anderson's terms, 'cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence'.[340] Allowing fiction to be structured according to a grammar of conjunctive adverbs such as 'elsewhere' or 'meanwhile', chaptering permits the author to manipulate a grid of domestic 'Places and Apartments' co-extended in near synchronicity. This would be narrative internalising the logic of the ephemeral press or, in Stuart Sherman's formulation, co-opting the opportunities for creative self-fashioning in diurnal forms whereby

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[335] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:28.
[336] Francis Coventry, *The History of Pompey the Little*, ed. Nicholas Hudson (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview, 2008), 131.
[337] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:31.
[338] Joseph Drury, *Novel Machines: Technology and Narrative Form in Enlightenment Britain* (OUP, 2017), 117.
[339] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:29.
[340] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983), 30.

'time as measured but blank' becomes a 'field open for self-creation by self-inscription'.[341] The eighteenth century's influx of commercial press products (e.g. 'mercuries', 'diurnals') worked to enforce such a temporal structure, Anderson argues, by accentuating a latent characteristic of all print: that of planned obsolescence. Such texts posit each day or week as a regular unit of time and as an organising principle, insisting that all of their readers undergo the same regular ritual of renewal. In Anderson's argument, it is a shared consciousness of this process occurring at the same time which binds readers to each another as imaginative communities. Chaptering in *Charlotte Summers*' account permits an experience of simultaneity not *as* consumption but *within* narrative and as a levelling device, allowing readers to make the transition from one 'Place' or 'Apartment' to another of perhaps a different social class without the 'impuden[ce]' of imagining such a movement within 'the shifting of a Scene'.[342] There is, however, a curious disjunction between the effect *Charlotte Summers* claims chapters achieve as pseudo-theatrical divisions in fiction and how acts and scenes appear to work in the theatre. Jean-Christophe Agnew argues that the development of scenes in early modern theatre typically allowed for 'a more or less linear sequence' in which 'the synoptic and timeless viewpoint of religious mystery gave way to the fragmentary and historical viewpoint of the secular chronicle.'[343] Sequential rather than coincident, rarely were scenes used in the eighteenth-century theatre to stage the effect of simultaneity.

It is of less importance for my purposes whether chapters in novels work precisely as *Charlotte Summers* describes—to explore this would require another thesis on the eighteenth-century novel and theatre—than to observe how chaptering is subsumed through a theatrical idiom into a discourse of fiction that attempts to comprehend modern commercial experience. Fictions such as *Charlotte Summers* and *Pompey the Little* present chaptering as a new but already accepted feature of prose fiction; they assume familiarity but continue to acculturate their readership to it. They aver its legitimacy in theatrical terms and by citing 'the Worshipful Mr. *F——g*' as their 'Authority'.[344] As we have seen, Fielding could by no means claim to have invented chaptering in prose fiction, yet his authorial practice is closely identified with its popularity. If, as Hunter contends, an increase in extended private reading shaped chaptering as a means of providing respite in the same way that 'oral narratives of

[341] Sherman, *Telling of Time*, 22.
[342] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:29.
[343] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (CUP, 1986), 109.
[344] *Charlotte Summers*, 1:28; see also Coventry, *Pompey the Little*, 131.

earlier times took their shape in part from the circumstances of communal gathering', it is also Fielding who most strongly identifies this distinction by collapsing it:

> These Divisions have the Sanction of great Antiquity. *Homer* not only divided his great Work into twenty-four Books, (in Compliment perhaps to the twenty-four Letters to which he has very particular Obligations) but, according to the Opinion of some very sagacious Critics, hawked them all separately, delivering only one Book at a Time, (probably by Subscription).[345]

Citing Homer as his authority, Fielding grafts contemporary practices such as serialisation and subscription publishing onto the divisions within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[346] He thus wryly establishes the 'Art' of 'exhibit[ing] [a work] piece-meal to the public' as one of the time-honoured 'Mysteries or Secrets' of an authorial craft.[347] Common or uninitiated readers labour under the misconception 'that by this Art […] we mean only to swell our Works to a much larger Bulk than they would otherwise be extended to'.[348] 'In reality', Fielding's narrator asserts, authors 'consult the Advantage of our Reader and not our own'.[349] The very denial affirms Fielding's awareness of the increasing 'Bulk' of fiction on the market; a well-apportioned novel can be sold to the reader in greater mass and over longer stretches of time.

If Sterne later takes his cue in chaptering from Fielding, as I will argue, Fielding's concern for the ways in which his text's presence extends or limits its capacity to mediate commercial transactions borrows from Swift and Pope. The art of the modern author, Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* concludes, is appealing to a largely unknown readership, even, as we saw in Chapter 1, to the extent of measuring a book's physical '*Bulk*' against the appropriate 'Climate' or 'Season' in which it will '*take*' with its readers (*CWJS vol. 1*, 134). If *A Tale's* emphasis on how books '*take*' with their readership sets its reader up as a dupe to imply an underhandedness largely absent from Fielding's more genial conversation, a shared emphasis on '*Bulk*' suggests an awareness of the density of matter that both are asking the reader to consume. Similarly, Fielding's description of the 'Places […] in our Paper […] filled with

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[345] Hunter, 'Typology to Type', 50; Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 90-91.
[346] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 91.
[347] *Ibid.*, 91, 89.
[348] *Ibid.*, 89.
[349] *Ibid.*, 89.

Books and Chapters' as 'so much buckram, Stays, and Stay-tape in a Taylor's Bill' echoes the *Dunciad Variorum*'s derision of critics as 'Haberdashers of Points and Particles', albeit here with the positive connotation of how such detailed textual tailoring adds support (in the 'Buckram') and pliancy (in the 'Stays, and Stay-tape') to the fiction's structure.[350]

Like Shaftesbury's 'post way' inclusion of 'intervals of repose', *Joseph Andrews* also presents its own reading as the undertaking of a journey, the space between each chapter acting as 'an Inn or Resting-Place' wherein the reader may recuperate before the next stage.[351] As Dames outlines, Fielding displays chaptering as a means to 'aerate' the consumption of narrative, 'permit[ing] a reading oriented around pauses' that ostensibly dovetails with his reader's routine whilst also aiming to reshape it.[352] If *Joseph Andrews* defines the spaces between its chapters as loci of consumption, *Tom Jones*'s opening '*Bill of Fare to the Feast*' introduces its following chapters as variously sized and flavoured morsels.[353] Volume 1, book 1, chapter 7 is a dense affair, '*Containing* [much] *grave Matter*'; volume 1, book 1, chapter 9 also brims with '*Matters*' such as will undoubtedly '*Surprise the Reader*'; volume 1, book 1, chapter 12 contains '*what the reader may perhaps expect to find in it*'; volume 1, book 3, chapter 1 contains '*little or nothing*'; volume 2, book 4, chapter 1, specified only as '*Containing five Pages of Paper*', reduces itself to quantifiable material; volume 2, book 4, chapter 4 is for acquired tastes, '*Containing such very deep and grave Matters, that some Readers, perhaps, may not relish it*'; volume 2, book 4, chapter 5, on the other hand, promises '*Matter accommodated to every taste*'.[354] The stress throughout is on how each chapter gratifies the 'taste' of its reader. Fielding notes the density and quality of '*Matter*(s)' and opines the extent to which chapters will conform to expectation. As Henry Power notes, through a language of extension, tactility, and flavour, he presents his novel as 'an object to be consumed', and, moreover, describes how its readers might consume it piecemeal.[355] Headings that invite the reader '*to read no more than you like*' display

[350] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 89; Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad, in Three Books… With Notes Variorum, and the Prolegomena of Scriblerus* (1735), 41.
[351] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 89.
[352] Nicholas Dames, 'The Chapter: A History', *The New Yorker* (October 29, 2014), http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/chapter-history, last accessed 14/01/2020.
[353] Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 1:31.
[354] *Ibid.*, 9-13.
[355] Henry Power, *Epic into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature* (OUP, 2015), 146.

Fielding's awareness that readerly appetite is not a fixed quantity, but rather susceptible to being coaxed through the skilful apportioning of text.[356]

This 'consciousness of mediation', which Lupton describes as a 'flat style of reflexivity', attends to the processes by and the material with which the work is constructed.[357] In relation to chaptering, this is not something found extensively in fictions prior to Fielding's, although we might also identify it as the 'materially embodied style' that 'includes ongoing commentary on its own form as it proceeds' and which Fanning identifies as a line linking Sterne to the Scriblerians.[358] In Fielding's chapter '*Containing five Pages of Paper*', however, we see a stronger precedent for *Tristram Shandy*'s own reflexive chaptering. Although *Tristram* contains neither contents pages nor headings, it nonetheless foregrounds its own division across books and chapters, often drawing a fine line between the diegetic scene depicted and its material methods and divisions of production.

III. (O)economy: *Tristram Shandy*.

Alighting in France after nightfall, Tristram wagers 'that I this moment write a chapter upon Calais as long as my arm', containing 'distinct and satisfactory' details of 'every item' (*TS*, 7.4.580). Despite vaunting his descriptive abilities, it is the size and the shape of Tristram's chapter 'as long as [his] arm' that runs foremost across the reader's visual field. Fielding's chapter measurements are precise to a point of redundancy. What information, after all, does his reader glean from learning that a chapter contains '*five Pages of Paper*' beyond how long it might take to read? Fielding exhausts the *capitulum's* vestiges in the chapter heading to humorous effect, establishing no textual strategy or outline beyond bald enumerative description. Tristram, in contrast, builds himself into his text, measuring his chapter against his anatomy as opposed to the number of pages on which it is printed. This is necessarily less precise; the reader can readily observe the size of Fielding's pages yet can only imagine the length of Tristram's arm. As Tadié observes, the passage satirises the language of empirical transparency in travel-writing, or 'the ability perfectly to convey into words the experience of sight'.[359] Our view of the town of Calais is obstructed by the presence of the very chapter

[356] Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, 294.
[357] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 4-5.
[358] Christopher Fanning, 'Small Particles of Eloquence: Sterne and the Scriblerian Text', *Modern Philology*, 100:3 (2003): 361.
[359] Tadié, *Whimsical Theatres*, 115.

Tristram claims will display it in detail. Moreover, the quantity of matter that occludes Calais is purely discursively evoked. To state the obvious, Tristram has no actual arm against which to measure his chapter. Where *Tom Jones*'s '*five Pages of Paper*' sends up any material precision that forgoes meaning, Sterne's measure of chaptered matter holds still less use for its reader, but remodels Fielding's flat reflexivity into a more rounded and surprising conceit.

Indeed, *Tristram Shandy'*s treatment of chaptering reframes many of the concerns of Fielding and his contemporaries. Tristram extols chaptering as a convenience 'to relieve the [reader's] mind' (*TS*, 4.10.337), almost certainly alluding to *Joseph Andrews*'s figure of the 'Inn or Resting-Place'. Like Fielding's narrator, he claims to value chaptering as a prudent technique of aeration, breaking up narrative into digestible components and, as in volume 6's opening hiatus, permitting the reader moments in which mentally to regather. Tristram also describes how its use 'in a work of this dramatic cast' allows for a 'shifting of scenes' (*TS*, 4.10.337) in the same theatrical idiom used in fictions such as *Charlotte Summer*s. Tristram disarms any accusation of indebtedness for these observations by dismissing them as 'cold conceits' in a meaningless 'parade of wisdom' (*TS*, 4.10.337), allowing Sterne to appropriate their descriptiveness whilst sidestepping any charge of plagiarism.

Tristram also describes the obverse to Arabella Dimple's use of chaptering as an 'oeconomic' means of textual preservation. He does so by portraying the haptic reading practices of another intradiegetic reader: Walter.

> my father shut the book,—not as if he resolved to read no more of it, for he kept his forefinger in the chapter:——nor pettishly,—for he shut the book slowly; his thumb resting, when he had done it, upon the upper-side of the cover, as his three fingers supported the lower-side of it, without the least compressive violence (*TS*, 5.33.118).

Helen Williams argues that Sterne stages Walter's reading as an 'intensely embodied experience' through his imitation of the manicule, a gesticulatory printer's device used as a textual waymark throughout the eighteenth century.[360] Walter's corporeality as a reader is evoked through his hand's functional similitude to a piece of type, which itself imitates the

[360] Helen Williams, 'Sterne's Manicules: Hands, Handwriting and Authorial Property in *Tristram Shandy*', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 2 (2013): 213.

place-holding of a reader's hand. In a description typical of Sterne's idiosyncratic textual-sexual intercourse, Walter retains his forefinger 'in the chapter' rather than 'on the page', the chapter functioning as a gap in the almost-closed book that invites fondling. He marks the chapter with his finger so as to suspend readerly consummation, hovering ('not as if he resolved to read no more of it') between closure and continuation. The chapter as textual aerator marks a point at which Walter can discontinue—but not necessarily to conclude—his line of thought, even whilst he continues manually to probe the text.

Despite the ominous caveat that his book-handling entails no 'compressive violence', Walter proves otherwise inept at textual husbandry and presides over a wracked library. His onanistic habits compare poorly with Arabella's sociable reading practices in terms of how well he preserves his stock of literature. Attempting to impose his own hobby-horsical preconceptions on books, he inadvertently wreaks the same damage upon them as he does upon the body of his son. Whilst seeking an authority on ideal nose shapes, for example, Walter resorts to 'trying experiments' with a penknife upon a volume of Erasmus so to 'scratch some better sense into it'. The experiment culminates with the comic destruction of the book, Walter's ploy to slice into Erasmus's 'mystic meaning' indelibly marring the page:

> —See, my dear brother *Toby*, how I have mended the sense.—But you have marr'd a word, replied my uncle *Toby*.—My father put on his spectacles,—bit his lip,—and tore out the leaf in a passion (*TS*, 3.37.272)

Arabella, by contrast, is a modish, albeit similarly self-absorbed, intradiegetic reader in that she fashions her practice in opposition to the 'ugly Custom' of folding corners in books. That she does so, however, allows her stock of literature to remain the better preserved.

As Hunter notes, this second-degree-ness in *Tristram Shandy*'s treatment of chaptering suggests that Sterne sought to 'demystify the feature, redeem it, and then use it in a more self-conscious way'.[361] One of the ways he does so is to reorient commonplace expressions that draw from its practice through tropes of slippage such as syllepsis and metalepsis. 'To the end of the chapter' was, as Johnson's dictionary attests, already a stock

[361] Hunter, 'Typology to Type', 50.

'proverbial phrase' by the mid-eighteenth century, meaning 'throughout; to the end'.[362] Sterne deploys the phrase within a chapter on Walter's elucidation of Socrates, allowing it to stand either as a cliché of narration or as a straightforward report of Walter's place within his text:

> She [Tristram's mother] listened to [Walter's discourse on Socrates] with composed intelligence, *and would have done so to the end of the chapter* [italics mine], had not my father plunged (which he had no occasion to have done) into that part of the pleading where the great philosopher reckons up his connections (*TS*, 5.13.442)

As with Tristram's chapter on Calais, Sterne interrogates the border between the diegetic scene Tristram depicts and the material text that produces and frames it. Is it the chapter in Walter's Socrates to which Tristram refers? Or is he referring to the chapter we are reading that depicts Tristram's parents in dialogue? The object of the referent 'chapter' is indeterminate; Sterne stages a metaleptic conflation of Walter's chapter as contained *in* the diegetic scene and Tristram's chapter that contains, determines, and frames that self-same scene. Both onion and onion-peeler, Sterne's fiction hereby defamiliarises a nominally conventional 'to the end of the chapter' by restaging it as a textual *aporia*.

Sometimes, as in volume 2, chapter 11, Sterne rests a chapter upon a sole conceit in quite virtuosic fashion, here prising open a discursive gap between narrator and reader that he has so far claimed to diminish. Up until the chapter's midpoint, Tristram has notionally presented his life's work as a 'conversation' in which matters are divvied up amicably between men of 'decorum and good breeding' (*TS*, 2.11.125). However, this seductive hint at collaboration introduces a passage of strict dictation to the reader's imagination:

> ***Let the reader*** imagine then, that Dr. *Slop* has told his tale;——and in what words, and with what aggravations his fancy chooses:——***Let him suppose*** that *Obadiah* has told his tale also, and with such rueful looks of affected concern, as he thinks will best contrast the two figures as they stand by each other: ***Let him imagine*** that my father

[362] Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. 'CHA'PTER'.

> has stepp'd up stairs to see my mother:—And, to conclude this work of imagination,—***let him imagine*** the Doctor wash'd,——rubb'd down,—condoled with,—felicitated— (*TS*, 2.11.126—bold italics mine)

Commenting on the episode, Keymer observes that 'within a few sentences, the relaxed convenor of collaborative meanings has mutated into a control freak'; he could just as easily have written 'within the space of a chapter'.[363] The chapter pivots on two competing conceptions of narrative discourse: one in which narrator and reader enjoy a parity of imaginative labour, and another in which the reader features as a passive consumer. In contrast to the easy conversational style with which it opens, the chapter develops through a taut anaphoric sequence of imperatives (in bold italics) that periodically terminate in dashes, creating a squeeze-release valve through which Tristram drip feeds narrative to his reader-consumer. 'The reader', described rather than addressed as 'you, [the reader]', is gradually dissociated from any too-close-a familiarity with Tristram as narrator. The chapter is a self-contained, almost hermetically sealed exercise in essayistic wit in which Sterne bounces a single concern—the nature of narrative 'conversation'—up against his structuring of the text.

Such conceits may owe a debt via Fielding to Scriblerian wit. Where Sterne's theory and practice of chaptering is more innovative lies in its shifting between the 'oeconomic' as the husbandry of narrative material and the 'economic' as constructing more abstract models of value. Staging scaled-down cycles of obsolescence and renewal, Tristram often interrupts his narration to start afresh, using chapters to contain and thereby license new imaginative flights. For example, volume 1, chapter 23 introduces Tristram's vision of sympathy between Mercury's 'vitrified' inhabitants by announcing 'I have a strong propensity in me to begin this chapter very nonsensically, and I will not balk my fancy.—Accordingly I set off thus' (*TS*, 1.23.82). Sometimes, Tristram will break off a chapter so as to observe a decorum of style even at the expense of narrative continuity. Volume 2, chapter 3 concludes with the following cautionary apostrophe addressed to Uncle Toby:

> O my uncle! fly--fly--fly-- from [knowledge] as a serpent—Is it fit, good-natur'd man! thou should'st sit up, with the wound upon thy groin, whole nights baking thy blood

[363] Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 35.

> with hectic watchings?—Alas! 'twill exasperate thy symptoms, […] and hasten all the infirmities of thy old age.—O my uncle! my uncle *Toby* (*TS*, 2.3.103-104)

Volume 2, chapter 4 duly opens by informing us that

> I Would not give a groat for that man's knowledge in pencraft, who does not understand this,——That the best plain narrative in the world, tack'd very close to the last spirited apostrophe to my uncle *Toby*,—would have felt both cold and vapid upon the reader's palate;—therefore I forthwith put an end to the chapter,—though I was in the middle of my story (*TS*, 2.4.104).

Elsewhere, Tristram broaches a new topic as a chapter develops, only to rein himself in to allow a new chapter to begin. Narrating the news of Bobby Shandy's death reaching Shandy Hall, Tristram, having digressed into relating Tacitus's account of Agrippina's grief, decides that 'how my father went on, in my opinion, deserves a chapter to itself' (*TS*, 5.2.418). The next chapter opens with the pronouncement

> ——— ———And a chapter it shall have, and a devil of a one too—so look to yourselves (*TS*, 5.3.418).

Duplicating Tristram's earlier threshold for 'the curious and inquisitive' reader, Sterne's lineal typography allows for a clear demarcation of textual boundaries.

Chaptering evinces compositional prowess in all three preceding examples, albeit contradictorily. In the first, venturing a new chapter stresses Tristram's authorial originality; in the second and third, ending a chapter allows him to observe a rhetorical rule in relation to the Shandy household. Self-reflexive concern over how copious and how varied the matter apportioned to each chapter should be is not uniquely Sternean. The narrator of *The Life and Memoirs of Mr. Ephraim Tristram Bates* (1756), a well-established antecedent 'Tristram', also measures narrative incidents across its divisions, determining, for example, at the end of chapter 2 that 'What followed would make this chapter too long; and, with a small Addition,

is enough for the next'.[364] Sterne's Tristram differs in the extent to which his chaptering features explicitly as a tool for domestic regulation. Tristram uses new chapters to insert documents from the Shandean family archive such as the 'Memoire presenté a Messieurs les Docteurs de Sorbonne' and its 'Réponse' (*TS*, 1.10.67-70), Walter's 'CAP. XXXV. Excommunicatio' (*TS*, 3.10.202) and most famously Yorick's sermon '*For we* trust *we have a good Conscience*' (*TS*, 2.17.142). Such divisions form what Carol Watts terms Sterne's 'montage' effect, a 'juxtaposition of temporal zones' and intra-texts that distributes 'images of social discourse' such as homilies and legal proceedings throughout the tale.[365] Chaptering here works in Shaftesbury's 'miscellarian' sense, allowing Sterne to extend disparate 'rolls, records' (*TS*, 1.14.41) and lists into segments whilst also sequencing them in a collection.

Tristram's introduction of the sermon to advertise a forthcoming 'handsome volume, at the world's service' (*TS*, 2.17.167), however, intimates that *Tristram Shandy*'s chapters also figure within more complex considerations of value. Representing the progress of his work through the marketplace requires Sterne to employ a prolepsis that, in Lupton's terms, 'inflate[s] the knowledge an author can plausibly claim to have of the writing process […] by extending it to take account of the book as an object already in print'.[366] When Tristram promotes the auctioning of his 'Virgin-Dedication' (*TS*, 1.9.15) in the first volume, he makes an offer to the successfully bidding Lord that 'in the next edition care shall be taken that this chapter be expunged, and your Lordship's titles, distinctions, arms and good actions, be placed at the front of the preceding chapter' (*TS*, 1.9.16). In principle, Tristram reduces the dedicatory chapter to a fungible component within the text that can be switched for another of a higher value. In practice, Tristram provides only a model for discontinuance, the dedicatory chapter remaining unchanged in subsequent editions. In the accompanying commentary, Tristram claims to solicit the approval of the 'Lord' who will purchase his dedication, but, in a subordinate aside, assumes superior knowledge of how a dedication should draw its subject: 'if I may be allowed, my Lord, to understand my own *design*, and supposing absolute perfection in *designing*' (*TS*, 1.9.16). Tristram has already reckoned the chapter according to his '*design*', and the text invites its patron (and readers) to recognize passively Tristram's

[364] *The Life and Memoirs of Mr. Ephraim Tristram Bates* (W. Owen, 1756), 25; Keymer cites this as an example of how both narrators continually perform 'calculations about structure'. Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 52.
[365] Watts, *Cultural Work of Empire*, 56.
[366] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 34.

skill rather than actively to dictate the terms of his art. In doing so, Tristram protects the integrity of his work even whilst attempting to establish its commercial protocols.

Trade in chaptering occurs again in volume 4, chapter 13, which opens with Tristram demanding his chairman 'step into that bookseller's shop, and call me a *day-tall* critick' (*TS*, 4.13.340). As Keymer observes, *Tristram Shandy* often contrives 'narrative *aporia* through creative deformations of print conventions'.[367] The instruction to the chairman augurs one such example, which Sterne dramatizes as a scene of metatextual bargaining. The fiction maintains its polite veneer by directing our viewpoint from inside Tristram's carriage onto the shopfront exteriors of textual commerce, withholding any glimpse of its internal dealings. The *aporia* figures in its rhetorical sense, with Sterne situating Tristram in a strategic posture of doubt. Having directed Walter and Toby onto the stairs in his narrative, Tristram finds himself in need of a way to 'put them to bed'. This sparks the associated realisation that the time it takes to compose his narrative far exceeds any time narrated:

> I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve-month; and having got, as you perceive, almost into the middle of my fourth volume—and no farther than my first day's life—'tis demonstrative that I have three hundred and sixty-four days more life to write just now, than when I first set out (*TS*, 4.13.341)

Although one of Sterne's most celebrated passages, few commentators note that Tristram's answer to his temporal fix is a division of labour, offering the chapter as a unit of exchange for completion to the '*day-tall* critick' for the price of 'a crown' (*TS*, 4.13.340). Ostensibly a neat solution, Tristram's proposed textual outsourcing can only further fragment our visual panorama of 'the country' we have been traversing. If Sterne's point at that later juncture is to demonstrate how his narrative landscape divides across five discrete volumes, here he presents the further divided segments within those volumes as tradable commodities.

The episode mirrors Pope's hints at a division of labour in Scriblerus's *Memoirs*, whilst again transcending the flat reflexivity of Fielding's chapter '*Containing five Pages of Paper*'. In envisaging the outsourcing of his text, Tristram does not simply outline his chapter in terms of its raw materials, but rather ascribes an abstract value-form by which, to

[367] Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 74.

paraphrase Lynn Festa, value not only inheres within the single chapter, but also outside it, and in its differential relation to other chapters as commodities.[368] Where Sterne's fiction departs from those of Pope and Fielding is in this claim to cohere through a marketplace compositional logic in which chapters are distributed as fungible components across a balanced and abstracted textual economy. McKeon argues that the market, unlike older commercial models, conceives value as 'a general and homogenous category available through the equalization of particular and distinct commodities'; it 'invite[s] the figure of the general as a concrete but virtual space composed of many actual particulars'.[369] We see this logic evinced in Sterne's assurance to Robert Dodsley that *Tristram Shandy*'s satire would remain 'general' and therefore 'saleable', but more so in *Tristam*'s fourth volume, which features a ten-page glitch in its pagination.

Tristram's apparently expunged chapter has garnered attention of late as an example of self-editing and as a sizeable lacuna in his text. Anne Toner reads it as another oblique gloss on *Joseph Andrews*'s figure of the Inn, with the chasm acting much like Fielding's 'vacant Pages […] placed between our books' as a temporal omission that allows for a more insistent closing of the preceding scene: 'Tristram reassures the reader, in a parody of Fielding's approach, that in spite of 'a chasm of ten pages', the book 'is more perfect and complete by wanting the chapter, than having it''.[370] In the fullest treatment to date, Nicholas D. Nace notes that Tristram's description of the missing chapter as a 'chasm […] in the book' rather than a hiatus in 'the story' marks the point at which we may 'begin to question whether these two concepts are as interchangeable as we might have thought'.[371] Nace further observes that, according to the pagination given, the 'chapter wanting' amounts to nine missing pages (147-155 in the first edition), a number that makes little sense if the omission were to be accounted for as a cancelled quire in an octavo book.[372] Whilst the pagination skips according to Tristram's omission, the foliation signatures (L, L2 etc.) remain constant, with the effect that the convention for pagination—i.e. odd numbers for the recto, even for the verso—is reversed until the end of the volume:

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[368] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 16.
[369] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 106.
[370] Anne Toner, *Ellipsis in English Literature: Signs of Omission* (CUP, 2015), 67.
[371] Nicholas D. Nace, 'Unprinted Matter: Conceptual Writing and *Tristam Shandy's* 'chasm of ten pages'', *Shandean* 24 (2013): 31.
[372] *Ibid*., 32.

> The page on which chapter 23 concludes is the verso of the first leaf of signature L. In our move across to the recto, the signature continues uninterrupted with L2, though the pagination has jumped. We see '[156]' and, below it, 'CHAP. XXV.' A lost chapter and nine missing pages, with the added unease of inaugurating the volume-long process of what Peter de Voogd has termed 'typographical alienation': rectos that seem like versos, and vice versa, until the end of the volume.[373]

There is thus a discrepancy between the regularity of the material text as printed and bound in formes and the irregularity of the pagination, a textual feature which usually provides a measure of consistency. The most obvious observation regarding this discrepancy is that it assures Sterne's readers that there is, in fact, nothing truly amiss with their individual copies of the volume; the foliation meets consumer expectation even whilst the pagination subverts it. For Nace, whose essay links Tristram's 'experiment' to the conceptual writings of Kenneth Goldsmith and Craig Dworkin, the conclusions to draw are that, for Tristram, who corrects his work for 'stile and manner', 'Completeness […] is a matter best understood stylistically' and that 'representation needs to follow a logic of expressive consistency, not narrative exigency'.[374] The fact that the absent chapter leaves its physical mark on the volume in its reversed pagination and in the discrepancy between that pagination and its foliation, inscribes the 'Nothing' of the missing chapter as a 'force exerted from within the book itself'.[375]

Tristram's own justification for the omission, which appears in the following chapter, speaks not in conceptual terms of an internal exertion of 'Nothing'—as if the missing chapter were an autotelic black hole—at the centre of his writings. Nor, following Toner's line of argument, is there any indication that Tristram views this 'perfection' as a device the better to draw a curtain over the preceding scene. Nace is correct in that the material trace left by the chapter's absent presence is important. Its effect on the pagination re-centres the whole volume's structure. However, both Toner and Nace omit the explicit market rationale that Tristram gives for the apparent cancellation:

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[373] *Ibid.*, 32.
[374] *Ibid.*, 33
[375] *Ibid.*, 31

> [The chapter], upon reviewing it, appears to be so much above the stile and manner of any thing else I have been able to paint in this book, that it could not have remained in it, without depreciating every other scene; and destroying at the same time that necessary equipoise and balance […] betwixt chapter and chapter, from whence the just proportions and harmony of the whole work results (*TS*, 4.25.374).

As Johnson's *Dictionary* attests, to 'depreciate' meant, much as it does now, 'to bring a thing down to a lower price' or 'to undervalue'.[376] Concerned with establishing a regular economy of style, and thereby fixing a more abstract measure of value across his work, Tristram insists even momentary excellence should yield to commercial 'equipoise'—even if such an internal harmony of parts has to be taken as something of a joke in an irregularly continued text impressed so explicitly upon by external factors. Once again proleptically projecting his life's work as an already completed whole, Tristram also presents it as a closed and determined system of chapters which, because Tristram understands its internal distribution, can be manipulated to maximise its textual value. The conceit bears a close relation to the pleonasm or 'performed pun' that Jonathan Lamb discerns as characteristic of Sterne's 'double principle'; Tristram 'perfects' his book by erasing a chapter that approaches perfection.[377]

This is McKeon's bifocal abstract-concrete logic of the market in miniature: Tristram ascribes an abstract value to the overarching work, which he derives from the 'stile and manner' of its myriad constituent chapters. In order to maintain this valuation's consistency as a virtual measure, Tristram sloughs off any individual chapter that threatens to deviate from, or, in Smith's later parlance, 'derange' its internal 'distribution'.[378] Crucially, it is from the 'actual' particulars of the text's chapters rather than the 'concrete' particulars of the fiction's diegetic world that Tristram creates his valuative model, complicating McKeon's analogy between mid-century fiction—which, in McKeon's argument, generalises from 'concrete' particulars—and the market, which creates an abstract model from 'actual' particulars. The fiction as a scaled-down model for market economics does not, however, fully meet Taylor's definition of 'the economy' as a social imaginary: its regular 'economy of style' is not established through self-regulation given that the only 'interest' or idiolect determining its abstract measure of value is Tristram's. Tristram as author-protagonist defines

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[376] Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. 'DEPRE'CIATE'
[377] Jonathan Lamb, *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* (CUP, 1989), 44-51.
[378] Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 2:630.

the episode as an 'experiment' (*TS*, 4.25.372), albeit one that fails to meet any standard of peer-review given that its results are pre-determined and kept hidden from his readers. The unconventional pagination that emerges in the fourth volume inscribes Tristram's oddity as its sole imputer of textual value (this point is lost when Nace attempts anachronistically to link Sterne's fiction to the conceptual writings of Goldsmith or Dworkin). The book's divisions of production are measured, cut, and repositioned so as to achieve its author-protagonist's desired assemblage of print.

This manipulation of chapters across a balanced textual economy culminates midway through the text in Tristram's 'chapter upon chances' (*TS*, 4.9.335), which ironically provides a fuller account of *Tristram Shandy*'s chapters than the following 'chapter upon chapters' (*TS*, 4.10.338). In another metaleptic intrusion between the diegetic scene that Tristram depicts and its compositional divisions, Walter ponders with Toby 'what a long chapter of chances […] the events of this world lay open to us' (*TS*, 4.9.335). As with Tristram's missing chapter, the episode has garnered recent critical attention. Molesworth describes it as 'perhaps the most famous fictional meditation on chance authored in the eighteenth century', whilst also observing the contradictory nature of Walter's musings: 'if events unfold in chapters, according to a scripted narrative, they can hardly be said to happen by chance, which designates the absence of cause or preparation'.[379] Lupton likewise notes the episode's interplay between contingency and authorial calculation, citing volume 4's aforementioned 'missing' chapter as an example of one Sterne 'might have placed differently in another version of the novel'.[380] Drawing on Mark Currie's notion of the 'ontological category', the 'chapter upon chances' for Lupton exposes a phenomenological fissure that divides 'all kinds of unwritten narrative and experience from the novel as something written down'.[381] If this focus on chance, contingency, and modality stresses the interplay between art (technē) and contingency (tychē) that Shell sees as inherent to any complex economy of authorship, it also neatly compliments Walter Shandy's own preoccupation with auxiliary verbs as linguistic producers of what is conceptually possible.[382]

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[379] Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 193.
[380] Christina Lupton, 'Contingency, Codex, the Eighteenth-Century Novel', *ELH* 81, no. 4 (2014): 1176-1177.
[381] *Ibid.*, 1176; Lupton iterates Currie's description of how 'In written text, the future lies there to the right, awaiting its actualization by the reading, so that written text can be said to offer us a block view of time which is never offered to us in lived experience'. Mark Currie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 2.
[382] Shell, *Economy of Literature*, 98.

As with volume 4's missing chapter, Sterne negotiates two distinct conceptions: (1) of the text as contingent and determined by external factors, and (2) of the text as planned, systematic, and therefore under authorial control. Within their discussion of chance and contingency, neither Molesworth nor Lupton comments on the promissory role that chapters play in the episode as a form of paper-credit negotiated with Tristram's reader. Tristram uses Walter's comment as a prompt to provide a reckoning of chapters promised to his reader against those delivered—so far, few:

> What a lucky chapter of chances has this turned out! for it has saved me the trouble of writing one express, and in truth I have anew already upon my hands without it—— Have not I promised the world a chapter of knots? two chapters upon the right and the wrong end of a woman? a chapter upon whiskers? a chapter upon wishes?—a chapter of noses?—No, I have done that—a chapter upon my uncle *Toby*'s modesty? to say nothing of a chapter upon chapters, which I will finish before I sleep—by my great grandfather's whiskers, I shall never get half of 'em through this year (*TS*, 4.9.335).

The passage works at surface-level as a confession of ineptitude in which Tristram laments that he has contracted himself to too many chapters on too many subjects and will fail to fulfil his quota before the time of next publishing. Sterne evokes, to paraphrase Lupton, a doubling of powerlessness as entertainment in which Tristram's readers find themselves contracted to an author who himself claims to be captive to the contingencies and processes of modern commercial authorship.[383]

This play with powerlessness is simply that: it allows Sterne to present the previous volumes and those still to be published in terms of units promised, units delivered, and those still in progress. In doing so, he uses chaptering to introduce a structure of deferred value within his fiction. The varied and variously intricate forms of writing we recognise as paper-credit—promissory notes, bills of exchange and bank papers—are all performative tokens; they are texts that *do* what they *say*. They serve the business of a commercial society that has increasingly come to perceive itself as spectacle or as social theatre. Promises, David Hume observes in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (for which we can also read promissory notes and

[383] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 43.

paper-credit), are public undertakings enacted through 'certain symbols or signs instituted, by which we might give each other security of our conduct in any particular incident'.[384] In Christensen's words, the promise for Hume thus 'stabilises the potentially volatile relations between constancy and transference' in 'configuring a triangle that reroutes the avidity of the individual in an oblique path of possession without satisfaction and of lack without despair'.[385] The configuring of possession 'without satisfaction' and lack 'without despair' well-describes the reader's relation to the chapters Tristram inventories. Many remain incomplete; many can be 'owned' only as hints towards future instalments. Within Sterne's quite Humean model of textual distribution, the chapter as promise, as promissory note, and as paper-credit hooks into a libidinal economy that binds author and consumer to the fiction as an object of as-yet unconsummated desire. In positing his undelivered chapters as a speculative reward, Sterne evokes a fantasy of the future completed text that resembles public credit's fantasy of future full repayment.[386] The author(s), booksellers, and their associates can defer any consummation of reader desire, as *Tristram Shandy* demonstrates, through controlled serialisation, which, in terms of a narrative oeconomy and in support of William Kenrick's appraisal, also resembles the astute husbandry of a stock of letters.[387]

As Keymer suggests, the effect of Tristram's reckoning at this point can be lost on the modern reader, for whom the entirety of Sterne's text is available in one volume.[388] *Tristram Shandy*, as volume 6's opening reminds us, originally appeared across nine octavo volumes published intermittently—indeed, between volumes 4 and 9, increasingly erratically—over an eight-year period. When Sterne provides his chapter breakdown in volume 4, to the reader in early 1761 he is summarising over a year's worth of narrative promises made, some kept, many remaining unfulfilled until an as-yet unknown date. He thereby opens a rift in terms of authorial-commercial strategy between himself and his protagonist. Tristram as 'author-

[384] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1:335.
[385] Christensen, *Practicing Enlightenment*, 123.
[386] Jean-François Lyotard's 'libidinal economy' is useful as a conceptual tool in that, as Tom Mole argues, it allows scholarship on literary commerce 'to move beyond Marxist base-superstructure analysis and suggest ways in which the desires of individual readers, the economic arrangements of publishers and poetic techniques of an author become intertwined'. Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 174.n.1.
[387] Lyotard himself asserts the applicability of this model to *Tristram Shandy* in an extraordinary and often-overlooked comparison between Sterne and Marx. We should read 'Marx's inability to catch up with his book [*Capital*]', Lyotard argues, not as 'an effect of masochism or guilt', but in comparison with Sterne's narrative and publishing practices, which '[make] a theme of this delay'. Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (Bloomsbury, 2015), 115.
[388] Keymer argues that *Tristram Shandy* 'was not only irregularly written across a period of more than seven years but also irregularly published in the intermissions of writing, at every stage of which process the future shape and direction of the text remained largely […] unfixed'. Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 85.

protagonist' fears artistic failure, having overcommitted himself to a wildly diffuse final product; Sterne as 'author-proper' teases his readers with a reminder of all that they have invested in over three-and-a-bit volumes and all that remains (however much that may be) to venture through. The 'chapter upon chances' and those it inventories interlock within Sterne's desire-machine of promises and guarantees, providing Christensen's oblique form of 'possession without satisfaction' and 'lack without despair'.

The inclusion of Tristram's inventory in volume 4 is timely in another sense. The contract that Sterne signed with James Dodsley on 8 March 1760 brought him £250 for the first London edition of volumes 1 and 2 of *Tristram Shandy* and £380 for volumes 3 and 4. It contained no provision for any further instalments. Tristram had promised his reader in volume 1 that 'if I am suffered to go on quietly, and can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live' (*TS*, 1.12.42), yet as events transpired, Sterne himself was unable to strike any further bargains with the Dodsleys. Possibly Sterne's inclusion of the inventory in volume 4 was originally designed to remind the Dodsleys of the potential that *Tristram* still held as a serial publication. It doubles also as an effective sales pitch for other booksellers and readers. Whilst Sterne was composing volumes 5 and 6, he was still yet to secure his new association with Becket and de Hondt.[389] As Cash notes, the earliest advertisements for volumes 5 and 6 in the *London Chronicle* (Tuesday 24 and Thursday 26 November, 1761) and the *York Courant* (Tuesday 1 December, 1761) do not mention any bookseller and it is likely that Sterne finalised his new arrangements only in December. As with the York edition of *Tristram*'s first instalment, Sterne shouldered much of the initial financial risk; he purchased the paper and arranged for the printing of both volumes with the printer William Strahan. By the end of 1761, Sterne was essentially acting as his own publisher, with Becket now his agent (he appears to have had few direct dealings with de Hondt), Strahan his printer, and William Edmonds his stationer. In this light, the fourth volume's inventory of promised chapters re-establishes in abstract terms Tristram's credit as author-protagonist with his readers prior to Sterne re-establishing his financial credit as a self-publishing author-proper with London's book trade. Sterne's dealings with that trade remained makeshift and speculative. In presenting and cataloguing the now-conventional divisions of narrative as tradeable components, he invites his reader imaginatively to reinvest in Tristram's text as the ongoing, always provisional progress of a life in publishing.

[389] Cash, *Later Years*, 111.

IV. Order: *A Sentimental Journey*.

Tristram Shandy's chaptering retains Fielding's focus on how his texts are consumed whilst introducing a value-form and a complex conception of market economy to his flat reflexivity. *Tristram*'s chapters are remarkably fungible in this regard: they are cut, repositioned, put up for auction, and even outsourced for completion. The question to consider is whether Tristram's strategies as an author-protagonist correspond to Sterne's as author-proper. Did Sterne compose his fiction in discrete chapters capable of being switched, traded, or expunged in order to regulate his narrative economy? No extensive surviving manuscripts for *Tristram* have been discovered beyond volume 6's tale of Le Fever, which Sterne copied out separately as a gift for its dedicatee Lady Spencer.[390] But perhaps the extant fair copy manuscript in Sterne's hand, used by the printer of the first volume of *A Sentimental Journey*, can help to answer our question.[391]

A Sentimental Journey also introduces some subtle yet important changes in Sterne's chaptering. Sterne handles their distribution across the text with a lesser degree of reflexivity through his central author-protagonist. As Tadié observes, Yorick is rarely situated as an arranger 'in the workshop of narration' or of the final printed text to the same degree as Tristram; he rarely vaunts chaptering as evidence of his authorial prowess, seldom discusses when or how to end and begin chapters, or inventories them as does Tristram.[392] *Tristram Shandy*'s chapters contain no headings unless to indicate the interpolation of a text from the Shandean family archive. They are marked sequentially with roman numerals and prior to volume 9 usually run contiguously on the page, leaving only a small space after each chapter ends and before the next begins. This presentation aids many of *Tristram*'s more elaborate japes with the material book such as the 'chasm of ten pages' (*TS*, 4.25.372) in volume 4; it is because Tristram's chapters are clearly numbered in sequence that we notice when they contravene that sequence or appear to have been expunged.

A Sentimental Journey's more subdued approach regarding its internal workings belies an equally mannered and careful structuring. In the first edition (and as in *Tristram Shandy*'s ninth volume) each chapter starts afresh on a new page. This may evince mere expediency on Sterne's part—the need to pad out limited narrative resources even further as

[390] Melvyn New, 'A Manuscript of the Le Fever Episode in *Tristram Shandy*', *Scriblerian* 23, no. 2 (1991): 165-174.
[391] Commonly referred to as *S1* in scholarly editions and catalogued in the British Library as Egerton MS 1610.
[392] Tadié, *Whimsical Theatres*, 83.

his health declined—but the effect is to leave often extensive quantities of white space in the text. In place of *Tristram Shandy*'s roman numerals, every chapter now has a verbal heading. Some are composed of a prepositional phrase combined with a location, such as 'In the Street. Calais' (*ASJ*, 20, 30, 36), orienting the reader within the fiction's geography; others provide a location coupled with an object or character around which the scene's affective action takes place, such as 'Nampont. The Dead Ass'. As Tadié notes, the formulation is bifocal: it outlines Yorick's travel itinerary while also unifying the action of each scene.[393] Excepting Yorick's extended preface in the *desobligeant*, the *Journey*'s chapters do not vary so wildly in length as those in *Tristram*, providing both a formal regularity to its narrative movement as well as a sense that, even when we are following Yorick on the open road, we are enclosed in scenes.

A Sentimental Journey's episodes thus appear within textual frames that, in Benedict's terms, apply 'spectatorial distance' and aesthetic reflexivity to emotive response. The conventions of travel-writing provide a broader generic frame for Yorick's sentimental encounters, within which these two frames (material-textual and discursive-generic) act in tension, creating 'a structural dialectic' between 'static' scene and 'dynamic narrative'.[394] For Chandler, the *Journey*'s divisions should therefore not be considered chapters so much as 'brief titled sections' which he elsewhere describes as 'vignettes'.[395] Even as they facilitate movement within the *Journey*, the 'frame or box' in which sentimental vignettes appear also fetishizes and detaches feeling, much like Yorick's snuffbox.[396] One example of this occurs in the fifth chapter of the first volume, 'The Monk. Calais.' Following Yorick's tirade against the Order of St. Francis, the monk departs and every 'ungracious syllable' Yorick has spoken returns to overpower his 'imagination' (*ASJ*, 11). The chapter pivots around Yorick's reflective distress in relation to its titular monk, yet it is also filtered to the reader through Yorick's narration. Yorick's inability to change his prior treatment of the monk allows his past-tense narrative to linger on the ensuing feelings without placing him at fault for not acting on those. In Michael Bell's terms, the frame of the closed vignette grants the reader the 'leisure, or freedom, to reflect on the values rehearsed in the narrative' as Yorick interrogates his own behaviour before resolving to 'learn better manners as I get along' (*ASJ*, 11).[397] For

[393] *Ibid.*, 82.
[394] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 26.
[395] Chandler, *Archaeology of Sympathy*, 5.
[396] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 41-42.
[397] Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, Culture of Feeling*, 71.

Yorick and the reader, the ethical and aesthetic are conjoined; what is 'seen' by the reader at a certain spectatorial distance is the intimate 'scene' of feeling Sterne frames through Yorick's episodic narration. His resolution provides an impetus to move onto the following vignette, which describes how Yorick's '[discontent] with himself' (*ASJ*, 12) equips his mind to bargain for the *desobligeant*. Yorick's scene of self-scrutiny, which asks readers to consider feelings in stasis and *in themselves*, returns to narrative movement in Yorick's commitment to re-socialize those feelings.

The shift from *Tristram Shandy*'s numerical sequence to organization by location further suggests a new prioritising of spatial over temporal layout. The sense of location conveyed through these headings coheres through parataxis and repetition, wherein key phrases and objects such as 'Remise', 'Passport,' or 'Fragment' reappear and lock each other into position. This iterative and more regular structure of discrete episodes and encounters, Tadié argues, more distinctly reflects an act and scene division than Sterne's previous fictions had done:

> These blanks introduce changes of scene, and provide the reader with a visual equivalent of the movements of characters […] The different titles can be viewed as contents of chapters, but the juxtaposition of the name of a place in France, with the title, although paying lip service to the fact that this text purports to be a travel book, suggests a setting, as in a play[398]

By this argument, chaptering in *A Sentimental Journey* permits each vignette to focus on one or two affecting details while also allowing characters to enter or exit between each scene. The blanks that Sterne leaves between the *Journey*'s chapters allow for clean and convincing transitions, particularly when shifting from the interiors in which much of the fiction takes place to scenes on the road.

If we take a detailed look at Tadié's analogy of *A Sentimental Journey*'s scenic construction, an intriguing shift occurs from *Charlotte Summers*' earlier outline: scenes as titled and offset in Sterne's fiction do not facilitate the external narrative simultaneity of 'elsewhere' and 'meanwhile' so much as the relation between an internalized spectatorial

[398] Tadié, *Whimsical Theatres*, 82.

distance—in which, as in the 'The Monk. Calais', the author-narrator doubles to reflect upon his own feelings—and the exterior movement of Yorick's travels. In Agnew's analysis of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), the impartial spectator emerges as a detached aspect of the affective imagination in Smith's pseudo-theatrical model of sympathy '[o]nce man ha[s] physically distanced himself from the demands of material necessity'. In the luxuries it affords, its divisions of labour, and the concomitant appreciation of leisure time as distinct *from* labour, the commodity economy in Smith's thought 'inevitably bring[s] forth a world of spectators'.[399] So Sterne presents both Yorick and the reader with the leisured space to reflect on feelings-*qua*-phenomenological experience. As in Yorick's account of his encounter with Father Lorenzo, Smith's sympathy requires the spectator 'to impersonate the sufferer within the theatre of his own mind', which also requires that the spectator become an actor within the internalized scene—but an actor decentered in his role as experiencing feeling for another.[400] 'Active' spectatorship as internalized, Agnew argues, is thus indicative in Smith's thought less of an 'invisible hand' than of an 'invisible eye' which emerges in commercial societies to regulate how one imaginatively relates to others.[401]

The analogy, however, again insists on difference as much as any similarity between theatre and text. Scenic spectatorship may adhere to Smith's laws of social emergence in the *Journey*, but it is explicitly mediated by the material text and, conversely, insists upon the singularity and privacy of feeling as a prerequisite of exhibiting that feeling to its audience. In a passage that Sterne revised at the final stage of transcription, it is white space in the text that facilitates the mind turning in upon itself. Yorick explains to his reader that 'when your eyes are fixed upon a dead blank—you draw purely from yourselves' (*ASJ*, 21). Ostensibly, the 'blank' in question is the remise door in the scene on which Yorick's gaze is 'fixed', yet, given Sterne's propensity to obscure the line between 'text' and 'scene', the assertion evokes also the white spaces in the text as *tabula rasa*, with chaptering allowing for self-scrutiny and clarity rather than, as in Locke's treatment of Biblical chaptering, fragmentation of thought.

This is indicative of a text that explores how attempting to chart an affective cartography raises issues of mediation, that emphasises how wordless moments of sympathy must be conveyed to the reader using words and devices that restructure them, and that 'encourage[s] readers to look beyond the immediacy of feeling to revisit the material reality

[399] Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 179
[400] *Ibid.*, 183.
[401] *Ibid.*, 184.

that informs it,' in Kyoko Takanashi's terms.[402] When Yorick distinguishes himself as a traveller through the 'mere *Novelty of my Vehicle*'(*ASJ*, 15), he highlights, as Chandler notes, the interplay between narrative 'movement' and the capacity of the traveller to 'be moved' that a 'sentimental journey' entails, with much of that movement provided by the transitioning that chaptering affords.[403] The conventional claim to '*Novelty*' notwithstanding, the design of Yorick's '*Vehicle*' also determines the terrain he traverses, and indeed the ordering of text, thought, and itinerary all intertwine in his opening: '—They order, said I, this matter better in France' (*ASJ*, 3). In driving action from discourse at the *Journey*'s outset, Michael Seidel argues, Sterne 'makes the linguistic properties of utterance spatial', but more importantly, by inscribing 'the space for narrative projection' in these terms, he threads the 'matter' of what is, or should be, well 'order[ed]' into the fiction's textual weave.[404] Another instance of metaleptic slippage, it is the order of narrative 'matters'—that is, the material arrangement and divisions of the book itself—that Yorick most strongly evokes by asking that his reader interpret the conclusion of a conversation as the beginning of his journey.

Ordering, closely related to that of narrative (o)economy, proves a repeated concern of *A Sentimental Journey*. Considering the 'better order of beings' to which the Lady belongs as axiomatic, or as a 'general idea', leads Yorick to almost neglect 'a more particular inquiry' (*ASJ*, 30) regarding her circumstances before feeling intervenes. However, it is a disordering of those feelings (a 'discontented[ness] with himself') that prompts Yorick to retire to the *desobligeant* to compose his 'Preface', which itself comes doubly out of sequence. It appears late in the order of the book yet early in the order of composition, a preface being typically a summative paratext composed after a work's completion but placed before it within the book so as to promote it to the reader. Nature, 'prompting us to the thing we are fittest for', reorders 'matters' such that Yorick is inspired to write his preface only just after his journey has begun and before he has finished writing it. The preface in part harks back to *Tristram Shandy*'s use of chaptering, allowing Yorick to revert to what Cynthia Wall describes as 'detail-oriented description' through listing.[405] Yorick's catalogue inventories various traveller types and suggests that traveller-readers can know themselves better by recognising their type; yet Yorick's own reticence to occupy 'a whole nitch entirely to myself' (*ASJ*, 15)

[402] Kyoko Takanashi, 'Mediation, Reading, and Yorick's Sentimental Vehicle', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 49, no. 3 (2016): 488.
[403] Chandler, *Archaeology of Sympathy*, 176.
[404] Michael Seidel, 'Narrative Crossings: Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*', *Genre* 18 (1985): 2.
[405] Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 21.

as a sentimental traveller suggests how this chaptering departs from *Tristram*'s 'miscellarian' sense. The focus is no longer on 'oeconomising' the various documents and resources of a Shandean household; rather, it is on attempting to locate and specify affective encounters that threaten to evade even loose categorisations. Sterne now economizes his narrative less by stretching its resources, as in *Tristram*, and more by paring it to a formal scenic arrangement.

Sterne's sacrifice to these scenic set-pieces is not only *Tristram Shandy*'s former 'miscellarian' arrangement, but also chaptering's indexical function. *A Sentimental Journey*'s vignettes interlock through iterated title-words and phrases—there are, for example, four chapters headed 'The Passport. Versailles' following a further two 'Passport' chapters located in Paris. Because of this, it becomes increasingly hard to recall and locate in which chapter crucial events occur. Curiously, though, the *Journey* becomes, in Keymer's terms, even more 'calculable' than *Tristram* with regards to what is included in each chapter and what is apportioned to contiguous episodes. When Yorick pronounces in the seventeenth chapter of the first volume that, despite the length of his opening, he has in fact spent 'little more than a single hour in Calais', (*ASJ*, 36) the reader can readily see how Sterne has divided and compartmentalised that hour within fifteen episodes of comparable length (excluding the preface) situated around the monk, the remise door, the street, and the snuffbox. The 'large volume of adventures' that Yorick claims can be arranged from everything that 'time and chance […] perpetually' present to the sentimental traveller is, in one sense, the measurable (in terms of chaptered episodes) rewards of labour for the traveller who 'as he journeyeth on his way misses nothing he can fairly lay his hands on' (*ASJ*, 36). At the same time, the appeal to 'time and chance' also suggests that Yorick's sentimental traveller is one who capitalises on the possibilities of alternate orders or even *dis*ordering. Lupton shows how the apparent contradiction between formal regularity and a sentimental appeal to chance is reconcilable through the idea of reading 'contingency' (which 'exclu[des] […] impossibility and necessity from a proposition') in the bound codex form: 'Sentences and literary forms carry traces of the randomly accessible pool of language from which they are drawn, even as they fix one sentence after another'.[406] Read this way, even the closure of chaptered scenes evinces Yorick's openness to the logic that episodes *might have* been arranged otherwise.

Events, qualities, and associations often appear in unexpected arrangements such that they more powerfully affect Yorick. Observing a chivalrous beggar 'retiring two steps' from

[406] Christina Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 99, 100.

the crowd to withdraw 'his claim' for a *sous* (*ASJ*, 47), Yorick exclaims 'Just heaven! for what wise reasons hast thou order'd it, that beggary and urbanity, which are at such variance in other countries, should find a way to be at unity in this?' (*ASJ*, 47). For this reason, Sterne's concern with narrative ordering predominates even—perhaps, especially—during scenes in which his protagonist claims to be 'govern'd' by 'circumstances' rather than to 'govern them' (*ASJ*, 104). Yorick's indecisiveness at Versailles leads to La Fleur's 'impossible' discovery of the Chevalier de St. Louis 'selling *patès*' (*ASJ*, 104). The Chevalier's tale of declining fortune arrives unexpectedly and proves salutary in illustrating how peace after the Seven Years' War has led to the reformation of regiments, leaving distinguished soldiers with poor means of subsistence. Yorick concludes the episode nine months from his initial encounter to elide sentimental value with a reversal in the Chevalier's financial circumstances: his story so moves the various people who pass through Versailles that it 'reach[es] at last the king's ears', who grants him 'a pension of fifteen hundred livres a year' (*ASJ*, 106).

Lest we imagine Yorick submitting his own progress to such vagaries of fortune, however, the chapter concludes with him rearranging his sentimental encounters in a quid-pro-quo bargain with the reader:

> As I have told this to please the reader, I beg he will allow me to relate another out of its order, to please myself—the two stories reflect light upon each other,—and 'tis a pity they should be parted (*ASJ*, 106).

Yorick's remark concludes one chapter and introduces another 'out of its order,' and against his direction of travel. The digressive episode is titled 'The Sword. Rennes'; if we follow Yorick's journey on a map, its insertion suggests a fully sideways movement rather than simply, in Judith Hawley's terms, a 'shuttling back and forth along [the narrative's] temporal line'.[407] Indeed, it proves hard to reposition the episode at any point along Yorick's journey given that it marks a detour over 200 miles each way from Versailles, the most westerly point on his route southeast.

[407] Hawley, 'Digressive and Progressive Movements', 23.

The purpose of this detour, Yorick argues, is to stress the similitude between two tales of declining fortune reversed. Each shines 'light' upon the other, amplifying their affective value. There is, therefore, an intriguing parallel between the detour Yorick takes and the tale he tells in order to take it. Yorick frames the story as another example of the 'distress and poverty' that follow when 'states and empires have their periods of declension' (*ASJ*, 107). It focuses on the Marquis d'E****, whose estate has fallen 'into decay' during the ravages of the Seven Years War. Hoping nonetheless to provide a '*light*' to his two sons, who look to him as an example of nobility, he settles upon the repair of his sword as a symbol of familial regeneration. The sword's mounting, however, proves too costly '—and simple œconomy was not a match for it—there was no resource but commerce' (*ASJ*, 107). Sterne contrasts 'oeconomy' as the management of an estate's limited resources with the totalising 'resource' of the marketplace—the last resort of aristocratic families unable to remain self-sufficient. The Marquis saves his honour by availing himself of a 'provision' available only in Brittany:

> taking an occasion when the states were assembled at Rennes, the Marquis, attended with his two boys, enter'd the court; and having pleaded the right of an ancient law of the duchy, which, though seldom claim'd, he said, was no less in force; he took his sword from his side—Here—said he—take it; and be trusty guardians of it, till better times put me in condition to reclaim it (*ASJ*, 107).

He preserves his right to the sword by invoking the alternative values of courtly convention and local codes of honour, which withhold it from circulation across what Deidre Lynch describes as the 'heterogeneous spaces' of commerce and its abstract 'exchange value'.[408]

The episode provides an example equal to Yorick's snuffbox of how, as Festa argues, sentimentalism allows 'a society undergoing rapid commoditization to rope off areas that would not be absolutely fungible […] by stressing the particularity of the feeling self and by withdrawing objects from indiscriminate circulation'.[409] It also highlights a paradox Festa locates as inherent within sentimentalism. The affecting nature of the scene, its locality, and

[408] Deidre Lynch, 'Personal Effects and Sentimental Fictions' in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 77.
[409] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 68.

the social ties of those involved appear to bestow upon the sword a 'singularity that defies the commodity form' and that resists the encroachment of 'commerce' into life's most private spheres, yet such sentiments are themselves 'forged in the smithy of that great commodity the sentimental text'. The chapter which frames the episode is an interchangeable component within Yorick's narrative; he bargains with the reader to introduce it 'out of its order' so as to optimize its affective worth. As such, it encapsulates the contrary nature of the sentimental commodity, which introduces particularity of feeling as a key facet of its exchange value.[410]

We know from the tale's conclusion, where Yorick witnesses the sword's restoration, that the chapter forms part of Yorick's itinerary 'out of its order' rather than being a tangential interpolated tale, like that of Abdera featured in the 'Fragment'. Yorick's presence is important for three reasons: first it translates the gnomic 'period of declension' that 'states and empires' undergo into the specific context of post-war France. Second, it evinces a causal opacity whereby Yorick's almost exclusive concern with scenes of 'social intercourse' defines him largely, in Chandler's terms, 'through exercises in vicariousness.'[411] Yorick's investment in the affairs of others suggests the corresponding ability to augment everyday incidents through his sympathetic imagination, opening him to a flux of potential experiences that are closed to a Smelfungus or Mundungus. What remains unclear is whether the reflections that open Yorick to this flux 'can be supposed to occur on a single plane of circulation, where we all reflect each other,' or on 'an ascending scale of higher-order recognitions.'[412] Yorick asserts that 'It was an incident of good fortune which will never happen to any traveler, but a sentimental one, that I should be at Rennes at the very time of this solemn requisition,' (*ASJ*, 108), but the precise set of circumstances that led him to be present for the sword's restoration remains mysterious if also determined, evincing again a sense of contingency at the episode's closure. Finally, Yorick's presence is necessary for his experiential appropriation of the Marquis's sword. As many critics note, where words often fail to encompass emotional states, visual perspectives and lines of sight remain vital in sentimental literature to the often-delayed triangulation of affecting moments.[413] The criterion for a sentimental object in *A Sentimental Journey* is, according to Festa, its 'inalienability':

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[410] *Ibid.*, 69
[411] Chandler, *Archaeology of Sympathy*, 204.
[412] *Ibid.*, 205.
[413] Stephanie DeGooyer, for example, argues that the 'triangulation of perspective' in the sentimental novel allows sympathetic connections to occur 'in the gap of narrative and time rather than through immediacy.' Stephanie DeGooyer, '"The Eyes of Other People": Adam Smith's Triangular Sympathy and the Sentimental Novel,' *ELH* 85, no. 3 (2018): 683, 687.

the idea that, 'irrespective of its ownership' and in contrast to commodities exchanged in the marketplace, 'it cannot be detached from Yorick's subjective experience'.[414] Unlike Father Lorenzo's snuffbox, which Yorick incorporates into his daily forays to help 'regulate' his spirit as if it were one of 'the instrumental parts of [his] religion' (*ASJ*, 27), the sword's only sentimental use lies in recalling the moment at which it re-enters the newly balanced oeconomy of the Marquis's estate. Yorick acknowledges as much when he reflects upon his mixed response to the scene as the Marquis leaves with his family in tow and his sword returned to its scabbard: 'O! how I envied him his feelings!' (*ASJ*, 108).

Yorick's envy can be read as that of 'a peripatetic philosopher' (*ASJ*, 13) continually thrown back into circulation and thereby forced to encounter the limits of a cosmopolitan ethos within its 'sphere of contentions and reconciliations' that are never fully resolved, as Shaun Regan has argued. Yorick admits at Versailles that 'I seldom go to the place I set out for' (*ASJ*, 103), and the impulses that return him back into circuitous motion through heterogeneous spaces are, as Regan asserts, both 'interested and erratic'.[415] *A Sentimental Journey* figures Sterne's own movement between the 'oeconomic' management of text and the 'economy' as the market's abstract exchange value in Yorick's envy of the Marquis, who is able to redeem his household and withdraw from commerce in the symbolic return of the sword to its scabbard. As Benedict notes, the episode is nostalgic for nobility's ideal relations, evincing in the Marquis's retreat sentimentalism's tension between 'static' vignette and 'narrative dynamism'.[416] We encounter the static ideal, Sterne shows, only through continual movement. The scene provides an archetypal portrait of aristocratic stability, yet it is the commercial mobility chaptering affords that permits Yorick's attendance at Rennes. Because, unlike the sword, Sterne's chapters circulate, can be exchanged, and admit lateral movement 'without hurry or apparent Absurdity' in their transition of scenes, we do not object when Yorick takes us 200 miles west of his route 'out of […] order', even if he offers us no explanation for the detour beyond its stemming from an 'incident of good fortune'.

The layout and appearance of the chapters themselves partially facilitate this textual and readerly latitude. Their clean transition, each one beginning afresh on a new page, makes them *appear* interchangeable even as they drive narrative movement. I want to conclude by addressing Tadié's suggestion that this reflects Sterne's practice in the final stage of *A*

[414] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 73.
[415] Shaun Regan, 'Peripatetic Philosophy: Sterne and Cosmopolitanism', *Textual Practice* 31, no. 2 (2017): 277.
[416] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 88.

Sentimental Journey's transcription: 'The careful physical layout of the chapters, in the manuscript as well as in the first edition of the novel, with blanks on the page isolating each chapter, shapes the perception of the text'.[417] The manuscript to which Tadié refers is the only lengthy draft entirely in Sterne's hand, a fair copy of the *Journey*'s first volume used by its printer.[418] The corresponding fair copy for volume 2 remains unfound and may have been destroyed after printing. *S1* thus offers an insight only into the final transcription stage for the *Journey*'s first volume, and it cannot be the basis of speculation as to how Sterne arranged his chapters in earlier stages. The manuscript appears incomplete: of the thirty-eight chapters that appear in the final volume, chapters 14: 'In the Street. Calais.', 15: 'The Remise. Calais.', and 16: 'The Remise. Calais.' are missing alongside the second half of 13: 'The Remise Door. Calais.'[419] More importantly, it provides only a rough guide as to how Sterne wished the volume to appear. He does not, for example, attempt to replicate the first edition's font or denote font size with his hand. Nor does the number of folio leaves on which he composes each chapter correspond to the number of pages upon which each appears in print.

Nonetheless, Tadié's suggestion that the chapters in *S1* remain discrete and easily separable in appearance at this stage is supported by Gardner D. Stout's description, in his edition of *A Sentimental Journey*, of how '[a]s in the first edition, chapters begin at the top of a new folio'.[420] With the exception of a few explanatory notes and deleted false starts, Sterne only writes on one side of each loose folio leaf, leaving its obverse blank—a detail that, to state the obvious, does not apply to the first print edition. In theory, then, at this final stage of transcription, Sterne still allows his chapters to appear interchangeable in material if not in narrative terms. Moreover, each chapter's demarcation as a discrete unit of narrative is strengthened by another detail that does not make it into print: each of *S1*'s chapter headings is contained between two horizontal rules, giving them the appearance of intertitles between enclosed, or boxed, scenes (see **fig.5**).

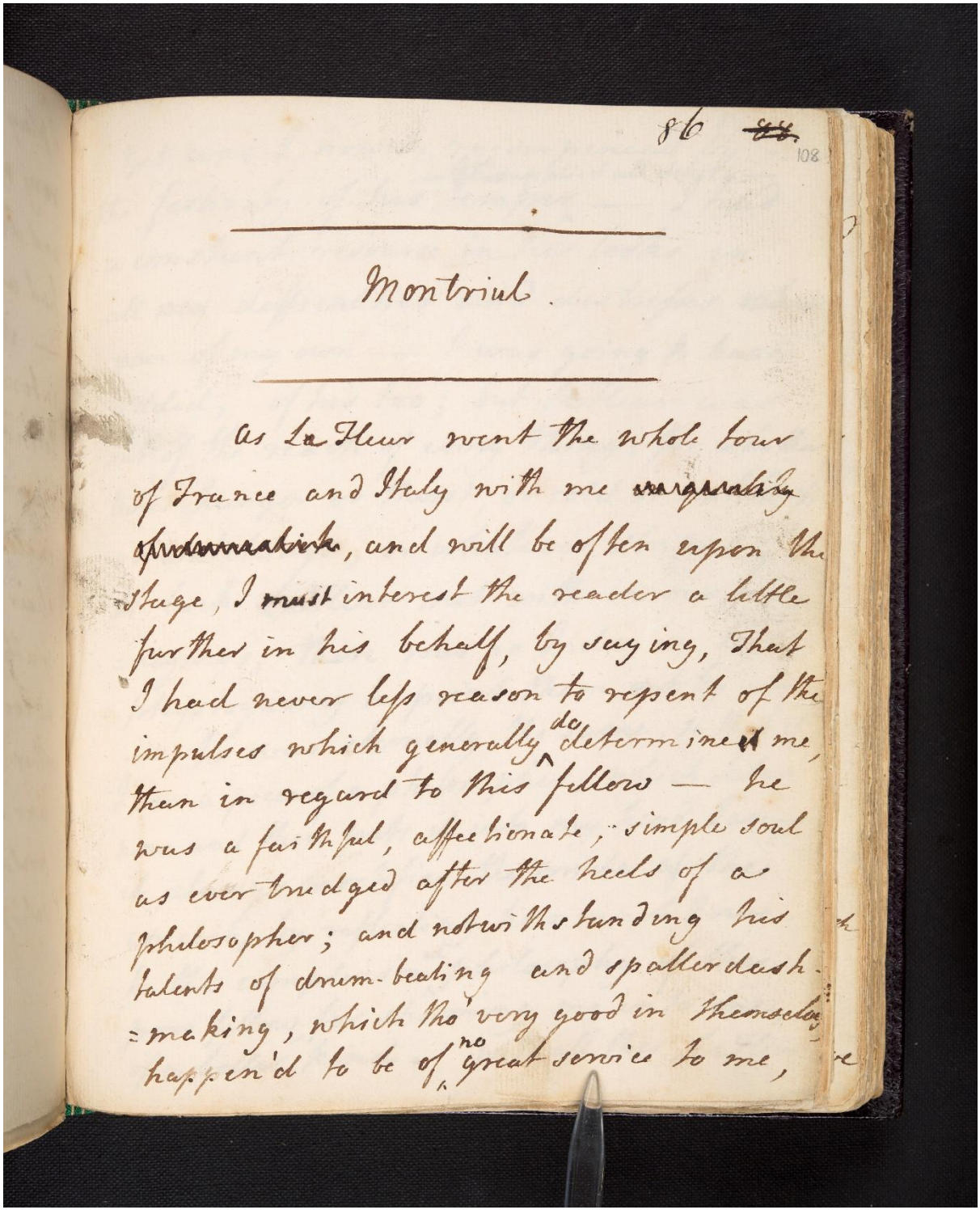
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[417] Tadié, *Whimsical Theatres*, 82.

[418] See note 113. As the Florida edition notes, there is another surviving manuscript of the *Journey* at the Morgan Library and Museum which includes both volumes 1 and 2; these are referred to as *M1* and *M2* in scholarly editions. *M1* and *M2* are in two unknown copyists' hands and the editors of the Florida edition observe that the copyists appear to have 'worked directly from *S1-[2]*, attempting to reproduce it page for page'. In the case of *M1*, the copyist worked with *S1* 'prior to Sterne's final alterations' (*ASJ*, xxxviii).

[419] As the editors of the Florida edition note, we can reconstruct these missing sections to a certain extent given that they survive as copied in *M1* (*ASJ*, 428).

[420] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, ed. Gardner D. Stout (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 298. I follow the Florida editors in referring to Stout's description of *S1*.

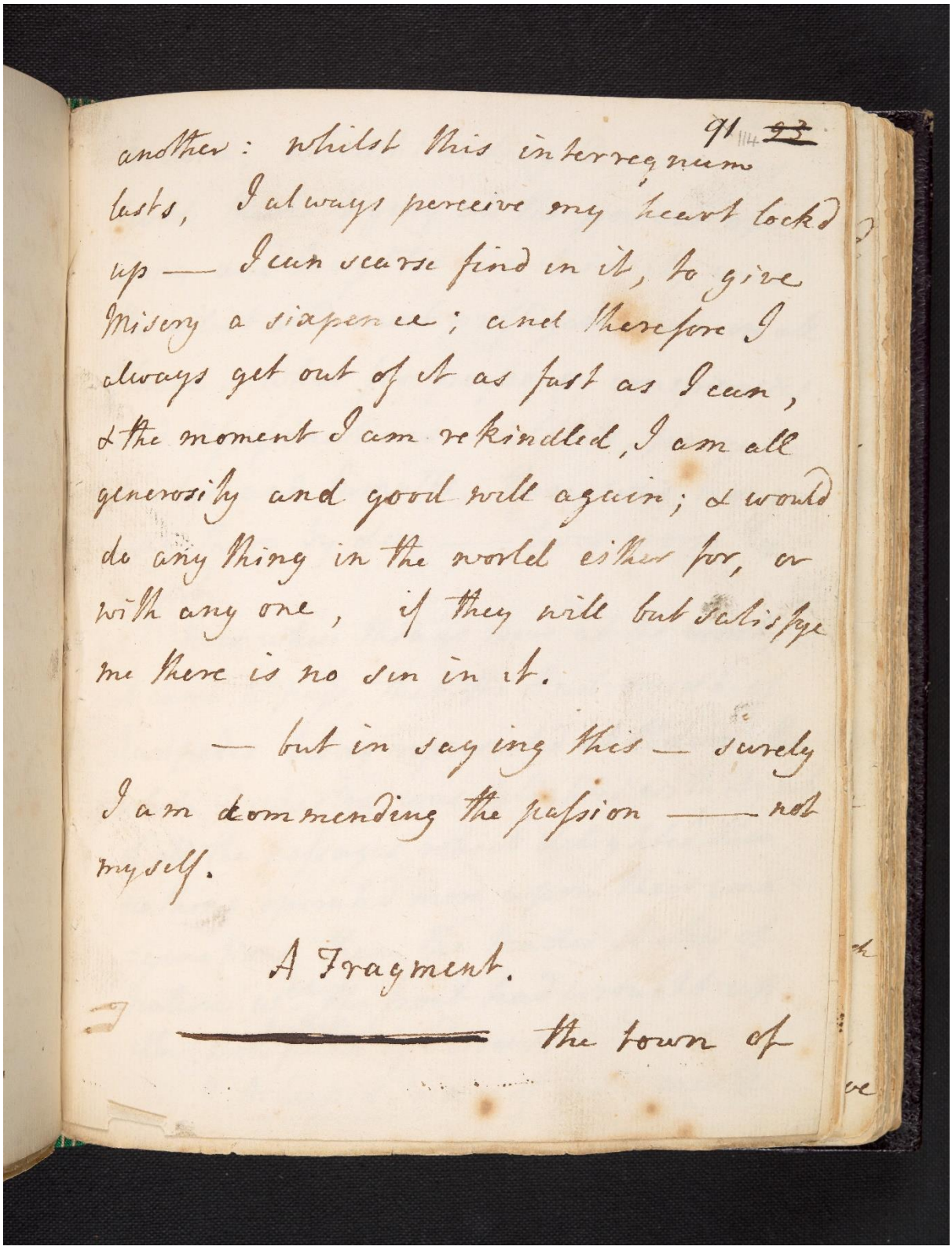


86 ~~88~~ 108

Montriul.

As La Fleur went the whole tour of France and Italy with me ~~[illegible]~~, and will be often upon the stage, I ~~must~~ interest the reader a little further in his behalf, by saying, That I had never less reason to repent of the impulses which generally ^do determine me, than in regard to this ^fellow — he was a faithful, affectionate, simple soul as ever trudged after the heels of a philosopher; and notwithstanding his talents of drum-beating and spatterdash-making, which tho' very good in themselves happen'd to be of ^no great service to me,

Fig. 5. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 86 ~~88~~ [108].



another: whilst this interregnum lasts, I always perceive my heart locked up — I can scarce find in it, to give Misery a audience; and therefore I always get out of it as fast as I can, & the moment I am rekindled, I am all generosity and good will again; & would do any thing in the world either for, or with any one, if they will but satisfye me there is no sin in it.

— but in saying this — surely I am commending the passion —— not myself.

A Fragment.

—————— the town of

Fig. 6. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 91 [114] ~~93~~.

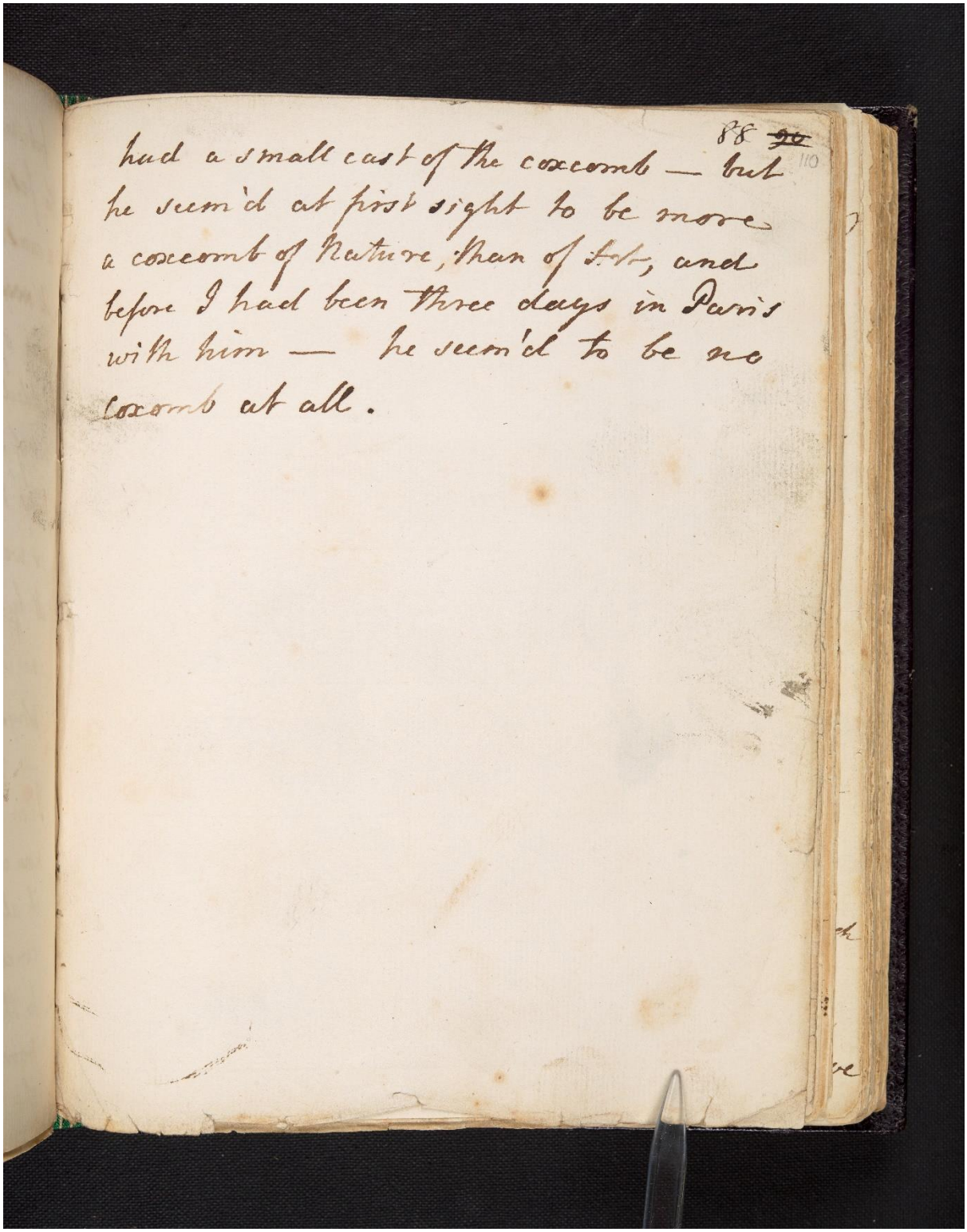


Fig. 7. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 88 ~~90~~ [110].

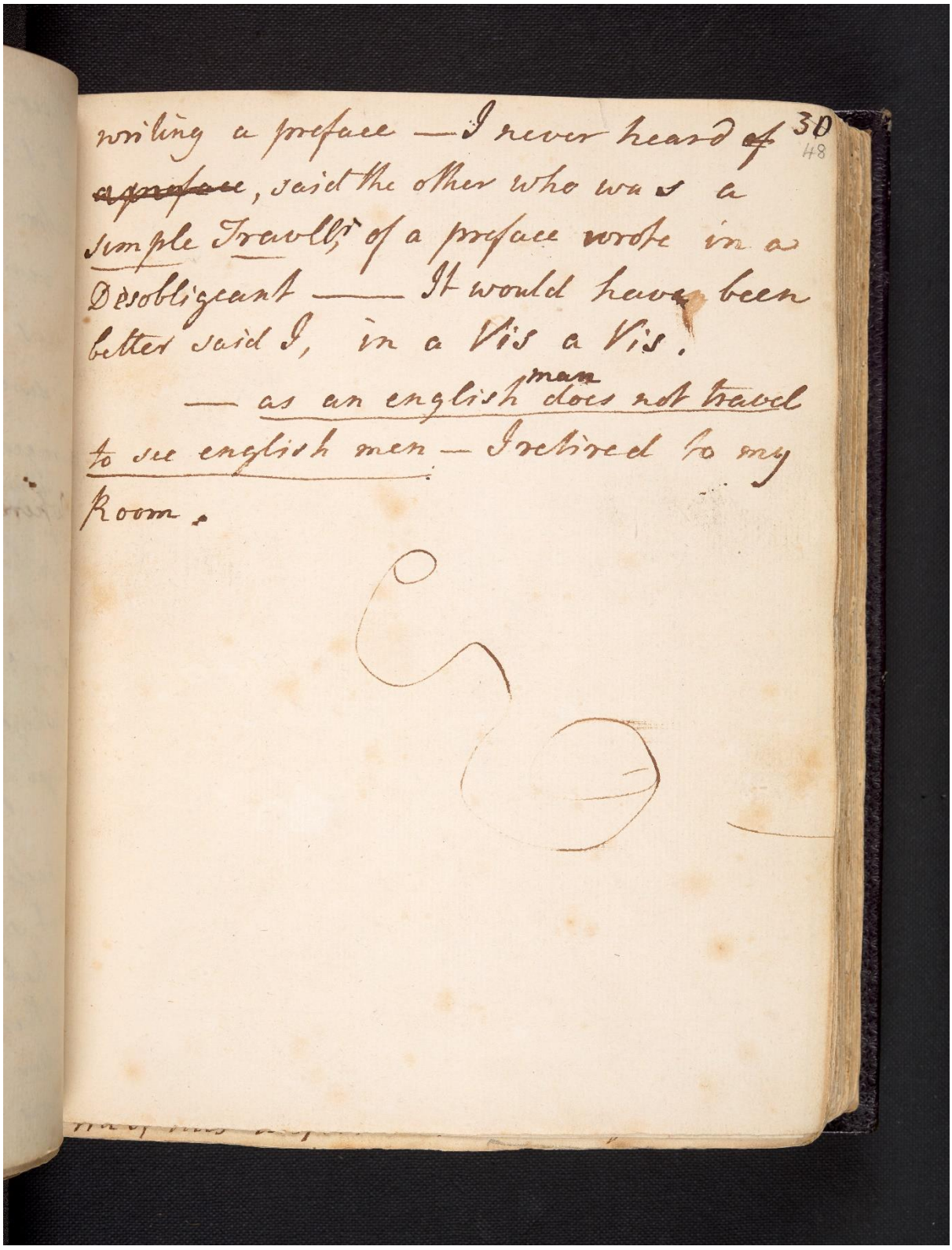

writing a preface — I never heard of
~~a preface~~, said the other who was a
simple Travell'r of a preface wrote in a
D'sobligeant —— It would have been
better said I, in a Vis a Vis.
— as an english man does not travel
to see english men — I retired to my
Room.

Fig. 8. Egerton MS 1610, fol. 30 [48].

The manuscript is not, however, as uniform or schematic in its layout as might at first appear. As Stout further notes, whilst the majority of chapters do begin at the top of a new folio leaf, five of the thirty-five extant do not.[421] Each of those chapters runs contiguously on the page from the one preceding it, which accounts for ten chapters in total that are locked into position at this stage of transcription: a statistically high enough figure to make us query whether Sterne purposed his chapters to be quite as neatly cordoned off from each other as Tadié suggests. Twenty-five of the thirty-five chapters in the manuscript feasibly could thus have been cut or repositioned at this stage.[422]

Chapters which do not begin at the top of a new fol. (Titles as in *S1*/positions as in the first edition).	**Preceding chapters.**
The Desobligeant. | Calais. (6)	The Monk. | Calais (5)
The Remise Door. | Calais. (13)	The Snuff Box. | Calais (12)
A Fragment. (23)	Montriuil [sic] (22)
Amiens. (28)	Nampont. | The Postillion. (27)
The Letter. (30)	The Letter. | Amiens (29)

A detailed look at the manuscript's arrangement helps us account for some of the chapters that appear anomalous. Of the five that do not begin on a new folio, two are Shandyesque interpolated texts: 'A Fragment' (23) and 'The Letter' (30). Indeed, 'A Fragment' begins at the bottom of fol. 91 ~~93~~ straight after preceding chapter; its title is not enclosed within horizontal rules (see **fig. 6**), leading the editors of the Florida edition to query whether or not Sterne initially intended it as a separate chapter. Given that Sterne travelled to London to see the first edition of *A Sentimental Journey* off the press, it is possible that he decided at the last minute to grant these interpolated texts the status of separate chapters. It is also possible that the printer decided on their separation in order to keep the book's arrangement in line with the layout of the rest of the manuscript.

Of those thirty chapters that do begin on new folios, seven (3, 4, 19, 25, 26, 27, and 38) follow chapters that conclude at the bottom of the preceding folio. Nonetheless, Sterne often left large quantities of paper blank between chapters—sometimes almost ¾ folio leaf

[421] *Ibid.*, 298.
[422] The Florida edition's collation of *S1*, *M1* and *M2* suggests that Sterne's unrevised versions (noted as '*M1:* u.v.') in *M1* do not differ with regards to which chapters run contiguously from each other; no alternative folio endings are indicated (*ASJ*, 472-496).

(see **fig. 7**)—and on four occasions appeared loosely to signal when the printer should start the next chapter on a new page. These indications do not take the form of written instructions, but appear as penned squiggles, which are occasionally used in manuscripts to denote that space should be inserted. The chapters that Sterne concludes in this manner are Yorick's 'Preface' (see **fig. 8**), 9: 'In the Street. Calais', 19: 'Montreuil', and 'The Letter'. The first example is, as we have seen, a paratext folded inward, and the last is an interpolated text, so it may be that Sterne was attempting to specify their offsetting in the text. We cannot conclude that Sterne indicates the beginning of a new page in these instances to allow the chapters in question to remain interchangeable

There is, however, one instance in *S1* in which Sterne may have moved a chapter from its original position to another. It occurs across the pages marked 72 ~~74~~ [84], 73 ~~75~~ [88], 74 ~~76~~ ~~61~~ [89], ~~7~~75 ~~62~~ [91], 76 ~~78~~ ~~63~~ [92], 77 ~~79~~ ~~64~~ [93].[423] These comprise what appears in the first edition as 18: 'In the Street. Calais', which concludes with Yorick's famed rebuke of 'Smelfungus and Mundungus' (*ASJ,* 38). As Stout observes, the cancelled foliation suggests that Sterne positioned the chapter to run up to what was originally numbered fol. 64, situating its original location somewhere in the gap in the manuscript between the middle of 13: 'The Remise Door. Calais.' and the beginning of 17: 'The Remise. Calais'.[424] It is not, however, possible to determine from these cancellations on which numbered folio in the manuscript the chapter would originally have begun, given that Sterne may have revised its opening when he opted to reposition it. Stout argues that Sterne may have originally placed it between 13: 'The Remise Door. Calais' and 14: 'In the Street, Calais'; certainly, the cancelled folio numbers support his conjecture. The editors of the Florida edition further support this, arguing that Sterne's awareness of 'the play of transition between chapters' may have led him to judge that ending an emphatic apostrophe to Smelfungus and Mundungus 'merely to pick up again with the account of Yorick's pursuit of Madame L* * *' (*ASJ,* xxxviii) would have jarred—hence his eventual decision to conclude Yorick's time in Calais with it instead. Although 14: 'In the Street, Calais' is missing from *S1* in Sterne's hand, it appears in *M1*: the manuscript of the first volume in an unknown copyist's hand. In *M1*, the chapter's opening fol. 59 ends with the words 'general idea:' from the chapter's opening paragraph (*ASJ,* 30) which are, the Florida editors note, 'widely spaced on a half line'. Fol. 60 opens with the unindented words

[423] The fol. numbers in square brackets are in pencil and in a different hand from Sterne's. Stouts bibliographic description of the fol. numbers is as follows: '72 <74>; 73 <?75>; 74 <76> <61>; <7>7∧5∧ <62>; 76 <78> <63>; 77 <?64>~<79>~'. Stout, 302.
[424] *Ibid.,* 302.

‘she had scarce…’, leading the Florida editors to observe that Sterne may have first intended the Smelfungus and Mundungus apostrophe to start on fol. 60 (*ASJ*, 428).

Wherever Sterne originally placed it, marks of the revisions he needed to make in order to reposition the chapter remain visible. Aside from the changes in foliation already mentioned, fol. 74 ~~76~~ ~~61~~ [89] opens with the following crossed-out writing:

~~—another will—no matter—I get~~

~~my Labour for my pains—’tis enough~~:

The script cancelled appears to be an earlier attempt of the script that closes fol. 73 ~~75~~ [88], which the first edition retains so: ‘If this won’t turn out something—another will—no matter—’tis an assay upon human nature—I get my labour for my pains—’tis enough’ (*ASJ*, 36). That the same script appears at both the beginning of fol. 74 ~~76~~ ~~61~~ and at the end of fol. 73 ~~75~~ suggests that fol. 73 ~~75~~ replaces a different folio page that originally preceding 74 ~~76~~ ~~61~~, and that the chapter as it originally began was of a different length. The first two folios of the chapter do not feature cancelled numbers leading up to 61-64, suggesting that these may be newer additions that Sterne re-wrote into position.

This demonstrates two things: first, that Sterne may well have experimented with repositioning or perhaps even replacing certain chapters, although the scope for him to do so at this stage of finalising *A Sentimental Journey*’s fair copy was more circumscribed than might be assumed from Tadié’s description. Second, my reading of *S1* supports Stout’s conjecture that Sterne probably needed to revise the opening of what became 18: ‘In the Street. Calais’ so that he could reposition it in the manuscript, although we may never know how extensive any such revisions were. As such, the interchangeability of Sterne’s chapters across a textual model of equivalent value remains more an imaginative leap than a practical reality. There is one final difference between *Tristram Shandy*’s chaptering and the *Journey*’s in such imaginative terms. In the case of *Tristram*, its models of value using chapters are typically formed to envisage future returns for the reader in forthcoming volumes. Tristram’s itinerary lists chapters already written, but more prominently imagines those still potentially to feature. Although the *Journey*’s subscribers invested in four volumes (two of which never materialized) there is little sense that Sterne foresaw the *Journey* continuing in a ‘rolling state

of openness' as *Tristram* had done. Perhaps this evinces Sterne's changed circumstances. Where Tristram promises to write for 'as long as I live' (*TS*, 1.14.42) and initially sees his life encompassing twenty volumes, Yorick's making a similar gesture could only be grimly ironic with Sterne's own health ailing. Spared death once, Yorick nevertheless could not evade his author's end. Sterne inserts in the *Journey*'s subscribers' copies a note acknowledging their 'further claim upon him for Two Volumes more than these delivered to them now' and promising that 'The Work will be compleated and delivered to the Subscribers early the next Winter' (*ASJ*, xxx). Sterne died on 18 March 1768; whether he truly anticipated the *Journey*'s Italian volumes being completed is unknowable. If he did not, the insertion of the 'The Sword. Rennes' episode 'out of its order' gains another significance: the one place it would fit in Yorick's travels is in a return journey that would never be written.

Sterne and 'Sir Critick': Criticism and 'Refined Taste' in *Tristram Shandy*.

'Every Author does not write for every Reader'—Samuel Johnson, *Idler* 70 (1759).

I. Entertaining the Critic.

'Few faults of style', Samuel Johnson argues in *Idler* 70, 'excite the malignity' of critics more than contriving a 'voluntary obscurity' through the use of jargon ('hard words') with the aim 'not to make others learned, but to boast the learning' which one professes. There is, however, an immediate caveat in *Idler* 70's opening statement: the fault of stylistic obscurity identified by critics may always be 'real or imaginary'. Words 'are only hard to those who do not understand them', and a critic 'ought always to enquire, whether he is incommoded by the fault of the writer, or by his own'.[425] Making oneself intelligible to all readers in all occupations would entail 'tiresome circumlocutions or laborious explanations' at the expense of concision and the use of specialised 'words of larger meaning'.[426] As Robin Valenza notes, Johnson's corresponding assertion that 'Every Author does not write for every Reader' has 'the air of a commonplace, presenting the obvious as self-evidently true'.[427] Yet this matter-of-factness belies its polemical nature. Any assumption that publications should be intelligible at least to all learned men gives way to the notion of a disparate reading public in commercial Britain, with many readers using and understanding different, often competing, idiolects. Citing *The Guardian*'s direction that students should 'think with the wise, but speak with the vulgar', Johnson argues that Steele's dictum is unsuited to a time when labour is divided and specialised: 'Difference of thoughts' arising from different occupations will result in a 'difference of language'.[428] The idea that writers should address every reader is impracticable when trades and sciences maintain their interests through their own 'peculiar language'.[429] For Johnson, Valenza argues, 'forms of expression must 'be modified to fit the

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[425] Samuel Johnson, *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. John H. Middendorf *et al.*, 19 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-2016), 2: *The Idler and the Adventurer*, ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L.F. Powell (1963), 217.
[426] *Ibid.*, 218.
[427] *Ibid.*, 217; Robin Valenza, *Literature, Language, and the Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines in Britain, 1680-1820* (CUP, 2009), 37.
[428] Johnson, *Idler and Adventurer*, 218.
[429] *Ibid.*, 219. Another example of Johnson's defence of specialised terminology appears in the 'Preface' to his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

occasion of their use', a modern variation on a Ciceronian decorum in which subject and mode of expression should be attuned to each other.[430]

Johnson's positing of a disunified, variously interested reading public as a common-sense proposition holds a rebuke to an occupation that Valenza omits from her argument—one that is becoming increasingly professionalised by 1759. This is Johnson's 'critick', who 'seldom suspects his own deficiency; but complains of hard words and obscure sentences, and asks why books are written which cannot be understood'.[431] The problem for critics, in Johnson's argument, is that they are often charged, or task themselves, with examining works written in professional languages and for audiences they cannot comprehend. Johnson thus provides late evidence within Michael Gavin's 1650-1760 timespan for English criticism as originally 'a field of knowledge defined against its knowers'.[432] Late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century criticism's 'idealized sense of itself', Jonathan Brody Kramnick notes, 'sets terms for urbane conversation and so remains close to the world it serves'.[433] Criticism in these terms does not define a specialised practice so much as a generalised social response, or attitude, towards works of art and literature. It is not a deep-but-narrow discipline with its own specialist vocabulary. Actual critics of the period are often seen as falling short of such ideals, writing in ways that alienated themselves from the sociable world. *Idler* 70 defends specialised professional language uses, but positions critics apart as imperfect 'knowers' (in Gavin's terms) outside of those languages looking in at a fragmented reading public.

For Sterne, writing in the same year in which *Idler* 70 is published, this argument is acutely relevant. The problem of how to address one's work to an amorphous, anonymous reading public divided into many professional and social groups is reflected in the sheer number of readers Tristram identifies. *Tristram Shandy*'s readers are variously 'good folks' (*TS*, 1.1.1), 'fellow labourers and associates' (*TS*, 1.21.71), 'painters', 'orators' (*TS*, 2.17.141), or, at their broadest, 'the world' (*TS*, 2.17.167)—although that world, Tristram informs us, can shrink to as little as four miles diameter. The individuated reader invites an even wider array of addresses: 'dear Sir' (*TS*, 1.1.3), 'Madam' (*TS*, 1.4.7), 'my dear friend and companion' (*TS*, 1.6.9), 'your Lordship' (*TS*, 1.8.14), and 'your worship' (*TS*, 1.13.40).

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[430] Valenza, *Literature, Language, Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines*, 37; c.f. Freya Johnston, *Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking* (OUP, 2005), 5.
[431] Johnson, *Idler and Adventurer*, 218.
[432] Michael Gavin, *The Invention of English Criticism, 1650-1760* (CUP, 2015), 2.
[433] Jonathan Brody Kramnick, 'Literary Criticism Among the Disciplines', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2002): 350.

Within only his first volume, Tristram ranges across numerous formalities and genders of address, each of which accompanies a different register with corresponding assumptions about the reader. 'Madam', for example, is capricious; she reads for the plot and its salacious details, so Tristram vacillates between teasing and chiding her. 'Your Worship', by contrast, is a man of taste to whose 'fancy' (*TS*, 1.13.39) Tristram claims to accede; he can be approached regarding delicate matters 'in confidence' (*TS*, 1.13.40). Likewise, Tristram delimits his 'reader' at different times using various epithets. There is the 'curious and inquisitive' reader, the 'fair reader' (*TS*, 1.18.56), 'the learned reader' (*TS*, 1.19.61), and the Swiftian 'gentle reader' (*TS*, 1.19.63).

This way of proceeding evinces, in McKeon's terms, that Sterne conceives the modern author's problem as that of appealing to 'a virtual readership that consists of no one in particular'.[434] Sterne illustrates Johnson's dictum that 'Every author does not write for every Reader' by showing what the process of addressing and defining every type of reader looks like in practice. In one sense, Tristram's imagined panoply of readers traces his mental activity as, in Natalie M. Phillips's terms, 'multifocal [...] mov[ing], not in single lines of attention, but in many simultaneously'. Prone to 'wide-ranging associations and patterns of disconnected thought', Tristam appears to shift across reader-types and addresses amidst 'scattered [...] rhythms' of attentiveness. [435] In another, it also provides the obverse of the '*Chiaro Oscuro* strategy of concealment' that Fawcett claims Sterne borrows from Colley Cibber. *Tristram Shandy*, Fawcett argues, adopts a logic of overexpression: 'a method of characterization that arrives at concealment through the illusion of openness and hides the self under an excess of self-revelations'.[436] Tristram's propensity to dwell on every 'circumstanc[e] relating to myself' asks readers to immerse themselves in details typically considered 'trifling in [their] nature, or tedious in [their] telling'; yet it is also a means of obfuscation. Too much detail in Tristram's account becomes white noise, concealing the central author-protagonist as effectively as too little. The challenge *Tristram* presents readers is to ascertain how much detail is optimal, and this raises a related issue as to whom of its readers it should speak. Tristram's proliferation of addresses and reader-types uses his scattered attentiveness to mask the impersonality of addressing a commercial reading public of 'no-one in particular' whilst also stretching the fiction's narrative thread. Volume 1 in

[434] McKeon, 'Swift's Debt to Marvell', 151.
[435] Natalie M. Phillips, *Distraction: Problems of Attention in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 98.
[436] Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances*, 106.

particular progresses at a glacial pace, so preoccupied with formalities of address and definition that it registers little actual plot or opinion. Moreover, these readers feature only *as* abstracted types: gentry, scholars et cetera. Aside from figures such as *Didius*, Dr. *Kunastrokius* (*TS*, 1.7.12), or *Eugenius* (*TS*, 1.12.31), who sit between comic stock characters and local referents, Tristram does not name names because he cannot be sure, beyond conjecturing professions or social groups, of whom his readership consists.

There is, however, one reader-type that appears first amongst equals and to whom Tristram chiefly attends, 'pay[ing] them all court' and leaving 'places purposely open' (*TS*, 2.2.97) for them within his text. These readers, whom Tristram addresses as 'Gentlemen', claim to cultivate the taste of his unknown readership: the 'criticks', or, more specifically, those Tristram distinguishes 'by occupation' in contrast to those 'by nature' (*TS*, 2.2.96, 97). In a diffuse and impersonal textual marketplace, Sterne through Tristram plays with the possibility or otherwise of adapting his fiction to pre-empt authoritative readings from increasingly professionalised readers. Here, I differ marginally from Shaun Regan, who argues that Sterne 'subtly displace[s] [...] traditional slurs against literary professionalism' on to 'the newly established institution of review criticism'.[437] For Regan, Tristram's address to critics 'by profession' and his determination to publish twenty volumes of his *Life and Opinions* 'in spight of all the gentlemen reviewers in *Great-Britain*' (*TS*, 1.13.40) together represent a straightforward 'hit at the reviewers' polite self-fashionment'.[438] Regan's reading should, however, be tempered (1) by Sterne's own questionable fashioning of Tristram as a 'Gentleman' in his work's title, and (2) by the absurdly overblown publication scheme 'of commentary, scholium, illustration, and key' (*TS*, 1.13.40) that Tristram proposes in the latter passage within only his opening volume. The reader of early-1760 might instead wonder whether the intervention of such 'gentlemen reviewers' might temper Tristram's ambitions into something more palatable to consume. What is also missing in Regan's account, which focusses on the changing terms of proprietorial authorship in the eighteenth century, is a sense of *Tristram Shandy* as a serial text-as-process (as opposed to a static product) wherein Sterne adjusts and develops his stance on reviewers over *Tristram*'s eight-year run.

Rather, I want to argue for the ambivalence of Sterne's discourse with professional critics at the outset and as his fiction developed over those eight years. Professional critics are

[437] Sean Regan, 'Print Culture in Transition: *Tristram Shandy*, the Reviewers, and the Consumable Text', *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 14, nos. 3-4 (April-July 2002): 292.
[438] *Ibid.*, 295.

situated as influential discerners above other reader-types in the marketplace and, in a bold metaphor, Tristram's text lays open its material to accommodate them. Lupton situates *Tristram Shandy* within a wider sub-genre of mid-century fictions that present themselves as 'paper products' within the print market.[439] Using Lisa Gitelman's definition of media as 'socially realized structures of communication', she argues that Sterne's fiction is reflexively concerned with its status as a fabricated surface realised through, yet also determining, social processes—the epitome of Bruno Latour's 'quasi-object'.[440] This 'flat style of reflexivity', or 'consciousness of mediation' is a compelling aspect of Sterne's fiction, yet Lupton's analysis does not attend to Sterne's presentation of his text as a surface that facilitates specifically commercial transactions, nor the metaphorical metamorphoses it undergoes to do so.[441] Leaving 'six places' open at his 'entertainment' for professional critics, Tristram presents the surface of the page as a table at which they are invited to 'sit down without any ceremony, and fall on heartily' (*TS*, 2.2.97). In hosting them 'at table', Tristram presents the courting of professional critics as one of the 'expence[s]' of publishing invested to ensure those critics do not 'run it down' (*TS*, 2.2.96-97) as it enters the marketplace. This accounting of the critics' entertainment as a necessary 'expence' is a double-edged acknowledgment of their mid-century status. On the one hand, the professional critic holds enough influence in the textual marketplace that not to entertain him would be imprudent for an aspiring author. On the other, it also implies that such critics are mercenaries whose favourable opinions can be purchased for the cost and effort of feeding them.

Sterne hereby mystifies his fiction's submission to the market's judgment. Although the text becomes a surface around which critics gather to ascertain its value, the scene is one of a polite evening's 'entertainment' rather than the hustle and bustle of Grub Street, the coffeehouse, or the Exchange. At the dinner table, 'criticks (by occupation)' are only identified in parentheses and as arbiters of the work alongside—crucially, not secondary to—'gentry of refined taste' (*TS*, 2.2.96). On the one hand, the invitation to eat 'without [...] ceremony' alongside critics bred and educated into their 'fine taste' implies that those by 'occupation' receive the same share in Tristram's '*Life*', collapsing any distinction between them. Whilst Regan argues that Sterne presents professional critics as 'unceremonious

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[439] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 3.
[440] Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 8; see Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 51-55—especially Latour's definition of the 'quasi-object' as 'much more social, much more fabricated, much more collective than the 'hard' parts of nature' (55).
[441] Lupton, *Knowing Books*, 4, 5.

devourers of the textual meal', it is important to note that the dismissal of 'ceremony' features in Tristram's invitation and is only an implied possibility in the professional critics' response.[442] On the other, the appellation 'Sir Critick' by which Tristram addresses them is also a partial redress, Tristram having considered using 'language unurbane' (*TS,* 2.2.97) in his curt demand that they 'Go look' through Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* for an explanation as to why Toby, 'a military man, and whom you have represented as no fool' could be 'at the same time such a confused, pudding-headed, muddle-headed fellow' (*TS,* 2.2.97). The barely veiled frustration Tristram reveals within his own conceit that 'at this very moment that I am going here to fill up one place against a critick,---- I should have made an opening for a couple' (*TS,* 2.2.98) suggests that to play host to even a select number of professional critics is to open oneself up to a potentially endless array of quarrelsome respondents in the textual marketplace—each jostling for their place at the table.

Sterne's playful depiction of Tristram's attempt to host professional critics (never mind 'every Reader') as a Sisyphean task complicates the most thorough account of his commerce with eighteenth-century reviewers. In *The Fame Machine* (1996), Frank Donoghue argues that Sterne's exchanges with periodical reviewers provide a straightforward case study 'in alienated labor' in which Sterne 'entered the literary culture […] naively, yet at a period when that culture was rapidly becoming more complex'.[443] Not fully understanding their influence and pervasiveness when he published *Tristram Shandy*'s opening instalment, Sterne's initial response to the reviewers' accusations of impropriety, in Donoghue's account, is to amplify the bawdiness of subsequent volumes and attack directly those he refers to as 'Messrs. the monthly Reviewers!' (*TS,* 3.4.190). Chastened, however, by the lukewarm response to subsequent volumes and alarmed by a tailing-off in sales and imitations, Sterne in Donoghue's account continues to bristle in his public sallies 'as if recovering from one trauma after another' before relinquishing *Tristram* to write *A Sentimental Journey* as his final '*Work of Redemption*' essentially at the reviewers' behest.[444] The Florida editors of *A Sentimental Journey* correctly observe that Donoghue's 'biographical scenario, in which a chastened Sterne listened to the advice of his critics and mended his ways' is 'as doubtful as [the *Journey*] itself' (*ASJ*, xv). Yet Donoghue's narrative of commercial naivety and eventual

[442] Regan, 'Print Culture in Transition', 295.
[443] Donoghue, *Fame Machine*, 85.
[444] *Ibid.*, 85; Richard Griffith and Elizabeth Griffith, *A Series of Genuine Letters, between Henry and Frances*, 6 vols. (J Bew, 1786), 5:83. As New notes, although often attributed to Sterne, the phrase 'is actually Richard Griffith's, whom Sterne met whilst beginning his *Journey*'. Melvyn New, 'Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* and Sterne: A Study in Influence', *Modern Philology* 115, no. 2 (2017): 233.n.47.

capitulation also fails to account for the extent to which Sterne's earlier fiction at its outset incorporates criticism—and especially criticism 'by occupation'—into its serial structure, nor for the ways in which Sterne anticipated criticism as playing an integral role in *Tristram Shandy*'s success in the marketplace.

Prior to its publication, Sterne's correspondence suggests that he considered criticism in redesigning *Tristram Shandy*'s scheme and even in making the decision to publish at all. The 'criticks' whom Sterne cites are often contemporaries active in York's public affairs, such as 'M^{r} Fothergil' (*Letters*, 83) i.e. Marmaduke Fothergill, Esq, son of Marmaduke Fothergill, the vicar of Skipton and Pontefract who bequeathed his substantial book collection to York Minster on his death in 1731.[445] Even when this is the case, Sterne's handling of such sociable criticism informs his more public defences. In a draft letter of January 1760, which Sterne appears to have prepared as a public *apologia* in his *Letter Book* to anticipate any negative critical responses to *Tristram*'s first volumes, he mentions Fothergill as amongst 'my best of criticks and well wishers' (*Letters*, 83). According to the letter, Fothergill had advised Sterne as a 'point of prudence' that 'the vein of [*Tristram*'s] humour' was 'too light for the colour of [Sterne's] Cassock' (*Letters*, 83). Likely concerned for Sterne's professional welfare after the failure of *A Political Romance* (1759), Sterne reports that Fothergill advised him to 'get your preferment, Lory, first […] and then write and wellcome' (*Letters*, 83). This is criticism as a professional courtesy that Sterne argues he cannot afford to heed:

> but my dear gentlemen, suppose this self same preferment is long o'coming (& for aught I know I may not be prefer'd till the resurrection of the Just)—& I continue all that time in hard Labour--how shall I manage my pains? (*Letters* 83-84)

Despite the concern of critics he has encountered in sociable settings, Sterne claims to have reached a point in *Tristram*'s composition where, regardless of any remaining flaws, the judgment of the faceless public and its organs of public criticism must now be cast upon it:

[445] On Fothergill and Sterne, see Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 92; Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life*, 204.

> after all, I fear Tristram Shandy must go into the world with a hundred faults——if he is so happy as to have some striking beauties, merciful & good Judges will spare it as God did Sodom for the ten Righteous that are therein (*Letters* 84-85).

For Sterne, sociable criticism precedes commercial reception, and this supports *Tristram Shandy*'s status as an open, contingent process across its provisionally finished products. Fothergill's private criticism is only preliminary to public judgment, which attains the status of a quasi-apocalyptic reckoning. Sterne's work will, he hopes, be spared the faceless public's critical wrath for its 'beauties' and in spite of its author-protagonist's sins. Sterne elsewhere less defensively vaunts his confidence that the public and its critics will embrace his work. In his letter of approach to Dodsley, he assures him that 'If this Ist Volume has a run (w^{ch} such Criticks as this Latitude affords<)> say it can't fail of) We may both find our Account in it' (*Letters,* 80). Sterne accepts a disparity between the markets of provincial York and metropolitan London, whilst also arguing that success in one will translate to the other: critics such as York 'affords' are the best assurance he has that 'The Book will sell' wherever it appears and that 'the World' will finally 'fix the Value for us both' (*Letters,* 80).

Evidence available suggests that even to persuade Dodsley of his fiction's saleability required Sterne to respond to Dodsley's own initially mixed critical judgment. Sterne originally attempted to sell *Tristram Shandy*'s copy to Dodsley for £50 (*Letters*, 80). Dodsley having turned down this initial proposal, Sterne revised the piece and wrote again in October to assure him that 'All Locality has been taken out of the Book—the Satyr general […] and the whole made more sale<b>~a~ble' (*Letters*, 97). Although the reason Sterne cites for Dodsley's initial rejection is that '50 pounds' proved 'too much to risk on a single Vol.' (*Letters*, 96), the assurance that he has revised *Tristram*'s satiric specificity to make 'the whole' more 'sale<b>~a~ble' suggests that Dodsley's rejection contained a grain of encouragement—Sterne wrote again to Dodsley rather than approaching another bookseller—and that Dodsley provided a rationale for his rejection and possibly even a brief for revisions. The notion that Sterne reworked his fiction's scheme and style to accommodate Dodsley's criticism is strengthened by Dodsley's claim in his *Trifles* (1745)—mirroring that of Fielding—that he is a 'general satirist, yet not rude nor ill-natur'd'. Dodsley presents himself as a purveyor of amiable raillery on trivial topics and objects: 'He has got a custom of moralizing upon every trifle he sells, and will strike lesson of instruction out of a snuff-

box, a thimble, or a cockle-shell'.[446] Like Sterne's revised Tristram, he draws general lessons from small particulars. In keeping with this purview, Sterne assures Dodsley that *Tristram* will avoid personal and local sallies to ensure that it adheres to London's critical trends.[447]

Other evidence in Sterne's correspondence suggests that he is more attuned to critical trends and less naïve than in Donoghue's account. In the October letter to Dodsley, Sterne states his intent to finance privately a small impression of his work in an octavo edition 'the Sise of Rasselas' (1759) so as to 'feel the Pulse of the World' (*Letters*, 96).[448] Aside from Sterne's awareness of the success of Johnson's fiction, published by Dodsley in the same year, his aim to take 'the Pulse of the World' taps into a pseudo-medical critical trend which pathologizes new aspects of literary consumerism. As we saw in Chapter 1, Sterne's conceit may more specifically borrow from critic James Ralph. If we return to the relevant passage from *The Case of Authors by Profession*, we find that Ralph's medical analogy for treating the symptoms of the reading public equates political works with 'Carminatives' (treatments for flatulence) and 'Tales, Novels [and] Romances' with 'Cantharides' (Spanish fly, used as an aphrodisiac or a diuretic).[449] Ralph's lesson—that booksellers should use the controlled publication of fictions as a treatment to 'flatter' rather than assuage readerly desire—is acutely relevant to *Tristram Shandy*'s publication scheme as it develops between Sterne and Dodsley. As Keymer observes, 'Through the mechanism of serialization, Sterne engineered something we need to view more as an unstable process than as a static product'.[450] In his approach to Dodsley, Sterne suggests that his first volume should be published immediately in May (*Letters*, 80), with 'a 2^{d} Volume [to be] ready by Christmas, or Nov^{r}' (*Letters*, 80).

Having revised the work for his second approach in October, Sterne still has biannual publication in mind:

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[446] Dodsley, *Trifles*, 8.
[447] Intriguingly, Zachary Leader reveals that Byron, who famously professed a 'gentlemanly, or non-professional character of poetic composition', also wrote in genres that his bookseller John Murray deemed sellable. Zachary Leader, *Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 90-92.
[448] *The Monthly Review* affirms the similarity in criticizing both Johnson's 'little volumes' (*MR* 20, 1759: 428) and Sterne's 'pigmy octavos' (*MR* 24, 1761: 104).
[449] Ralph, *Case of Authors by Profession*, 21.
[450] Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 85.

> If my Book sells & has the run our Criticks expect, I purpose to free myself of all future troubles of this kind, & bargain with You, if possible for the rest as they come out which will be every six Months (*Letters*, 96)

Sterne understood the necessity of meeting the expectations of 'our Criticks' in scheduling publications. By the time he introduces Tristram to the world, the scheme has changed: Tristram as author-protagonist proposes 'writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year;----which, if I am suffered to go on quietly, and can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live' (*TS*, 1.14.42). In Ralph's terms, Sterne recognises the need continually to flatter the 'Disease' of readerly avidity; key is to fix the correct 'Dose' to sustain it. As sales of subsequent volumes and Sterne's health fluctuate, he amends the scheme again, introducing longer delays between volumes 5 and 6, 7 and 8, and 9; in Keymer's terms, *Tristram* comes to 'typif[y] and exaggerat[e] the characteristic elasticity of serial writing—its capacity to be suspended, interrupted, protracted, or curtailed as commercial or personal exigencies might require'.[451] Two intertwined external factors in *Tristram*'s unstable publishing process from its outset are its critical reception and sales.

It is this characteristic of *Tristram Shandy*—its ability to tease and defer expectation and, with it, meaning—that leads Jean-François Lyotard to draw a link between Marx and Sterne in his theory of libidinal economies. 'Marx's inability to catch up with his book [*Das Kapital* (1867-83)]', Lyotard argues, should be read not as 'an effect of masochism or guilt', but in comparison with Sterne, who 'makes a theme of this delay'.[452] Less anachronistic parallels between Sterne's publication strategies and contemporaneous textual forms of criticism are, however, more revealing with regards to how Sterne manipulates consumer interest. If Tristram's scheme for 'publishing two volumes of my life every year' settles and then adjusts according to the response 'our Criticks expect', it resembles also the key medium of eighteenth-century criticism prior to reviews: the single-essay periodical. Manushag N. Powell identifies a formula for launching such publications:

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[451] *Ibid.*, 98.
[452] Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 115.

> the usual mode is to introduce oneself, explain one's motives for writing, nod to the overabundance of periodical publications while excusing one's own addition to the crowd, and finally to lay out a plan for the texts to follow.[453]

Goldsmith's *The Bee*, for example, introduced three months prior to *Tristram*, acknowledges the abundance of periodical publications by claiming to reveal the 'anxiety' hidden beneath 'studie[d] ease, and [...] good humour' that any first-time periodical writer experiences when 'Impressed with the terrors of the tribunal before which he is going to appear'.[454] Goldsmith's parajuridical conceit presents the stages of first submitting one's periodical to the public's judgement as, by 1759, holding a long-established history. In promising to 'pursue no fixed method' or 'regular plan', he presents *The Bee*'s not-so-new intention to 'rove from flower to flower [subject to subject] Like the Bee, which I ha[ve] taken for the title of my paper', expeditiously introducing his eidolon and motivation.[455] Goldsmith next offers 'an apology to the reader, who expects [...] a bill of his future entertainment', acknowledging a contingent plan for the issues to follow by claiming no fixed plan at all.[456]

The first issue of *The Connoisseur* (another example) introduces its eidolon 'Mr. Town', who styles himself as 'Censor General' and promises, after 'the example of the old Roman Censor', to 'review the people, and distribute them into their several Divisions'.[457] In this role (and echoing Mr. Spectator), Mr. Town claims to have a dispersed presence that constructs a general view of London from many particular viewpoints and that grants him access to every interesting locale:

> I constantly visit all places that afford any matter for speculation. I am a Scotchman at *Forrester*'s, a Frenchman at *Slaughter*'s, and at the *Cocoa-Tree* I am—an Englishman. At the *Robin Hood* I am a Politician, a Logician, a Geometrician, a Physician, a Metaphysician, a Casuist [...] Wherever the World is, I am.[458]

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[453] Manushag N. Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 15.
[454] Goldsmith, *The Bee*, 1.
[455] *Ibid.*, 3.
[456] *Ibid.*, 4.
[457] George Coleman [Elder] and Bonnell Thornton, *The Connoisseur, by Mr. Town, Critic and Censor-General* (R. Baldwin), no. 1 (Thursday 31 January, 1756), 1.
[458] *Ibid.*, 1, 6.

His motive for writing is 'to please and instruct the Ladies' of the town. A self-styled sociable 'Critic', he promises to 'animadvert on every thing that appears to me vicious or ridiculous' throughout the following issues.[459]

Tristram Shandy's opening closely resembles such programmatic introductions. It introduces Tristram at his moment of conception before explaining his motive for writing:

> I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of my character, and of what kind of a mortal I am, by the one, would give you a better relish for the other (*TS*, 1.6.9)

Tristram situates his apology for his 'addition to the crowd' in relation both to early fictions and canonical essays. He predicts that his life and opinions will 'make some noise in the world, and, if I conjecture right, will […] be no less read than the *Pilgrim's Progress* itself---and, in the end, prove the very thing which Montaigne dreaded his essays should turn out, that is, a book for a parlour-window' (*TS*, 1.4.5). In the same chapter, he places his work in a line of classical and learned predecessors, before justifying its appearance on the grounds of novelty: 'I should beg Mr. Horace's pardon;—for in writing what I have set about, I shall confine myself neither to his rules, nor to any man's rules that ever lived' (*TS*, 1.4.5). Finally, he lays out his proposal for following volumes to form a running annual work—presumably with the intention of publishing regularly in December, when novels 'generally usher in the *Winter* as *snow-drops* do the *Spring*' (*CR* 2, 1756: 276) as *The Critical Review* observed. In planning to publish for 'as long as I live', Tristram's view of his end in his beginning echoes Mr. Spectator's opening promise to 'Print my self out, if possible, before I Die'.[460]

The borderland that *Tristram Shandy* occupies between novel and periodical helps to explain the profusion of addressees and readers towards whom Tristram directs his life and opinions. As Powell explains, 'In periodical essays, as the common use of printing both real

[459] *Ibid.*, 4, 6.
[460] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 1:5.

and fictional letters to the eidolon attests, the author is always presumed to be addressing the reader. The illusion preserved is that of dialogue'.[461] Similarly, Tristram later affirms that

> Writing, when properly managed, (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all;—so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all (*TS*, 2.9.125)

Like a periodical eidolon, Tristram lends 'an appearance of cohesiveness' to his otherwise miscellaneous text, allowing Sterne to engage in self-consciously performative writing.[462] The points of overlap are, however, complex. The eidolon as the organising figure that Tristram resembles begins, as Powell observes, to recede from periodical publications in the 1760s with the conclusion of Johnson's *Idler* and Goldsmith's *Bee* and the rise of magazines and reviews, leaving a gap which Sterne's fiction is able to fill. Yet Siskin suggests that single-essay periodicals had, by the 1760s, already lain the groundwork formally to be subsumed by fictional works. The golden age of single-essay periodicals, Siskin argues, occurs during a period of economic deceleration in the first two quarters of the eighteenth century.[463] During this period of 'profitless prosperity', these periodicals become a literary form that proliferates despite a decrease in the number of London booksellers and a precipitous drop in demands for paper.[464] By centring on these eidolon figures, single-essay periodicals reconfigure the work of writing to prioritise '*Author* "before" *work*' and, in doing so, insist that 'We engage the latter through the former'.[465] Fictions, previously more focussed on tales and subject-matter, begin to follow suit in foregrounding author-protagonists and their opinions at precisely the time when the periodical eidolon, having helped to drive an upturn in the print market, begins to disappear. *Tristram* broadly fits into this narrative, yet the annual scheme for publication that Sterne proposes more closely resembles that of another type of periodical introduced by Dodsley in the late 1750s and early 60s that I will briefly examine in my Coda: Edmund Burke's *Annual Register* (1758-).

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[461] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 43.
[462] *Ibid.*, 7-8.
[463] Siskin, *Work of Writing*, 160-161.
[464] *Ibid.*, 161.
[465] *Ibid.*, 162.

Tristram sits at the mid-century in a triangular relation to the essayistic periodical (on the wane) and the miscellaneous reviews, magazines, and registers (on the rise). To understand this relation requires us to trace the changes criticism undergoes in the eighteenth century, from the sociable pursuit of John Dryden and John Dennis to the corporate identities of the reviews and their critics 'by occupation'.

II. Critical Origins.

Criticism is, in Chambers and Gregory's guide to teaching higher education English, both 'the method and the outcome' of literary studies. Literature students learn skills of 'analysis, interpretation [and] evaluation' not 'in a vacuum', but as 'mutually influencing and informing abilities that are necessarily bound up in the very process of study'.[466] This idea of criticism as a craft and process developed within a community of practice rests, however, on a schism that emerges over two hundred years ago. The eighteenth century, argues James Engell,

> sees for the first time, what has become an entrenched phenomenon throughout the world of modern literature—a discrepancy, even an essential discrepancy, between books of criticism, books about "literature"—and shorter, more popular critical forms: single essays, reviews, and commentary in periodicals.[467]

This discrepancy develops in the years leading to the publication of *Tristram Shandy*'s first instalment. It also defines a distinction between those who write on the theory and principles of taste and criticism in books and treatises, and those who regulate such topics day-to-day in periodical essays and later in reviews and magazines. When Tristram warns against provoking the displeasure of 'criticks and gentry of refined taste' before defining his critic 'by occupation', his coordinating conjunction elides in one consumption metaphor two distinct but overlapping types of critic. In doing so, Sterne creates a bifurcated temporal structure. Both critic-types partake in the same portion of Tristram's work, yet the one 'by

[466] Ellie Chambers and Marshall Gregory, *Teaching and Learning English Literature* (Sage, 2006), 38.
[467] Engell, *Forming the Critical Mind*, 168.

profession' determines *Tristram*'s immediate reception in the mid-century marketplace whilst the other represents a patrilineal view of social critical practices that dates to the Restoration.

Dryden, Johnson argues, 'may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition'.[468] Dryden's importance in popularising the art of criticism was recognised in Johnson's time as it is in ours. Douglas Lane Patey shows that the Restoration and early-eighteenth century inherited many critical activities from the seventeenth such as 'grammar, rhetoric, history, geography, and such newly named studies as "palaeography"', yet Dryden is amongst the first to draw together aspects of these practices under the overarching term 'criticism' in English.[469] Prior to Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), Johnson argues, 'Audiences applauded by instinct, and poets perhaps often pleased by chance'.[470] Although Dryden introduced 'principles' from Italian and French criticism into English, his reputation for Johnson is also as a sociable critic of performance, unbeholden to dry theory or pedantry:

> [Dryden's criticism] is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.[471]

Sterne's debt to these critical origins is visible in Tristram's 'hypercritick' (*TS*, 2.8.119), originally an invention of Dryden's in his dedication to the *Examen Poeticum* (1693) that describes the '*Zoili*, and *Momi*' of antiquity and those of Dryden's contemporaries who 'take upon themselves the Venerable Name of Censors'.[472] Dryden's 'Hypercritick' is paradoxically an excessive critic and no critic at all: 'neither *Zoilus*, nor he who endeavour'd to defame *Virgil*, were ever Adopted into the Name of Criticks by the *Ancients*'.[473] In contrast

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[468] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 2:118.
[469] Douglas Lane Patey, 'The Institution of Criticism in the Eighteenth Century' in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume 4: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (CUP, 1997), 3.
[470] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 2:119.
[471] *Ibid.*, 120.
[472] John Dryden, dedication to *Examen Poeticum: Being the Third Part of Miscellany Poems* (J. Tonson, 1693), sig. A4^{v}.
[473] *Ibid.*, sig. A5^{r}, sig. A4^{v}.

to true critics, who are the 'Defenders of Poets, and Commentators on their Works' and who 'help out an Author's Modesty, who is not ostentatious of his Wit', the 'Hypercritick' fixates solely on discovering 'Imperfections' to mend.[474] This provides only pyrrhic victories in that their discoveries are of no abiding interest to society and provide it with nothing to aspire towards: Scaliger 'has indeed shown us some of those [imperfections in Homer] which are incident to Humane Kind: But who had not rather be that Homer than this Scaliger?'[475]

The 'Hypercritick' is, for Dryden, a non-critic because he or she cannot comprehend criticism's function and value. As Trolander and Tenger note, much written criticism at the turn of the century is occasional and interpersonal: 'No matter the *content*, the *vehicle* was social'.[476] Dryden's account of the 'Hypercritick' appears in the *Examen Poeticum*'s dedication to Lord Radcliffe, evincing its role in social ingratiation and networks of patronage. Writing on the critic's social status becomes an additional type of written criticism itself and, as Gavin notes, much early criticism appears in 'supplementary genres—prologues, prefaces, [and] dedications'.[477] As Gavin further notes, criticism for Dryden and his contemporaries is not a distinct mode of writing, but is more seen as a particular 'response' in readers and audiences that takes place in theatres, coffeehouses, and other social settings.[478] There is thus occasional criticism just as there is occasional verse; as the contents of the *Examen Poeticum* show, the two often complement each other. Marcie Frank argues that such occasional criticism is historically oriented and performative in seeking to establish 'a native tradition coded as filiation'.[479] Often presenting poetry as a patrilineal inheritance, or genealogy, criticism as it develops in the Restoration and early-eighteenth century provides a means 'to guarantee the transmission of a literary legacy and to augment that inheritance'.[480] Johnson's recognition of Dryden as the 'father of English criticism' thus affirms Dryden's success in his own terms. The 'Hypercritick' in this formulation is continuous with mythical bad critics of antiquity such as Momus, but given that those critics were outcasts who did not deserve the appellation, the good critic by implication inherits his correct social role as 'Defender and 'Commentator'. Not only does the 'Hypercritick'

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[474] *Ibid.*, sig. A4^{v}, sig. A5^{r}.
[475] *Ibid.*, sig. A5^{r}.
[476] Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, 'Abandoning Theory: Towards a Social History of Critical Practices' in *Critical Pasts: Writing Criticism, Writing History*, ed. Philip Smallwood (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2004), 43.
[477] Gavin, *Invention of English Criticism*, 1.
[478] *Ibid.*, 3.
[479] Marcie Frank, *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism* (CUP, 2003), 2.
[480] *Ibid.*, 7.

embody his bad inheritance, he denies contemporary poets and dramatists their rightful one. Under the guise of a 'seeming Veneration' for pre-Restoration dramatists such as William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, antisocial critics 'wou'd thrust out us their Lawful, and Govern us themselves, under a specious pretence of Reformation'.[481]

Within this social order, critics should recognise their status as 'Wits of the Second Order' compared to the poets from whom they derive their 'subservient' fame. The 'hypercritick[s]' of Dryden's day 'become Rebels of Slaves, and Usurpers of Subjects', turning ranks when they should act as 'Auxiliary Forces' for poets.[482] Gavin notes that such battlefield analogies 'map critical ideas onto a social world', imagining 'a virtual geography for critical exchange'.[483] That terrain is, however, strictly circumscribed given that Dryden uses the analogy to enforce literary protectionism; a critic should know his place as a poet-warrior's 'Second' if he is not a poet himself. A generation later, Pope makes a similar assertion in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) that only those 'who themselves excell' in poetry should have licence to '*censure freely*' (15-16).[484] As Patey notes, Dryden and Pope assert a continuity between the roles of poet and critic to 'buttress their authority against unworthy opponents, especially that growing number of critics who set up not as the muses' handmaids but in the independent business of judging for themselves'.[485] In the early-eighteenth century, the most famous non-poet to set up 'independent business' as a critic is John Dennis. In his reply to Pope's *Essay*, Dennis inverts its key assertion, arguing that 'I am [...] convinc'd that there never was an admirable Poet, but he was a Great Critick'.[486] Dennis staunchly defends criticism as a practice independent of poetry, citing—still, we should note, in patrilineal terms—his own 'Father of *Criticks*' as precedent:

> this is undeniable at the same time, that there have been Critics, who have been approv'd of by all the World, who never meddled with Poetry. Was *Aristotle* himself […] a Poet? [...] Did he ever write either Tragedy or Epick Poem? And yet how freely did he censure both Tragick and Epick Poets?

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[481] Dryden, dedication to *Examen Poeticum*, sig. A6^{r}.
[482] *Ibid.*, sig. A4^{v}.
[483] Gavin, *Invention of English Criticism*, 50-51.
[484] Quotations and line numbers are from Pope, *One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope*.
[485] Patey, 'Institution of Criticism', 14.
[486] John Dennis, *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a Late Rhapsody Call'd, An Essay Upon Criticism* (Bernard Lintot, 1711), 2.

Dennis's charge against Pope's *Essay* is that it denigrates criticism as a fallen offshoot of poetry as it had once been in a golden age.

> At first Poets and Criticks were all one; and there Poets made use of their Criticism only to make their Poetry more charming, and more accomplish'd. But the Wits who immediately follow'd after them, deviated from the Design of their Predecessors; and not being able to attain to Poetry, took up a Resolution to drive a separate Trade, and set up only as Criticks.[487]

Dennis takes issue with the idea that criticism as 'a separate Trade' is a belated secondary enterprise that establishes itself through envy and deviation from poetry's ideal 'Design'. Pope's *Essay* is clear that only those unable 'to attain to Poetry' would consider making criticism their independent profession.

Pope's *Essay* frequently responds to Dennis's own design for critical and poetic reformation in his *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704). Here, Dennis sets his stance against the aristocratic Tory lineage of criticism—the 'Gentlemen of taste'—epitomised by Dryden and Wentworth Dillon, 4th Earl of Roscommon. As Abigail Williams notes, Dennis's *Grounds of Criticism* is 'formal and prescriptive' in its intent to provide inalterable principles for criticism and poetry.[488] The opening 'Proposal' that 'the taste of both the Readers and the Spectators was never so debauched as it is at present' motivates Dennis's programme 'to fix the Rules both of Writing and of Judging'.[489] Dennis's purported aim in (re)affirming poetic principles is 'to restore and reestablish' poetry's status as the 'the noblest of all Arts, and by consequence the most instructive and most beneficial', yet this is not a mere straightforward return to classical codes of poetic conduct.[490] Having first 'laid down the Rules' adopted by the Ancients, Dennis promises 'to examine, Whether those Rules are always to be kept inviolable; and if they are not, in what parts, and by whom, they may be altere'd'.[491] His

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[487] *Ibid.*, 5.
[488] Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture, 1681-1714* (OUP, 2005), 41.
[489] John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (George Strahan and Bernard Lintot, 1704), [xii-xiii], sig. A^{r}.
[490] *Ibid.*, 1-2.
[491] *Ibid.*, sig. A6^{r}.

model poet capable of disobeying poetry's laws to maintain its spirit is John Milton, who 'by daring to break a little loose from them in some particulars, kept up in several others to the Nature of the Greater Poetry in general'.[492] Milton's poetic license, Dennis argues, is not so much 'against the Rules' as 'above them all' and what 'set[s] him free from the Obligation which he lay under to the Poetical Laws' is his subject.[493] Dennis is less intractable than his claim to inscribe 'eternal and unalterable' poetic rules suggests.[494] '[S]ince the final End of Poetry is to reform the Manners', he argues, 'nothing can be according to the true Art of it which is against Religion, or which runs counter to Moral Vertue, or to the true Politicks, and to the Liberty of Mankind'.[495] Critical and poetic principles are not ends in themselves, but serve poetry's 'Greater [...] general' purpose of conveying the passions in pursuit of moral and political reformation.

Dennis's focus on religious poetry as exalting 'the Liberty of Mankind' in evoking 'the strongest Enthusiastick passions' contrasts with the even measures proposed by Tory critics such as Dryden, Pope, and, in particular, Roscommon.[496] Dennis defends 'the frequent use of Metaphors, Dialects, Epithets' in poetry as 'the Language of Passion'.[497] His poetic ideals are strikingly figurative in their reach towards a Longinian sublime. The highest poetry, Dennis argues, takes its shape from 'Great Thoughts moving the soul from it's Ordinary Scituation by the Enthusiasm which naturally attends them'.[498] The use of elaborate figures is, for Dennis, not artifice so much as a natural consequence of poetic enthusiasm. The significance for professional criticism lies in Dennis's defence of the 'true Politicks' of 1688 and of Milton's status as protector of 'the Liberty of Mankind': lauding poetry in these terms allows Dennis to impugn the idea of criticism as an aristocratic privilege rather than a means of establishing one's professional independence.[499] As Williams notes, Dennis's Whiggish rhetoric of liberty presents itself as 'freeing English literature from the tyranny of the past', a position easily inverted in Pope's likening of Dennis's fiery critical persona to 'some *fierce Tyrant* in *Old Tapestry*!' (587).[500] The idea of criticism as a patrician, even regal, trait is evident in Roscommon's praise of those 'Serene, and clear, Harmonious' (41)

[492] *Ibid.*, sig. A6^{r}-A6^{v}.
[493] *Ibid.*, sig. B3^{r}.
[494] *Ibid.*, sig. A5^{r}.
[495] *Ibid.*, 9.
[496] *Ibid.*, 23.
[497] *Ibid.*, 23-24.
[498] *Ibid.*, 78.
[499] *Ibid.*, 9.
[500] Williams, *Poetry and Whig Literary Culture*, 43.

translations of Horace that have been 'cultivated by a Royal hand' (31).[501] Native English '*Wit*', Roscommon argues, should be 'strong', '*succinctly Writ*' (57-58), and not encumbered with unnecessary adornments. Decency and 'strict *harmonious Symetry* of *Parts*' (148) are, for Roscommon, poetry's '*sure Foundations*' (145). All are exclusively aristocratic attributes, 'For None have been with *Admiration*, read, / But who (beside their *Learning*) were *Well-Bred*' (69-70).

In his dedicatory verse to Roscommon, Dryden celebrates how 'The Muses Empire is restor'd agen / In *Charles* his Reign, and by *Roscommon*'s pen' (28-29), conflating the restoration of the monarchy and courtly manners with that of poetic and critical sense and, in doing so, echoing Roscommon's own insistence that '*Empire*, and *Poesy* together rise' (353).[502] Pope's *Essay* later links Roscommon's 'Manners gen'rous' to 'his Noble Blood' (726); critical decorum rises *with* and is also itself a form *of* aristocratic stability. Mirroring Roscommon's aristocratic poetic principles, Pope's ideal critic is 'well-bred' (635), holds an innate proclivity to avoid extremes, and is capacious in his view: 'blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd / A *Knowledge* both of *Books* and *Humankind*' (639-40). The dependent critic, in contrast, is blinkered by his servility: 'A Constant Critick at the Great-man's Board, / To *fetch and carry* Nonsense for my Lord' (416-417). Against this view, Dennis argues that 'accomplish'd Criticks', including those who have never written poetry themselves, have been exercising their right as 'free Censurers' independent of faction since antiquity.[503] He accuses the neophyte Pope of already himself being a 'pedantick Slave to Authority and Opinion'.[504] As Gavin avers (in terms also significant for Sterne), 'Opinion' in the early-eighteenth century was a strong term that 'remained suspect and was largely denigrated as an epistemological category'. To express an opinion 'was to hold an individual belief presumed to be at odds with the actual state of affairs in the world' and the proliferation of opinions was 'easily viewed as disturbing to the social fabric'.[505] Precisely because of opinion's instability, Gavin argues, 'it is social and political' and often connotes the lack of consensus.[506] Yet it also 'places ideas into a network of contextual relations which can be thought of as a deictic

[501] Quotations and line numbers are from Dillon Wentworth, Earl of Roscommon, *An Essay on Translated Verse* (J. Tonson, 1694).
[502] Quotations and line numbers are taken from John Dryden, 'To the *Earl of* Roscommon, *on his Excellent* Essay *on* Translated Verse', dedication to Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*.
[503] Dennis, *Reflections Critical and Satyrical*, 3.
[504] *Ibid.*, 2.
[505] Gavin, *Invention of English Criticism*, 39.
[506] *Ibid.*, 40.

field'.[507] When Dennis accuses Pope of being a slave to opinion, he ties him to an aristocratic critical tradition founded on personal caprice rather than reasonable principles. This jostling between the critical ideals of Roscommon, Dryden and Pope on one side, and Dennis on the other, illustrates Philip Smallwood's argument that the early history of English criticism is foremost a narrative of 'interconnected *occasions*': Dennis and Pope's struggle for interpretative control over criticism's longue durée from antiquity is occasioned by its political implications in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.[508] The pretexts and provocations of these critical occasions rest on the public position of the critic, who is either (for Roscommon, Dryden and Pope) born to poetry and criticism as one and the same art, or practicing a distinct trade that exercises his newfound liberty (Dennis).

We see also how (again in Smallwood's terms) in the act 'of bringing the identity of criticism to mind', critics 'are creating an instance of it'.[509] Critical definitions exist in a hermeneutic circle: to define the critic's space and role is already to occupy it. Pope asserts as much in his description of Longinus, 'Whose *own Example* strengthens all his Laws, / And *Is himself* that great *Sublime* he draws' (679-680). For Pope, Longinus provides another example of how critics must create the art that they criticise in order to understand its rules. In contrast, Dennis begins to establish a field for Sterne's critic 'by occupation'; his criticism of Pope's *Essay* seeks to legitimise criticism as an independent practice neither tied to the tyranny of 'Authority and Opinion' nor a degraded offshoot of poetry. In writing his formal *Grounds* for the professional critic's principles, however, his aim to mend 'the taste of both […] Readers and […] Spectators' prefigures the ambit of the shorter texts that dominate occasional criticism's discussions of taste for the following decades: single-essay periodicals.

As Erin Mackie and Terry Eagleton both observe, criticism's primary function in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* is not literary but cultural. [510] Literary criticism in Addison and Steele's periodicals forms 'one relatively marginal moment of a broader enterprise' which Mackie defines as the 'reformation of manners and morals'.[511] In this purview, both share a motivation with Dennis's more straightforwardly literary *Grounds of Criticism*: to amend

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[507] *Ibid.*, 42.
[508] Phillip Smallwood, *Critical Occasions: Dryden, Pope, Johnson, and the History of Criticism* (New York: AMS Press, 2011), 2.
[509] Phillip Smallwood, *Reconstructing Criticism: Pope's Essay on Criticism and the Logic of Definition* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003), 60.
[510] Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 16-18.
[511] Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism from "The Spectator" to Post-Structuralism* (Verso, 1984), 18; Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 1.

public taste. In orientating criticism towards a public and situating it within that public's quotidian experience, Addison and Steele help to establish discussions on the standards of taste that pass into magazines and review periodicals later in the century. Pope's ideal critic 'blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd' affirms that taste can be particular *and* normative, transcending political faction. This allows it to become all-the-more persuasive as a means of self-fashioning in single-essay periodicals. As Mackie further notes, this entails a curious contradiction: 'the kind of bourgeois taste promoted by the *Tatler and The Spectator* […] is nonelitist and inclusive, but as such it [...] excludes other "more exclusive" modes of taste'.[512] This tension, Mackie suggests, is constitutive: Addison and Steele's periodicals engage with—and in part create—'a dialectic between commerce and criticism that proves positively generative for both'.[513] Criticism in Addison and Steele's periodicals is immersed in yet also claims to rise above commercial society. It promotes particular styles and tastes in fashionable commodities. At the same time, and to retain its authority, it also presents tastefulness as transcending momentary fashions.

The Spectator's criticism of literature is bound, then, to the wider issue of reforming tastes and morals. 'As a perfect Tragedy is the Noblest Production of Human Nature', *Spectator* 39 opens, 'so it is capable of giving the Mind one of the most delightful and most improving Entertainments'.[514] The socio-cultural function of catharsis is to 'wear out of our Thoughts every thing that is mean and little'—in performing this, tragedies 'cultivate that Humanity which is the Ornament of our Nature'. Modern tragedies, argues Mr. Spectator, excel in terms of 'Intricacy and Disposition', yet fail to match their antecedents in terms of 'the Moral Part of the Performance'. Laying out a plan for 'the Improvement of the *English* Tragedy', Mr. Spectator seeks to attune style and expression to each other and to their subject such that they arise naturally from a dignity of thought.[515]

> our *English* Poets have succeeded much better in the Stile, than in the Sentiments of their Tragedies. Their Language is very often noble and sonorous, but the Sense either very trifling or very common […] in the Ancient Tragedies, and indeed in those of

[512] Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 20.
[513] *Ibid.*, 25.
[514] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 1:163.
[515] *Ibid.*, 1:164.

> *Corneille* and *Racine*, tho' the Expressions are very great, it is the Thought that bears them up and swells them.[516]

'For my own part', Mr. Spectator asserts, 'I prefer a noble Sentiment that is depressed with homely Language, infinitely before a vulgar one that is blown up with all the Sound and Energy of Expression'. Such a 'Defect' might be attributable to a 'Want of Genius, Knowledge, or Experience in the Writers' but equally it might arise from their 'Compliance with the vicious Taste of their Readers, who are better Judges of the Language than of the Sentiments'. Defective, or even 'vicious' taste, is that which is *merely* literary: interested only in the 'Ornaments' of language such as 'sounding Phrases, hard Metaphors, and forced Expressions' at the expense of a more capacious and refined conception of 'Sentiments'.[517]

In promoting his ideal diction, Mr. Spectator is closer to Pope and Roscommon than Dennis (he even quotes Roscommon towards the conclusion of *Spectator* 39): 'Opinions, Manners and Passions' are, he fears, 'apt to be obscured by pompous Phrases'.[518] Mr. Spectator prescribes his preference for a 'Simplicity in the Words that outshines the utmost Pride of Expression' as a means of rectifying London's manners and morals by improving the ways its inhabitants experience 'Pleasure'.[519] The discourse of taste, Denise Gigante argues, affirms that 'pleasure is its own way of knowing'.[520] In asserting this form of knowledge, it also tests one's ability to detect contrivance: 'false Beauty will not pass upon Men of honest Minds and true Taste'.[521] Taste proves a malleable construct in Addison and Steele's writings. The taste of the town might be 'vicious' or ugly, but once corrected it is also the sole standard by which the rules of art and criticism become meaningful:

> Musick, Architecture and Painting, as well as Poetry and Oratory, are to deduce their Laws and Rules from the general Sense and Taste of Mankind, and not from the

[516] *Ibid.*, 1:165.
[517] *Ibid.*, 1:166.
[518] *Ibid.*, 1:166.
[519] *Ibid.*, 1:166, 1:164.
[520] Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 2.
[521] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 1:29.

> Principles of those Arts themselves; or in other Words, the Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste.[522]

Mackie cites this passage as an example of Mr. Spectator's 'strenuously antiformalist aesthetic', whereby the literary is only one aspect of a cross-disciplinary social standard of criticism that remains extrinsic to literature and other arts.[523] Johnson argues the same when he describes *The Spectator*'s critical ventures 'as deciding by taste rather than by principles'.[524] Although the more formalist Johnson elsewhere asserts it to be the 'task of criticism' to 'establish principles' so as to 'improve opinion into knowledge', the implication in the *Lives* is that the inculcation of a general 'taste' for criticism precedes their establishment.[525] Addison, Johnson avers, 'is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects, but by the lights which he afforded them'. In instilling the prerequisite 'taste' for criticism to flourish, he inspires the forming of principles by which he is later judged.[526]

Whilst tastes as upheld by history are the touchstone against which art and literature should be measured, taste in the present moment is a precarious measure requiring regulation. '[T]he great and only End of these my Speculations', Mr. Spectator argues, 'is to banish Vice and Ignorance out of the Territories of *Great-Britain*'. His method to achieve this is to 'establish among us a taste for polite Writing'.[527] This provides an example of how, in Warner and Siskin's terms, 'Culture and disciplinarity [...] are bound historically to each other'.[528] Addison and Steele's wide cultural aim to correct taste 'narrowed and hierarchized' the 'polite Writing' they deemed appropriate for attention.[529] In its broadest reformative aims, *The Spectator* begins to delimit a narrower, more specialised space for literary appreciation.

Mr. Spectator's programme evinces also the 'temporal incongruity' of taste that James Noggle identifies in the period. Eighteenth-century taste, Noggle argues, 'lives in the moment, in particular sensibilities' and in the immediacy of one's judgments on works of art

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[522] *Ibid.*, 1:123.
[523] Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 204.
[524] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 3:36.
[525] Samuel Johnson, *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, 3-5: *The Rambler*, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (1969), 4:122.
[526] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, 3:36-37.
[527] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 1:245.
[528] William B. Warner and Clifford Siskin, 'Stopping Cultural Studies', *Profession* (2008): 103.
[529] *Ibid.*, 104.

and literature; the 'great Conformity between that Mental Taste […] and that Sensitive Taste' is the Lockean basis on which Addison introduces a series of essays examining the pleasures of the imagination.[530] In drawing sense and embodied cognition close to each other, taste as a metaphor creates 'a symbolic economy of consumption', in Gigante's terms, that insists on one's 'self-engagement in the world of material presence'.[531] At the same time, however, 'tastes' also identify 'slowly evolved, collective processes and outcomes'.[532] Noggle suggests that, rather than perceiving this as contradictory, taste as sensible response—as a moment of 'delight or discrimination'—is often 'conceived metonymically' in the eighteenth century as 'a little piece of a historical process'.[533] Establishing a *current* taste for 'polite Writing' will, Mr. Spectator argues, initiate a purge of 'Vice and Ignorance' from England's historic literary tastes. This distinction between 'taste' and 'tastes' is, for Noggle, a crucial one:

> While instantaneous taste has no place to work but in single sensibilities, tastes tend to work explicitly through social means and promote group solidarity. While taste is immediate and self-expressive, tastes tend to be mediated and imitative.[534]

The man 'of a fine Taste in Writing' instantly discerns 'not only the general Beauties and Imperfections of an Author' but also 'the several Ways of thinking and expressing himself, which diversify him from all other Authors', in the same way that one with a refined taste in tea might identify 'without seeing the Colour of it, the particular Sort which was offered to him' as well as 'any two Sorts of them that were mixt together in an equal Proportion'.[535] Immediate taste depends on the keenness of one's sensory organs; developing tastes over time is an emulative social process. The first is purely experiential, whilst the other accrues in time *from* experience. 'Conversation with Men of a Polite Genius is [a] Method for improving our Natural Taste', Mr. Spectator argues: 'I cannot think that *Corneille*, *Racine*, *Moliere*, *Boileau*, *la Fontaine*, *Bruyere*, *Bossu*, or the *Daciers*, would have written so well as they have done, had they not been Friends and Contemporaries'.[536]

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[530] Noggle, *Temporality of Taste*, 1; Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:527.
[531] Gigante, *Taste*, 17, 16.
[532] Noggle, *Temporality of Taste*, 1.
[533] *Ibid.*, 3.
[534] *Ibid.*, 11-12.
[535] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:527-528.
[536] *Ibid.*, 3:529.

Regarding taste as experienced within moments of pleasure, 'It is very difficult', argues Mr. Spectator, 'to lay down Rules for the Acquirement' as the 'Faculty' of sensibility must to a degree 'be born with us'.[537] In this sense, *The Spectator* establishes an alternative measure in the senses of Pope's 'Noble blood'. Sensibility may not align precisely with those born into nobility, yet it holds its own circuitous quasi-aristocratic logic: 'because the aesthetic and the standard of taste […] are so heavily ethical and subjective, their formulation is intimately tied to that of ideal character types. Because taste is so inextricably involved with character, it serves as well as an ethical criterion'.[538] If taste as sensibility is something that 'must in some measure' be inborn, there are nevertheless 'Methods for Cultivating and Improving it'. Foremost, one must 'be conversant among the Writings of the most Polite Authors' as this 'naturally wears [oneself] into the same manner of speaking and thinking'.[539] In providing his readers with this means of self-improvement, Mr. Spectator establishes criticism as a valuable investment: 'It is likewise necessary for a Man who would form to himself a finished Taste of good Writing, to be well versed in the Works of the best *Criticks* both Ancient and Modern'.[540] Whilst taste establishes its own elite, it provides also a commercial-proprietorial model for appreciation. The 'Polite Imagination', Mr. Spectator argues, 'gives [the person who possesses it] a kind of Property in every thing he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated Parts of Nature administer to his Pleasures'.[541] As Eugenia Zuroski notes, taste as a synesthetic mental faculty and metaphor transforms 'the act of seeing and incorporating objects as part of the mind's mental storehouse of ideas' into a 'basis of social status'.[542] Taste as sensibility can, as Noggle notes, be fashioned into *a* taste—for a particular style of art or literature, for example—'through the medium of money'.[543] Investment in their own daily 'Speculations', Addison and Steele argue, will help readers to 'banish [a] *Gothic* Taste' for 'Epigrams, turns of Wit, and forced Conceits'.[544]

For Noggle, the Addisonian conversational style that bestrides early periodical criticism evinces and strengthens what Pocock terms a 'presentistic' attitude that takes 'the moment and its strategies as providing the context in which the effort to moralize and to

[537] *Ibid.*, 3:529.
[538] Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 206.
[539] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:529.
[540] *Ibid.*, 3:530.
[541] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:538.
[542] Zuroski Jenkins, *Taste for China*, 70.
[543] Noggle, *Temporality of Taste*, 15
[544] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:530.

regulate must be made'.[545] Modern taste subsumes and remediates the 'tastes' of other '*Criticks* both Ancient and Modern' in its drive towards 'imagination, fantasy or passion'; it is no coincidence that Addison's examination of taste introduces his affirmation of the pleasures of the imagination.[546] These discussions also feature in single-essay periodicals at first consumed daily before being anthologised for posterity. In conceiving taste as an immediately experienced moment of delight *and* as a prolonged process of refinement, Mr. Spectator outlines a bifurcated structure of sensation and chronology that anticipates Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's description of the aesthetic experience as 'an oscillation (and sometimes [...] interference) between "presence effects" and "meaning effects."'[547] It is the same bifurcation that Tristram later presents in seating the 'gentry of refined taste', who embody the development of tastes as a historical process, next to critics 'by profession', who condition our immediate response to the work. Such 'presentism' is, Pocock shows, tied to a predominantly Whig view of the economy as 'consisting of exchange rather than inheritance' —what Hume describes as 'unnatural' wealth transferable 'within an instant' that confers 'no hereditary authority of credit to the possessor'.[548] As we saw in Chapter 1, Pocock shows that the 'presentistic' imagination is conversely a means of evacuating the present. The concept of public credit when extended to National Debt becomes an appeal to the imagination, asking its investors to buy into the fantasy of a future full repayment that cannot come to pass.[549]

Taste shares a structural resemblance to credit in that both elicit standards that prove impossible to locate precisely or quantify; both evoke a *je-ne-sais-quos* either as an indefinable quality or as a tipping point at which quantity *becomes* quality. In both cases, this emerges through a consensus resistant to retrospective analysis. Richard Scholar argues that the *je-ne-sais-quoi* 'settles in late seventeenth-century culture […] as an artificial sign of quality; not as an inexplicable and vital relation, the catching of fire between two individuals, but as a collective fabrication'.[550] Its French critical exponents include Dominique Bouhours and Chevalier de Méré. Méré's description of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* as an indefinable nonchalance, or ease of style, that hides its artifice even as it is artfully constructed particularly chimes with Mr. Spectator's project: 'In all activities […] one recognizes the

[545] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time', 95.
[546] *Ibid.*, 98.
[547] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2.
[548] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time', 96; Hume, *Selected Essays*, 209.
[549] Pocock, 'Mobility of Property', 112-113.
[550] Scholar, *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 284.

masters of the craft by I know not what that is free and easy and always pleasing, but which one can hardly acquire without great practical experience'.[551] The *je-ne-sais-quoi* as stylistic ease itself shifts easily from artist to consumer. Discussing naïveté of style and language, Nicolas Despréaux Boileau describes such 'kinds of beauty' that 'one needs to feel and which cannot be proven. It is that *je-ne-sais-quoi* which charms us and without which beauty itself would have neither grace nor beauty'.[552] The *je-ne-sais-quoi* becomes a particular critical touchstone in discussions of the sublime that follow Boileau's translation of Longinus. Both Bouhours and Boileau describe its working in instant and striking moments of taste, with Bouhours outlining reciprocally how a '*je ne sais quoi* of beauty and ugliness […] excite in us these *je ne sais quoi* of inclination and aversion' that are 'born in an instant and when we least think of them'.[553] As Ann T. Delehanty notes, Bouhours describes a form of immediate knowing that defines our relations between potential friends and enemies.[554] His aesthetic experience and man of taste are, as for Mr. Spectator, intensely social.

Sheehan and Wahrman show that one route by which French criticism's *je-ne-sais-quoi* enters the English lexicon is to address 'questions of complexity, causality, agency, randomness, and chance' that begin to emerge during the early-eighteenth century as 'a large and growing number of people were touched by matters of credit, trade, or finance'.[555] The *je-ne-sais-quoi* can express indefinable tipping points within nonlinear and self-organising mechanisms. Defoe's description of credit and Hume's description of the emergence of mind both contain an 'Invisible, *Je ne scay Quoi*' regarding which ''tis impossible to give any definition or description, but which every one sufficiently understands'.[556] Hume's description of 'Public securities' as 'a kind of money' that passes 'as readily at the current price as gold and silver' but which 'convey no hereditary authority or credit' to the possessor describes both the immediacy of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* and the problem of value it carries:

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[551] Chevalier de Antoine Gombault Méré, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. C.-H. Boudhors, 3 vols. (Paris: Fernand Roches, 1930), 2:121—translated and quoted in Scholar, *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 200.
[552] Nicolas Despréaux Boileau, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Antoine Adam and Françoise Escal (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 316—translated and quoted in Scholar, *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 202.
[553] Dominique Bouhours, *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugene* (Paris: Chez Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1671), 250—translated and quoted in Ann T. Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France: From Poetics to Aesthetics* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 60.
[554] Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France*, 60.
[555] Sheehan and Wahrman, *Invisible Hands*, 52.
[556] Defoe, *Review*, 6:31 (14 June, 1711), 122—quoted in Sheehan and Wahrman, *Invisible Hands*, 50; Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1:74.

paper-credit is and is not credit—it *transfers* value at every point of exchange yet *confers* no intrinsic value traceable through time.[557]

Credit's structural affinity with taste becomes further apparent in Hume's essay 'Of the Standard of Taste', which Engell describes as 'a crucial first document in "the criticism of criticism"'.[558] Hume opens by identifying the problem with defining such a standard: 'The great variety of Taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation'.[559] If, Hume argues, we use the term 'taste' as a synonym for the 'sentiments of men' which 'differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same', we find ourselves at a semantic impasse. 'Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing [but] when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions'.[560] Sterne makes a similar point on the unruliness of readerly sentiments in a letter to John Eustace (9 February, 1768):

> it is not in the power of any one to taste humour, however he may wish it [...] a true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him [...] his own ideas are only call'd forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within, so entirely correspond with those excited, 'tis like reading himself and not the book (*Letters*, 646).

Critical consensus in these terms is merely an agreement on the common words which each critic uses to affirm their own sentiments. The problem that Hume identifies is, as Engell notes, a referential incongruity between sentiment and judgment:

> All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves […] and are not always conformable to that standard.[561]

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[557] Hume, *Selected Essays*, 205.
[558] Engell, *Forming the Critical Mind*, 113.
[559] Hume, *Selected Essays*, 133.
[560] *Ibid.*, 134.
[561] Engell, *Forming the Critical Mind*, 113; Hume, *Selected Essays*, 136.

Because sentiment is internal and wholly self-referential, it alone cannot provide a common standard for authoritative readings. This leads to the resignation that 'every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others'.[562]

The accompanying axiom that Hume states 'seems to have attained the sanction of common sense' is *de gustibus non disputandum est*: there is no disputing tastes. It provides, in Gigante's terms, an easy proverbial assent to 'a kind of pleasure that does not submit to objective laws'.[563] As we shall see, it is also integral to Tristram's validation of hobby horses. For Hume, the extreme relativism it implies as a common-sense phrase gives way to another 'species of common sense' which serves 'to modify or restrain it'.[564] This higher common sense tempers sentiment with understanding and judgment to form taste as a compound response, or mixture of faculties, against which we can distinguish a sociable consensus:

> Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe.[565]

Sentiment does not simply give way to reason: 'none of the rules of composition', Hume asserts, 'are fixed by reasonings *a priori*, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding'. The key to critical principles is, for Hume, 'the same with that of all the practical sciences': 'experience', which accrues through communal practices and tempers true critics against enforcing their own reductive or pedantic rules.[566]

> To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it

[562] Hume, *Selected Essays*, 137.
[563] Gigante, *Taste*, 2.
[564] Hume, *Selected Essays*, 137.
[565] *Ibid.*, 137.
[566] *Ibid.*, 137.

> would produce a work, which, by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable.[567]

Although literature cannot 'submit to exact truth', it must be 'confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or by observation'.[568] Echoing Addison's anti-formalism, Hume argues for taste as an extrinsic touchstone against which we should validate literature's rules. Nothing determined a fault by critical rule is actually so if it pleases, 'let the pleasure which [it] produce[s] be ever so unexpected and unaccountable'.[569]

'[G]eneral principles of approbation and blame' exist 'amidst all the variety and caprice of taste'.[570] This is what Engell means when he describes Hume's critical model as bisociative: Hume marks a distinction between rational principle and sentiment whilst also insisting upon their admixture as the basis for the standard of taste. Indeed, Hume's stated aim is 'to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment'.[571] In doing so, he insists on taste's empiricist-physiological underpinning. Acuteness of sensation coupled with a '*delicacy* of imagination' are vital to the standard of taste: 'Where the organs are so fine as to allow nothing to escape them, and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition, this we call delicacy of taste'.[572] We draw the rules of beauty, Hume argues, 'from established models and from the observation of what pleases and displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree'.[573] However, if the same qualities 'in a continued composition, and in a smaller degree' do not affect a person's sensibilities 'we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy'.[574] The standard of taste derives from this capacity to distinguish desirable qualities as they appear to lesser degrees and intermixed with others: 'A good palate is not tried by strong flavour, but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and

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[567] *Ibid.*, 138.
[568] For an account that treats observation and '*Imitations* [...] of Authors' as its own form of 'Genius', see Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition* (A. Millar and R and J Dodsley, 1759), 9-12.
[569] Hume, *Selected Essays*, 138.
[570] *Ibid.*, 140.
[571] *Ibid.*, 140-141.
[572] *Ibid.*, 140, 141.
[573] *Ibid.*, 141.
[574] *Ibid.*, 141-142.

confusion with the rest'.[575] Whenever this capacity for distinguishing is discerned, Hume concludes, it draws our 'general approbation'.[576]

Hume's essay invokes the same bifurcated temporal structure as in *The Spectator*, whereby taste at the moment of delight functions metonymically:

> Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle, and even familiar acquaintance with [an author's] person may diminish the applause due to his performances: but when these obstructions are removed, the beauties which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments immediately display their energy.[577]

Taste's immediate moments phase into a historical process and vice versa. At the moment of appreciation, the man of taste prefigures the approbation of history by dissociating himself from his prejudices, allegiances, and any associations with the author. Conversely, Hume collapses the historical process of canonisation into a momentary 'display [of] energy': matters of 'envy and jealousy' and 'familiar acquaintance' appear, in the context of history's longue durée, to fall away in an instant.

The way one refines one's delicacy so as to transcend any 'familiar acquaintance' is through accumulated experience: first, encountering literary and artistic qualities in their heightened form, then learning how to identify them in mixed or diluted composites. Hume cannot precisely define what the standard of taste *is* because it exists as the tipping point within this cumulative process. Like other complex, nonlinear mechanisms—like, crucially, the functioning of credit—the standard of taste emerges from aggregate experience but cannot be reduced to any one particular set of experiences. For Hume, compositional rules cannot be 'fixed by reasoning *a priori*' and nor can we reason to an *a priori* standard of taste, if such a thing even exists. Nonetheless, this does not negate the standard's existence as an ideal mean within the totality of experience—a *je-ne-sais-quoi* within the admixture of sentiment and judgment that constitutes critical appreciation. Engell describes Hume's standard as 'a presence that is, in a sense, an absence […] a fact that can no more be denied than it can be exactly determined' and, in doing so, links its absent presence to Derrida's

[575] *Ibid.*, 142.
[576] *Ibid.*, 143.
[577] *Ibid.*, 139.

concept of decentred discourse.[578] As we have seen, and less anachronistically, its emergence mirrors credit's complexity and 'presentistic' view. 'Critics read with taste', *The Connoisseur* argues in May 1756, because it is the 'present darling idol of the polite world'. But, like credit, amidst its 'super-abundancy', few 'can say what it really is, or what the word signifies'.[579] For Robert W. Jones, this ubiquity 'signifies not [taste's] triumph but its exhaustion' yet there is another term we might use: saturation.[580] Taste becomes a loadbearing metaphor, allowing criticism to build principles on its elusive standard. Like credit and Mr. Town, it has a dispersed ubiquity that exists in moments of exchange.

III. 'Tasters to the Public'.

It is unsurprising, then, that, as Sebastian Domsch notes, the trustworthiness of eighteenth-century taste-making criticism is often rendered 'in economic imagery [and] in terms of "credit"'.[581] Criticism in periodicals and reviews relies on readers opting to invest money and credence in authorial, or, increasingly, corporate identities. *Tristram Shandy*'s first reviewer William Kenrick asserts as much when he warns 'periodical criticks' that, unlike their forbears who held titles (Roscommon) or patrons (Dryden), 'Your own credit rests on too tottering a basis for you to indulge yourselves safely in any inclination you might have to chastise writers of *established reputation*'.[582] Kenrick's warning derives from his experience working for Ralph Griffiths' pioneering *Monthly Review*. It also evinces a shift in purview within that publication and its competitors. When Griffiths founded the *Monthly* in 1749, its aim was to provide an aid for handling informational overload in the textual marketplace. The volume of books published each month combined with a lack of detail on title-pages created the need for a sifting tool to allow readers to invest in only the right newly published books:

> *When the abuse of title-pages is obviously come to such a pass, that few readers care to take in a book, any more than a servant, without a recommendation; to acquaint the*

[578] Engell, *Forming the Critical Mind*, 114-115.
[579] Coleman and Bonnell, *The Connoisseur*, no. 120 (Thursday 13 May, 1756).
[580] Robert W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty* (CUP, 1998), 14.
[581] Sebastian Domsch, *The Emergence of Literary Criticism in 18th-Century Britain: Discourse Between Attacks and Authority* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 22.
[582] William Kenrick, *A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakespeare* (S. Bladon, 1766), 60.

> *public that a summary review of the production of the press, as they occur to notice, was perhaps never more necessary than now* (*MR* 1, 1749: 'Advertisement')

The *Monthly* began less as a critical periodical than, as its opening title-page suggests, 'An account, with proper Abstracts of, and Extracts from, the New Books, Pamphlets, *&c*. as they come out' (*MR* 1, 1749: title-page). In its advertisement it claims to provide '*a compendious account of those productions of the press, as they come out, that are worth notice*' (*MR* 1, 1749: 'Advertisement')—more a miscellany than a critical mouthpiece.

Three decades later, by contrast, Frances Burney addresses her first fiction *Evelina* (1778) to 'the Authors of the Monthly and Critical Reviews' as the 'Magistrates of the press, and Censors for the Public', appealing to their 'lenity' as an author 'Without name, without recommendation, and unknown alike to success and disgrace'.[583] In the intervening years, review publications had established their authority as proliferating forms of mediation, in Siskin and Warner's terms. As well as reproducing substantial quantities of material cheaply, they are, by the time Burney is beginning to publish, characterised by 'more actively critical strategies such as the combination of summary and evaluation'.[584] The reviews even to some degree solve criticism's originating problem as a field of knowledge defined against its knowers. By initially presenting themselves as reliable sift-tools within an ever-expanding print marketplace, they justify their position not in terms of a specialist critical superiority to the public, but, as Kramnick notes, as relieving that public of labour by offering a service: 'The point was not so much that the public lacked discrimination as the new dispersal of reading and writing left that public in need of a custodial hand to select products worth its attention'. Criticism in these terms rests its authority on 'the *mediation* of expertise and laity, whereby criticism chooses certain works to write about and to offer the public as worth reading'.[585] The *Monthly* wards off accusations of pedantry or bias 'by invoking the market, whose means-ends rationality secures a practical integration of knowledge into the social whole'.[586] Burney suggests as much when she describes reviews as recommending authors to

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[583] Frances Burney, *Evelina, Or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Edward A. Bloom (OUP, 1968), 3-4.
[584] Clifford Siskin and William Warner, 'This is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument' in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 15.
[585] Kramnick, 'Criticism Among the Disciplines', 355.
[586] *Ibid.*, 356.

the public within 'the private commerce of the world'.[587] The book market is the reviews' final guarantor and that market operates within even the most private reading experiences.

The *Monthly Review* was never quite the impartial tool it first claimed to be. As Michael Gamer notes, its aim in providing reviews only of new publications was truly groundbreaking in its swiftness of response; it thus relied on a deep 'familiarity' (in Hume's terms) through Griffiths' profession as a bookseller with the authors, texts, and, by extension, other booksellers it immediately reviewed.[588] Griffiths also published, for example, Ralph's *Case of Authors by Profession or Trade,* a guide to authorship as an interested profession that often disparages the tough regimens that booksellers impose on authors forced to 'consume themselves' in literary labour.[589] Regan contrasts Sterne with Ralph regarding the targets they pick in commenting on contemporary textual commerce. Whereas Ralph 'implicate[s] booksellers in a contemporary corruption of taste', Sterne, Regan argues, adapts Ralph's argument to attack 'the professionalization of [reviewing as a] second order literary activity' and, moreover, presents the reviews' figureheads as 'pimping proprietors'.[590] If we follow Regan's argument, Ralph's hardnosed bookseller and Sterne's pimping proprietor turn out to be one and the same. Griffiths is in fact closer to both than we might assume from Regan's argument. Peter de Hondt, one of the booksellers in Sterne's final publishing arrangement, later writes to Griffiths on 18 October 1780 seeking further 'assistance [...] at Guildhall' as a 'Creditor' to Thomas Becket after their partnership has dissolved. The letter relays advice from William Strahan (the printer with whom Sterne directly arranged the printing of *Tristram Shandy*'s fifth and sixth volumes) that the Guildhall's 'Commissoners might form some objections' to readmitting de Hondt following Becket's bankruptcy. De Hondt argues that, until their partnership ended 'and several years before the disorder of [Becket's] affairs', many of their joint enterprises were profitable, 'of which Sterne's, Montague's, Rousseau's works and a great many others are the proof'.[591] The letter provides some insight into the personal and professional bond through the Stationers Company that de Hondt, Strahan, and Griffiths shared despite ostensibly being on opposing sides of *Tristram*'s critical spats.

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[587] Burney, *Evelina,* 4.
[588] Michael Gamer, 'Assimilating the Novel: Reviews and Collections' in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Vol. 2: English and British Fiction 1750-1820*, ed. Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (OUP, 2015), 534.
[589] Ralph, *Case of Authors by Profession,* 65.
[590] Regan, 'Print Culture in Transition', 292, 300.
[591] Bodleian Library Add. MS C89.

As one of London's more influential booksellers, Griffiths could claim to have established one of the few truly innovative formats in the eighteenth-century print market. Prior to the *Monthly*, there had appeared, as Antonia Forster notes, limited 'abstract-and-extract' publications addressing 'erudite works with small potential audiences'.[592] There were also (and continued to be) catalogues and advertising sections in newly-published books and periodicals such as Edward Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine*. None were as detailed or later as comprehensive in their selection. The *Monthly*'s modest initial claim to '*authority enough for its representations to be serviceable*' stemmed from its self-professed '*candour*' and '*justness of distinction*' (*MR* 1, 1749: 'Advertisement') in selecting which new books to feature in each volume. As Forster records, this selectiveness lasted two months before Griffiths expanded its ambition to 'register all the new Things in general, without exception to any, on account of their lowness of rank or price' (*MR* 1, 1749: 238).[593] Thereafter, each new issue was divided between leading reviews featured at the front and a brief summary of 'Other Books and Pamphlets published this Month' listed at the end. Barely into its infancy and prior to assuming full critical pretensions, the *Monthly* established a hierarchy based on which works were deemed worthy of full review and which featured merely as 'Other Books' published.

David Finkelstein describes how *Blackwood's Magazine* in the early-nineteenth century revised its appearance and cover design to impose a 'corporate identity that remained the hallmark of [its] general profile'.[594] Alongside other miscellaneous periodicals such as magazines and registers, the *Monthly* helped to instigate an earlier shift from single-essay criticism centred on eidolon figures towards the form of corporate identity that *Blackwood's* later promoted. In terms of voice, the *Monthly* is rarely reflexive; when it is, it refers to itself through the plural 'we' rather than 'I' singular. It also typically refers to 'the reader' in the third person rather than addressing 'you', the reader, in the second. Its review of '*Select pieces on commerce, natural philosophy, morality, antiquities, history*, &c.' in January 1755, for example, begins by asserting that

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[592] Antonia Forster, 'Review Journals and the Reading Public' in *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (Continuum, 2001), 172. Examples that Forster cites include *Memoirs of Literature* (1710-14, 1717) and *History of the Works of the Learned* (1737-43), neither of which enjoyed long print runs.

[593] Antonia Forster, 'Reviewing the Novel' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. J.A. Downie (OUP, 2016), 373.

[594] David Finkelstein, 'Selling *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1817-1834' in *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine: 'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 70.

> The *pieces* before us are called select; there are some that deserve that title, we wish we could say, all. Our opinion, however, is not a standard for others; nor is it, in the least, our design or inclination to derogate from the merit of any work that passes through our hands; we shall, therefore, endeavour to give our readers an insight into each of the essays in this collection, and leave the merit of the whole to their decision (*MR* 12, 1755: 1).

It establishes its assessment of some '*pieces*' as a collective consensus ('Our opinion') yet demurs on presenting that assessment as a 'standard' by which the reader should judge the whole text. Responding in the same year to John Free's *The Monthly Reviewers Reviewed* (1755), the *Monthly* claims to represent 'a small plurality of reviewers', stating that

> The present committee then, of *fifteen*, have unanimously agreed, after a mature consideration of this author's very peculiar case [...] to pass over and remit several fibs, puns, and pretty *concetti* in *the Reviewers reviewed*, which must have tickled his own imagination (*MR* 13, 1755: 145)

Whilst placing an exact figure on its 'committee' is rare, what is typical is the *Monthly*'s refusal to name reviewers. Anonymity remained a staple of the *Monthly* and many of its imitators, setting up an irony and identification in Burney's appeal as an author 'Without name' to the authority of its veteran 'corps'.[595] It is as a distanced, quasi-regulatory association that it can 'unanimously' offer to 'remit' the debt owed by Free for his solecisms. The identity of the *Monthly*'s individual reviewers is not important to—perhaps, would only undermine—the joint-stock authority with which the public credits it. The opening terms of Free's attack are themselves telling:

> When I receive an Affront from a *Stranger*, I generally defer my resentment, till I can inform myself whether there be anyThing valuable in the Character of the Person,

[595] Burney, *Evelina*, 4.

> which may incline me to overlook the Offence [...] If the Offence comes from a *Number*, I still wish to know whether they be *all* Delinquents[596]

Free addresses Griffiths' 'Gentlemen' under the 'Style and Title of the *Monthly Reviewers*' through which they have criticised his previous works. He is compelled to acknowledge the '*Figure*' singular that they collectively cut in their self-professed role as 'publick Registers of our *Commonwealth* of *Letters*'.[597] Free goes on to accuse the *Monthly* of establishing its corporate identity to conceal its reviewers' individual shortcomings and lack of abilities:

> though you affected to appear most *learned*, most *judicious* and *profound*, yet you enjoyed those Qualifications but in your own *Conceit* […] it was owning to this *Cause*, in Conjunction with the Teazingness of dire *Necessity* […] that you had erected yourselves into a *Fraternity*, and, in Spight of *Modesty*, and *common Sense* continued to act, as though you were the *commissioned* Censors [of] *English* Literature.[598]

Free nonetheless engages with the *Monthly* on its preferred terms. He might accuse its reviewers of a 'deplorable Unfitness to answer the high Purposes of *publick* Criticism', yet he seeks to disparage its collective 'Character' rather than the individual writers of its reviews. Even in asserting its 'deplorable Unfitness' for the role, he cedes the authority with which the *Monthly* is, by 1755, invested by its readership as a quasi-institution of public criticism.[599]

Evelina's dedicatory appeal is not, however, addressed solely to the *Monthly*'s authority. From 1756, Griffiths had a competitor: *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, established under Tobias Smollett's editorship. Like the *Monthly*, the *Critical* claimed to be the collective work of 'A Society of Gentlemen' (*CR* 1, 1756: title-page). The preface to its first collected issue in 1756 provides the following *apologia*:

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[596] John Free, *The Monthly Reviewers Reviewed* (E. Owen, 1755), 3.
[597] *Ibid.*, 3.
[598] *Ibid.*, 8.
[599] *Ibid.*, 9.

> *The* Critical Review *having passed through a series of numbers with uninterrupted success, the authors beg leave to present it in the form of a volume, together with their warmest acknowledgments to the public* […] *An indulgence the more remarkable, as they have been in a peculiar manner, exposed to virulent invective, slanderous insinuation, and other low arts of malice practised by authors who have smarted from their animadversions, and persons who had an interest in depreciating their labours* (*CR* 1, 1756: preface).

Smollett had previously worked for Griffiths as one of the *Monthly*'s reviewers; the two publications now jostled for critical hegemony and often exchanged '*invective*'. Unlike the *Monthly*, the *Critical* had a precedent in Griffiths' periodical that allowed it to begin its run with the intent also to review every new book as it appeared. As the *Critical*'s name suggests, Smollett also did not need to be so coy as Griffiths regarding his aim to criticise works and amend public taste, the *Monthly* having more cautiously led the way.

The previous year, the *Monthly* had presented its reviewers in a new role as 'tasters to the public' (*MR* 13, 1755: 399). This shift in the *Monthly*'s metaphor of taste is crucial in establishing a critical role for its reviewers. 'Taste' is not itself (as in *The Connoisseur*) ubiquitous in the *Monthly*, but instead now a means of handling the print market's unwieldy proliferation. It may still be developed over time through experience, but its function is to identify the safely consumable texts of the present moment. It serves not coteries but the entire reading 'public' and, if it does not wholly '[forswear] diffident politeness for economic assiduity', as Kramnick suggests, it casts the former as in service to the latter.[600] It also favours regular, discrete 'tastings' over larger servings, evincing the increasing distance Engell notes between longer texts on, for example, *belletrist* critical principles, and critical-periodical texts that intervene in the daily or monthly work of cultural regulation. Crucially, this affirmation of shorter, popular critical forms explicitly relates to the material 'tasted': it is during the end-of-year 'season for novels' (previously below the considerations of polite taste) that the *Monthly* seeks to 'apprize the connoisseur of what is, or is not, fit for his table' (*MR* 13, 1755: 399). When *Tristram Shandy* presents professional critics gathering around its

[600] Kramnick, 'Criticism Among the Disciplines', 356.

table to consume the fiction 'heartily', Sterne is very much following the reviews' lead—albeit offering a homelier 'entertainment' than a fine connoisseurly dinner.

The *Critical* follows suit in identifying the end-of-year 'season' during which novels 'usher in the *Winter* as *snow-drops* do the *Spring*' and, more subtly, in professing to act as a public taster. The preface to its first collected issue isolates the qualities Hume identifies as distinct, yet also intermixed, in forming the standard of taste:

> *Not that* [our reviewers] *pretend to infallibility in criticism, or presume to decide with dogmatical authority: They have delivered their sentiments as opinions only, and these have supported with reasons on which every reader may exercise his own understanding* (*CR* 1, 1756: preface).

Hume's emphasis on the sociability of taste-formation remains. The terms 'sentiment' and 'reason' or 'understanding' also remain but are now divided across the interaction between critics and readers. The *Critical* provides one half of the equation: it proffers immediate '*sentiments*' tentatively flagged '*as opinions only*' alongside its '*reasons*'. 'Opinion', which, as Gavin indicates, had been for earlier critics a disturbing epistemological category, now more fully defines a 'deictic field' of 'contextual relations'. It is left to readers to apply their '*understanding*' to the *Critical*'s '*sentiments*', and this combination produces the final criticism of a text. The metonym of immediate 'sentiment' applied to the historical process of 'understanding' remains but divided across two groups: reviewers and their reading public. This marks again Engell's increasing discrepancy between longer critical works and periodical-critical interventions, which develops as a further distinction between periodical types. Jon Klancher argues that the pseudo-aristocratic periodical culture of the early-eighteenth century eventually undid itself by inviting consumers to pass judgement on a wider textual marketplace that it could not control.[601] Hence Powell's observation that the single-essay periodical focused through a polite eidolon had 'largely [...] died away' by the late 1760s, 'consumed by miscellany periodicals' better-equipped to negotiate what Tim Parnell describes as the 'more amorphous and disparate literary culture' of the mid-century

[601] Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 18-20.

period.[602] The *Critical* obliquely acknowledges this more disparate marketplace in envisaging taste-making as a division of labour. In Keen's terms, it incorporates 'a sense of the discontinuities of modern knowledge into [its] structure' by dispersing critical authority month by month between its own corporate responsibilities and those of a readership it assumes are well-enough educated in critical principles to trust to their '*understanding*'.[603]

Another distinction between the reviews and Hume's essay lies in their perception of taste's strength within literary appreciation. For Hume, 'taste' holds a persuasive authority that forges a positive teleology: once time eliminates considerations such as 'familiarity', 'envy', or 'jealousy', 'the beauties' of great works irresistibly 'display their energy'. Even as it positions its reviewers as 'tasters' of novels for the public, the *Monthly* rues its inability to temper that same public's relish for novel-reading, which appears somehow to persist in spite of taste's rules and of the public's understanding. The proliferation of novels in the mid-century market seems, according to the reviews, to feed an unnatural appetite:

> From the number of contemptible productions with which our novel-makers have complimented the public this season, one may almost be tempted to conclude that these writers have combined to try whether the age may not be cured of its peculiar taste for this species of amusement, by an excessive surfeit (*MR* 6, 1752: 75).

Far from acceding to the lustres of great works over time, novels have entrenched themselves in the reading public's habits in disregard of good taste. Both the *Monthly* and the *Critical* are ambivalent, tending towards hostile, to this perceived glut. Describing John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748-49) as a 'work of the Novel kind' allows the *Monthly* to highlight where it excels and to excuse its lack of delicacy on the same grounds:

> Though this book is said to be taken from a very loose work […] yet it does not appear to us that this performance […] has any thing in it more offensive to decency, or

[602] Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 22; Tim Parnell, 'Sterne's Fiction and the Mid-Century Novel: The 'Vast Empire of Biographical Freebooters' and the 'Crying Volume'' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. J.A. Downie (OUP, 2016), 274.
[603] Keen, *Literature, Commerce, Modernity*, 104.

> delicacy of sentiment and expression, than our novels and books of entertainment in general have (*MR* 2, 1750: 432).

Cleland's writings lack discretion, but what else would one expect of a novel? The *Critical* establishes its own aversion in its first volume. In a review of *The Fortune-Teller; or the Footman Ennobled* (1756), it presents itself as already hamstrung by its ambition to review every book as it is published: 'Nothing could have obliged us to the perusal of a performance so wearisome as the *Fortune-Teller*, but the absolute necessity under which we are laid by our plan, of giving some account of every thing that appears in print' (*CR* 1, 1756: 53).

The *Monthly*, the *Critical*, and their various imitators had to tread carefully. Whilst they claiming to follow the taste of a public whom they served and defined their own role as 'tasters' in explicit relation to novels, they also portrayed that public's taste for novels as profligate and in need of regulation. As Gamer notes, 'the long-term financial health of a Review required it to anticipate broad shifts in popular taste even as it sought to mould that taste'.[604] In anticipating these shifts, reviewers had to examine the novel's appeal and identify where an ideal novel might excel in exceptional circumstances. The *Monthly*'s review of *The Force of Education* (1751), for example, proposes that 'If a competent knowledge of human nature, interesting incidents, and elegance of language, be a recommendation to a novel, this small performance may claim some share of the publick favour'. That share of public favour should, perhaps, remain small, but characters seen as 'natural' when coupled with a 'subtilty and judgment' (*MR* 4, 1751: 259) in plotting could prompt qualified recommendations. As Gamer notes, one of the problems reviewers faced was that, despite the newness of the novel, there was one genre that was still newer: the review. The novel thus became the straw-man upstart against which reviews could claim their venerability. Focussing on the novel as a suspect new genre in need of control 'enabled [the reviews] to deflect and otherwise deny the newness of their own mode of writing' as well as the questionable foundations of their credit as 'tasters' with the public.[605]

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[604] Gamer, 'Assimilating the Novel', 536.
[605] *Ibid.*, 535.

IV. Tristram and ‘Sir Critick’.

These developments in criticism from the late-seventeenth into the mid-eighteenth century allow us better to read Sterne’s confidence in seeking the public to ‘fix the Value’ of his work. Elsewhere, I have challenged Mullan’s description of *Tristram Shandy* as a novel ‘let loose in the world—subject to no official control’ by examining Sterne’s decision—perhaps in conjunction with bookseller John Hinxman and/or printer Anne Ward—to feature in *Tristram*’s first *York Courant* advertisement its Greek epigraph taken from Epictetus’s Stoic discourses and commonly translated as ‘it is not things themselves, but judgements concerning things, which disturb men’.[606] This presents, I argued, an attempt to delimit, or at least refine, the terms in which critical ‘judgments’ concerning Sterne’s text would be ventured.[607] The Greek epigraph appears to establish an authenticating code or shibboleth through which learned readers must pass before they themselves can pass judgement.

Furthermore, I argued for the possibility of reading the advertisement’s use of Greek text as an arcane jest in the tradition of learned wit. The advertisement collapses hierarchies of language and temporality yet, in doing so, reasserts their importance. The colloquial English of daily Yorkshire life sits above Stoicism’s timeless classical precepts, but its small world of ‘Shandies’, ‘Gents’, and ‘Opinions’ floats free of historical significance without Epictetus’s underpinning wisdom in Greek, whose words are accessible only to an educated few. Ostensibly, only scholars capable of deciphering the Greek text are given licence to consider what is being offered up for judgement. In the ephemeral and public act of declaring its own sale, *Tristram* already appears to avouch its timelessness through the language of a learned elite. In fact, however, the advertisement could exploit two readerships and two temporalities: it could appeal both to the learned readers whom Sterne perhaps considered best-qualified to transmit his work to posterity’s longue durée *and* to those who aspired to be so and could appreciate in the immediate moment the advertisement’s rather novel bid for exclusivity in promoting an urbane entertainment.

Similarly, in the text-proper’s collocation ‘criticks and gentry of refined taste’, Sterne maintains a distinction between those who professionally aspire to influence taste and those supposedly bred to further its refinement even as he effaces it. He demonstrates an understanding that critical judgment and taste-making are more amorphous and dispersed

[606] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, 149.
[607] Hardie-Forsyth, ‘Sterne, Textual Commerce, Public Judgement’, 27-47. See also ‘Introduction’, 1-7.

than they had been only a few decades earlier, yet he identifies two main groups of tastemakers—critics 'by profession' and gentry of 'taste'—who, although distinct, shared significant points of overlap—for example, in the *Critical*'s claim to be authored by a 'A Society of Gentlemen'. The two groups are not so dissimilar or irreconcilable that they cannot be situated 'at table' to consume Tristram's text together. In terms of Noggle's temporality of taste, Sterne collapses immediate response into historical process: professional critics, who, as we have seen, could define themselves as public 'tasters' during each 'season for novels', dine alongside 'gentry', who have 'refined' their taste over generations. Although he only identifies 'Messrs. the monthly Reviewers' explicitly in *Tristram*'s third volume, there are suggestions that Sterne has them in mind when he refers to the critic 'by profession'. Tristram cannot decide whether to leave six or seven places for them at his table, suggesting an unknowable number will arrive for 'entertainment'. Whatever number he does leave, those spaces will, he fears, be easily filled, with Tristram 'hoping [...] that I shall be able to make a great deal of more room next year' (*TS*, 2.2.97). Although Tristram 'beg[s] only you [the critics] will make no strangers of yourselves, but sit down without any ceremony' (*TS*, 2.2.97), they remain shadowy, ill-defined figures. Like the *Monthly* and *Critical*'s reviewers, they are addressed only by profession rather than by name. When Tristram attempts to respond to them 'as a man of erudition' who, in terms of an Aristotelian *ethos*, must 'sustain [his] character properly', he worries that 'at this very moment that I am going here to fill up one place against a critick,-----I should have made an opening for a couple'(*TS*, 2.2.98). The traditional valuing of candour and consistency of character in critical exchanges invites chaos in reply, and Tristram appears concerned that addressing an indistinct mass of reviewers in these terms will incite them to multiply and overfill his house.

In part, this is because Tristram as a 'sustain[ed] character' resembles what the reviews largely supplanted: the eidolon of single-essay periodicals. His life and opinions are, like those earlier periodicals, 'anti-archival': in Keen's terms, 'iterative without adding up into any unified body of knowledge'.[608] Walter Shandy, of course, famously attempts to complete the *Tristrapædia* such that it will provide a total encyclopaedic system for his son's education, a project Tristram inherits and for which he writes the chapter recounting his own traumatic circumcision—'the *chapter upon sash-windows*, with a bitter *Philippick* at the end of it, upon the forgetfulness of chamber-maids' (*TS*, 5.26.458)—finally to 'render the *Tristrapædia* complete' (*TS*, 5.26.459). The moment of completion is, like its mutilated

[608] Keen, *Literature, Commerce, Modernity*, 110.

author, incomplete. Tristram's authoring of Walter's missing chapter years later confirms what we already know: that the *Tristrapædia* never served the systemising purpose for which it was conceived. Should readers ever encounter the *Tristrapædia* (as Tristram promises they will once he publishes it), it will be long after Walter—and perhaps Tristram—has died. The larger point that again relates to Sterne's playful search for *author*itative readers is that the uses and purposes of books cannot be governed by their authors, but must instead be decided by critical readers, whose interventions keep those books open and incomplete. Even as critics appear as self-vaunted authorities and even, in the case of the reviewers, within their own quasi-institutions, criticism itself serves the function of *not* closing off texts.

Tristram embodies this as a protagonist who is quite literally *mis*conceived with a purpose he proves never fit to serve, but who discovers his own vocation in essayistic commercial authorship. As Siskin notes, the essay itself is characterised by 'irregularity and fragmentation' where 'incompleteness' should be considered 'a generic feature'.[609] This interplay between the encyclopaedic and the anti-encyclopaedic—the complete and the fragmentary—is noted by a number of Sterne's scholars. Judith Hawley argues that *Tristram Shandy*'s borrowings from Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (1728) occur in clusters, suggesting that 'Sterne dipped into it, following strings of cross-references that interested him' and used its 'openness and interconnectedness' as a means of constructing his own loosely provisional associations.[610] More recently, Karen Harvey has outlined the 'atomistic and holistic impulses' that underlie Tristram's use of writing as a tool for self-management.[611] Such impulses support the notion of Tristram as an eidolon. Tristram's inventory of promised chapters which we examined in Chapter 2, for example, functions as an index of subjects to be treated in forthcoming instalments. The subjects Tristram offers to treat are miscellaneous, mostly anecdotal or micro-historical, and diffuse. The only connective through-line is, as Tristram asserts in his introduction to the '*The Fragment*' on the 'affair of *Whiskers*', his own 'chain of ideas' (*TS*, 5.1.408) that leads from each to the next. Like *The Spectator*, Sterne positions author-eidolon before work and insists that we engage the latter through the former for however long Tristram is able to publish.

Tristram's life and opinions often perform at an intersection between the pseudo-aristocratic periodical culture of the early-eighteenth century and the miscellany and review

[609] Siskin, *System*, 132
[610] Hawley, 'Sterne and the *Cyclopaedia* Revisited', 59, 61, 71.
[611] Harvey, 'Manuscript History of *Tristram Shandy*', 298.

periodicals of Sterne's time. Tristram's claim to gentility—he is, after all, Tristram Shandy, 'Gentleman'—reflects this as it comes into contact with his competing mercantile impulse to frequent bookshops, to hire '*day-tall* critick' (*TS*, 4.13.340) collaborators, and, in Mr. Spectator's terms, to 'Print [himself] out, if possible' each year, but only for so long as he continues to make 'a tolerable bargain with [his] bookseller'. As Regan suggests, Tristram's hiring of the critic even resembles the practices of a review editor-proprietor, the expression '*day-tall*' referring to a '*day-taler*' [sic] i.e. a writer 'engaged and paid by the day' and often expected quickly to perform pre-set tasks in accordance with 'the biases of [...] owners and editors'.[612] Sterne also registers this shift in his depiction of the 'hypercritick', which, two generations after Dryden's 'Hypercritick', cuts a quite different figure. Dryden's hypercritick is so named because he pursues his own pedantic critical standards to indecorous lengths. He conceives criticism as the practice of censuring imperfections and carries this to such antisocial excess that he becomes no critic at all. For Dryden, this reaches back to the classical examples of Momus and Zoilus as archetypal bad critics not only because they do not check their impulse to rail, but also because they are not part of the poetic aristocracy's social sphere and hold no right to influence taste. Tristram, as we have seen, welcomes the critic 'by occupation' who holds a profession distinct from that of poets. Tristram's hypercritick instead appears as a figure so caught up in the rush and hurry of the modern critical response to the 'season for novels' that he is unable to cultivate the practical experience necessary to develop the right 'principles' (in Johnson's terms) on which his judgements should be made.

To affirm the verisimilitude of his fiction, Tristram opens the hypercritick episode with an attempt to conflate the time narrated with the times of narration and reading. He argues that since 'it is about an hour and a half's tolerable good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, when Obadiah was order'd to saddle a horse', Slop's entrance in the previous chapter is 'poetically speaking' (*TS*, 2.8.119) in keeping with Aristotelian principles regarding time and action. Tristram's hypercritick, 'resolved after all to take a pendulum, and measure the true distance betwixt the ringing of the bell and the rap at the door', discovers the actual time narrated 'to be no more than two minutes, thirteen seconds, and three fifths' (*TS*, 2.8.119). Tristram fears that the hypercritick will censure the text 'for such a breach in the unity, or rather probability, of time' (*TS*, 2.8.119). Tristram's shift from unity to probability as a temporal measure is suggestive of the different standards by which poetry and prose-

[612] Regan, 'Print Culture in Transition', 297.

fictions are held to critical account. The implication is that, like the reviewer (and like Swift's Taleteller existing only within 'this Minute I am writing'), the hypercritick holds a modern, commerce-driven obsession with perceiving chronometric time as (in Sherman's terms) 'measured but blank'. Tristram's own response is a Lockean appeal to subjective time, 'the idea of duration and of its simple modes' being 'got merely from the train and succession of our ideas' which is, Tristram informs us, 'the true scholastick pendulum […] by which, as a scholar, I will be tried in this matter,----abjuring and detesting the jurisdiction of all other pendulums whatever' (*TS,* 2.8.119). The hypercritick is Hume's pedant without practical experience or taste, who, 'reduc[ing] every expression to geometrical truth and exactness', appraises texts according to his own 'insipid and disagreeable' metric.

As Amit S. Yahav notes, Locke's account of the experience of duration distinguishes 'between an inner time-sense and a community's conventions for representing history and locating events in time'.[613] In contrast to Locke, Sterne more typically 'flags strings of linguistic sounds, and not just strings of thought, as crucial for understanding how temporal experience works'.[614] This sonorous textuality presents the experience of duration as more closely tied to 'physiological tendencies' and 'vibratory motions' than Locke's chains of ideas.[615] Indeed, Tristram frames the adoption of Locke's associative-temporal standard as merely switching one critical 'pendulum' for another. Evoking Locke's concept of duration, however, serves a specific purpose: it allows Sterne to establish fiction-reading as consisting of 'off-the-clock durational breaks' as opposed to modern forms of critical reading, which obsess over chronometric conventions.[616] Such temporal distinctions are also social: if the 'Gentle critick' wishes to join Tristram's sentimental readership, he will have to 'drop a tear of pity' (*TS*, 2.2.100) and attune himself to the text's affective rhythms. The evocation also allows Tristram to distinguish himself *by association*—i.e. in terms of an essayistic eidolon, who provides an authorial-associative through-line to disparate subjects—from the type of critical reviewer who refuses to see past the tautological literalism that 'two minutes and thirteen seconds are no more than two minutes and thirteen seconds' (*TS,* 2.8.120).

Such critics, Tristram argues, threaten his work's marketability. The hypercritick represents, in Pocock's terms, a kind of extreme presentism which refuses to disassociate the

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[613] Amit S. Yahav, *Feeling Time: Duration, the Novel, and Eighteenth-Century Sensibility* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 88.
[614] *Ibid.*, 100.
[615] *Ibid.*, 88, 89.
[616] *Ibid.*, 10.

present moment of the fiction narrated from the present moment of reading. He thus parodies the modern responsiveness of a reviewing critic, who submits his immediate '*sentiments*' or '*opinions only*' to the public's broader '*understanding*' whilst almost wilfully lacking his own. The hypercritick's presence thus emphasises how *Tristram Shandy*'s text remains an ongoing, often-revised process as well as a product. The hypercritick refuses even to wait for the first two volumes to be published, intervening instead as they are composed to force Tristram's hand. Tristram's Lockean plea to associative time, he worries, 'might save me dramatically' but in the hypercritick's rigid terms it will 'damn me biographically, rendering my book, from this very moment, a profess'd Romance, which, before, was a book apocryphal' (*TS,* 2.8.120). It is commonplace to recognise that *Tristram* provides its own criticism of fiction's narrative forms; this scene, however, provides a criticism of criticisms of fiction. By reducing the criteria of fiction to immediacy, probability, and temporal exactitude, the hypercritick consigns Tristram's text to the genre of 'Romance' from which he feels the need to exculpate it in the following chapter.

The scene comically heightens the fine margins by which '*publick* Criticism' categorises texts and determines their reception. In this sense, it mirrors the earlier episode in volume 1 in which Tristram demands that his female-reader turn back the page and reread the previous chapter. As we saw, his rationale for insisting so is that the 'vile pruriency for fresh adventures in all things' has become such a habitual demand from readers that any 'subtle hints and sly communications of science fly off, like spirits, upwards', any 'heavy moral escapes downwards', and both or either become 'as much lost to the world, as if they were still left in the bottom of the ink-horn (*TS,* 1.20.66). Sterne frames the episode as a 'rebuke' to those who follow this new 'vicious taste' (*TS,* 1.20.65) in reading only for plot. It is, therefore, a rebuke of the practice of reading for the personal history of one character's progress through the world—that of a *Tom Jones, Peregrine Pickle,* or a now lesser-known *Jerry Buck* or *David Ranger*—reflected in the qualified value that reviewers place in 'natural' characters and 'subtilty and judgment' in plotting. As we saw in Chapter 1, the episode formulates criticism's margins of generic categorisation in Lucretian terms. When Tristram's insinuations do not gain weight, they fly free from its pages and are lost to a chaos of unpredictable collisions; when the moral of his work is taken too gravely, it carries too much weight and sinks. In both instances, critical interest is limited to a zone of narrative progress, leaving only middle-weight particles of plot and character to be sifted through. Tristram's genre and mode—the version of himself he is eventually able to sell—are defined by the

weight of his words. Philosophy, theology, and ingenious satire are, he worries, genres in which his writings will not sell, either because they do not register in a world calibrated only for measuring 'lives and adventures' or because modern critics all refuse to receive his work in these terms. The act of critical reading as measuring a text using new detailed methods and mediating instruments is, as with the hypercritick's pendulum, over-literalised: Tristram's ideal critic must be more refined in the art of weighing words than the average fiction-reader.

In his rebuke of the female-reader's 'vicious taste' for reading for the plot and in his buttonholing self-scrutiny of the 'small particles [upon which his] eloquence and [his] fame depend' (*TS*, 2.6.116), Tristram resembles already the hypercritick to whose scrutiny he inadvertently opens his table and his text. As Keymer suggests, this resemblance extends to the swiftness of response that open-ended serial publication permitted Sterne. Publishing *Tristram Shandy* annually could allow (in theory, albeit not later in practice) a critical response to each instalment to gather against which Sterne could respond the following year:

> Through the mechanism of serialization, *Tristram Shandy* could accumulate in a rolling state of openness to determination from without [...] In its wittily haphazard registration of its own reception, the work exploits the inherent contingency and reciprocity of serial composition [...] its dialogic inscriptions of response and counter-response making something palpable of Tristram's initial sense that writing must resemble conversation.[617]

Not just interpersonal conversation, however, but an occasional-critical dialogue with reviewers that is able to institute new joint forms of self-perpetuating '*publick* Criticism'. It is therefore worth examining the exchanges that occurred between Sterne and the various 'Sir Criticks' of the *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews over the course of *Tristram*'s publication.

The *Monthly*'s initial response to *Tristram Shandy* echoes Tristram's rebuke of the female-reader for surging 'straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge' (*TS*, 1.20.65) but argues that 'Madam's' reading manners are already passé. 'Of Lives and *Adventures* the public have had enough', Kenrick's review from December 1759 begins, praising 'the droll Mr. Tristram Shandy' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561) for

[617] Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*, 86.

providing a new variation on a threadbare formula. Narrative 'adventures worth relating' might be easily 'exhausted', Kenrick continues, but drawing on opinion should provide Tristram (Sterne is not yet known as the author-proper) with 'matter enough to write about' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561) if he intends to follow his scheme of publishing two volumes annually. Kenrick's focus on how profitably *Tristram* might support its author's livelihood is unusual for reviews and is surely a jobbing writer's appraisal of narrative returns—one that identifies an affinity between Sterne's fiction and periodical criticism, which also never wants for 'matter [...] to write about' but also relies on the textual marketplace for that matter. Already alert to the provisional and contingent nature of Sterne's project, Kenrick's main concern is that Tristram appears so fond of digressions that he may well 'give [readers] the slip in good earnest, and leave the work before his story is finished' (*MR* 21, 1759: 562). Kenrick praises Sterne's scheme both as viable and prudent, claiming 'notwithstanding all his denunciations of prolixity' that he should be given licence in 'telling his story his own way' with 'every man to his own taste' (*MR* 21, 1759: 562). Kenrick invokes the proverbial *de gustibus non disputandum est* to license a narrative scheme and 'taste' that evades Hume's higher common sense. Sterne's 'design' will certainly appear 'extravagant' to many, but he is unlikely to fail due to 'want of materials' (*MR* 21, 1759: 563). Kenrick receives Tristram with 'approbation' as a 'hero' who possesses the 'character' of 'an Author' (*MR* 21, 1759: 568). He praises his introduction of an 'excellent moral sermon' and excuses his attempts at being 'immoderately witty' as 'an affectation […] generally attended with spirit and humour enough' (*MR* 21, 1759: 568). Overall, Kenrick concludes, Sterne's characters are 'striking and singular' and 'we will venture to recommend Mr. Tristram Shandy, as a writer infinitely more ingenious and entertaining than any other of the present race of novellists' (*MR* 21, 1759: 571).

The *Critical* is also effusive in its response to Tristram's first instalment. Like the *Monthly*, it recognises the difficulty of categorising Sterne's fiction, introducing it as 'a humorous performance, of which we are unable to convey any distinct ideas to our readers' (*CR* 9, 1760: 73). Appearing to follow the *Monthly*'s lead, it singles out praise for Sterne's 'excellent imitations of certain characters' in a Cervantic style: 'Nothing can be more ridiculous than uncle *Toby*'s embarrassment in describing the siege of Namur, *Trim*'s attitude reading aloud a sermon, and Dr. *Slop*'s overthrow in the rencounter with Obadiah the coachman' (*CR* 9, 1760: 74). It concludes on a recurring motif which may have strengthened interest in and sales of *Tristram Shandy*'s opening instalment: its inability to account for Sterne's fiction to those who have not encountered it. 'To those, however, who have perused

this performance, specifying particulars will be unnecessary, and to those readers who have not, it would be unentertaining. We therefore refer them to the work itself' (*CR* 9, 1760: 74). As with the *Courant*'s advertisement, experience, knowingness, and being 'in the know' are key to the Shandean craze as it took off in 1760, supported by appraisals that defer to the text as a *sui generis* site of its own criticism. Early on, the reviewers support the tautological notion that *Tristram* is the only thing like itself; it must be read on its own terms.

This initial enthusiasm took a vertiginous fall in May 1760 with the publication of Sterne's first two volumes of sermons under the revised titled of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760) and containing a second title-page revealing their true author. The *Monthly*'s review (this time written by Owen Ruffhead) opens with a series of 'animadversions on the manner of their publication, which we consider as the greatest outrage against Sense and Decency, that has been offered since the first establishment of Christianity' (*MR* 22, 1760: 422). Every Christian reader who has encountered the text, it avers, 'must have been offended at the indecency of such an assumed character' (*MR* 22, 1760: 422). The *Monthly*'s moralising seems especially histrionic when considered in the light of Kenrick's review of *Tristram Shandy*'s opening volumes, which praises the introduction of the sermon on the abuses of conscience by the 'assumed' characters of Tristram and Yorick, to whom it is attributed. The *Monthly* continues to affect outrage through a series of overwrought rhetorical questions:

> For who is this *Yorick*? We have heard of one of that name who was a *Jester*—we have read of a *Yorick* likewise, in an obscene Romance […] Would any man believe that a Preacher was in earnest, who should mount the pulpit in a *Harlequin's coats*? [...] Is it possible that a man of such wit and understanding as our Author possesses, should have so little decency and discretion? How can he suppose that the *second title-page* will ease people's minds? Will it not rather disturb them the more, to find a Dignitary of the Church so lost to virtue, and so insensible of sham, as openly to acknowledge himself the Author of so indelicate a Novel; and what is still worse, to use it as a recommendation of works which he publishes in his sacred character.
>
> Must obscenity then be the handmaid to Religion—and must the exordium to a sermon be a smutty tale? Tillotson, Clarke, and Foster found other means of raising attention to divine truths; and their names will be respected, when those of Yorick and Tristram Shandy will be forgotten or despised (*MR* 22, 1760: 422-423).

The *Monthly* designs its response to hit Sterne where it will hurt the most. Wryly echoing the hypercritick's assessment, it dismisses his fiction as 'an obscene Romance' whose characters offend all bounds of decorum and probability by promoting indecent absurdities. In comparing the 'forgotten or despised' names of Yorick and Tristram against Latitudinarian models for Sterne's sermons such as John Tillotson, it denies him the fame he seeks, claiming that tastes as they develop over ensuing ages will consign Sterne's characters to anonymity.

More broadly, this augurs a line of criticism that breaks with the *Monthly*'s claim to disinterestedness in not attacking the persons of authors. Ruffhead does so by accusing Sterne himself of ending that pact: 'If the order of society requires that there should be a distinction of characters, *Yorick* and *Sterne*, instead of being one and the same person, should have been, in public at least, as utter strangers as *Moses* and *Mahomet*' (*MR* 22, 1760: 424). Sterne has broken with decorum in allowing what should be distinct characters—the '*Jester*' and the '*Divine*'—to intermix 'in public', a charge Sterne aggravates by playing the parts of Tristram and Yorick on his trips to London, or later 'Shandy[ing] it away […] to all sorts of people' (*Letters*, 242) in his sojourn to France. By first making his own authorial presence an insistent component of his fiction and then promoting works of divinity using that fiction, Sterne has, the *Monthly* claims, forced its hand. Presented without their promotional frame as the work of the fictional Yorick, the *Monthly* argues, Sterne's *Sermons* would 'abound with moral and religious precepts, clearly and forcibly expressed' (*MR* 22, 1760: 424). As it is, and 'Excellent as they are', they are 'introduced without propriety, and to no effect' (*MR* 22, 1760: 423). This initially appears to be a problem of authorial sincerity: 'How can we think that a Preacher speaks from his heart, when his example belies his doctrine? or how can we believe that Mr. *Sterne* is serious, while *Yorick* is on the grin?' (*MR* 22, 1760: 423-424). Oddly enough, however, the *Monthly*, acknowledges Sterne's role as a clergyman as just that: another role that should remain distinct, but which Sterne has committed the cardinal sin of intermixing with others in public. His offence is that of generic indeterminacy. The *Monthly* evokes the performative aspect of sermonising when it accuses him of a poor-taste marketing campaign, using an indelicate novel to promote works that should feature only 'in his sacred character'. The problem is how particular characters predominate within Sterne's publishing scheme, which evinces the type of fame he seeks: 'If, as the Reverend Writer premises, the name of Yorick is more known than that of Sterne, we are sorry for it.—More shame to the

Divine, who has made the *Jester* so noted!' (*MR* 22, 1760: 424). Sterne's indiscretion is not only in mixing the characters and associated genres of '*Jester*' and '*Divine*', but in seeking fame for the former at the expense of the latter.

The *Critical* initially refuses to support the *Monthly*'s attack. It opens its review of the *Sermons* by noting that 'It is with pleasure we behold this son of Comus descending from the chair of mirth and frolick, to inspire sentiments of piety' (*CR* 9, 1760: 405). The compliment is intriguing in that it appears to position the 'mirth and frolick' of comedies above works of 'piety'. In what appears a continuation of its war of '*invective*' with the *Monthly*, the *Critical* argues that only a 'narrow-minded bigot' could be persuaded that 'religion consists in a grave forbidding exterior and austere conversation' (*CR* 9, 1760: 405). As with Hume's man of taste, who is capable of distinguishing desirable qualities as they are intermixed with others, the *Critical* makes a virtue of discerning the complexity of Sterne's mixed publications and of being able to regulate and compartmentalise one's responses to them. It argues that the more broadminded stance is to adopt different poses alongside Sterne's:

> we will lay siege to Namur with uncle *Toby* and *Trim*, in the morning, and moralize at night with Sterne and Yorick; in one word, we will ever esteem religion when smoothed with good humour, and believe that piety alone to be genuine, which flows from a heart, warm, gay, and social (*CR* 9, 1760: 405).

The *Critical* proffers a nuanced response to Sterne's publications, arguing that each work provides for different attitudes and habits of thought even within the space of a day. It is clearly, however, the *Monthly*'s response that caught Sterne's notice. In May 1760, he had written a bullish response to the publication of *The Clockmakers Outcry* (1760) to Stephen Croft, arguing for all publicity as good publicity: 'There is a shilling pamphlet wrote against Tristram.—I wish they would write a hundred such' (*Letters*, 144). In a letter to William Warburton dated only a month later (9 June 1760), and after the *Monthly*'s review had emerged, he now complained bitterly that the 'scribblers use me ill' (*Letters*, 152).

Sterne's outburst to Warburton is intriguing given that it follows a recommitment to continuing *Tristram Shandy*: 'I am just sitting down to go on with Tristram, &c.' (*Letters*, 152). If (as seems likely) Sterne wrote most of the second and third volumes between June

and November 1760, he may have used the *Monthly*'s reception of his *Sermons* as a galvanising moment—continuing his fiction in the face of Ruffhead's cries of impropriety. As we saw, the *Monthly*'s response struck weak points in Sterne's armour; it attacked his judgment as a self-promoter, his reputation as a divine, his hunger for fame, and the *ethos* of his authorial character. Sterne duly made things personal early in *Tristram*'s third volume: in a direct address to 'You Messrs. the monthly Reviewers!' Tristram opens with the assertion that 'A Man's body and his mind' are as intimately interwoven as 'a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining;—rumple the one—you rumple the other' (*TS*, 3.4.189). Yet, he asserts, if the materials are pliant enough such as 'gum-taffeta, and the body-lining to it, of a sarcenet or thin persian' (*TS*, 3.4.190), the interior will withstand any rough treatment of the exterior:

> you might have rumpled and crumpled, and doubled and creased, and fretted and fridged the outsides of them all to pieces;—in short, you might have played the very devil with them, and at the same time, not one of the insides of 'em would have been one button the worse (*TS*, 3.4.190).

Sterne next subtly modulates the conceit, arguing that 'never poor jerkin has been tickled off, at such a rate as it has been these last nine months together, and yet I declare the lining to it as far as I am a judge of the matter, it is not a three-penny piece the worse' (*TS*, 3.4.190). The exterior transforms from Tristram's clothing into Sterne's texts—from the outer garments of the author-protagonist to the collective corpus of Sterne's writings.

'How', Tristram asks of the reviewers, 'could you cut and slash my jerkin as you did? how did you know, but you would cut my lining too?' (*TS*, 2.4.190-191). Intriguingly, it is only Sterne's *Sermons* over which Tristram can be claiming ownership as '*my* [slashed] jerkin' given that 'Messrs. the monthly Reviewers' had largely praised *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne thus continues to intermix the roles of *Jester* and *Divine* in the face of Ruffhead's accusations. Tristram's accusation is a double bind. The *Monthly* had assumed that Sterne's authorial person was so interwoven with his fiction and his sermons that it was fair publicly to attack texts and author alike. Yet if this were truly to be the case, surely an attack on the text would be *less* justifiable in that it would inflict an actual wound on its author. In defiance, Sterne maintains his authorial *ethos* on the basis of Tristram's sanguine response: 'Next month, if any one of you should gnash his teeth, and storm and rage at me, as some of

you did last May, (in which I remember the weather was very hot)—don't be exasperated, if I pass it by again with good temper' (*TS*, 2.4.191). When the exterior text is assailed, the interior author is rankled but his integrity holds. Tristram again resembles the earlier periodical eidolon in presenting his text as an extension of its single author whilst also insisting on his indifference as a 'Spectator' to his own critical reception. As a review periodical, the *Monthly* has, Sterne asserts, contravened Hume's principle of taste: that one should remove oneself from any 'familiarity' with a text's author and his or her circumstance when passing judgment. Sterne reduces the *Monthly*'s response and its corporate identity to an immediate bodily impulse: its intemperate rage is provoked the passing heat of May 1760.

The *Monthly* doubles down on its argument in an extensive sixteen-page review of *Tristram Shandy*'s third and fourth volumes. The reviewer (Ruffhead again) begins by attempting to qualify any praise the *Monthly* had at first bestowed, arguing that Kenrick's review of volumes 1 and 2 had deliberately omitted a number of 'indelicacies' under the belief that they were written by 'some *young Genius* in Romance' (*MR* 24, 1761: 101). Now that a work 'of so light a nature' has been owned 'the production of a Dignitary of the Church of England' (*MR* 24, 1761: 101-102), it becomes the *Monthly*'s responsibility to outline Sterne's all-too-numerous faults:

> It is true, that in some degree, it is our duty, as Reviewers, to examine books, abstracted from any regards to their Author. But this rule is not without exception: for where a Writer is publicly known, by his own acknowlegement, it then becomes a part of our duty, to animadvert on any flagrant impropriety of character. What would be venal in the farcical Author of the *Minor*, would be highly reprehensible from the pen of a Divine (*MR* 24, 1761: 102).

The *Monthly*'s bid for a revisory defence is spurious. The introduction of the sermon which Kenrick had praised in *Tristram*'s first instalment belies the notion of *Tristram* as written by a '*young Genius* in Romance' and strongly hints at its author's profession. The contention that Ruffhead attempts to justify is that, in Fawcett's terms, 'Sterne's celebrity status made him a special case'.[618] Because Sterne makes Tristram's authorship a matter of his own

[618] Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances*, 120.

public performance as author-proper and uses the names 'of Yorick and Tristram Shandy' to market—even to 'publish'—his *Sermons*, the *Monthly* sustains its attack on his indecorous mixing of modes, characters and registers: 'Hast not thou, O Tristram! run over things holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave, and light, without regard to time, place, thy *own person*, or the person of *thy Readers*?' (*MR* 24, 1761: 103). The *Monthly* stresses Sterne's impropriety by feigning to accept it, addressing the author of both *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sermons* as 'Tristram' or 'Mr Shandy!' Ruffhead also uses the scene of Tristram's sensible awakening in witnessing Toby's mercy towards a fly to demonstrate how Sterne-as-Tristram-and-Yorick has imposed a confusion of registers and an improper mix of genres on the public: 'the world to be sure is wide enough to hold us all. Yet was it ten times as wide as it is, we should never walk without interruption, when we deviate from the paths of discretion' (*MR* 24, 1761: 106).

The *Monthly*'s accusation against Sterne is that through this lack of discretion and, relatedly, by equivocating with the 'small particles' of language on which his 'eloquence and [...] fame depend' (*TS*, 2.6.116), he has forced the public and its '*Publick* Criticism' to attend to the questionable figure he cuts: 'Hast thou not played with sounds, and equivocal significations of words, ay, and with *Stars* and *Dashes*, before those whom thou oughtest to reverence—for whom should'st thou reverence more than the *Public*?' (*MR* 24, 1761: 103). With its arcane 'thou' pronouns and interrogatives, Ruffhead's tone is inquisitorial—as if the *Monthly* assumes the public role of holding Sterne's sins to account. At the same time, there is a strange blunder in Ruffhead's pseudo-dogmatic accusation 'for whom should'st thou reverence more'—the answer for any divine should surely be God. As we saw in Chapter 1, the passage to which Ruffhead refers aligns the slipperiness of language and meaning with 'the materiality, or otherwise, of personal identity and its external corollary, reputation', in Keymer's terms.[619] It draws attention to aposiopetic gaps in the text as productive of multiple (often prurient) possible meanings and locates the 'true swell' of character as a weighing of 'the *Poco piu* and the *Poco meno*' (*TS*, 2.6.115). The *Monthly* draws on Tristram's suggestive discussion of how 'eloquence' and 'fame' require continual attentiveness in order to accuse Sterne in his own terms of being *in*attentive to decorum and the dignity of the church in what he reveals 'before' a public he ought to treat with 'reverence' as his patrons and benefactors.

Drawing on Tristram's jerkin metaphor, the *Monthly* admonishes Sterne again—as in 'Our former animadversions on the Reverend *Yorick*'—to 'hide his dirty linen' from the

[619] Keymer, 'Small Particles of Fame', 12.

public gaze (*MR* 24, 1761: 105). Ruffhead's tone softens at this point, stating that the *Monthly* 'cannot but admire the good humour' with which Sterne receives its criticisms (*MR* 24, 1761: 105). If Sterne has maintained his humour thus far in the face of criticism, however, this is not enough to spare him from 'what [he] will dread above the most terrible of all imputations': *Tristram Shandy* has, by only its second instalment, become 'dull, *very dull*' (*MR* 24, 1761: 103). Its characters 'are no longer striking and singular', Sterne's imagination seems already to be 'exhausted'—a pointed accusation, since Kenrick had lauded Sterne's publication scheme as nigh-on inexhaustible—and, although its 'novelty and extravagance of manner, pleased at first', its 'continued affectation' has already become 'insipid' (*MR* 24, 1761: 104). Ruffhead's accusation is frequently levelled at fictions in the eighteenth century. When addressing the increasing number of novels published, the reviews often acknowledge to prize open a 'gap between possibility and performance—between the theoretical potential of genre and the practical failure of countless individual texts', in Joseph F. Bartolomeo's terms.[620] Tristram had, according to the *Monthly,* begun like many novels with promise, but by not heeding its critics it has already squandered its potential by its second instalment.

Ruffhead even appears to suggest that *Tristram Shandy* has thereby internalised and accelerated the lifespan of the novel as a genre. As Bartolomeo further notes, the foremost overarching criticisms of novels in eighteenth-century reviews is that they are 'too numerous, too similar, and too dull'.[621] Exceptional novels such as Fielding's *Amelia* (1751) could, on occasion, offer an 'original turn' in bold strokes portraying 'natural situations' and 'scenes of trial' (*MR* 5, 1751: 510-511). For the most part, reviewers consider novels to be formulaic, sensationalist, or both. 'Novelty', Ruffhead insists to Tristram, 'is the very soul of Romance'—again using the hypercritick's (and Sterne's least-) preferred generic identification—'and when you are continually chiming on one set of ideas, let them be ever so extravagant and luscious, they soon become stupid and unaffecting' (*MR* 24, 1761: 104). Whilst the 'extravagance' of Sterne's 'manner' may have 'pleased at first' (*MR* 24, 1761: 104), it has, Ruffhead argues, already become tedious and formulaic through overfamiliarity.

Having refused to join the *Monthly*'s attack on Sterne's *Sermons*, the *Critical* now follows its lead. Tristram's third and fourth volumes are 'no more than a continuation of the first two volumes', composed to satisfy an unnatural appetite, or '*fames canina*', in the

[620] Joseph F. Bartolomeo, *A New Species of Criticism: Eighteenth-Century Discourse on the Novel* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 114.
[621] *Ibid*., 113

reading public which can only end in '*nausea* and *indigestion*' (*CR* 11, 1761: 316). Taking up again the conceit of tasting and consuming fictions, the *Critical* echoes also Ralph's methods of flattering readerly desire by suggesting that *Tristram Shandy*'s volumes, and, perhaps novels more broadly, have, in the frequency of their publication, stoked an artificial and unabating hunger for works of little sustenance. That unnatural hunger quickly leads to oversaturation: 'all novel readers […] devoured the first part with a most voracious swallow, and rejected the last with marks of loathing and aversion' (*CR* 11, 1761: 316). The *Critical* remains less vituperative than its rival, claiming that Tristram's latest instalment has been 'too severely decried' where the previous one 'was extolled above its value' (*CR* 11, 1761: 316). It praises Slawkenbergius's Tale as 'written with elegance and propriety' (*CR* 11, 1761: 317) and notes that the work as a whole retains some 'marks of taste and erudition' (*CR* 11, 1761: 316). The *Critical*'s overarching criticism is nevertheless that 'self-conceit' and 'a general want of decorum' (*CR* 11, 1761: 317) permeate Tristram's second instalment, and these are attributable to Sterne's ingratitude: 'While the two first volumes of Tristram Shandy lay half-buried in obscurity, we, the Critical Reviewers, recommended it to the public […] and, in return were publickly reviled with the most dull and indelicate abuse' (*CR* 11, 1761: 316). Tristram's address to 'Messrs. the monthly Reviewers!' is taken by those at the *Critical* as an attack on the credit and authority of reviews in general: a reminder of the precarity of their position when, as Kenrick later notes, faced down by an author 'of *established reputation*'. Sterne's riposte appears to have persuaded the *Critical* to close ranks with its erstwhile competitor whilst inflating its own role in establishing Sterne's reputation.

Tristram Shandy never again directly addresses the reviewers, Sterne perhaps viewing such skirmishes as at best pyrrhic. Although Sterne's annual serial form could allow him to respond in each instalment to the previous round of reviews, he could not emulate their timeliness. Whilst the reviews could publish their appraisal the month following *Tristram*'s publication, there would always be a lag of several months from Sterne's side of the conversation. In turn, the reviews are never again so vociferous in their attacks on *Tristram*'s subsequent volumes. The *Critical* seems largely to have ceased hostilities in its review of the fifth and sixth volumes. Following Sterne's decision to bolster his credit with his readers by signing 'Every Book' of Tristram's fifth volume, the *Critical* responds:

> Mr. S—— might have saved himself the trouble of signing his name to each volume of this performance [...] as it would be impossible for any reader, even of the least

> discernment, not to see in the perusal of half a page, that these volumes can be the production of no other than the original author (*CR* 13, 1762: 66).

Affirming Sterne-as-Tristram's *ethos* and originality, it argues that Sterne need not have added his signature to authenticate the fifth volume since his singular style acts as signature enough on his behalf. It gives 'credit' to Tristram for the 'asterisks, dashes, hiatuses, and indented lines', which 'help to fill up the volume' and, as in Kenrick's description of Sterne's oeconomy, to draw out its narrative materials (*CR* 13, 1762: 67). Yet it also praises a new affective directness in the episode of Le Fever, which it lauds as 'a conceit of genius, glowing with the warmth of a heart truly sentimental' (*CR* 13, 1762: 69).

The *Monthly* remains more bullish and prescriptive. In its review of volumes five and six (this time written by John Langhorne), it opens with a defence of its impartiality: 'The Authors of the Monthly Review being determined never to lose sight of truth and candour, are neither to be misled by favour [...] nor borne down with the current of popular opinion' (*MR* 26, 1762: 31). This introduces a continuation of its argument that, 'where a Writer is publicly known, by his own acknowlegement', his work cannot be abstracted for review from the particularities of his person or his non-authorial profession. The *Monthly*'s reviewers 'would willingly, indeed, have their censure fall upon books only, without any regard to their Authors', but, since criticism must consider a book's 'moral tendency', the *Monthly* is under an obligation to criticise authors 'as members of society [and] servants of their country' (*MR* 26, 1762: 31). Sterne's character is again questioned, but with a new distinguishing of author-proper from author-protagonist. Where Ruffhead had addressed his animadversions to 'Tristram' or 'Mr Shandy', now, following Sterne's signing of the fifth volume, Langhorne considers that 'while the Author was exerting his talents to maintain the humour and consistency of his characters, he was himself so much out of character' (*MR* 26, 1762: 32). The fifth and sixth volumes, although 'not without their stars and dashes', are, 'in point of true humour […] much superior' (*MR* 26, 1762: 32), with Sterne particularly redeeming his authorial character in Le Fever's tale.

> Since Mr. Sterne published his Sermons, we have been of opinion, that his excellence lay not so much in the humorous as in the pathetic; and in this opinion we have been confirmed by the above story of Le Fever. We appeal to the Heart of every reader whether our judgment is not right? (*MR* 26, 1762: 41)

For Donoghue, the 'clear critical consensus' regarding *Tristram Shandy*'s fifth and sixth volumes shows how Sterne was starting to pay heed to the reviewers' advice, even if he now insists in his correspondence that 'I care not a curse for the critics' (*Letters*, 197).[622] Yet that assertion appears in a letter to John Hall-Stevenson following a promise that 'to-morrow morning, (if Heaven permit) I begin the fifth volume of Shandy' (*Letters,* 197). Despite no longer addressing them directly, Sterne again uses the reviewers as a corporate body of opposition against which to galvanise his own authorial practice—much as he does in the letter to Warburton of June 1760. Donoghue claims quite differently that Sterne 'effectually complied' with his critics following the reproaches he received for the third and fourth volumes, having entered the market naively and having been 'stunned' by the shock of their consensus on *Tristram* and the degree of his 'interdependency' with the reviews.[623]

The *Monthly* and *Critical*, however, diverge on a crucial point. Where the *Critical* praises Sterne's consistent and distinct authorial *ethos* in its review of the fifth and sixth volumes, the *Monthly* views those same volumes as the rehabilitation of an author previously 'much out of character'. The *Critical* continues its line in its review of volumes 7 and 8. 'The Spectator somewhere observes, that an author may print a joke, but he cannot print a face, which is often the best part of joke,' it begins in January 1765, before arguing that 'The principal part of the work before us is its manner, which is either above or below criticism; for if it is level with it, it becomes a kind of impassive object, upon which the artillery of criticism must be discharged in vain' (*CR* 19, 1765: 65). Sterne's writing is so singularly characteristic that its humour can only be conveyed by—or even compared to—itself. Fawcett views this as an achievement of Sterne's strategy of 'transforming his text into [an] accompaniment to his "manner"'.[624] By designing his fiction as an 'elaborate self-promotion' that cannot fully function in his absence and thereby makes that absence a presence, Sterne 'disables the "artillery of criticism" and protects himself from the analysis and condemnation to which a celebrity author might otherwise be subject'.[625] This is true if one omits the *Critical*'s warning that, in relying too heavily on personal idiosyncrasies, Sterne's fiction threatens in future volumes to become 'threadbare, and rotten' (*CR* 19, 1765: 66). Taking up Sterne's joke in volume 7 that Tristram's 'equivocal' exclamation of '*Out upon it!*' can only

[622] Donoghue, *Fame Machine*, 80.
[623] *Ibid.*, 82, 85.
[624] Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances*, 120.
[625] *Ibid.*, 121.

be correctly placed by 'the Reviewers of my Breeches' (*TS*, 7.32.632), the *Critical* uses its position as textual tailor to argue that Sterne's style might become characteristic—an accompaniment to his 'manner'—to the point that it is no longer accountable in comparative terms. The *Critical* suggests that, as with Hume's treatment of 'taste' as 'sentiment' in criticism, style becomes unaccountable by holding a 'reference to nothing beyond itself'. As such, it evades but also fails to meet any social standard for taste.

The *Critical* retains this ambivalence in its review of *Tristram Shandy*'s final ninth volume. 'A critic would prove himself as extravagant as the author affects to be, should he pretend to give a character of this work' (*CR* 23, 1767: 138), it asserts. Again, the only way to criticise Tristram is to adopt and thus be inured to his mannerisms and style. In this sense, it iterates (albeit less negatively) the *Clockmakers Outcry*'s early lament that 'Our manner and speech at present are all *be-Tristram'd*. Nobody speaks now but in the *Shandean* style; the modish phraseology is all taken from him, and his equally intelligible imitators'.[626] In inculcating his readership to the vagaries of Shandeism, Sterne has, in Shaftesbury's terms, 'draw[n] the world' to him and re-fashioned it in the 'Shandean style'.[627] Thus, the *Critical* concludes that 'none can with more justice than Tristram put his arms a-kimbo, strut through his room, and say, None but myself can be my parallel' (*CR* 23, 1767: 138).

In contrast, the *Monthly* opens its review of the ninth volume (written by Griffiths himself) by dismissing 'all the scholia, commentaries, glossaries that have appeared [...] to explain the nature and design of these whimsical volumes' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93) as having failed to identify *Tristram Shandy*'s true generic category. It is 'the Pantomime of Literature' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93): performative but slight—hardly bearing the *ethos* and self-referential distinctness praised by the *Critical*. Finally, it accuses Sterne of bad faith in delivering on the credit he has gained with readers: 'what is *proposed*, and what is *done*, are, with this Author, points as little connected as the south pole is with the North' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93). What Tristram promises in his 'chapter upon chances' and as 'the main subject' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93) of each volume is wildly at variance with what *Tristram* has delivered over its eight-year intermittent publication. As we saw in Chapter 2, promises are for Hume public matters enacted through 'certain *symbols* or *signs* instituted, by which we might give each other security of our conduct in any particular incident'.[628] In Christensen's words, Hume's public

[626] *Clockmakers Outcry*, 43.
[627] Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 118.
[628] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1:335.

promise 'stabilises the potentially volatile relations between constancy and transference'.[629] Promises and proposals bind authors and consumers to serial texts as they continue to provide provisionally finished products within an ongoing process. In the case of *Tristram*, they retain readerly interest in various mooted topics and tales. The *Monthly* accuses *Tristram* in retrospect of short-circuiting this arrangement by lacking any design: 'Chapter the first, might with equal propriety have been chapter the last;—it informs us of nothing' (*MR* 36, 1767: 94). The interchangeability of *Tristram*'s chapters here functions less to balance Tristram's stylistic (o)economy, and more to deny his reader any sense of progress. Narrative potential—which may, Kenrick argued, have at first been limitless and provided for Sterne for as long as he lives—is, under pressure of performance, squandered through uneven execution. Referring to the blank pages left by the missing eighteenth and nineteenth chapters, the *Monthly* concludes, 'well would it have been for thy reputation S——! had some scores of *thine* too, which are *not* blank, been left in the like state of primæval innocence!' (*MR* 36, 1767: 102)

Donoghue's 'critical consensus' is thus not quite so 'remarkably clear'. Moreover, the difference in response between the *Critical* and the *Monthly* centres on questions of 'taste' and its temporality. As Bannet notes, the manners of reading promoted by *belletrist* critics emphasise a 'refined taste for unity, regularity, and uniformity' formed, like Hume's standard of taste, through 'education, exercise and above all, habit'.[630] Bannet cites Henry Home, Lord Kames, who argues that 'we are framed by nature to relish order and connection' and that, consequently, a work is most tasteful when, 'like an organic system, its parts be orderly arranged and mutually connected, bearing each of them a relation to the whole'.[631] Bannet argues that Kames is attempting to correct or bring under control miscellaneous reading, which potentially fosters a 'wildly proliferating diversity of opinions and ideas'.[632] Kames makes this explicit when he asserts that 'an appetite for trifling amusements, is called *a low taste*' and that 'A constant train of trifling diversions, may form such a habit in the mind, as that it cannot be easy a moment without amusement'.[633] The man of '*low*' taste's poor judgement in the moment stems from unfocused reading habits formed over long stretches of time. Kames is correspondingly positive in his belief that good taste can be developed

[629] Christensen, *Practicing Enlightenment*, 123.
[630] Bannet, *Manners of Reading*, 214.
[631] Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London: A. Miller, and A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1762), 1:32, 1:34—quoted in Bannet, *Manners of Reading*, 213.
[632] Bannet, *Manners of Reading*, 212.
[633] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 2:276, 2:95.

through what he terms '*generic habit*', arguing that 'those things which at first are but moderately agreeable, are the aptest to become habitual' and that, because harmony and regularity are themselves only moderately agreeable, over time they become more constant sources of pleasure than 'trifling diversions'.[634]

As Bannet notes, this is a dubious point to insist on with a commercial reading public:

> telling readers that it was "natural" for them to like what men of taste admired, and insisting that narratives and discourses must have unity, connections, and a beginning-middle-and-end which most people seemed quite happy without, did more to obscure discontinuous, miscellarian manners of reading […] than to cure the public of its abiding preference for fragments.[635]

The *Monthly* takes the same line with Sterne: despite the public's initial craze for *Tristram Shandy*, his disjointed fiction ends up 'little connected' with what it promises to perform. The '*Harlequin-Shandy*' (*MR* 36, 1767: 94) of literature, Tristram's motley opinions form, as the dedication to Pitt affirms, according to a principle 'that every time a man smiles,—but much more so, when he laughs, that it adds something to this Fragment of Life' (*TS*, 'Dedication'). The *Monthly* judges in its very first review of *Tristram*'s opening volumes that 'it would not be amiss […] if, for the future, [Tristram] paid a little more regard to going strait forward. Lest the generality of his Readers, despairing of ever seeing the end of their journey, should tire' (*MR* 21, 1759: 562), a warning it repeats in its review of volumes 3 and 4. It repeatedly presents *Tristram*'s fragmentation and digressiveness as deviating from morals and taste, and as a sign of Sterne himself being 'out of character'.

The *Critical*'s stance is more understanding of Sterne's miscellanist scheme. It early-on affirms that Sterne the '*Jester*' and Sterne the '*Divine*' can be compartmentalised without impropriety, and, in its review for the ninth volume, does not so much rue the impossibility of 'giv[ing] a character of this work' as recognise Sterne as the only properly qualified person to do so. Consistent waywardness and extravagance are their own form of character—perhaps,

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[634] *Ibid.*, 2:84. As Lupton shows, it is common for readers to treat *Tristram Shandy* as a 'ramble' through miscellaneous materials rather than as a narrative to be read from beginning to end. Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time*, 116-117.
[635] Bannet, *Manners of Reading*, 214.

even taste—if developed as a '*generic habit*' over time. The pleonastic formula that 'none can with more justice than Tristram […] say, None but myself can be my parallel' is an example of the *Critical* itself '*be-Tristram'd*', emphasising how the excess, or doubling, of meaning that results when a style is comparable only to itself can form a self-referential stability even as *Tristram Shandy*'s narrative veers across surprising conceits and oddities. The problem, as Goldsmith notes in an attack on *Tristram* in the *Public Ledger* for 30 June, 1760, is that stylistic self-referentiality can become repetitive and self-important: '[Tristram] must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manner [...] and his own importance [...] with the most unpitying prolixity'.[636] It thus threatens to flatten its curiosities into a tedious uniformity. In a rare critical comment on a fiction, Hume asserts much the same: 'With all [Tristram's] drollery, there is a sameness of extravagance which tires us. We have just a succession of Surprise, surprise, surprise'.[637] As we saw, Hume's version of taste values in particular the 'mixture of small ingredients' wherein the man of taste remains 'sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and confusion with the rest'. It is in valuing the capacity to distinguish desirable qualities as they appear to lesser degrees and intermixed with others that the standard of taste forms. Sterne writing treats even its 'minute' subjects with such engorged 'extravagance' that all Tristram's morsels end up tasting the same.

Tristram from the outset requests that his reader extend his 'appetite for trifling amusements' more credit than they might at first be willing. In this sense, he pre-empts the critical line the *Monthly* maintained throughout its engagement with Sterne's works in the 1760s and also anticipates its final accusation of bad faith:

> bear with me,—and let me go on, and tell my story my own way:——or if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road,——or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it, for a moment or two as we pass along,--don't fly off,—but rather courteously give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon my outside (*TS,* 1.6.9-10)

This 'rolling state of openness' allows Sterne more playfully to anticipate aspects of '*Publick* Criticism' in his serial fiction than Donoghue's rather melodramatic account of 'shock' and

[636] Howes, *Critical Heritage,* 94.
[637] *Ibid.,* 147. This appears in the private papers of James Boswell dated 4 November 1762.

'alienation' suggests. Tristram's rebuke of the 'vicious taste' of his female-reader, 'which has crept into thousands besides herself,—of reading straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge' (*TS*, 1.20.65), for example, parodies the hectoring cant of some novel-reviewers and prefigures a contradiction that develops in the *Monthly*'s line of criticism. If Tristram's narrative follows a much straighter trajectory, it can incorporate neither the 'subtle', equivocal 'hints' of which the *Monthly* disapproves nor the 'heavy moral' it demands. Moreover, as the text claims to register the correct way of reading itself in present time and through the physical inter-arrangement of its intradiegetic readers, it heightens the immediacy of response that the review periodicals introduced as 'tasters to the public' during the new 'season for novels'. Never mind criticising fictions within the 'season' of their publication, Sterne criticises his own as it is composed.

Following its complaint to 'Messrs. the monthly Reviewers!', volume 3 introduces the parodic return of the hypercritick, who now (perhaps in a nod to Hume's 'geometrical' critic) obsesses over the book's shape and extension:

> And what of this new book the whole world makes such a rout about?—Oh! 'tis out of all plumb, my Lord,——quite an irregular thing!—not one of the angles at the four corners was a right angle.——I had my rule and compasses, &c. my Lord, in my pocket. ———Excellent critic! (*TS*, 3.12.213)

Similarly, when Walter, in seeking an authority for his argument on noses, uses a penknife to dismantle a volume by Erasmus, Tristram excuses his zeal on account that 'Nature [...] had sown the seeds of verbal criticism' in him (*TS*, 3.37.272). In both cases, criticism is a myopic obsession with the material of books that threatens their disintegration, revealing its claims to authority to be singly harmful. There is, however, both an animosity and a parity between Sterne and such critics in the work of commercial writing. When Tristram dedicates his 'Author's Preface' to 'my dear Anti-Shandeans, and thrice able critics', it is (despite the *Monthly*'s attacks) as 'fellow-labourers' (*TS*, 'Authors Preface', 228) in the field of cultural production. In volume 8, Toby advises Trim that he should have set his tale of the King of Bohemia 'back some seven or eight hundred years out of harm's way, both of criticks and other people' (*TS*, 8.19.686). Sterne implies that recent even fantastical histories (Trim

absurdly sets his in 1712) are scrutinised for their probability, but also that being subjected and responding to ongoing criticism is a peculiarly modern condition.

In contrast to the 'trauma' Donoghue identifies, Sterne appears to enjoy reframing criticism's mannerisms and tropes throughout *Tristram Shandy*'s instalments. When, for example, in volume 3 Tristram composes his apostrophe to 'ye Powers!' that 'which enable mortal man to tell a story worth the hearing,—that kindly shew him, where he is to begin it,—and where he is to end it' (*TS*, 3.23.244), he addresses not only the reviews' criticism of his inability to marshal effectively his narrative resources, but also the authority with which they have invested themselves. 'Ye, who preside over this vast empire of biographical freebooters, and see how many scrapes and plunges your subjects hourly fall into' (*TS*, 3.23.244-245), Tristram continues, investing his critical addressee, as Burney will also later do, with mock-sublime and anonymous omnipotence. It is easy to view the unspecified 'power' Tristram addresses as the corporate seeing-eye of the reviews, and to find, within Tristram's 'vast empire' of organised plagiarism, their common criticism of novels as, in Bartolomeo's terms, 'too numerous, too similar, and too dull'. This wry accommodation of *Tristram*'s critics is again less reactive and less crabbed than we might expect from Donoghue's account. Indeed, the sixth volume's opening invitation for the reader to 'sit down upon a set' (*TS*, 6.1.491) of *Tristram*'s volumes ('they are better than nothing') wrings out a good-humoured conceit from a criticism that was by that stage almost two years old.

The jest—in which Tristram's text presents its books as providing a paltry seat of only a few inches (and which we analysed in Chapter 2)—again tempers Sterne's more explicit attack on reviews as the sixth volume's opening chapter continues toward its conclusion.

> What a wilderness has it been! and what a mercy that we have not both of us been lost, or devoured by wild beasts in it.
>
> Did you think the world itself, Sir, had contained such a number of Jack Asses?——How they view'd and review'd us as we passed over the rivulet at the bottom of that little valley!——and when we climbed over that hill, and were just getting out of sight—good God! what a braying did they all set up together!
>
> ——Prithee, shepherd! who keeps all those Jack Asses?* * *

> ——Heaven be their comforter——What! are they never curried?——Are they never taken in in winter?——Bray bray—bray. Bray on [...] In good sooth, you are ill-used (*TS*, 6.1.491-492)

As the Florida editors note, Sterne draws on a long and hoary satirical tradition that includes Cervantes, Swift, and Pope of likening critics to asses (*TS Notes*, 396), but updates the trope to the specific mid-century context of being continually 'view'd and review'd' across the journey of publication. The implication is that, whilst authors might in their mind's eye fear reviewers as 'wild beasts' capable of devouring their work at will, in reality they make only a quarrelsome noise amidst wider concerns. As Regan notes, the question of 'who keeps all those Jack Asses?' appears to move Sterne's commentary away from reviewers themselves and onto 'periodical proprietors' whilst still situating reviewers as 'ill-used' bestial writers (certainly not 'A Society of Gentlemen') 'kept' by their review-owning employers.[638] This reading is strengthened by Tristram's later address to an ass in volume 7, where he exclaims 'God help thee, Jack! [...] thou hast a bitter breakfast on't—and many a bitter day's labour—and many a bitter blow, I fear, for its wages' (*TS*, 7.32.631). Tristram's ass appears to recall the reviewing 'Jack Asses' of the previous volume in obtaining a wage for its drudge-work, and that wage, which becomes its 'bitter breakfast', again evokes taste and consumption.

As in Tristram's initial fear of reviewers as devouring beasts, the point is that Griffith's and Smollett's impoverished reviewers are too immediately motivated by animal hunger and indigence to develop over time the correct principles and discerning palate necessary to 'apprize the connoisseur of what is, or is not, fit for his table'. Yet Tristram is also indebted to the hungry reviewers for providing at first glance an albeit misplaced sense of risk in his narrative-as-journey conceit and, indeed, for providing the inspiration to fold his volumes inwards, presenting their criticism as both inside and outside of the text. A self-possessed sangfroid is, Tristram claims, the steady hallmark of the Shandean response to reviews and critics: each issue, he promises to 'pass [criticism] by again with good temper'. As the trope of the journey suggests, however, Tristram's responses to reviewers are not uniform but provisional and of their moment. They alter and modulate over the landscape he traverses and according to the criticism Sterne receives, shifting from the hungry but influential and authoritative reviewer of volumes 1 and 2 capable of curbing a writer's worst

[638] Regan, 'Print Culture in Transition', 298, 300.

excesses to the stooge-like 'critick *in keeping*' (*TS*, 9.26.794) of volume 9, so reliant on the beneficence and authority of others that he holds no taste of his own.

The reviews in turn sometimes respond with imaginative dialogues, creating a genuine sense of running discourse between fiction published periodically (*Tristram Shandy*) and periodical fiction (the reviews). Shrewdly employing Sterne's narrative-as-journey trope, Griffiths himself authors a lengthy review to volumes 7 and 8 that follows Tristram on his sojourn through France. Griffiths imagines Tristram greeting a single embodied figure 'my old friend the Reviewer!' (*MR* 32, 1765: 120) at his journey's outset. This is a wry gesture, certainly, but it is also a genuine reflection of their symbiosis at this stage of publication and perhaps even envisages an end to hostilities. Reflecting the intricate treatments of taste that Sterne has deployed over the previous eight volumes, Griffiths imagines his Reviewer asking Tristram to submit another volume to 'the gentlemen of our *corps*' before Tristram replies 'Well every man that's born with a mouth, has a right to eat' (*MR* 32, 1765: 121). The jest appears jovially to cede to Sterne his point on taste and consumption, with Griffith's reviewers clearly fed by the products of Sterne's pen. Griffiths' Reviewer still has much to criticise, yet less to castigate. Tristram's travels to France are 'a dull expedient for filling up half a score pages' (*MR* 32, 1765: 122) and Sterne continues to misjudge 'the public taste' for 'Obscenity', which 'is not in high vogue now, as it was in the time of Charles the Second' (*MR* 32, 1765: 124). To this, Griffiths' Tristram proudly replies 'A fig for the taste of the public! I *live*, Sir! I *write*, Sir! to my own taste' (*MR* 32, 1765: 124). The review continues in this manner of amiable call-and-response raillery, with Tristram and the Reviewer laying wagers on whose wit chimes best with the taste of the reading public. Despite its continued jibes, Griffith's review remains good-humoured and even concludes with praise. Against Donoghue's account of Sterne's wholesale capitulation to the reviewers, this suggests some movement in the other direction: that Griffiths grew partly to admire Sterne's witticisms on points of taste.

That said, even at *Tristram Shandy*'s outset Sterne was never so naïve with regards to critical debates on taste as Donoghue suggests. In the opening volume, Tristram invokes the proverb '*De gustibus non est disputandum*' (*TS*, 1.8.12), which Hume had argued 'seems to have attained the sanction of common sense'. He does so explicitly as a means of evading critical responsibility through the hobbyhorse's immediacy and the self-referentiality of its 'sentiment'—here unalloyed by rational judgment. Hume, as we have seen, argues that experience over time supplants the proverb with a higher common sense that permits an

external, if indefinable, standard of taste to exist which allows for authoritative readings. Tristram uses it to disrupt the level of continuity that Hume argues overrules its extreme relativism. At certain intervals and 'changes of the Moon', Tristram might appear as a 'fiddler', a 'painter', or both 'according as the fly stings' (*TS*, 1.8.12). As quickly as critics grasp his taste, manner, or even medium, Tristram has already discovered another byway to explore, and this disrupts those critics' attempts to pronounce upon his works with authority. Yet, as the *Critical* and Hume both perceptively outline, such extravagant inconsistency becomes its own form of consistency. Tristram is ever inconsistent, from the very admixture of Animal Spirits that forms within the homunculus at the beginning of volume 1. As a rule, he draws upon a miscellaneous and motley array of artistic practices and critical texts.

Correspondingly, Sterne's use of criticism is, like Mr. Spectator's, not limited to the purely literary. Tristram's affirmation, for example, 'that of all the senses, the eye […] has the quickest commerce with the soul,—gives a smarter stroke, and leaves something more inexpressible upon the fancy, than words can either convey' (*TS*, 5.7.432) is reflected in volume 6's presentation of narrative as scenic 'country' (*TS*, 6.1.491) and broadly follows a critical favouring of visual arts that dates to Locke via Addison. Specifically, Jakub Lipski argues that Sterne's role in 'the novelistic afterlife' of William Hogarth's 'line of beauty' lies in part in the type of 'visual comment' he frequently employs in his fiction.[639] Sterne alludes to Hogarth's famous principle in Tristram's detailed description of Corporal Trim:

> He stood [...] with his body sway'd, and somewhat bent for-wards,—his right leg firm under him, sustaining seven-eighths of his whole weight,—the foot of his left leg, the defect of which was no disadvantage to his attitude, advanced a little,—not laterally, nor forwards, but in a line betwixt them;—his knee bent, but that not violently,—but so as to fall within the limits of the line of beauty (*TS*, 2.17.141)

Tristram asserts that his description fits also his own 'line of science too', for

[639] Jakub Lipski, *Painting the Novel: Pictorial Discourse in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 61.

> consider, it had one eighth part of his body to bear up;—so that in this case the position of the leg is determined,—because the foot could be no further advanced, or the knee more bent, than what would allow him, mechanically, to receive an eighth part of his whole weight under it,—and to carry it too. (*TS*, 2.17.141)

Overproducing the kind of meticulous description of affected bodies one associates with fictions such as Richardson's *History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), the passage concludes with a wry recommendation of Tristram's 'line of science' as critical guidance 'to painters;—need I add,—to orators?—I think not; for, unless they practise it,—they must fall upon their noses' (*TS*, 2.17.141). Tristram tempers Hogarth's aesthetic principle with a dose of local and practical observation, yet admits that his own details struggle to withstand the reviewers' line of criticism for fictions: 'Let not the critick ask how Corporal *Trim* could come by all this; I've told him it shall be explained' (*TS*, 2.17.142). In posing and deflecting the question, Tristram fudges the issue of whether introducing such particulars heightens his fiction's verisimilitude. The reader may hold a clearer image of Trim through Tristram's visual details, but this is a problem if we attempt to attribute qualities in the eye of the beholder to the object itself. Hogarth's 'line of beauty' works only as an organising principle for the images we see, not for the 'natural situations' and motivations of others—the realm of the novelistic.

Sterne engages with Hogarth's lengthier work on visual-aesthetic principles, however, to score points against the antagonistic reviewers of shorter critical forms. As Lipski notes, Sterne's Hogarthian visual comments later evoke also a mock-preference for the straight narrative line over the wavering, or linear over nonlinear narrative.[640] Volume 6 answers the *Monthly*'s repeated demand that Tristram pay 'a little more regard to going strait forward' as well as its equating of digressiveness with moral deviance. In the face of critics such as Ruffhead who thought Sterne's fiction to be exhausted, Tristram asserts at the volume's conclusion that 'I am now beginning to get fairly into my work' and that 'by the help of a vegitable diet, with a few of the cold seeds, I make no doubt but I shall be able to go on with my uncle Toby's story, and my own, in a tolerable straight line' (*TS*, 6.40.570). Tristram illustrates his new-found authorial discipline with five now-famous graphic lines that correspond to the movement of each of the previous five volumes. Volume 5 marks the beginning of Tristram's improvement: 'I have not taken the least frisk of a digression, *till*

[640] *Ibid.*, 68-69.

John de la Casse's devils led me the round you see marked D' (*TS,* 6.40.571). In volume 6, he has 'done better still, for from the end of *Le Fever*'s episode, to the beginning of my uncle *Toby*'s campaigns,—I have scarce stepped a yard out of my way' (*TS,* 6.40.571). If he continues to 'mend at this rate', Tristram suggests, 'it is not impossible but I may arrive hereafter at the excellency of going on even thus', indicating a line 'drawn as straight as I could draw it […] turning neither to the right hand or to the left' (*TS,* 6.40.571-572). His counter to the *Monthly*'s equivalence between moral rectitude and tastefully linear narrative is made explicit in Tristram's facetious description of 'This right line,—the path-way for Christians to walk in! […] The emblem of moral rectitude! says *Cicero* […] The *best line!* say cabbage-planters——is the shortest line, says *Archimedes,* which can be drawn from one given point to another (*TS,* 6.40.572).

Ostensibly, this is a revision of Tristram's rebukes to the female-reader, and, more noticeably, the 'historiographer' in the opening volume who, like a muleteer, 'drives […] straight forward […] without ever once turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left' (*TS,* 1.14.41). In this earlier episode, Tristram presents maintaining the straight line as 'morally speaking, impossible', for if the historiographer is 'a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid' (*TS*, 1.14.41). If, however, Sterne's recitation of so many authorities in support of the straight line is not sufficient an ironic pointer, Tristram concludes his new beginning with a performed pun that drives Sterne's point home. Should we accept that Tristram has indeed shed his consistent inconsistency, he requests that his reader answer the question of how 'your men of wit and genius have all along confounded this line, with the line of Gravitation' before he 'write[s] my chapter upon straight lines' (*TS,* 6.40.572). The straight line is only mistaken for the 'heavy moral', and this mistake itself provides another subject upon which to digress further from the line.

The narrative line itself becomes another component in Tristram's 'digressive' and 'progressive' (*TS,* 1.22.81) machinery; he even provides a visual aid to prove it. Yet the mock-evidence of 'strait forward' progress, as recommended in Kenrick's very first review, arrives only in his sixth volume. *Tristram Shandy* has already by this point been subjected to two rounds of reviewing and will continue to have its reception and marketability defined by further reviews. Sterne's provisional deals with booksellers and, by extension, his rolling publication scheme meant that his fiction developed under unprecedented scrutiny as the *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews sought to bolster their own credit as public 'tasters' during each

'season' in which *Tristram* appeared. Under their critical eye, Sterne's fiction itself forms a triangular relation to critical forms of its time: it is presided over by a gentlemanly eidolon figure, but one who entertains 'gentry' and critics 'by profession' equally in creating a taste for his writings, and who eschews the gravity of his reviewing critics by making his tale ever more fragmentary and miscellaneous in defiance of *belletrist* tastes. *Tristram*'s initially annual publication scheme is more summative and less immediately responsive than most periodicals—closer to Burke's *Annual Register*. Defending Trim's narrative practice of 'leaving the images on one side, and the pictures on the other, [and] going strait forwards as nature could lead him, to the heart' (*TS*, 5.6.429), Tristram exclaims 'O ye criticks! will nothing melt you?' (*TS*, 5.6.429). Even if one follows their reprimands, the critics remain cold. But it is, by the mid-to-late century, impossible to write profitably without appealing to their 'corps', as Burney's dedication suggests. The following coda examines models for Tristram's miscellaneity as it follows taste into the realm of early aesthetics: the magazines, registers, and '*Beauties*' that receive, reprint, and reframe sections of Sterne's fictions.

Coda: Magazines, Registers, and 'Intimations of the Aesthetic'.

So far, we have explored Sterne's commerce and position in the textual marketplace during his lifetime. This coda addresses two aspects of his legacy following the publication of *A Sentimental Journey* and his death in 1768. In doing so, it follows discussions on taste into the realm of early aesthetics. As I argued in Chapter 3, Sterne's fiction sits at the mid-eighteenth century in a triangular relation to the essayistic periodical (on the wane) and the miscellaneous reviews, magazines, and registers (on the rise). It brandishes its digressiveness, its open-endedness, and its '*low taste*' (in Kames' terms) for 'trifling amusements' in the face of *belletrist* tastes for holism, organic order, and connection.[641] *Tristram Shandy* thereby resembles mid-century miscellaneous publications such as magazines and registers that also critically receive and reproduce sections of it. Whilst this links Sterne's fiction to new types of market-driven periodicals, Bell argues that Sterne's fiction also prefigures conceptions of the aesthetic as a disinterested autonomous field by showing how episodes of feeling 'may be variously modulated for different orders of meaning'.[642] Bell argues that Sterne's sentimental episodes intuit 'a demonstrative discrimination' between the 'honorific and pejorative possibilities' of 'feeling for its own sake'.[643] I argue that Sterne's debt to miscellaneous periodicals and the intimations of the aesthetic that Bell discovers in his fiction are intertwined. As Keen notes, magazines popular during the mid-century period often present themselves as collations of '*loose papers*' encountered '*by Accident*' (*GM* 1, 1731: 'Advertisement')—arranged, but conceivably otherwise arrangeable, through similar subject headings each month. There is a structural affinity between the way Sterne composes his fiction across framed episodes that prove ripe for anthologizing and the way that mid-century miscellaneous periodicals claim to present various contributions within tastefully ordered 'textual contingencies'.[644] It is in dialogue with miscellanies which seek to identify, select, and refine the finer qualities of his writing that Sterne creates sentimental scenes suggesting differing orders of response depending on the circumstances in which they are read.

This appears to suggest a contradiction: that Sterne's intimations of *dis*interested aesthetic value materialise in a sphere of textual commerce which is, by definition, one of

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[641] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 2:276.
[642] Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, Culture of Feeling*, 72.
[643] Bell, 'Intimations of the Aesthetic', 18.
[644] Keen, *Literature, Commerce, Modernity*, 113.

competing interests. Under the purview of intellectual history, it is one that academics are more familiar with handling. Paul Guyer, for example, examines the extent to which pre-Kantian explanations of our attachment to objects of taste rely on appeals to 'more general sources of value' and an interest (whether concrete or imagined through 'generalization') in the utility of those objects.[645] Guyer argues that Hume, Kames, Edmund Burke, and, indeed, most eighteenth-century thinkers fit this model; it is only Francis Hutcheson prior to Kant who identifies taste as a category distinct from material interest. Likewise, Peter de Bolla examines the ways in which the mid-century discourse of the sublime is marked by 'the emergence of a discursive excess' commensurate with the 'yoking and subjection of the individual to the sign of economic transfer' that occurs across vast increases in national debt incurred from the early-eighteenth century to the end of the Seven Years War.[646] De Bolla argues that we can only approach this affinity at an abstract level of discourse: the sublime and public credit share a structural homology as 'legislative […] means of controlling an excess' even if they share little in terms of lexicons.[647] For both Guyer and de Bolla, therefore, eighteenth-century treatments of aesthetic response are either entangled or analogous with commercial matters of interest and inflation.

Alongside (and within) de Bolla's legislative discourses and Guyer's philosophical enquiries, there are more concrete examples of taste and aesthetic judgement being married to commercial concerns. This is particularly true in Robert Dodsley's miscellaneous periodical first edited and largely written by Burke: *The Annual Register* (1758-). Burke is often overlooked in studies of Sterne's reception, yet he goes some way toward bridging Engell's gap between 'books of criticism, books about "literature" […] and shorter, more popular critical forms'. His criticism, although brief, of *Tristram Shandy* as foremost amongst 1760's published works appears in a summative text that provides accounts of and selections from popular publications alongside records of Britain's National Debt, costs of the Seven Years' War, and discussions of taste. We here find the beginnings of what Pierre Bourdieu describes as the 'relatively autonomous field' of cultural production that 'makes pure aesthetics possible'.[648] Bourdieu defines this field as the 'space of positions and [...] of [...] position-takings' that functions as a 'system [...] of common reference' for cultural producers.[649] The

[645] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* (CUP, 1996), 95, 69.
[646] Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: History, Aesthetics & the Subject* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 109.
[647] *Ibid.*, 14.
[648] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 189.
[649] *Ibid.*, 30, 176.

field remains *relatively* autonomous in that writers and works define themselves against each other in aesthetic terms whilst also being subject to external factors such as the market. At stake is 'literary legitimacy': bestowed within the field largely through criticism and selection.[650] Despite its relative autonomy, external determinants such as 'the effect of economic crises [and] technical transformations' produce 'transformations' in the field's structure, but also in its formation.[651] The proliferating mediations that Warner and Siskin identify in the period as a 'technical transformation' include magazines and registers as '"storehouses" of previously printed materials' which, alongside public credit's protocols, allow the field of cultural production to emerge.[652]

Founded by Edward Cave in 1731, *The Gentleman's Magazine* is the first 'storehouse' periodical to introduce itself to a broad readership as '*a Monthly Collection, to treasure up* […] *the most remarkable Pieces*' (*GM* 1, 1731: 'Advertisement') previously printed in the press.[653] Presented as a collection suited to all gentlemen, the magazine asks its readers to aspire to this status by consuming its tasteful selection of articles, poetic endeavours, and informational titbits. The *Gentlemen*'s is an open and provisional form which shares the polyvalence of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopædia* (1728) without its aim to produce a totalising system of knowledge. Like *Tristram Shandy*, it relies for its cohesiveness on an imagined gentlemanly figure: 'Sylvanus Urban, Gent'. Urban functions less as an eidolon—the *Gentleman's* heterogeneity cannot sustain the same sort of essayistic persona that defines Addison and Steele's single-essay periodicals—than, in Iona Italia's terms, the magazine's '*genius loci*'. There is little direct address from Urban to the reader, yet his presence is ever assumed as an organising figure and correspondence is typically directed to 'Mr Urban', as are various poems and essays the magazine also publishes. As Italia notes, Urban's lightly-sketched outline makes him malleable; he can be a bookseller, editor, author, critic, or any combination of these as required.[654] As such (and like Addison's man of taste, who claims 'a kind of Property in every thing he sees'), he asserts a proprietorial right through discernment over his selections.

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[650] *Ibid.*, 42.
[651] *Ibid.*, 182.
[652] Siskin and Warner, 'This is Enlightenment', 15.
[653] Prior to Cave's venture, there were publications named 'magazines'; however, these compiled specialist information for professions or similar delimited readerships. Examples include Edward Hatton's *The Merchant's Magazine: Or, Trades-Man's Treasury* (1701) and Richard Hayes's *The Negociator's Magazine* (1719).
[654] Iona Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 112.

The *Gentleman's* hereby makes a timely intervention within an ongoing commercial trend. It affirms its gentlemanly bookseller-editor-author as a cultural personality twenty-one years after the Statute of Anne first granted authors 'legal personalities' in relation to copy ownership.[655] As Joseph Loewenstein notes, its first issues appear during the year in which all rights to copy ownership, including those of deceased authors, began to lapse under the statute.[656] Although most of the magazine's material reprinted from newspapers and other periodicals was not covered under the act, it nevertheless arrives just as the 'possessive individualism' of authorship that defines Tristram's relation to his life and opinions begins to emerge.[657] The *Gentleman's* proffers an ideal of connoisseurship, selection, and tasteful arrangement as its own form of authorship. It assures its readers that contributions which 'would otherwise be transient and evanescent' become 'fixed and durable' (*GM* 30, 1760: 'Preface') by Urban's discerning hand.

As Italia notes, Cave (like Sterne after him) borrows and reprints vast quantities of material from other sources whilst also 'consider[ing] himself the originator of a new form of publication', the uniqueness of which he jealously defends.[658] As with *Tristram Shandy*, this claim to originality emerges at an aggregate level. Many individual parts of each issue are identifiably second-hand, yet the overarching structure passes by rhetorical sleight of hand as innovative. The introduction to 1760's collected issue, for example, states that, 'notwithstanding the late amazing Increase or periodical Pamphlets', the *Gentleman's* retains its readership by being 'in a great degree, an Original Work' (*GM* 30, 1760: 'Preface'). This claim to originality derives in part from what Keen describes as the magazine's ability to 'synthesiz[e] opposed impulses towards dissemination and consolidation'.[659] Shaping and concentrating the output of London's ephemeral press, the *Gentleman's* claims at the same time in proto-Shandean fashion to provide 'more in Quantity, and a greater Variety, than any Book of the Kind and Price' in its advertisements.[660]

The claim derives also from the magazine's innovative attempts at canon-formation. Increasingly, the *Gentleman's* began to position itself through the figure of Sylvanus Urban as a public organ of critical appreciation. As Jacob Sider Jost shows, prior even to the advent

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[655] Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing*, 36.
[656] Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 231.
[657] *Ibid.*, 196.
[658] Italia, *Rise of Literary Journalism*, 110.
[659] Keen, *Literature, Commerce, Modernity*, 104
[660] *London Evening-Post* (Thursday 3—Saturday 5 August, 1738).

of the reviews, Cave 'sought to appropriate existing structures of prestige and patronage, while at the same time asserting the prestige-granting power of the *Gentleman's Magazine* itself' through a series of poetry contests staged between 1733 and 1736.[661] Jost identifies these as largely 'improvisatory [and] experimental' attempts to navigate the relationship Bourdieu identifies between cultural capital ('access to status and reward') and symbolic capital ('access to recognition and consecration' or, more broadly, 'fame') during a period in which both were up for renegotiation through innovative variants of—and alternatives to—older patronage models.[662] Jost shows how the genres and subjects the contests covered and the prizes Cave offered varied considerably even over three years.[663] The contests made a lasting impression on Johnson, who cites them in his account of Cave's life as evidence that he was 'a greater lover of poetry than of any other art' (*GM* 24, 1754: 57). Johnson also observes that the prizes failed to garner the interest either of established poets or universities, but he concludes the episode by noting that the magazine's critical remit continues to increase under and now beyond Cave's editorship.

Following the founding of the reviews, one of the ways the *Gentleman's* increases this remit is to extend its list of 'Books and Pamphlets Publish'd' that had featured since its first issue into 'New books and pamphlets *with remarks*' (italics mine) from 1752 onwards. With regards to fiction, Kramnick observes that the *Gentleman's* classification system for 'New books' in these lists largely 'understands novels according to their status as light reading staked in opposition to the heavy weight of "poetry" or antiquities'.[664] Some are, however, treated more seriously, such as Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1755), which provides an example of how critical appraisals across magazines and journals talk to and imitate each other so as to present a consensus. The *Gentleman's* cites Henry Fielding's review of Lennox's fiction in the *Covent Garden Journal* when it describes how

> Mr Fielding [...] acknowledges in his paper of the 24th, that in many instances this copy excels the original; and though he has no connection with the author, he concludes his

[661] Jacob Sider Jost, '*The Gentleman's Magazine*, Samuel Johnson, and the Symbolic Economy of Eighteenth-Century Poetry', *Review of English Studies* 66, no. 277 (2015): 916.
[662] *Ibid.*, 917, 920.
[663] Jost notes that Cave's prizes 'range from symbolic (a year's subscription to the Magazine for the best poem praising Queen Caroline's grotto) to sizeable […] £50 for the best poem on 'life, death, judgement, heaven, and hell'. Jost, 'Symbolic Economy of Poetry', 917.
[664] Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past*, 1700-1770 (CUP, 1998), 128.

> encomium on the work, by earnestly recommending it as a most extraordinary, and most excellent performance (*GM* 22, 1752: 145).

Fielding had previously praised the 'Incidents, or [...] Adventures' in Lennox's fiction as 'much less extravagant and incredible' than those in Cervantes's original, which 'in many Instances, approaches very hear [sic] to the Romances which he ridicules'.[665] The *Gentleman's* creates the effect of a critical dialogue. It cites Fielding as its authority on quixotic fictions to present itself as tastefully ratifying his views.

Where the *Gentleman's* critical output is yet more intriguing is in the poetical essays by contributors less famous than Fielding that it publishes each month from its opening issue. These verses, which remain separate from the magazine's more ambitious attempts at patronising poetic talent in competitions, provide an intriguing array of responses to fictions as they begin to establish themselves in the marketplace. Many of the essays addressing popular fictions dwell precisely on the commercial details of printing, bookselling, and writing for money. Included in April 1741's selection, for example, is a quatrain entitled 'Advice *to* Booksellers (*After reading* Pamela)' which argues that

> Since printers with such pleasing nature write,
> And since so awkwardly your scribes indite,
> Be wise in time, and take a friendly hint;
> Let printers write, and let your writers print. (*GM* 11, 1741: 214)

This 'essay' is essentially an off-the-cuff piece of epigrammatic wit; it works wholly towards its concluding antimetabolic imperative. The verse implies that this role-reversal of writers and printers is easy to conceive because (as the *Gentleman's* own 'Sylvanus Urban, Gent.' evinces) the gap between them is now so slender in the textual marketplace—particularly, when *Pamela*'s true author is well-known.

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[665] Henry Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 161.

Other poetical essays receiving popular fictions include a lengthier verse '*To* Henry Fielding *Esq*; *On reading his inimitable history of* Tom Jones' (*GM* 19, 1749: 371) and a Latin fragment of aphoristic advice entitled 'De Clarissa' claiming to be from 'Pamela B jun.' (*GM* 19, 1749: 39). As the magazine begins to intermix these contributions with its own comments and with reprinted critical pieces from outside of its production line, it becomes an early quasi-institution for hosting appreciations of fiction amongst other artforms. The *Gentleman's* may not refer to itself as an institution, and, whilst Jon Klancher notes that 'It's important to see that print media have been mainly understood [...] as produced in the markets of civil society, while "institutions" have been grasped as a separate realm', in another of Klancher's senses, Cave is an 'institutor' as 'one who […] powerfully feels, articulates, and transmits the force of unarticulated practice and custom'.[666] Gathering assorted critical appraisals within a regularly published miscellany with a broad readership, the *Gentleman's* draws on existing non-purposive anthologising and miscellaneous reading practices that treat texts as contingent, flexible, and open to poaching for readerly profit.[667] Likewise, if *the* institution as a noun in the mid-to-late-century period 'distinctly connote[s] the forces of self-organizing modernity' whilst also representing such 'formations […] between the traditional order and [...] aggressive unbounded markets', the *Gentleman's* qualifies *avant la lettre*. In Sylvanus Urban, it channels the market-driven processes of reprinting contingent material through a 'gentleman of taste' from the traditional order.[668]

Another miscellaneous quasi-institution of mid-century literature is Dodsley's *Annual Register*. Its founding in 1758, Burke first argues, presents a direct critical and commercial response to the success of reviews and magazines. The *Register* sought to provide both a selective *via media* between, and a purview encompassing more, than its parent-forms: 'Endeavouring to be as extensively useful as possible', Burke informs his readers, 'we aimed at uniting the plan of the Magazines with that of the Reviews'.[669] As F.P. Lock observes, Burke's editorship was not widespread knowledge, and the length of its tenure still remains uncertain: 'the available evidence suggests that he edited the first seven years of the *Register* (for 1758-64), and that the volume for 1764 [...] was the last for which he was responsible'.[670]

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[666] Jon Klancher, *Transfiguring the Arts and Sciences: Knowledge and Cultural Institutions in the Romantic Age* (CUP, 2013), 6, 43.
[667] C.f. Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time*, 93-94; Bannet, *Manners of Reading,* 206.
[668] Klancher, *Transfiguring the Arts and Sciences*, 49.
[669] *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1758* (R and J Dodsley, 1759), v.
[670] F.P. Lock, *Edmund Burke*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998-2006), 1:166.

What we do know is the remuneration he was initially offered to perform this task. Burke signed an agreement with Dodsley on 24 April 1758 stating that he would compile the *Register* for the sum of £100 paid in two instalments.[671] The agreement also includes the proviso that Dodsley would provide all pamphlets and books necessary for Burke to complete the work. Dodsley's aim was to establish a yearly digest featuring a month-by-month chronicle, various reprinted essays, and concluding in the vein of the *Gentleman's* with a list of significant books.

The *Register* was published each May to cover the preceding year: the issue for 1758 appears in May 1759, the issue for 1759 in May 1760 et cetera. It proved immediately popular in terms of sales and each of the first seven issues was reprinted throughout the year. Indeed, Harry M. Soloman conjectures that the *Register*'s continued success may stand as Dodsley's greatest commercial achievement.[672] As Burke notes in its first issue, the *Register*'s less intensive publication scheme in comparison to the magazines and reviews allows it to be more selective over the 'products' it features:

> Not confined to a monthly publication, we have an opportunity of examining with care the products of the year, and of selecting what may appear most particularly deserving of notice. We have from the same cause the advantage of order; we are better able to rank the several kinds under their proper heads; at least, with as much exactness as the nature of a miscellany will admit.[673]

As the *Register*'s editor, Burke assumes the role of connoisseur: less immediately responsive to the pulse of the times, perhaps, but more capable of perceiving tastes as and within 'slowly evolved, collective processes and outcomes'. The connoisseur-editor is hereby best-placed to 'order' essays and texts that have stood the test of the year beneath 'their proper heads'.

The *Gentleman's* and the *Register* both critically receive *Tristram Shandy* in different ways. In the case of the *Gentleman's*, the first poetical essay dedicated to *Tristram* appears in May written in a sing-song doggerel that evokes Sterne's indebtedness to ballad collections

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[671] Robert Dodsley, *The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley*, ed. James E. Tierney (CUP, 1988), 510.
[672] Harry M. Solomon, *The Rise of Robert Dodsley: Creating the New Age of Print* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 191.
[673] *Annual Register… of the Year 1758*, iv.

such as Thomas d'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth: Or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1698-1720). The verse stresses the colloquial and whimsical aspects of Sterne's fiction over his learned credentials and, crucially, this directly relates to *Tristram*'s marketability. It envisages Sterne as an author of preternatural commercial acumen; a writer of no 'shame' capable of wringing 'six hundred' (*GM* 30, 1760: 243) from the Dodsleys for the right to publish a tall tale. The essay's mooted sum is remarkably close to what the Dodsley's agreed to pay in total for *Tristram*'s first four volumes. The Dodsleys had invested approximately £650 in *Tristram* by May 1760 (see 'Introduction', 9-10)—£50 above the essay's estimate. Sterne's financial dealings with the Dodsleys are either known or well-estimated by *Tristram*'s first poetical essayist. What is striking is the sheer 'excess' (in de Bolla's terms) it presents in those dealings as inflating the value of Sterne's books. The verse imagines Tristram as a trader in loose tenets of 'philosophy', yet in his appealing carelessness and whimsy he becomes capable of transmuting the base materials of a 'pot' or 'pan' into gold. In another use of the 'taste' metaphor, *Tristram* leaves its reader with a 'melting' (*GM* 30, 1760: 243) flavour on the tongue; it provides little sustenance yet teases with the anticipation of further superficial delights and sensations. The essay is ambivalent about the Dodsleys' role in this. Author and bookseller are yoked in a doggerel rhyme of 'The author to shame, / And purchaser blame' yet there is a sense that, in accepting his portion of that blame, the bookseller-'purchaser' (*GM* 30, 1760: 243) who resells Tristram's transmuted wares has done profitable business for himself by increasing the overall value of books in London's marketplace. The newsworthy sums paid for *Tristram* have become an anecdotal part of its narrative, its cultural consecration, and the aura surrounding its author-proprietor and booksellers.

Another poetical essay dedicated to *Tristram* appears in the June 1760 issue and further literalises Sterne's appeal to tastes for novelty. Titled '*A* Receipt *for a Soup for* Tristram Shandy' (*GM* 30, 1760: 289), the poem provides an actual recipe for a soup in verse which puns throughout on Sterne's profession as a clergyman. The verse evokes Sterne's text as a loose satire, the possible etymological origins for the term being a *lanx satura* or 'full dish'.[674] Within this conceit, it plays with *Tristram*'s reliance in filling its dish on arcana, riddles, housewives' tales, and proverbial fragments to achieve a motley admixture of flavours. It recommends the reader add to a 'knuckle of veal' (fresh meat) the herb 'which killed † king *Will*' ('Sorrel'), 'What ‡ never stands still' ('Thyme'), and 'Some ‖ sprigs of that bed, / Whence children are bred' ('Parsley') (*GM* 30, 1760: 289). These brief footnoted

[674] See Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994) 9-28.

puzzles reflect Tristram's own promise not to begin 'dropping […] riddle[s] in the reader's way' (*TS*, 1.21.73) whilst simultaneously cramming his text with numerous teasing tests of the reader's attention and acumen. Like the poetical essay of May 1760, '*A* Receipt *for a Soup*' links *Tristram* to miscellaneous publications such as recipe books, almanacs, anecdote collections, and even the *Gentleman's* itself.

The *Register*'s critical reception of *Tristram Shandy* is subtler. Burke argues that the immediate responses of the public and the marketplace provide the 'products of the year' which the editor-connoisseur should then 'examin[e] with care' so as to discern those most suitable to summarise each year. Each selected book must be both exceptional *and* typical. The *Register* is not a totalising periodical in the sense of aiming (as the reviews do) to include a précis of every book published within a given timeframe. Indeed, each of the *Register*'s lists contains fewer publications than most issues of the *Monthly Review*. The term 'register' itself teeters between comprehensiveness and selectivity. Johnson defines it as a noun as 'An account of any thing regularly kept' and as a verb 'to preserve from oblivion by authentick accounts'.[675] The *Register* seeks both regularity as a product and actively to preserve only the choicest works 'from oblivion'. Each year, Burke selects a small array of essays to reprint and between four and seven books from which to extract and review. As Lock notes, those Burke selects often fit with his own interests.[676] Works on history, the law, and biographies of eminent men predominate in the opening issues. Perhaps most suggestively, one of the essays the *Register* reprints during the time at which Burke is revising *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) to include an 'Introduction on Taste' is an abridged translation of Montesquieu's *Essai sur le gout* [*Essay on taste*] (1757).

Burke typically situates political-economic matters of import antecedent to those of critical discernment. In 1758, the *Register* opens with a 'History of the Present War' over twelve chapters. This acts as a primer for the following 'Chronicle', which details more recent developments month by month.[677] Burke maintains this chronicle as a regular feature until the cessation of hostilities in 1763. He concludes each instalment with a record of 'Supplies granted by Parliament for the service of the year 1758', '1759', and so on.[678] To this, he adds an appraisal of the '*State of the National Debt, provided or unprovided for by Parliament, as it stood* Jan. 11, 1757, *and* Jan. 11 1758, *together with an Account of the*

[675] Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. 'RE'GISTER'.
[676] Lock, *Edmund Burke*, 1:167.
[677] *Annual Register… of the Year 1758*, 1, 78.
[678] *Ibid.*, 127.

Produce of the Sinking Fund in that Year'.[679] Again, this record covering the twelve months leading up to January of each year becomes a regular feature, allowing readers to keep abreast of the state of the treasury and the National Debt in relation to the hostilities. The 'heads' that next follow vary, including in 1758's issue: 'State Papers', 'Characters', 'Extraordinary Adventures', 'Literary and Miscellaneous Essays', and ending with 'An Account of the Books published in 1758'.[680] To these, Burke adds sections on 'Natural History', 'Antiquities' and 'Useful Projects' in 1759, which, in the issue for 1760, extends into a larger segment on 'Useful or curious Projects, Discoveries, Inventions, *&c.*'[681] The chronicle and list of books published bookend each of the first seven issues; Burke's basic movement from political-economic accounts into interests of an historical and then *belletrist* nature remains consistent. Where de Bolla discerns a shared 'emergence of […] excess' at the discursive levels of political economy and aesthetics, Burke's *Register* more concretely binds both as print-sections of its annual miscellany. To enter the 'common conversation' of each year requires that the reader attains some interest and proficiency in both worlds.[682]

Burke early-on presents the *Register*'s categories and subject-matter as subsidiary to proper learning. 'Those who aspire to a solid erudition' must take 'methods' other than miscellaneous reading 'to acquire it'. Yet there are 'readers of another order' who may consult the *Register* on subjects 'pleasing even by their levity; by their variety'—i.e. subjects easier to address in sociable conversation. Burke envisages a labour-scale within critical appreciation, arguing that the *Register* allows those immersed in too much leisure-time to 'steal some moments from the round of dissipation and pleasure' in the service of learning. On the one hand, the *Register*'s issues provide an intermediate stage between the exertions of labour and the ease of recreation. They 'relieve the minds of men of business, who cannot pass from severe labour to severe study' with an 'elegant' mode of 'relaxation'—one that still demands a degree of mental work. On the other, it 'preserve[s] the strenuous idleness of many from a worse employment'. Under the guise of providing another entertainment form, Burke hopes that the *Register* will 'gradually and imperceptibly insinuate a taste for knowledge, and in some measure gratify that taste'.[683] As per the reviews, Burke performs

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[679] *Ibid.*, 138-147.
[680] *Ibid.*, 144-234, 235-277, 278-310, 311-444, 445-96.
[681] *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1759* (R and J. Dodsley, 1760), 372-394, 395-415, 416-422; *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year 1760* (R and J. Dodsley, 1761), 105.
[682] *Annual Register… of the Year 1758*, iii.
[683] *Ibid.*, iii.

initial groundwork for his readers in selecting exceptional works. 'We have observed upon none', he asserts, 'which we could not praise'.[684] In keeping with their general status, Burke's lists do not often include fictions. Most choices, such as the *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Thomas More* (1758) or Hume's *History of England* (1761), are prompts for light *belletrist* study. During the years in which Burke was editing the *Register*, only Johnson's *Rasselas* features for 1759 the year prior to one further outlier: *Tristram Shandy.*

The reason for Burke's selection of both is perhaps expediency rather than personal approbation: *Rasselas* and *Tristram Shandy*'s first instalment were both sold by Dodsley. Given that Dodsley had agreed to supply Burke with materials to compile the *Register*, their inclusion spares any further outlay and provides opportunities to advertise his wares. Burke selects *Tristram* as the first of six works to include in 1760's 'Account of Books published'. Again, this may be Burke capitalising on a publication sensation and its attendant controversies. Ostensibly, his critical treatment of *Tristram* is well-rehearsed—even, by mid-1761, somewhat conventional. 'It is almost needless to observe of a book so universally read', Burke argues, 'that the story of the hero's life is the smallest part of the author's concern' and in 'reality made nothing more than a vehicle for satire on a great variety of subjects'. Its 'author perpetually digresses; or rather having no determined end in view, he runs from object to object, as they happen to strike a very lively and very irregular imagination'. Repeated *ad nauseam*, Sterne's digressions 'instead of relieving the reader, become at length tiresome' and the overall effect, Burke argues, is that of 'a perpetual series of disappointments'.[685] Burke initially adheres to a Johnsonian mode of fault-finding, that, as Mullan notes, focuses on anti-*belletrist* 'offences against propriety'; he opens by levelling at Sterne the charges of 'irregularity' and of trying his readers' patience.[686]

This provides, however, only an opening counterbalance to Burke's praise of Sterne's powers. 'The faults of an original work are always pardoned', Burke argues, 'and it is not surprising, that at a time when a tame imitation makes almost the whole merit of so many books, so happy an attempt at novelty should be so well received'. As with the *London Magazine*'s reviewer, who lauds Tristram as 'unaccountable', Burke argues that Sterne's fiction transcends any narrow imitative function to achieve a strength of originality that pardons any tedium or impropriety. *Tristram Shandy*'s author, Burke argues, 'professes in an

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[684] *Ibid.*, vi.
[685] *Annual Register… of the Year 1760*, 247.
[686] John Mullan, 'Fault Finding in Johnson's Lives of the Poets' in *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum*, ed. Freya Johnson and Lynda Mugglestone (OUP, 2012), 74.

high degree, the talent of catching the ridiculous in every thing that comes before him' and attains a sublimity in heightening the pathetic. In particular (and in keeping with the *Register*'s interest in notable 'Characters'), Burke singles out the character of Yorick, which, as it 'is supposed to be of the author himself', is conceived with great 'skill and happiness'.[687] Here, the *Register* and the *Gentleman's* responses meet. As well as printing critical appraisals of *Tristram*, both also reproduce the same excerpted scene for their readership. In the case of the *Gentleman's*, the scene's aesthetic quality is heightened in its introduction: '*The following Character of a Person called* Yorick, *supposed to be a descendant of* Yorick *the King of* Denmark's *Jester* […] *extracted from* The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy […] *as it is by some supposed to be the Character of the Author, as he himself chuses it should be exhibited*' (*GM* 30, 1760: 35). The excerpt is an 'extracted […] *Character*' which works as a portrait miniature '*exhibited*' by Sterne in his own image. As with the *Register*, The *Gentleman's* emphasis lies on choice and discernment, implying in its pleonastic reflexive pronoun the overdetermined connoisseurly hands of both Sterne '*himself*' in drawing the piece and, in selecting it for reproduction, Sylvanus Urban.

As we saw in Chapter 3, Sterne's fiction itself draws on compositional principles in painting such as Hogarth's line of beauty to provide visual comments. The *Register* and the *Gentleman's* duly present visual displays of Sterne's authorial '*Character*' offset with what Benedict terms 'spectatorial distance'.[688] The doubling of the aesthetic frame ('*as he himself chuses it should be exhibited*') is itself redoubled across various publications in which the excerpt is presented under a similar title, for example in the *London Chronicle* (5 February, 1760). Cash even speculates that Sterne may have sent the excerpt to the *Chronicle* '*himself*'.[689] Later, *Tristram* will, in another pleonasm, plagiarise Robert Burton in asking his reader to consider plagiarism as a *mise-en-abyme*:

> Shall we for ever be adding so much to the *bulk*—so little to the *stock*?
>
> Shall we for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another?

[687] *Annual Register… of the Year 1760*, 247.
[688] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 9.
[689] Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 296.

> Are we for ever to be twisting, and untwisting the same rope? for ever in the same track—for ever at the same pace? (*TS*, 5.1.408)

In plagiarising Burton on plagiarism, however, Sterne uses textual appropriation to create an all-new conceit. For Sterne, to pour the episodes of his fiction from one contingent text into another, howsoever tastefully arranged, is to allow the sentiments contained therein to be (re-)inflected through their relation to other selections with which they come into contact. Like Toby's half-moons and ravelins, which are built 'exactly alike in all points' (*TS*, 2.12.129) but differ in how they are placed, *Tristram*'s framed episodes oscillate between the commercial and the aesthetic depending how and against what they are situated.

Both the *Gentleman's* and the *Register* also consider commercial details—particularly how and to whom Sterne's fiction is sold—in their reception of *Tristram Shandy*. This is not to argue that either aesthetic or commercial considerations predominate; rather it is to emphasise the persistent confluence of (commercial) interest and (aesthetic) *dis*interest in Sterne's fictions and in the magazines and registers that reprint them. Indeed, the interplay helps constitute both: what Bell identifies as sentimental feeling 'variously modulated for different orders of meaning' is also what Benedict identifies in sentimental scenes as the need 'to reconcile private feeling and public duty by means of refined perception'.[690] In the featured excerpt, Yorick as a mixed portrait of sublimity and prudence exemplifies Adam Smith's outline of how spectatorship can be both interested and *dis*interested. Describing sympathy's operation, Smith argues that it relies on 'two different efforts': that of 'the spectator to enter into the sentiments of the person principally concerned' and that of 'the person principally concerned, to bring down his emotions to what the spectator can go along with'. Affective spectatorship relies on a quasi-economic regulation of human qualities: the spectator's 'candid condescension' meeting half-way the 'self-government' of the person viewed.[691]

For Smith, this relates to how 'taste and good judgment' are 'considered as qualities which deserve praise and admiration' only when coupled with exceptional sensitivities of discernment: 'so the virtues of sensibility and self-command are not apprehended to consist

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[690] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 10.
[691] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (CUP, 2002), 29.

in the ordinary, but in uncommon degrees of those qualities'.[692] The spectator's engagement relies on their ability to discern the 'principally concerned' actor, who in turn accommodates themselves to the spectator's emotive pitch. Emotional investment across both sides looks more like the *dis*interested regulation of virtues in Smith's vision—like the *Wealth of Nations*' invisible hand. The distanced aestheticization of sympathetic scenes emerges *from* the affective interest of their involved subjects. Moreover, it is the leisure that divisions of labour afford which allows the spectator to transcend their immediate sphere of interest. 'Our imagination, which in pain and sorrow seems to be confined and cooped up within our own persons, in times of ease and prosperity expands itself to every thing around us'.[693] This expanded sensibility becomes also a 'love of system', which inspires our aesthetic 'regard to the beauty of order, of art and contrivance'.[694]

The episode from which the *Gentleman's* and the *Register* excerpt already contains this aesthetic/commercial admixture, particularly in relation to one of Burke's aesthetic touchstones: the sublime. It opens with Tristram struggling to account for Yorick's heritage. 'This is all that ever stagger'd my faith in regard to *Yorick*'s extraction', Tristram argues: 'Instead of that cold phlegm and exact regularity of sense and humours, you would have look'd for, in one [of Danish decent]---he was, on the contrary, as mercurial and sublimated a composition,----as heteroclite a creature in all his declensions' (*TS*, 1.11.27). Herein lies an example of what Lamb terms the 'tautological sublime,' which is 'the sublime of identity and self-comparability, where nothing is unlike itself' and which Tristram strives to transcend.[695] Yorick is unaccountable in terms of lineage because his lineage makes him unaccountable. The paronomastic gesture toward what Tristram calls Yorick's '*sublim*ated' character is also towards the *sub*-lime as an experience of limit in the figure of a parson who, because of his 'sublime' weightlessness holds 'not one ounce of ballast' (*TS*, 1.11.27) in conversation and, therefore, fails to speak within the limits of acceptability; 'his first setting out, the brisk gale of his spirits, as you will imagine, ran him foul ten times in a day of some body's tackling' (*TS*, 1.11.28). For this reason, Tristram argues,

[692] *Ibid.*, 30.
[693] *Ibid.*, 213-214.
[694] *Ibid.*, 216, 214.
[695] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 113.

> Yorick had an invincible dislike and opposition in his nature to gravity;----not to gravity as such [...] but he was an enemy to the affectation of it, and declared open war against it, only as it appeared a cloak for ignorance, or for folly (*TS*, 1.11.28).

An extension of Yorick's 'sublimated' weightlessness and unaccountability, there is also another sense in which this distaste for gravity that is studied rather than natural reflects also Sterne's treatment through the Yorick persona of the Longinian sublime in his sermons.

Sterne evokes Longinus to support a distinction between sublimity in classical texts and sublimity in the Bible:

> In the classical authors, the expression, the sweetness of the numbers, occasioned by a musical placing of words, constitute a great part of their beauties;—whereas, in the Sacred Writings, they consist more in the greatness of the things themselves, than in the words and expressions (*Sermons*, 393).

The 'justly' held awe of Longinus ('the best critic the eastern world ever produced') when reading passages of the Old Testament demonstrates, Sterne argues, how 'though [Scripture] has undergone so many translations, yet [it] triumphs over all, and breaks forth with as much force and vehemence as in the original' (*Sermons*, 394). Unlike Burke, Sterne does not classify the sublime and the beautiful as experientially incompatible. Where he does distinguish is between rhetorical, or artificial, sublimity—which, for Sterne, encompasses 'expression', 'sweetness', and 'beauties'—against a natural sublimity in 'things themselves'.

Sterne's sublime of 'things themselves' shares a consonance with Burke's insistence on 'the comparative weakness of the imitative arts' to comprehend sublime objects.[696] Burke's litmus test regarding the sublime in the arts is whether 'the object represented' in poetry or in painting is such 'as we could have no pleasure in seeing the reality'. If this is the case, we can be sure 'that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of imitation'.[697] As Lamb notes, Sterne's litmus test for sublimity in the 'thing itself' is

[696] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. J.T. Boulton (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 47.
[697] *Ibid.*, 49.

translation: whether that which is conveyed retains its 'force and vehemence' in another language.[698] Burke and Sterne both, then, argue that if sublimity survives beyond a specific inscription in language, it must reside in the thing represented. In *Tristram*'s fourth volume, Yorick more explicitly rejects an artificial sublime that seeks to overwhelm through ostentatious rhetoric:

> To preach, to shew the extent of our reading, or the subtleties of our wit—to parade it in the eyes of the vulgar with the beggarly accounts of a little learning, tinseled over with a few words which glitter, but convey little light and less warmth—is a dishonest use of the poor single half hour in a week which is put into our hands (*TS*, 4.26.377)

Hints of this distaste for performativity appear in the *Register* and *Gentleman*'s excerpted portrait. Having declared 'open war' against the 'deceit' of an affected gravity that is designed to 'gain credit of the world', Yorick, we are told, assumed a 'wild way of talking' (*TS*, 1.11.28). He was able to receive 'no impression but one, and that was what arose from the nature of the deed spoken of' and which he would 'translate into plain English without any periphrasis' and without any consideration of 'personage, time, or place' (*TS*, 1.11.29).

In his 'wild' manners and intuiting of first 'impressions', Yorick rejects rhetorical artifice for the 'thing itself', and thereby assumes a sublime levity. Due to this directness in speaking 'point blank to the heart' (*TS*, 4.26.377), however, Yorick cannot adapt his words to occasions. Because Yorick speaks plainly in all circumstances, his words escape those circumstances and he fails to make himself understood. There is a structural hypallage at play whereby the social constrictions resulting from Yorick's sublime levity not only further *sublim*ate Yorick but also phase into the linguistic thinning of Tristram's narrative. As Lamb notes, Yorick's progress marks the 'gradual silencing of a man incautiously liberal of tongue—a narrative of a gradually contracting public voice that arrives, via the obliquities of a becoming modesty and three short words on a gravestone, at the total silence of the black page'.[699] Tristram's portrait of Yorick becomes, as Burke identifies, a periphrastic exercise in 'run[ning] from object to object' in a hopeless quest for genealogical origins that, at the point of threatening to become 'tiresome' or trite, finds in the silencing of Yorick its own

[698] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 111.
[699] *Ibid.*, 108.

winnowing to ‘no more than these three words of inscription’: ‘Alas, Poor Y O R I C K!’ (*TS*, 1.12.35) and to the black page’s sublime silence. The shift is stark: the black page’s silence imposes all the more against the prolixity it interrupts. Its linguistic breakdown begins with the final inscription. The letters that constitute Yorick’s name appear already to separate into fragments at the bottom of the page, intimating with typographical interstices the strange in-betweennesses of existence.

We can thus identify some points of connection between Shandean and Burkean sublimity. As Lamb notes, ‘Tristram’s sublime occasions are always accompanied by loss, or take their rise from it: a death, a wound or some reduction of the self’.[700] The Shandean encounter with the sublime, as in Burke’s *Enquiry*, is bound to ‘limit’ experiences that relate to instinctual drives toward self-preservation. Ostensibly, Sterne seems to support Burke’s notion that sublimity lies in the gap between representation and what exceeds it. We encounter the sublime in moments where Tristram’s text fragments and/or falls into silence. The sublime thus appears to exceed the mimetic impulse that attempts to apprehend it as an image. There is, though, one crucial way in which Sterne’s black page disrupts the distinction between the mimetic arts and linguistic obscurity in Burke’s account. Burke’s *Enquiry* proposes an ‘apictorial’ sublime that interrogates language as a representational medium.[701] The sublime ‘effects of poetry’, Burke argues, ‘are by no means to be attributed to the images it raises’ in our minds.[702] Instead, these effects, Burke argues, are associational and recede to an untraceable originating moment that leaves them unable to be entirely accounted for. They reside, for Burke, in the affective power of sound and oratory, and the experiential presence that those convey. As de Voogd argues, Sterne’s black page works through a ‘co-existential verbo-visual’ mode in which ‘verbal and visual elements are so intimately interwoven that they form an aesthetic whole’.[703] Appearing as text overprinted on a letterpress’s print area, the page blurs any distinction between image (perceived as a whole) and text (perceived in parts) by suggesting that the darkness and silence it imposes following Tristram’s prolixity emerges as an effect of that prolixity—i.e. as text driven into overproduction. The page features too much overlaid text and printers’ ink, and this expunges the presence of voice.

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[700] *Ibid.*, 137.
[701] C.f. Hélène Ibata, *The Challenge of the Sublime: from Burke’s Philosophical Enquiry to British Romantic Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 11.
[702] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 62.
[703] De Voogd, ‘Tristram Shandy as Aesthetic Object’, 109-110.

The black page with which Yorick's portrait concludes does not, therefore, function straightforwardly as a mimetic image of the sort that Burke believes diminishes the sublime effect by providing 'clear representations of […] fanciful and terrible ideas'.[704] Rather, it symbolises yet also further obscures that which cannot be represented as an image: death. It works as an image/non-image formed within the linguistic obscurity of the Burkean sublime but made textual in that each page (no two are exactly alike) facilitates only one particular form of 'transmissive interaction'.[705] In its denial of any *urtext* or point of origin divorced from material-textual conditions, it hints at the sort of infinite regress that Burke also identifies as sublime. The black page, then, not only disrupts Burke's distinction between (clear, mimetic) image and (obscure, associative) language. In its odd position as both and neither, it provides the 'oscillation […] between "presence effects" and "meaning effects"' that Gumbrecht defines as the aesthetic experience.[706] Sterne reinforces this when Tristram later charges his readers with failing 'to penetrate […] the many opinions, transactions and truths which […] lie mystically hid under [its] dark veil' (*TS*, 3.36.268). Tristram's challenge to 'meaning' acknowledges in spatial terms that the black page's effect lies as much in our presence 'before' it as in penetrating any coded sense that lies 'under' or behind it.

The oscillation within Yorick's portrait between presence and meaning that gives the episode its curious aesthetic detachment derives from the doubling of the sublime and economic prudence as aspects of Yorick that qualify each other. For Lamb, this leads to an unresolvedness in Sternean sublimity, which 'depends on the continued oscillation of odd, mixed and tragicomical impulses [rather than] their transcendence'.[707] For Burke, the sublime's final transformative stage is a 'tranquillity tinged with terror' where the mind regathers having overcome a moment of crisis. This '*astonishment*' is a triumph of the mind's exertion after its faculties have been 'braced and strengthened' and is attainable only through strenuous labour of 'the finer parts'.[708] In contrast, Sterne's limit-instances of sentimental *aphasia* valorise positions of relative weakness and fail to conclude with recuperative wholeness. Instead, the awareness of feeling continually loops back on itself creating a mixed reflexive mode. At his portrait's outset, Tristram tempers Yorick's status as the conveyor of sublime 'things themselves' with circumstantial detail. 'I was within an ace of saying

[704] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 63.
[705] I borrow this term from McGann, *Textual Condition*, 11.
[706] Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 2.
[707] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 132
[708] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 136.

[Yorick's name had not changed] for nine hundred years,' Tristram begins, 'but I would not shake my credit in telling an improbable truth, however indisputable in itself' (*TS*, 1.11.25). Tristram's reflexive need for 'credit' as a narrator, which determines what is *probable* rather than what is historically *true* ('the thing itself'), breaks the line that links Yorick's name 'without the least variation or transposition of a single letter' (*TS*, 1.11.25) to a sublime ancient history. It is so improbable that the particles of language would not have strayed over nearly a millennium that it is prudent to concede that they have—even when, according to Tristram, the historical records maintained by the 'the prudent care of the *Yorick*'s family' (*TS*, 1.11.25) prove the contrary. Narrative credit obviates the credit of domestic prudence and sublime history; credit thus holds its own doubleness even as it qualifies sublimity.

Personal credit and economy instigate multiple comic doublings-in-resemblance within Yorick's portrait. It is from his compunction not to own a horse 'disproportion'd to his other expences' that the consumptive Yorick retains his bare-boned steed 'with all his aches and infirmities […] to the very end of the chapter' (*TS*, 1.10.22). The metaleptic wordplay of 'to the very end of the chapter' indicates several doublings at play: Yorick's religious 'chapter' and the Bible's 'chapter-and-verse' formulation double with the containing chapter of Tristram's fiction. Already (as the *Gentleman's* and the *Register* affirm) Sterne's authorial double, Yorick doubles in appearance and grafts 'centaur-like' (*TS*, 1.10.20) onto his horse—itself the double of Don Quixote's Rocinante. Yorick's parsimony in retaining his horse becomes its own form of quixotism, and this is later doubled in Tristram's generalising figure of the hobbyhorse. Commerce functions in Yorick's tale as a mirror to the sentimental sublime; both form a proliferating economy of excessive doubling (feeling and reflection; 'chapter'-chapter; narrative/domestic credit; author-protagonist/author-proper) that, like the endless possibilities of Walter's auxiliary verbs, appears to recede all the way down.

Acquiring a fine horse would have 'confined all [Yorick's] charity into one particular channel' of assisting childbirths, leaving 'nothing for the many comfortless scenes he was hourly called forth to visit, where poverty, and sickness, and affliction dwelt together' (*TS*, 1.10.22). Yorick reckons charity as a range of competing needs across his parish against which he must invest his limited resources. The ailing horse is a compromise that becomes a symbol of equilibrium. It is only astride the horse that Yorick can 'reconcile' myriad interests, 'unite' the claims on his time, and restore his self-composure in a neat almost-zeugma: 'upon his steed […] he could compose his sermon,—he could compose his cough—and [...] compose himself to sleep' (*TS*, 1.10.21). Yorick is displayed as a mixed figure of

humour in suffering. As frugality and tuberculosis slow his pace, 'he never could enter a village, but he caught the attention of both old and young' and 'Labour stood still as he pass'd' (*TS*, 1.10.19). The *Gentleman's* and the *Register* duly present Yorick as a doubled spectacle. Yorick is a picture of the author as '*he himself chuses it should be exhibited*': a reflexive still-life paradoxically in (and approached through) constant slow motion. The narrative itself slows to consider the scene of comic *bathos* that counterbalances the *hypsos* of Yorick's sublime levity and his faith in 'things themselves', which, as the opening epigraph from Epictetus asserts, do not disturb men so much as 'opinions about things'. Yorick comically halts labour wheresoever he arrives. At the same time, his glacial progress instils in him the same mixed appreciation of the comic and the pathetic that *Tristram* aims, by slowing its narrative pace, to instil in readers: 'he had generally time enough upon his hands to make his observations,--to hear the groans of the serious——and the laughter of the light-hearted' (*TS*, 1.10.19).

Yorick's frugal economy, then, grants him the leisure to consider passing scenes with detached sangfroid. Likewise, in staging emotion as spectacle, Sterne's readers are, Benedict argues, 'directed not just to sympathize, but also to detach ourselves from the action and the characters'.[709] Sterne refines feelings to provide cultivated spectators an apparently 'natural' delight that is artificially displayed for them to examine at their leisure.[710] Another instance where spectatorial distance modulates, but does not negate, the reader's affective engagement with the sentimental moment is in volume 6's tale of Le Fever. As with Yorick's portrait, its framing allows it to be easily reprinted in miscellanies. The *Gentleman's* introduces it in January 1762, for example, as '*a master-piece in its kind* [which] *does the Writer great credit*' (*GM* 32, 1762: 32). As Bell notes, Sterne seems to invite the tale's excerption when he offsets it with a series of subtitles in the original text.[711] Moreover, he at several points prepares for the episode's detachment by superadding qualifying layers of dissociation, or mediation. The first comes in the dedication to Lady Spencer that opens the fifth volume. Unlike any other discrete episode, Sterne particularly 'inscrib[es] the story of Le Fever in the sixth volume' to a patron, 'for which I have no other motive, which my heart has informed me of, but that the story is a humane one' (*TS*, 5 'Dedication' 405). The wry implication is that Sterne's heart may not inform him of his own commercial self-interest in dedicating the

[709] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, 11.
[710] *Ibid.*, 14.
[711] Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, Culture of Feeling*, 68.

tale to Spencer, opening its 'humane' story to alternate motives and registers of meaning allegedly unknown even to its author.

Sterne supports the episode's separation in copying it out as a manuscript gift to its dedicatee.[712] The manuscript opens not with Le Fever's tale directly, but with the conclusion of volume 6, chapter 5, where Tristram concedes that the tale must now be rendered in his own words despite his not being present for its events. We already know that Le Fever's tale is the one that Trim tells to Jonathan, Susanna, and Obadiah in Shandy Hall's kitchen in volume 5 (*TS*, 5.10.438). At that juncture, Tristram leaves Trim's account to rejoin his mother upstairs. When Tristram picks it up again in volume 6, 'the occasion' has been 'lost' for Trim to 'tell it in his own words' and Tristram 'must tell it now in my own' (*TS*, 6.5.499). Other distancing techniques prevent us from mistaking the tale for a direct record. As Lamb notes, Death appears as a pseudo-allegorical figure not only in arriving to shut Le Fever's eyes, but also in 'the semi-personification of the lieutenant himself as the cause—the fever—of his own demise'.[713] In personifying illness, Le Fever's name prevents us from reading the episode as anything other than artful fiction. One of the episode's most lauded pseudo-allegorical conceits is also its most overwrought: a 'recording angel' drops a tear on Toby's oath that Le Fever will live 'by G—' and blots out his sin 'for ever' (*TS*, 6.8.511).[714]

The number of densely imbricated accounts that constitute the tale also tempers any emotive response to it. Although ostensibly Trim's story retold in Tristram's words, it is, as Lamb notes, actually relayed by multiple figures: Trim, Toby, the landlady and the landlord of the inn housing the lieutenant, and Le Fever himself.[715] Tristram begins by establishing the historical scene in 'the summer of that year in which *Dendermond* was taken by the allies' (*TS*, 6.6.499). He excuses his inclusion of circumstantial details on Toby and Trim's 'squabbles', however, with an almost-instant ceding of authorial control: 'Ask my pen,—it governs me,—I govern not it' (*TS*, 6.6.500). The landlord next assumes the tale-telling, interrupting Toby and Trim's quarrels 'to beg a glass [...] of sack' for 'a poor gentleman,—I think, of the army [...] who has been taken ill at my house' (*TS*, 6.6.500). Piqued by the landlord's report and believing there to be 'something more than common in [the lieutenant] that in so short a time should win so much upon the affections of his host' (*TS*, 6.6.501),

[712] New, 'Manuscript of the Le Fever Episode', 165-174.
[713] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 101.
[714] Sterne writes in January 1762 to Lady Dacre of his 'vanity' that Dacre and Garrick had found 'the thought of the accusing spirit flying up heaven's chancery with the oath' to be 'sublime' (*Letters*, 220).
[715] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 100.

Toby asks Trim to uncover more information. Trim persuades the landlord to return, who reveals that Le Fever is attended by his son. As the landlord gives 'his account' (*TS*, 6.6.501), Tristram does not reproduce this in detail. He instead dwells visually on the scene of Toby's distress as he is compelled to '[lay] down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate from before him' (*TS*, 6.6.501). After the landlord departs, Toby is in a state of disarray: 'I am not at rest in my mind, Trim, since the account the landlord has given me. I wish I had not known so much of this affair [...] or that I had known more of it' (*TS*, 6.6.502).

As Lamb notes, Toby's wavering between the desire to know all or nothing of Le Fever's case establishes the tale as a mystery 'whose attempted elucidation will form the body of the story, and whose resistance to elucidation will cause its ending'.[716] Like Toby, the reader learns of Le Fever's condition piecemeal via explorations and secondary reports. Provided with money to drink with the servants, Trim attends the inn to 'reconnoitre' as Toby's intermediary (*TS*, 6.6.502). Trim's account on his return relays to Toby the landlady's report: 'the poor gentleman will never get from hence [...] for I heard the death-watch all night long;——and when he dies, the youth, his son, will certainly die with him; for he is broken-hearted already' (*TS*, 6.7.504). We sit at several stages removed from the sentimental scene: Tristram relates a story from before his birth originally told by Trim to Shandy Hall's servants in the privacy of its kitchen and that involves Trim reporting to Toby the landlady's prognosis. As Mullan notes, in contrast to Richardson, Sterne appears to be 'writing away from the moment', conceding 'that sentiment can only be glimpsed across the distance between a translator and an 'original'' and across multiple accounts that supplement each other.[717] Having met Le Fever's son and offered him Toby's assistance, Trim finally relates his encounter with Le Fever, who, to make himself known to Toby via Trim, relates yet another scene-within-a-scene of how 'I was the ensign at *Breda*, whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent' (*TS*, 6.7.507).

Account piles upon account, culminating in *bathos*. On Trim's return, Toby confirms the death of Le Fever's wife 'with a circumstance his modesty omitted'. He asks Trim to complete his account, but ''Tis finished already, said the corporal' (*TS*, 6.7.508). Sterne creates a division in ethical and aesthetic responses: Toby is overwhelmed by Le Fever's situation such that he yearns to escape his feelings in sleep. In contrast, the reader's response is inflected through the episode's mediations and modes of relation which include hints of

[716] *Ibid.*, 101.
[717] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, 160.

allegory and comic prurience. As Trim assists Toby to bed, another comic scene occurs where the two disagree over whether Le Fever can recover from his fever:

> He will march; said my uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off:——An' please your honour, said the corporal, he will never march, but to his grave:——He shall march, cried my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch,—he shall march to his regiment.——He cannot stand it, said the corporal;——He shall be supported, said my uncle Toby;——He'll drop at last, said the corporal (*TS*, 6.8.510)

Toby's foot imitates and punctuates his insistences (and Trim's replies) that Le Fever 'shall march' again. Synced with the argument across Sterne's dashes, the marching foot creates a tension between the sincerity of Toby's feeling and the comic see-saw syntax of its relation. As with Yorick, Sterne uses these movements, which do 'not advanc[e]' Toby 'an inch', to slow the narrative. This grants the reader time momentarily to consider feeling in stasis and for its own sake. 'Although Toby and the reader listen to ostensibly the same story', Bell argues, 'they do so within different orders of consideration'.[718] Toby hears a story of distress to which he must in time formulate an ethical response, whilst Sterne places the reader at a remove from that response to enjoy the tragicomic spectacle of its contrivance.

For Bell, this epitomises Sterne's intimations of the aesthetic. Both the reader and Toby learn of Le Fever's condition by increments; both may find the process taxing and query their own desire to know all or nothing of the matter. But where Toby must act ethically and, indeed, gives financial support to Le Fever's son after the episode concludes, Sterne's reader has 'a legitimate leisure [...] to reflect on the values rehearsed' in the scene.[719] Aesthetic response is distinct from the ethical even as it remains bound to it. There is another sense in which the episode intimates the aesthetic in its 'oscillation […] between "presence effects" and "meaning effects"'. As Tim Parnell argues, in the tale's conclusion 'Sterne experiments with a different kind of pathos, mediated by the narrating Tristram, rather than a participant in the fiction'. In doing so, 'he appears to be attempting to replicate the cadences

[718] Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, Culture of Feeling*, 70.
[719] *Ibid.*, 71.

of a public oration by means of [...] creative punctuation'.[720] The tale's ending finally situates Toby and Le Fever in the same room. As planned the previous evening, Toby places all his resources at Le Fever's service. Toby's ethical performance, however, is interrupted by Le Fever's death throes:

> he looked up wishfully in my uncle Toby's face,—then cast a look upon his boy,——and that *ligament,* fine as it was,—was never broken.———
>
> Nature instantly ebb'd again,——the film returned to its place,——the pulse fluttered——stopp'd——went on——throb'd——stopp'd again——moved——stopp'd——shall I go on?——No. (*TS* 6.10.512-513)

Tristram's pseudo-oratorical relation mimics the changing of Le Fever's pulse, making present for the reader the lieutenant's final heartbeats. Yet its use of dashes is anticipated in the comic argument between Toby and Trim over Le Fever's fate and provides distance in self-consciously vaunting a rhetorical effect. The effect works, as Lamb notes, through mimetic asyndeta, where an absence of conjunctions mirrors Le Fever's lurching between states.[721] Tristram's final question breaks the mimetic illusion, drawing us away from the deathbed. In asking the reader whether to continue and then refusing, Tristram leaves unanswered whether his refusal is a question of taste and self-command, or (the opposite) if it suggests the overpowering of his emotions. The tale ends as it begins with Tristram reminding us of its relation in his 'own words'. Even whilst constructing the fiction of our presence at Le Fever's death, Sterne draws us out of that scene to consider how it is produced and the arrangement, or 'textual contingency', through which we encounter it.

The legacy of these doublings between feeling and reflection, presence and meaning, ethics and contemplative leisure is locatable in Friedrich Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* [*On Naive and Sentimental Poetry*] (1795-6). Schiller defines sentimental writing in contrast to the naïve as nostalgic for a lost unity with nature. Naïve writings require 'that […] nature be victorious over art'; its poesy proceeds not by artistic

[720] Tim Parnell, 'A Story Painted to the Heart? 'Tristram Shandy' and Sentimentalism Reconsidered', *Shandean* 9 (1997): 131.
[721] Lamb, *Double Principle*, 102.

'principles' but 'by flashes of insight and feeling'.[722] Yet modern writers living in commercial civilisations are estranged from a oneness with nature, and this estrangement articulates itself as a yearning to recapture nature through art:

> Once man has passed into that state of civilization and art has laid her hand upon him, that *sensuous* harmony in him is withdrawn, and he can now express himself only [...] as striving after unity. The correspondence between his feeling and thought which in his first condition *actually* took place, exists not only *ideally*; it is no longer within him, but outside of him, as an idea to be realized, no longer as a fact in his life.[723]

Feeling and thought no longer naturally correspond in commercial societies, Schiller argues, yet the writer still strives after their harmony and this striving leads to sentimentalism's split between sensible feeling and the reflection thereon that anticipates disinterested aesthetic value. The sentimental writer '*reflects* upon the impression that objects makes upon him' and in this reflection he is concerned with and oscillates between 'two conflicting representations and perceptions': actuality 'as a limit' and 'his idea as infinitude'. This 'dual source' of inspiration—the 'limit' of one's connection to nature and the 'infinitude' of ideas reflecting on that connection—fragments into sentimentalism's distinguishing trait: 'mixed feelings'.[724]

At the same juncture in the late-eighteenth century, this same fragmentation into scenes oscillating between intense feeling and distanced reflection that Schiller identifies as characteristic of 'sentimental' writing also makes Sterne's fiction ripe for anthologising in '*Beauties of*' titles. As Benedict notes, these anthologies differ from miscellanies in that whereas most miscellanies 'boast of their novelty' in presenting readers with all-new pieces, *Beauties* claim to 'vend the vetted and the venerable'.[725] They are thus similar to Burke's *Register* in their dual-emphasis on connoisseurly selectivity and the affirmation of time. Their title-formulation proffers both editorial selection and aesthetic pleasures for readers, whilst their prefatory outlines are often more didactic. The most prominent bookseller to capitalise

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[722] Friedrich von Schiller, *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry; and, On the Sublime: Two Essays*, trans and ed. Julius A. Elias (New York: Friedrich Ungar Publishing, 1966), 89, 96.
[723] *Ibid.*, 111.
[724] *Ibid.*, 116.
[725] Barbara M. Benedict, 'The 'Beauties' of Literature, 1750-1820: Tasteful Prose and Fine Rhyme for Private Consumption', *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Eras* 1 (1994): 321.

on the marketability of these toward the end of the century is George Kearsley, whose collections are often edited by 'W.H' (probably William Holland). W.H. introduces the first *Beauties of Sterne* (1782) as a 'highly necessary [...] selection' for introducing to '*chaste*' readers passages of 'pleasure and instruction' in Sterne's *oeuvre* whilst pruning the 'obscenity which taints [his] writings'.[726] The contents-page outlines its excerpts according to alphabetised titles, yet the collection proceeds neither alphabetically nor chronologically. Instead, it opens with Le Fever's tale. W.H. offers the following reason:

> I intended to have arranged [the *Beauties*] alphabetically, till I found the stories of *Le Fever*, the *Monk*, and *Maria* would be too closely connected for the *feeling reader* and would wound the bosom of *sensibility* too deeply: I therefore placed them at a proper distance from each other.[727]

The manoeuvre is savvy: under the rationale of providing 'instruction' and sparing the enervation of '*feeling reader*[s]', W.H. can open and therefore promote the collection with Sterne's best-known and critically lauded scene.

As Daniel Cook observes, Kearsley's '*Beauties*' are usually reader- rather than author-centric in arranging selections under convenient didactic headings. They are 'at once catalogue and content, index and item' and provide excerpts—whether from various sources or from particular authors—that address an array of (usually moral) subjects.[728] Cook further notes, however, that Sterne holds a unique place in Kearsley's series: 'the new issues of [Sterne's] *Beauties* pay increasing homage to his standing as a modern classic'.[729] Sterne's *Beauties* become increasingly comprehensive and are arranged via popular vignettes rather than didactive headings. They are also hugely successful via this method, running to thirteen editions by 1799 under Kearsley's imprint. The preface to 1787's enlarged tenth edition (this time edited by 'A.F.') evinces its increasing size and standing. Introducing more scenes and

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[726] *The Beauties of Sterne: Including all his Pathetic Tales, and Most Distinguished Observations on Life. Selected for the Heart of Sensibility* (T. Davies, J. Ridley, W. Flexney, J. Sewel, and G. Kearsley, 1782), vii.
[727] *Ibid.*, viii.
[728] Daniel Cook, 'Authors Unformed: Reading "Beauties" in the Eighteenth Century', *Philological Quarterly* 89, nos. 2-3 (Spring 2010): 284.
[729] *Ibid.*, 298.

excerpts than prior editions, A.F. promises that this new edition will not be so single-mindedly moralising as prior ones:

> It has been a matter of much general complaint, that the selections hitherto made were of rather too confined a cast,—and that, contrary to the original, the *utile* and *dulce*, were not sufficiently blended, or in equal quantities. That as the work was intended [for] the improvement of the more juvenile mind, it dragg'd on rather too serious a system of grave morality, unmix'd with those sprightlier sallies of fancy, which the great Original knew so judiciously and equally to scatter in our way.[730]

A.F. oddly appears to argue for the redundancy of the *Beauties* form for Sterne's writings. Sterne as 'the great Original' already situated his affecting moral scenes against 'sprightlier sallies of fancy' in the most pleasing way for readers. The best collection can only imitate Sterne's own compositional deftness.

In this sense, A.F. already acknowledges a point that Newbould makes: that 'Sterne [...] effectively self-anthologizes' in his own fictions by composing them across discrete and fragmentary scenes of feeling offset with spectatorial distance.[731] Yet arguably Sterne becomes adept at self-anthologizing precisely because scenes from his fiction are frequently excerpted for reprint in magazines, registers, and other miscellanies during his composition of *Tristram Shandy* and whilst it is being serialised. The 'very many editions' of Sterne's *Beauties* that 'A.F.' boasts on behalf of Kearsley show that those scenes can be reordered again and again across different textual arrangements and to differing (often co-existing) effects: moral, witty, aesthetic—always commercially profitable.[732]

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[730] *The Beauties of Sterne... Enlarged and Ornamented with Plates, from Original Drawings*, 10th ed. (G. Kearsley, 1787), v-vi.
[731] M-C Newbould, 'Wit and Humour for the Heart of Sensibility: The Beauties of Fielding and Sterne' in *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, ed. Daniel Cook and Nicholas Seager (CUP, 2015), 140.
[732] *Beauties of Sterne...* 10th ed., v.

Conclusion.

Across the preceding chapters and coda, we see how commerce, credit, and (o)economy define Sterne's dealings with booksellers, his compositional practices, and his authorial legacy. They create the productively unsettled ground where issues of how Sterne arranges and publishes his material texts meet more abstract concerns in his fiction with value and reputation. Combining a 'book history' study of Sterne's provisional arrangements with booksellers and critics with a re-examination of the structural affinities between fiction and credit allows us to see how each illuminates the other. Through tropes such as syllepsis and metalepsis, Sterne himself often blurs the distinction between his fiction's diegetic world and his real-life commerce with the book trade. Before *Tristram Shandy*'s first publication, he promises Dodsley that its octavo books will be manufactured in 'so creditable a way' as to uphold Dodsley's reputation as a bookseller. In its opening volume, Tristram promises his reader to continue those books for so long as he can strike 'a tolerable bargain with my bookseller' (*TS*, 1.14.42). Shortly thereafter, *Tristram*'s earliest critical reading establishes its then-unknown author's reputation for shrewdly promoting his own interests: a writer of 'great oeconomy' able to provide for himself from his narrative resources for 'as long as he lives' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561). In each of these instances, commerce drives both Sterne as author-proper and Tristram as author-protagonist to create future potential. In moments of exchange, it connects Sterne's fiction to various other texts past, present, and future such as Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, mid-century fictions such as *Charlotte Summers*, various essays and periodical-types, and future '*Beauties of*' anthologies. Sterne's handling of commerce to shape that potential is not static but changes constantly between 1759 to 1768.

Chapter 1 suggests how Sterne's correspondence with the bookseller Robert Dodsley changes the purview of his writing from a Swiftian satire on ecclesiastical intriguing to a 'general' and (within the context of the mid-century marketplace) 'more sale<b>~a~ble' (*Letters*, 97) fiction where readers no longer pursue coded real-life scandals behind parodies. Instead, readers engage sympathetically with a concrete quasi-person, who, because he resists being 'unlocked' by textual keys or reduced to a panoply of referents, is able to be named and appear for Sterne as a publisher in the first advertisement for his *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760). It thereby examines how Sterne's mid-century commercial context differs from Swift's. For Swift, writing during what Nicholson terms the 'institutionalising phase' of new instruments of credit, public debt, insurance, and, more broadly, 'monetary policy', the fragmentary and shape-shifting textual forms that result from parody as '*personat*[ion]'

dismantle the reader's ability to read for authorial character as a verifying quality.[733] Swift thereby undermines the types of belief and provisional truth claims that new models of credit require from investors in both fiscal and cultural capital. The Lockean qualitative evaluations based on '*Belief, Assent*, or *Opinion*' that secure the emergence of 'system trust' (a shift from 'facework' to 'faceless' commitments, in Wennerlind's terms) during the English Financial Revolution are revealed in Swift's *Tale* to be easily destabilised by an author-proprietor who refits self and commercial strategy to Grub Street's prevailing fashions.[734]

For Sterne, writing several decades after Swift, the generalising turn in mid-century fiction whereby readers are 'offer[ed] a concrete individual [...] from whom they can learn through an equalizing process of identification' and to which Sterne appears to accede on Dodsley's advice is also a stabilising one.[735] Sterne offers his readers a 'creditable' publishing protagonist in whose life's work they can invest provisionally their credence. He does so by forming his fiction as a digressive and progressive character-system that allows his central author-protagonist to emerge from the accumulation of circumstantial details. Whilst some critics view Sterne as unparodying a famous predecessor from whom he pledges to maintain a 'due distance' (*Letters*, 84), the reality is also that the more disparate mid-century book market is one where negotiating both paper-credit and fiction through 'a disposition of ironic credulity' has, as Poovey and Gallagher both argue, become commonplace following the crises of the early-eighteenth century and the naturalisation of writing as money.[736] Where *Tristram Shandy* problematises Poovey's account of the mid-century generic divide between fiction and paper-credit is in its use of paper-credit's provisional assurances in relation to authorial character. At the point at which Sterne begins to act as his own publisher for volumes 5 and 6 with Becket acting as his agent and Strahan his printer, Sterne signs every copy of volume 5's first edition. Like an endorser on a bill of exchange, he adds his signature to the volume so that readers can safely invest in it. As with a bill of exchange, the assent of the reader—their investment in the text as in some way authentic—is conditional. This volume, Sterne's signature affirms, represents a 'real' or 'authentic' fiction, unlike the 'false' fictions propagated by imposters. Establishing new relationships with booksellers thus twice affects Sterne's treatment of Tristram's character as a publishing protagonist. Where Sterne's correspondence with Dodsley appears to inspire the

[733] Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance*, 2.
[734] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 665; Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, 95.
[735] McKeon, *Secret History of Domesticity*, 108-109.
[736] Gallagher, 'Rise of Fictionality', 246.

generalising shift whereby Tristram becomes a concrete quasi-person who can act as a publisher-guarantor for Sterne's *Sermons*, Sterne's move back to self-publishing leads him next to sign himself as the publisher-guarantor for *Tristram*. Because Tristram is not reducible to a cipher for Sterne, the two can assure each other's names in the marketplace through substitution and deferral.

Sterne's fiction thus arrives at an intriguing juncture following credit's imaginative rehabilitation in mid-century fictions such as Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Richardson's *Pamela*. It both supports and problematises Poovey's account of the splitting-up of an early-century continuum that mediates value into three distinct strands: (1) writing *on* money, (2) writing *as* money, and (3) fiction.[737] Chapter 2 shows how we can use Sterne's chaptering—an aspect of fiction that also develops during the mid-century period—to interrogate '(o)economy', a complex term in relation to eighteenth-century commerce. Whilst *Tristram Shandy*'s first reviewer, William Kenrick, uses it to liken Sterne's compositional and publishing practices to good household husbandry, Sterne also sits at a terminological fault-line whereby the economic comes also to describe the wider, more abstract equalization of commodities across their exchange value. According to Kenrick, Sterne apportions *Tristram*'s narrative 'so extremely thin' (*MR* 21, 1759: 561) across his work's divisions that it bears him the most advantageous return when his books enter the market. *Tristram*'s textual divisions relate to this older civic-humanist model of estate management in two ways: (1) in figuring the text *as* a household wherein chapters are constructed as contiguous rooms holding different (and differently gendered) readers, and (2) in allowing Tristram to introduce and contain texts *from* an imagined Shandean archive of domestic writings. In this older sense, 'oeconomy' shifts within its own figuration between the interior and exterior of Sterne's text.

In these instances, Sterne often follows other mid-century fictions such as *Tom Jones, Charlotte Summers,* and *Ephraim Tristram Bates* in self-consciously using chapters to calculate how the material text might be apportioned and consumed piecemeal by readers. Yet Sterne also uses chapters to prompt questions about his text's value. Tristram attempts to auction his 'Virgin-Dedication' (*TS,* 1.9.15) to the highest bidder and promises that the dedicatory chapter will be replaced with another of a higher worth. Later, he proffers another chapter for completion to a '*day-tall* critick' for the price of 'a crown' (*TS,* 4.13.340). In volume 4, which features a ten-page glitch in its pagination, Tristram justifies his cancellation

[737] Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy*, 6-8.

of the missing chapter so: '[The chapter], upon reviewing it, appears to be so much above the stile and manner of any thing else I have been able to paint in this book, that it could not have remained in it, without depreciating every other scene' (*TS*, 4.25.374). Aiming to establish a regular economy of style so as to fix a more abstract measure of value across his work, Tristram insists that even momentary excellence should yield to commercial equipoise.

Whilst still focusing on individual chapters, these latter examples of textual exchange and bargaining project abstract value-forms by which, to paraphrase Lynn Festa, value not only inheres within the single chapter, but also outside it, and in its differential relation to other chapters as commodities.[738] Where Sterne's fiction differs from its near-contemporaries is in this claim to cohere through a marketplace logic in which chapters are distributed as fungible components across a balanced compositional economy. Tristram presents a general model of value using his text's *actual* as opposed to *concrete* particulars—i.e. its material chapters. Sterne thereby disrupts McKeon's and (by extension) Poovey's accounts, which posit a purely analogous relationship between fiction (which, for McKeon, generalises only from 'concrete' particulars) and the market (which generalises from 'actual' commodities) in the mid-eighteenth century. Sterne also uses chapters to envisage more extensive models of deferred value and narrative credit within *Tristram Shandy*'s serial structure. In volume 4's 'chapter upon chances', Tristram outlines a number of chapters he fears he will be unable to complete by the time of next publication. Like Sterne's signing of the fifth volume, this inventory serves a promissory role in that it allows Sterne to remind the reader in 1761 of all they have invested in and all that potentially remains to be enjoyed in future volumes. The promise held is, as a form of paper-credit, provisional and liable to change; for those reading a complete set following Sterne's death in 1768, many of the chapters Tristram lists exist only as unrealised suggestions. Again, the timing in relation to Sterne's actual dealings with booksellers is crucial: the inventory features in the final volume financed under Sterne's contract with the Dodsleys, and just prior to his new arrangements as a self-publisher with Becket and Strahan. It reaffirms *Tristram*'s commercial potential at precisely the point at which its continuation could not be guaranteed.

Chapter 3 explores *Tristram Shandy*'s commercial readerships and, more particularly, Sterne's engagement with the possibility of critics 'by occupation' (*TS*, 2.2.96, 97) offering authoritative readings in an increasingly disparate literary marketplace. It thus revises

[738] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 16.

Donoghue's account of 'alienated labor', shock, and 'trauma' in Sterne's dialogues with reviewers.[739] Instead, it shows how Sterne deftly uses 'taste' as a metaphor to imply that courting professional critics and their periodicals has, by 1759, become necessary for any aspiring author. Sterne updates a conceit stemming from the early-century works of Addison and Pope wherein 'taste' functions as an extra-disciplinary 'standard' extrinsic to art and literature by which their critical principles become meaningful—in Addison's antimetabole, 'the Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste'.[740] Taste thus provides a pliant discourse and a means of self-fashioning as a 'man of taste' in eighteenth-century criticism. Pope's ideal critic 'blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd' (639-40) affirms that taste can be both particular and normative, transcending political faction. This claim of even-handedness, however, masks underlying commercial imperatives. As a metaphor, 'taste' makes readers consumers. As Noggle observes, one develops taste into *a* taste through the judicious investment of time and wealth.[741] Taste promotes a proprietorial model of appreciation whereby the man of taste holds 'a kind of Property in every thing he sees'.[742] Moreover, the 'Standard of Taste' on which critics of criticism such as Hume base their principles appears, like credit, to rely upon an an undefinable *je-ne-sais-quoi*, or tipping point, which emerges as an aggregate from experience but which cannot be reduced to any exact set of experiences. Addison's conversational style that leads discussions of taste in periodicals for much of the century evinces but also disturbs Pocock's 'presentistic' attitude of credit and exchange, which takes 'nothing but the moment and its strategies as providing the context in which the effort [...] to regulate must be made'.[743] In its immediacy, modern 'taste' can subsume the historical 'tastes' of '*Criticks* both Ancient and Modern' in its affirmation of the pleasures of the imagination.[744] Simultaneously, 'tastes' also identify slower-evolved 'collective processes and outcomes'—for example, in Addison's treatment of national tastes for tragedy.

Sterne affirms taste's bifurcated temporal structure when he presents his narrative as an 'entertainment' and the surface of his page as a 'table' around which to 'sit down without any ceremony, and fall on heartily' (*TS*, 2.2.96-97). The critic 'by occupation' and the 'gentry of refined taste' (*TS*, 2.2.96) enjoy the same share in his life's work, with the former

[739] Donoghue, *Fame Machine*, 85.
[740] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 1:123.
[741] Noggle, *Temporality of Taste*, 15.
[742] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:538.
[743] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time', 95.
[744] Addison and Steele, *Spectator*, 3:530.

representing the immediate response of critical reviewers in the marketplace and the latter a patrilineal view of sociable criticism that dates to Dryden's practices at the Restoration. Tristram collapses any distinction between them, initially courting the professional 'Sir Critick' using the reviewers' own preferred gentlemanly appellation. There is, however, another contingent temporality at play in Sterne's engagement with mid-century criticism. *Tristram Shandy*'s publication scheme allows each annual instalment to gather its own body of responses from reviewers to which the following instalment can respond. Although there is always a delay from Sterne's side of the conversation, *Tristram* develops as a serial fiction in dialogue with—and under unprecedented scrutiny from—the *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews, each themselves only ten and three years old respectively at *Tristram*'s first instalment. For these corporate reviewers, who style themselves as anonymous 'tasters to the public' (*MR* 13, 1755: 399), fictions such as Sterne's provide a touchstone against which to shore up their own 'tottering [...] credit' as new market-driven print forms with a reading public.[745]

The long-running dialogue between Sterne and the reviewers centres on matters of taste and on the respective credit each holds with readers. Sterne flaunts *Tristram Shandy*'s digressiveness and miscellaneity in the face of *belletrist* tastes for 'unity, regularity, and uniformity' whilst figuring reviewers as kept jack asses served 'a bitter breakfast' (*TS*, 7.32.631) by their masters: animals too preoccupied with where their next meal will come from to be able 'apprize the connoisseur of what is, or is not, fit for his table' (*MR* 13, 1755: 399).[746] In response, the reviewers accuse Sterne of bad faith in delivering on the credit he has gained with his readership: 'what is *proposed*, and what is *done*, are, with this Author, points as little connected as the south pole is with the North' (*MR* 36, 1767: 93). Yet the dialogue between Sterne and, in particular, Ralph Griffiths' *Monthly Review* can also be sprightly, performative, and show signs of mutual regard. Griffiths' own review of *Tristram*'s seventh and eighth volumes imagines '[Tristram's] old friend the Reviewer!' (*MR* 32, 1765: 120) and Sterne's author-protagonist as bickering co-travellers on a long journey together, evincing their symbiotic relationship in promoting each other's wares. Griffiths' correspondence held at the Bodleian also suggests that he later became close to Sterne's bookseller Peter de Hondt through professional ties. For his part, Sterne may appear to accede to the reviewers' taste for 'the pathetic' (*MR* 26, 1762: 41) in the sentimental episodes—Le Fever, Maria of Moulines, Toby's amours—that predominate in *Tristram*'s final volumes and

[745] Kenrick, *Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review*, 60.
[746] Bannet, *Manners of Reading*, 214.

later in *A Sentimental Journey*. Yet the equivocation between sentimental silences and sexually suggestive openings that remains in those episodes suggests, as the Florida editors note, that 'the biographical scenario, in which a chastened Sterne listened to the advice of his critics and mended his ways, remains as doubtful as his text itself' (*ASJ*, xv). Sterne clearly enjoys playing with criticisms of his text and with criticism's mannerisms throughout *Tristram*'s publication. He invokes the proverb on taste '*De gustibus non est disputandum*' (*TS*, 1.8.12) to evade responsibility, and uses Hogarth's line of beauty to mock the *Monthly*'s repeated demand that he pay 'more regard to going strait forward' (*MR* 21, 1759: 562). Tristram as author-protagonist may at times exclaim in exasperation against 'ye criticks!' (*TS*, 5.6.429), yet Sterne as author-proper understands the impossibility at the mid-century period of ignoring their influence when writing for profit.

The connective thread across these chapters is textual commerce as it relates to developing conceptions in the eighteenth century of credit and the market. As with Sterne's serial fiction, credit is textual *and* promissory. It inscribes readers in a temporal narrative towards which they must develop an attitude of 'ironic assent', in Gallagher's terms. Just as Sterne's dealings with the book trade remain provisional, so the promises his fictions hold for readers remain also provisional. In promoting Tristram as a concrete publishing protagonist and then acting as a guarantor for the authenticity of his fifth volume, in constructing abstract models of value using *Tristram Shandy*'s chapters, and in engaging in long-standing debates over taste and criticism with reviewers, Sterne builds credit into *Tristram*'s textual structure. His particular and abstract models for textual commerce and his distinctly *un*critical affinity with the credit economy connect his fiction to booksellers and reviewers in ways that Poovey claims are, by the 1750s and 60s, generically anti-fictional, and that exceed the 'switchpoints' and vestigial traces of a broken continuum. What my Coda demonstrates, however, is how Sterne's textual commerce also exceeds its own limits. Where critics such as Gallagher and McKeon suggest the role that credit's conditionality plays in the development within fictions of 'a kind of "aesthetic" truth, aware of its own fictionality, and detoxified of crude empiricist illusion', we see also how engagement in the textual market's sphere of exchange and competing interests allows Sterne to prefigure the aesthetic as its own relatively autonomous field.[747] One of the strongest and oddest legacies of Sterne's extended bid to 'sell both inside

[747] McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 63.

& out' (*Letters*, 140) is its capacity to imagine forms of aesthetic value that outlast its transactive moment.

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