THE HACK IN SWIFT'S A TALE OF A TUB COMPARED
WITH
TRISTRAM IN STERNE'S TRISTRAM SHANDY

by

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ABSTRACT

The similarities between Swift's Grub Street Hack and Sterne's Tristram are persistent and remarkable, even though the Hack is a satiric pose of Swift and Tristram a comic projection of Sterne. Perhaps the most striking similarity lies in the constant tension between the reader's expectations of a wise narrator and a sequential style and the Hack's and Tristram's perverse frustration of the reader's desire for order. The foolish narrators, in an obstructive style, develop systematic theories based on absurd hypotheses. This perversity is not only witty and amusing, but also a reflection of Swift's and Sterne's eighteenth century "rage for order."

To Swift, order is a necessity, to be defended by attacking all that threatens order. Swift imitates the chaos he saw in seventeenth-century style and thought by assuming the mask of a fool who speaks in the accents of hundreds of modern pretenders to learning. But the seeming chaos of the Hack's discourse is ordered by Swift's satiric intent and his views on Gnosticism. In the end, comic order predominates as the quintessence of disorder, the Hack is laughed off the stage. Wit triumphs over dulness. However, the comedy is undermined by tragic associations of evil, madness, and anarchy.
To Sterne, conventional order of time and formal logic are illusions. He imitates the disorder in men's minds by assuming a mask and playing many parts. The seeming chaos of Tristram's narration is ordered by the association of ideas, a central group of characters, and the values of humour, common sense, feeling and benevolence. In the end, in spite of suggestions of the world's ill nature, hypocrisy, and corruption, comic order predominates.
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CHAPTER I
THE NATURE OF THE HACK AND TRISTRAM

PART A: THE HACK AND TRISTRAM COMPARED

A "rage for order" characterizes many of the great writers of the eighteenth century. For Swift, order is a necessity, to be defended by attacking through satire all that threatens order. He achieves his literary ends by assuming a mask, and becoming the ridiculous essence of disorder in seventeenth-century style and thought. For Sterne, conventional order is an illusion, obsessively pursued by time-bound novelists and logic-bound reasoners. He achieves his literary ends by assuming a mask, and finding a new, often comic, order in the association of ideas.

Moreover, these works of calculated chaos, A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy, stir up the reader's "rage for order," even in our time, constantly creating a tension between his expectation of an author's sanity and ability to create a logical sequence, and its inevitable frustration as he finds himself abandoned on a pinnacle of wit or cast into the depths of persuasive madness. This essay seeks to illustrate the peculiar nature of the "rage for order" in Swift and Sterne and to discuss how they excite and frustrate the reader's expectations about order to attain their literary ends.
In Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, the reader soon becomes confused amidst the babble of voices, those of the supposed author, the dedicator, the bookseller, and so on. But soon he is aware of the main narrator, in the person of a Grub-Street Hack. But instead of the sound, sensible, omniscient author he expects, the reader finds a fool who naively admits his folly, and who in an eccentric and frustrating style narrates an allegorical tale and develops the most extraordinary theories, logical yet absurd. The Hack is the quintessence of disorder.

The character of the Hack is comically foolish and naive. This supposed seventeenth-century writer is remarkably candid about his lack of powers. He is the self-advertized defender of the moderns, but fixing on the details of his age's learning is a task "too slippery for [his] slender abilities." His imagination makes a tour of his invention, but, he admits, it returns empty. He has a short memory, so he loses or mislays his memoirs (205) and, like all moderns, forgets about the past (135). Besides, he confesses, his sanity is questionable:

> I myself, the author of these momentous Truths, and a Person whose Imaginations are hard mouth'd and exceedingly disposed to run away with his Reason, which I have observed from long Experience, to be a very light Rider, and easily shook off. . . . (179-180)

The Hack confides to us (as if we were interested) the full details of his writing, the circumstantial venal quality
of it. He scribbles away in a garret, deservedly hungry, or in a bed while undergoing treatment for shameful venereal disease. Sometimes, he walks along dirty streets in the rain and so his writing becomes splenetic or dull.

His strongest wish, he tells us, is to appear profound and sublime. What could be a better way to appear "wondrous Deep" than to be "wondrous Dark" (208)? He advises the reader that

... where I am not understood, it shall be concluded, that something very useful and profound is couched underneath, and again, that whatever word or sentence is printed in a different Character, shall be judged to contain something extraordinary either of Wit or Sublime. (46-47)

He becomes wildly enthusiastic about his "Divine Treatise" (124) and thanks the world for its "generous and universal acceptance" (181). He invites critical speculation on his meaning and gives a few hints to the "Sublime Spirits" who are going to make a universal comment on his wonderful discourse:

I have couched a very profound Mystery in the number of 0's multiply'd by Seven, and divided by nine. Also, if a devout Brother of the Rosy Cross will pray fervently for sixty three mornings, with a lively Faith... . . . (186-87)

Just as the character of the Hack—foolish, venal, naive, vain, a little mad—makes the reader laugh at him while it outrages his expectations of a sensible narrator,
so does the Hack's style or mode of expression frustrate the reader's sense of order and progress. The Hack's style is not only a parody of seventeenth-century formlessness in the masses of introductory material and the endless digressions, but it is also a Menippean parody of form itself in its "deliberate rambling digressiveness" and "calculated bathos or art of sinking" in the narration. Menippean satire, as Northrop Frye describes it, is an exuberant attack on the foibles of the philosophus gloriosus, or systematic reasoner. The Menippean satirist adopts the style, the erudition, and the type of logic used by his target, and outdoes him in his own specialty. The satirist is more pedantic and more rigorously systematic than the philosophus gloriosus, and reaches heights of comic absurdity.

The Hack takes all sorts of liberties with his puzzled reader. The reader expects a logical sequence, but he is interrupted by all sorts of devices: confidential addresses or apologies, hiatuses instead of promised material, masses of tedious erudition or digression upon digression, and dilemmas which surprise him.

The Hack constantly addresses his reader. He confesses that he has forgotten an important detail, the lace on the brothers' coats (135), or asks the reader to remove a digression somewhere else (149) or confidentially whispers bawdy into his reader's ear (179).

The Hack sometimes builds up our expectation for a
piece of sublime reasoning, then leaves a chasm or hiatus in the manuscript:

The present argument is the most abstracted that ever I engaged in, it strains my Faculties to their highest Stretch; and I desire the Reader to attend with utmost Perpensity; For, I now proceed to unravel this knotty Point.

THERE is in mankind a certain * * * . . .
. . . * * * and this I take to be a clear Solution of the matter. (170)

The Hack may impede the development of his ideas with masses of erudition, the more esoteric the better, or by playing with the reader's tendency to read footnotes, obligingly thought out by the Hack or his critic, Wotton. In this passage, the Hack adopts the style and outdoes Bentley, the epitome of the modern pedantic critic, in his own specialty:

. . . Pausanias is of opinion . . . that the * Nauplians [he provides a footnote] in Argia, learned the Art of pruning their Vines, by observing, that when an ASS had browsed upon one of them, it thrived the better, and bore fairer Fruit. But + Herodotus [he provides another footnote] holding the very same Hieroglyph, speaks much plainer, and almost in terminis. He hath been so bold as to tax the True Criticks, of Ignorance and Malice; telling us openly, for I think nothing can be plainer, that in the Western Part of Libya, there were ASSES with HORNS: Upon which Relation + Ctesias [another footnote] yet refines, . . . . (98)

The Hack has mischievously added to his tale the "key" of the critic, Wotton. The critic's notes are sometimes useful, but often redundant and therefore obstructive and provoking. For example, in the matter of the "Indian Figures of Men, Women, and Children," the Hack provides this useless footnote:
Ibid. Images in the Church of Rome give him but too fair a Handle. The Brothers remembered, etc. The Allegory here is direct. W. Wotton. (89)

This extra erudition added to the Hack's contributes much to the difficulty of reading an already complicated book.

Masses of prefatory material and constant references to himself further impede the reader's progress through the Tale. After the Apology, Dedication, note from the Bookseller to the Reader, the Epistle Dedicatory to His Royal Highness, Prince Posterity, the Preface, the reader finally gets to the title, A Tale of a Tub. But section one is only the Introduction. In it, the Hack continues to frustrate us with another irrelevance. Dryden-like, he sighs over his noble character:

From an Understanding and a Conscience, thread-bare and ragged with perpetual turning; From a Head broken in a hundred places, by the Malignants of the Opposite Factions, and from a Body spent with Poxes ill cured, by trusting to Bawds and Surgeons, who . . . were profess'd Enemies to me and the Government. . . . Fourscore and eleven Pamphlets have I written under three Reigns, and for the service of six and thirty Factions. But finding the State has no farther occasion for me and my Ink, I retire willingly to draw it out into Speculations more becoming a Philosopher, having, to my unspeakable Comfort, passed a long Life, with a Conscience void of offence. (70-71)

Besides interrupting the narrative with frequent allusion to himself, the Hack disrupts the thread of his tale with formal digressions. The more annoyingly placed they are for the reader intent on the narrative, the better. For
example, Section II, on the increasingly ornamental coats of the three brothers and the first real knavery of Peter, is interrupted by the Digression on Critics. Section IV, on the further madness and knavery of Peter, is halted by the Digression in the modern Kind. Section VI, on the mad enthusiasm of Jack, builds up to: "of whose original, as well as Principles, I am now advancing to gratify the World with a very particular account. . . ." (142) Then we find another digression, the Digression in Praise of Digressions.

The Hack loves digressions. He confesses that

After so wide a Compass as I have wandred, I do now gladly overtake, and close in with subject, and shall henceforth hold with it an even Pace to the End of my Journey, except some beautiful Prospect appears within Sight of my Way; whereof, tho' at present I have neither Warning nor Expectation, yet upon such an accident, come when it will, I shall beg my Reader's Favour and Company, allowing me to conduct him thro' it along with my self. (188)

The reader who wants to follow the straight road is a "Scurvy Companion"; the reader who "out of Stupidity or Weariness" will not follow can jog on by himself" and be d__n'd." (188-189) Just where the unfortunate reader expects something to be concluded, that is, in the Conclusion to the Tale, he finds the Hack scribbling:

I am now trying an Experiment very frequent among Modern Authors; which is, to write upon Nothing; When the Subject is utterly exhausted, to let the Pen still move on; by some called, the Ghost of Wit, delighting to walk after the Death of its Body. (208)
The worst trick the Hack plays on his reader is to hang him up on the horns of an unexpected dilemma. For example, in the "Digression on Madness," the Hack establishes two mutually exclusive theories: either happiness is to be found in the analysis of the meaning of things or in the enjoyment of the appearance of things. The first hypothesis, the one supporting reason, is dismissed:

... that pretended Philosophy which enters into the Depth of Things, and then comes gravely back with Informations and Discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing. (173)

Take the skin off life, and it is ugly. The reader then assumes that he should be credulous. Unpredictably, the Hack then destroys the reader's acceptance of the surface of life:

He that can with Epicurus content his Ideas with the Films and Images that fly off upon his Senses from the Superficies of Things; Such a man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs, for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called, the Possession of being well deceived; The Serene Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves. (174)

The reader is left with the dilemma: either man is not meant to be happy, or, if he is happy, it is because he is a fool. Neither hypothesis is very palatable.

The Hack's mode of expression seems to reveal a mind incapable of ordered thought. The Hack balks at "closing in with Subject" and prefers to fly off into diversions. He is laughable, a candid harmless fool, who unknowingly prefers
appearance to reality, disorder to order because of his slender abilities. But when we examine his theories, we find that they are remarkably ordered. In fact, they are so systematic that they are mechanical. The Hack's theories are Menippean in that reality is interpreted so that a single hypothesis which leaves out all inconvenient data is developed. The reader soon becomes aware that the reductive theories, seemingly so logical, are a manifestation of disorder. They depend on a super-subtle reasoning, which is against the nature of truth, and are based on the assumptions of a fool. They lead to madness.

The Hack, in the manner of an enthusiastic preacher, is determined to make converts out of his readers. He tries to do this by presenting his "reasons" systematically, and in great detail. The reader becomes uneasy, for he is swayed by the persuasiveness of the argument, then pulled up by the dictates of his own common sense.

The Hack presents the views of reductionist critics just as seriously as he does his own. Yet his attitude to the critics is ambiguous, for he can laugh at their folly and yet make the same mistakes himself.

For example, he half-seriously unfolds the arguments the three brothers use to rationalize their lust for personal ornament. They examine their Father's Will and twist it to their purpose. The argument, which could be in a piece of literary criticism in our day, is persuasive, yet entirely foolish.
The three brothers cannot find "shoulder-knot" in full or in syllables, so they look for the letters of the word. Not surprisingly, they soon pick out "S, H, O, U, J, P, E, R; when the same Planet, Enemy to their Repose, had wonderfully contrived, that a K was not to be found." Peter then argues that "K was a modern illegitimate Letter, unknown to the Learned Ages, nor any where to be found in ancient manuscripts. . . . [It] should be writ with a C." (84) Soon the three critics "swaggered with as large and as flanting ones [shoulder knots] as the best." (85)

The Hack seems to see clearly into the nature of critics when he sets up a new project. Seven commentators are to write seven ample discourses on his Tale. Of course, the Hack slyly remarks, no matter how the interpretations differ from one another, they will "without the least Distortion, [be] manifestly deducible from the Text." (185) In the discourses, the Hack would have "the Pleasure to find twenty Meanings, which never enter'd his Imagination." (20) Ideally, his words are like seeds "however scattered at random, when they light upon a fruitful Ground, will multiply far beyond either the Hopes or Imagination of the Sower." (186) In fact, though the Hack doesn't realize it, the true critics are like himself, airy occultists:

... [the] converting Imaginations dispose them to reduce all Things into Types; who can make Shadows, no thanks to the Sun; and then mold them into Substances, no thanks to Philosophy; whose peculiar Talent lies in fixing Tnopes
Philosophers are just as reductive as the critics. The Hack mocks philosophers like Epicurus and Descartes, whose empty minds spin into a vortex of mad airy theories. He uses the jargon of the two philosophers to discredit them and all others who would convert men to their own "reasons":

Epicurus modestly hoped, that one Time or other, a certain Fortuitous Concourse of all Mens Opinions, after perpetual Justlings, the Sharp with the Smooth, the Light with the Heavy, the Round and the Square, would by certain Clinamina, unite in the Notions of atoms and Void, as these did in the Originals of all Things. Cartesius reckoned to see before he died, the Sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser Stars in his Romantick System, rapt and drawn within his own Vortex.

But while the Hack can laugh at such philosophers, he can still seriously present his own reductive systems. He amuses himself with several little systems, and also develops three large important ones.

The Hack's systems give a good indication of his habits of mind. Mechanically, Jack's brains suffer an "unlucky shake," so he turns to mad abstruse matters. Philosophers should stand on various edifices, the Hack reasons, for

... Air being a heavy Body, and therefore ... continually Descending, must needs be more so, when loaden and press'd down by Words. ... (60)

Similarly, the mechanical physics of air apply to the modern theatre, where the Pit is sunk low so that
... whatever weighty Matter shall be delivered thence (whether it be Lead or Gold) may fall plum into the Jaws of certain Criticks... which stand ready open to devour them. Then, the Boxes are built round, and raised to a Level with the Scene, in deference to the Ladies, because, That large Portion of Wit laid out in raising Pruriences and Protrubemances, is observ'd to run much upon a Line, and ever in a Circle. The whining Passions, and little starved Conceits are gently wafted up by their own extreme Levity, to the middle Region, and there fix and are frozen by the frigid Understanding of the Inhabitants. (61)

The Hack can laugh at other occult philosophers who

... grow fond of some proper mystical number, which their Imaginations have rendered Sacred, to a Degree, that they force common Reason to find room for it in every part of nature; reducing, including, and adjusting every Genus and Species within that Compass, by coupling some against their Wills, and banishing others at any Rate. (57)

In the very same breath, he praises his number Three! By "the most convincing proofs," he has not only reduced "the Senses and the Elements under its Banner, but brought over several Deserters from its two great Rivals Seven and Nine." (57-58)

The first great system that the Hack devises is Sartorism, or the theory of externals. It is beautifully reasoned. The Sartorist worships the Taylor-God, and governs his life by clothing. He believes

... the Universe to be a large Suit of Cloaths, which invests every Thing: That the Earth is invested by the Stars; and the Stars are invested by the Primum Mobile. (77-78)

He justifies these beliefs by foolishly and systematically arguing in this manner. Nature obligingly dresses up her
creations. Indeed, what is man but a suit of clothes? and look at the trimmings of his mind:

Is not Religion a Cloak, Honesty a Pair of Shoes, worn out in the Dirt, Self-love a Surtout, Vanity a Shirt, and Conscience a Pair of Breeches, which, tho' a Cover for Lewdness as well as Nastiness, is easily slipt down for the Service of both. (78)

As man is just a suit of clothes, then, conversely, "those Beings which the World calls improperly Suits of Cloaths, are in Reality . . . Rational Creatures, or Men." (78) Thus, one can look upon, say, "an apt Conjunction of Lawn and black Sattin" (79) as a Bishop.

From this main religion, a sect develops. This sect scholastically refines the main hypotheses and maintains that men have two dresses, "the Natural and the Celestial Suit, which were the Body and the Soul: That the Soul was the outward, and the Body the inward Clothing." (79) After all, the body is only "a sensless unsavory Carcass," so then the "outward dress must be the Soul" (80) because it is more beautiful. One can then have all the desirable traits of the mind simply by obeying certain equations: "Embroidery was Sheer Wit; Gold Fringe was Agreeable Conversation. . . ." (80) and so on. Moved by these "reasons", the three brothers betray Christianity for a materialistic religion of fine appearances. Sartorism is systematically upheld, but it is madness.

While Sartorism reflects the Hack's fondness for appearances, Aeolism betrays his occult and enthusiastic
propensities. The Hack admiringly recounts the details of this new religion, based on a reduction of the universe to wind. Both Sartorism and Aeolism are religions of seemingly logical beliefs, but the Hack is incapable of seeing into their basic unsoundness. They are all surface, and no substance--complex structures surrounding a void.

Aeolism is beautifully argued, right from the first premise. The Aeolists believe that:

... the Original Cause of all things [is] Wind, from which Principle this whole Universe was at first produced, and into which it must at last be resolved; that the same Breath which had kindled, and blew up the Flame of Nature, should one Day blow it out. (150)

From the premise of the universe based on wind, the Hack constructs a fine chain of reasoning which comes to the most surprising conclusions. He uses terms from the occult and scholasticism; Adepti, Anima Mundi, Spiritus, Primordium, Quintessence, to give a pseudo-logic and authority for his notions. What is life, he asks, but the "Breath of our Nostrils"? (151) He refines the "spirit of the world" into three Animas, a fourth Anima for ornament, and then to a Quinta essentia. The last

... is of Catholick Use upon all the Emergencies of Life, is improvable into all Arts and Sciences, and may be wonderfully refined. ... (151-152)

And how is this wonderful essence of wind to be used?

Upon these Reasons, and others of equal Weight, the Wise Aeolists, affirm the Gift of BELCHING, to be the noblest Act of a Rational Creature. (153)
Their method of learning is equally surprising. Upon these syllogisms: "Learning puffeth men up," "Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words, Ergo, Learning is nothing but Wind" (153), Aeolists teach through belches. From this reasoning and the obliging footnotes, the reader associates the enthusiasts and other dissenting groups with the Aeolists worshipping their airy gods with gaping mouths and vast hums.

Aeolism appears to be eminently logical, yet it is based on the assumptions of a fool. And the Hack enthusiastically supports its scheme. After another digression, he lights upon a great problem: what is the cause of madness? An answer springs into his mind—vapours, which are of kin to the beloved wind of the Aeolist and explain his wild enthusiasm. The Hack does not realize that his own unsound mind may be a product of his pox-marked body. Happily ignorant, he develops his theory that vapours cause madness. The Hack manufactures a fine close-spun web to justify his notion.

New empires, new philosophy, and new religions, he argues, are due simply to "Vapours, ascending from the lower Faculties." (163) He brings up two supporting cases: two conquerors driven by sexual and excremental vapours. What else but vapours could explain philosophical advancement of "new Systems with such an eager zeal, in things agreed on all hands impossible to be known"? (166) However, madness is a hard thing to ascertain, states the only partially-sane Hack. Madness is a matter of chance:
... if you chance to jar the String [of Human Understanding] among those who are either above or below your own Height, instead of subscribing to your Doctrine, they will tie you fast, call you mad, and feed you with Bread and Water. (168)

If there is so little difference between madness and sanity, why not improve madness in society by taking Bedlamites out of their cells and placing them in appropriate niches in society? A swearing, foul-mouthed madman would make a good soldier, the eternally babbling madman would make a good lawyer, and so on. The Hack's system appears reasonable in the sense that it is cunningly argued, but it would lead to a vast improvement in madness in any commonwealth or in any reader who believed in it.

Swift's Hack then is a half-foolish, half-mad creature who naively and comically admits all his mental weaknesses and who spins off into any diversion but the topic at hand. Oddly enough, his theories are well ordered and persuasively argued, but reveal a basically unsound mind.

When we begin to read Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, we become aware of a person remarkably like Swift's Hack. There is no doubt that Sterne was familiar with Swift's Tale, for his *Political Romance* is Swiftian and he asks Posterity to let his *Tristram* "swim down the Gutter of Time" with *A Tale of a Tub*. Just as the reader's expectations of order are frustrated in *A Tale* of *a Tub*, so they are in *Tristram Shandy*. Instead of the sensible
author one might expect, the reader finds a fool who, like the Hack, admits his folly and narrates in an eccentric, frustrating style the details of his life and several systematic and remarkable theories.

Tristram, the narrator, candidly admits that he is a child of misfortune and mistake, the victim of the petty evils of fortune, and the result of a begetting which laid the foundation for "a thousand weaknesses both of body and mind." (6)

He confides to us (sometimes to the point of being tedious) the details and difficulties of his writing. His head "akes dismally" (337), he throws one of his yellow slippers across the room (632), he dons cap and bells (11) and fiddles (371), he writes for bread (293), and his taylor is pressing him for money (620). He gets into the most fearsome difficulties as he writes (235), sighs over the mounds of paper he must fill (286), and yet claims he has "true genius." All men, he confesses, will write as well as he does "when they think as little." (615) Empty-headedness makes a great writer.

At times, Tristram would like to appear to be profound. His work is "dark," so he "lights" it up with stars or hiatuses:

... little service do the stars afford, which, nevertheless, I hang up in some of the darkest passages, knowing that the world is apt to lose its way... (462)
He invites his critics to find that his book is written "against predestination, or free will, or taxes" (301) or to discover that it is "apocryphal." (104) He invites universal admiration of his masterpiece. His father's and mother's replies and rejoinders will be "read, perused, commented and discanted upon . . . by Posterity." (610) Tristram is remarkably enthusiastic about his own writing:

... in all my digressions (one only excepted) there is a masterpiece of digressive skill, the merit of which has all along, I fear, been overlooked by my reader . . . because 'tis an excellence seldom looked for, or expected, indeed, in a digression. . . . (72)

He wails over his lost remarks:

--I must have my remarks--they were the best remarks, I cried, that ever were made--the wisest--the wittiest. . . . (529)

Tristram's confessions of a weak mind are like the Hack's admissions of slender abilities; the circumstantial but venal quality of his writing is a reflection of the Hack's; his foolish pride in his masterpiece and his baiting of the critics are similar to the Hack's. The reader can laugh at both persons, while cursing their obstructive eccentric styles. There is the same joyous lunacy in the Hack's and Tristram's mode of expression.

The narrative in Tristram Shandy continually bogs down because of Tristram's style. In fact, Tristram laughs at the reader's expectations of conventional time order, or even a
conventionally logical sequence. The novel is a satire on
the novel form itself. Why begin at the hero's birth? Why
not begin ab ovo, at his begetting? Why follow rules?
Tristram accepts as the only order the association of ideas,
and will not be bound by the 'limitations of others. ' "In
writing what I have set about, I shall confine myself,
neither to his [Horace's] rules, nor to any man's rules that
ever lived." (8) This mockery of form itself is like the
Menippean deliberate rambling digressiveness and bathetic
conclusions.

Tristram uses several devices to interrupt and sur­
prise his reader. Like the Hack, he is an intrusive narrator,
giving directions to his reader, or building up an incident
and interrupting it with a hiatus or mass of erudition or
digression upon digression. He is not above mocking his
reader by making him face up to unpleasant dilemmas.

Tristram confuses his reader by giving him many obstruc­tive directions. There are an extraordinary number of hiatuses,
little hands pointing to non-existing morals, a black page of
mourning, a marbled page, a blank page, a blank chapter or two,
chapters shifted here and there, and so on. Tristram oblig­
ingly leaves a blank so that the reader can write in his
description of the Widow Wadman or fill in a curse at the
loss of the remarks (529). Tristram even instructs us to shut
the door, so that he can gossip in peace with the reader (8).

One of Tristram's favourite tricks is to build up to
a climax of expectation, only to break it off. We expect a
magnificent description of the concupiscent Widow Wadman,
but meet this instruction:

   --call for pen and ink--here's paper ready to your hand
   [a blank page follows]. Set down, Sir, paint her to
   your own mind--. . . . (470)

After this blank page, Tristram perversely sighs:

   Thrice happy book! thou wilt have one page, at least,
   within thy covers, which MALICE will not blacken, and
   which IGNORANCE cannot misrepresent. (472)

Tristram also thwarts his reader with innumerable hiatuses.
For example, we are naturally very interested in Tristram's
fate when the sash window fell. But we are met with:

   and Fame, who loves to double every thing,--. . . . had
   sworn . . . That the nursery window had not only * * *
   . . . ; --but that * * * . . . *'s also. (433)

and Walter Shandy's equally suggestive remark:

   --I'll put him, however, into breeches, . . . --let the
   world say what it will. (433)

   Tristram warns his readers:

   . . . I write as a man of erudition; --that even my
   similies, my allusions, my illustrations, my metaphors,
   are erudite,-- . . . , (85)

He then clutters up his narrative with references to hundreds
of esoteric learned authorities, many of them imaginary.
Sometimes the effect is bathetic, as in this passage:

'Tis either Plato, or Plutarch, or Seneca, or Xenophon, or Epictetus, or Theophrastus, or Lucian--or some one perhaps of later date--either Cardon, or Budaeus, or Petrarch, or Stella--or possibly it may be some divine or father of the church, St. Austin, or St Cyprian, or Barnard, who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children--and Seneca (I'm positive) tells us somewhere, that such griefs evacuate themselves best by that particular channel. (350-51)

To help the reader confused by his "dark" work, Tristram obligingly promises to provide an erudite, definitive key at the end of his book. Of course, he mockingly claims, this key is

... not to swell the work--I detest the thought of such a thing; but by way of commentary, scholium, illustration, and key to such passages, incidents, or innuendos as shall be thought to be either of private interpretation, or of dark or doubtful meaning after my life and opinions shall have been read over ... by all the world. ...

(36)

But the key, which would have had surprising interpretations, if Sterne's earlier Political Romance is any indication, is never provided, for the work is never concluded. If the key had been provided, it would have been one more obstructive device. The reader would have felt compelled to use it, and the reward for his pains would have been more confusion.

Tristram continually breaks the thread of his narrative to sigh over the vagaries of his character or all the difficulties he has in writing. He often stops to inform us
that he writes only for the inquisitive, nosy reader (66) or
that much depends on the reader's clean imagination (218).
Every once in awhile, we come upon passages like these:

--Of all the perplexities a mortal author was ever seen
in,—this certainly is the greatest,—for I have Hafen
Slawkenbergius's folio, Sir, to finish—a dialogue be-
tween my father and my uncle Toby, upon the solution of
Prignitz, Scroderus, Ambrose Paraeus, Ponocrates and
Grangousier to relate,—a tale out of Slawkenbergius to
translate, and all this in five minutes less, than no
time at all;—such a head!—would to heaven! my enemies
saw the inside of it! (235)

He loves to reflect on unkind fate, the cause of all his per-
sonal difficulties. Tristram blames Fortune "for pelting me
all my life long, like an ungracious duchess, . . . with so
many small evils." (518) The reader is constantly aware of
the narrator, just as he is in Swift.

In the midst of his digression on hobby-horses, we
find Tristram's dedication to anyone willing to buy the dedi-
cation. Later, he further dedicates his work to the moon and
asks her to "make the world run mad after it." (17) In the
midst of the tale of his birth, Tristram finds a moment to
spare and writes his Preface (192).

The effect of the novel is wild confusion, especially
when the narrative is interrupted by an endless series of
digressions, the more annoyingly placed the better. There are
Bishop Ernulphus's curse, one of Slawkenbergius's tales, a
few bawdy stories, and chapters on sleep, nothing, and whiskers.
Tristram praises digressions in digressions. They are the
"sunshine," "the life, the soul of reading." (73) He is enamoured of digressions. Like Swift's Hack, he

. . . knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hinderances he is to meet with in his way,—#
. . . . Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule,—straight forward.
. . . but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: For, if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects. . . . perpetually soliciting his eye. . . . (36-37)

His story proceeds along the most comic, fanciful, and digressive lines (473-74). But the reader who wants a straight-lined narrative is a dull, grave fellow (475).

Tristram mischievously hangs his reader up on the horns of a dilemma. Suddenly, he startles his reader with, "How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, That my mother was not a papist!" (56). The puzzled reader, searching her memory, replies:

Papist! you told me no such thing, Sir. Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again, That I told you as plain, at least, as words, by direct inference, could tell you such a thing.-- Then, Sir, I must have miss'd a page.-- No, Madam, you have not miss'd a word.--Then I was asleep, Sir.-- My pride, Madam, cannot allow you that refuge. (56)

Either the reader must admit to being inattentive or to being ignorant of an obscure record of the Roman Catholic church that a child may be baptized before it is born (note, 57-58). If one admits to ignorance, Tristram berates the reader for reading for fresh adventures, not "subtle hints, and sly communications." (57)
Tristram, with all his talk of the importance of the "cleanliness of my reader's imaginations" (218), tries to trap his reader into admitting an "ill imagination." Either one pretends or pleads ignorance of bawdy suggestions and misses half the humour in the novel or one admits to a lewd imagination and bears up to Tristram's mockery. For example, in Slawkenbergius's tale, it is pointless for Tristram to stress the restless excitement of the women and the fact that they cannot sleep unless another meaning for *nose* is thought of. Much of the humour in the novel depends upon the recognition of double-entendres in whiskers, button-holes, trenches, and green gowns. Tristram's favourite target among his readers is the hypocritical prude who little realizes that "the extrems of DELICACY, and the beginnings of CONCUPISCENCE" (348) are very close. Such a reader draws up in horror at the slightest whiff of bawdy. Most readers wouldn't even smell it. Thus her reaction starts all sorts of "ill ideas"-- "Madam, . . . let us govern our fancies" (602)--and Tristram stands back, laughing and warning his readers

... for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no art or wile to put any other ideas into their minds, than what I put into my definition--... . . .

(218)

The position he leaves us in is rather uncomfortable.

The theories that Tristram presents are as airy as any of those of the Menippean *philosophus gloriosus*. They are just as finely reasoned and reductive as those of Swift's Hack. While
the Hack can see into the faults of other reasoners, yet calmly make the same mistakes himself, Tristram can laugh at his father's theorizing, and yet approve his own similar reasoning. Tristram, he admits, is the product of his mother's calm temperament and his father's hobby-horsical irascible nature. As the family historiographer (note, 368), it is Tristram's duty to record his own and his father's elaborate ideas. Tristram's systems betray his reductive cast of mind and his indebtedness to his father's example. All the systems in *Tristram Shandy*, just as in *A Tale of a Tub*, are developed with many reasons, and a persuasive seemingly logical argument. Even when Tristram seems to mock his father's theories, he is tempted by them, just as the reader, against the dictates of his common sense, is swayed by the mechanical pseudo-logic of the systems.

Tristram's little theories betray a cast of mind much like his father's, and show a strong affinity to the type of reasoning used by Swift's Hack. We find Tristram's anatomical account of sea-sickness much like the Hack's theory of the brain shaken out of its natural position. Tristram cries:

... what a brain!--upside down!--hey day! the cells are broke loose one into another, and the blood, and the lymph, and the nervous juices, with the fix'd and volatile salts, are all jumbled into one mass--good g__! every thing turns round in it like a thousand whirlpools--

... . . . (481)

Even the imagery of the Hack's physics of air in a modern
theatre resembles that in Tristram's scolding his reader for seeking adventure or bawdy:

... this self-same vile pruriency for fresh adventures in all things, has got so strongly into our habit and humours,—and so wholly intent are we upon satisfying the impatience of our concupiscence that way,—that nothing but the gross and more carnal parts of a composition will go down:—the subtle hints and sly communications of science fly off, like spirits, upwards;—the heavy moral escapes downwards. . . . (57)

Just as the Hack reduces experience to threes, Dr. Slop reduces everything to sevens:

Why, Sir, are there not seven cardinal virtues?—Seven mortal sins?—Seven golden candlesticks?—Seven heavens? --- . . . (129)

Just as the Aeolists find a short cut to sublime learning through belches, Walter Shandy can make his child a prodigy merely by making him expand auxiliary verbs. According to the Hack, all madness is due to sexual and excremental vapours. According to Walter Shandy, all the world's evils are due to women's lust:

... not only, "That the devil was in women, and the whole of the affair was lust"; but that every evil and disorder in the world, of what kind or nature soever, from the first fall of Adam, down to my uncle Toby's (inclusive) was owing one way or other to that same unruly appetite. (644)

Tristram develops a clothes-body system somewhat analogous to the Hack's Sartorism. If Tristram's writing fails, he tells us, he can always shave and dress cleanly and elegantly for
... the soul and body are joint-sharers in every thing they get: a man cannot dress, but his ideas get cloath'd at the same time; and if he dresses like a gentleman, every one of them stands presented to his imagination, genteelized along with him—so that he has nothing to do, but take up his pen, and write like himself. (616-17)

Tristram surprises us then with the ironical reflection that his clean writing is far more cursed and confounded than his dirty writing. But clothes make the man nevertheless. The "dirtier [a bitter satirist] is, the better he succeeds in it." (618) Because the archbishop of Benevento wore a purple coat, he wrote a lewd, nasty romance. (618)

Tristram's single greatest theory, the one which most strongly resembles his father's comic systems, is on causality. Constantly, Tristram reduces all his misfortunes to one cause—fortune:

... I affirm it of her, that in every stage of my life, and at every turn and corner where she could get fairly at me, the ungracious Duchess has pelted me with a set of as pitiful misadventures and cross accidents as ever small HERO sustained. (10)

One of Tristram's greatest pleasures in life is recounting the details of his father's theories. He enjoys them for their own sake, for they are beautifully argued, yet basically foolish. There is a great difference between Tristram's love of folly (including his own) and his own and his father's harmless systems, and the Hack's ignorance of his own folly and his finely argued systems which lead to atheism and madness. I will discuss this in more detail when I con-
trast the two personas.

Like all philosophers, including the Hack, Walter Shandy not only has crack-brained ideas but also wants to make converts to them. He presents his arguments to his less philosophically-minded brother, but is thwarted in attempts at conversion by that brother's common sense. In the midst of philosophizing on the "solutions to noses," Walter is stopped short by his brother's comment, which revealed a total lack of understanding:

--My father thrust back his chair--rose up--put on his hat--took four long strides to the door--jerked it open--thrust his head half way out--shut the door again . . .--plucked my mother's thread-paper out of Slawkenbergius's book--. . . bit her satin pin-cushion in two, . . . . (239)

Such behavior is ludicrous, especially in a philosopher trying to make a convert. Melting sorrow over trivial incidents also betrays Walter's lack of common sense. After one of his favorite hypotheses has been blasted, a "fix'd inflexible sorrow" takes possession of "every line of his face" (216). Sadly, he lies in bed,

. . . his nose touch'd the quilt; his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining on the handle of the chamber pot, which peep'd out beyond the valance. . . . (216)

Walter has all the makings of a true reductive critic. Erasmus's plain literal text doesn't fit Walter's bawdy theory on noses. So Walter examines the text in the same way that the Hack's three brothers examine their father's Will. He
studies "every word and every syllable of it" (229) but the text cannot be twisted. Tristram mockingly relates:

Nature had been prodigal in her gifts to my father beyond measure, and had sown the seeds of verbal criticism as deep within him, as she had done the seeds of all other knowledge,—so that he had got out his penknife, and was trying experiments upon the sentence, to see if he could not scratch some better sense into it. --I've got within a single letter, brother Toby, of Erasmus his mystic meaning. . . . I have mended the sense. --But you have marr'd a word, replied my uncle Toby. (230)

With such talents, it is no wonder that Tristram decides that Walter Shandy's way was

. . . to force every event in nature into an hypothesis, by which means never man crucified TRUTH at the rate he did. . . . (644)

Walter is rather empty-headed, like the Hack's moderns, having never read Cicero or Quintilian or Aristotle, or even the scholastic philosophers. Instead, he sharpens his wits by defending peculiar theories and reading old books. His ideas take on a very odd cast; he devises theories, and "like all systematick reasoners, he would move both heaven and earth, and twist and torture every thing in nature to support his hypothesis." (53) His most remarkable theories concern the begetting, birth, naming, generative powers, and education of the perfect child, one like him, a philosopher.

In order to beget this child, Walter Shandy must discover where the "seat of the soul" is and how to ensure the soul's brilliance. To him, the "great difference between the
most acute and the most obtuse understanding" arises

... merely from the lucky or unlucky organization of the body, in that part where the soul principally took up her residence. . . . (147)

He considers Descartes' theory that the soul is in the mind, but is shaken out of that notion by the description of the cutting out of part of an officer's brain. In a spirited syllogism, he reasons:

If death . . . is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body; and if it is true that people can walk about and do their business without brains,—then certes the soul does not inhabit there. Q.E.D. (148)

Walter finally concludes that the soul inhabits "somewhere near the medulla oblongata" (149). How can he ensure brilliance? Like Cornelius, the comic virtuoso of the Scriblerus Memoirs of Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift, Walter decides that the act of propagation

. . . required all the thought in the world, as it laid the foundation of this incomprehensible contexture in which wit, memory, fancy, eloquence, and what is usually meant by good natural parts do consist. . . . (149)

He becomes horrified at the notion of the havoc wrought upon the fine-spun web of the soul by natural birth, . . . the violent compression and crush which the head was made to undergo by the nonsensical method of bringing us into the world by that part foremost. (149)

Systematically, he supports his hypothesis by accounting for
"the eldest son being the greatest blockhead in the family"
--"he made way for the capacity of his younger brothers"
(151); for the "observations of drivellers and monstrous heads" (151); and for the brilliance of Asiatic genius—in a warmer climate, women had greater pleasures and less pains, so that in labour the "resistance upon the vertex was so slight, that the whole organization of the cerebellum was preserved" (152). The whole remedy for this disaster to the child's intellectual powers lay in the Caesarian section. At this idea, Mrs. Shandy turns as white as a sheet, for "the recorded mortality of mothers in Caesarian sections was over fifty percent." She wouldn't hear anything more of the matter.

Walter Shandy has an equally inexplicable belief, which his son mockingly describes, that "there was a strange kind of magic bias, which good or bad names, irresistably impress'd upon our characters and conduct" (50). He supports his theory with a great show of logic. He maintains that Dinah, Trismegistus, Archimedes, and Optat were excellent names sure to make a child worth something, while Nyky, Simken, and Tristram could bring only dishonour. His reasoning on the matter is always ad hominem, addressed to the passions of the man, and always uses one special name:

... was your son called Judas,—the sordid and treacherous idea, so inseparable from the name, would have accompanied him thro life like his Shadow, and in the end,
made a miser and a rascal out of him, in spite, Sir, of your example. (51)

Yet by accident, the name Tristram, a name Walter Shandy de­tested, believing that a man so named could be neither "learned, or wise, or brave" (295) is given to his son rather than Trismegistus, the name of the greatest lawgiver, philos­opher, priest, and so on of all men (283-84)

The careful generation of the child is thwarted. Be­cause of his mother's orderly "temperate current of blood" (600), and her question about the clock, his father's care in begetting him was destroyed, the animal spirits of the homun­culus were "scattered and dispersed" (5). Thus deprived of his rights to his animal spirits, Tristram claims, the homun­culus, in "a sad disorder'd state of nerves," rests in the womb. And so the foundation for a "thousand weaknesses both of body and mind" (6) was laid. By accident, Tristram's nose, key to his generative powers, is crushed by Dr. Slop's forceps. By another unlucky accident, Tristram is circumcised by the sash window, and doubt is forever cast on his virility. This clock-like system, dependent on chance, is an odd mixture of his father's theories and Tristram's own reflections on the perversity of fortune.

Walter Shandy's most magnificently reductive and ludi­crous system is the theory on noses. He has faithfully col­lected "every book and treatise which had been systematically wrote upon noses" (224), being predisposed to this interest
because he had to pay three hundred pounds yearly to his grandmother on account of his grandfather's short nose. Now the Hack wrote earlier in A Tale of a Tub that "if there be a Protuberancy of Parts in the Superiour Region of the Body, as in the Ears and the Nose, there must be a Parity also in Inferior" (201). Considering this idea and the money he was losing, Walter declares that "he did not conceive how the greatest family in England could stand it out against an uninterrupted succession of six or seven short noses." (220) Similarly, in such a family "the same number of long and jolly noses following one another in a direct line, . . . [would] raise and hoist it up into the best vacancies in the kingdom" (220-21). Of course, learned men could not "write dialogues upon long noses for nothing" (229), so Walter alters Erasmus to make a bawdy meaning.

How can he ensure a long nose, key to virility, for his son? He studies the learned Prignitz's conclusion that "the excellency of the nose is in a direct arithmetical proportion to the excellency of the wearer's fancy" (233) and then Scroderus's that Prignitz was in error in claiming "the fancy begat the nose," for "the nose begat the fancy." (233) Paraeus declares both men are wrong, for "the length and goodness of the nose was owing simply to the softness and flaccidity in the nurse's breast," for by sinking into such a breast "like so much butter," the child's nose was "comforted, nourish'd, plump'd up, refresh'd, refocillated, and
set a growing for ever."

These theories Walter proudly recounts to his brother. But Toby's reply (just as the long nose and soft breast idea) comes from Rabelais: "There is no cause but one . . . why one man's nose is longer than another's, but because God pleases to have it so" (240).

This unscientific answer displeases his brother.

The extent of Walter's reductive folly is found in this comment:

\[
\ldots \text{if all the arts and sciences in the world, with the books which treated of them, were lost,--should the wisdom and policies of government, he would say, through disuse, ever happen to be forgot, and all that statesmen had wrote, or caused to be written, upon the strong or the weak sides of courts and kingdoms, should they be forgot also,--and Slawkenbergius [the complete digest on noses] only left,--there would be enough in him in all conscience, he would say, to set the world a-going again.}\]

(241)

Many of the passages in A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy are so similar as to be almost interchangeable. The foolish narrator, his eccentric obstructive style, and his overly logical yet basically foolish or mad systems form the strongest basis for comparison.
PART B: THE HACK AND TRISTRAM CONTRASTED

The Hack and Tristram then are remarkably similar, but their functions are not. The reader soon realizes that the Hack has a definite satiric function, while Tristram is a mainly comic representation.

The personae reflect their creators' "rage for order" in different ways. Swift is critical of the chaos in style and thought of modern learning, so he fragments himself to imitate this disorder. The Hack is truly a babble of voices, sounding like Dryden, or Bentley, or Hobbes, or Thomas Vaughan, or even Swift himself. He is so closely bound to his various targets that although the reader has some conception of his character, the Hack is not a creature with a life of his own. He is a satiric butt, a complete fool whose praise of the moderns damns them.

Sterne is fully aware of the ironic contrast between the disorderly minds of men and the over-simplified theories of time or logic that are supposed to guide them. He reflects the chaos of life by assuming a mask and, unlike Swift, becoming a single character who self-consciously plays many parts. Sometimes Tristram plays the fool, dons cap and bells, and talks with an ass. Sometimes, he plays the parts of a wise man, a weeping philosopher, a sentimental lover, a man hastening away from death, a perplexed author, or a systematic
reasoner. But all these roles are consistent with Tristram's mercurial disposition. Besides, unlike the Hack, Tristram enters into the plot of his novel and becomes fully alive. He is the comic narrator of his own story.

It is necessary for Swift to make his Hack into a complete fool, so that the reader unsympathetically laughs at him. The Hack is entirely happy with the world because he is deceived by appearances. He claims he has "neither a Talent nor an Inclination for Satyr," (53) and smugly maintains:

... I am so entirely satisfied with the whole present procedure of Human Things, that I have been for some Years preparing Materials towards a Panegyrick Upon the World... (53)

But modern learning is so bad that even when it is praised by a simple fool, the reader becomes aware that it is a thing of flies and spittle, a dirty insubstantial web.

Swift's purpose in creating the Hack is satiric. He is a means of attacking the abuses in learning and religion. But the Hack is not a fully-rounded character. He is so firmly attached to the satiric target that at times he becomes fantastic. With one breath, he attacks other reductive philosophers in a brilliant fashion characteristic of Swift... (57), and in the next breath, he slips back into himself, proudly and stupidly boasting about his system of three (57-58). The Hack, even though he is a wild conglomeration of
voices, is really an ironic pose which Swift assumes at will. Often the mask drops, and we are aware that the Hack's voice is that of Swift himself.

Tristram admits he is a fool. But he has other dimensions. He sees into the nature of the world, its hypocrisy, ill-will, and corruptions. Tristram is aware of the errors of his father, who is over-zealous for a logical order in the universe. Tristram, unlike the Hack, is not entirely happy with the world. Intermingled with his other roles are the bitter observations of a court jester. "Madam," the prude, claims she has a very delicate imagination, but, as Tristram observes, she is ready to "tut-tut" at the least suggestion of a bawdy double-entendre. "Dour, long-bearded men are mocked with the definition of gravity, "a mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind" (26). Stung to fury by Yorick's witty jests, grave men treacherously and mercilessly attack the parson (30), while Tristram weeps. Tristram often plays the role of the ill-natured gossip:

--The story ran like wild-fire.--'The parson had a returning fit of pride which had just seized him; and he was going to be well mounted once again in his life; and if it was so, 'twas plain as the sun at noon-day, he would pocket the expense of the licence, ten times told the very first year:--so that every body was left to judge what were his views in this act of charity.' (22)

Tristram like a court fool naively wonders at his "impossible" vision of life:
... a statesman turning the political wheel, like a brute, the wrong way round—against the stream of corruption—by heaven!—instead of with it. . . . [a surgeon] upon his knees in tears,—drawing the curtains of a mangled victim to beg his forgiveness;—offering a fee,—instead of taking one.

In that spacious HALL, a coalition of the gown, from all the barrs of it, driving a damn'd, dirty, vexatious cause before them, with all their might and main, the wrong way;—kicking it out of the great doors, instead of, in. . . . (198-99)

Tristram wisely sees into the nature of his father's hobby-horsical character:

--Mr. Shandy, my father, Sir, would see nothing in the light in which others placed it; --he placed things in his own light;--he would weigh nothing in common scales; --no,--he was too refined a researcher to lay open to so gross an imposition.--- . . . (145)

And yet he can play the fool and relate his own theories with an uncritical joy, like the system of the transparent people of Mercury (74-75).

For all his insight, Tristram is mainly a comic representation. He enjoys thwarting, puzzling, and amusing his reader. Sterne is not bound by the limitations of satire, for he can develop Tristram without constant references to a satiric target. He uses the novel form to create an eccentric, but still fully rounded character who enters into the plot and is begotten, born, christened, circumcised, breeched; flees from death across Europe; sighs over his Jenny, and throws slippers around.

The Hack's and Tristram's modes of expression differ.
Even though the two personae use an eccentric obstructive style, the Hack uses epithets and imagery which discredit the learning he praises, while Tristram uses the presence of relatively obtuse characters or super-subtle scholastic reasoning to satirize his father and the development of his theories. The Swiftian voice of the Hack, betrayed by his epithets and imagery, might confuse the reader, for it detracts from the Hack's praises of modern learning. But the effect is not chaotic, because these stylistic devices suggest the same satiric norms throughout the Tale, the ideas of true religion and learning. Sterne uses Toby Shandy and Mrs. Shandy to suggest the norm of common sense. The reasoning does not mock its target through images, as in Swift, but by its mechanical absurdity it makes us laugh. True order could not lie in such folly.

Satiric epithets and imagery constantly obscure the Hack's well-meant praises. Sometimes simple epithets betray Swift's ironic intent: "Epicurus modestly hoped," "the wise Aeolists," the "discreet, candid, pious" Wotton. Sometimes, we find a passage such as this, where the Hack's proud comments are undermined and destroyed by a tissue of ironic epithets:

I here present your Highness with the Fruits of a very few leisure Hours, stollen from the short Intervals of a World of Business, and of an Employment quite alien from such Amusements as this. The poor Production of that Refuse of Time which has lain heavy upon my Hands, during a long Prorogation of Parliament, a great Dearth
of foreign News, and a tedious Fit of rainy Weather: For which, it cannot chuse extremely to deserve such a Patronage as that of Your Highness ... Fate having decreed you sole Arbiter of the Productions of human Wit, in this polite and most accomplish'd Age. (30-31)

The Hack obviously means to suggest that his work is like a gentleman's, the product of a few leisure hours, and is so carelessly brilliant that time and posterity will immortalize it, as well as the wit of the age. But his epithets betray his cause, and they suggest what Swift wants to say. The work is really careless and sloppy, the product of a very few hours of some tradesman (no gentleman) who pretentiously claims that his labours are an amusement. The production is indeed a poor thing, a piece of refuse, and dullness incarnate (like "a long parliament, no news, and tedious rainy weather"). The author is a presumptious fool in claiming his work "extreamly" deserves immortality. And this "amusement" of his is a "production of human wit [or dullness]" in an ill-mannered and barren age.

The Hack loves the metaphysical imagery so prevalent in the seventeenth century. This imagery is a perfect vehicle for Swift's wit, and satire. The Hack's imagery displays true "perverseness of industry" in yoking together by violence "the most heterogeneous ideas." The Hack outdoes all his contemporaries in the brilliance and variety of his imagery, but he is often confused by his "metaphysical conjectures" (158). He uses this imagery to develop his theories, but the images themselves change to something unsavory
and the target is again satirized. The apparent chaos of image and negative association is calculated, for the proud, super-subtle imagery and theorizing of the seventeenth century is constantly mocked.

If we examine the Hack's imagery as he praises wisdom, we soon realize that opposing ideas are being suggested. The Hack would rather be credulous and stay on the "surface and rind" of things than be wise.

Wisdom is a Fox, who after long hunting, will at last cost you the Pains to dig out; 'Tis a Cheese, which by now much the richer, has the thicker, the homelier, and the courser Coat; and whereof to a judicious Palate, the Maggots are the best. 'Tis a Sack-Posset, wherein the deeper you go, you will find it the sweeter. Wisdom is a Hen, whose Cackling we must value and consider, because it is attended with an Egg; But then, lastly, 'tis a Nut, which unless you chuse with Judgment, may cost you a Tooth, and pay you with nothing but a Worm.

Essentially, wisdom is compared to the rich food of a sensualist: a cheese, a sack-posset (a drink made out of sweet wine), a nut. With their worms and maggots, they can leave the diner quite ill. Such are the rewards of seeking for wisdom. At any rate, wisdom is like a snarling biting fox, hard to get out of its hole, and it is like a stupid cackling hen, considered only because of its egg or most plebian kind of usefulness.

Similarly, the images in the Hack's three great systems change. The fanciful idea of a universe beautified by natural coverings becomes the foolish equation of embroidery and wit. The spirit of the world becomes a series of foul
belches. Even the system of men influenced by sexual and excremental vapours alters to the image of the madman, who should really be a doctor, paddling in and eating his own dung.

In the calculated chaos of *Tristram Shandy*, there are many ordering devices. The novel is primarily comic, but it has many satiric targets as well. Tristram sometimes uses ironic epithets to suggest his satiric intent. But more frequently, we are given pause as we follow Walter Shandy's persuasive reasoning by the whistling of Lillabullero or by Mrs. Shandy's quiet presence. Even when these satiric devices are not used the reader soon becomes aware that the scholastic theorizing is not true reason but merely rationalization of an absurd premise. The satiric norm is the reader's common sense.

Tristram satirizes the way of the world with simple ironic epithets. It is **impossible** for a statesman to turn the political wheel "the wrong way round—**against** the stream of corruption---. . . instead of with it. . . ." (198)

The presence of opposing characters reveals Tristram's mocking intent. Toby's simple, or pious, or common-sense remarks confound his theorizing brother. Or in the midst of Walter's fantastic notions, we hear the satiric whistling of Lillabullero. This whistling was Toby's means of expressing "when any thing shocked or surprised him;--but especially when any thing, which he deem'd very absurd, was offered." (69)
In the midst of Dr. Slop's vigorous cursing of Obadiah, Toby whistles Lillabullero "as loud as he could, all the time." (170) When the learned are about to prove "that the mother is not of kin to her child" (328), Walter

\[\ldots\] instantly clapp'd his hand upon my uncle Toby's mouth \ldots\ he was alarmed for Lillabullero--and having a great desire to hear more of so curious an argument--he begg'd my uncle Toby, for heaven's sake, not to disappoint him in it--my uncle Toby gave a nod--resumed his pipe, and contenting himself with whistling Lillabullero inwardly--Kysarcius, Didius, and Triptolemus went on with the discourse. \ldots (328)

Tristram's mother is a simple, good natured person, like Toby Shandy. After trying his arguments on her, Walter, bitterly complaining, leaves the room:

\[\ldots\] cursed luck! \ldots--for a man to be master of one of the finest chains of reasoning in nature,--and have a wife at the same time with such a head-piece, that he cannot hang up a single inference within side of it, to save his soul from destruction. (147)

While Walter presents arguments and counter-arguments about Tristram's breeching, Mrs. Shandy obligingly agrees to everything he says:

--But indeed he is growing a very tall lad,--rejoin'd my father.
--He is very tall for his age, indeed,--said my mother.--
--I can not (making two syllables of it) imagine, quoth my father, who the deuce he takes after.--
--I cannot conceive, for my life,--said my mother.--
  Humph!--said my father.
  (The dialogue ceased for a moment.)
--I am very short myself,--continued my father gravely.
  You are very short, Mr. Shandy,--said my mother. (437)

The effect is pure comedy.
The very presence of Mrs. Shandy can be satiric. "A temperate current of blood ran orderly through her veins in all months of the year, and in all critical moments of the day and night alike" (600). Her calm question about the clock thwarted Walter's begetting of a perfect Tristram. Yet Walter Shandy is foolish enough to argue

... notwithstanding my mother was sitting by—not only "That the devil was in women and the whole of the affair was best"; but that every evil and disorder in the world ... was owing one way or other to the same unruly appetite. (644)

Instead of using images to develop his theories, like the Hack, Tristram uses a scholastic form of argument. He happily manufactures his theory about the inhabitants of Mercury, a planet where the sun

...--must, I think, long ago have vitrified the bodies of the inhabitants, (as the efficient cause) to suit them for the climate (which is the final cause); so that, betwixt them both, all the tenements of their souls, from top to bottom, may be nothing else, for aught the soundest philosophy can shew to the contrary, but one fine transparent body of clear glass... (74-75)

Scientific speculations here are laughed at, just as the kind reasoning that can justify it and quibble over character assassination and murder is mocked:

--What is the character of a family to a hypothesis? ...--Nay, ... what is the life of a family? ... my uncle Toby would answer,—every instance is downright MURDER, ...--There lies your mistake, my father would reply; --for, in Foro Scientiae there is no such thing as MURDER, '--'tis only DEATH, brother. (69)
Sterne found the old discredited scholastic logic both fascinating and ludicrous. This logic reached new heights of absurdity when learned men prove that a mother is not of kin to her child. Triptolemus argues from the first principle, in law "things do not ascend, but descent" and because "the parents are not begot by the child, but the child by the parents," then the parents are not of the seed of the child and the child is not of kin to his parents (330). Besides, the father, mother, and child, being of one flesh, are not kindred. Then, replies Didius, they may be made kindred if a man begets a child upon his grandmother.

--But who even thought, cried Kysarcius, of laying with his grandmother?--The young gentleman, replied Yorick . . . who not only thought of it, but justified his intention to his father by the argument drawn from the law of retaliation--"You lay'd, Sir, with my mother, said the lad--why may not I lay with yours?" (330-31)

In the extensive and elaborate development of reductive theories, the Hack and Tristram are very similar. They differ in that the Hack's theories have many extensions into abuses in religion, atheism, Gnosticism, and so on. Tristram's theories, like those of his father, do not have these extensions. They are simply comic.

In A Tale of a Tub, the abuses in religion are basically errors in learning or reason. Peter rationalizes himself away from simple pure Christianity to a materialistic, vicious religion concerned with outward show. Through wild enthusiasm
and cloudy occult tendencies, Jack transforms the Bible to a guide for the most paltry things in life, babbles on about predestination, and deliberately seeks persecution. Sartorism is really atheistic materialism, the theory of the world as matter with no soul.\textsuperscript{13} Aeolism is an occult system, reducing the world to spirit, without reference to the Christian God. The theory of vapours is an evil pseudo-scientific project. Seemingly so diverse, these theories share similar imagery and what Swift saw in Gnosticism, knowledge without wisdom. They are the babblings of men who proudly use their own abstruse language and logic, separating themselves from human tradition, common sense, and the Christian religion.\textsuperscript{14}

Tristram's theories do not have these extensions, although they mock rigorous systematic reasoning. But such reasoning is foolish, not criminal. We follow the theories, such as Tristram's types of arguments (70-71) or Walter Shandy's on noses with delight, unmixed with any apprehension that they are basically evil. In fact, it is hard to wish Tristram with his provoking eccentricity, or Toby Shandy with his miniature fortifications, or Walter Shandy with his "thousand little sceptical notions of the comick kind to defend" (53) any different.
CHAPTER II
THE HACK AND TRISTRAM AS REFLECTIONS
OF SWIFT AND STERNE

PART A: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MASK AND THE CREATOR

Drawing a distinction between the mask and the creator can be very difficult in *A Tale of a Tub* and *Tristram Shandy*. In *A Tale of a Tub*, there seem to be hundreds of voices expounding, theorizing, contradicting each other. Amidst this babble, how can we find Swift's? In *Tristram Shandy*, Tristram plays so many parts that it is hard to fix on one pose and state that it is Sterne's. But there is order in the calculated confusion of the mask. The reader can recognize Swift's ironic pose, hear his voice, and realize his satiric intent. Because Tristram and Sterne share so many important values, and these values are constantly and feelingly upheld in the novel, we can recognize Sterne. Although Tristram and Sterne contradict themselves with ease, it is not as important for the reader to distinguish between the whimsical projection of a comic writer and his own personality as to recognize the ironic pose of a satirist.

No discerning reader should mistake the Hack for Swift, although sometimes the distinctions among Swift's true sentiments, his ironic reflections, the Hack's naive thoughts, and his attempts at irony can be very fine. But we recognize
Swift's pose as a fool among knaves, knowing that Swift himself is no fool. The devices Swift uses to give his own opinions away are the epithets and imagery in the Hack's speech and his completely out of character remarks.

When we examine this passage from the "Digression on Madness," we might ask, "Who is speaking?"

He that can with Epicurus content his Ideas with the Films and Images that fly off upon his Senses from the Superficies of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs, for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and regined Point of Felicity, called, the Possession of being well deceived; The Serene Peacefully State of being a Fool among Knaves. (174)

Here is a complex interchange between Swift and his mask. Just to "a Fool among Knaves", the passage could be the honest reflections of the simple Hack. This same passage could be Swift's ironic reflections, given away by the epithets content, Films, fly off, Superficies, which stress superficiality and truly wise, creams, Sower and Dregs, Religion and Philosophy which suggest true wisdom in religion and philosophy. However, the "Fool among Knaves" sentiment is completely uncharacteristic of the Hack. He has inklings that he is foolish and that there might be a few faults in the moderns, like very short memories, but he cannot see himself as he really is--a fool among knaves. That thought is completely typical of his creator, Swift, just as these earlier comments are typical of him:
For, the Brain, in its natural Position and State of Serenity, disposeth its Owner to pass his Life in the common Forms, without any Thought of subduing Multitudes to his own Power, his Reasons or his Visions; and the more he shapes his Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning, the less he is inclined to form Parties after his particular Notions; because that instructs him in his private Infirmitles, as well as in the stubborn Ignorance of the People. (171)

The ideas are typical of Swift himself. There are no ironic epithets or undermining imagery.

It is much more difficult to separate Tristram from his creator, Sterne. Perhaps it is a fruitless task, even though Sterne complains "The world has imagined, because I wrote Tristram Shandy, that I was myself more Shandean than I really ever was." Sterne plays the role of Tristram, and the reader finds himself often equating the two, for the values Tristram upholds, the value of wit, laughter, and the feeling heart, are constantly and seriously upheld not only in Tristram Shandy, but also in Sterne's other works. Besides, trying to separate Tristram and Sterne impedes the development of Tristram as a character in his own right.

Consider this passage:

I hesitate not one moment to affirm, that in half a century, at this rate, we shall have no souls at all; which being the period beyond which I doubt likewise the existence of the Christian faith; 'twill be one advantage that both of 'em will be exactly worn out together. Blessed Jupiter! and blessed every other heathen god and goddess! for now ye will all come into play again, and with Priapus at your tails—what jovial times!—but where am I? and to what delicious riot of things am I rushing? (495)

Is Tristram or Sterne speaking? or both of them? The reader
might pause to argue that Sterne is so annoyed at Jesuit theories on the volume of souls to be damned that he feels that paganism would be preferable to Christianity. Or Tristram might be speaking, for he also dislikes scholasticism. But the passage contradicts attitudes expressed elsewhere by Tristram and by Sterne. The death of Christianity, and the praise of paganism contradict Tristram's comment that he is serious about society and religion (367), Yorick's equation of irreligion and an evil life (140), and Sterne's support of Christian morality in his sermons. However, in other passages, Tristram and Sterne show impatience with the asceticism of the Christian religion. They prefer a god of joy. Tristram wishes to "dance, and sing, and say his prayers, and go to heaven with this nut brown maid" (538). In *A Sentimental Journey*, Sterne watches peasants dance and cries, "I thought I beheld Religion mixing in the dance." The problem of ascertaining Sterne's true meaning is very difficult. But the original passage with its contempt of scholasticism, rejection of asceticism, and praise of joy is entirely consistent with the character of Tristram as developed in the novel. A close analysis of the creator's meaning in such an ambiguous passage is merely obstructive.

The difficulty of seeing Sterne through every one of Tristram's statements is an aspect of Sterne's concern over order. Men are so unsettled, so mercurial, so dependent upon their ever-changing moods that it is no wonder that
Tristram is so "heteroclite a creature in all his declen­sions"(25). Certain basic consistent ideas occur all through the novel, but the reader cannot expect a perfectly consist­ent narrator, for men are not perfectly consistent. It is foolish for the reader to blindly equate the comic mask and its creator, to make Sterne "more Shandean" than he really is by taking every one of Tristram's comments seriously.

In spite of the apparent confusion in Swift's and Sterne's assumptions of a mask, there are enough devices to direct the reader's attention to the basic ideas underlying the two works.

PART B: THE MASKS REFLECTING THE VALUES OF THEIR CREATORS

If comedy is to be defined as the triumph of order and tragedy as the destruction of order, what then is the final effect of A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy? Both works, hastily or carelessly read, might be enough to drive a reader to the conclusion that either he is or the books are com­pletely mad. Many critics have commented on the seeming lack of order in A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy. But I be­lieve that both works are mainly comic, and that order is dominant at the end.
To me, the Hack in Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, in spite of the overtones of madness and evil in his discourse, is a great comic pose.

The confessions and praises of this man of "slender abilities" are amusing. Candid and unexpected admissions like the following are calculated to delight the reader:

That even, I myself, the author of these momentous Truths, am a Person, whose Imaginations are hard-mouth'd and exceedingly disposed to run away with his Reason, which I have observed from long Experience, to be a very light Rider, and easily shook off. . . . (180)

There is something humourous too in the mechanical and systematic development of an absurd premise, like Sartorism:

. . . the Earth is invested by the Air; The Air is invested by the Stars, and the Stars are invested by the Primum Mobile. Look on this Globe of Earth, you will find it to be a very compleat and fashionable Dress. What is that which some call Land, but a fine Coat faced with Green? or the Sea, but a Wastcoat of Water-Tabby? Proceed to the particular Works of the Creation, you will find how curious Journeyman Nature hath been, to trim up the vegetable Beaux: observe how sparkish a Perewig adorns the Head of a Beech, and what a fine Doublet of white Satin is worn by the Birch. (77-78)

The tragic implications of the satire lie in the epithets, imagery, and associations. They suggest emptiness, spinning, excrement, madness, evil, and anarchy. They undermine, but do not destroy the joyousness of the comedy.

If the two aspects were to be weighed against one another, I would choose comic satire as the most predominant. *A Tale of a Tub* seems to be a satire reflecting Swift's
delight in the power of mind and style, not simply his *tragic awareness*. Some parts of the satire are so bitter in tone that they seem incongruous. The Digression on Madness is similar to Swift's later fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*. In spite of the babble of hundreds of seventeenth century scientists, philosophers, critics who are the Hack's voice and in spite of his foolish mad theories, Swift's values are clear and triumphant. Swift becomes the quintessence of seventeenth-century style and thought, and outdoes the earlier writers and theorizers in their own specialty. He conquers them all, and the results are brilliant, as Johnson comments on the *Tale*: 

*[It] has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction such as [Swift] afterwards never possessed, or never exerted.*

Swift's values dominate his satire. Swift loves wit and humour, believes in intellectual humility and true learning, and supports reason and morality.

The happy fool in *A Tale of a Tub* represents an aspect of Swift often neglected. "Wit," Swift writes in his *Tale*, "is the noblest and most useful Gift of humane Nature," while "Humor is the most agreeable," and when these two "enter far into the Composition of any Work, they will render it always acceptable to the World" (18). The *Tale* is meant to amuse as well as instruct its readers. Perhaps Swift’s
love of wit and humour is an escape from his intense awareness of human evil. The Hack is the ironic pose of a wit, and Erasmian mask of a fool praising folly and sometimes being wiser than he knows.

The Hack is a good candidate for Swift's views on intellectual humility. These theories are basic to A Tale of a Tub. They also put bounds of order on man's proud, wildly speculative and fanciful mind.

Because he is proud and ignorant, like other reductive philosophers and all moderns, the Hack develops the most subtly-argued absurdities. He does not know even the basic classical learning, as revealed in his foolish comments on Homer (127-28). His perception of reality is faulty, for he can reduce all experience to threes. And the Hack is proud, having an excellent opinion of his "divine treatise."

In contrast, Swift drops his mask and tells unequivocally what true learning is. The more a man

... shapes his Understanding by the Pattern of Human Learning, the less he is inclined to form Parties after his particular Notions. (171)

He must beware that his senses do not delude him (171). The uncorrupted senses can be a guide to truth, for truth cannot be contrary to what is seen. Thus Martin and Jack reject Peter's notion that the communion bread is actually transubstantiated into flesh (116-117), for it looks, feels, smells, and tastes like ordinary bread.
Men must not become victims of their own imagination, for imagination leaves out part of and thus narrows experience. The most pernicious delusion is forcing reality into one simple hypothesis:

... they force common Reason to find room for it in every part of Nature; reducing, including, and adjusting every Genus and Species within that Compass, by coupling some against their Wills, and banishing others at any Rate. (57)

Finally, men should have a low enough opinion of their own pet theories so that they do not try to "subdue multitudes to their own power, reasons, or visions" (171). These madmen convert others through simple brute force, or through subtle reasoning which appeals to men's proud self-sufficiency, or through enthusiastic preaching which stirs men's passions and carnal lusts. The result of such conversions is a community of the mad.

The imagery of disorder reflects Swift's fear of madness and anarchy. Order is absolutely necessary to Swift. Often in the Tale, the thwarting of the sense of order as shown in the Hack's eccentric character, obstructive style, and persuasive but absurd theories can lead to a sense of comic incongruity. But this thwarting of the sense of order has tragic implications. It can unloose the bounds of reason so that animal-man can give way to his passions. The Hack's folly, reflected in his undisciplined style and pox-ridden flesh, leads to the justification of atheistical doctrines
through overly systematic reasoning. The stink of sexual and excremental vapours drives men away from Christianity to an evil life, and finally into madness. But at the end of the Tale, the Hack who is scribbling away on nothing, is still more of a fool than a knave. He is unaware of the implications of his doctrines. He is still a foolish, vain, ridiculous figure, writing for man's repose (or sleep), and sighing:

... I shall here pause awhile, till I find, by feeling the World's Pulse, and my own, that it will be of absolute Necessity for us both, to resume my Pen. (210)

Although there are many suggestions of evil in Tristram Shandy, the novel is mainly comic. I do not believe there can be much doubt of this. In spite of the treachery towards Yorick, the ill-natured gossip of the world, the hypocritical prudes, and human folly such as the Widow Wadman's when she dismisses Toby Shandy's virtues, supposing him to be impotent, the weight of such passages as Bishop Ernulphus's curse, Slawkenbergius's tale, the incident of the chestnut, and conflicts between Toby and Walter Shandy and Walter and Mrs. Shandy swings the balance in favour of comedy.

In spite of the seeming chaos of Tristram Shandy, Sterne's values are clear and triumphant. The disasters of Tristram's begetting and birth are told in a brilliant circumstantial style, ordered by the association of ideas. The
novel is further unified by certain basic ideas on the values of wit and humour, intellectual humility, and human warmth and feeling.

Tristram's is a comic pose, reflecting Sterne's desire to don cap and bells and play the fool to "the top of his bent." This gaiety could be a defence against his awareness of suffering and death. Tristram laughingly refers to his "vile cough," disparages that dull grave personage, Death, and informs us:

... I live in a constant endeavour to fence against the infirmities of ill health, and other evils of life, by mirth; being firmly persuaded that every time a man smiles—but much more so, when he laughs, that it adds something to this Fragment of Life. (3)

Tristram is the device of a wit, an Erasmian mask of a fool speaking a complex and ironic blend of wisdom and folly. As Tristram explains:

... I write a careless kind of civil, nonsensical, good humoured Shandean book, which will do all your hearts good--and all your heads too,—provided you understand it. (436)

All men should have intellectual humility, and admit "the weakness and imbecility of human reason" (543). In this view, Sterne differs from Swift. In the Tale, human reason may be imbecilic, but true learning does exist. In Tristram Shandy, all men are fools and the only kind of order their minds are truly capable of is association. Besides, reason
is not man's best guide for his inner good nature is best revealed through his feelings. In Swift, the feelings or passions lead men to evil and chaos.

Tristram believes that all men have their hobby-horses, their follies:

... have not the wisest of men in all ages, not excepting Solomon himself,--have they not had their HOBBY-HORSES;--their running horses,--their coins and their cockle-shells, their drums and their trumpets, their fiddles, their pallets,--their maggots and their butter-flies?--and so long as a man rides his HOBBY-HORSE peaceably and quietly along the King's highway, and neither compels you or me to get up behind him,--pray, Sir, what have you or I to do with it? (13)

Sterne evidently shares Swift's dislike of proselytizing. Men are all fools, Tristram argues. Their minds are an untidy mass of associations and their reason and passions inexorably blended. We are

... men cloathed with bodies, and governed by our imaginations;--and what a junketting piece of work of it there is betwixt these and our seven senses, ... .

(361)

It is no wonder then that men are perplexed by "the unsteady uses of words" (86), and fly off into the oddest associations of ideas at the mention of a bridge, or solution of noses, or even 'zounds.

Even when men are able to perceive truth, it is only in part. Ironically enough, they see into other men's hobby-horses, but not their own. Toby and Walter find each other's
pet foibles ludicrous. Tristram mocks his father's theories, but solemnly presents his own.

Warm human feeling is praised in the novel. Nature herself had created Toby Shandy:

... she had formed him out of the best and kindliest clay—had temper'd it with her own milk, and breathed into it the sweetest spirit—she had made him all gentle, generous, and humane—. . . . (626)

But she has not given him, as she has to Walter Shandy, the "gifts" of natural eloquence or abstruse thought. Instead, she gave Toby the gift of common sense. There is a sustained and important contrast between the clever but rather unfeeling Walter and his intellectually obtuse but warm hearted brother. Walter Shandy is so busy reasoning and ordering reality, that he cannot act even in the smallest events of life. The hinge on the parlour door never gets oiled, Bobby does not travel to Europe, Tristram does not receive his elaborate proposed education. Slawkenbergius is Walter Shandy's bible, and conventional piety is not one of his concerns. But Toby Shandy, even with his time-consuming military fortifications, is pious and able to act benevolently towards Corporal Trim, and LeFévre and his son. Walter's theories lead to folly and inactivity; Toby's benevolent feelings, even toward a fly, lead to kind acts.

**Tristram Shandy** is comedy with a moral purpose, to make men feel and act better than they do. Sterne would have
men virtuous, and "as WISE as they [are] MERRY" (338). He tries to achieve this end in several ways: through comedy, so that men laugh; through the idea of universal folly, so that men do not become proud in their own wisdom; and through appealing to men's feelings, so that they will act virtuously.

It is remarkable that two writers having such differing views on human nature as Swift and Sterne should create two works with such striking similarities. Swift's view of man tended to be tragic; Sterne's, comic. But A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy with their foolish narrators, disorderly style, and reductive systems reflect important values common to their authors. Swift and Sterne both support the "rule of wit" against dulness. They share a love of good style, irony, and comedy. They are fascinated by long systematic theories, but are well aware of the folly they can lead to.

Swift and Sterne share a concern about order. A Tale of a Tub and Tristram Shandy are works of calculated chaos. The seeming wild disorder of digressions, mad theories, obstructive erudition, and whirling imagery of A Tale of a Tub is steadied by similarities of image and basic idea among the sections. Gnosticism in the person of the Hack is constantly ridiculed, and in the end, laughed out of existence. Swift's wit and style and power of mind triumph. Order in the form of the satiric norms of true learning, sound reason, and religious faith predominate. But it is undermined by the
tragic implications of evil, madness, and chaos.

The seeming confusion of *Tristram Shandy*, its digressions, hiatuses, absurd theories, piles of erudition, and mocking narrator is ordered by the development of the same group of characters and by the basically sound, but odd, associative manner in which they think and speak. Comedy and the view of life as ordered predominate in the novel, in spite of men's folly. Sterne does not knock the props from under a meaningful existence. Men can enjoy their folly, but center their universe in reality and kindness. The order of time and formal logic are arbitrary, while Locke's association of ideas best describes the kind of reasoning men do. Men should not indulge in excessive reasoning, which becomes rationalization, but should feel and act benevolently instead. Only by disparaging their own reasoning and acting according to their hearts can men be merry, wise, and good.

In both *A Tale of a Tub* and *Tristram Shandy*, comic order prevails. But *Tristram Shandy* does not have the tragic implications of *A Tale of a Tub*. 
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I


6 Frye, p. 229.


9 See Works's comment, p. 153 (note).


11 For views similar to this one, see Kathleen Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Laurence [Kansas], 1958), p. 137 and her quotation of Herbert Davis, p. 131;


13 See Philip Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism (Chicago, 1961), pp. 77-78.

14 I am indebted to the conception in Ronald Paulson's discussion of "Gnosticism" in his Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub'.

CHAPTER II

1 Quoted in Works, p. xlii.


5 The idea of man driven by his passions to reason against his faith and become vicious is prevalent in Swift. See the "Argument against the Abolishing of Christianity," "Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders," and the "Sermon on the Trinity."

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