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Two Satyrs Against Travelling: The Arts and the Grand Tour in Peregrine Pickle, Vol. 2, and Tristram Shandy, Vol. 7

Abstract: Comparisons between Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne have typically been based on Travels through France and Italy and A Sentimental Journey. Here, the travel sections of Peregrine Pickle and Tristram Shandy inform a comparative discussion of both authors' differing pursuit of continental travel as aesthetic experience and their satirical reworking of contemporary Grand Tour narratives.

Despite Laurence Sterne's famous distancing from Tobias Smollett, the 'learned Smelfungus' of *A Sentimental Journey* (ASJ, 37), no special scholarly effort is required to discern at least several points of convergence between the ways the two writers travelled on the Continent and wrote fictional and factual (or perhaps factional) Grand Tour narratives. When they met in Montpellier in 1763, they were both travelling due to an 'infirmity of body' (ASJ, 14), to use Yorick's nomenclature. For Smollett, it was his second continental tour, the first in 1750 being more of a gentlemanly educational venture. For Sterne, it was his first, consisting of a more *beau monde*-kind of sojourning, or 'Shandying it', in Paris in the wake of the success of the early volumes of *Tristram Shandy*,¹ and a more health-oriented search for a drier climate in the south, with longer stays in Toulouse and Montpellier. Sterne subsequently set out on his second tour, this time reaching Italy in 1765–66. The repeated tours of the novelists translated into their writing in a relatively analogous manner. In a letter to Robert Foley of 11 November 1764, Sterne wrote:

You will read as odd a Tour thro' france, as ever was projected or executed by traveller or travell Writer, since the world began.

—tis a laughing good temperd Satyr against Travelling (as puppies travel)— (*Letters*, 391–92)

The ‘Satyr against Travelling’ Sterne referred to was volume 7 of *Tristram Shandy*, but the labelling is also a very apt characteristic of volume 2 of Smollett’s *Peregrine Pickle* (1751). The second tours of the novelists, in turn, inspired autonomous and unique travel books — Smollett’s *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) and Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) — merging fact with fiction, formal posturing (Smollett’s fake letters and Sterne’s novelistic persona) with authentic experience. Meanwhile, both writers produced a corpus of personal correspondence when travelling, with individual letters both illuminating and contradicting the published pieces of writing.

Typically, comparative studies of Sterne and Smollett — provoked by the fictional account of their meeting in *A Sentimental Journey* (by the Pantheon, which never actually took place) — have focused on the later narratives, exposing their different approaches, though not necessarily endorsing Yorick’s critical remarks on Smollett as Smelfungus and the binary of spleen and sentiment. Robert Uphaus, for example, points to ‘the limitations of the distinction between sentiment and spleen’, perversely using evidence from Sterne’s own writing, and treating *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) as Smollett’s way of resolving the dichotomy.² Yet the narrative that has inevitably taken hold, even in Uphaus’s seemingly revisionist argument, is of a complaining, irritable and over-sensitive Smelfungus, a representative of the pre-Sternean ‘Augustan age of reason and order’, as Frédéric Ogée has it, who is thrown off balance whenever his ideas of taste and value are not met.³ Indeed, as Ian Campbell Ross suggests in his more recent attempt to argue against these once-popular binaries, ‘neither Tobias Smollett nor his *Travels through France and Italy* [...] has perhaps ever wholly recovered from [Sterne’s] characterization of the writer-traveler as a querulous malcontent’.⁴

Nevertheless, over the past two decades, roughly speaking, Yorick’s unfavourable characterisation of Smollett, foregrounding his alleged ignorance and unsentimental spleen, has been redressed with well-documented accuracy. Frank Felsenstein accounts for the John Bull-like narrative voice in Smollett’s *Travels* by referring to the writer’s engagement with the Earl of Bute’s policies following the Seven Years’ War, rather than to essential character traits belonging to Smollett.⁵ William Gibson and Richard Jones successfully show how competent Smollett was in the realm of connoisseurship and aesthetic debates.⁶ Ross, in turn, juxtaposes the writers’ later travel books with their personal correspondence written around the time of their meeting in 1763 to argue that it was Sterne, rather than Smollett, who struggled with spleen, irritation, and melancholy.⁷ Indeed, despite the obvious differences in their approaches, the travel books of both Smollett and Sterne have been seen as contributing to what Carl

Thomson has labelled the 'inward turn' in travel writing in the second half of the eighteenth century as opposed to the so-called 'scientific' paradigm belonging to the first half of the century.⁸ In Smollett's account, which still followed the 'scientific' narrative's poetics of fact-laden descriptions, the traveller's individualism has nevertheless been recognised in his non-standard, highly opinionated responses to what he saw and to his idiosyncratic interests, such as bridges; this subjective angle has been read as corresponding to Sterne's reduction of descriptive discourse and his emphasis on fleeting impressions and sentimentalised encounters.⁹

In this essay, however, I would like to move the scope of comparison. While critical practice has typically paired the later accounts, which has been sanctioned by the 'Smelfungus' references in *A Sentimental Journey*, the allure of biographical contexts, and the different roles these two narratives played in the context of contemporary travel writing, my aim here will be to read comparatively the early Grand Tour narratives of Smollett and Sterne: respectively, the second volume of *Peregrine Pickle*, which traces the protagonist's 'educational' tour of France and Flanders, and the seventh volume of *Tristram Shandy*, which features Tristram's literal and metaphorical escape from Death. These two 'Satyr[s] against Travelling' playfully and self-consciously engage with the conventions of the Grand Tour account, especially its representational and connoisseurly dimensions, whereby the travelling narrator, through describing the highlights of the cultural-artistic heritage of the places visited, proved his gentlemanly identity. Indeed, as Edward Chaney puts it, 'the Grand Tour became almost synonymous with artistic concerns', which helped achieve 'an educational ideal of virtuosity'.¹⁰ In the first half of the eighteenth century, these aspects of the genre were best exemplified in Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705), the second edition of which (1718) memorably underlines its investment in 'the Charms of Art' in the prefatory poem 'Letter from Italy'.¹¹ As Charles Batten has demonstrated, during this period Addison's *Remarks* served not only as a guidebook for Grand Tourists but also as a model for subsequent travel writers.¹² By the 1750s, as Chloe Chard explains, the Grand Tour account had become a 'practically oriented, impersonally presented enumeration of sights to visit', and the decade's most popular example, apart from Addison's *Remarks*, was Thomas Nugent's *The Grand Tour* (1749).¹³ When Sterne's Tristram refers to 'the Great Addison' directly at the beginning of Volume 7, he suggests that his descriptive engagement with 'the Charms of Art' need not have been facilitated by first-hand experience, but rather by 'his satchel of school-books hanging at his a—' (*TS*, 7.4.580). Sterne also helped himself to the French eighteenth-century equivalent of 'the Michelin guides', Jean Aimar Piganiol de la Force's *Nouveau Voyage de France* (1724, revised edition in 1755).¹⁴ The derivative and non-individualised approach, such as these guidebooks exemplify, becomes

the direct object of satire in the two novels discussed here, and my argument is that while the reformist agenda in both narratives addresses the realm of art and aesthetic experience, Smollett and Sterne offer different solutions to the question of the Grand Tour and the arts.

With its main focus on the artistic architext for eighteenth-century fiction, this essay also adds to studies of Sterne's fiction in the context of novels of the 1750s. *Peregrine Pickle* was first published in 1751, and a revised edition, the typical master copy of subsequent editions, appeared in 1758. There is a relatively long tradition of studying *Tristram Shandy* against the background of fiction in the 1750s, and parallels with Smollett have occasionally emerged. One critic comes inevitably to the fore in this respect: it was the anonymous reviewer for the *Critical Review*, perhaps Smollett himself in his role as editor, who implicitly suggested that Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, and Dr Slop were inspired by *Peregrine Pickle* — dubbed, for the sake of modesty, 'a modern truly Cervantic performance'.¹⁵ Indeed, the aesthetic of 'the plurality of discourses and traditions that bump up against one another in *Tristram Shandy*', as Thomas Keymer puts it, lies at the core of *Peregrine Pickle*, too.¹⁶ Smollett's indebtedness to the Menippean satire and, anachronistically speaking, his reliance on Bakhtinian polyphony and carnivalesque, also make his second novel a probable source text even for Sterne-as-satirist-oriented critics. The connection has also been recognised at the level of detail: for example, a number of critics have followed the *Critical Review*'s suggestion by relating Uncle Toby to Commodore Trunnion; Robert Folkenflik believes Sterne's idea for 'a romance given name' followed by a 'comic or satirical surname' to have been taken from Smollett;¹⁷ and Keymer underlines parallels in how slap-stick comedy is rendered in an alienating language of 'amused detachment' in both *Peregrine Pickle* and *Tristram Shandy*.¹⁸

Accordingly, the Grand Tour narratives in question reveal affinities both at the general level of satiric and parodic agenda and in their details. They include memorable scenes with a mule (*PP*, 260–62; *TS*, 7.24.612–13); musical catches (*PP*, 181; *TS*, 7.25.613–14); and allusions to Lilliburlero — as John Zomchick and George Rousseau note, 'The pigs that lie with their arses bare' song in *Peregrine Pickle* (250) was normally sung to the tune of Lilliburlero,¹⁹ which of course Tristram's Uncle Toby whistles when confounded (*TS*, 7.40.643). Both works also feature grave tourism — the birthplace and tomb of Rubens in *Peregrine Pickle* (292) and the tomb of the two lovers, Amandus and Amanda, in Lyon in *Tristram Shandy* (7.31.627–29); there is a more extended, parodic reference to the story of the lovers in Smollett's novel, too, with the protagonist's indomitable attempts at

seducing Amanda, the ‘fair Fleming’. There are far too many similarities for them to be coincidental.

In tackling the issue of the arts on the Grand Tour, Sterne and Smollett not only followed their own interests and preoccupations but also responded to a generic necessity, given the central role of aesthetic experience, or — perhaps more appropriately — connoisseurly posturing on the continental tour, and, consequently, the guide-book function of the published account so exemplified by Nugent and Piganiol. The target of satire in this respect is the same: both novels ridicule derivative and formulaic responsiveness to art, which for Smollett becomes an obstacle for the development of true taste and for Sterne diverts attention from what travelling should really be about. In this, they exemplify the wider panorama of developments in mid-eighteenth-century travel writing, among which were the growing numbers of travellers and travel writers from the middling classes who, as Kathrine Turner puts it, often asserted their ‘British individuality, character, and “eccentricity”’,²⁰ and for whom connoisseurly posturing would have been a way of parroting aristocratic grand tourism. While both narratives rely on what might be termed iconoclastic policy, going beyond the artificially ritualistic appreciation of artistic highlights, they nevertheless realise their agendas in opposite ways: by maximising the art content in Smollett’s case, and minimising it in Sterne’s.

Volume 2 of *Peregrine Pickle* sees the protagonist depart on a traditionally educational Grand Tour in the company of Francophile Jolter and servant Pipes. From the outset, that is, the crossing of the channel, the narrative of the tour is endowed with its characteristically Smollettian tinge of the bodily grotesque, often of a very low character. A good example is the character sketch of a cook in Boulogne, modelled, according to Ronald Paulson, on the cook depicted in William Hogarth’s *The Gate of Calais* (1748):²¹

[T]hey were surprized with the appearance of a strange figure, which from the extravagance of its dress and gesticulation, Peregrine mistook for a madman of the growth of France. The phantome (which by the bye, happened to be no other than the cook) was a tall, long-legged, meagre, swarthy fellow, that stooped very much; his cheek-bones were remarkably raised, his nose bent into the shape and size of a powder-horn, and the sockets of his eyes as raw round the edges, as if the skin had been pared off [...]. (*PP*, 180)

The bodily grotesque adds to a wider spectrum of chamber pot comedy, vomiting, fisticuffs and sexual lust, and all sorts of dubious embellishments that Smollett derived from picaresque and ramble fiction; they produce an

ideological and aesthetic tension throughout the novel when juxtaposed with its excessive, or indeed Gargantuan, treatment of the arts.

Smollett's satire of the Grand Tour centres on how this educational ritual was largely defined by the traveller's multidimensional exposure to the arts, from architecture, theatre and music to painting and sculpture. As a result, volume 2 derives its meaning from what I would label 'the architext of art', constituted by the textualised experience of the arts at the time: from the conventional ways of writing and talking about the arts, especially in Grand Tour accounts, to the role of art-related concepts, visible in lexical structures, used to render social practices. Smollett's thematisation of the arts depends on the principle of endless, as it were, multiplication, which adds to the cornucopian poetics of the textual traditions upon which he relied.²² So, apart from typical accounts of picture galleries and monuments visited, performances seen and heard, the novel features the memorable figure of Mr Layman Pallet, the painter, and his companion, the falsely learned Doctor, who quotes Latin and Greek phrases in a manner reminiscent of Fielding's Parson Adams. These two become literal, though parodic, embodiments of the sister arts debate, especially in terms of the argument about the superiority of the image or of the word that was prevalent in eighteenth-century art discourse. The novel also provides a space for serious aesthetic commentary, without the satirical or parodic dimension; for instance, when Peregrine discusses the superiority of the English stage, Smollett foregrounds authentic sentiments concerning the excessively artificial French school of unnatural gestures and poses (*PP*, 242–46). At the textual level, the narrative, as was typical of Smollett, and indeed of Sterne, weaves together moments of adventurous acceleration (as with the comic *qui pro quo* scenes in the dark, practical jokes and sex intrigues) with moments of stasis and narrative suspension, which often adopt a truly powerful pictorial language.

Smollett's pictorialism, tellingly enough, centres on character sketches rather than places worth seeing. These sketches are not only limited to performing the role of Fielding-esque introductions, such as the example of the cook suggests; they also capture fleeting moments of grotesque expression in suspension. The politics of 'looking' on the Tour, something that later travel writing scholars have labelled 'the tourist gaze',²³ concentrates on human evanescence rather than the eternity of art or the stability of landscape framed as a picture, very much in line with the larger picaresque/ramble ideology of instability and constant change. This is how Peregrine discerns 'a certain vulgar audacity in [Mrs Hornbeck's] countenance' (*PP*, 179) as she reveals herself at a window (a typical pictorial framing strategy), which inspires

his seduction plot, or how he sees the painter Pallet, when he struggles to digest his companion's beverage during 'the entertainment in the manner of the ancients': 'he [...] sat like the leaden statue of some river god, with the liquor flowing out at both sides of his mouth' (*PP*, 213). This last example is purposely meta-artistic — the painter of portraits himself becomes a grotesque meta-pictorial portrait (that is, it alludes to a work of art) — a technique of multi-layered handling of the arts that is repeatedly adopted. Another example can be found in the aftermath of the Bastille scene, when Pallet, believing, on Pickle's suggestion, that they are escaping from prison rather than being officially discharged, 'stared like the Gorgon's head, with his mouth wide open, and each particular hair crawling and twining like an animated serpent' (*PP*, 228). Smollett is particularly skilled at rendering facial expressions in stasis, as in the cat-for-rabbit prank, when Peregrine and his companion Pipes suggest to poor Pallet that the rabbit fricassee which he is then enjoying might not be what it seems (but cat meat instead): '[Pallet] instantly suspended the action of his jaws, and with the morsel half chewed in his mouth, stared round him with a certain stolidity of apprehension, which is easier conceived than described' (*PP*, 233).

The strategy of making the painter — a false enthusiast of gallery highlights — the object rather than the subject of the gaze constitutes the core of Smollett's satire on the art of travelling. Layman Pallet has been interpreted as a vehicle for expressing personal antagonism, with Hogarth himself identified as the probable real-life source of inspiration;²⁴ but, just as there are other possibilities for the model,²⁵ so is Pallet's role within the novel considerably more complex than that of a caricature of an extra-textual type. The painter, given the variety of comic scenes that his connoisseurly itinerary creates, is a catalyst for satire targeted at the thoughtless re-enactment of aesthetic experience, which in principle often remains vicarious even if the traveller is no longer an armchair traveller and does indeed approach the artwork.

Volume 7 of *Tristram Shandy*, by contrast, reduces the art content, as if in line with the Sternean policy of meaningful absence and omission.²⁶ This policy is made clear in one of the Paris chapters, when Tristram parodies the representative agenda of travel writing and lists the streets of the capital. He concludes by recommending a walk to 'the four palaces, which you may see either with or without the statues and pictures, just as you chuse' (*TS*, 7.18.602). When, immediately afterwards, Tristram mentions the Louvre, which opened to the public as a royal gallery in 1750 and featured an admirable collection, he deliberately limits his observation to what can be read on the portico, emphasising, as it were, that he was

not tempted inside. Conventional ekphrastic passages are scarce, and purposely nonsensical and poorly written. They feature in the playfully derivative Calais chapter, which closely follows Piganiol's account of the city, including the church of Virgin Mary, the market square and the town hall. The most extensive description is dedicated to the church:

—it is built in form of a cross, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary; the steeple which has a spire to it, is placed in the middle of the church, and stands upon four pillars elegant and light enough, but sufficiently strong at the same time—it is decorated with eleven altars, most of which are rather fine than beautiful. The great altar is a master-piece in its kind; 'tis of white marble, and as I was told near sixty feet high— (*TS*, 7.5.581–82)

Sterne nods towards the standard descriptive patterns of guidebook-like travel writing of the period: the passage mentions forms and shapes, numbers and dimensions, and spatters elements of qualitative evaluation. At the same time, the lexical choices are rather simplistic and the climactic introduction of the 'master-piece' altar purposefully disappoints by not even attempting to substantiate the judgement in any serious manner.

Despite its straightforward renunciation of ekphrastic travel writing, Sterne's narrative does not give up on the importance of aesthetic experience on the continental tour. It reorientates the focus of aesthetic sentiment, from the arts traditionally understood, to the experience of the everyday and the human being as a site of interest and exploration, inviting typically Shandean sexual ambiguities. As Brian Norton aptly puts it, Sterne's writing reveals how, in the mid-eighteenth century, 'it was taken for granted that aesthetic experience could occur in the world beyond art; at the same time, an ever-growing number of artists and writers were experimenting with the possibilities of making art the commonplace'.²⁷ While both Smollett and Sterne expose the 'ordinariness' of art, breaking the façade of connoisseurly elevation it typically evoked, they differ in their views on how to re-envision the aesthetic potential of travelling.

In both cases, the authors' later travel books are more programmatic in this respect. Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy* offers a number of insightful responses to artwork, which shun conventional derivativeness and ritualistic repetition, even if at the cost of evoking controversies. The travelling narrator fashions himself as an uncompromising critic, perfectly capable of transcending standard connoisseurly reactions. In his careful reading of *Travels*, William Gibson persuasively demonstrates that beyond the showy treatment of the Pantheon and the Medici Venus, alluded to in the 'learned Smelfungus' passage in *A Sentimental Journey*, there is a wealth of

historically contextualised analysis, grounded in what the traveller actually saw and could confront with his critical competence, and not necessarily in what he read in post-Addisonian travel accounts.²⁸ In *Travels* Smollett also follows what might be termed a pattern of unmasking, a Yorick-like going ‘through the different disguises’ (*ASJ*, 111). Here they are the disguises of the finished art object, cherished by unperceptive false enthusiasts, which obscure the original contexts and the down-to-earthness of the creative process.

Unmasking as an ideological and formal narrative solution is central to *Peregrine Pickle* in general, with its ridicule of pretentiousness, posturing, falsehood and affectation, and much of the ridiculed posturing is concerned with the experience of the arts. When Pallet arrives at the shrine of his beloved Rubens, he is easily tricked into praising paintings not painted by the Flemish painter, and censuring those that were in fact by him. But, despite his role as the object of satire, there is something of the iconoclastic Smollett of the *Travels* in the fictional painter. A sort of bull in a china shop, cracking the façade of cultural varnish, as it were. One can clearly sense a tinge of narratorial sympathy when Pallet, in exposing his own ignorance, is also ridiculing a Swiss connoisseur at the Palais Royal by parroting and deforming the latter’s opinions:

While they stood considering the pictures in one of the first apartments, which are by no means the most masterly compositions, the Swiss, who sets up for a connoisseur, looking at a certain piece, pronounced the word *magnifique!* with a note of admiration; upon which Mr. Pallet, who was not at all a critick in the French language, replied with great vivacity, ‘*Manufac*, you mean, and a very indifferent piece of manufacture it is; pray gentlemen take notice, there is no keeping in those heads upon the back ground, nor no relief in the principal figure: then you’ll observe the shadings are harsh to the last degree; and come a little closer this way—don’t you perceive that the fore-shortening of that arm is monstrous?—agad, sir! there is an absolute fracture in the limb—doctor, you understand anatomy, don’t you think that muscle evidently misplaced?’

It is indeed a most mute benumbing piece; and the fable shews that the painter was very little honoured by the deity. (*PP*, 204)

Despite being the butt of the joke, Pallet becomes Smollett’s mouthpiece, drawing attention to the ordinariness of the creative process, here considered as manufacture, including the struggles of pictorial representation and the related technical issues of perspective and grouping. The observer’s focus on anatomy in responding to artwork is typical of Smollett, who received medical training, and demonstrates this

knowledge in *Travels*. The concluding double entendre, referring back to the more pleasing moments of the artistic process, would clearly be beyond Pallet's intellectual capacity; instead, it matches the ironic tone of the narratorial figure, who repeatedly resorts to ironic euphemisms when referring to sex.

In *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick's well-known, and ambiguous, articulation of his aims and approach alludes to and develops the gist of the Paris scene in *Tristram Shandy*. He writes:

—But I could wish [...] to spy the *nakedness* of their [i.e., French women's] hearts, and through the different disguises of customs, climates, and religion, find out what is good in them, to fashion my own by—and therefore am I come.

It is for this reason [...] that I have not seen the Palais royal—nor the Luxembourg—nor the Façade of the Louvre—nor have attempted to swell the catalogues we have of pictures, statues, and churches—I conceive every fair being as a temple, and would rather enter in, and see the original drawings and loose sketches hung up in it, that the transfiguration of Raphael itself. (*ASJ*, 111)

Yorick elaborates on Tristram's take on Paris's palaces, including the Louvre, and their galleries, this time tellingly even ignoring the façade of the Louvre, which, as mentioned before, is given some attention in *Tristram Shandy*. Once art as artifice is discarded, art-related concepts become metaphors for authentic interpersonal encounters. The sexual innuendo created by the metaphors of nakedness and entering a temple of the human body would have been particularly to Smollett's Peregrine's taste, but so would the idea of 'original drawings and loose sketches' confronted with final artistic products, the aesthetic value of which is compromised by ritualistic connoisseurly bombast.

In *Tristram Shandy* this programmatic aestheticisation of the everyday as being the core of the art of travelling is given a more playful treatment than in *A Sentimental Journey*, complemented, as it is, with Smollettian undertones and elements of sexual innuendo. Most memorably, perhaps, the metaphor of the temple of the female body is developed into a character sketch of Janatone, the 'only thing' worth seeing in Montreuil:

[*Janatone*] stands so well for a drawing——may I never draw more, or rather may I draw like a draught-horse, by main strength all the days of my life,—if I do not draw her in all her proportions, and with as determin'd a pencil, as if I had her in the wettest drapery.——

—But your worships chuse rather that I give you the length, breadth, and perpendicular height of the great parish church, or a drawing of the fascade of the abbey of Saint Austreberte which has been transported from Artois hither—every thing is just I suppose as the masons and carpenters left them,—and if the belief in Christ continues so long, will be so these fifty years to come—so your worships and reverences, may all measure them at your leisures—but he who measures thee, Janatone, must do it now—thou carriest the principles of change within thy frame; and considering the chances of a transitory life, I would not answer for thee a moment; e'er twice twelve months are pass'd and gone, thou mayest grow out like a pumkin, and lose thy shapes—or, thou mayest go off like a flower, and lose thy beauty—
—nay, thou mayest go off like a hussy—and lose thyself.—I would not answer for my aunt Dinah, was she alive—'faith, scarce for her picture—were it but painted by Reynolds—

—But if I go on with my drawing, after naming that son of Apollo, I'll be shot— (TS, 7.9.589–90)

Beyond its typically Shandean inconclusiveness, this passage is an excellent illustration of Sterne's iconoclastic travelling and the aestheticisation of the everyday, which is grounded, in a critical manner, in prevalent aesthetic theories of the time, including the treatises of Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy and Robert de Piles (*TS Notes*, 457). The varying register and linguistic artistry underline what deserves attention and what does not. When Tristram answers the implied expectations to describe touristy highlights, the language used is significantly de-aestheticised and mundane — much as with the descriptions of Calais monuments — and indicates the nonsensicality of the very idea of describing such things at all: the objects are what they are. At the same time, however, rather than simply embrace the possibilities of literary pictorialism to render the beauty of Janatone, Tristram, in a truly masterly idiom combining sublimity with comic down-to-earthness, rejects imposing an artistic frame of stasis upon his fleeting experience and reflection, which are inseparable from the temporal dimension of what is now and what is to come. The idea of the fleeting sensual experience, often enriched with bawdry, is brought up with frequency throughout, but perhaps most powerfully at the close of the volume, when Tristram is charmed — irrespective of or, perhaps, thanks to 'that cursed slit in [her] petticoat' — by the dancing Nannette: '—*Viva la joia!* was in her lips—*Viva la joia!* was in her eyes. A transient spark of amity shot across the space betwixt us—She look'd amiable!—Why could I not live and end my days thus?' (*TS*, 7.43.650–51).

In *Peregrine Pickle* the satire of the arts in excess accords with Smollett's proto-sentimental ideology of searching for true taste and authentic, unmediated aesthetic experience, which is given a more systematic treatment in *Travels*. Almost halfway through the volume Smollett offers a memorable meta-commentary on the arts when Peregrine, imprisoned in the Bastille, thinks it appropriate to draw a caricature of his accuser on the prison wall:

the youth [was] whistling with great unconcern, and working with his pencil at the bare wall, on which he had delineated a ludicrous figure labelled with the name of the nobleman whom he had affronted, and an English mastiff with his leg lifted up, in the attitude of making water in his shoe. (*PP*, 223–25)

Very much in line with Tristram's short theory of writing and/as galloping (*TS*, 7.4.580), Pickle ridicules the compulsive connoisseurly sketches of things seen, sketches produced by Pallet and his type, who, like Tristram's incorrigible travel writer, 'cannot go quietly through a town, and let it alone' and 'must be turning about and drawing his pen at every kennel he crosses over' (*TS*, 7.4.579–80). In Smollett's novel the experience of art is often equated with posturing, and, conversely, it is only logical that social interactions in general are rendered as arts performed. Even a lexical analysis of volume 2 shows that the word 'art' and its derivatives are often used in the original Latin sense of craft or skill, and in a number of contexts by no means sublime. As a result, the very few uses of 'art' with reference to the arts understood as 'the fine arts' are confronted with such concepts as the art of seduction, the art of gambling, the art of prostitution, the art of cooking, or the art of ogling. The satire against connoisseurs is then part of the larger spectrum of satire against posturing, artifice, and affectation in social interactions. And, just as the reforming agenda behind Smollett's representation of the arts and the Grand Tour concentrates on the possibility of seeing and responding to art without the mediation of critical clichés, it does also concern, in a proto-Sternean manner, the artifice of interpersonal encounters, confined in the comic yet melancholic display of grotesque postures. Sterne in volume 7 of *Tristram Shandy* is in principle concerned with the same barriers to unmediated experience, though he largely gives up on the arts for themselves, and instead adopts the language of the arts to capture the fleeting moments of pleasure that stem from the aestheticised everyday.

The merits of a comparative reading are not dependant on the prerequisite of textual and extra-textual evidence for the so-called influence

of one author on another. As mentioned, the Grand Tour narratives in *Peregrine Pickle* and *Tristram Shandy* share common aesthetic concerns as well as utilising similar scenes and details; in fact, there have been analogical debates surrounding critical approaches to the authors regarding their affinities to satirical and novelistic traditions.²⁹ But even if we explain away the areas of convergence as coincidental reliance on similar points of reference, such as Addison's *Remarks* or Nugent's *Grand Tour*, and on responsiveness to the same literary-historical milieu, the placing of these two 'satyrs against travelling' alongside each other creates a fruitful cognitive tension that comparative literary studies feed on. This tension not only elucidates the two writers' work within the wider context of satirical-novelistic writing in the period, but, given their divergent approaches to the same thematic concern, it also enables a complex perspective on the centrality of aesthetic experience on tour and its fictional representations. In both narratives, the architext of art both generates satire and creates a context for a fictional experiment on how the Grand Tour's inter-artistic preoccupations could be reconfigured.

NOTES

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1 'I have been introduced to one half of their best Goddesses, and in a month more shall be admitted to the shrines of the other half—but I neither worship—or fall (much) upon my knees before them; but on the contrary, have converted many unto Shandeism—for be it known I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont, talk more nonsense than ever you heard me talk in your days—and to all sorts of people', Sterne wrote on 19 March 1762 (*Letters*, 242).

- 2 Robert W. Uphaus, 'Sentiment and Spleen: Travels with Sterne and Smollett', *The Centennial Review*, 15.4 (1971), 406–21.
- 3 Frédéric Ogée, 'Channelling Emotions: Travel and Literary Creation in Smollett and Sterne', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 292 (1991), 42.
- 4 Ian Campbell Ross, 'When Smelfungus Met Yorick: Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne in the South of France, 1763', in *Tobias Smollett, Scotland's First Novelist: New Essays In Memory of Paul-Gabriel Boucé*, ed. by O M Brack, Jr. (Newark, DE: Delaware University Press, 2007), 75.
- 5 Frank Felsenstein, 'After the Peace of Paris: Yorick, Smelfungus and the Seven Years War', in *Guerre et Paix: la Grande Bretagne au XVIII Siècle*, ed. by P.-G. Boucé, 2 vols (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1998), vol. 2, 311–23.
- 6 See William Gibson, *Art and Money in the Writings of Tobias Smollett* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007) and Richard J. Jones, *Tobias Smollett in the Enlightenment: Travels through France, Italy, and Scotland* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011).
- 7 Ross, 'When Smelfungus Met Yorick', 78.
- 8 Carl Thomson, *Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 108–18.
- 9 See Grzegorz Moroz, *Travellers, Novelists and Gentlemen: Constructing Male Narrative Personae in British Travel Books, from the Beginnings to the Second World War* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013), 50; Jakub Lipski, *Re-Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Studies in Reception* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 75–88.
- 10 Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), 203.
- 11 Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, 2nd edition (J. Tonson, 1718), vii.
- 12 Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 15–33.
- 13 Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600–1830* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 14n38.
- 14 Van R. Baker, 'Sterne and Piganiol de la Force: The Making of Volume VII of *Tristram Shandy*', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 13.1 (March 1976), 5.
- 15 *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, vol. 9 (1760), 74.
- 16 Thomas Keymer, 'Sterne and the "New Species of Writing"', in *Tristram Shandy: A Casebook*, ed. by Thomas Keymer (OUP, 2006), 50.

- 17 Robert Folkenflik, 'Tristram Shandy and Eighteenth-Century Narrative', in *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne*, ed. by Thomas Keymer (CUP, 2009), 49; Tim Parnell, 'Sterne's Fiction and the Mid-Century Novel: The "Vast Empire of Biographical Freebooters" and the "Crying Volume"', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by J.A. Downie (OUP, 2016), 267.
- 18 Keymer, 'Sterne and the "New Species of Writing"', 67.
- 19 Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, ed. by John P. Zomchick and George S. Rousseau (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), 710n12. Quotations are taken from this edition, with page numbers cited parenthetically in the text.
- 20 Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750–1800: Authorship, Gender, and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2018, repr. 2001), 1–2.
- 21 Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times*, 2 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), vol. 2, 131.
- 22 Jerry Beasley identified the following textual traditions as constituting *Peregrine Pickle*'s eclectic form: the travel book, the rogue biography (or the picaresque), the whore's tale, the memoir, the romance, the scandal chronicle (or secret history), exemplary biography, and trial narratives. Jerry C. Beasley, *Tobias Smollett: Novelist* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 75.
- 23 See John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Society* (Sage, 1990).
- 24 Ronald Paulson, 'Smollett and Hogarth: The Identity of Pallet', *Studies in English Literature*, 4 (1964), 351–59.
- 25 See Gibson, *Art and Money*, 81–106.
- 26 See M-C. Newbould, "[B]y the knowledge of the great saint *Paraleipomenon*—": Si(g)ns of Omission in Laurence Sterne', *Symbolism*, 22 (2022), 13–32.
- 27 Brian Norton, 'Laurence Sterne and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life', in *Sterne, Tristram, Yorick: Tercentenary Essays on Laurence Sterne*, ed. by Melvyn New, Peter de Voogd and Judith Hawley (Newark, DE: Delaware University Press, 2016), 232.
- 28 Gibson, *Art and Money in the Writings of Tobias Smollett*, 107–36.
- 29 Writing about the genre(s) of *Roderick Random*, John Skinner notes: 'No eighteenth-century author has suffered as much as Smollett from the thrust of twentieth-century novel-centered criticism'; *Constructions of Smollett: A Study of Genre and Gender* (Newark, DE: Delaware University Press, 1996), 32.