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The First Biography of Laurence Sterne: A Correction

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Mary Newbould

Kazimierz Wielki University

Abstract: Dr John Hill is considered to have produced the first biography of Sterne, printed in a magazine in early 1760. This Note re-examines the provenance of this piece, and the role it has played in accounts of Sterne's early reception. In doing so, it encourages a reassessment of the wider significance of newspapers and magazines in constructing that reception history.

Laurence Sterne was the subject of biographical curiosity almost from the moment that he became famous, in early 1760, when the first two volumes of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* created an unexpected sensation in London and beyond the capital, a widely discussed topic in the reception histories. Sterne himself was a keen observer of his own success, which his correspondence from this period testifies. He wrote to several friends and acquaintances describing how, as this talked-about work's known author, his company was sought after by the rich, famous, fashionable, and noble (*LY*, 1–32). He also noted the swell of imitations that leaped on the bandwagon of *Tristram Shandy's* fame. Sterne's own celebrity and that of his book were intertwined from the outset, characterised by amusement and raillery, with hints at the indecency associated with both author and work. It is therefore not surprising that Sterne's personal biography became subject to semi-scandalous gossip concurrently with frenzied reactions to the fictional life of Tristram Shandy. Nor is it surprising that contemporary newspapers and magazines, as the print publications most readily responsive to the swell of public opinion and of fashionable taste, should have provided an outlet for this combination of fact and fiction.

The first biography of Sterne appeared in a magazine in early 1760. Authored by John Hill, who did not know Sterne personally, it is a combination of semi-truthful facts and gossip. Hill immediately positions his biographical sketch in the frivolous vein that should make readers suspicious of the strictness of its veracity, both with his choice of title – ‘*Anecdotes of a fashionable Author*’ – and his opening line: ‘As the chit-chat of the day is the most agreeable of all histories....’.¹

As Sterne himself recorded upon the appearance of Hill’s biographical sketch in a letter written to Stephen Croft in May 1760: ‘The letter in the Ladies Magazine about me, was wrote by the noted Dr. Hill, who wrote the Inspector, and undertakes that magazine—the people of York are very uncharitable to suppose any man so gross a beast as to pen such a character of himself’ (*Letters*, 1:148). He goes on to note a dispute between Hill and a Dr Monsey, the details of which have remained somewhat uncertain (*Letters*, 1:150).

The fact of Hill’s authorship of this sketch of Sterne appears largely to be beyond dispute: ‘There seems no doubt but that the biography is his work’, write Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd, the editors of the Florida edition of Sterne’s correspondence (*Letters*, 1:149). They trace the scholarly trail through the established route to Lewis Perry Curtis’s 1935 edition of the *Letters*, which labels Hill’s biography ‘An indiscreet account of Sterne, itself a proof of the popular curiosity about the author of *Tristram Shandy*’.² Curtis goes on to outline the publication provenance of this piece: it ‘had appeared on the 1st May in the Apr. number of the *Royal Female Magazine*, whence it was copied into “nearly all of the London newspapers”’, citing Wilbur L. Cross’s *Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* (1925). Cross’s *Life*, first published in 1909, in referring to Sterne’s romance with the singer Catherine Fourmantel and to the author’s celebrity, does indeed state that

How Sterne bore himself among the great people whither fate called him away from dear Kitty and what they thought of him, were told in the April number of the *Royal Female Magazine*, issued on the first of May. The account was immediately copied into nearly all of the London newspapers’.³

Cross’s source was probably Percy Fitzgerald’s *Life*; although ‘dissatisfied’ with it (*Letters*, 1:lviii), Cross cites the 1896 *Life of Sterne* in his Preface and elsewhere in the text (he also refers to Sidney Lee’s 1898 account of Sterne’s life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; Lee, however, does not mention Hill’s notice).⁴ Fitzgerald’s *Life of Laurence Sterne* was first

published in 1864, but subsequently reprinted (1896, third edition 1906). In the 1864 *Life*, and in its reprinted versions, Fitzgerald comments that Hill

added to the ranks of the magazines, whose name was already legion, and directed the *Inspector* and *Royal Female Magazine* ... in the *Royal Female Magazine* for May the first, appeared a strange paper—a photograph of the fashionable clergyman—outrageously personal, and laughably flattering, a curious yarn of truth and falsehood commingled. It was copied into the *London Chronicle* and the *London Magazine*...⁵

On the first page of his introduction to the 1906 edition of Fitzgerald's *Life*, Cross speculates that Hill, 'a notorious London quack-doctor ... must have interviewed Sterne's friends in town for anecdotes half-fact and half-fiction'.⁶ Lewis Melville reiterates the identification of Hill as Sterne's first biographer, and the location of his piece in the *Royal Female Magazine*, in his 1912 *Life and Letters of Laurence Sterne*.⁷

Alan B. Howes cites Cross's 1904 *Works* in identifying *The Royal Female Magazine* as the source, with a headnote clarifying that 'Since [Hill] did not know Sterne personally, there are inaccuracies in his account, which was copied by most of the London newspapers'.⁸ Howes is typically used as the go-to bible for primary sources for the earliest reactions to Sterne, especially those printed in periodicals, newspapers, and magazines. An invaluable scholarly resource, the anthology inevitably has drawbacks in its selection and abridgement of material, and in the scope of resources on which it draws: ongoing digitisation projects and the new scholarly work that they help to generate have immeasurably widened the potential remit for investigating Sterne's presence in the press since Howes's 1974 volume appeared.⁹ In fact, Cross's 1904 *Works* cites the version of Hill's biography reprinted in the *London Chronicle* as its source, and not the initial magazine publication.¹⁰ In following Cross by reprinting the *London Chronicle* piece and not the original magazine item, Howes also lightly muddies the trail of provenance. Given the rapid production rates of the press in this period, with the to-and-fro of borrowing between publications rife, alterations between reprintings were inevitably introduced, no matter how slight. The 'first' biography of Sterne, when represented by its newspaper version, is not even quite the first.

Arthur H. Cash, widely reputed as Sterne's most authoritative modern biographer, similarly echoes how 'Dr Hill's account was published originally in a newspaper which he himself had recently started, the *Royal Female Magazine*, 1 May 1760, where it might have been forgotten were it not picked up and reprinted in the *London Chronicle*, 3–6 May' (*LY*,

20). Newspapers and magazines are confusingly merged here. Ian Campbell Ross repeats the same thing, although without naming Hill, in his own *Life of Sterne*.¹¹ Cash's assertion seems to be behind the note in the Florida edition of Sterne's letter to Croft, which mentions the Hill biography: after citing Curtis, the editors track the publication route of this sketch from 'the *Royal Female Magazine* on May 1, subsequently reprinted in the *London Chronicle* for May 3–6, after which it had very wide circulation'. They go on to confirm Cash's claim by stating that 'The magazine was conducted by John Hill (1714–1775), an actor, amateur scientist, dubious medical practitioner, and, above all else, a literary hack writer, in which capacity, writing daily for the *London Advertiser and Literary Gazette* from 1751 to 1753, he had achieved some enduring fame as the "Inspector"' (*Letters*, 1:149n2).

Outside of Sterne-specific scholarship, the most recent biography of Hill himself, G. S. Rousseau's *The Notorious Sir John Hill* (2012), similarly asserts that the *Royal Female Magazine* provided the outlet for Hill's biography of Sterne.¹² Rousseau also retails Hill's scurrilous insinuations about Yorick, 'the lascivious parson, who may be Tristram's father in Sterne's convoluted plot, having conducted a secret dalliance with Elizabeth Shandy, Tristram's mother', and describes how Hill 'weaves a web around Yorick's carnal affliction' – leaving these suggestions largely unchallenged or unquestioned.

These supposed facts are repeated almost everywhere that Hill's biography is mentioned.¹³ However, if we revisit what Sterne writes in his letter to Croft, it is immediately striking that he does not name the *Royal Female Magazine* at all; instead, he locates the suspicious 'character' in 'the Ladies Magazine' – the publication mentioned in the title under which this piece was printed in the issue of the *London Chronicle* for Saturday 3 to Tuesday 6 May: '*Anecdotes of a fashionable Author, in a Letter to the Ladies Magazine*' (Figures 1–4). Sterne's own words can indeed be taken at face value, as Hill's biography appeared in the April 1760 issue of the *Lady's Magazine*, advertised as '*This Day is publish'd*' in newspapers on 1 May, and not in the *Royal Female Magazine* in May 1760. It was printed under a different title to the version used in the *London Chronicle* and subsequently: '*Anecdotes of a Fashionable Author, in a Letter to Mrs. Stanhope*', as opposed to the later '*Anecdotes of a fashionable Author, in a Letter to the Ladies Magazine*'.¹⁴ It is also worth noting that despite the repeated claim that 'all of the London newspapers' reprinted Hill's piece, apart from the most frequently cited *London Chronicle* version, the only other example I have found so far is from the *Newcastle General Magazine*, which reproduced the *London Chronicle*'s title and text in its issue for May 1760.¹⁵ (There may, of course, be others.)

Hill's biography is nowhere to be found among the pages of the *Royal Female Magazine* for April or May 1760 — the only Sterne-related item in those two issues are reviews of John Hall-Stevenson's *Two Lyric Epistles* in April and of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* in May¹⁶ — nor did Hill conduct the magazine (the editor was 'Charles Honeycomb, Esq.', i.e. Robert Lloyd). Sterne's somewhat confusing syntax may be responsible for implying a proprietorship link that did not, in fact, exist: in his statement 'The Letter in the Ladies Magazine about me, was wrote by the noted Dr. Hill, who wrote the Inspector, and undertakes that magazine', as the Florida notes suggest 'the Inspector' most obviously indicates the pseudonym Hill adopted in his column for the *London Daily Advertiser and Literary Gazette* from 5 March 1751 onwards.¹⁷ However, 'that magazine' could also apply to *The Inspector*, the volumes of Hill's 'Inspector' columns published by Ralph Griffith and others in 1753, which Sterne might loosely associate as being Hill's 'magazine' — as, in fact, Fitzgerald suggested in 1864 while he simultaneously identifies Hill as the director of the *Royal Female Magazine*.

As for the title in which Hill's piece did appear, the *Lady's Magazine* was not, as Cash states, a newspaper, nor was it 'started' by Dr John Hill: it was a magazine published between 1759 and 1763 under the probably fictitious 'Honourable Mrs Caroline Amelia Stanhope', who intended it to be 'a magazine by and for women'.¹⁸ This *Lady's Magazine* is not to be confused with the perhaps more famous *Lady's Magazine* published from 1770–1832, which has been the recent subject of a digitisation project hosted by Eighteenth Century Journals (Adam Matthew Digital) and of a fine monograph by Jennie Batchelor; the later *Lady's Magazine* will be familiar to Sterneans, as it carried a serialised part-imitation of Sterne entitled 'A Sentimental Journey, by a Lady' from 1770–77, discussed by Paul Goring in *The Shandean* in 2020.¹⁹ The identity of Caroline Stanhope has caused some speculation; she may have been a fabrication. Some, following a claim made by Thomas Percy, suggest that this was a pseudonym used by Oliver Goldsmith, who therefore ran the magazine, although the evidence on which the connection is based is rather tenuous.²⁰ Batchelor notes that while Goldsmith contributed to the earlier *Lady's Magazine* and was at one point its editor, this identification is 'somewhat [misleading]'.²¹ It may be seen as reflective of an impulse to involve men (especially famous authors) in the production of publications within a domain where women firmly asserted themselves. Kathryn Shevelow, meanwhile, considers but does not affirm the possibility that Caroline Stanhope was the wife of Charles Stanhope, future founder of the *New Lady's Magazine* (1786–95).²² These attempts at identification indicate a sometimes unhelpful thirst for attribution in a form of publication where anonymity and

pseudonymity purposely thrived. Although Batchelor does not speculate further about the fictionality, or otherwise, of Stanhope she nevertheless asserts the significance of such an ‘official figurehead’, with a female nomenclature, in the production of this title, in a broader context where magazine publications were far more than the frivolous or negatively ‘feminised’ minor entertainments that they have sometimes been caricatured to be.²³ To combat dismissal by contemporary readers as being superficially lightweight, Stanhope aligned her *Lady’s Magazine* with admired examples of ‘Female Genius’, citing as reference-points Charlotte Lennox and Elizabeth Carter, among others; a letter on the topic of female education, addressed to Stanhope and probably by Lennox, was published in the October 1759 issue.²⁴ The April 1760 issue alone, in which the Sterne biographical sketch appears, carried serious essays on women’s history, the theatre, parenting, religion, and botany; a fragmentary epistolary fiction; a musical score for lyrics lamenting the death of General Wolfe; illustrated plates; and poems sent in by contributors. As one among them notes in addressing Mrs Stanhope, ‘the laudable design of your work, and the good sense with which it is conducted’ made it an attractive place to publish new work.²⁵

Whatever the identity or existence of this figure, Stanhope is named as the proprietor-editor of the *Lady’s Magazine* in the numerous newspaper advertisements for the title published throughout this period – which also confirm, in the list of contents they typically provide for magazines, that it is this publication which first published ‘Anecdotes of a fashionable author’. The *Public Ledger* of 1 May 1760, for instance, advertises the *Lady’s Magazine* as the title that carries this piece (Figure 5); perhaps the proximity of this notice to advertisements in the same column for the *Royal Female Magazine* and for the similarly titled *Royal Magazine* led to the original confusion between magazine titles in locating Hill’s biography in a curious instance of eye-skip.²⁶ The *Public Ledger* of 3 May similarly juxtaposes advertisements for the *Royal Female Magazine* and *Lady’s Magazine* in adjacent columns.²⁷

The significance of women as readers and consumers of Sterne’s work, and as active participants in his critical reception – not least through the production and circulation of *Sterneana* – has been sorely neglected.²⁸ The history of Sterne’s biography has been almost exclusively male-dominated, save for the role played by his daughter Lydia in curating his posthumous correspondence and its publication – typically in a negative way, on account of her partial censorship of her father’s letters (*Letters*, 1:xlix–l), although arguably she saved them from a more irredeemable fate given the rapidity with which plagiarists and opportunists sought to capitalise on Sterne’s death after 1768. As far as Hill’s biography is

concerned, the connection with Mrs Stanhope has so far gone unnoticed, probably because the *London Chronicle* version (which uses a different title) seems to have been scholars' primary source. Identifying whoever Mrs Stanhope was as Hill's addressee adds clarity, and opens up new interpretive possibilities. For one, it might explain Hill's seeming delicacy in discussing Sterne's innuendo concerning Richard Mead, *Tristram Shandy's* 'Kunastrokius', 'which I don't know how to write to a lady', Hill says.²⁹ The assumption, perhaps, has been that the 'lady' in question was the generic addressee of the *Lady's Magazine* (or the *Royal Female Magazine*, depending on which assumption one makes). Hill's claim could have been ironic, which the identification of Stanhope as Goldsmith might support; but, if we follow Batchelor's analysis of Stanhope's *Lady's Magazine*, it suggests reasons why Hill might have exercised delicacy in addressing his contribution to a female 'figurehead' who clearly stated her elevated aspirations for the refinement of her magazine.

The well-recorded mixture of real and fictional personae perpetuated by Sterne himself and by his readers and critics has no doubt also added to some of the confusion. Hill's biography repeatedly calls Sterne 'Yorick'. He asks:

Who has not read the life of Tristram Shandy, the most eloquent of unborn babes, the favourite of Fame and Fortune? The discourse, where I was, turned not upon the book, but the man ... We long to know something of the man, whose exploits astonish, or whose wit has charmed us: ... who will grudge five minutes and a half to know something of poor Yorick.³⁰

Hill perhaps drew off an already circulating tendency to elide these identities perpetuated in the press. The *Gentleman's Magazine* was the first to reprint *Tristram Shandy's* portrait of Yorick in January 1760 – an excerpt that was, in fact, more widely circulated than Hill's biography in competitor titles, including the *London Chronicle* in February 1760 (*LY*, 21). The headnote to the excerpt, '*Specimen of the Work ... [which] is by some supposed to be the Character of the Author, as he himself chuses it should be exhibited*', made current the idea that Sterne and Yorick were one and the same, while also hinting at the disapproval of Sterne's exhibitionism that was to plague him.³¹ Given that we know Sterne read the papers, and would doubtless have scoured the columns for news of himself during his London trip from March to May 1760, the popularity of the correlation could not have escaped him. And, as advertisements for Sterne's own sermons under the Yorick pseudonym began to appear

from mid-April, it is not a wild speculation to wonder whether such press publications encouraged him to play further on this choice of ‘Character’.

These reprinted excerpts are already familiar; it is worth adding, though, that the Yorick portrait also appeared in the first issue of the *Royal Female Magazine* in February 1760 under the title ‘The History of YORICK, a Descendant of HAMLET’S celebrated Jester’ (Figure 6). The headnote is more expansive than that found in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* and elsewhere, and adds a different colouration to the passage presented to the public:

The consequences of indiscretion, and the licentious indulgence of satirical wit, are so humorously and affectingly displayed in this story, that it affords a most entertaining and useful lesson for the government of that unlucky faculty.

It is taken from a new work, called THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, of which no character can give so just a notion, as this extract; as it affects (and not unsuccessfully) to please, by a contempt of all the rules observed in other writings, and therefore cannot justly have its merit measured by them. It were to be wished though, that the wantonness of the author’s wit had been tempered with a little more regard to delicacy, throughout the greatest part of his work.

The *Royal Female Magazine* does not meld together Yorick’s and Sterne’s biographical ‘character’, as other reprintings of the extract do, but instead projects the critical commentary on *Tristram Shandy* that was to emerge during 1760, although the charge of indecency – ‘wantonness’, a lack of ‘delicacy’ – was yet to become fully embedded in the critical discourse; it did not appear in the assessment of Sterne’s first two volumes found either in William Kenrick’s *Monthly Review* or in the *Critical Review*, for instance, which focus on Sterne’s humour and wit (if ‘immoderate’, according to Kenrick).³² Howes’s volume includes a few lines from the *Royal Female Magazine*’s headnote, although he does not mention the Yorick character portrait that follows;³³ it is nonetheless worth reinforcing how creative and critical commentary were intermingled in Sterne’s early reception, in which his own quixotic authorial persona was mixed.

Indeed, an additional element to observe here is that, according to Sterne, ‘the people of York’ assumed he had written this ‘character of himself’. This local opinion may have been relayed to Sterne by Croft or by another correspondent; but whatever the source or nature of Yorkshire gossip, Sterne’s mention of it nonetheless adds to the narrative of his early reception as being enacted partly through word-of-mouth – a circulation of responses that

was most often perpetuated through private correspondence, conversation, and the contemporary press – a quality also underlying the anecdotal, gossipy quality of Hill’s biographical sketch.

The correction to the record, in identifying the *Lady’s Magazine* as the original source for Hill’s biography, is fairly small, but nonetheless holds implications for how some of the materials that are vital to forming a picture of Sterne’s early (and later) reception may have been approached in the past, and how we might want to approach them now. There are two main conclusions to draw here.

Firstly, perhaps we need to rethink the role Hill’s piece has played in Sterne’s reception history – and, conversely, the more diminished part given to other, similar-type pieces. The generic identity and publication venue of Hill’s piece, self-styled as chit-chat but (in Cash’s words) harmless and ‘amusingly written’ (*LY*, 21), if placed within the wider subgenre of anecdotes and gossip columns as found in numerous newspapers and magazines during this period, might make us question quite how far this can legitimately be called a ‘biography’ of Sterne at all. On the other hand, the newspapers and magazines carried numerous biographical notices about Sterne in the years of his fame and in the decades following his death, such as the *Sentimental Magazine* of January 1774 – which in fact borrows heavily from Hill’s piece before expanding with flourishes of its own.³⁴ Why not classify these anecdotal histories alongside Hill’s, rather than dismissing them as frivolous ephemera? Perhaps because Hill’s piece has been given an elevated status based on primacy, or because it was produced in Sterne’s lifetime (despite their lack of acquaintance) and was recorded in his correspondence.

We should take more seriously Hill’s own admission that he is contributing to ‘the chit chat of the day’ as a telling affirmation of the intentionally tongue-in-cheek credentials of his piece. It is both comically amusing and polite, adapted to the decorous context of Caroline Stanhope’s magazine, but also resonating with the froth of daily gossip, while engaging with the creative potential (including for humour) that both magazine publications and anecdotal biographies provided. In fact, Curtis’s alignment of Hill’s piece with ‘many scurrilous anecdotes’ inadvertently indicates its hybrid nature.³⁵ It presents as a perhaps politer version of the gossip columns found in publications such as the *Town and Country Magazine*, which printed its notorious ‘Tête-à-Tête’ scandal stories from the late 1760s onwards. Indeed, the *Independent Chronicle* carried a gossip column entitled ‘Chit-Chat of the Day: Or, Polite Small-Talk’ over several issues from late 1769 to 1770, suggesting the currency of the phrase

in this context – it appears numerous times in similar, anecdotal scenarios in the newspapers during the ensuing decades.

Rather than being a singular, monumental marker initiating the history of Sternean biography, which created such a stir that it had a ‘very wide circulation’ (*Letters*, 1:149) and was reprinted multiple times elsewhere, or rather than acting as a ‘rare’ example of an ‘extended’ biographical notice,³⁶ the nature and publication of Hill’s piece situates this more as an example of Shandean Sterneana than of biographical seriousness, one which capitalises on the moment of fame, using the magazine publication route readily adopted by many immediate readers of *Tristram Shandy* and observers of Sterne’s ‘fashionable’ celebrity. This suggestion is further consolidated if we look, as the Florida editors suggest we might, towards Hill’s wider output, which tended towards the satirical and the parodic. If we add Hill’s *Letters to a Lady* (1752) to the list, with their gently eroticised content, then a new slant can be perceived in Hill’s intentions in choosing Sterne as his subject in this new piece addressed to a lady, which teeters between decorousness and suggestive humour. In other words, perhaps we have been somewhat misreading the nature and status of Hill’s piece, isolating it to assert its significance within an existing narrative of Sterne’s reception. Instead, Hill’s piece is fairly typical of the humorous pseudo-biographies of the time, and not the only example of its kind either in Sterne’s reception history or in eighteenth-century press publications.

The second, equally significant conclusion to draw from this small correction expands well beyond this particular item itself. Newspapers and magazines have typically been relegated to a more minor role in accounts of Sterne’s reception, used as ancillaries to the supposedly meatier substance found in books and even pamphlets, classed as ‘ephemeral’, of lesser status than other printed or manuscript materials. Current scholarly work in this field is now enabling this material to reassert the cultural significance it has not always been granted, to grasp more fully the world in which the authors and creators in whom we are interested themselves circulated, as did their works. The Sterne-related information these print publications carry is far more extensive and complex than has properly been accounted for, and what may seem like trivial details accumulate to create a more comprehensive (and perhaps different) picture of the world in which Sterne, his works, and reactions to both (including Sterneana) revolved and evolved. Newspapers, periodicals, and magazines, in distinct but related ways, are the pulsating veins of eighteenth-century life, responding to each new beat with rapidity and immediacy, and as such they deserve a more careful assessment in earning their place in the history of Sterne’s reception.

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Notes

1 Fuller bibliographical references are given in the discussion that follows.

2 Lewis Perry Curtis, *Letters of Laurence Sterne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935; repr. 1967), 111n2.

3 Wilbur L. Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 204.

4 Cross, *Life*, viii, 114. Sidney Lee, 'Laurence Sterne', *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 54 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898). Cross reprinted the new edition of Fitzgerald's *Life* published in 1896 as volumes 11 and 12 of his 12-volume *Works and Life of Laurence Sterne* (New York: J. F. Taylor, 1904).

5 Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of Laurence Sterne*, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1864), vol. 2, 43–44; 3rd edn (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), 149. I cannot find any evidence to back up the claim that Hill's piece was reprinted in the *London Magazine*.

6 Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of Laurence Sterne; With an Introduction by Wilbur L. Cross* (New York: J. F. Taylor, 1906), xi. The *Royal Female Magazine* claim appears on pages 240–1..

7 Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of Laurence Sterne* (New York: Appleton, 1912), 229.

8 Alan B. Howes, *The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 73.

9 Among Sterne-related digital resources, Laurence Sterne and Sterneana, co-created by Mary Newbould and Helen Williams and hosted by Cambridge Digital Library, and funded by an AHRC grant, offers digital editions of Sterne's works published in his lifetime and an extensive selection of Sterneana, principally held in the Oates Collection at Cambridge University Library; <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/sterne/1>. *Networks of Reception in Eighteenth-Century Newspapers and Magazines: Laurence Sterne*, a project co-funded by the Polish National Science Centre (NCN) and a Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant, explores the presence of Sterne and of Sterneana in eighteenth-century newspapers and magazines in Britain, France, Poland, and Germany. Hosted by Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland, from 2022–24, the project's collaborators, Mary Newbould and Jakub Lipski, have devised a digital platform explaining the project's objectives;

<https://www.ukw.edu.pl/jednostka/sternews>.

10 Cross, *Works*, 6:33.

11 Ian Campbell Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, repr. 2002), 6; also see the relevant note (433n11).

12 G. S. Rousseau, *The Notorious Sir John Hill: The Man Destroyed by Ambition in the Era of Celebrity* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2012), 252.

13 For instance, René Bosch, *Labyrinth of Digressions*, 119–20n75, citing Howes; Melvyn New, 'Sterne, Warburton, and the Burden of Exuberant Wit', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15, no. 3 (1982): 245–74 (251n17); Thomas Keymer, 'Small Particles of Fame', in *Sterne, Tristram, Yorick: Tercentenary Essays on Laurence Sterne*, eds Melvyn New, Peter de Voogd, and Judith Hawley (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2016), 19–20, citing Howes, Rousseau, and Ross. See also David Thomson, *Wild Excursions: The Life and Fiction of Laurence Sterne* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), which claims that this was 'a ragbag of stories and half-truths' and that 'Sterne disliked the article' (24); see also 183.

14 Harvard's Houghton Library holds the relevant, complete issues: only incomplete issues are held at the British Library and the Bodleian Library, on which the ECCO versions are based. I am grateful to Harvard for reproducing the relevant images for me to be able to pursue this line of enquiry.

15 *Newcastle General Magazine*, May 1760, 265–69.

16 *Royal Female Magazine*, April 1760, 185; *Royal Female Magazine*, May 1760, 238.

17 Barry O'Connor, 'Hill, Sir John [pseud. the Inspector] (bap. 1714, d. 1775), physician and actor', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, published 23 Sep. 2004; accessed 12 April 2024, <https://www-oxforddnb->

com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13281.

18 Jennie Batchelor, *The 'Lady's Magazine' (1770-1832) and the Making of Literary History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 39.

19 Paul Goring, 'The Evolution of "A Sentimental Journey, by a Lady" in *The Lady's Magazine*', *The Shandean* 31 (2020), 67–100.

20 John Ginger, *The Notable Man : The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith* (London: Hamilton, 1977), 149; Rosalind Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer, and Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 64–5. I am grateful to Paul Goring for his tips here.

21 Batchelor, *The 'Lady's Magazine'*, 39.

22 Kathryn Shevelow, "'C-- L—" to "Mrs. Stanhope": A Preview of Charlotte Lennox's *The Lady's Museum*', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 1, no. 1 (1982): 83.

23 Batchelor, *The 'Lady's Magazine'*, 39.

24 Batchelor, *The 'Lady's Magazine'*, 40; Shevelow, "'C-- L—" to "Mrs. Stanhope"', 83–6. See also advertisements for the magazine, which promote similar aspirations towards joining emulating 'Female Genius', such as printed in *Sussex Advertiser* 690, Monday, 17 September 1759, 2, and *Leeds Intelligencer* 6, 282, Tuesday, 18 September 1759, 5.

25 *Lady's Magazine*, April 1760, 352.

26 *Public Ledger* 95, Thursday, 1 May 1760, 3.

27 *Public Ledger* 97, Saturday, 3 May 1760, 3.

28 See Helen Williams, 'Laurence Sterne and Women's Writing: Elizabeth Bonhôte, Jane Harvey, Jane Timbury, and Miss Street', 'Adaptation and Digitization in the Long Eighteenth Century: Sterneana and Beyond', ed. M-C. Newbould and Helen Williams, special feature, *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 28 (2022), 44–62.

29 Rousseau, *The Notorious Sir John Hill*, 252.

30 *The Lady's Magazine*, April 1760, 337. Reprinted, with minor variations, in *London Chronicle* 524, 3–6 May, 1760, 434–45; *Newcastle General Magazine, 1748-1760*, May 1760, 265–69.

31 *London Chronicle* 485, 2–5 February 1760, 124–25. The claim is repeated in the notice of the *London Chronicle* item printed in the *Public Ledger* 22, Wednesday, 6 February 1760, 4. The item is advertised in the *Public Advertiser* 22, 26 February, *Public Ledger* 23, 27, 29 February, 1, 3 March; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 23–26 February, 28 February–1 March, 4–6 March; *London Evening Post*, 26–28 February, 1–4 March.

32 [William Kenrick], *Monthly Review* 21, December 1759 (appendix; January 1760), 56–71; *Critical Review* 9, January 1760, 73–74.

33 Howes, *Critical Heritage*, 53.

34 *Sentimental Magazine*, January 1774, 4–7; *Sentimental Magazine*, November 1775, 493–95; *Sentimental Magazine*, December 1776, 556.

35 Curtis, *Letters*, 111n2.

36 Cross, *Life and Times*, 204.