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“The Irish References in Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*”

By Dr. David Clare

Laurence Sterne has always occupied an uncertain place within the Irish literary canon. Important commentators have consistently denied that his work is, in any significant way, Irish. Referring to the fact that the Tipperary-born Sterne was the son of an English soldier stationed in Ireland, Arthur Clery famously stated that “To call Sterne an Irishman is the mere pedantry of birth administration”.¹ W.B. Yeats contended that Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* should not be included in a canon of “national Irish literature” because it fails to reflect the nation’s “Celtic” traditions and character.² Seminal surveys of Irish literature, including Declan Kiberd’s *Irish Classics* (2000), Norman Vance’s *Irish Literature: A Social History* (1999), and Joep Leerssen’s *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael* (1986), do not mention Sterne at all, even in passing, and, although Derek Hand writes incisively about Sterne in his study, *A History of the Irish Novel* (2011), he makes the unnecessarily extreme (and untrue) caveat that Sterne placed “no emphasis on his Irish roots whatsoever”.³

When the occasional commentator does attempt to reclaim Sterne for Ireland, they often fail to use rigorous, textual demonstration, and instead focus on the thematic and stylistic similarities that he shares with other Irish writers. They link Sterne’s work to that of his hero, Jonathan Swift,⁴ and discuss the profound impact that Sterne had on

important twentieth-century Irish writers, including James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Flann O'Brien.⁵

A. Norman Jeffares, Terry Eagleton and Vivien Mercier provide additional, curiously abstract, evidence for Sterne's Irishness. Jeffares suggests that "what [Sterne]... gained from growing up in Ireland was the common heritage of many Anglo-Irish writers; genteel poverty, rich relations, and talk as the cheapest means of entertainment". He finds the biggest evidence of Sterne's Irishness in his tendency to engage in "mock-seriousness [and] serious mockery".⁶ Eagleton echoes this observation and suggests that other Irish aspects of Sterne's work include "the carnivalesque comedy, the twisting of linear narrative, the satirical wit and black humour, [as well as] the mixture of the comic and the melancholic."⁷ Eagleton's frequent contention that Sterne's anarchic approach to form is Irish mirrors Mercier's argument that a key "Irish" aspect of Sterne's writing is the fact that he "approached" the novel "as if it were a game", much as "Wilde did ... the drama" and Berkeley did with philosophy.⁸

Such critics too frequently ignore the actual, concrete references to Ireland in Sterne's fiction and life writing – and there are many more than is generally realized. In Shaun Regan's critique of Eagleton's work on the 'Irish' Sterne, he writes that Eagleton's case is based on "largely unsubstantiated... comparisons and generalisations" which rely on "suggestion, alignment, and repetition – that is ... rhetoric – rather than evidence or textual demonstration";⁹ unfortunately, this same criticism could be levelled at most of the attempts by critics to claim Sterne for the land of his birth. This essay challenges this prevailing tendency towards abstraction by examining the numerous, explicit references to Ireland and Irishness in Sterne's most famous work, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram*

Shandy, Gentleman (published between 1759 and 1767). Such an undertaking reveals that Ireland was much more important to Sterne than has traditionally been credited.

Before exploring the Irish references in *Tristram Shandy*, it is important to briefly examine Sterne's Irish background. Despite my misgivings about the 'metaphysical' cases for Sterne's Irishness made by Jeffares, Mercier, and Eagleton, they are right to combat the traditional – and erroneous – assertion that Sterne was unequivocally English and that calling him Irish is no different to calling writers like the Indian-born Thackeray or Kipling 'Indian'. Sterne's father may have been a Yorkshire-born soldier in the British Army, but he actually had a significant network of relatives in Ireland, including a cousin called Robert Sterne, with whom the Sternes lived for a year during Laurence's childhood, and another called John Sterne, a friend of Swift who – interestingly for our purposes – served as the Rector of *Trim* ('Trim' being the nickname of a famous Sterne character, and one who will be discussed in detail later in this essay).¹⁰ Similarly, Laurence's mother may have been born in Flanders but she was in fact Anglo-Irish and lived for much of her life in Ireland. Laurence himself was born in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary in 1713 while his father was stationed there. Being tied to a regiment, the Sternes lived all over Ireland, changing towns every time the regiment was moved to a new location. Other than a three-year stint in a Dublin townhouse, the Sternes never lived anywhere for more than a year between Laurence's birth and his departure for boarding school in England a few months shy of his eleventh birthday. Besides Clonmel and Dublin, the Sternes also lived in Wicklow Town; Annamoe, Co. Wicklow; Drogheda, Co. Louth; Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath; Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim; and Derry City. (It

seems that Laurence was sent to boarding school shortly before the family's arrival in Derry.)

As an adult, Sterne was perfectly ready to acknowledge his Irish background. In the brief memoir that he wrote for his daughter, Lydia, he describes his family's movements around Ireland during his childhood, and even recounts the celebrity he gained in Co. Wicklow for having survived a fall through a mill-race. He also mentions that his mother's family probably still lives in Clonmel.¹¹ In a letter from 1760, Sterne discusses his Irish background with a friend, Stephen Croft, asserting that he was born at Clonmel and not Dublin, as was widely believed.¹² Likewise, in a letter from 1765, Sterne aggressively refutes the accusation that he had insulted the Irish guests at a party in Bath. He insists that this is impossible, because "I am myself of their own country".¹³ In addition to giving details regarding his Irish background, Sterne proceeds to generously praise each Irish man and woman present at the gathering, including Francis Burton of Buncraggy, Co. Clare; Lady Lepell Phipps of New Ross, Co. Wexford; Letitia Gore of Lissadell, Co. Sligo; Elizabeth Vesey (with whom Sterne later conducted a flirtation by post) of Willbrook, Co. Westmeath;¹⁴ Lady Barrymore of Cashel, Co. Tipperary; and a Mrs. Moore (probably) from Limerick. He even refers to these people as "my Irish friends".¹⁵

Asserting that Sterne saw himself as (on some level) Irish is not to deny the English aspects of his identity. In addition to the fact that Sterne lived entirely in England from the age of ten, it must also be pointed out that the regiment that the Sterne family accompanied made three extended sojourns to England during Laurence's first six years. These trips mean that Sterne spent about two of those first ten 'Irish' years in England.

Likewise, I am not seeking to distort or oversimplify the Irish aspects of Sterne's biography in a way that is misleading, as Eagleton does when he calls Sterne a "Tipperary author".¹⁶ (Sterne's immediate family only remained in Tipperary for six months after Laurence's birth.) I am instead arguing that, in Sterne's greatest work, *Tristram Shandy*, there are repeated and important references to Ireland, and that these references are central to any true understanding of Sterne's hybrid (English *and* Irish) identity.

This essay is not the first to enumerate the Irish references in *Tristram Shandy*. The Victorian, Louth-born critic Percy Fitzgerald was the first to analyse the novel's major references to Ireland, but, ultimately, he did not assess them in great depth. By far the most comprehensive study of the Irish aspects of *Tristram Shandy* is a 2003 article in the *Irish Studies Review* by Joan Meyler, in which (with near-Shandean extravagance) she heroically attempts to prove that Laurence Sterne intended the entire novel to be read as "an allegory of the history of Ireland" – the novel is, Meyler argues, an account of "the conception and birth of Ireland" and a meditation on Irish sectarian strife and English subjugation of the country.¹⁷ While Meyler's overall argument is ultimately unconvincing – she goes so far as to suggest that Tristram's body is an "anthromorphised map of Ireland" and that Tristram's grandfather's mutilated nose is in the shape of a shamrock¹⁸ – she does incisively discuss some of the more important Irish references in the novel. In engaging with *Tristram Shandy*, I will expand upon Meyler's reading of these references; I will also tease out a few of Fitzgerald's compelling observations regarding Irishness in the novel, and point out Irish aspects of the work that critics have previously ignored.

Tristram Shandy's most obvious engagements with Ireland are Uncle Toby's repeated whistling of the Orange song, "Lillabullero", and Toby and Trim's recounting of their participation in the Siege – or, more accurately *Sieges* – of Limerick of 1690-1691. The song "Lillabullero", which is still a vitally important "protestant triumphalist anthem"¹⁹ in Ulster Loyalist circles, mocks Irish Catholic expectations of future victory/influence over Irish Protestants. As Brendan Behan and Breandán Ó Buchalla have pointed out, the refrain to "Lillabullero" is not meaningless "gibberish", as many have surmised. Behan explains that:

At the time of the Siege [of Derry] in 1689, the Apprentice [Boys]... were Irish-speaking and, defending the Dutch William, their symbol was the Orange lily. The meaning of 'Lillibulero bullenala' is simply *An lile ba léie é – ba linn an lá* – 'the lily was triumphant – we won the day!' ²⁰

Uncle Toby's seemingly innocuous whistling of the song throughout the novel is of greater significance than is often acknowledged. As Meyler points out, it is Sterne's criticism of the way that "the eloquence of Milton in the 1640s, expended on doctrinaire religious points and parodied in 'Slawkenbergius's Tale', resulted in the demonization of Catholics in the minds of a great number of otherwise kind-hearted but unreflective Englishmen, like Uncle Toby".²¹ Early in his career as an Anglican clergyman, Sterne (under the influence of his uncle Jaques and out of Protestant fear of Jacobite rebellion) preached anti-Catholic sermons. By the time he wrote *Tristram Shandy*, however, he was a committed advocate for "tolerance"²² between people of different viewpoints. As such, he incorporated an anti-Catholic sermon that he preached in 1750 into the novel; this time, however (as Christina Lupton and Carol Stewart argue) Sterne used the sermon for

a much more “playful”²³ purpose than that for which it was originally intended. In the novel, the sermon is ascribed to Parson Yorick and is read aloud by Corporal Trim, after it falls out of a book (tellingly) on fortifications. While Sterne, at the time he wrote *Tristram Shandy*, still believed many of the theological points made in the sermon (as Martha Bowden has shown),²⁴ one of his many purposes in using it in *Tristram Shandy* is to criticise the insensitivity of persisting in reading out such a virulently anti-Catholic sermon before the Catholic house guest, Dr. Slop.

One of the most interesting (and comical) aspects of Toby’s whistling of “Lillabullero” is his tendency to do so in response to his brother Walter’s more heretical religious reflections or instead of discussing the wound his genitalia suffered in the Siege of Namur.²⁵ His instinct to whistle the song as a frightened defense of his orthodox Protestantism is an allusion to the alleged ‘siege mentality’ of Irish Protestants, a defensiveness employed to protect their own threatened Protestantism. In these scenes, Sterne (who happily socialised with atheists and radicals)²⁶ is criticising such hyper-vigilance against possible heresy, implying that those who refuse to hear theological views that differ from their own are too narrow-minded in their Christianity.

As for the link between the triumphalist Orange anthem and Toby’s compromised genitalia/‘manhood’, here Sterne is deliberately undermining the machismo associated with militant Loyalism. Sterne more obviously mocks militarism, the English Army, and its misadventures overseas through Toby’s obsession with fortifications and through the march that Toby and Trim make on the Widow Wadman’s house when Toby finally decides to make his romantic ‘attack’ on her. However, that same spirit of mockery is present in the possibly ‘un-manned’ Toby timidly and embarrassedly whistling an

aggressive Loyalist anthem. Whatever Laurence Sterne witnessed of his father's regiment in Ireland as a child, or whatever bitterness he felt over the fact that his father was ordered away to Jamaica in 1727, where he met his death by a fever in 1731, led him to repeatedly ridicule military form and discipline and made him sceptical about the value of the English Army's overseas (often colonial) operations. One of the things that Sterne seems to find most distasteful about militant Loyalism and colonial wars is that it forces suggestible men like Uncle Toby to be more vicious than they would be by nature. As Meyler points out, "the kind but unreflective Uncle Toby ... would not kill a fly and yet [his] 'heart panted for war'".²⁷

Condemnations of Protestant 'bullying' and the militarism associated with Empire-building are also implicit in the novel's repeated references to the brutal Sieges of Limerick. For Sterne, these sieges epitomised how uncivilised the struggle between Catholics and his supposedly spiritually-superior Protestants could become. During the Williamite attempt to besiege Limerick during the summer of 1690, William himself called for a vicious all-out attack on the city. This was famously repulsed not only by Jacobite troops but also Irish civilians (including women), armed only with rocks. After a hard winter, in which Toby and Trim, like all the Williamite troops, suffered horribly from the damp (2,000 died of disease that winter), the Williamites besieged and bombarded the city again in mid-1691. During this second siege, they ruthlessly butchered retreating Irish Catholic troops who were attempting to surrender after being refused entry to the city by the French troops guarding Limerick's main gate. By highlighting these atrocities committed in Ireland, the clergyman Sterne, who felt that the "philosophical basis to sentimentality" is "Christian charity",²⁸ was criticising his fellow

Protestants for showing what appeared to him to be quite un-Christian hatred towards Roman Catholics – hatred not dissimilar to that shown by Catholics during the Inquisition, also condemned by Sterne in the novel.

Given the involvement of women in the first siege of Limerick and the refusal of quarter to Irish Catholic troops during the second, it is noteworthy that Corporal Trim says at one point: “I never refused quarter in my life to any man who cried out for it ... [and] before I would level my musket at [a woman or a child], I would lose my life a thousand times.”²⁹ The noble Trim must have been as disgusted by English Army behaviour at the Sieges of Limerick as his creator, Sterne.

In addition to Sterne’s subversive use of “Lillabulero” and the Siege(s) of Limerick in the novel, another significant ‘Irish’ component of *Tristram Shandy* is its Irish characters. One important Irish presence in the novel is Bridget, the Widow Wadman’s chambermaid, confidante, and spy. While usually regarded as unequivocally English by critics, Bridget’s Irishness is confirmed not only by her name – echoed in the novel’s two allusions to the Irish St. Bridget³⁰ – but also by her freedom of manner, her ‘Irish’ love of intrigue, and her romantic interest in Corporal Trim,³¹ who (many will be surprised to learn) is the novel’s main Irish character.

Most readers of *Tristram Shandy* assume that the Corporal, being a staunch Williamite, is English, but Percy Fitzgerald has convincingly demonstrated that Trim (whose “real name [is] *James Butler*”) ³² is, in fact, an Irishman.³³ Fitzgerald points to Trim’s speech patterns (including his “constant and profuse” repetition of ‘please your

honour' and 'Your Reverence'),³⁴ his storytelling (including what these stories reveal to us about his background), and his romantic interest in the Irish Bridget.

Fitzgerald also interestingly suggests that one of Trim's most Irish traits is "his rueful view of Le Fever's case" compared to the wilfully optimistic view of it taken by the English Uncle Toby.³⁵ The famous scene, in which Corporal Trim and Uncle Toby discuss the soldier Le Fever's prospects for recovery, neatly contrasts their differing casts of mind:

—In a fortnight or three weeks, added my uncle *Toby*, smiling, -he might march. —He will never march, an' please your honour, in this world, said the corporal: —He will march; said my uncle *Toby*, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off: —An' please your honour, said the corporal, he will never march but to his grave: —He shall march, cried my uncle *Toby*, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch, -he shall march to his regiment. —He cannot stand it, said the corporal; —He shall be supported, said my uncle *Toby*; —He'll drop at last, said the corporal, and what will become of his boy? —He shall not drop, said my uncle *Toby*, firmly. —A-well-o'day, -do what we can for him, said *Trim*, maintaining his point, -the poor soul will die. —He shall not die, by G—, cried my uncle *Toby*.³⁶

Le Fever, of course, dies shortly after this scene takes place. This is a case of Sterne depicting Trim as a cynical Irish fact-facer, nearly a century and a half before

Bernard Shaw's Larry Doyle became famous for occupying that expectation-defying role in the 1904 play, *John Bull's Other Island*.

In his analysis, Fitzgerald neglects to mention that there is further evidence of Trim's Irishness in the fact that it is he who introduces the subjects of the Siege of Limerick and the Galway regiment into conversations with Walter and Toby.³⁷ (The Galway regiment was led by Lord Galway – née Henri de Ruvigny – and several other Irish-based Huguenots.)³⁸ Fitzgerald also fails to tease out the reason why Trim's surname, Butler, should alert us to his Hibernian roots. While Meyler interestingly analyses the connection between Trim's name and the novel's two allusions to the Irish-born 2nd Duke of Ormond (whose name was also James Butler),³⁹ she once again makes overly extravagant claims for Sterne's 'Irish' intentions in this aspect of the novel. For example, she claims that Walter Shandy and Corporal Trim discuss black and white bears, because the Butlers (including the Black Earl of Ormond and the White Earl of Ormond) and the O'Sullivan Bears were important families in Tipperary history.⁴⁰ (Let me reiterate that Sterne's family only spent the first six months of Laurence's life in Tipperary.) She even links Walter's need for a handkerchief from India to the Duke of Ormond's defense of the Irish linen trade, claiming that the soft Indian handkerchief is an allusion to the fact that English law meant that Ireland was only allowed to produce "linen [of the] coarsest kind".⁴¹ Clearly, as Joan New, Christopher Ricks, and Ian Campbell Ross have shown, Sterne's main reasons for giving the Duke of Ormond "a role, of sorts, to play" in the novel are his "interest[s] in the Treaty of Utrecht" and "Jacobite rebellion".⁴² If there is another, specifically 'Irish' reason for Sterne's references to the two James Butlers in *Tristram Shandy*, it is that the Ormond Butlers (the

family to whom the Duke and – presumably – Trim belong) had important Protestant and Catholic branches, and – with family links to Gaelic Ireland, England, and France – were famous for the “ability to blend and mix traditions”.⁴³ Sterne, as part of his call for tolerance, is asking that people be more like the Ormond Butlers and, more specifically, like Corporal Trim – the Irish devotee of King William who is much kinder about foreign nations than the English characters in the novel.⁴⁴ Trim (like his fellow Ormond Butlers) is a blender of traditions and the kind of person through whom greater cooperation between different nations – including the nations of Britain – might possibly come. Of course, I am not suggesting that the kindly corporal is perfect; in a novel of flawed characters, Trim’s biggest blind spot is an occasional, unthinking insensitivity towards Roman Catholics, best exemplified by the incident with Dr. Slop and the sermon (mentioned above). However, this is the very weakness that one would expect from an Orangeman *avant la lettre*.

After Bridget and the two James Butlers, the remaining Irish character in the novel is Tristram’s Irish host in Boulogne, who speaks in lively and effectively rendered Hiberno-English.⁴⁵ As Ian Campbell Ross has pointed out, “A number of inns frequented by English travellers in Channel ports were run by Irish or Scottish Jacobite exiles.”⁴⁶ The Irish landlady’s presence in the novel is intended to express Sterne’s sympathy for “the scorned and exiled sacrificial victim[s]”⁴⁷ of political struggle, even those who subscribe to political beliefs that differ from Sterne’s own. Sterne, of course, extends this same, open-minded sympathy to that other Irish Jacobite presence in the novel – the aforementioned Duke of Ormond, whose house of exile in Avignon is spotted and commented upon by Tristram.⁴⁸

The interesting parallel between John Sterne's tenure as the Rector of Trim and the nickname attached to the novel's main Irish character has already been noted. This is only one 'Irish' aspect of the Corporal's more familiar moniker; the servant in *The Funeral*, a play by the Dublin-born Richard Steele, is also called Trim. Melvyn New, Richard A. Davies, and W.G. Fay have demonstrated the ways in which this play by an Irishman was an important influence on *Tristram Shandy*⁴⁹ (just as they have pinpointed other works by Irish writers with which Sterne plays intertextual games in *Tristram Shandy*, including Thomas Sheridan's *A Discourse Being Introductory to His Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1759) and Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Idea of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757)).⁵⁰ Of course, the main reason that the servants in the works by Steele and Sterne are called Trim is because of the name's resonances with the old English proverb "Trim, tram, like master like man".

Besides Trim, the names of three of the novel's other characters also have their roots in Sterne's Irish background. Parson Yorick is Sterne's main alter-ego in the novel, but the author also put a good deal of himself into the main character of Tristram (Sterne did, after all, name his home Shandy Hall). Strong evidence of Sterne's personal tie to Tristram can be found in the character's Christian name. In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Calidore's squire, Tristram, moves from 'Celtic' Cornwall at the age of ten to the land of Gloriana (which is a projection of England, since Gloriana is a representation of Queen Elizabeth I). This echoes Sterne's move at the age of ten from 'Celtic' Ireland to West Yorkshire.

Another character name in the novel related to Sterne's native country is that of Tristram's mother. As Eric Rothstein has noted, "Tristram has his [interest in John]

Locke from a most unlikely source, his mother, whose maiden name was Molineaux: the distinguished [Dublin-born] philosopher William Molyneux (1656-1698) was [a] correspondent of Locke's ... Contemporary readers would have been likely to catch the allusion, for Molyneux's correspondence with Locke was often reprinted."⁵¹ Molyneux was, of course, also a friend of Sterne's literary hero, Swift.⁵²

A final character whose name derives from Sterne's Irish background is that of the soldier, Le Fever. Sterne's biographer, Arthur Cash, has traced this name to an Irish soldier called Rowland Lefever, with whom Sterne was acquainted as a child. Indeed, in 1767, Sterne told the Irish writer Richard Griffith that Lefever was his first teacher and that "it was he who imbued my soul with humanity, benevolence and charity".⁵³

Rowland Lefever is not the only person from Sterne's Irish childhood who contributed to the formation of a character in *Tristram Shandy*. Cash has also suggested that much of Uncle Toby's characterisation derives from Sterne's relation by marriage, Col. Thomas Palliser, who lived at Castletowne Carne, north of Wicklow, while the Sternes were resident in the Garden County. Cash writes that the character of Toby is "not modelled on any single historical person, but old Colonel Palliser comes closer to him than anyone else in Sterne's known life".⁵⁴ Intriguingly (for our purposes), Palliser eventually built a stately home on Great Island – formerly known as Durbard's Island – in Co. Wexford, on land seized from the disgraced and exiled Duke of Ormond.

Clearly, Sterne's formative years in Ireland had a much greater impact on him than is generally recognised. Critics have been fond of making broad, extravagant, sweeping, ultimately un-provable, arguments about the 'Irishness' of Sterne's writing. It

is – admittedly – compelling when they argue that Sterne’s ‘rollicking’ prose has an Irish ‘flavour’, or that he was the first Irish modernist, or that his writing eerily anticipates many of the qualities and preoccupations of later Anglo-Irish literature. However, as I have demonstrated, significantly stronger evidence of Sterne’s Irishness can be found through direct engagement with his work – especially *Tristram Shandy*.

Tristram Shandy’s foregrounded Englishness and its previously under-regarded Irishness combine to reveal that Sterne was Anglo-Irish in the truest sense of that term – he was someone with profound ties to both England and Ireland. As the novel amply confirms, Sterne was Anglo-Irish in the traditional sense, as well; most of *Tristram Shandy*’s Irish references are intimately related to issues of great importance to the Irish Anglican subculture within which Sterne was partially raised. (These issues include, of course, to sectarian strife, Irish loyalty (or disloyalty) to the English crown, and the English military’s attempts to subdue its troublesome neighbour.) Sterne’s extended exposure to Ireland at an impressionable age and the significant Irish ties on both sides of his family tree are undoubtedly what inspired the culturally-hybrid author to repeatedly reflect on his native country in *Tristram Shandy*, his sterling and complex masterpiece.

ENDNOTES

¹ From the 1919 study *Irish Essays*, as quoted in Seamus Deane et al, eds., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature, Vol. 2* (Derry: Field Day, 1991), 1006.

² W.B. Yeats, *Collected Letters, Vol. 1: 1865-1895*, ed. Jim Kelly and Eric Domville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 448.

³ Derek Hand, *A History of the Irish Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47.

⁴ See, for example, Carol Watts, “Sterne’s ‘politicks’, Ireland, and evil speaking”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne*, ed. Tom Keymer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 95-110; John Harrington, *The Irish Beckett* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 112-115.

⁵ See, for example, Michael Steinman, “Sterne and Joyce: Two Touching Stories”, *James Joyce Quarterly* 18.2 (Winter, 1981), 206-208; Patrick Murray, “The Shandean Mode: Beckett and Sterne Compared”, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 60.237 (Spring, 1971), 55-67; Harrington, *The Irish Beckett*, 112-115; Rüdiger Imhof, “Two Meta-Novelists: Sternesque Elements in Novels by Flann O’Brien”, *Anglo-Irish Studies* 4 (1979), 59-90.

In Ian Campbell Ross’s excellent biography of Sterne, the Trinity College Dublin professor essentially treats Sterne as an English writer. However, he does briefly touch on the case for seeing Sterne as Irish and, like others, he does so by linking him to Joyce, Beckett, and Flann O’Brien. (See Ian Campbell Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 430, 467-468.)

⁶ A. Norman Jeffares, *Anglo-Irish Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 53-54.

⁷ Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 92.

⁸ Vivien Mercier, *The Irish Comic Tradition* (London: Souvenir Press, 1991), 245. See also Terry Eagleton, *Crazy John and the Bishop* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 67; Terry Eagleton, “A Novel Choice”, *The Irish Times*, 27 Sept. 2003; Terry Eagleton, “Form and Ideology in the Anglo-Irish Novel”, in *Literary Relations: Ireland, Egypt and the Far East*, ed. Mary Massoud (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1996), 136.

⁹ Shaun Regan, “Locating Richard Griffith: Genre, Nation, Canon”, *Irish University Review* 41.1 (Spring-Summer 2011), 109.

¹⁰ John Sterne later preceded Swift as Dean of St. Patrick’s and then became Swift’s superior as Bishop of Clogher.

¹¹ Laurence Sterne, *Letters of the late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne, to his most intimate friends. With a fragment in the manner of Rabelais. To which are prefix'd, memoirs of his life and family. Written by himself. And published by his daughter, Mrs. Medalle. In three volumes: [VOLUME 1]*, (London: T. Becket, 1775), 2.

¹² Laurence Sterne, *The Letters, Part 1: 1739-1764*, vol. 7 of *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, eds. Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2009), 148.

¹³ Laurence Sterne, *The Letters, Part 2: 1765-1768*, vol. 8 of *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, eds. Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2009), 430.

¹⁴ It should be noted that critics have shown that Elizabeth Vesey was probably not at Bath in the year of this letter, so that it is “very likely” (though not perfectly certain) that William Combe added the passage about her to this letter when compiling his edition of Sterne’s correspondence, *Original Letters of the Late Reverend Mr. Laurence Sterne* (1788). Critics have long known that Combe ‘embellished’ several of Sterne’s letters. (Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd, Notes, *The Letters, Part 2: 1765-1768*, vol. 8 of *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, by Laurence Sterne (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2009), 433.)

For a flirtatious letter from Sterne to Mrs. Vesey, see Sterne, *The Letters, Part 2: 1765-1768*, 491-492.

¹⁵ Sterne, *The Letters, Part 2: 1765-1768*, 430. For more information on these Irish guests, see New and de Voogd, Notes, *The Letters, Part 2: 1765-1768*, 432-434, 494.

¹⁶ Terry Eagleton, *Crazy John and the Bishop*, 23.

¹⁷ Joan Meyler, “The ‘Body National’ and the ‘Body Natural’: Tristram Shandy’s History of Ireland”, *Irish Studies Review* 11.2 (2003), 137.

¹⁸ Meyler, “The ‘Body National’ and the ‘Body Natural’”, 137.

¹⁹ Andrew Carpenter, ed, Notes, *Verses in English from Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), 37.

²⁰ Brendan Behan, *Brendan Behan’s Island: An Irish Sketch-book* (London: Bernard Geiss, 1962), 158; 158. According to Breandán Ó Buchalla, the chorus is actually in the

future tense: “*Lillí bu léir ó – bu linn an lá* – Lily will be manifest – the day will be ours”.
(As quoted in David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its
Diaspora: Community and Conflict* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 17.)

²¹ Meyler, “The ‘Body National’ and the ‘Body Natural’”, 150.

²² Carol Stewart, “The Anglicanism of *Tristram Shandy*: Latitudinarianism at the Limits”,
British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies 28 (2005), 240-246.

²³ Christina Lupton, “Two Texts Told Twice: Poor Richard, Poor Yorick, and the Case of
the Word’s Return”, *Early American Literature* 40.3 (2005), 474. See also, Stewart, “The
Anglicanism of *Tristram Shandy*: Latitudinarianism at the Limits”, 246.

²⁴ For Sterne’s lingering anti-Catholicism at the time he wrote *Tristram Shandy*, see
Martha F. Bowden, *Yorick’s Congregation: The Church of England in the Time of
Laurence Sterne* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 205-211.

²⁵ See, for example, Laurence Sterne. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,
Gentleman, Volume I*, vol. 1 of *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*
(Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1978), 78, 193, 285; Laurence Sterne.
The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, Volume II, vol. 2 of *The Florida
Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida,
1978), 803.

²⁶ Simon During, “Review of *Yorick’s Congregation*, by Martha E. Bowden”,
Eighteenth-Century Fiction 21.4 (Summer 2009), 647.

²⁷ Meyler, “The ‘Body National’ and the ‘Body Natural’”, 152. Meyler is quoting from Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 556.

²⁸ Anonymous, Introduction, *Tristram Shandy*, by Laurence Sterne (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1996), ii.

²⁹ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 160-161.

³⁰ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 412, 413.

³¹ In British works of literature from the eighteenth century, Bridget was a common name given to servants. This was partially because it could indicate a Stage Irish woman, but also because it referenced London’s Bridewell Hospital, a “house of correction for wayward women” named for St. Bridget, thereby hinting at the servant’s loose sexual morals. In *Tristram Shandy*, Bridget’s sexual forwardness with Trim picks up on the Bridewell Hospital connection, as critics have noted. (Melvyn New with Richard A. Davies and W.G. Day. Notes. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Volume 3: *The Notes*, vol. 3 of *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, by Laurence Sterne (Gainesville, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1984), 256.)

³² Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 108. Emphasis in original, as with all the proper names in the Florida edition.

³³ Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of Laurence Sterne*, Vol. I (London: Chapman & Hall, 1864), 50-52; Percy Fitzgerald, “Sterne and His Day”, in *Dublin University Review*, Vol. LX (July to December 1862) (Dublin: George Herbert/London: Hurst & Blackett, 1862),

277-278. Although Fitzgerald fails to note this, there are other evidences of Irishness in Trim's speech: he refers to an event as "desperate slow" in taking place and says "bating" instead of 'beating'. (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 620; Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 434.)

³⁴ Fitzgerald, *The Life of Laurence Sterne*, Vol. I, 51.

³⁵ Fitzgerald, *The Life of Laurence Sterne*, Vol. I, 52.

³⁶ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 510-511.

³⁷ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 476; Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 694.

³⁸ For more information on the Irish-based Huguenot officers and foot soldiers in the Galway Regiment, see T.P. Le Fanu & W.H. Manchee, "Dublin and Portarlington Veterans: King William III's Huguenot Army", *Publications of the Huguenot Society of London* XLII (1946), 1-72.

³⁹ Meyler, "The 'Body National' and the 'Body Natural'", 138-140, 144. For the two allusions to the Duke of Ormond, see Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 360; Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 644.

⁴⁰ Meyler, "The 'Body National' and the 'Body Natural'", 138-140.

⁴¹ Meyler, "The 'Body National' and the 'Body Natural'", 144.

⁴² Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life*, 25; Joan New and Christopher Ricks, eds., Notes, *Tristram Shandy*, by Laurence Sterne (London: Penguin, 1997), 647; Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life*, 25.

⁴³ Claire Connolly, Introduction, *Ormond*, by Maria Edgeworth (London: Penguin Books, 2000), xv.

⁴⁴ Of Trim's three questionable remarks about people from other countries, only his firm conviction that the French are "treacherous" is unequivocally racist. (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 560.) At one point, Trim passes on slander he has heard about the Chinese but not from any firm personal conviction. Likewise, he asks Toby if black people have souls, but only because he is grasping for a reason why white people treat blacks so badly. He cannot understand why white people would treat fellow human beings with souls as though they were inherently inferior. (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 690, 747-748.) For most of this scene, Trim is much more concerned about the racist treatment of blacks than Toby is. For Walter Shandy's racist remarks, see, for example, Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 215, 286, 417. In fairness to Walter, he is not completely averse to foreign ideas. For example, he consoles himself over Tristram's accidental circumcision by reminding himself that many "great nation[s]" have practised circumcision, including the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Phoenicians, the Arabians, and the Cappadocians. (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. I, 460.)

⁴⁵ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 586.

⁴⁶ Ian Campbell Ross, ed., Notes, *Tristram Shandy*, by Laurence Sterne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 592.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Lamb, “Sterne and Irregular Oratory”, in *Laurence Sterne’s Tristram Shandy: A Casebook*, ed. Tom Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 228.

⁴⁸ Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. II, 644.

⁴⁹ New et al., Notes, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Vol. III, 82-83, 95.

⁵⁰ New et al., Notes, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Vol. III, 355-356, 437, 513-514, 517, 519.

⁵¹ Eric Rothstein, *Systems of Order and Inquiry in Later Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 70 (n.12).

⁵² For Sterne’s expressions of his devotion to Swift, see, for example, Sterne, *The Letters, Part I: 1739-1764*, 84, 190.

⁵³ As quoted in Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years* (London: Routledge, 1992), 20. It should be noted that Cash believes that these words (which come from Griffith’s account) “could hardly be Sterne’s”.

⁵⁴ Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years*, 18-19. Palliser was born in North Riding of Yorkshire (like Uncle Toby), but spent the vast majority of his long life in Ireland (he lived to over ninety).