

**‘Alas, Poor Yorick!’:  
A Sterne 250-Year Anniversary Conference  
Jesus College, Cambridge | 18-21 March 2018**

**Abstracts**

**Iryna Banakh**

Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno

**Wandering in the labyrinths of imagination: narrative traditions of Laurence Sterne in Russian sentimental travels of the late XVIIIth-early XIXth centuries**

The report is devoted to the reception of “A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy “ by Laurence Sterne in Russian literature of the beginning of the XIX century – in “sensitive” travelogues by P. Shalikov, P. Sumarokov, V. Izmailov, A. Kropotov and other writers travelling not only geographically but also through infinite space of Sterne’s book. The publication of Sterne’s travelling contributed to the development not only of qualitatively new direction in West European literature but also of a new literature – sentimental model of travelling within the framework of which the position strengthening of a narrative subject occurred, the forms of the author’s subjectivity developed, which is directed to itself and to the text. Parodying documentary-enlightening travelling Sterne encroaches on fundamental “paradigm” installation of the genre: his hero Yorik goes to France and Italy not with the purpose of studying and describing geographical and historical monuments of the countries but with the aim of “educating his own heart”. Consequently the narrative interest is concentrated here not only on the surrounding space, but on a person with all the diversity of his inner and external characteristics what as a result devalues traveler’s desire for displacement: since “to make a test of a human nature” is possible in any space. Russian fiction of the beginning of the XIX century mastering subjective forms of artistic communication followed the direction of adaptation and replication of Stern’s tradition. The main acquisition inherited by a Russian traveller of the beginning of the XIX century from Sterne is the freedom of narration and primary attention to the subjective world of the hero-narrator and the intimacy of the dialogue with a reader.

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**Michael Bell**

University of Warwick

**Sterne, Sentiment, and Premonitions of the Aesthetic**

The late eighteenth-century invention, or discovery, of the aesthetic as a distinct category of experience was preceded by premonitions which have attracted relatively

little commentary. These premonitions are often negative, moments when the category of the aesthetic is clearly required but is not yet available to thought. Pierre Corneille's essay on the dramatic unities provides such an instance and the emotional literalism in the later cult of sentiment was particularly blind, or blindly resistant, to aesthetic consciousness as Friedrich Schiller was to note of Rousseau. The critical reaction against sentiment, and the excesses of sensibility, which set in by the 1770ies might have been merely dismissive and sterile but the notion of the aesthetic as propounded by Friedrich Schiller transformed the debate and gave a more sophisticated moral interpretation of the sentimental impulse. Schiller's idea of the aesthetic emerged along with his specialised definition of the 'sentimental' as modern self-consciousness for which Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* was a textbook instance. But it is the embedded 'Story of Le Fever' in *Tristram Shandy* which provides a subtly implicit analytic demonstration of the relationship, distinct yet inseparable, between aesthetic appreciation and the moral value of feeling. Yet one would not attribute to Sterne a conscious understanding of Schiller's model and in that respect this episode provides one of the most substantial, as well as fully positive, premonitions of the aesthetic.

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**Petr Budrin**

University of Oxford

### **The Shadow of Eliza in *A Sentimental Journey***

By the time he first encountered Eliza Draper, Sterne had already conceived the idea of writing a separate book based on his travels through France and Italy. However, the appearance of Eliza in his life, as well as her subsequent departure to India, were crucially important for Sterne when he began to work on *A Sentimental Journey*. As Melvyn New has argued, Sterne's second novel 'cannot be sufficiently understood' without considering *Bramine's Journal*, Sterne's 'diary of the miserable feelings' which he kept at the same time. Most studies devoted to Sterne's relationship with Eliza discuss psychological, ethical, and cultural aspects of that affair. In my study, I will focus primarily on the form of Sterne's novel. I argue that in *A Sentimental Journey*, Eliza – although she is not an acting character in the book – functions as both the driving and decelerating force of the narrative. Sterne uses a particular set of literary techniques which, while remaining almost imperceptible to the general reader, constitute an important dimension in the structure of the *Journey*.

I begin with a close reading of Yorick's phrases which mention Eliza's real name. Next, by analysing some textual parallels between *Bramine's Journal* and *A Sentimental Journey*, I will expose Sterne's hidden dialogue with Eliza on the pages of the *Journey*. Eliza's name was on the list of subscribers ('a List which I am most proud of because my Eliza's name is in it'), and Sterne expected her to read the *Journey* even if she never sees the *Journal* he kept for her. For my discussion of Yorick and Eliza I will utilise the concept of *literary personality*. The notion of *literary personality* was introduced by the Russian formalists in the 1920s in order to reveal the boundaries between literary form and 'extra-literary' reality.

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Bertrand Cayzac

Author

### **Bidding through Heaven's Door: *Floozman in Space's* Sternean Curio**

Sterneana has been buoyant with creative responses. Still, no one seems to care for the mock dedication put on sale in TS Vol I, Chapter VIII...

Now the French author of *Floozman in Space* dares to place a bid as part of his tribute letter to Laurence Sterne. He wonders whether he is somehow misconceiving the fictional pact -- with this imperviousness to irony the addressee himself was keen to mark in his eighteenth-century fellow countrymen -- but pretends nonetheless that this candid attempt at trading across the gulf of death is a shamanic invitation to converse and ponder reception in a time of uprooting.

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Ildiko Csengei

University of Huddersfield

### **Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* and the Seven Years' War**

Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* was written in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, and is arguably inspired by the author's travels on the continent, esp. his journey to France during the closure of the hostilities between 1762-64. The theme of war, however, is pushed to the background in the novel, making the culture of wit, politeness and sensibility take the centre stage. Sterne's protagonist, Yorick, is poorly attuned to contemporary events: oblivious to the fact that his country is at war with France, he carelessly travels there without arranging for a passport. He appears unable to comprehend the enormity even of his own situation when threatened with the idea of incarceration in the Bastille. Despite Yorick's naivete, however, his observations in France testify to the miseries war can bring to a country; behind the light-hearted jokes and gentlemanly politeness a reader of sensibility will find a country ravaged by war and populated by impoverished veterans, crowds of beggars, and a bleak world where fellow-feeling is scarce and selective.

This paper proposes to read *A Sentimental Journey* as a piece of war-writing, in the context of first-hand accounts of life during the Seven Years' War written by soldiers, civilians and travellers. While Sterne's account focuses on Yorick's mental and emotional journey, I will read a range of primary sources from the period to uncover what the novel strives to suppress: the immediate experience (physical and emotional) of war for those who participated in it or observed it, as well as the state of Europe (especially England and France) during this time of conflict. The essay will argue that the discourse of sensibility enables both the erasure and the re-surfacing, in an altered and polite guise, of the realities of war in the novel. In *A Treatise of Human Nature* David Hume proposes that there is an unconscious reflective element in the operation of sympathy. Our sympathy with others' affections "proceeds from certain views and reflections, which will not escape the strict scrutiny of a philosopher, tho' they may be the person himself, who makes them." The sympathies of Sterne's Yorick are

often guided by his unconscious views and reflections and are ultimately made possible by his imagination. It is the pleas of the English-speaking starling crying to get out of his cage that bring home to Yorick the potential suffering that his own situation could entail. Like Yorick to the starling, the reader is meant to respond to Yorick's encounters with reflection, and ultimately, with sympathy. The paper will analyse the role of sensibility in mediating the experience of war in the context of contemporary first-hand accounts. It will also explore Sterne's commentary on the limits of eighteenth-century sensibility and highlight the techniques used to manage his audience's responses to the darker contemporary issues that are suppressed behind the novel's humorous façade.

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**Daniel Cook**

University of Dundee

### ***Tristram Shandy, John Bunclé, and Fictional Affiliation***

As Petrarch once cautioned, the 'proper imitator should take care that what he writes resembles the original without reproducing it', since resemblance is like 'a son to his father'. Such a claim speaks to what Terry Castle identifies as an ingrained readerly insistence 'that the sequel be different, but also *exactly the same*'. Even knowingly reworked novels, such as unofficial sequels or counterfeit volumes, bear the marks of what Linda Hutcheon calls 'repetition without replication'. In this context British and Irish works of fiction written in the long eighteenth century routinely invoked an invented, uncanny heritage, most famously in Thomas Cogan's baggy extension of Thomas Amory's popular Irish novel *The Life of John Bunclé*, namely *John Bunclé, Junior*; or in the reams of imitations that declared an authorial relationship with *Tristram Shandy*, such as *The Life, Travels, and Adventures of Christopher Wagstaff, Gentleman, Grandfather to Tristram Shandy* and *The Life and Opinions of Bertram Montfichet*. What do such counterfeit or playful imitations look like against the shifting fictional archive of copyrighted print culture? Why was the dubious trope of fictional affiliation invoked so flagrantly, and to what ends?

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**Mariano D'Ambrosio**

Université Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle

### **Georges Perec as reader of Laurence Sterne**

Georges Perec, the French postmodernist and member of the OuLiPo, has acknowledged his appreciation of Laurence Sterne's work as early as 1965, in interviews and conferences held after the publication of his first novel *Les choses* (*Things: A Story of the Sixties*), although this sociological novel, admittedly inspired by Gustave Flaubert, appears as very far from any Sternean influence. Later, with his admission to OuLiPo and especially with the publication of *La vie: mode d'emploi* (*Life: a User's Manual*), the influence of Sterne on Perec's work became more explicit. In this novel Sterne incorporates quotations by many writers, often slightly modified, always undeclared; among these intertextual hidden borrowings, we find many passages from

Sterne's work. Almost all the intertextual inserts are quotations from the *Tristram Shandy*, which confirms the lasting legacy this novel left to contemporary literature, especially to postmodern novelists; surprisingly enough, though, Perec also quotes an episode from the pseudo-Sternean *Koran*.

In my paper, I would wish to analyze the literary relation of Georges Perec to Laurence Sterne's work in three steps: first of all, I will try to retrace the history of Georges Perec as reader of Sterne, through an examination of public declarations and private writing; then, I will focus on the direct quotations of Sterne incorporated in *Life a User's Manual*, comparing them with their source texts; in the last part of the presentation, I will point out the formal and thematic influence of Sterne in Perec's work, especially with regard to intertextuality/plagiarism, and the intertwining themes of identity, memory, and the complexity of life narratives.

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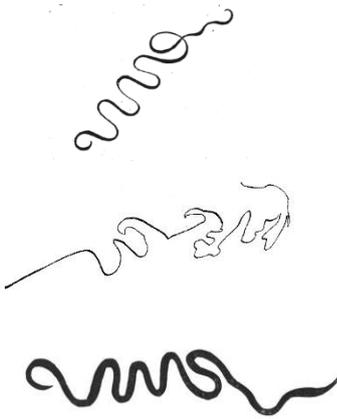
**Polly Dickson**

University of Cambridge

### **'And it happens thus': Tracing Lines in the Works of Laurence Sterne, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Honoré de Balzac**

My paper follows the course of a single, undulating line taken from Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* — the flourish made by Corporal Trim with his walking stick — through the works of two figures who tower over nineteenth-century European literature: the German E. T. A. Hoffmann and the French Honoré de Balzac. Balzac's reproduction of Sterne's line as the epigraph to his novel *La Peau de chagrin* (1831) is well known. Less familiar to scholars is Hoffmann's appropriation of the same line in an early piece, 'Fragment eines humoristischen Aufsatzes' ('Fragment of a humoristic Essay', 1795–1800). These three waving lines, or squiggles — images which have never before been considered as a set — form a triangulated relationship of imitation which proves the lasting influence of Sterne into the nineteenth century and across the European literary canon.

My paper explores how the squiggle, in each case, troubles a set of assumptions about the mechanics of reading. If elsewhere these writers draw from the lexicon of the artist or the art critic, engaging a style we might call 'ekphrastic' or 'pictorial' — with particular attention to the 'line' or stroke of the painter's brush — then their inclusions of the squiggle push the act of reading into the domain of the image. Hoffmann's and Balzac's re-drawing of a shape that by its very nature cannot be reproduced exactly so much as imitated and adapted contributes to an ironic self-fashioning of the narrator as artist, following the model of Sterne.



Laurence Sterne

E. T. A. Hoffmann

Honoré de Balzac

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## Douglas Dodds

Victoria & Albert Museum

### A Sentimental Journey Through South Kensington: Laurence Sterne and the V&A

The Victoria and Albert Museum holds a wide range of artworks that relate to Laurence Sterne, but some of them are better-known than others. The V&A's oil paintings are well-documented, but scholars are perhaps less familiar with the Museum's prints and drawings. This paper will explore paintings such as C.R. Leslie's *My Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman* (ca.1831), Charles Landseer's *Maria* (ca.1836) and W.P. Frith's *Scene from A Sentimental Journey* (1841), comparing them with related artworks in the V&A and other collections. Intriguingly, the Museum also holds a number of original illustrations for various editions of *Tristram Shandy*, *A Sentimental Journey* and other works by Sterne. Examples include early drawings by Thomas Stothard and Luke Clennell, plus more recent artworks by Vera Willoughby and others. Some of the drawings have been misattributed in the past, but recent research has helped to clarify their true significance. The Museum also has some hand-coloured fan mounts, similar to those in the British Museum and Shandy Hall. In addition, the V&A's National Art Library has a number of important editions of Sterne's works, such as the 2nd (London) edition of *Tristram Shandy*, plus the Golden Cockerel Press edition and the Arion Press edition with photo-collages by John Baldessari. The paper will also consider the role of collectors such as John Forster, Alexander Dyce, John Jones and John Sheepshanks, who donated or bequeathed many of the works to the South Kensington Museum in the 19th century.

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Chris Ewers

University of Exeter

### **Yorick's spatial digression, cosmopolitanism, and the citizen of the whirled**

Parson Yorick produces an exhaustive list of types of traveller at the start of *A Sentimental Journey*, ranging from the idle to the splenetic traveller, though there is one he neglects to mention; the cosmopolitan traveller, the educated member of an elite who are as at ease in Paris or London as they are in Rome. As Yorick starts to feel at home among the higher echelons of Parisian society, he has to engage with – and modify – this cosmopolitan ethos at a time when debates in France were starting to regard the citizen of the world as far from the ideal citizen of a nation. Sterne's own narrative programme, to write something 'quite out of the beaten track', also has consequences for the frictionless and rapid travel imagined by cosmopolitanism. While *Tristram Shandy* tends to work by means of temporal digression in *A Sentimental Journey*, the digression is spatial. 'I seldom go to the place I set out for' admits Yorick, and his liminal, 'slow' encounters (with a grisset, the silent and pathetic figure of Maria, Madame de Lxxx, an ass) and the unaccustomed scenes of his travels (from a coach-yard to a peasant hut) not only valorise the importance of sentimental travel but foreground many of the contradictions and assumptions of the cosmopolitan world view. It is even possible that the move to a wider conception of travel encouraged by Sterne's work had a lasting effect on how cosmopolitanism, instead of being hailed for its 'universalism', could be regarded as the product of a damaging form of circulation, promoting a limited and narrow form of mobility.

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Paul Goring

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim

### **Death, debt, and literary inheritance: the end of Sterne and *A Sentimental Journey***

Laurence Sterne died in debt – owing two further volumes of *A Sentimental Journey* to those who had bought subscriptions to the work. This paper will examine the intermingling of death and debt in Sterne's authorship, and will consider the ways in which they are connected to an attitude to writing as a way of claiming a position outside of mortality as a link in literary history. Sterne's fiction presents many different types of debt: financial debts, emotional debts, debts of character, literary debts, 'book debts', and more. The paper will examine ways in which the idea of debt as an ongoing obligation informs Sterne's fiction at several levels concerning character, the contract between author/narrator and reader, and an author's position within literary history. Regarding *A Sentimental Journey*, most attention will be given to the final chapter; the paper will consider this chapter alongside the portrayal of Yorick in *Tristram Shandy* and will also connect Sterne's work to passages from Shakespeare. When Yorick meets the Count de B— at Versailles, the Count finds himself 'obliged to Shakespeare' for making Yorick known to him: in Sterne's literary economy, Shakespeare, through writing, renders future readers indebted to him. The

paper will explore how Sterne probed such ideas of longevous literary credit, at the same time as he created in Tristram Shandy a writer whose self-imposed literary debts were comically doomed never to be paid off, and as he himself left the world with two promised volumes of *A Sentimental Journey* outstanding.

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**Flavio Gregori**

Università Ca'Foscari Venezia

### **Yorick and the 'inner beyond' of the *unhappy consciousness***

Hegel defined the *unhappy consciousness* the modern form of incompletely self-sufficient consciousness that emerged from the unsuccessful attempts of Stoic and Sceptical philosophies to attain the independence of the self from the corruption and instability of the world. This paper will address the dilemma of the self caught between the Scylla and Carybdis of the "habitual selfishness" of the ways of the world (*die Prosa der Welt*) and the excessive refinement of sentimentalism, an aesthetic form of egotism. Yorick is troubled by a modern version of Pyrrhonism (the 'Humean flux of the empirical self'), sometimes feels a (quasi) Stoic urge to protect himself from the world by passing judgment on its changeability; he is also anxious to find a soul in it, or to give one to it in the ebbs and flows of his own heart. Yorick yearns for an almost religious form of intersubjectivity through sympathy and compassion. But was this 'religion', grounded as it was in the Latitudinarian faith as well as in the 'neuro-cognitive' philosophy of Sterne's days, adequate to achieve a concrete, effective consciousness of the self 'within the world', i.e. both in its autonomy and in its relationship with the others? Yorick's sentimental communion with the others has its normative foundation 'beyond himself' ("I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself"), while, at the same time, the others seem to exist mainly in the innermost motions of his being. Does not Yorick run the risk of remaining an absolute being, absorbed in his inner self on the one hand and pointing to a mere 'beyond', on the other hand? To which extent are the others "the illusions of an imagination which is eternally misleading" him? or are they acknowledged and experienced as real beings?

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**Alexander Hardie-Forsyth**

University of Oxford

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

Claiming to have expunged the twenty-fourth chapter of his fourth volume, Tristram justifies the resulting 'chasm of ten pages' to his reader: '[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). In keeping with William Kenrick's perceptive description of *Tristram Shandy* as a text that orders its adventures 'with great oeconomy', Tristram as author-protagonist is here concerned with establishing a regular economy of style and

thereby fixing a measure of value across his work. Tristram's reflexive use of chaptering adheres to a compositional logic of the marketplace, which, as Michael McKeon argues, conceives value as 'a general and homogenous category available through the equalization of particular and distinct commodities'. Unlike earlier models of exchange, McKeon argues, the market thus 'invite[s] the figure of the general as a concrete but virtual space composed of many actual particulars'. In the case of Tristram's text, this figure of the general demands that momentary perfection yield to commercial equipoise. Tristram's conceit thus bears a close relation to the pleonasm or 'performed pun' – itself a figure of surplus, or overproduction – that Jonathan Lamb identifies as characteristic of Sterne's 'double principle'; Tristram perfects his book by expunging the chapter that most nearly approaches perfection.

*A Sentimental Journey* likewise invites its reader to analyse the economy of Yorick's narrative ordering. Yorick's oblique raison d'être for his sojourn to the continent is that 'THEY order [...] this matter better in France' (*ASJ*, 3), an assertion that can function as a metaleptic reference to its author's own adroit inter-arrangement of narrative 'matter[s]'. While evidence outside the Florida *Letters* is scant regarding Sterne's compositional process for *Tristram Shandy*, both Alexis Tadié and Gardner D. Stout refer to a fair copy of the *Journey* in Sterne's hand (Egerton MS 1610) to suggest how Sterne may have ordered his second narrative through compositional chaptering. Implicit in both accounts is the notion that Sterne composed his chapters as discreet and fungible units of narrative that, as in Tristram's earlier fictionalised episode, could be reordered to achieve a regular economy of narrative. '(O)economy and Order: Laurence Sterne's Chaptering' will address this question of compositional, or textual, economy, and, in doing so, will provide an innovative approach to Sterne's use of chaptering both in narrative representation and in compositional praxis. The new readings it will provide will be based on the author's detailed re-examination of the manuscript and its surrogates.

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**Gabriella Hartvig**

Pécsi Tudományegyetem (University of Pécs)

### **Advertising *A Sentimental Journey* and Sterne's Letters in the 1770s**

The examination of advertisements, we now know, can offer valuable information on how Sterne's works were marketed and received in newspaper notices, reviews, and even in Sterne's own writings. Although in the 1770s we can probably find less newspaper advertisements than either in the previous or the following decade, yet significant posthumous editions were published in those years to profit from the memory of the late writer. I would like to demonstrate how advertisements found mainly in the digital Burney Collection Newspapers related to *A Sentimental Journey*, its spurious continuation by Hall-Stevenson, and the publication of original and forged letters such as *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, *Sterne's Letters to his Friends on Various Occasions*, and *Letters of the Late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne* by Lydia Sterne Medalle modified the image of Sterne in the decade following his death, not only as the prebendary of York, but also as the celebrated writer of fiction.

Although taking a much smaller scope than Brandtzæg, Newbould, and Williams in their article on “Advertising Sterne’s Novels,” I attempt to show how the two types of writing, fiction and letters, reflected on each other in newspaper advertisements and how one promoted the other.

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**Monica Latham**

Université de Lorraine, Nancy

### **The ‘forerunner of the moderns’: Virginia Woolf reading Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey***

Throughout her career, Woolf wrote several essays on Sterne, including ‘Sterne’ (1909), ‘Eliza and Sterne’ (1922), ‘Sterne’s Ghost’ (1927) and ‘The “Sentimental Journey”’ (1928), and expressed her admiration for him as the pioneer of a unique, innovative style. I would like to focus on ‘The “Sentimental Journey”’ in order to propose a genetic analysis of Woolf’s essay, beginning with her reading notes dated from the end of 1927, through 1928, to early 1929, which resulted in a review originally published in *The New York Herald Tribune* on 23 September 1928. This text was subsequently revised by Woolf and published as the ‘Introduction’ to the Oxford University Press edition of *A Sentimental Journey* on 1 November 1928. It was finally revised and included in Woolf’s collection of essays, *The Common Reader: Second Series*, published in 1932.

I intend to explore the reading notes contained in Woolf’s Notebook XIV (archived at the Berg Collection, New York Public Library) and Notebook XLVI (archived at the University of Sussex Library) in order to offer a close examination of the progress of ‘The “Sentimental Journey”’. Woolf’s raw remarks, impressions, spontaneous ideas and direct interrogations formulated in her reading notebooks are gradually expanded, rephrased and polished up to result in an essay that contains a variety of laudatory remarks about Sterne’s ‘extreme skill’. She particularly praises the elasticity and fluidity of Sterne’s prose which follows the ‘very folds and creases of the individual mind’. She also points out the ‘pure poetry’ in Sterne’s conversational prose. In her notebooks, Woolf selects and jots down ‘good’ passages of Sterne’s exemplary writing. However, Woolf also formulates criticism of Sterne’s character portrayal: his ‘chief fault’ consists in the abundance of sentimentality and the ostentatious display of sensibility, compassion and kindness, which allows him to portray Yorick in the best possible light.

Woolf’s reading notes unveil her thorough method of book reviewing, as she reads writers’ fictional works as well as their (auto)biographies. In Sterne’s case, she matches the account of *A Sentimental Journey* with parallel anecdotes and descriptions of his journey from his own *Letters*. This first-hand autobiographical information is further corroborated by a secondary source, as Woolf reads Wilbur Cross’s *Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* at the same time. Woolf’s reading habit of placing the author’s work within the biographical context – inherited from her father, Leslie Stephen, the prominent Victorian biographer – is visually displayed in her reading notebooks. The alternating notes from the three sources exemplify her radial reading that she deems necessary for a comprehensive, informed evaluation of a book that was highly relevant and formative for a whole generation of modernist writers.

**Maria Laudando**

Università di Napoli

### **Sterne's Literary Passports: or the artful Translations of 'Sentimental' Authorship**

In one of the essays collected in *Imaginary Homelands* devoted to his inspiring favourite books, Salman Rushdie mentions, among the others, *Tristram Shandy* and focuses on the process of reading as “a kind of passport”, arguing that a seminal work enables sensitive readers to recognise their vocation as writers – a category Rushdie redefines in terms of “would-be migrants” eager to embark on their own travel from the “World to the Book”. Drawing on this forceful metaphoric field, my paper starts from the famous fragment of Yorick's Shakespearian Passport in the *Sentimental Journey* to discuss the subtle intertextuality which is embedded and disseminated throughout the speculative and emotional detours as well as the ambidextrous authorial investments underlying the ‘Novelty’ of Sterne's sentimental ‘Vehicle’. Even if the book was conceived as a sort of ‘redemptive’ act, it still pursues a most Shandean devious funambulist course – forwards and backwards – from one textual fragment to the next, from the body to the soul, from worldly stages to printed pages, in a delicate precarious balance of mixed tunes, postures and relationships.

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**Foteini Lika**

Hellenic Open University

### **Byronically Sterneward: Digressive storytelling and sentimental journeys from Sterne to Byron and Roidis**

This paper sets out to discuss the impact of Lawrence Sterne's digressive artistry on Byron's and Emmanouil Roidis' picaresque poetics in *Don Juan* and *Pope Joan* respectively. The influence of the impish vicar on the ‘wicked’ Lord has been often noted by criticism, since Byron quoted occasionally from *A Sentimental Journey* in his letters and the remnants of his library included a copy of *Tristram Shandy*. What is more, Byron was explicit in calling his *Don Juan* ‘a poetical T Shandy’. Roidis on the other hand, when he attempted to map out the European satiric tradition whose modern Greek continuation was his historical novel *Pope Joan* (1866), besides Byron, made a specific reference to Sterne. Like Sterne's and Byron's work, Roidis' own novel masterly defied simplistic classifications and inspired many modernist readings during the twentieth century, most of which emphasized its intricate rhetoricity and its ironical self-reflexivity. For all these reasons, this paper will try to illuminate the intertextual affinities between the said three writers, while also focusing on the defamiliarising ways they employ spatial form in order to keep their hypothetical sentimental readers in a perpetual suspension between text and gloss, subjectivity and materiality.

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Jakub Lipski

Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz

## **Sterne/Yorick, the Sentimental Traveller and Contemporary Travel Writing Studies**

This paper studies Sterne's legacy in contemporary travel writing studies. It begins by revisiting the theoretical content in Sterne's work itself – from the sermon on the Prodigal Son, to Volume VII of *Tristram Shandy*, and finally, to the celebrated comments on travelling and travel writing in *A Sentimental Journey* – in order to evaluate both Sterne's innovativeness and anchoring in the eighteenth-century context. By confronting Sterne's ideas with contemporary views on the art of travel (*ars apodemica*) and travel writing, the chapter illustrates Sterne's dialogue with tradition and his reconciliation of the ideals of circular/spiritual and linear/educational journeys rather than arguing for the supposedly revolutionary nature of his views on travel. Then, the chapter proceeds to a discussion of the uses of Sterne in contemporary critical readings in the field of travel writing studies. Informed by reader response criticism, the chapter sketches the dominant styles of *ASJ*'s reception and its legacy beyond Sterne studies. In particular, it is concerned with two critical topoi – Sterne's agency in the so-called paradigm shift from the scientific to the sentimental in travel writing; and the vague concepts of “going Sternean” or “Sternean fashions”, which have tended to be used as umbrella terms for stylistic idiosyncrasies in post-1768 travel writing. The former is approached as illustrative of a “mythical” style of reception; a style that establishes a myth of origin and, paradoxically, undermines it at the same time by contextualising Sterne's *Journey* and identifying the same tendencies in others (e.g. James Boswell, Tobias Smollett). The latter, analysed with reference to the East Central European notion of *sternizm*, exemplifies a pattern of disconnection, where a critical term derived from a name begins an autonomous life of its own and loses contact with the point of origin.

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Joanna Maciulewicz

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

## **Two adaptations of *A Sentimental Journey* in Polish fiction: Maria Wirtemberska's *Some Events, Thoughts and Sentiments Experienced Abroad* and Fryderyk Skarbek's *A Journey Without A Purpose***

Although Laurence Sterne's fiction was widely read in Poland, it did not find many imitators among Polish writers. Polish translation of *A Sentimental Journey* was first published in 1817, *Tristram Shandy* was first translated into Polish as late as 1958 but the two novels were widely read either in French or in the original and were frequently alluded to in Polish journals or fiction. The aim of this paper is to analyse two texts which most closely resemble Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, Maria Wirtemberska's *Niektóre zdarzenia, myśli i uczucia doznane za granicą* [Some Events, Thoughts and Sentiments Experienced Abroad], which was not published during the author's lifetime but most probably written between 1816 and 1818, and Fryderyk Skarbek's *Podróż bez celu* [A Journey without a Purpose] (1824), in order to show that although

they are clearly inspired by Sterne's novel, they are in fact the adaptations, or recreations, of the original text. Maria Wirtemberska borrows from Sterne the formula of a subjective travelogue and writes a fictitious travelogue, based upon her own journey, which registers the impressions of a woman named after the heroine of the author's earlier novel *Malwina*. Fryderyk Skarbek's traveller wants to pass for a sentimental traveller cannot help but look at the reality with economist's sober eyes, producing an account in which satire and didacticism outweigh sentimentalism. The analysis will show that the early Polish novelists employed Sterne's model of sentimental novel to develop their own modes of novelistic writing.

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### **Anatomizing Sensibility: Yorick's Journey into Modernity**

While in *Tristram Shandy* the author's attempt to dissect the "nature" of man remains the focus of narrative interest, the novel's aesthetics take on consistency through the intersecting of different cultural fields, from literature to medicine, from mechanics to art, mathematics, law, philosophy. In *A Sentimental Journey* the acrobatics of Yorick's sensibility are at centre stage, in the brilliant visual rendering of his eccentric subjectivity through the kaleidoscopic whirl of emotional fragments; where the period's infatuation with optical instruments meshes with the lure of the 'new' science of mechanics in the emotional cadence of the journey. While physical experiences trigger the sentimental traveller's imaginative apprehension, activating, in his body, a system of fluids governed by the laws of hydraulics, the debate over the material or immaterial reality of the 'self' marks his route in various ways and forms. The spectacular aspect of science is already on its way while brand new questions regarding the constitution of personhood are being posited.

In conclusion, two images which illustrate the ever-elusive, oxymoronic complexity of Sterne's work, while celebrating, though in a very different way, his presence in Italy. The first comes from Naples. The enigmatic "anatomical machines" (1763-1764), now in the Cappella Sansevero in Naples, exhibit the internal 'fabric' of the human body, contributing with spectacular evidence to the contemporary medical and philosophical debate on the connection between the visible surface and the hidden depth of the human body. They were constructed under the supervision of Raimondo Sangro, Prince of Sansevero. Sterne, in Naples in 1766, and the prince certainly knew of each other but, to my knowledge, never met. The second image is from Milano. It is the last of eight illustrations by Filippo De Pisis (1896-1956) for *Il Viaggio sentimentale* translated by Ugo Foscolo and published by Enrico Damiani in 1944. Yorick is leaving the reader with the levity of a flight of fancy, the feather touch of Charlie Chaplin and the mechanical movements of an automaton.

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### **Ambition and Disappointment? Two new Sterne letters of 1752**

This paper discusses two previously-unknown Sterne letters of 1752, the first ‘new’ pieces of Sterne’s correspondence to be brought to light in over ten years. First, evidence is forwarded to demonstrate that just two years after delivering the assize sermon ‘The Abuses of Conscience’ at York Minster, Sterne wrote a letter of application (now lost) to serve Richard of Sykes of Sledmere, High Sheriff of Yorkshire for 1752 – an episode entirely unknown within Sterne studies. The second letter, to John Fountayne, Dean of York, provides a personal insight into Sterne’s activities as commissary in the peculiar courts of the diocese of York. The full text of this letter will be presented from the original manuscript. These discoveries, it is argued, provide a crucial insight into a period in which Sterne was embroiled in disturbances in York chapter politics, domestic unhappiness, and an ongoing struggle to gain a foothold with both ecclesiastical and lay patrons in order to further his clerical career.

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### **Revitalizing Humanity through ‘Reading’ the Marbled Page**

For this milestone event, I derive new cultural legacies from the marbled page in *Tristram Shandy*. This page — the most stunningly visual element in a novel whose punctuation, page layout, and material composition already make the text into a multimedia performance — takes several twists on conventions of book design to resist the potentially deadening effects of mechanization. Its surprise and riotous color point toward the “mystery” not of just a Shandean game that can be puzzled over, but of the impenetrable, unpredictable vitality of life itself. If Sterne’s opposing the marbled page to the “dark veil” of the black page constitutes a rumination on life and death, then this “motly emblem of my work!” — which, for the author/narrator, is the “work” of bringing a new character/world into consciousness — is a visual embodiment of life’s creative energy.

In short: the marbled page is orgasmic ejaculate.

Sterne’s bibliographic craftiness transforms textuality’s dangers into life’s inscrutable joys.

The text of the novel solidly supports these interpretations. I further substantiate them using the production history and material details of Sterne’s first edition. I also offer rationales for Sterne’s concerns about potentially degrading effects of reading printed texts, as a minister witnessing the popularization of novels during the Industrial Age.

The cultural implications of Sterne's textual critique can be productively reconsidered in our current age of increasing digital media. Further: amidst our current focus on abusive sexual behaviors, Sterne's *jouissance* finds affirmatively humorous, spiritually gratifying frameworks for vibrant sexual energy.

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### **Breaking vessels: Playfulness as a driving force for innovation in literature**

In his 1938 monograph *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga aimed at integrating "the concept of play into that of culture." While this extension of the concept to culture is highly contestable, its application to the field of literature leads right to the centre of literary-theoretical questions. Play is not just a popular motif or an element among others in literary texts. More importantly, literature in general is at its core a kind of game. Like all games, literary texts are shaped by the correlation between freedom and rule. To avoid getting bored by a game that is too familiar and knowing the outcome of it beforehand and thereby depriving the game of its very nature, the breaking of rules and the definition of new rules is vital. I use Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as an example of how a playful handling and the pleasurable breaking of rules stimulates innovation in literature. Sterne introduces new narrative strategies, incorporates elements from other media and further includes the reader as a key player into what Milan Kundera calls "that great game of invented characters." To show how Sterne's ideas have been employed and developed further, I also use examples from Mark Z. Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves* (2000).

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### **A (Digressive) Worker in Graven Images**

Perhaps the most celebrated symbol of Sterne's (and Tristram's) narrative digression is the series of plotlines printed in volume 6 of *Tristram Shandy*. But Sterne refers to engraved lines in many of his works to measure how far he has departed from his source material and also as a metaphor for wide-ranging adventures. This paper considers Sterne's digression to consider engraved lines in Sermon 20, on the prodigal son. Whereas the Biblical text only names one of the prodigal son's unfortunate experiences on his journey away from home, having to feed pigs (an unclean animal in the Jewish tradition), Sterne fleshes out the prodigal son's trip into a Grand Tour, creating a fuller list of degrading experiences for his character. The third of these experiences takes a print cultural turn, with the prodigal son wondering how to explain to his father

—that he had been sold by a man of honour for twenty shekels of silver, to a worker in graven images;—that the images he had purchased had profited him nothing —that

they could not be transported across the wilderness, and had been burnt with fire at Shusan [...]? (S 4:189)

As Melvyn New points out, here Sterne alludes to Deuteronomy 7:5, which refers to graven images as false idols. But Sterne's use of images specifically composed using the technique of engraving transforms his prodigal son's experiences – experiences usually only considered by scholars as those typical of the grand tourist – into adventures in the book trade. The fate of Sterne's prodigal tourist is an author's nightmare. He is sold to an engraver in the common mid-century metaphor of Grub Street existence being slavery to booksellers. It is also a bookseller's misfortune. Having invested in engravings, the prodigal son discovers that they are worthless and is unable to bring them home. The prodigal son's attempt to import graven images prompts us to read his experience in parallel with Sterne's literary travels across print cultural forms, and especially his importation of experimental print figures – and engravings – into the form of the novel. In this bookish set-piece in sermon 20, Sterne provides the prodigal son with an enlarged backstory incorporating Biblically-inspired misadventures in engraving. This demonstrates how, for Sterne, digression and engraved images are rarely mutually exclusive.

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