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LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION IN
LAURENCE STERNE'S TRISTRAM SHANDY

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Part One:

Sterne's Narrative Discourse

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> It was to be wished that the preacher had written his
> comic novel just to teach the English not to let
> themselves be duped any longer by the charlatanry of
> novelists, and that he could have corrected the long
> declining taste of the nation which has abandoned the
> study of Lockes and Newtons for the most extravagant
> and frivolous works. But that was not the intention of
> the author of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. Born poor and gay, he
> wished to laugh at England's expense and to make some
> money.--Voltaire, 25 April, 1777.[1]

Any standard biography will verify the poverty and high
spirits of Laurence Sterne; we may assume that if we met him, and
had a taste for sometimes obnoxious sarcasm, we would think him
amusing enough. Yet, even if we were lucky enough to be seated
with the prebendary at, say, the Archbishop's table and could ask
him over the porto why he wrote <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, we would be no
closer to finding a key for interpretation of the book than if we
had shared the hay of the Archepiscopal coach-horses. Despite the
cynical truth of Voltaire's view, it does not really matter why
the great-grandson of the Prelate of York created <u>Tristram</u>
<u>Shandy</u>. The paradox of a novelist uncovering the "charlatanry" of
novelists is, however, apt for a book which does seek to arrest
its readers' decline into a taste for trivial works. It is even
more paradoxical that the novel seeks to revive both the
worthwhile style of philosophy and science and a taste for

serious works like Newton and Locke through the kind of humor attributed to its author, in a narrative which is itself, to a large extent, frivolous.

Tristram Shandy seems especially extravagant in its unconventional narrative style, which frustrates many readers. Like a tourist lost in the modern section of a large art museum, who sees only incompetence and cheap absurdity in the paintings there, the reader accustomed to and expecting to find a realistic, forward-moving narrative will fault Sterne for failing to write a "story" in his book. He will look in vain for the necessary and sufficient conditions of imitative literary art in the tradition of Aristotle's Poetics, and he will be thwarted in his attempt to clearly identify either plot, character or action.[2] The inability of readers to reduce Sterne's text to any traditional form of coherent progression and representation has led to famous dismissals of the novel by critics from Dr. Johnson, who called Tristram Shandy an oddity which "did not last,"[3] to F.R. Leavis, who consigned Sterne to a derogatory footnote in his "great tradition" of the English novel.[4]

The novel's endurance has refuted Johnson's dismissal of it, but it has not disputed his judgment that the novel is unique. Despite the history of twentieth-century, non-realistic literature which we now have to draw on, Tristram Shandy remains an odd novel. It is strange in comparison to both the novels of its own time and to those which followed it, including those written quite recently. It does not easily fit into the

Eighteenth-century tradition, completely opposes that of the
Nineteenth-century, and reveals significant differences from the
style of modern novels.[5] Melvyn New shows that Sterne ignores the
conventions of his own time by writing like neither Fielding nor
Richardson.[6] It is the exhaustion of interest in the conventions
of its time, according to Viktor Shlovsky, that laid a fertile
ground for Sterne: "the appearance of Tristram Shandy was due to
the petrification of the devices of the traditional **roman
d'aventure**. All its devices had become totally ineffectual."[7]

In addition, it is plain that the novel's style embodies
much of what is un-Victorian in that it does not, above all,
uphold a strong and pervasive moral principle: as a parody,
Shlovsky continues, its target "is neither the mores nor the
social types of an age, but the technique of the novel itself."[8]
Because of this self-conscious concern with form, the novel does
not tell an engaging if complicated story, either. The Nineteenth
century, which revelled in the absorbing tales of the Arabian
Nights vignettes, or long, progressive series like the chronicles
of Trollope, had little use for assertive form in narrative. And
the ribaldry of Tristram Shandy offended Victorians such as
Thackeray, who, a century prior to Leavis, thought Sterne
unnecessarily crude and prurient.[9]

The self-aware form of Tristram Shandy thus separates it
from novels of its own century and from those of the century that
followed it. It is less evident how the novel significantly
differs from more recent texts, which show a similar concern with

the method of novel-writing. English, American, and European literatures of the twentieth century century boast traditions of self-conscious novels, frequently called "metafictions." "Metafictional novels," Patricia Waugh explains, "tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion."[10]Tristram Shandy differs from much twentieth-century metafiction in that it refuses to construct the illusion of a linear, progressive story, but instead admits that it is, as a novel, saddled with this conventional expectation. It uses the awareness of the illusion it **"should"** be creating to show how fictive any representation of the people, actions, and temporal progression of the phenomenal world really is.

Metafictive novels sacrifice the telling of a good tale for an emphasis on form. Gerard Genette develops this opposition as that between **histoire** and **discours**, or story and narrative discourse.[11] The story of a novel is the "succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subjects" of the novel. The discourse, on the other hand, is the narrative statement, which "undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events."[12] In metafictional texts, narrative discourse is more apparent than story, the mode of telling is more apparent than the tale itself, whereas in realist texts, narrative discourse is more transparent--it does not draw attention to itself by interrupting the story in some way.

Self-aware texts of the twentieth century, which play with literary conventions, come from formal innovators such as the proto-modernist Proust, the modernist Joyce, and the post-modernist Thomas Pynchon, whose books all tell disconnected stories, so that they can focus on the narrative discourse. Sterne's novel can be compared to Remembrance of Things Past, as Genette argues, for example, in its use of stories-within-the-main narrative, which shows that "narrating is an act like any other."[13] In addition, both novels are self-reflexive texts that show a keen awareness of novelistic convention through their subversion of traditional narrative structure. Their styles are not progressive, as realist novels had been, but are instead digressive; they fail to develop a linear plot, or a causal chain of actions.

This ambivalent relationship towards conventions of novel-writing raises the role of **discours** in the metafictional text from the tool which conveys story-content to a literary subject in its own right. Metafictions are "odd" in that they differ from the literary norms defined by the Aristotelian tradition of critics like Johnson and Leavis. Johnson represents well the mistrust for attention to literary form in Sterne's time:

> This view, that literature is "a just representation of things really existing and actions really performed," that the "legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth,"that the novelists should be "just copiers of human manners," recurs again and again. There runs through Johnson a deep mistrust of all fiction and all art. According to Hawkins he "could at any time be talked into a disapprobation of all fictitious relations, of which he would frequently say they took no hold of the mind.""The rejection and contempt of

fiction is rational and manly," is another of his sayings.[14]

Despite its concern with form and fictionality, there are certainly some very realistic scenes in <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. These are most often connected with the temporally disordered and sketchy story of Uncle Toby's various adventures, characterized by his sentiment or good nature. A scene from the touching story of the dying Lieutenant Le Fever in Volume VI shows Sterne's skill in composing realistic, detailed, and emotional scenes:

> THE sun looked bright the morning after, to every eye in the village but **Le Fever's** and his afflicted son's; the hand of death press'd heavy upon his eye-lids---and hardly could the wheel at the cistern turn round its circle,--when my uncle **Toby**, who had rose up an hour before his wonted time, entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology, sat himself down upon the chair by the bed-side, and independently of all modes and customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it...(VI.x)

Such a scene, emphasizing realistic details and actions, would have pleased Johnson, had he not been opposed to sentimental writing as well as highly fictional language. The scene is only a vignette in Sterne's formal scheme, and one, unlike the stories of Queen Scheherazade, which is not completed before it is interrupted by self-conscous narrative of some sort. The whole story of Le Fever, for example, is itself interrupted by five chapter divisions, and it is separated from other events in Toby's life by many chapters of narrative discourse unconcerned with Toby.[15]

Sterne shows here a keen awareness of the convention of the

realistic scene, but he self-consciously uses this convention to subvert any realism achieved. Le Fever's actual death, which should be the touching and serious conclusion to this vignette, is used as an occasion to burst the bubble of realistic imitation:

> ...The blood and spirits of **Le Fever**, which were waxing cold and slow within him, were retreating to their last citadel, the heart,--rallied back,--the film forsook his eyes for a moment,--he looked up wistfully in my uncle Toby's face,--then cast a look upon his boy,---and that **ligament**, fine as it was,--was never broken.----
>
> Nature instantly ebb'd again,---the film returned to its place,---the pulse fluttered---stopp'd---went on---throb'd---stopp'd again---moved---stopp'd---shall I go on?---No. (VI.x)

The staccato effect of the interruptive dashes is an exaggerated representation of the ebbing of the dying man, whose heart fights death in a series of weakening spasms of the pulse. The interruption of the linear discourse here suggests the interruption of steady heart beats, and it therefore acts as a realistic imitation of an event in the phenomenal world. But the mimetic effect also functions in a parodying way. The most apparent effect of the interruptions is to draw attention to the dashes themselves and the method, the form of interruption. The final interruption, "shall I go on?---No," is doubly interruptive: it continues the staccato back-and-forth of the mimesis, but it interrupts that imitation of the heart-beats with an authorial intrusion, a comment on the narrating instance. In this reversal of Johnsonian realism, then, the narrative discourse supplants the story, for Sterne's playful technique

diverts us from the potential sentimentality of the scene.

Tristram Shandy is metafictional as much for what critics call its "borrowings" as for its subversion of traditional progressive story-telling. Yet, it is really a unique novel not so much for the delaying of Tristram's birth until Volume III, or any of the other chronological disjunctions in the telling of the lives of the Shandy family, but for the way it uses other texts, real or ficticious. The importance of Sterne's indebtedness to other authors has been shown by critics from his time to our own.[16] The amount and extent of Sterne's borrowing, which includes the work of over fifty real authors and several fictional ones, seems to qualify Tristram Shandy for Voltaire's category of the extravagant and frivolous.[17] Some borrowings, like Ernulphus' ridiculously long and exhaustive Curse, certainly are playful, if not unashamedly frivolous and thematically irrelevant (given here in small part):

> ...May the holy choir of the holy virgins, who for the honor of Christ have despised the things of this world, damn him...May he be cursed in living, in dying...May he be cursed in eating and drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting, in sleeping, in slumbering, in walking, in standing, in sitting, in walking, in working, in resting, in pissing, in shitting, and in blood-letting...(III.xi)

Other borrowings, such as references to Rabelais or Cervantes, seem less playful, because of those authors' direct influence on the text and relevance to Sterne's satiric themes.

Whether they seem relevant or gratuitous, borrowings in the

novel suggest extravagance by their sheer volume and extent; it becomes difficult to separate the borrowings from each other, or ultimately to find Sterne's "original" writing in <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. Yet these incorporations of texts into that of the novel, through either indirect borrowing of concepts or direct reference to the specific structure and form of texts, enable <u>Tristram Shandy</u> to explore the very method of any textual representation. Narrative discourse is exalted over story to establish the very serious question of the nature of communication and textuality as the novel's central subject.

In her discussion of metafiction, Patricia Waugh argues that the novel as a genre is characterized, annoyingly enough, by being undefinable:

> There is no privileged "language of fiction". There are the languages of memoirs, journals, diaries, histories, conversational registers, legal records, journalism, documentary. These languages compete for privilege. They question and relativize each other to such an extent that the "language of fiction," is always, if often covertly, self-conscious.[18]

<u>Tristram Shandy</u>'s open and obvious borrowings make its self-consciousness overt. Through the extravagant use of borrowings the novel flouts particular, well-established novelistic conventions. Among these are the single, well-defined author for every novel--the borrowings allow the novel to incorporate many different authors--and the idea of the organic unity of a text, where relevant structures support narrative and thematic progression. As a metafiction, the book concerns itself with novelistic form. In a seemingly pardoxical way, through playful

narrative structures, Sterne establishes the ground for serious inquiry into both representation in the novel and signification in language. He achieves the "correction of long declining taste," hoped for by Voltaire, by taking serious account of extravagance, by borrowing excessively from sometimes silly material, and by actually making extravagant borrowings work to oppose triviality.

The question of communication through language is the sort of serious issue which occupied the Eighteenth-century empirical scientific tradition represented for Voltaire by Newton and Locke. Sterne not only achieves the level of seriousness praised by Voltaire, but goes so far as to do so by direct use of the philosophy of John Locke. This particular borrowing helps to explain the uniqueness of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, separating it from both contemporary and later texts. An overt use of philosophical doctrine, especially in relation to problems of communication, makes Sterne's text even more overtly self-conscious than the metafictions of Proust and Joyce.

John Traugott draws the distinction between the novelist, "who proves nothing," and the philosopher, who deals in logical, extensive, and abstract discourse. [19] Through a self-conscious use of different discourses, however, Sterne actually proves more about communication than the ostensibly detached, consistent, and logical discourse of Locke. The novelist shows how language conveys and creates meaning through narrative action. His own text, in the way it structures understanding, demonstrates the

very point that texts like his can be understood. This sort of learning by demonstration is innovative, to be sure, yet we might ask whether we need a theory in which to group the forms we encounter in any text. In other words, don't we need an **a priori** understanding of significant structures in order to know what to look for? In order to deal with these questions we must turn to a detailed consideration of Sterne's central philosophical borrowing, the text of Locke's <u>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>, and its relation to other major borrowings in the novel.

Locke's <u>Essay</u> proposes a hypothesis of clear signification which may be used to explain Sterne's novel, or any written text. Locke's doctrine of signs may be seen as the illusive meta-language, which can discuss a phenomenon in which it, as a text, is not included.[20] For Sterne himself, the influence of Locke was among the borrowings which helped account for <u>Tristram Shandy</u>'s uniqueness, the "oddness" which earned Johnson's disapproval. In an interview with the French man of letters Jean Baptiste Suard, Sterne

> attributed his "originality," in the first place...to "imagination," or "sensibility,"...in the second place, to daily reading of the Old and New Testaments...[and] in the third place, to the study of Locke...to that philosophy which those who are able to recognize explicitly and implicitly will discover or sense in all his pages, in all his lines, in the choice of all his expressions; to that philosophy which is too religious to try to explain the miracle of sensation, but which, with the miracle for which it does not have the temerity to ask reason or accounting from God, unfolds all the secrets of the understanding, avoids errors,

reaches truths open to all.[21]

We see that Sterne cites the most conventional and generally accepted influences on Eighteenth-century prose--literary creativity, the Bible, and the philosophy of Locke--as the basis for his "originality." In his novel, Sterne uses these three conventional discourses to fashion a new narrative style, which transcends the oppositions between the three individual modes.

"Imagination" and "sensibility," while difficult to locate in a history of ideas describing the period, are two qualities which seem so necessary to any literary enterprise that they appear to be obvious requirements of any author. The emotional appeal of the Man of Sentiment, the man "sensible" to the touching and pathetic potential of literature, is seen in the trials of Richardson's moral maidens, and in the comic picaresques of Fielding and Smollett. Sentimental literature obviously requires imagination, the power to create verbal "pictures" or images, to arouse feeling in its reader. Sterne "borrows" the conventional idea of literary discourse from the traditions of sentimental authors, just as his satire draws on the "Scriblerian" tradition of Pope and Swift.

The power of image-making, so widely accepted as necessary to literature, is a "world-making" quality. It allows the literary author to achieve the imitation of the world which traditional realistic narrative strives for. Imagination and sensibility are thus specifically literary qualities--not the serious ones associated with empirical philosophy and physical

science. This would seem to make them "frivolous," opposing them to the mode of expression of Newton and Locke. But, if we accept Voltaire's assessment of Sterne, we see that his literary style promotes philosophy and science, specifically, and serious discourse in general. All three modes of communication are "world-making," for all three constitute a particular view of reality, the phenomenal world, through a specific way of using language. Sterne makes use of opposing world-making methods through a special use of the frivolous--a use which expresses philosophy through literature, and not only merges opposites, but makes each depend for expression on the other.

Literary language is thus equated with the freedom of imagination and sensibility, and opposed to the discipline required of science and philosophy; this opposition is then blurred by Sterne's unique narrative style, which, for him, depends on multiple conventions of his literary context, imagination among them. Sterne opposes the frivolous to the serious in his particular choice of conventional forces. The Two Testaments, for instance, the second conventional and widely accepted force in Sterne's literary context, also exercise an influence on his style. And their discourse is also serious, though in a non-scientific way; the Bible is opposed to literary discourse, and to the frivolous in general, because the indisputability of the Word of God makes it unacceptable as a subject for joking. Biblical interpretation is always disputable, but the pronouncements of the Bible are sometimes indisputably

clear: in a striking example, Genesis states that "the imagination of a man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen.18:21). Imagination--free discursive creation--is the basis for disagreement between Biblical discourse and literary discourse.

As in the case of philosophic discourse, Sterne reconciles religious language with literary modes of expression by incorporating Biblical language within the novel's new style of narrative discourse. For example, Sterne places Yorick's serious sermon within the context of fortification, one of the pervasive themes of Toby's sentimental and humorous story. As Toby's "hobby-horse," fortification is one of the large comic leitmotifs of the novel. Corporal Trim, the satirically philosophical Sancho Panza to Toby's Quixote, finds the sermon is found on paper folded up in Toby's encylopedia of forts, and then volunteers to read it, just to hear himself talk. Sterne takes this opportunity to parody traditional arts of oratory in Trim's "natural artfulness":

> He stood before them [Slop, Toby and Walter] with his body swayed, and bent forward 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!
> The necessity of this precise angle of 85 degrees and one half to a mathematical exactness,--does it not shew us, by the way,--how the arts and sciences mutually befriend each other? (II.xvii)

Sterne sets up a ridiculous context for the presentation of the sermon in his comic admiration of the exactitude of Trim's

physical stance. The goal of this reading position is thus persuasion for its own sake. Frivolity, as a satire of formalized rhetoric, thus becomes the context of the sermon-reading.

Yet rhetorical power, while providing a good bit of Trim's pleasure, is not his only "stand"--he, like Sterne, has an ideological investment in merging oppositions. To this end, he corrects Dr. Slop's denominational division--"`it [the sermon] may be a composition of a divine of our church [Catholic], as well as yours [Anglican].'" Trim's interpretive "position" transcends Slop's "op**position**": "` `Tis wrote on neither side, quoth Trim, for 'tis only upon **Conscience**, an' please your Honours.'" Trim's sound opinion itself opposes the frivolous aspects of his rhetorical presentation. Trim uses both comic and serious discourse to make a sound judgment where the grave one sidedly-grave Slop fails.

Through Trim's reading of Yorick's sermon, Sterne lays the ground for the mixing of discourses, and the mixture specifically focuses upon in the mutual support of the "arts and sciences," oratory and mathematics. The sermon concludes by making conscience a form of judgment:

> In a word,--trust that man in nothing, who has not a CONSCIENCE in everything.
> And in your case, remember this plain distinction, a mistake which has ruined thousands,--that your conscience is not a law:--No, God and reason made the law, and have placed conscience within you to determine;--not like an **Asiatick** Cadi, according to the ebbs and flows of his own passions,--but like a **British** judge in this land of liberty and good sense, who makes no new law, but faithfully declares the law which he knows already written. (II.xvii)

Here is a sensible and serious sermon, one which shows that a common sense religious faith is as central to the novel as literary creativity. This interpretation of the tone is supported by Melvyn New, who cites 69 separate references to the Old Testament and 44 references to the New Testament in the novel.[22] This manifestation of the merging of the serious and the frivolous helps to constitute the novel's unique style. And that style is primarily metafictional, for the borrowings draw attention to the issue of merging discourses, constituting a multi-faceted meaning by combining various stories and concepts into one literary discourse.

Sterne's third influence, the philosophy of Locke, is connected to his other two sources by being a kind of standard text for eighteenth-century thought. Locke's _Essay_ is, like the Bible in religion and _Pamela_ in sentimental literature, a canonical text in the discourse of Sterne's time. Yet Locke, as the representative of disciplined empiricism and knowledge based on sensory perception, differs from both the "blind" faith of religious and the playfulness of literary language.

Sterne, however, manages to merge the opposition between Locke and both religious and literary discourse. Faith becomes the departure point for Locke's philosophy, which as Sterne expressed to Suard, "is too religious to explain the miracle of sensation," and uses the God-given "miracle," of empirical knowledge, to "unfold the secrets of the understanding."[23] Yorick's sermon contributes to the unity of philosophy and

religion, in crediting both "God and reason" with the power over conscience. This synthesis of revelation--knowledge given from a higher source than man and passively received on earth--and empirical knowledge--sensory perceptions acquired through one's own abilities--is accomplished through imaginative writing. It is as personal a synthesis of different discourses as is conscience, which, in its freedom, makes judgments acceptable to both heaven and earth, religion and philosophy.

The coordination of differing modes of discourse--literary, religious, and philosophical, lays the ground for the metafictional narrative of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. The self-conscious method of the novel uses three major, well-accepted modes of discourse to center on discourse itself as the issue. As used by sighteenth-century society, literary, biblical, and philosophical modes answer different questions. For Sterne, on the other hand, these three seemingly contradictory forms of expression deal with the same concern: the overall problem of explanation and communication in language. The coordination of these three modes of signification with each other in Sterne's narrative system makes <u>Tristram Shandy</u> as religious and philosophical as it is literary, for the coordinated pursuit of the novel is the exploration of meaning itself.

Part Two:

The Philosophical Basis of Sterne's Narrative Discourse

The same stories of wit and sentiment are to be found
in both the Sentimental Journey and Tristram Shandy.
The former, for example, is no more a "journey" than
the latter is a "life." In both, the connections
between one chapter and another, between one paragraph
and the next, happen by chance, or appear to. If my
manner of writing, says the author, is not the best, it
is at least the most religious:"I begin with writing
the first sentence--and trusting to Almighty God for
the second."...Sterne says it again elsewhere; but here
is the way he repeats himself. Judge if this is only
repetition: "I know what I am doing when I write the
first sentence, and the first guides me to the last."
To choose well and state clearly that first sentence,
men like Locke, Condillac and all the true tutors of
the human mind designate as the best method.--Jean
Baptiste Suard on Sterne.[24]

The first sentence of Tristram Shandy establishes the
concerns which will be central to the whole novel, and it sets up
the novel as a metafictive text. We have seen that Sterne has
created a new discourse through the merging of opposing
discursive modes. The result of this combining of ways of
conveying meaning yields a self-reflexive text whose central
concern is signification. We have also seen how this new
discourse relies on the merging of different conventional
elements--literary, Biblical, and philosophical languages--for
its originality.

As Suard notes, the very title of Sterne's book promises a
traditional "life"; the novel, however, fails to conform to

standard biographical style. In a metafictive gesture, it sets up the illusion of a "life"--a story which takes into account the biological beginning and end of a character--which it then fails to sustain. The novel's first sentence supports this illusion by referring to Tristram's birth--actually, his conception: "I wish either my mother or my father, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me "(I.i). Tristram's wish that his parents had shown some judgment, the first "opinion" of the book, sets up two themes of Sterne's discourse, which we have seen already in the mixing of discursive modes: judgment and frivolity in the novel. Tristram makes **judgments** from the very beginning both of his Life, which is the book's first sentence, and his life-story, which naturally starts with his birth. Tristram as narrator tries to correct the "oversight" involved in his own conception by "minding what he is about" in begetting his creation and conceiving his narrative.

Tristram's opinion that his parents lacked judgment, on the other hand, relies upon a theory that the narrative shows to be only questionably valid: the power of "humors" over Tristram's fate. Mrs. Shandy's question "Pray, my dear...have you not forgot to wind up the clock?" interrupts the sexual rite during which Tristram is conceived and his fortunes supposedly determined:

> ---Then positively, there is nothing in the question, that I can see, either good or bad.---Then let me tell you, Sir, it was a very unseasonable question at least,---because it scattered the animal spirits, whose business it was to have escorted and gone hand-in-hand with the HOMONCULUS and conducted him safe to the place

destined for his reception.(I.ii)

Tristram's concern here is for the "humors" which, from a man's conception, determine his constitution. He is ostensibly worried that all his later misfortunes were caused by his parents' laxity in attending to the "animal spirits"--such care would, we presume, have kept Mrs. Shandy from ever asking such an ill-timed question.

The imagery of the animal spirits as "scattered" from their task of "escorting" the homunculus recalls Tristram's earlier theory of humors:

> ...when they [the humors] are once set a-going, whether right or wrong, 'tis not a halfpenny matter,--away they go cluttering like hey-go-mad; and by treading the same steps over and over again, they presently make a road of it, as plain and as smooth as a garden-walk, which, when they are once used to, the Devil himself sometimes shall not be able to drive them off it.(I.i)

This description allows the narrative to dramatize stylistically the ridiculousness of Tristram's opinion--its frivolity is evident in the figure of the humors as a run-away cart which defies even Hell. The "serious" problem of Tristram's fate is made comic both by his belief in a silly theory and by the frivolity of his judgment. Like Locke before him in separating wit from judgment, Tristram makes a bad--literally "humorous"--judgment on another act of judgment. Sterne's humorous method reveals the flaws in Tristram's theory of humors.

This bad judgment is based on another frivolous opinion--that of the obscurity created by the random connection of unrelated ideas. Tristram explains his mother's interruption, and

thus his own fate, in terms of the impression made on Mrs. Shandy by Walter's habit of both winding up the clock and bedding his wife on the first Sunday night of every month:

> ...from an unhappy association of ideas which have no connection in nature, it so fell out at length, that my poor mother could never hear the said clock wound up,--but the thoughts of some other things unavoidably popp'd into her head,--& **vice versa**:--which strange combination of ideas, the sagacious **Locke**, who certainly understood the nature of these things better than most men, affirms to have produced more wry actions than all other sources of prejudice whatsoever. But this by the bye.(I.iv)

As he boasted to Suard, Sterne's first sentence does guide him to the rest of the text. Sterne introduces Locke into his discourse in a passage that explains Tristram's first opinion. Sterne even goes a step further than the first sentence in connecting this passage to the title of the book, a written utterance which actually comes before the first sentence. The "life" and "opinions" of the title identify the discursive action of the narrative in the introduction of Locke. The context of this introduction is the frivolous theory of humors, which makes the **coitus interruptus** significant, in Tristram's opinion, for its impact on his conception. Tristram thus connects "pre-text"--the title--to text through the context of frivolity, in his silly opinion on his life.[25] Locke's theory of the association of ideas is necessary to make Mrs. Shandy's action completely arbitrary and to add the element of accident which victimizes Tristram--as we see here--from conception.

The particular tenet of the association of ideas is a fitting introduction for Sterne's view of Locke, for it serves as

the occasion for ironic tribute to the philosopher. Tristram notes that this particular aberration of thought has produced "wry actions" such as Elizabeth Shandy's odd connection of monthly clock-winding and monthly sex. Locke's philosophy, we have seen, is the ostensibly serious borrowing in the novel that explains Sterne's concern with "wry," playful language, because it is itself explicitly concerned with communication. Locke's discourse may be the metalanguage, the discourse illuminating the method of all language, which Sterne uses in constructing his self-conscious, playful, and apparently frivolous narrative. While both literature and the Bible use language either to create and order images or to spread the Word of God, the philosophical mode of Locke attempts to use language to speak objectively about language.

According to Sterne's interview with Suard, both the concepts and themes of Locke's philosophy, and the actual formal structures of Locke's own language in his Essay, are to be recognized "explicitly and implicitly in all [the] pages...lines...and choice of all [the] expressions"--that is, in both the general themes and specific structures Sterne employs to explore language in the novel. W.G. Day makes the distinction between conceptual and "verbal" borrowings from Locke.[26] This distinction roughly corresponds to Genette's opposition of story and discourse: the concepts of Locke are his philosophical doctrine, and as such are the "content"--the story--of the text of the Essay, while the way he expresses these ideas is the

ostensibly transparent "form" of his text--the discourse.
Sterne's narrative uses what is implicit and explicit in Locke to
develop possibilities of both meaning and confusion in the
philosopher's system.

The attitude of <u>Tristram Shandy</u> towards Locke, I have
argued, is ambivalent. Sterne and Locke agree on many specific
points--among them a distrust of institutionalized and pompous
learning, like that of the medieval scholastics, and unclear
communication in general. Day believes that the degree to which
Locke and Sterne disagree disqualifies the <u>Essay</u> as the key to
<u>Tristram Shandy</u>. To a certain extent, the novel "unLockes"
itself: it renders comic Locke's serious language in order to
disassociate Tristram's narrative from that of the <u>Essay</u>. "The
reader who...is anxious to establish a coherent intellectual and
philosophical basis for the novel as a whole is in for a rude
shock."[27]

Day compares two specific passages illustrating the
disagreement between the novel and the <u>Essay</u> on the central issue
of wit and judgment. Locke separates the two concepts:

> For wit lying most in the assemblage if **Ideas,** and
> putting those together with quickness and variety,
> wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity,
> thereby to make up pleasant Pictures, and agreeable
> Visions in the Fancy: **Judgment,** on the contrary, lies
> quite on the other side, in separating carefully, one
> from the other, **Ideas,** wherein can be found the least
> difference, thereby to avoid being misled by
> Similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for
> another. (<u>Essay,</u> II.xi,2)

Locke obviously makes a judgment, since he separates ideas which

he sees leading to the confusion of "similitude." But his separation depends upon some affinity--for him a deceptive one--between wit and judgment. Johnson's Dictionary defines wit as "sense;judgment," and includes wit among the qualities, like imagination, of "a man of genius."[28]

Sterne appears to agree with Johnson. He makes his own judgment on wit and judgment by imitating the form of Locke's discourse:

> Now, **Agelastes** (speaking disprovingly) sayeth, that there may be some wit in it [the novel], for aught he knows,---but no judgement at all. And **Triptolemus** and **Phutatorius** agreeing thereto, ask, How is it possible there should? for that wit and judgment in this world never go together; inasmuch they are two operations differing from each other as wide as east is from west.--or says **Locke**,--so are farting and hiccuping say I.(III. The Author's Preface)

Day comments, rightly, that "these are hardly the words or tone of a committed disciple."[29] Locke is placed in agreement with learned fools like the grave Doctor Phutatorius ("copulator"), the comic canon-lawyer who becomes the victim of a hot chestnut in his pants in Volume IV. Phutatorius displays flawed judgment in that scene, for he wrongly blames Yorick as the malicious prankster responsible for his accidental burning pain. And flawed judgment characterizes both Phutatorius and Locke in "the Author's Preface," because both insist upon separating wit from judgment. Phutatorius, as an example in the story of Sterne's novel, shows that Locke's primordial mistake, a bad judgment on judgment, can lead to a complete lack of judgment in other respects.

The lack of respect Sterne shows towards Locke should come, however, as no shock--Sterne need not be Locke's "disciple" in order to draw on his discourse in a metafictional way. Sterne, in ridiculing Locke, does not reject his discourse completely but shows that he recognizes faults in a good plan:

> Now your graver gentry having little or no kind of chance in aiming at the one,--unless they laid hold of the other...raised up a hue and cry against the lawful owners [of both wit and judgment].
> I need not tell your worships, that this was done with great cunning and artifice,--that the great **Locke**, who was seldom outwitted by false sounds,---was nevertheless bubbled here. The cry, it seems, was so deep and solemn a one, and what with the help of great wigs, grave faces, and other implements of deceit, was rendered so general a one against the **poor wits** in this matter, that the philosopher himself was deceived by it,--it was his glory to rid the world from the lumber of a thousand vulgar errors;--but this was not of the number...(III. The Author's Preface)

Locke's own flawed judgment arises not from his philosophical enterprise, but from his deviation from it--he listens to the voice, the immoderate "hue and cry" of authority, instead of following the solid empirical method and judging the phenomena themselves. In this respect the true sage lacks the courage to trust himself, and he therefore succumbs to the power of symbols of established and systematic knowledge, the "great wigs and grave faces," learned "implements of deceit" in the tradition of the medieval schoolmen.

In _Tristram Shandy_, Locke's false moderation becomes enthusiasm, transforming gravity into frivolity:

> ...so that instead of sitting down cooly, as such a philosopher should have done, to have examined the matter of fact before he philosophised upon it;---on

> the contrary, he took the fact for granted, and so
> joined in with the cry, and halloo'd it as
> boisteriously as the rest.(III. Author's Preface)

In this particular passage, Sterne is more properly the "disciple" of Locke's method, and not the blind advocate of every part of the text of the Essay. In a strict adherence to the method of clarity and true judgment, Sterne attempts to be more Lockean than the philosopher himself. Paradoxically, the novel does this through self-conscious narration, explicitly recognizing the structures of signification which constitute communication in any text. Locke's attempt at clarity is tainted by his refusal to treat his own language directly as language, as a system of structures which do not just convey meaning, but also create it. As metanarrative, the novel differs from Locke's discursive practice in order to correct Locke's deviations from his own theories.

Sterne develops both serious and satiric possibilities of Locke's philosophy in the story and narrative discourse of Tristram Shandy to demonstrate that the rhetoric of the Essay undermines its author's explicit project. While we have seen that the narrative discourse of the novel plays with Locke's representational tenets, Sterne's "characters are so made," says John Traugott, "that operating on Locke's premises, they completely foil his rational method for communication."[30] Commentators on Tristram Shandy make clear that the central malady affecting the inmates of Shandy Hall is an inability to make themselves understood through language. Uncle Toby, Corporal

Trim, Walter, and especially Elizabeth Shandy (whose ironic maiden name is Mollineux, that of the empirical philosopher) are connected to each other by emotional sympathy--not the reasonable logic of Locke--which transcends the "hobby-horsical" self-centeredness that makes each character speak what amounts to a separate language.[31] "As a rhetorician," Traugott says, "Sterne had to subvert the reason so that he could persuade the reader of the moral substance of that ultimate sympathy which reconciles the eccentric egos of the Shandy world."[32]

Walter Shandy, for example, could represent Locke in the story. He is "curious...in philosophy--wise also in political reasoning,--and in polemical...no way ignorant..."(I.xix).His philosophical interest and magisterial nature are displayed in the many didactic lectures he gives on various topics. These range from a discourse supporting country-living (I.xviii), to a Lockean analysis of time (III.xvii) to "a bitter **Phillippick** [planned] upon the frogetfulness of chambermaids," in his always-in-progress **magnum opus,** the "Tristrapaedia." (V.xxvi)

These cannonades, to use the language of Uncle Toby's hobby-horse--against which hobby-horse, incidentally, Walter is always at war--are fired on the slightest pretext, and are ostensibly leveled at misunderstandings through language. Yet Walter's illuminations serve more to give his discursive bent a chance to find expression than to breach the gaps in the ramparts of Shandyean obscurity. He explicitly agrees with Locke's view of language, "especially," for James Swearingen, "in regretting

metaphor as an abuse," but he makes use not only of metaphors, but also of an amazing array of classical rhetorical devices.[33] In the use of words as **tropes**, in a way different from their proper grammatical sense for the sake of persuasive effect, Tristram describes his father as

> certainly irresistible, both in his orations and disputations;--he was certainly born an orator...Persuasion hung upon his lips, and the elements of Logick and Rhetorick were so blended up in him,--and, withall, he had so shrewd guess at the weaknesses and passions of his respondent,---that NATURE might have stood up and said,--"This man is eloquent." In short, whether he was on the weak or strong side of the question, 'twas hazardous in either case to attack him.(I.xix)

Walter's persuasive success comes from his conflation of two uses of language, the logical--or properly grammatical--and the rhetorical--the persuasive or logically deviant.

From the relatively unproblematic supportive relationship between logic and grammar, Paul de Man shows how logic is connected to persuasive language through "illocutionary" grammatical utterances, "speech acts" like pronouncements of marriage or baptism. Speech acts involve action on people, hearers of an utterance. This involvement in action through language makes the continuity between "the illocutionary [limited] realm of grammar and the perlocutionary realm of rhetoric...self-evident."[34] Yet, despite his evident skill and pleasure in argumentation and figuration for their own sakes, Walter only grudgingly admits the power of tropes:

> The highest stretch of improvement a single word is capable of, is a high metaphor,---for which, in my opinion, the idea is generally the worse, and not the

better...(V.xlii)

Walter's use and abuse of figurative language, and tropes in general, comes from his hobby-horse: building systems of understanding and clarity through language. Uncle Toby's obsession with fortification, then, is no more self-serving and obscuring than Walter's discursiveness, which is only naively clarifying. Fortification becomes the concrete image for Walter's aggressive confusion of rhetoric and logic.

In a parallel way, Locke implicitly uses tropes to express his explicit idea of language as clear communication. Locke defines discourse as a clear exposition of a logical train of ideas in plain terms:

> Since wit and fancy finds easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, **figurative speeches** and allusions in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or **abuse** of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them can scarce pass for faults. But yet, if we would speak of things as they are, that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words elegance hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats.(III.x.34)

Paul de Man notes, in quoting this passage, that "nothing could be more eloquent than this denunciation of eloquence. It is clear that rhetoric is something one can decorously indulge in as long as one knows where it belongs."[35]

De Man sees little "epistemological risk" in Locke's self-contradiction here--only dull-witted readers would take such a

flowery display too seriously. Locke's implicit recognition of the power of tropes is like Walter's unconscious use of specific classical rhetorical devices. This baffles Tristram, who cannot explain why his father, who "knew not so much as the names of his tools, should be able to work [so convincingly] with `em"(I.xix). Walter's ignorance of the devices with which he structures meaning in discourse leads to his own victimization by rhetoric-- he begins to form comic notions simply for the sake of defending them.

Similarly, the real risk comes for Locke when he makes language into a simple "conduit" which may corrupt "the fountains of knowledge which are in things themselves." Such free-wheeling assumptions about the relation of the mind to "things themselves," which any theory confined to categorization of **phenomena** and perceptions of things cannot really treat, make de Man wonder

> whether the metaphors illustrate a cognition or if the cognition is not perhaps shaped by the metaphors. And indeed, when Locke then develops his own theory of words and language, what he constructs is a theory of tropes. Of course, he would be the last man in the world to realize and to acknowledge this. One has to read him, to some extent, against or regardless of his own explicit statements...That is to say, he has to be read not in terms of explicit statements (especially explicit statements about statements) but in terms of the rhetorical motions of his own text, which cannot be simply reduced to intentions or to identifiable facts.[36]

The difference between a naive, explicit reading of Locke's <u>Essay</u>, and an internal, rhetorical one will explain Sterne's apparent ambivalence towards the philospher. The novel's keen

awareness of the relations within the text of the _Essay_ allows _Tristram Shandy_ to exploit the metafictive possibilities of Locke. These possibilities arise from the contradictory relation between the rhetoric and the logic of the _Essay_. And Sterne's conscious use of contrary possibilities in Locke is similar to his merging of opposing discourses to create the mixed narrative discourse of _Tristram Shandy_.

The best place to see the relation of explicit statement to actual linguistic practice--de Man's "rhetorical transformation"--is the section of the _Essay_ where Locke explicitly treats language.In Book Three, Locke develops his apparently empiricist view of language. Here, in discoursing about language, Locke makes "explicit statements about statements," and he therefore gives the very interpretive call which de Man warns us not to heed. Each of Locke's main tenets will be found in _Tristram Shandy_ to be victim of its own rhetoric.

The cardinal tenet of Locke's view is that ideas are prior to and exist independently of the system of signs, the linguistic "conduit" which serves to carry them. "Internal ideas," notions which find their representation in language, arise from the sensory perceptions of real things in the phenomenal world. And these simple ideas are, in turn, the basis of all thought. The corresponding linguistic signs are the starting point of language, which progresses in complexity through the combination of simple into more complex forms. Signification relies on a direct, one-to-one relation between the sign and the idea it is

to represent: "Those names [become] general which are made to stand for general ideas, and those [remain] particular where the ideas they stand for are particular"(III.iii.1). In all languages, "the names which stand for things which fall not under our senses...have had their rise from sensible ideas"(III.i.5). Locke traces the chain of signification from the sign for the most abstract idea down to that for the most particular, where definition through linguistic means can no longer occur. This places the linguistic system in a hierarchical position beneath that of "reality," which must take over the task of definition when language exhausts itself through translation. Locke thus ontologically privileges ideas over signs.

Locke's theory is **semantic** in its valorization of meaning, the external reference of any system of signification. De Man notes that Locke's theory of words is based on one of ideas, where the linguistic sign is not an autonomous structure but rather one entirely dependent on denotation.[37] Sterne's text, on the contrary, shows a marked distrust of the power of language to refer to anything outside of its own system, in this case, the system of Tristram's narrative:

> As many pictures as have been given of my father, how like him soever in different airs and attitudes,--not one, or all of them, can ever help the reader to any kind of preconception of how my father would think, speak, act, upon any untried occasion or occurrence of life.(V.xxiv)

Since we can only know what Walter does within the text, Tristram sees his narrative as closed. This closed system represents

language in general, and Sterne thus differs from Locke in seeing discourse as **semiotic**: its elements must be studied in their relations to each other, just as the elements of Walter's story in the narrative--"pictures [of] airs and attitudes"--are not meaningful in "untried," extra-textual situations, but only in "tried," textual ones. Tristram's discursive and philosophical skill comes in keeping "up a good understanding amongst words, as politicians do amongst men" (VII.xix). By figuring the understanding as inseparable from language, Sterne in effect undermines Locke's privileging of ideas over signs.

Locke's second tenet is that representation must be arbitrary. His theory is free of "`cratylic' delusions," which de Man finds in romantic theories of language where words naturally have specific meanings.[38] Representation for Locke is accomplished "not by any natural connexion that there is between particular articulate sounds and certain ideas, for then there would be but one language amongst men"(III.ii.1), but by the arbitrary assignment of signs to ideas. This arbitrariness helps account for the obvious differences from language to language in the representation of the same idea.

Yet in the discussions of the origins and basis of language, Locke limits arbitrariness to the connection between signs and things:"**nature** (my emphasis), even in the naming of things, unawares suggested to men the originals and principles of all their knowledge" (III.i.5). Locke argues for the arbitrary quality of the linguistic sign only in the simplest sense of a

word standing for a thing which is already delineated from other things **before** the attachment of signs **to them.** By contrast, the grammatical structures of language are pre-arranged because they cannot deviate from the "natural" arrangement of the world perceived by the senses. Language, under Locke's semantic scheme, is organized so as to represent the divisions recognized in the empirical world, the ideas of which are both temporally prior to and ontologically privileged over signs.

Sterne plays with Locke's view of the priority of natural organization, which necessitates linguistic correspondence to an implicit code or "natural grammar," through the figure of baptism. Among its many comic borrowings, the novel reproduces the French transcript of a serious deliberation of Sorbonne theologians on pre-birth christening: "The **Romish** Rituals direct the baptizing of the child, in cases of danger, **before** it is born."(I.xx) This excruciatingly convoluted and jesuitical dissertation allowing "baptism by a squirt" is inscribed within the "Romish" scholastic tradition of unprincipled twisting of discourse as "logic" in the service of persuasion, "rhetoric."

The rhetorical nature of the Sorbonne discourse identifies its style with Locke's own confusion of logic and rhetoric, though the theological dispute represents the sort of scholastic foolishness which Locke opposes. Tristram repeats the exposition of Locke's bad judgment seen in his rejection of wit, and thus identifies the philosopher here, as with Phutatorius previously, with the purveyors of bad counsel he rejects. Tristram

compliments the doctors, "hopes they rested well after so tiresome a consultation," and

> begs to know, whether, after the ceremony of marriage, and before that of consummation, the baptizing all the HOMUNCULI at once, slap-dash, by **injection**, would not be a shorter and safer cut still; on condition, as above, That if the HOMUNCULI do well and come safe into the world after this, That each and every of them shall be baptized again (**sous condition.**)--And provided, in the second place, That the thing can be done, which Mr. Shandy apprehends it may, **par le moyen d'une** petite canulle, and, **sans faire aucun tort a` le pere.** (I.xx)

Here, as in his frivolous homage to the humors (I.ii) "homunculi" are a signal of the ridiculousness of the Sorbonne discourse. We are also alerted to the comic potential of the discourse by the ungrammatical form "tort **a le** pere"--French agreement requires "**au** pere"--which draws us to the joke entailed by the idea of damage to the father, rather than to the mother--"a la mere"--in interuterine baptism.[39] The novel ridicules both the painstaking detailing of the Sorbonne doctors' argument and the ontological implications of baptism before birth, that nominal essence precedes existence.

Baptizing is naming--not as christening a baby "Bob," for example, but as calling something by a name, a "man," capable of being baptized--which is giving a sign to an idea or entity. Tristram draws the logical, and ridiculous, conclusion to the Sorbonne theory of prior baptism, which is prior-naming, by calling for naming before conception, before existence of the entity, here a "homunculus." Thus, through a comic transformation of the French discourse, baptism is ontologically privileged over the existence of the baptised, and nominal is valorized over real

essence; even the existence of the phenomenal world becomes dependent on naming. In semiotic terms, the signifier is both temporally and ontologically prior to its signified, which is the reversal of Locke's idea of natural "grammar," to which language must conform its structures of meaning. This privileging of word over thing, name over baby, reverses Locke's idea of a linguistic correspondence to pre-existing nature, and puts him in agreement with Tristram's humorous exploitation of this passage. Tristram thus vindicates Locke's idea of correspondence, but in a very un-Lockean, playful way.

While poking fun at the Sorbonne discourse and its philosophical conclusions, the novel also concretely demonstrates the arbitrariness of naming in the very possibility of "baptizing all the homunculi at once, slap dash." Silly language and the unlikeliness of Tristram's proposal suggest a continuation of an ironic treatment of baptism unconcerned with real essence, but the feasibility of such baptism is nonetheless opened up and brought to the fore by its suggestion. Since such arbitrary pre-naming is within the realm of possibilities--unlikely and silly, but imaginable nonetheless--names become separated from what they are supposed to represent.

Despite its irony, the novel's text is keenly aware of the plausibility of such naming in its presentation of the "Romish" discourse, which is given credence by, we presume, Catholics who accept the authority of scholarly pronouncements. The consequences of this discourse, which both Tristram and Locke

oppose, are thus somewhat conventional, in the authority they carry for a large group of those who accept it. It seems that the text unambiguously opposes such pretensions of scholarly authority since it is impossible to ignore the Rabelaisian contempt that Sterne shows throughout the text for learned foolishness. But until we see that similar authority is a powerful force in constituting the novel's own text. This comes when Walter is powerless before another scholarly naming-authority to change Tristram's name(IV.xix). There, learned doctors of theology--not Catholic, but Anglican, who draw, however, on the scholastic tradition of Catholic canon-law--refuse his request to declare Tristram's baptism invalid. We tend to agree with Walter that the accidental nature of the naming is a mitigating circumstance, as Toby does, despite the decree of "Pope Leo the IIId." cited by Kysarcius: "But, my brother's child, cried my uncle Toby, has nothing to do with the Pope--'tis the plain child of a Protestant gentleman, christen'd **Tristram** against the wills and wishes both of its mother and father, and all who are a-kin to it." (IV.xix)

Yet, the doctors' authority is upheld, giving the novel, and thus its ostensible subject, their names as a result. Such scholastic authority, unjust or not, does carry power, and does have influence over naming, which is the figure for signification in language in general. Hence, naming in language does occur arbitrarily, and even accidentally, and it is upheld by authority and by the conventional decision to respect such authority.

A corollary of arbitrariness in sign-idea relations is the idea of conventionality. According to Locke, meaning in language is conveyed through the use of signs "in the common acceptation of that language [to which they belong]" (III.ii.4).The significance of all linguistic entities is established by mutual agreement of a community of speakers, because no previous or necessary value is attached to any term. As in social contracts, meaning is chaotic until agreement is established, and subsequently enforced, by language users. Conventions are discovered through experience in signing, experience which must be different in every language, but equally valid in all systems so long as it accepts the decisions, tyrannical and capricious, of established agreement.

The different "languages" of the Shandys subvert convention in the story. Generally, the problems that the characters have understanding each other's points end in comedy, as in this discussion between Walter, Yorick, and Toby on legendary examples of precocity:

> ---Others were masters of fourteen languages at ten,-- finished the course of their rhetoric, poetry, logic, and ethics at eleven,--put forth their commentaries upon **Servius** and **Martianus Capella** at twelve,--and at thirteen received their degrees in philosophy, laws and divinity: But you forget the great **Lipsius**, quoth Yorick, who composed a work the day he was born;--They should have wiped it up, said my uncle **Toby**, and said no more about it.(VI.iii)

Toby misunderstands the denotation of the word "work," taking it in the less conventional sense of "excrement," which is however more appropriate to newborns than "work of scholarship," the

denotation used by Walter and Yorick. Toby thus misses the whole point of the conversation because he cannot understand a word in the signification its context gives it. He instead supplies a different context--a more common sense-one--and thus a different set of assumptions about the subject of infant precocity. These assumptions constitute a language, which is understood only if its meanings are agreed upon, and attached to words by convention.

Subversion of Locke's conventional model of language is, according to Terry Eagleton, the purpose of the novel. He summarizes Locke's view as "contractual":

> This was just a "market" view of language... meaning belonged to me like my commodity, and language was just a set which like money allowed me to exchange my meaning-commodity with another individual who was also a private proprietor of meaning. It was difficult under this empiricist theory of language to know how what got exchanged was the genuine article...Maybe we were just systematically misunderstanding each other all the time.[40]

While Eagleton expands this account to express a Marxist view of empiricism as a manifestation of "bourgeois individualism," his metaphor of conventional language as a series of exchange transactions clarifies Tristram Shandy's development of the failure of idea-sign correspondence as "systematic misunderstanding." Sterne's recognition of the contractual basis of Locke's theory is what allows the novel both to subvert agreement in language and to establish the principle of convention on a more primordial footing.

The lack of true agreement in discourse is what causes the

Shandys to talk past each other. Yet, they do not always misunderstand each other, for there reigns an unstated convention among them that all may speak their own "language," and that none is required to heed the content of hobby-horsical discourse. According to Traugott, it is only when Walter and Toby talk past each other and exercise their discursive tendencies, that they "settle into their proper natures, and that, says Aristotle in the Rhetoric, is pleasure. Part of the pleasure is, in fact, that each understands the other's pleasure. This is a way of communication that depends upon the public character of our activity, mental or physical, and depends not at all on the analysis of ideas."[41] Tristram explains how his mother, the quietest and least hobby-horsical of the Shandys, ironically grasps the perlocutionary nature of Walter's language:

> ...[she] had a way, which by the bye, I would this moment give away my purple jerkin, and my yellow sloppers into the bargain, if some of your reverences would imitate--and that was never to refuse her assent and consent to any proposition my father laid before her, merely because she did not understand it...(IX.xi)

Mrs. Shandy, whose unobtrusiveness seems to make her the stupidest of the Shandys, shows a far keener awareness of the essential convention in her family, as a linguistic community, than does the self-appointed "translator" of discourses and image for Locke, Walter, whose discursive bent she fully appreciates. She recognizes that Walter's meaning is not the "genuine article," and that his logic is the servant of his rhetoric: one-to-one correspondence between word and idea is replaced by ambiguous completion of rhetorical, perlocutionary acts by the

process of discoursing. Tristram's mother shows her explicit understanding of the subordination of semantic content in discourse to rhetorical form by her docile acceptance of the propsositions put to her by Walter, whose meaning she does not dispute, or even seriously consider. This ironically makes Tristram's mother, whose primary mode of "discourse" is silence, a better philosopher of language than either Walter or Locke.

We can now return to Locke's main thesis, that language is primarily an instrument of clear communication. It is an imperfection of language when "the signification of a word is referred to a standard, which standard is not easy to be known"(III.ix.5). In the linguistic "market," the possibility of clear communication has its limits when men cannot represent what they do not know, even if they are familiar with a sign for such an idea, which convention has established and tradition strengthened. Indeed, it is this very strength which can obscure meaning; the illusion of a necessary connection between sign and idea encourages the ignorant to invoke unfamiliar words as talismanic means to communicate unfamiliar or misunderstood ideas by tapping the accumulated wealth of the system. This shows that language is more personal than conventional when limited by the scope of individual perceptions, both of the system of signs and, more importantly, of the sensory world.

Language, though personal to some extent, obscures meaning when it becomes specialized, as in the cases of jargon and particular scientific, moral, religious, and philosophical

languages. According to Locke, these sorts of systems consist "of nothing else but abstract ideas, with [gratuitously unfamiliar] names annexed to them"(III.iii.9) Such sub-languages distort signification because of their divergence from conventional terminology. Unfamiliarity to any but a select group of speakers, who by their own efforts usually confuse themselves along with the uninitiated, separates signs from the clarifying authority of general convention. Speakers are free, in effect, to act irresponsibly. Their words become playful and start to draw attention to themselves by their very strangeness. Rather than convey ideas, jargon at its worst asserts its own form over any content or denotation. Jargon is among the imperfections of words which results from improper correspondence to ideas and the abuses of words--the use of "signs without anything signified" (III.x.2). Moreover, multiple significations and undue self-awareness in language usage frequently lead to a proud "skill in disputing" in speakers (III.x.7). This accounts for the subordination of logic to rhetoric accomplished by Walter Shandy.

Locke uses several examples of jargon to demonstrate the power and extent of perversions of meaning. Locke is so generous with particular examples of this sort that he casts doubt on his own text--playfulness results from his derision of ridiculous language. These terms of jargon, by virtue of being so often referred to specifically, become more than just evidence for Locke's point: they actually become a part of his own text, and draw attention to themselves by their strangeness. The terms of

the various "schools" demonstrate, for Locke, the progress of "gibberish" and taking "words for things":

> To this abuse those men are most subject who confine their thoughts to any one system, and give themselves up into a firm belief of the perfection of any received hypothesis...Who is there that has been bred up in the Peripatetick philosophy, who does not think the Ten Names, under which are ranked the Ten Predicaments, to be exactly conformable to the nature of things? Who is there of that school that is not persuaded that substantial forms, vegetative souls, abhorrence of a vacuum, intentional species, &c., are something real?...The Platonists have their soul of the world, and the Epicureans their endeavor towards motion...and should aerial and aetherial vehicles come once...to be generally received anywhere, no doubt those terms would make impressions on men's minds, so as to establish them in the reality of such things...(III.x.14)

Such an unconnected list of scholarly foolishness is reminiscent of Rabelais' technique of parodying medieval learning and the convoluted forms of speculative philosophy through tiresome detail.[42] It also recalls a tradition of satiric playfulness previously seen in Fielding and Smollett.

In addition, Locke, like Walter Shandy, uses figurative language on his own and to express his own points. "Locke does not purge his language of metaphors," although he considers them "instruments of error and deceit".[43] The learned, especially the Scholastics, use signs which signify nothing to create "artificial intelligence"--not computer-generated, but impressive-sounding foolishness--whose obscurity is a way of maintaining their academic authority:

> Besides, there is no such way to gain admittance, or give defense to strange and absurd doctrines, as to

guard them round about with legions of obscure,
doubtful and undefined words. Which yet make these
retreats more like the dens of robbers, or holes of
foxes, than the fortresses of fair warriors; which, if
it be hard to get them out of, it is not for the
strength that is in them, but the briars and thorns,
and the obscurity of the thickets they are beset
with.(III.x.9)

Here Locke employs the language of fortification which we
recognize as Toby's hobby-horse; moreover, it is the concrete, if
ironic, image for Walter's own obsession, pawning off tropes as
logic. As in his eloquent attack on eloquence, the philosopher
uses metaphor to accomplish his end. Locke's attack on the false
scholars of his day (who, we suspect, are identical with those
who do not agree with him) as "robbers" and "foxes" leaves no
doubt as to the identity of the "fair warrior." Unfortunately for
the cause of the soldier-philosopher, his "fortress," the
discussion of language in the Essay, has already been breached,
if not explicitly by "doubtful and undefined words," then by his
own figurative expression. Yet these enemies of clarity are not
breaking the walls from outside--metaphors and tropes are the
ambiguous Janissaries guarding Locke's theory, who undermine his
principles while working in their defense.

In addition to military imagery, Locke's discourse is
connected to that of the novel by the figure of baptism. We have
seen how the Sorbonne discourse served as the occasion for
Tristram to show the authority of the assertion of nominal over
real essence, and subvert the "natural grammar" entailed in
Locke's assertion of empirical organization prior to language.

Locke is similarly concerned with ambiguous baptism and the problems of naming it implies. In this connection he relates a story of Giles Menage concerning the **"Abbe' Malortru"**:

> "When the abbot of Saint Martin", says he, "was born, he had so little of the figure of a man, that it bespoke him rather a monster. It was for some time under deliberation, whether he should be baptized or no. However, he was baptized, and declared a man provisionally..." This child, we see, was very near being excluded out of the species of man, barely by his shape. He escaped very narrowly as he was;and it is certain, a figure a little more oddly turned had cast him...as a thing not to be allowed to pass for a man. And yet there can be no reason given why, if the lineaments of his face had been a little altered, a rational soul could not have been lodged in him...(III.vi.26)[44]

Here, a baby, born of a woman but in important physical ways not resembling a human, must be defined as a true man (at least "provisionally") before he can be given the first rites of the church. Baptism signifies admission of a baby into the community of Christendom, which is here synonymous with humanity. This image, while questioning our ability to determine real essence, figures the "common acceptation" required for a word to signify an idea and thus enter the community of meaningful signs. The issue of humanity would seem to fall into the province of the necessary and determined organization of nature which language must represent. But the importance of convention calls into question any natural arrangement of reality as the solid empirical basis of signification. Thus a man is not necessarily a man, one of God's distinct creations, until we choose to call him a man. Moreover, it is only common agreement that marks the

difference between a man and an unacceptable mutation of one, not any natural boundary. Such emphasis on common acceptation places words above things, the literary and linguistic above the real: the baby is not afforded the rites of the Church and even the possibility of salvation until he is **called** a man.

Locke escapes affirming the linguistic as more important than the structure of nature by using this metaphor to show the imperfection of language, rather than the indeterminacy of reality. In the baby's case, it is not his physical characteristics which are the reality, but whether or not he has a **soul**. This is of course a reality which cannot be represented empirically; the baby's outer physical form does not precisely indicate what it is seen by the doctors and priests to represent. This very subtle image shows the limits of strict correspondence in language. "The boundaries of species are uncertain"(III.vi.27), not because the natural world is not organized well, but because the idea of **species** is arbitrarily imposed on reality. Language, then, cannot be simple and straightforward because it is constructed under the limits of all empirical perception, which gives us knowledge of phenomena, but not of true natural organization.

The remedy for uncertain meaning in language which the Essay suggests only separates words from things even further than has been accomplished by the abuses and imperfections of language. In the idea of the "picture lexicon," Locke interposes another means of representation between the sensory world and the system of

linguistic signs:

>It were therefore to be wished, That men versed in physical inquiries, and acquainted with the several sorts of natural bodies, would set down those simple ideas wherein they observe the individuals of each sort constantly to agree...such a Dictionary [though]...will require too much time, cost, and pains to be hoped for...yet methinks it is not unreasonable to propose, that words standing for things should be expressed by little draughts and prints made of them. A vocabulary made after this fashion would perhaps with more ease, and in less time, teach the true signification of many terms, especially in languages of remote countries or ages, and settle truer ideas in men's minds whereof we read the names in ancient authors, than all the large and laborious comments of learned critics...**Toga, tunica, pallium,** are words easily translated by **gown, coat,** and **cloak**; but we have thereby no more true ideas of the fashion of those habits amongst the Romans, than we have of the faces of the tailors who made them. Such things as these, which the eye distinguishes by their shapes, would be best let into the mind by draughts made of them, and more determine the signification of such words, than any other words set for them, or made use of to define them. But this is only by the bye. (III.xi.25)

Locke opposes self-referentiality in language, the semiotic view, where one sign can only be connected to another sign, but in this passage he makes just such a connection between words and the system of drawings. Some confusion may arise in regard to pictures as signs; Locke must have believed that there are pictures which will be universally recognized as drawings of particular things. But, we, however, cannot accept such universality: where do we draw the positive distinction between written forms which are linguistic or pictorial? Hieroglyphs, for example, do not always resemble what they describe in a simple caricature. Similarly, pictures are not the things themselves, or even the actual perceptions of those things, but rather signs

which are part of a system of signification. There is no more natural connection between pictures and reality than between words and things.

Sterne uses pictorial representation as his most original "sign." The black, marbled, and blank pages, along with squiggles of various sorts, are extended tropes, in that they vary from proper linguistic use, but serve to signify nonetheless. In a famous example, the "description" of Widow Wadman--blank pages which play with the reader's conventional concern for realistic character-rendering--valorizes the arbitrariness of signs. This introduction precedes the two blank pages:

> To conceive this right,--call for pen and ink--here's paper ready to your hand.--Sit down, sir, paint her to your own mind--as like your mistress as you can---as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you--`tis all one to me--please your own fancy in it. (VI.xxxviii)

In this passage Sterne brings his semiotic view of language into full play. Widow Wadman is the signified, but the signifier is a balnk page, reminiscient of Locke's **tabula rasa**. Tristram invites the creation of different discourses to fill the gap. First, the "pen and ink" gesture toward a verbal characterization, but the reader is also invited to "paint her," thus gesturing toward a visual reprsentation. Further, either representation is based upon the accident of readership: the portrait, whether verbal or visual, depends upon the arbitrary action of the reader who may either represent an ideal somewhere between mistress and wife, or may choose, as most readers undoubtedly do, to note the oddity of the pages and their invitation as simply "rhetorical," and

proceed to read on. Again, the novel shows Locke's tenets to be potentially obscuring--the blank space does not clarify its ostensible subject at all. Locke is ironically rescued by the semiotic potential of Sterne's technique, for the blank space emphasizes the radically arbitrary nature of signs.

Under a conventional theory of language, then, representation of any sort is not reality. All means of signing are arbitrary impositions on the world and cannot be defined by it, but must be defined by their relation to other signs. Since the only way to illuminate signs is by seeing their connection to other signs, the system of language in general is self-referential and self-contained. Hence, Locke errs in insisting upon the superiority of sensory perceptions over linguistic systems, for given Locke's theory, language refers only to itself. Indeed, words would seem to take precedence over things and become in a sense more "real," in their evident connectedness, than the sensory world.

Locke concludes his proposal for linguistic reform and clarity by finishing his dictionary proposal with an apologetic gesture towards marginality:"But this by the bye." This negative climax seems strange. How, we might ask, can a tool which would clarify much of language be anything but central? Locke's use of this common disclaimer--one used several times in Tristram Shandy in connection with Locke--serves to raise doubt concerning the possibility of any clarity under his scheme of language.

The disclaimer is part of Locke's rhetoric which, along with

his use of figurative language, opposes his idea of correspondence and direct, unambiguous communication. For Sterne, however, there is a certain importance to the marginal in Locke. Not only does the novel reverse the hierarchies in Locke's ideas, but it also centralizes what the discourse of the Essay considers trivial. As Jonathan Culler points out, the French critic Jacques Derrida uses this same method:

> Another common operation is that which takes a minor, unknown text and grafts it onto the main body of the tradition, or else takes a footnote, and transplants it to a vital spot...
> This concentration on the apparently marginal puts the logic of supplementarity to work as an interpretive strategy: what has been relegated to the margins or set aside by previous interpreters may be important precisely for those reasons that led it to be set aside.[45]

Several marginal structures connect the novel to Locke's text. Sterne shows an awareness of Locke's impulse to relegate certain comments to marginal status in imitating these maneuvers in his own discourse.

By ending his picture-dictionary proposal with a gesture towards marginality--"But this by the bye" (III.xi.25)--Locke implies that his solution to all the obscurities in language, which he has treated at length, is a kind of digression from his main argument. Yet we see that Sterne exploits pictorial representation to a large extent in his narrative, making it one of his central devices to undermine novelistic convention. Because of its boldness, typographical variation from written discourse serves as a concrete image for the novel's metafictiveness. Pictures are thus central to Sterne's self-

conscious and self-reflexive method. The use of pictures is the promised corrective of Locke--the novel takes a powerful idea of Locke and exalts it, despite the efforts of the discourse of the Essay to render the idea marginal. In addition, the novel performs this operation self-consciously: After the description of Elizabeth Shandy's association of clock-winding and sex, explained "by the sagacious **Locke**" as the "Association of Ideas" productive of "wry" actions, Tristram repeats Locke's apologetic phrase--"But this by the bye."(I.iv) This passage is not explicitly connected to pictorial representation, but to the comic connection of ideas. Still, the two points are similar: the "Association of Ideas" is an arbitrary connection of dissimilar notions, while pictorial representation is an arbitrary pairing of linguistic and non-linguistic signs, or a pairing of ideas, like the appearance of the Widow Wadman or the reader's idea of a mistress/wife, with non-linguistic signs, like a blank page.

The novel's discourse shows other unlikely pairings, and becomes practically a history of them in its mixing of discourses and binary opposites: wit and judgment, frivolity and seriousness, philosophy and literature, logic and rhetoric. To these we can now add the association of the central with the marginal. Tristram uses this marginal "by the bye" opening in Locke to introduce the Essay to his readers, in what we have seen is the un-Lockean but appropriate context of figurative language:

> You see as plain as can be that I write as a man of
> erudition;--that even my similes, my allusions, my
> illustrations, my metaphors, are erudite,--and that I
> must sustain my character properly, and contrast it

properly too,--else what would become of me? Why, Sir,
I should be undone;--at this very moment that I am
going here to fill up one place against a critick,--I
should have made an opening for a couple.
      --Therefore I answer thus:
      Pray, Sir, in all the reading which you have ever
read, did you ever read such a book as **Locke's** Essay
upon the Human Understanding ?--Don't answer me rashly,
because many, I know, quote the book, who have not read
it,--and many have read it who understand it not:--If
either of these is your case, as I write
to instruct I will tell you in three words what the
book is.--It is a history.--A history! of who? what?
where? when? Don't hurry yourself.--It is a history-
book, Sir, (which may possibly recommend it to the
world) of what passes in a man's own mind...
      But this by the way.(II.ii)

This passage, consistent with Sterne's method, is both comic and

serious. Its pedantic tone allows Tristram to warn his reader

against falling into the tradition of answering "rashly," or

reading naively and explicitly, in ignorance of the semiotic and

relational reading of Locke's <u>Essay</u>. The "Sir" of this paragraph

is not only a reader who needs to be scolded in advance for his

mistaken opinions but one whose eager and humorous opposition to

the conclusion of Tristram's act of naming ("A history! of who?

what? where? when?") is itself a result of undue haste, a reflex

to conform to naive convention.

      If, as I have been arguing, Locke is central to <u>Tristram

Shandy</u>, it seems odd, at first, that Tristram's introduction of

this key borrowing should end with the marginal gesture. Yet, in

its use both of conventional devices and of Locke, the novel

undermines explicitness and then uses the rhetoric of the device

to serve its own metafictional ends. "One of the characteristic

reflexes of the self-conscious novel," according to Robert Alter,

"is to flaunt `naive' narrative devices, rescuing their usability by exposing their contrivance."[46] In Alter's sense, Locke's philosophy as a whole can be seen in its wide acceptance, as a convention. Along with the Bible and the "imaginative" tradition, it is one of Sterne's central conventional borrowings. This has implications for interpretation of Locke's text: Locke's explicit oppositions become "naive" conventions of his text, structures of meaning which have been traditionally identified as the univocal pronouncements which yield the accepted "philosophy" of Locke. Accepted interpretations of the _Essay_ become inadequate in light of Sterne's exposure of the operations which give meaning to Locke's text: the infection of logic by illogical tropes, and the ultimate subjection of Locke's arguments to rhetoric. The novel flaunts both conventional senses of Locke--his status as canonical author, and the semantic pronouncements of the _Essay_ which support that privileged position. Sterne then makes the discredited Locke usable by emphasizing the semiotic potential embodied in his text's rhetorical transformation. Locke's text becomes meaningful not as an authoritative and convincing philosophy of communication, but as a highly interesting text which denies its own propositions through its own language. Such a denial supports the novel's central concern with self-conscious language through drawing attention to signification in the most unconventional of places, a discourse about "transparent" language.

The "by the bye" marginal gesture is a "footnoting" found in

Locke's _Essay_ which Sterne incorporates into his own text as signifying central points. Conversely, Sterne makes a central image of Locke marginal in his borrowing of the baptism of the "Malformed Abbe'" (_Essay_ III.vi.26). Baptism as naming is central in Sterne's treatment of Locke's ideas of conventionality in language and its dependence on a universal natural grammar. Yet, Tristram turns Locke's story into a footnote--"* Vide Menagiana, vol.I"--in his own comic discussion of the problems involved in naming. Here, Francis I tells a minister that

> ...it would not be amiss, said the king...if this good understanding between ourselves and **Switzerland** were a little strengthened--There is no end, Sire, replied the minister, in giving money to these people--they would swallow up the treasury of **France**--Poo!poo! answered the king--there are more ways, Mons. **le Premier**, of bribing states, besides that of giving money---I'll pay **Switzerland** the honour of standing godfather for my next child--Your majesty, said the minister, in so doing, would have all the grammarians in **Europe** upon your back;--**Switzerland**, as a republic, being a female, can in no construction be a godfather...(IV.xxi)

Here we re-enter the illocutionary, limited realm of grammar, which is de Man's link between logic and rhetoric. Naming a godfather is a speech act and is, by definition, placed within the larger illocutionary context of christening a child. Christening is an act based on baptism, which associates the two uses of Menage in the context of naming: Locke's story from Menage and Tristram's borrowing from the same source. In this passage the limited act of naming a god-parent is connected with the rhetorical goal of "bribing a state," illustrating the rhetorical transformation of the speech act. This image, inscribed within the marginal/central opposition illustrating the

rhetoric of Locke, is a figure for the connection between Locke's own limited goal of constructing a theory of language, and the larger operation of illustrating how that theory fails, which is accomplished by the text of the Essay: Francis' act of paying a small compliment to Switzerland leads to the larger paralocutionary consequence of arousing "all the grammarians in Europe."

The transformation of the marginal into the central in the discourse of the novel shows essentially that Sterne corrects Locke's discourse when it is at variance with his tenets. For de Man the breakdown of Locke's logic creates an intolerable situation "and makes the soothing conclusion of book 3, entitled `Of the Remedies of the Foregoing Imperfections and Abuses [of Language],' into one of the least convincing sections of the Essay. One turns to the tradition engendered by Locke's work in the hope of finding some assistance out of the predicament."[47]

Here de Man turns to the Essai sur l'origine des conoissances humaines by the Abbe' de Condillac because it explicitly begins at the point where Locke's rhetoric unknowingly carried him--to a theory of mind that is based on signs, and a theory of signs which is semiotic and relational, rather than semantic and referential. Condillac will thus be helpful in explaining Sterne's view and use of language, which Locke only partially--and usually unwittingly--illuminated. While Locke's work, as pedantically introduced by Tristram, is "a history-

book...of what passes in a man's own **mind**"(II.ii), Condillac gives a far more strictly historical account of the development of knowledge than does Locke. This makes his discourse more "literary," in its temporal "story," than Locke's "philosophical," atemporal discourse. And the difference inscribes Condillac within Sterne's mixed discourse--its ambiguity is a concrete image for the continuity between literary and philosophical modes. Condillac will also forthrightly explain the figural and picture-oriented nature of language which plays such a large part in the semiotics of Tristram Shandy.

Considering Sterne's interest in French letters, it is very possible that he read Condillac's Essai in the original when it came out in 1746, thirteen years before he started writing Tristram Shandy. As I have not been able to determine how familiar Sterne actually was with Condillac, it is reasonable to assume that he was influenced by the general interest caused in England by the translation of the Essai, published in 1756.[48] Hans Aarsleff notes that in England Condillac "gave the impulse to several works," and that he had a wide influence on significant figures in England, in his native France, and especially in Germany--where he founded the tradition of classical philology which was to produce Herder, and later, Nietzsche.[49]

Whatever the extent and directness of the influence of Condillac's ideas on Sterne, the Essai provides its own justification for consideration along with Locke in a discussion

of the language of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. Condillac ontologically privileges language over ideas, and, like Sterne, remains more consistent to Locke's original tenets, particularly the empirical basis of sensation and reflection. For Condillac, the seed of language is well-rooted prior to the reflection over sensory data which Locke saw as producing ideas. In Locke's origin of the operations of the mind, language is taken for granted and simply introduced as the completely-formed signifier of the natural order. For Condillac, language is prior to ideas.

The necessity of language for constituting ideas is demonstrated for Condillac in the history of language, which is really a progression of metaphorical proliferation. Primitive man, without language, developed a series of arbitrary gestures to express wants, which became conventional through repetition. Gesture later branched off into both vocal "cris naturels" and a physical language of action. Residual elements of both of these primordial systems of signification remain in the modern languages, music, and dances which they fathered: "speech succeeding the language of action, retained its character." (<u>Essai</u> II.ii)

The language of gesture can be seen in <u>Tristram Shandy</u> in the involved description of Trim's oratorically optimal position when reading Yorick's sermon (II.xvii), and here, in Walter's accidental attitude in wig-removing:

> As my father's **India** handkerchief was in his right coat pocket, he should have by no means suffered his right hand to have got engaged:on the contrary, instead of taking off his wig with it, as he did, he ought to

have committed that entirely to the left...

In this case (unless indeed, my father had been resolved to make a fool of himself by holding the wig stiff in his left hand--or by making some nonsensical angle or other at his elbow joint, or armpit)--his whole attitude had been easy--natural--unforced: **Reynolds** himself, as great and gracefully as he paints, might have painted him as he sat. (III.ii)

Walter's awkward stance reminds Toby of fortification structures he had seen when fighting at Namur, and the association serves to launch him into a hobby-horsical discourse on the battle and fortification:

It was not an easy matter in any king's reign, (unless you were as lean a subject as myself) to have forced your hand diagonally, quite across your whole body, so as to gain the bottom of your coat-pocket.--In the year, one thousand seven hundred and eighteen, when this happened, it was extremely difficult; so that when my uncle **Toby** discovered the transverse zig-zaggery of my father's approaches towards it, it instantly brought into his mind those he had done duty in, before the gate of **St.Nicholas**;--the idea of which drew off his attention so entirely from the subject in debate, that he had got his right hand to the bell to ring up **Trim**, to go and fetch his map of **Namur**, and his compasses and sector along with it, to measure the returning angles of the traverses of that attack...(III.iii)

This passage shares a comic exaggeration of the power of "attitude" with Trim's sermon-reading, but it shows that the language of gesture can signify despite intention. Walter, the erstwhile master of both Lockean clarity and rhetorical bullying, is now reduced to a sign, which signifies, quite arbitrarily, meanings within Toby's language--what he himself most detests. Walter becomes a trope in Toby's paradigmatic connection of accident with meaning. Walter's "authorial" intention signifies exactly nothing, but as in the primordial language of action, the

principle of **want** is primary--Toby wants to talk about forts, so he will understand signs only as signifying within his linguistic system.

Condillac's history continues from the language of gesture to a simple verbal one of images, where all language is poetic: primitive languages adopted all sorts of metaphor "and became extremely picturesque"(_Essai_ II.viii). Writing was invented to reach the mass of the people with the increasingly large number of laws, traditions, and conventions accumulated by a growing culture. Prose and poetry divided on the lines of "useful" and "amusing" discourse, a division which accomodates the usual notion of philosophy/literature. Sterne's mixing serious and playful modes is thus justified by the common origin of the two modes in figurative language.

Language reaches its most advanced stage, for Condillac, when abstractions come into use. At this point, philosophers, who tend towards abstraction, forget

> that the most abstract terms are derived from the first names that were given to sensible objects. When the use of these signs became familiar, their origin was forgotten and people were so weak as to believe that these were the most natural names for spiritual things. It was even imagined that they perfectly explained the essence and nature of those things (_Essai_ II.x).

The progress of abstraction is what paves the way for the the kind of scholastic foolishness which Locke castigates and which appears throughout _Tristram Shandy_, from the Sorbonne deliberation to the discussion of learned babies. Condillac recognizes that names strongly influence the determination of

real essence, as does Sterne's concern with baptism and christening.

According to Condillac, the history of language is cyclical, not progressive. Once a language has reached a high level of abstraction in philosophy, and a correspondingly high degree of metaphor in literature, a necessary decline begins. Condillac uses the case of Egyptian hieroglyphics to illustrate the cycle of a language and its signs from clarity to obscurity (Essai II.xiii). Hieroglyphics originated as a simplified and advanced form of picture-writing in a language of metaphoric and metonymic tropes. Figures--both characters and the tropes they made up-- were originally simple and easy to understand, coming out of the common language of action. Once Greek-style letters were invented, hieroglyphics became a priestly language, and thereby gained a mystical air. Signs that originated in necessity came to be employed for secrecy. Later, in Greece and Rome, the old hieroglyphs became ornaments for monuments, seen on obelisks and pediments. Finally, these signs fell into the hands of the barely literate mass, and returned to the status of popular, easily-understood symbols.

The continual presence of picture-language in effecting some form of obscurity means that metaphor and trope are always present in a language, to some degree of explicitness, in their primordial form as pictorial representations based on actions. Pictures are thus always among the conventional tropes that an original writer can choose from. Therefore, Sterne's most

original figures, pictures--deviations from written verbal language--are as conventional and traditional as any metaphor, and are no more deviant than the realistic narrative devices which he parodies. For Condillac, great writers change and enrich the rhetorical taste of their nation--literary images spread because men of superior merit in all fields use tropes to progress in their own branch of the national language. Any would-be great writer must deviate from linguistic convention to be original and create influential figures. In this way, the greatest writers paradoxically contribute the most to the ruin of their language, becoming the envied model for frivolous and specious imitation.

Aside from the evident implications of this destructive theory of genius for <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, Tristram's narrative shows an awareness of the necessary decline of language. He traces the prurient progress of the word "whiskers" through the gossiping ladies of the court of Navarre to its sad end:

> 'Twas plain to the whole court that the word was ruined: **La Fosseuse** had given it a wound, and it was not better for passing through all these defiles--It made a faint stand, however for a few months [until] the word in course became indecent, and (after a few efforts) absolutely unfit for use.
> The best word in the best language of the best world, must have suffered under such combinations.--The curate of **d'Estella** wrote a book against them, setting forth the dangers of accessory ideas, and warning the **Navarois** against them. (V.i)

Could the curate be the Abbe' de Condillac? His doctrine of the necessary decline of languages and their signs is comically illustrated in the power of gossip, stale idle talk--the opposite

of the original discourse of genius--to disfigure signs, and change the "tropography" of their system. Condillac does not specifically "warn against" Locke's bugbear, the association of ideas, but he does show that metaphor, the most entrenched association of unlike signs, allows writers striving for originality to debase language. Through these writers, metaphor actually deconstructs its own code--tropes which vary too far from convention (agreements of grammatical or, for the Navarrese court, moral propriety) will not only be expelled from the linguistic system, but will leave behind a poorer language. Writing which becomes too rich in metaphorical meaning eventually becomes meaningless, and proliferates so as to destroy all meaning.

Since metaphorical development is the job of writers of genius, metaphorical decline can be linked to the deviation of writers from convention:

> When a language abounds with original writers in every kind, the more a person is endowed with abilities, the more difficult he thinks it will be to surpass them. A mere equality would not satisfy his ambition; like them he wants the pre-eminence. But as every style analogous to the character of the language, and to his own, hath been already used by preceding writers, he has nothing left but to deviate from analogy. Thus in order to be an original, he is obliged to contribute to the ruin of a language, which a century sooner he would have helped to improve.
> Though such writers may be criticized, their superior abilities must still command success. The ease there is in copying their defects, soon persuades men of indifferent capacities, that they shall acquire the same degree of reputation. Then begins the reign of subtil and strained conceits, of affected antitheses, of specious paradoxes, of frivolous and far-fetched expressions...a vicious taste infects the arts and sciences, which is followed by a visible decrease of

men of abilities (<u>Essai</u> II.i.158-9).

In this respect Condillac resembles Ann Radcliffe or Mary Shelley
in his history of language, which is, for Paul de Man, "like the
plot of a Gothic novel in which someone compulsively manufactures
a monster on which he then becomes totally dependent and does not
have the power to kill."[50] Tristram uses similar imagery of
manufacturing to describe his narrative style which depends on
digressions. Because of them

> ...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 at variance with
> each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is
> progressive too,--and at the same time...from the
> beginning of this, you see, I have constructed the main
> work and the adventitious parts of it with such
> intersections, and have so complicated and involved the
> digressive and progressive movements, one wheel within
> another, that the whole machine, in general, has been
> kept a-going...(I.xxii)

It is because Tristram's narrative is digressive that it can
progress at all. He has taken two opposite movements, the forward
and the backward, and reconciled them so that they become
mutually dependent and nearly indistinguishable from each other,
just as Condillac's "monster" depends on a dialectic of progress
and decline.

Condillac's own discourse shows similarities to the method
of Sterne in its historical model of language, so like a literary
narrative. Yet, Sterne's narrative is not progressive, as is
Condillac's dicourse of signs (whose "story," however, is
cyclical and not teleological), but digressive--its story is

barely visible in its discourse. This results largely from the interruption of any progression in the novel by the borrowings which help to constitute Sterne's mixed modes of discourse. The very device of borrowing which allows Sterne's narrative to digress is what Condillac harnesses in the cause of progression. The discourse of his _Essai_ is punctuated with direct quotations from various other authors--Bishop Warburton, Mallebranche, Descartes, Voltaire, and of course, Locke, whose own _Essay_ is the borrowing responsible for Condillac's _Essai_ in the first place. But, Condillac's "story" of the cyclical rise and fall of languages is no more progressive than Sterne's digressive and scattered one.

Condillac is primarily useful for his recognition of the figural nature of all language, and for his relational and historical view of sign-systems, both of which make him explicitly closer than Locke to Sterne's use of language. In addition, he sides with Tristram in his dispute with Locke over the separation of wit and judgment. Wit, for Condillac, is how we acquire ideas different from the vulgar, and is necessary for understanding. The best discourse shows a combination of wit and judgment and expresses the necessary relationship between fiction as interesting, and truth as sensible.

Condillac's own rhetoric transforms the logic of language into a tool for unfolding the "germ" of all knowledge: "I am convinced that the use of signs is the principle which unfolds the germ of all our ideas" (_Essai_, Introduction). This seems to

create a new principle of innate knowledge, and develop a "germ" of knowledge which is not simply repesented by signs, but actually brought to the fore and disclosed by language. That which constitutes all ideas is then signs, making the "germ," the origin of all thought, into language itself. Condillac sees Locke's insistence that all the contents of reflection cannot be reduced to sensation as implying innate knowledge. He tries to show that reflections are compositions of sense experience, "since ideas are formed by a pre-reflective process of association." (Introduction) He bases them in the germ of language, which creates associations--tropes--prior to all knowledge. This germ then becomes the innate principle and **a priori** basis for the organization of all ideas.

"If the referent of a narrative," de Man notes of the Essai, "is indeed the tropological structure of its discourse, then the narrative will be the attempt to account for this fact."[51] In its metafictive narrative, Tristram Shandy undertakes the same enterprise as Condillac's story of language. The novel, however, rejects Condillac's wavering between passive sensationalism--his development of the pure empiricism of Locke--and linguistic formalism implying prior, if not innate knowledge, opting for the latter view, of language and narrative as semiotic.

Part Three:

Beyond Influence

_____

With the snow, the rain,
The wind against me,
In the misty chasms,
Ever onward! Ever onward!
Without rest or repose!
I should rather have sorrows
Through which to struggle
Than so many joys
Of life to endure.
--Goethe, from "Rastlose Liebe"

Goethe's idea of restless love depends upon a valorization of motion over stasis--"sorrows" to be grappled with are preferable to "joys...to endure." This is an apt image for the defamiliarizing and disorienting text of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, the language of which demands the active participation of the reader. Like the lover against the snow, rain, and wind, the reader of the novel must face a disordered narrative, and press "ever onward" despite the failure of the text to entertain and provide an aesthetic diversion from mundane life through a mimetic story. <u>Tristram Shandy</u> as disorienting text asserts itself as what Roland Barthes calls "writable" or "writerly": a self-conscious work which resists easy reading, and requires its reader to be a producer of literary meaning, rather than a consumer of it.[52] Barthes opposes writable, metafictive texts, which are problematical and experimental, to "readable," classic works,

which meet conventional expectations of character and plot development in order to show that works demand different kinds of attention.[53]

The attention required by writable texts is active: presented with the seeming disorder of the narrative, the reader is challenged to decode and make familiar the unclear structures of meaning placed in the text, essentially to "rewrite" the work in an attempt to understand it in relation to conventional ideas of literature. Such rewriting amounts to a co-authoring of the text by the reader, who adds the conventions which constitute his knowledge of literature to the structures of the text. Tristram Shandy, as a metanarrative filled with unclear structures, requires such active participation in its creation during reading. These unclear structures include references to Locke and Condillac, which leave themselves open to disclosure in a discussion of Sterne's philosophical rhetoric. We have seen how the novel inscribes itself as metafictive and writable; its use of philosophical borrowings asserts the semiotic nature of language. In addition, the texts of Locke and Condillac have been shown to assert the same thing in their own mode of self-consciousness--should we then consider them to be writerly texts also? My question focuses on writability as a way of reading. In an internal reading of the two philosophical works, we find the same self-conscious operation of language, through the deconstruction of conventions of philosophical and abstract discourse, as we see in Tristram Shandy as metafictive text. This

makes the writable dependent on operations of reading, which can be applied to both Locke and Condillac--ostensibly readable texts which yield self-conscious linguistic structures--and the evident metafiction of Sterne.

The subversion of logic by rhetoric, which powers the self-reflexivity of language in the two philosophical treatises, requires active reading in a truly writable construction of meaning. In an internal reading, then, Locke and Condillac make comments on language just as Sterne does, and, by doing so, constitute their discourses as metalinguistic. However self-conscious the rhetoric of the two philosophers may be, Sterne's metafiction seems nevertheless to meet the conditions of a self-conscious text better than either Essay. This is a result of conventions of reading reflected in the idea of inherent readablity or writability Barthes claims to find in texts--his hierarchy of modern experimental texts over traditional conventional ones may be applied here to the issue of discursive linearity. Yet, he reads classic texts in such a way as to render them problematic also: this reflects his view of writable texts as alive.[54] Writable texts are so much more evidently self-conscious than classic texts that they could be written today.

The modernity of writable texts does not mean that classic texts cannot also be rewritten; the rewriting of classic texts seems simply to take more subversive effort and more determined analysis to render problematic what is so fordibbingly simple. Thus, we read philosophical texts as forward-moving logical

arguments because that is a conventional expectation that readers carry to "abstract" texts. In the same way, we read causally-connected readable narratives in a linear fashion because we expect them to tell a story, and they do not seem to resist this expectation structurally. Metafictive literary texts, however, flaunt linearity by their playful transgression of its rules.

Sterne's text strongly resists a progressive reading. The borrowings which constitute his metafiction make Tristram Shandy a discourse with a very inadequate, almost sham story. As a writable, active, and metafictive text, the novel then goes on to deny the distinction between active and passive texts, through an interweaving of pre-determined structures which cross all texts. Through Sterne's digressive form, we are brought face to face with this self-conscious view of borrowing as the necessary condition of all texts. Michael Riffaterre, in a discussion of poetic interweaving which has implications for novelistic narrative as well, notes that breaks in linearity produce explicit awareness of "intertext," the collection of discourses which contains the elements of all texts:

> When the reader, obeying the lexical sequence, stops reading in relation to nonverbal referents, and starts reading in relation to the semantic program, the break disappears--or rather, the gaps and breaks are perceived as signs that the verbal referents are no longer in the text itself, but in the intertext.[55]

The evident failure of a narrative to meet readerly, and readable, expectations of story brings borrowing as a semiotic collection of linguistic elements to the fore. Digressions in Tristram Shandy become the signs that the hermeneutic, internal

reference in a text, which was thought to have replaced traditional semantic reference to phenomena, is now itself replaced by cross-textual structures of signification. The text is a field, explains Barthes, where "the generation of a perpetual signifier..is realized...according to a serial movement of connections, overlappings, variations."[56]

The function of apparent digressions to disrupt narrative linearity represents the role of borrowings in the novel.Pre-formed discursive structures lead to self-consciousness through an ambiguous relation to Sterne's text. Yet, these borrowings cannot be said to influence that text--even given proved historical connection between texts, such as those of Locke and Laurence Sterne as reader/author, or a probable but less satisfactory connection between Sterne and Condillac, the novel does not require the specific texts of Locke and Condillac to be a self-aware text: <u>Tristram Shandy</u> is concerned only with a particular use of discourses, a use which refers to Locke directly and to Condillac indirectly. Barthes explains that since all texts are plural--constructed of borrowings--readings should not be concerned with influence as an explanation of themes. Thus, texts do not answer to even the most liberal interpretation, but rather to an "explosion":

> The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the "sources" of a work is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas.[57]

We can cite particular sources for Sterne's text, but we cannot therefore prove a causal relation between texts: the ambiguity of the role of Locke in the novel shows that <u>Tristram Shandy</u> is by no means a simply "Lockean" or "anti-Lockean" novel. Explicitly named borrowings such as the <u>Essay</u> are not thematic foundations for the novel, but are rhetorical texts to be played with for their semiotic potential. Implicit borrowings, such as the Bible or Condillac, play as large a role in the self-referentiality of the novel as those which are named. In this particular case, in fact, the anonymous <u>Essai</u>--a historical narrative of mixed discourses--shows more apparent discursive similarities to <u>Tristram Shandy</u> than does the text of Locke.

A concrete image for the role of the intertext in the novel is "Slawkenbergius' Tale" in Vol. IV. As a digression, it both breaks the linearity of the narrative and meets Riffaterre's condition for awareness of textual connectedness. Slawkenbergius' Tale is the most easily identifiable of the digressions in <u>Tristram Shandy</u>: having different characters placed in a different setting from the Yorkshire home of the Shandys, there is no question that this story is separate from the **Life**--the story--if not the **Opinions**--narrative discourse--of Tristram. The digressiveness of the story element is enhanced by the form of Slawkenbergius' discourse, which is that of a standard, forward-moving, readable narrative. Unlike Tristram's discourse, its effects follow its causes in standard chronological order, and its text is not marred by squiggles, clumps of dashes, or blank,

black, or marbled pages. With the addition of its Latin "original" text on the first few recto pages, and clear markings at the tale's beginning and end, Slawkenbergius' digression is as different from the main narrative as the readable is from the metafictive text.

The difference of the Tale allows it to stand out conspicously from the text which surrounds it and to call attention to itself: no reader who wants to face the novel with "spirit" can with good conscience pass it up, according to Tristram, who asserts the importance of all digressions in his discussion of narrative as "history":

> ...when a man sits down to write a history ,--tho' it be but the history of **Jack Hickathrift or Tom Thumb**, he knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hindrances he is to meet with in his way...Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule--straight forward--for instance, from **Rome** all the way to **Loretto**...to his journey's end;--but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: For if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually soliciting his eye , which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly; he will moreover have various
> Accounts to reconcile:
> Anecdotes to pick up:
> Inscriptions to make out:
> Stories to weave in:
> Traditions to sift:
> Personages to call upon:
> Panegyricks to paste up at this door:
> Pasquinades at that:--All which both the man and
> his mule are quite exempt from.(I.xiv)

Standard progressive narration is here compared to driving a mule, and it is "morally impossible" to write because it misses so much of importance which is not in its plan. The man and his

mule are "exempted" from the topics of interest which demand attention by the unenviable task at hand: compelling a slow and stubborn pack-animal over poor and difficult trails absorbs all of the driver's attention. In the same way, the non-digressive, readable narrative puts all of its effort into the petty project of marshaling its story into a linear progression of cause-and-effect. Even the least serious narratives, such as those of "Jack Hickathrift and Tom Thumb," present the need for digression to a writer of any "spirit," any metafictive novelist.

In addition, the list of diversions includes particularly anonymous structures of meaning, such as traditions, along with accounts, anecdotes, inscriptions, stories, personages (not persons, but the institutionalized discourse which constitutes knowledge of people), panegyrics, and pasquinades of potentially unknown origin. The metafictive author is thus concerned with varying discourses of anonymous authorship, and unlike the mule-driver conentrating on empirical circumstances which directly help or hinder his progress, he can and must encounter elements of intertext in his divergent path.

In disrupting the main narrative, Slawkenbergius' Tale is a deviation through language from both the story and the discourse of the frame narrative. As the longest and most thoroughly anticipated discourse of the novel--and thus most evident--the Tale is the most "digressive" of all the major digressions in the novel.[58] This can be seen through a consideration of Genette's classification of digressions.[59] There are three kinds of

"metadiegetic" narratives which Genette finds in Proust. These can be classified in <u>Tristram Shandy</u> on the basis of increasing ability to disrupt narrative linearity.

The first and least disruptive type of metadiegesis is the temporal departure from the story of the main narrative. Such a metadiegesis relates events which occur in a time either prior to (through analepsis) or after (using prolepsis) the events related at the point in the discourse where they appear. The story of LeFever (VI. vi) is a metadiegetic analepsis, a temporal digression which recalls unnarrated episodes; its account of Toby and Trim's accidental discovery of the dying soldier, their care for his later orphaned son, and the "sensibility" and sentimentality they both display, concerns events which took place before Tristram's birth. Analepsis places these events outside the temporal reach of Tristram's life story but not outside of the temporal reach of his characters' lives. This "type of relationship," Genette explains, constitutes "direct causality between the events of the metadiegesis and those of the diegesis [main narrative], conferring on the second narrative an explanatory function."[60]

The story of LeFever explains the identity of "LeFever's son," whom Toby recommends as tutor for Tristram: "I humbly beg I may recommend poor **LeFever's** son to you--a tear of joy of the first water sparkled in my uncle **Toby's** eye...you will see why when you read **LeFever's** story"(VI.v). The son's story, assumed at the point in the novelistic discourse where a tutor is being

discussed, refers to an already established set of facts about him--known to uncle Toby, but not yet disclosed in the narrative. The story of LeFever thus becomes the explanatory "pre-text" for the discussion of his son: it functions as a logical presupposition, a structure which necessarily prompts the question "who is LeFever?" Culler connects this sort of structure to the intertext, or pre-text, as "part of the **deja-lu**, as a set of sentences already in place."[61] Here, the sentences describe the episode of LeFever and connect it with Toby's story.

LeFever's story is a metadiegesis which could be placed at the start of a time-line drawn of Tristram's life--it would come before the first point of that line, but would be nonetheless on the same level of chronological succession. In this way, it is part of the ideal linearity of any story of Tristram's life which includes Toby and Trim, and while separated from that story by time, what Locke would call "duration" and Genette the temporal "reach" in narrative, it is connected by "succession"--what Genette calls "extent."[62] Temporal departures are thus only temporarily disruptive of narrative progression, for once they are read, linearity resumes.

The second type of metadiegesis acts as a metaphor for the themes of the main narrative. The relationship here is thus "purely thematic...therefore implying no spatio-temporal continuity between" the two narratives, but instead "a relationship of contrast."[63] For example, the story of Maria serves as a contrast to both the travels of Tristram and the

amours of Toby which occupy Vol. IX. Tristram is in France in his "flight from Death" when he asks

> ----And who is poor Maria? said I.
> The love and pity of all the villages around us; said the postillion---it is but three years ago, that the sun did not shine upon so fair, so quick-witted and amiable a maid; and better fate did Maria deserve, than to have her banns forbid, by the intrigues of the curate of the parish who published them----(IX. THE INVOCATION)

This story is ostensibly drawn from the text of Tristram's French travels, and is thus a pre-text for <u>Tristram Shandy</u>. In addition, its tone of romantic tragedy inscribes it within the anonymous tradition of "sentimental" writing, a general intertextual structure which Sterne draws upon throughout the novel.

The similarities between the scene of Maria and the earlier one of Tristram's naming (IV. xiv) are thematically, if not strucurally, evident. In the naming episode, Susannah hurries down from the scene of the baby's birth to ask whether "as Captain Shandy is the godfather, it should not be called after him." Walter must quickly consider whether to name as perlocutionary act or keep to his original plan and try to procure the benefits of nominal correspondence for his son:

> Were one sure, said my father to himself...that the child was expiring, one might as well compliment my brother Toby as not--and 'twould be a pity, in such a case, to throw away so great a name as **Trismegistus** upon him--But he may recover.

Walter, as author, reluctantly dispatches the chambermaid, as conveyance or medium, to relay his choice for the baby's name, his text, to the upstairs bedchamber, where Yorick's curate waits

as audience and reader. Walter's text, "Trismegistus," conjures up intertextual tradition in its inescapable strangeness.[64]

> Susannah ran with all speed along the gallery.
> My father made all possible speed to find his breeches.
> Susannah got the start, and kept it--'Tis Tris-- something,cried Susannah--There is no Christian name in the world, said the curate, beginning with Tris--but Tristram. Then 'tis Tristram-gistus, quoth Susannah.
> --There is no gistus to it, noodle!--'tis my own name, replied the curate, dipping his hand as he spoke into the basin--**Tristram!** said he, &c. &c. &c. &c. so Tristram was I called, and Tristram shall I be to the day of my death.(IV.viv)

Both of these episodes feature a curate, as interpreter of text, who intervenes to make people sad; misinterpretation causes mischief. Maria's happiness in love is destroyed through selfish scheming, which valorizes presumed personal interest over curatorial duty, while Walter's baby son is given a literally "sad" name through the self-centeredness and ignorance of Yorick's curate, who squelches Susannah's faithful attempt to repeat her "text," constituted by Walter's text, which is in turn a result of cultural pre-texts and connotations concerning the name "Trismegistus." Yorick's curate as reader, then, rewrites Walter's text and clearly co-authors it on the basis of his own conventional background.

While Maria's misfortune is the result of conscious bad intentions--"scheming"--the christening mishap is just that--an accident, resulting from the circumstances of the baby's delivery and the fear of his imminent expiration. Yet, the accident is given an element of motivation in the curate's imposition of himself as text on the unnamed baby--truly anonymous and ante-

textual. This imposition of a name on the pre-textual baby represents the misguided and self-serving attempt to assign origins to elements of general tradition.

Both sad events are unforeseen departures from life-plans: Maria did not expect to have her marriage prevented, while Walter did not plan on his son being given the worst possible name known to him, instead of the best. As divergences from a plan, then, both events are accidents in relation to that plan. They are made doubly unplanned by their basis in curatorial action--a curate is only a deputy to a priest, and as such is either an inferior clergyman charged with routine administrative duties, such as publishing banns, or a substitute for his superior at more important rites like christening. In both cases, a curate's authority is strictly proscribed; independent action on his part, against plan or duty, is itself extraordinary and makes the situations more accidental, more divergent from the expected and normal. Despite the contrast between the two narratives, they are both digressions from a linear life-plan. This is an image for the excursion of hermeneutical reading into unexpected texts of dubious authorship--curatorial instead of priestly, and anonymous instead of specific.

Tristram's early life is filled with such accidents; his story is a comedy of errors, all iof which thwart Walter's well-laid plans for his happiness, an image for intertextual structures which cross over into the most painstakingly planned and unified readable text, and make it writable. By extension of

this operation, an image is then created for the entrance of the readable into the seemingly disordered text of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>: accidents lose their random nature in striking only at Walter's specific hobby-horsical concerns, and they do so with unfailing accuracy. Starting with Tristram's ill-humored conception, and including his nose-flattening, sad mis-naming, and window circumcision, accidents diverge from Walter's plan; these too are "digressions" from Walter's "text."[65]

Of course, little Tristram's mishaps are only evil in Walter's view, and do the child little actual damage. Tristram is nevertheless ill-at-ease in his world of phenomenal disorder, a victim of existentialist "malaise," a general dissatisfaction with, and separation from, ordinary life.[66] Such malaise is an image for the frustration encountered by the reader faced with a disordered writable text. Tristram's name signifies his sad awkwardness. To escape sadness (and to escape himself, since as "Tristram" he is sadness) he flees across France, which is what brings him to Maria. Walter and Toby also suffer from malaise; Walter attempts to deal with separation from his world and its inhabitants through forging systems of speculative learning and disputation based in the general academic tradition, the pre-text, of his culture. This becomes an image for forging logical connections in discourse. Toby's hobby-horse of fortification, on the other hand, is his escape from boredom and the world which offers so little to a invalid veteran, through construction of a fantasy world--an image for mimetic representation in discourse,

which becomes simply metafictive by being a text within a text, just as Toby's artificial world is placed within the real one. Maria's more tangible sadness is a metaphor both for this malaise, and for the problem of reading disruptive texts from a conventional context which thematic sadness represents.

Genette's third type of digression is a narrative which completely disrupts the main narrative, both temporally and thematically, and brings the reader to a direct encounter with the general nature of metafictive borrowing. For Shlovsky, all metadiegesis in Tristram Shandy functions as a simply disruptive force to bring about breaks in the main narrative. "Sterne's grotesquely long and irrelevant digressions," Shlovsky believes,"[and] such devices as placing the preface in the middle of the book or the playful `omission' of several chapters, are eloquent testimony to his keen awareness of literary form and its essential conventionality."[67] For Shlovsky, such a digression as the transcript of Doctors Le Moyne, De Romigny, and De Marcilly of the Sorbonne does no more than interrupt the linear progression of Tristram's narrative by its difference from the rest of Tristram Shandy. We can see, however, that even the French disputation is not wholly irrelevant. Because of its development of themes of problematic baptism and scholastic foolishness seen in the general narrative, it does not exactly fit Genette's classification as completely disruptive either. Its decision on baptism relating to Tristram's theme of birth and christening (as well as to Locke's story of the Abbe' of Saint

Martin) also serves to develop the arbitrary nature of signification central to <u>Tristram Shandy</u>.

A more disruptive and thematically irrelevant narrative is the list of Parisian districts in Volume VII:

> In the quarter called the City--there are fifty three streets.
> In St. James of the Shambles, fifty five streets.
> In St. Oportune, thirty four streets.
> In the quarter of the Louvre, twenty five streets...(VII.xvii)

This list continues to twenty items and repeats the type of Rabelaisian inventory which is found in several places in the novel. While some of Tristram's lists contain thematically significant items, this particular one is more easily seen as a tedious index of irrelevant names. It serves only Shlovsky's role of interruption, which makes it more pretextual than textual: it seems almost not a part of the <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, in the little thematic relevance it has to the narrative of the novel, compared to the great relevance it evidently has to another text, that of Parisian geography. Highly separated metadiegesis of this sort is most evidently intertextual, and sets up a chiasmus of the sort seen in the double column discourses of Derrida. Such an obviously "grafted" discourse accentuates the most radical oppositions between metadiegesis and main text, resembling what Culler calls Derrida's "tympanum," a membrane which sets up "reverberations" between the inside, and the outside, between the main text of <u>Tristram Shandy</u> and the pre-text of the map of Paris.[68] Such movement images the active role of reading the

writable text and serves to exchange text for intertext, by interrupting inside narration with outside information.

Initially, it is this interruptive mode which demands attention in Slawkenbergius' Tale. Its time, characters, and setting are not those of Tristram's story, nor is its style that of his narrative discourse. These discontinuities are what we first see. In addition, the Tale seems further separated because of its discrete form--it begins abruptly at the beginning of Volume IV of the novel, without any introduction there, and finishes with a flourish--"The END of Slawkenbergius's TALE."-- before Chapter I of that volume. It is thus an addition, an obvious pre-text to Volume IV, which is so marginal as to be excluded from the formal chapter structure of the novel. This makes the Tale seem so digressive and interruptive as to be almost not a part of the novel at all. Yet the story is not so neatly framed as it seems: neither its ostensible end nor its apparent beginning completely border it. Thus, a page after "The END" we find the title

<div style="text-align:center">

The INTRICACIES
of
Diego and **Julia**.

</div>

Characteristically, nothing having to do with those two lovers follows this title. This does not make the heading an insignificant anomaly, however, but instead emphasizes the general untrustworthiness of titles, headings, and all boundaries in Tristram's text. It therefore functions as an image for the untrustworthiness of all determinations of origin in intertextual

structures.

Once we look at the pages adjacent to the Tale, we see that its supposed beginning is not so neatly separated from the main narrative either. The introduction, missing in Volume IV, is given informally in the last eight chapters of Volume III, where Slawkenbergius is mentioned twenty-eight times. Here a distinction must be drawn between Slawkenbergius' book and his Tale: the latter appears printed in "translation" in the novel, while his "book," from which the Tale allegedly comes, is simply **described** by Tristram. The book is part of the novel only through indirect reference, a concrete image for the anonymity and absent origin of the novelistic pre-text. That general body of discourse is richer in self-consciousness than the clearly present Tale: more is related to us about the structure of Slawkenbergius' work as a whole in the last chapters of Volume III than can be directly read from the text of his Tale.

The distinction between book and Tale further blurs the facile opposition between Tristram's narrative and the metadiegesis: the book as frame for the Tale is absent in <u>Tristram Shandy</u> and thus marginal to the novel, while its metadiegesis of <u>De Nasis</u>, the Tale, is present and thus our only available text of Slawkenbergius as a whole. Replacement of book by Tale makes a metadiegesis more central than a main narrative, and this replacemant parallels the centrality of digressions in <u>Tristram Shandy,</u> whose role as pre-text constitutes the self-consciousness of Tristram's narrative. The reversal of marginal

and central seen in the replacement reduces the disruptive power of the digression, showing us that we cannot take seriously the borders Tristram has set up between "his" narrative and that of Slawkenbergius, for the source of the Tale, De Nasis, is simply present as yet another discourse in Tristram's text.

The disruptive nature of Slawkenbergius' Tale is further reduced by the metaphoric connection between the structure of Slawkenbergius' book De Nasis and the discourse of Tristram's own narrative. We are told that Slawkenbergius' book is an encyclopedia of its subject, a "DIGEST and regular institute of noses," because, like Tristram's narrative, it is a collection of the best of other texts, achieved by

> collating, collecting, and compiling--begging,
> borrowing, stealing [from the] schools and porticos of
> the learned (III.xxxviii).

This method parallels that of the digressive traveler of Vol. I, whose borrowing draws on varied anonymous and unidentified pre-texts which Tristram cites as the mode of his narrative. The very incorporating of Slawkenbergius' Tale in Tristram Shandy is itself evidence of this "learned borrowing."

Yet, Tristram's borrowing is "learned" in a very strange sense: Slawkenbergius' Tale is identified with the scholastic tradition of painstaking scholarship--false learning--and a German tradition of original creation and even dull-wittedness: "the most amusing part of Hafen Slawkenbergius is his tales,--and considering that he was a German, many of them told not without fancy..."[69] We know, however that Slawkenbergius'

text is not any more traditional or learned in origin than the rest of Sterne's text, for Tristram gives us the clue in a note:"As Hafen Slawkenbergius' De Nasis is very scarce, it might not be unacceptable for the learned reader to see the specimen of a few pages in the original." Scarcity makes the text not a central part of the general learned tradition outside of Tristram Shandy, but a marginal text which requires the work of Tristram to make it known, and to enter into the relations of intertextuality. The lack of a basis in origin external to TS makes Slawkenbergius--Slawkenbergius as "shit-heap," conspicuously absent from literary history--a "learned" text not in the sense of learned as acquired or received, but in the sense of knowing: the Tale shows a knowledge of a tradition whose discourse it shares by co-incidence, rather than influence.[70]

Aside from our knowledge of Sterne's authorship of the supposedly medieval text of the Tale, the inclusion of "original" pages seems to assume not only that the reader of TS can read Latin--and thus is as linguistically "learned" as the schoolmen-- but also that he will critique Slawkenbergius' style, as Tristram does in his note: "his story-telling Latin is much more concise than his philosophic--and, I think, has more of Latinity in it." (IV. Slawk. Tale) This sort of borrowing is always done by Tristram with some irony, however, especially when the text cited is in any tradition of systematic learning. This Tale is used ironically also: it is not really a necessary assumption of the text that its readers can read Latin, since the Tale is also

given in English. The obscurity of the Latin text can thus serve a completely defamiliarizing function, demonstrating the distance of pre-texts from the texts they compose. Riffaterre notes that the obscurity of intertextual elements does not alter a text, because

> The text is the starting point of the reader's reactions, not its paragrams. Obviously the reader who shares the author's culture will have a richer intertext. And the reader who is denied access to the intertextual paragram still sees the distortion, the imprint left upon the verbal sequence by the absent hypogrammatic referent. He does not even have to understand fully: it is quite enough for him to stand before a spectacle, however incomprehensible it may be, in which the inner logic of the hypogram [intertextual structure] can be seen, provided that spectacle is devoid of internal contradictions.[71]

The Latin spectacle is enough to inscribe the Tale within an obscure tradition, a source of distant pre-texts. Inclusion of the Tale in the murky soup of anonymous pre-modern discourses is reinforced by its medieval setting and Aristotelian title: all of these suggest the sort of scholastic foolishness which both Sterne and Locke ridicule.[72] In addition, The Tale's sexual ambiguity, with nose as phallus, recalling the double entendre of "whiskers" in the gossip of the Navarese court, partakes of the bawdiness of Rabelais, who shares Sterne's humor regarding medieval scholarship.[73]

The double use of Slawkenbergius as metaphor for the main narrative and specimen of ridiculous speculative philosophy allows for further irony. Because of Slawkenbergius' comprehensiveness, Tristram "forebears to speak of other nose-

books," but immediately describes, in some detail, the debate of "Prignitz" and "Scroderus" over the priority of the "nose" and the "fancy," a debate which hearkens back to problems over the priority of real and nominal essence seen in both Locke's "Abbe Maloru" and in the Sorbonne discourse. Slawkenbergius supposedly avoids embroilment in this dispute because he encompasses all nasal views and therefore has a richer intertext. For Walter,

> Slawkenbergius in every page of him was a rich treasury of inexhaustable knowledge--he could not open him amiss; and he would often say in closing the book, that if all the arts and sciences in the world with the books that treated of them were lost---should the wisdom and policies of governments, he would say, through disuse, ever happen to be forgot, and all that statesmen had wrote, or caused to be written, upon the strong or the weak sides of kingdoms, should they be forgot also,---and **Slawkenbergius** only left,---there would be enough in him in all conscience, he would say, to set the world a-going again. (III.xlii)

Walter's impression corresponds to the naive reading of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>, which seems to have a little of everything, and to be itself a kind of institute of, for example, eighteenth-century learned satire. Walter shows this dilettantish value of the encyclopedic in his own venture, the ill-fated and continually obsolete <u>Tristrapedia</u>, which, instead of being at all comprehensive, becomes an exercise in aposeopesis--a rhetorical break in discourse which vibrates between the opposites of intention and emotion--whose writing cannot keep up with Tristram's growth. Walter's text never progresses beyond the collection of pre-texts which would constitute the completed work. The ridiculousness of Walter's view of sytematic knowledge--a little of everything and no more than a Berlitz pocket-guide

knowledge of anything--is a parody of any compilations which pretend to include everything worth knowing, and any texts which claim to comprehend intertextuality.

It is evident that no nasal institute can really reconstruct all valuable knowledge and, thus, that no text can contain, or even represent, the intertext which crosses texts and renders any text only a manifestation of the body of general conventional discourses. On the other hand, Slawkenbergius' encyclopedia creates the basis for many of Walter's discourses--lending itself to comparison with Walter's other encyclopedic source, Locke's Essay--and comes from a rich background of discourse-creation, that which includes, among others, "Scroderus" and "Prignitz." The Tale is in fact concerned with the creation of discourse over Diego's disputed nose. Argument over the authenticity of the nose among the people of Strasburg eventually reaches the schoolmen of the city, whose discourse over the astrological proofs of Martin Luthe's damnation--another set of elusive textual origins--is soon replaced by nose-talk:

> God's power is infinite, cried the Nosarians, he can do anything.
> He can do nothing, replied the Antinosarians, which implies contradictions...
> Infinite power is infinite power, said the doctors who maintained the reality of the nose.---it extends only to all possible things, replied the Lutherans.
> By God in heaven, He can make a nose, if He thinks fit, as big as the steeple of Strasburg...
> This at once started a new dispute, which they pursued a great way...that controversey led them to Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas Aquinas to the devil.
> The stranger's nose was no more heard of in the dispute--it just served as a frigate to launch them into the gulph of school-divinity...(IV. Slawkenbergius' Tale)

Slawkenbergius is more valuable to Tristram as a story-book, one whose narrative style balances "intuition" with "science." This happy pairing of opposites gestures towards a platitudinal complacency in good sense and moderation, and is similar to Tristram's own "wit and judgment," expressed in his "Author's PREFACE." There, he tells us

> ...Triptolemus and Phutatorius agreeing...that wit and judgment in this world never go together; inasmuch as they are two operations differing from each other as wide as east is from west.--So, says Locke--so are farting and hiccuping, say I (III. Author's PREFACE).

Here Locke is mistaken, taking the opinion of learned prententious shams. Yet, Tristram's simple view does not so easily triumph over the traditional one expressed by Locke: it is true that east and west cannot be brought together, but rather that they define distances in their relation to two extremes. The use of the east/west opposition signifies the heuristic value, in the absence of a natural signification, of polar meaning in language. The separation of wit and judgment operates in the same way: wit and judgment are not indistinguishable simply because Tristram debunks the natural and necessary value of their separation. Like Derrida's tympanum, the opposition allows for a vibration, a double reading of two aspects of discourse which are both separated by relationality and joined by their relation to one another.

The story shows that wit can in fact be separated from judgment--with humorous results--in discourse. Walter, as the image for Locke and main advocate of his ideas in the novel,

makes judgments--distinctions--with little wit, but does judge
nonetheless. His valorization of origins causes him to mistake
Slawkenbergius for the origin of all things as a kind of sacred
text:

> at matin, noon, and vespers was Hafen Slawkenbergius
> his recreation and delight: 'twas for ever in his
> hands--you would have sworn it was a canon's prayer-
> book (III.xlii).

Walter and Locke are both mistaken in their opinions. Walter
values Slawkenbergius as pure science and falls into the trap of
scholasticism, just as Locke's separation of wit and judgment in
his Essay falls into the trap of the rhetoricians, who share his
view.

Tristram's own opinion, also a misjudgment, separates
philosophy and literature:

> the most amusing part of Slawkenbergius is his tales---
> Philosophy is not built on tales, and therefore 'twas
> certainly wrong in Slawkenbergius to send them into the
> world by that name (III.xlii).

Tristram then shows how wrong it is for him to oppose tales and
abstraction: but although these tales are "playful and sportive"
rather than "speculative" they do serve a philosophical purpose--
the "learned" should see them as "illustrations upon the doctrine
of noses."(III.xlii) The ridiculousness of the doctrine
illustrated seems to imply that tales cannot really be read
philosophically, and looks as if it valorizes literary reading
over abstract illustration. Yet, the very implication that
figurative language cannot lead to speculation is itself an
abstraction, which has led to considerable speculation in the

concern with tropes and rhetoric in the discourses of Locke and Condillac.

It would still be easy to say, however, that Sterne denies the distinction between philosophy and literature, or valorizes figural over literal reading. As Culler notes,

> Any claim for the superiority of literature to philosophy would presumablly be based on the argument that philosophy deludedly hopes to escape fiction, rhetoric, trope, while literature explicitly announces its fictional and rhetorical nature. But to support this claim...one would have to know what was literal and what was figurative...One would thus have to be able to distinguish authoritatively between essence and accident, form and substance, language and thought. [Such] an attempt would not be based on superior literary knowledge, but would depend upon and lead back to these fundamental philosophical difficulties.[74]

Literature and philosophy thus vibrate off of each other in writable readings: for Derrida this "writing with both hands" takes place in a general intertext which includes both opposites.[75] Thus, the mixed discursive mode of <u>Tristram Shandy</u> combines phlosophy and literature, the serious and the frivolous, the literal and the figurative in an intertext composed of paradoxically original borrowings. And "Slawkenbergius' Tale" serves as an image of this essential connectedness of texts, even though it does so by flaunting its own difference from the supposedly primary text of the novel. This is to see the apparently "readable," classic quality of the Tale, then, as an image for Sterne's writable, metafictive weaving of discourses.

ENDNOTES

1.   Alan B. Howes, ed., _Sterne: the Critical Heritage_ (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) 392.

2.   Aristotle, _De Poetica_. V,6.

3.   James Boswell, _The Life of Samuel Johnson_. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983) 696. Johnson here compares Sterne's book to "some ludicrous fantastick dialogues between coach-horses" published by Giuseppe Marc'Antonio Baretti (1719-89) in his _Easy Phrasealogy for the Use of Young Ladies_ (1775).

4.   Leavis talks of the novel's encouragement to the prurient reader's indulgence in "irresponsible (and nasty) trifling" in _The Great Tradition_ (London:Chatto and Windus, 1948) 2.

5.   While its whole form and use of literary conventions is strongly opposed the style of its time, a good case for similarities in satiric style has been made connecting _Tristram Shandy_ with the Scriblerian tradition of Pope and Swift, and less convincingly in general, with Fielding and Smollett. See especially John Traugott, _Tristram Shandy's World: Sterne's Philosophical Rhetoric_ (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954).

6.   Laurence Sterne. _The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne_, 3 vols. (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1984) vol.3. All references to _Tristram Shandy_ are to this edition and appear in my text with Sterne's volume and chapter references.

7.   Viktor Shlovsky, "Pushkin and Sterne: Eugene Onegin" in Erlich ed., _Twentieth Century Russian Literary Criticism_ (New Haven: Yale UP, 1975) 79.

8.   Shlovsky, 69.

9.   Howes, 29.

10. Patricia Waugh, _Metafiction: the Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction_. (London: Methuen, 1984) 6.

11. Gerard Genette, _Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method_ trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell UP).

12. Genette, 25.

13. Genette, 231-34.

14. Rene Wellek, <u>A History of Modern Criticism:1750-1950</u>, 4 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1955-65) 1: 80.
   Sir John Hawkins (1719-89) published a life of Johnson in 1787 and edited his works in 15 volumes, 1787-8.

15. As seen elsewhere in the text, Le Fever's story actually does not end in Chapter X, although that chapter is titled "the story of Le Fever concluded." Chapter XI follows with Le Fever's funeral, interrupted by a digression concerning Yorick's comments on the sermon he wrote for the burial. Chapters XII and XIII tell of Le Fever's son as a soldier and end with the discussion between Toby, Trim, and Walter about young Le Fever as tutor for Tristram. Le Fever is again mentioned in Chapter XX, after an interval of seven chapters with no mention of Toby.

16. See especially John Ferriar, <u>Illustrations of Sterne</u>. (London, 1798). This comprehensive account of borrowings in <u>Tristram Shandy</u> has been the definitive source for research into influences on the book since its publication, and it remains, according to W.D.Day, "essential reading for any study of <u>Tristram Shandy</u>." See his " `Tristram Shandy': Locke May Not Be The Key" in Valerie Myer, ed. <u>Laurence Sterne: Riddles and Mysteries</u> (Totowa, N.J.:Barnes and Noble, 1985) 75-83.

17. Melvyn New cites at least 75 authors contemporary with or previous to Sterne in the notes to <u>The Works of Laurence Sterne</u> 3: 561-72.

18. Waugh, 5.

19. Traugott, 4.

20. The **metalinguistic**, for Roman Jakobson, is a function of all utterances which contain implicit or explicit references to their own "code," the series of assumptions which makes meaning-within-a-context possible. See Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, <u>Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Sciences of Language</u>, trans. Catherine Porter (Baltimore: Hopkins, 1983) 341. The semiotic use of metalanguage, where one system of signification denotes another such system, is the role Locke's text tries to take in relation to its topic. Roland Barthes rightly notes that all such detached ventures are doomed to be as subjective as the content they seek to convey. Terry Eagleton sums up this position: "There can be no ultimate metalanguage: another critic can always come along and take your criticism as the subject of study, and so on in an infinite regress." See his <u>Literary Theory: An Introduction</u>

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983) 101, 137.

21. Howes, 414.

22. New, 562.

23. Howes, 414-415.

24. Howes, 412.

25. The "pre-text" of any particular "text" is the set of structures of meaning which anticipate that text. These pre-formed discourses, sentences, and word phrases come form the general discursive knowledge of all linguistic tradition, the "intertext."

26. Day, 75.

27. Day, 76.

28. M. H.Abrams etal ed., <u>The Norton Anthology of English Literature</u> 2 vols. (New York: Norton, 1979) 2: 2347.

29. Day, 80.

30. John Traugott, "The Shandean Comic Vision of Locke," Traugott ed., <u>Laurence Sterne: A Collection of Critical Essays</u> (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968) 130.

31. William Molyneux (1656-98) corresponded with Locke on problems of sensation and a priori knowledge.

32. Traugott, <u>Tristram Shandy's World</u>, 19.

33. James E. Swearingen, <u>Reflexivity in Tristram Shandy: An Essay in Phenomenological Criticism</u> (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 184.

34. Paul de Man, "Rhetoric and Semiology" in Josue' V. Harrari, ed., <u>Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticsm</u> (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979) 126-127.

35. De Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor" in Sheldon Sacks, ed., <u>On Metaphor</u> (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979) 13.

36. _____. <u>On Metaphor</u>, 14.

37. _____, <u>On Metaphor</u>, 14.

38. De Man cites Warburton, Vico, and Herder in this connection; <u>On Metaphor</u>, 14.

39. Melvyn New shows that the grammatical implications of "a le pere" refer us to the grammatical and more semantically consistent form "a la mere" in The Works of Laurence Sterne, 2: 943.

40. Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory, (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) 115.

41. Traugott, Tristram Shandy's World, 13.

42. Francois Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel, trans. J.M. Cohen, (New York: Penguin, 1986). See especially the lists of the games that Gargantua plays with his scholastic tutor, Tubal Holofernes, in Book 1, Ch. 22.

43. Swearingen, 183.

44. Giles Menage (1613-92) was a French philosopher whose Menagiana contains this story along with other **bon mots**.

45. Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982) 139-40.

46. Robert Alter, Partial Magic (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1975) 30.

47. De Man, On Metaphor, 20.

48. Condillac is absent in standard studies of Sterne, among them the extensive annotations found in Melvyn New's edition of notes on the text in The Works of Laurence Sterne, Ferriar's Illustrations of Sterne, Ian Cambell Ross' notes to the text in the Oxford University Press edition of 1983, and all the critical works dealing with Sterne cited in my bibliography. In addition, none of Condillac's works is found among the auctioner's list of books in Charles Whibley, ed., A Facsimile Edition of a True Catalogue of Laurence Sterne's Library (New York: Tregaskis, 1930).

49. Hans Aarsleff, From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982) 210.

50. De Man, On Metaphor, 21.

51. De Man, On Metaphor, 22.

52. Roland Barthes, S/Z, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) 4.

53.   Barthes' writable texts include French "nouveau romans" such as those of Alain Robbe-Grillet, and the plays of Bertolt Brecht, while La comedie humaine of Balzac provides many of the readable texts which Barthes examines. See Jonathan Culler, Roland Barthes (New York: Oxford UP, 1983) 31.

54.   Barthes' reading of Balzac's "Sarrasine," the occasion for S/Z, is a particularly striking example of a writable reading imposed on a readable text: Barthes subdivides the short story into hundreds of "lexias," segments of meaning which refer back to one of five intertextual codes.

55.   Michael Riffaterre, Text Production, trans. Terese Lyons (New York: Columbia UP, 1983) 84.

56.   Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text", Image-Music-Text, trans. and sel. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) 158.

57.   Barthes, "From Work to Text," 160.

58.   The Tale is amply introduced in Vol. III of the novel, where it is mentioned twenty-seven times in Chapters 38-42.

59.   Genette, 228-234.

60._____, 232.

61.   Culler, The   Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981) 112.

62. Such linearity is of course, the most obviously illusive structure of the novel. This has not stopped attempts by various critics to piece together temporally disorganized fragments into a traditional story-form. An interesting example of this is a children's book called My Uncle Toby (New York: Dutton, 1908), which is a montage of the various references to Toby and Trim arranged in chronological order, from Toby's wounding at Namur (a difficult subject for a children's story) to his courtship of the Widow Wadman. In its introduction, the editor, Thomas Cartwright, tells us that while "Laurence Sterne wrote a lot that no one wants to read," the story of Toby will continue to give delight because of the charm of the character it creates.

63. Genette, 233.

64. Melvyn New (95) refers "Tristmegistus" to "Thoth the Great," author of encyclopedic treatises on varied topics. Significantly, he was an Egyptian who drew on a Greek tradition, and served the cause of discourse-mixing and intertextual dissemination.

65.Walter is vexed by his wife's interruption: "have you forgot to wind the clock?" This stirs up his humors, "which scattered and dipersed the animal spirits."(I.i-ii) Melvyn New (39) explains that, "the idea that the conditions of conception determined the future of the child was a commonplace one."

66. This is Walker Percy's term for what Sartre terms "La Nausee'," and similar to Martin Heidegger's Anxiety over Falling-into-the-They-self in Sein und Zeit.

67. Erlich. Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine. (The Hague: Mouton, 1955) 165.

68. Culler, On Deconstruction, 136.

69. New (278) cites Thomas Salmon's Modern History to show that a "commonplace prejudice of [Sterne's] day was the dullness of the German people."

70. "Hafen Slawkenbergius" is Sterne's construsction of the German "Chamberpot Shitheap," similar to Rabelais' "Dr. Hafenmuss." See New, 267.

71. Riffaterre, 87-88. Here, the paragram is the "semantic given," the thematic germ out of which all the displacements and oppositions of a text proceed. Hypograms are the particular manifestations of the paragrammatic word-theme. See Riffaterre, 75-79.

72. Compare De Nasis to Aristotle's medieval titles, now standard, such as De Motu Animalium or De Metaphysica.

73. Melvyn New (245) notes that it is well accepted that the nose in TS functions as a phallic symbol.

74. Culler, On Deconstruction, 183.

75. _____, 144.

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