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 Laurence Sterne published his masterpiece *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* in nine slender volumes in the final decade of his life, between 1759 and 1767. The first two volumes appeared in York, Dublin and London in January 1760. On 25 March the advertisement for the second (London) edition proudly announced a frontispiece designed by William Hogarth. Volumes 3 and 4 (again with a frontispiece by Hogarth) appeared a year later, in January 1761, and in December of that same year volumes 5 and 6 came out, with the unusual announcement that "Every book is signed by the author". And indeed, to protect his book from being pirated, Sterne signed all copies of the first and second (revised) editions of volume 5, and of the first editions of volumes 7 and 9 on the first text-page: 12,750 signatures in a neat (and still perfectly legible) hand. Volumes 7 and 8 appeared in January 1765, the last volume in 1767, shortly before Sterne's death (he died of consumption). Contrary to Samuel Johnson's famous dictum that "Tristram Shandy did not last," the novel was a success: some thirty different editions appeared in his lifetime, and many, many more have appeared since then.

From the very beginning Sterne devoted almost excessive attention to matters of typographical detail. His letters to his publishers attest to his demands regarding format, quality of paper, type, and layout. The first advertisements for his book stressed that it was "Printed on a superfine Writing Paper" and with a "new Letter", and that it was "neatly bound". He saw each new volume through the press himself, which is the more remarkable since he had to travel all the way from Coxwold in Yorkshire to London in the worst possible season (all volumes came out in winter). He wrote to his London publisher, Dodsley, about the first York imprint, that he had corrected every proof himself, and the extant manuscripts of his other masterpiece *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* are evidence that Sterne corrected his proofs with very great care, revising his text in minor detail, specifying typographic accidentals such as italics, upper and lower case with professional precision, and devoting much care to lay-out and paragraphing. He had always been finicky, even in 1759, when Caesar Ward in York had printed his satirical pamphlet *A Political Romance*. Sterne wrote Ward: "do not presume to alter or transpose one Word, not rectify one false Spelling, nor so much as add or diminish one Comma or Tittle".

The text of *Tristram Shandy* is characterized by the highly unusual nature of its many non-verbal features. Many of these appear, if they appear at all, in modern editions of the novel in a form which differs from the one originally insisted upon by the author. No one who knows *Tristram Shandy* only in the Penguin, the Random House, or the Everyman edition can know the extent of Sterne's experiments with the visual effect of the printed word. In this paper I will regard his novel as a "co-existential" verbo-visual whole. I will discuss the function and effects of the non-verbal aspects of the text of the first editions of *Tristram Shandy* in the light of the aesthetic effect of the printing and lay-out of its 1,594 duodecimo pages.

Let me explain that term "co-existential": the verbal and visual elements of a text can be said to be
either mutually "referential" (as when a newspaper article is illustrated by a photograph), or "co-referential" (as when a graph elucidates a text). But the closest relationship between a word and an image is a "co-existential" one, when the text's verbal and visual elements are so intimately interwoven that they form an aesthetic whole. Text and picture cannot be divorced from one another without serious loss: the picture is the text, the text the picture. A striking example in Tristram Shandy (amply commented upon) is the marbled page in volume 3, which is part of the text of the novel, as its pagination and margins show. Indeed, what first made me turn to the first editions of the individual volumes of Tristram Shandy was the very unicity of those baffling marbled pages, each page hand-marbled, each side different and unique, each side hand-stamped, each leaf stuck in, the sheer scope of the undertaking a tell-tale indication of the extent to which Sterne was prepared to go in turning his book into an aesthetic object: the marbled pages in volume 3 required 8,000 times folding of the leaf, marbling, and stamp-ing. In between the extremes of, on the one hand, a unique text (in all its original typographical aspects) and, on the other, a cheap featureless reprint, I propose a sliding scale by which we may measure the degree of co-existentiality of any text's verbo-visual elements and features. To give one example, many of W.M. Thackeray's illustrations are merely referential and can be (and often, unfortunately, are) left out in modern reprints without loss of understanding of the text. But Thackeray occasionally throws in a clearly co-existential drawing, as in The Rose and the Ring (1854), where on page 87 he uses an almost Sternian dash to indicate the delicate pause in which he decides to draw the picture rather than describe the scene: "The landlady came up, looking --- looking like this ---" and there she is, (fig. 1) rising from the page.

Another example, in which indeed the co-existentiality of the aesthetic whole makes it almost impossible to say whether we are dealing with a text or with a picture, can be found in Tom Phillips's A Human Document: A Treated Victorian Novel. Tom Phillips started "treating" William H. Mallock's 1892 A Human Document in 1966, using the typographical "rivers" in the type of the original, scoring out unwanted words, colouring in type areas, making each page new, and inviting the reader / spectator to share in his Barthesian textual jouissance.

Sterne's novel contains all the verbo-visual features outlined above. This is not surprising, since in volume 5, chapter 7, Sterne himself voiced the idea "that of all the senses, the eye ... has the quickest commerce with the soul,-- gives a smarter stroke, and leaves something more inexpresable on the fancy, than words can either convey -- or sometimes get rid of." This paper's scope does not allow more than passing treatment of the purely "referential" dimension. Given the variety of Sterne illustrations this is a pity. From Hogarth onward illustrators have risen to the challenge (Henry William Bunbury is one of the more intriguing artists in a long line), and obviously one of the more interesting subjects here is which "pregnant" moments (in Shaftesbury's sense of that term) have been chosen by illustrators. Uncle Toby's hobby-horse was quite popular. Another favourite, of course, was Mad Maria, with her goat. That rather disturbing animal was later, when Sentimentalism had won, replaced by a little lamb, and, in the 19th century, by a poodle ...
in the black page, thus turning it into a perfect tomb-stone, and in many editions Uncle Toby's favourite song Lillabullero is printed, lyrics and score, unasked for by Sterne's text. As to the co-referential and co-existential dimensions of Sterne's text, most one-volume editions of *Tristram Shandy* merely offer the reader the verbal contents of the text. Some copy in one form or another some of the non-verbal effects characteristic of the novel, but none, alas, do full justice to the startling originality of the novel as it was published by Sterne. Obviously, the marbled pages must be seen in colour, but other examples come to mind. The graphs in volume 6 charting the plot lines (and originally signed "Inv. T.S. & Scul. T.S.") are mostly copied, but they strike one differently in the original text, as does Trim's flourish in volume 9. The difference is easily explained: the flourish (fig. 2) is much larger a gesture than the one we find in modern editions. This one fills more than half the page (the absence of a catchword adding to the effect). The Penguin page contains two and a half times as much text as Sterne's original pages do. This simple fact diminishes the effect Trim's flourish can have in Penguin considerably, and likewise makes the graphs in volume 6 far more secondary in Penguin than they are in the original.

A quick check of the following most outstanding typographical "oddities" will show how appallingly bad most modern editions are: there must be two black pages in volume 1, chapter 12; and two marbled ones (each side different, and in colour) in volume 3, at the end of chapter 36; there must be a gap in the pagination of volume 4, since chapter 24 is missing; a blank page is asked for in chapter 38 and a series of graphs in the last chapter of volume 6; in volume 7, chapter 25, the broken syllables chanted by the Abbess of Andouillets and Margarita must get smaller and smaller; the fine woodcut depicting Corporal Trim's flourish must be in chapter 4 of volume 9, of which chapters 18 and 19 must be blank, though later they are printed, with different chapter-headings. And there are countless smaller indications that words and characters are visual objects in the pages of *Tristram Shandy*, as when "sentiment" sails down the Ganges and round the world in volume 5, chapter 12, or when the city of Nevers is never reached in chapter 2. And in chapter 13, Mrs Shandy almost would have listened at the door "till the end of the chapter ..." Thus it is fitting that in volume 3 the actual moment of Tristram's birth is not described; at that point in the work there is instead "The Author's PREFACE". After all, Tristram Shandy, Gentleman is both a character, an implied author, and a title.

Here are two more examples of verbo-visual surprise. In (fig. 3) the left (Latin) and right (English) pages suggest a literal translation, and indeed nearly all modern editions number the chapter on both pages identically, thus deviating from the original where, as one sees, the Latin text gives chapter 25 of Ernulphus, the English text chapter 11 of Tristram. An interesting variant is first found in the edition of 1782, where the English chapter numerically succeeds the Latin one. But even thus regularized the surprise effect is gone. And a closer look at the pagination of the missing chapter in volume 4 (the text jumps from page 146 to 156) brings to light the awkward (and I am sure deliberate) misnumbering of the right-hand page (p. 156). As compositors and binders know only too well (their work hinges on the very principle) right-hand pages are always odd-numbered. To have them even-numbered from here to the end of the volume on page 220 (indeed recto) creates total and recurrent typographical alienation. This is a printer's nightmare not unlike the glorious grammatical impossibility of that triumphant non-sentence in volume 3, chapter 38: "a cow broke in (to-morrow morning)". Naturally, all modern editions number the pages of *Tristram Shandy* "correctly" (that is to say, they ruin one of Sterne's better jokes).

Many of these are obviously based on the serial appearance of the volumes. A good example is the fate of Sterne's suggestion to his fictional reader
(himself a character in the volume) in the beginning of volume 6 that "as we have got thro' these five volumes" he "sit down upon a set" (of those volumes: their very small size adds to the joke). But the point was obviously missed when the format of the novel was changed: in later editions "set" is often silently "emended" to "seat". I often advise my students to cut up their Penguin edition into nine separate parts — it helps. Although of course nothing can ever turn Penguin's Linotype Georgian pages (38 lines, 60 characters wide) into Sterne's hand-set Caslon Pica ones, twenty-two lines long, each page 40 characters wide.

And this brings me to my main point. Tristram Shandy was designed by Laurence Sterne to be set in Caslon Pica, indeed, he had insisted upon this in his first letter to Dodsley, in October 1759. Sterne, who had just seen the first two volumes of Tristram Shandy through Caesar Ward's press in York, wrote Dodsley in London, not quite truthfully (since the volumes had been printed already): "I propose ... to print a lean edition, in two small volumes, of the size of Rasselas, and on the same paper and type, at my own expense". Johnson's Rasselas had just been published in two slender duodecimo volumes. Sterne did not copy Johnson's entire title-page: he obviously disliked the customary division between title and imprint, and got rid of the double rule separating them. But he did almost exactly copy the rest of the format of Rasselas: the type Caslon Pica, the type-area 21 lines, the paper smooth writing-paper. And he used with abandon the many characteristic features of the type he chose, a type which he would also have known from his favourite reference work, the second (1738) edition of Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopaedia: or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, which has s.v. "Letter" a copy of Caslon's first type specimen of 1734. Caslon's is a highly irregular letter, more suitable for poetry than for prose, and a difficult letter for compositors and printers to work with, especially on smooth "super-fine" writing-paper. The "f" is asymmetric, the "g" too slanting, the verticals of the "W" are not parallel, the "N" slants and is too wide, the "A" looks topped off, the italics are highly irregular, almost too italic, and the ampersand is quite exuberant (and cheerfully used for full effect by Sterne, for instance in volume 4 where whole strings of &c. &c. &c.'s disrupt the order of the page). The letter Sterne chose is one reason why the pages of Tristram Shandy have their nervous look, especially since the relatively small type-area and the generous margins give Caslon's Pica full rein.

But Sterne went further. He developed an intricate system, rhetorical rather than grammatical, of hyphens and dashes and asterisks, adding an occasional cross (when someone crosses himself), or index hand (to score a point), and once (in volume 5, chapter 10) he had two small dots printed to indicate that Corporal Trim snaps his fingers. He also considerably varied letterpress, asking for black letter, Greek type, French and Latin, undercase, uppercase (sometimes both in one line, and often, as in the phrase "insensible MORE or LESS", he insisted upon a double shift to uppercase for single words) — compositors must have considered him exceedingly demanding, and this might explain why Dodsley did not renew his contract. It is also quite typical of Sterne that a very complex joke necessitates bad French, in volume 1, where it is hoped that the baptismal strategies invented by the Doctors of the Sorbonne will do no harm "a le pere". This was silently and incorrectly "corrected" to "au pere" by nearly all compositors after the first edition. Interestingly, the relevant (and correct) page in the first (York) edition is a cancel, which seems to indicate that Sterne had demanded restoration of his joke.

But the most immediately striking visual feature of Sterne's text is his remarkable use of the asterisk and the dash. The contemporary use of the asterisk (to indicate footnotes and hiatus or ellipsis) is expanded considerably. In Tristram Shandy it often stands for
distinct words or whole sentences (thus "**** *** ** *** ******" in volume 5 is, in context, perfectly legible, what with there being no ****** **), sometimes it stands for unspecified sentences or narrative passages in general, filling whole blocks of text. Such asterisked textlines (asterisks occur in 163 lines, sometimes for half a page) often have their own punctuation: the starry paragraphs are indented, or rounded off with a period, or they are interrupted by a dash; indeed, a row of asterisks is used twice for a catchword. Even more spectacular (and mysterious) is the Shandeian dash, which varies in length from 3 mm to 3 cm, and, like the asterisk, is often treated as though it were a word in a sentence. The fine Florida Edition of Tristram Shandy (1978) points out (in an important note on pp. 835-37) that Sterne lengthened the dash in the second edition of volumes 5 and 6, which he carefully supervised, by one em in 90% of cases: "perhaps he did ask the printer to open up the text in this way ... for Sterne the dash was primarily important not as a grammatical or oratorical sign, but as a visual one -- it affects the appearance of the page". The extent to which the dash is used is truly staggering (9,560 times in 1,594 pages of text, or rather in 27,899 textlines, that is to say there is on average one dash in every three lines). The dash's visibility is great in the small type-area of the original text. Gardner D. Stout suggests on p. 53 of his edition of A Sentimental Journey that the dash is usually preceded by other punctuation in volumes 1 to 4, and that in the remaining volumes, as in A Sentimental Journey, there is "almost exclusive use" of the single dash, the shift "commencing in vols. III and IV." This is not entirely true. There is considerable flux and variation throughout the nine volumes, although in general the longer dash in stead of a comma or period occurs more often from volume 7 onwards. The subject is too complex to treat here, but my computer data indicate that in all volumes different combinations with dashes occur, the patterns being totally unpredictable and certainly not as linear as Stout would wish.

Finally there is Sterne's intriguing use of a contemporary printer's convention, the use of a catchword on the signature line of the page to indicate the first word on the next. There are indications that Sterne did not really like that convention (one remembers that there is no catchword to spoil Trim's flourish). But as they had to be there, Sterne used them, on one occasion so subtly interweaving text and footnote that no modern edition seems to have noticed what does happen. In figure 4 one can clearly see how the two texts on page 133 -- main text and footnote-text -- continue to the next page via their respective catchwords "but" and "If". There the footnote text stops, any catchword being strikingly absent, although the text would suggest that the next page will "follow", as it does, but from the other catchword, the main text's "ME-". In other words, typographically main text and footnote are merged in new main text, a confluence that has gone unnoticed so far. Catchword-order (to coin a phrase) is restored on the next pages.

As my last examples will show, to read the original text of Sterne's book one must to a very great extent submit to a lexical and visual guessing game. Needless to say, one's guesses are not infrequently wrong, and expectations are often frustrated. Sterne's use of catchwords can be compared with one important feature of rhyme: the skilled reader tries to anticipate what follows while the poet tries to surprise. And in the case of Tristram Shandy one not only seldom knows how the sentence (or for that matter the story) will continue, one does not know either what the next page is going to look like. Tristram Shandy is one of those novels where blanks are as meaningful as text. Each page is a living unit, each new page a visual surprise. Any modern edition in comparison is drably uniform, its type-area too large and its type too small to be as flexibly versatile as Sterne's twenty-odd Pica lines per page. Figures 5 to 7 demonstrate the full effect of a sequence of pages. Some indication of context is required: throughout the volume the Widow Wadman and her servant Bridget
want to know precisely (anatomically) where in or near the groin Uncle Toby, a retired Infantry Captain, was wounded during the siege of Namur (which might be a pun on "ne amour" or on "no more"), but their persistent inquiries always lead to Uncle Toby's explaining, geographically, with the help of a map of the fortifications of Namur, where he stood when he got wounded. His faithful batman, Corporal Trim, here explains in his own way that the Widow has nothing (or everything) to fear. The striking position of the two textlines on p. 118 is the more striking when one realizes that this is the only time that the word "map" (which occurs 20 times in the novel) is capitalized, and that this is the only one of the 312 chapters placed thus on an otherwise blank page: here hangs a Map indeed. In the next pages dashes lead the eye while the right-hand catchwords raise expectations that are not fulfilled. "We" are not Toby and Trim, but Widow and Bridget. What "It" will be can never be guessed, and few will guess that it is Trim who "knows" on p. 124. Notice on pages 120 and 121 how the long dashes and the blank lines between paragraphs slow down the narrative, and remark that Bridget's gesture is said to be a "sentence"; notice also how the lines of asterisks on page 122 end in a period; above all, notice how these pages vibrate with life, their ever-surprising lay-out furthered by the fact that the text is hand-set in a letter which refuses to yield straight and uniform lines.

This is why only the original text will do: no matter how faithfully the more obvious idiosyncracies of Sterne's text are copied, the modern linotype page cannot but be a grey and uniform typographical block, whereas Sterne's pages are wide open. Just as the text of the novel is typically and nervously conversational (the text must be read aloud to make full sense), its typography is never still but in constant flux. Yet the conversational flow is all the time interrupted by the typography, and a great deal of the full effect of this unique novel stems from that very contrast between textual point and visual counterpoint. In a word, in Tristram Shandy we witness the writing in time in a book in space. But we can participate fully only when we accept the co-existence of word and image in this novel that can only be be read as it was originally composed.


2. As Kenneth Monkman puts it (in the 1978 Florida Edition of Tristram Shandy, p. 929) in his commentary on the fact that in the second edition of volume 5 the catchword "CHAP." is omitted in 10 out of 11 cases: The decision to remove them certainly improves the look of the printed page, but was contrary to contemporary practice, and "CHAP." reasserts itself in volumes VII and VIII, and consistently throughout volume IX, in which, probably to spin out Sterne's text, each chapter begins on a new page and so calls for a catchword.
gown—my slippers;" but nobody came. There was no bell, so he went and bawled out for the waiter on the top of the stairs. The landlady came up, looking—looking like this—

"What are you a hollering and a bellaring for here, young man?" says she.

Figure 1.

[Image of a woman in a gown]

[Image of a man with a stick]

Figure 2.

Nothing, Trim—said my uncle Toby, musing—

Whilst a man is free—cried the Corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus.
By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the holy canons, and of the undefiled Virgin Mary, mother and patroness of our Saviour. I think there is no necessity, quoth Dr. Slop, dropping the paper down to his knee, and addressing himself to my father,—as you have read it over, Sir, so lately, to read it aloud,—and as Captain Shandy seems to have no great inclination to hear it,—I may as well read it to myself. That’s contrary to treaty, replied my father,—besides, there is something so whimsical, especially in the latter part of it, I should grieve to lose the pleasure of a second reading. Dr. Slop did not altogether like it,—but my uncle Toby offering at that instant to give

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MY uncle Toby's Map is carried down into the kitchen.

A ND here is the Maes—and this is the Sambri; said the Corporal, pointing with his right hand extended a little towards the map, and his left upon Mrs. Bridget's shoulder—but not the shoulder next him—and this, said he, is the town of Namur—and this the citadel—and there lay the French—and here lay his honour and myself—and in this cursed trench, Mrs. Bridget, quoth the Corporal, taking her by the hand, did he receive the wound which struck'd him so miserably here——

In pronouncing which he slightly press'd the back of her hand towards the part he felt for—and let it fall.

We
It was somewhat unfortunate for Mrs. Bridget, that she had begun the attack with her manual exercises, for the Corporal instantly

She snatch'd up a rolling-pin —
*twas ten to one, she had laugh'd —
She laid it down — she cried; and had one single tear of 'em but t'ail'd of bitterness, full sorrowful would the Corporal's heart have been that he had used the argument; but the Corporal understood the less, a qu'art major to a terce at least, better than my uncle Toby; and accordingly he afflied Mrs. Bridget after this manner.

I know,