Warning Concerning Copyright Restrictions

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Although Laurence Sterne would not have used the phrase 'print culture', he had a developed conception of the constellation of socio-economic and aesthetic factors clustered around the print medium, and he understood how to exploit these in an authorial career based on, though extending beyond, his literary work on the page. Sterne's expressions, in his letters and published work, of his awareness of the opportunities made possible by print allow us to define 'print culture' in his own terms. The main categories by which he recognised print culture were both public and private, combining an acute awareness of the market for literary works - the power of public opinion and the tools (patronage, reviews) by which a reading public is created and maintained - with a philosophical conception of the existential implications of printed expression for notions of individuality and originality. For Sterne, print culture manifested itself in three basic categories: fame (the social phenomenon of the celebrity), finance (the business of professional authorship), and physicality (the printed artefact). Both the social-cultural aspects of print culture (fame and finance) and the concretely material (physicality) mark an intersection of public and private. Not only is the print marketplace a locus of exchange where private written expression is made public; the printed text itself is also, for Sterne, a place where author and reader interact, and a point of contact that reveals the unbridgeable gap between participants in the act of communication.

'I wrote not [to] be fed, but to be famous'

Sterne is our first author to achieve celebrity status in the modern sense of the term: a popular phenomenon in and of himself, and one who grounds his fame in public performance and market manipulation rather than, like 'the celebrated Mr. Pope' earlier in the century, in commendatory poems, collected editions, and claims to canonical status in a classical tradition. The celebrity author is distinct from the author presupposed by the reader of any
The given book—that sense of an author manifest in a text that has been a concern of literary theory since Foucault and Barthes. Because Sterne was not just an author posited by a text, but himself a celebrity phenomenon in 1760, the public could respond to both the fictional and the real author figures. His book was read by many who met the author, or who wanted to: as Sterne boasted soon after publishing the first volumes of Tristram Shandy, ‘I ... am engaged already to ten Noble men & men of fashion to dine’ (Letters 96; see also 102, 104). Conversely, he was known as—an author—by many who never read the book. Indeed, Sterne created for himself something of a fictional persona, signing correspondence with the names of his characters, Tristram and Yorick, and deliberately blurring the lines between his biological self and his literary creations. Together, Laurence Sterne and Tristram Shandy garnered much attention. Sterne’s association of himself with his mad narrator, or with his jester-cum-parson, brought him a reputation for whimsy and a certain carelessness about the mores of polite society. What had become of the ‘authority’ of such an author?

When Sterne announced his preference for fame over food (Letters 90), he was inverting a statement of Colley Cibber, who, as a way of excusing his writing, insisted he wrote ‘more to be Fed, than to be Famous’. This connection is telling of cultural developments over the middle-third of the eighteenth century. Cibber, the poet laureate of the previous generation, had been crowned king of the dunces in the last versions of Alexander Pope’s Dunciad (1742–3). He was a self-promoter extraordinaire, much to the offence of the Scriblerian satirists (primarily Pope, Jonathan Swift, and John Gay), who ridiculed him as a threat to human culture by means of his pandering (and successful) approach to artistic production—a man who vulgarised the stage, and who changed poetry to a vehicle for flattery rather than moral instruction, all unabashedly in the name of self-interest. What does it mean that Laurence Sterne, a generation later, could both admire and imitate the Scriblerians and yet take on a campaign of public self-promotion like Cibber? This is an indication of shifting assumptions, tastes, and fundamental beliefs about authorship, changes of which Pope and Swift had been aware and afraid. They saw Cibber and Grubstreet hacks in general as enemies of learning and humanistic culture who wrote for no higher end than money or preferment. In their resistance to a model of literature as a consumer commodity, Pope and Swift proclaimed themselves to be anti-materialists in both the philosophical and economic senses, however indebted they were in practice to the literary and commercial techniques of the new print culture.

By the 1760s, in contrast, Sterne was not only much more comfortable with publicity and the validity of public opinion, but also comfortable with the system of consumer-driven literary production. He shows a distinct lack of resistance to what Pope would have labelled the forces of Dulness. 'There is a shilling pamphlet wrote against Tristram.—I wish they would write a hundred such', Sterne writes to a correspondent in May 1760 (Letters 107), clearly pleased at this sign of popular approval. And there would be dozens of such responses. Imitations, parodies, outcries, spurious continuations, and publications under the names of Shandean characters proliferated, all attempting to capitalise on the fact that 'Tristram is the Fashion' (Letters 102).

In addition to this kind of print-market response were the more formal reviews. These were mixed, some celebrating the wit and oddity of the book, others condemning its bawdiness. And when Sterne’s sermons were published as The Sermons of Mr. Yorick, many took offence, like Owen Ruffhead in the Monthly Review, at his 'mount[ing] the pulpit in a Harlequin's coat' (CH 77). Less than a year later, after the publication of volumes 3 and 4, Sterne’s enthusiasm for any kind of attention was undiminished, especially as it implied financial success: 'One half of the town abuse my book as bitterly, as the other half cry it up to the skies—the best is, they abuse it and buy it, and at such a rate, that we are going on with a second edition, as fast as possible’ (Letters 129–30). Sterne’s sensitivity to his market played a significant role in the development of Tristram Shandy over the seven-year period of its publication: not only does Tristram respond to the attacks of the reviewers directly in subsequent volumes, but Sterne can be seen as adjusting and adapting his work to these responses. For example, many reviews noted Sterne’s skill in the pathetic, or sentimental, and encouraged him to include more of this (and less bawdry). The shift in emphasis in Tristram Shandy towards Uncle Toby—the benevolent, naïve, wounded old soldier—indicates that Sterne was listening to his critics. In order to remain ‘the Fashion’, Tristram Shandy had to keep pace with shifts in popular taste. And when popular taste lost interest in the Shandean mode, Sterne had Tristram voice his financial concerns: ‘Is it not enough that thou art in debt, and that thou hast ten cart-loads of thy fifth and sixth volumes still—still unsold, and art almost at thy wit’s ends, how to get them off thy hands’ (TS 8.6.663). Certainly Sterne’s shift of modes in his final work, A Sentimental Journey, may be construed as both a response and an adaptation to the tastes of his reading public: ‘If it is not thought a chaste book, mercy on them that read it, for they must have warm imaginations indeed!’ (Letters 403).

At least in public, Swift and Pope would have condemned all of these concerns as elements of hack work: writing to popular taste for financial gain. Even though Sterne admired the satire of the Scriblerians, who attacked popular authorship so vehemently, he was a full participant in a living print
culture as a consumer of popular texts himself. Thomas Keymer has recently argued that Sterne was well-read in ephemeral fictions such as John Kidgell's *The Card* (1755) and the anonymous *Life and Memoirs of Mr. Ephraim Tristram Bates* (1756), as well as in popular works by contemporaries of the 1760s such as James Macpherson's Ossian poems. That these are not the canonical figures of his day is significant, for Sterne's rapid rise to fame gives the lie to the traditional, canonical, Virgilian path of working upward through the classical genres. Indeed, his calculated approach to fame distinctly avoided the literary authorities of mid-century England.

Nevertheless, Sterne did seek out cultural authority of a different kind. Rather than align his work with the most prestigious literature of the moment, he placed himself within a discourse of publicity that was only partly connected to textual production. Before even coming to London in March 1760, he had orchestrated approval of his work (using the first, self-published, York edition of 1759) from David Garrick, the most celebrated actor and theatrical producer of the day, and this became a publicly noted friendship following his arrival in the capital. By the end of May, Sterne had negotiated contracts for - and seen the publication of - London editions of *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*. He had also procured acceptance of his dedication to the Prime Minister, William Pitt, obtained a frontispiece illustration by the renowned artist William Hogarth, and sat for a portrait by Joshua Reynolds that would be engraved for his edition of the *Sermons*, the opening volumes of which boasted a prestigious list of 660 subscribers.

We should return to Sterne's first access to fashionable London life, David Garrick, to assess an essential quality of celebrity: personal presence. Garrick had effected a revolution in acting technique in the 1740s by creating a less formal, more 'natural' style that emphasised the particular details of a character rather than a universal human nature. Twice in the second instalment of *Tristram Shandy* Sterne would invoke Garrick, first placing the actor against the rule-bound grammarians who only consult their watches during Garrick's dramatic pauses: 'But in suspending his voice—was the sense suspended likewise? Did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm?—Was the eye silent?' (TS 3.12.213). The bookishness of the grammarians is contrasted to Garrick's *embodiment* of sense, something that Sterne valued (as is evident from the rhetoric of his sermons) and sought to translate into printed form in *Tristram Shandy*. The dependence of Garrick's technique on the style of the individual actor (rather than on a stock of codified gestures) blurs the lines between his own self and that of the characters he portrayed; and this confusion leads to his celebrity. Garrick was much sought out off the stage, and was known for 'performing' at non-theatrical social settings, such

as a Parisian salon or a London art show. Sterne clearly emulates Garrick's social presence, and sees it as an essential part of true celebrity. This is apparent in Tristram's second invocation: 'O Garrick! what a rich scene of this would thy exquisite powers make! and how gladly would I write such another to avail myself of thy immortality, and secure my own behind it' (4.7.333).

'Tall, opake words' and the physicality of print

That Sterne is concerned with the possibilities for personal presence in a text is clear from the great lengths to which he pushed his publishers to play with the *mise en page* (the design and layout) of his work. In a jocose letter appended to his first published work of satirical fiction, *A Political Romance*, the author forbids his printer 'to alter or transpose one Word, nor rectify one false Spelling, nor so much as add or diminish one Comma or Tittle, in or to my Romance' (Letters 68). Such work usually was left to the printer, but Sterne was invested in the minutiae of his text. As he wrote to his prospective London publisher, Robert Dodsley, concerning his own, first, York edition of *Tristram Shandy*, 'I shall correct every proof myself, it shall go perfect into the world, and be printed in so creditable a way as to paper, type, &c., as to do no dishonour to you' (Letters 80–1).

*Tristram Shandy* is a veritable museum of typographic idiosyncrasy, particular examples of which I discuss below. However, we must note that this is consistent in all of Sterne's publications. For example, in printing the London edition of his sermons (especially the second set, published in 1766), Sterne attempted to ensure that these dramatic performances would be rendered onto the page. Drawing on the Scriblerian tradition of performative textuality (in which non-verbal elements supplement the verbal meaning of the text) and the already established Shandean style of presentation, Sterne renders the orality of his sermons on the page by the use of white space, expressive dashes, and other techniques of layout. Implicit in the use of these techniques is the recognition that language is material. A print culture only emphasises this as it distances us from the sense of a living author and presents mere matter: black marks on the page, or, as an exasperated Tristram at one point puts it, 'tall, opake words' (TS 3.20.235). Sterne will not let his reader forget that 'texts' (an abstract concept) are in reality concrete books, physical things that require tactile handling. A minutely detailed instance of this philosophy occurs when Corporal Trim is instructed to look for 'aught of a sailing chariot' in Stevinus's book. Trim does not use the index, the table of contents, or read through Stevinus for references to the chariot. Instead, he drolly insists
on making 'sure work' of the task: 'so taking hold of the two covers of the book, one in each hand, and letting the leaves fall down, as he bent the covers back, he gave the book a good sound shake' (2.15.137-8). If texts are things (objects), they are paradoxical ones because they communicate. They do this through a fiction about the transparent referentiality of abstract words. However, interfering with this fiction, reminding us that communication takes place through physicality, is the *mise en page*; the presence of the page is a counter to the abstract conception of literature.

This also has implications for the idea of authorship. How can the page compensate for the absence of the author at the time of reading? And what is unique to print culture about this concern? Mark Rose has argued that the development of cultural interest in both biographical authors and the creation of psychologically realistic characters in the eighteenth-century novel is a response to the vexed issue of copyright during this period. He suggests that the need to ground copyright in a particular owner of intellectual property gives rise to the development of the value of originality in literary composition (as opposed to neoclassical imitation), and to the notion of personality as something transferable to literature, making a work unique (and hence something that can be owned). Thus copyright debates played a role in creating the romantic idea that the author becomes known through his work. In Rose's view, the author is a construct of a print culture that needs to locate the origins of the text for primarily financial or legal reasons; it is the literary text that performs this construction. For Sterne, however, even as his animated pages offer the idiosyncrasy of the text as a substitute for the personality of the author, the independent existence of the author is never out of sight.

And in this regard, Sterne ultimately seems to resist the openness of the print market; he resists the 'death of the author' implied in a vision of the author as a textual construct. This is manifest in two somewhat contradictory ways: the physicality of his printed books, and a thematic strain of resistance to print itself within *Tristram Shandy*. First, the typographical gestures that Sterne offers in *Tristram Shandy* make his book stand out from the crush of books. Among the more obvious examples are the black page memorialising Yorick (TS 1.12.37-8; see Fig. 1); the chapter 'torn out' and represented by a 'chasm of ten pages' (4.25-372); the blank page provided for the reader to draw his own widow Wadman (6.38.567); the diagrams of the narrative line (6.40.570-1; see Fig. 2, discussed below); and the flourish of Trim's stick (9.4.743). More subtly, throughout the nine volumes of the work as a whole, we find a characteristic textual 'feel' - in the ubiquitous asterisks, the generous use of varying dash-lengths, the unconventional deployment on the page of white space (see, for example, 6.18.526-9) and printer's devices (even
I am now beginning to get fairly into my work; and by the help of a vegetable diet, with a few of the cold feeds, I make no doubt but I shall be able to go on with my uncle Toby's story, and my own; in a tolerable straight line. Now,
CHRISTOPHER FANNING

the passage goes on, 'this moment that I last dipp'd my pen into my ink' becomes a confirmation of Tristram's existence in space and time (four specific dates of composition, from 9 March 1759 to 12 August 1766, are given over the course of the work). He is biologically one with his writing, developing the preceding connection of his pulse and his writing into a sanguinary apostrophe: 'spurting thy ink about thy table and thy books' (3.28.254). **Tristram Shandy** is one of the most personalised deployments of print we know, and yet, even as Sterne pushed his printers to heights of expressive idiosyncrasy, he harboured a sense of alienation from print: can the manipulation of cast type in a print shop by a team of journeymen render the authorial self?

The unpronounceable subtitle above comes from the abbreviated phrases beneath Tristram's diagram of his narrative lines (TS 6.40.570), signifying that 'Tristram Shandy invented' and 'engraved' these lines. What is the meaning of Sterne's use of print technology in the context of Tristram's many explicit references to technologies other than that of movable type printing: pen, ink and paper, pencil and paintbrush, the pentagraph, coin stamping, marbling and engraving? I refer to these under the heading of 'graphism' to distinguish them from print, for the insistent presence of non-print graphism in the context of the printed work marks an attempt to authorise the printed work - that is, to tie the multiplied and disseminated product to its author or originator. In Fig. 2, the crooked lines draw attention to themselves in their peculiarity relationship to print. They are clearly woodcuts that stand out against the movable type of the page, attesting to an older technology, and perhaps alluding to an ornamental calligraphic flourish associated with writing (as with the later flourish of Trim's stick (9.4.743)). Yet, at the same time, they are embedded in a linear text and very carefully set parallel to the lines of type. Their deviance from the straight lines (literal and metaphorical) that Tristram writes about in this chapter and elsewhere is limited by the medium. If the medium limits the expression of individual deviance, what is the interrelationship between developing senses of authorship in the eighteenth-century print market and the sense of agency made available to the author in the material act of inscription?

The question is implicit in Tristram's inscription: 'Inventit T.S.' suggests both literary senses of 'invention' - the first of the five parts of classical rhetoric, which seeks out existing arguments for deployment - and the modern conception of 'originality'. 'Sculpsit T.S.', the personal act of engraving, implies the uniqueness of the artefact (another sense of originality), and its direct connection to the author. How can the act of printing - multiplying a text in the absence of the author, and disseminating it in a different material medium - be an 'authorial' act?

**In a study of early modern writing manuals,** Jonathan Goldberg draws attention to the relay between the cultural violence enabled by writing (social stratification, control of knowledge) and the physical violence of the material scene of writing: the focus on the knife that sharpens the quill or stylus, and the subsequent ploughing and gouging metaphors used to describe the action of the pen upon paper. Readers of Sterne might find a parallel scene of textual violence where Walter Shandy seeks to 'scratch some better sense' into Erasmus by means of a penknife: 'See, my dear brother Toby, how I have mended the sense. - But you have mar't a word, replied my uncle Toby. - My father put on his spectacles, - bit his lip, - and tore out the leaf in a passion' (TS 3.37.272). This literal violence has metaphorical application elsewhere in **Tristram Shandy**, as when Tristram rounds on the reviewers of his previous instalment: 'how could you cut and slash my jerkin as you did? - how did you know, but you would cut my lining too?' (3.4.190-1).

The literary 'violence of the letter' that interests Goldberg is the forced conformity of the hand to the rule of writing. The standardisation of handwriting marks the erasure of the author's personal hand. Goldberg further notes of his sources that 'the printed books realise what was implicit in the writing practices prescribed in the manuals, for if the aim was to produce a hand conformed to a model, printing insured the duplication of the hand'.

The effacement of the writer in the act of writing after a model is clinched by the replicating technology of print. Returning to the diagrams of volume 6, consider Tristram's version of Goldberg's thesis. Tristram speaks of the decreasing deviance of his narrative from linear expectations:

If I mend at this rate, it is not impossible ... but I may arrive hereafter at the excellency of going on even thus;

which is a line drawn as straight as I could draw it, by a writing master's ruler, (borrowed for that purpose) turning neither to the right hand or to the left.

(TS 6.40.571-2)

As we know from comments on straight lines elsewhere in **Tristram Shandy**, such a history is 'morally speaking, impossible', for any author of spirit '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' (1.14.41). The fact that Tristram does not own his own ruler suggests that he will not conform his hand to the rule, even as he promises to do just that.

But how will he convey his idiosyncratic hand in so regulated a medium as print? Or, how is an author to convey his sense of self in this impersonal form? One of the ways in which Sterne attempts to 'reinscribe' printing - to
personalise and authorise it - is by insisting on the scene of writing that stands behind the printed artefact: 'In less than five minutes I shall have thrown my pen into the fire, and the little drop of thick ink which is left remaining at the bottom of my ink-horn, after it' (TS 4.32,400). Tristram reminds us and himself, by means of such details, that there is a living being behind these printed words.

And this is not only a comic reminder, for inscription is, as it were, a confirmation of agency and, as such, a means of self-knowledge in the existential sense: a moment of conscious self-identity. The precedent for Sterne's deployment of writing to manifest self-presence may be found in John Locke's philosophical discussion of personal identity. Here, writing becomes a ground for a present identity based in consciousness:

Had I the same consciousness, that I saw the Ark and Noah's Flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the Thames last Winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I, that write this now, that saw the Thames overflow'd last Winter, and that view'd the Flood at the general Deluge, was the same self ... than that I that write this am the same self now whilst I write ... that I was Yesterday.'

Writing, for Locke, reveals a sense of continuing self-presence by acting as a sort of mirror; the self is doubled through writing, allowing self-recognition.

Tristram, too, asserts that the activity of writing manifests an author's sense of his existence, for 'every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity Life follows my pen' (TS 9.8,754). A subsequent discussion of writer's block confirms the biological connection of life and writing. 'I never stand conferring with pen and ink one moment', Tristram boasts, and when other remedies fail:

I take a razor at once; and having tried the edge of it upon the palm of my hand, without further ceremony, except that of first lathering my beard, I shave it off ... for consider, Sir, as every man chuses to be present at the shaving of his own beard (though there is no rule without an exception) and unavoidably sits over against himself the whole time it is doing, in case he has a hand in it -- the Situation, like all others, has notions of her own to put into the brain. (9.13,763)

Tristram finds that the self-presence induced by shaving gives rise to intellectual reflection, which is both a pre- and co-requisite for writing. Through this process of making himself present to himself, he becomes able to extend this reflection into the writing that further confirms his presence: 'A man cannot dress, but his ideas get cloath'd at the same time; and if he dresses like a gentleman, every one of them stands presented to his imagination, genteeled along with him -- so that he has nothing to do, but take his pen, and write like himself' (9.13,764). This is an application of Locke's formula for identity: I write therefore I am. In dragging one's pen across the page, one is confirmed in one's biological sense of an empirical self -- externalised on the page, yet connected to the volition that drives the hand. This is not a connection available to the author of works circulating in print, or at least not without considerable and somewhat paradoxical effort.

In December 1761, Sterne began to autograph every instalment of Tristram Shandy (see Fig. 3). This was probably an attempt to protect his copyright, supported by advertisements stating that 'Every book is signed by the Author'. But might we also read this decision as an attempt to ground the printed text in its biological origins? Jacques Derrida has taught us the paradox of originality implicit in the signature -- that mark of singularity which must be repeated. Sterne certainly enjoyed such problems, as the various puzzles of identity posed in Tristram Shandy suggest, including the irrepeatability of the marbled page and the impasse that arises when, in narrating two separate trips through Auxerre, Tristram finds he has been 'getting forwards in two different journeys together, and with the same dash of the pen', and must pause to 'collect myself' before continuing (TS 7.28,621-2). However, the signatory act was also a moment to confirm identity for Sterne in several ways. Here, I turn to a well-known anecdote about Sterne's schooldays in the 1720s (well-known because it is the only one he supplied to posterity), in which his Yorkshire schoolmaster

had the ceiling of the school-room new white-washed -- the ladder remained there -- one unlucky day mounted it, and wrote with a brush in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment this expression made me forget the stripes I had received. (Letters 3-4)

This is the single anecdote of his youth in the memoir Sterne wrote for his daughter Lydia, suggesting that the mature author recognised the importance of the lesson learned that day decades earlier. There are in fact several lessons to be learned here, for the context in which this memory is produced affects the meaning of the incident. The memoir was begun in 1758 (before Sterne's rise to fame), but this anecdote was added in 1767, at the height of his celebrity, and near the end of his life, as he was aware. In other words, this narrative of primal graphism (the autograph in graffiti) is recalled and written only after Sterne had fulfilled his schoolmaster's prophecy. It is also recounted after Sterne had signed issues of Tristram Shandy for six years, to a probable total of some 12,250 signatures. The anecdote concerns an act of writing, and it would appear that it is the act of signing his name that is of first importance. Sterne's account draws
THE
LIFE and OPINIONS
OF
TRISTRAM SHANDY, Gent.

CHAP. I.

I CALL all the powers of time and chance, which severally check us in our careers in this world, to bear me witness, that I could never yet get fairly to my uncle Toby's amours, till this very moment, that my mother's curiosity,

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This image of the writer evokes many of the facets of Sterne's involvement with print culture. It is a scene of writing placed in a Grubstreet context of attention to the activity of this writing. He does not say 'I wrote my name upon the ceiling'. Rather, he gives us the action letter by letter, printed in capitals in Lydia's 1775 edition of the memoir (the incomplete manuscript lacks this passage). The importance of this act of writing is shown in its production of two kinds of self-confirmation for the boy, by which I mean the confirmation of his existence to himself: first, in body, with the whipping given by the usher ('stripe' is probably from the Germanic *strippen*, to flog, but also suggests the graphic); second, in mind or soul, with the master's declaration of the boy's genius. Both acts correlate the marks made with the maker, their referent, the signatory Laurence Sterne. This is Sterne's primal scene of writing. It asserts his existence in the same way that the signatures in *Tristram Shandy* draw attention to Laurence Sterne, who may or may not be identical with the Tristram who so carefully describes his scenes of writing. It is this Laurence Sterne who decides to relate the anecdote in 1767, in a world very different from that of the schoolboy. The unity of authorship with the act of writing has dissolved over the intervening years, Sterne the literary celebrity has seen his name fly out of his control—has seen published spurious continuations of his work, and, in one case, has even read a report of his own death; he has lost the feel of the pen moving across the pages of which he is supposedly the author. Does the anecdote of the schoolboy reassert his sense of himself as a writer? Surely he recognised that the anecdote would not have been called for if he were not a public figure. Just as the rebellious lines of narrative in volume 6 are subject to the rule of print, and are interpretable only in relation to straight lines, so the value of the writer—the act of writing itself, even as it confirms the writer's self-identity—is found in the circulation of print.

The real historical biological boy writing his name from the ladder is produced to testify to the existence of an aging and decaying Laurence Sterne. However, the anecdote would not exist for us without the demand for such a concrete detail as an author. Ironically, this demand is created by the intervening figure of a fictional Tristram Shandy, who himself attempts to confirm his reality by means of writing:

It is not half an hour ago, when (in the great hurr'y and precipitation of a poor devil's writing for daily bread) I threw a fair sheet, which I had just finished, and carefully wrote out, slap into the fire, instead of the foul one.

Instantly I snatch'd off my wig, and threw it perpendicularly, with all imaginable violence, up to the top of the room—indeed I caught it as it fell—but there was an end of the matter, nor do I think anything else in *Nature*, would have given such immediate ease.

( *TS* 4:17.349-50)
writing for bread, where the pressure of the press causes the hurry and precipitation of the error. It represents a failure to fit the biological human element into the mechanised system of print. And yet Tristram's recovery in this scene re-humanises the author. Every one of us has done the equivalent of tossing our wig at the frustrations of writing, and hence we will recognise the author in the work, even as we realise the impossibility of so discovering the 'real' Laurence Sterne.

NOTES


3. Colley Cibber, A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope (1742), 9, quoted in Letters 92.


6. For a fuller account of this phenomenon, including the role of Garrick, see Peter M. Briggs, 'Laurence Sterne and Literary Celebrity in 1760', Age of Johnson 4 (1991), 241-80.

7. On the physiology of the passions and the codification of gesture in the period, see Alan T. McKenzie, Certain, Lively Episodes: The Articulation of Passion in Eighteenth-Century Prose (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990); McKenzie offers telling anecdotes about Garrick's offstage demonstration of his gestural technique for conveying different emotions at 1-5.


11. Exact print-runs of the opening volumes are uncertain, but Kenneth Monkman proposes a figure of between 200 and 300 copies for Sterne's York edition, and 5,000 copies for the first London edition ('Bibliography of Early Editions of Tristram Shandy', The Library, 5th series 25 (1970), 11-39). There were also two further London editions and three Dublin editions in 1760.

12. Fixity is one of the key features of print for Elizabeth Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), I, 113-26. Adrian Johns has argued that 'fixity' is a construct created by publishers themselves (The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. 10-32 and 628-38), but it was certainly an expectation among readers.

13. For a full description of the laborious (and costly) process of marbling, see Diana Patterson, 'Tristram's Marblings and Marblers', Shandean 3 (1991), 70-97.


19. See Kenneth Monkman's 'Bibliographical Descriptions' in the Florida edition (TS 907-18), which give the following figures for the signed volumes: volume 5, first edition, 4,000 copies; volume 5, second edition, 750 copies; volume 7, 4,000 copies; volume 9, 3,500 copies (noting that at least one surviving copy of volume 9 lacks Sterne's signature).