

The Sensorium in the World of "A Sentimental Journey"

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"SENSORY, *SENSORIUM commune*, the seat of the common sense, or that part of place where the sensible soul is supposed more immediately to reside. The *sensory* is supposed to be that part of the brain wherein the nerves, from all the organs of sense, terminate; which is generally allowed to be about the beginning of the medulla oblongata: Descartes will have it in the conarion or pineal gland."
— Chambers' *Cyclopædia* (1728)¹

ON HIS JOURNEY through the Bourbonnais after his emotional encounter with the deranged peasant girl, Maria, Yorick indulges in an apostrophe that may be taken as the crux of any interpretation of Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*:

— Dear sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bead of straw — and 'tis thou who lifts him up to HEAVEN — eternal fountain of our feelings! — 'tis here I trace thee — and this is thy divinity which stirs within me — not, that in some sad and sickening moments, "*my soul shrinks back upon herself, and startles at destruction*" — mere pomp of words! — but that I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself — all comes from thee, great — great *SENSORIUM* of the world! which vibrates, if a hair of our heads but falls upon the ground, in the remotest desert of thy creation.²

From previous commentaries four basic views toward this apostrophe have emerged: (1) that it is Yorick's, not Sterne's, infatuation with a God who vibrates emotionally at the slightest event; (2) that it is distrustful as well as celebratory toward Yorick's/Sterne's sensibility; (3) that the inflated language implies a disembodied ascent for the moment only to be collapsed in the

final episode, "The Case of Delicacy"; and (4) that it is an exalted expression of feeling coming from within the individual but inextricably joined to the cosmic system.³ Without denying the ambivalent tone of the narrative, which accounts for these diverse responses, I wish to demonstrate why the last view may be primary to the author's intention.

Short of declaring Sterne's text simply indeterminate and hence either to be rejected or indulged as "unreliable" narrative, we need to examine it further in the light of the eighteenth-century mind/body dilemma. In Arthur Cash's view, the most likely context for this apostrophe is the controversy between Leibniz and Clarke over Newton's explanation in the *Opticks* of space as God's sensorium.⁴ Against Leibniz's objection that God would therefore require sense organs and not be pure spirit, Clarke replied that Newton had intended the opposite meaning of the soul as a living, immaterial substance being present to the things themselves. According to Cash, Sterne is rendering Yorick as a caricature of the sensationalist that Leibniz accused Newton of being: "The infatuated Yorick is not to be taken as the spokesman for the philosophy of Laurence Sterne."⁵

A recent essay avoids this rigid bifurcation between author and character by emphasizing the blend of irony and feeling in the tone: "The element in this passage that survives the satire is the direct link Yorick makes between sense and sentiment, his recognition of the human ability to endow objective phenomena with personal meaning."⁶ A subsequent statement, however, reverses the order of priority in the experience: "A hair falling on the remotest desert is evidence of 'generous joys and generous cares beyond myself.'" Although elsewhere amply endowing objective phenomena with private intentionality, here for once Yorick is finally testifying that his individual feelings are not self-rooted but inherently sympathetic with the Other like the "great SENSORIUM" of the godhead that is present to all phenomena. Unfortunately, instead of developing his important insight concerning the link between sense and sentiment, Chadwick takes cues from Mayoux and Braudy to justify the text's supposed indeterminacy as an outlet for the higher freedom of rich subjectivity and inventiveness in the reader.

Another recent essay shows the very different problem of overdeterminacy by attempting to find a source for Sterne's associationism in David Hartley's theory of vibrations.⁷ Happily, the tenuous juxtaposition of a radical determinism with Sterne's joyous physiology does prompt Lamb to concede at one point: "Although this account would not look out of place in Martinus Scriblerus' system of muscular morality, and although we might expect Sterne to see it as ridiculous as Swift and Arbuthnot saw similar mechanistic theories, it seems to be the case that Sterne finds an intelligible account of human behavior in a doctrine like Hartley's."⁸ Aside from the lack of any evidence that Sterne ever read Hartley, not only the Cartesian mechanism but the lacklustre, quasi-scientific style of the *Observations on Man* would be anathema to Shandeism. Sterne, for instance, uses repeatedly the vibration theory of the nerves commonplace among Newton's followers to describe sensations, and he especially makes the feelings equivalent to musical sound. Thus while Tristram "felt the kindest harmony vibrating within me, with every oscillation of the chaise alike" and all his perceptions "touch'd upon some secret spring either of sentiment or rapture," the moment is ripe for "the sweetest notes I ever heard" of Maria's vespers (IX. xxiv.483). Yorick's paternalistic sentiments, in turn, "touch'd upon the string on which hung all her sorrows — she look'd with wistful disorder for some time in my face; and then, without saying any thing, took her pipe, and play'd her service to the Virgin — The string I had touch'd ceased to vibrate — in a moment or two Maria returned to herself — let her pipe fall — and rose up" (pp. 273-74). In a jocular letter to Mrs. Vesey, probably written in 1761, Sterne loses control with the musical figure to express his erotic delight:

But that You are sensible, and gentle and tender — & from [one] end to the other of you full of the sweetest tones & modulations, requires a Connoisseur of more taste & feeling — in honest truth You are a System of harmonic Vibrations — You are the sweetest and best tuned of all Instruments — O Lord! I would give away my other Cassoc to touch you — but in giving this last rag of my Priesthood for this pleasure You perceive I should be left naked — <nay> if not quite dis-Orderd: — so divine a hand as y^{rs} would presently get me into Order<s> again — but if Yo[u]

suppose, this would leave me, as You found me — believe me dear Lady, You are mistaken.⁹

Clearly, Sterne as a writer found in contemporary physiology a creative resource not only for satiric reductionism as in Swift but also for celebrating the human spirit as, for example, in George Cheyne's medico-theology:

That the Intelligent Principle, or *Soul*, resides somewhere in the Brain, where all the Nerves, or Instruments of Sensation terminate, like a *Musician* in a finely fram'd and well-tun'd Organ-Case; that these Nerves are like Keys, which, being struck on or touch'd, convey the Sound and Harmony to this sentient Principle, or *Musician*.¹⁰

By contrast to Cheyne and Sterne, however, Hartley is unequivocal toward the musical analogy: "For that the Nerves themselves should vibrate like musical Strings, is highly absurd; nor was it ever asserted by Sir *Isaac Newton*, or any of those who have embraced his Notion of the Performance of Sensation and Motion, by means of Vibrations."¹¹

To understand the exuberant physicality in *A Sentimental Journey* we need to recognize the important shift from mechanism to materialism in eighteenth-century natural philosophy. The climate of scientific opinion changed significantly, for instance, between 1717, when the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence was published, and 1768, when Sterne wrote Yorick's narrative shortly before his death. As Robert Schofield has shown, the original impetus from the *Principia* and the *Opticks* in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was to explain all natural phenomena in terms of primary particles related by attraction and repulsion, and predictable in their motions by the Calculus. By the 1740's, however, in conjunction with other subjective tendencies in the culture — Richardson's novels, the reflective poems of Gray, Young, Collins, and Cowper, the Wesleyan evangelical movement, the solipsism of Berkeley and Hume — a new generation of natural philosophers began seeking the causes of phenomena in unique substances having qualities in proportion to their quantity. Though often used interchangeably, "mechanism" and "materialism" denote for Schofield these two distinctly different tendencies, the latter, non-mathematical and

anti-Newtonian in spirit, though attributing to the vague aether hypothesis in the *Opticks* a source for the new iatric interest in physiology and chemistry.¹²

Sterne's place in the mid-century intellectual revolution may best be seen in his consistent attack on the traditional mind/body dualism, whether in classical philosophy, medieval theology, or in Cartesian mechanism. What Yorick rejects in quoting the "mere pomp of words" from Addison's *Cato* is apparently Plato's argument in the *Phaedo* that the rational soul welcomes death as a release from the prison of the body.¹³ Since this dualism applies equally to the Pauline/Augustinian doctrines of the world, flesh, and devil, Sterne's unorthodox use of current physiology to interpret the story of Job in a sermon is not only against Stoics like Seneca or Epictetus: "— one is led to doubt, whether the greatest part of their heroes, the most renowned for constancy, were not much more indebted to good nerves and spirits, or the natural happy frame of their tempers, for behaving well, than to any extraordinary helps, which they could be supposed to receive from their instructors."¹⁴ As in the sermons, Tristram constantly reminds us of the close interdependence of mind and body: "A Man's body and his mind, with the utmost reverence to both I speak it, are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining; — rumple the one — you rumple the other" (III.iv.120). If the conditions of this middle state are often laughable, however, so are the pretenders to a rationalistic idea:

I love the Pythagoreans (much more than ever I dare tell my dear Jenny) for their . . . "getting out of the body, in order to think well." No man thinks right whilst he is in it; blinded, as he must be, with his congenial humours, and drawn differently aside, as the bishop and myself have been, with too lax or too tense a fibre — Reason is, half of it, Sense; and the measure of heaven itself is but the measure of our present appetites and concoctions — (VII.xiii.376)

Whatever the context of dualism, whether in Platonism, Stoicism, Pythagoreanism, Cartesianism, or the new Methodism, Sterne remains contemptuous of any scheme to place mind firmly over the body. Implicit in his assault on the old dualistic metaphysics is a temporizing of orthodox theology with the enlight-

ened humanism greatly influenced by the experimental philosophy. In this light we may trust his statement about his last work: "my Sentimental Journey will, I dare say, convince you that my feelings are from the heart, and that that heart is not of the worst of molds — praised be God for my sensibility!"¹⁵

If Sterne is fairly consistent in opposing the traditional hierarchy of mind over body and of reason over the passions, his attitude toward the rival claims of mechanism and materialism, on the one hand, and of vitalism, on the other, is more complex. During the initial scene at Calais, after reaching a benevolistic high, aided of course by the wine, Yorick declares with apparent contradiction in view of his circumstances: "In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate — the arteries beat all, chearily together, and every power which sustained life, performed it with so little friction, that 'twould have confounded the most *physical precieuse* in France: with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine —" (pp. 68-69). Why his awareness of dilated blood vessels and good feelings should prove that he is more than a machine is not immediately clear, but his automatic dismissal of the begging monk immediately afterwards leaves no doubt that his behaviour can be mechanical at times, as he often acknowledges after the fact. Yet the interesting thing is that Yorick, like many of his informed contemporaries, may indeed be curious, if not neurotically driven, to find out whether there is a ghost in the machine. His scene with Maria is qualitatively different from his solitary performance at Calais: despite the mechanical motions with the handkerchief to wipe away Maria's tears as well as his own, this time he genuinely feels sympathy; and the erotic impulse reinforces rather than undermines the interaction:

as I did it, I felt such indescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion.

I am positive I have a soul; nor can all the books with which materialists have pester'd the world ever convince me of the contrary. (p. 271)

Unless we assume that Sterne is merely ridiculing sentimentalism by emphasizing its dependence on the bodily processes, an im-

probable intention if only because Yorick is his own best critic on other occasions, then the claim here to spirituality, it seems to me, hits at the older kinematic mechanics promulgated by the Cartesians in favour of the mid-century tendency toward vitalism, which stressed a purposive “sentient principle” in the corporeal system.

If Yorick’s fear of being no more than a machine, therefore, alludes to La Mettrie’s *L’Homme machine* (1747), as some scholars have believed, it is doubtful whether Sterne knew the book itself for despite its monistic denial of the soul or mind, it is surprisingly Shandean in tone and equally against the outmoded matter-and-motion kinematics. As Aram Vartanian points out:

To understand the special filiation of mood and idea in that work [*L’Homme machine*], we must first recall that at the time what was really felt to be deadening was the metaphysics of dualism, which, with the theology it supported, had ossified into a series of platitudes. By contrast, materialism came as a quickening and liberating current. Because it was possible to see in matter a source of spontaneous energy, the man-machine became associated in the moral sphere, somewhat paradoxically, with attitudes of freedom from restraint and *joie de vivre*.¹⁶

Unlike Descartes’ *bête machine*, which Leibniz and others at the time felt was absurd because it excluded consciousness, La Mettrie’s *homme machine* incorporates Leibniz’s idea of *force motrice*, the self-moving power of the organism. Taking a long neglected principle from Francis Glisson, who in the 1670’s objected to the Cartesian clock analogy by pointing out the inherent movement in all the parts of the animal body, both La Mettrie and Haller advanced the conception of irritability on the findings of recent experiments with muscle tissue. Another important discovery of the 1740’s, Trembley’s polyp, with its astonishing ability to generate new zoophytes after being severed, complemented the principle of irritability: “The cosmic machine resembles the organism in that its moving and directing principle is to be found inside, not outside, its own structure.”¹⁷ Ironically, a *physical precieuse* in La Mettrie’s camp could very well have called Yorick a machine and not at all be confounded by his

vigorous emotionalism, which on the contrary reveals the very force of living matter from within.

But if La Mettrie's machine hypothesis was a brilliant attempt to bridge the extremes of vitalism and mechanism, more conservative contemporaries like Jerome Gaub and Robert Whytt had a similar interest and may have been more familiar to Sterne. Gaub's objective was to apply physiological knowledge to the treatment of major mental disorders; trained by Boerhaave and also a professor of medicine at Leyden, he delivered his academic oration, *De regimine mentis quod medicorum est* in 1747, with La Mettrie in the audience.¹⁸ Although Gaub prudently maintained a respectable mind/body dualism, his demonstration of the profound interaction between physical and mental states was neither far from the *homme machine* nor from Tristram's rumpled jerkin and its lining. Drawing upon Galen's and Hippocrates' psychosomatic doctrines to counter the Platonic incorporeal *psyché*, Gaub cautiously admits that "the power of the mind over the body is probably no greater than that of the body over the mind."¹⁹ But what would have been most disturbing in the era of Locke and Newton is Gaub's theme that the irrational, often unconscious and involuntary phenomena of emotions and unknown bodily processes predominate in the system for good or ill. In both mind and body he finds an agent of arousal, the *enormôn*, a term borrowed from Hippocrates, quite beyond the control of the rational faculties: "When it slumbers you might think it absent entirely, so little does it then do; when it is aroused it breaks forth with a most violent impulse hardly to be contained." He calls the corporeal *enormôn* the "neural man": "this structure of nerves is no less animated from within by its motive power than it itself stirs up the rest of the body's inert mass throughout which it extends. In this sense it represents a kind of man within a man."²⁰

Much more polemically dictatorial than Gaub, Robert Whytt, professor of medicine at Edinburgh, also steered safely between vitalism and mechanism while showing the supreme importance of the nerves in the living organism. He criticizes Georg Stahl specifically for "extending the influence of the soul, as a rational agent, over the body a great deal too far"; and he dismisses the

Cartesians for reducing all phenomena to mechanical principles. To refine his position further, he declaims against the “modern Materialists [who] have imagined the *anima* to be no other than a more subtle kind of matter lodged chiefly, in the brain and nerves, and circulating with the grosser fluids” and against “a few authors [who] have run even such lengths, as to suppose the very *animus*, or rational soul itself, material.”²¹ Nevertheless, if disturbed by the materialists, Whytt is quick to deny the scholastic opinion that the soul exists in an individual point and argues from physiological evidence that it “must be present at one and the same time, if not in all the parts of the body, yet, at least, where-ever the nerves have their origin; i.e., it must be, at least, diffused along a great part of the brain and spinal marrow.” To support this psychosomatic thesis Whytt points out that “some of the greatest Philosophers of the last and present age, supposed the soul to be extended,” naming Gassendi, Henry More, Isaac Newton, and Samuel Clarke.²² Having established his orthodoxy in the tradition of the Anglican Church and the Royal Society, Whytt then describes the involuntary motions of the nerves as primary and of the blood as secondary, the “sensitivity” or irritability of the heart deriving from the *sensorium commune* and all the feelings excited in the mind and nerves. With some diffidence in admitting the determinism of the involuntary motions in the body, he compensates by stressing the idea of “a general sympathy which prevails through the whole system” and the remarkable “*consent* between various parts of the body” to allay any fears of either old or new machine hypotheses.²³

Surely nothing in Gaub, Whytt, or even in much of La Mettrie conflicts with Sterne’s celebration of life as corporeal motion directed by some instinctive power in the organism. Any argument to prove a rationalistic theology as a norm in Sterne’s sermons will need to skip deftly over the abundant concern with the involuntary and unconscious or hidden dynamics of vibrations and fluids that not only mitigate the individual’s moral accountability but on the positive side ally him to the whole system of nature:

in the present state we are in, we find such a strong sympathy and union between our souls and bodies, that the one cannot be touched or sensibly affected, without producing some corresponding emotion in the other, — Nature has assigned a different look, tone of voice, and gesture, peculiar to every passion and affection we are subject to; and, therefore, to argue against this strict correspondence which is held between our souls and bodies, — is disputing against the frame and mechanism of human nature. — We are not angels, but men clothed with bodies, and, in some measure, governed by our imaginations, that we have need of all these external helps which nature has made the interpreters of our thoughts.

Tristram plays on the psychosomatic dilemma in the same language: “nor are we angels, I wish we were, — but men clothed with bodies, and governed by our imaginations” (V.vii.273); and doubtless because of our corporeal state, we are damned to syllogizing by our noses while angels and spirits do it by intuition.²⁴

Like his contemporaries in physiology, Sterne understands the irrational element in man to exert an all-important function of survival. If the imagination, clothed with the body, thwarts our analytic ability, its illusory power, corresponding with the purposive motions of the body, is indispensable. In his sermon “Trust in God,” rather than the usual emphasis from orthodox rationalism on the freedom to believe or not to believe, Sterne seems to identify religious faith with some unknown involuntary process of nature:

though in fact it no way alters the nature of the cross accidents to which we lay open, or does at all pervert the course of them, — yet [it] imposes upon the sense of them, and like a secret spring in a well-contrived machine, though it cannot prevent, at least it counterbalances the pressure, — and so bears up this tottering, tender frame under many a violent shock and hard justling, which otherwise would unavoidably overwhelm it. — Without such an inward resource, from an inclination, which is natural to man, to trust and hope for redress in the most deplorable conditions, — his state in this life would be, of all creatures, the most miserable.²⁵

Just as Gaub prefers to avoid naming the “certain something both in the body and in the mind” to underscore its mysterious

presence and just as Whytt repeatedly acknowledges his perplexity at how the mind affects the body, so Sterne adopts the indefinite pronoun for the heuristic idea of this "inward resource" to prolong life against all odds.

But in *Tristram Shandy*, however, when again the idea recurs with much of the same language, the discourse between Walter and Toby implies ironically the hobby-horsical penchant for naming things unknown as a self-gratifying means of knowing:

Though man is of all others the most curious vehicle, said my father, yet at the same time 'tis of so slight a frame and so totteringly put together, that the sudden jerks and hard jostlings it unavoidably meets with in this rugged journey, would overset and tear it to pieces a dozen times a day — was it not, brother *Toby*, that there is a secret spring within us — Which spring, said my uncle *Toby*, I take to be Religion. . . . Figuratively speaking, dear *Toby*, it may, for aught I know, said my father; but the spring I am speaking of, is that great and elastic power within us of counterbalancing evil, which like a secret spring in a well-ordered machine, though it can't prevent the shock — at least it imposes upon our sense of it.

While Walter charitably indulges his brother's figurative term for this "secret spring" as "Religion," as a natural philosopher, of course, he believes that his own mechanistic nomenclature ("elastic power") brings him closer to the thing itself (IV.iii. 209).²⁶

In *A Sentimental Journey* Yorick's task of affirming that he has a soul while in the country of the *lumières* is no easier than Sterne's of finding the right situation and language for it. A major strategy, however, after showing repeated failures to get beyond the mechanical behaviour conditioned by situation, is to suggest that "settled principle of humanity and goodness" of purposive emotion against the many delusions, freely admitted by the narrator, of a permissive imagination. Unfortunately, as a writer in a highly charged atmosphere of curiosity about the body processes and their identity in the cosmic system, Sterne, for all of his apparent inventiveness, is still conventional enough to predicate Yorick's vibration and pulse of the moment as an epiphany of oneness with the godhead without knowing how to extend it further than an analogy between nervous sympathy

and divine omniscience. Readers in the mode of a Coleridge or a Thackeray may continue to suspect almost everything in the narrative tone; but in the context of mid-eighteenth-century discourse on the body, with the dualistic metaphysics nearly discredited, we discover a material world richly potential and self-sufficient, with a divinity merely "present" like the cipher strangely participating in the wondrous processes of the body.²⁷

NOTES

- ¹ Quoted from *Cyclopædia: Or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London, 1783). Another popular reference work, Robert James' *A Medicinal Dictionary* (London, 1745), defines the *sensorium commune* as that which "receives the Impressions of all sensible Objects, conveyed to it by the Nerves of each particular Organ of Sense, and consequently is the immediate cause of Perception."
- ² *A Sentimental Journey*, ed. Gardner D. Stout, Jr. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1967), pp. 277-78. All further references are to this edition and in parentheses in the text. References to *Tristram Shandy* are to the Riverside Edition by Ian Watt (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), the volume, chapter, and page numbers included in parentheses in the text.
- ³ For most recent examples of these four interpretations see the following: (1) Arthur Hill Cash, *Sterne's Comedy of Moral Sentiments: The Ethical Dimensions of the Journey* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 89-101; (2) Joseph Chadwick, "Infinite Jest: Interpretation in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*," *ECs*, 12 (1978/79), 190-205; (3) Jonathan Lamb, "Language and Hartleian Associationism in *A Sentimental Journey*," *ECs*, 13 (1980), 285-312; and (4) Gardner Stout, Introduction to his edition of the *Journey*, p. 35. Although Chadwick cites my chapter on this novel in my *The Discourse of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974) as the opposite extreme of Stout's view and thus of my argument here, it is only superficially so. The abundant evidence of Yorick's paranoiac failure to communicate with others (my previous argument) increases all the more the significant moments of genuine sympathy toward his belief in the sensorium of the godhead.
- ⁴ Cash, *Sterne's Comedy of Moral Sentiments*, footnote 3, pp. 94-95.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ⁶ Chadwick, "Infinite Jest," p. 198.
- ⁷ Lamb, "Language and Hartleian Associationism," esp. pp. 299-312.
- ⁸ Lamb, p. 303.
- ⁹ *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, ed. Lewis Perry Curtis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), p. 138. [20 June ?1761]
- ¹⁰ Cheyne, *The English Malady: Or, A Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds* (London, 1733), pp. 4-5. Among the some fifty items on natural philosophy and medicine in the sale catalogue of Sterne's library, the three works by Cheyne listed are as follows: *Essay on Health and Long Life* (1725); *English Malady* (1733) and *Essay on Regimen* (1740).

- 11 Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (London: Printed by Samuel Richardson, 1749), I, 11.
- 12 Robert E. Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in An Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 91-114. In view of Sterne's obvious interest in Cheyne, Schofield's point that the latter's Newtonianism moves gradually from the early Newtonian corpuscular theory to the materialistic, vitalistic, and mystical universe (pp. 58-59) is suggestive of Tristram's conclusion that "we live amongst riddles and mysteries" (IV.xviii.219).
- 13 Dougal MacMillan and Howard Mumford Jones, the editors of *Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1931), identified Plato's *Phaedo* as the source for Cato's soliloquy in Act V, scene one (footnote 1 on p. 544).
- 14 Sermon XV, "Job's Expostulation with His Wife," *The Sermons of Mr Yorick* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head, 1927), I, 175. Further references to the sermons indicate volume and page numbers of this edition.
- 15 *Letters*, pp. 395-96. [To William Stanhope, 27 Sept. 1767]
- 16 Vartanian, *La Mettrie's "L'Homme Machine": A Study in the Origins of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1960), p. 31. Vartanian's inference of La Mettrie's presuming that Boerhaave "had, for all practical purposes, identified the soul with the *sensorium commune*" (p. 81) may be applicable to Sterne's own reading of the great Dutch physician and chemist. Sterne's library contained Boerhaave's *Method of Studying Physic* (1719), the *Elementa Chemicæ* (1733), and Shaw's translation of his *Chemistry* (1741).
- 17 Vartanian, p. 26.
- 18 Vartanian, pp. 90-91. See L. J. Rather's Introduction to his translation of Gaub's work, *Mind and Body in Eighteenth Century Medicine* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1965), esp. pp. 1-16. References to Gaub are to this translation.
- 19 Gaub, p. 38.
- 20 Gaub, pp. 60 and 64.
- 21 Whytt, *An Essay on the Vital and Involuntary Motions of Animals* (Edinburgh, 1751), pp. 276-77, and 280.
- 22 Whytt, p. 380. Cf. "Objects are perceiv'd by our Senses to move, inso-much as different parts of the *Object* striking on the same, or different Extremities of Nerves, successively cause different *Refluxes* of the *Spirits* to the *Commune Sensorium*, one after another. All *Perception* is caused in the *Soul*, by the Motion which is excited in the *Nerves* and *Organs*; as likewise the *Reflux* of *Spirits* to the *Brain*," Mat[thew] Beare, M.D., *The SENSORIUM: A Philosophical Discourse of the SENSES* (Exon: 1710), p. 9. Malcolm Flemyng, a contemporary of Whytt's, trusts Providence with the ultimate mystery of the mind/body relationship: "concerning the manner of the operation of our will upon the fluids and solids of our body, it is common to, and equal in all possible explications of animal sensation and motion. And as it may, I think, be rightly referred to the positive laws of union, between our corporeal and incorporeal parts, that is, between mind and body, established by our all wise and all powerful creator, it only affects these minute philosophers called materialists," *The Nature of the Nervous Fluid, or Animal Spirits, Demonstrated* (London, 1751), pp. 39-40.

- ²³ Whytt, *Observations on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of those disorders which have been commonly called Nervous, Hypochondriac, or Hysterick: to which are prefixed some remarks on the sympathy of the nerves*, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh, 1765), p. vi. Like Yorick, Whytt attributes the life principle to this power of sympathy, which derives from the nerves: "Could we suppose the circulation of the blood were to remain, after a total abolition of the sentient powers of the brain and nerves, there would be no more *sympathy* between those of any hydraulic machine. As in this case, the motion of the fluids would be merely mechanical, so every change made in any of its parts, must be the result of mechanism alone, and consequently, wholly different from *consent*, which, as it depends upon feeling, cannot be explained upon mechanical principles" (p. 32).
- ²⁴ Sermon XVI, "The Worship of God," II, 239-40.
- ²⁵ Sermon VII, "Trust in God," II, 148.
- ²⁶ A similar problem of discourse arises over the "solutions of noses" when Toby opposes his final cause to Walter's material cause: "— There is no cause but one, replied my uncle *Toby*,— why one man's nose is longer than another's, but because that God pleases to have it so.— That is *Grangousier's* solution, said my father.— 'Tis he, continued my uncle *Toby*, looking up, and not regarding my father's interruption, who makes us all, and frames and puts us together in such forms and proportions, and for such ends, as is agreeable to his infinite wisdom.— 'Tis a pious account, cried my father, but not philosophical,— there is more religion in it than sound science. 'Twas no inconsistent part of my uncle *Toby's* character,— that he feared God, and revered religion" (III.xli.179). While discussing Hartley's scheme for a philosophical language for "real essences" that would be as precise in meaning as mathematical symbols, Lamb includes Walter with Comenius, Wilkins, Leibniz, and Condillac in this search for a universal nomenclature; and he makes the important point about the tendency of language in *A Sentimental Journey*: "To be fair to Yorick the resort to literal language is a sign of uncertainty rather than in any faith in the power of the name; yet there is an aspect of his journey that shows language being purified by sheer happiness" (p. 309). He then proceeds to argue, wrongly, I believe, that the apostrophe and the subsequent language pertaining to the Bourbonnais experience become too disembodied to be convincing. Unlike Toby, who is content to look heavenward rather than agonize over "solutions," Yorick, though a clergyman by profession, is radically empirical throughout his journey and despite his seeing Religion mixing in the peasants' dance withholds belief until the old man observed "that this was their constant way" (p. 284).
- ²⁷ Despite his emphatic denial of the materialists, Whytt becomes almost ecstatic at the physiological spectacle: The whole is not to be understood as a machine, "But as a system, framed indeed with the greatest art and contrivance; a system! in which the peculiar structure of each part is not more to be admired than the wise and beautiful arrangement of the whole; nevertheless, as a system whose motions are all owing to the active power, and energy, of an immaterial sentient principle, to which it is united, and by which every fibre of it is enlivened and actuated" (*An Essay*, pp. 324-25).