

**A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY
AND THE CULT OF SENSIBILITY**

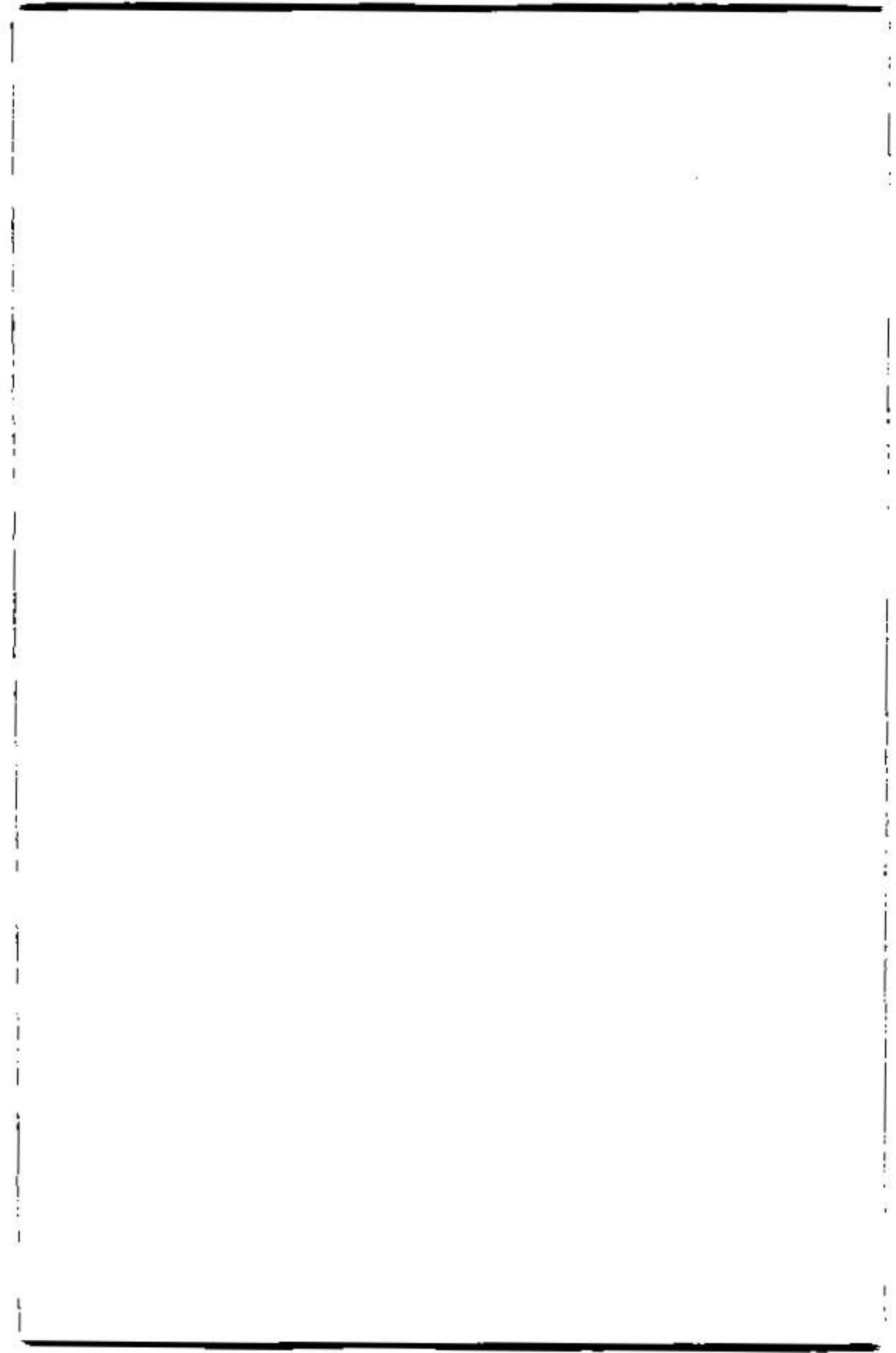
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In his seminal article, "Suggestions Toward a Genealogy of the Man of Feeling", R. S. Crane traces the origins of the cult of "sensibility" to numerous Anglican divines of the Latitudinarian tradition, writing from about 1660 to 1725¹. This tradition, according to Crane, was not simply a doctrine, but a complex of doctrines, that reached their widest dissemination in the latter half of the eighteenth century². This essay proposes to re-examine Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*³ as a work that simultaneously represents, shapes and undercuts this cult of sensibility⁴. I will first attempt to locate Sterne's novel within the context of such a genealogy, through a fresh examination of the novel that builds upon the methods and techniques of new historicism. Perhaps the most significant difference between traditional historicist approaches to eighteenth century fiction in general, and to Sterne's novel in particular, has been the latter's adoption of discursive analysis for a mimetic theory that sees novels primarily as reflecting or imitating ideas and philosophies already prevalent in a culture within a given historical period⁵. By examining Sterne's use of the voice of Yorick as narrator of the text, I will attempt to show a representative Man of Feeling with a distinct voice, who preaches a cult of sensibility, while yet exposing that textual voice to the critical examination of the critic/reader⁶. I will then examine the theatrical devices deployed by Sterne to contextualize Yorick's pronouncements upon sensibility and "feeling", through the enactment of scenes, which at once supply a stage for the rhetorical expression of sensibility, but simultaneously create a context in which the validity of that feeling is ironically called into question. Sterne's deployment of such strategies will be shown, from a new-historicist perspective, as performing an ideological task, namely that of

defining and propagating the new cult of sensibility. I will also attempt to show that, through its use of irony, and through the choice of Yorick's narrative voice, the text eludes certain ideological restraints, and creates for itself a subversive space within the sentimental tradition⁷.

New Critical readings of *A Sentimental Journey* as a canonical text have traditionally adopted one of two broad approaches to Sterne's text. Either they have placed it in relation to other Sterne texts – in particular, *Tristram Shandy* – or they have examined some of its textual features from a formalist perspective, through individual studies of character, imagery, structure, style, etc⁸. Given the recent interest in literary theory, and the energizing zeal of new-historicist approaches to eighteenth century studies, it may be time to examine *A Sentimental Journey* afresh.

Robert Markley, writing in "Sentimentality as Performance", has already reopened Sterne's text for examination from a new-historicist perspective⁹. However, his methodology, which undercuts Crane's thesis, fails to offer an alternative genealogy, and ends up reifying Sterne's text contrary to the basic principles of the new-historicist approach he had set out to introduce. I have difficulty in accepting Markley's rejection of Crane's basic thesis, and also with his enthusiastic endorsement of that of Greene, and with his oversimplified ideological reading, derived from his neo-Marxist orientation, of Sterne's work as performing a mystifying, conservative, function.

According to Stephen Greenblatt, one of the major critical contributions of new-historicism, that distinguishes it sharply from the old historicist approach, is its emphasis upon the constitution of the individual subjectivity in history¹⁰. Far from being a manifestation of a trans-historical, immutable, essentialist "core", traditionally described as "spirit", "soul" or

simply "man", human subjectivity is seen as flexible, mutable and forever malleable by shaping economic, cultural and social pressures within a larger cultural interplay between power, knowledge, and discourse. The complexity of that process of individualism on the one hand, and of the historical moment at which the critical act itself is undertaken, on the other, render the act of interpretation at best provisional and limited by its own historicity. It is Crane's contribution, in his seminal work on the eighteenth century, that he first pointed to the rise of new discursive formations, signaled by an upheaval or rupture caused by the demise of Puritan influence on British politics and culture, a rupture for which the date 1660 may be said to mark an important turning-point.

Crane's work, while it noted distinctive elements of "sentimental benevolism" in the writings of the third Earl of Shaftsbury, regards these elements as manifested in Shaftsbury's work, but not as originating with it. Indeed, as previously mentioned, Crane seeks its origin in the influence of the Latitudinarian tradition, which enabled divines to reach an audience through their congregations, but also a much larger one through their books. It is important in this regard that Crane also identifies elements of the new emerging philosophy in the sentimental heroes and heroines of countless English novels, plays and poems, between the 1730s and the 1790s. In other words, Crane traces the genealogy of specific discursive formations, in different types of discourse, which already reflect a process of individuation at work in eighteenth-century discourses. Both Mullan and Markley directly link the rise of these new types of discourse that reinforce one another to a shift in class power relations, with the growing ascendancy of a new urban bourgeoisie. Markley writes, "Sentimentalism, then, is neither solely a literary nor a philosophical phenomenon, but a form of moral self-promotion that manifests itself in the discursive practices of a variety of literary and non-literary

genres: the novel, moral conduct books, philosophical discourse, and, as Rousseau and Mullan argue, medical literature" (219). Crane isolates four principal aspects of the ethical and psychological traits that compose and reconstitute subjectivity within the cult of sentimentality. Each of these traits will be shown to constitute a strain of discourse for Sterne in *A Sentimental Journey*. Each, it will be argued, operates at the surface of the text and yet is undermined through the text's ironic depth. The first of these is what Crane terms "Virtue as universal benevolence". The shift that the category signals is from an emphasis on the value of human works which had been advocated and disseminated by the Puritans, to a strongly naturalized "power of goodness" specific to "man only of all creatures under heaven" (Crane 69). The second shift, Crane identifies as a pronounced strain of anti-stoicism that constitutes benevolence as "feeling". Such a view strongly challenged and undermined the hitherto prevalent notion of the eighteenth century as an age of "reason", understood as a cold intellectuality. The third category debates the Hobbesian notion reductive of human motivation to egoistic self-interest based on competition. The new discourse disseminates an opposite ideology, one that defines "man" as essentially a gentle and sympathetic creature, organically linked to society not merely by intellect, but by passions productive of a tendency to love and goodwill. The fourth category is what Crane terms "self-approving joy". This last is extremely important for readings of Sterne, for it may be reinscribed in Foucauldian terms as "the eroticisation of benevolence". Good deeds precipitate a pleasure (*jouissance*)¹¹.

Crane's categories and findings, it must be noted, have been criticized on several grounds. A number of studies have attempted to reinscribe an alternative history of sensibility, one that emphasizes the importance of Shaftesbury, while others have attempted mainly to deconstruct Crane's definition of

Latitudinarianism, and to question its significance as a precursor of "sensibility". Greene's article, "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of 'The Man of Feeling' Reconsidered", is seen by several critics of eighteenth-century literature to have accomplished the task of refuting Crane's categories. Greene contests each element of the complex doctrines that constitute the fledging philosophy of sensibility, on the one hand by relying on more recent work on the history of Anglicanism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and, on the other, by blurring the specificity of particular types of discourse in a particular historical period, in favor of a much broader, almost ahistorical, thematic understanding of "feeling" as constituent of the literary in Western discourse. Thus the identification of virtue with benevolent actions and the admiration of warm human emotion, according to Greene, long antedates 1660. By collapsing the terms "humanity", "good-nature" and "universal benevolence", Greene finds it possible to trace them back to Wycliffe and Chaucer in the fourteenth century, and even further back, through Biblical writings to those of the Classical period, and even to Homer. Sensibility is thus reduced to a false, self-conscious affectation, usually accompanied by a drop in the popularity of the genre, which celebrates it in any age. Greene's genealogy thus universalizes a Western literary tradition in celebrating its mimetic function, with no theory of language to help account for the semantic instability of signifiers over time. Similarly, his tracing of the doctrine that human beings are innately capable of mutual affection and benevolence to Christian teachings long predating 1660, fails to grasp that discourse, even for the founding fathers of the Church, performs specifically ideological tasks directly related to that complex interplay between power, discourse and knowledge previously alluded to as outlined by Foucault¹². This preoccupation with a transcendental, ahistorical moral teaching somehow miraculously constitutive of moral being, mars

Greene's understanding of Crane's detection of the doctrine of "self-approving joy" in the writings of the latter half of the seventeenth, and most of the eighteenth, century. Greene views Crane's work as falling unwittingly into a celebration of the complacent, egoistic, self-approbatory joy of the Pharisees of Luke's gospel. Crane's whole point, it may be argued, was to show the process by which this "curious type of hedonism" gained an ascendancy (86).

Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* may be read as a text that enacts each of Crane's four categories; as a representative eighteenth-century text that inscribes sentimentality in its own title and uses it as a unifying principle for the entire work. However, far from mechanically applying these categories to a set of characters and situations, Sterne establishes a comic, ironic distance between himself as author and his text, through the authorization of Yorick as narrator/sentimental hero. The humor that animates both *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* thus arises from the reader's ability to laugh both with and at Sterne's narrators. The self-consciousness of both *Tristram Shandy* and Yorick is presented as representative of the sensibility of the Man of Feeling at work, but also as open to parody and to satiric undercutting. Sentimentality and feeling as reflections of inner virtue are, indeed, a characteristic of many of the major writings of the eighteenth century, particularly those of Sterne, Richardson, Fielding and Smollett. Each of these writers celebrates the virtues of "the human heart", as they manifest themselves in the benevolent actions of their individual (usually male) heroes. Thus, impulses of generosity, "manly tears", charitable gifts to the needy, become outward manifestations of that complex of "sensibility" outlined by Crane. The "self-approving joy" depicted as experienced by a Squire Bramble or an Allworthy¹³ is represented as being its own reward. Sterne not only works within these traditions, but also

parodies them, in ways, which will shortly be examined in the present paper.

The character of Yorick first makes its appearance in *Tristram Shandy*. Yorick's relationship with all the major characters of this complex narrative is pivotal to its structure and to its moral debates. In a work that deals primarily with the acts of reading and writing, and with presence and absence, birth and death, Yorick is central. He is, paradoxically, although dead, very much alive. His sermon, read by Corporal Trim, while outwardly a digression, is in fact integral to our understanding of the moral universe inhabited by the characters. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Sterne's plan for both his major *oeuvres* included the writing of Volumes 3 and 4 of *Sentimental Journey* before resuming work on *Tristram Shandy*, so that the geneses of the two works are intimately related. Yorick's name obviously invokes the deceased court jester of *Hamlet*, a "fellow of infinite jest" (V, I, 171), whose disinterred skull is also, however, a grim reminder of mortality¹⁴. Yorick's authorization by Sterne as narrator thus raises the crucial question, how seriously can a jester be taken? The answer, the narrative seems to suggest, is both very seriously, and not seriously at all. On the one hand, Sterne's Yorick is a grave clergyman, a man of God, devout, morally upright, virtuously benign; on the other, he is a playful, even feckless libertine, whose narrative discourse mocks and undercuts pious axioms, even as it articulates them. Similarly, his didacticism in the promotion of acts of charity and his celebration of his own moral worth as "benevolent" man are undercut by his self-absorption, his self-congratulation, the calculating awareness of monetary values that underlies even his charities, and his carnal sensuality.

Virginia Woolf was the first of a line of critics to attack the excesses of "sentimental self-interest" in *A Sentimental Journey*. Woolf's reading calls attention to the self-dramatizing

aspects of the narrative¹⁵. Her insights, however, fall prey to the critical fallacy of identifying author with narrative voice. Thus, in her introduction to the work Woolf writes, "Instead of being convinced of the tenderness of Sterne's heart – which in *Tristram Shandy* was never in question – we begin to doubt it. For we feel that Sterne is thinking of himself" (xiii). Her parenthetical comparison of *A Sentimental Journey* to *Tristram Shandy* indicates the crux of the critical problem. The narrative voice in both works is mistaken for that of the author himself. Yorick, although he shares some quixotic qualities with *Tristram Shandy*, differs in that he is a Quixote in search of self-knowledge through a journey, both physical and psychological¹⁶.

Certain character traits in Yorick are emphasized even before the account of his journey to the Continent begins. From the first, Yorick is presented as self-consciously a man of fashion; as somewhat maudlin in his chivalric devotion to Eliza; as a dilettante, preoccupied with trivia; and as a being given to flights of fancy, a creature of impulse. As a would-be man of the world, he claims a first-hand knowledge of French society, which he does not possess. As a man of fashion, he finds it important to tell the reader what clothing, however simple, he took to France: "half a dozen shirts and a pair of black silk breeches" (3). His sentimentality where women are concerned appears already in his allusion to the "little picture" of Eliza he has promised to carry with him to the grave (4). The preoccupation with material details – his packing and travel arrangements, the fricasseed chicken he ate on the Channel ferry at three o'clock in the afternoon – presage an obsession with trifles which continues throughout his narrative. The vivid fantasy of his death, and the consequent seizure of his property by the French Crown – a fantasy triggered solely by his mention of the meal that might have, but did not, cause his death "that

night of an indigestion", suggests the extreme susceptibility of his imagination. Yorick's impulsiveness suggests itself, above all, in the alacrity with which he dashes to Dover and onto a boat, merely in order to secure to himself the same rights to pronounce on French affairs as his opponent in a casual argument¹⁷.

Determined to record his journey, Yorick takes out pen and ink and begins writing his Preface as soon as he is seated in the *Desobligeant*. Now for the first time in *A Sentimental Journey* self-consciously a writer, Yorick shows himself to be aware of working within a literary tradition of the travelogue, an integral part of which is the travelogue preface. Yorick's preface parodies the introductions to such works. It also brilliantly parodies the assured, logical prose of the Enlightenment philosopher in the manner of Hume, Locke, or Burke¹⁸. By putting himself in the company of "many a peripatetic philosopher" Yorick self-consciously satirizes their systems of classification in juxtaposing them with his own. Thus, for instance, his researches into the efficient and final causes of traveling are parenthetically interrupted by the seesaw movement of the *desobligeant*, which he has playfully chosen as his parodic version of the philosopher's study (32). It is in this discourse that Yorick also classifies those literary precursors who have written travelogues. They are categorized as idle, inquisitive, lying, proud, and so on; as travelers from necessity; as "delinquent and felonious travelers"; as "unfortunate and innocent"; and, finally, as "simple". The *sentimental* traveler (by which of course Yorick means himself) gives, we are told, his particular account of his travels out of necessity. Yet the novelty of Yorick's enterprise is firmly underscored: "I am well aware, at the same time, as both my travels and observations will be altogether of a different cast from my forerunners; that I might have insisted upon a whole

niche entirely to myself" (34). The reason Yorick gives for not thus celebrating the "novelty" of his "vehicle" is an alleged fear that he might "break in upon the confines of the vain traveler". In his parody of the philosophical passages of a travelogue, Yorick makes fun of the travelogue's traditions, not only by parodying its style, but by his debunking and dismissive classification of travelers, and, by implication, travel writers.

One work that Yorick singles out as the object of especially biting satire is Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy*. For Yorick, Smollett epitomizes the disgruntled "splenetic" traveler, who is mockingly presented in *A Sentimental Journey* as "The learned Smelfungus". Smelfungus, we are told, traveled from Boulogne to Paris, and "from Paris to Rome – and so on – but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted – He wrote an account of them, but 'twas nothing but the account of his miserable feelings" (98). The writers of these immensely popular eighteenth-century travelogues only succeed, according to Yorick, in projecting their subjective personal moods and feelings upon the settings through which they pass. Ironically, however, the same may be said of Yorick himself, the sentimental traveler. As a representative Man of Feeling, he projects his inner states of melancholy, joy, and *joie de vivre* upon the most barren and unpromising of natural settings: "Was I in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections – If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to". He would "cut my name upon them, and swear they were the loveliest trees throughout the desert; if their leaves wither, I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice along with them" (98).

This passage already anticipates what, decades after the writing of *A Sentimental Journey*, would be identified as characteristic features of literary Romanticism; the

"spontaneous overflow" of feeling; the subjective, even solipsistic, identification with nature and projection of subjective emotion onto natural surroundings; the consequent cultivation of private reflection in the setting of the wilderness¹⁹. Unlike the *personae* of a large proportion of Romantic lyrics, however, Sterne's narrator in *A Sentimental Journey* undercuts the possibility of reader identification with his musings, through ironic exaggeration.

Another important device by which Sterne illustrates yet undercuts his narrator's attitude toward nature and natural objects is through Yorick's fascination with sentiments aroused by contact with sentient beings, including animals. At the hotel in Paris Yorick's meditations upon the Bastille are interrupted by a cry for help from captive bird. The sympathetic Yorick watches it fluttering from one side of its cage to the other, apparently lamenting its captivity. A comic scene ensues, in which Yorick and the starling appear to engage in dialogue: "I can't get out," said the starling – God help thee! Said I – but I'll let thee out, cost what it will ... The bird flew to the place where I was attempting his deliverance ... " However, Yorick's efforts are in vain. "I fear, poor creature! said I, I cannot set thee at liberty – 'No' said the starling – 'I can't get out – I can't get out,' said the starling (240). Yorick's quixotic errand of rescuing the bird, in which Yorick himself becomes the object of an impressive self-dramatization – "I'll let thee out, cost what it will" – causes the narrator to dwell with loving self-approval upon his own finer feelings at this moment: "I vow I never had my affections more tenderly awakened; or do I remember an incident in my life, where the dissipated spirits, to which my reason had been a bubble, were so suddenly called home" (241). The incident is rendered speciously poignant by the narrator's anthropomorphism. The bird is said to press against the inside of the cage as if "impatient". The bird's repeated cry of "I can't get out" appears to the narrator as forming part of an

active verbal communication between bird and human being. The profundity of Yorick's emotional response, and the impact of the bird incident upon his sensibility, are undercut, however, when we realize the basis of Yorick's delusion in the trained bird's continual repetition of a single utterance. The final debunking of an, at first sight, pathetic case, occurs with the satire on social snobbery – and its traditional place in first-person memoirs – for which the caged bird offers the opportunity. The bird, we are told, was presented as a gift to a series of English aristocrats and commoners. The paradox, as Yorick sees it, is that whereas his bird “wanted to get out” of its cage, the commoners who acquire the bird that was the property of a Lord, wanted, rather, to “get in” – into a higher rank in society, that is.

In his article “Sentimentality as Performance”, Robert Markley sees Sterne as dramatizing sentimentality in ways, which explicitly assert the values of middle-class culture. Yet, whereas Markley reads tragic, rather than pathetic undercurrents in *A Sentimental Journey*, I read a comically ironic undertone in the text, which, I would argue, constitutes one of the definitive qualities of Sterne's fiction²⁰. The incidents with the Franciscan monk and the chambermaid may serve as representative examples of the ironic tension between a seemingly benevolent act and the context within which it occurs and is ironically interpreted. The Franciscan monk calls upon Yorick, in the name of those great claims that one human being may make upon another of benevolence and charity. While in private conference with the monk Yorick lectures him sternly, in self-righteous tones, about the moral disgrace of idle parasitism and the greater deservingness of the truly needy disabled and poor. In a different context, however – in the presence of a pretty young woman to whom he is sexually attracted – Yorick's attitude and motives become considerably more complicated. When he tells his reader how he behaved with apologetic

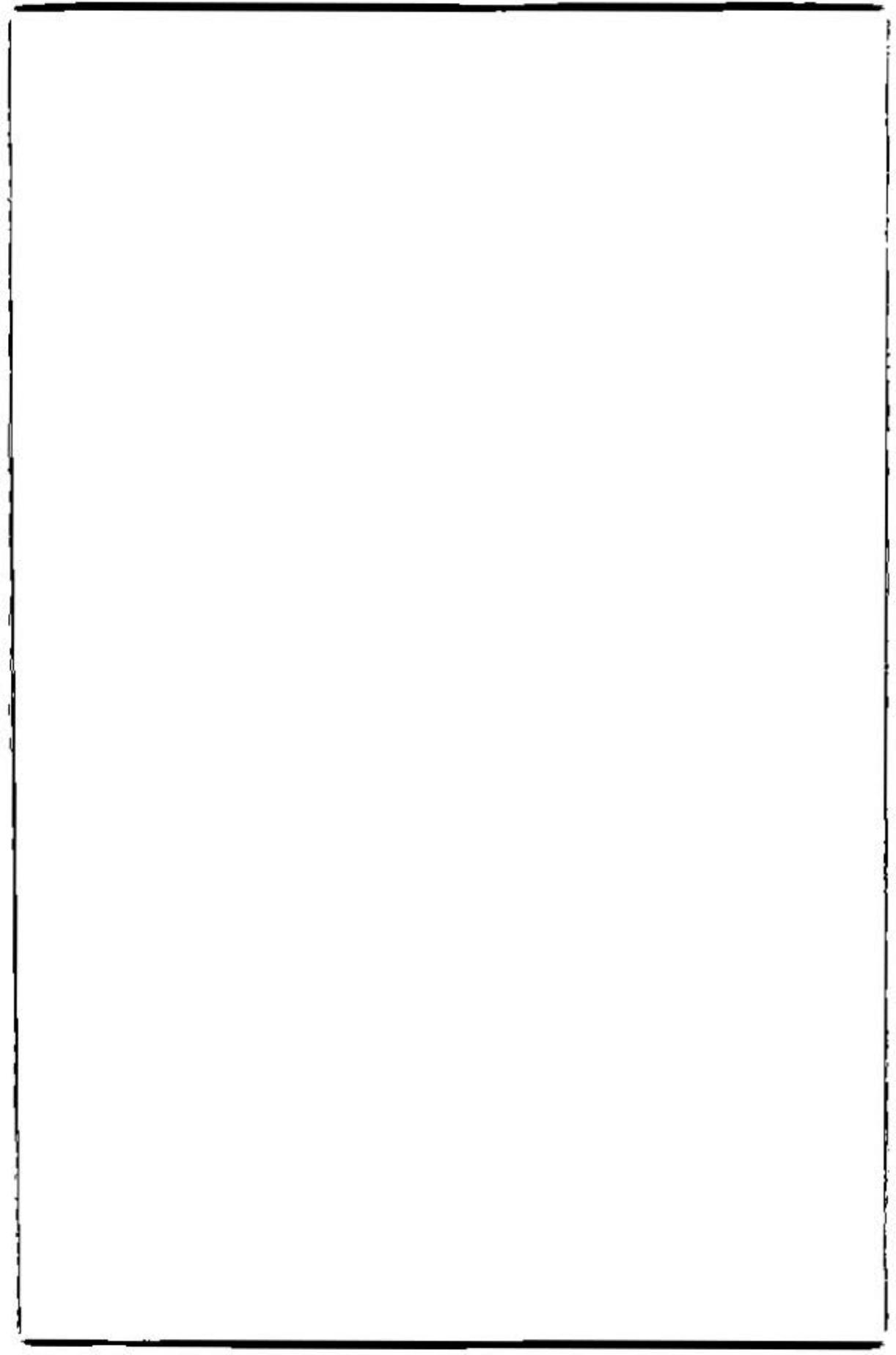
graciousness, and material generosity, toward the same monk whom he had earlier scorned and slighted, the reader may infer that his motives in doing so are, on the one hand, more than a little blended with self-approbation, and on the other, not unrelated to a desire to display himself in a favorable light before the young woman. For Yorick this complex of motives issues in a state in which self-approbation and sexual attraction are oddly compounded: "I knew not that contention could be rendered so sweet and pleasurable a thing to the nerves as I then felt it" (66). The ritual exchange of snuffboxes between the two male protagonists in the scene, and their accompanying expression of elevated sentiments, is ironically contrasted with Yorick's erotic gesture of kissing the young woman's hand. (He has in fact been clinging to the hand, all the while the high-flown rhetoric has been passing between the two men.)

Yorick's encounter with the *fille de chambre* constitutes another moment wherein the rhetoric of benevolence and sensibility is clearly subverted by the narrator's evident erotic attraction to the object of his charity. As Yorick slips a crown into the girl's purse, he gives her a piece of moral advice: "Be but as good as thou art handsome, and heaven will fill it" (223). Markley reads Yorick's advice as articulating "the ideological values" of Sterne's "sentimental narrative" (210). The coin, in Markley's reading, is transformed into a symbol definitive of the relationship between a gentleman and a girl of the lower classes, his potential victim. However, such a humorless reading fails to appreciate the irony both of the religious and sexual allusions in Yorick's account of the incident, and in its later outcome. The clergyman's rhetoric that Yorick employs in addressing the *fille de chambre* is revealed as nothing more than a poor substitute for the language of desire. (The tell-tale phrase here is, "a kiss of charity, as warm and holy as an apostle" (227). Yorick's paternalistic sermonizing, as from a fatherly minister to one of his virtuous female parishioners – "Be

as good as thou art beautiful" – also carries clear sexual undertones, in Yorick's slipping of the money into the purse with the ambivalent words, "and God will fill it". The irony is compounded, and also the scene's potential later outcome implied, by this ambiguous speech, as is made plain in Yorick's next encounter with the young woman, with a scene of erotic conquest. At the hotel in Paris, Yorick explicitly contrasts the language of sensibility and that of devotion, with the language of eroticism: "I felt something at first within me which was not in strict unison with the lesson in virtue I had given her the night before. ... The devil was in me" (308). With the *fille de chambre* "falling off her center", any lingering illusion of piety is finally dispelled.

Whereas the incidents of *A Sentimental Journey* which deal with the *fille de chambre* satirize conventions of sentimentality by means of ironic parody and even farce, that of Maria, the beautiful maid driven mad by love, epitomizes the pathetic, but also implicitly contains its own form of irony. Maria is a combination of a heroine of pastoral idyll, of the seduced, abandoned maid of medieval ballads, and of Ophelia. For Yorick, she collapses the distinction between the imaginary worlds he loves to conjure up in his musings, and that of his immediate, physical surroundings: "The story he had told of that disorder'd maid affected me not a little in the reading; but when I got within the neighborhood where she lived, it returned so strong into my mind" (380). It is important to note the Quixotic, "medieval" quality of Yorick's prose at this point: "'Tis going, I own, like the Knight of the Woeful Countenance in quest of melancholy adventures". As a representative of melancholy, Maria is dressed in white, with her hair hanging loose, with a pipe at her waist, and with a goat and a little dog at her side, in a pastoral tableau that Yorick himself enters as he sits down beside her, at once weeping for her, and wiping her tears. The scene both has the potential to arouse a degree of sympathy,

while, paradoxically, also taking the reader into the realm of the self-consciously literary and picturesque. The narrator thus unwittingly draws attention to the artificiality of the scene he describes, and even upstages his pathetic heroine to the point where the narrator's finer feelings, rather than hers, are forced upon the reader's attention. Not surprisingly, Yorick's effusions on this occasion are among the most oft-quoted passages in *A Sentimental Journey*, illustrating and satirizing as they do the propensity of the Man of Feeling to indulge in and celebrate his own emotional reactions: "Dear sensibility! Source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrow! ... Eternal fountain of our feelings!" (395). In this speech, which confounds within itself the language of feeling, of devotion ("Thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bed of straw – 'tis thou who lift'st him up to Heaven") – and of pleasure, the exasperation of sensibility reaches its ironic acme. I register this as a novel conflation of all the strains within and influences upon the cult of feeling traced by Crane and Greene respectively, but always with a self-parodying, ironic twist. Sterne's representation of sensibility in *A Sentimental Journey* appropriates the cult of sensibility identified by Crane as having originated in Latitudinarian religious discourse, by Greene as having been secularized by Shaftesbury, and by Markley as operating in the service of an ideological function – as the defining mark of the gentleman. However, like his mentors, Cervantes and Rabelais, Sterne eludes the ideological constraints which originally provided the space for his literary practice, putting to use his awareness of the cult of sensibility in a manner which both celebrates and parodies it, defamiliarizing it in a novel literary form.



NOTES

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- ¹See R.S. Crane, "Suggestions towards a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling'." *EHL*, 1 (1934). Pp. 205-230. Ever since its publication Crane's essay has been a touchstone in Sterne criticism.
- ²For a broad discussion of sentimental novels in general, see John Mullan "Sentimental novels" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti. CUP, 1996.
- ³The edition used in this essay is Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*. In *Complete Works*, Vol. 1. Ed. Wilbur Cross. New York: AMS Press, 1970.
- ⁴For a definition of the age of sensibility see Frye's important study "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility", in *Eighteenth Century English Literature: Essays in Modern Criticism*. Ed. James Clifford. London and New York: OUP, 1959.
- Other important contributions to our understanding of sensibility and upon which I have drawn in this article include Jean Hagstrum's *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980; and Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility. Literature and Ideas in the 1790s*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- ⁵For a succinct introduction to the impact of new historicism on eighteenth century studies in general and the eighteenth century novel in particular, see J. Paul Hunter's "The Novel and Social/Cultural History" in John Richetti's title cited above.
- ⁶The term 'Man of Feeling' has been universally adopted by critics from the title of Henry Mackenzie's influential first novel, first published in 1771.
- ⁷See Jonathan Lamb's "Sterne and irregular oratory" in J. Richetti's title cited above.

⁸For a representative sampling of such approaches, see John Traugot (ed.) *Laurence Sterne: a Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968.

⁹See Robert Markley "Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue". *The New Eighteenth Century*. Ed. Felicity Nussbaum & Laura Brown. New York: Methuen, 1987.

¹⁰Greenblatt's own definitions of new historicism occur in two seminal works: *Renaissance and Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), and *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987).

¹¹New historicism itself, it may be argued, prospered in the shadow of the French thinker Michel Foucault's work. The two important studies that have a bearing on this article are *The Order of things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (1973) and *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction* (1980).

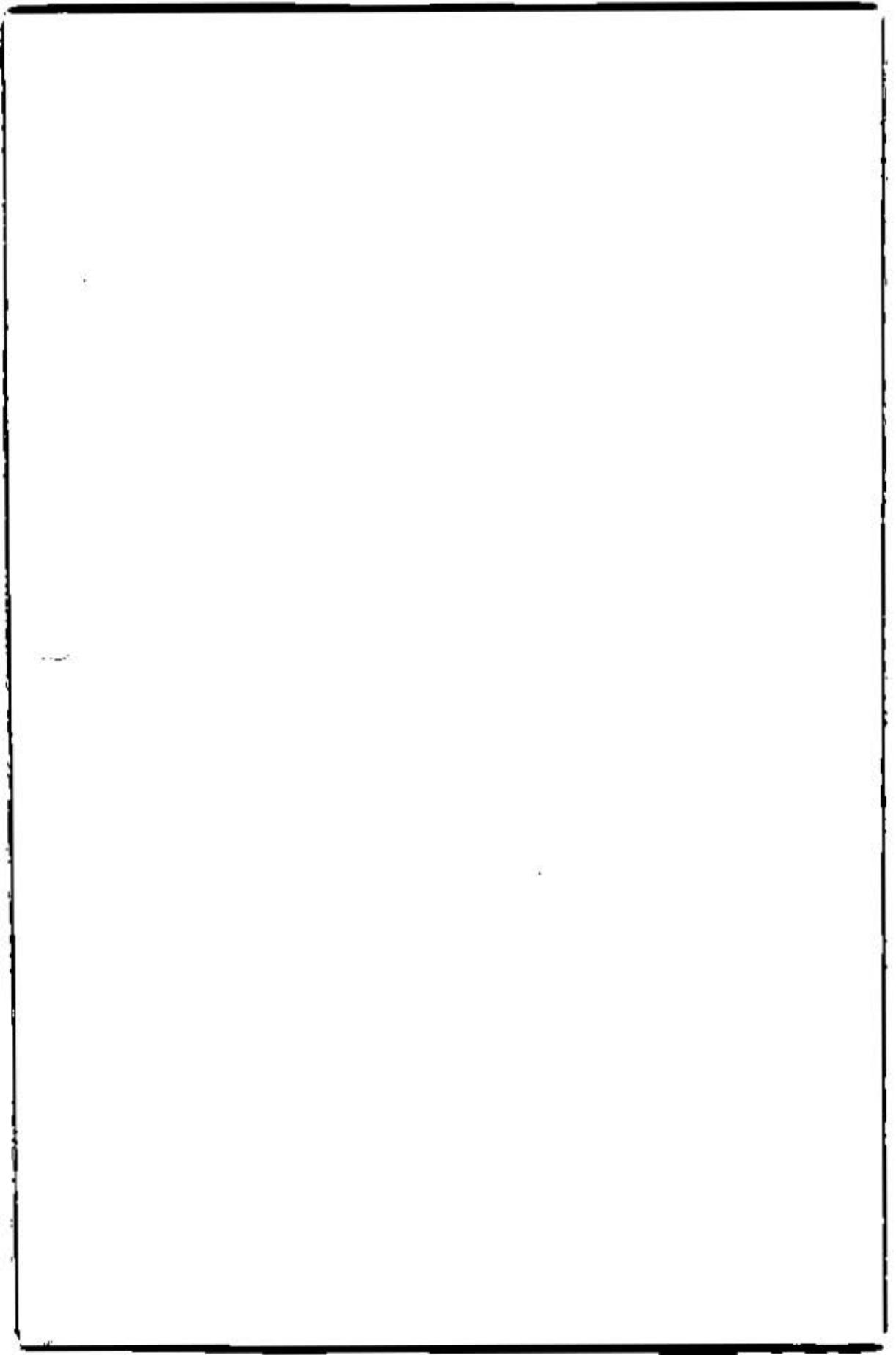
¹²In addition to the articles on sensibility cited above, see Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth Century Sensibility and the Novel*. Cambridge: CUP, 1993; John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. OUP, 1988; and Janet Todd *Sensibility: An Introduction*. London: Methuen, 1986.

¹³See Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*, and Fielding's *Tom Jones* respectively.

¹⁴Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Beirut: York Press, 1992.

¹⁵Virginia Woolfe's essay on Sterne is included in the Penguin edition of the *Sentimental Journey* as an Introduction, pp. v-xvii.

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- ¹⁶For the Quixotic tradition in the eighteenth century fiction, see Micheal McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987; and Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth Century England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- ¹⁷For a similar argument, see Henri Fluchère *Laurence Sterne: from Tristram and Yorick*. London: OUP, 1965. The differences between my handling and his will become evident as the article progresses.
- ¹⁸See Syndy McMillen Conger, *Sensibility in Transformation. Creative Resistance to Sentiment from the Augustans to the Romantics*. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990.
- ¹⁹For a full discussion of "Romantic Sensibility", see M.H. Abrams *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. New York: Norton, 1958.
- ²⁰For another critique of Markley's influential essay, see David Fairer "Sentimental Translation in Mackenzie and Sterne" in *Essays in Criticism*, #2, Vol. XLIX, April 1999.



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