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Maryam Ghabris

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YORICK AND LOVELACE

Physical Manifestations and Internal E-motions

MARYAM GHABRIS

The sentimental voyage of Yorick as depicted by Sterne is not like the ones organized by the English in the eighteenth century—the “Grand Tour” which visited all the principal capitals of Europe, as recounted by Lovelace to the Harlowe family in *Clarissa*.¹ The Yorick of *Sentimental Voyage* should not be confused with the Yorick of *Tristram Shandy*, who “disappeared” on the twenty-seventh page and whose death is marked by two black pages like the catafalque draped over the coffin.² Yorick’s

¹ Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*, ed. Angus Ross (1747–1748; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).

² Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, ed., introd., and notes, Ian Campbell Ross (1749–1767; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy By Mr. Yorick with The Journal to Eliza and A*

"Sentimental Journey" is an inner, "subjective" journey which only provides interest insofar as it reflects the impressions and "motions" of emotion felt by the noblest part of the body—the heart, the soul, the spirit—the "superior" faculties of the traveler, where the feelings and sentiments are not permitted to attain the forbidden fires of passion which Lovelace searches for. Yorick's "quête universelle et vagabonde laisse entrevoir, au-delà de l'observation des coeurs dans un espace géographique propice, une inquiétude de caractère général. C'est à la nature humaine qu' Yorick s'adresse."³ To consider the difference between Richardson and Sterne is to consider the difference between their two characters—Lovelace, the man of pleasure, and Yorick, the man of sentiment—and to consider how the physical "movements" of their displacements and the internal manifestations of their e-motions are opposed. These two characters represent and demonstrate the debate in the second part of the eighteenth century over the role of sentiment and reason in the life of man.

Upon the publication of the discovery of the blood's circulation by Sir William Harvey in his *An Anatomical Study on the Motion of the Heart and of Blood in Animals* (1628), and Thomas Willis's *An Essay of the Pathology of the Brain and Nervous Stock* (1681), it then became more possible to imagine not only the blood, but other spirits moving and carrying information from one part of the body to another. The eighteenth-century medical and scientific theories represented the body as to its invisible nerves which transport animal spirits carrying the soul itself throughout the body such as in George Cheyne's *An Essay on Health and Long Life* (1725), where he discusses the influence of the passions and the nerves on the body and the body/soul relationship in terms of a musical metaphor. The question of movement in all its forms—in the domain of physical motion and in the realm of sentiment—had attracted philosophers, scientists and novelists since Aristotle continuing on and developing between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century in the philosophy of Descartes, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and others; it is therefore not surprising that such ideas and themes should surface in literature. In *Clarissa* Richardson develops the "moral" of his narrative as a warning, using as his tool the violent "motions" of the passions and their consequences for the victims of passion: "Le sentimentalisme est avant tout une structure narrative, dans laquelle bonheur et malheur sont

Political Romance, ed., introd., and notes, Ian Jack (1768; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29–30.

³ Serge Soupel, Préface, *Voyage sentimental à travers la France et l'Italie*, trad., Aurélien Digeon (1768 ; Paris: Flammarion, 1981), 1–26, 21.

des termes fondamentaux.”⁴ In [*The*] *Sentimental Journey*, Sterne develops his moral purpose in an atmosphere of sentimentalism that respects virtue: an internal, interior movement towards the other becomes an object lesson in proper conduct—both on the individual and the social levels. The book is “un livre spirituel quoique sentimental—à l’occasion sentimental parce qu’il est spirituel—l’esprit fait partie du sentiment, tel que le conçoit l’auteur.”⁵ Spontaneous emotion is regarded as a mark of virtue and wisdom and is manifested in different “movements” in the body.

Through his disappointed love for Arabella, Lovelace is introduced into the Harlowe family and is seduced by the beauty of Clarissa, whom he meets for the first time.⁶ The Harlowes and Clarissa’s uncle ask him to describe in detail the most useful and valuable aspects of the countries he has visited for the sake of Clarissa’s uncle (47), who has decided to send his protégé on the Grand Tour. Lovelace’s “remarks were curious and showed him to be a person of reading, judgement, and taste” (47). In his displacements, he is a “great plotter” (50), “a master of metamorphoses” (412) who shows a marked preference for disguise (162) that he uses to move others (383). The novel ends with his final voyage to Europe, on the advice of his family and friends, planned by Lovelace to forget and escape scandal (1437), a voyage on which he dies when he least expects it (1488). Sterne’s hero leaves on his journey for knowledge without any plan and takes nothing with him but “half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches.”⁷ Yorick in his sentimental journey never reaches Italy. It ends in the episode, “THE CASE OF DELICACY,” where Yorick is in bed catching “hold of the Fille de Chambre’s ——” (125).

The various stages of Sterne’s (that is, Yorick’s) journey “through France and Italy” are, to a great extent, the result simply of the convenience of a route which will both allow him to travel on his way towards Italy and to delay or “dally” at each stage of his trip in order to get to know various characters (female by preference when possible) he has met by chance. Lovelace’s movements are of a completely different kind—he must constantly travel between Saint Albans and London in order to maintain contact with his accomplices, and must also keep watch on Harlowe Place⁸ and prepare the sequestration: “these two hours; dispatching messengers to every stage; to

⁴ David J. Denby, “La Modernité du sentimentalisme,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 7.4 (July 1995): 373–92, 373.

⁵ Soupel, Préface, 23.

⁶ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 45.

⁷ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 3.

⁸ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 164, 383.

every inn; to every wagon or coach, whether flying or creeping, and to every house with a bill up, for five miles round" (736), and rape of Clarissa, who is being guarded by prostitutes in London (882-83). Prevented from seeing her during her illness, he says, "I ride towards London three or four times a day, resolving *pro* and *con* twenty times in two or three miles; and at last ride back . . . how many score times did I ride backwards and forwards from the Palace to the Gore . . . whether on horseback or on foot . . . sometimes ambling, sometimes prancing . . . backwards and forwards in so short a compass!" (1334). Finally leaving to go abroad, he plans to go "first to Paris . . . thence to some of the German courts . . . perhaps to Vienna descend through Bavaria and the Tyrol to Venice, where I shall keep the carnival: thence to Florence and Turin . . . again over mount Cenis to France: and . . . return again to Paris" (1432); his last voyage being the journey towards his death at Trent (1488). Robert Burton (1577-1640) has described the moving faculty: "It is the other power of the sensitive soul, which causeth all those inward and outward animal motions in the body."⁹ Since his arrival at the Harlowes, up until the death of Clarissa and himself, Lovelace has not ceased to move, spurred on by the engendering animal movements of his evil actions and violent e-motions.

In the third episode of *Sentimental Journey* (this very title evoking the idea of movements and displacements), Yorick provides a list of categories of travelers in his preface. Whatever their objectives or resolutions, they do not always manage to attain or realize their goals because of a lack of communication with the inhabitants of a place: "from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs, and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility."¹⁰ It is thus at the beginning of this trip that, seated in the chaise, he represents two of the four causes which Aristotle defines in *Physics*: efficient causes (the author, alias Yorick) and final causes (to learn through the contacts made with people encountered on the various stages of his journey, that is to say, his "displacements" (10). He "shall learn better manners as [he gets] . . . along" (8).

In the beginning of his trip, Yorick, only just disembarked on the quay at Calais, stumbles on a Franciscan monk and, after having heard his sorrowful complaint, glances at him briefly; however, feeling a sleeping

⁹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. and introd., Holbrook Jackson (1621; London: Dent, 1978), 160.

¹⁰ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 9.

anti-papist prejudice rising within himself, he decides not to give the monk alms and keeps his purse tight in his pocket: "The moment I cast my eyes upon him, I was predetermined not to give him a single sous" (5). Instead he responds by verbally attacking the monk, arguing his refusal to give him the least little sous by remarking on the presence of useless monks who profit from almsgiving. Yorick notices the humble attitude of the monk, but he confirms his opinion with a gesture. John Donaldson explains the origin of primary sensations in this way: "the first and simplest of our sensations, and of which our primary ideas are chiefly compounded, are light, sound, and motion."¹¹ The eighteenth-century theory "seems to have been more concerned with eyes and ears than with the other senses" even if "precise descriptions of gestures and body language flourish."¹² The passive attitude of the monk is a sign of resignation; the flush that spreads over his face makes Yorick understand that he has vexed this poor man who has not deserved such treatment.¹³ It is the first encounter of his journey, which begins badly. It is certain that the rudeness with which he has treated the monk in this exchange contradicts what he has affirmed about the generous man: "When man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! he pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompress'd, looks round him, as if he sought for an object to share it with—In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate" (4). When he opens his hand with a gesture of charity and good feeling, his blood vessels dilate: this movement of generosity is accompanied by an increased and free circulation of blood through his veins—the thought provokes the movement of the hand. Sterne also speaks about the rosiness of Yorick's cheeks after his remark about the soft fine nature of Bourbon blood (4); this softness is for him due more to a movement of generosity than to excitement caused by the wine of Burgundy: "rougir ou de pâlir . . . ces changements ne dependent pas des nerfs et des muscles . . . ils viennent plus immédiatement du coeur, lequel on peut nommer la source des passions, en tant qu'il prépare le sang et les esprits à les produire."¹⁴

¹¹ John Donaldson, *The Elements of Beauty. Also, Reflexions on the Harmony of Sensibility and Reason* (Edinburgh: Elliot, 1780), 10.

¹² Alexis Tadié, "From the Ear to the Eye: Perceptions of Language in the Fictions of Laurence Sterne," in *Sensual Reading: New Approaches to Reading in Its Relations to the Senses*, Michael Syrotinski and Ian MacLachlan, eds., (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 107–26, 109, 115.

¹³ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 8.

¹⁴ René Descartes, *Les Passions de l'âme*, introd., notes, bibliographie et chronologie, Pascale D'Arcy (1649; Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 168.

Conscience for Yorick leaves him free to exercise and indulge his emotions. The concept of conscience was not isolated from moral significance until Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). Later and after the refusal of Yorick to perform a charitable act, in the heart of the monk, in his conscience, just as in that of Yorick, each one is animated by a voluntary movement of generosity and fixes on the most precious object, the little horn snuff-box, which becomes a symbol for Yorick; the monk makes the first 'move': "The poor monk blush'd as red as scarlet . . . I blush'd in my turn; but from what movements. . . . I knew not that contention could be rendered so sweet and pleasurable a thing to the nerves as I then felt it."¹⁵ This exchange seals a mutual 'recognition' which will be followed by several other "signs"—the rosy faces of the two, "frissons" in Yorick's soul, and then the announcement of the death of the monk: "I burst into a flood of tears—but I am as weak as a woman" (21). According to Hume and as to Sterne, "Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals."¹⁶ Throughout these episodes Yorick constantly notes the effects of "internal" movements—blushes, quickening of the pulse, glances and gestures appropriate to the emotion felt when in contact with the other.

Lovelace, in contrast, from his first entry into the novel, spreads disorder everywhere: "By this engine, whose springs I am continually oiling, I play them all off,"¹⁷ and he provokes the e-motion and movement of others: "jealousies and uneasiness rising in every breast, where all before was unity and love" (104). When the family see him on their way home from church: "They all came home in disorder" (140). Dr. Lewin "had persuaded him not to attempt speaking to any of the family . . . observing to him the emotions his presence had put everybody in" (172). As to generosity, having seen a beggar, Lovelace throws "him money, in hopes to obtain by his prayers the blessing [his] . . . heart pants after" (1334). Lovelace also has a lot to do with a young parson (of the same church as the priest Sterne) who is disdained equally by Lovelace, Colonel Morden, and by Lovelace's relative, Uncle M—all atheists. Indeed, Uncle M charged the parson with being a "Firebrand" (1291), or troublemaker, because he agreed to spy on the young Clarissa for the Harlowes and sent them a detailed account in a very pretentious letter

¹⁵ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 20.

¹⁶ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (1739; London: Penguin, 1985), 510.

¹⁷ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 145.

(1292–95). Lovelace interprets the opinion of Morden, Clarissa's cousin, about the parson, in this way: "his contempt of the parsons is a certain sign that he is one of *us*" (1291)—that is, an atheist. Yorick, while disagreeing with the French philosophers: de la Mettrie, the Baron Holbach, and Diderot, materialists who did not believe in free will, intended to maintain "friendly relations" with them but also "meant to reconcile body and soul, the laws of physiology and the freedom of the will."¹⁸ He rejected the idea of "man as machine" defended by de la Mettrie. He extends to man Descartes' principle of animal—machine and rejects in this way all dualism in favor of monism, which conceives of reason as the only universal principle. His mechanistic determinism leads naturally to a rejection of all ideas of God, even that of the deists, whose god he refuses to interpret as or confuse with nature. He (de la Mettrie) declares directly that in morality, "il faut ressembler aux autres malgré soi, vivre et presque penser comme eux. Quelle comédie!"¹⁹ This is the source of his struggle against religion. Lovelace refuses to be taken for a machine: "Yet 'tis poor too, to think myself a machine—I am *no* machine—Lovelace, thou art base to thyself, but to *suppose* thyself a machine";²⁰ but he is aware of being trapped by his own intrigues: "I am a machine at last and no free agent" (848). While he is searching for Clarissa, he feels "What a void in my heart! What a chillness in my blood, as if its circulation were arrested!" (740). Belford's design in the second part of the book is to make Lovelace "*feel*" (1378), but in vain. Lovelace never "*feels*," he is always in disguise and always engaged in self-deception. Yorick is so susceptible to feeling, that he cannot "*fool*" himself as to his true emotions or intentions.

For Yorick, his physical movements and the sensation of the blood pulsing through his veins prove to him that he is a living being and not a machine, and, speaking to the proprietor of the hotel, M. Dessein, he finds a fitting person to apply the epithet to: "You suffer, Mons. Dessein, as much as the machine —." ²¹ He needs to feel "*pervious*" to the other and this is what makes his heart and spirit open to offer love and affection to those who are in this same need. First he felt "*imperviousness*" to the monk which is transformed into comprehension and understanding when they exchanged the snuff-box. An analogous situation takes place when Yorick meets the old French officer

¹⁸ Martin C. Battestin, "Sterne Among the Philosophes: Body and Soul in *A Sentimental Journey*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 7.1 (October 1994): 17–36, 30.

¹⁹ Emile Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie*, 7 vols., (Paris: PUF, 1950), 2. 442.

²⁰ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 658.

²¹ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 14.

and shares the snuff-box with him. With M. Dessein, no "perviousness" has ever been established between them because their souls are not open to each other. Despite Sterne's friendly relations with the group of materialists, he does not hide the fact that he feels free to defend the idea that each individual has a "soul." Concerning the emotions and tender sentiments aroused in him by the poor Maria, Yorick declares: "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" (114). When he gives money to the pretty chambermaid, she thanks him by humbly bowing to him: "where the spirit bows itself down—the body does no more than tell it" (65). The same attitude appears in the episode "THE GRACE," when the family express their gratitude to God by dancing. Here Yorick imagined he "could distinguish an elevation of spirit" mixing *Religion* with the dance (120). To Hume, "The passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts."²² The soul can only harvest the impulses and enthusiasm of sensibility on condition that it feels free.

On the other hand, Lovelace "must create beauty and place it where nobody else could find it . . . to single out some *one* of the sex to make *half a score* jealous . . . for many an eye . . . to sparkle with rival indignation: many a cheek glow; and even many a fan . . . to be snapped at a sister-beauty."²³ He finds pleasure in seeing women suffer as well as birds: "beauty in tears is beauty heightened, and what my heart has ever delighted to see ——" (737), "We begin with birds as boys, and as men go on to ladies; and both perhaps; in turns, experience our sportive cruelty . . . I have known a bird actually starve itself, and die with grief, at its being caught and caged ——" (557). For him, a woman must accustom herself to suffering and accept the insensitivity of man. Like a bird in a cage, she must become accustomed to her prison and continue to sing, finding her voice again only a short while after being caged. Lovelace gives the simile of a bird new caught: "at first, refusing all sustenance, it beats and bruises itself against its wires . . . at last, finding its efforts ineffectual, quite tired and breathless . . . seeming to bemoan its cruel fate and forfeited liberty . . . after a few days, its struggles to escape still diminishing, as it finds it to no purpose to attempt it, its new habitation becomes familiar . . . resumes its wonted cheerfulness, and every day sings a song to amuse itself, and reward its keeper" (557).

²² Hume, *A Treatise*, 655.

²³ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 143.

Yorick respects and even worships liberty. For him, three words symbolize the idea of liberty: the passport, which allows the liberty of movement; the birdcage and the Bastille (a large cage), which signify the deprivation of liberty, enclosure, slavery. Yorick manages to expunge from the word Bastille all its connotations of imprisonment by considering the advantages such a stay of several weeks at the King's expense would have for him—he could profit from this forced immobilization to dream, philosophise, and have some peace and quiet.²⁴ If the body is deprived of liberty to move, the spirit remains free and unfettered. Sterne, like Locke, believes that the true life is lived in the mind. After having descended into the courtyard of the hotel and made his plans for an eventual stay at the Bastille, he goes back up to his room, and it is at this point, while walking down the hallway, that he hears the anguished cry of the bird in the cage, which he has forgotten: "I can't get out" (71). The symbol of deprivation of liberty which signifies absence of the power to move freely is represented by the bird (starling) in the cage and inspires Yorick's thoughts on slavery and liberty: "Cet oiseau . . . tout embastillé dans une cage, n'est il pas comme une âme attendant de s'échapper de son corps? Le rapprochement est proposé sans tristesse."²⁵

Inspired by his encounter with the Duc de Choiseul, from whom he expects to obtain his passport, he conceives a plan for the study of physiognomy, of the character which is inscribed on the face and figure, the posture, and tone of voice—in order to know better how to adapt his own behavior to the circumstances.²⁶ Yorick is struck by the physiognomy and air of sincerity of this valet whose name, La Fleur, "always in love," reminds him of this beneficial link with nature. Yorick's judgement at first sight (a judgment already criticized by Richardson in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*) does not deceive him: "I had never less reason to repent of the impulses which generally do determine me, than in regard to this fellow—he was a faithful, affectionate, simple soul as ever trudged after the heels of a philosopher" (32). From the external appearance one can read the internal aspects and characteristics of the individual. Denis Diderot, in his "Eloge de Richardson," speaks of all these expressions which follow one another on a face "sans qu'il cesse d'être le même; et l'art du grand poète et du grand peintre est de vous montrer une circonstance fugitive qui vous avait échappé."²⁷

²⁴ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 70.

²⁵ Soupel, Préface, 23.

²⁶ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 76–77.

²⁷ Denis Diderot, "Eloge de Richardson," *Œuvres choisies*, 2 vols., ed. Mme de Vandeul and introduced by François Tulou (1761; Paris: Garnier, 1936), 1. 183–99, 189.

To Diderot, "Le geste est quelquefois aussi sublime que le mot; et puis ce sont toutes ces vérités de détail qui préparent l'âme aux impressions fortes des grands événements" (189).

Yorick tries to prepare to present himself to the Duc de Choiseul with a calm demeanor: "A heart at ease, Yorick, flies into no extremes—'tis ever on its center";²⁸ he tries to avoid using language which would offend his host or predispose him against Yorick's cause; he must measure his words, maintain a balance so that he will not overreach the equilibrium demanded to keep everything on an even keel—within both physical and moral limits. This sort of equilibrium is obtained by a measured plan of action, based on a proprioceptive sensitivity which gives assurance of the envisaged success. For Yorick, "the pleasure of the experiment has kept my senses, and the best part of my blood awake, and laid the gross to sleep" (28). Lovelace attempts to obtain his equilibrium from the outside as he explains why the girl is the goal of his conquest: "Whatever our hearts are in, our heads will follow. Begin with spiders, with flies, with what we will, the girl is the center of gravity, and we all naturally tend to it."²⁹ Yorick does not proceed like Lovelace because his objective is the search for human communication, doubtless sensual, but above all, sentimental, with consideration for the other; to establish understanding with the other when there is no question of trying to establish a tender or loving relationship. Wherever he passes, Yorick "suscite des commencements d'affection qu'il prend plaisir à multiplier, en lui-même et chez les femmes, sachant qu'il séjourne parmi des gens doués d'une capacité d'aimer sans cesse renaissante—signe de la grandeur et de la disponibilité de leur cœur."³⁰

Sterne gives the example of the old French officer: Yorick is sitting in his "box" and the old man takes off his glasses to put them in their case, without words. Yorick "translates" his physical actions clearly, transposing them into a commentary on the subtle signals of the body: "There is not a secret so aiding to the progress of sociality, as to get master of this *short hand*, and be quick in rendering the several turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations, into plain words" (57). Yorick's attitude is that of one who wishes to learn and understand, with no evil intentions. His sociability comes about through sympathy with the individual. Lovelace, in order to accomplish a shameful purpose, uses shorthand writing³¹ and sign

²⁸ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 77.

²⁹ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 419.

³⁰ Soupel, *Préface*, 20-21.

³¹ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 762.

language with the help of his accomplice Tomlinson to persuade and overpower Clarissa (841). Further, he "places" their physical bodies in order to accomplish his purpose: Clarissa and Tomlinson facing each other, Lovelace seated behind Clarissa so that he can send signals to his accomplice to guarantee suitable replies. He "plays" with winks, raised eyebrows, etc.; in order to accomplish his purpose. The young girl perceives the collusion and the deception and retires (832-34).

Locke explains motion, "To slide, roll, tumble, walk, creep, run, dance, leap, skip, and abundance of others that might be named, are Words which are no sooner heard, but every one who understands English has presently in his Mind distinct Ideas, which are all but the different Modifications of Motion."³² Samuel Farr reduces to two causes actions and movements: "those which evidently acknowledge the action of some spiritual Being upon them . . . or those which seem spontaneous, and which we can refer to no direct cause."³³ Even Lovelace's language indicates the violence of his movements: "I gape like an unfledged kite in its nest, waiting to swallow a chicken, bobbed at its mouth by its marauding dam!"³⁴ Later he shows in his letter to Belford that he needs the space, "I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep . . . I turn my head from every one I meet . . . I have one half of the house to myself; and that the best . . . the common part is theirs; the state part is mine . . . while the two porsy sisters, the old gouty brother and the two musty nieces, are stived up in the other half, and dare not stir for fear of meeting me . . . so I have them all prisoners while I range about as I please" (1182). Yorick does not need conversation and violent physical contact or space to move.

Once they have arrived at Amiens, Yorick, after many fruitless attempts, both brain and hand incapable of action, feels himself unable to write to Mme. L, "I begun and begun again; and though I had nothing to say, and that nothing might have been express'd in half a dozen lines, I made half a dozen different beginnings, and could no way please myself."³⁵ The spirit of Yorick is paralyzed, despite the fact that he is constantly searching for mobility and change: "there is no regular reasoning upon the ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for ought I know, which influence the tides themselves" (5). The tides may be regular,

³² John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols., (1689; London, 1753), 1, 180.

³³ Samuel Farr, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature, Origin, and Extent, of Animal Motion, Deduced from the Principles of Reason and Analogy* (London, 1771), 22.

³⁴ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 911.

³⁵ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 46.

but the thoughts of Yorick are often disorganized and susceptible to the variability and change of his passions: "if ever I do a mean action, it must be in some interval betwixt one passion and another: whilst this interregnum lasts, I always perceive my heart locked up ——" (34). When Lovelace loses Clarissa, he says: "What heart, thinkest thou, can I have to write, when I have lost the only subject worth writing about?"³⁶ He is disappointed that Clarissa has once more taken flight, and feels ill and paralyzed, "I must lay down my pen. I cannot write with any spirit at all . . . I must be ill indeed when I can't write ——" (1201-2), and, some days before the death of Clarissa, he still remains in the same state of incapacity: "I know not what I write, nor what I would write" (1333). Yorick is in a different situation because he wishes to break off with Mme. de L.

In *Clarissa*, Lovelace prides himself on being prepared for "high passions, raving, flying, tearing, execration: these transient violences, the workings of sudden grief and shame, and vengeance, would have set us upon a par with each other, and quitted scores" (900). His pride is stronger than his feelings: "Never was there a more joyous heart and lighter heels than mine joined together, yet both denied their functions; the one fluttering in secret, ready to burst its bars for relief-ful expression, the others obliged to a hobbling motion; when, unrestrained, they would, in their master's imagination, have mounted him to the lunar world without the help of a ladder" (768-69). Yorick, on the contrary, has a sense of limits and does not give himself to such extremes. He speaks of sweet sensations, sensations capable of attenuating, or easing painful sensations.³⁷ The grape harvest provided him with a rich festival of strong sensations which would, had he the time, have filled up twenty volumes (113). When he visits the mother of the poor Maria, Yorick's emotion anticipates the experienced sensation when he walks with the young girl in tears, destroying the image of the young girl lost in her dreams. Even La Fleur "whose heart seem'd only to be tuned to joy, to pass the back of his hand twice across his eyes" (114). The mixture of the tears of Yorick and those of the young girl signifies the blending of their souls: "I sat down close by her; and Maria let me wipe them [her eyes] away as they fell with my handkerchief.—I then steep'd it in my own—and then in hers—and then in mine—and then I wip'd hers again—and as I did it, I felt such undescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion" (114).

³⁶ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 1023.

³⁷ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 87.

As an adversary of the materialists, Yorick praises this sensibility which comes from the heart, and thus from the soul: "—Dear sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bed of straw—and 'tis thou who lifts him up to HEAVEN—eternal fountain of our feelings!" (117). In contrast, when Lovelace says, "My nose had been made to tingle before; my eyes have before been made to glisten by this soul-moving beauty; but so *very* much affected, I never was—for, trying to check my sensibility, it was too strong for me, and I even sobbed—Yes, by my soul, I *audibly* sobbed, and was forced to turn from her before she had well finished her affecting speech" (695), one can doubt his sincerity. The scene where Yorick summarizes the story of Maria in order to "make contact" with the unhappy girl who wanders through the countryside is one of the most sorrowful scenes of the novel: the soul is in movement through the experience of the emotions. Yorick has sent the postillion and La Fleur off to Moulines in order to get away from them for a while and profit from a bit of free time, time which he can dispose of as he sees fit, away from unwanted interruptions. He can say goodbye to Maria, whom he will not see again: it is a definitive break with no hope of a return because of his health (he will die three weeks later). Nevertheless, this unfortunate girl still makes him dream—"Maria should lay in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter" (116), but his manner of describing this in physical terms makes the reader believe in the attraction felt by the heart of a lover (114). The description of sorrow provokes a movement of compassion in Yorick, but his true preference is for e-motion which carries his soul to search for pleasure to the point of desire (117).

Yorick, while in the study of the Comte de B, gives free rein to his imagination when he opens Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and his wandering thoughts drift to the resting place of virtuous souls, where he approaches the shade of the unhappy/unfortunate Dido, thus forgetting where he is or why he has come to see the comte. He lets his imagination wander and discovers that there is indeed reason to be happy in the knowledge of the flexibility of the human spirit: "Sweet pliability of man's spirit, that can at once surrender itself to illusions, which cheat expectations and sorrow of their weary moments!" (87). Sensibility/sensitivity is the most elevated faculty of the senses. Lovelace and Sterne (Yorick) do not define or feel this quality in the same way: "The less sensibility any man possesses, his affections are the more selfish; the more he is sensible

of happiness himself, he is the more disposed to make others happy."³⁸ Lovelace flies from woman to woman like a bee from flower to flower in order to satisfy his carnal "sensibility": "when a man has been ranging like the painful bee from flower to flower. . . . Such a passion as this keeps love in a continual fervour; makes it all alive."³⁹ He always illustrated his "eagleship by aiming at the noblest quarries" (559). After the rape of Clarissa, he declares: "if I stir, the venomous spider of this habitation will want to set upon the charming fly, whose silken wings are already so entangled in my enormous web that she cannot move hand or foot" (887). For Yorick, it is the spirit which inspires movement—to explore the vast field of memories, and jump from a saddening thought to a more elevating thought; this is the sign of a "liberty" which is never questioned, a spirit which is moved in the presence of sorrow and which shows itself at the slightest emotion of the heart. Lovelace says, "Those confounded poets . . . fired my imagination . . . to become a goddess-maker" (143). To Hume, "the imagination and passions, assist each other in their operation, when their propensities are similar, and when they act upon the same object . . . the imagination and affections have close union together, and that nothing, which affects the former, can be entirely indifferent to the latter."⁴⁰ Francis Bacon was the founder of a movement which guaranteed the mastery of man over nature—he includes, after history and philosophy, a third science—poetry—the science of the imagination, or the "dream" of science.⁴¹

For Yorick, the knowledge of the other is obtained more through the heart than through physical appearance or physical contact—when speaking of Mme. de L, he says "it was not critically handsome."⁴² Lovelace, on the other hand, shows how Clarissa is "lovely in her tears;"⁴³ beauty is provoked through the movement, the emotion of pain. Our affections, to Hume, "depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind, than any other impressions; for which reason they arise more naturally from the imagination, and from every lively idea we form of them. This is the nature and cause of sympathy; and 'tis after this manner we enter so deep into the opinions and affections of others, whenever we discover them."⁴⁴

³⁸ Donaldson, *The Elements of Beauty*, 80.

³⁹ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 521.

⁴⁰ Hume, *A Treatise*, 389, 471.

⁴¹ Bréhier, *Histoire*, 23-31.

⁴² Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 17.

⁴³ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 520.

⁴⁴ Hume, *A Treatise*, 369.

The sentimental traveler experiences a thirst for e-motions which inclines him to like others for the sensations which they arouse. Lovelace thinks only of himself. The heart stirs when the body feels, and this stirring is translated into emotions. For Hobbes (1581–1679), the philosopher of motion, the senses are activated into motion, this motion is transmitted from the brain, and from there to the heart: “in this organ, begins a movement of inverse reaction of which the origin (conatus) is precisely that which constitutes sensation; memory comes into play when the movement which has produced the sensation continues in the absence of the object.”⁴⁵ More precisely, the “conatus” is the smallest cause/effort seen to be the beginning of movement, and felt before it can be externalized through perceptible movement—word, deed, etcetera. The memory of Yorick is constantly invaded by his memories of Eliza, evoked by the picture “tied in a black ribband” and hung around his neck.⁴⁶ When Lovelace thinks of Clarissa, his thoughts are translated into the physical movements of the conqueror: “Never was there a more joyous heart and lighter heels than mine joined together, yet both denied their functions; the one fluttering in secret, ready to burst its bars for relief-ful expression, the others obliged to a hobbling motion; when, unrestrained, they would, in their master’s imagination, have mounted him to the lunar world without the help of a ladder . . . my heart danced to my mouth at the very glimpse of her.”⁴⁷ Certain movements can explain changes in the mind the effect of the imagination.

Fortune smiles on Yorick in the person of a lady at the moment when he feels anger rising in him against M. Dessein, the hotel keeper at Calais. His conversations with this lady are not frequent, but the exchanges arise from internal “movements” and from gestures which are born from sensations and impressions uncovered and worked on by the imagination.⁴⁸ Yorick is translating himself and his own sensations when he makes suppositions about the misfortunes of his temporary heroine. The hands serve as the first visual contact, communicating the first sensations which reveal the e-motions informing the heart: “The pulsations of the arteries along my fingers pressing

⁴⁵ Bréhier, *Histoire*, 147.

⁴⁶ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 44.

⁴⁷ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 768–69. When Lovelace is in joy, he says, “I am taller by half a yard, in my imagination, than I was!—I look *down* upon everybody now!—Last night . . . I took off my hat, as I walked, to see if the lace were not scorched, supposing it had brushed down a star: and, before I put it on again . . . I was for buffeting the moon. In short, my whole soul is joy. When I go to bed, I laugh myself asleep: and I awake either laughing or singing” (402).

⁴⁸ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 16–17.

across hers, told her what was passing within me: she looked down—a silence of some moments followed. I fear, in this interval, I must have made some slight efforts towards a closer compression of her hand, from a subtle sensation I felt in the palm of my own” (19). The sensations come from the body; the e-motions come from the heart. Chance has given Yorick the opportunity to make the acquaintance of a lady of great charm who consents to accept his attentions—to the point where he desires to hold her in his arms and caress her in the open street (19). When he takes her hand (this is not a polite handshake), he can understand everything that the lady is feeling in her heart; the variations of her sentiments and feelings are transmitted through her arteries to her palm and to the heart of Yorick. These tactile sensations correspond to an exteroceptive sensitivity which Denizot defines: “ce contact physique, essentiel pour Yorick, a des multiples fonctions. Il est générateur de sensations agréables et d’émotions; c’est grâce à lui que s’établit la communication et qu’est mise en échec la solitude; c’est enfin le véhicule privilégié du sentiment qu’il fait naître et dont il est en même temps le signe.”⁴⁹

Even though the novel “is not a work of reasoning,”⁵⁰ despite the fact that certain episodes and structures can lend themselves to reason, most of the encounters are shared with the other, or involve the gathering of sensations, impulses, or temptations, but with reservations (like with Mme de L, la Marchesina, or the pretty chambermaid). It is not through reason that internal “movements” are stirred, or through reason that one can approach the “other.” When Lovelace feels passion, there is no communication with the “other,” the woman: Clarissa is only a prey to be conquered by any means. He says, “Let me rejoice that she has passed the Rubicon: that she cannot return.”⁵¹ Yorick avows that he is “in love with” women (34). While with Lovelace, his love for women, is considered as “vice” (1146) because it is uncontrollable, without real e-motions and sometimes leads to duelling and tragedy.

In the episode “The PULSE,” Yorick said “walking forth without any determination where to go — . . . I had given a cast with my eye into half a dozen shops . . . in search of a face . . . till at last, this hitting my fancy, I had walked in;”⁵² he perceives in the manner of this glove seller, “so chearful a

⁴⁹ Paul Denizot, “Yorick et la quête du bonheur, ou les équivoques ludiques du corps et de l’âme dans *A Sentimental Journey*,” in *Le Corps et l’âme en Grande-Bretagne au XVIII^e siècle*, Paul-Gabriel Boucé and Suzy Halimi, eds., (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986), 157–66, 161. [Actes des colloques tenus en 1983–1985 à la Sorbonne Nouvelle.]

⁵⁰ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 59.

⁵¹ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 387.

⁵² Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 50–51.

movement and so chearful a look, that had I been laying out fifty louis d'ors with her, I should have said—"This woman is grateful" (51). The kindness of this beautiful grisset arises from her temperament, which Yorick thinks he can detect in the quality and rhythm of the glove seller's pulse, that is to say, the rhythm of the blood in the artery of her arm or indeed the mobility of her blood as dictated by her heart (52-53). He feels bewitched by her beauty to the point that after leaving the store he finds he has forgotten the directions which she has repeated three times to him (52). Here again the eye is more solicited, more aware, than the ear. Taking account of his ignorance, which has not diminished a jot, he enters the store and profits from his situation to feel her pulse and make her the most beautiful of compliments. In response, "a quick black eye . . . shot through two such long and silken eye-lashes with such penetration, that she look'd into my very heart and reins—It may seem strange, but I could actually feel she did ——." Yorick, finally embarrassed, buys a pair of gloves even though he doesn't need any (54-55).

It is through the hands that Yorick first knew Mme. de L, with whom he engaged in a sentimental adventure as far as their sensations permitted. It is in the chaise that the 'movement' of their emotions is ended: no other circumstance would have encouraged the couple to pursue further an adventure which the memory of Eliza and the virtue of the priest would naturally put an end to (43-44). In the room of the hotel, Yorick and the young girl are seated on the bed, this place of consummation which Yorick refuses as much out of virtue as out of respect for the innocence of the young girl. A second is enough to throw her off balance and the ensuing motion throws her off her center of gravity "it unavoidably threw the fair *fille de chambre* off her center—and then ——" (93). At the period when Richardson and Sterne were writing their novels, two great names dominated the literary figures and philosophers of the period—Newton and Locke. Newton had discovered the law of gravity, as he describes in this phrase extracted from a letter addressed to Dr. Richard Bentley: "if the very mathematical Center of the central Particle be not accurately in the very mathematical Center of the attractive Power of the whole Mass, the Particle will not be attracted equally on all Sides."⁵³ Locke acknowledged gravity as a cause of movement.⁵⁴ If Descartes "*satisfait ainsi pleinement aux exigences de sa philosophie mécaniste, qui stipule que l'explication de tous les phénomènes doit être donnée seulement en termes de*

⁵³ Isaac Newton, *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Doctor Bentley, Containing Some Arguments in Proof of a Deity* (London: Dodsley, 1756), 14.

⁵⁴ Bréhier, *Histoire*, 283.

figure et de mouvement . . . Newton unifie le système du monde en montrant que c'est la même loi, celle de l'attraction universelle, qui régit le mouvement des planètes et celui de la chute des corps."⁵⁵ In applying the empiricism derived from the philosophical movement of Francis Bacon and later Locke, Yorick converts each stage of his original journey into an experiment. He shares the opinion of the old French officer: "the advantage of travel, as it regarded the *savoir vivre*, was by seeing a great deal both of men and manners; it taught us mutual toleration; and mutual toleration . . . taught us mutual love";⁵⁶ Yorick "va dès lors partir à la recherche de l'humain sous toutes ses formes, afin de trouver un terrain commun avec lui et de fonder la tolérance en sa légitimité."⁵⁷ Van Ghent tries to explain that Locke "had attempted to explain the genesis of ideas from sensation. . . . From the notion of sensation as the prime source of knowledge and as the primitive character of experience, arises that doctrine of "sensibility" or "sentimentality" which Sterne made famous."⁵⁸

Yorick avows, when the question of the passport resurfaces: "Go but to the end of a street, I have a mortal aversion for returning back no wiser than I set out; and as this was one of the greatest efforts I had ever made for knowledge, I could less bear the thoughts of it [to be thrown out of France or imprisoned in the Bastille because of the absence of a passport]."⁵⁹ Yorick's thirst for knowledge in service to understanding has driven him to undertake this difficult voyage of the heart "in pursuit of NATURE, and those affections which rise out of her, which make us love each other—and the world, better than we do" (84–85). For Richardson, "Knowledge by theory only is a vague uncertain light: a will o' the wisp, which as often misleads the doubting mind as puts it right."⁶⁰ Lovelace, at the end of the novel, is not moved to any suffering and does not learn to control his emotions because he does not have "an innate sensibility leads to the consciousness of good and evil."⁶¹ He makes himself believe that his victim will pardon him, as if nothing existed, with no compassion to her and no consideration to her feelings, "one

⁵⁵ Michel Blay, "L'Attraction unificatrice newtonienne," *BSEAA XVII–XVIII* 56 (2003): 31–42, 33–37.

⁵⁶ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 62–63.

⁵⁷ Alain Morvan, *La tolérance dans le roman anglais de 1726 à 1771* (Paris: Didier, 1984), 437.

⁵⁸ Dorothy Van Ghent, *The English Novel and Function* (1953; London: Harper, 1961), 99–111, 89.

⁵⁹ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 68.

⁶⁰ Richardson, *Clarissa*, 789.

⁶¹ Donaldson, *The Elements of Beauty*, 98.

tour to France and Italy . . . will do the business. Miss Harlowe will by that time have forgotten all she has suffered from the ungrateful Lovelace,"⁶² but he encounters his adversary, Colonel Morden, on the border between Venice and Austria and dies of a sword wound after a long agony, at the end of which he tries to pronounce his last inaudible words, and his lips even at deathbed continue to be "moving" (1487).

In the course of this Voyage, Sterne shapes himself by giving himself over, not to reason, not to duels, nor sexual conquests, but to human contacts, thanks to which his exaggerated sensitivity is rendered useful to himself and to others. He needs the "others" to conduct his experiments on human nature; the other serves as object of his experiments: he discovers universal sensibility and sociability. He relies on conversation as one of the dominant forms of communication and since "everything that occurs in the mind occurs in the present, this enables Sterne to portray some of his scenes with all the vividness which Richardson's 'lively present-tense manner' had made possible."⁶³

Yorick recounts the following anecdote in this episode "A FRAGMENT,"⁶⁴ extracted from Burton by Sterne, on the change in the mentality and outlook of the inhabitants of the city of Abdera in Greece: the city was known for being "the vilest and most profligate town in all Thrace" (34); when *Andromeda* by Euripides was played in Athens, the public imagination was awakened by the song that inspires the people of Abdera to respond to the call of the prince of God and men, Cupid, and "The fire caught—and the whole city, like the heart of one man, open'd itself to Love" (35). It was enough for the inhabitants to be moved to hear the words of a poet to feel their hearts empty of evil thoughts and to be filled with goodness and love. To Sterne, "there should be no division made between the divine and the human, nor between the intellectual life and sexual love."⁶⁵ Does Sterne succeed "à faire croire en sa victoire sur la tentation et dans la sublimation de l'attirance charnelle [pour les femmes] en sentiment religieux"?⁶⁶ For Richardson, Lovelace, whose relations with women based on sexual conquests and battlefields, causes suffering to himself and those around him through his insensitivity, his physical manifestations, and internal movements of emotion, which are overwhelming and inhuman:

⁶² Richardson, *Clarissa*, 1085.

⁶³ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 304.

⁶⁴ Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 34–35.

⁶⁵ Margaret A. Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (London: Harper, 1996), 446.

⁶⁶ Denizot, "Yorick," 162.

he displaces all the passions and drives them toward tragedy. Whether in his “country” or through traveling out of his country, our kindliness and good nature is aroused by feeling at one with the other, respecting the other, and understanding the true nature of the philosophy of the eighteenth century.