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THE PRESENCE OF THE TEXT: STERNE, SATIRE, SUBLIME

by

CHRISTOPHER FANNING

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1999

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Abstract

THE PRESENCE OF THE TEXT: STERNE, SATIRE. SUBLIME

by

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This dissertation takes on the problematic coexistence of satire and the sublime during the eighteenth century, using Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as a paradigmatic case. The essential problem I explore here is how satire, which levels its subjects to the common denominator of the bodily and the physical, and the sublime, which elevates and transcends by means of a "pure" and "disinterested" aestheticism, *both* come to be the most influential discourses of the period. I propose that during the eighteenth century both satire and the sublime are primarily rhetorical modes which, in the age of flourishing print culture, derive their power from the printed text. Thus Sterne's well-known attention to the *minutiae* of the text as an aesthetic object, which questions our assumptions about communication at its very material roots, is accompanied by invocations of both satire and the sublime. The two are united in their concern with representation in language which is itself represented by physical marks on the printed page. By bringing together historical and theoretical approaches, combining Jacques Derrida's *grammatology*, Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of the dialogic and carnivalesque and varieties of critical approaches to the body with aspects of

cultural history such as the history of the book, I am able to relate postmodern concerns to the larger shifts in cultural epistemology brought about by print.

The dissertation explores these issues first by examining Sterne's rhetorical development in his sermons. Next, I trace the rise of "the presence of the text" in the development of Classical and Renaissance Menippean satire, concluding with the performative works of the Scriblerians and Sterne. These works manifest a self-reflexive preoccupation with the physical or nonverbal aspects of the text, which I also detect in the rhetorical sublime of Longinus. Despite its aims at transcendence, this sublime cannot escape the physicality of textual expression. Thus both satire and the sublime embrace the physical properties of language, which, given the flourishing print culture of the eighteenth century, are manifested in the physical presentation of the text, such as that in the first editions of Sterne's works, where "the presence of the text" is central to his effect.

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There are two people in whose debt I will remain. David Richter's great generosity of spirit has been essential to my success. He has read my work closely, he has confirmed me in my ventures into the profession, he has *fed* me. I am most of all grateful for his friendship. Finally, I could never have arrived at this point without the constant support and companionship of Jeanette Herrle-Fanning, who has taken much time from writing her own dissertation to be my most formidable critic, tirelessly analyzing my work and asking me the most difficult questions of all. Without the bizarre combination of sympathy and dialectic she provides, I would have nothing. Everything I do is dedicated to her.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

---By the tomb stone of *Lucian*---if it is in being,---if not, why then, by his ashes! by the ashes of my dear *Rabelais*, and dearer *Cervantes*,---

--you must read *Longinus*--read away--if you are not a jot the wiser by reading him the first time over--never fear--read him again--¹

By naming Lucian, Rabelais and Cervantes as his forbears in *Tristram Shandy*, Laurence Sterne places himself in the tradition of Menippean satire, a tradition that mocks the higher aspirations of humankind by levelling them with the material world. By invoking Longinus, Sterne alludes to the sublime, a tradition that elevates and transcends the material world. How are two such disparate traditions to be accounted for in the same work? We may further note that satire and the sublime are the two most powerful discourses of the eighteenth century. This gives rise questions of literary history: what allows the eighteenth century at large to countenance such seemingly opposed traditions simultaneously? By using *Tristram Shandy* as a paradigmatic case, this study is drawn to attend the impact of the print revolution on literary form, for the eccentric appearance of *Tristram Shandy*'s typography reveals an interest in textuality shared by both satire and the sublime. Both discourses are concerned with representation in language which is itself represented by physical marks on the printed page.

¹Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*. Vol. III, Chap. 19, p. 225, and IV.10.337. Further references are to this edition, made in text by volume chapter and page.

Sterne's well-known attention to the minutiae of the text as an aesthetic object is immediately remarkable to even the most casual of readers. Flipping through the pages, one is instantly struck by the strange disposition of its text. Even in a regularized edition, whether modern or Victorian, there exists in the dashes and asterisks, the illustrative designs and the colored pages,² a distinct textual presence. Sterne's text draws attention to itself as something other than "pure" (i.e., transparent) language. Sometimes *Tristram Shandy* uses the printed text to imitate speech; at other times it defies the linearity of spoken discourse. This attention to the relation of speech and writing, and the concomitant doubt about the efficacy of language to communicate is an expression of the engagement of Sterne's own culture with the impact of print. But it can also be said that, in many ways, *Tristram Shandy* comes into its own with the ideas of Jacques Derrida, some two hundred years after its initial publication. These interwoven literary, historical and epistemological questions prompt the present study.

Following the considerable distaste of the Victorians,³ interest in Sterne's works

²Or, indeed, apologies for their absence, such as, "The BOOKBINDER is desired to cover both sides of this leaf with the best marbled paper, taking care to keep the folio lines clear, and to preserve the proper margins" (*The Works of Laurence Sterne* [London: A. Millar, 1794]: I.327, cited in Peter J. De Voogd, "Laurence Sterne, the marbled page, and 'the use of accidents'" [285]). A similar apology appears in a *Complete Works* of 1872.

³This ranges from Thackeray who praises Sterne's sensibility, yet warns that "the foul satyr's eyes leer out of the leaves constantly: the last words the famous author wrote were bad and wicked--the last lines the poor stricken wretch penned were for pity and pardon" (*The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century* [1853], quoted in *Tristram Shandy*, ed., Howard Anderson, 493) to the intolerant F. R. Leavis' banishment of Sterne from *The Great Tradition* for his "irresponsible (and nasty) trifling" (2). Alan B. Howes provides a useful survey of Sterne's reception in *Yorick and the Critics: Sterne's Reputation in England, 1760-1868* and reprints noteworthy reactions in *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*.

has grown steadily, attesting to affinities between his age and our own. From our vantage point in an uncertain world, we can locate Sterne in a transitional period, between what we now term the early modern and modern periods. Sterne's immediate predecessors, Swift and Pope, had strong ties to the Renaissance, inheriting a set of ethical, metaphysical and literary assumptions which, although under the pressure of change, still provided a grounding for their thought. Sterne has less solid footing. His work does not appeal to an ordered universe, but rather one which is relative, questionable in its nature. *Tristram Shandy* itself poses many questions, satirizes assumptions and reveals a sensitivity to the uncertain nature of experience. Thus scholarship has tended to see Sterne as a watershed, bringing *Tristram Shandy* forward into the twentieth century to engage with our own preoccupations. Sterne's playful narrative deceptions and transgressions seem to belong with deconstruction's delight in undoing the assumptions implicit in language and the postmodern engagement with problems of epistemology and legitimation: both Sterne and his late twentieth-century counterparts reveal serious philosophical implications in the process.

But however much a watershed, a forerunner of modernity, Sterne is also a messenger of the past, an Anglican minister deeply engaged with long standing beliefs, a reader of texts representing ancient traditions. And perhaps this double role should prompt us to question the "modernity" of our own notions. Sterne did not have the benefit (or burden) of German enlightenment philosophy or Saussurean linguistics, yet he is capable of fully "deconstructive" observations. Which, among the discourses available to him, offered ways of thinking amenable to his "postmodern" approach to the problems

of language and communication?

The present study, while obviously continuing the scholarly project of bringing postmodern questions to bear upon *Tristram Shandy*, wishes simultaneously to take a historical approach, searching out the discourses *contemporary to Sterne* which make his work one that continues to attract readers centuries after his death. It is the purpose of my study to examine the fundamentals of rhetoric, style and form as Sterne inherited them from his predecessors in order to account not only for the literary-historical importance which today's writers and critics have accorded to *Tristram Shandy* but also for Sterne's unique handling of issues current in his own day. In this fashion, rather than imposing "postmodern" concerns upon an eighteenth-century text, we can ground these very concerns in possibilities which Sterne himself discovered in the ramifications of the print revolution as manifested in the discourses of satire and the sublime.

But, as did Sterne, we can only begin with the present.

Sterne in Literary History (1)

It is customary in studies of modern and postmodern literature to comment upon the work's self-consciousness about its own medium. In his recent study, *The Novel: Language and Narrative from Cervantes to Calvino*, André Brink rehearses the well-known narrative of the twentieth-century turn from representational arts: "From Cézanne onwards, painting turns its back on a long tradition of 'truth to nature' as it begins to focus on the materiality of paint on canvas." After noting similar developments in theater

and music, Brink continues, "literature, too, begins to foreground its own medium, language," changing "the entire relationship between text and reader, moving from one of passive consumption to active engagement and transformation."⁴

It is also customary in such studies to acknowledge in passing the influence of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.⁵ Indeed, among eighteenth-century authors, Sterne is by far the most often considered in the context of the twentieth century.⁶ This is not surprising, for Sterne was frequently, during his own time, considered out of place, perhaps most famously in Samuel Johnson's assessment: "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last."⁷ Furthermore, many twentieth-century authors acknowledge a direct influence from Sterne. James Joyce, for example, saw the complexity of Sterne's method, saying, in relation to *Finnegans Wake*, "I am trying to build many planes of narrative with a single esthetic purpose. Did you ever read

⁴*The Novel: Language and Narrative From Cervantes to Calvino*, 1-2.

⁵As does Brink who declines a major engagement with Sterne on the grounds of "obviousness" (19). This is understandable after Robert Alter's chapter in *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* which covers much of the same territory.

⁶Melvyn New notes that an MLA survey of fifty college instructors which asked, "What books do you find most useful to compare with *Tristram Shandy* as a part of your classroom presentation?" elicited not only the expected Richardson and Fielding, Defoe and Smollett, Cervantes, Rabelais and Erasmus, but also modern authors such as Amis, Barth, Beckett, Borges, Calvino, Coover, Crews, Joyce, Lawrence, Melville, Nabokov, Proust, Pynchon, Robbins, Vonnegut, Wodehouse, Woolf (*Approaches to Teaching Sterne's Tristram Shandy* 26).

⁷Quoted in James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, II.449.

Laurence Sterne?"⁸ Virginia Woolf, in one of her four essays on Sterne, called him "singularly of our own age."⁹ Indeed, Wayne Booth's ironic essay, "Thomas Mann and Eighteenth-Century Comic Fiction," makes much of Sterne's popularity among moderns (and especially modern literary critics), finding it impossible to find a modern work *not* influenced by Sterne: "all modern literature is essentially one . . . not only is it *not sui generis*, but it has *one* source and fountainhead: *TRISTRAM SHANDY*."¹⁰ In a different modernist realm, we should also note the importance of Sterne to the Russian formalists for whom "*Tristram Shandy* is the most typical novel of world literature."¹¹ More recently, postmodern or metafictional novelists such as Salman Rushdie or Milan Kundera have openly embraced Sterne's techniques.¹² Beyond open acknowledgement (something Booth's ironical essayist soon dispenses with), any number of articles, and especially

⁸From a conversation with Eugene Jolas, cited in Lodwick Hartley's "'Swiftly-Sterneard': The Question of Sterne's Influence on Joyce" (40). Hartley's article, stressing the greater importance of Swift, is, in fact, skeptical of more than a general influence of Sterne on Joyce. For a more recent and more positive assessment, under a Menippean rubric, see Michael Hart's "'Many Planes of Narrative': A Comparative Perspective on Sterne and Joyce." John M. Warner provides a Joycean reading of Sterne in *Joyce's Grandfathers: Myth and History in Defoe, Smollett, Sterne and Joyce*.

⁹Woolf explains her comment by praising Sterne's attention to the mind over external reality: "In this interest in silence rather than in speech Sterne is the forerunner of the moderns. And for these reasons he is on far more intimate terms with us today than his great contemporaries the Richardsons and the Fieldings" ("The *Sentimental Journey*" 98).

¹⁰*Now Don't Try to Reason With Me*, 285.

¹¹Viktor Shklovsky, "A Parodying Novel: Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*," 89.

¹²Acknowledgements are cited in Walter Gobel and Damian Grant, "Salman Rushdie's Silver Medal" and Tim Parnell, "Sterne and Kundera: The Novel of Variations and the 'Noisy Foolishness of Human Certainty'."

dissertations, consider thematic or technical links among Sterne and moderns in Europe and Latin America.¹³

But there is a problem with such uses of Sterne's work which often merely bow in his direction while marching toward their own destination.¹⁴ Of course, a study of twentieth-century fiction will have little space for more than a somewhat clichéd idea about what *Tristram Shandy* is up to. However, the present study contends that such shorthand has consequences beyond the status of Sterne's reputation. This is apparent in the example of André Brink, cited above, in which the modern painter's attention to paint is equated with the modern novelist's attention to language. The present study will argue--through Sterne's example--that these media are not so easily equated. Of course Sterne contributes to a "postmodern" narrative tradition: frustrating readers' expectations of narrative conventions, provoking us to question our most basic assumptions about sequence and causality, memory and experience, forcing us to come to terms with the way

¹³Such as Carlos Fuentes, Juan Goytisolo, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, Robert Musil, Luigi Pirandello, Italo Svevo.

¹⁴For example, Larry McCaffery's *Postmodern Fiction: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide* bluntly states, "it is a commonplace to note that *Tristram Shandy* is a thoroughly postmodern work in every respect but the period in which it is written" (xv), and remains at the level of commonplace, the occasional entry making reference to Sterne's digressive style. Gabriel Josipovici sums up the problem and notes an inverse phenomenon: "It is fashionable for scholars writing on [Rabelais, Cervantes, Swift and Sterne] to make passing references to their similarity to Joyce or Beckett or Robbe-Grillet, but this is more of a sop to a youthful audience than a critical argument, just as the parallel backward glance on the part of critics dealing with the modern writers is usually nothing but a bid to boost the value of their wares in the eyes of the traditionally minded" (*The World and the Book: A Study of Modern Fiction* xv). The recent volume *Laurence Sterne in Modernism and Postmodernism*, edited by David Pierce and Peter de Voogd, offers something of a corrective to such uses, although some of its essays do fall back onto the enumeration of technical and thematic similarities.

in which we construct a story and believe in it. In these terms, Sterne's greatest influence in the twentieth century is perhaps as an interpreter of Cervantes, contributing to the philosophical tradition of metafiction, dwelling on the paradoxes of narration.¹⁵

However, *Tristram Shandy* makes us self-conscious not only about the conventions of story but also about the material object--the book--we are reading, complementing Sterne's explorations of epistemology with the *form* in which the explorations are presented. At this level, Sterne points out that *first* it is printer's ink which has its analogue in Cézanne's paint long before the medium of language comes into play.¹⁶ The present study wishes to place itself within the tradition of a "postmodern" Sterne, but seeks to correct the insufficient attention paid to the *material* manifestation of its self-consciousness.

Textuality

My choice to examine material manifestations implies a definition of "text" different from that of much postmodern theory. For example, although they both have their printerly quirks, there is nothing so radical as Sterne's typography in Joyce's *Ulysses*

¹⁵This, of course, develops with a historical shift in the reception of *Don Quixote* as a study of the humorous character to a self-reflexive study of the relationship between artifice and reality. In Patricia Waugh's *Metafiction*, Sterne wholly supplants Cervantes as "prototype for the contemporary metafictional novel" (70).

¹⁶Michael Kaufmann's *Textual Bodies* distinguishes between the "metatextual" attention to the printed form and the "metafictional" attention to the invented status of a story. He reserves such metatextuality for high modernism, whereas I see it in a much more radical form in *Tristram Shandy*.

or Derrida's *Glas*.¹⁷ *Ulysses* certainly *thematizes* material textuality: the ambulatory letters of the "tallwhitehatted sandwichmen" advertising "H. E. L. Y' S." ("Wandering Rocks" 220) or the attention to the printing process in "Aeolus,"¹⁸ for example. However, at the level of *performance*, its printer's bullet ("Ithaca" 689), musical examples or mock headlines pale before *Tristram Shandy's* marbled page. Similarly, Yorick's "BRAVO" (VI.11.516) anticipates Derrida's erasures by two centuries. The textual work of *Glas's* columns is ultimately abstract:

Not since *Finnegans Wake* has there been such a deliberate and curious work: less original (but what does "original" mean to Derrida?) and mosaic than the *Wake*, even flushed and overreaching, but as intriguingly, wearily allusive. It is hard, at the same time, to shake off a feeling that high seriousness is mixed here with high frivolity, and that we may wake up from the beautiful strangeness of *Glas* into a handful of provocative epigrams and strongly contextual ruminations. What form does this book have? Is it a book at all?¹⁹

¹⁷I am aware that some works, such as Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers*, B. S. Johnson's *Travelling People*, Raymond Federman's *Double or Nothing*, or William Gass's *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* do engage in significant typographical play (see Louis Pegenoute, "Three Trapped Tigers in Shandy Hall," 139-40, Waugh, *Metafiction*, 21 and Kaufmann, *Textual Bodies*, Chapter 4), but my sense is that this is exceptional. Furthermore, my choice here of the quintessential modernist novel and a postmodern discursive text is deliberate, for there is a problem in the critical simplification of *Tristram Shandy* into a "novel"--sometimes merely a convenient shorthand label, but often a central interpretive assumption. This is addressed in the survey of Sterne scholarship, below.

¹⁸The Great Gallaher's conversion of a Bransome's coffee advertisement into a map of Dublin is particularly interesting (130-32).

¹⁹Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Saving the Text: Literature / Derrida / Philosophy*, 2.

It is possible to imagine *Tristram Shandy* substituted for the *Wake* in this passage ("vive la Bagatelle" etc), but Geoffrey Hartman's comment is telling about the postmodernist's definition of "text" in a number of ways. First, the choice of *Finnegans Wake* as an analogy draws us away from even the mild textual performances of *Ulysses* toward an abstract floating text which is a tapestry of allusions (intertexts). Similarly, his questioning of *Glas*'s status as "book" places him in Derrida's camp which condemns the traditional abstraction of the theological "idea of a book [which] sends us back to a totality that claims to be founded in nature," while promoting the equally abstracted "'aphoristic energy' of writing itself" (Hartman 2). Derrida himself is quite open about his abstract and metaphoric sense of "writing":

By a hardly perceptible necessity, it seems as though the concept of writing--no longer indicating a particular, derivative, auxiliary form of language in general (whether understood as communication, relation, expression, signification, constitution of meaning or thought, etc), no longer designating the exterior surface, the insubstantial double of a major signifier, *the signifier of the signifier*--is beginning to go beyond the extension of language.²⁰

But surely no one who takes the trouble simply to examine a copy of *Glas* (remove it from the shelf, open its cover, turn the pages stitched into its binding, see the columns of print) will deny that this is a *book*.

Clearly we are encountering different definitions, or better, discrepancies in the metaphoric uses of "book" and "text." John Mowitt outlines three senses of "text" from

²⁰*Of Grammatology* 6-7.

which we may choose.²¹ That which has predominated since the emergence of deconstruction in the 1960s, the one Hartman has in mind and that which Mowitt engages, is the semiological. This sense allows Roland Barthes' "From Work to Text" to discuss textuality as open-ended free play, "*an activity of production*": it cannot be defined or localized. To this Barthes opposes the "work" as a literary object which "can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses) . . . [and] held in the hand".²² It is interesting to note how Barthes' textualized sense of reality collapses the nature of the "object" seen in a catalogue with that held in the hand.²³ Neither "work" nor "text" in these senses is wholly appropriate for the purposes of this study. Another sense of "text" identified by Mowitt is the phenomenological. This text is the basis of a hermeneutic construct, the meaning produced by a reader, which Wolfgang Iser calls the "work": "the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie half-way between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized."²⁴ The third sense of text listed by Mowitt is the philological, the text of the "textual critic" and editor who pay attention to the material objects which have carried a work over time into the present. This attention to

²¹*Text: the Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object*, 223-24.

²²*Image, Music, Text* 157.

²³This reflects Barthes' interest in the ideological factors governing the perception of literature: it is a "disciplinary object." (See Mowitt 23-29.)

²⁴*The Implied Reader*, 274. Just before invoking *Tristram Shandy*'s open invitations to its readers, Iser continues, "the convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader" (275).

materiality paradoxically gives way to a Barthesian abstraction (although the terms "work" and "text" have traded places) as the editor attempts to construct an ideal version, regaining the author's "original" intentions.²⁵

The present study makes use of all of these definitions of "text" in order to understand Sterne and the traditions of satire and the sublime. *Tristram Shandy* is a highly allusive and open work which pays close attention to the role of the reader and also problematizes questions of "authority" and "originality," sometimes deliberately invoking philology. However, for my purposes, each of these traditions too readily considers "text" as an abstraction. Thus my use of "text", "textual" and "textuality" needs to be distinguished from that of others. I wish to hew as closely to the philological tradition as possible, without falling into idealization. "Text" and "textuality" in this study thus refer first to the way in which the abstract text is physically presented on the page. Ultimately the book itself, as an object, is the extreme manifestation of the text.²⁶ This primary sense of graphic textual presentation is often accompanied by Barthes' secondary semiological sense of "textuality" (allowing prefixes such as "inter-" and "meta-"), but never without being at some level *physical*. The relation of primary to secondary textuality as I have outlined it here is one means by which this study will attempt to

²⁵This brief survey by no means exhausts the possible definitions of "text." In particular, we should note that postmodern and sociological practices have shifted the goals of textual editing away from those of idealizing, intentionalist philology. D. C. Greetham's *Theories of the Text* takes up at length the ontological paradoxes produced by different editorial attitudes toward literary transmission.

²⁶In Chapter Six, the tension between abstract and concrete notions of textuality will resurface in my considerations of "book" as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia*.

examine the relation of presentation (in a physical, graphic, theatrical sense) to presence (in a metaphysical, transcendental sense). It is my intention to avoid abstraction, or rather to ground the philosophical speculations made possible by Sterne's text in their very material roots, the marks on the page. For it is, in fact, the materiality of the text which allows for certain approaches to philosophical problems.

First, we should note that, if postmodern writing exhibits a penchant for abstraction, this does not sunder it from earlier traditions (both the book and *écriture* have their mystical power). The twentieth-century tradition of metafiction takes to an extreme a strain of eighteenth-century idealism in its absolute valuation of the imagination: *esse est percipi*.²⁷ But, like Berkeley's philosophy itself, it also bears a relationship to the materialist traditions of the same period.²⁸ Perhaps more subtle than Samuel Johnson's famous refutation of Berkeley,²⁹ Sterne's formal innovations mark his participation in

²⁷I have in mind in particular Borges' combination of Berkeley with a gnostic mysticism. Of relevance to the present study is that way that "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" offers a meditation on the power of textual scholarship to project a whole ("the apparent contradictions of the Eleventh Volume are the fundamental basis for the proof that the other volumes exist . . .") and, as a correlative, the power of perception to maintain a world: "Centuries and centuries of idealism have not failed to influence reality. . . . At times some birds, a horse, have saved the ruins of an amphitheater" (*Labyrinths* 8, 13-14). Howard Giskin makes note of Borges' use of Berkeley, among other philosophers ("Mystical Phenomenology of the Book in Borges"). See also Stephen E. Soud, "Borges the Golem-Maker: Intimations of 'Presence' in 'The Circular Ruins'."

²⁸Indeed, I hope my examination of satire's reified metaphors will make apparent the material basis of deconstruction's attention to the constitutive function of metaphor (as in Derrida's "White Mythology" in *Margins of Philosophy*). See also Robert Phiddian, "Are Parody and Deconstruction Secretly the Same Thing?" and "A Hopeless Project: Gulliver Inside the Language of Science in Book III": 59-61.

²⁹"I observed, that though we are satisfied his [Berkeley's] doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered,

the ongoing discussion of a philosophical problem which deeply troubled Enlightenment thinkers. Since the seventeenth century, when Descartes' radical doubt of all but the thinking mind posed what has become known as the "mind-body problem," philosophers have been struggling with the question of how the immaterial substance mind can interact with the material substance body.³⁰ *Tristram Shandy*, by its constant transgression of the conveniently assumed boundary between mind and body, places itself within this tradition of enquiry. Although in particular places he does address the mind-body problem in philosophical terms, Sterne's concerns with this problem are figured at a much more pervasive systemic level throughout *Tristram Shandy*, indeed in the very physical form of the work itself.

And this is where my study will focus its analysis, using the notion of "textuality" to describe the paradoxical condition of thought in language, and language in printed form, addressing the fundamental problem of *embodiment*. Seen in the context of the eighteenth century, Sterne's work appears within an ongoing exploration of the relation between mind and body, and especially of language as a medium between the two. Unlike Descartes' answer to the mind-body problem, which merely cuts the knot by allowing an unexplainable correspondence sanctioned by a non-deceiving God, Lockean empiricism, by founding knowledge upon sensation, had established a materialist

striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it *thus*.'" (*Boswell's Life of Johnson* I.471).

³⁰"Toward a natural History of Mind and Body," the lengthy introduction to *The Languages of Psyche* by G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter offers a bibliographic and historical survey of this problem in its philosophical, scientific, medical, social and political manifestations, with an emphasis on its Enlightenment provenance.

relationship between mind and body. As John Yolton summarizes the relationship, "the reason we have simple ideas [the foundation of all knowledge] at all is because there are externally existing objects in the world bombarding our senses with tiny particles."³¹ Notably using the literate and perhaps even typographical analogy of the alphabet (II.7.10), Locke describes the working of the mind, moving from sensation to reflection: it is with the building blocks of simple ideas (letters) that we may develop knowledge, fancies and opinions (words). Despite the telling material analogy, in his reflections on language Locke is well known to have attempted to remove *words* from their traditional connection to *things*--something evident in the many "universal language" and "real character" schemes of the seventeenth century and enshrined by the Royal Society in Sprat's *History*.³² Locke wished to shift the focus to the connection of words to *ideas*. Nevertheless, as his own philosophy (not to mention the analogy) dictates, the foundations of ideas themselves are absolutely material.³³ And for many, such materiality had an obvious analogue, and perhaps even cause, in printing:

From John Bulwer's deliberations on the deaf and dumb in the 1640s, to Warburton's massive study of Egyptian hieroglyphs in *The Divine Legation of*

³¹Introduction to *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Dent, 1961), I.xvi. Yolton describes Locke's suggestion that thought could be a property of matter in Chapter One of *Thinking Matter*. The rest of this book traces the pervasiveness of the idea as it is contested and adapted over the eighteenth century.

³²See James Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France 1600-1800*.

³³David Hartley's later extreme developments of associationism in *Observations on Man* (1749) would, of course, only magnify its materialist basis.

Moses Demonstrated (1738–41), we discover an enduring fascination with the grounds of human cognition, hence of language, and a growing belief that those grounds must be imagined in terms of spatial or somatic metaphors, whose visualism seeks to reinforce the primacy of written or printed over aural media.³⁴

The impact of print culture on consciousness has been well documented. Following Marshall McLuhan's speculations in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which ascribe to print the creation of Romantic and modern ideas about identity (the invention of the subconscious), authorship, the imagination, and closed literary forms, Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* has accounted for such abstract phenomena by classifying the material impact of printing as follows: dissemination, standardization, reorganization, data collection, preservation and amplification and reinforcement (Chapter 2). Alvin Kernan offers a cogent summary of these scholars' work under three key terms: "multiplicity, systematization and fixity":

The way in which these print qualities manifest themselves in the world can be illustrated most immediately and obviously with print's most characteristic product, the book: multiplicity--the printing press makes many different books and many copies of the same book; systematization--a book is systematically produced and internally ordered, and its existence forces the systematic structuring of knowledge; fixity--the book is objectively, durably, there, always the same or

³⁴Richard W. F. Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century*, 185.

moving toward a "true" form.³⁵

Thus the print revolution is not only responsible for the general expansion of scientific and philosophical inquiry, but also for the very epistemology provoking the inquiry--producing and spreading ideas of stable knowledge, indisputable classifications, and so on.³⁶

Furthermore, and most important for this study, print comes to provide a dominant metaphor for human activity. Julie Stone Peters provides a survey of specifically English interiorization of print, noting how, over the seventeenth century, the divine Book of Nature is replaced "with the literal forms of printed matter: the scribblings of hacks and the dirty sheets of the news press" (14). Whereas once the written pervaded metaphoric

³⁵*Printing Technology, Letters, and Samuel Johnson*, 54. See generally Kernan's Chapter 2: "Printing, Bookselling, Readers and Writers in Eighteenth-Century London."

³⁶See Eisenstein, Chapter 6. We should note that the descriptions provided by Eisenstein or Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin (*The Coming of the Book*) of the print revolution on the continent during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, culminating in Enlightenment projects of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as literary and scientific periodicals (Eisenstein xv, 460-62), do not wholly address the delayed impact on general consciousness, and especially English consciousness. As Julie Stone Peters rightly notes, "a revolution in material culture produces, after a time lapse, a revolution in cultural consciousness that is largely interiorized; only after the full interiorization of the material change has occurred does a culture begin to call attention in vivid, deliberate, and expressive ways to that change" (*Congreve, the Drama, and the Printed Word* 211). And in the case of England, it is only after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 that the print industry explodes onto the London scene (Peters 12). Peters does note that print as a popular medium first appears during the pamphlet wars of the Interregnum (10), but that "English printing finally achieves some of the quality of Continental" only in the eighteenth century (258). More generally, in *The Nature of the Book*, a recent and important reexamination of the impact of print, Adrian Johns considers the sociology of the book trade and the fragility of early modern constructions of knowledge through print, calling into question Eisenstein's notions of standardization, dissemination and fixity.

descriptions (ranging from landscape to social interaction), now the typographic becomes the dominant metaphor; and one's relationship to printing (whether the gentleman's access to a library or the hack's writing for money) becomes a marker of social standing (15-17). Walter J. Ong notes that the kinds of materialist philosophy described earlier reflect the impact of print on consciousness:

the letters used in writing do not exist before the text in which they occur. With alphabetic letterpress print it is otherwise. Words are made out of units (types) which pre-exist as units before the words which they will constitute. Print suggests that words are things far more than writing ever did.³⁷

This is an important development for the present study which presupposes a deep integration of print and consciousness that enables certain attitudes toward the relationship of mind and matter, artifice and reality. For the medium informs the message, and if words are material things, that which they describe is so as well. Restoration atomism had introduced the analogy of movable type to explain the constitution of physical reality from uncountable material units: "the age seems to have delighted in the concreteness of the page impressed by visible marks, ascending atomically from letters to words, to sentences, to entire discourses" (Kroll, *Material Word*, 14).

This atomic conception of language is precisely what allows the kind of specious interpretation parodied in the Peter's manipulations of the will in *A Tale of a Tub* (section II), or in a later appearance, Walter Shandy's specious "analysis" of a sentence of Erasmus (III.37). These mock exegeses are, of course, sibling discourses to the developing

³⁷*Orality and Literacy* 118.

discipline of classical and biblical textual scholarship. The invention of print more than two hundred years earlier had created a demand for consistency and accuracy in editions of ancient texts, positing the attainment of the author's "original" as the ideal.³⁸ Ironically, the subsequent attention to such detail only foregrounded the problems of transmitting thought in a physical medium susceptible to bodily corruptions. In Chapters Three and Four, we will note that textual scholarship focuses on *lacunae*. Indeed, in a climate highly aware of the faulty text, a fragmented state becomes the signifier of authenticity, testifying to its origins by the signs of their absence.³⁹ At the same time, the license granted by such fragmentation made the entire editorial enterprise suspect,

³⁸A product of the apparent uniformity of printed copies, as opposed to manuscripts, as well as the "permanence" made possible by multiplication. A classic humanist statement of this ideal is Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel (discussed in Chapter Three) which praises printing as "so elegant, and so correct, that better cannot be imagined" (Rabelais II.8.196). Eisenstein notes the influence of printing on a shift in the perception of the distance of the classical past from the humanist present which also entails a redefinition of being "original" from being close to the divinely inspired source to being different from all precedents (192 and Chapter 3, *passim*). See also David Quint, who explores this tension in Renaissance humanist satirists well known to Sterne, such as Rabelais and Cervantes: "these works self-consciously stage a debate over the extent to which an awareness of the literary text's human historicity may or may not be reconciled with the claims it makes to transcendent truth, over whether the text's source of meaning and locus of value lie in the literary originality of its author or in an extratextual, authorized origin that subtends its discourse" (*Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* 23). In an important connection for the present study, these are concerns inherent in the Longinian sublime, discussed below.

³⁹This paradox is explored by Everett Zimmerman in *The Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth-Century British Novel*, which discusses the problems of historical knowledge posed by awareness of faulty documentary witnesses, and the implications of these problems for writers and readers of fiction. His chapter on *Tristram Shandy* discusses how developments in biblical textual criticism during this period are making "deconstructive" questions about the accessibility of origins available. See also "Tristram Shandy and Narrative Representation."

since the conjectural method could easily become a modern re-writing of ancient texts. A famous case in point is Richard Bentley, whose great philological work on classical texts set the standard for modern classical scholarship. However, the problem with his conjectural method was made apparent in the hubris of his *Milton*, which created a fanciful model of textual transmission, projecting a series of intermediaries (including the invention of an "editor") necessitated by Milton's blindness. Such projections allowed Bentley to rewrite Milton more in Bentley's Neoclassical sense of grammar, logic and decorum.⁴⁰ Bentley's *Milton* would earn a place among the "Works of Scriblerus."

Although they give rise to the paradoxes which have become pronounced in the late twentieth century, these materialist and textualist contexts are thoroughly of their time. It is the work of the present study to return to Sterne as a representative of his own period in order to re-ground modern and postmodern concerns. Rather than drawing *Tristram Shandy* forward as a footnote to our own time, I wish to investigate the roots of twentieth-century concerns in the discourses present in conjunction with the rise of print culture to its full dominance in the eighteenth century. Thus this is an attempt to account for Sterne's "oddity" in eighteenth-century terms which will have an impact on our view of Sterne and the discourses of his period as well as our own. I account for Sterne's impact in terms of what I have called "the presence of the text."

⁴⁰For example, according to Bentley, the conclusion of *Paradise Lost* "contradicts the Poet's own way" and thus is emended: "THEN hand in hand with SOCIAL steps their way / Through *Eden* took, WITH HEAV'NLY COMFORT CHEER'D" (quoted in Marcus Walsh, "Bentley our contemporary," 166). Walsh provides details and examples in the context of textual editing. In "Richard Bentley and John Dunton: Brothers Under the Skin," Robert Adams Day describes Bentley as a prime example of the interiorization of print.

Critics have been describing the effect of *Tristram Shandy's* rhetoric ever since it was first reviewed. The cause, however, remains elusive. The present study will propose that the rhetorical process of calling attention to its text (in a material sense) is what produces *Tristram Shandy's* effect. The workings of Sterne's rhetoric represent the creation of "presence": first in a radical sense, in the physical object set before the reader, forcing the recognition of textuality; subsequently in the presentation of its narrative and characters. Without a notion of textual presence, criticism of *Tristram Shandy's* style has hitherto mainly consisted of random descriptions of textual effects of all sorts. This study will attempt to account for presence itself by connecting these textual effects to their origins in those rhetorical and material processes which draw the reader's attention to the problem of language.

The self-conscious attention to the medium is evident not only in *Tristram Shandy's* graphic idiosyncrasy: such self-reflexivity exists at different levels in the text. levels seemingly "beyond" the graphic, but which always figure the problem to which the graphic draws attention. For example, one notices the persistence of repetition, drawing attention to a problem in communication. In attempts to render experience and knowledge by means of language, Tristram as narrator and other characters as participants in acts of communication are constantly forced to return to the experience or notion to be rendered, each time adding a nuance or detail, in the hope that clarity, a correspondence of conception between sender and receiver, will occur. The frustration experienced by each sender results from the frequent production of effects opposite to those originally intended. With each new layer, each retelling, all that becomes clear is that language is

unclear. It is not the transparent medium its users (who desire *immediacy*) would have it be. Like the graphic textual presentation of *Tristram Shandy*, all language, whether written or spoken, demands to be recognized as something in itself. Indeed, to speak of language in the terms of visual metaphor (transparency or clarity) is to reveal its graphic basis. This study wishes to engage this problem in terms of textual presence: the way in which Sterne's graphic self-awareness forces us to recognize the inescapable fact of mediacy when dealing with language.

All users of language must struggle with this problem of language at some level: in *Tristram Shandy* this struggle is obviously a central issue. However, this concern permeates all of Sterne's thinking, and is evident even in the way he recollects his past. In September of 1758, shortly before beginning *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne, writing a brief memoir, recalls an "anecdote of myself, and school-master," which he "cannot omit mentioning":

He [the schoolmaster] had had the cieling of the school-room new white-washed-- the ladder remained there--I one unlucky day mounted it, and wrote with a brush in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment--this expression made me forget the stripes I had received . . .⁴¹

This is the single anecdote of his youth in this memoir, suggesting that the mature Sterne recognized the importance of the lesson learned that day twenty-five or thirty years

⁴¹*Letters of Laurence Sterne*, 3-4. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text.

earlier.

How is it that the same piece of writing can provoke such opposite reactions? The anecdote concerns an *act* of writing, and it would appear that it is the *action* of signing his name which is of first importance here. Sterne's account draws attention to the activity of this writing. He does not say, "I wrote my name upon the ceiling." Rather, he gives us the action letter by letter: indeed, they are illustrated here for the reader. The force of this act of writing is shown in its effects: first in the whipping it provokes (described with the graphic metaphor "stripes") once those letters are interpreted by the usher; second, in the master's counter-interpretation (consciously delivered before an audience), correlating the marks made with the maker, their referent, the signatory Laurence Sterne.

In other words, writing is an act with implications beyond what the words signify. The iconic value of this writing, the gesture of the graffito, has a rhetorical impact which varies according to its audience. The signified, Sterne himself, does not vary, yet the force of the inscription provokes either punishment or praise. Thus, the meaning of writing obviously does not derive directly from its referent--although the schoolmaster (and Sterne himself as he later reinscribes this event) certainly wishes to make some connection between the referent of the physical marks and the permanence of the marks themselves (ironically phrased in a recognition of their effaceable impermanence, and perhaps their role in effacing their referent).

Such attention to the text is contrary to much of eighteenth-century aesthetics, which engaged with the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* with its emphasis on *enargeia*, "the

vivid and lifelike reproduction in verbal art of natural detail."⁴² Lord Kames's theory of "ideal presence," for example, recommended that nothing should distract from the reader's apprehension of what is represented. Ideal presence, like "*a waking dream . . . [that] vanisheth the moment we reflect upon our present situation*" (*Elements of Criticism* I.91), requires that the reader forget that he or she is reading.⁴³ Such an ideal would *seem* to be in mind when, later in life, Sterne, through Tristram Shandy, gives writing a more conventional, suspicious, "logocentric" definition: "placing a number of tall, opaque words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your readers conception" ("The Author's Preface," III.20.235). This is very much the same lesson learned by the schoolboy, seen from the opposite perspective: writing is fallible, unable to convey its author's "meaning." The author is absent, unable to respond to questioning; and in his absence, the reader is left with the task of interpreting unresponsive, mute black marks upon a white page. However much this may seem to echo Kames's complaints about breaking the mimetic illusion, as when, for example, he berates Virgil "for interrupting the natural course of ideas [in the *Georgics*] with digressions and authorial intrusions" (Desmet, 134, citing Kames, I.28-29), it is essential to note that Sterne does so in a radical fashion, drawing attention not only to language, but to its material manifestation

⁴²See Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray*, 62 and *passim*. The antipictorialist reaction which emphasized the psychological, emotive aspects of words will be important to my argument in Chapter Five, on the sublime. For different readings of the *ut pictura* tradition, see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* and Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign*.

⁴³See Eric Rothstein, "'Ideal Presence' and the 'Non Finito' in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics" and Christy Desmet, "Henry Home, Lord Kames."

on the page. Kames's concerns addressing questions of probability, particularity, and so on, all presuppose a transparency of language which is naive in the presence of the text.

It cannot be denied that the words on the page have an effect independent of reference. By the testimony of the usher and the schoolmaster, there is a presence in Sterne's writing, as, indeed, in all writing, that cannot be ignored. The problem raised by writing which expresses a logocentric view of writing is one of origins. At the same moment that writing, considered as a referential medium, points away from itself to a referential origin of meaning elsewhere, the presence of the text argues that the text is the thing itself, the original. (The fact that this "original" may be a copy of a printed edition consisting of many copies further complicates this problem.) We will find Sterne engaging with problems of originality in many forms, among which are the difficult questions of writing's presence, its relations to, or effects on, the author, the reader, and itself. These questions are complicated by Sterne's awareness of these questions as problems. Here we must ask what enables difficult questions to be asked about writing.

Presence

My thinking here is obviously Derridean. As it appears in this study, "presence" is related to both the metaphysical object of Jacques Derrida's attack as well as Derrida's own sense of writing as the marker of absence. Derrida criticizes Western philosophy for privileging speech over writing as a manifestation of self-presence: an assertion that sound and sense are intimately related and self-confirming (as one can hear one's own voice

confirming one's thoughts). Writing, in this philosophy, is at two removes from thought: "signifier of the signifier" (the self-cancelling visual representation of a sonic representation of thought), merely a supplement. Derrida has attempted to show that writing is not merely supplemental in the sense of a superfluous addition, but rather a constitutive supplement, fulfilling a fundamental lack in language. That is, writing is a third-level supplement to speech, but also something in itself: it is so constitutive of the system that no simple replacement of signifier with signified is possible without destroying the system of signification itself (cf. *Of Grammatology*).

Responses to this philosophy often take the form of Johnson's sheer assertion of materiality in the face of Berkeley's logically irrefutable position. In the face of a vision of texts set free from the predictability, and accountability, of determinate reference, critics of deconstruction have sought to locate a distinctive source of meaning for a text. In general, this involves an assertion of a somewhat theological principle of an originating presence for the text. (We should recall that this was Berkeley's solution as well: the all-perceiving eye of God ensured the continuing existence of the known world.) George Steiner openly posits the presumption of God as precondition enabling communication: "any coherent account of the capacity of human speech to communicate meaning and feeling is, in the final analysis, underwritten by the assumption of God's presence."⁴⁴ Murray Krieger offers what is only apparently a secular account of "poetic presence," in the name of "illusion." Metaphor is his central paradox:

On the one hand, we perceive the tenor of the metaphor as collapsed wholly into

⁴⁴*Real Presences* 3.

the dimensions of the vehicle [O]n the other hand, we are also aware that the vehicle is *not* its [metaphorical] meanings, is utterly separate from them, is *only* a metaphor for them, an empty verbal substitute.⁴⁵

For Krieger, it is this very self-awareness of contradiction which allows the illusion of identity, or presence. The poem becomes a present object by means of such self-reference.⁴⁶ Dennis Donoghue posits the Romantic figure of the imagination as well as voice as transcendent sources.⁴⁷ These reactions do not, of course, answer the challenge of deconstruction any more than Johnson's kick refutes Berkeley. Indeed they pose their answers as matters of faith, in the case of Steiner, explicitly invoking the language of Pascal's wager. As expressions of faith or even Johnsonian common sense, we need to consider the possibility that the presences posited by these critics may still be described as supplements *elicited by the text*--direct products thereof, rather than the reverse. Such responses provide a context for Sterne's response to similar skeptical challenges to his own faith or common sense. There is no doubt that Sterne shares in his culture's logocentrism. It is the task of his sermons to confirm a "transcendental signified." At the

⁴⁵*Poetic Presence and Illusion* 157. Stephen E. Soud's "Borges the Golem-Maker" has drawn my attention to both Krieger's and Steiner's books.

⁴⁶Behind Krieger's new-critical use of metaphoric structure as "presence" is a vision of the divine book: he shifts away from the history of the book as the "reification of the literary object" (151) both because the history of printing removes the theological (logine) underpinnings for the presence of the word (155) and because deconstructive skepticism also removes such authority (151). Metaphorical habits of mind (which readers inherit from the logine tradition) restore a doubleness which allows both *parole* and *écriture* to exist simultaneously in a poem, both conferring contradictory presences (151-2).

⁴⁷See *The Sovereign Ghost: Studies in Imagination*, especially Chapters 1 and 2, and, more recently, "Orality, Literacy, and Their Discontents."

same time, however, and unlike the merely assertive responses to the challenge of the text, he is aware of the ironies involved in mediation (the preacher's task, the text's task), the uses of supplementarity as an alternative presence (*ex post facto* only to staunch logocentrists).

It is from this sense of the supplement that I take my use of "presence." For what Derrida uses to counter the metaphysics of presence is writing: "if it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence" (*Of Grammatology* 145). In other words, if language *represents*, it implies the absence of what it represents. Furthermore, "the supplement supplements" (consider the solely graphic import of *differance*, undiscernible by sound), that is, it has a presence of its own. For Derrida, this becomes a metaphysic itself ("arche-writing"), an *a priori* condition for thought, an inescapable graphocentrism lurking beneath logocentric nostalgia for origins. In its search for transcendent truth, the speech-centered metaphysics of presence will always encounter absence, the effacement of writing: language is always already inscribed.

This abstract conception of writing has a more material correlative in Derrida's notion of "the violence of the letter." Although for Derrida this is primarily a philosophical metaphor in his analysis of the cultural imperialism of anthropology, its material aspect is omnipresent.⁴⁸ In a study of early modern writing manuals, Jonathan Goldberg has drawn attention to the relay between the cultural violence enabled by

⁴⁸Indeed, Walter J. Ong, following Hartman's connection of Derrida's *Glas* to concrete poetry (*Saving the Text* 35), astutely observes that "deconstruction is tied to typography rather than, as its advocates seem often to assume, merely to writing" (*Orality and Literacy* 129).

writing (in Derrida's general sense of *écriture*)--including social stratification, control of knowledge, etc--and the physical violence of the material scene of writing--the focus on the knife which sharpens the quill or stylus and the subsequent ploughing and gouging metaphors used to describe the action of the pen upon paper (*Writing Matter*, see especially Chapter 2). Such attention to the tools of writing foregrounds the presence of the text as object and agent of violence. Tristram Shandy is careful to make us aware of the instruments of writing. We have already noted Walter Shandy's penknife (III.37--here a vehicle of erasure, imposing his interpretation on a sentence of Erasmus). More intimately connected to Tristram's predicament of living faster than he writes is his exclamation upon the materials of writing, "Heaven prosper the manufactures of paper under this propitious reign," which is followed by an acknowledgement of the violence of the letter: "As for the propagation of Geese--I give myself no concern--Nature is all bountiful--I shall never want tools to work with" (IV.13.342).⁴⁹

It is already apparent in their sense of proliferation that these comments refer to a technologized print culture. Goldberg notes that "the printed books realize what was implicit in the writing practices prescribed in the manuals, for if the aim was to produce a hand conformed to a model, printing insured the duplication of the hand" (136). The writing technology of the pen and knife which Goldberg has described as effacing the writer here comes full circle to efface itself under the reproductive powers of the printing press. The printing press thus becomes the further manifestation of the violence of the

⁴⁹We might also note the violence of the publishing community: "--You Messrs. the monthly Reviewers!----how could you cut and slash my jerkin as you did?----how did you know, but you would cut my lining too?" (III.4.191).

letter. An example in the eighteenth-century period which interests us is Alexander Pope who taught himself to write "by copying printed books" and would later take obvious delight in emulating print in manuscript with a *trompe l'oeil* effect.⁵⁰ We have seen that printing metaphors come to dominate the thought of the period. The very language of empiricism's "impressions" cannot escape the all-pervasive resonance of the press.⁵¹ In addition to references to the tools of writing, those linked to printing are present in *Tristram Shandy* as well. Especially important with regard to the violence of the letter are the signatures to the woodcuts in VI.40: "Inv. T.S" and "Scul. T.S" (570)--Tristram Shandy's conceptual "invention" of the diagrams of his narrative is accompanied by his engraving of them (*sculpsit*). In carving the lines of narrative Tristram reflects his attempt to shape his life into an orderly narrative (just as Dr. Slop's theoretical writing has shaped his nose). There is certainly a violence here, although it does not succumb to the instrumental violence of the straight line.

These observations have implications for notions of identity, both phenomenological, or objective, and personal, or subjective. The definition of the self by

⁵⁰The quotation is from Joseph Spence's *Observations, Anecdotes and Characters of Books and Men*, cited in Maynard Mack's *Alexander Pope: A Life*, 47. Pope's emulation of a typographical *FINIS* is illustrated on p. 205. More striking are Pope's manuscript renderings of typographical headings to manuscript versions of a number of works, illustrated in David Foxon's *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade* (159, 166, 198).

⁵¹In this context we might note that Sterne invokes Locke's analogy for the mind as the wax which takes an impression (II.2.99). Similarly, the stamped coin, the "recurrent trope for print" (Peters, *Congreve*, 102-3), appears in Sterne's Dedication to Pitt in Volume IX (733). Harold Love notes the sexual metaphors which employ printing, including the male impression of female wax and paper, and coin or medal (*Scribal Publication* 152).

means of writing or printing is an underlying theme in this study. The interrelation of character as engraved or stamped figure and personal character, like the relation of stylus to style, reinforces the written and printed nature of the self, a notion which necessarily questions "self-presence." This does not, however, dispense with presence altogether. If "logocentrism" yearns after the pure self-presence of speech (access to origins), writing as "supplement" has its own presence, is itself a point of origin, as can be discerned by the effect of writing on its reader. This presence of writing (for the moment construed widely as any discursive or rhetorical act) is an unavoidable embodiment which creates an "other" against which the existence of the self can be confirmed (presence)--paradoxically by displacement of the self: writing allows the self-conscious recognition of physical and mental existence, through the combination of the physical and mental in any discursive act. A radical reading of the etymology of "presence" ("being before") reveals an inherent dialectic or paradox: how can "presence" be assigned to a single subject without a reference point "before" which that subject can "be"? Writing can enable "presence" by means of "presentation": providing that reference point, becoming a self-reflexive presence on the page, bringing the "author" before the "reader," the "reader" before the "author," and, in a Shandean fashion, each one before him or herself.⁵²

⁵²In a discussion of the shifting valences of speech, script and print in the seventeenth century, Harold Love writes, "an increase in the perceived objectification of the world through print is to be seen not as a liberation of the possibilities of meaning but as a more rigid form of subjugation. . . . The freedom offered by typography is narrowly and specifically the freedom *from* presence (Derrida's conception); but it also brings with it a new tyranny arising from the object-like status of the typographic page and the hypostatization of language as possessing a reality independent of specific human acts of

This solution is decidedly *not* the "authentic" self-presence sought by philosophy, and it raises difficult questions about the identity of the self. The present study will argue that literary texts such as *Tristram Shandy*, aesthetic theories such as the sublime, and modes such as Menippean satire engage with these questions, and, most importantly, refuse to resolve them. For it is in the engagement, in the presences produced therein, that the self has a fleeting sense of its own presence, even if it is in the hollow echo of the text: if not convincing proof of the existence of matter, Samuel Johnson's encounter with the rock certainly made him aware of his own sensations.

The Presence of the Text

Deconstructive notions of presence and absence, with related concepts of logo- and graphocentrism are tools useful to articulate eighteenth-century concerns about thinking, speaking, writing and printing.⁵³ And it is important to note that such notions are not wholly foreign to eighteenth-century thinkers, for, as we have already noted, the impact of the print revolution comes to full fruition during this period, offering a new mode of

utterance and audition" (*Scribal Publication* 144). My own sense of these matters differs in that I believe the independent objective status of the printed page creates a material point to which one's sense of self may be referred for a form of confirmation.

⁵³Deconstruction, like the Kantian sublime which it finds so fascinating, tends toward abstraction. For this reason, Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia ("a double-voiced discourse" [*Dialogic Imagination* 324] which frustrates the search for an origin much in the same fashion as Derrida's supplementarity) and especially the carnivalesque which emphasizes the grotesque and physical aspects of writing (see Chapters Three and Four), will ground the work of this study. See below.

consciousness that raises problems of identity and originality. A part of these developments is a new sense of authorial identity arising in connection with copyright. The 1710 copyright act was a product of an expanding print culture which gave rise to cheap pirated editions of texts. In an attempt to control "unauthorized" editions, the law needed to posit an "author" as originator and owner of his work. This implies a unique self to which words can be traced in a Lockean fashion, following the *Second Treatise on Government* which develops a definition of property from one's ownership of oneself and one's labor and the consequent ownership of anything (taken "out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in") with which one's labor is mixed.⁵⁴ Another issue implicit in the copyright act is the notion of what constitutes the literary object. Clearly the author's property does not consist of the physical copies of a printed work, but rather in the unlocatable "work" which transcends any individual manifestation. Thus we can see how the developing notion of legal copyright works together with editorial and interpretive notions of an abstract "text" which we have considered above. The paradoxes of print are many: copyright necessitates ideas of uniqueness and originality, and of the author's individual personality as integrated into his work, while at the same time the proliferating powers of print which made these ideas necessary deny a firm material location for such identity by multiplying copies.⁵⁵ What signifies ownership of a text

⁵⁴Locke is quoted by Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* 5. Rose provides a detailed history and analysis of the development of copyright in the eighteenth century. See also Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters, and Samuel Johnson*.

⁵⁵Thus we may note that it is printing which has developed the notion of "the author" which has come under suspicion in the twentieth century. Both Roland Barthes ("The

widely disseminated through multiple copies? How stable is the self projected by such ownership? Furthermore, how does one claim texts which partake of a tradition, make use of quotation, or, as Sterne's texts notoriously do, plagiarize?

Sterne himself seems to link the minute particulars of his text directly to the question of copyright. In a letter supposedly protecting the minutiae of his text, he warns the printer of *A Political Romance* not to "alter or transpose one Word, nor rectify one false Spelling, nor so much as add or diminish one Comma or Tittle." He continues: "For if you do,—In case any of the Descendents of *Curl* should think fit to invade my Copy-Right, and print it over again in my Teeth, I may not be able, in a Court of Justice, to swear strictly to my own Child, after you had *so large a Share* in the begetting it" (*Letters* 68). In Chapters Six and Seven, on Sterne's texts, we shall witness the recurrence of comments indicating the impact of printing technology on personal identity, literary property, origins and originality. For running parallel to and in conjunction with the copyright debate in the mid-eighteenth century, poetic concern with originality had come into full bloom.

In the year that saw the first appearance of *Tristram Shandy*, Edward Young

Death of the Author" in *Image, Music, Text*) and Michel Foucault ("What is an Author") draw attention to the early modern and modern invention of "authorship" as a hermeneutic necessity, a point around which readers can organize hermeneutic, epistemological and ontological questions about a text. Rose's book points out how this originates as a legal necessity. In *The Author, Art, and The Market* Martha Woodmansee offers an interesting examination of the meaning of these issues for (mainly) German aesthetics of the later eighteenth century.

published *Conjectures on Original Composition*.⁵⁶ Under the aegis of Longinus's *On the Sublime*, which declared that "the whole universe is not sufficient, for the extensive reach and piercing speculation of the human understanding,"⁵⁷ poetic authority had begun to derive not from the external criterion of imitation (of "nature," the ancients), but rather from the internal criterion of the poet's unique imagination. Since the Restoration, Milton's *Paradise Lost* had laid claim to greatness in tackling "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," and Dryden had begun the valorization of Shakespeare as the untutored "original genius." In the early eighteenth century, Addison popularized the notions of original genius and the subjective pleasures of the imagination.⁵⁸

There is no doubt that the "Romantic" conception of the self foreshadowed in these eighteenth-century developments is the product of print culture. Walter J. Ong notes that an oral culture which depends upon its poets to preserve the past through repetition cannot afford to sustain notions of originality, whereas a print culture is "subconsciously convinced that what is already known does not require repetition because what is known

⁵⁶Samuel Johnson already found Young's theory quite belated: he "was surprized to find Young receive as novelties, what he [Johnson] thought very common maxims." Quoted in James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides in Boswell's Life of Johnson*, V.269.

⁵⁷Longinus, *An Essay on the Sublime*, sect. xxxv, p. 58. Hereafter cited parenthetically by section and page.

⁵⁸This is an indication of the growing prevalence of ideas about originality in the Restoration and eighteenth century. My rapid survey follows the trajectory which Patricia Phillips's study outlines in great detail in *The Adventurous Muse: Theories of Originality in English Poetics 1650-1760*. In *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* W. Jackson Bate identifies the second third of the century as the key period for the development of this notion. Furthermore, Rose's study ties many of the figures mentioned here directly to ideas of authorial identity developing through copyright.

is stored in books, whereas art is necessarily a venture into the unknown".⁵⁹ But while a retrospective analysis may note such an idea, Sterne, as a contemporary to the print revolution, expresses a skepticism, which draws attention to the constructed nature of "originality" as a product of print. A somewhat waspish report from Horace Walpole notes the effect of Sterne's play as one of Sterne's patrons commits a logical error in expressing his admiration:

Bishop Warburton gave him a purse of gold and this compliment (which happened to be a contradiction) *that it was quite an original composition, and in the true Cervantic vein--the only copy that ever was an original except in painting, where they all pretend to be so.*⁶⁰

How can one be an original, yet like something else? Warburton has stumbled across the intertextuality masked by the printed artifact's apparent closure and fixity (Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 133-34). But, as Walpole suggests with his painting analogy, the paradox lies at the heart of representational art itself: here the original is always necessarily outside the work. How can the work of art be original if it is itself a copy of "nature"? By what right does one claim "authorship" (origination) of something which is thus necessarily a copy? And even if stylistic qualities create a sufficiently "original" mimesis, how does one lay claim to such originality? For if it can be characterized and identified, it cannot be wholly unprecedented: recognizability is at odds with difference, the distinguishing

⁵⁹*Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* 21.

⁶⁰Walpole to Sir David Dalrymple, 4 April, 1760, quoted in *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Alan B. Howes, 55-6.

feature of originality (construed as uniqueness).

If Sterne is willing to play such games at the expense of those who hold such fashionable notions as "originality," he is also highly aware of the existential and ontological ambiguities in the accompanying notion of *origins* (which emphasizes priority). Tristram's Quixotic attempt at completeness--his determination to begin *ab ovo* and explain all attendant circumstances--reveals that, in his existential search for origins (parentage, character, identity), Tristram is forever causing them to recede. Furthermore, for the autobiographical subject who invests his self into his writing, the disseminative powers of print have implications for personal identity. Here Sterne is taking up a half-century debate initially sparked by John Locke's location of identity in consciousness--a theoretical position that allowed for the possibility of multiple selves as awareness of one's actions change over time.⁶¹

As we study Sterne's sermons in Chapter Two, we will see that his awareness of the originality paradox and Lockean puzzles of identity is complemented and complicated by "plagiarism," long an issue in his writings, as Sterne himself playfully acknowledges by the most famous plagiarism in *Tristram Shandy*--a passage declaiming against

⁶¹The eighteenth-century debate centered around the moral and theological implications of Locke's theory--the issue of assigning responsibility to a self no longer identical to its earlier version. As we will see, this has a clear analogue in mass publication, especially in serial form. Although it is taken up briefly in the final chapter, the theme of identity remains for the most part implicit in the present study. See Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II.27, and Christopher Fox's account of the debate in *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain*. In *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory*, Ian Hacking draws the consequences of Locke's theory forward to recent debates about multiple personalities and the construction of a remembered self by means of narrative (see especially 146-47 and 218). I return briefly to Lockean identity in Chapter Seven.

plagiarism stolen from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.⁶² Chapter Two begins with an exploration of Sterne's sermon-writing as an *ars rhetorica*, demonstrating how the particular demands of this often neglected genre bring Sterne to an early awareness of the necessity of rhetoric for effective communication. In his sermons, Sterne frequently turns to address issues of communication directly. In attempting to communicate divine truths he recognizes the inadequacies of human language, and thus necessarily turns to formal rhetorical devices to compensate for the inability of language to articulate the ineffable. Here Sterne will turn to address questions of origins directly. Unlike the small body of existing scholarship on Sterne's sermons, this chapter seeks neither to define Sterne's theology nor to enumerate his technical devices. Rather, it seeks to show how Sterne's earliest writing demonstrates his awareness of how these two aspects are inextricable from one another. Clearly, this awareness drives him toward the conjunction of form and content in print, as my discussions of both *Tristram Shandy* and the sermons in Chapters Six and Seven illustrate.

But before turning to these illustrations, it is important to gain a sense of the context in which Sterne's conjunction of form and content in print takes place. When the young Sterne writes his name on the ceiling, it is not an isolated act of writing. Rather, he is participating in a discourse (locally, the discourse of graffiti, at a higher level,

⁶²See V.1 Sterne has borne the burden of the label *plagiarist* ever since John Ferriar's *Illustrations of Sterne* (1798 and 1812). See H. J. Jackson, "Sterne, Burton, and Ferriar: Allusions to the *Anatomy of Melancholy* in Volumes Five to Nine of *Tristram Shandy*" and John M. Stedmond's appendix, "Plagiarism and Originality," in *The Comic Art of Laurence Sterne* 166-71.

inscription), a matrix that enables his particular act of writing.⁶³ Sterne's graffito is an individual act which takes part in a discourse that plays on the rhetorical force of inscription: the implicit concerns for rhetorical effect and the methodology chosen derive from a pre-existent matrix, the discourse of graffiti. It is the recognition of the discourse which allows us to classify and thus consider this act *as an act of writing*, an essential notion to the mature Sterne.

This relatively simple example provides us with a model for the more complex operations of Sterne's later writing which engages a huge variety of discourses in a reflexive fashion. For Sterne became a writer interested in writing itself, simultaneously aware of the necessary role of rhetoric in communication and of rhetoric's threat to communication. In two bodies of his writing, the sermons and the fiction, we may examine Sterne's mature considerations of problems of writing such as those raised by his youthful writing on the wall.

This study will examine Sterne's sermons and *Tristram Shandy* in the light of the problems of textual presence outlined here. Ultimately we will need to consider the

⁶³"Discourse" here describes an invisible set of assumptions, a cultural climate, which enables the understanding of particular utterances without the need for definition or reference to the framework. The relationship of Sterne's act of writing and the discourse in which it participates corresponds to Saussure's distinction between *parole* and *langue*. Discourse bears some relation to notions of "genre" and "tradition", although it represents something less objective. Indeed discourse describes the frame of reference which allows such objective notions to exist. Foucauldian thought links discourse with ideology as an invisible set of assumptions that "constitutes" truth by organizing random reality into a taxonomizing system which enables the institutionalization or disciplining of knowledge (see Paul A. Bové's summary in "Discourse"). More than genre or tradition, discourse provides a family of concerns and questions with an associated approach to or set of choices for addressing such concerns which are always already present to enable any particular act of writing.

discourses that enabled Sterne to engage with this problem. And these are, as acknowledged both by Sterne himself, as well as by Sterne scholarship, the discourses of satire and the sublime. Therefore, Chapter Three begins an examination of the tradition of Menippean satire to which Sterne declared allegiance by his frequent citation of authors such as Rabelais, Cervantes, Burton and Swift. Over the history of this tradition of discursive, often narrative, anatomical, encyclopedic works in verse or prose, from Petronius and Lucian through Rabelais and Cervantes, we can trace the rise of what I term "the presence of the text," a growing understanding of textuality as an aspect of rhetoric that comes of age with the rise of print culture. The Menippean genre is characterized by a self-consciousness about rhetoric, an open awareness of textual matters, which has remarkable similarities to Sterne's concerns with the inadequacy of language in the sermons. Satire, with its emphasis on reduction to the bodily and physical, seems the polar opposite to the transcendent subject of the sermons. Nevertheless, both sincere and ironic readings of the preacher's task do emphasize the mediacy of language and the question of the effect produced by language use. Ultimately, it is in this similarity that we may see Sterne as both preacher and satirist, without contradiction.

Chapter Four addresses the highly print-based satire of Sterne's immediate precursors, the Scriblerians. In the work of Swift and Pope, concern with printed textuality shifts from being the *topic* of the satiric discourse to *constituting* that discourse by means of the visually performative printed text. Scriblerian interest in "monsters," freaks of nature which question assumptions about "natural laws" and conventionally accepted boundaries between mind and body, is seen to manifest itself in the printed text

which is nothing but dead matter, yet which communicates the ideas of living minds. The fear that the proliferation of print is destroying true thought by reducing it to a merely mechanical process is ironically voiced through printed texts. This fundamental contradiction is one that troubled Jonathan Swift--a preacher whose sermons rhetorically declaimed against rhetoric--but one that Laurence Sterne was able to embrace through his awareness of the *uses* of embodiment.

The satiric works discussed in Chapters Three and Four manifest a self-reflexive preoccupation with the physical or nonverbal aspects of the text, something I also detect in the pre-Kantian sublime, the subject of Chapter Five.⁶⁴ One of the important contributions of the present study is to establish telling points of similarity between these two discourses, which, on the surface, appear to be radically opposed.⁶⁵ However, both are critical "metadiscourses" engaged in questions about their own operations, in particular about the opacity of language which forces recognition of its unavoidable presence. Both

⁶⁴Longinus is first mentioned as one of Sterne's stylistic sources in Margaret Shaw's *Laurence Sterne*, and since has received most of the critical attention among all of Sterne's rhetorical sources. For briefer treatments, see Max Byrd's *Tristram Shandy* and Peter J. De Voogd's "Laurence Sterne, the marbled page, and 'the use of accidents.'" Lamb's *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* develops this area of study to the extent of defining a Sternean poetics, the "comic" or "Shandean sublime."

⁶⁵There has been little direct consideration of this conjunction. Thomas Weiskel offers admittedly "foreshortened" and "impressionistic" commentary on connections between satire and the sublime while establishing the background for his *Romantic Sublime*; Marshall Brown has developed a related concept of the "urbane sublime" in his *Preromanticism*; Michael Seidel's "Satire and Metaphoric Collapse: The Bottom of the Sublime" is suggestive, but brief; Gary Dyer's recent *British Satire and the Politics of Style: 1789-1832* is representative of a small number of works which treat of the somewhat unexpected issue of satire in the Romantic period, without direct reference to the sublime. My own work here needs to be extended further.

are aware that they are constituted by the language which is in many ways their subject. This awareness of language extends to the recognition of language's own presence, made manifest in the variety of rhetorical, textual and material "presences" which have effects upon readers and authors themselves.

Although recent scholarship has tended to treat them separately, the study of each field has drawn attention to common aspects. Work on Menippean satire, following the theories of Bakhtin, has focused on transgression and subversion, questioning the assumed boundaries between language and thought, body and mind, audience and author, satirist and satiric object. This area of interest has obvious similarities with the questions of presence and transcendence posed by deconstructive studies of the sublime that draw attention to the breaking of boundaries in aesthetic experience.⁶⁶ As Longinus phrases it, there is a lack of clarity about the subjective or objective origin of the sublime experience: "the mind is naturally elevated by the true sublime, and so sensibly affected with its lively strokes, that it swells in transport and an inward pride, as if what was only heard had been the product of its own invention" (vii.10).

The parallels briefly noted here, and expanded upon in Chapter Five, to some extent depend on my selection of the Menippean variety of satire as well as on the rhetorical tradition of the sublime. Menippean satire bears a closer relationship to what

⁶⁶We have already noted Robert Phiddian's suggestion of the methodological relationship between parody and deconstruction in "Are Parody and Deconstruction Secretly the Same Thing?".

we call "parody" than traditional or formal satire.⁶⁷ Joseph Dane offers the following definition of parody: "Parody is the imitative reference of one literary text to another, often with an implied critique of the object text. . . . it is parasitic of its object and thus cannot be described formally; it is a meta-literary genre and thus is a form of literary criticism."⁶⁸ One problem with parody is its lack of a unique generic identity: it is formally adaptive to its host.⁶⁹ We should note how the self-reflexivity of parody, its ability to make the "host" genre turn upon itself, poses a problem of origins, both in its apparent removal from reference to worldly reality, and (keeping within the bounds its

⁶⁷In "The English Swift / the Irish Swift," Robert Phiddian illustrates the distinction between parody and satire through Swift's English and Irish careers: "There is a raciness about Swiftian parody in the English phase of his career that seems to assume that wit and humour can do no damage to the truth and can only render the inherently false absurd. In Ireland, he could no longer afford the luxury of even a fugitive faith in the power of mere exposure as a means of furthering the cause of truth and justice. Exile forced Swift to see his place in a matrix of cultural, social and moral dysfunction, and there the speculative openness of his English parody could not be maintained" (39). Parody is playful, non-referential; satire is committed to the world. Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Parody*, while paying close attention to the ironic *mise-en-abyme* of parody, ultimately wishes to assert the engagement of parody with the world, distinguishing between localized parodies and parody as an ethos, and therefore a (particularly modern) means of interacting with the world.

⁶⁸*Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne*, 4-5. We can see the importance of parody in Viktor Shklovsky's comment on *Tristram Shandy* as "the most typical novel." He is drawing attention to its "literariness": the attention it draws to its own medium which differentiates it from ordinary language. This approach is an essential key to understanding Sterne's innovation, but it needs to be taken beyond the narrative devices which interest Shklovsky toward the text itself.

⁶⁹Mikhail Bakhtin has demonstrated how this feature of parody functions in Menippean satire, incorporating a wide range of genres to create its expansive encyclopedism. Bakhtin's interest in parody and Menippean satire in relation to ideas about the novel are discussed below. See also Leon Guilhamet's *Satire and the Transformation of Genre* which likens satire to *bricolage*.

intertextual system of signs) its use of another text's features.⁷⁰ This is a problem shared by the sublime, which, taken as a substantive, is notoriously vague. Adjectivally it may describe both the object perceived or the aesthetic experience of its perceiver. Thus the sublime is as much a transumptive mode as satire, invading and transforming other genres through its self-reflexive attention to the process by which these works produce their effects. In addition to the reflexive awareness of the sublime text's own workings, it is this power to move an audience which offers a strong connection to satire of all varieties, for as Robert C. Elliott's classic study *The Power of Satire* notes, satire has its origins in a belief that words are magically powerful, that personal curses and invectives upon others actually work, for example. Rhetorically speaking, this is also the foundation of the sublime orator's power to "move" an audience. More metaphysically, it also accounts for Longinus's interest in the divine *fiat*, the immediate creativity of the word.

In an argument focused on Sterne I cannot, for reasons of space, examine the full breadth of the larger correspondences between these discourses.⁷¹ I therefore restrict

⁷⁰This makes for the subversive nature of parody, which denies authority to both its object text and itself. In Frank Palmeri's formulation, "the most complex and subversive narrative satires incorporate more than a single instance of parodic energy: after parodying a prevailing perspective, these satires go on to parody their own parodic inversion, without reverting to the original point of departure. Parodic satire in narrative then becomes not an isolated episode, but a continuing process of unsettling hierarchies of value and systems of thought. Through repeated parody and self-parody, such satire counterpoises multiple frames of understanding without assenting to the authority of any single perspective" (*Satire in Narrative* 2-3). In *Satiric Inheritance*, Michael Seidel places satire in a somewhat anthropological context demonstrating how satire subverts cultural myths of origins and dispensation (inheritance) by exposing the monstrosity and illegitimacy which traditional narratives seek to cover.

⁷¹Juvenalian bombast and apocalyptic prophecy, for example, seem to offer fruitful connections between more traditional definitions of both satire and the sublime. As

myself, for the moment, to Menippean satire. Furthermore, not only is this focused definition of satire important for my argument, but, as already suggested, it is a specific aspect of the sublime which interests me. Most studies of the sublime have looked back at the eighteenth century through the eyes of German enlightenment philosophy. For such studies, Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is the foundational text of aesthetics, placing the terms of inquiry in a transcendental mode emphasizing an aesthetic "purity" and "disinterestedness" which excludes Longinus, Addison or Burke from all but precursory roles. One of my goals in Chapter Five is to examine the eighteenth-century English tradition of the sublime without this bias. Based on the ancient rhetorical treatise of Longinus and his eighteenth-century inheritors (including John Dennis, Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, Robert Lowth), this sublime is inseparable from the production of rhetorical effect and, despite its aims at transcendence, cannot escape the physicality of textual expression. In this manner we can see that both satire and the sublime embrace the physical properties of language, which, in the context of the flourishing print culture of the eighteenth century, are manifested in the physical presentation of the text, such as the unusual typography for which *Tristram Shandy* is famous.

This typography is the subject of the Chapter Six, which addresses the physical presentation of the text in the first editions of both *Tristram Shandy* and Sterne's sermons, showing how Sterne's concerns, emanating from his knowledge of satiric and sublime discourses, as well as his preacherly practice, are made manifest in the material

mentioned below, this study lays the groundwork for a larger reexamination of critical assumptions about divisions between the so-called "Eighteenth-Century" and "Romantic" periods, which often correspond to the assumed opposition of satire and the sublime.

embodiment of his works. Observing the carefully sculpted appearance which he demanded of his printed page, I suggest that a form of reading which integrates varieties of form (conceptual as well as physical) with content is required to fully appreciate Sterne's project.⁷² The argument here is that *Tristram Shandy* in its first-edition format is a radical demonstration of the presence of the text, the absolute integration of printing and epistemology, form and content.

The concluding chapter develops from the presentation of the text to a wider variety of rhetorical "presences," turning what has all along been a Shandean reading of satire and the sublime to a detailed examination of *Tristram Shandy* itself, demonstrating the centrality of "the presence of the text" to Sterne's comic effect. This is seen in the high profile given to rhetoric, textuality, and the body--frequently all at the same time--in *Tristram Shandy*. Communication is impossible without a medium, and yet the medium, whether a text or a speaking voice accompanied by bodily gestures, stands in the way; its necessary embodiment distracts and obfuscates. This naturally leads readers to idealize, separating content from its form. However, *Tristram Shandy* problematizes our desire to separate form and content by refusing to answer the question, what is the original? Do the represented actions or ideas (i.e., the life or opinions) constitute the original? In this case, the first edition (with its carefully crafted physical appearance) would have no special place in the history of *Tristram Shandy*, since ideas are translatable. However, Sterne's careful inclusion of nonverbal elements in his text, and his constant reference to the artifice of his narrative prevent such a treatment of the text as transparent. This

⁷²And so implied here is a critique of modern editions' failure to present Sterne's text.

suggests that the original is to be found in the thing itself, the printed artifact. Of course, this is a printed artifact that appears in multiple copies, spreading versions of Tristram's self all over. So, even if the first edition is "the original" how can we locate the original Tristram?

Sterne in Literary History (2)

This reading of *Tristram Shandy* sees Sterne as posing modern and postmodern questions about the function of language as it engages with the relation of mind and body, the stability of the self, the possibility of knowledge and communication. As such it takes the challenge of Sterne's humor seriously. Such a reading stands in opposition to one strain of writing on Sterne, and indeed on the eighteenth century in general. Following from Stuart Tave's *The Amiable Humorist*, Ronald Paulson has argued that a shift takes place over the eighteenth century from a harsh and rebarbative satire of splenetic attacks to a genial comedy of humorists. This thesis is based on a traditional conception of satire as a moral discourse, focusing on the development of the period's conception of character as shifting from the deeds of an agent (a public, legal definition of character) to the "history" of an individual (a private, organic definition).⁷³ Paulson has maintained this thesis basically unchanged over thirty years. Recent manifestations have aligned this shift with the development of "aesthetics" from the early to mid-eighteenth century, a

⁷³Stuart M. Tave, *The Amiable Humorist: A Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, 24-5; Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*, 3-11.

development important to the present study's interest in the sublime.⁷⁴ This thesis fits with other familiar narratives of eighteenth-century developments: Northrop Frye's description of a shift from product- to process-oriented literature; M. H. Abrams' from imitative to expressive forms; S. H. Monk's from rhetoric to aesthetics.⁷⁵

Most of these studies are often teleologically oriented, determined to see a shift at the expense of continuities. Lawrence Lipking has discussed the disciplinary consequences of the teleological view of the eighteenth century put forth by M. H. Abrams, asking "is it possible . . . for Romantic scholars to give fair play to the eighteenth century?", and criticizing Romanticists' effacing leap back to Milton. As an alternative Lipking identifies the 1740s as an underrecognized decade of innovation.⁷⁶ Nevertheless the end result of Lipking's reassessment of literary history is to put the eighteenth century back on the map *as a period of transition*, which, I would suggest, is only to instate the mirror-lamp polarization within a smaller purview. Lipking summarizes his argument elsewhere:

the ferment of the 1740s helps separate two wings of eighteenth-century studies.

To scholars who concentrate on the earlier period, the decade often serves as a terminus ad quem, the era when fiction at last arrived at the novel, the dominance

⁷⁴For Paulson, Addison is the crucial watershed. It should be apparent that I disagree with Paulson's somewhat absolute interpretation of this development. See the companion volumes, *The Beautiful, Novel, and Strange: Aesthetics and Heterodoxy* (1996) and *Don Quixote in England: The Aesthetics of Laughter* (1998).

⁷⁵Found, respectively, in "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility," *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, and *The Sublime*.

⁷⁶"The Genie in the Lamp: M. H. Abrams and the Motives of Literary History" in *High Romantic Argument*.

of the heroic couplet died with Pope, and religious and epistemological faith visibly yielded to skeptical challenges. To scholars who concentrate on the later period, the decade serves as a terminus a quo, the source of those stirrings (once called preromantic) that would eventually flower in an age of political and artistic revolutions. . . . Scriblerians and Blakeans do not always talk the same language.⁷⁷

Questions about periodization are important in understanding Sterne, and the uses to which his work is put, for some of these studies take Sterne as a key figure in their shift. Sterne is Frye's quintessential process-writer. For Paulson, Sterne represents "the subversion of satire" (*Satire and the Novel* 248). Indeed, in keeping with the larger narrative, Peter Conrad enlists Sterne as the harbinger of the Romantic soul, breaking traditional forms in the name of expressivity.⁷⁸ Other studies are only slightly more circumspect, casting Sterne as "Preromantic." For Martin Battestin, Sterne is the culmination of the narrative describing the shift from the Augustan Age to the Age of Sensibility, claiming that

despite their resemblances, *A Tale of a Tub* and *Tristram Shandy* violate the formal expectations of their first readers for diametrically different ends. What is in Swift an aberration from the norms of rational order, implying the madness and materialism of the Modern world, has become in Sterne the image of reality. The attitudes of these two writers toward solipsism, imagination, sense, and time

⁷⁷"Inventing the Eighteenth Centuries: A Long View" 10-11.

⁷⁸*Shandyism: The Character of Romantic Irony*.

serve to define the aesthetic and intellectual context of the "Augustan" and the "Modern" modes.⁷⁹

Thus it seems that the corollary to this view of large developments is a particular reading of Sterne. This reading (perhaps an inheritance from disapproving Victorians) manifests itself in biographical views of Sterne dominant in the period before World War II. This Sterne is a somewhat crack-brained free spirit, a frivolous parson who would abandon his congregation in order to shoot at a brace of partridges encountered while walking to church on Sunday morning, or indeed, would, on the Sunday after his marriage, preach on the text, "We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (see Work's introduction, xviii). This is the Sterne who would indulge in "sentimental" affairs, more interested in the union of true hearts than other parts.⁸⁰

Ultimately this leads to Sterne the whimsical writer, a problem haunting many more recent studies, including those already mentioned. Other studies of Sterne which are not openly engaged with biographical questions or with questions of literary history often tacitly accept the whimsical Sterne in conjunction with the narrative of an eighteenth-century shift (from satire to comedy, etc). Thus, while placing him in philosophical, rhetorical, political, or other contexts, they tend to remove him from active

⁷⁹*The Providence of Wit: Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts*, 269. See also Leopold Damrosch's *God's Plot and Man's Stories* and Marshall Brown's *Preromanticism* for "preromantic" versions of Sterne.

⁸⁰This is the Sterne celebrated (rather than condemned) in Wilbur Cross's exuberant biography, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* (1909; 1925; 1929). Virginia Woolf's review of the first edition reflects the general influence of this version of Sterne ("Sterne").

engagement in these discourses. This Sterne engages in harmless play. Carol Kay's *Political Constructions* sees *Tristram Shandy* as creating a "scene of play" which aestheticizes the political questions (such as those raised in the sermon of II.17) that activate other novelists (although she suggests that *A Sentimental Journey* is more engaged). This thesis is like that of Richard Lanham who, in reaction to overserious readings of Sterne, portrays a playful rhetorician seeking only the pleasure of the game. However, as I mention below, Lanham's attention to Sterne's engagement with Renaissance rhetoric reveals a commitment to serious questions about knowledge and the value of art.⁸¹ The "overserious" studies against which Lanham writes tend to show the existentialist bias of the 1950s and 1960s. Helene Moglen's *The Philosophical Irony of Laurence Sterne* is a rereading of Sterne's engagement with Locke. While wishing to invest Sterne with serious philosophical weight, this is done by stressing the sentimental. Ultimately Moglen derives from the most important and influential of books on Sterne studies this century, John Traugott's *Tristram Shandy's World: Sterne's Philosophical Rhetoric*. Traugott's work reveals the complexity of Sterne's engagement with Locke, paying close attention to the rhetorical structures of the text, but it is ultimately committed to a vision of Sterne as a sentimentalist who praises the language of the heart as the only means of communication between isolated minds. A more recent approach to the Sterne-Locke nexus is James Swearingen's *Reflexivity in "Tristram Shandy": An Essay in Phenomenological Criticism*. This dense work attends to questions of consciousness and identity which are important to the present study, adducing Hume as

⁸¹"*Tristram Shandy*": *The Games of Pleasure*.

well as Locke, and, somewhat fatally, Husserl and Heidegger.⁸²

My own approach in this study connects best with Traugott's interest in rhetoric. However, the Sterne this study wishes to portray has much harder edges than the whimsical-sentimental view allows.⁸³ Furthermore, in the context of literary history, if Sterne is an important figure of transition, he is as much connection as *coupure*. It is precisely my contention that, through Sterne, Scriblerians and Blakeans do speak the same language. This is a result of my reconsideration of the discourses of satire and the sublime, as they are specifically manifested in their Menippean and Longinian forms. The self-reflexive emphasis on discourse in these modes alters our perception of the eighteenth-century terrain. My emphasis on satire as an epistemological rather than a moral discourse, and similarly, on the sublime as a technical science of language rather

⁸²This study is a case of the methodology proving its point regardless of its subject. Indeed, Sterne can often be called in to clarify Swearingen. Consider, for example, the following statement: "If we are to win Sterne's insight here, we must acknowledge that he has grasped something radical about the general nature of consciousness, that what occupies a person focally is never merely a contingent occurrence, an atomic piece of stone in a mosaic of mental patterns where each element is indifferent to the nature of its neighbors. In place of the psychological atomism of the empiricists, Sterne represents mind as a clear and unitary system in which each element is colored and enriched by the texture of its milieu. The unity itself is a function of the permeating teleology, comic in Toby's case because the rigidity of his inner horizon excludes large dimensions of the outer horizon that should also be attended to. But the directional force of hobby-horsical thinking, its power to point toward or intend its object, reveals the intentional structure of thought, and the directedness of the beam of thought toward a particular matter includes the apprehension of the matter as valued in some way" (63). In other words, Uncle Toby rides his hobbyhorse. Nevertheless, Swearingen is admirable in his refusal to indulge a sentimental reading of Toby. See his later summary essay, "Reflexivity and the Decentered Self in *Tristram Shandy*."

⁸³There is, of course, a counter-tradition of scholarship which places Sterne among the Augustans, as indeed does Swearingen. These are noted below.

than a metaphysical theory of perception, raises the issue of rhetorical continuities amidst the changes in sensibility over the eighteenth century. So, rather than a Sterne whose undisciplined self ranges over generic choices, we have a critical eye wilfully invading and violating genres and linguistic conventions in order to raise difficult metaphysical, ontological, epistemological and psychological questions. If Sterne is important to a master narrative of literary development, it is in the way he bridges periods by bringing the sharp "postmodern" edge of the recalcitrant text, acquired from Menippean satire and the rhetorical sublime, forward as a bequest to Blake as an engraving poet, or to Coleridge as the self-parodying theorist of *Biographia Literaria*.

Within this framework of competing versions of Sterne's thought and the cultural *mentalité* he represents--the critical versus the whimsical--we may also note an overlapping critical framework more concerned with *genre*.⁸⁴ It is customary to note the difficulty of identifying the genre of *Tristram Shandy*, and for any given study, the chosen identification often constitutes the interpretive fulcrum. The present study strives to avoid describing *Tristram Shandy* as a "novel" in the still-dominant sense of Ian Watt's "formal realism," a description which inevitably forces Sterne's work into the pigeon-hole of being a parody of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding.⁸⁵ While there is no doubt that *Tristram Shandy* is parodic, there is "no certain evidence" that Sterne ever read Defoe, Richardson

⁸⁴In the case of Paulson, these two frameworks coincide, since he sees the novel as taking over from satire over the eighteenth century.

⁸⁵This is how Watt deals with Sterne in *The Rise of the Novel*, 290-96.

or Fielding.⁸⁶

There is, however, another "novel" tradition, notable not for its formal realism, but for its formal extremism. This bears a relation to the tradition which has been called Menippean satire by Northrop Frye, who classifies *Tristram Shandy* as an "anatomy": "characterized by a great variety of subject-matter and a strong interest in ideas."⁸⁷ This form has been closely allied to the novel tradition by Mikhail Bakhtin whose theory of the dialogic (or double voiced) nature of fiction employs parody as a means of subverting an authoritative voice (such as that of epic). For Bakhtin, the novel is an "ever-developing" (i.e., free from fixity) critical genre which works by means of a parodic invasion of host genres. In a somewhat inverted version of Ian Watt's formal realism, the novel performs its critical activity by "insert[ing] into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the openended present)."⁸⁸ Works in this tradition include those which we know Sterne read with great dedication: Lucian, Rabelais, Cervantes, Swift (to

⁸⁶Arthur Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years*, 199. See 197-207 on Sterne's reading.

⁸⁷*Anatomy of Criticism* 365. D. W. Jefferson's "Tristram Shandy and the Tradition of Learned Wit" is a foundational contribution to this way of thinking about Sterne. Critics such as Wayne Booth, Northrop Frye, John Stedmond and more recent writers such as Donald Wehrs and Jonathan Lamb have all elaborated upon Sterne's place among writers such as Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, Burton, Browne and Swift. These studies examine this tradition as a kind of scholastic wit which provides Sterne with models for composition and encyclopedic modes of thinking.

⁸⁸*The Dialogic Imagination* 6-7.

name the most important figures in this study).⁸⁹

Given my study's interest in the physicality of the printed text, the bodily aspect of Menippean satire as discussed by Bakhtin is crucial.⁹⁰ More specific to Sterne is a school of criticism (beginning with Sigurd Burckhardt's "*Tristram Shandy's Law of Gravity*") which emphasizes the body in a number of ways. Psychoanalytic and feminist readings of *Tristram Shandy* often correlate sexuality and language in terms of the body. Other studies are less concerned with the representation of the body *in* the text than with the very body *of* the text. As Chapters Six and Seven suggest, examinations of *Tristram Shandy's* textuality which consider issues of punctuation and typography need to be linked to rhetorical issues as well as to questions pertaining to the body. (Previous studies have been innocent of Bakhtinian or feminist/political theories which allow physical embodiment to be "read.") By bringing together the study of the book and the study of

⁸⁹It is the critical function of the "novel" genre defined thusly which has interested scholars concerned with fiction as a narrative mode. Wayne Booth's "*The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before *Tristram Shandy**" (1952), which treats of works outside Ian Watt's canon, is a necessary precursor to *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) which analyses canonical fiction. Among works considering this "alternate" novel canon are Walter L. Reed's *An Exemplary History of the Novel: The Quixotic versus the Picaresque* as well as wider-ranging histories such as those of Alter and Brink, mentioned above.

⁹⁰Bakhtin's engagement with Menippean satire is considered in Chapter Three. We should note here a different, "Augustan," approach to Sterne's relationship with satire. Melvyn New's *Laurence Sterne as Satirist* argues against seeing *Tristram Shandy* as a novel, favoring a schematic definition of the work as an Augustan satire in the manner of Swift--not the Swift of the subversive Menippean variety of recent Bakhtinian studies (e.g., Frank Palmeri), but rather one more in line with the conservative moralist tradition of verse satire. Although New's Sterne is deliberately not a postmodernist interested in epistemological questions, this study is important for its willingness to see Sterne as a harsh satirist, rather than an amiable humorist. Other studies placing Sterne among the Augustans, if not necessarily among satirists include Mark Loveridge's *Laurence Sterne and the Argument about Design* and Max Byrd's *Tristram Shandy*.

the body, my own work can examine the presence of the text in *Tristram Shandy*.

As should be apparent by now, the present study is animated by an attention to rhetorical issues which deliberately blurs strict classification (such as "Augustan" or "Preromantic", "novel" or "satire"). Here I am combining rhetorical analysis with criticism aware of the body in *Tristram Shandy*, as well as more philological-bibliographic studies of its physical text. This moves Richard Lanham's description of *Tristram Shandy* as "facetious rhetor" toward *Tristram Shandy* as performative text. My sense of Sterne's integration of satire and the sublime in the performative text is also inspired by Jonathan Lamb's work, which first brought to my attention the importance of minute particulars in the Longinian sublime, especially in connection with the developing associationist aesthetics of the period.⁹¹ Part of the innovation of my study is to develop Lamb's analysis of the sublime to reveal its rhetorical connections with satire.⁹²

This study, then, locates Sterne against these contemporary discourses. While

⁹¹See, most importantly, *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle*. Lamb improves upon Lanham by bringing an engagement with questions of identity, both personal and "political" (pace Kay). Lamb's interests have taken the originality issue to the political level of civic discourse, where singularity and public spirit appear to be at odds. See "Originality and the hobbyhorse," chapter 2 of *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* and, most recently, "Sterne and irregular oratory."

⁹²The foregoing consideration of Sterne scholarship cannot avoid having benefitted from Melvyn New's vigilant watch over the literature. See his "*Tristram Shandy* among the Critics" in *Tristram Shandy: A Book for Free Spirits* (12-22), "Further Reading" in *New Casebooks* (174-84), the survey in *Approaches to Teaching Sterne's "Tristram Shandy"* (11-16), as well as his ongoing reviews of books and articles in *The Scriblerian*. Max Byrd's somewhat schematic division of studies which treat *Tristram Shandy* as fiction or as philosophy (144-46) has also been useful. Scholarship of general importance to individual chapters is reviewed in introductory sections, and, of course, works to which I owe particular debts are cited where appropriate.

providing a reading of textual presence in *Tristram Shandy* (a notion only tangentially considered by Sterne scholars) my study simultaneously engages in a Shandean reading of the discourses of satire and the sublime, two fields of writing frequently invoked in conjunction with Sterne's fiction, but not hitherto considered as closely associated during the eighteenth century at large. Furthermore, as we develop a sense of "the presence of the text," we are continuing the ongoing investigation of the impact of print culture. I hope that in maintaining attention to "text" as artifact this study can provide a better understanding of Sterne's work as well as a grounding for both the "postmodern" questions which arise in *Tristram Shandy* and a reconsideration of the literary history of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2: The sermons as Sterne's *ars rhetorica*

To begin a study of Sterne's rhetoric it is appropriate to consider his sermons, not only because they constitute the major body of his writing prior to his fiction,¹ but also because the sermon is a genre with specific rhetorical ends. The clarity of the sermonist's purpose offers us an entry point for later considerations of works with less obvious goals.

For all readers from the time of their first publication to the present, the existence of Sterne's sermons comes as something of a surprise. Although they represent twenty years of pulpit experience, the sermons appear on the coattails of *Tristram Shandy*, carefully tailored in their printed format to capitalize on the success of that work. This creates the tension that Sterne himself articulates in his preface and dramatizes in his *two* title pages:

the first [*The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*] will serve the bookseller's purpose, as *Yorick's* name is possibly of the two the more known;--and the second [*Sermons by Laurence Sterne, A. M. Prebendary of York, and Vicar of Sutton on the Forest, and of Stillington near York*] will ease the minds of those who see a jest, and the danger which lurks under it, where no jest was meant. [1]

Contemporary reviews reacted in consonance with this opposition, both unfavorably

¹Lansing Van Der Heyden Hammond's extensive source study, *Laurence Sterne's "Sermons of Mr. Yorick"* argues that all but one of the sermons were written before 1751. James Downey's corrective "Reassessment of Hammond" suggests it is more likely that Sterne wrote sermons throughout the 1750s and into the 1760s, especially for the special occasions of which we have record. Melvyn New suggests it is impossible to pinpoint dates of composition: "Rather than creating anything new from whole cloth, the sermons . . . have roots in . . . a sermon-writing career that coincides with the start of Sterne's clerical career in 1737 and ended probably in 1765 with his final acts of revision" (for Vols. 3 and 4, which are the only sermons Sterne seems to have revised for publication) (New, "Introduction" to *The Sermons in The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, Vol 5, *The Notes to the Sermons* [hereafter cited as *Notes*], 5.

("Must obscenity then be the handmaid to Religion--and must the exordium to a sermon, be a smutty tale?") and favorably ("It is with pleasure that we behold this son of Comus descending from the chair of mirth and frolick, to inspire sentiments of piety, and read lectures in morality, to that very audience whose hearts he has captivated with good-natured wit, and facetious humour").² Many twentieth-century studies of Sterne follow this division, which corresponds with a critical division between "style" and "substance." Some studies make passing reference to the sermons, using a few quotations to establish an entry into or contrast with his fiction (thus reading the sermons in a Shandean light).³ A number of essays examine the sermon reprinted in *Tristram Shandy*, and its role there.⁴ Those studies which concern themselves with the sermons exclusively are generally interested in portraying an aspect of Sterne's theology, that is, most critics treat of Sterne's religious "thought" or the "substance" of the sermons.⁵ Much of Melvyn New's

²Reviews quoted in Alan B. Howes' *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, 77 and 76.

³See, for example, John Traugott's *Tristram Shandy's World*, John Stedmond's *The Comic Art of Laurence Sterne*, Jonathan Lamb's *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle*. See below for a discussion of Melvyn New's valid, if extreme, critique of this approach.

⁴See, for example, the radically different approaches of: Homer Obed Brown, "Tristram to the Hebrews: Some Notes on the Institution of a Canonic Text," reprinted as Chapter 4 of *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott*; Arthur H. Cash, "The Sermon in *Tristram Shandy*"; J. Paul Hunter, "Response as Reformation: *Tristram Shandy* and the Art of Interruption."

⁵For example, Arthur Cash's "The sermon in *Tristram Shandy*" argues that although Sterne's sermons are not "religious," a moral theory can be found: a Christian Platonism/Classical Rationalism heavily influenced by Locke. For a demonstration of Sterne's debt to the orthodox Anglican tradition, see Melvyn New's recent "The Odd Couple: Laurence Sterne and John Norris of Bemerton."

work has argued that *Tristram Shandy* should be read in the light of the sermons.⁶ At this point we should consider New's view of Sterne's sermons, and the validity of the present chapter's formal or rhetorical interest in the sermons.

New's recent edition of Sterne's sermons offers itself as a corrective to what he sees as fundamentally erroneous "Shandean" readings of the sermons. Distorting "interpreting canons" (selections of sermons) have misrepresented Sterne's work as a preacher as emphasizing charity, "dramatic portrayals of characters," or "opening rhetorical flourishes" (*Notes* 33). In general, they have been misrepresented as "comic" ("in no sermon is there anything that can legitimately be called humor after the second paragraph" [*Notes* vii-viii]). It is New's argument--present not only in his preface and introduction, but throughout the edition in headnotes and annotations--that Sterne's sermonic voice is indistinguishable from his seventeenth-century Anglican predecessors, "and is part of the eighteenth-century chorus that imitated and emulated that discourse." Indeed, New adds, "what is vital to understand is that Sterne did in no way wish his sermons to be otherwise" (*Notes* xiv).

As with any correction, danger lies in allowing the pendulum to swing too far in

⁶This is the polemical focus of his recent Florida Edition of the sermons. New's first study, *Laurence Sterne as Satirist*, in defending Sterne from accusations of "superficial, nominal, Shandean" Christianity, argues, by comparison with Swift, that Sterne was an "Augustan" with a moral outlook founded in orthodox Anglicanism (which asserts the limits of reason and the necessity of revelation--that there is no morality without religion): for New, Sterne's sermons and satires both stem from and are consistent with this foundation. See also New's articles, "Swift and Sterne: Sermons and Satire" and "Swift and Sterne: Two Tales, Several Sermons, and a Relationship Revisited," as well as J. T. Parnell's "Swift, Sterne, and the Skeptical Tradition" which argues a similar point by means of the humanist skeptical tradition.

the opposite direction, preventing the possibility of any insight into Sterne's work because of his participation in a larger discourse. Following a discussion of Sterne's extensive borrowing from other sources in his sermons (a common practice for sermons delivered from the pulpit, although not for published sermons), New offers a caveat to critics of *Tristram Shandy*:

one risks one's reputation by pointing to any passage in any sermon and insisting on hearing Sterne's *unique* voice, for tomorrow we may discover, in the vast sea of sermon literature available to him, the particular drop he swallowed. Where we have not already done so, the cause is far more likely to be the unmanageable number of possible sources, than the originality of Sterne's effort. . . . Sterne's sympathy with the ongoing discourse, his irenic insistence behind the enterprise of sermon-writing, his skill in joining diverse voices into unified and quite effective wholes, are of a piece with eighteenth-century Anglican pulpit oratory, reflecting theologically-based principles of sermon composition. [Notes xvi-xvii]

New's caveat is not limited to readings of the sermons. He warns that echoes of the sermons in Sterne's other works (the letters, *Tristram Shandy*, *A Sentimental Journey*) require a skeptical eye, for "a passage of parallel sentiment may indicate Sterne's reliance on the ongoing Anglican discourse, rather than a uniquely Sternean observation" (Notes 20). A characteristic example of New's attitude is the considerable glee in the two-page annotation to a passage in Sermon 19 which traces *Tristram Shandy's* famous passages about "riddles and mysteries" (IV.17; IX.22) directly to John Norris and indirectly to Locke and Tillotson. The annotator triumphantly states:

That [these different sources] . . . all sound the same chord on this point, should give pause to any facile suggestion that the phrase 'mysteries and riddles' argues Sterne's sympathy with Humean skepticism . . . much less with postmodern indeterminacy. When Sterne uses such words as 'mystery' or 'riddle' it is far more valid to hear echoes of 1 Corinthians 13:12 . . . [Notes 219]⁷

New's discouragement of interpretation along lines other than those bound by annotation may be a worthwhile reminder to the fanciful, but it closes off too many possibilities. For example, New himself notes that Sterne himself seems to have chosen a "false" interpreting canon:

Significantly, perhaps, he picked out sermons rather unlike his others, at least in their concentration on the Old rather than the New Testament, sermons illustrating his narrative capacities, a natural gesture, perhaps, since he was riding the coattails of his narrative triumph. [Notes xv]⁸

⁷New strengthens his triumphant language in "The Odd Couple": "The phrase 'mysteries and riddles' has been to postmodernists what the three journeys to Auxerre were to the preceding generation of formalists, the clue to unravel the whole of *Tristram Shandy*. In many such readings, the phrase is taken as Sterne's commitment to an indeterminate, undecidable, equivocal, uncertain, and ambiguous world; yet for Norris (as, indeed, for Locke) and Sterne, the phrase simply restates a most fundamental Christian text . . ." (377).

⁸In addition, Sterne's selection included four charity sermons (numbers 3, 5, 7, 23). Charity sermons are public performances with a highly rhetorical end, namely to solicit donations. Added to this general rhetorical goal, we must keep in mind Sterne's own end in creating and maintaining his public Shandean persona which he obviously conceived of as consonant with the performativity of the charity sermon. The present chapter has an underlying interest in Sterne's Shandean self-presentation. For this reason it focuses mainly on sermons chosen for publication by Sterne himself (rather than those published posthumously), including two preached in the 1760s after Sterne had gained fame (and wished to maintain it through public performances). Furthermore, my interest in rhetoric

Ultimately, it may not be important to identify Sterne's *unique* thoughts if we can see that, although he shared them with others, he did in fact think them. Sterne did not have to come up with certain ideas to make them sympathetic with "Humean skepticism . . . much less with postmodern indeterminacy": "we see through a glass, darkly" seems to do that itself.

Thus, unlike the extreme approaches outlined above, the present chapter proposes to find a middle ground between fictional and theological readings (including New's) of Sterne's sermons, to examine them in depth for evidence of the way Sterne handled a communication situation with certain defined parameters. This is not to read the sermons as early attempts at *Tristram Shandy*. Rather, it is to place Sterne amidst a set of rhetorical conventions, a select group of which would ultimately contribute to the style we now term "Shandean." As our discussion of New's approach suggests, questions of style in Sterne's sermons have been addressed only lightly, mainly because the issue of plagiarism has plagued the sermons for centuries. I do not intend to deal with plagiarism *per se*. Nevertheless, it obviously hovers over Sterne's discussions of "reading" and "originality." It also becomes an issue during close reading: whose rhetorical flowers are we smelling? It has been argued that the plagiarism itself is one of those flowers. For example, Graham Petrie, looking at Burton's *Anatomy* as Walter Shandy's commonplace

turns to these sermons for their pronounced self-awareness of their rhetorical goal and concomitant sensitivity to their audience. What we observe in these sermons is to some degree true of all of Sterne's sermons; they certainly reflect his preaching practice as he himself wished to represent it.

book, concludes that "Sterne, in fact, makes of plagiarism an artistic device."⁹ Thus my interests in Sterne's sermons may be grounded in his selection, arrangement and rhetorical pointing of others' texts rather than his "authorship" of them.

This chapter is concerned with Sterne's rhetorical development. We will find in his sermons both a theoretical art of rhetoric--commenting on issues in communication--as well as rhetorical practice--communication itself. An examination in these terms will show Sterne's engagement with the rhetorical and linguistic concerns that appear in various forms in *Tristram Shandy*.

Such concerns originate with Sterne as an orthodox preacher in the Latitudinarian tradition. This tradition is one which, in reaction to the strife of the civil war, attempted to find an inclusive middle way between Catholic authoritarianism and radical Protestant individualism by means of an appeal to reason and an emphasis on practical morality.¹⁰ Isabel Rivers suggests that although there may have been some division between the erudite philological sermons given at the universities and those addressed to the common

⁹"A Rhetorical Topic in *Tristram Shandy*" (261). See also Melvyn New's "Sterne as Editor" for comments on Sterne's nuancing of his copy text. For each passage quoted from Sterne's sermons, New's annotations and Hammond's appendix of sources will be consulted.

¹⁰See W. M. Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660-1700*. Recent writing on the Latitudinarians has been revisionary, correcting the assumptions of the past which have looked back at this seventeenth-century movement through the lens of eighteenth-century rationalism and deism, magnifying the Latitudinarians' emphasis on reason by denying their insistence on revelation and ignoring their belief in the Fall and its consequences. See also, Gerard Reedy, *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England*.

sense of city congregations, the Latitudinarians generally speak with a collective voice.¹¹ This voice emphasizes reason (although the passions are not neglected), using the language of the plain style advocated by the Royal Society (John Wilkins, the language theorist, was a Latitudinarian bishop) and appealing to the material interests of its mercantile audience (Rivers 51-59):

The latitudinarian sermon thus posits a hearer who is felt to be representative of ordinary humanity, whatever his particular needs: he is a being who is rational and self-interested, and who will respond both to the demonstration that religion is true and to the persuasion that its practice will make him happy. [59]

As New has impressed upon us, it is in this general context that we must consider Sterne's sermons.¹²

However, this context (created with a scholarly interest in theology) does not foreground the necessary question of rhetoric: any sermon is a form of oratory, and the way in which it addresses its audience is worthy of equal consideration. In his authoritative biography, Arthur Cash portrays Sterne as a popular preacher to a rural parish, known for preaching extemporaneously: contemporary accounts describe a crowded

¹¹*Reason, Grace, and sentiment: a study of the language of religion and ethics in England, 1660-1780*. Vol. 1. *Whichcote to Wesley*: 37-38. Reedy suggests that the Latitudinarians reserved their complex arguments for academic tracts and books rather than sermons (16). We should note that Sterne's rural congregation imposes further limits upon much of his preaching, although not necessarily upon his published sermons, which may be based on those delivered to audiences in York, London or Paris.

¹²Without this context, one might, for example, read the contemporary reaction to Sterne's sermons as "moral Essays" (see Howes, *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, 78, 79) as a comment on the author. It is, in fact, one of the most common descriptions of the Latitudinarians (see Rivers 51).

church and a dramatic style (*Early and Middle Years* 126-128). Sterne himself expressed interest in sermon delivery, attesting to his conception of preaching as dramatic in a letter describing

one Père Clement, who delights me much; . . . his manner, more than theatrical. and greater, both in his action and delivery, than Madame Clairon, who, you must know, is the Garrick of the stage here; he has infinite variety, and keeps up the attention by it wonderfully; his pulpit . . . [is] a stage, and the variety of his tones would make you imagine there were no less than five or six actors on it together. [*Letters* 154-55].¹³

To assess Sterne's approach to sermon rhetoric, we must examine that of his forbears. Swift will provide an interesting example because he is atypical: in conflict with the form, and therefore quite revealing of the nature of the preacher's rhetorical situation.

What is immediately remarkable about the sermon is its high degree of formality. Earlier Anglican seventeenth-century sermons were highly ornate with a complex structure of divisions "into a succession of rigidly prescribed parts, the first part devoted to unfolding the text, the second to dividing the text, the third to drawing the doctrine, and so on through instruction, refutation, reproof, consolation, and exhortation."¹⁴ The

¹³Cash notes that Sterne had first planned to call his published sermons, *The Dramatic Sermons of Mr. Yorick*. See also Byron Petrakis, "Jester in the Pulpit: Sterne and Pulpit Eloquence."

¹⁴Louis Landa's "Introduction" to Swift's sermons in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*. Vol. 9, p. 103. References to Swift's works in this chapter are to this volume, unless otherwise noted.

eighteenth-century sermon (the watershed is Tillotson) is notable for its lack of such rigid structures, although methodical argument remains "one of the chief differences between the latitudinarian tradition of preaching and that of the puritans and their nonconformist and dissenting heirs" (Rivers 52). The basic structure which does survive into the eighteenth century remains in the foreground with an increasing self-consciousness (a heightened awareness of what structure remains). At the outset of his sermons, Tillotson announces his divisions and carefully numbers them. As he proceeds, he repeats the number and the key phrase upon arrival at the division itself. This is designed to enhance the audience's memory, to spatialize the temporal apprehension of information, creating the effect of chapter-headings running across the top of the page. There is nothing self-conscious in this process: Tillotson is merely attaining his end by means of his rigid formal structure.¹⁵

Swift is simultaneously less comfortable with the given structure of his sermons and more dependent on such a structure. As Louis Landa's introduction to Swift's sermons describes Swift's practice,

His usual method was to begin with a brief comment on the text and then to announce the several divisions of the sermon. His concession to conventional practice was to call marked attention to transitions from one division to another and to any subdivisions. Although his sermons have design and logical

¹⁵This description is based on Tillotson's sermons in Volume Two of the 1757 *Works*. The oral nature of the sermon makes the textual apparatus appear unnatural, especially in the inconsistencies of eighteenth-century printing which foreground the strangeness of the text.

development, there is no ordering of the material that suggests the succession of expository and rhetorical devices dear to clergymen of the preceding century.

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Even subdivisions are for the most part excessive for Swift.¹⁶ There is, however, a more basic sense of counting down the divisions in Swift's sermons. Whereas Tillotson was open to further divisions (or digressions with numbered subdivisions) after the sermon began, Swift strictly limits himself to his initial announcement of divisions. There is a tension in Swift between reliance on the structure signified by the numbers in his text and distaste for it. What merely appears as textual oddity in the printed sermons of Tillotson becomes monstrous in Swift--mainly through its simplified form.

These monstrosities are not the satirical devices of the Scriblerians, such as the parodic textual apparatus of *A Tale of a Tub*. In the sermons they appear as involuntary manifestations of Swift's conflict with the form of the sermon itself. These manifestations of textual self-consciousness complement Swift's reflections on the genre itself, revealing contradictions as he struggles against the fluidity of boundaries to which self-reference draws attention. This "pathological" type of self-consciousness differs greatly from that I will suggest is at work in Sterne's sermons. Sterne *uses* self-consciousness as an integral part of his message concerning the communication of moral truth. Swift, on the

¹⁶As they are printed, the first three of Swift's sermons (published in 1744) do not have the rigidly schematic printed characteristics of the others, printed much later. It should be noted that the fourth sermon added to the 1744 edition, "The Difficulty of Knowing One's Self," is of doubtful authorship. "The highly self-conscious orderliness and schematism" (Landa 106) of this sermon sets it apart from Swift's other sermons (v. Landa 103-106). Sterne's sermons show use of the 1744 edition of Swift, including the doubtful sermon.

other hand, seems to attempt such communication *in spite of* self-consciousness. Swift's declaredly rational and Sterne's implicitly social approach to the sermon are indicative of each preacher's view of the rhetorical situation which provides the sermon's context.

An examination of Swift's self-consciousness--of the places in the sermons where Swift reflects on aspects of the genre itself--reveals his attitude toward the preacher's rhetorical situation. It is perhaps disappointing for readers of Swift's "secular" (or at least non-liturgical) works of self-conscious irony such as *A Tale of a Tub* to find that, in his sermons, Swift does not open the rhetorical situation to a deliberate confusion of the sacred and the secular or the preacher and the audience. Instead, in places where ironic readings are possible, we can see Swift the preacher struggling against such a doubleness.¹⁷ What is important to Swift is a defined sense of his relationship with his audience. However, his desire for definition remains patently unfulfilled.

"Upon Sleeping in Church" (a traditional sermon topic) is wholly concerned with the "great neglect of Preaching now among us" (211). A double reading is possible here: who is neglecting preaching, preacher or congregation? However, the body of the sermon makes it clear that no doubleness is intended. Swift sees the communication situation of the sermon as unidirectional: "The Doctrine delivered by all Preachers is the same: *So we preach, and so ye believe*" (213). The slight alteration of I Corinthians 15:11 is telling.

¹⁷The satiric device of an implied middle ground between two extremes is absent from the sermons. If at all, it surfaces as an outright contradiction (see New's "Relationship Revisited"). Brian A. Connery addresses recent critical approaches to the problem of author, persona and intentionality in *A Tale of a Tub*, suggesting that the *Tale* argues for a kind of "interpretive community" through the recognition of the need to construct meaning ("The Persona as Pretender and the Reader as Constitutional Subject in Swift's *Tale*"). This is exactly what the Swift of the sermons will not tolerate.

St. Paul's narrative summary of the gospel concludes descriptively, "So we preach, and so ye believed," thus including the audience's belief as a part of the action of the story. Swift's version imposes an imperative cause and effect scenario: "Faith and Duty are explained and delivered" (213) to the audience, and the audience in turn believes. In "A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately enter'd into Holy Orders,"¹⁸ Swift reinforces his view of the preacher's didactic role: "the two principal Branches of Preaching, are first to tell the People what is their Duty; and then to convince them that it is so" (70). This vision of the communication situation resists the doubleness implicit in a sermon upon sermon giving.

Shortly after the subdivision of the sermon--"These may be reduced under two Heads" (211)--Swift makes the same gesture regarding its listeners: "If the Audience were to be ranked under several Heads, according to their Behaviour, when the Word of God is delivered, how small a Number would appear of those who receive it as they ought?" (212). However, the potential crossover between sermon and audience (both ranked or reduced under Heads) is prevented by the sharp distinction made between the *delivery* and the *reception* of the Word. As Swift continues to analyze the problem of communication, he again reflects on the act of preaching:

Opium is not so stupifying to many Persons as an Afternoon Sermon. Perpetual Custom hath so brought it about, that the Words of whatever Preacher, become

¹⁸This is a preaching manifesto from the point of view of an outsider, a "Lay-Patron," alternately titled, "A Letter from a Lay-Patron to a Gentleman Designing for Holy Orders" (see *Prose Works* Vol. 9, pp. xxiii and 372). That Swift should adopt a persona and write a separate piece to express the audience's point of view, rather than directly incorporate it into the rhetorical situation of the sermon, is telling of his rigid approach.

only a Sort of uniform Sound at a Distance, than which nothing is more effectual to lull the Senses. For, that it is the very Sound of the Sermon which bindeth up their Faculties, is manifest from hence, because they all awake so very regularly as soon as it ceaseth . . . [212]

The solipsistic implications of this statement are large. The very act of communication defeats itself. One is tempted to see the materialistic theory of the effect of language as satiric, a counterpart of *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* or *A Tale of a Tub*'s teller's "Experiment very frequent among Modern Authors; which is, to *write upon Nothing*; When the Subject is utterly exhausted, to let the Pen still move on . . ." ¹⁹ However, such deconstructive deracination is very carefully grounded in the sermon. The *Tale*'s nothingness is rendered in the sermon as the realm of ridiculers, who

learn a Rote of Buffoonery that serveth all Occasions, and refutes the strongest Arguments for Piety and good Manners. These have a Set of Ridicule calculated for all Sermons and all Preachers, and can be extream witty as often as they please upon the same Fund. [216]

This description of sameness in the ridiculers' criticism is Swift's reply to the objection that sermons present "the same an hundred Times over" (213). The reply is developed into a distinction between the finite referentiality of sermons (having their end in explaining and delivering Faith and Duty) and the infinite *self*-referentiality of ridiculers:

The Scorners of Preaching would do well to consider, that this Talent of Ridicule,

¹⁹*A Tale of a Tub: To which is added The Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, "The Conclusion," p. 208.

they value so much, is a Perfection very easily acquired, and applied to all Things whatsoever; . . . the most celebrated Pieces have been thus treated with greatest Success. It is in any Man's Power to suppose a Fool's Cap on the wisest Head, and then laugh at his own Supposition. I think there are not many Things cheaper than supposing and laughing; and if the uniting these two Talents can bring a Thing into Contempt, it is hard to know where it may end. [217]

Swift's claim to the distinction between the preacher's grounded reference and the ridiculers' *self*-reference is difficult to maintain in a sermon upon sermon giving where he in effect makes his own supposition about the validity of the form he uses. The similarity of the reflexive mode employed (like ridicule, the sermon is self-contained, self-justified) collapses the distinction Swift would have it make.

Nevertheless, Swift insists upon the distinction between preacher and audience (here the ridiculers), maintaining a closed, unidirectional model of communication. If there is a problem with preaching, it lies in the audience.²⁰ It is not the preacher's task

²⁰In "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Considered" (discussed below), Sterne turns the tables on his audience in a very different fashion. For the moment, Swift's attitude toward his audience in "Upon Sleeping in Church" may be seen clearly by contrast with Sterne's Sermon 43 which addresses similar issues of church misbehavior. Sterne's terms of accusation are mild: motives for absence from church on Sunday are merely "to trifle that day away, or apply any portion of it to secular concerns" (405). Swift is more accusatory: absence is "upon the Account of Idleness, or Spleen, or Hatred to Religion, or in order to doze away the Intemperance of the Week" (210). Each preacher's use of the first person plural is similarly indicative. Sterne's use is inclusive, counting himself among the congregants, "when we are performing this solemn duty in the house of God" (406). Swift's use of "we" is, with a single exception, authorial, for the purposes of argument, or exclusive, separating "we," the preacher(s), from the congregation. Indeed, this stance is so strong it might be surmised that this sermon was addressed by the dean to lower clergymen, were it not for his explicit accusation of "some Part in *this* Audience" (210, emphasis added), a gesture of separation which Sterne never

to address the passions with classical rhetoric, "which is not the Business of a Christian Orator, whose Office it is only to work upon Faith and Reason" (214). He maintains a distinct commitment to the rhetoric of the head over that of the heart, without acknowledging this to be a rhetorical stance. This same distinction, again without acknowledgement, informs "A Letter to a Young Gentleman" where rhetoric is seen as "without either Propriety or Meaning" (67). It interferes with the exchange (and the use of "Propriety" has an economic resonance with "property") of meaning:

I have listened with my utmost Attention for half an Hour to an Orator of this [rhetorical] Species, without being able to understand, much less to carry away one single Sentence out of a whole Sermon. [67-68]

What lies behind Swift's resistance to rhetoric is his insistence upon boundaries: between head and heart, preacher and congregation. To allow rhetorical considerations to enter into a sermon would be to allow the crossover of audience and preacher, to allow what for Swift are the hierarchized units of the preaching situation to be interchangeable and hence, equal. This, Swift is unwilling to acknowledge.

A brief look at Swift's comments on his audience in "A Letter to a Young Gentleman" and the sermon "On the Trinity" reveal telling contradictions as Swift attempts to define his relation to his audience. In "A Letter," Swift echoes the period's praise of the plain style, speaking out against "hard words" or "Terms of Art" (65, 66) which, like rhetoric, stand in the way of meaning. This is cast in terms which initially appear to be sympathetic with his audience, for his aim is to enhance communication:

employs.

But I am apt to put my self in the Place of the Vulgar, and think many Words difficult or obscure, which the Preacher will not allow to be so, because those Words are obvious to Schollars. [65]

However, this identification is accompanied by an anecdote about Lord Falkland which reinforces distinction:

when he doubted whether a Word were perfectly intelligible or no, he used to consult one of his Lady's Chambermaids, (not the Waiting-woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in Romances,) and by her Judgment was guided, whether to receive or reject it. [65]

The author's conscious effort to identify with his audience in effect makes that identification impossible. It is noteworthy that distinction is made not only between author and audience, but also within the audience itself (between Chambermaid and Waiting-woman). In considering sermons, "where the meanest Hearer is supposed to be concerned" (65), such distinctions collapse into equations: "very often a Lady's Chambermaid may be allowed to equal half the Congregation, both as to Quality and Understanding" (66).

As an outside statement of sermon policy, not intended for the congregation's ears, the brusque treatment of the congregation found in "A Letter" is understandable. However, within the sermon "On the Trinity," the same contradiction surfaces as Swift attempts to identify with his audience by means of pointing out his intellectual separation from them. At the outset, Swift establishes a distinction between the complex theological notion behind the Trinity (which he is shortly to label "a Term of Art" [160]) and the

audience:

THIS Day being set apart to acknowledge our Belief in the Eternal TRINITY, I thought it might be proper to employ my present Discourse entirely upon that Subject; and, I hope, to handle it in such a Manner, that the most Ignorant among you may return home better informed of your Duty in this great Point, than probably you are at present. [159]

The rest of the sermon is spent dismissing complexity. For example:

This Creed is now read at certain times in our Churches, which, although it is useful for Edification to those who understand it; yet, since it containeth some nice and philosophical Points which few People can comprehend, the Bulk of Mankind is obliged to believe no more than the Scripture-Doctrine, as I have delivered it. [160]

This method, emphasizing the distinction between preacher, "I" who understand the issue, and audience, "you," "the Bulk of Mankind," reinforces the unidirectional sense of the sermon. The preacher delivers, the audience receives.²¹

When Swift makes his move toward becoming one with his audience, this rigid structure impedes him. The language of distinction employed--"meanest," "Humiliation," "ignorant"--defeats the supposedly unifying intent:

Does this Mystery of the Trinity, for Instance, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, bring the least Profit or Power to the Preachers? No; it is as great a Mystery to

²¹I should note here that this is an unexceptionable model for eighteenth-century sermons; it is stressed here to contrast Sterne's approach.

themselves as it is to the meanest of their Hearers; and may be rather a Cause of Humiliation, by putting their Understanding in that Point upon a Level with the most ignorant of their Flock. [163]

The didactic structure of Swift's conception of the sermon and its rhetorical situation has its parallel in the formal structure of the sermon itself which relentlessly carries the preacher to his conclusion.

Swift is clearly uncomfortable with the genre of the sermon, perhaps because of his sense of alienation from his congregation. Generically speaking, his most successful sermons, those first published, are the least subject to the tyranny of a structure that is simplified and reified in the text. In these three sermons (which include "On the Trinity"), the format is open ended: introductory commentary upon the text, followed by a demonstration, followed in turn by "a few Inferences and Observations" ("On the Trinity" 166; see also "Mutual Subjection" 145) which are numbered, but not limited by a previous announcement. Here, if anywhere, Swift seems to be representative of the eighteenth century's less rigid approach to the sermon. Nevertheless, as we have seen in "On the Trinity" and "Upon Sleeping in Church," the sermons' formal structure is not the only rigid force at work. Swift is unwilling to engage in dialogue with either his audience or the discourse itself.²² He is anxious to ground the generic self-reference of "Upon Sleeping" in a unidirectional rhetorical situation. Swift's dealings with genre are negative

²²This is not to suggest that Anglican doctrine was a matter for public debate, but rather to show Swift's almost antagonistic attitude toward his audience. Even the sermons of as strait-laced a preacher as Tillotson convey a greater sense of mutual purpose in seeking religious knowledge.

as he concludes "On the Trinity": "thus I have done with my Subject, which probably I should not have chosen, if I had not been invited to it by the Occasion of this Season . . ." (168). He wishes to ground his discourse, to explain the situation in terms of--and with denotative reference to--outside, liturgical circumstances. He is willing only to tell and deliver in a closed rhetorical situation. He will not make room for his audience.

These characteristics of Swift's preaching foreground the difficulty of the situation. Swift's approach is to deny his audience's participation in the discourse, that is, to deny a conception of the audience as thinking beings (perhaps in need of persuasion) rather than passive receptors. The outright denial of rhetoric creates contradictions left unresolved by either an acceptance of ambiguity or a definitive proof of one side over the other. Swift is at his weakest in failing to acknowledge that the denial of rhetoric is itself a rhetorical stance. As we move to consider Sterne, we will see that it is exactly the acknowledgement of rhetorical considerations which distinguishes *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*.

The essential difference between Swift and Sterne is the difference between each one's rhetorical paradigm, and the worldview associated with it. These paradigms are traditional: Swift's approach is Platonic, favoring philosophy (with its claims to "truth" and "being") over rhetoric (the realm of "appearance" and "seeming"); Sterne's approach is that of the Sophists--the tradition of Cicero and Quintilian--which posits a relative, contingent truth, identifying eloquence as the source of social harmony.²³ These

²³That "Sophist" has a sense *in malo* should remind us that we are subject to Platonic (or Swiftian) assumptions about rhetoric. For a cogent summary of the traditions mentioned here, see Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric."

paradigms correspond roughly with the eighteenth-century division between the head and the heart, although we should keep in mind that *both* are rhetorical stances: the appeal to the head is still an appeal, and, as we will see, the appeal to the heart is by no means purely emotional. Ultimately the differences between individual preaching styles may suggest questions about the historical difference of their common orthodox ground as the century progresses. For, despite his Augustan (and even Renaissance) proclivities, Sterne, born nearly a half-century after Swift, is a preacher of a different generation.²⁴ His theology may be grounded in seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism, but he addresses an audience attending church during the decades which saw the publication of not only Pope's rationalist satires, but also the socially embedded novels of Richardson and Fielding. Swift's rationalist position is contradictory, for, as we have seen, his didactic absolutist stance denies not only rhetoric, but also dialectic (which is the philosophical ideal of the non-rhetorical Platonic position to which he subscribes). Swift's own rigidities in the sermons suggest the dangerous fixity of the written word as described in the *Phaedrus*.

The difficulty of Sterne's rhetoric is that it plays upon the traditional opposition of philosophy and rhetoric while holding neither position. Sterne is attempting to work a "deep" rhetoric (which will be seen to be dialogic) while avoiding both absolutist (Platonic-Swiftian) and ornamentalist (e.g., that of Swift's ridiculers) positions. Thus,

²⁴Louis Landa's "Introduction" to Swift's sermons suggests approximate dates for the surviving sermons ranging from 1715-1726 (*The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*. Vol. 9, 133-37). See note 1, above, for scholars' conjectures about the dates of Sterne's sermons.

much of the discussion to follow must employ the term "rhetoric" in two senses which are necessarily subject to collapse. The primary systemic rhetoric of Sterne's entire project is found in his recognition that truth is embedded in a social context. This social context requires a secondary ornamental rhetoric (of classical tropes and figures) which is simultaneously questioned in its opposition to philosophy. Thus we will show Sterne rhetorically denying rhetoric to the higher end of persuading (through rhetoric) his parishioners to lead more virtuous lives.²⁵

In *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit*, James Downey remarks that,

With Sterne the sermon comes closer to passing over entirely into the field of literature than with any other preacher of the eighteenth century. He dispenses

²⁵Sterne's comment on his charity sermon delivered in 1761, "The parable of the rich man and Lazarus considered" (Sermon 23), is worth quoting as a general statement on his preaching. He promises to give

not a half hour (not a poor half hour), for I never could preach so long without fatiguing both myself and my flock to death--but I will give you a short sermon, and *flap* you in my turn:--preaching (you must know) is a theologic flap upon the heart, as the dunning for a promise is a political flap upon the memory:--both the one and the other is useless where men have *wit enough* to be honest. This makes for my hypothesis of wit and judgment. [*Letters* 134]

The preacher's sensitivity to the restlessness of his congregation, as well as his awareness of the kind of emotional appeal he is making place him in the arena of both the practical orator and the theoretical rhetorician. The latter position Swift rejects, for it involves an acknowledgement of an interaction between orator and audience which violates his rigid boundaries between head and heart. Sterne's approach is one based on just such an intermingling--one which acknowledges the complexities of the rhetorical situation. It is no surprise that we have no record of Swift giving a charity sermon for the purpose of encouraging generosity and soliciting donations, although charity (however discouraged) is certainly the subject of several sermons, such as "On the Poor Man's Contentment," "Doing Good," and most famously (for its proposal that parishes have their beggars wear badges) "Causes of the Wretched Condition of Ireland."

with practically all homiletic appurtenances; there is nothing to indicate an outline--no major headings, subdivisions, or Roman numerals; no repetitions, recapitulations, and nothing which even faintly resembles a peroration. Only the presence of a Biblical text distinguishes one of Sterne's sermons from a vigorous moral essay.

Sterne appears deliberately to disregard the conventions of sermon construction. [137]

This statement exaggerates, perhaps (especially with regard to Sterne's "deliberate" intentions), but, as a description of Sterne's sermons, it is not untrue.²⁶ However, I believe that Sterne makes his mark in the *oscillation between* such the absolute freedom from convention which Downey describes and convention itself. Obviously, the generic self-reference of the sermon would be impossible in a state of total freedom from genre. It is a peculiar freedom from the doubleness of a genre which incorporates self-reference that allows Sterne to expand self-reference beyond the strictly generic appurtenances of Tillotson and the wider (but still restricted to genre) self-reference of Swift. In Sterne's sermons, reference to the genre is displaced onto referentiality itself. In other words, in Sterne's sermons we have neither the self-referentiality of a textual apparatus, nor commentary on a general notion of the sermon, but rather an ongoing engagement with

²⁶Downey's study is dated in its use of early twentieth-century assumptions about Latitudinarianism (e.g., the sermon as "vigorous moral essay") which have been questioned by the revisionist historians discussed above. Although New's comment that "one would be hard pressed to find in Sterne a passage that could not have appeared in Tillotson or Clarke--or, for that matter, in Wilkins or William Wollaston, Edward Stillingfleet or John Sharp" (xiv) must be considered, we should note that it refers more to Sterne's theology than his style.

discourse at large. In the following exploration of the sermons, we will see this engagement in Sterne's frequent meditation on questions of reading and writing which, in contrast with Swift, include his audience's perspective within the sermon. This develops in part from the sermon form itself which generates discourse by means of interpreting a text. Ultimately, such questions introduce issues of authorship and originality which lead Sterne to the aesthetics of the sublime.

In Sterne's sermons, the typical announcement of divisions is softened into a short--and polite--paragraph:

In the remaining part of the discourse I shall follow the same plan; and therefore shall beg leave to enlarge first upon the story itself, with such reflections as will rise from it; and conclude, as our SAVIOUR has done, with the same exhortation to kindness and humanity which so naturally falls from it. [Sermon 3, 23]²⁷

Unlike Swift, who would have numbered his outline and stuck to the plan, Sterne, after enlarging upon the story, alters his course:

I have now done with the parable, which was the first part proposed to be considered in this discourse; and should proceed to the second, which so naturally falls from it, of exhorting you, as our SAVIOUR did . . . *to go and do so likewise*: but I have been so copious in my reflections upon the story itself, that I find I have insensibly incorporated into them almost all that I should have said

²⁷See also Sermon 1 (5) and New's note on Sterne's awareness of "the traditional three-part division of sermons, viz., explication, confirmation, and application" (*Notes* 63).

here in recommending so amiable an example; by which means I have unawares anticipated the task I proposed. I shall therefore detain you no longer than with a single remark . . . [29]

In Tillotson or Swift, a rigid structure would have prevented such a Shandean accident from occurring. Sterne expresses awareness of the strangeness of his proceeding by casting it as accidental. It happened "insensibly," he has "unawares anticipated the task." He knows what was "proposed," but he is not only writing or speaking: he is simultaneously *reading*, becoming aware of what is happening in the text of his sermon. Reading in one form or another is never distant in Sterne's sermons. This instance offers the image of the text--or its author/speaker--reading itself. This double sense of a mind simultaneously generating and interpreting a text is only partially inherent in the sermon genre. Certainly, a sermon is intended to interpret its text (here, the selected passage from scripture). Also, it is clear that the traditional sermon is highly aware of its own proceeding, using the announcement of divisions as a technique of invention. However, the interpretation of the text and the generation of the sermon discourse are separate concerns to Tillotson and Swift. What is remarkable in Sterne's sermons is the collapse into the sermon's interpretation of its own proceeding.²⁸

²⁸In one sense, this phenomenon could be the function of Sterne's plagiarism: he is reading others' texts in his own. It is also conducive to drawing attention to the sermonist--another aim of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*. In examining the reading of the sermon in *Tristram Shandy*, Homer Obed Brown draws attention to the "scene of reading" ("a moment in a text in which other texts are 'read' in a way to suggest possibilities of reading the narrative that contains them") (*Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott*, 117). This concept may be broadly applied to any moment in the sermons in which Sterne interrogates his text, on behalf of, or as a model to his audience. From such moments I derive my paradigm of doubling/collapse, which is also indebted to Jonathan

In "The House of Feasting and the House of Mourning Described"--"one of the best" according to Sterne himself (*Letters* 301)--the opening pages unsettle the metaphoric status of its text.²⁹ This is done by foregrounding types of reading. But before this procedure can be explored, we must experience the immediate reading of the text Sterne offers his congregation. The text is Ecclesiastes 7:2-3:

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting.---

-
 THAT I deny--but let us hear the wise man's reasoning upon it--*for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart: sorrow is better than laughter--*for a crack'd-brain'd order of Carthusian monks, I grant, but not for men of the world . . . [Sermon 2, 12]

Despite his contrary reading of the text, Sterne keeps its travel metaphor. He is, however, unwilling to let it pass unnoticed in the opening pages. The "uneasy journey of life" (12) metaphor is one so common that it does not register as a metaphor. For Sterne, this is unacceptable (perhaps symbolic of his audience's disinterest in his sermon). He must, therefore, defamiliarize. After running the journey metaphor through its familiar

Lamb's similar use of pleonasm and tautology in *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle*.

²⁹Indeed, New's Preface to the sermons suggests that these first pages of an otherwise sober sermon are intended to unsettle the congregation after forty-five minutes of perhaps dull church service (*Notes* xix). See also Downey, *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit* (141-42). Traugott's reading of this sermon (100-102) is similar to mine, perhaps seeing as "philosophical rhetoric" what I term "reading."

changes,³⁰ he pulls up and bares the device: "I will not contend at present against this rhetorick; I would choose rather for a moment to go on with the allegory, and say we are travellers . . ." (13). Sterne draws out the metaphor for another paragraph, and then again reminds us we are reading: "But let us not lose sight of the argument in pursuit of the simile" (13).

This attention to reading is necessarily accompanied by attention to the rhetorical situation. It is noteworthy that, in questioning the text, Sterne addresses its author with a mocking phrase: "do you think my good preacher, that he who is infinitely happy, can envy us our enjoyments?" (12). This rhetorical question is a distancing technique, aligning Sterne with his "wise" audience against the "preacher." However, in the given rhetorical situation, Sterne is the preacher. This reflexive moment introduces an *aporia*, allowing Sterne to be both preacher and audience for the duration of the sermon. And it would appear that, as a member of the audience, the journey metaphor has rather secular associations for Sterne. In these opening pages, references to "crack'd-brain'd," "Carthusian monks," "the dry and dismal deserts of a *Sierra Morena*," and "a nonsensical piece of saint errantry" (12-13) allude to *Don Quixote*, a journey of rather different import.³¹ *Don Quixote* is not just a location of "ridicule," as Traugott suggests: it is an

³⁰Sterne is plagiarizing here (*Notes* 69-70).

³¹Traugott (100) and New (*Notes*, 70) use only the *Sierra Morena* to introduce the Quixotic, but the confluence of the four terms increases the secularity of the allusion, for there is a greater sense of time spent with the novel. Don Quixote's niece believes his reading "help't some how or other to crack my Uncle's Brain" (Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, I.i.6, p. 31). Later, Quixote compares the austerity and benefit to the world of his profession with that of a Carthusian (II.i.5 [75]). For his adventure in the *Sierra Morena*, see I.iii.9 (161 ff.). In the *Sierra Morena* passage of Sterne's sermon, Hammond suggests

irresistible text when issues of reading are concerned. Don Quixote's steadfast literal reading of romances forces him into an equally steadfast allegorical (or "enchanted") reading of reality. In Cervantes' text, reading is always present, as Quixote and Sancho argue over the interpretation of events.

Secular reading aside, with the metaphor twice labelled as a metaphor, reading is at issue. Following these reminders, Sterne turns to the moral substance of his sermon. He nevertheless maintains the metaphor throughout the sermon, "look[ing] into" (14) each house. Sterne offers his audience sensual and emotional portraits of the two houses. Although both are emotionally convincing--sentimental--allegories, the warnings offered early on hover over the descriptions. In a sense, the moving rhetoric employed in describing the house of mourning has been undermined. However, there is a counter-rhetoric at work, for, in the last analysis, Sterne contradicts his first reading of the text and returns to an orthodox position: "we might then safely rest our cause . . . whether Solomon has not made a just determination here, in favour of the house of mourning . . ." (20). By alerting his audience to its lazy reading habits--strenuously reading against holy scripture, questioning the role of preacher, alluding beyond the range of the rhetorical situation, pointing to the congregation's thoughtless acceptance of metaphors--

that he is heavily reworking a passage from Joseph Hall: ". . . to have been placed in some vast desert, on the top of some barren mountain . . ." (131), although New is doubtful (*Notes* 70). Sterne's substitution of Sierra Morena for "barren mountain" requires knowledge that he could have learned from a footnote in the edition of *Don Quixote* he seems to have read: "Sierra, tho' Spanish for mountain, properly means . . . a Saw . . ." (162 n.). Finally, "saint errantry," although not of Sterne's coining, was one of his favorite phrases (it appears in two other sermons, and an early political piece--see *Notes*, 70-71). The word is obviously based on "knight errantry," but only in the post-Quixotic, ironic sense of the term (OED, s.v. "saint-errant" and "knight-errant").

Sterne preoccupies the reader with reading, distracting or dividing his or her attention. Meanwhile, he re-grounds his text's message in a new discursive context: the *aporia* of the preacher becomes the identification of the present preacher (Sterne) and the scriptural preacher (Solomon). By doubling his role (preacher/non-preacher), Sterne has restored communication to the rhetorical situation of the sermon (something Swift was attempting to do in "Upon Sleeping in Church"). This highly rhetorical pattern of division and return (here, the shift from *aporia* to identity, from multiple interpretations to orthodoxy) is achieved through a reworking of the self-reflexivity Sterne found in the sermon tradition.

"The Character of Herod" (Sermon 9) is a sermon with less self-reference and more explicit advice on reading other texts in various ways. These various ways are doubled in the fashion of "The House of Feasting and the House of Mourning." Here texts are doubled.³² Matthew's New Testament account of the massacre of the innocents overlaps Jeremiah's Old Testament account of Rachel's lamentations which itself draws on Genesis (81-82). Similarly, Sterne offers critiques of Jewish interpretations of Jeremiah and Christian interpretations of Matthew (82-83). The pattern of division and return which we have noted in "The House of Feasting and the House of Mourning" occurs as the words of Jeremiah are "literally accomplished" in Matthew in the same geographical space:

For as the former scene he relates, was transacted upon the very same stage--in the

³²Sterne's choice of text (Mat. 2:17-18) engages him in debates over a crux in biblical interpretation which he takes little trouble to present with much clarity. As New points out, Sterne seems much more interested in the tangentially related character of Herod (see *Notes* 132-35).

same district of Bethlehem near Rama----where so many mothers of the same tribe now suffered this second most affecting blow--the words of Jeremiah, as the evangelist observes, were literally accomplished, and no doubt, in that horrid day, a voice was heard again in Rama, lamentation and bitter weeping . . . [83]³³

After this account, Sterne turns to the reading of another text, the character of Herod. The first reading technique he analyses is a superficial double approach. Good and evil are tallied up:

Now in all such complex characters as this,--the way the world usually judges, is-- --to sum up the good and the bad against each other,--deduct the lesser of these articles from the greater, and (as we do in passing other accounts) give credit to the man for what remains upon the ballance. [85]

But this is a "fallacious reckoning" (85), a splitting rather than a doubling. There is a "different rule" (86) which we must follow. This is "the principal and ruling passion which leads the character" (86). In Herod, it is ambition, and in this light the separate tallies of good and evil collapse, for

we must call them [apparent virtues] to this very account; examine whom they serve, what passion and what principle they have for their master. When this is understood, the whole clew is unravelled at once, and the character of Herod, as complicated as it is given us in history----when thus analysed, is summed up in

³³A clarifying analogue is the more familiar account of Tristram's three journeys through Auxerre (VII.28). New suspects a source for this sermon, although he cannot find one. Whether Sterne's own or another's, the phenomenon in question would certainly have interested him.

three words---*That he was a man of unbounded ambition*, who stuck at nothing to gratify it,---so that not only his vices were ministerial to his ruling passion, but his virtues too (if they deserve the name) were drawn in, and listed into the same service. [88-89]

This version of the division and return pattern is itself dependent on doubleness: the existence of two "rules" for reading--one seemingly double, the other essentially single. Herod's split personality--his acting ability--was the product of his single driving ambition. Complacent reading, Sterne suggests, fails to detect the truth. Therefore, his job as a preacher is to teach reading, to make reading self-consciously present at all times.

Doubleness of this type pervades Sterne's sermons. Even single instances tell of the constant presence of reading--an interpretive lens. In "The Case of Hezekiah and the Messengers" (Sermon 17),³⁴ the negative effect of this lens is at issue. At both the level of rhetoric and homiletic, and ultimately between the two, collapse rather than doubling occurs. Early on in the sermon, Hezekiah's apostrophe to God gives way to Sterne's own:

----And he pray'd, and said, O LORD! I beseech thee remember----O Hezekiah! How couldst thou fear that GOD had forgotten thee? or, How couldst thou doubt of his remembrance of thy integrity, when he called thee to receive it's

³⁴This sermon has drawn considerable critical and biographical attention, as it was a provocative public performance (given in Paris) with considerable results for Sterne's public image. See New's headnote (*Notes* 193-97) for details and problems with the documentation.

recompence? [158]³⁵

This gesture parallels Sterne's address to "my good Preacher" in "The House of Feasting," instantly creating a "scene of reading." Here the two levels revealed in this use of rhetoric upon rhetoric ultimately lead to a meditation on vanity:

VANITY bids all her sons to be generous and brave,----and her daughters to be chaste and courteous.----But why do we want her instructions?----Ask the comedian who is taught a part he feels not-----

Is it that the principles of religion want strength, or that the real passion for what is good and worthy will not carry us high enough?----GOD! thou knowest they carry us too high----we want not *to be*--but *to seem*-- [162]

Acting (and Sterne employs the "world is a stage" trope throughout the sermons) stands in for rhetoric here: both place seeming over being--external appearance over internal reality. This was what Sterne was pointing at in Hezekiah's apostrophe to God. Of course, in employing the same rhetorical device (apostrophe), the preacher's finger is pointing at himself as well--there is an actor in the pulpit, a jester on the title page of the text (recall the dramatic Père Clement [*Letters* 154-55]). This is made most explicit when he points the finger at "the saint":

----with what an inflexible sanctity of deportment, he sustains himself as he advances:--every line in his face writes abstinence;----every stride looks like a check upon his desires: see, I beseech you, how he is cloak'd up with sermons,

³⁵Sterne's apostrophe to Hezekiah is borrowed from Joseph Hall (*Notes* 197). It is the doubling echo of Hezekiah's own apostrophe which is Sterne's innovation.

prayers and sacraments; and so bemuffled with the externals of religion, that he has not a hand to spare for a worldly purpose. . . . Must the garb of religion be extended so wide to the danger of it's rending?--Yes truly, or it will not hide the secret----and, What is that?

----That the saint has no religion at all. [162-63]

Sterne's examples in this sermon are commonplaces.³⁶ Although Hammond finds several passages to be specifically plagiarized from other religious writers (New is more circumspect), the examples of hypocrisy could as easily be paraphrases of Shakespeare. Indeed, it is the very notion of the commonplace which comes to have significance for Sterne. Like the acceptance of the journey metaphor in "The House of Mourning and the House of Feasting," acceptance of these commonplaces endangers communication. To single out sermons as "externals of religion" (a commonplace phrase in anti-Catholic literature) in a sermon should raise questions about the present enterprise, but amidst a catalogue of commonplaces on hypocrisy, this doubleness is flattened out.

It is no wonder then, that the conclusion of this sermon addresses not only the read commonplaces, but commonplaces of reading itself. The falsity of rhetoric is so pervasive that there are those

who from a general distrust of all that looks disinterested, finding nothing to blame in an action, and perhaps much to admire in it,----immediately fall foul upon it's motives: *Does Job serve God for nought?* [165]

³⁶This is supported by the fact that New cites an analogue rather than a source (*Notes* 202).

The possibility of genuine disinterestedness (the word itself is a negative) has been undermined by the rhetorical use of appearance. Sterne here demonstrates that the doubleness of seeming and being is collapsed by biased interpretation:

What a vile insinuation! besides, the question was not, whether Job was a rich man or a poor man;--but, whether he was a man of integrity or no? and the appearances were strong on his side: indeed it might have been otherwise; it was possible Job might be insincere, and the devil took the advantage of the die for it.

[165]

The very doubleness of seeming and being, which allowed for hypocrisy, through hypocritical interpretation makes the identification of hypocrisy impossible--or universal. Commonplaces mark the location of possibilities for hypocritical interpretation: "It is a bad picture, and done by a terrible master, and yet we are always copying it" (165). Copying is the activity of commonplaces; commonplaces are the location of collapse. Sterne's double rhetoric--apostrophe upon apostrophe--is a warning against the collapse, but perhaps, as the sermon's penultimate paragraph pointedly states, "----it is too late" (166). The collapses of rhetoric in this sermon against sermons account for the concluding movement to exclude the preacher altogether:

It is painful to utter the reproaches which should come in here.----I will trust them with yourselves: in coming from that quarter, they will more naturally produce such fruits as will not set your teeth on edge . . . [166]

This is a desire for a non-rhetorical dialectic, the "fruits" of which stand in opposition to the orator's *copia* of copied commonplaces. The final words of this sermon continue the

preacher's withdrawal in many senses: "----for they will be the fruits of love and good will, to the praise of GOD and the happiness of the world, which I wish" (166). Not only does the preacher syntactically estrange himself, dangling his desire at the end of the sentence at the end of the sermon, he also recedes into silence and perhaps reinforces the call for a new rhetorical setting by pointing toward the opening line (as well as the frequent refrain) of *Tristram Shandy*: "I wish . . ." (I.1.1). This sermon has returned to the necessity for like-mindedness which we have seen rhetorically created in "The House of Feasting and the House of Mourning."³⁷ In this case, however, Sterne makes his case by enacting the failure of rhetoric to convey truth, necessitating a turn toward what is ultimately a higher rhetoric, silence.

The relationship of Sterne's copybook preaching and his paradoxical vision of the preacher's role as one which should not be needed brings us to the question of authorship and originality. We have noted that all of Sterne's sermons are deeply indebted to sermon writers who went before him. As New points out, "plagiarism" was expected in sermons demanded for the grinding routine of the parish minister. His skill is found in weaving together passages and ideas upon common topics into an effective vehicle for moving his audience, and moving them in an orthodox fashion: indeed, to say anything unique in a sermon would be to transgress the purpose of the sermon, which is to reinforce the common values of Christianity. (It is in publishing these compilations in a printed form which implies "originality" that Sterne is unusual, and truly commits plagiarism.)

In this context, which seems at odds with the period's literary concerns about

³⁷See also the discussion of "The Rich Man and Lazarus," below.

originality, Sterne's sermons offer a valuable place to study complex issues of writing which will surface in *Tristram Shandy*. The concerns of Sterne the rhetorician and orator--theoretical and practical concerns with performance, for immediate effect upon one's audience--come into contact with the concerns of the author, often figured in terms of ownership: singularity and originality in relation to a pre-existent discourse.³⁸ As we are about to see, it is also in this context of interpreting the scriptures that Sterne comes into contact with a notion of the biblical sublime which provides a mode of reading which raises the very concerns with which the preacher is wrestling in terms of the originality and immediacy of the word of God. For the preacher is concerned with the ultimate origin whose being he must confirm by mediating the Word.

Thus Sterne's use of this already overtly rhetorical form is self-reflexive: he expresses concerns about the role of originality in a sermonic discourse which requires the repetition of the already known and accepted Christian truths. Although "novelty"--which Sterne allegorizes in the figure of Lazarus who is depicted as a shocking rhetorical ploy for attention (Sermon 23)--is all the preacher can offer, it also obscures the original truths. Thus the paradoxical ideal for the preacher is to be a transparent repetition of the "original" message.

Such discussions (and there are several in the sermons) raise questions of identity

³⁸Cf. "Originality and the hobbyhorse," chapter 2 of Jonathan Lamb's *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle*, which is concerned with questions of the "singular" character and the possibilities of speech. Lamb's important study also introduces related notions of fragmentation and silence which are important to the present chapter. See also the present study's discussion, in Chapter One, of the new sense of authorship and originality emerging in this period in connection with print.

and authorship which Sterne was equally able to bring to bear upon himself. In two letters to Robert Foley, he discusses a portrait of himself. In both letters an interesting play on "original" and "copy" is at work.

Mr. H . . . has sent my friend W---'s picture--You have seen the original, or I would have sent it you--I believe I shall beg leave to get a copy of my own [portrait] from yours, when I come in *propria persona* . . . [Letters 202]

There are shifting grounds here, which will become familiar to us from the problematic discussions of originality in the sermons. Does "You have seen the original" mean that Foley has had a visit from W---, or that Foley has seen the original painting? The subsequent use of "yours" to refer to a (seemingly "original") portrait of Sterne suggests the latter. Also noteworthy in this passage is the use of notions of ownership or property in the context of "originals." There seems to be a double contradiction in begging a copy of "my own" portrait (which is simultaneously "yours"). Furthermore, there is a tension in Sterne's waiting to get a copy of a portrait of himself until he (the "original" of the portrait) is present. This suggests a multiplication, not of copies, but of originals: the "original" subject of the portrait requests a copy of the "original" portrait. Sterne's use of "in *propria persona*" maintains the tension by tautologically asserting himself to be his own property.

In the next letter concerning this portrait, Sterne has given up being personally present for the copying of his portrait:

---is it possible for you to get me over a Copy of my picture anyhow?--If so--I would write to M^{lle} Navarre to make as good a Copy from it as She possibly

could--with a view to do her Service here--& I w^d remit her 5 Louis--I really believe, twil be the parent of a dozen portraits to her--if she executes it with the spirit of the Original in y^r hands--for it will be seen by half London--and as my Phyz--is as remarkable as myself---if she preserves the <Spirit> Character of both, 'twil do her honour & service too--- [*Letters* 231]

The same confusions of copy and original are at play in this letter. Again using the language of multiplication, the copy of the original itself becomes a parent of a dozen children (each of which, if formal portraits, will be an "original" of an "original"). There is also a more contained fragmentation of originality: the original portrait, "my Phyz" and "myself." To which two of these three does "the <Spirit> Character of both" refer? Sterne's cancellation of "spirit" may move the reference away from the earlier "spirit of the Original" to his "Phyz" and "self." His choice of "Character"--with its sense of engraving or stamping from without--may ultimately question his own "originality." "Spirit," with its sacred resonance, its connection to the ultimate origin may be too much to claim when discussing a copy of *anything*.

Questions of singularity and number accompany notions of originality and copy. Later in the same letter, Sterne sends greetings to a mutual acquaintance and writes, "I want to send him one of the best Impressions of my Picture <for> from Reynolds, & another to Mon^s Pelletriere---" (231). These are copies of a different original from that being discussed earlier. In his dealing with his "own" portraits, Sterne's notions of originality and property are haphazardly thrown up against a language that collapses distinctions between whose portrait it is, and whose painting it is (indeed, whose painting

it is can be divided between ownership and authorship).³⁹

As we will explore in Chapter Seven, *Tristram Shandy* takes on the problems of copy and original, using the very physical form of the book to question both the technology which produces the book and its implications for personal identity. Part of the problem which the sermons reveal is that, despite emerging concerns with originality, imitation and outright plagiarism are still accepted and even inculcated modes of composition. Indeed, if rhetorical or compositional instruction proceeds by example, "original composition" is something of an oxymoron. In this climate no consideration of authorship and origins is possible outside of the reading context which Sterne brings to his sermons.

The conventional nature of the sermon--its dependence upon commonplaces--offers a challenge to originality which Sterne acknowledges, but declines to take up. The preface to Volume One of the sermons offers the following disclaimer:

I have nothing to add, but that the reader, upon old and beaten subjects, must not look for many new thoughts,--'tis well if he has new language; in three or four

³⁹In the case of the Reynolds portrait, authorship and ownership remained the same for the duration of Sterne's lifetime, since Reynolds retained it. Cash suggests that this was "a joint business venture" in which "Sterne would have the right to have it engraved and used as a frontispiece for his sermons" (*Later Years* 30). Sterne's "ownership" of the right to make copies of "his own" portrait enormously multiplies the number of copies in circulation (see Cash's description of these and their original: *Early and Middle Years* 300-307). Sterne wrote in a letter: "There is a fine print going to be done of me--so I shall make the most of myself, & sell both inside & out" (*Letters* 105). A more metaphorical concern with portraiture, character and copying can be found in the chapter which concludes with Tristram's decision to "draw my uncle *Toby's* character from his HOBBY-HORSE" (I.23.85). This chapter runs through the options from the purely mimetic (although purely metaphorical) Momus's glass (82) to a footnote on "Pentagraph, an instrument to copy prints and pictures mechanically, and in any proportion" (85 n.).

passages, where he has neither the one nor the other, I have quoted the author I made free with--there are some other passages, where I suspect I may have taken the same liberty,--but 'tis only suspicion, for I do not remember it is so, otherwise I should have restored them to their proper owners, so that I put it in here more as a general saving, than from a consciousness of having much to answer for upon that score . . . [2]

This caveat is perhaps less than completely honest, as subsequent scholarship has demonstrated.

Nevertheless, the disclaimer problematizes a theme which arises throughout the sermons. In "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Considered" (Sermon 23), the issues of novelty and originality are considered in a double fashion. First, in explicating the text of Luke 16:31--"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho' one should rise from the dead"--Sterne makes explicit its rhetorical context, allegorizing "novelty" in the figure of Lazarus who is depicted as a shocking rhetorical ploy for attention:

----Rise from the dead! To what purpose? What could such a messenger propose or urge, which had not been proposed and urged already? the novelty or surprize of such a visit might awaken the attention of a curious unthinking people, who spent their time in nothing else, but to hear and tell some new thing; but ere the wonder was well over, some new wonder would start up in its room, and then the man might return to the dead from whence he came, and not a soul make one enquiry about him. [214]

The doubling process begins in the following paragraph when Sterne becomes a member of the audience to the dead man who is envisioned as a preacher, sent by God "to call home our conscience and make us better Christians, better citizens, better men, and better servants to GOD than what we are" (214-15). Next, Sterne's sermon begins to describe the dead man's sermon in its detailed proceeding until,

he would enter into this enquiry.-----

He might add-----

But what?----with all the eloquence of an inspired tongue, What could he add or say to us, which has not been said before? the experiment has been tried a thousand times upon the hopes and fears, the reasons and passions of men, by all the powers of nature . . . [so] that there is not a greater paradox in the world, than that so good a religion should be no better recommended by it's professors.

[216]

Here the rhetoric of the dead man's sermon breaks down as Sterne's sermon addresses the futility of sermonizing: "The fact is, mankind are not always in a humour to be convinced" (216).

The message of this sermon is similar to Swift's "Upon Sleeping in Church." The technique is radically different. Whereas Swift attempted to force his point by overdefining the rhetorical situation and denying rhetoric altogether, Sterne's sermon becomes a study of the rhetorical situation, an apparent lesson in persuasion: "In a word, a man's mind must be like your proposition before it can be relished; and 'tis the resemblance between them, which brings over his judgment, and makes him an evidence

on your side" (222). Is this baring the device? Or is this a device in itself? What originally appears as advice to the orator regarding his audience now reverses its reference. In the next paragraph it is no longer the orator's concern that his audience is not of his mind. It has become the audience's concern:

'Tis therefore not to the cruel,----'tis to the merciful;----to those who rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with them that weep,----that we make this appeal:----'tis to the generous, the kind, the humane, that I am now to tell the sad story . . . [222-23]

The images of like-mindedness (rejoicing and weeping together) obscure the rhetorical flip that has occurred by means of revealing the rhetorical technique at work. The failure of the orator to understand his audience has become the audience's failure to share the orator's grasp of the truth.⁴⁰ It is no surprise that on these shifting grounds, Sterne turns to a questioning of rhetoric: "----What can I say more?----it is a subject on which I cannot inform your judgment,----and in such an audience, I would not presume to practise upon your passions . . ." (223). However, this is a rhetorical questioning of rhetoric. It functions not only by *occupatio* (the rhetorical denial of rhetoric), but by reference to the rhetoric of the other preacher in this text, the dead man whose sermon was interrupted by Sterne's sermon because his audience was doomed to failure. This juxtaposition of

⁴⁰"The Rich Man and Lazarus" was a charity sermon (delivered in 1761), with a specific rhetorical design in mind: to solicit donations to the Foundling Hospital (Cash, *Later Years* 97-8). In Sterne's letter about this sermon (*Letters*, 134), quoted earlier, he suggests that like-mindedness (honesty) precludes the need for preaching--or any communication. He associates preaching with political dunning, thus clearly marking silence as the preferable state.

orators and audiences, the doubling of rhetoric upon itself returns Sterne's audience to the text: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho' one should rise from the dead." No amount of rhetoric, "novelty" or "new language" can convey the message better than the original. This leaves the preacher in a difficult situation, with nothing to say but what has been said. In the light of artificial "novelty," the repetition of old and beaten subjects constitutes "originality."

This mode of "originality" gives rise to a problem similar to that of the portraits: whose is it? In another prefatory comment, Sterne again addresses the issue of originality in two senses: substance and delivery.

[T]here can be little left to be said upon the subject of *Charity*, which has not been often thought, and much better expressed by many who have gone before: and indeed, it seems so beaten and common a path, that it is not an easy matter for a new comer to distinguish himself in it, by any thing except the novelty of his *Vehicle*. [40, original in italics]

It is noteworthy that this apology is itself a commonplace, hewing close to the repetition of accepted truths in its echo of Pope's famous definition of true wit.⁴¹ As we have already seen in "The Rich Man and Lazarus," novelty of vehicle creates only the appearance of communication. The model of communication suggested in "The Rich Man and Lazarus" is one of repetition: sender and receiver are already of like minds.

⁴¹In another instance, the dedication to the first printing of "The Abuses of Conscience" (1750), Sterne apologizes for not making an "original" apology: "--Excuses of this Kind being generally so well known, both as to Substance and Form, that it is altogether unnecessary to copy them" (*Notes* 285).

"Communication" here is the reaffirmation of the old message.⁴² To view repetition as originality is somewhat contradictory.

In other sermons this problem remains, but in a modified form, when Sterne turns to a consideration of *origins* in scripture, rather than the preacher's own originality. He addresses this problem under the rubric of the sublime, asking after the source of the Bible's affective power. In several sermons Sterne follows the old and beaten path of distinguishing sacred from heathen writing in terms of their respective simplicity and ornamentation, choosing the *locus classicus* of the biblical sublime: Job. "Job's Account of the Shortness and Troubles of Life, Considered" (Sermon 10) opens with a comment on Job 14:1-2:

THERE is something in this reflection of holy Job's, upon the shortness of life, and instability of human affairs, so beautiful and truly sublime; that one might challenge the writings of the most celebrated orators of antiquity, to produce a specimen of eloquence, so noble and thoroughly affecting. Whether this effect be owing in some measure, to the pathetic nature of the subject reflected on;--or to the eastern manner of expression, in a stile more exalted and suitable to so great a subject, or (which is the more likely account,) because they are properly the

⁴²The language of information theory is useful here because it shares many of the same assumptions which create the originality paradox in this eighteenth-century context. The Anglican option for "redundancy" (predictability) is a lowering of "information content" (marked by unpredictability) in order to combat "noise" (interference which causes misinterpretation): "The higher the redundancy, the lower the information, therefore the higher the predictability and imperviousness to noise." See Louis T. Milic, "Information Theory and the Style of *Tristram Shandy*," 238-9. The Anglican view would see "novelty of vehicle" as noise, mere rhetorical ornamentation. These conditions lead to a communications contradiction threatening the "original" Christian message.

words of that being, who first inspired man with language, and taught his mouth to utter, who opened the lips of the dumb, and made the tongue of the infant eloquent;--to which of these we are to refer the beauty and sublimity of this . . . may not seem now material . . . [91]

Here are Sterne's concerns with originality, ironically delivered in a commonplace observation.⁴³ His parenthetical preference for divine authorship (which "first *inspired* man with language") returns us to his use of "spirit" in the letters concerning his portrait. There is a similar tension here among "originals," for it may be "the pathetic nature of the subject" as well as "the eastern manner of expression" which cause the sublimity of Job. As with the portraits, there is authority in subject and style as well as spirit. But Sterne questions these: they "may not now seem material." The multiplicity of originary powers fragments what, for Sterne, should be the singularity or unity of the biblical sublime. In this light, the acknowledgement of Job's own experiential authority--"surely without these helps [subject, style and spirit], never man was better qualified to make just and noble reflections upon the shortness of life . . ." (91)--must necessarily be questioned as well, for, as we receive the story by means of textual transmission, there are too many divisions of authority and its origin. The source of Job's power is ontologically diffuse.

In "National Mercies Considered" (Sermon 21), Sterne alludes to the divine single

⁴³See *Notes* (141-42), which cites Tillotson as well as *Spectator* 405. Jonathan Lamb's "The Comic Sublime and Sterne's Fiction" further notes the traditional preference of "the primitive sublime of the Old Testament" to the classical in sources such as *Guardian* 86, William Smith's notes to his translation of Longinus, and Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* (123). See also Lamb's comments suggesting the importance of the phrase following the parentheses for Sterne's poetics of silence (*Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* 22).

origin of form and content which are now, for us in the fallen age of multiplication and fragmentation, double. He suggests that the authority of the ten commandments resides not only in their divine origin, but also in their divine *inscription*. As he apostrophizes Moses, he notes that Moses *holds* the tables, emphasizing their material form which had been in the presence of God (the abstract text of the commandments is less important here):

. . . a propensity towards superstition in the Israelites, did once betray thee into an excess of anger, that thou threwest the two tables out of thy hands, which GOD had wrote, and carelessly hazarded'st the whole treasure of the world . . . [197]

The medium as well as the message is original.⁴⁴ But this, of course, is compromised in this example, as the originality of form allows Moses to break the tables, interfering with the communication of originality. Now, we may only translate, read *about* the original text of the commandments in the pages of the bible. Just as we perceive multiple causes for Job's sublimity, the original tables inscribed by God are multiplied into shattered fragments just as the story of this fragmentation is multiplied by innumerable retellings as well as printed copies.

Elsewhere in the sermons, these concerns with originals and copies, old thoughts and new language, give way to considerations of absence and presence, rhetoric and reference, often discussed explicitly in the terms of sublime aesthetics. This is most clear

⁴⁴In this context it is interesting to note that "In his *Sculptura* (1662), Evelyn insists on the link between the modern art of printed engraving . . . and the biblical 'graven image,' at once literal and figural: print is the descendant of 'the Tables of stone, engraven by the Finger of God himself'" (Julie Stone Peters, *Congreve, the Drama, and the Printed Word*, 15, citing Evelyn, 15).

in Sterne's use of translation to discuss the problem of mediation in "Search the Scriptures" (Sermon 42). Here Sterne notes that the classical authors are more dependent on rhetorical ornamentation than the biblical, and hence they "lose most of their graces whenever we find them literally translated" (393). On the other hand,

in the Sacred Writings, they consist more in the greatness of the things themselves, than in the words and expressions.--The ideas and conceptions are so great and lofty in their own nature, that they necessarily appear magnificent in the most artless dress.--Look but into the Bible, and we see them shine through the most simple and literal translations.--That glorious description which Moses gives of the creation of the heavens and the earth, which Longinus, the best critic the eastern world ever produced, was so justly taken with, has not lost the least whit of its intrinsic worth; and though it has undergone so many translations, yet triumphs over all, and breaks forth with as much force and vehemence as in the original.

[393-4]

The valences of this passage are multiple. Again, it is a commonplace observation--an old thought in new language, a translation upon translation (although the reference to Longinus in a sermon seems unique to Sterne).⁴⁵ This discussion must be considered alongside the discussion of novelty in "The Rich Man and Lazarus." For the return of a dead man is a translation of sorts, a translation which, in the Lazarus sermon, could add

⁴⁵Almost all of the various sources and analogues which New cites for "Search the Scriptures" are critical commentaries rather than sermons. It is noteworthy that this sermon reveals a considerable depth to Sterne's reading in sublime aesthetics, including William Smith's translation and annotation of Longinus, and works by John Dennis, Anthony Blackwall, and Robert Lowth.

nothing to the original message. In the present case, however, translation is not novelty, but rather the purification of novelty. When the ornaments of classical writers are filtered out, the true nature of their effect is seen to reside in "an over-curious and artificial arrangement of figures, tinsel'd over with a gaudy embellishment of words, which glitter, but convey little or no light to the understanding" (392). In other words, these writings have no "original" behind them.⁴⁶ They are a series of copies from the rhetorical *copia* of figures, in a sense, pre-translated--dead men arisen without a message.⁴⁷

The "simplicity and majesty" of the sacred writings reveal their origin by their plainness. Translation becomes a direct mapping of authority through repetition:

--As the infinite wise Being has condescended to stoop to our language, thereby to convey to us the light of revelation, so has he been pleased graciously to accommodate it to us with the most natural and graceful plainness it would admit of. [393]

Although the doubly original ten commandments were shattered, through their simplicity they are repeated with the certainty of mutually confirming translations. In a sense, it is

⁴⁶It is worth noting in this context Yorick's comment on the Parisian barber's reference to the ocean: "All that can be said against the French sublime in this instance of it, is this--that the grandeur is *more* in the *word*; and *less* in the *thing*. No doubt the ocean fills the mind with vast ideas; but Paris being so far inland, it was not likely I should run post a hundred miles out of it, to try the experiment--the Parisian barber meant nothing.-- . . . *The French expression professes more than it performs*" (*A Sentimental Journey* 159).

⁴⁷There is an irony here in that Sterne is copying this criticism of copious writing (as well as several subsequent observations) from Anthony Blackwall (*Notes* 420-21). See Lamb, *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle*, Chapter 5 (esp. 109-23), for a discussion of translation in Sermon 42 and Sterne's use of Blackwall, Lowth and others in the tradition of the biblical sublime.

only through translation, by distancing ourselves from the original source, that the very originality of that source can be ascertained.⁴⁸ On the one hand, translation fragments classical writing through the distortions of repetition. Like the copies of Sterne's portrait, these translation-repetitions call into question the "original" itself by pointing out the rhetorical or ornamental nature of the "original": which instance of repetition has authority? On the other hand, translation confirms the unity of the scriptural sublime by means of repetition--the spirit cannot be filtered out.⁴⁹

In Sermon 26, on the text, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22), Sterne distinguishes between "knowledge" and "wisdom" in the terms of the now familiar classical/sacred division. Classical knowledge consists of (ironically titled) "little ideas": "sounding the depths of arts and sciences;----measuring the heavens; telling the number of the stars, and calling them all by their names . . ." (246-47).⁵⁰ This taxonomic wisdom is explicitly linked to the Greeks and Romans, to whom, Sterne notes, St. Paul alludes (247). Again, knowledge is a matter of linguistic ornament, the realm of "professing" rather than "becoming" and, ultimately, being.

The taxonomizing of nature is finally seen to be a fragmentation and multiplication. Sterne prefaces his enquiry into the "advantages of Christianity" with a

⁴⁸In Derrida's language, "the supplement transgresses and at the same time respects the interdict" (*Of Grammatology* 155), marking presence with absence.

⁴⁹The ontological problem of the representational text still remains, of course. The "original" in question is the Hebrew text, not "the things themselves." "Spirit" is a substitute or supplement.

⁵⁰Again, this is a commonplace notion. Sterne seems indebted to Tillotson here, although not in the reference to naming (*Notes* 277).

reflexive denial of the act of enquiring: "In litigating this, one might oppose facts to facts to the end of the world, without coming one jot nearer the point" (249). In other words, this is a classical mode of proceeding, causing origins to recede by its very operation. Nevertheless, Sterne proceeds. The terms are those of unity and multiplication:⁵¹

That there was one supreme Being who made this world . . . is the foundation of all religion, and so obvious a truth in nature,----that Reason, as the Apostle acknowledges, was always able to discover it . . . [but] little able to keep true to its own judgment, and support it long against the prejudices of wrong heads, and the propensity of weak ones, towards idolatry and a multiplicity of gods. [249]

This tendency toward multiplication is next described in quasi-rhetorical terms, indeed the terms of the elaborate sermon divisions of Sterne's predecessors. Spirit is fragmented into ornament:

----how soon was this simple idea lost, and mankind led to dispose of these attributes inherent in the Godhead, and divide and subdivide them again amongst deities, which their own dreams had given substance to;----his eternal power and dominion parcell'd out to gods of the land,----to gods of the sea,----to gods of the infernal regions; whilst the great GOD of gods, and LORD of lords, who ruleth over all the kingdoms of the world,----who is so great that nought is able to controul or withstand his power, was supposed to rest contented with his allotment, and to want power to act within such parts of his empire, as they

⁵¹Again, these are commonplace terms (v. *Notes* 278-79).

dismembered and assigned to others. [249-50]

I quote at length to demonstrate Sterne's use of anaphora to suggest the division of the Godhead, not only among the gods but also within the concept itself: the inherent attributes must be listed separately with successive "who's." Between these two uses of anaphora stands the Biblical tautology, "GOD of gods, and LORD of lords," a repetition of unity (*sum qui sum*), a redundancy made necessary by a language of insufficient expression, one dependent on ornamentation.⁵²

Finally, Sterne brings the question down to one of origin:

If the number of their gods and this partition of their power, would lessen the idea of their majesty, What must be the opinions of their origin? When instead of that glorious description, which Scripture gives of "The Ancient of Days who inhabiteth eternity,"----they gravely assigned particular times and places for the births and education of their gods; so that there was scarce a hamlet or even a desert in Greece or Italy, which was not rendered memorable by some favour or accident of this kind. [250]

This brings out the tension within originality itself. For Sterne, the greatest mistake of the heathens is that "they supposed . . . that the gods they worshipped had a beginning" (250). That is, they assumed origins are accessible. Ultimately, in Sterne's articulation

⁵²As already noted, Sterne is here borrowing quite closely from Tillotson (*Notes* 279). Tillotson draws the same contrast of sacred unity and heathen plurality. Nevertheless, the specific rhetorical techniques (including "divide and subdivide") under consideration here are part of Sterne's reworking: an interesting instance of translated ornamentation. In fact, the very use of rhetorical figures here epitomizes Sterne's use of doubling and collapse. Language itself is used to demonstrate its own insufficiency.

of this commonplace theory, it is the very absence of the original--usually the fact that it does not lie in the language--which makes it powerful and authoritative. The original description "breaks forth" only "with *as much* force and vehemence *as* in the original" (394, emphasis added); it is clearly not *the* original. This accounts for the multiplication of originals in the letters on the portrait. If the original cannot be located in any single point, it is everywhere and nowhere.

These concerns with absent presence, or presence through absence account for Sterne's interest in, and use of, silence in the sermons.⁵³ In "Search the Scriptures," while discussing the revelation of Joseph to his brothers, Sterne continues to contrast the scriptural and classical writings in these terms:

--On all sides, there immediately ensues a deep and solemn silence;--a silence infinitely more eloquent and expressive, than any thing else could have been, substituted in its place.--Had Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, or any of the celebrated classical historians, been employed in writing this history, when they came to this point, they would, doubtless, have exhausted all their fund of eloquence in furnishing Joseph's brethren with laboured and studied harangues; which, however fine they might have been in themselves, would nevertheless have

⁵³Like the questions of unity and number, the vision of the "simplicity and majesty" of scripture, and the concern for origins in Sterne's sermons, this is a Longinian move: "Hence it comes to pass, that a naked thought without words challenges admiration, and strikes by its grandeur. Such is the silence of *Ajax* in the *Odyssey*, which is undoubtedly noble, and far above expression" (Longinus ix.13). As with the sublime, the frequent gesture at silence in the sermons is simultaneously logocentric and inscribed in rhetoric. This paradox is central to the questions of presence and absence with which the present study is concerned. The representation of silence will be considered with reference to the printed book's textuality in Chapter Six.

been unnatural, and altogether improper on the occasion. [395-6]

Here is an example of originality passing the translation test. The ornamented speech of the historians is false, or unoriginal, in many ways. Most flagrantly, it would be "furnished" or added to the story. Such a speech would fail in translation. "In this case, silence was truly eloquent and natural, and tears expressed what oratory was incapable of" (396). The true spirit of the event is communicated--it "breaks forth"--by the very untranslatability of silence which makes it simultaneously most translatable. The terms which Sterne employs reveal his necessary sleight of hand. Without the contrast with classical ornamental rhetoric (and its implied opposition to philosophical truth), Sterne cannot articulate the weighty silence (it has presence) which will move his audience. In other words, origins are most powerful in their inaccessibility.⁵⁴ Anglican redundancy is transcended not by "novelty of vehicle" itself, but by the opposition of novelty to silence which represents an uncommunicable message, a glimpse at the origin made articulate only by contrast. This is a "deep" rhetoric of presence manifested by the "surface" presence of rhetoric.

It is the presence of rhetoric in Sterne's sermons which has concerned us all along in this chapter. Sterne's discussion of or decision to opt for silence in his sermons is a

⁵⁴Lamb's reading of Sterne's sermon rhetoric returns us to this paradox at the level of the preacher: "As a preacher Sterne felt it his duty to be the energetic medium between the force of scriptural language and the hearts of his congregation, so his 'dramatic' sermons are translations of the primitive and sublime ideas of the holy text into expressions that are made as forceful and immediate as possible by concrete language and a variety of rhetorical devices. The sermons are not simply elaborations or explanations of the text but enactments or imitations of the divine original" ("Sterne's System of Imitation" 804).

manifestation of a problem inherent in the nature of discourse. Words stand in the way of understanding. Discourse, as Tristram discusses it in his preface, is the act of "placing a number of tall, opaque words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your readers conception" (III.xx.235). In the terms of "Search the Scriptures," discourse is classical, bound up in its expression, untranslatable. The beauties of sacred discourse "consist more in the greatness of the things themselves, than in the words and expressions" (393). But this is an ideal, nonhuman discourse. The rhetorical situation of the sermon requires human discourse--"a theologic flap upon the heart" (*Letters* 134). As has been suggested, rhetoric--the recognition of the need to persuade--plays its role in the human context. Rhetoric functions by means of the double nature of language. The form of the message must be considered if it is to be communicated. The simultaneous doubling and collapse in the sermons is a marker of Sterne's use of rhetoric, playing on the relationship of medium and message--sometimes distinguishing one from the other, sometimes making one identical to the other. The extreme manifestation of these concerns which were openly addressed throughout Sterne's sermon writing career appears in the Shandean physical format in which the sermons were presented to the world in the 1760s. The silent, non-verbal, spatial and gestural nature of the sermons will be addressed in Chapter Six where we will see the poetics of silence at work in the margins, between paragraphs and at the end of the line.

This manifestation of Sterne's concerns will not, however, reveal the origins of Sterne's sense of the presence of the text--the Shandean typographic style--for it is *Tristram Shandy* which directly informs the printed presentation of the sermons. Instead,

we should return to the questions with which this chapter began to ask how these questions of presence come to produce a work like *Tristram Shandy*. As we have already noted, the reputation *Tristram Shandy* created for Sterne necessarily forces skepticism regarding his religious sincerity. Nevertheless, the sermons in themselves do not easily offer evidence of insincerity. Although the foregrounding of rhetorical issues may suggest the sophist *in malo*, we must note that Sterne's end in discussing and employing rhetoric invokes the sophist *in bono* to help his parishioners recognize their contingent human condition, cope with their weaknesses and lead happier lives.⁵⁵ The aesthetics of the sublime which Sterne invokes are employed toward this end. The difficulties engaged with here involve an attempt to use fallen language to recreate divine presence, the ultimately persuasive force. That *truth* should need persuasive force is the fundamental aspect of our fallen condition: "Is it that we are like iron, and must first be heated before we can be wrought upon?" (Sermon 20, 186). The preacher's rhetorical mediation is as necessary as Christ's intervention.

This is a generous reading of the situation of the preacher. Sterne the satirist (one intimately aware of weaknesses in the preacher's position) is aware that the same set of data is susceptible of an ironic interpretation. And here we must turn to consider Sterne in the context of satiric irony and pursue satiric questions of presence.

⁵⁵Cash describes Sterne in general as a man who enjoyed preaching and had a good deal of concern for his parishioners (*Early and Middle Years* 123-25).

Chapter 3: Textual Presence in Menippean Satire: Classical and Renaissance

Backgrounds

In order to bridge the apparent gap between the sermon-writer and the writer of bawdy satire, many studies turn to examine the sentimental drift of *Tristram Shandy*: the pathos of the story of Le Fever (at whose funeral Yorick preaches), for example, has obvious affinities to the sermons' appeal to the heart. However, this is to beg the question, for we must now explain how the Le Fever episode is accommodated in the bawdy context of *Tristram Shandy*. As a whole, this study takes a different approach, seeking continuities of rhetoric among the discourses engaged by Sterne. This chapter and the next concern Menippean satire, characterized by a self-consciousness about rhetoric¹ which has remarkable similarities to Sterne's rhetorical methods and concerns in the sermons. The very inadequacy of language which requires sublime transcendence in the sermons may equally produce bombast aimed to achieve less altruistic ends, or no ends at all. Satire, with its emphasis on reduction, most often to the bodily and physical, seems the polar opposite to the transcendence of the sublime, especially in the religious context in which we have just begun to examine it. Nevertheless, both sincere and ironic readings of the preacher's task do emphasize mediation and the question of the effect produced by language use. Ultimately, it is in this self-reflexive similarity that we may see Sterne as both preacher and satirist, without contradiction.

This chapter discusses the tradition of Menippean satire to which Sterne openly

¹See, for example, Frank Palmeri's comments on the discussion of the ends of rhetoric in the opening fragment of the *Satyricon* (*Satire in Narrative* 25-27). As we will see, later Menippean works such as Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Pope's *Peri Bathous* show similar concerns.

declared allegiance. In *Tristram Shandy* he aligns himself with Lucian, "my dear *Rabelais*, and dearer *Cervantes*" (III.xix.225),² as well as Swift's *Tale of a Tub* (IX.viii.754). In the letters he represents himself as heir to Rabelais and Swift (writers Sterne clearly sees as constituting a tradition [76, 132]), as well as Cervantes (77, 120) and the Scriblerians (305). Clearly, Sterne is self-consciously placing himself in an accepted tradition (which has since come to be known as Menippean satire). Although the reading of the Menippean tradition which this chapter offers is informed by the twentieth-century observations of the critics mentioned below, we should stress that the tradition we trace here is an early modern construction made by the Renaissance as it rediscovered ancient texts. Lipsius is the first to use the term Menippean satire in 1581,³ and the collection of anonymous French Menippean satires known as the *Satyre Ménippée* took up the name in 1594. This publication also offers an important prefatory discussion of the genre, defending the use of prose in satire, drawing the ancient pedigree from Menippus through Varro, Petronius, Lucian and Apuleius and adding Rabelais as a modern Menippean. In the next century, we find Rapin adding Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* to the list of ancients and Cervantes to the moderns.⁴ This tradition receives its major

²An extended discussion of this declaration of allegiance appears in the *Critical Review* of April 1761, identifying the influence of Lucian and Rabelais and denying that of Cervantes (reprinted in Howes, *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, 125-26).

³Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire*, 12. This is a useful book although its attempt at a strict definition of Menippean satire as a classical genre excludes *all* of the present chapter's examples (save Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*).

⁴This summary is taken from Dorothy Coleman's *Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction* (85-7). It is interesting to note that, in the face of the difficulty in defining this genre, the pedigree becomes a substitute. Indeed, most Menippean works incorporate such

identification in English in Dryden's "Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," which draws heavily on Casaubon's Renaissance work, *De Satyrica* (1605). Dryden repeats the list of ancient authors compiled above (with special reference to Lucian's *Verae Historiae*), and lists among the moderns, Erasmus' *Moriae Encomium*, Spenser's *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, and his own *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Flecknoe*.⁵

So, when Sterne announces his pedigree, he is acknowledging his participation in a long tradition which, by an examination of its contributors, is obviously more complex than is allowed by the merely formal definition of the genre as a medley of verse and prose (Quintilian's definition [X.i.95] and that of many modern classicists [see Relihan 3]). Such a definition has given way to a more complex set of characteristics ever since Northrop Frye discussed the genre in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, and especially since the work of Mikhail Bakhtin has become available in English. Definition is problematic: both Frye and Bakhtin are careful to introduce new terminology (Frye refers to the "anatomy," Bakhtin the "Menippea") to describe an extremely loose category, including discursive, often narrative (albeit episodic), anatomical, encyclopedic works in verse and/or prose

a pedigree as a form of self-identification: the authors cite pedigrees "because the apparent lack of structural and thematic decorum in their imitations requires some defense, and historical precedent is the best defense possible" (Eugene Paul Korkowski, *Menippus and his Imitators: A Conspectus, up to Sterne, for a Misunderstood Genre*, 13).

⁵"Discourse," 46-48. Dryden's understanding of the Menippean genre has been questioned, especially with reference to his own works. Nevertheless, he seems to agree with a general notion of Menippean satire as non-didactic (or indirectly so, employing an apparently non-satiric persona), narrative (or implicitly so), serio-comic (*spoudogeloios*) and parodic (see the *California* commentary, 560-62).

(but, in post-classical works, most often the latter). Each theorist's definition reveals how this tradition engages with philosophical ideas, both participating in and subverting intellectual discourse. Frye's definition appeals to the idealist, attempting to identify Menippean satire, or the anatomy, as a single genre: "A form of prose fiction . . . characterized by a great variety of subject-matter and a strong interest in ideas" (*Anatomy* 365, see also 308-12). It is important to note that Frye would not dispute much of Bakhtin's definition, except perhaps its materialist emphasis. Bakhtin defines the serio-comic genres of which Menippean satire is his key example, as "novelized," "multi-styled and hetero-voiced" hybrids, incorporating other genres:

Characteristic of these genres are a multi-toned narration, the mixing of high and low, serious and comic; they make wide use of inserted genres--letters, found manuscripts, retold dialogues, parodies on the high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations; in some of them we observe a mixing of prosaic and poetic speech, living dialects and jargons . . . are introduced, and various authorial masks make their appearance. Alongside the representing word there appears the *represented* word; in certain genres a leading role is played by the double-voiced word. And what appears here, as a result, is a radically new relationship to the word as the material of literature.⁶

These are extremely broad definitions. A number of useful critical studies of aspects of the Menippean tradition (both in England and elsewhere) have attempted to narrow the scope of the Frye-Bakhtin definition according to their major focus, just as the

⁶*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (108; see also 114-20, *passim*).

present chapter attempts to do with the lens of print and an emphasis on narrative.⁷ One recent book needs to be singled out here for its different approach to similar subject matter. In *Menippean Satire and the Poetics of Wit: Ideologies of Self-Consciousness in Dunton, D'Urfey, and Sterne*, Garry Sherbert addresses Restoration and eighteenth-century Menippean satire in terms of the tradition of exuberant wit. This focus determines his interest in metaphor (especially catachresis) and its application to psychoanalytic insights, exploring questions of identity: Self and Other. Although clearly related to these questions, my own interest in the physical textuality of Menippean satire is ontological, exploring the relation of the physical and metaphysical, something implicit in catachresis which I see made explicit in the presentation of the text.

The question of Menippean satire's status as a genre is vexed. Relihan notes that Frye and Bakhtin "agree that a new relation of author to work is the issue, and the elimination of the word *satire* from their names for the genre avoids the glib associations of social criticism that that word normally entails" (8). Although somewhat arbitrary (there is a clear connection between the miscellaneous nature of Juvenal's *farrago* and Horace's *satura* and the open-ended, digressive Menippean satire [Pope is one author who

⁷For example, F. Anne Payne's *Chaucer and Menippean Satire* focuses on characters in the dialogue form (emphasizing Lucian and Boethius); W. Scott Blanchard's *Scholars' Bedlam: Menippean Satire in the Renaissance* is a new historicist account relating the genre to shifting cultural patterns of emerging classes and marketplace forces. See also Relihan, Dorothy Coleman's *Rabelais*, Chapter 5, and the indispensable Eugene Kirk [Korkowski], *Menippean Satire: An annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism*. In this context we should recall the tradition of Sterne scholarship, beginning with D. W. Jefferson's "Tristram Shandy and the Tradition of Learned Wit," mentioned in Chapter One.

engages in both modes]), such generic boundaries are influential.⁸ For my purposes, a clearly defined genre is unnecessary, perhaps even counterproductive: the limiting definition of a classicist such as Relihan ignores the continuity of a set of discursive practices employed by authors in the (expanding and contracting) Menippean tradition. However, the opposition to formal verse satire which, since Dryden, has been taken as a closed form aimed at imparting "some one Precept of Moral Virtue" and warning "against some one particular Vice or Folly" is historically important, and theoretically useful, for it allows the insight that Menippean satire employs a radically ungrounded irony lacking clear loci of praise and blame.⁹ Indeed, the incorporative nature of Bakhtin's "Menippea," which makes its *violation* of categorical boundaries its chief generic characteristic, is both product and producer of such irony.

As we will see in our discussion of Rabelais, Bakhtin's figure for generic violations is the body, for it is in the transgressive realm of the grotesque where satiric attack finds figures for the contradictions it wishes to expose: most often the incompatibility of mind and body. Bakhtin's insight into the workings of the grotesque are important for the present chapter which investigates transgressions of the form-content

⁸In Chapters 1 and 2 of his *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* Dustin Griffin offers historical and theoretical discussions of the question of satiric genres.

⁹Dryden is quoted from his "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," 80. We should note that the ends of this formal variety of satire have obvious similarities with the ends of the sermon. Frank Palmeri suggests that unlike verse satire, which is grounded in a conservative perspective (attack), narrative satire sustains an ongoing parody of all positions (7). Palmeri's study, and others such as Joseph A. Dane's *Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne*, treat the Menippean tradition without the specific generic concerns of the studies discussed above.

boundary under the name of the presence of the text. Relihan succinctly summarizes:

Bakhtin does create an impressive series of relations between structural elements (fantasy, multileveled construction, voyages, *catascopia*, mad characters, variations in style and tone, subsumed genres, use of verse) and thematic ones (the breakdown of old notions of truth and order, the search for new truths, the possibility that truth may be anywhere). [8]

Beginning with this set of interrelations and Bakhtin's emphasis on the body, this chapter and the next wish to trace the Menippean tradition in terms of its awareness of textuality, seeing a relay among thematic concerns of mind and body, satiric and narrative techniques, and the textual condition, which, over the history of the genre becomes the condition of print. It is no accident that as Marshall McLuhan enumerates the "four massive myths of the Gutenberg transformation of society" he is also tracing a modern Menippean pedigree: "Besides *Gargantua*, they are *Don Quixote*, the *Dunciad*, and *Finnegans Wake*."¹⁰ The technologizing of the mind, the impact of print on perception and worldview, which is McLuhan's subject manifests itself in the literary self-consciousness of the works addressed in this chapter and the next. In the present chapter, I wish to consider this self-consciousness (which is an awareness of the mind-body problem) in thematic attention to linguistic embodiment and extra-thematic attention to diegesis. These two manifestations of self-reflexivity are analogous to the parts of the problem addressed by Menippean satire: respectively, body and mind. With the Scriblerians, Sterne's closest forebears, this self-awareness becomes performative at the

¹⁰*Gutenberg Galaxy* 147.

textual level. With this telos in mind, we may note the presence of the text as it is manifested in the tradition as a whole, especially in the direct precursors to both Sterne and the Scriblerians: Rabelais and Cervantes.

Body and Mind in Classical Menippean Satire

As Menippean satirists engage with their versions of the mind-body problem, we find a constant recourse to questions of presence, with special attention paid to textual presence. In satire written before the advent of print a more general interest in the function of language in creating presence, a concern with representation and reality, is in evidence. The fact of linguistic illusion necessarily leads to an analysis of the claims of philosophy and learning, Menippean satire's most prevalent theme. The method of analysis is, of course, to debunk the pretentious claims of philosophers and scholars by drawing attention to the highly physical form of their medium: to trace Menippean satire from Petronius or Apuleius through Rabelais and Cervantes to the Scriblerians is to note a constant emphasis on representing the grotesque bodily and physical manifestations of thought, a constant reminder that a "great tradition" is derived from a physical set of manuscripts, that a notion of mind is abstracted from the body.

Nowhere else are philosophers more brought down to earth than at dinner. The Menippean *cena* has origins in a parody of Plato's *Symposium*, which inevitably brings mind and body together at the table. So many minds around a single table raises the expectation that great wisdom will be imparted. However, what is to be learned when so

many minds are accompanied by so many bodies? As one of Lucian's narrators concludes after attending a banquet at which different schools of philosophers, rhetoricians and poets become the worse for drink and turn debate into apocalyptic battle, "I have at least learned that it is not safe for a man of peace to dine with men so learned."¹¹ In Menippean satire, learned individuals inevitably succumb to their embodiment. The most famous example of the Menippean *cena* is Trimalchio's dinner in Petronius' *Satyricon*, which features pretenders to learning and taste. Trimalchio himself is highly embodied: his delight in the consumption of food and wine is made apparent by the constant stream of delicacies at his dinner. Equally apparent is his concern for excretion, which he cannot keep to himself: if he does not urinate in public, as when we first meet him (27), he returns from the pot with a detailed report, and indeed a philosophy of evacuation (47). His sycophantic guests who, however appalled, applaud Trimalchio's every word, are no better. all seeking another invitation to dinner, to feed the body.

But in addition to the individual bodies present at the *cena*, we are also presented with a thematic exploration of embodiment: a catalogue of transgressions of the boundary between mind and body. This is immediately apparent in the grotesque violations of classical decorum apparent in Trimalchio's taste, as this exemplar of the nouveau riche combines without distinction his popular taste for vulgar sports with an attempt to show his status through "high art" and mythology. For example, the pictures in his hall are "The Iliad and the Odyssey . . . and the gladiator's show given by Laenas," upon which,

¹¹"The Carousal, or the Lapiths" in *Lucian* vol. 1 (48). References to all classical works are to the divisions of the standard text presented in the Loeb editions. Quotations are from the accompanying translation.

our narrator Encolpius rightly comments, "I could not take the whole multiplicativity in at once" (29-30).¹² This is an important comment in a work whose irony is never grounded for very long, and is always turning upon the text itself and its reader. Trimalchio is certainly satirized for his failure to understand the intellectual distinctions upon which taste is built, but he is not the only satiric target here. The satirist himself acknowledges here the fact of his own human limitations: his inability to comprehend the whole. Taste is revealed to be a construction based on exactly the bodily limitations which it would transcend. (We should note that one might easily describe Encolpius' experience of Trimalchio's grotesque bricolage as "sublime.") This satiric observation leads to an issue which concerns aesthetic discourses as well (especially in the eighteenth century), namely the bodily metaphor in the notion of taste.

In Menippean satire generally and the *Cena Trimalchionis* especially, the nature of language, representation and the issue of taste are dealt with in bodily terms, and, appropriately enough, in terms of food. In *Rabelais and His World* (Chapter 4), Bakhtin describes banquet imagery as a celebration of the grotesque body in its universal and all-encompassing nature, but, in its mixing of low and high and its propensity for parody, the banquet also plays an intellectual role in providing an analysis of language with a recognition of the effect of its embodiment. In the *Satyricon* this analysis takes place with the physical performance of ideas, often the embodiment of conceptual puns in the form

¹²Later displays by Trimalchio inevitably reveal his knowledge of mythology to be seriously confused, and his knowledge of wrestling to be quite accurate (see, for example, 52). He later declares that "there were only two things in the world that he could watch with real pleasure, acrobats and trumpeters" (53).

of food.¹³ Trimalchio is obsessed with forcing symbolic and linguistic correspondences into a physical form. He presents an elaborately designed Zodiac with food appropriately chosen for each symbol (35); in his attempt to make a joke on a Latin name for Bacchus, Liber, he sets free (liber) one of his slaves whom he has dressed as Bacchus (41). As the evening progresses, Trimalchio's performances become increasingly strained. His *apophoreta* (a variety of wit akin to the rebus in which a riddle punningly describes a gift given to a guest) represent a particularly literalistic view of language in which meaning is undone by a focus on the correspondence of the physical sounds of words, even unto letters, as in the following riddle, "Muraena et littera" which corresponds to the gift of "murem cum rana alligata fascemque betae" (56).¹⁴ In some sense, the fact that we read about these puns makes them easier to comprehend, since the connection is linguistic. At the dinner, the guests are presented with only the objects that, in themselves, are so distant

¹³As Bakhtin suggests (297-98), the use of food becomes an all-pervasive trope, marking the presence of the bodily throughout literary discourse. Despite Bakhtin's disapproval of Lucian as lacking "true gaiety" (387-88), the fantastic voyage in *Verae Historiae* (in *Lucian* vol. 1), which traverses entire lands of food, is a perfect illustration: a river of wine populated by intoxicating fish (I.7), or a sea of milk with an island which "was a great solid cheese, as we afterwards learned by tasting it" (II.3)--the alimentary nature of this land is linked to language by puns: it is ruled by a queen Tyro (*tyros* = cheese) and home to a temple to Galatea (*gala* = milk). Elsewhere he does battle with enemies armed with huge radishes, using "mushrooms for shields and stalks of asparagus for spears" and flying "on the back of winged acorns" (I.16). We should note that Bakhtin's disapproval points to the "other side" of this tradition which this chapter attempts to outline as more expressly concerned with diegesis than mimesis, with mind than with body.

¹⁴Translation reveals how terrible Trimalchio's puns are: the riddle translates, "a moray-eel and a letter," the gift is literally "a mouse tied to a frog and a bundle of beetroot" which, in the Latin, combines *mus* and *rana* to get *muraena* and adds *beta*, both the Greek letter and Latin for beet. J. P. Sullivan's more free translation (Penguin) attempts to convey this in English: "*Lights and letters* got a lamprey and some peas" (72).

from the riddle that a full separation of signifier from signified takes place. Like most of Trimalchio's world, this is a violation of decorum, the mutual suitability of form and content.

Indeed, these transgressions are part of a larger concern with issues of representation and reality in the *Satyricon* as a whole.¹⁵ In Trimalchio's entrance-hall Encolpius becomes frightened and jumps back, "For on the left hand as you went in . . . a great dog on a chain was painted on the wall, and over him was written in block capitals 'BEWARE OF THE DOG'" (29). It is unclear exactly what the source of Encolpius' fear is. The warning certainly contributes to his apprehension, yet, at the same time, the presence of a text embedded within the picture would seem to point out the artifice, denying the need for fear (note that, again, we are using the terms of the sublime). Again, this is a question of decorum. Trimalchio's use of both painting and text employs two mutually exclusive systems of representation, each of which on its own would justify fear. However, placed together on the same surface, each cancels the other's threat by revealing it to be merely a representation. Trimalchio's penchant for trompe l'oeil, as well as Encolpius' inability to detect it, indicate an ongoing interest in the relationship of art and reality, analyzed by means of their confusion.¹⁶ Frank

¹⁵On this larger issue, see, for example, Frank Palmeri and Niall Slater (*Reading Petronius*), who are interested in questions of narrative from a Bakhtinian and a reader-response perspective, respectively.

¹⁶In this fashion the *Satyricon* is a self-reflexive text. Outside of the *cena*, as the existing fragment opens, we witness a declamation against declamation which criticizes rhetoric on the grounds that it has no relation to reality, no referential meaning. Ultimately, however, this speech is seen to be an example of exactly what it purports to criticize: a discourse with rhetorical ends (gaining an invitation to Trimalchio's dinner)

Palmeri describes the full import of Trimalchio's culinary performances:

Petronius's parodic leveling ultimately extends to parodies of fundamental institutions and social practices which call into question the precedence of culture over nature that epics celebrate. Trimalchio's dishes move in this direction when they make use of conceptual puns that conflate process and product, nature and culture, life and death. In the first roast (40.1-8), for example, the cooked pig appears to have given birth to suckling piglets, but these prove to be made of cake. Then, when the pig's belly is sliced open, live thrushes fly out; in an artificial confusion of species, the boar gives birth to birds, which are recaptured and redomesticated. . . . Trimalchio confuses the boundaries between culture and nature, cooked and raw, servile and free. He aims to produce moments in which the first category in each of these oppositions wears the appearance of the second, to represent natural processes by artificial products, life by death. [34]

This description shows Petronius' concern with issues of representation played out at the mimetic level of the text. Indeed, within the mimetic level, the series of illusions has remained distinct, as set of displays in which the spectators, and even Trimalchio as dramaturgical director, remain distinct from the spectacle. The ultimate confusion comes at the end of the *cena* when the illusion crosses the boundary from display to an event in which author, audience and illusion collapse into one. As Trimalchio gives directions for his funerary monument, we see his sense of art and reality is confused, as he requests the sculptor to depict "big jars sealed with gypsum, so that they may not let the wine run out"

irrelevant to, or rather, contradictory of its supposed "content" (see Palmeri 26-7).

(71). Shortly thereafter, he indulges his fantasy further. Lying upon a bier, he enacts his own funeral, instructing the audience to break the fourth wall, "Now you must imagine you have been asked to a festival in honour of my past life" (78). As his slaves play the funeral march, the trumpets alarm the local watch which "suddenly burst in the door and proceeded with water and axes to do their duty in creating a disturbance" (78). As Niall Slater points out, Trimalchio's fantasy cremation attracts a real fire brigade (85).

This chapter demonstrates in the tradition of Menippean satire concerns with representation and reality, such as these seen in Petronius at the *mimetic* level, as emerging, first at the *diegetic* level, and ultimately at the *presentational* level of the text. The *Satyricon* does lend itself to narratological analysis. Slater (Chapter 4), for example, while examining the work as a series of interpretive crises which mirror the reader's experience, traces the inconsistency of the narrator's evaluation of events from transparent reportage through willing gullibility to resentful judgment. However, the work does not explicitly perform this analysis itself. The diegetic references of the narrator are rare and wholly conventional, for example: "I cannot linger over details" (28), or, "there were any number of these jokes, which have now escaped my memory" (56). Beyond this, the *Satyricon* offers no direct commentary on its textual status. However, as it has come down to us, it has a reception history which foregrounds its textual status. Petronius' text is a fragment. Its accidental commencement *in media verba* declares it to all readers since the fifteenth century¹⁷ as subject to decay, the fate of the body. Even the somewhat

¹⁷Slater's reader-response approach is useful here. He notes that the *Satyricon* "begins with a debate over the status of words and their ability to create or distort reality" (27). We should note that attention to the faulty text is a function of Renaissance scholars'

continuous *cena* is riddled with lacunae. It is quite appropriate that this leaky vessel should convey Petronius' satire on more abstract violations of the standards which define the high literary and philosophical tradition: standards of language, genre and decorum.

We should note that, even before the advent of print (which, in connection with humanist scholarship, foregrounds textual questions), Menippean satire was aware of its textual status and its place in a tradition which is transmitted textually. Eugene Korkowski, in an article which ranges widely over the whole Menippean tradition, ancient and modern, notes that those extremely convenient learned-scholarly lacunae (which will concern us below) have origins in Lucian, who "was fond of showing how false prophets and priests bilked their flocks with half-effaced writing and unintelligible gibberish."¹⁸ Such abuses of language, along with a growing awareness of the violations of the textual body is part of Menippean satire's examination of the notion of tradition itself. The learned dependence on authority suffers a necessary deflation when reminded that the sources of authority are frail and fallible documents.

With such a subject, literary satire is engaged with a self-critique. Such embodiment as we have seen represented in Petronius is in many ways the manifestation of a satiric self-reflexivity which needs an object (quite literally) of criticism. This is the

desire to print it.

¹⁸"*Tristram Shandy*, Digression, and the Menippean Tradition," 14, n.33. The Menippean fragmented manuscript tradition has an obvious parallel in the found manuscript topos of its sister-genre, romance (see Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, Chapter 1, especially 55-7, on the found manuscript and questions of truth and historicity). On the generic relationship of romance and Menippean satires (both stemming from the *Odyssey*) see Relihan (31-2) and Frye (*Anatomy* 309).

crucial relay between mind and body. The textual object which is both a material thing and the conduit of an abstract tradition of thought allows for a crossover and interaction of the irreconcilable mental and physical aspects of humanity. This relay is, of course, dependent on an imaginative belief in literature, which is a concern of Menippean satire corresponding with the bodily, but manifested in the mind. The attention paid to the reliability of textual transmission leads to related questions of truth in literature and the problem of belief.

We have already seen such issues taken up in the action represented in the *Satyricon*. Lucian offers a capsule example of these issues taken to a more explicitly self-conscious level. The outrageous truth claims made by histories are not merely implicit in the *Verae Historiae*: they are explicitly the subject of this enquiry into different kinds of authority, for authenticity derives from different sources. Lucian paradoxically claims that he parodies poets' outlandish truth-claims (e.g., a description of India by someone who had never been there) (I.2-3), yet simultaneously cites these poets as an authoritative tradition of lying histories, all deriving from the master-liar, Odysseus (I.3):

on reading all these authors, I did not find much fault with them for their lying, as I saw that this was already a common practice even among men who profess philosophy. . . . Therefore, as I myself, thanks to my vanity, was eager to hand something down to posterity . . . and as I had nothing true to tell, not having had any adventures of significance, I took to lying. But my lying is far more honest than theirs, for though I tell the truth in nothing else, I shall at least be truthful in saying that I am a liar. . . . Be it understood, then, that I am writing about things

which I have neither seen nor had to do with nor learned from others--which, in fact, do not exist at all and, in the nature of things, cannot exist. Therefore my readers should on no account believe in them. [I.3-4]

At the same time that the work's fictional status is flaunted, the pretense of qualifying the narrator's authority (as famous historians do) is maintained: "I did not get a look at them, as they did not come, so I have not ventured to write about their characteristics, for the stories about them were wonderful and incredible" (I.13, see also I.18). Indeed, the foregrounded presence of a first-person narrator creates a difficulty in separating truth from fiction. In some ways, an "objective" third-person chronicle of a fantastic voyage might bring with it some form of authentication. Lucian's first-person assertions draw attention to the flagrant impossibility of the account while simultaneously laying claim to the authority of personal experience: "Anyone who does not believe this is so will find, if ever he gets there himself, that I am telling the truth" (I.26).

Within the fiction, we notice that textuality is a marker of authority, especially in its instability which confers authority by the appearance of age: "we saw a slab of bronze, inscribed with Greek letters, faint and obliterated, which said: 'To this point came Hercules and Dionysus'" (I.7: this fact is later "confirmed" by external evidence).¹⁹ Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, while making a parodic gesture at qualifying the narrator's authority also draws attention to the authority of textual transmission: "He made an eloquent harangue . . . but a harangue too fast for the notary to take down. That is why I give no full report of it, for I don't want to change the words he used" (8). Truth and

¹⁹Interestingly, Lucian is the first Menippean for whom we have complete texts.

textuality are thus linked, although the framework of Lucian's *Verae Historiae* has equally linked textuality to fiction. Throughout we are engaged with the tradition, in the form of quotations and allusions. The equal textual status of Lucian's account with those of Homer, Herodotus and Thucydides (among many others) refuses to settle the question of truth or fiction.

The tradition is more directly interrogated in the "dialogues of the dead,"²⁰ which aim at undermining received opinions by speaking with the original subject of those opinions. Lucian's interview with Homer (II.20) is a paradigm case. General truths are addressed and corrected--his birthplace (Babylon), his blindness (he can obviously see). These are obvious biographical facts which the subject can confirm or correct, but Lucian does not stop here. It is noteworthy that he introduces questions of textual scholarship in this context: "I went on to enquire whether the bracketed lines had been written by him, and he asserted that they were all his own: consequently I held the grammarians Zenodotus and Aristarchus guilty of pedantry in the highest degree" (II.20). This not only sets a precedent for satire's enmity for editors (Aristarchus will return in the *Dunciad*), but it also suggests a crossing of levels between author and reader which Cervantes will make famous.

The self-referential vein running throughout *Verae Historiae*, which we have seen in the attention to textual transmission and the examination of belief in literature, is most important for the tradition of imaginative literature leading to Sterne. In Lucian's text,

²⁰As separate works (such as Lucian's in *Lucian* vol. 7) these are a branch of the fantastic voyage tradition. That examined below is a part of the voyage in the "True History."

it perhaps culminates in Homer's telling of "the lawsuit that he won, for a charge of libel had been brought against him by Thersites because of the way he had ridiculed him in the poem, and the case was won by Homer, with Odysseus for his lawyer" (II.20). Here epic hero and poet are not only reduced to the mundane proceedings of a lawsuit (and the implied lawyerly abuses of language), but they are also represented as interacting, crossing the boundary of author and character and questioning conventional definitions of truth and fiction. Satire is a critical mode which certainly has external objects, but it is constantly aware of the implication that modality itself is subject to criticism.

Two Renaissance models for satiric self-reference: Rabelais and Cervantes

Sterne's use of Rabelais and Cervantes--direct borrowing, stylistic imitation, general methodology--has been noted since *Tristram Shandy's* first appearance.²¹ My purpose in this section is not to trace or re-trace the specific uses in *Tristram Shandy*, but rather to show how these texts contribute to that aspect of the Menippean tradition which I have labelled the presence of the text. As print becomes the medium for Menippean satire during the Renaissance, the mind-body problem is offered a greater range of representation. In Rabelais we may examine the influence of print on a notion of the

²¹For contemporary reactions, see Howes, *Sterne: The Critical Heritage* (56, 69, 124, 125-26, 151). More recently, Howes' "Laurence Sterne, Rabelais, and Cervantes: The Two Kinds of Laughter in *Tristram Shandy*" uses these two influences to characterize, respectively, Sterne's "comedy of reference" and "comedy of character." Stedmond's discussion of Rabelais and Cervantes makes a similar point (*The Comic Art of Laurence Sterne* 37-47). See also Lamb, "Sterne's System of Imitation."

bodily. In Cervantes we may find the influence of print on a notion of mind.

The questions of truth which appear in the Menippean tradition appear in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* as well. The narrator is present to protest his veracity not only in the prologues or even in conventional asides (for example, "God take me presently if I tell you one single syllable of a Lye in the matter" [IV.28.592]) but also as a member of Pantagruel's entourage. In an extreme instance of the difficult truth claim, we are offered a Lucianic fantastic voyage into Pantagruel's mouth (II.32) which draws attention to the conflict of its fantastic status with the veracity implicit in a first-person narrator. Indeed, the participation of the narrator is foregrounded here as Pantagruel inquires of his journey and addresses him by name at the end of this episode (284).²²

The tension between orality and print in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* has received critical attention.²³ Although Gargantua's famous letter to Pantagruel contains humanist praise of printing as "so elegant, and so correct, that better cannot be imagined" (II.8.196), there does seem to be some suspicion about print, not only in its darker parallel, "found out . . . by divine inspiration, as by a diabolical suggestion on the other side was the invention of Ordnance" (196), but also in the Platonic distrust of writing found in the prologue to Book II which urges readers to commit the work to memory, "that if by chance the Art of printing should cease, or in case that in time to come all books should

²²Coleman notes that the prominence of the first-person narrator is a deliberate choice on Rabelais' part, for it does not appear in the original chapbook *Gargantua* which is a third-person chronicle (7). Coleman's study throughout makes much of the authorial *I* in Rabelais.

²³See McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and Donald Frame, *Francois Rabelais*, p. 6, and Chapter 12.

perish, every man might truly teach them unto his children, and deliver them over to his successors and survivors from hand to hand, as a religious *Cabal*" (165). The apparent allegiance to orality is a traditional recognition of the instability of the text. However, it is noteworthy that, in the physicality of the metaphor, delivering over information "from hand to hand," orality would appear to be pre-inscribed, even as it is praised as superior to writing.

In addition to this fundamental contradiction, we may also see in orality itself a notion of language as embodied. This is part of the satiric reification of ideas into things. Bakhtin has noted Rabelais' carnivalesque emphasis on the bodily and material aspects of life: food, sex, excretion are all represented in grotesque excess, magnified by the presence of giants. In addition to the celebration of the body so well documented by Bakhtin in his attempt to demonstrate the triumph of unofficial popular culture, we should note in particular that the satire on learning often takes on the particular dimensions of the "material bodily lower stratum," as when the young Gargantua engages in a research project in which "I have . . . by a long and curious experience found out a meanes to wipe my bum, the most lordly, the most excellent, and the most convenient that ever was seen" (I.13.53).

Such a reduction of scholarship is embedded in a general notion of the embodiment of ideas. We have already noted the use of food in this fashion. Rabelais offers a parodic alimentary geography like Lucian's as Pantagruel engages over several chapters with a band of chitterlings:

Their Order, proud Gate, and resolute Looks, made us judge that they were none

of your paultry Links, but old Warlike Chitterlings and Sawsages. From the foremost Ranks to the Colours they were all arm'd *Cap a pié* with small Arms, as we reckon'd them at a distance, yet very sharp, and case-harden'd. Their right and left Wings were lin'd with a great number of Forrest-Puddings, heavy Patti-pans, and Horse Sawsages, all of them tall and proper Islanders, Banditti, and Wild. [IV.36.607]

In addition to such an emphasis on the body, in the figure of Panurge we frequently encounter the crossover of the mental with the material first noted in Petronius. Panurge, who is introduced in a polyglottal orgy of languages (II.9), will, like Trimalchio, perform puns and enact proverbs as he goes to the extreme of piercing his ear and wearing a gold earring "whereof was set and enchased a *Flea*" (III.7.322) so that he may answer Pantagruel's question about "what he did intend to personate in that newfangled *Prosopopeia*": "I have . . . a *Flea in mine Ear*, and have a mind to marry" (323).

This view of embodied ideas is often taken a step further and displaced onto the embodiment of language (itself often seen as the "dress of thought"). In Panurge's search for advice on marriage, he seeks the purity of a "natural language," seeking to avoid "Amphibologies, Equivoks, and Obscurity of Words" (III.19.368). Following a lengthy discussion of how chirology itself may be misinterpreted, one Goatnose is sent for, as a pure communicator ("for he is, and hath been, both dumb and deaf from the very remotest Infancy of his Childhood" [372]). The speechless conversation which follows is, of course, less than pure. For example:

He inverted his Eye-lids upwards, wrinched his Jaws from the right to the left

side, and drew forth his Tongue half out of his Mouth; this done, he posited his left Hand wholly open (the mid-finger wholly excepted, which was perpendicularly placed upon the Palm thereof) and set it just in the room where his Codpiece had been . . . [III.20.375]

Needless to say, this highly embodied conversation is no less ambiguous than speech itself, and ultimately comes down to physical violence as Goatnose expresses his message and Panurge rebuts it. A similar encounter between Panurge and Thaumast (a parodic representation of Thomas More) turns humanist debate into a series of childish gestures: "*Panurge* set his two Master-fingers upon each side of his mouth, drawing it as much as he was able, and widening it so, that he shewed all his teeth: and with his two thumbs pluck't down his two eye-lids very low, making therewith a very ill-favour'd countenance, as it seemed to the company" (II.19.243). With this sign, Panurge is victorious.

This emphasis on the material nature of language, which, we should note, is still orally based (i.e., insistent on the presence of the communicator), ultimately comes to an extension beyond orality which insists on the presence of the *text*. A letter which Pantagruel receives integrates the Rabelaisian body and banquet with textuality. The letter appears to have nothing written on it. On the assumption it is written in invisible ink, Panurge advises a series of tests, all of which revel in the physicality of the medium:

he rubbed one part of it with oile of nuts, to see if it were not written with the lee of a fig-tree: and another part of it with the milk of a woman giving suck to her eldest daughter, to see if it was written with the blood of red toads, or green earth-frogs. . . . He rubbed after that one end with eare-waxe, to see if it were not

written with the gall of a Raven. . . . After that he greased it with the fat of a bat or flutter-mouse, to see if it was not written with the sperm of a whale, which some call ambergris . . . [II.24.253]

As with the gesticular debates, medium takes over from message as this experiment continues. This is quite literally the pleasure of the text, except of course, ultimately, there is no text here. They have been attempting to read the envelope which contained a gold ring, itself a symbol in need of interpretation.

Rabelais' attention to the embodiment of meaning marks a significant development in the *presentation* of satiric reification which will come to full fruition with the Scriblerians. He presents us with a highly concrete sense of the word, figured in, for example, the frozen words of IV.55-56. This episode has been read as both a celebration of the materiality of language and a condemnation of it.²⁴ Whichever is the case, there is certainty that *matter* is in question here. This is made apparent by the opening of the episode, which indulges in a Gargantuan synaesthesia: "we listen'd, and with full Ears suck'd in the Air, as some of you suck Oysters, to find if we could hear some sound scatter'd through the Sky" (IV.55.650). The synaesthetic crossover here is important, as the questions of linguistic signification, which engage only sight and sound (analyzed, for example, in Thaumast's debate), are extended to tactile and gustatory senses. Pantagruel

²⁴See Michel Jeanneret, "Les Paroles Degelees." Jeanneret's reading of this episode as condemning a materialist view of language is persuasive, situating these chapters in their context of surrounding satiric examinations of the literalizing and simplifying tendencies of writing-based modes of interpretation in opposition to the polyvalency of Pantagruel's orality. Jeanneret, not without acknowledging the difficulty, sees the Pantagruelistic writing of the work's narrator as liberating this text from reification.

theorizes on the as yet unlocated sounds in a logocentric fashion, wondering about the origins of language in a Platonic sense, or with a sense of embodiment in an Aristotelian gloss on Homer's words as "flying, moving, and consequently animated" (651). But when the true nature of the words the crew hears is discovered, theory gives way to matter. We learn that the words and noises uttered during a wintertime battle²⁵ "froze in the Air; And now the rigour of the Winter being over by the succeeding serenity and warmth of the Weather, they melt and are Heard" (IV.56.652). This is unproblematic as a metaphor, but as the episode continues, frozen words are literally fished out of the sea:

whole handfulls of frozen Words, which seem'd to us like your rough Sugar-Plumbs, of many colours . . . and when we had somewhat warm'd them between our Hands, they melted like Snow, and we really heard them . . . one of them only that was pretty big, having been warm'd between Fryar *Jhon*'s Hands, gave a sound much like that of Chesnuts when they are thrown into the Fire without being first cut, which made us all start. This was the report of a Field-piece in its time, cry'd Fryar *Jhon*. [652]

The physical presence of words gives way to some satirical commentary on the way we treat language: "*Panurge* pray'd *Pantagruel* to give him some more; but *Pantagruel* told him, that to give words, was the Part of a Lover. Sell me some then, I pray you, cry'd *Panurge*. That's the part of a Lawyer, return'd *Pantagruel*" (652). *Pantagruel* continues, "I would sooner sell you Silence," reminding us that we are dealing with the same

²⁵Jeanneret notes the alignment of textual reification and violence throughout the last half of IV.

linguistic issues of representation and communication that would concern Sterne two centuries later.²⁶

Such an awareness of words as physical things is only encouraged by the print medium. For, although Rabelais' "exuberant style" is certainly orally based, as Donald Frame suggests (*Francois Rabelais* Chap. 12), the *representation* of that style is certainly a printed one. The much celebrated lists (e.g., Pantagruel's genealogy [II.1]; the catalogue of the library of St. Victor [II.7]; the anatomy of Shrove-tide [IV.30-32]) are strung together not in continuous prose, but rather in a column (the games of Gargantua [I.22] appear in double columns, two separate lists of some 339 variations on "testicle" appear in triple columns [III. 26, 28],²⁷ making them easy to locate visually). The sense of orality is often enhanced by its printed representation, as in the call-and-response columns of Pantagruel and Panurge as they exchange modifications of "fool" (III.38), or the use of speech prefixes, a convention taken from printed drama, to convey the immediacy of speech (e.g., III.36).

Although these uses of print seem to be mere translations of orality into a physical form rather than the form itself being used for expressive purposes, the awareness of physical form, whether in the gestures of an orator or the physics of communication

²⁶Indeed, this chapter, in general with its play on the materiality of language, and specifically with its reference to the delivery of the ten commandments, when "the People saw the Voices sensibly" (652) and certain of the thawed words, especially "bou, bou, bou, bou" (653), which recalls the urgings of the Abbess of Andouillet (a Rabelaisian name) to the mule in *Tristram Shandy* (VII.25), would seem quite important to Sterne.

²⁷This is Frame's count (139). It is noteworthy that the Urquhart-Motteux translation at least doubles this figure, exaggerating the textual effect by spreading it over succeeding pages.

suggested by the frozen words, ultimately leads to an acknowledgement of the expressive use of print. Whether or not the fifth volume of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* belongs to Rabelais, the cumulative logic of his linguistic commentary justifies the arrival at the oracle of the bottle to find it expressed through the physical form of the text, printed in the shape of a bottle (V.45.799; 802). McLuhan suggests (153) that, metaphorically speaking, the final praise of wine also be taken as a celebration of print, for wine is the product of the wine press (visited in V.7) which is both metaphor for and precursor to the printing press, ultimately linking the bacchic celebration of the body to a textual manifestation.

If Rabelais offers carnivalesque embodiment in print, Cervantes' novel, in a different way, reveals the metaphysical implications of belief in literature, in a way more amenable to a related Bakhtinian concept, the dialogic. This is not to say that the carnivalesque is absent from *Don Quixote*, for the universal body survives in Sancho, who rarely makes a comment without bemoaning his empty stomach or waxing nostalgic about generous hospitality he has received, and indulges his appetite on every possible occasion. Nevertheless, Cervantes' exploration of narrative technique, questioning the metaphysical assumptions necessary for reading, also moves in a different realm.²⁸ This realm has

²⁸*Don Quixote* introduces the "novel" form into the Menippean tradition, something unmistakably new and most important for Sterne. The introduction of narratological questions does not, however, remove Menippean characteristics (James Parr's *Don Quixote: An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse* [xv-xvi] lists the attributes which belong to Frye's definition, and we should recall Rapin's classification of *Don Quixote*). Indeed, the Bakhtinian view of the "novel" not as a genre, but as an all-encompassing, anti-canonical, anti-generic force (*Dialogic Imagination* 7-8; 320-24; see also the editor's introduction, xxxi), is founded upon the "Menippea" as a "novelizing" tradition. In *Don Quixote*, the splitting of the ancient dual body into the travelling pair of Quixote and

grounds in the dialogic voicings of parody and travesty as language itself conveys a multiplicity of styles which imply, as Leo Spitzer suggests, a multiplicity of perspectives on "reality."²⁹ Cervantes criticism is vast and the present discussion makes no claim to new discoveries. Instead, I wish to examine the instances of "metafiction" for which this work is so justly celebrated³⁰ with a particular emphasis on the way they are achieved by using a Menippean technique: the highly reflexive examination of the work's own textual status.

In Part I of *Don Quixote*, the traditional satire on learning takes on a particularly printed aspect. The author's preface to the reader expresses concern over the lack of humanist learning in his work, which is displayed so conspicuously in other works. He reports a friend's advice which reveals that such displays are manifestations of printed textual apparatus rather than true learning. First of all, Cervantes may fill out his text by writing his own commendatory verses, and signing others' names to them.

As to marginal Notes and Quotations from Authors for your History, 'tis but dropping here and there some scatter'd Latin Sentences that you have already by rote, or may have with little or no Pains. . . . These Scraps of Latin will at least gain you the Credit of a great Grammarian, which, I'll assure you, is no small

Sancho (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 433-4) introduces literal dialogue to the novel, thus providing a narrative correlative for the dialogic voicing of the genre.

²⁹See Bakhtin on hybridization and heteroglossia in "Discourse in the Novel" (*Dialogic Imagination*) and Spitzer on polynomasia and perspectivism in "Linguistic Perspectivism in the *Don Quixote*" (*Linguistics and Literary History*). Both authors see a democratic freedom--a coexistence of worldviews--arising out of a fundamental linguistic indeterminacy.

³⁰See, for example, James Parr and Robert Alter's *Partial Magic*.

Accomplishment in this Age.³¹

Allusions, the friend continues, allow the author to "spin out a swingeing Annotation." Ultimately it becomes apparent that the printed appearance of the work is more important than its content, for, as the economic language of the following passage makes apparent, it is a print market, rather than a learned readership, to which the author makes his appeal:

In short, 'tis but quoting these Authors in your Book, and let me alone to make large Annotations; I'll engage to crowd your margins sufficiently, and scribble you four or five Sheets to boot at the End of your Book. And for the Citation of so many Authors, 'tis the easiest Thing in Nature. Find out one of these Books with an alphabetical Index, and without any farther Ceremony, remove it *verbatim* into your own: And tho' the World won't believe you have Occasion for such Lumber, yet there are Fools enough to be thus drawn into an Opinion of the Work; at least, such a flourishing Train of Attendants will give your Book a fashionable Air, and recommend it to Sale; for few Chapmen will stand to examine it, and compare the Authorities upon the Compter, since they can expect nothing but their Labour for their Pains.

It is quite clear that print has a life of its own, independent of both authors and readers.

And indeed, the friend goes on to point out that the citation of ancient authorities is useless for the purported target of Cervantes' book: "you have no Occasion for any of these Things; for your Subject being a Satyr on Knight-Errantry, is so absolutely new, that

³¹*Don Quixote*, trans. Peter Motteux, rev. John Ozell. This is the translation (which had reached its seventh edition by 1743) read by Sterne. The preface is unpaginated and originally printed in italics.

neither *Aristotle*, *St. Basil*, nor *Cicero* ever dreamt or heard of it."³² Ironically, the printed manifestations of learning are rendered pointless in the face of a genre coeval with print itself: "that monstrous Heap of ill-contriv'd Romances, which tho' abhorr'd by many, have so strangely infatuated the greater Part of Mankind." The "monstrous Heap" anticipates the terms in which we will see eighteenth-century Britain characterize the proliferation of print.³³

The extent to which print has permeated culture is made manifest in Don Quixote's first sally and its repercussions. Not only has print filled the Don's library with the texts of chivalric romances and substituted their fantasy for reality in his mind (by means of their demand--as texts implying meaning--for interpretation), but, more remarkably, print has reached all of the characters Quixote encounters, from the curate and barber of his own village to the lowly innkeeper of the first sally and other travellers on the road, who are able to speak the language of romance and accommodate Quixote's delusion (for example, the innkeeper knights Quixote in I.i.3; at the end of Part I an entire caravan of characters attempt to bring him home by playing out a romance scenario).³⁴ All of these characters show the ability to bridge fantasy and reality, providing a satirical

³²The preface describes a rather narrow satiric project which holds, if at all, only for the early part of *Don Quixote*.

³³Indeed this eighteenth-century British translation has invented the "monstrous Heap," which translates "la máquina mal fundada" ("that ill-founded edifice" in the Ormsby translation [Norton]). It is perhaps noteworthy that, whatever its translation, *máquina* has its own mechanical resonances, and will appear in the description of the operations of the printing house in II.62.

³⁴This effect of print is foregrounded by the contrast to the illiterate Sancho, who depends on Quixote himself for guidance in the ways of knight-errantry and squireship.

norm by which to judge Don Quixote (this will be inverted in Part 2, where characters, especially the Duke and Duchess, deliberately deceive Quixote for their own ends).

The most famous of the repercussions of the first sally is the "pleasant and curious scrutiny which the curate and the barber made of the library of our ingenious gentleman" (I.i.6). Here, we see revealed in a straightforward satiric fashion a culture's complicity in what it condemns as the curate and barber reveal their intimate knowledge of each book they throw to the flames, exempting some, and even becoming excited by the discovery of texts they have not yet read. However, it is at this point that the fairly simple satire of the first sally begins to give way to the more complex metafiction for which *Don Quixote* has been heralded in the twentieth century. For among the books in Quixote's library the inquisitors discover the *Galatea of Miguel de Cervantes*, which receives the following commentary by the curate:

That *Cervantes* has been my intimate Acquaintance these many Years . . . and I know he has been more conversant with Misfortunes than with Poetry. His Book indeed has I don't know what that looks like a good Design; he aims at something, but concludes nothing: Therefore we must stay for the Second Part, which he has promis'd us; perhaps he may make us Amends, and obtain a full Pardon, which is denied him for the present; till that Time keep him close Prisoner at your House. [I.i.6.37]

With this crossing of fictional planes, *Don Quixote* begins its metaphysical exploration of the nature of reading and writing and their relationship to "reality." For the grounded relationship which Cervantes seems to have claimed to his work in the preface, that of

satirist and satiric object, is no longer clear-cut when the author himself appears within the work, and among objects of satire.³⁵

Furthermore, if Don Quixote has been reading Cervantes, and Cervantes has been, in his researches, outlined by references to the "Annals of *La Mancha*" and various "authors" (see, e.g., I.i.2.9), reading about Don Quixote, the ontological distinction between reading and writing is not as strong as we may ordinarily presume.³⁶ And within the first pages of Part I, we can see this distinction being blurred, as Quixote himself considers putting pen to paper to finish *Don Belianis*. Quixote does not only imagine himself author of other texts; he spends considerable time constructing his own text--by means of projecting a "learned Author" who will chronicle his adventures. As Quixote performs actions, he quotes what he expects *will be written* by this Author, for example: ". . . the renowned Knight Don *Quixote de la Mancha*, disdaining soft Repose.

³⁵Indeed, upon closer inspection, the preface reveals contradictions (is the work the "Offspring of my Brain" or a history of a man "known in these Parts these many Years"?) which anticipate the fruitful confusions of the work as a whole. We may see in the preface that both author and reader are absolved of responsibility to the text: "But I, who am only a Step-father, disavow the Authority of this modern and prevalent Custom [of parental prejudice] . . . what Favour can I expect from you, who are neither his Friend nor Relation? You have a Soul of your own, and the Privilege of Free-will, whoever you be, as well as the proudest He that struts in a gaudy Outside: You are King by your own Fire-side, as much as any Monarch in his Throne: You have Liberty and Property, which set you above Favour or Affection, and may therefore freely like or dislike this History, according to your Humour."

³⁶We have examined a similar phenomenon in Sterne's sermons (see Chapter Two). We should perhaps note here that a strict narratological account of fictional levels is difficult throughout *Don Quixote*, and especially in the first eight chapters (see James Parr, *Don Quixote: An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse* for one attempt to see the novel as consistent in its diegetic references). My use of "Cervantes" here and elsewhere makes no claim to systematic accuracy. Rather, it is intended to show the local contradiction: Cervantes seems to be both within and without his fictional world.

forsook the voluptuous Down, and mounting his famous Steed *Rozinante*, enter'd the ancient and celebrated Plains of *Montiel*" (I.i.2.8: note the double quotation marks). This leaves our present author ("Cervantes") with only the ability to add, after the fact, "This was indeed the very Road he took."

These fairly simple paradoxes come to full fruition in the much noted introduction of Cid Hamet Benengeli as the author of the "source" of the rest of *Don Quixote*. The introduction takes place within the tradition of the found manuscript which is not only a Romance trope (v. McKeon) later played out in Part I, but also a version of Menippean satire's faulty manuscript tradition. For it is at the climax of the telling of Quixote's battle with the Biscayan that Cervantes pulls the rug out from under us (lest we become Quixotic in our involvement in the narrative) and announces that "here we must deplore the abrupt End of this History which the Author leaves off just at the very Point when the Fortune of the Battle is going to be decided, pretending that he could find nothing more recorded of Don *Quixote*'s wondrous Atchievements than what he had already related" (I.i.8.51).

Despite the citation of historical sources in previous passages, the reader cannot help but collapse these "sources" into the immediacy of the narrative. At this point "our" author ("Cervantes"?) describes himself as "the second Undertaker of this Work," highly dependent on the source manuscript which has just ended, itself claiming lack of documentation. In the following chapter, this attention to the instability of the text is heightened by the inclusion of questionable details of transmission concerning the source: a manuscript, written by an Arabian ("those of that Country are not a little addicted to

Lying") found in the marketplace, which "our" author cannot read, thus necessitating the hired help of a Morisco as translator. Such a *mise en abîme* of displaced origins has caused much critical ink to spill, as some have attempted to identify "the" author of *Don Quixote*.³⁷ Another imaginative inkwell has taken license from such a phenomenon to produce a tradition of metafiction, from Sterne to Borges, Garcia Marquez and Rushdie. My purpose here is to note the dependence of this tradition on textuality, for it is the paradox of absent communication (through writing) which allows such investigations. But what of printing? Just as our author deals with manuscript documents in researching *Don Quixote*, the romance tradition in which Don Quixote places himself is clearly one of the manuscript (rare, aristocratic, idiosyncratic). Indeed, the learned Author he projects is clearly a scribe. Although we have already noted the impact of print in the author's preface as well as in the widespread knowledge of romance conventions in the novel proper, we must turn to Part II to examine the direct impact of printing on *Don Quixote* as well as *Don Quixote*.

The cumulative significance of this impact is revealed in terms of Don Quixote's encounter with modernity which overwhelms him in every sense. Near the end of their

³⁷See for example, James Parr, a sophisticated narratologist whose system only functions on logical principles which the Cervantine text resists. Indeed, Parr's strident campaign against Cid Hamet's importance as a narrator is a classic example of the critic drawn into the fiction (we will see this again). Parr's attack on Benengeli has its precursor in Quixote himself, especially in his attack on the characters in the puppet show (II.26). An eighteenth-century reaction revealing similar difficulty appears in a translator's footnote which attempts to assign intention to what is most likely an authorial error, when Sancho loses his ass and recovers it without explanation: "But what if *Cervantes* made this seeming Slip on Purpose for a Bait to tempt the minor Criticks . . ." (I.iii.9.164n. original in italics).

journey, Quixote and Sancho arrive in the modern city of Barcelona, encounter the sea, "which they had never seen before" (II.61.858), witness the display of a modern naval engagement, and are subjected to the highly orchestrated and manipulative reception of Don Antonio Moreno. This is the location of Don Quixote's final defeat, not merely at the hands of the "Knight of the White Moon" (II.64), but in his inability to assimilate the complexities of this modern world to his romance ideals. In an emblematic scene just before his defeat Don Quixote encounters a printing shop:

This Discovery pleas'd the Knight extremely, having now an Opportunity of seeing a Printing-Press, a Thing he had never seen before. . . . There he saw some working off the Sheets, others correcting the Forms, some in one Place picking of Letters out of the Cases, in another some looking over a Proof; in short, all the Variety [*máquina*] that is to be seen in great Printing-Houses. He went from one Workman to another, and was very inquisitive to know what every Body had in Hand. [II.62.868-69]

The distance between Quixote's romance ideals and this scene of mass production is vast. The tone suggests this in two ways: first, in the mechanical repetition of the "some-other" pattern in the account; second, in the alignment of the narration with a knowing reader (who is assumed to be familiar with Sheets, Forms and Cases) in contrast with Quixote, who needs to ask. That Quixote is out of context is made clear as he interviews a translator who, in response to Quixote's neoclassical discussion of the ideals of translation, brazenly declares: "No, no, Sir, I print not my Works to get Fame in the World, my Name is up already; Profit, Sir, is my End, and without it What signifies Reputation?"

(870).

The most explicit confrontation with the world of print in this chapter comes as Quixote inspects another work in the press:

they told him 'twas the Second Part of that ingenious Gentleman Don *Quixote de la Mancha*, written by a certain Person, a Native of *Tordesillas*. I have heard of that Book before, said Don *Quixote*, and really thought it had been burnt, and reduc'd to Ashes for a foolish Impertinent Libel; but all in good time. Execution-day will come at last. For made Stories are only so far good and agreeable as they are profitable, and bear the Resemblance of Truth; and true History the more valuable, the farther it keeps from the fabulous. And so saying, he flung out of the Printing-house in a Huff. [870-71]

How the printing of a Second part of *Don Quixote* has come about, we will discuss shortly. For the moment, we can see that Quixote's wish to inhabit an honor-bound manuscript-world (in which a single burning can destroy a libellous text) is impossible in the modern world of mass printing for profit (Quixote's Horatian sense of "profitable" is in stark contrast to the translator's). Robert Alter summarizes the irony of this scene: "At such a moment we can hardly forget that Don Quixote himself is no more than the product of the very processes he observes, a congeries of words set up in type, run off as proof, corrected and rerun, bound in pages, and sold at so many reales a copy" (*Partial Magic* 4-5). The self-referential nature of this emblematic scene places *Don Quixote* at the head of a tradition of self-conscious fiction, but also within the existing tradition of Menippean satire which this chapter is investigating.

This awareness is at the heart of Part II in which we encounter a world radically transformed by the publication of the first part. Although published ten years later, the fiction of Part II picks up only one month after the events narrated in Part I. In that time, Part I has been printed in four cities and gained great notoriety. The bachelor Sampson Carrasco, who, among others, has read it, estimates some twelve thousand copies of the original and many translations currently to exist (II.3). This is a moment of great concern to Quixote, for his fantasy that his knightly deeds would be recorded has become reality, and he is anxious to inquire after the treatment he receives in this work. Although he is quite proud to be the subject of a history ("one of the things that ought to yield the greatest Satisfaction to a Person of eminent Virtue, is to live to see himself in good Reputation in the World, and his Actions published in Print" [II.3.461]), Quixote is enough of a critic to be aware that there is an equal potential for falsity in printed histories, a concern which becomes increasingly pronounced as Part II proceeds. As he and the bachelor discuss the veracity of the history and its reception, it becomes quite clear that the Part I we have read is the same one published in the fictional world, and thus it is also a moment of importance for the reader: the games played with this intersection of different planes of reality are not only entertaining but also philosophically compelling, for the ontological status of the reader's experience is questioned. Take, for example, an extra-diegetic occurrence in the text of Part I, the confusion about the loss of Sancho's ass, noted above.³⁸ At the opening of Part II, we learn that critics have

³⁸The history of this error extends to the second and third editions of Part I (published before Part II). Originally, a sudden reference to the loss of Dapple appeared in I.iii.11.189; the narration of the loss was added to I.iii.9.163-4 and the recovery to

become curious: "some there are who have tax'd the Author with want of Memory or Sincerity; because he has forgot to give an Account who it was that stole *Sancho's* Dapple; for that Particular is not mention'd there; only we find by the Story that it was stol'n; and yet, by and by, we find him riding the same Ass again, without any previous Light given us into the Matter" (II.3.466).³⁹ This entire passage has a strange status within the novel. Clearly it is the author's joke on events following the first publication of Part I. However, within the fiction, we see Sancho held accountable for the "truth." When his account does not satisfy Carrasco, Sancho can only reply, "If the Man made a Blunder, who can help it? But mayhaps 'twas a Fault of the Printer" (II.4.468). In some ways, the corrections made to subsequent editions weaken the immediacy of the joke, although the confusion of textual history does offer insights into the intersecting planes of reality in Part II of the novel. Perhaps more complex in a literary sense is the speculation in Chapter 4 about the possibility of a second part of the history (468-9). Here the absurdity of the premise of the true account (published in less than a month, etc) is made clear. The author is said to be seeking out the rest of the story, which we know does not yet exist (even though we are reading it at the moment we recognize the impossibility). Again, the distinctions between reading and writing, story and discourse,

I.iv.3.253 in the second edition, although references to Dapple between these additions remained in the text, some of which were removed in the third edition (see the editorial notes to the Ormsby translation [Norton], 161 n.1 and 235 n.4).

³⁹Interestingly, the quibble, as it is represented in Chapter 3, is based solely on the first edition, whereas Sancho's version accords with the additions made to the second edition of which Carrasco seems aware by the time Sancho gives his account in Chapter 4, since he accepts this version and only quibbles about the problematic references to Dapple (II.4.468).

past present and future are unclear.

But the implications of Part I's presence in Part II extend far beyond these textual quibbles and implicit problems of ontology, for, as Don Quixote sallies out for the third and last time, he encounters characters, most notably the Duke and Duchess, who have read Part I and use that knowledge to manipulate the Don for their own entertainment by staging "adventures" for him. Their acceptance of both Don Quixote and *Don Quixote*, the one so clearly a man, the other so clearly a fiction, raises an ontological problem which Cervantes explores throughout this work.⁴⁰ Some critics see the existence of Part I in Part II as a device which confers autonomy on the characters.⁴¹ Of course, the irony is that it is the same device which makes much of Don Quixote's experience in Part II contrived and unreal. Part II is in many ways a study of the power of print. As such it is necessarily self-reflexive, raising questions about its own status. As John J. Allen phrases it, Part I "is the only specific object in the phenomenal world of Part II which exists literally, and lies ready at hand for our confirmation of its objective reality, yet it is precisely the presence of this book, *Don Quixote*, Part I, which violates the realistic terms of that world" (79).

But such self-reflexivity is not left at the level of inference, for Cervantes continues to interweave fiction and reality. This is most apparent in his dealing with a spurious Part II published by one Avellaneda, a year before Cervantes' Part II. In a

⁴⁰See John J. Allen, *Don Quixote: Hero or Fool? A Study in Narrative Technique: Part I*: 77.

⁴¹See Richard L. Predmore, *The World of Don Quixote*: 14 and Allen, 72.

different context, this act might be answered by a mere assertion of authenticity on the part of the original author.⁴² The author's preface to Cervantes' Part II is indeed anxious to make the distinction between Avellaneda's work and his own. However, such a simple distinction at the extra-diegetic level is insufficient for the interweaving logic of *Don Quixote* in which the author's preface is not wholly separate from the fiction. Quixotic logic suggests that if Part I exists both in our world and Quixote's, so must the spurious Part II. And Cervantes does not disappoint. Shortly after one of Don Quixote's increasingly ironic proud identifications of himself as the subject of a history (" . . . famous in Histories, dignify'd with the Honour of the Press . . . " [II.59.839]), the knight overhears some travellers reading from a *second* part of *Don Quixote* (it is worth noting that every character we encounter in Part II has *already* read Part I, although Quixote himself never reads it). The characters engage in a critique of the second part as aesthetically inferior to the first part. The question of its claim to truth is not addressed. Nevertheless, when Don Quixote objects strenuously to the false suggestion that he no longer loves Dulcinea, these travellers instantly acknowledge the Don as the "true" Quixote, a judgment apparently based on his resemblance to the character in Part I (Sancho is similarly identified) (843). The ontological problem addressed here is one of belief in reality and fiction: these readers are apparently willing to accept the spurious Part II as an inferior continuation of Part I, quite aware that this acknowledges its fictional status (the account of Quixote's not loving Dulcinea is criticized as a fault in taste, not

⁴²Indeed this was Sterne's approach when he attempted to protect his copyright from pirated editions and imitations by signing each new issue of *Tristram Shandy*.

in veracity). Nevertheless, Quixote himself is acknowledged as the true subject of the first history.⁴³ And indeed, as they proceed to interview Quixote about his adventures, it is quite clear that they recognize him to be the madman described in Part I, and that they are catching up on the details with which *our* Part II is continuous.

Don Quixote's attitude toward the false Part II is interesting, for it reveals the same ontological contradiction. When Quixote, who had been intending to attend the tournaments in Saragosa, learns that the Quixote of the false Part II did the same, he vows, "I will not set a Foot in *Saragosa*, and so the World shall see what a notorious Lie this new Historian is guilty of," as if to prove the untruth of the *account* given in the false Part II. However, Quixote goes on to add that "all Mankind shall perceive I am not the Don *Quixote* he speaks of" (845), implying that the false Part II may indeed be telling the truth, and that it is a question of the identity of the subject rather than the veracity of the author.⁴⁴ This double-edged sword continues throughout the final chapters of *Don Quixote*, contradicting the logical either/or of ontology with an assertion of both/and. This episode concludes ambiguously with respect to the ontological status of the falsity of the false Part II: "Don *Quixote* and *Sancho* retired to their Chamber, leaving the two

⁴³It is interesting to note that Quixote himself follows aesthetic criteria for criticizing the spurious Part Two before drawing attention to its errors in fact.

⁴⁴David Quint, examining authorial anxieties over originality, suggests that this crossover of truth claims is the result of the imaginative status of art which has no claim to originality in any "real" sense: therefore both Cervantes and Avellaneda are equal in their fictional status. This shifts the question of originality toward aesthetic quality and away from historical priority (*Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* 3). We should note that Sancho, in his illiterate naivety, never ponders the possibility of authorial veracity, but rather leaps instantly to the assumption of a different knight and squire.

Strangers in Admiration . . . But fully satisfied however, that these two Persons were the true Don *Quixote* and *Sancho*, and not those obruded upon the Publick by the *Arragonian* Author" (846).

As the novel proceeds toward its conclusion, the spurious Part II makes a variety of appearances, as we have seen in the printing shop, without resolving such ambiguity. Nevertheless, with the flair for literalization which we have noted in the Menippean tradition, Cervantes takes this to the level of language's mimetic function and presses the ambiguity toward the more difficult conclusion: following Quixotic logic, if Part I records the true actions of Don Quixote, the false Part II must record the true actions of a *false* Don Quixote. It is with this gesture that Cervantes not only transcends his plagiarizing rival, but also moves issues of fiction and belief, illusion and reality, to a self-referential level which reveals the lack of an Archimedean point by which to separate one from the other. This is achieved with the appearance of a character from the false Part II within the true Part II. Don Quixote is pleased to meet Don Alvaro Tarfe, for he recognizes his name from the false Part II. This resolves the ontological issue,⁴⁵ for Tarfe is able to testify (and, like Sterne signing his works, Quixote and Sancho have a notarized deposition of their authenticity made) that there are in fact two *other* men, known as Don Quixote and Sancho, who performed the actions related in the false Part II. This allows

⁴⁵Perhaps only temporarily, for Quixote's final will returns the ambiguity to the question of literary imitation: "I intreat the said Executors, that if at any time they happen to meet with the Author of a Book now extant, entitl'd, *The Second Part of the Achievements of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, they wou'd from Me most heartily beg his Pardon for my being undesignedly the Occasion of his writing such a Parcel of Impertinences as is contain'd in that Book; for it is the greatest Burthen to my departing Soul, that ever I was the Cause of his making such a Thing publick" (II.74.934).

Quixote a negative self-definition, which he asks Tarfe to confirm: "I am not the Don *Quixote* mention'd in that second Part, nor was this *Sancho Pança* my 'Squire, the Person you knew formerly" (II.72.922). The problem, of course, is that this does nothing to authenticate Quixote and Sancho as "true." Tarfe makes this clear in the terms of enchantment (which Sancho recognizes instantly): "I must own my self not a little confounded to find at the same time two Don *Quixote*'s, and two *Sancho Pança*'s, as different in their Behaviour as they are alike in Name; for my Part, I don't know what to think on't . . . I am now assur'd that I have not seen what I have seen, nor, in respect to Me, has that happen'd which has happen'd" (922).⁴⁶

Cervantes has taken the Menippean focus on contradictions in thought and expression to a level beyond the reduction of ideal qualities to the bodily and of language to material. His exploration of literary illusion has nevertheless taken the presence of the text quite literally, as we have seen the implications of publication played out in Don Quixote's world. And for all its metafiction, *Don Quixote* is not without its awareness of the material aspect so abundant in Rabelais.

The metafictional extremes of the Cervantic developments were not taken up wholly until Sterne, and in the meantime, as Bakhtin argues, the fundamentally downward orientation of Rabelais is compromised by gentrification.⁴⁷ Direct commentary on

⁴⁶Perhaps unsurprisingly, the eighteenth-century English translator saw fit to leave the last contradictory sentence in a footnote.

⁴⁷Bakhtin sees the material bodily principle already weakened in *Don Quixote* (*Rabelais and His World* 22); see also his discussion of the reception history of Rabelais (97-119).

Rabelais and Cervantes in the eighteenth century (including Sterne's [see *Letters* 76-7]) tends to pay attention to only the conservative aspects of their satire, as when Pope praises Swift: "Whether thou chuse Cervantes' serious air, / Or laugh and shake in Rab'lais' easy chair" (*Dunciad* [1743] I.21-2). Nevertheless, as we are about to see, in Scriblerian satiric practice, there is a far more radical use of the presence of the text.

Chapter 4: Scriblerian Satire: The monster in/of the text

We have noted in the previous chapter that Sterne includes Swift, especially for his *Tale of a Tub*, in his Menippean pedigree. In a famous letter of 1767, Sterne also proudly cites Lord Bathurst's authority as a personal friend of Pope and Swift to prove his Scriblerian ancestry. Sterne quotes Bathurst's own words, spoken in 1760:

I want to know you, Mr. Sterne; but it is fit you should know, also, who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard . . . of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes, and Swifts, have sung and spoken so much: I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast; but have survived them; and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have closed my accounts, and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again: but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die; which I now do; so go home and dine with me. [*Letters* 305]

This occasion provides an important sense of living continuity to the satiric tradition, as Sterne points out in introducing this anecdote: "This nobleman is an old friend of mine.-- You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius; and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c. &c. always at his table" (*Letters* 304). This should remind us of satire's role as social critique, but also draw attention to the integration of the social with print.¹ This is an important feature which cannot be

¹Lord Bathurst was notably one of the copyright holders for *The Dunciad* of 1729 (Sutherland, Introduction, *Twickenham* Vol. 5, xxviii). Patricia Bruckmann's recent *A Manner of Correspondence: A Study of the Scriblerus Club* studies the social side of this conjunction. Paying attention to the Scriblerians as a social unit, this approach is different from most studies (including the present chapter) which consider the dense textuality of Scriblerian satire. Bruckmann ultimately suggests that this group strove for a pastoral ideal.

overlooked when discussing the Scriblerus project, for it is wholly formed upon the presumption of a print culture, not only for its source of satiric butts, but also in its method of baiting and mastering these butts by incorporation. The Scriblerus project as a whole perpetrated its hoax by means of print. Charles Kerby-Miller best describes the intentions of the project:

The principal work of the club was to be a full dress biography of their hero [Martinus Scriblerus] in which they would introduce him to the public and lay the foundation for any future exploits they might devise. In addition, they planned to publish a series of works by their hero either under his own name or under pseudonyms. And finally, as a sort of cream of the jest, they proposed from time to time to claim as his work various publications, discoveries, and projects advanced by others which they wished to ridicule.

The heart to this program was its ostensible solemnity and frequent use of real material. By the double process of putting out apparently serious works by their hero under his own and other names, and at the same time claiming for him things actually done by real people, they planned further to obscure the already dubious line between authentic and spurious publications until the reading public became bewildered.²

²Kerby-Miller, Introduction to Pope, et al, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, 29. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Memoirs*. A fine example of the Scriblerus project's intentions is revealed in a letter from Arbuthnot to Swift: "Whiston has at last published his project of the longitude; the most ridiculous thing that ever was thought on. But a pox on him! he has spoiled one of my papers of Scriblerus, which was a proposal for the longitude, not very unlike his, to this purpose: that since there was no pole for East and West, that all the Princes of Europe should join

This is clearly a program of satire both made necessary and made possible by print. As Kerby-Miller describes them, the intended results of this project draw attention to the perils of indiscriminating print by means of its own existence, its daily workings:

Thus gullible people could be trapped into accepting absurdities . . . while the critical and wary would learn to scan every new production in the learned and literary world that seemed in any way ridiculous with a skeptical eye, ready to charge it with being another work by the mysterious Scriblerus. [29-30]

Although the full extent of the Scriblerus Club's plan was never realized, we will see below that much of the satiric material appearing in all of its works, especially *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad Variorum*, was generated by the print industry itself.³

The dangerous complicity of the satirist with the object of satire is a perennial problem, and one particularly acute for Pope and Swift who seek to express a conservative vision in a modern medium. As the aesthetic and moral arbiters of their day, they held a strong sense of their Renaissance inheritance: an appeal to an ordered universe implying a set of ethical, metaphysical and literary assumptions which, although under the pressure of change, still provided a grounding for their thought. This position is most evident in Pope's formal verse satire (the Horatian imitations; the "Moral Essays"), but

and build two prodigious poles, upon high mountains, with a vast light-house to serve for a pole-star. I was thinking of a calculation of the time, charges, and dimensions. Now you must understand, his project is by light-houses, and explosion of bombs at a certain hour" (quoted in *Memoirs* 361).

³We should note that this takes place within the context of developments in the sense of authorial identity, arising in connection with copyright, a product of an expanding print culture. There are many recent studies, such as those by Alvin Kernan, Julie Stone Peters, David Foxon, and Mark Rose already mentioned in earlier chapters.

it also manifests itself indirectly in the Menippean works known as Scriblerian: the collaborative *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Peri Bathous*; Pope's *Dunciad*; Swift's early *Tale of a Tub* volume.⁴ Here the conservative satiric vision is expressed by means of a radical parody of modern forms, which, according to Scriblerian analysis, are the product of print culture.

What distinguishes the Scriblerian vision of the presence of the text from the Menippean satires discussed in the preceding chapter is twofold. First is the direct and continuous focus on the printed *product* (in contrast, *Don Quixote's* extensive use of printing examines the process--the impact of publication). As we will see, print does not so much create a milieu, a "global village" in which knowledge is exchanged, as it isolates individual minds from one another, reifying knowledge, reducing thought to a series of uncommunicative objects.⁵ The second distinguishing feature of Scriblerian uses of

⁴Swift's more properly Scriblerian *Gulliver's Travels* is a divergence from the Scriblerian Menippean satires, perhaps explaining its lesser importance to Sterne. Robert Phiddian describes the difference in terms of the distinction between the parodic playfulness of Swift's works in his English period and the satiric commitment of his Irish works ("The English Swift/The Irish Swift").

⁵The autonomy of the printed text takes place in a paradoxical context, for print is also generally considered to close the gap between the reader and author through the increased privatization of knowledge (the need to literally "possess" it), or the rise of realism in the particularization of an intimate authorial presence, something Swift addresses in *A Tale of a Tub*: "Whatever Reader desires to have a thorow Comprehension of an Author's 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" (44). See Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, and Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, on print epistemology; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, and J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*, on the intimacy of the printed novel; and Marlon B. Ross on "Authority and Authenticity: Scribbling Authors and the Genius of Print in Eighteenth-Century England."

Menippean forms is a result of this focus on product. The Menippean satires of Pope especially do not engage with the explicit narrative concerns (questions of realism, of diegetic authority) noted in the previous chapter.⁶ This is in part a result of the object of parody: false scholarship. It is also a result of the parodic mode which is imitative and performative, insistent on producing a facsimile (albeit an exaggerated one) of the satiric object. Ultimately, this study wishes to demonstrate that Sterne is combining these different modes of Menippean satire in *Tristram Shandy*, which is quite clearly concerned with narrative (it tells a story and examines the telling of a story), yet also a deliberately nonnarrative object.

It is this aspect of Scriblerian satire which concerns me here. The self-reflexive narratives of earlier Menippean satires here become objects which draw attention to their status as such by means of the presence of the text. The key Scriblerian recognition is akin to that of Petronius (notably the ancient Menippean satirist least concerned with narrative as such): the embodiment of thought in language has an effect on thought. As we have already seen, there is a self-reflexive contradiction in satire which must criticize the expression of thought in language through language; more generally, while showing

⁶Indeed, contemporary criticism of *The Dunciad* complained that it lacks action (see Sutherland's Introduction, xli). This is obviously far too strong a statement to make about Swift, whose Menippean work takes a narrative form and has been extensively and successfully studied as narrative (see, for recent examples, Frank Palmeri, and Everett Zimmerman, *Swift's Narrative Satires*). *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*, however, do not bear the relation to the novel tradition which Cervantes or even Rabelais do. I believe that the greater importance of the discursive *Tale*, rather than the more "novelistic" *Gulliver*, to Sterne indicates that the nature of Swift's contribution to *Tristram Shandy* lies in its nonnarrative elements. See Hugh Kenner's identification of the *Tale*, the *Dunciad* and *Tristram Shandy* as forerunners in the use of "technological space" in literature (*The Stoic Comedians*, 37-49), and Chapter Six of the present study.

the world its errors, satire implicates itself in a deep knowledge of the world's errors.⁷ In Scriblerian satire, this contradiction is manifested textually, for its greatest target is the result of the impact of print. Because it is itself presented in the physical form of a printed text, it necessarily becomes subject to its own critique of the modern condition. In this period of flourishing print culture, the Scriblerian writers are acutely aware that their texts are physical things, *books*. This is manifest in the Scriblerian penchant for mocking textual scholarship, the branch of humanist learning most susceptible to losing sight of the ideals of the revival of classical wisdom. The figures of scholar-editors such as Bentley and Theobald are in many ways definitive of Scriblerian satire.⁸ What the Scriblerians see as these figures' excessive attention to the physical body of the text manifests itself in the use of the literalized or reified metaphor for satiric purposes,⁹ ironically revealing the untranscendable nature of all language in its metaphoric structure. This customary satiric device receives a Scriblerian twist as it is seen to parallel the

⁷Christopher Fox makes this point with the rhetorical questions, "How does one attack a pedant without becoming a pedant? How does one satirize a squabbler without entering into the squabble itself?" (*Locke and the Scriblerians* 85). We may note that *The Dunciad's* mockery of textual scholarship has origins in Pope's reaction to criticism of his edition of Shakespeare (see James Sutherland's Introduction: xi-xiii).

⁸The editorial tradition, stemming from Renaissance classical studies and intensifying in the Restoration and eighteenth century with the advent of higher biblical criticism, coincides with the rise of print, which both facilitates and demands textual analysis, but we should not forget the grammarians Zenodotus and Aristarchus in Lucian (*Verae Historiae* II.20).

⁹See Maurice Quinlan's "Swift's use of Literalization as a Rhetorical Device." More recent comments upon this device appear in Roger Lund's "*Res et verba*" and Frank Palmeri's Bakhtinian *Satire in Narrative*. These studies do not pursue this device to the presentational level of textuality.

reduction of ideal "authorship" (a transcendent, logocentric category) to "composition" (a graphocentric activity--literally the setting of type for the printing press).

So far we have seen Menippean satire as a tradition which mocks learning, often by noting the inadequacy of language to convey knowledge and the frailty of the texts by which it is transmitted. As we approach the Scriblerians, it is important to keep the intellectual-linguistic-textual nexus in mind, for I am suggesting that the proliferation of print during the Restoration and eighteenth century shifts the focus toward the text. To the end of showing continuity with the tradition, we will trace the textual manifestation of satiric self-referentiality beginning from within the text and moving outward to the text itself. This is to follow the model outlined in many of Swift's materializing puns in *A Tale of a Tub*, which comments upon "zeal" as follows: "it first proceeded from a *Notion* into a *Word*, and from thence in a hot Summer, ripped into a *tangible Substance*" (137).¹⁰ In general Scriblerian terms, we will move from the monster *in* the text to the monster *of* the text.

One of Swift's non-satiric statements on language, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*,¹¹ offers a starting point. Coming to this somewhat excessive title (which succinctly conveys Swift's thesis) in the context of satire, it is not immediately apparent that Swift is most serious here. The foolishness of this proposal, which necessarily haunts a satirist (a "petty treatise" Samuel Johnson would call

¹⁰See David Nokes, "'Hack at Tom Poley's': Swift's use of puns," for further examples of this "process of linguistic ripening" (47).

¹¹*Prose Works*, Vol. 4: 1-21.

it, having recognized the futility of his own similar proposal),¹² reflects a deep-seated fear about the instability of language. The origins of this fear are revealed in the *Proposal* by the language used to describe language. It is important to note the presence of the Fall here. In a typically inverted fashion, Swift shows God's command to the unfallen Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (*Gen.* 1:28), in its postlapsarian manifestation: "the Pretenders to polish and refine it [language], have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities" (6). This is notably transferred from an image of generation to one of signification, an important connection never distant from any moment in a Scriblerian text, which we will shortly address in terms of monstrosity. The Fall itself follows shortly hereafter, again transferred from the fleshly sin of *Genesis* (eating) to that of words:

I have never known this great Town without one or more *Dunces* of Figure, who had Credit enough to give Rise to some new Word, and propagate it in most Conversations; although it had neither Humour nor Significancy. If it struck the present Taste, it was soon transferred into the Plays, and current Scribbles of the Week, and became an Addition to our Language; while the Men of Wit and Learning, instead of early obviating such Corruptions, were too often seduced to imitate and comply with them. [10]

The seduction of Adam--Milton's man of wit and learning, and the archetypal namer--is clearly present here, representing the fall of language. In addition, the use of the term

¹²"Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language*" in *Rasselas, Poems, and Selected Prose* 235.

"propagate" reinforces the connection to generation. These connections are in some way basic to the outlook of the Scriblerians.

Swift's transferred sense of the Fall, the linguistic lapse, is firmly grounded in *Genesis* itself. This is the *locus classicus* of the power of language, God's *fiat*. It also provides the archetype of the ideal language of Adam which writes "the nature of things upon their names."¹³ Finally, *Genesis* also provides the first abuse of language, the first use of quotation (a re-use, a displacement of reference from natural objects, to words): "And [the serpent] said unto the woman, 'Yea, hath God said, "Ye shall not eat . . ."?" (3:1, quotation marks added). Quotation draws attention to signification as a process of displacement rather than an instantaneous, organic identification like Adam's. Furthermore, "drawing attention to" is important here, for this is the result of the Fall: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (3:7). Suddenly, appearances take over. A distance is placed between signifier (apron) and signified (nakedness). The rest of human history is in quotation marks.

The relationship between Swift's *Proposal* and *Genesis* shows connections everywhere present in Scriblerus: the mysterious, hilarious, and dangerous link between words and things. Submerged in this link is what I hope to have brought out of the Fall, the aspect of "drawing attention to." Satire self-reflexively draws attention to these connections. In Scriblerian satire, a key figure for this self-reflexive function is

¹³Robert South quoted in Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure*, 59; v. *Gen.* 2:19.

monstrosity.¹⁴ The words "monster," "monstrous" and "monstrosity" appear here not only because monsters figure prominently in these works, but also because the very *words* are signifiers of a deep doubleness in language. Indeed, Marie-Hélène Huet, among others, has drawn attention to a double etymological tradition for the word "monster." Beginning with St. Augustine, the word is related to the Latin "monstrare," to show. Another tradition derives "monster" from the Latin "monstrum," from "monere," to warn.¹⁵ This double etymology allows the Scriblerians to use the word "monster" not only to signify within their fictions "showing" or "warning", but to encode the linguistic means by which these warnings are given with extra significance. "Monster," through its double etymology becomes a code word for the instability of language, even as monsters

¹⁴Monstrosity is fast becoming a popular topic in eighteenth-century studies. In addition to the studies mentioned below, see Andrew Curran, Robert P. Maccubbin, and David F. Morrill, eds., *Faces of Monstrosity in Eighteenth-Century Thought*. Monstrosity is explicitly linked to satire by Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe in their introduction to *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism*: "The peculiar nature of satire has always been its monstrosity, its doubleness and self-bifurcation. . . . Most satirists . . . *claim* one purpose for satire, that of high-minded and usually socially oriented moral and intellectual reform; however, they *engage* in something quite different, namely, mercilessly savage attack on some person or thing" (2). See also in this volume Richard Nash's "Satyrs and Satire in Augustan England" which connects satire's interest in monsters to modern science's drive to classify the wild-man or satyr: monsters are "too dangerously similar to be safely classified as 'other'" (95). The generic ambivalence of Menippean satire noted in the previous chapter has the valence of the monster: it is beyond classification.

¹⁵See *Monstrous Imagination*, 6. In English, an older spelling of "monster," "monstre," has etymological links to the French "monstrer," to show. The noun (apart from the variant spelling of "monster") is used in English in this unnaturalized form or in the naturalized form, "monstrance," "an open or transparent vessel . . . in which the host is exposed," or "a receptacle used for the exhibition of relics" (O.E.D., s.v., "monster," "monstre," "monstrance"). So, lying behind "monster" is a double etymology, both senses of which are grounded in "drawing attention to," either by warning (verbal, or by event) or exhibition (a physical framing).

themselves are signs of the instability of human knowledge and identity. Language draws attention to itself while at the same time referring to its subject: such self-reflexivity is a form of monstrosity. Ultimately, awareness of language sheds light on the monstrous instability of Scriblerian satiric genres.

Issues of Scriblerian monstrosity have most recently been addressed by Dennis Todd's *Imagining Monsters*. Todd describes the epistemological preconditions that allow the use of monsters--those undefined or mixed entities, neither one kind nor another--in Scriblerian works. Eighteenth-century notions of monstrosity, the imagination and personal identity are "rooted in the way many people in the eighteenth century conceived of the relationship between the mind and the body" (267). Todd demonstrates that the British fascination with monsters (evidenced by the many popular freak shows of eighteenth-century London) is connected to contemporary thinking about the mind-body problem. As the mind and body became increasingly incompatible in medical and philosophical discourses, the imagination came to be seen as the faculty that mediates between the mind and body. However, the imagination was not only a mediator but also a dangerous vehicle that allowed the body to impinge upon the mind (producing monstrous confusion) and the mind on the body (producing monstrous offspring) (96). Thus the imagination becomes "a great leveller", making indistinguishable ideas and sensations, reality and fantasy (136). Such an understanding of the imagination makes impossible a firm notion of the self (based on an opposition of inside and outside), so that

ultimately, the *self* is seen to be monstrous.¹⁶

Whether in Swift's earnest *Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue* or in the satiric experiments of the projectors at the Academy of Lagado in *Gulliver's Travels*, the Scriblerians view language as unstable, mutable and metamorphic: in other words, monstrous. As with all eighteenth-century monsters, this is a case of blurred boundaries. The boundaries of Scriblerian monsters are blurred in a double sense. Within the fictions, monsters draw attention to the instabilities of epistemological categories. At the linguistic level, however, the word "monster" draws attention to itself as an instability. This very act of self-reference, drawing attention to "drawing attention to", is the ultimate Scriblerian monstrosity.

In the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* (a work long recognized as a source for *Tristram Shandy*), the prodigies attendant on Scriblerus' birth are literally "monsters" in this double sense. The first prodigy is Mrs. Scriblerus' dream that

she was brought to bed of a huge *Ink-horn*, out of which issued several large streams of Ink, as it had been a fountain: This dream was by her husband thought to signify, that the child should prove a very voluminous Writer. [98]

The connection of this moment of generation (and, hence, of origins) to writing is

¹⁶Huet's *Monstrous Imagination* and Barbara Stafford's *Body Criticism*, without Todd's specifically British emphasis, have drawn similar attention to the way in which monsters problematize early-modern epistemological categories. Judith Hawley has recently summarized the social implications of monsters: "The real problem the Scriblerians have with monsters is not their intrinsic oddity, but the promiscuity involved in the way they are seen and shown. The mixture of science and entertainment, the mingling of social classes, the muddle of objects and interests indicate to the satirists a disregard for due decorum and hierarchy" ("Margins and Monstrosity" 40). My approach to the monster differs in its emphasis on language and print.

important, as we shall see shortly. Another prodigy maintains the connection with language:

a monstrous *Fowl*, which. . . . had a large body, two little disproportioned wings, a prodigious tail, but no head. . . . on a nearer view, he perceived it to be speckled with black, in the form of letters . . . His back was armed with the Art Military, his belly was filled with Physick, his wings were the wings of Quarles and Withers [who wrote shaped poems], the several Nodes of his voluminous tail were diversify'd with several branches of science; where the Doctor beheld with great joy a knot of Logick, a knot of Metaphysick, a knot of Casuistry, [etc.] . . . [98-9]

Here the monster is literally a text, constructed of words appropriate to each of its parts. True to their double etymology, both of these prodigies draw attention to the birth of a monstrous producer of texts, the scholar, Martinus Scriblerus, while at the same time drawing attention to themselves, their own status as textual beings.

Such a double function is to be found throughout Scriblerian writings. The everyday meanings of "monster" were many in the eighteenth century, allowing the Scriblerians to use frequently what was for them a potent code word--at all times a comment upon postlapsarian language, in which the relation between words and things is ambiguous. Every use of the word "monster" reveals a sense of the doubleness implicit in the word's etymology, a doubleness which draws attention to "drawing attention to."

The most common uses of "monster" have a connection to generation. Both Huet and Todd note that the relationship between mental and physical "conception" is not

merely metaphoric in eighteenth-century discourse. Rather, says Todd, "the delusions of the imagination . . . were described in the language of monstrous birth because the two processes were thought of as the same process" (103), due to the two-way, mediating function of the imagination. However, I should add to Todd's observation that the *appearance* of a metaphoric quality adds another doubleness, and gives license to the Scriblerians to treat *all* metaphors as monsters, because metaphor blurs boundaries, makes two things into one.¹⁷ Monstrosity transgresses a dense set of correlative binary oppositions (for example, philosophy's mind and body, rhetoric's thought and expression, metaphor's tenor and vehicle¹⁸). In such transgressions, monstrosity itself becomes a monstrous master trope through which satire may comment upon language, and specifically writing or printing, as a form of confusion between mind and body. As a two-in-one paradox, monstrosity represents a fearful recognition of supplementarity. In Menippean satire this recognition is provoked by the presence of the text.¹⁹ In

¹⁷Most discussions of metaphor deal with issues of identity and difference: the tenor and vehicle of metaphor constitute one idea which simultaneously contains two. This was not an idea foreign to the eighteenth century: Samuel Johnson said of metaphor, "when it is used with propriety . . . it gives you two ideas for one" (quoted in I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 93). Richards defines metaphor as the "interaction" of tenor and vehicle (93). Such activity, whether it be a metaphor drawing attention to the inherent contradiction of its two terms, a text self-consciously referring to its textual status or a text literally performing its meaning, is a sign of the presence of the text.

¹⁸Literary theory's debates about "text" and "work" are confused here as well as the issues of authorship are raised by the emergence of print. As with teratology's concern with generation, print also problematizes identity and originality in its easy proliferation of copies.

¹⁹The "presencing" function of monstrosity and metaphor is at work in satire as a genre, which is by definition self-reflexive, since knowledge of the object satirized implicates the satirist. This self-reflexivity is figured by the materializations in satirical texts. Mind is implicated in body and body in mind, reduplicating themselves into literal

Scriblerian writing, monstrosity spreads by association from physical conception to mental conception and from mental conception to writing, writing which is always double (i.e., monstrous) in that it addresses issues of monstrosity, while drawing attention to its own form.

These associations permeate Scriblerian works, as a sampling from the *Memoirs* and *Peri Bathous* reveals. Consider the double conception of Martinus' mother, the "undoubted daughter either of the great Scriverius, or of Gaspar Barthius" (*Memoirs* 95). From this double physical conception we can turn to the double mental conception in Martinus' use of Horace in *Peri Bathous* and Crambe's "Theory of Syllogisms" in the *Memoirs*. In Chapter V of *Peri Bathous* (192), Martinus quotes from the *Ars Poetica* (13) in support of his grotesque style: "Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni." Not only does this bring double conception / copulation to bear on writing, it also draws attention to quotation (with which *Peri Bathous* abounds). For like the serpent in *Genesis*, Scriblerus manipulates his original text by quoting only the single line. As it stands--isolated in *Peri Bathous*--the verb can be construed as a jussive subjunctive, "Let serpents couple with birds, lambs with tigers." This is a considerable change from Horace's subjunctive of a negative result clause (introduced by "non ut" at the end of the previous line), in its full context meaning, "this licence we poets claim and in our turn we grant

objects for satire. (This formulation bears resemblance to Foucault's description of language becoming an "object of knowledge" in the nineteenth century, and thus gaining a kind of self-sufficient presence [*The Order of Things* 300]. However, Foucault's epistemological and ideological concerns are figurative, whereas I wish to add the literal level.)

the like; *but not so far that . . . serpents couple with birds, lambs with tigers.*"²⁰ By quotation, Martinus turns Horace's anti-monstrous statement into a monster itself.

The monstrous couplings of both Horace and Martinus regard the representations produced by poets (i.e., externalized objects). The theory of syllogisms outlined by Martinus' companion Conradus Crambe clearly reveals the source of the monstrous productions to be a monstrous mind. The theory states that the mind is

like a great Forest, where Ideas rang'd like animals of several kinds; that those Ideas copulated and engender'd Conclusions; that when those of different Species copulate, they bring forth monsters or absurdities . . . [*Memoirs* 121]

This is the fundamental statement of the Scriblerian outlook. By means of metaphor Swift's linguistic absurdities are equated with the Scriblerian monsters of physicality. Such equation, the dangerous hardening of thought, recalls the reification of language that Swift seems dangerously to yearn for in his *Proposal*. It is this equating factor--the other side of monstrosity's doubleness, the tyrannous unity of aspects which should be separate or double--that is brought to light in the form of much Scriblerian thought. Crambe's theory includes ten "rules of Syllogisms," the last of which shows the collapse of tenor and vehicle into a reified unity of absurd thought: "When the Premisses or parents are necessarily join'd (or in lawful wedlock) they beget lawful issue; but contingently join'd, they beget bastards" (122). The metaphor becomes literal as the reasoning progresses toward its conclusions. "Lawful issue" may equivocally refer to both tenor and vehicle, (i.e., syllogisms and animal copulation) but "bastards" is strictly in the realm of the

²⁰Loeb translation, 11-13, emphasis added.

vehicle--the animal world of copulation.

The reifying collapse into the vehicle permeates Martinus' thought. In *Peri Bathous*, the "Project for the Advancement of the Bathos" (Chap. XIII) hardens writing into clock-making by parcelling out the several branches of rhetoric to different trades and collecting individual tropes in "a *Rhetorical Chest of Drawers*" (225), so that composition becomes quite literally a putting together. This reification, while a satirical comment upon the "repositories" of the Royal Society (v. n255), has a greater poignancy as a comment upon language itself, and upon the publication of thoughts in the form of a book--something that implicates writers and readers alike in the Bathos. For these drawers, "resembling those Cabinets for Rarities" (225), also resemble the compositor's compartmentalized case of type--the heavy agent of reification, most pertinent to the "art of sinking."

These instances of reification are all monstrous in their deviation toward a monistic unity, away from the normal separation of tenor and vehicle, that is, the separation of thought and language as well as that of language and objects. This monstrosity of *absent* doubleness has its inversion in another ubiquitous Scriblerian feature, the single self divided. Martinus' diagnosis of the self-love of the "young Nobleman" in the terms of other-love provides an example:

why then he is in love with Himself, one of the most common cases in the world. I am astonish'd, people do not enough attend this disease, which has the same causes and symptoms . . . with the other [kind of love]. . . . Constant opportunities of conversation with the person beloved (the greatest of incentives) are here

impossible to be prevented. [134]

Martinus' paradigm of diagnosis requires an "other" in a love relationship to the extent that the unity of the self is divided into a monstrous double which ultimately requires "bawds and pimps" to "go between a man and himself" (135). By raising the question of identity in this fashion (if a man can be separate from himself, who, or which one, is he?), this passage anticipates the later manifestation of Lockean puzzles of identity in the physical monstrosity of the *Double Mistress*.²¹

The monstrous self-splitting aspect of language is found in the rich selection of bathetic lines in Chapter VII of *Peri Bathous*. Theobald's example is appropriate here: "None but Himself can be his Parallel" (199). Even a single word can manifest monstrosity, as with "The PARANOMASIA, or PUN, where a Word, like the tongue of a jack-daw, speaks twice as much by being split" (209). The instability of the individual units of signification reflects kindly on neither the mind that employs them, nor the system of thought which the units constitute. The unstable word is a fundamental embodiment of the Scriblerian critique of modernity as suffering from thought dominated or indeed wholly formed by the physical forms in which it is expressed.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, it is in the nature of satire to turn upon itself. These instances of self-splitting as well as the self-solidifying metaphors draw attention to the satirical project. Through monstrosity, the text (a "warning" of sorts) "shows" itself. This internal economy (providing its own support through splitting and

²¹Christopher Fox deals extensively with this episode in *Locke and the Scriblerians*, see especially 34, 110. For a radically different reading of this episode, see Maja-Lisa von Sneidern, "Joined at the Hip: A Monster, Colonialism, and the Scriblerian Project."

collapse) is mirrored by the external conditions of the creation of Martinus Scriblerus. There is a certain monstrosity present in multiple authorship: the collapse of the many actual minds of the Scriblerians into the one fictional mind of Scriblerus. On the other hand, Martinus shows his multiple creators through his exaggerated deformities and inconsistencies, he is a fragmented being. On the generic level, the *Memoirs* partake in the self-doubling reflexivity of satire which reveals its intimate knowledge of the very corruptions it attacks. In this aspect, satire is most monstrous. Satire is, after all, presented in the form of a printed text, created with heavy type taken from the compartmentalized compositor's drawer. In this context, *Peri Bathous* reveals not only a deep reading in the corpus of bathetic literature, but also, as indicated by Pope's own youthful lines which appear here, participation in the creation of that corpus. The other authors come off worse, of course. Nevertheless, Pope's self-inclusion reveals the satiric paradox.

Finally, one must wrestle with Swift's *Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue*, a text not intended with any irony, but one which--perhaps too late (in its final line)--recognizes its own foolish status: "BUT I forget my Province; and find my self turning Projector before I am aware; although it be one of the last Characters under which I should desire to appear before your Lordship" (20-21). Here one is presented with an image of the very linguistic monstrosity against which Swift has written his *Proposal*. From a representative of "all the learned and polite Persons of the Nation" (6) he has metamorphosed into a "Projector." "Finding himself" recalls the self-splitting aspects of Scriblerian literature. Furthermore, the representation he takes upon himself (he writes

"in the Name of" multiple "Persons") is a form of quotation, drawing attention to the fact that "naming" is now a fallen, and therefore monstrous activity. Swift seems to be calling for a dictionary, "some Method . . . for *Ascertaining* and *Fixing* our Language for ever, after such Alterations are made in it as shall be thought requisite" (14) (indeed, this is why Johnson addresses Swift's "petty treatise" in the preface to his *Dictionary*). However, in addition to the *static* dictionary *in bono*, there is the constantly revised, *modern* dictionary *in malo* with which Swift himself berates La Bruyere for "mak[ing] use of many new Terms which are not to be found in any of the common Dictionaries before his Time" (8). The doubleness of the dictionary presents Swift with the problem of language.

Furthermore, the tyranny of fashion which Swift seeks to destroy has its counterpart in the tyranny of fixity. This is most clearly shown by Crambe's collapsing chiasmus: "my life is as orderly as my Dictionary, for by my Dictionary I order my life. . . . Every day I am under the dominion of a certain Word" (*Memoirs* 128). Here words tyrannize by reification--by physical control over the world. In his reaction to a series of Crambe's examples, Martinus shows both Swift's horror and helplessness in the face of language:

For example, [says Crambe,] this 24th of June, I am govern'd by the word Cord; I accord favours to such as ask them, live in concord with all the world . . . record the actions of famous men. Monstrous! (says Martin, lifting up his hands and eyes) such an unnatural, unaccountable, unintelligible, unpolite, unprofitable Jargon! There it is now (answers Crambe) this is your day for *Uns*: The whole

world is govern'd by Words. [264]

The satiric paradox takes place both within and without the text. The critic or satirist falls victim to the vice he criticizes or satirizes. The Swift of the *Proposal* is shown to be like Scriblerus, just as Scriblerus becomes like Crambe. Scriblerian satire works on a fine balance between resistance to and acceptance of the corruptions of words and the world. Drawing attention to the corruptions inevitably draws attention to itself. The fundamental monstrosity of the Scriblerian project, the great showing and warning, is found in the fact that monstrosity is addressed only by means of a monstrous genre.

As suggested in our survey of Menippean satire, such monstrous textuality--signifying the instability of epistemological categories--is made present at different levels in satire. And we should note that, so far, we have seen mainly figurative or representational uses of textuality. At this level (i.e., within the text), the monsters which appear are figures for the confusion of the ideal with the physical. Often these monsters appear in the form of living or objectified texts--as in Swift's *Battle of the Books*.²² I wish to argue that, in terms of our history of the tradition, it is the eighteenth century which witnesses the literalization of literalization. As we have seen in this chapter and the last, in the early modern era, that which constitutes physical textuality increasingly becomes print.²³ Sterne's text, which plays upon its material manifestation as a printed

²²Terry Castle's Derridean reading of Swift's "grammaphobia," in "Why the Houyhnhnms Don't Write," is restricted to a consideration of textuality at the representational level of Swift's satires.

²³As noted in Chapter One, Elizabeth Eisenstein suggests that print precipitates an epistemological shift in this period. In "Mise-en-Page, Biblical Criticism, and Inference during the Restoration," Richard Kroll sees print as a key factor in Restoration

book, is the inheritor of the tradition of printed satire that approaches ideas by reducing them to bodily or physical manifestations.²⁴ With the advent of printing in the early modern era, this tradition sees the medium itself as the materialization of ideas. For the Scriblerians, this is a criticism:

In modern Wit all printed Trash, is
 Set off with num'rous *Breaks*---and *Dashes*--
 To Statesmen wou'd you give a Wipe,
 You print it in *Italick Type*.
 When Letters are in vulgar Shapes,
 'Tis ten to one the Wit escapes;
 But when in *Capitals* exprest,
 The dullest Reader Smoaks the Jest . . .²⁵

However, as we have seen above, it is a criticism which is infectious. Swift's poem, which contains not a few dashes throughout, concludes with a series of dashes and asterisks and a final "******Caetera desiderantur******," suggesting that the only way to

epistemology, especially Locke's influential theory. J. Paul Hunter argues that the early eighteenth century sees the first full recognition of the possibilities made available by print ("From Typology to Type").

²⁴One Menippean text from the British tradition that exhibits a typographical exuberance prophetic of Sterne's is printer John Dunton's *A Voyage Round the World* (1691), which (without certain proof) has been cited as a source for *Tristram Shandy* since 1762 when it was reprinted as *The Life, Travels, and Adventures of Christopher Wagstaff*. See J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels* and Garry Sherbert's *Menippean Satire and the Poetics of Wit* for accounts of Dunton.

²⁵Swift, *On Poetry: A Rhapsody* 93-100. *The Poems of Jonathan Swift* II.643.

convey certain qualities of the satiric object is by means of the presence of the text. At the presentational level, the level of the printed book as object, the satiric texts themselves become monstrous objects--breaking down (or coming out--there is a definite printerly exuberance at work) into nonverbal, printerly gestures.

Framing the activities of the Scriblerus club, whose figures of monstrosity we have just examined, are two major works, Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1710) and Pope's *Dunciad* (published with full apparatus in 1743), which make the transition from monsters *in* the text to monsters *of* the text. Beginning with the earlier work, we may consider the complete volume of Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (including *The Battle of the Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*) as a monstrous text, a Menippean parody of modern scholarly discourse in every aspect. The volume first appeared anonymously in 1704. Its thematic satire is well known: the *Tale* contains an allegorical tale (satirizing the history of the church with special attention to abuses of biblical interpretation) alternating with parodic digressions in the voice of a modern hack writer (whose main aim seems to be self-display through writing); *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, picking up on the *Tale*'s "Aeolists," engages with the philosophical debate about the question of the materiality of the soul by means of literalizing "spirit" into its etymological meaning of "wind," and satirizes Puritan claims to inspiration. *The Battle of the Books* is Swift's contribution to the quarrel of the ancients and moderns, siding, of course, with the ancients against the presumptuous textual editors and translators of his day. The literalizing allegory of the latter piece, in which a library of books take on their authors' identities and enter into literal combat over their canonical status, is a prime example of

the play on the physical nature of books, so much so that a pedantic note from the "Bookseller" offers the following caveat:

I must warn the Reader, to beware of applying to Persons what is here meant, only of Books in the most literal Sense. So, when *Virgil* is mentioned, we are not to understand the Person of a famous Poet, call'd by that Name, but only certain Sheets of Paper, bound up in Leather, containing in Print, the Works of the said Poet, and so of the rest. [214]

That such a warning is needed points to the degree to which the physical and the ideal are integrated.

These are the concerns with mind and body, thought and language, familiar to the tradition of Menippean satire. The *Tale* as a whole takes place within its narrator's "Physico-logical Scheme of Oratorical Receptacles or Machines" (61) which is premised upon the following theory of language:

Air being a heavy Body, and therefore . . . continually descending, must needs be more so, when loaden and press'd down by Words; which are also Bodies of much Weight and Gravity, as it is manifest from those deep *Impressions* they make and leave upon us; and therefore must be delivered from a due Altitude, or else they will neither carry a good Aim, nor fall down with a sufficient Force. [60]

This is clearly a speech-based theory (although the empiricist's language of "impressions" already points to print), but, in its strong sense of embodiment and mechanism, it is clearly affected by the place in which we find it--a printed book. And it is this textual manifestation of traditional Menippean concerns which is unique to the early eighteenth

century.

Not unlike Don Quixote's continual encounter with *Don Quixote* Part I throughout Part II, the (possibly unauthorized) publication of the *Tale of a Tub* volume had an immediate and lasting impact on Swift, demonstrating the dangerous power of print. It was said that *A Tale of a Tub's* rabid satire so offended the Queen that she "debarred him from a bishoprick."²⁶ Such criticism seems to have motivated the "Apology for the, &c," added to the fifth edition (1710), which defends the work as only ironically criticizing Anglicanism. Also added to this edition of *A Tale of a Tub* is a much more concrete sense of the power of print. The first four editions had provoked printed commentary in the form of William Wotton's *Observations upon The Tale of a Tub* (1705) and Edmund Curll's *A Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub* (1710). The fifth edition takes on Wotton's printed commentary to produce a demonstration of the equal power of print to avenge wrongs. Here, complementing the first edition's parodic use of scholarly textual apparatus (discussed below), Swift manages to incorporate in the form of footnotes Wotton's criticism, turning the attack of a rival into the self-parody of a pedantic annotator. The incorporative nature of Swift's parody is facilitated by print in the manner systematically put to use by the Scriblerus club: the first edition attracts material used in subsequent editions which neutralize criticism by demonstrating authorial control over it. At the same time, the lessons of *A Tale of a Tub* indicate the danger of print in extending an author's words beyond his control (this is a constant refrain of the "Apology"). This ambivalence is a part of Swift's difficult relationship to modernity: he

²⁶Samuel Johnson, "Swift," *Lives of the English Poets* iii.10.

is a part of it, yet sees its degradation. Nowhere is this ambivalence more present than in his use of print, a debased medium, yet the only one available.

The extent of Swift's parody is so deeply ironic that it is difficult to detect where he stands. The sheer exuberance of his use of print suggests a deeper engagement than the parodic. It is at this level that the presence of the text has its greatest impact. In the full fifth edition, *A Tale of a Tub* is replete with the printed trappings of scholarship. The crowded title page alone suggests this. In addition to the expected title, place and date of publication, the title page announces, "Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind," and adds the following: mention of the appended account of the battle of the books, a description of the material added to the fifth edition (explanatory notes and the author's apology) and no fewer than three Latin tags. Here the monstrosity we have seen described *within* most Scriblerian works is made manifest by the work itself.

The complicity of scholarship and printing, which may have once had a sense *in bono*, as both are concomitant facts of the Renaissance revival of learning, here takes on its Grub Street sense *in malo*, of the proliferation of useless and meaningless texts. This is manifested immediately following the title page in what seems to be a publisher's advertisement: "Treatises wrote by the same Author, most of them mentioned in the following Discourses; which will be speedily published" (2).²⁷ Prefatory material abounds, illustrating the sheer bulk that print is capable of producing (the hack is always careful to note the number of folio volumes occupied by a work), without any guarantee

²⁷A similar list appears in the *Memoirs*. In the "already published" section, it claims Bentley's *Milton* as a work of Scriblerus (171).

of meaning. Before we come upon the *Tale* proper, we must first encounter: "An Apology for the, &c," a dedication from the bookseller to Lord Sommers, a notice from the bookseller to the reader,²⁸ the author's dedication to Prince Posterity, and "The Preface." The *Tale* itself begins with an introduction. This prolegomena has its counterpart elsewhere in the volume. Although printed in a continuously paginated single volume, each of *The Battle of the Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* has its own title page, a notice from the bookseller and a preface or dedication from the author.²⁹

Within these texts we encounter the scholarly apparatus of both marginal notes and footnotes. These add to the number of voices heard in the volume, for they incorporate Wotton's criticisms, and purport to represent others. Their role is to create the sense of scholarly dialogue found in a "variorum" edition, although the parodic mode of this volume draws attention to the lack of communication in such a practice: "I do not well understand what the Author aims at here . . ." (159).³⁰ It is exactly this lack of understanding which lies at the heart of Swift's critique of print culture. As the excessive prefatory material demonstrates, its sheer quantity defies understanding. The hack who writes the *Tale* displays much index-learning, but is unable to comprehend it, to put it to

²⁸This places the work within the tradition of the found manuscript (alongside *The Dunciad* and *The Memoirs*), as well as providing something of a Menippean pedigree of authors recently updated by English translations: "Don Quixot, Boccacini, la Bruyere and other Authors" (29).

²⁹These features are more striking in the 1710 edition rather than a modern reprint.

³⁰The Guthkelch-Smith introduction classifies the variety of the notes (xxiv-xxv).

proper use, or even to distinguish learning from quackery. It is his ultimate ambition to engage in an "experiment very frequent among Modern Authors; which is, to *write upon Nothing*; When the Subject is utterly exhausted, to let the Pen still move on . . ." (208). This sense of hollow writing is magnified by the multiplying powers of print, which not only proliferates meaninglessness, but also increases the distance between author and reader, for, as Cervantes noted with regard to the question of textual transmission, the author of a printed work is in many ways only its stepfather. And it is here that the independent presence of the text makes itself known. Textual transmission has its own signs within a printed work. One is the scholarly note in the margin. Another is the representation of a faulty source-text within the printed text. And *A Tale of a Tub* is, in many ways, a study in the valence of the hiatus.³¹

In *A Tale of a Tub*'s "Digression Concerning Madness" we find the mind-body problem violently figured in terms of the anatomy by which Reason attempts to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the senses: "Last Week I saw a Woman *flay'd*, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse" (173). Such an image is a figure for the literalizing thought of typographic man. Yet, beyond the figurative we have the text itself. Earlier in the same section, the hack enters upon an abstract philosophical discussion intended to "search till we can find, from what Faculty of the Soul the Disposition arises in mortal Man, of taking it into his Head, to advance new

³¹In this light, the Latin on the title page, "*Diu multumque desideratum*" ("long and much desired"), appears to echo the marginal explanation of lacunae: "*Hic multa desiderantur*" ("here there is much to be desired") (170), suggesting that the work as a whole marks a large, cultural hiatus.

Systems with such an eager Zeal, in things agreed on all hands impossible to be known" (166). The argument proceeds by means of the outward trappings of scholarly discourse, such as reference to ancient and modern authorities, technical terms, Latin quotations, and *postulata*, until the speaker announces his conclusion to be immanent:

The present Argument is the most abstracted that ever I engaged in, it strains my Faculties to their highest Stretch; and I desire the Reader to attend with utmost Perpensity; For, I now proceed to unravel this knotty Point. [170]

The next paragraph begins, "THERE is in Mankind a certain," and ends, "And this I take to be a clear Solution of the Matter," but, in between, it is fragmented by several rows of asterisks marking the absence of the argument. The effects of this textual event--and it is neither the first nor the last within the volume--are multiple. Clearly it is a commentary on the dependence of abstract thought upon physical means of communication. It is also, as a pedantic footnote makes clear, a comment on the impossibility of abstract thought in such a medium (therefore questioning the validity of such thought in the first place): "Here is another Defect in the Manuscript, but I think the Author did wisely, and that the Matter which thus strained his Faculties, was not worth a Solution; and it were well if all Metaphysical Cobweb Problems were no otherwise answered" (170n).

The refusal of the annotator to go along with the corrupt manuscript fiction draws attention to the distance which the printed text imposes between the author and his reader, and the advantages which an unscrupulous author may thus take. Even in a case where the manuscript is said not to be defective, the reader is still alienated from direct

communication. In *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, labelled "a fragment," the reader encounters only one hiatus, marked by rows of asterisks and the following explanation: "Here the whole Scheme of spiritual Mechanism was deduced and explained, with an Appearance of great reading and observation; but it was thought neither safe nor Convenient to Print it" (276n). If we choose to believe the note, we must recognize that this is not a fragment in its manuscript state. The public nature of print has necessitated the fragmentation and, in place of the argument, substituted itself, rows of marks upon the page which cannot be abstracted. This visceral demonstration of the presence of the text is complemented by the postscript to this epistle, "Pray, burn this Letter as soon as it comes to your Hands" (289). This is a paradoxical request if one assumes a reading from beginning to end, but more importantly, it draws attention to the physical nature of the communication, as well as the ironic transcendence of this physicality by means of the proliferating power of print: *this* letter may be burnt, but as Don Quixote finds out, the product of the printing press is difficult to suppress.³²

Each set of asterisks in the *Tale of a Tub* volume (there are eleven major

³²An account written by Pope and Parnell in 1714 conveys Swift's deep sense of the presence of the text in his private life: "He has in his windows an orbicular glass, which by contraction of the solar beams into a proper focus, doth burn, singe, or speckle white or printed paper, in curious little holes or various figures. We chanced to find some experiments of this nature upon the votes of the House of Commons. The name of Thomas Hanmer, Speaker, was much singed, and that of John Barber entirely burnt out. There was a large gap at the edge of the Bill of Schism, and several specks upon the proclamation for the Pretender. I doubt not but these marks of his are mystical, and that the figures he makes this way are a significant cypher to those who have the skill to explain them" (*Correspondence* II.418-19). Satire notwithstanding, the treatment of texts as physical objects is a consistent feature of much of Swift's writing. See Deborah Baker Wyrick's *Jonathan Swift and the Vested Word* for an extended treatment of Swift's sense of language as material.

interruptions) is accompanied by a marginal note informing the reader of the state of the manuscript. The frequency of the lacunae is greatest in *The Battle of the Books*, which, like *On Poetry: A Rhapsody*, concludes with asterisks and "Desunt caetera" (258). As in chapter eight of *Don Quixote*, Part I, the manuscript first becomes faulty just as the battle is just beginning. However, if the narrative within the text is lacking, we may also trace a solely textual narrative in the commentary on the lacunae. In a sequence of three lacunae appearing on a single page, the marginal commentary traces a narrative, increasing with the pitch of the battle: "Hic pauca desunt. . . . Desunt nonnulla. . . . Ingens hiatus hic in MS" (244nn). The final instance in this sequence of asterisks (perhaps we may read "ingens" as not only vast, but also monstrous in the sense of "unkind") is also an illustrative textual gesture, as it follows upon the death of Descartes at the hands of Aristotle:

The Torture of the Pain, whirled the valiant *Bow-man* round, till Death, like a Star
of superior Influence, drew him into his own *Vortex*. * * * *
* * * * * [244]

Whether these are "the Sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser Stars in his [Descartes'] *Romantick* System" (167) or the *Vortex* itself, the text is making a gesture at communication which transcends (or subverts) verbal reference. And this marks the effect of the presence of the text in Scriblerian satire. The marginal gloss on the missing argument in the "Digression concerning madness" states, "*Hic multa desiderantur*" (170). There is much wanting here, indeed. However, in the very act of noting absence, the text

has manifested its own presence through asterisks and notes.³³

In turning to Pope's *Dunciad*, appearing at the end of the Scriblerian period, we may note that it shares thematic concerns with *A Tale of a Tub* about the decline of letters. These concerns are represented by means of monstrous textuality, represented at the opening of Book I in the uncontrolled linguistic generation of the primordial Chaos.

The goddess Dulness peers in and sees:

How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.³⁴

A variety of abuses follow before we are given a vision of generic miscegenation, based on the Horatian warning which Martinus Scriblerus inverts and takes to heart: "How Tragedy and Comedy embrace; / How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race" (69-70).

These conceptual interminglings soon come to more physical manifestations when attention is drawn to the relation of a book's subject matter to its physical materiality. This can be seen in the altar of books which Bays (Cibber) raises in order to burn his own

³³Elizabeth Wanning Harries begins *The Unfinished Manner*, a study of fragmentation in the later eighteenth century, with a survey of Petrarch, Rabelais and Cervantes, and *A Tale of a Tub*. Although more concerned with the affective aesthetics of sentimental literature, this study does suggest a ground of continuity between satire and sensibility (I would add more specifically, the sublime) in the inadequacy of language. Harries is concerned with *absence* and the reader's self-awareness, a concern parallel to what I have termed the presence of the text, which, as I have suggested here, is what marks the problem and provokes Harries' reader through a process of supplementation.

³⁴l.59-62. All references are to the 1743 *Dunciad* (*Twickenham* V, "Text B"), by book and line numbers.

works:

A folio Common-place

Founds the whole pile, of all his works the base:

Quartos, octavos, shape the less'ning pyre;

A twisted Birth-day Ode completes the spire. [I.159-62]

But it is more explicit (and pedantic) in Martinus Scriblerus' duncical annotation to the conclusion of this passage after the goddess Dulness has extinguished the literary fire with "a sheet of Thulè" (I.258). Scriblerus writes:

Thulè: An unfinished Poem of that name, of which one sheet was printed many Years ago, by *A. Ph.* a Northern Author. It is an usual method of putting out a fire, to cast wet sheets upon it. Some Criticks have been of opinion, that this sheet was of the nature of the *Asbestos*, which cannot be consumed by fire; but I rather think it an allegorical allusion to the coldness and heaviness of the writing.
[note ad I.258]

We may thank Scriblerus for making clear the satiric reduction of content to form.

The monstrosity of textuality is demonstrated in the power of form itself to take over from the more important abstract distinctions which, according to Augustan decorum, ought to dictate form. In the works of Dulness we find "Prose swell'd to verse, verse loit'ring into prose" and discover that "Prologues into Prefaces decay, / And these to Notes are fritter'd quite away . . ." (I.274, 277-78). These phenomena are, of course, demonstrated on the very page where we read about them. However, a distinction should be made between the modern works described here, which come into the world in this

polymorphous state by virtue of the unformed minds of their authors ("with less reading than makes felons scape, / Less human genius than God gives an ape" [281-82]), and the works of the truly learned ancients whose works suffer less from the ravages of time than the physical damage wrought by editors, who are also the children of Dulness, encouraged in Book IV:

Let standard-Authors, thus, like trophies born,
 Appear more glorious as more hack'd and torn,
 And you, my Critics! in the chequer'd shade,
 Admire new light thro' holes yourselves have made. [IV.123-26]

The advances of modern editing have only heightened our awareness of the dependence of the "great tradition" on the physical state of texts. Printing, which originated the demand for "perfect" texts of the ancients, has also revealed the impossibility of perfection by magnifying lacunae and drawing attention to cruxes of interpretation. The end result is the triumph of Dulness over even great literature by levelling it to the polymorphous indistinction of modern productions. Bentley "praises" himself in the same terms used to describe the works of Dulness in Book I:

Thy mighty Scholiast, whose unweary'd pains
 Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.
 Turn what they will to Verse, their toil is vain,
 Critics like me shall make it Prose again. [IV.211-14]

The ravages of modern editing and the inanities of modern writing are equally symbolic of the decline of learning, letters and culture in general. The Scriblerians obviously want

no part of it, yet they are inextricably bound to modern forms, as the format of both *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad* make clear.³⁵

The Scriblerians' view of modern culture is contradicted by their use of modern forms, for, no matter how parodic in intent, the sheer weight and extent of textuality has an impact beyond critique. All of the techniques employed by Pope in *The Dunciad* may be found in *A Tale of a Tub*, especially the incorporation of criticism into its own body of notes and appended commentaries. What distinguishes *The Dunciad*, and perhaps points to its greater complicity with print culture, is its systematic approach. In its engagement with other publications, its continuing evolution, its incorporation of many voices (not only of critics, but also of fellow Scriblerians), this work comes closest to realizing the grand satiric project of the Scriblerus club's ongoing attack on modernity.³⁶

Pope's systematic engagement with the public sphere of printing is also reflected

³⁵*The Dunciad* itself undergoes a certain amount of polymorphous swelling. It first appeared as a 52 page pamphlet with "nineteen brief footnotes" (Sutherland, "Note on the text of *Dunciad A*," *Twickenham*, Vol. 5, 2). As Maynard Mack notes, a year later it appeared as *The Dunciad Variorum*, which, although Pope "enlarged the poem itself by less than a hundred lines," was now, due to the extensive critical apparatus, "a work of substance in a small-quarto format with pages more than twice the size of those in 1728 and more than twice as many of them" (*Alexander Pope 476-77*). In 1743 the fourth book and further apparatus are added.

³⁶Pope's careful collection of attacks upon himself, and his specific baiting of the critical public with *Peri Bathous* in order to generate material for the notes variorum is well known (see Sutherland's Introduction, xxvi, xvi). Indeed, perhaps the most Scriblerian feature of *The Dunciad* is the way in which, even after Pope's death, the work continues to accrue further notes variorum, beginning with Warburton's contributions to the last lifetime edition (1743) as well as his 1751 edition in which he adds notes "to castigate his own personal opponents" (Sutherland xxxvii). Sutherland's own edition (1943-63) continues this process, placing his own voice (albeit in hooks) among those of Pope's duncical commentators (noted by James McLaverty, "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the *Dunciad Variorum*," 104).

in the final product of *The Dunciad in Four Books*. Unlike *A Tale of a Tub*, which manifests its textual presence in local irruptions of typography, *The Dunciad* presents itself *in toto* as a monument of (to?) print.³⁷ In a classic essay, James McLaverty suggests that Pope's *Dunciad Variorum* is a work whose "mode of existence" is inseparable from its physical appearance in print, it is "an imitation not of spoken discourse but of written discourse" (98). In particular, it adopts the entire format of editions such as Bentley's "Amsterdam Horace" (emulated in Theobald's Shakespeare) and even more so the Geneva Boileau (98-101). These are works fraught with textual apparatus such as prefaces, indexes and notes of different varieties, often crowding the poem off the page, making, as McLaverty notes (99), the editor as important as the author--exactly the levelling of distinctions to which Pope objects.

McLaverty argues that the pomp (a word used by Pope himself to describe the *Dunciad Variorum*, see Sutherland, xxiv) of this edition allows Pope to simultaneously satirize textual scholarship yet claim importance for his poem (101). It is this double game which makes the presence of the text such an important feature of Scriblerian satire. *A Tale of a Tub* quite explicitly parodies the productions of typographic man, as does *The Dunciad*. Yet Pope is also quite explicitly using the format of his work to supplement its content. This is a technique he employed frequently with works not pointed explicitly at print culture. David Foxon's study of Pope's careful imitation of "classicizing"

³⁷William Kinsley's wide-ranging exploration of "The *Dunciad* as Mock-Book" suggests that *A Tale of a Tub*, "partly because it is always focused on the process of authorship, is a much more detailed and thoroughgoing parody of the form of the book than is the *Dunciad*, but it does not bring into play so many of the positive metaphorical associations of the tradition of the book," namely the sacred "Book of Nature" (37).

typography traces his efforts to make his works more elegant by removing obvious signs of printing, such as the double rule framing the title page of the 1713 edition of *An Essay on Criticism* or the catchwords and italics for proper names in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*.³⁸ The paradox is, of course, that these are merely substitutions of newer printing conventions for older ones. Pope's meticulous care for bibliographic detail suggests an attempt to raise a debased medium, yet he is also, as McLaverty has suggested, using the medium to make a claim to his own importance.

If the very presence of the notes in *The Dunciad* simultaneously mocks scholarship and ennobles Pope's poem, the content of the notes reinforces this double imperative. It is well known that not all of Pope's notes are parodic. Often he is supplying information which he could expect no reader to have.³⁹ Other notes provide classical allusions which one might expect a learned audience to perceive. This aggrandizing feature may place Pope among the learned classic authors, yet at the same time, as J. Paul Hunter notes, it defeats the need for the humanist ideal of the learned reader.⁴⁰ In flagrant contradiction of the work's satiric motivations (to warn against the decline of learning), the text takes over, substituting itself for the reader's knowledge and appreciation: "Index-learning turns no student pale, / Yet holds the eel of science by the tail" (I.279-80). The very textual gestures which crowd the poem off the page also crowd the reader out of the book. *The*

³⁸*Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, 23-33; 114.

³⁹Swift wrote to Pope: "twenty miles from London nobody understands hints, initial letters, or town facts and passages; and in a few years not even those who live in London" (quoted in Sutherland, Introduction, xxiii-xxiv).

⁴⁰"From Typology to Type," 65.

Dunciad becomes a text which, in the absence of the banished author and reader, independently writes and reads itself.

This is a phenomenon we saw Sterne employing in his sermons to achieve specific rhetorical ends. Like sublime rhetoric, which we are about to examine, these gestures have an effect on the reader. In their printed form they manifest a presence independent of their referential use, indeed often dispensing with reference altogether. Like the sermons, although with different ends, both Menippean satire and the sublime share an interest in the threshold of mind and body--the ambiguous place where communication takes place. It is such a parallel between these two apparently disparate discourses which this study wishes to examine in terms of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which self-consciously evokes both discourses by name--that is, at a critical meta-level--and by technique.

Chapter 5: Textual Presence in the sublime

Although the main focus of this chapter will be the sublime, it is important to place Sterne and his use of Longinus in the more general context of rhetoric. As we will examine more closely in Chapter Seven, *Tristram Shandy* is full of references to and uses of the tropes and figures of classical rhetoric, as well as the ancient rhetoricians. Sterne's concern with rhetoric doubtlessly stems from his classical education as a boy at local schools and in his twenties, training for the clergy at Jesus College, Cambridge where, in addition to the classics and modern philosophy, "formal logic and classical rhetoric were studied with a view to mastering them as practical skills."¹ Examination by debate was still in practice in Sterne's day, and mounting the rostrum to face an opponent (v. Cash 51-2) must have made the classical and humanist tradition of performative rhetoric (as well as satirical versions such as Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* or Rabelais' portrayal of the gestural debate of Thaumast and Panurge [II.18]) a living reality for him.

References to Longinus in *Tristram Shandy* should be seen in this classical context as well as in the context of the aesthetics burgeoning by mid century (see below). For Longinus is a transitional figure in eighteenth-century rhetoric, fitting in at both ends of the accepted scholarly narrative of developments in rhetoric over the century, from the implications of Ramus's separation of logic from rhetoric, leading toward a narrow focus on style and delivery (culminating in the elocutionary movement) to the reaction of the "new rhetoric," seeking a complete account grounded in philosophical and psychological theories as well as a belletristic interest in the interpretation of literature (as opposed to

¹Arthur Cash, *Early and Middle Years*, 50. See also 34, 43-4.

its production).² This inward and hermeneutic turn is the concern of the present chapter. The elocutionists and other classical rhetoricians who consider the orator's body as the primary medium of communication are addressed in the final chapter.

This chapter wishes to argue that, for a Sternean reading of the sublime, it is not so much the orator's body, as the body of the text which gives presence: a text may be given voice by the text's own embodiment. In Chapter Six we will trace the relationship between the text of *Tristram Shandy* and the orator-preacher of the sermons. Here we must follow Sterne's lead (offered to us from both the pulpit and the pages of *Tristram Shandy*) and turn to Longinus and the eighteenth-century discourse of the sublime generated from *Peri Hypsous*, and ask how Sterne approaches this discourse with his specific concerns. We must also ask *why* he approaches this discourse, for it is apparently of a different order from the satiric tradition of which *Tristram Shandy* so obviously partakes. This apparent difference is understandable at the level of first expectations: at the most basic level, we consider satire to be a levelling discourse and the sublime an elevating one. On the one hand, satire is thought to be pointed at the particular: it is

²See Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric*, 77-9 and 696-7, Michael G. Moran's introduction to *Eighteenth-Century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* and S. H. Monk's *The Sublime*, as well as the discussion of literary history in Chapter One. A voice dissenting from this narrative is heard in S. Michael Halloran's "Hugh Blair's Use of Quintilian and the Transformation of Rhetoric in the Eighteenth Century," although Halloran is really quibbling rather than restructuring the accepted story. However, the continuation of a classical tradition is important to the present study, for although Longinus and the sublime are heralded as the source of modern aesthetics, anticipating and allowing for Kantian ideas, the presence of Longinus (in summary with modern illustration) as a supplement to John Holmes's *The Art of Rhetoric Made Easy* (1739), a popular Ciceronian stylistic rhetoric for schoolboys, indicates the strength of the link to the older tradition (see Larry Ferrario, "John Holmes (1703-1759).")

aimed (according to Dryden) at imparting "some one Precept of Moral Virtue" and warning "against some one particular Vice or Folly," or it enumerates the grotesque physical details of a Shadwell or an Edmund Curll. On the other hand, we expect the sublime to transcend toward the general. This is the assumption behind Johnson's comment on the metaphysical poets' failure to attain sublimity: "Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness."³ A modern critic, Marshall Brown, who has written on the "urbane sublime," summarizes these common assumptions: satire and the sublime are opposed as "the comic and the serious, the clever and the pompous, the critically detached and the uncritically self-involved."⁴

The critical function of satire and the rhapsodic function of the sublime would seem to be irreconcilable. And, as we have suggested in Chapter One, this irreconcilability marks one of the foundational premises with which we construe literary

³"Cowley" in *Lives of the English Poets*, I.21. Johnson continues: "Their attempts were always analytick: they broke every image into fragments . . ." It is also worth quoting Johnson's famous remark on Edgar's description of the cliffs of Dover: "He that looks from a precipice find himself assailed by one great and dreadful image of irresistible destruction. But this overwhelming idea is dissipated and enfeebled from the instant that the mind can restore itself to the observation of particulars, and diffuse its attention to distinct objects" (quoted in William Edinger, *Samuel Johnson and Poetic Style*, 205). See Edinger for a consideration of the classic topic of the general and the particular in Johnson. Although Johnson does not often use the term, he is clearly dealing with the sublime as we generally conceive of it: "a surpassing of conventions or reasonable limits, an attempt to come to terms with the unimaginable" (Martin Price, "The Sublime Poem: Pictures and Powers" 31).

⁴*Preromanticism*, 23. We should note Longinus' comparison of Hyperides and Demosthenes in similar terms (xxxiv.56-7). Brown cites Wimsatt's "The Augustan Mode in English Poetry" (*Hateful Contraries*), Peter Hughes' "Language, History and Vision" and Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime* as examples of this traditional view.

history. The eighteenth century has often been divided between an "age of satire" and an "age of the sublime" (or "sensibility"). This corresponds with the overarching narrative of the shift from rhetoric to aesthetics, or, from Neoclassicism to Romanticism, during the century. Tellingly, this type of oppositional thinking has its origins in the development of literary history in the eighteenth century. In 1762, Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser* expresses exactly the assumptions I have just outlined as a part of his "Gothic" backlash against the "Augustan" age. Warton here describes in the language of literary history what for many of us is a self-evident truth about satire and the sublime. He is discussing the disappearance of allegory after Spenser:

a poetry succeeded, in which imagination gave way to correctness, sublimity of description to delicacy of sentiment, and majestic imagery to conceit and epigram. Poets began now to be more attentive to words, than to things and objects. The nicer beauties of happy expression were preferred to the daring strokes of great conception. Satire, that bane of the sublime, was imported from France. The muses were debauched at court, and polite life, and familiar manners, became their only themes.⁵

Setting the politics of Warton's taste aside, we can recognize here the familiar Burkean valorization of the masculine aesthetic of obscurity and greatness over the feminized particulars of ornamental style. Satire for Warton is clearly that of the Horatian variety.

The problem here is that such a view of literary history elides the fact that Longinus and the sublime (from Boileau to Burke) have their rise *in tandem* with the rise

⁵*Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser* II.111-12.

of satire (from Dryden to the Scriblerians, Fielding and Sterne). This historical continuity calls for a reconsideration of the traditional opposition of satire and the sublime. Ultimately, I wish to suggest that the two discourses converge in rhetorical issues, especially issues of performance which stress the particulars which create rhetorical effects. To anticipate my final chapter, *Tristram Shandy*, published at the same time as Warton's statement, is an interesting framework with which to examine a theoretical connection between satire and the sublime, one which comes down to problems of expression.

As Melvyn New's extensive editorial commentary to "Search the Scriptures" suggests, Sterne is deeply engaged with the aesthetics of the sublime, to the extent of borrowing phrases and ideas from the specific texts of this tradition, including William Smith's translation and annotation of Longinus, and works by John Dennis, Anthony Blackwall, and Robert Lowth. Our discussion of his sermons in general suggests that the rhetoric of the sublime is an important mode of communication and interpretation to Sterne, who is clearly sensitive to the issues raised by rhetorical situations.

It is the question of rhetorical situations which leads us to consider the conditions under which a confluence of satire and the sublime may be possible. I wish to argue that the conditions which enable this confluence revolve around rhetoric: the open-ended and improvisatory nature of the anatomical tradition of Menippean satire (as opposed to the formal verse satire described by Dryden above) and the "rhetorical" sublime.⁶ In this

⁶Marshall Brown's chapter, "The Urbane Sublime," argues the following: "that the satiric and the sublime poets wrote on the basis of common stylistic presuppositions. They employed similar kinds of verbal artifice, entertained similar conceptions of formal

light, it is important to note that the authors alluded to in "Search the Scriptures" belong to the "rhetorical" side of the discourse of the sublime which is in transition in this period, moving toward a culmination in the full-blown aesthetics of Kant.⁷ Beginning with S. H. Monk, most modern studies of the sublime offer teleological readings which consider the eighteenth century as inevitably leading to Kant. Although *de facto* a post-Kantian study, it is the purpose of this chapter to examine the rhetorical, pre-Kantian aspect of the sublime in order to see what it had to offer Sterne as a thinker about writing.⁸ This is difficult, for the history of the sublime after Sterne's time somewhat obscures his options. Poststructural studies have taken "the sublime" beyond its common sense of "lofty thoughts in elevated language." This rhetorical sense gives way, through Kant, to "the

organization, and envisioned similar purposes with respect to much the same audience. There is a continuity between the satiric and sublime modes, as well as between the sublime mode and ordinary experience" (*Preromanticism* 23). Despite his emphasis on formal questions, his restriction to mid-century poetry in this chapter tends to move his definition of "satire" toward a more general "ironic distance," thus differentiating his emphasis from my interest in performative rhetoric.

⁷R. S. Crane's review of Monk's *The Sublime* is the first to articulate a distinction between the "rhetorical" and "natural" sublime of the earlier and later eighteenth century, respectively. For a critique of this division see David Morris, *The Religious Sublime*, 5-8.

⁸Jonathan Lamb's *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* has broken this ground in its close attention to Longinus' rhetorical figures. However, his reading is inclined toward a Kantian aesthetic and is tethered to Sterne in such a way that it needs the further independent exploration of the works in this tradition which this chapter will provide. Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla's recent anthology, *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* makes a case for the "de-coupling" of eighteenth-century British aesthetics from Kantian disinterestedness, emphasizing the continuance of the rhetorical sublime throughout the century. However, in its insistence on the imbrication of aesthetics in a matrix of discourses, particularly the political and ethical, this cultural materialist approach obviously differs from my own.

question of presentation," that is of "being-in-the-world."⁹ Through close readings of the rhetoric of texts on the sublime, deconstruction has revealed a contradictory core of assumptions in sublime aesthetics: art is natural, nature artful. While such an approach does lead to twentieth-century abstractions,¹⁰ its methods may also be useful for excavating an eighteenth-century sublime which wrestles less comfortably with such inherent contradictions and also shows continuities with satire. Let us not forget that Longinus' image of the sublime orator is virtually a description of *Tristram Shandy*: "he gives his audience a kind of anxiety, as if he had lost his subject, and forgot what he was about; and so strongly engages their concern, that they tremble for, and bear their share in the dangers of the speaker . . ." (xxii.42).

Ultimately I will argue that the discourses of satire and the sublime must be combined to understand the presences of *Tristram Shandy*, just as *Tristram Shandy* may provide a lens which allows us to see similarities between these discourses. As we have seen in Chapters Three and Four, the Bakhtinian reading of Menippean satire focuses on its generic instability, its ability to invade and consume other modes of writing, creating a self-awareness of its own generic status. The sublime famously pays no heed to generic boundaries (Longinus alone ranges from Sappho's lyric to Homer's epic, from

⁹The phrases quoted here are from Jean-Luc Nancy's preface to *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question* by Jean-François Courtine (et al.) (2). These essays are characteristic of the Kantian approach, determined, for example, to read Longinus "not as a work of rhetoric or of poetics . . . but rather as a philosophical work" (Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Sublime Truth," 96). See David. L. Sedley, "Sublimity and Skepticism in Montaigne" (1079-81) for a recent survey of postmodern approaches to the sublime.

¹⁰"Without *techne*, *physis* escapes us, because in its essence *physis* . . . loves to dissimulate itself" (Lacoue-Labarthe 99).

Demosthenes' speeches to Moses' account of creation). Recent criticism of the sublime has drawn attention to generic instability brought on by sublime self-awareness in mid-century poetry and aesthetic writings.¹¹ This common ground offers a starting place for the consideration of continuities between satire and the sublime.

It is important to note that the satirists known to Sterne were also highly aware of the sublime. It was customary to cite on the title page of a translation or in a footnote to a discussion of Longinus, Pope's lines from *An Essay on Criticism*:

Thee, Bold *Longinus!* all the Nine inspire,
 And bless *their Critick* with a *Poet's Fire*.
 An ardent *Judge*, who Zealous in his Trust,
 With *Warmth* gives Sentence, yet is always *Just*;
 Whose *own Example* strengthens all his Laws,
 And *Is himself* that great *Sublime* he draws.¹²

The quotable nature of Pope's couplets and the commonplace attitudes toward Longinus which the couplets express threaten to prevent an appreciation of the validity of these thoughts. This passage moves from the balanced Augustan antithesis--of "*Critick*" and

¹¹For example: Marshall Brown's emphasis on continuity and fluidity in "The Urbane Sublime"; Peter de Bolla's consideration of the emergence of a self-reflexive theory of the sublime during the Seven Years' War (which, incidentally, saw the publication of six volumes of *Tristram Shandy*) in *The Discourse of the Sublime*; Jonathan Lamb's interest in generic transformations as satire turns upon itself, "impelled by the need to identify and appropriate the irregularities of the sublime before the moderns cite it as a license for experiment" ("Blocked Observation: Tautology and Paradox in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*," 337) and the "interruptivity" of theodicy in *The Rhetoric of Suffering*.

¹²Lines 675-80 in *Twickenham I*.

"Poet," of "ardent" (taken from the poet's "Fire") and "Judge," of "Warmth" and "Just"—to the seemingly monistic repeated self-reference of the final couplet, giving a concise portrait of eighteenth-century ways of thinking—the doubleness of antithesis—as well as a fundamental insight into Longinus' thought—the doubleness of self-reference.

This insight is an important one, not only for postmodern readings of the sublime, but also for a potential connection with satire. In *Peri Bathous: or . . . the Art of Sinking in Poetry*, Pope's Martinus Scriblerus (confounding intellectual and physical uses of "lowest") writes of the difficulty of a writer

falling gracefully; much more for a man who is amongst the lowest of the creation, at the very bottom of the Atmosphere, to descend beneath himself, is not so easy a task unless he calls in Art to his assistance. [191]

This seems to be in satiric opposition to Longinus' "rising." However, the paradoxical formulation, not only falling beneath the lowest point of the Atmosphere (i.e., off the scale), but then "beneath himself," reveals a striking similarity with the language and vertical orientation of Longinus. One must realize that *hypsous* and *bathous* are not opposed as are the horizontal and the vertical, but as members of the same vertical measure. Speaking more generally, Longinus himself observes, "our excellencies and defects flow almost from the same common source" (v.9). As we will see (in the discussion of "as if", below), the "almost" here is crucial, and a look at "those vices, which border so near upon, and are so easily blended with the true sublime" (v.9), reveals that the "almost," though differentiating, does not oppose. We have a one-sided difference in kind. In other words, Pope's *Peri Bathous* belongs on the same side of the scale as

Longinus' *Peri Hypsous*.

An example closer to home for Pope reveals the redoubling nature of both satiric and sublime self-referentiality. In Chapter VII of *Peri Bathous*, "Of the *Profound*, when it consists in the Thought," Scriblerus quotes a series of lines dangerously parallel to the last of Pope's couplets in praise of Longinus. Theobald's line, already quoted in Chapter Four, provides the closest match: "None but Himself can be his Parallel." Scriblerus calls this "Profundity itself" (199). If the difference between the Theobald (as quoted in *Peri Bathous*) and Pope (in the *Essay on Criticism*) is sufficient to separate the profound from the sublime (as Pope's lines on Longinus are certainly intended to be), another problem arises in the couplet quoted shortly before: "Venus beheld her, 'midst her crowd of slaves, / And thought herself just risen from the waves" (198). These lines are Pope's own (cf. *Peri Bathous*, n.107). Not only is this self-reference within *Peri Bathous* (where the ironic stance is under control--Pope can safely mock his own juvenilia), but, as I have suggested, this is also self-reference outward to *An Essay on Criticism*, lines 679-80 (where the reference to Longinus, the master of self-reference, contains no mockery). The lines in *Peri Bathous* are followed by the parodic, yet accurate commentary on the salient feature of the couplet: "How much out of the way of common sense is this reflection of Venus, not knowing herself from the lady?" (198). This comment points out the lack of epistemological clarity (the chapter is concerned with figures of thought) found in the bathos.¹³ At the same time, it draws attention to the exchange of subject and object, a

¹³Christopher Ricks is dismissive of Pope's approach to the lines discussed here: "in simply ruling out, on simple principle, such turns . . . such Augustan criticism was cutting itself off from a certain form of poetic apprehension which genuinely 'is *Profundity*

traditional problematic in the discourse of the sublime, which this chapter will address in terms of a "sublime slip" originating in Longinus and permeating the tradition. What is important here is the continuity of satiric and sublime modes: just as the adjective "sublime" describes both the object perceived (be it an ode, an oration, or an ocean) as well as the experience of the subject-perceiver (who feels sublime emotions), so does satire examine in a subversive light both the satirical object and the satirical subject. So, not only is Pope's example self-reflexive in its choice of material and subject matter (both of which are in turn involved with reflexivities of Longinus), but it is also reflexive upon the discourse of the sublime--that of Pope's period and far beyond. This is a reading of the sublime available to Sterne through a satire he admired and imitated (the *Rabelaisian Fragment* suggests a version of *Peri Bathous* for sermon writers).

Given the parallel of self-reflexive methodology between satire and the sublime, we should pursue the implications and effects of self-reflexivity in the discourse of the sublime. If Menippean satire, as we have suggested, brings with it a full sense of the body (both *in* and *of* the text), we must ask if the discourse of the sublime does the same. I believe this can be done through the satirist's observation of (and affinity with) the self-reflexive nature of the sublime. Satire's literal treatment of figures may help us

itself" ("Andrew Marvell: 'Its Own Resemblance'" in *The Force of Poetry*, 45). Nevertheless, the attention Ricks draws to the ambiguity of "reflection" in Pope's comment suggests otherwise. I believe reference to the sublime (as well as to Pope's praise of Longinus) enables us to see that Pope does engage with the combined wit and mystery (Ricks' terms) of the "self-inwoven simile."

understand Longinus's more slippery use.¹⁴ A certain amount of satiric "translation" and selection from the discourse of the sublime is needed to see the somewhat contradictory textual presence of the sublime. This chapter will attempt to show that such a selection of aspects of this discourse--those concerned with linguistic performance (rhetoric, imitation, the act of representation, all ultimately emphasizing the physicality of language through its self-reflexivity)--was available to Sterne who gives life to performative language both figuratively in metaphors and images, etc. and literally in the text itself.

How would Sterne have read the contradictions of *Peri Hypsous*, a text which presents itself as a rhetorical manual, yet, over the century, would come to stand for philosophical transcendence? Here we find a version of the logocentric valuation of voice (which marks the presence of the speaker) set in a highly textual (i.e., graphic) context (marking the absence of the speaker). The argument is ultimately based on a model of language as speech: "What an opinion therefore may we justly form of fine composition, the effect of that harmony, which nature has implanted in the voice of man?" (xxxix.63-

¹⁴Self-reflexivity is one characteristic shared by satire and the sublime, but the parallel is not simply at the level of thought. Here I anticipate the argument of the following pages with reference to John Snyder's genre study, *Prospects of Power*, which draws attention to an aspect of satire which we can also identify in the sublime: "Satire, properly speaking, has no action, just signifiers--words. These words have their bite, their edges, yet these edges lack the sharpness of mimetic-political action" (94). This anti-mimetic, purely rhetorical aspect which leads Snyder to consider the instability of the satiric genre (cf., 142-46), should lead us to see a parallel to the inward turn of the sublime. As Snyder suggests, "the rhetorician goes where his ironies will; some of them hit their target, others are transformed into ludic elaboration" (95). Similar is Longinus' emphasis on the artifice which conceals artifice. This is an end in itself, or at most a self-interested use of figures to preserve the orator in the face of an unruly and dangerous audience (xv.31-32) or the arbitrary power of a tyrant (xvii.35) (these examples are complementary to Snyder's concern with power).

64). Nevertheless, within the passage which this sentence begins, there are tensions between the spoken and the written, the oral/aural and the visual and bodily. *Composition* (which presupposes literacy--perhaps even printing)¹⁵ is paradoxically a product of the "natural" harmony of the oral voice. The abstract literacy presupposed in the visual (non-oral) images which follow--"an edifice of words"--is complemented by the implicit physical violence of the military imagery as this passage continues: the sublime will "seize their attention" by means of the "marshalling of sounds" (64). As Longinus describes "fine composition", "made up of words, which by no means die upon the ear, but sink within, and reach the understanding [and] . . . convey the passions of the speaker into the breasts of his audience" (64), we must realize that the body is present here. The sublime manifests qualities of the monster (which we have seen as a satiric device): the voice is another location of the meeting of the distinct entities of mind and body.¹⁶

As with the logocentrism of the eighteenth-century elocutionists (discussed in Chapter Seven), there is a belief that the passions are moved by the "structure and marshalling of sounds." Yet, as we have noted, "framing an edifice of words" invokes visual, physical images. Indeed, such a concrete sense of language permeates Longinus' thinking, and enables much of his analysis. Longinus' description of Homer's *hupek*

¹⁵Cf. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 121; obviously, the Longinian original, "synthesis" (arrangement or "structure of the words" [Smith's phrase]), is not informed by the post-Gutenberg "composition" consistently used in Smith's translation. Cf. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, translated, with a commentary, James A. Arieti and John M. Crossett, 193n.

¹⁶It is worth noting that, in another passage, Longinus uses the building metaphor in a strikingly visceral, bodily fashion: "for such expressions are like mere patches, or unsightly bits of matter, which in this edifice of grandeur entirely confound the fine proportions, mar the symmetry, and deform the beauty of the whole" (x.22).

("some prepositions that are naturally averse to union," which he "has forcibly united" [notes, 104]) depends upon a sense of language as literally performative: "[By this means] the danger is discerned in the very hurry and confusion of the words" (x.22). At this level of analysis, words gain the status of aesthetic *objects* with a presence of their own, apart from the sounds they represent.

This kind of close verbal analysis has obvious affinities with the images we have seen Longinus using to describe language and its action. Longinus is concerned with the paradoxes of mental and physical presence at the presentational as well as representational levels. The tensions between literate abstraction and oral presence are inherent characteristics of the genre of the rhetorical manual which intends to address spoken discourse through the written.¹⁷ The "presence" of spoken discourse praised in the passage analysed above is necessarily absent as we read about it on the page and, furthermore, can only be recreated by textual means. This is the general case in *Peri Hypsous*. Elsewhere, for example, the analysis Longinus performs upon the speeches of Demosthenes depends upon the fact that they are texts he can manipulate and reiterate in his own text. Demosthenes' speech to the Athenians is given new life in Longinus' text only by means of Longinus' use of textual repetition: paraphrase and interruption (xvi.33-35). We should note that this technique not only "gives voice" to Demosthenes, but also creates Longinus' own presence as a critical voice expounding the sublime, thus creating another form of "presence," through the very textual process which simultaneously presupposes and supplements a speaker's presence. Indeed, as Peter de Bolla has noted,

¹⁷See Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 8-10, 108-13.

"the Longinian method of citation of literary example coupled with a sustaining commentary became a standard format for many treatises on a range of topics,"¹⁸ thus giving rise to a doubling critical discourse which insists on its own presence as it presents others, often, as we are about to see, obscuring the source of sublimity.

The manifestation of presence by means of the text is ultimately related to the self-reflexivity found in the Longinian sublime which so perplexed the eighteenth century. The famous commentary on the relationship between nature (*physis*) and art (*techne*) raises questions which share the assumptions involved with the relationship between speech and writing. One aspect gives rise to the self-reflexive question of origins: which gives rise to which? "For art may then be termed perfect and consummate, when it seems to be nature; and nature then succeeds best, when she conceals what assistance she receives from art" (xxii.40). The first phrase of this quotation seems to be about nature, and how art depends upon it. However, this relationship is undone, for it is only through art that the relationship is perceived. Art's dependence upon nature is undone, and done again into (art's dependence upon) nature's dependence upon art (to be perceived). There is here a self-reflexive fulcrum, a mirror point, that subverts the Platonic relationship of art to nature as that of "three removes from reality."¹⁹ Art becomes primary. It is not just a moral "mirror up to nature," but the complete and sole means of perceiving nature. A Berkelean idealism lurks in these phrases. Nature/reality exists only in its being perceived (through art). It follows, then, that "art may be termed perfect and

¹⁸*The Discourse of the Sublime* 35-36.

¹⁹Plato, *Republic*, X, 597e in *The Collected Dialogues*.

consummate, when it seems to be nature." However, Longinus' mirror point undoes this phrase to reveal why this statement is true. It is true because "nature then succeeds best, when she conceals what assistance she receives from art." In other words, "art may be termed perfect and consummate, when it seems to be . . . art."

The question of origins is complicated by the readerly transport of the sublime which creates the impression that "what was only heard had been the product of [the reader's] own invention" (vii.10). This ambiguous relationship between subject and object and the self-reflexivity of a text which engages in discussions of the effects of a text necessarily raises questions of self-presence. Longinus has many curiously circular statements to express the unity of contradictory elements in writing: "For tho' it must be owned, that there is a force in eloquence, which depends not upon, nor can be learn'd by rule; yet even this could not be known without that light, which we receive from art" (ii.4); "a figure is then most dexterously applied, when it cannot be discerned that it is a figure" (xvii.36); asyndeton "at once restrains and accelerates the words" (xix.38). In each of these statements there is a mirror point--a point at which what is being said is undone, and done again. The effect is, however, a doubleness. The cancelled element does not disappear, but remains, in a palimpsestic or supplementary fashion, asserting a paradoxical presence: the confirmation of existence by placing the subject outside himself.

Longinus' self-reflexive insistence on the interrelation of art and nature, the absolute necessity of figurativity for the creation of presence, can be seen to offer a mirror-like mode for a self-sufficient discourse which creates presence by the very activity of its operation. At issue here is a question of concern to eighteenth-century aesthetics:

the role of the imagination in the interplay of subject and object, or the (often mutual) exchange between author (speaker/artist) and reader (audience). Eighteenth-century rhetoricians and critics come to see the importance of the *activity* of representation--that is, the act of creating or even apprehending a work of art--rather than the representation or the work itself as a key to the manifestation of presence.²⁰ For Sterne, this will ultimately become the presence of the text.

Textual presence is at odds with the traditional notion of *enargeia*, a presence created through vivid visual images. This presumes a transparency of language which the aestheticians of the eighteenth century come to recognize is unavailable. Murray Krieger attributes this recognition to Longinus, who initiates a subjective turn inward, away from objective Platonic mimesis, as the century shifts away from the natural sign aesthetic of the *ut pictura poesis* tradition (which implies an observer's distance from the object) toward a reader-response aesthetic of emotional and psychological immediacy. It is this aesthetic tradition which I believe contributes to Sterne's sense of the presence of the text. The terms at issue are, of course, art and nature. Krieger observes:

In chapter 36 [Longinus] distinguishes between art and nature, characterizing the plastic arts as "art" and human discourse as "nature." Although he concedes that "the faulty Colossus is not superior to the Spearman of Polycleitus," the judgment does not bother him, because "in art the utmost exactitude is admired" and these are works of art (i.e., plastic art). But different criteria are required for the arts of discourse because "grandeur [rather than utmost exactitude is admired] in the

²⁰This is a version of Derrida's "arche-writing."

works of nature; and . . . it is by nature that man is a being gifted with speech. In statues likeness to man is the quality required; in discourse we demand, as I said, that which transcends the human." Thus Longinus associates perfection ("freedom from failings") with "art" and elevation (even if "unevenly sustained") with "nature." And the verbal arts, as a natural emanation--like speech itself--from the human being as author, must reach toward grandeur, whatever it may sacrifice in the exactitude of representation.²¹

Krieger shows the same circling relations of terms that were at play on page 40 (of Smith's translation), still circling 20 pages later in Longinus' essay. In this case a slip occurs under the surface, by a change in the point of view on the aesthetic experience.

In this apparent reversal of the way nature relates to the verbal arts on the one hand and to the plastic arts on the other, . . . Longinus is talking, not about the resemblance between artistic representation and its external object, but about the relation between the work of art and how it is created--whether by the natural gift of language in the verbal arts or by the manufacturing of an artifact in the plastic arts. He does not see the art object as a representation of another object but looks for the point of origin of the art object; and that point of origin has been shifted from the external object of imitation to the internal, natural endowments of the human mind. [107]

This shift in focus (and the slip by which it occurs is an important element in the process) is essential to understand eighteenth-century attempts at understanding the sublime. The

²¹*Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* 106.

issue of imitation is constantly raised by theorists, for this represents the active process involved in the aesthetic experience. Although the location of this activity shifts from theorist to theorist, it is never absent. Each one senses that imitation is the key to unsealing the sublime self-reflexivity.²²

Taking the self-reflexive elements of Longinus' text into consideration, many eighteenth-century theorists raise questions about the role of the reader in what seems to be a solipsistic enterprise. Part of the sublimity of a sublime text is wrapped up in its reader-excluding self-involvement. The reader is awed before the impenetrable fortress of self-reflexivity. But the defeat of the outsider is only part of the sublime moment. For, as we noted above, Longinus simultaneously makes room for the reader within the fortress of self-reflexivity. This is achieved by a sleight of hand, a sublime slip from one element of the reading experience, the reader, to another, the author:

For the mind is naturally elevated by the true sublime, and so sensibly affected with its lively strokes, that it swells in transport and an inward pride, as if what was only heard had been the product of its own invention. [vii.10]

What needs analysis in this passage is the "as if" that allows the reader to assume the position of author. Like the "almost" discussed earlier, this is obviously a function of artifice (the "as if" is the sign of a "figure" here). Artifice, recognized as such, poses a

²²What is held in common among the theorists we will examine is the sense of the *action* of mimesis, the putting into words, the combination of images, etc. Derrida's explication of Kant in "Economimesis" similarly emphasises action: "The artist does not imitate things in nature, or, if you will, in *natura naturata*, but the acts of *natura naturans* . . ." (9). However, Derrida does not stress--as I wish to--the concrete, physical manifestations of this process.

problem for many eighteenth-century theorists who demand immediacy, depreciate imitation and (this may not be surprising) end up with a version of Longinus' fortress of self-reflexivity, creating immediacy out of the seeming presence created by the hidden "as if" of figurativity.²³

Joseph Addison provides an interesting, and often self-contradictory example. He paraphrases Longinus without the "as if" that allows the reader to slip into the author's seat. In *The Spectator* Addison announces that his essay *On the Pleasures of the Imagination* will search for the "something more essential, to the Art [of poetry], something that elevates and astonishes the Fancy, and gives a Greatness of Mind to the Reader, which few of the Criticks besides *Longinus* have consider'd."²⁴ Despite the reference to Longinus, Addison's description is of a direct giving, an immediate exchange of an object, lacking an "as if." Krieger points out that Addison's hierarchy of the arts (*Spectator* 416, p. 559) favours the immediacy of "*Statuary*" over the two dimensional illusions of "*Picture*" which is in turn followed by "*Description* . . . yet further from the things it represents," leaving only "*Musick*" as an art of greater abstraction (Krieger 23-24). Ultimately, Krieger reveals that "in Addison's extreme version of the natural-sign aesthetic, immediacy is all in the illusionary identification between the imitation and its

²³Cf., again, "Economimesis," on Kant's "as if": "a certain *quasi*, a certain *als ob* re-establishes analogical *mimesis* at the point where it appears detached. The works of the Fine-Arts must have the appearance of nature and precisely in so far as they are productions (fashionings) of freedom. They must resemble *effects* of natural *action* at the very moment when they, most purely, are works . . . of artistic confection" (9). Figurativity, the "as if," is the sign of the interaction of subjects, not objects, in mimesis.

²⁴*The Spectator*, No. 409, Vol. 3, p. 530. Hereafter cited parenthetically by issue number and page.

object" (156). In other words (i.e., Longinus' terms), identification is "a figure" so "dexterously applied," that "it cannot be discerned that it is a figure" (xvii.36). This is not wholly unexpected in Addison's essay, for he is required to make some concessions even before offering the hierarchy: "it must not be understood that we had once seen the very Place, Action, or Person which are carved or described" (No. 416, p. 558). Indeed, he falls back onto "the Power of the Imagination," that great mediator, "when it is once Stocked with particular Ideas, to enlarge, compound, and vary them at her own Pleasure" (558-59). Krieger points out "this need for the intervention of the interpreting mind to mediate between the object previously known by the observer and the object being imitated" (157), defining Addison's "double principle" (*Spectator* 414).

"The double principle" is Addison's term for the experience of apprehending a work of art, emphasizing the "re-" of representation, which causes pleasure to the mind by necessitating an oscillation between the perfection of the copy and the naturally defective original. This, says Jonathan Lamb,

sets up a complex reaction between immediate ideas, or impressions, and remoter ones stored in the mind, in which vividness is not an index of an idea's proximity of a thing but of its resemblance to another idea.²⁵

In other words, it is like Hogarth's line of beauty which Lamb connects to Addison's analysis of "the pleasure we take in viewing convex surfaces" in *Spectator* 415:

The fancy is provoked to supply the absent parts, but never arrives at the full stop of an entire conception of the thing itself. What is missing from a representation--

²⁵*Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* 28.

the reason for the melancholy expression of the beautiful woman [in *Spectator* 418], for example--is at once evidence of natural imperfection and a sign of the intensity of our response to its representation. [29]

Here Addison can be shown to bring the reader to sit in the author's seat, participating in the creation of the aesthetic experience.

Whereas Addison's struggles with the desire for immediacy produce the self-contradiction pointed out by Krieger, other theorists attempt to incorporate the contradiction into a system in which imitation plays a role, but a subsidiary role. John Dennis, who quotes Longinus' passage on swelling the soul, "with a certain noble Pride, as if it self had produc'd what it but barely reads,"²⁶ later makes an explicit attempt to deny the double principle, the action of the mind in the aesthetic experience. This is done by denying the soul its defining action, reflection:

sudden Agitation surprizes the Soul, and gives it less time to reflect; and at the same time causes the Impressions that the Objects make to be so deep, and their Traces to be so profound, that it makes them in a manner as present to us, as if they were really before us. [362-63]

Dennis' vehemently pure mimesis ultimately threatens both the reader and the work of art with annihilation:

For the Spirits being set in a violent Emotion, and the Imagination being fir'd by that Agitation; and the Brain being deeply penetrated by those Impressions, the

²⁶*The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* [1704] in *The Critical Works of John Dennis* Vol 1, 360.

very Objects themselves are set as it were before us, and consequently we are sensible of the same Passion that we should feel from the things themselves. [363]

The work of art, the medium, is effaced, for nothing could be more immediate than "the things themselves" (a phrase important to Sterne in his Sermon 42, "Search the Scriptures"). In addition, Dennis twice more repeats his annihilation of the reader ("the Soul utterly incapable of reflecting" [363]).

The threat to the reader's mind as well as to the medium of language itself has a Longinian basis. In his analysis of Chapter 10 of *Peri Hypsous*, Neil Hertz sees the discussion of Sappho as bringing "the motifs of violence and risks and death into touch with the rhetorician's theory that the effective poem is an organic unity."²⁷ This is achieved through a Longinian reflexivity, "for the elements that Sappho is bringing together into the body of her poem are precisely the names of the fragments of her natural body" (Hertz 5). Dennis, by bringing a similar violence to the aesthetic experience, sets up among these texts a reflexive relationship--one implying a high degree of artifice, suggesting the rhetorical or literary sense of "imitation" (the subject of Longinus' treatise), and undermining Dennis' desire for a purely transparent mimesis.

Hertz sees Longinus' use of Sappho's poem as a version of the sublime slip among elements in an aesthetic moment--here the moment of creation: "it is not simply a poem of passion and self-division but one which dramatizes, in a startlingly condensed fashion, the shift from Sappho-as-victimized-body to Sappho-as-poetic-force" (7). Dennis' violent language may unconsciously evoke the artifice described by Hertz. However, it is

²⁷*The End of the Line* 4.

obvious from Dennis' text alone, that, although he can annihilate the reader, he cannot avoid the higher level of mediacy, the art of the poet's language (a version of the presence of the text):

But those two great Poets were not satisfy'd with setting absent Objects before our Eyes, by shewing them in violent Motion; but if their Motion occasion'd any extraordinary Sounds that were terrifying, they so contriv'd their Numbers and Expressions, as that they might be sure to ring those Sounds in the very Ears of their Readers. [363]

Like Addison, Dennis returns to the author. Even if he is able to annihilate the reader's mind, and perhaps even the work of art, he cannot dispense with the art of imitation. V.

A. De Luca points out that elsewhere in *The Grounds of Criticism*, Dennis

narrows or virtually effaces the gap between the imagining perceiver and the imagined percept; to recognize the divinity inherent in the image of the sun is tantamount to asserting the divinity of the self that has conceived the image. The sublime becomes the comprehensive term for the state in which this narrowing occurs.²⁸

"The state in which this narrowing occurs" is the state of imitation, where "imagining" and "imagined" have the power of representation. If this is the sublime, it is so highly mediated that it becomes solipsistic, a product of private passions alone. The annihilation of the reader's mind seems to be a negative statement of its absolute presence in the aesthetic experience. It is interesting to note that De Luca describes in similar terms a

²⁸*Words of Eternity* 28.

sublime slip of the type suggested by Dennis' version of Longinus' swelling soul (360):

It is next to impossible to distinguish here between the reader moved and the poet who moves, embraced as they both are by the unifying and apparently free-floating entity of "Great Thought," which generates passions as its operative mode.

[28]

Dennis' violence makes apparent certain necessities by refusing to acknowledge them. Later in the century, a critic such as John Baillie acknowledges mediacy, noting that sublime affections or passions must be perceived through their objects:

What one Person, in whose Breast they are, knows *immediately* and by *Sensation*, another can only know *mediately* and by *Induction*; and therefore in considering the *Sublime* of the *Passions*, their Objects only can be the proper Subject for Examination, the Objects alone being really what affects the Person who wou'd contemplate the *Passions*---And thus we judge of the *Courage* of a Person, by his *Steddiess* in braving *Dangers*.²⁹

One can only imagine to what extent Dennis would go to know others' sublime passions immediately. Baillie later comments on an aspect of imitation which Dennis denies: "What, indeed, is *Poetry*, but the Art of throwing a Number of agreeable *Images* together, whence each of them yields a greater *Delight* than they possibly could *separately*" (37). This statement acknowledges both the art involved in using the medium of language (images are imitative) and the mind involved in perceiving the art. What follows is a curious sentence, a mild parody of Dennis: "There might be something likewise said from

²⁹*An Essay on the Sublime* (1747) 19.

the *Variety of the Parts*, and yet so *uniform* as not to distract the Imagination" (37). Baillie does not even want to distract the Imagination, let alone destroy it. (However, his penchant for "solemn *Sedateness*" [11, 33] is potentially as annihilating as Dennis' violence.)³⁰ Baillie follows this sentence with the by now standard paraphrase of Longinus' soul, swelling with (reflexive) pride.³¹

Alexander Gerard, who acknowledges his debt to Baillie, seems to pick up on Baillie's comments on imitation and move to a focus on the activity involved in aesthetic perception. However, unlike Baillie, distraction is for Gerard an essential part of imitation. He begins with a version of Addison's double principle, connecting "similitude" with "association" which "produces in mankind a strong tendency to comparison."³² He continues, "as comparison implies in the very act a gentle exertion of the mind, it is on that account agreeable." This is for Gerard an essential activity of the mind, a *cogito* ensuring its existence. It is rather action than distraction. However, this reflective action of the mind, when moved to stronger passions by tragedy, becomes a distancing device, a selective distraction:

When thus secondarily produced, they [the passions] agitate and employ the mind,

³⁰These are issues concerning *enargeia* which founders upon mediation (compare Lord Kames' "ideal presence," cited in Chapter One).

³¹It is interesting to note that Baillie has earlier used the sublime slip from one element of the perceiving process, the mind, to another, the sensation: "The *Sublime*, when it exists *simple* and unmixed, by filling the *Mind* with one *vast and uniform Idea*, affects it with a solemn *Sedateness*; by this means the Soul itself becomes, as it were, one *simple grand Sensation*" (33, repeated from 11).

³²*An Essay on Taste* (1759) 49.

and rouse and give scope to its greatest activity; while at the same time our implicit knowledge that the occasion is remote or fictitious, enables the pleasure of imitation to relieve the pure torment, which would attend their primary operation. [54-55]

The action of comparison which allows us to enjoy tragedy, when less engaged, also produces the expected Longinian pride, for the discovery of the original by the copy "produces a grateful consciousness of our own discernment and sagacity, and includes the pleasant feeling of success; the recognizing resemblance, in consequence of comparison, augments our pleasure" (49-50). Finally, a sublime slip occurs as the work of the reader infers that of the author: "our admiration of the skill and ingenuity of the artist diffuses itself over [i.e., participates in] the effect from which that skill is inferred [i.e., the work of art], and compleats the delight which the work inspires" (50).

This survey of authors has pointed to a concern with mediacy (discussed in terms of the activity of imitation) among writers on the sublime contemporary to or known by Sterne. The most famous among these writers is, of course, Edmund Burke, who is by no means immune to self-contradictions with regard to mediated immediacy. He seems to have a notion of the double principle (or, the value of imitation) in mind when he unquestioningly accepts "the pleasure resulting from the effects of imitation; for it is never so perfect, but we can perceive it is an imitation, and on that principle are somewhat pleased with it," only to dismiss its role in the appreciation of tragedy.³³ The awareness

³³*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757/1759) 47.

of "fiction," says Burke, diminishes the power, and therefore hinders the sublime. Imitation is societal, a moral excuse, allowing us to blur the distinction of "what we would by no means chuse to do, from what we should be eager enough to see if it was once done" (47). Continuing in the societal vein, Burke describes imitation as a passion which acts like a natural faculty for learning:

this affection prompts us to copy whatever they do; and consequently we have a pleasure in imitating, and in whatever belongs to imitation merely as it is such, without any intervention of the reasoning faculty, but solely from our natural constitution, which providence has framed in such a manner as to find either pleasure or delight according to the nature of the object, in whatever regards the purposes of our being. It is by imitation far more than by precept that we learn every thing; and what we learn thus we acquire not only more effectually, but more pleasantly. [49]

It is important to note that Burke here uses imitation as a means to immediacy, "without any intervention of the reasoning faculty." Of course, he has let the term "imitation" slide from that of literary mimesis to that of social role-playing. However, the resonance of this aspect of social "imitation" with the experience of the sublime is significant. Burke describes astonishment in the same terms--the absence of reason--he uses to describe social imitation:

the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our

reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. [57]

Perhaps the slide from literary to social imitation is a sublime slip, akin to those we have already seen. In this case, Burke can explicitly support "the real sympathy" with life over art (47) while implicitly acknowledging the power of imitation. This is accomplished by the similar immediacy of social imitation and astonishment. The importance of imitation as a medium is brought home in a section which is presented between the two resonant passages on imitation and astonishment:

The passions which belong to self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight,

I call *sublime*. [51]

The delightful, which is by definition mediated, is also by definition "*sublime*." After this ten-page crux in which Burke manages to argue all sides, he falls back on a Gerard-like Addisonian principle implied in phrases such as "allowing for the effect of imitation which is something" (60) or "with the superadded pleasure of imitation" (163).³⁴

The problems of self-contradiction we have seen in all of the theorists of the eighteenth century receive a particularly sensitive treatment in a work which seems to

³⁴The contradiction of a mediated sublime of delight and the immediate sublime of astonishment is found within the definition of "astonishment" itself (De Luca calls it "a ring of mutually cancelling figures" rather than a "definition" [17]). Burke's final position on words and "imitation" will be discussed later in this chapter.

have influenced Sterne, Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*.³⁵

In the lecture "Of the Sublime of Passion," Lowth's treatment of "imitation" picks up on elements of the other theorists' versions and arranges them in a curiously circular fashion.

He begins with the definition of mimesis from the *ut pictura poesis* tradition:

Poetry is said to consist in imitation: whatever the human mind is able to conceive, it is the province of poetry to imitate; things, places, appearances natural and artificial, actions, passions, manners and customs. [I.367]

The inclusion at the very beginning of "whatever the human mind is able to conceive" casts a new light on the objective world which is to be imitated. The medium of the mind here pre-exists the medium of language (Longinus' "as if" here becomes structural).

This double mediation is doubled again on the receiving end of the aesthetic experience.

Lowth begins with a standard phrase, but then reflects it back upon itself:

since the human intellect is naturally delighted with every species of imitation, that species in particular, which exhibits its own image, which displays and depicts those impulses, inflexions, perturbations, and secret emotions, which it perceives and knows in itself, can scarcely fail to astonish and to delight above every other. [I.367-68]

Through the mediation of imitation--doubly linked with the mind--what Baillie could only know through objects is brought into the mind without induction. This mirror-like imitation which shows the mind its own image has the effect of immediacy. Here the double principle works to reduce mediation, since the act of comparison establishes the

³⁵Published in Latin in 1753. Quotations are from the 1787 translation in 2 volumes.

affinity of mind and imitation. The immediacy is the effect of a reduction in the number of elements in the aesthetic process. The sublime slip occurs here as the comparing mind and the original of the imitation slide into each other:

The delicacy and difficulty of this kind of imitation are among its principal commendations; for to effect that which appears almost impossible naturally excites our admiration. The understanding slowly perceives the accuracy of the description in all other subjects, and their agreement to their archetypes, as being obliged to compare them by the aid and through the uncertain medium, as it were, of the memory: but when a passion is expressed, the object is clear and distinct at once; the mind is immediately conscious of itself and its own emotions; it feels and suffers in itself a sensation, either the same or similar to that which is described. [I.368]

The mind does not become a sensation, as in Baillie, but rather more like Dennis--with the crucial difference of a recognition of the process of artifice--it "feels . . . either the same or similar" sensation. Lowth concludes "that sublimity, which arises from the vehement agitation of the passions, and the imitation of them, possesses a superior influence over the human mind" (I.368). This is by virtue of the immediacy of the internal comparison. What is most important about Lowth's version of imitation is the full recognition of the artifice involved in the aesthetic process, and the suggestion that the artifice is an essential part of that process:

And as the imitation or delineation of the passions is the most perfect production of poetry, so by exciting them it most completely effects its purpose. The intent

of poetry is to profit while it entertains us; and the agitation of the passions, by the force of imitation, is in the highest degree both useful and pleasant. [I.369]

Here we seem to have come full circle and to have returned to the hyper-reflexive moment at which we left Longinus: "art may be termed perfect and consummate, when it seems to be . . . art."

Lowth's recognition of the role of artifice contrasts with Burke's binary model of aesthetic experience: the sublime as a relation of subject and object. In his section on words, Burke needs to collapse or remove the common distinction between words and ideas: "whatever power [words] may have on the passions, they do not derive it from any representation raised in the mind of the things for which they stand" (164). To maintain that words are representative would be to introduce a third party to his binary system--he cannot admit (at least willingly) words as mediators of the sublime:

For put yourself upon analysing one of these words, and you must reduce it from one set of general words to another, and then into the simple abstracts and aggregates, in a much longer series than may be at first imagined, before any real idea emerges to light, before you come to discover any thing like the first principles of such compositions; and when you have made such a discovery of the original ideas, the effect of the composition is utterly lost. [164]

Such an infinite regression in the search for origins works against sublimity. For Burke, for words to be sublime, they must become objects: "mere sounds" (165) with powerful associations.

However, in his attempt to make words "primary" objects of aesthetic judgment,

Burke introduces the artifice he wishes to avoid. This is apparent in his discussion of the lack of referentiality of "general words." Although they are not representative, they have power. In describing their power, Burke shows artifice to be at work:

it is hard to repeat certain sets of words, though owned by themselves unoperative, without being in some degree affected, especially if a warm and affecting tone of voice accompanies them, as suppose,

Wise, valiant, generous, good and great. [166]

The artifice described here is that of the orator. Another implied artificial enhancement here is poetic meter, for Burke's string of "unoperative" words can be scanned. These artifices are explicitly linked a few pages later:

In reality poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does; their business is to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves. [172]

Having built a fortress of self-reflexivity out of non-mimetic words, Burke must address the place of the reader. The introduction of "sympathy" as a substitute for "imitation" is a sleight of hand much like Longinus' slip from reader to author. First Burke must admit that

It is indeed an imitation so far as it describes the manners and passions of men which their words can express. . . . There it is strictly imitation; and all merely *dramatic* poetry is of this sort. But *descriptive* poetry operates chiefly by *substitution*; by the means of sounds, which by custom have the effect of realities.

Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing; and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand. [173]

In asserting the non-mimetic character of words, Burke hopes to make them sufficiently objective to justify his binary view of the sublime. However, in ousting mimesis, he is forced to call in rhetoric:

Now, as there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture, which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion; they touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject matter. We yield to sympathy what we refuse to description. The truth is, all verbal description, merely as naked description, though never so exact, conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described, that it could scarcely have the smallest effect, if the speaker did not call in to his aid those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself. Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another, which probably might never have been struck out by the object described. [175-76]

Far from having cancelled the failure of mediation to produce the sublime, Burke seems to have come around to a view of mediating words and their rhetorical arrangement as enhancements of sublimity beyond objects themselves. Compare Longinus on the effect of the hyperbaton (the transposition of words out of normal order):

He seems to invert the very order of his discourse, and what is more, to utter every thing *extempore*. . . . Frequently arresting his thoughts in the midst of their career, he makes excursions into different subjects, and intermingles several seemingly unnecessary incidents: By this means he gives his audience a kind of anxiety, as if he had lost his subject, and forgot what he was about; and so strongly engages their concern, that they tremble for, and bear their share in the dangers of the speaker. [xxii.41-42]

Here again is the sublime slip, which we have already noted is Shandean: audience becomes speaker.

What Burke's problem with (and Lowth's accommodation of) words ultimately points to is Longinus' important recognition of artifice as a valuable element in aesthetic experience: perhaps even as an object of aesthetic experience. No other eighteenth-century theorist (save Lowth) fully recognizes Longinus' insight: the aspect of performance. Although the theorists recognize imitation as an issue in aesthetic experience, none (save Lowth) is prepared to see imitation itself as an aesthetic object. The problem with imitation as an element in their process is its third-party status. When working in a framework of perception which involves subject and object, a third party is unwelcome and forced into ambiguity. The "sublime slip" I have noted in each theorist (in some more successfully than in others) is a symptom of the attempt to fit a tripartite model into a binary system. The result is slippage--two elements collapsing into one in order to make a binary model.

Krieger sees in Burke's final section on words a move to collapse the imitated

object into the author's conception of that object. Imitation becomes one with expression, and therefore the binary system can operate on a principle of direct, though ambiguous perception.

In Burke, as less single-mindedly in Addison, once the critic moves from the pictorial imperative--moves, that is, from the obligations of the *ut pictura poesis* tradition that accompanies the mimetic theory of representation--language takes on major affective advantages unavailable to the visual, natural-sign arts. The very weakness--nay, the incapacity--of language as a surrogate natural sign is the source of its strength as a stimulus of emotion. Because language only suggests, but does not direct, how it is to be interpreted, the poet should play up that suggestiveness and exploit its inevitable vagueness instead of trying to force it to paint pictures that each reader would in any case construct differently from the hints cast by the poem's words. [103]

This is a willing acceptance of mediation made sweeter by a "new" (third) party, interpretation. The new party sets up a balance, an "invisible" party which corresponds to the "invisible" imitation. These are, in fact, the only unmediated (therefore "visible") elements in this process, because they are mediation themselves (therefore "invisible"). In this way, the emphasis of action in the aesthetic experience shifts from imitating author to interpreting reader. Krieger sees this as the beginning of the trend in which "the very conception of unmediated natural signs would disappear" (158), and notes a move "toward idealism: it suggests that the priority belongs, rather, to the appeal to imagination in the stimulus of signs that achieve an independence from, and thus a potential superiority to,

their referents" (168). This is exactly the Longinian independence, through "art" (i.e., imitation), outlined above. Furthermore, it is exactly this self-reflexive independence which makes the sublime free of its readers. (The sublime independence is balanced by the "new" readerly independence of interpretation; but the discovery of interpretation is, of course, only a recognition on the part of readers.)

In any case, the "superiority to their referents" aspect of words does not correspond to the general thrust of the eighteenth-century sublime which loses interest in language and shifts toward nature and, with Kant, the mind alone (thus treating language as a medium). Sterne's performative rhetoric is an exception to this trend, a concerted effort to maintain Longinus's interest in language within the eighteenth-century context of print culture. Thus a Shandean reading of the sublime begins with the paradoxical immediacy of exchange which Longinus outlines in Chapter VII (quoted above) and directs our attention to the performative nature of the sublime, located in the minutiae of language as well as in nonlinguistic silence. It is noteworthy that, unlike, say, Quintilian, who codifies the orator's bodily gestures, the gestures of Longinus' rhetoric are strictly at the verbal level, where figures of grammar and syntax, as well as silence are registered. Through his satiric sensibility, Sterne identifies a textual "embodiment" of rhetoric which registers oratorical gesture in its text (most often in printed form). This begins with Longinus' sense of animated, performative language, combines with oratorical (elocutionary) notions of performance as well as satiric textual gestures, to result in the

presence of the text in a work like *Tristram Shandy*.³⁶

We have already examined hints of this in Sterne's sermons, in the questions of unity and number, the vision of the "simplicity and majesty" of scripture which are linked to the concern for origins. In Chapter Six we will examine the presentation of the text as an "origin," supplementing the reference of the words with its own presence. Such concerns are, as Sterne acknowledges, Longinian. The form of Longinus' discussion of amplification, for example, offers a paradigm for the sermons' discussions of originality. Longinus first takes issue with the rhetoricians' definition, "words aggrandizing the subject," since "this definition may equally serve for the sublime, the pathetic, and the amplification of tropes" (xii.23). He then makes the following distinction:

Sublimity consists in loftiness, but amplification in number; whence the former is often visible in one single thought; the other cannot be discerned, but in a series and chain of thoughts rising one upon another. [23]

This distinction becomes double, for Longinus does not deny that amplification causes the sublime. In fact, he seems to suggest that sublimity is, in a sense, amplification without number.

We have discussed Longinus' self-referentiality, his wilful slippage between terms, frequently returning to the well-known example, of the mind swollen "in transport and an inward pride, as if what was only heard had been the product of its own invention" (vii.10). The question of originality and authorship is complicated by the readerly

³⁶Commenting on Blake's "wall of words," V. A. De Luca traces such a phenomenon to Robert Lowth's conception of the sublime of the Bible as "deeply involved with formal or iconic arrangements of words" (86; cf. 89-94).

transport of the sublime. The crossing over of reader and author, as with the question of "whose" picture Sterne's portrait is, is a doubling, an interplay between "original" ("delivery") and "copy" ("reception") without clear identification of either position. Something similar is at work in "The Character of Herod" (Sermon 9). In a scene of reading from this sermon on interpretation, Sterne suggests a double credibility check:

For next to the faith and character of the historian who reports such facts,--the particular character of the person who committed them is to be considered as a voucher for their truth and credibility;--and if upon enquiry, it appears, that the man acted but consistent with himself,---and just so as you would have expected from his principles,--the credit of the historian is restored,--and the fact related stands incontestable, from so strong and concurring an evidence on its side.-----

[84]

In a classically Longinian manner, Sterne suggests that the historian's facts can be checked against the character of the subject constituted by the historian's facts. At the center of this chiasmic structure stands a near tautology, "consistent with himself," asserting the authority of the actor in order to assert the authority of the author. Whose picture is it anyway?

As this chapter has argued about the discourse of the sublime, this is an enabling self-reference, generating presence. Longinus' techniques return us to the self-sufficient primacy of rhetoric at the originary moment. The persuasive language of feeling, which moves an audience to action, or indeed, in its divine manifestation, creates the world

through utterance,³⁷ is rhetorical. The logocentric emphasis to be found here (and in the desire for "presence" in much eighteenth-century rhetorical theory) ultimately comes down to a graphocentric or supplementary manifestation. The presence of writing/language is already at work upon the reader/listener before reference moves us. The very metaphoric nature of "moving" the reader indicates the essentially embodied, and therefore "present" nature of the reading experience: the sublime moment of transport (in its motion, immediacy of exchange, even its rhetorical logocentrism) questions the boundaries of mind and body. This chapter has argued that the middle step in this shift (from the presence of the orator to the presence of the text, from orality to literacy, logo- to graphocentrism) is sublime self-reflexivity.³⁸

Sterne's iconic text restores the possibility of words as aesthetic *objects* (which Krieger's chapter VI, "Language as Aesthetic Material" does not quite include). As already noted, Longinus' allusions to an edifice of words, are metaphorical, but not without a strong visual and tactile force (x.22; xxxix.64). This sense of words as objects is present in the eighteenth-century discourse of the sublime, lying dormant, waiting for

³⁷"Let there be light" is one of Longinus' most famous examples of sublimity (ix.16). The immediacy of the creative word, the instantaneous translation of thought or wish into word into action marks the ideal presence of the sublime.

³⁸A famous correlative to this phenomenon is the sublime valorization of expressive silence which creates presence by means of absence: "a naked thought without words challenges admiration, and strikes by its grandeur. Such is the silence of *Ajax* in the *Odyssey*, which is undoubtedly noble, and far above expression" (Longinus, *On the Sublime*, ix.13). (See Smith's notes to this passage and Addison, *Tatler* 133, for the intense eighteenth-century awareness of this phenomenon.) As we have seen, in the scene of Joseph's revelation to his brothers, Sterne's sermons employ this device self-consciously. The textual manifestation of this phenomenon in both the sermons and *Tristram Shandy* is the subject of Chapter Six.

Sterne to build with them. The "heap" of words and the "crowd" of images are present everywhere in the language of the sublime, needing only enactment. As Pope's lines suggest, Longinus, unlike most eighteenth-century critics, was also a poet, able to enact. For this reason, the issue of imitation is natural to Longinus, and unproblematic (which is not to say unambiguous). As Krieger shows, imitation is first turned inward by Longinus. Much of the eighteenth-century theorists' problem is their inability to see imitation as enactment, even in the readerly sense that Longinus demonstrates so well.

Ultimately, it is the very ambiguity of the floating (doubling, collapsing) third term which produces the effects of the sublime for Longinus, Burke and the "lesser" theorists. Whether termed artifice, imitation or sympathy, the discursive act is the location of the sublime. Although they differ in the degree to which they openly acknowledge it, for both Longinus (openly) and Burke (unwillingly), what is sublime about the "fiat lux" is the "fiat *lex*" that necessarily precedes this utterance and the subsequent power of sublimity associated with utterance. As the following chapters will argue, this is surely the case demonstrated by both *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* and *Tristram Shandy*.

Chapter 6: The presentation of the text in *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* and *Tristram*

Shandy

The preceding chapters have attempted to demonstrate the importance of textuality to the discourses of satire and the sublime with which Sterne engaged. The final two chapters of this study will bring questions of textuality to bear upon *Tristram Shandy*, first in terms of its physical presentation and the implications thereof for narrative concerns, and second as an all-pervasive poetics: the rhetoric of *Tristram*. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Sterne recognizes in many of his sermons that "pure" communication does not exist. Rhetoric, a "flap upon the heart" (*Letters* 134), must be recognized as necessary: the form of the message must be considered if it is to be communicated. Beyond the world of the orally delivered sermon, in the world of print, rhetorical considerations take on a new dimension. In the absence of the preacher's delivery, the presentation of the text plays a role. This chapter establishes a connection between the non-verbal or gestural rhetoric of the sermons and the unique manifestation of textual presence in *Tristram Shandy*.

It has long been established that Sterne was very particular about the printed presentation of his work.¹ This is clear in Sterne's letter to the first publisher of *Tristram*

¹For a concise summary of Sterne's engagement with the printing process, see De Voogd, "*Tristram Shandy* as aesthetic object," 383. Further work needs to be done on the relationships between Sterne's few surviving manuscripts and his printed text. My argument in this chapter follows Gardner Stout's analysis of extant MSS of *A Sentimental Journey* which concludes, cautiously, that Sterne's final intentions are represented in the printed version which reflects substantive and accidental revisions made in proof (see *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy by Mr. Yorick*, ed. Gardner D. Stout, Jr., 49-57). Melvyn New's analysis of a MS (possibly in Sterne's hand) of the Le Fever episode stresses compositorial alterations accepted only tacitly by Sterne, suggesting that the MS has greater visual presence (see "A Manuscript of the Le Fever Episode in *Tristram Shandy*"). Unfortunately, the two extant sermon manuscripts correspond to

Shandy, Robert Dodsley:

I propose . . . to print a lean edition, in two small volumes, of the size of *Rasselas*, and on the same paper and type. . . . The book shall be printed here, and the impression sent up to you; for as I live at York, and shall correct every proof myself, it shall go perfect into the world, and be printed in so creditable a way as to paper, type, &c., as to do no dishonour to you . . . [*Letters* 80-81]

Earlier that same year, in a jocoserious letter to the printer appended to *A Political Romance*, his first fictional work, Sterne makes clear the importance of the minutiae of the text: "I have only to add . . . That, at your Peril, you do not presume to alter or transpose one Word, nor rectify one false Spelling, nor so much as add or diminish one Comma or Tittle, in or to my *Romance*" (*Letters* 68).² This clear injunction to heed the minute particulars, the accidentals of the text, should concern readers as well as printers. As we will see in Chapter Seven, in *Tristram Shandy*, such references to the printed appearance of the text intrude upon the narrative itself, reminding us that we are reading

sermons printed posthumously (28 and 37), and, therefore, cannot reveal Sterne's intentions for print. On the one hand, a comparison of the MS for sermon 37 (Pierpont Morgan Library, MA 418) to its printed version reveals that many dashes were added by the printer according to a regularized Shandean style. On the other hand, it is worth noting that, unlike the sermons seen through the press by Sterne himself, in those posthumously published the dash lengths do not vary: surely an indication of Sterne's involvement at the printing stage consistent with the more famous printed features of *Tristram Shandy* such as the black and marbled pages, or the missing chapter. I deliberately take my illustrative examples from volumes III and IV of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, which New notes "are the only ones Sterne labored over to any extent in preparing his sermons for the printer" (*Notes to The Sermons* 4).

²Sterne's attention to minutiae did not diminish: there is evidence that, in 1767, he requested changes to the lengths of the dashes in Volumes V and VI (see Melvyn New's "Introduction" to the Florida Edition, pp. 835-37).

a printed artifact, and also, I wish to argue, that no simple translation from the text to an idealized oral communication is possible. Rather, we must read Sterne's print both as a text of mimetic verbal referents and as a nonverbal object that communicates by means of its manipulation of the space on the page.

This study has already touched upon ideas of origins and originality. This problem, traditionally associated with the sublime, is brought to the fore by questions surrounding the nature of the text: what is the ultimate source of its impact, its reference or its appearance? The letter's insistence upon each "Comma or Tittle" reminds us that the author (as "originator") and his intentions are also possible ultimate sources. The present chapter works with an implied critique of modern editions of *Tristram Shandy*, which in their inadequate representation of Sterne's page draw attention to the problem of the original.³ (*Tristram Shandy's* more explicit discussions of the implications of textuality are considered in the next chapter.) Accompanying the problem of the original is a set of contradictions in assumptions about what constitutes the literary object: is it the abstract "text" (in modern editors' terms) or the concrete book? does it address the ear or the eye? Some of these issues will be considered in relation to rhetoric, bodies and embodiment in Chapter Seven. For the moment, let us consider one eighteenth-century

³For example, how is the impact of the first edition's 1,594 pages (Peter J. De Voogd, "*Tristram Shandy* as aesthetic object," 387) altered in the 809 pages of the scholarly edition or the 539 of the Oxford paperback? An editor's assumption that the "text" is an abstract, transparent entity which can be reproduced in any form does not sit comfortably with a performative text such as *Tristram Shandy*. (Interestingly, the online electronic edition, although not a facsimile, follows the first edition's pagination and layout right down to the catchwords. According to Peter J. De Voogd's review, the recent Chadwyck-Healy *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* on CD-ROM allows simultaneous viewing of both a modern text and reproductions of the first editions.)

statement on the book.

The first edition of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (1728) lacks an entry for "book," proceeding immediately to "bookbinding." However, by the second edition (1738),⁴ so often a source for Sterne, one finds a lengthy entry for "book" juxtaposed to that for "bookbinding." This perhaps testifies to a growing awareness of books, but this awareness does not extend to an overt recognition of the tension between the two entries. By relegating the physical nature of "book" to an entry on its production ("bookbinding"), Chambers allows himself to discuss "book" almost exclusively in abstract terms: "a writing composed on some point of knowledge by a person intelligent therein, for the instruction or amusement of the reader." In discussing "the *matter* of Books" (i.e., their material component), Chambers describes materials used in antiquity, such as "stones" and "the parts of plants," but these very material items are rapidly abstracted into a footnote explaining the etymological connections to such "matter."⁵ The separation of intellectual content from its physical embodiment in Chambers' two entries is indicative of the pervasive assumptions to which Sterne delighted in drawing attention, and which problematize modern editions of *Tristram Shandy*.⁶

⁴I am using the seventh edition (1751-2).

⁵"They were first written on stones, witness the Decalogue given to Moses (which is the oldest *book* we have any warranted account of); then, on the parts of plants . . ." The footnote appended here adds: "The parts of vegetables continued long the common matter of books; insomuch that most of the names and terms belonging to *books* are taken thence . . . and the English *book* itself."

⁶The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of "book" identifies the tension in the concept itself.

. . . Since either the form of the book or its subject may be mainly or exclusively

Such assumptions lead to difficulties in the consideration of *Tristram Shandy's* presentation. There is no question that Sterne's concern for the appearance of his texts has some effect upon their reception. The unusual typographical features of *Tristram Shandy* have been commented upon since its first publication. The *London Magazine* review of February, 1760 makes note of this in its imitation of Sterne's use of dashes. John Langhorne, reviewing the fifth and sixth volumes for the *Monthly Review* of January 1762, comments on what had already become familiar: ". . . yet they are not without their stars and dashes . . ." ⁷ Such textual gestures play upon the tension between form and content, style and substance. In many cases--as with these reviews--they frustrate criticism which depends upon this tension, producing either imitation or dismissal. Later in the century, George Gregory, the translator of Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, while condemning Sterne's typographical devices, grants them the

the object of attention, this passes on either side into

b. The material article so made up, without regard to the nature of its contents . . .

c. A literary composition such as would occupy one or more volumes, without regard to the material form or forms in which it actually exists. . . . No absolute definition of a 'book' in this sense can be given . . . [OED, s.v. "book," 3a, b, c]

Sterne's typographical, printerly and bookbinderly tricks play on this tension, and cause considerable difficulty to modern editors and critics who approach *Tristram Shandy* with assumptions which presuppose the second sense of "book," the one corresponding with the notion of "text": "The wording of anything written or printed; the structure formed by the words in their order; the very words, phrases, and sentences as written." (OED s.v. text, 1a). This notion of "text" has its extreme in a further (and pertinent) definition: "The wording adopted by an editor as (in his opinion) most nearly representing the author's original work; a book or edition containing this; also, with qualification, any form in which a writing exists or is current . . ." (1d).

⁷See Alan B. Howes' *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, 52 and 141.

status of rhetorical *figures*, calling Sterne's "a style which no classical ear can possibly endure, and which must be confessed to derive its principal embellishments from what are called the *typographical figures*" (Howes 265). This last comment raises (despite itself) interesting questions which come to dominate the commentary on physical properties of *Tristram Shandy's* text. For here is the fundamental tension between the text, which can employ traditional rhetorical figures (aurally apprehended), and the book, which alone can employ typographical figures (visually apprehended). It is the latter which is the locus of Sterne's peculiar rhetoric, the place where he attempts (to use the language of the sublime) to represent the unrepresentable, and (to use the language of satire) to address the mind through the senses. These are paradoxes fundamental to the nature of communication.

Modern studies which consider *Tristram Shandy's* format generally fall into one of two categories. Some are bibliographic in nature, that is, mainly descriptive of technical aspects of bookmaking. Others offer ad hoc demonstrations of a particular typographical effect. For example, William V. Holtz prints parallel columns of a passage from *Tristram Shandy*: one with its dashes one without. The reader is left to "appreciate" the effect. While Holtz's observations about the effects of the dash are suggestive, the absence of an analytic framework ("Its effect is more easily felt than defined . . .") leaves them at the level of personal impressions. In addition, a modern reprinting of Sterne's text such as Holtz's disregards the presentation of the first editions, abstracting the words and dashes from their original context: *neither* of Holtz's columns resembles what Sterne

presented to his public.⁸

In general, there is critical disagreement about Sterne's dashes, centering around their meaning in either an oral/aural or visual context. For example, Michael Vande Berg notes that the English tradition of rhetorical pointing, which sees the visual as a script or score for the aural, was still current in Sterne's day.⁹ On the other hand, Roger B. Moss argues that Sterne's punctuation forces a recognition of the disjunction of the aural and visual.¹⁰ Moss discusses the dash in similar terms, insisting on the unreadability of space in the novel (195-8). Yet, despite a declared interest in space, Moss discusses the dash as if its impact were identical in any context. Most critics argue that the dash opens up the text, but the nature of "text" remains undefined—it is most often an abstraction rather than the printed object. Is the spatiality created by the dash maintained in the translation of the first edition into modern forms? Or do critics discuss their *idea* of the effect of the dash, conceived apart from the page?¹¹

⁸See *Image and Immortality* (84-85). I must give credit to Holtz's chapter, "The Limits of Language," especially its section on typography, for identifying the issues of communication and "the *presence* of the talker" in the context of *Tristram Shandy's* graphic presentation. Nevertheless, as with any number of studies which have addressed Sterne's typographical stylistics, his emphasis on the elements of typography easily translated into a modern edition testifies to an unstated belief in the transparency of the text—despite his comments on "limits." Further critics of the dash are discussed below.

⁹"'Pictures of Pronunciation': Typographical Travels through *Tristram Shandy* and *Jacques le fataliste*," 23-4.

¹⁰"Sterne's Punctuation," 180-1, and *passim*.

¹¹For Ian Watt the text is an abstraction: the "most important strategic function of the dash" is syntactical, allowing for illogical connections ("The Comic Syntax of *Tristram Shandy*," 48). Anne Bandry abstracts not in terms of syntax but rather in terms of diegetic levels, attempting to demonstrate that certain dash lengths and their visual alignment on the page mark the presence of the narratee in the text ("*Tristram Shandy* ou

Part of the problem with these approaches is the insistence on separating the abstract from the concrete, the oral from the graphic. The implication of the present study so far, and especially in these final Shandean chapters is that, although it poses a conceptual problem, separation is impossible. Sterne does not offer a solution, but rather strives to integrate the problem into his work by means of textual presentation. The following consideration of ideas of "space" in the *Sermons* and *Tristram Shandy* is designed to show such an integration at work.

Since the time of its first publication, readers of *Tristram Shandy* have struggled to account for its oddities of appearance and narrative method. As we noted in Chapter One, its lack of conventional novelistic form has caused critics (myself included) to wonder whether *Tristram Shandy* is in fact a "novel" or rather some variety of philosophical commentary or anatomical satire. One answer to the problem of generic coherence has been to follow Tristram's own suggestion that he "must go along with you to the end of the work" (VI.20.534). Thus, one recurrent focus of criticism, following the work of Wayne Booth, is the sense of the narrator's presence as the unifying principle of the work.¹² Part of what ultimately obviates the need for strict generic definitions is the

le plaisir du tîret," 148). Also of interest is Janine Barchas' "Sarah Fielding's Dashing Style and Eighteenth-Century Print Culture."

¹²See *The Rhetoric of Fiction*: "the secret of [*Tristram Shandy's*] coherence, its form, seems to reside primarily in the role played by the teller, by Tristram, the dramatized narrator. He is himself in some way the central subject holding together materials which, were it not for his scatterbrained presence, would never have seemed to be separated in the first place" (222).

way in which Tristram, as Booth phrases it, "has ceased here to be distinguishable from what he relates" (223). Sterne's unique integration of the sense of the narrator's presence with the formal structure of the narrative has had well noted implications for the history of narrative. A further extension of this integration becomes apparent when we consider his attention to the physical material of the book in relation to questions of narrative presence in *Tristram Shandy*, for Sterne is deeply engaged in problematizing reading by means of the space literally upon and between the pages of his printed text: its *mise-en-page*, the spatial layout of the text.¹³

Despite Sterne's expressed desire to read the newly completed Volume III of *Tristram Shandy* aloud,¹⁴ oral readers of *Tristram Shandy* must encounter many moments at which they must either gloss over or describe unspeakable marks on the page, such as asterisks, dashes and squiggles, or make a decision about what to read next (for example, the Latin or the facing translation of Ernulphus's curse in III.11 or "Slawkenburgius's Tale" in IV). One wonders how Sterne intended to navigate the oddities of punctuation and layout found in the volume he wished to read aloud, especially the marbled page (III.36). *Tristram Shandy* is a visual text that problematizes the conventions of oral delivery (a mode presupposing a temporal rather than a spatial orientation). Sterne's work

¹³Walter J. Ong's *Orality and Literacy*, especially Chapter 5, "Print, space and closure," and Chapter 6, "Oral memory, the story line and characterization," provides a useful survey of the issues with which this chapter is engaged. Peter J. De Voogd's "*Tristram Shandy* as aesthetic object" contains useful and suggestive comments, well illustrated, on the importance of the printed appearance of *Tristram Shandy* in the first editions.

¹⁴"I have just finished one volume of Shandy, and I want to read it to some one who I know can taste and relish humour" (*Letters* 120).

draws attention to *mise-en-page*, a unique aspect of textuality that employs a notion of "space" which differs from customary uses of that term in the criticism of fiction. My particular interests here are to examine Sterne's use of space to represent not just the double imperative of written language as both referential tool and nonverbal object, but also an aspect of communication that falls between these two poles, the most ambiguous nonverbal aspect of orality: silence.

The place to begin an examination of Sterne's treatment of silence is his work in a genre specifically designed for oral delivery, the sermon. Sterne's sermons also provide a relatively clear preliminary to the consideration of space in *Tristram Shandy*, for in the sermons the relationship between spatial layout and the silences of orality is uncomplicated by the narrative concerns of representing the topographical space in which characters exist. Of course, as with all things Sternean, such simplicity is accompanied by interesting problems. In the case of the sermons, we encounter a printed version which was *directly influenced* by the printed aesthetic of *Tristram Shandy*. Although Sterne's sermons represent twenty years of pulpit experience prior to the publication of *Tristram Shandy*, as far as their printed presentation is concerned, *Tristram Shandy* is as much an introduction to the sermons as the reverse, for Sterne revised his sermons and prepared them for the press in 1760 and 1766, *after* the publication of *Tristram Shandy* had begun. The sermons in their printed form are remarkably--and intentionally--Shandean in appearance: *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* share the same size and type, generously made spacious with a small number of lines per page, a double space

between paragraphs, wide margins, and dashes of varying length.¹⁵ The mutual influence of the *Sermons* and *Tristram Shandy* (the former written and orally delivered before the latter, yet laid out in print after) makes the sermons an interesting ground to explore the relationship of oral and visual.¹⁶

Sterne's sermons are by no means simple transcripts of his orations. In examining the role of space and the dash in the printed sermons and their relation to oral delivery, we are tracing Sterne's thematic interest in problems of communication: speech, silence, and graphological representation. Ultimately, we are inquiring into the meaning of the Shandean style. The sermon, as an oral genre, is in need of some kind of translation into its printed form--no mere transcript will convey the rhetorical impact of the preacher's presence. Having already begun to employ *mise-en-page* to the end of creating presence in *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne takes advantage of the same technique to supplement the preacher's absence with an architecture of the printed page that speaks eloquently not only as a translation of the oral delivery (now lost) but also as a statement in itself. As we have seen in Chapter Two, many of his sermons, such as "Hezekiah and the Messengers"

¹⁵The evidence for sermons printed before *Tristram Shandy* is slender. Two of Sterne's sermons (numbers 5 and 27) were published individually in 1747 and 1750. These show intimations of the Shandean presentation with some use of varying dash lengths. The text of these early versions is on the whole less spacious than their later printings. Although there is double spacing between paragraphs, there are more lines per page (26 compared to 21 in 1760 and 19 in 1766) and less space within each line. A convenient comparison is Kenneth Monkman's facsimile of *A Political Romance*, originally printed by Caesar Ward, printer of the two early sermons.

¹⁶Appearances alone are not the only reason to consider the sermons as a way of understanding *Tristram Shandy*, for there is evidence to suggest that Sterne saw the sermons as dialogic companions to *Tristram Shandy*, designed to "keep up a kind of balance, in my shandaic character" (*Letters* 252).

(Sermon 17), are openly concerned with the problems of rhetoric, the lamentable need for a medium, such as the preacher himself, in order to communicate with God.¹⁷ In Sermon 17, Sterne laments his mediating role as a preacher and expresses a wish to be unnecessary, ultimately retreating into silence in the face of merely noisy rhetoric ("It is painful to utter the reproaches which should come in here.----I will trust them with yourselves . . ."). Here it is not surprising to see the printed page enact some kind of non-verbal communication. In the first edition of this sermon, the final page has the appearance of an hourglass (see figure 1).¹⁸ The blocks of print visually enact the collapse of discourse there under discussion. The first paragraph offers five lines of text, the third, ten. The second paragraph is simultaneously more and less than a paragraph. It consists of one line, centered on the page, rather than merely indented:

----it is too late.

The line is not an independent sentence, but a fragment of the preceding paragraph which concludes with a shorter dash. The ambiguous grammatical status of this line--it is simultaneously a sentence and a paragraph, but also neither--is foregrounded by its position on the page. Out of the ashes of rhetoric's collapse rises a new mode of communication: a silence which the preacher allows to envelop his words and which

¹⁷See in Chapter Two, for example, sermons 2, 3 and 23 for considerations of the preacher's own rhetoric and sermons 10, 26 and 42 discuss the rhetorical style of the scriptures.

¹⁸Illustrations appear at the end of this chapter.

becomes visually represented by the white space surrounding the center of this page.¹⁹

Elsewhere in the sermons, space, in conjunction with the dash, is explicitly associated with silence. In his sermon on "Pride," the double space between paragraphs becomes itself a typographic paragraph of silence:

---Approach his bed of state---lift up the curtain---regard a moment with
silence---

---are these cold hands and pale lips, all that is left of him who was
canoniz'd by his own pride, or made a god of, by his flatterers? [Sermon 24, 232]

The role of the dash is here obviously dramatic or gestural, standing in for the actions described. Most effective here are the dashes at the end of the first paragraph of text and the beginning of the second. Just as the preceding actions are set off by dashes on either side, so is the silence granted textual status. In this sermon, this space is conveniently labelled "silence." In other sermons it is simply heard, often marked by the aposiopestic dash.²⁰

Elsewhere in the sermons, white space (to some degree), and the dash (to a greater degree) become more purely performative, rather than representations of performance.

¹⁹Sterne's hand is apparent in the horizontal centering of the middle paragraph, although the vertical disposition of the text is likely the product of mere compositorial layout.

²⁰The best example is sermon 20 which employs the dash to represent the inadequacy of language to render the sentimental story of the prodigal son. It is also clear from the frequency with which the dash follows an exclamation that it represents a silent pause in which the exclamation may reverberate.

In such cases, they may not gesture at silence in itself, but rather at non-verbal actions. In "National Mercies" (Sermon 21), Sterne plays on the double space between paragraphs by eliminating it when two one-line paragraphs convey simultaneous events (see figure 2):

---The blessing was necessary,--
---and it was granted.---

In the fallen world, divine *fiat*--saying into being--is not only impossible, but unrepresentable. Nevertheless, Sterne's typographical collapse of the distinction between paragraphs attempts to collapse the distinction between (or rather, reunite) word and deed in his representation of a miracle. This performative gesture conveys the original lost unity and simultaneously recognizes it as lost (by drawing attention to the fact that, if he had printed the two phrases over each other, both would be illegible). This is a spatialized rendering of what in oral delivery would be described as parataxis. The very need to describe the technique using the terminology of sequence points out how the printed text attempts to transcend the sequentiality of oral reading. This has its parallel in a graphic device, which defies reading aloud, used in *Tristram Shandy* to represent simultaneous utterances of the Shandy brothers in IV.12 (see figure 3).²¹

This brief survey of Sterne's sermons has described his use of spatial layout to represent nonverbal aspects of orality, aspects dependent on the presence of the preacher. In addition to a similar use of space to convey the nonverbal in *Tristram Shandy*, we encounter greater complexity as narrative issues bring what I shall call mimetic and

²¹This device is used again to represent simultaneity in VII.8 and the syncopation of the abess and novice of Andouilletts in VII.25.

formal spaces to the fore. Therefore we need to inquire into Sterne's integration of three different ideas of "space" in *Tristram Shandy*: the space found in the fictional world, in fictional technique and in printing. The first two ideas of space, the mimetic and the formal, are the most customary ways of considering "fiction and space." Both critical approaches employ space as a metaphor. One of the most basic ways of interpreting a novel is to consider the mimetic spaces of fiction, the spaces of the fictional world that characters inhabit, as metaphors for its thematic concerns. In eighteenth-century fiction, obvious examples of this variety of space range from the enclosed, claustrophobic spaces of *Clarissa* to the freedom of the open road in *Tom Jones*, each having a metaphoric correlative in our ideas of the private and the public, the realms of thought and of action. This range is found in *Tristram Shandy*: the spatial separation of the men conversing in the parlor from Mrs. Shandy and the midwife who are laboring over Tristram's birth in the bedroom above correlates with the separate spheres of male and female activity that are themselves figures for satiric distinctions between theory and practice; Tristram's journey through France in Volume VII is a spatially enacted metaphoric flight from death.

At the same time that mimetic space has metaphoric meaning in a work of fiction, the form of that work is often discussed in terms of a metaphor of abstract discursive "space" that helps to articulate the manipulation of narrative sequence. This is a formal concern with the way in which the narrative is ordered. For example, when simultaneous events are placed into linear language, sequence is fragmented and narrative is said to have been "spatialized." Similarly, "spatial form" is at work when motifs or images demand interconnections that thwart the supposedly sequential flow of language (syntax

or narrative).²² *Tristram Shandy* has long been recognized as a masterpiece of spatial form,²³ especially with reference to its representation of time.²⁴ Indeed, since the eighteenth century, most of the criticism interested in the odd form of Sterne's work has been an attempt to account for "the whole narration always going backwards," as one eighteenth-century reader, Horace Walpole, put it.²⁵ Although Sterne's fiction is remarkable for its combination of the formal and mimetic senses of space, neither the abstract conception of spatial form as a metaphoric representation of time nor the mimetic rendering of the spaces inhabited by the fictional characters shows the extent of his use of "space" in *Tristram Shandy*, for they do not account for the presentation of the text.

Early in the novel, we can see the deliberate association of the formal and the mimetic metaphors of space. In a single early chapter we are informed that Tristram intends to narrate his origins *ab ovo*, but also that what follows is not wholly relevant to his story, and the readers who "do not choose to go so far back into these things" may "skip over the remaining part of this Chapter" (I.4.5). Tristram here gives his readers a formal directive, pertaining to the order of his narration. However, this is accompanied

²²The classic account is Joseph Frank's "Spatial Form in Modern Literature." See also W. J. T. Mitchell's "Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory," which addresses the metaphoric status of "space" and "time" in fiction.

²³See, for example, Jeffrey R. Smitten, "*Tristram Shandy* and Spatial Form," and K. G. Simpson, "At this Moment in Space: Time, Space and Values in *Tristram Shandy*."

²⁴See especially A. A. Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, 158-99, Jean-Jacques Mayoux, "Variations on the Time-sense in *Tristram Shandy*," and William Freedman, *Laurence Sterne and the Origins of the Musical Novel*, 52-86.

²⁵In a letter of 4 April, 1760, quoted in Alan B. Howes, ed., *Sterne: The Critical Heritage*, 55.

by a mimetic gesture, spoken to the "curious and inquisitive" (5) readers who choose to remain for the extended deduction of the date of Tristram's conception, that evokes a shared intimate space (6):

-----Shut the door.-----

This gesture, linking the fragmentation of narrative sequence (spatial form) and the metaphoric intimacy of a private conversation (mimetic space), is a frequent one in Sterne's text.²⁶ An interesting parallel occurs later in Volume I when Tristram addresses his female reader: "How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter?" (I.20.64). Here the intimacy of conversation is again marked by exclusion. However, rather than shutting the door, Tristram employs the formal, fictional space of the text: "as a punishment for it [inattentiveness], I do insist upon it, that you immediately turn back, that is, as soon as you get to the next full stop, and read the whole chapter over again" (64-65). While the female reader is engaged in a separate chapter--a different space--Tristram may converse confidentially with the male reader. It is important to note that the varieties of space are so closely interwoven here that they cross over: textual distance becomes mimetic distance. This is an all-pervasive technique in *Tristram Shandy*, to the extent that a narrator's or a character's words often carry both mimetic and diegetic implications, as when Tristram says of his mother, "She listened . . . with composed intelligence, and would have done so to the end of the chapter" (V.13.442): the reader

²⁶See Leland Warren's comments on the relationship of "presence" and conversation in *Tristram Shandy* ("Getting into the Talk: *Tristram Shandy* through Conversation") and Bruce Stovel on the intimacy of physical exchange in *Tristram Shandy's* gossip ("*Tristram Shandy* and the Art of Gossip").

cannot know whether this means "to the natural conclusion of this activity (or the events represented)" or "to the end of this chapter in the work known as *Tristram Shandy*" (see also I.10 and VIII.22). Furthermore, Tristram draws the reader in by enunciating a notion of reading as spatial. His intimate conversation with the male reader concerns the (female) "vicious taste" that cannot transcend a linear conception of "reading straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge . . ." (I.20.65). The spatial metaphor of depth contrasts the temporal sense of "straight forward" sequence (although we should note that many such time references are only expressed through spatial metaphors).

Another instance of the conjunction of textual and mimetic space occurs in Volume III, this time placed outdoors in the intimacy of a country walk. Again, the mimetic space, this time not the static containment of the private room, but the outdoor space through which the narrator and his friend Eugenius are travelling, is linked with the spatial form of fiction that (especially with the Shandean focus on the literal form) demands cross-referencing different pages and volumes:

-----Here are two senses, cried *Eugenius*, as we walk'd along, pointing with the fore finger of his right hand to the word *Crevice*, in the fifty-second page of the second volume of this book of books,--here are two senses,----quoth he.----
And here are two roads, replied I, turning short upon him,----a dirty and a clean one,----which shall we take? [III.31.258]

Interpretation takes place by means of spatializing the text: flipping through its pages in order to locate the place in the text to be considered; but it is also subject to the road

metaphor derived from the geographical space in which the interpretation occurs.

The most extended mingling of *Tristram Shandy's* mimetic time and place with textual time and place occurs in the travel metaphor of Volume VII. It is this volume that most strongly brings the applications of Shandyism into the world outside of textuality, into the human considerations of life and death in space and time, something beyond a bookish game. Volume VII begins with the metaphoric use of space ("DEATH himself knocked at my door"), interrupting another scene of intimate narration to Eugenius.

Thou hast had a narrow escape, Tristram, said Eugenius, taking hold of my hand as I finish'd my story----

But there is no *living*, Eugenius, replied I, at this rate; for as this *son of a whore* has found out my lodgings---- [VII.1.576]

What follows in Volume VII is an extended spatial metaphor asserting that life is found only in its participial form, *living*, which requires motion through space as opposed to lodgement, or stasis. As we have seen, such metaphoric uses of mimetic space are frequently linked to the spatial form of the work, as with, for example, Tristram's much noted travels through Auxerre: "I have been getting forwards in two different journies together, and with the same dash of the pen . . ." (VII.28.621). The insistence on the kinetic movement through space here supplies the moral framework underpinning the gestural nature of the spatial layout of both *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (as well as *Tristram Shandy's* spatial form). Just as the success of Tristram's flight from Death is marked by the change from linear flight to the choreographed peasant dance

at the end of Volume VII (accompanied by a denial of "*straight lines*" in the opening of VIII.1, cross-referenced to VI.40), Sterne's page demands a lively eye that apprehends meaning not "straight forwards," line by line from left to right, top to bottom, but in a dance that perceives the structure of the space, actively moving back and forth, in essence creating meaning by performing these actions.

We may trace the literal origins of this metaphoric dance by returning to the moment at which Tristram berates the "straight forward" reader. Here he not only asserts the spatial form of his work (by sending "Madam" back to the previous chapter) as well as the intimate conversational space he shares with the male reader, but he also at this moment introduces a third variety of space into *Tristram Shandy*, one that shifts from the metaphoric uses of mimetic location and spatialized narrative to the performative space of the book as object. In I.20, wishing to demonstrate his "deep erudition," Tristram has recourse, for the first time in the work, to a traditional scholarly device, the footnote. The history of the footnote runs parallel to the history of printing, marking the spatial incorporation of what manuscript culture would call a marginal gloss, and oral culture a digression. As Hugh Kenner points out,

The footnote's relation to the passage from which it depends is established wholly by visual and typographic means, and will typically defeat all efforts of the speaking voice to clarify it without visual aid. Parentheses, like commas, tell the voice what to do: an asterisk tells the voice that it can do nothing. . . . The language has forsaken a vocal milieu, and a context of oral communication between persons, and commenced to take advantage of the expressive possibilities

of technological space.²⁷

No stranger to digressions ("take them out of this book for instance,--you might as well take the book along with them" [I.22]), *Tristram Shandy* recognizes the problem they present to narration which is conceived of in an oral fashion, requiring the repetition of the words from which the digression began, as each digression returns to the subject, having supposedly enriched our sense of it. The footnote asks us to suspend the narration of the subject while supplementary information is supplied, employing the space on the page to mark this process rather than repetition in the text.²⁸ Sometimes, rather than supplying new information, the footnote can also simply refer readers back to places in previous volumes (e.g., a note in III.1 sends us back to II.18), drawing attention to what is known as "spatial form" (the cross-referenced fragmentation of sequence). In *Tristram Shandy*, after the gesture of "----Shut the door----" and other metafictional moments in which the reader finds himself or herself addressed in the context of mimetic space, the

²⁷Kenner's *aperçu* continues: "The man who writes a marginal comment is conducting a dialogue with the text he is reading; but the man who composes a footnote, and sends it to the printer along with his text, has discovered among the devices of printed language something analogous with counterpoint: a way of speaking in two voices at once, or of ballasting or modifying or even bombarding with exceptions his own discourse without interrupting it. It is a step in the direction of discontinuity: of organizing blocks of discourse simultaneously in space rather than consecutively in time" (*The Stoic Comedians* 39-40).

²⁸Printing enhances our sense of both types of supplementary information: the footnote by means of economy of type, the digression or interruption by excessive expenditure of type through repetition--as with several examples involving Trim, including the narrative of "The King of Bohemia and his Seven Castles" during the telling of which the title--formally centered on the page--is reprinted five times (VIII.19). The narratological problem of attributing repetition to diegetic or mimetic levels in these and many other instances in *Tristram Shandy* needs further study.

extra-diegetic device of the footnote, so clearly a function of the printed page, cannot occur without invoking the intimate relationship of the author and reader which has been defined by the metaphors of mimetic space. By this association, the printed text has taken on a living presence of the kind formerly thought only available within the intimate space of the lived world.

Footnotes may be called supplemental uses of space: at one level (that of metaphoric spatial form), they fill in the gaps in the narrative, or enlarge our sense of it. At the level of *mise-en-page*, printed in smaller type and separated from the main text, they draw the eye to the bottom of the page, providing, if one allows for the vertical orientation of the printed page, at least a two dimensional sense of the "depth" for which Tristram strives. As we have seen in Chapter Four, this type of textual supplementarity, playing on the appearance of scholarly apparatus, is characteristic of the dense textuality of *Tristram Shandy's* Scriblerian precursors such as Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and especially Pope's *Dunciad Variorum* in which the weighty notes dominate the space of the page. Sterne is clearly borrowing from this tradition in his histrionic use of footnotes and asterisks. However, as we have already seen in the sermons, the appearance of Sterne's page is quite different from Scriblerian pages. The text of *Tristram Shandy* is generously spaced (as figures 3-7 show). As noted above, the celebrated dash has been said to "open up" the text rather than weigh it down. What Sterne has done is to take the Scriblerian models of textuality and sublimate them, drawing in their sense of performativity, yet pointing it in a different direction--not toward the opacity of language, but rather toward its ineffability. In the Scriblerian works the excessive presence of ink

marks the performative text, whereas, for Sterne, with notable exceptions such as the marbled or black pages, it is the *absence* of excessive ink that enacts a performance. In other words, it is the unoccupied space on the page that produces many of *Tristram Shandy's* effects.

Let us examine what is perhaps the novel's most extended use of the space on the page. In the single chapter (VI.18) that relates the "beds of justice" conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Shandy, the manipulation of spatial layout to convey passing time or silence, to create activity or stasis, and to explore the relationship of repetition and meaning, is combined with one of *Tristram Shandy's* significant social spaces (see figures 4-7). This chapter, which returns us to the scene of the bedroom, is an important one for feminist critics concerned with the frequently silent or absent Mrs. Shandy.²⁹ Here we witness the source of that silence and absence at work as Mrs. Shandy displays her rhetorical skills in answering Mr. Shandy. The question under consideration is whether or not young Tristram should be put into breeches early (to compensate for the mutilation of his genitals in the accident with the window sash). Mrs. Shandy's technique, employed in Shandy Hall's most cathected space, is one that we have witnessed in connection with the spatialization of narrative: silence and repetition. And here Sterne's *mise-en-page* reinforces Mrs. Shandy's non-discursive discourse (which so frustrates Mr. Shandy's attempts at logocentric dialectic) through its third alternative of visual presentation.

²⁹Both John Traugott, *Tristram Shandy's World* (115), and Helen Ostovich, "Reader as Hobby-Horse in *Tristram Shandy*" (164-65), see Mrs. Shandy's silence as an active rhetorical technique. Ostovich connects the "beds of justice" conversation to Tristram's relationship with the female reader. Further references to feminist accounts of Mrs. Shandy's silence appear in Ostovich's notes.

In the "beds of justice" chapter, Mrs. Shandy is at her most rhetorical--simultaneously rejecting discourse and using it through subtle mutations--distorting echoes--of Mr. Shandy's words. The mutations in Mrs. Shandy's replies seem to demand an oral intonation for full effect, and, in many ways, this chapter can be read as a score annotated for performance. Let us first observe Mrs. Shandy at work. As Walter strains to provoke a response with which he can engage his dialectic, she consistently fails to provide one. Instead, she mildly reduces in both sense and syllables (526-27):

----I can not (making two syllables of it) imagine, quoth my father, who the duce he takes after.----

I cannot conceive, for my life,--said my mother.-----

Or she potently concentrates (527):

I suppose, replied my father,--making some pause first,--he'll be exactly like other people's children.-----

Exactly, said my mother.-----

She amplifies (but subtly, only the first half of the sentence) (527):

----And 'twill be lucky, if that's the worst on't, added my father.

It will be very lucky, answered my mother.

She anticipates Mr. Shandy's conclusions (528):

----They should be of leather, said my father, turning him about again.--

They will last him, said my mother, the longest.

Mrs. Shandy's repetitious responses thwart linear progress. However, they also help create the atmosphere of a ritual, something from the realm of magic that has its own value outside of Walter's "science." Thus this is a chapter that Sterne could well read aloud, applying the lessons of translating the sermons into print in reverse, reading the space on the page in order to extend the chapter beyond itself into sound.

Every paragraph in the first edition of *Tristram Shandy* is separated by a double space. This spatial arrangement helps to establish a rhythm and a pace for the chapter. Because of the short paragraphs in VI.18, there is extra white space on each page (the usual two and one half first edition pages printed on a single page of a modern paperback edition becomes nearly three and one half).³⁰ Treating the chapter as a score for performance, the question arises: should the pages be turned more quickly, because we are receiving "less" information, or should the tempo of page turning be kept constant, and rests added to fill out the time of each page? The question is not so easily answered when one considers Sterne's careful pacing (and spacing) of his sermonic discourses. The white space on the page is given meaning if we account for the resonance of the preacher's voice. However, this chapter is not only a means to a performance: it is, in many ways, the performance itself, a ritualized space. For the visual reader, the sermons

³⁰This is De Voogd's way of describing the difference between the first and modern editions ("*Tristram Shandy* as aesthetic object" 385). The "beds of justice" chapter averages approximately 81 words per page in contrast to about 125 in Volumes I and II. Because the Florida Edition maintains the double space between paragraphs, the ratio of first edition pages to Florida pages remains consistent with the other chapters: two to one. However, many of this chapter's short paragraphs appear as single lines in the Florida Edition.

have suggested that this chapter, which consists mainly of short exchanges of uncommunicative dialogue, presents to the eye a visual silence, a series of discrete textual islands, unbridged, a spatial metaphor for the lack of communication. The critic sensitive to social spaces will also note how this chapter enacts the uncomfortable physical relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Shandy as they lie together in the same bed.

In the "beds of justice" chapter, reading the white space as resonance is encouraged by the repetition in the passage--not only by Mrs. Shandy, but by the text itself. Peter J. De Voogd has suggested (in the context of the arrangement of footnotes) that "catchword-order" is worthy of serious consideration as one of Sterne's techniques in *Tristram Shandy* ("*Tristram Shandy* as aesthetic object" 387). How far this should be taken is questionable, for, despite Sterne's intense interest in the printing of his work, his control over page division cannot be established. However, catchwords are an unavoidable aspect of all eighteenth-century texts, and one to which Sterne was quite sensitive: for the second edition of Volumes V and VI, it is possible that Sterne requested the catchword be omitted whenever it read "CHAP."³¹ Although catchwords were mainly a device for the convenience of printers which readers were expected to ignore, Sterne's interests--both as a preacher and the author of *Tristram Shandy*--were in drawing attention to exactly such conventions. If we pay attention to them, catchwords serve to enhance the sense of repetition throughout the text.³² In the "beds of justice" chapter,

³¹This is the suggestion of Kenneth Monkman in Appendix 5 of the Florida Edition: Vol. 2, 929, 933.

³²In the dedication to volume I, for example, this repetition has the power to make "one" appear three: the author shall think himself "perhaps much happier than any [one]"

the extra white space makes catchwords (and hence repetition) more frequent.³³ This causes a ritualizing incantatory feeling to settle over the chapter, slowing the reading. Walter's twice repeated "Humph!" (527) appears *three* times in the first edition--if the first "Humph!", which is the catchword (figures 4-5, pp. 73-74), is pronounced. Is the fact that this word is the catchword accidental? Or is it the accidental of a musical score? (After all, "Humph" is an important argumentative technique in *Shandy Hall*, and it appears three times as Uncle Toby and Dr. Slop argue over the "Abuses of Conscience" sermon [II.17.149-50].)

Extra white space and more frequent catchwords are mutually supporting techniques for the creation of an incantatory tone in the "beds of justice" chapter. Within the text of the chapter, Mrs. Shandy's use of repetition confirms the tone conveyed by the extra-textual devices. Repetition is one of Mrs. Shandy's two rhetorical techniques, the other of which is silence. Both techniques are a refusal to participate in discourse by disregarding the rules of dialectic either in the subtle mutations of what she repeats or in her failure to respond at all. That this is represented visually in the text of *Tristram Shandy* suggests that we may see this as a contribution to the debate between theory and practice which is the theme of the satire in *Tristram Shandy*. As Walter Shandy's sterile words fall upon Mrs. Shandy's frustrating silence, we are made aware that opinions unsupported by life are inadequate. Just as Tristram's race through France is a spatial

one (one only excepted)" (I, dedication: I have supplied the catchword in square brackets).

³³Compare this chapter's ratio of 6 catchwords to its 563 words of text with, for example, II.6's 4 catchwords and 630 words of text.

affirmation of life, Mrs. Shandy's room-bound debate with Walter draws support from the spatial architecture of the "beds of justice" chapter, which draws upon the spatializing techniques of *Tristram Shandy* as a whole. The kinds of repetition that *Tristram Shandy* has employed elsewhere at the diegetic level as a function of digressions--the spatialized fragmentation of linear narrative--are employed by Mrs. Shandy at the mimetic level to thwart Walter's linear dialectic.

This is a prime example of the integration of varieties of space in Sterne's fiction. Within a mimetic social space (which the reader has frequently encountered in moments of narrative self-reflexivity that draw attention to the spatial form of the work, such as the "----shut the door----" gesture or the "two roads" debate discussed above) a character employs devices borrowed from the work's spatializing techniques. In addition, the very physical space on the page increases the impact of the satire, offering not just a score for performance, but a performance in itself, more subtle than the obvious typographical ploys for attention that force their presence upon the reader, because it acts by means of absence, empty space.

Thus far we have engaged with Sterne's use of textual presentation as a means to the creation of narrative presence in the face of the fundamental paradoxes of communication. Both the rhetorical discourse of the sublime and the tradition of satire within which Sterne places himself are working in the same field and wrestling with the same issues of presence and textuality. The rhetorical manifestation of these issues in *Tristram Shandy* is the subject of the next and final chapter.

60 S E R M O N II.

virtuous man who did it, with infamy;—undo it all.—I beseech you: give him back his honour,——restore the jewel you have taken from him,—replace him in the eye of the world—

——it is too late.

It is painful to utter the reproaches which should come in here.—I will trust them with yourselves: in coming from that quarter, they will more naturally produce such fruits as will not set your teeth on edge—for they will be the fruits of love and good will, to the praise of God and the happiness of the world, which I wish.

S E R-

Figure 1. *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1766), vol. 3, p. 60. Reproduced with permission of McMaster University Library.

184 SERMON VI.

If God then made us, as he did the Israelites, suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, how much more signal was his mercy in giving them to us without money, without price, in those good days which followed, when a long and a wife reign was as necessary to build up our church, as a short one was before to save it from ruins.—

—The blessing was necessary,—
—and it was granted.—

God having multiplied the years of that renowned princess to an uncommon number, giving her time, as well as a heart, to fix a wavering persecuted

[104]

it—'Tis a heavy tax upon that half of our fellow-creatures, brother *Sandy*, said my uncle *Toby*—'Tis a piteous burden upon 'em, continued he, shaking his head.—Yes, yes, 'tis a painful thing—said my father, shaking his head too—but certainly since shaking of heads came into fashion, never did two heads shake together, in concert, from two such different springs.

God bless } 'em all—said my uncle
Duce take } *Toby* and my father, each
to himself.

C H A P. XIII.

HOI, LA!—you chairman!—here's sixpence—do step into that book-seller's shop, and call me a *day-tall* critick. I am very willing to give any one

Figure 2. *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, vol. 3, p. 184. Reproduced by permission of McMaster University Library. Figure 3. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760-67), 9 vols, 4:104. Reproduced by permission of McMaster University Library.

[72]

C H A P. XVIII.

WE should begin, said my father, turning himself half round in bed, and shifting his pillow a little towards my mother's, as he opened the debate—We should begin to think, Mrs. *Sandy*, of putting this boy into breeches.—

We should so,—said my mother.—
We defer it, my dear, quoth my father, shamefully.—

I think we do, Mr. *Sandy*,—said my mother.

—Not but the child looks extremely well, said my father, in his vests and tunicks.—

—He

[73]

—He does look very well in them, —replied my mother.—

—And for that reason it would be almost a sin, added my father, to take him out of 'em.—

—It would so,—said my mother; —But indeed he is growing a very tall lad,—rejoin'd my father.

—He is very tall for his age, indeed,—said my mother.—

—I can not (making two syllables of it) imagine, quoth my father, who the duce he takes after.—

I cannot conceive, for my life,—said my mother.—

Humph!

Figure 4. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760–67), 9 vols, 6:72, 73. The remaining pages of chapter 18 are reproduced in figures 5, 6, and 7. *Ex bibliotheca Melvyn New.*

[74]

Humph!—said my father.

(The dialogue ceased for a moment.)

—I am very short myself,—continued my father, gravely.

You are very short, Mr. *Sandy*,—said my mother.

Humph! quoth my father to himself, a second time: in muttering which, he plucked his pillow a little further from my mother's,—and turning about again, there was an end of the debate for three minutes and a half.

—When he gets these breeches made, cried my father in a higher tone, he'll look like a beast in 'em.

He

[75]

He will be very awkward in them at first, replied my mother:—

—And 'twill be lucky, if that's the worst on't, added my father.

It will be very lucky, answered my mother.

I suppose, replied my father,—making some pause first,—he'll be exactly like other people's children:—

Exactly, said my mother:—

—Though I should be sorry for that, added my father: and so the debate stopped again.

—They should be of leather, said my father, turning him about again.—
They

Figure 5

[76]

They will last him, said my mother, the longest.

But he can have no linings to 'em, replied my father.——

He cannot, said my mother.

'Twere better to have them of fustian, quoth my father.

Nothing can be better, quoth my mother.——

——Except dimity,——replied my father:——'Tis best of all,——replied my mother.

——One must not give him his death, however,——interrupted my father.

By no means, said my mother:—— and so the dialogue stood still again.

7

I am

[77]

I am resolved, however, quoth my father, breaking silence the fourth time, he shall have no pockets in them.——

——There is no occasion for any, said my mother.——

I mean in his coat and waistcoat,——cried my father.

——I mean so too,——replied my mother.

——Though if he gets a gig or a top——Poor souls! it is a crown and a scepter to them,——they should have where to secure it.——

Order it as you please, Mr. Sbandy, replied my mother.——

——But

Figure 6

[78]

—But don't you think it right?
added my father, pressing the point
home to her.

Perfectly, said my mother, if it pleases
you, Mr. *Sbandy*.——

—There's for you! cried my father,
losing temper——Pleases me!——You
never will distinguish, Mrs. *Sbandy*, nor
shall I ever teach you to do it, betwixt
a point of pleasure and a point of con-
venience.——This was on the *Sunday*
night;——and further this chapter say-
eth not.

C H A P. XIX.

AFTER my father had debated the af-
fair of the breeches with my mother,
—he consulted *Albertus Rubenius* upon
it;

Figure 7

Chapter 7: The rhetoric of *Tristram*: the presence of the text

This study began with a discussion of *Tristram Shandy's* textuality: its self-conscious recognition of language as something in itself, rather than a transparent medium. It was suggested that the young Sterne's writing on the wall taught him a lesson in the variability of rhetorical effect. Chapter Two considered the preacher Sterne's recognition that formal and rhetorical concerns affect communication and raise questions about the meaning of concepts such as "originality." Chapters Three through Five introduced the discourses of satire and the sublime, which Sterne knew well. These discourses, whether reducing ideas to the physical or attempting to transcend it, are self-consciously rhetorical, interested in the problems of communication, each concerned with relationships of language and thought, mind and body, questions of presence and textuality. These are the discourses which enable Sterne to engage his concerns with writing as such. Chapter Six showed how Sterne's concerns are made manifest in the textual presentation, the material embodiment, of his works. Now we are ready to examine the complex interaction of these elements in the text of *Tristram Shandy*, ranging from the concrete presentation of the book before us to the abstract presence of the author absent from us.

This chapter proceeds in a double fashion, necessitated by Sterne's simultaneous *attention to* rhetoric (scenes of writing, of oration, meta-commentary on his own technique) as well as *use of* rhetoric (*Tristram Shandy's* tropes and figures). Both the figurations of rhetoric and the figures of rhetoric have origins in the satiric and sublime discourses of the eighteenth century. These two traditions, as we have seen, reveal tendencies toward the materialization of ideas into words and words into actions and

things, the immediacy sought in sublime writing having its counterpart in the bodily manifestations of satirical writing. It is this study's argument that Sterne sees both discourses as coming to realize "presence" in their medium, which, by the eighteenth century, is that of print.

The Rhetoric of Embodiment

An early example which sets the tone for the attention paid to writing in *Tristram Shandy* is the "Rabelaisian Fragment," which explicitly links satire and the sublime.¹ In this satire upon sermon writing Sterne draws his sublime and satiric sides together in a single character, Longinus Rabelaicus, who proposes to write a "Kerukopaedia" or "Art of Sermon-writing". At the same time that this character's mock-dissertation suggests abstract or theoretical connections between satire and the sublime, Sterne's representation of the preacher Homenas (a character borrowed from Rabelais) shows these connections in practice. In the following passage, Homenas reacts to his own rhetoric while contemplating the consequences of plagiarism in his sermon:

Here, *Homenas* burst into a Flood of Tears which falling down helter skelter, ding dong, without any kind of Intermission for Six Minutes and almost twenty five seconds, had a marvellous Effect upon his Discourse; for, the aforesaid Tears, do

¹According to Melvyn New the "Rabelaisian Fragment" was written just before *Tristram Shandy* was begun (Sterne, "Sterne's Rabelaisian Fragment," 1085). We should perhaps note that this places it about the time Sterne recalled the anecdote of writing on the wall.

you mind, did so temper the Wind that was rising upon the aforesaid Discourse,-- but falling for the most part perpendicularly, & hitting the Spirits at right Angles which were mounting horisontally all over the Surface of his Harrangue, they not only play'd the Devil and all with the Sublimity--But moreover, the said Tears, by their nitrous Quality did so refrigerate, precipitate, & hurry down to the Bottom of his Soul, all the unsavory Particles which lay fermenting (as you saw) in the middle of his Conception, That He went on in the coolest & chastest Stile (for a Soliloquy, I think) that ever mortal Man utter'd.-- [1090]

There are obvious foreshadowings of the Shandean style here (and indeed New notes borrowings from this fragment in the first four volumes of *Tristram Shandy* [1085-86]). There are echoes of the language of satire, most apparent in the use of height and weight (here personalized, in miniature), which dominates the opening section of *A Tale of a Tub* in its discussion of the "Physico-logical Scheme of Oratorical Receptacles or Machines" (61). Also present is the language of the sublime. This is located in the torrent of tears ("helter skelter, ding dong"), the language of height ("mounting", "falling . . . perpendicularly"), the mixing of spirit and rhetoric. These elements are, of course, recognizable as traditional objects of satire. New suggests that the "Kerukopaedia" or "Art of Sermon-writing" was to become "a parody of *Peri Hupsous (On the Sublime)*, perhaps in the manner of Pope's *Peri Bathous*" (1083). New's reading of the fragment as well as *Peri Bathous* places one discourse, satire, in a subject-position and the other, the sublime, in the position of satiric object. This is an accepted reading of both texts, but it fails to notice rhetorical continuities between the two discourses which compromise

the subject-object division. The sublime is subject to parody only because it shares with satire a common ground. As satire makes clear, this ground is the physical, wherein notions of "rising" and "sinking" have meaning. At some originary point the discourse of the sublime must take its metaphor as literally as satire wilfully chooses to do. Just as Homenas is reflexively reading himself--reacting to his own rhetoric--the presence of metaphor which the sublime attempts to conceal and satire forces us to see marks the presence of "presence"--a doubling which allows self-recognition.

We should pause here to remark on the physiological nature of the description of the sermon's rhetorical effectiveness, for this is the consistent focus of *Tristram Shandy's* investigation into the nature of communication. As Tristram reminds us, in his famous analysis of his father's pipe-snapping aposiopesis: "never let it be forgotten upon what small particles your eloquence and your fame depend" (II.6.116). This phrase encapsulates Sterne's insistence on the physical presence of language, what we can see throughout *Tristram Shandy* as the rhetoric of the particulate and the pendent. Reading with attention to *Tristram Shandy's* geometrical terms, terms of measurement or even cognates of pendent² places it within the rhetoric of satire and the sublime as expressed in *A Tale of a Tub* ("Nature it self hath instructed the Hearers, to stand with their Mouths open, and erected parallel to the Horizon, so as they may be intersected by a perpendicular Line from the Zenith to the Center of the Earth" [60]) or Burke's discussion

²The range of "pendent" cognates is formidable, from the constant use of the "dependence upon" formula to discuss cause and effect, "the true scholastick pendulum" of Tristram's hypercritic (II.8.119) or the one implied in the Shandy clock, to the perpendicularity invoked in Trim's stance (II.17) or the "470 pounds averdupoise acting perpendicularly upon" Tristram's head at parturition (II.19.176).

of the sublimity of a precipice: "A perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plane . . ." (72).

One passage from *Tristram Shandy* (which returns us to Homenas) brings together all of our concerns in this chapter: writing, the physical metaphor of height and measurement, the question of origins (including the issue of repetition and plagiarism), and the presence of the text. Immediately following one of Tristram's more radical printerly gestures--the deliberate change of pagination to represent the tearing out of Chapter 24 of Volume IV--Tristram explains why this has occurred by relating his critique of one of Homenas's sermons. The problem lies in one passage which outshines the rest:

Your notes, *Homenas*, I should have said, are good notes,--but it was so perpendicular a precipice--so wholly cut off from the rest of the work, that by the first note I humm'd, I found myself flying into the other world, and from thence discovered the vale from whence I came, so deep, so low, and dismal, that I shall never have the heart to descend into it again.

☞ A dwarf who brings a standard along with him to measure his own size--take my word, is a dwarf in more articles than one--And so much for tearing out of chapters. [IV.25.375]

This is an embodied rhetoric--in its metaphors as well as in its presentation by means of printer's devices. The metaphorical aspects of this rhetoric have been well noted by scholars such as Jonathan Lamb, whose description of "the double principle" draws attention to the physiological metaphors of associationist thought, as well as Sigurd

Burkhardt in his study of "gravity" in *Tristram Shandy*.³ The geometrical language, the language of measurement and mechanism, in these passages concerning Homenas is ever-present in *Tristram Shandy*, drawing attention to the intermingling of mind and matter, theory and practice in Sterne's work.⁴

With close attention to issues of language and rhetoric of the sort I have discussed in chapters on satire and the sublime, I wish to offer a reading of *Tristram Shandy* as sublime satire (or satiric sublimity), a self-reflexively integrated rhetoric of physical embodiment. Sterne's work addresses these issues at any number of levels. The "set dissertation" of the "Author's Preface," with its traditional comparison of wit and judgment, often explicitly labels aspects of communication in physical terms, as when the traditional satiric crossover of tenor and vehicle is subtly employed to make a common sense jab at formulaic modes of apprehending truth:

³Of general interest to particulate rhetoric, and already cited in Chapter One, is Richard W. F. Kroll's *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century*, a study of Restoration neo-Epicureanism which draws attention to the analogy between atoms and letters, and the concomitant embodiment of language: "Neoclassical linguists were fascinated by the phenomenon by which words occur as the physiognomic maneuverings of the mouth, tongue, palate, and lips. The Restoration frequently resorted to the metaphor of printing to emphasize this plastic quality in language: the age seems to have delighted in the concreteness of the page impressed by visible marks, ascending atomically from letters to words, to sentences, to entire discourses" (14). In a broader application, J. Paul Hunter describes Tristram's uncertainty about an orderly universe and his own origins and identity in relation to the circumstantial particulars of life ("Clocks, Calendars, and Names: The Troubles of Tristram and the Aesthetics of Uncertainty").

⁴Burkhardt makes this point in relation to the relays between Uncle Toby's military science, Trim's sex life and the embodiment of language (in puns, for example), all of which are subject to gravity. For a more recent theorizing of sexuality, textuality and the mechanical, see Roy C. Caldwell's "*Tristram Shandy*, Bachelor Machine."

. . . an illustration is no argument,--nor do I maintain the wiping of a looking-glass clean, to be a syllogism;--but you all, may it please your worships, see the better for it,---so that the main good these things do, is only to clarify the understanding, previous to the application of the argument itself, in order to free it from any little motes, or specks of opacular matter, which if left swimming therein, might hinder a conception and spoil all. [III.20.227-8]

Sterne's intricately woven motival patterns make such an explicit discussion of language resonant with other aspects of the work, such as the discussion of Momus's glass ("our minds shine not through the body, but are wrapt up here in a dark covering of uncrystalized flesh and blood" [I.23.83]).⁵ the deceptive clarity of Widow Wadman's eye ("there is neither mote, or sand, or dust, or chaff, or speck, or particle of opake matter floating in it" [VIII.24.707]) or the later writing-as-shaving metaphor (IX.13), discussed below, which manifests sublime self-presence.

It is no wonder that the "Preface" moves on to consider writing as "placing a number of tall, opake words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your readers conception" (III.20.235). The combination of embodiment--the opacity of words--with the abstract theoretical bias implied in the "right line," juxtaposed to the human communication situation (two conceptions) is a description of the issues continuously confronting all of the characters in *Tristram Shandy*. It is also a description of the issues with which we have seen the discourses of satire and the sublime engaged:

⁵This phrase provides the title to Juliet McMaster's study of mind, body and sexuality in *Tristram Shandy*: "'Uncrystalized Flesh and Blood': The Body in Tristram Shandy."

the presence of the text, the crossover between the rhetorical workings of the text and its physical presentation. This demands that attention be paid to the nonverbal aspects of the text which reveal the performative nature of the book as object.

Rhetorical Bodies

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, *Tristram Shandy* employs its physical textuality to create and enhance a narrative presence. To begin, the present chapter needs to examine how this work intertwines its narrative presence with traditional problems of rhetoric. Within the story, this is accomplished through an emphasis on the bodies of the variety of characters attempting to communicate their ideas. *Tristram Shandy* is full of self-consciously employed and illustrated rhetorical terms (Walter's aposiopesis being the most celebrated example).⁶ In addition, classical and contemporary rhetoricians and rhetorical theories are invoked or implied at any number of places.

Sterne's training in traditional rhetoric as well as the general thrust of rhetorical developments during his lifetime were briefly noted at the beginning of Chapter Five. It is to some of the places where Sterne manifests his awareness of both traditional and contemporary rhetoric that I now turn to demonstrate forms of rhetorical embodiment which contribute to *Tristram Shandy's* understanding of its own rhetoric. To begin with a rhetorical movement contemporary to Sterne, we may make note of the extreme

⁶Indeed, it is cited in Frye, Baker and Perkins's *Harper Handbook to Literature* (s.v. "aposiopesis").

development of stylistic rhetoric known as the elocutionary movement.⁷ For here the questions of presence which are more figuratively manifest in the discourse of the sublime are quite literally presented. The elocutionists were best known to Sterne (and perhaps to us) through Thomas Sheridan. Both Sheridan and Longinus at some level emphasize voice, the place where ideas and the body meet to form spoken language. Here I wish briefly to examine Sheridan in terms of the manifestation of presence in discourse by means of the body; we can then see, in the character of Corporal Trim, Sterne's use of Sheridan and his theories at work in *Tristram Shandy*.

The elocutionary movement was one which emphasized delivery, the aspect of rhetoric dependent on the presence of the speaker. A brief look at Sheridan's writings reveals his strong belief in what Derrida describes as a logocentric "metaphysics of presence." One of Sheridan's concerns is to revive the art of pulpit oratory, the loss of which he attributes to the descent into polemical writing during the interregnum.⁸ He argues that eloquence alone is effective to restore religion because of the divine roots of speech, which is God-given (and therefore all powerful, all impressing). Writing does not have the "natural" power of speech since it is the invention of man (85). Sheridan deals with the practical problem of regulating the passions and the fancy which cannot be

⁷W. S. Howell sees eighteenth-century Ciceronians as taking elocution to define the whole of rhetoric, culminating in Sheridan (*Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* 142-57 and 221-30).

⁸*British Education* 87.

addressed by the "dead letter" of the pen.⁹ Rather the tongue, the "living voice, with its accompaniments" is the only way to address these aspects of humanity (xii). Ultimately, Sheridan suggests that the human voice is the standard for all liberal arts (poetry, music, painting) (*British Education* 464). What accompanies this voice is the body which expresses the emotions through tones, looks and gestures.

As Michael Shortland has noted, there is a contradiction in Sheridan's emphasis on the body. It is seen as superior to writing in its expression of and address to the passions, but at the same time it is an unreliable register of the passions since gestures can be learned. This is the problem of the speaker's conviction, a problem which rhetoric has always faced. Both the "artificial," or "mechanical," and "natural" schools of elocution arrive at this problem from different directions, ultimately recognizing that codification of the "natural" expression of inner sentiments is contradictory.

Sheridan, who belongs to the "natural" school of elocution, requires that the speaker take his subject to heart so that his body may truly express his sentiments. For this reason, Sheridan notes that a read discourse can never have full presence: "feeling must in a great measure be blunted or destroyed, by the attention which the mind is obliged to give to so many different points, in the act of reading" (*Lectures* 13). It is the fully memorized or impromptu speech which is ideal. This allows Sheridan to collapse text and body into a single performance, and therefore allows description to stand in for

⁹*A Course of Lectures on Elocution* ix-x. Sheridan sees his "practical" work as a complement to Locke's. Locke dealt with the understanding, a concept useful for "speculative philosophy" (*Lectures on Elocution* vi) and appropriate as the subject of written discursive language, but impractical to the world.

prescription in Sheridan's text.¹⁰ In the *Lectures* (116), as in *Tristram Shandy* (III.12.213), Garrick is praised for his natural style. Sterne places Garrick, as he does Trim, whose rhetorical art is unlearned, against the grammarians: "But in suspending his voice---was the sense suspended likewise? Did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm?--Was the eye silent?" (213). The body gives voice to the text.

And this is where Trim (whose rank of corporal speaks of his bodily orientation) becomes important for a rhetorical reading of *Tristram Shandy*. At two places in *Tristram Shandy*, both associated with Trim, Sterne echoes the work of Sheridan. These moments draw attention to Sterne's concern with rhetoric and with the body--indeed with the body as rhetoric. They also show us Sterne's awareness of the rhetorical discourses of his time (especially those concerned with pulpit oratory, as was Sheridan). The references to Sheridan are mocking of his claim that elocution is of national importance. Sheridan had claimed that "the support of our establishments, both ecclesiastical and civil, in their due vigour, must in a great measure depend upon the powers of elocution in public debates, or other oratorical performances, displayed in the pulpit, the senate-house, or at the bar."¹¹ Sterne's parody magnifies these claims to "the preservation of our constitution in church and state,--and possibly the preservation of the whole world" (V.7.431) and adds to the list of oratorical locations: "the senate, the pulpit, the bar, the coffee-house, the bed-

¹⁰The latter substitution is, of course, also employed by Longinus, who famously goes one step further to substitute performance for both description and prescription.

¹¹*A Discourse: Being Introductory to his Course of Lectures on Elocution and the English Language* (1759), p. 4. This a short work which contains in brief the purport of his more lengthy *British Education* and *Lectures on Elocution*. See the Florida notes to II.xvii.141 and V.vii.431.

chamber, and fireside" (II.17.141). Despite this mockery, the references do not question the interrelationship of the body--Trim's stance while delivering the sermon, the gesture of his hat while eulogizing Bobby--and the effectiveness of rhetoric. Indeed, the satire is grounded in just that fact. In the first instance, Trim is about to read Yorick's sermon:

He stood before them with his body swayed, and bent forwards just so far,
as to make an angle of 85 degrees and a half upon the plain of the horizon;---
which sound orators, to whom I address this, know very well, to be the true
persuasive angle of incidence;--in any other angle you may talk and preach;--'tis
certain,--and it is done every day;--but with what effect,--I leave the world to
judge! [II.17.140]

This is only a part of the detailed description of Trim's stance, yet it is clear that, through the satiric use of the geometrical "true persuasive angle of incidence," the body is seen as mixed with discourse in a fashion similar to the interrelation of Homenas' tears with his harangue in the "Rabelaisian Fragment." The excessive number of words and the repetition of elements in the lengthy description of Trim's stance draw attention to the struggle of language to manifest physical presence. Sterne's recollection of Sheridan's view of oratory as source of all arts is thus appropriate in this context: "☞ This I recommend to painters;--need I add,--to orators?--I think not; for, unless they practise it,--they must fall upon their noses" (II.17.141). Here the difficulties of linguistic expression cross over by reference to other modes of representation as well as with a textual manifestation of bodily gesture, the irruption into the text of a non-linguistic printer's

device.¹²

In the second instance, Trim employs his hat to speak the unspeakable, for this gesture "gives a smarter stroke, and leaves something more inexpressible upon the fancy, than words can either convey--or sometimes get rid of" (V.7.432):

-----"Are we not here now;"--continued the corporal, "and are we not"--
(dropping his hat plumb upon the ground--and pausing, before he pronounced the
word)---"gone! in a moment?" The descent of the hat was as if a heavy lump of
clay had been kneaded into the crown of it.----Nothing could have expressed the
sentiment of mortality, of which it was the type and fore-runner, like it,--his hand
seemed to vanish from under it,--it fell dead,--the corporal's eye fix'd upon it, as
upon a corps,--and *Susannah* burst into a flood of tears. [432]

As with the description of Trim's stance, this is the third time Tristram has narrated the same gesture. (Tristram's triple repetition of Trim's single utterance is discussed below as a rhetorical device.) It is no surprise that such repetition, necessitated by the inadequacy of language, occurs in the representation of interplay between rhetoric and the physical: the echo of Sheridan (431); the play on "corporal" and "corps"; the mechanistic injunction to "Ye who govern this mighty world and its mighty concerns with the *engines* of eloquence" to "meditate, I beseech you, upon *Trim's* hat" (433). Together we have an interrelation of rhetoric and body intended to suggest the presence of the word, an

¹²It is noteworthy that this description, which includes reference to Hogarth's "line of beauty" was (not accidentally) to become the source for Hogarth's engraving of this scene for the second edition of *Tristram Shandy*: a manifestation of Trim's body more physical than the words which we are examining.

interrelation clearly drawing upon Sheridan's bodily theory of elocution.

But there are also more classical moments of elocution in *Tristram Shandy*. Indeed, Trim's speech upon Bobby's death is a scene of oratory deliberately contrasted with one of Walter's (V.3). Upon the news that Bobby has died, Walter takes refuge in words, seeking the consolation of philosophy in his ancient reading, as he runs through every commonplace in his repertoire, repeating the words of any authority who has commented upon death.¹³ In direct contrast to Walter's verbiage, Trim's speech on the same topic uses the very inexpressibility of grief in turning to the language of bodily gesture to communicate.

Walter Shandy's classical words are not, however, without their concomitant gestures. Consider a complex example which seems to respond to Trim's reading of the sermon with its intermingling of the arts:

My father instantly exchanged the attitude he was in, for that in which *Socrates* is so finely painted by *Raffael* in his school of *Athens*; which your connoisseurship knows is so exquisitely imagined, that even the particular manner of the reasoning of *Socrates* is expressed by it--for he holds the fore-finger of his left-hand between the fore-finger and the thumb of his right, and seems as if he was saying to the libertine he is reclaiming--"*You grant me this--and this: and this, and this, I don't ask of you--they follow of themselves in course.*"

¹³See Graham Petrie, "A Rhetorical Topic in *Tristram Shandy*," on Walter's construction of a classical *consolatio* through the use of commonplaces.

So stood my father, holding fast his fore-finger betwixt his finger and his thumb, and reasoning with my uncle *Toby* as he sat in his old fringed chair, valanced around with party-coloured worsted bobs--O *Garrick!* what a rich scene of this would thy exquisite powers make! and how gladly would I write such another to avail myself of thy immortality, and secure my own behind it.

[IV.7.333]

In the light of our preceding chapter, the first aspect of Walter's gesture to be noticed is not in fact the gesture itself, but rather the textual gesture necessary to communicate it. These two paragraphs cover a page and a half of the first edition (IV, 88-89)--the two largest blocks of text visible on these pages. The only motion in this static scene is that of the reader's eye moving from the bottom of page 88 to the top of page 89. However, this visual aspect of the book itself is not the only piece of visual communication involved, for Raphael's *School of Athens* is here described in detail. Here is an example of a typically Sternean translation: the mute is granted words (recall, for example, the conversation with the ass in VII.32). Socrates' words are not heard. The rhetorical gesture intended to accompany the words remains and Tristram reconstitutes the words from the gesture. However, one must recall that the words are still unheard, since they appear in print. This is, perhaps, the reason for the second paragraph with its apostrophe to Garrick. By aligning this gesture with the stage (note that both the painting and Garrick's powers are "exquisite"), a stronger sense of the spoken word is created. Socrates' voice is sundered from his rhetorical gesture. The gesture is given a voice by the silent writing on the page. This itself is strengthened by Garrick's ability to speak a

written text aloud, accompanied by a rhetorical-theatrical gesture.¹⁴

The ultimate irony is that, behind all three of the situations described here (i.e., the gestures of Walter, Socrates and Garrick) lies a mute text. Compare the passages above with Quintilian's description of "a gesture well suited for argument": the "top joint is lightly gripped on either side, with the two outer fingers slightly curved, and the little finger rather less than the third."¹⁵ The figure of Quintilian hovers in the background, a figure most appropriate to Tristram Shandy's nostalgic enterprise: a writer, living long after the great orators (or family orators), trying to recreate the oral through the textual.

Embodied Texts

As has already been suggested, in some cases, the visual gestures of the book itself draw attention to the oratorical problems of the characters. In a passage less dense with outside reference than the "School of Athens" paragraphs, consider the way in which the book itself, through asterisks (i.e., using internal referents), communicates its own bias in favour of Toby in an argument with Doctor Slop. Slop achieves a seeming victory:

Nor . . . do I know, Captain *Shandy*, what might have become of the garrison

¹⁴On the physiology of the passions and the codification of gesture in eighteenth-century England see Alan T. McKenzie's *Certain, Lively Episodes: The Articulation of Passion in Eighteenth-Century Prose*. Pages 1-5 offer a telling anecdote about Garrick's ability to communicate through gesture.

¹⁵*The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, Book XI, Chap. 3 Sect. 95. There is a further irony in that the passage quoted above from *Tristram Shandy* represents a Sternean plagiarism from a description of Raphael's painting by Jonathan Richardson (see the *Florida Notes*).

above stairs . . . but for the subordination of fingers and thumbs to *****---the application of which, Sir, under this accident of mine, comes in so *a propos*, the cut upon my thumb might have been felt by the *Shandy* family, as long as the *Shandy* family had a name. [III.13.217]

In this highly rhetorical situation (which Tristram glosses by reference to Cicero), Dr. Slop makes a rhetorical gesture, one which requires an entire chapter of explanation ("Let us go back to the *****---in the last chapter" [III.14.217]). When the text returns to the argument between Slop and Toby it is now explained that Slop,

when he foresaw the sentence would end in his new invented *forceps*, he thrust his hand into the bag in order to have them ready to clap in, where your reverences took so much notice of the ***** , which had he managed,--my uncle *Toby* had certainly been overthrown. [III.15.219]

There appears to be a simple substitution of the asterisks for the object. However, Slop's victory of III.13 is only apparent, for it is now revealed to be a defeat:

but Dr. *Slop* fumbled so vilely in pulling them out, it took off the whole effect, and what was a ten times worse evil (for they seldom come alone in this life) in pulling out his *forceps*, his *forceps* unfortunately drew out the *squirt* along with it. [III.15.219]

This allows Toby the upper hand: "'Good God!' cried my uncle *Toby*, '*are children brought into the world with a squirt?*'" (III.15.219).

Uncle Toby's victory is a relief to the reader who has had suspended his or her full understanding of the six asterisks. However, in another sense, no suspension has

occurred at all, for the text itself has sided with Uncle Toby from the beginning. After all, had Slop been successful, the text would have been obliged to print *seven* asterisks for the seven letters in "forceps," rather than the *six* asterisks printed for the six letters in "squirt." The text ensures that Slop's error has been present from the beginning. The reader is given three chances, with the repetition of "*****," to catch onto the game. The seeming transparency of the text, which would allow Slop to "clap in" his forceps, foils Slop because the opacity of the text, the illegible asterisks, simultaneously conceals and contains the knowledge of the outcome of the argument which corresponds to that which Toby "claps in," the squirt.¹⁶

Here is the tension of "texts" at full play in *Tristram Shandy*. The supposed transparency of the text to "the things themselves" (as Sermon 42 would have it) gives way to the opacity of the text's medium--in this case, the asterisks. The tension between visual and aural modes of communication is at play here as well. The ear, at an oral reading of these chapters, must await the author's revelation of the meaning of the gesture represented by the asterisks. The eye in visually apprehending the text, has the opportunity to perceive Slop's rhetorical failure at the moment it happens. Of course, quite a bit of flipping through pages 66-70 of the original volume III is required to apprehend this fluctuation in the text. However, this returns us to the spatial aspect of visual, book-based reading: the reader manipulates the relationship between space and

¹⁶See William Bowman Piper's "Understanding *Tristram Shandy*" on this episode and its relation to questions of the "openness" of *Tristram Shandy*.

time by controlling the turning of the pages.¹⁷ Ironically, the physical book has the capacity for transparency through the reader's ability to turn pages. (We have already seen Tristram using this in order to refer the reader back to places he or she has already been.)

Tristram Shandy offers many such playful--but no less important--figurations of the crossover between form and content which creates one variety of the presence of the text. For example, when Phutatorius seeks an anodyne for his burnt member, more than the soothing quality of the ink in the newly printed *de Concubinis retinendis* is at issue. It is essential that "there is no bawdry in it," the presence of which would have an effect opposite to that of cooling. When it is learned that the chapter in question is "*de re concubinariâ*" (translated by the Florida editors as "On the thing of a concubine") it is agreed that Phutatorius must "keep out of that chapter" (IV.28.387) for fear its bodily subject matter should counter the effect of its material embodiment. This is a "readerly" dealing with presence in both medium (the cooling ink) and message (the "inflaming" topic of the treatise). As a writer, Tristram addresses these levels of presence, with reference to the story of the abbess of Andouilletts and her novice (who attempt to use words they believe will have power in the world): "----My ink burns my finger to try---- and when I have----'twill have a worse consequence----it will burn (I fear) my paper" (VII.20.605). Medium and message are inseparable here.

¹⁷Even Ephraim Chambers seems to pick up on this potential while discussing the paucity of manuals for writing relative to those for oratory: "the former [writing] is the more difficult of the two; as a reader is not so easy to be imposed upon, but has better opportunities of detecting faults than a hearer" (*Cyclopaedia* [1751-2] s.v. "book").

In addition to these crossover moments which link form and content, Sterne also figures the problem of embodied language in a simpler form through the running motif of writing as an object subject to the vagaries of embodiment. We find books subjected to alternative uses, such as Phutatorius' treatise helping to "take out the fire" in his "tender part" (IV.28.386),¹⁸ or to violent "readings" such as Trim's, in which Sterne delineates the book as carefully as Trim's subsequent bodily stance while delivering the sermon: "taking hold of the two covers of the book, one in each hand, and letting the leaves fall down, as he bent the covers back, he gave the book a good sound shake" (II.15.138). We encounter the mutilating exegesis of a sentence of Erasmus by means of Walter's penknife, to try "experiments upon the sentence, to see if he could not scratch some better sense into it" (III.37.272), or the total annihilation of Yorick's sermon which is used to light a pipe (IV.26.376). Even Tristram's own remarks are used as "papillotes" upon the head of the chaise-vamper's wife (VII.38.640-41).¹⁹ These are the very remarks which the reader eventually reads while, perhaps, having accepted Tristram's invitation to "sit down upon a set" of the previous volumes (VI.1.491). Writing, it would seem, by its very physical nature, cannot command the respect it supposedly deserves.

¹⁸We should note, too, the particulate materiality of the treatise: ". . . if the type is a very small one . . . the sanative particles, which come into contact in this form, have the advantage of being spread so infinitely thin and with such a mathematical equality (fresh paragraphs and large capitals excepted) as no art or management of the spatula can come up to" (387).

¹⁹Note how Tristram's comment upon discovering his comments in the woman's hair parodically invokes the bodily language of the sublime: "'tis well, thinks I, they have stuck there--for could they have gone deeper, they would have made such confusion in a French woman's noddle . . ." (641).

This brings us to the larger issue implicit in Sterne's attention to the physical nature of writing, which we may label the paradox of the *monumentum aere perennius*, an ontological problem closely akin to the originality paradox we have seen in earlier chapters. At issue here is the notion of what constitutes the literary object. As we noted in the preceding chapter, the very concept of "book," whether defined by Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* or the *Oxford English Dictionary*, contains the contradictory notions of both the abstract "text" and its physical embodiment. This tension is the source of the irony in Horace's paradoxical *monumentum aere perennius*. What claim do immaterial words have to monumental status? Furthermore, how can they outlast brass when they are dependent on perishable media for the continuance of their existence?

We have already noted a number of perishable writings described in *Tristram Shandy*, but there is another set of references which places these in the context of the larger tradition of early modern textual scholarship which we have seen is a traditional subject for Menippean satire, even from the time of Lucian.²⁰ Within the satiric context of *Tristram Shandy*, Walter Shandy is the *philosophus gloriosus* who brings this tradition

²⁰Everett Zimmerman's recent *Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* describes the relationship of textual scholarship to "Skeptical Historiography and the Constitution of the Novel" (Chapter 1): "Questions about the reliability of witnesses, who are often, if not inevitably, biased and also about the textualization of accounts of the past, with all the problems posed by the transmission of texts through time, were important to the thinking of philosophers, clergymen, and historical scholars. History, biblical scholarship, and fiction in the eighteenth century share the recognition that textuality undermines assumptions about presence" (29). At the same time he notes that "the authenticity of the text is vouched for by the obtrusion of its hiatuses," and ultimately that "lurking behind the representation of the search for verification in eighteenth-century fiction is the image of the book as paper, its undeniable reality" (54).

into play. The elegiac tone of his oration upon Bobby's death brings home the way that language constitutes reality for this tradition. That Walter (or Sterne) borrows these sentiments and phrases from Burton, who himself is reading texts of classical stoicism, increases the textualization of reality, as names and places are granted equal status:²¹

The fairest towns that ever the sun rose upon, are now no more: the names only are left, and those (for many of them are wrong spelt) are falling themselves by piecemeals to decay, and in length of time will be forgotten, and involved with everything in a perpetual night: the world itself, brother *Toby*, must--must come to an end. [V.3.422]

Although Walter Shandy is not an editor-hero such as those in *The Battle of the Books* or Martinus Scriblerus, he shares the same values by which texts constitute reality, whether it be the history of humankind or the immediate present in which his faith in writing overrides everything else. It may be the map of France upon which he journeys until an interruption causes him "to return back to *Calais* (like many others) as wise as he had set out" (V.2.416), or the variety of theoretical texts impinging upon Tristram's existence, and even substituting for it, such as Dr. Slop's "five shillings book upon the subject of midwifery" (I.18.50) or, upon the occasion of Tristram's accidental circumcision, the "couple of folios" and "large reading desk" which Walter assembles quite oblivious to both the child's welfare and Mrs. Shandy's practical lint and basilicon

²¹For Burton, see the *Notes* to the Florida edition, and Graham Petrie, "A Rhetorical Topic in *Tristram Shandy*."

(V.27.459).²² Toby, as he and Trim "execute the contents" of the daily papers (VI.22.537), is, of course, the comic answer to Walter's tragically text-bound life. Rather than a frustrated attempt to leave Calais, Toby has a comically successful return following his destruction of fort Louis: "having done that, corporal, we'll embark for *England*.---- We are there, quoth the corporal, recollecting himself----Very true, said my uncle *Toby*--looking at the church" (VI.34.561).

Walter's absence from worldly reality while engrossed in texts should remind us that the editor's sense of the text is one of loss, as highly aware of intermediaries between us and the original as is Sterne the preacher. The most extreme form of this awareness in *Tristram Shandy* comes not only in the careful notation of texts abused in their physical (book) form. The paradox of the *monumentum aere perennius* reaches its most perplexing in examples of Tristram's references to learned or classical *texts* which have suffered the fate of *books* and no longer exist, such as two which concern Walter Shandy: Cicero's *Consolatio* (V.3.419) and Suetonius' work on the correct names for clothes (VI.19.530).²³ These works are treated as extant in *Tristram Shandy*, although they are

²²Many of these details are inspired by the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*. Sterne develops this sense of the text as reality to allow for so many of the metafictional moments in *Tristram Shandy* when text and reality cross over: "but there is no treating the subject whilst my uncle is whistling Lillabullero" (IX.17.769).

²³These examples are noted in Ian Campbell Ross' Oxford edition. The notes to the Florida edition refuse to make connections beyond the literal surface of *Tristram Shandy*, and hence, do not recognize absences. Ross' annotations are, in a sense, more informative (although less particular)--willing to describe the awareness of textuality surrounding Sterne rather than the specific source Sterne may have used. For example, in his annotation of Tristram's triumvirate of Lucian, Rabelais and Cervantes (III.xix.225), Ross points out that "one of [Rabelais'] works was a (now lost) Latin translation of a dialogue of Lucian" (Ross, III.xix n.2). The Florida edition merely notes sources for the tradition

only attested to by other texts (surely a case of textual power over reality). Even in the case where a text has survived, Tristram goes out of his way to point to a lacuna:

--If I was you, quoth Yorick, I would drink more water, Eugenius.--And, if I was you, Yorick, replied Eugenius, so would I.

Which shews they had both read Longinus-- [VIII.5.661]

The passage paraphrased (and parodied) by Yorick and Eugenius is from a lost portion of Longinus' text.²⁴ Tristram's coy comment deliberately draws attention to itself. The comment, "they had both read Arrian"²⁵ would have been unproblematic (and uncharacteristic). Instead, Tristram in essence says "they had both read *into* Longinus," that is, performed an editorial emendation. The note to this passage in William Smith's popular eighteenth-century translation of Longinus reads, "There is a great gap in the original here after these words. The sense has been supplied by the editors, from the well-known records of history" (ix n.2, 85). Clearly, the *text* has suffered from its embodiment in the form of a *book*. A passage from Smith's introductory "Life and Writings of Longinus" puts this in dramatic terms:

of this triumvirate. For a modern day example of embittered editors battling over a text in Scriblerian fashion, see Melvyn New's "Whim-Whams and Flim-Flams: The Oxford University Press Edition of *Tristram Shandy*" and Ian Campbell Ross's "New Puzzles over the Editing of *Tristram Shandy*: A Response."

²⁴See Longinus, *On the Sublime* ix.13. Again, the Florida edition is silent on this absence, directing the reader to the note to this passage in James Aiken Work's edition of *Tristram Shandy* and to Smith's translation of Longinus for further information.

²⁵See Ian Campbell Ross' note, which cites John Rooke's translation of Arrian (1729).

The writings of *Longinus* are numerous. . . . Dr *Pearce* has collected the titles of twenty-five treatises, none of which, except this on the sublime, have escaped from the depredations of time and barbarians. And even this is rescued as from a wreck, damaged too much and shatter'd by the storm . . . [xii]²⁶

This sense of a text's embodiment in perishable form is highly present in *Tristram Shandy*. The editor's worldview is one of absence, the *lacunae* that separate us from the source, constantly raising the spectre of originality, questioning the accessibility of origins.

This is an issue associated with the sublime by means of its crossover of subject and object in the aesthetic experience which we have examined in Chapter Five. Longinus and subsequent theorists of the sublime note the difficulty of locating origins as the mind "swells in transport and an inward pride, as if what was only heard had been the product of its own invention" (vii.10). Furthermore, we have already noted that Longinus' image of the sublime orator, here describing his use of hyperbaton (see below), is virtually a description of what we may have thought satiric in *Tristram Shandy*: "he gives his audience a kind of anxiety, as if he had lost his subject, and forgot what he was about; and so strongly engages their concern, that they tremble for, and bear their share in the dangers of the speaker" (xxii.42). The crossing over of reader and author in

²⁶Even Chambers shows some awareness of this condition of books, yet it is included in a list full of rich potential for such a reader as Sterne. Chambers writes: "Books, with regard to circumstances and accidents, may be divided into--*Lost*, those which have perished by the injuries of time, or the malice or zeal of enemies . . . *Promised* books . . . *Fictitious* books, those which never existed . . ." (*Cyclopaedia* [1751-2] s.v. "book"). In collapsing the ontological status of lost, promised and fictitious into the phenomenological, Chambers unwittingly makes way for such great works as the twenty-fourth chapter of volume four of *Tristram Shandy*, or the *Tristrapaedia*.

Tristram Shandy by means of its asterisks, dashes, blank pages and open invitations to readerly participation in the creation of the work is clearly a version of this Longinian interplay between "original" ("delivery") and "copy" ("reception"), lacking clear identification of either position. As Sterne himself would phrase it in a late letter: "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* 411).

These aesthetic issues which here seem to offer the playful freedom for which Sterne is often celebrated, also create difficulties when they come up against and do not sit comfortably with the ontological question which lies behind ownership.²⁷ In 1761 Sterne began to autograph every installment of *Tristram Shandy*, apparently an attempt to protect his copyright. One reviewer raised the originality paradox implicit in this move:

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 of *Tristram Shandy*. Here we find the same unconnected rhapsody, the same rambling digression, the eccentric humour, the peculiar wit, petulance, pruriency and ostentation of learning, by

²⁷Aspects of this problem are discussed in Chapter Two regarding issues raised in the sermons and Sterne's letters concerning his portraits. Copyright has been addressed briefly in Chapter One.

which the former part was so happily distinguished.²⁸

The paradox here is that such a defense of these volumes' "originality" is only possible because Sterne repeats himself, creating identity out of what was once noted for difference. Furthermore, the gesture of the signature only scratches the surface of printing technology's impact on questions of authorship and ownership which accompany the growing interest in literary "originality" during this period. In addition to the sense of authorial identity developing in contemporary copyright debates, Sterne's signature is interesting in the context of Derrida's comments on the paradox of iterability in "Signature Event Context," which is concerned with the impossibility of recognizing singularity without repetition.

How are these concerns with originality manifested in *Tristram Shandy*? At the ontological level, the book itself, published at the dawn of the age of mechanical reproduction, is a studied attempt to problematize issues of originality, using the very physical form of the book to question the technology which produces identical copies of an "original." In addition to perplexing readers about its meaning within *Tristram Shandy*, the marbled page (III.36) is the *locus classicus* for the problem of identity and originality with regard to the nature of the print medium, for eighteenth-century marbling never produced the same result twice. As Diana Patterson phrases it, the "highly individual results create truly unique 'copies' of Volume 3 of Sterne's novel. No two readers could have precisely the same experience of reading Volume 3 because of that

²⁸Quoted in Howes, *Sterne: The Critical Heritage* 138-9.

leaf, and no reader without a leaf could have had a proper experience of the novel."²⁹ Thus the marbled page, with its "monumental" associations duly noted, suggests that the *book* is the original rather than the abstract "text" of the novel.

And it is each specific copy which possesses this quality of originality--something which modern reprints fail to reproduce. Does the black and white photograph of a marbled page in a paperback edition point to the medium in the same way that the original marbled pages point toward their medium? In the first edition, every marbled page is different from others in the print run, and even different from the marbled page on the opposite side of the leaf. How does this point to the medium in a general way ("books"), and how does this point to the particular medium ("this book in your hands")? Does the modern edition's photograph, which is uniform in every copy of the run, point to a notion of "books" in general (or in a historicized way, through a footnote to eighteenth-century books) or to this book in particular? These are questions about our notion of "text" which Sterne will not let us settle. The general and the particular are at odds here.³⁰

These ontological questions have returned us to the question of particularity with

²⁹"Tristram's Marblings and Marblers," *The Shandean* 3 (1991): 83.

³⁰We should recall that, in contradiction of the implications of the marbled page, Sterne's "Search the Scriptures" (Sermon 42) with its "translation test" is drawing on the *monumentum aere perennius* tradition in suggesting that the original is beyond the text in a transcendent, disembodied form. Of course, as noted in Chapter Two, this is delivered in a sermon of particularized rhetorical moves.

a broader sense of its import for this study.³¹ We have seen that both satire and the sublime emphasize the need for rhetoric and also that rhetoric is of a physical nature, an assemblage of affecting particles which problematize access to origins because the particles themselves cause effects independent of the reference of the discourse.



The Particles of Eloquence: Rhetorical Figures

Tristram's life, from conception to the writing of his story, is characterized by interruption and the concomitant necessity of repetition. To conclude this study, let us trace the figurations of these phenomena in Sterne's use of a set of particular rhetorical devices which function by means of either repetition or interruption, drawing attention to the particulate nature of communication. Sterne's concerns with communication, first seen in his sermons, are foregrounded by both the frustrations of his characters and the high profile of rhetoric in *Tristram Shandy*. The questions of origins which this study has often posed are present in the very use of rhetorical figures which draw attention to themselves as figures (creating a problem in locating the source of affect). This is the subject of Longinus' treatise which frequently employs a repetitive technique of textual analysis to explain rhetorical effectiveness. At this point a close analysis of Longinus' consideration of Demosthenes' speech to the Athenians (mentioned in Chapter Five) is in order. In his discussion of apostrophe Longinus quotes four times from Demosthenes'

³¹Recall Johnson's objections to the specificity of the metaphysical poets (cited in Chapter Five) in relation to his comment on *Tristram Shandy*'s particularity: "Nothing odd will do long."

speech to the Athenians. The first version (in parentheses) is Longinus' pedagogical paraphrase followed by commentary and then the actual text of the speech:

Now, which is the most natural method of doing this? ("You were not in the wrong, *Athenians*, when you courageously ventured your lives, in fighting for the liberty and safety of *Greece*, of which you have domestic illustrious examples: For neither were they in the wrong, who fought at *Marathon*, who fought at *Salamis*, who fought at *Plataeae*.") *Demosthenes* takes another course, and filled as it were with sudden inspiration, and transported by a god-like warmth, he thunders out an oath by the champions of *Greece*: "You were not in the wrong; no you were not I swear, by those noble souls, who were so lavish of their lives in the field of *Marathon*, &c." (xvi.33)

After commentary, Longinus quotes again from the same speech, interrupting the quotation with more commentary:

In speaking of their ancestors he says, "Those who so bravely exposed themselves to danger in the plains of *Marathon*, those who were in the naval engagement near *Salamis* and *Artemisium*, and those who fought at *Plataeae*" industriously suppressing the very mention of the events of those battles, because they were successful, and quite opposite to that of *Chaeronea*. Upon which account he anticipates all objections, by immediately subjoining, "all whom, *Aeschines*, the city honoured with a public funeral, not because they purchased victory with their

lives, but because they lost those for their country." (xvi.35)³²

Here Longinus inserts himself between the repetitions, creating a pivotal point between the original and the alternative possibilities which explicate--reflect and extend--the original.³³

I wish to consider this technique as a form of tmesis. Literally "a cutting," tmesis originally refers to the grammatical "separation of the elements of a compound word by another word or words."³⁴ Its rhetorical use can be extended to "diacope," the "repetition of a word with one or a few words in between." Ultimately it is a variety of hyperbaton, the transposition of words out of normal order. It may already be apparent that, in its digressive form, *Tristram Shandy* is constantly employing an extended sense of tmesis. Perhaps the most famous example concerns Uncle Toby, who begins an utterance, "I think . . ." (I.21.70) only to have it suspended for eleven chapters (until II.6.114) while Tristram describes the speaker's character so that the reader may better understand the utterance. If *Tristram Shandy*, in its constant repetition of events, its "spatialized" representations and fragmentations of narrative, has a "master trope," it may be this extended sense of tmesis: the sundering of what should be whole for rhetorical purposes designed to re-create the presence of that whole. This applies to repetitions or sundered elements in single words

³²In a fashion similar to this extended example, Longinus analyzes hyperbaton rephrasing (i.e., repeating) the speech concerned in "the natural order" (xxii.41).

³³Superadded to Longinus' repetitions are those in the "Notes and Observations" of Smith's translation. These range from the quotation of a long passage from Milton followed by a smaller quotation from the same passage in the commentary (ix n.7, 90-91) to the repetition of Longinus' technique of explication (by repetition) in a note to a passage that does not employ this technique (e.g., 116 n.1).

³⁴Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, s.v. "diacope."

or larger narrative movements (i.e., sundered elements which do not show strict verbal repetition). Tmesis allows a single unit of signification (small or large) to have a double, or multiple meaning; or rather, tmesis allows the reader to perceive more than one meaning in a single unit.³⁵ Yet, as David Nokes' comments on the word "bridge" in *Tristram Shandy* suggest, it should be noted that a cutting element can show a connection as well as a disjunction: "Contrasting with the satiric unbridgeability of associations which turns the two brothers into a kind of comic double-act, Sterne's puns on the word ["bridge"] create the ironic sense of a shared humanity based on common sexual misadventures and misfortunes."³⁶ The very word, like the rhetorical device, both sunders and connects.³⁷ Ultimately, as in the case of Longinus' commentary on Demosthenes, tmesis allows the author's own voice to be heard, framed by the repeated elements. Thus tmesis may function as a figure for the self-reflexive structure of discursivity which creates presence.

I wish to suggest that Longinus' use of repetition and tmesis presents a technique of writing adopted and adapted by Sterne. Sterne's adaptation of this Longinian technique sets it askew from its original employment in learned discourse and applies it to narrative (which is equally set askew).³⁸ The effect of Longinus' repetitions is contrast. By

³⁵In this way, it functions perhaps in an inverse fashion to the limiting function of Kennedy's "voice as frame" (see Chapter Five).

³⁶"Laurence Sterne" 266.

³⁷cp. Derrida's "hinge" (*Of Grammatology*).

³⁸Unlike Longinus' repetitive quotations which have a locatable referent (Demosthenes' speech) and are intended to heighten a single moment of rhetorical impact, Tristram's repetitions often extend the effect more widely, since the fictional referent

beginning with "the most natural method," Longinus makes Demosthenes' apostrophe more effective. In the second passage quoted above, the same is achieved by Longinus' sundering of the two sections of the speech with a narrative description of what is about to happen (xvi.35). This insertion of a critical voice between two sections of a speech heightens the sense of repetition by loading the second half with information withheld from the reading of the first half. The effect is to create the "presence" of Demosthenes long after his death.

The effect of *Tristram Shandy's* repetitions of this type is similar. For example, this is at work in the chapters representing Uncle Toby's triumph over Dr. Slop's attempted rhetorical presentation of his forceps (III.13-15): the information withheld by the six asterisks has greater impact because of the narrative material inserted before the revelation of the meaning of the asterisks. In an earlier debate between these two, Toby's response to Dr. Slop is first uttered, then described by the narrator, and then repeated with more effect (witnessed in Slop's reaction):

--Humph!--said my uncle *Toby*; tho' not accented as a note of acquiescence,--but as an interjection of that particular species of surprize, when a man, in looking into a drawer, finds more of a thing than he expected.--Humph! replied my uncle *Toby*. *Dr. Slop*, who had an ear, understood my uncle *Toby* as well as if he had wrote a whole volume against the seven sacraments. [II.17.149-50]

This device depends on a reader-response reading. The repetition of "Humph!" represents only a single utterance. For the reader it is split apart so that its special meaning might

cannot be located except in the repetitions of *Tristram's* text.

be perceived as it is by Slop, "who had an ear," and therefore only needed to hear it once. This example is brief (the time-loop for the reader is only a few seconds) and simple (the repeated utterance does not change beyond the dialogue tags, "said" and "replied").³⁹

Frequently in *Tristram Shandy*, repetitions of this type are widely sundered and transformed in the narrative, while the "time-loop" still applies. Trim's speech on Bobby's death (discussed above in terms of bodily rhetoric) provides a complex yet localized example. The triple narration of a single utterance which occurs here is a rhetorical device intended to create the same emotion in the reader that the first audience experienced, in other words, to create presence. This becomes problematic for several reasons. First, Tristram the narrator (who was not present) repeats *his own* phrase in his description of the audience reaction: "We are not stocks and stones." Second, Tristram's praise for Trim's hat is praise for a rhetorical device delivered in the midst of Tristram's own double rhetoric--the repetitions of Trim's phrase and the repetition of Tristram's phrase. Finally, the reader must ask, what exactly did Trim and his hat say and do? We are offered three choices:

Are we not here now, continued the corporal, (striking the end of his stick perpendicularly upon the floor, so as to give an idea of health and stability)--and are we not--(dropping his hat upon the ground) gone! in a moment!-- [V.7.431]

--"Are we not here now,--and gone in a moment?"-- [432]

³⁹However, it should be noted that this interruption for the reader takes place within one of the many interruptions of the reading of the sermon. See J. Paul Hunter's "Response as Reformation: *Tristram Shandy* and the Art of Interruption" on this scene.

-----"Are we not here now;"--continued the corporal, "and are we not"--
 (dropping his hat plumb upon the ground--and pausing, before he pronounced the
 word)---"gone! in a moment?" [432]

Like Longinus, Tristram provides examples for contrast, but, unlike Longinus, he does so without telling the reader which is the original. This is a novelistic example of the mediation which Sterne's sermons thematize and demonstrate. Ultimately, just as God's omnipresence is confirmed by the lack of determinate origins (as in Sermons 26 or 42, among others analysed in Chapter Two), the rhetorical force of Trim's statement (its presence) is confirmed in its representational multiplicity.

These examples of repetition are created by fragmenting a single utterance with explication. By sundering a word or phrase from itself with an explication, repetition is made necessary. These "diacopic" examples of tmesis are easy to trace because they observe an implicit law of repetition which marks the return from a digression.⁴⁰ There are also non-repetitive (at least in the strictly verbal sense) examples of tmesis. Of the two following examples, the purest example of tmesis is perhaps the most complex in the multiple implications of its sundering material. Let us therefore begin with an example of a less strict use of tmesis, noting that Tristram is describing his digressions with a mechanical metaphor for writing:

By this contrivance the machinery of my work is of a species by itself; *two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be*

⁴⁰On the structure of Tristram's digressions, see William Bowman Piper's *Laurence Sterne*, Chapter 2.

at variance with each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too,--and at the same time. [I.21.81; italics mine]

In the (part of the) sentence I have italicized, Tristram modifies "motions" with an adjective and a subordinate clause, both of which have the same meaning. This tautology is sundered by the verbs "introduced" and "reconciled." By structuring the sentence in this fashion, Tristram sets up in the form of the sentence a model of its content. "Contrary motion" is suggested by the spatial opposition of the two parts of the tautology. However, the very words that perform the tmesis, "introduced" and "reconciled," by virtue of their balancing position in the sentence, also perform their semantic sense. Thus the form of this sentence enacts its content. The contrary motions of the sundered tautology are "reconciled."

A purer example of tmesis appears in the frantic last paragraph of III.38, and offers more than a stylistic illustration of content:

--a cow broke in (to-morrow morning) to my uncle *Toby's* fortifications, and eat up two ratios and a half of dried grass, tearing up the sods with it, which faced his horn-work and covered way. [III.38.278]

Here the phrase which sunders the word "into" is set off in parentheses, making the tmesis obvious. (However, heard read aloud, it is quite subtly integrated into the sentence: "in (to-." The hyphenated "to-morrow" encourages this visually.) The doubleness made immediately apparent by the tmesis is the temporal clash of the time of narration (which refers to the events in the past tense) and the time narrated (which refers to the future "to-morrow" from the perspective of the moment of the events). To have corrected this to,

"the next morning," would have rendered the tmesis merely ornamental, and considerably less subtly integrated into the sentence. As it stands, the reader gains an awareness of two disparate temporal planes which serves to heighten attention to the role of writing. For writing is, as this study has continuously shown, a large scale and constant form of tmesis, "a number of tall, opake words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your readers conception" (III.20.235). It is both a separation and a connection (a "bridge"). In addition to the choice of "eat" as an ambiguous past tense within this sentence, the play of verb tenses which follows the quoted passage reinforces the play introduced by the tmesis: "*Trim* insists" (present of the time narrated); "the cow to be shot" (the missing finite verb allows this phrase to fit both levels, the narrated and the narration); "I want swaddling" (present of the time narrated, with a play on the present of narration).⁴¹

The temporal doubleness is not the only implication of the tmesis in this sentence, for the sentence contains two other examples of hyperbaton (if not tmesis itself): "ratios" sunders the statement of their quantity, "two . . . and a half," and the relative clause ("which faced . . .") is alienated from its referent ("dried grass"). The choice of the word "ratios" for "rations" is deliberate (the *O.E.D.* cites Sterne's as the first usage) and significant at this point, highlighted as it is by its hyperbaton. This is a moment of irrationality--a non-rational cow (female fertility?) breaking into fortifications (see below) and eating dried grass (sterile male rationality?). That the cow should eat "ratios" (i.e.,

⁴¹Although there is no exact parallel, this is a version of Longinus' Sections xxv-xxvii on changes of tense and person.

reason, both the metaphysical and the etymological foundation of systematic "rationality") is wholly appropriate in a work which foregrounds the inevitable frustrations of attempts to order the accidental events of life into a narrative. The rationale of verb tenses, past, present and future (and their variations as well as moods) is inadequate to render the "thousand distresses and domestic misadventures crowding in upon me thick and three-fold, one upon the neck of another" (278), which is Tristram's situation as he leads into the passage under consideration.⁴² It is no wonder that Tristram employs the instance of tmesis we are examining in the next sentence, for this is a classic case of making his readers "bear their share in the dangers of the speaker," for which Longinus recommended hyperbaton (xxii.42).⁴³ It is quite clear that Tristram is practising a pure version of Longinus' hyperbaton in the last paragraph of III.38. Indeed, Tristram's anxiety fulfils Longinus' description of men actuated by "any of those numberless passions incident to the mind," and the cow itself seems to dramatize Longinus' passionate men "breaking

⁴²It is interesting to note how easily Tristram's traditional phrases, such as "misadventures crowding in upon me thick and three-fold," fit into the language of both satire and the sublime. In William Smith's "Notes and Observations" on Longinus' discussion of hyperbaton, we find an illustration of this figure from *Hamlet*, I.ii (a play not insignificant to *Tristram Shandy*). He describes Hamlet's oscillation between his mother and father (Tristram begins this paragraph with "My mother" and moves toward "my father"), and states: "but expressions fail him. He begins abruptly; but as reflections crowd thick upon his mind, he runs off . . ." (xxiin.3, 120). In Rabelais, we also discover, in a lengthy list of types of fools, not only the "sublime" fool, but, shortly thereafter, the "thick and threefold" fool (III.38.451).

⁴³Longinus' inclusion of narratorial anxiety ("the dangers of the speaker") in the discussion is doubtlessly the reason for Tristram's affection for this figure. (Peter J. De Voogd connects Sterne's penchant for hyperbaton to Longinus and contemporary theories of visual art in "Laurence Sterne, the marbled page, and 'the use of accidents'" [esp. 281].)

thro' measures before concerted, without any apparent reason" (xxii.40). Tristram, like the cow, breaks through the fortifications of grammatical (and novelistic) conventions (akin to Toby's fortifications built from the words of the newspaper) and eats up the dry grass of rationality. In this context, it is significant that one of the meanings of the Latin word "ratio" is "opinion."

This passage has further resonance with the kinds of rhetorical theory with which this study has engaged, for not only is Longinus' discussion of hyperbata pertinent to Tristram's paragraph of anxiety, but so is Quintilian's discussion of this device. This takes us back to the Sternean coinage of "ratios," which is noteworthy for its resonance with Quintilian's phrase for "the structure of the sentence": "ratio compositionis" (*Institutio Oratoria* VIII.6.62). In another discussion of hyperbaton, Quintilian uses the phrase "ratio numeris" (IX.4.26) to describe "the demands of the rhythm." Both of these uses of "ratio" describe the order or rationale that hyperbaton breaks or transposes. Sterne's coinage of "ratios" at this moment in *Tristram Shandy* is thus quite appropriate. It is no surprise that the irrational (cf. the passions in Longinus) cow should eat "ratios," performing a hyperbaton upon uncle Toby's order.

Furthermore, in both passages of Quintilian, he follows the "ratio" with a metaphor comparing words to "unhewn stones" which can only be built into the "wall" of writing where their size and shape will allow, thus necessitating hyperbaton (VIII.6.63; IX.4.27). In the present context, it seems inevitable that uncle Toby's fortifications (composed of the odds and ends of the Shandy family, "sicut in structura saxorum rudium") should figure in this allegory of hyperbaton. In Chapter Five we noted that Longinus also

employed the metaphor of building with words (x.22; xxxix.64), although there it is either abstractly stated or transferred to the body. What is special about Quintilian's use of this metaphor--and useful for drawing a parallel between Uncle Toby's fortifications and Tristram's *Life and Opinions*--is his pursuit of the metaphor to the particularity of the wall formed by such stones. The sense of "unhewn stones" is not limited to uncle Toby's fortifications, but present as well in *Tristram Shandy* as a whole. Many of Tristram's discussions of where to tell his stories (e.g., "if I reserve it for either of those parts of my story,--I ruin the story I'm upon,--and if I tell it here--I anticipate matters, and ruin it there" [III.23.244]) or where to place his chapters (e.g, Chapters 18 and 19 of Volume Nine) are examples of hyperbata on a large narrative scale.

Conclusion

The preceding illustrations have argued not only that *Tristram Shandy's* rhetorical tropes draw attention to the mediacy of language in a fashion akin to the way that its characters' bodies as well as the physical embodiment of its text present problems of communication, but also that in doing so, they are creating effects independent of and supplemental to their referents, whether those referents be the fictional characters, the dramatized narrator, or even the real author. In other words, *Tristram Shandy* manifests presence through its self-reflexive awareness of its supplementary status at both the presentational and representational levels. I hope that such a description of the present chapter's argument will also describe those of the preceding chapters. As first seen with

Sterne's sermons, these issues of mediacy and communication are central to Sterne's project. I have argued that they are presented to Sterne and his contemporaries not only in religious discourse, but also in the discourses of satire and the sublime. All three of these discourses simultaneously present the problem of communication as well as a discursive mode for exploring it: one variety or another of what I have termed "the presence of the text," a rhetorical self-reflexivity ranging from conspicuously hidden tropes to open discussions of communication while communicating, from the idealizing textualization of reality to the reifying opacity of the text which denies transparent "reference."

My explorations of these issues have employed notions of "origins" and "originality" as a means of bringing the problem of communication to bear on ontological issues, problematizing ideas about the literary object. The originality paradox also bears upon ideas about the literary (or otherwise) *subject*, the self.⁴⁴ Just as the marbled page forces us to recognize that no two copies of *Tristram Shandy* are identical, Tristram is frequently forced to confront the possibility that he may not be identical with *himself*:

in this last chapter, as far at least as it has help'd me through *Auxerre*, I have been getting forwards in two different journies together, and with the same dash of the pen--for I have got entirely out of *Auxerre* in this journey which I am writing

⁴⁴This theme is treated rather implicitly in the present work. The comments here are offered as a prospectus for further study. Two essays concerning Sterne and Hume's discussion of identity may be found in *Laurence Sterne in Modernism and Postmodernism*: Stuart Sim, "'All that Exist are "Islands of Determinism": Shandean Sentiment and the Dilemma of Postmodern Physics" and Herbert Klein, "Identity Reclaimed: the Art of Being Tristram."

now, and I am got half way out of Auxerre in that which I shall write hereafter.
 . . . I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre with my father
 and my uncle Toby, in our way back to dinner----and I am this moment also
 entering Lyons with my post-chaise broke into a thousand pieces--and I am
 moreover this moment in a handsome pavillion built by Pringello, upon the banks
 of the Garonne, which Mons. Sligniac has lent me, and where I now sit
 rhapsodizing all these affairs. [VII.28.621-22]

Which one is the original Tristram? It is one of the profound observations of *Tristram Shandy* that writing enables the apparent freedoms of the multiple self. However, such freedoms come at a cost. In his encounter with the toll-collecting commissary, Tristram discovers the dangers inherent in such freedom, revealing the notion of self to be merely a tautological assertion:

----as sure as I am I--and you are you----

----And who are you? said he.----Don't puzzle me; said I. [VII.33.633]

The terms of personal identity are not unimportant to this study, for, as the theoretical discussion in Chapter One has noted, questions of "presence" center on the "self" aware of its own presence. With a crucial qualification, this study has accepted that writing offers something of a mirror to the self to confirm its presence, very much in the way that John Locke's chapter on the question of identity uses writing as a ground for a present identity based in consciousness:

whatever has the consciousness of present and past Actions, is the same Person to whom they both belong. Had I the same consciousness, that I saw the Ark and

Noah's Flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the *Thames* last Winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I, that write this now, that saw the *Thames* overflow'd last Winter, and that view'd the Flood at the general Deluge, was the same *self*, place that *self* in what Substance you please, than that I that write this am the same *my self* now whilst I write (whether I consist of all the same Substance, material or immaterial, or no) that I was Yesterday. For as to this point of being the same *self*, it matters not whether this present *self* be made up of the same or other Substances, I being as much concern'd, and as justly accountable for any Action was done a thousand Years since, appropriated to me now by this self-consciousness, as I am, for what I did the last moment.⁴⁵

Writing, for Locke, reveals a sense of self-presence by acting as a sort of mirror: the self is doubled through writing, allowing self-recognition.

Tristram, too, asserts that the activity of writing manifests an author's sense of his existence: "every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity Life follows my pen" (IX.8.754). This aphoristic statement is considered at greater length a few pages later where "presence" is explicitly invoked. Tristram is discussing one of his techniques of composition:

I take a razor at once; and having tried the edge of it upon the palm of my hand, without further ceremony, except that of first lathering my beard, I shave it off .

. .

⁴⁵John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. Book II Chap.27 Sect.16.

. . . for consider, Sir, as every man chuses to be present at the shaving of his own beard (though there is no rule without an exception) and unavoidably sits overagainst himself the whole time it is doing, in case he has a hand in it--the Situation, like all others, has notions of her own to put into the brain.---
[IX.13.763]

Tristram finds that contemplating his reflection in a mirror induces intellectual reflection, which is both a pre- and co-requisite for writing. He creates for himself a mirror scene which reflects and therefore confirms the existence of the author, albeit in a paradoxical, yet concrete fashion, "overagainst himself." Through this process of making himself present to himself, Tristram tells us he becomes able to extend this reflection into writing, and ultimately into his book (which in turn reflects this experience).

Sterne's literal application of Locke's formula for identity brings to light the crucial qualification, that writing, especially as it manifests itself in print, has a presence of its own which complicates its role as mirror to the self. Tristram's writing, while making him present to himself during the act, also extends beyond mere reflection. A third entity, between Tristram and himself, as it were, comes into play in the form of his text. Tristram's act of writing confirms his own existence, but it also creates an existence independent of himself. Here in this shaving scene (as in *Tristram Shandy* as a whole) we have both mirror and lamp, reflection and extension.

This scene may be summarized in more general interpretive terms. Writing is a counter-presence to logocentric self-presence: an other-presence, something in itself. While supposedly pointing back toward an "original truth," it is simultaneously itself an

origin. This can be seen in its independent effect--the medium informs the message: to recall our very first example, what is written on the wall, "LAU. STERNE," is not as important as the fact that it is written. In the eighteenth century, we see such independent effects in studies of rhetoric, especially the sublime, whose focus on technique draws attention to the presence of the medium, and in satire's use of the monstrous text, the (grudging) recognition of the necessary embodiment of thought. For Sterne, these discourses draw attention to the ironic condition of all writing, simultaneously denying access to origins, yet providing an origin in itself. If the implicit theology of logocentrism emphasizes the "word" of John 1:14, Sterne's emphasis is on the "flesh," the supplementary rhetoric which is always already in place.

Tristram's self-reflexive shaving scene is obviously attentive to both word and flesh. As a discussion of writing, it is appropriate that he turns to one of his favorite metaphors⁴⁶ to draw together his concerns:

Ludovicus Sorbenensis makes this entirely an affair of the body . . . but he is deceived: the soul and body are joint-sharers in every thing they get: A man cannot dress, but his ideas get cloath'd at the same time; and if he dresses like a gentleman, every one of them stands presented to his imagination, genteelized along with him--so that he has nothing to do, but take his pen, and write like

⁴⁶"A Man's body and his mind, with the utmost reverence to both I speak it, are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining;--rumple the one--you rumple the other. There is one certain exception however in this case, and that is, when you are so fortunate a fellow, as to have had your jerkin made of a gum-taffeta, and the body-lining to it, of a sarcenet or thin persian." (III.4.189-90). Tristram develops the analogy to show that *writing* constitutes the outside of the jerkin--a protective layer for the delicate inner lining of the self.

himself. [764]

This is a succinct, and appropriately humorous, statement of the problems with which this study has engaged: the embodiment of thought; the concomitant question of presence, here quite literally recalling the etymology of "presence" as the gentleman brings his ideas before him, like a review of his servants in livery (*praesum* means to be in command, as a general before his troops); the self-reflexive paradox of "writing like himself." In the context of such an explicit discussion of writing as the joint product of body and soul (and the self-reflexive conclusion drawn from this paradox), it is important to note that this chapter is simultaneously satiric and sublime. In a characteristic move, Tristram immediately transfers the mirror scene of reflective action to the body, the beard:

I maintain it, the conceits of a rough-bearded man, are seven years more terse and juvenile for one single operation; and if they did not run a risk of being quite shaved away, might be carried up by continual shavings, to the highest pitch of sublimity[.] [763-64]

In a single gesture, the abstract language of self-presence in the mirror has been translated or displaced into the realm of the physical. The somewhat paradoxical "presence" of the mirror scene has become a more literal physical presence, something which may have its own effects in the world, independent of the self-present self. This is a key gesture for Scriblerian satire, as we have seen. However, this shift to the physical is not merely a satiric gesture. It must be noted that the potency of the experience of self-presence is maintained by translating the experience into the Longinian language of the sublime. Shaving becomes a version of Longinus' amplification: "the great incidents heaped one

upon another, ascend by a continued gradation to a summit of grandeur" (xi.22).

As in a work such as Pope's *Peri Bathous*, the relationship between satire and the language of the sublime is not simple here. Satire may seem to have the upper hand, but this is merely a way of pointing out the artifice, the presence of rhetoric which Longinus would have (ostentatiously) hidden. In general and independently, both discourses are employed in the business of "presencing" the author while at the same time drawing attention to their own presence through their rhetorical particulars. Sterne's insight is to see the continuity between the two discourses, here figured in the particular act of shaving. The self-reference of the mirror scene is translated to the beard which itself becomes the subject of the amplification that reconfirms the value of writing as an act of self-consciousness. Thus both satire and the sublime are implicated in the question of "presence." Drawing on the rhetorics of satire and the sublime, *Tristram Shandy's* text is performative, embodying itself as an origin, doubly being and referring, its monstrous printed shape denying access to origins amidst a proliferation of particulars, yet having an original effect.

These are features of human communication which deeply concerned Sterne both as preacher and literary author. They are features he encountered in the discourses of satire and the sublime. It is no wonder that Edmund Burke's review of *Tristram Shandy* employs the physiological language of the *Enquiry's* theory of the sublime in describing Sterne's satire:

The 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. These digressions so frequently repeated, instead of relieving the reader, become at length tiresome. The book is a perpetual series of disappointments.⁴⁷

Exactly, Sterne might say. Communication is a perpetual series of disappointments because it is based upon a hybrid of mind and body called language, which of necessity "strikes the imagination" in ways which can neither be predicted, nor, in this age of print, kept track of. This is because language (writing, rhetoric, the printed page) is something in itself--endangered and fragile in its embodiment, confusing in its particulars, distracting in its pendulous forms--and so we must account for the presence of the text.

Epilogue

As Tristram says, "the more I write, the more I shall have to write" (IV.13.342). I believe the present study suggests a number of directions which further writing may take.

One reason this study has not touched upon *A Sentimental Journey*, apart from its discussion of the "French sublime" (159), is that my focus upon Menippean satire and the rhetorical sublime is more obviously compatible with *Tristram Shandy*. Nevertheless, with a more inclusive reading of both satire and the sublime in relation to the development of sensibility and aesthetics during the eighteenth century, Sterne's final work, so deeply ironic beneath its slender appearance, will find its place in my narrative

⁴⁷Quoted in Howes, *Sterne: The Critical Heritage* (106-7).

of continuities amidst developments over the century. Just as *Tristram Shandy* brings together Menippean satire and the Longinian sublime, *A Sentimental Journey* offers a mode of irony which is consistent with the personae of Swift's autobiographical poems, the self-undermining Thomas Gray (an attentive reader of Sterne)--hesitant to place himself among the great--and the bombastic Lord Byron, laying claim to all in a very eighteenth-century blend of satire and the sublime, with not a few Shandean digressions.

Furthermore, I believe that the conjunction of satire and the sublime as I have described it, in the medium of print, provides a means of reconsidering the boundaries of literary history. Blake's engagement with the sublime, which (in one instance) appears in his satiric attacks upon the margins of Reynold's *Discourses*, employs the rhetoric of the particulate which I have outlined in Sterne: "Minute Discrimination is Not Accidental. All Sublimity is founded on Minute Discrimination";⁴⁸ "Without Minute Neatness of Execution The Sublime cannot Exist! Grandeur of Ideas is founded on Precision of Ideas." (457); "A Folly! Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the Sublime" (459). Furthermore, Blake as engraver and printer has radically and self-consciously embodied his particular brand of apocalyptic satire in its medium (non-facsimile modern editions of Blake are worse than those of Sterne).

More subtly, but most importantly, without the tradition which I have described, Coleridge (with Wordsworth's help) could not have written to the publisher of *Lyrical Ballads*:

I hope that you will *take off* some half dozen of our poems in great paper, even

⁴⁸*Complete Writings* 453.

as the Joan of Arc.----Cottle, my dear Cottle, I meant to have written you an Essay on the Metaphysics of Typography; but I have not time.--Take a few hints without the abstruse reasons for them with which I mean to favor you--18 lines in a page, the lines closely printed, certainly, *more closely* than those of the Joan--(Oh by all means closer! W. Wordsworth) *equal ink; & large margins*. That is *beauty*--it may even under your immediate care mingle the sublime!----⁴⁹

And, I contend, Coleridge's most famous evasion of abstruse reasons (in his theory of the imagination in Chapter 13 of *Biographia Literaria*) would be impossible without the interruptive typography he learned from *A Tale of a Tub* and *Tristram Shandy*.

As noted in Chapter One, it is not uncommon to see Sterne invoked as a precursor to the Romantic or postmodern movements. However, this is usually done at the expense of Sterne's eighteenth-century heritage. I hope my study has brought to light the importance of an eighteenth-century Sterne--not only for understanding *Tristram Shandy*, but also for addressing large issues concerning the relationship between cultural epistemology and technology in relation to historical change, and indeed in relation to the perception of historical change itself. At the very least, we can now begin to ground Romantic, modern and postmodern concerns in the tangible reality of the eighteenth-century texts which opened up future possibilities by bringing forward ancient traditions while at the same time wrestling with the difficulties of doing such a thing by acknowledging the presence of the text.

⁴⁹*Collected Letters of S. T. Coleridge* I.412. Alan D. Boehm has addressed related issues in "The 1798 Lyrical Ballads and the Poetics of Late Eighteenth-Century Book Production."

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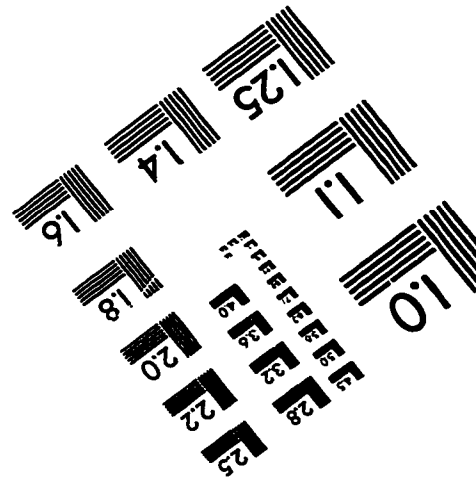
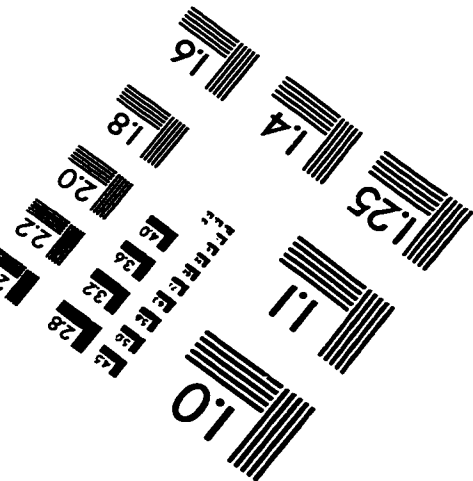
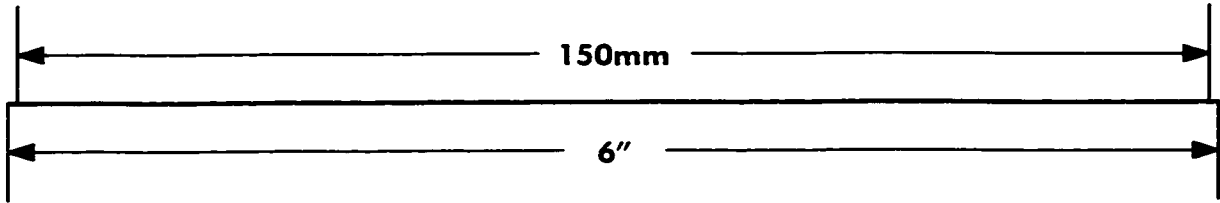
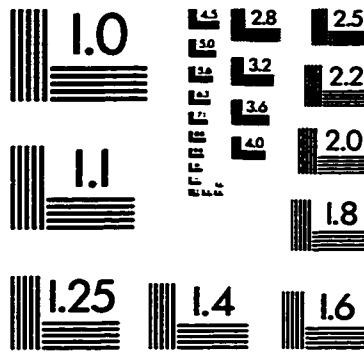
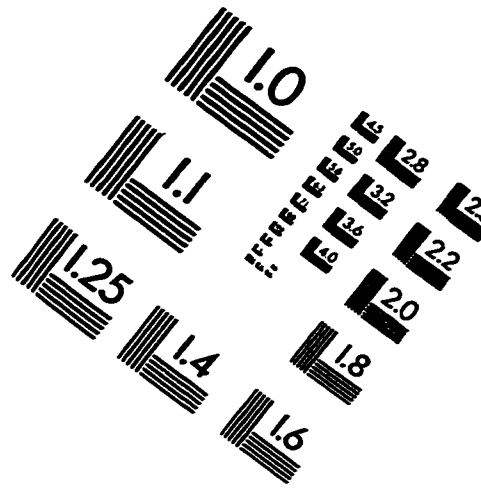
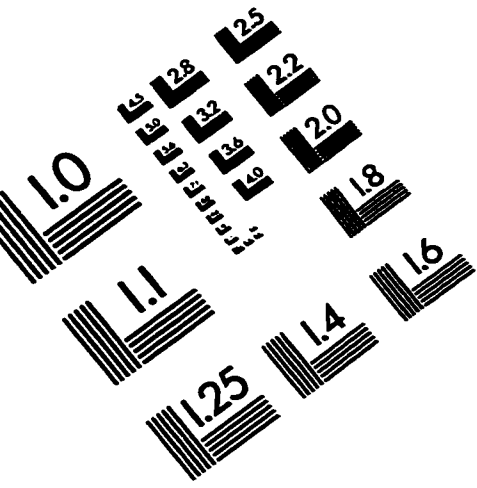
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