

The Impact and Presence of the Writings of Laurence Sterne in Eighteenth-Century Russia

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*A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Letters*

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2001

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Abstract

The works of Laurence Sterne have made a significant and long-lasting contribution to the literary and cultural life of Russia. The early translations of the *Letters from Yorick and Eliza* and *A Sentimental Journey* as well as the critical discussions in the Russian media of the 1770s-1790s brought Russia into the mainstream of eighteenth century politics of Sensibility. The eighteenth-century Russian translations of Sterne's *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* by Apukhtin (1789), Kolmakov (1793) and Karin (1795) and the first translation of *A Sentimental Journey* by Kolmakov (1793) reinforced the contemporary approach to questions of self-development and morality, having anticipated the interpretation of literature as the enlightenment of the heart. The impact of Sternean models was so strong, that it even had a profound effect on Catherine the Great, who responded to the idiosyncratic narrative method of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* in her *Memoirs*.

I have devoted Chapter One to analysing *Sterne in England and on the Continent*. In this chapter, I highlighted the difference between English and Continental conceptions of Sterne and Sternean Sensibility and explored the general Continental reception of his works.

Throughout this study I have endeavoured to explore the contemporary reaction to Sterne's work in Russia. In the second phase of my research I concentrated on the early reception to Sterne in Russia and the question of how Russian writers Karamzin and Radishchev gradually became acquainted with

Sterne's works, and eventually came to accept and appreciate them, a milestone reached by ca. 1780s-1790s. In Chapter Two, *Sentimental Metaphysics: Russia in the Age of Sensibility* I have examined the relationship between Catherine the Great's socio-cultural strategies of the 1760s-1780s and the rise of Russian Sentimentalism. An exposition of these strategies, as reconstructed according to the Empress's private correspondence, is followed by a sketch of Sterne's audience of the age of Sensibility. The second part of my study begins with a chapter on Catherine the Great's rethinking about Sterne's ambiguous philosophy of life as a carnival in her *Memoirs*. The main object of Chapter Three, however, is a discussion of the carnivalesque elements in Sterne's and Catherine the Great's works, emphasising the concept of Folly in relation to Bakhtin's concept of the carnival. The final Chapter Four, *Sterne in the Eighteenth-Century Russian Translations*, explores the relationship between the translated texts of Sterne and their originals in order to give an accurate examination of the Russian treatment of Sterne's themes.

From the general themes of benevolence and compassion to specific devices and approaches, the works of Sterne provided models for many aspects of Russian intellectual and cultural development. When viewed from this perspective, it becomes evident that Sterne's fondness of the polyphonic narrative, his emphasis on an enigmatic concept of the carnival nature of human life, strikes a sympathetic chord in Russian fiction and memoir writing. In a variety of ways, the eighteenth century rethinking of Sterne's writings holds the key to fully comprehending some of the greatest achievements in Russian literature.

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Introduction

The unprecedented reaction to the first two volumes of Laurence Sterne's (1713 -1768) *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gentleman* in London, 1760, dominated literary circles as the main topic of discussion. It inspired the publishers Dodsley and then Beckett in the hope of capitalising on the popularity of the novel to produce and release his subsequent works in rapid succession. *Tristram Shandy* extended to nine volumes between 1760 and 1767, followed by seven volumes of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760-1769) and *A Sentimental Journey* (1768). *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza* emerged posthumously. English readers as well as those on the Continent quickly adopted Sterne's unconventional writing style. French and German readers recognised the true value of these novels and soon had them translated. The works of Sterne were considered to have stimulated and profoundly influenced the emergence of the European novel. Sterne's dominant position within the literary culture of Sentimentalism was strongest during the 1760s-1790s.

I have devoted Chapter One to analysing *Sterne in England and on the Continent*. In this chapter, I highlighted the difference between English and Continental conceptions of Sterne and Sternean Sensibility and explored the general Continental reception of his works.

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reached by ca. 1780s-1790s. In Chapter Two, *Sentimental Metaphysics: Russia in the Age of Sensibility* I have examined the relationship between Catherine the Great's socio-cultural strategies of the 1760s-1780s and the rise of Russian Sentimentalism. An exposition of these strategies, as reconstructed according to the Empress's private correspondence, is followed by a sketch of Russian readership of the age of Sensibility.

The second part of my study begins with a chapter on Catherine the Great's rethinking about Sterne's ambiguous philosophy of life as a carnival in her *Memoirs*. The main object of Chapter Three, however, is a discussion of the carnivalesque elements in Sterne's and Catherine the Great's works, emphasising the concept of Folly in relation to Bakhtin's concept of the carnival. The final Chapter Four on *Sterne in the Eighteenth-Century Russian Translations*, explores the relationship between the translated texts of Sterne and their originals in order to give an accurate examination of the Russian treatment of Sterne's themes.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to my supervisors at Glasgow University, Professor Stephen Prickett and Dr. Margaret Tejerizo, and to the Overseas Research Students Award Scheme in United Kingdom, which made my study possible.

I also wish to thank the following scholars for their consistent support and encouragement (in an alphabetical order):

Mrs. Ada Boddy (University of Glasgow), Dr. William Christie (University of Sydney), Professor Anthony Cross (University of Cambridge), Dr. Kenneth Craven (New York), Professor Michael Kirkwood (University of Glasgow), Mrs. Tania Konn (University of Glasgow), Professor Patrick O'Meara (University of Dublin), Professor Peter de Voogd (University of Utrecht).

I am grateful for the help of Dr. Elizabeth Moignard (University of Glasgow) for her guidance in academic matters.

My personal thanks to Mrs. Pat Mason and Mr. Gerald Hartley (the Glasgow University Library). I am grateful for help given by the staff of the university libraries at Cambridge and Glasgow, the British Library and the Moscow State Library.

I am especially grateful to the late Dr. Kenneth Monkman, the Honorable Curator of the Laurence Sterne Trust, and Mrs. Julia Monkman, the Honorable Secretary of the Laurence Sterne Trust, who kindly welcomed my pilgrimage to Sterne's home, Shandy Hall, in Coxwold, Yorkshire.

Notes on Translations

All translations are mine, except where the source is given in the notes. In transliterating Russian names, titles and words, I have followed the Library of Congress System. I have given the anglicized version of many Russian first names (for example, Alexander, not Alexandr, Peter rather than Petr) and retained well-known spellings of certain surnames (for example, Tolstoy, not Tolstoi).

Abbreviations

The following short titles have been used throughout; the full bibliographical information for each will be found in the Bibliography. The quotations from Sterne's works reproduce the text of the mentioned edition in each case, with the short title, volume, chapter and page numbers appearing in brackets at the end of each quotation.

Laurence Sterne, <i>The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy</i>	<i>Tristram Shandy</i>
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Laurence Sterne, <i>A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy</i>	<i>A Sentimental Journey</i>
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<i>The Sermons of Laurence Sterne</i>	<i>Sermons</i>
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<i>Memoirs of the Life and Family of the Late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne</i>	<i>Memoirs</i>
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<i>Letters of Laurence Sterne</i>	<i>Letters</i>
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CHAPTER ONE

STERNE IN ENGLAND AND ON THE CONTINENT

This chapter considers the question of eighteenth-twentieth century reception of Sterne's works in England and on the Continent, and relates this to the phenomenon of Russian understanding of Sterne as a writer and a thinker. English and Continental (Russian in particular) audiences differ in their responses to Sterne's 'literary invasion' of English and European culture. In England, Sterne's work received praise on its initial reception but this was to change because of critical attacks and gossip of a private nature. Sterne was often criticised for his 'Continental' attitude, in other word, for his 'alienation' from the traditions of English culture. The two influential men of letters of the latter half of the eighteenth-century, John Wesley and Samuel Johnson, argued that Sterne's writing was not 'English'. "I told him it was not English, Sir", thus Samuel Johnson commented on *Tristram Shandy* in the early 1760s.¹ "I casually took a volume of what is called *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*", wrote John Wesley a decade later, when Sterne's popularity was at its prime in England and on the Continent, "Sentimental! What is that? It is not English; he might as well say Continental."² This antipathy survived throughout the centuries and was echoed in F. R. Leavis's comment on *Tristram Shandy* in his *Great Tradition*, "Irresponsible (and nasty) trifling."³ For the Continental audiences, Sterne was considered an influential figure and an important part of the "great tradition" in English literature. In this chapter, I argue that literary history of English and Continental receptions of Sterne reveals different facets of his

readership and demonstrates his permanent presence – or ‘residence’ if you will – in the European house of fiction.

Even though Sterne’s critics argued about many things, they agreed in one fundamental respect: that Sterne was an influential yet controversial writer and a cultural phenomenon, regardless of geographical boundaries. As one critic put it, Sterne had an ability to “enter into the intellectual life and the hearts of the people in each country he was read”.⁴ Sterne’s favourable reputation on the Continent was different from the English critique of his works which was to arouse the public interest and also numerous debates in Europe. By reading Sterne in the original or in the French and the German translations, Russians were aware of these critical debates. Sterne’s reputation in Russia can not be understood without analysing his reception in his motherland and on the Continent.

The enthusiasm and sympathy towards Sterne’s works characteristic of his Continental and Russian audiences can be explained because of the lack of gossip that was to shadow his reputation in England. Neither can Sterne as a cultural phenomenon, as a man who enters into the intellectual life and the hearts of people of different national backgrounds, be comprehended without depicting his path in life in relation to his writing.

The present study attempts to acknowledge and make accessible the Russian conception of Sterne’s works, but to do so in the context of English and Continental literary history. This is the literary history from which Russian literati benefited in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to which Russian avant-guard thinkers were to contribute in the twentieth century. In this chapter, I will explore the English conceptions of Sterne and his concept of Sensibility given the major literary movements of the age. I will investigate the reception of Sterne’s works on the

Continent as a precursor to understanding the Russian reception of Sterne. Finally, I will address the question of English-speaking scholarship given an international focus of the contemporary Sterneana.

In 1767, Laurence Sterne wrote a brief autobiography, *The Memoirs*, covering some of the major events of his family history and young days up to 1732. Dedicated to his daughter Lydia, “in case hereafter she should have a curiosity or a kinder motive to know them” (*Memoirs*, 139), these recollections of the distant past reminds of an *apologia pro sua vita*. Apart from enlightening his only child in the genealogical matters, Sterne, being aware of the numerous gossips which shadowed his life and could disturb that of his daughter’s, intended to make light of the charges of his dubious family origins and poor moral code. Yet while *The Memoirs* offer the reader the dates and facts, those dates and facts need a further introduction.

Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) was a son of a junior army officer, whose modest rank and poor financial state predetermined the endless journeys through European battlefields and British military camps that his wife and children were to suffer: “At Clonel in the south of Ireland... I was born November 24th, 1713, a few days after my mother arrived from Dunkirk.” (*Memoirs*, 139). Though a gentleman by birth, Roger Sterne (died 1731)⁵, the father, was estranged from his wealthy relations due to his choice of the military career instead of the theological education followed by the clerical service; and as the biographers agreed, mostly because of his marriage. It was suggested that his wife, Agnes Sterne (d. 1759)⁶, might have been of either Flemish or French origin and a daughter, as *The Memoirs* inform the reader, “of no Other than a poor Suttler who followed the Camp in Flanders” (*Memoirs*, 139). She was not accepted by her husband’s genteel relatives and, at the time of his death

in 1731, was left penniless with three children. Later in life, her son Laurence would recall the Sternes' family prejudices in his characteristically twisted, almost mocking manner: "for these four generations, we count no more than one archbishop, a Welch judge, some three or four aldermen, and a single mountebank" (*Tristram Shandy*, VIII, iii, 517).

Laurence Sterne would owe his education to the above mentioned archbishop, his great-grandfather. Dr. Richard Sterne (d. 1683), a Master of Jesus College and a leader of the Cambridge loyalists played a part of a national hero in the history of the Civil War. Arrested by Cromwell, he was locked in the Tower and later transferred to a coal ship, where he was "tortured by being forced below deck with a crowd of prisoners, deprived of food, water and sanitation, the airholes purposely plugged"⁷. For his heroism Charles II at the Restoration presented him to oversee the See of York. A man of letters, Richard Sterne had established a scholarship for poor students in Cambridge that would allow his orphaned great-grandson to enter the university in 1733 and, therefore, to embark on a clerical career. Yet when the family connections provided Laurence with the daily bread, it was Sternes' coat of arms that inspired the allegorical leitmotif of his *A Sentimental Journey*. The family name was associated with the old English word *stearn*, or dialectical *starn*, signifying a starling; thus the Sternes' arms appeared as "gold, a chevron engrailed between three crosses flory sable, surmounted with a starling in proper colors for a crest".⁸ That starling, made captive, was long afterwards brought into Laurence Sterne's last work, *A Sentimental Journey* as the allegorical motif of the vanity of human life and the misery of slavery. This leitmotif, associated with Sterne's captured starling, would be echoed by the subsequent generations of his fellow writers, from Jane Austen to Nabokov⁹.

But to return to Sterne's education: he entered his great-grandfather's *alma mater* in 1733, was granted a degree in Divinity in 1737 and ordained the same year¹⁰. Having spent some twenty years as an Anglican minister in Yorkshire and disillusioned in the progress of his clerical career, Sterne embarked on writing a novel. The first instalment of his novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, issued in May 1760, was a success. Throughout the period of his literary fame and international recognition, which spanned from the appearance of the first book in 1760 to the publication of the following volumes of *Tristram Shandy* (1760-1767), *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760) and *A Sentimental Journey* (1767), Sterne rose to a status of a 'Classick' English writer. Yet his reputation as the author and the man remained ambiguous due to his innovative artistic methods and liberating mode of behaviour. Sterne's death in London in 1768 provoked a string of the controversial assessments of his character and works that would continue up to the end of the nineteenth century.

A fine portrait by Reynolds hangs in the hall of Jesus College, Sterne's *alma mater*. With a deadly pale face, the "late Reverend Mr. Laurence Sterne",¹¹ as the writer was posthumously recalled, looks down the hall. But there is another painting, believed to be a portrait of the writer as a young man that hangs in a small room behind the hall. Sterne is there in his early twenties: a witty handsome youth, who knows how to enjoy life, with shining eyes, rosy cheeks and a humorous smile. These two portraits of the writer reflect the double image of Sterne as it emerged in English critique. On the one hand, there was Sterne the classical author of 'decent' sentimental tales and on the other, Sterne the satirist, a flamboyant character and a creator of 'indecent' *Tristram Shandy*. By contrast, the Continental and Russian audiences never voiced the motif of Sterne's so-called 'indecent' in spiritual and

literary matters. For example, referring to Reynolds' portrait, a Russian critic and translator noted that "Sterne had a gloomy and thoughtful visage; however his disposition was full of wit and humour".¹² The Russian critic was expressing the common opinion, characteristic of the Continental audience, by paying his respects to the 'thoughtful writer', who is, at the same time, "full of wit and humour". The following discussion considers the 'double image' of Sterne, characteristic of the English literary context, in contrast to the all-embracing image of the well-respected writer whose "wit and humour" are highly praised, characteristic of the Continental literary context.

Sterne in England

***Tristram Shandy* (1759 – 1767)**

In May 1759, Sterne sent his unsolicited manuscript of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* to a London publisher Robert Dodsley (1703 –1764), on the recommendation of a local bookseller John Hinxman (died 1762). In an accompanying letter Sterne tried to persuade Dodsley that the book had both literary merit and commercial value:

If this 1st volume has a run (wch. Such Criticks as this Latitude affords say it can't fail of) We may both find our account in it.
 – The Book will sell; - what other Merit it has, does not become me either to think or to say, - by all Accts. You are a

much better Judge – the World however will fix the value for
us both. (*Letters*, 74)

Sterne asked for £50 for the copyright. It was a modest request in comparison with the large amounts paid to the fashionable, let alone the canonical, writers of the age, whose copyrights appeared to be so high that they were often split amongst a group of investors. For example, when Samuel Richardson's widow sold her shares in his novels at an auction of 1766, "one twenty – fourth share of *Clarissa* fetched £25, a similar share of *Sir Charles Grandison* reached £20, and one sixteen of *Pamela* went for £18"¹³. Yet these sentimental novels were no match for the prices of canonical works: "in 1767 *Clarissa* was worth £600; in the same year the copyright of Pope's *Works* was valued at an astonishing £4,400, Shakespeare at £1,800 and Addison and Steele's *Spectator* as a part – book at £1,300"¹⁴.

But Dodsley refused to pay, having returned the manuscript with an excuse that he was turning his business over to his brother James and did not want to take a risk with the new venture. The Dodsleys' enterprise was indeed an unusual choice given Sterne's status of an unknown provincial cleric. Addressed by his twentieth century biographer as the Great Dodsley¹⁵, this former footman, poet and the famous bookseller of Tully's Head in Pall Mall made a powerful figure in the mid - eighteenth century publishing trade. In the 1740s he started to play a pioneering part of a medium between publishers, booksellers and literati by negotiating the agreements with authors to superintend his magazines through the press. Dodsley's most famous employee would be Edmund Burke, who composed for him the *Annual Register*¹⁶.

Yet in the case of *Tristram Shandy* the publisher's intuition went wrong. At the end of 1759 the writer himself took the financial risk by borrowing the money from his acquaintance, Mr. Lee, "a Gentleman of York and a Bachelor of a liberal turn of mind".¹⁷ When the first two volumes were issued in York, Sterne made a proposal to Dodsley suggesting that he could send him part of the edition with the exclusive right to market the books in London. "I propose", he wrote, "to print a lean edition, in two small volumes... at my own expense, merely to feel the pulse of the world, and that I may know what price to set upon the remaining volumes, from the reception of these" (Letters, 99). For the sake of the book, Sterne had not revealed his authorship and the place where it was printed, for the London reader would overlook a provincial publication by an unknown author. The first volumes were a success and James Dodsley had agreed to pay ≤250 for the copyright:

It is hereby agreed between Mr. Dodsley and Mr. Sterne, that
Mr. Sterne sells the copy Right of the first and 2d Vols. Of
Tristram Shandy for the Summ of two hundred and fifty
pounds... And it is further agreed that the 3rd and 4th Volumes,
are to be sold and bought for the Summ of (four hundred
Guineas erased) three hundred and eighty pounds. Mar. 8,
1760¹⁸

According to Sterne's account – book of 1768, which came under the eye of his York acquaintance John Croft, the writer received "≤1500 of Dodsley at different times of

his publications”¹⁹. Thomas Becket, who would replace James Dodsley as Sterne’s publisher in 1762, should have paid him as much more.²⁰ Having found the publisher Sterne took the further steps to promote his book in London, at this time seeking for David Garrick’s patronage. Frank Donoghue wrote in relation to Sterne’s endeavour:

I contend that courting the attention of Garrick was Sterne’s first attempt to define himself professionally after abandoning hope of advancement in the Church. In the absence of a conventional career pattern or public image for writers of fiction, Sterne looked to the theatre as the best available model for capturing the attention of a mass audience. ...What is perhaps most remarkable is that Sterne began this professional lifetime of passing before his public undifferentiated from the characters of his book by addressing the most accomplished of role-players, Garrick. ...In different settings, Sterne and Garrick were perceived by consumer publics as breaking new ground: they both appeared, in a richly detailed way, to be recovering authentic emotions either on stage or in the pages of *Tristram Shandy*²¹.

Indeed, the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* precipitated a kind of cult that one would associate with a stage production than with a work of literature. Remembering a French saying that the style is the man, *Shandyism* was the style associated with a

persona of an eccentric yet witty gentleman and a free thinker. At the end of Sterne's life, for instance, an American admirer sent him a walking stick with "more handles than one": "a *Shandean* piece of sculpture".²²

This "*Shandean* piece of sculpture" illustrates the reader's "visual" estimate of *Tristram*'s idea of flexibility and resourcefulness of the human mind. Having been admired or hated, the novel did not pass unnoticed in the world of polite letters. Samuel Richardson's letter of January 1761 conveys the hostile circumstances of *Tristram Shandy*'s entry into the world:

It is, indeed, a little book, and little is its merit, though great has been the writer's reward! Unaccountable wildness; whimsical digressions; comical incoherencies; uncommon indecencies; all with an air of novelty, has caught the reader's attention, and applause has flown from one to another, till it is almost singular to disapprove: even the bishops admire, and recompense his wit though his own character as a clergyman seems much impeached by printing such gross and vulgar tales... Yet I will do him justice; and, if forced by friends, or led by curiosity, you have read, and laughed, and almost cried at *Tristram*, I will agree with you that there is subject for mirth, and some affecting strokes...²³

Richardson's estimate of Sterne demonstrates a multifaceted nature of *Shandyism* as a cultural phenomenon. A pious moraliser at the beginning, the correspondent turns almost apologetic at the end, when he accepts that "there is subject for mirth and some affecting strokes" in the novel. Furthermore he would confess bitterly that Sterne had picked up the right image which was to be applauded by the mob, perceptive to the different kinds of folly. "...I most admire the author for his judgement in seeing the town's folly in the extravagant praises and favours heaped on him," – wrote Richardson to Mark Hildesley (1698-1772), Bishop of Sodor and Man, – "for he says, he passed unnoticed by the world till he put on a fool's coat, and since that every body admires him!"²⁴

Strangely enough, these lines do not accuse *Tristram's* creator, as one could expect, but lament the writers' position in the world where writing is a kind of folly and a source of public amusement. Richardson's is a characteristic position of a *Shandean* critic who, rather unwillingly, is charmed by the novel that he has intended to criticise (and which he has "the patience to run through"). In 1761 Richardson wrote to Lady Bradshaigh (1706-1785) asking whether she knew the word *Shandy*. Lady Bradshaigh replied:

The word *Shandy* having been re'd by all the world, no wonder that I am not Ignorant of it. I did read the short volumes thro, ... and to say the truth, it some times made me laugh. It is a pity a man of so much humour, cou'd not contain himself within the bounds of decency. Upon the whole, I think the performance, mean, *dirty Wit*.²⁵

According to Lady Bradshaigh's emotional response, the word, either admired or hated, was on everybody's lips and this *ado about Shandyism* contributed to the novel's increasing popularity. At the same time, the above quoted lines bring to light the main target of the contemporary to Sterne critique: a case of *Dirty Wit* (the description is Lady Bradshaigh's). For instance, commenting on Sterne's sale of the copyright to Dodsley: "six hundred for *Shandy*" (therefore, in terms of its commercial value a "scandalous" story of *Tristram* became equal to a sentimental tale of *Pamela*), *Gentleman's Magazine* of May 1760 blamed the author and the publisher in the following stanzas:

Ye ladies so fair,
 And beaus debonair,
 Do all in your power that can be,
 The author to shame,
 And purchaser blame,
 That gave his six hundred for *Shandy*.²⁶

When a moralising reviewer tried his best in "shaming" or "blaming" the novel, a motif of "Shandean indecency", or "dirty wit", if you will, had found its way within the gentlemen's private realm. The amused reader could not help thinking of the

notorious first page of the novel that depicted the circumstances of Tristram's conception:

I wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me... "Pray, my Dear, quoth my mother, "have you not forgot to wind up the clock?" – "Good G - !" cried my father, making an exclamation, but taking care to moderate his voice at the same time, - "Did ever woman, since the creation of the world, interrupt a man with such a silly question?" Pray, what was your father saying? – Nothing.

(Tristram Shandy, I, I, 35)

Though Tristram's father "was saying nothing", the audience had keenly responded to "such a silly question":

It alleged that respectable matrons could no longer look a clock in the face; clocks of unimpeachable regularity of life were being thrown out as incitements to acts of carnality; if a gentleman wound up his watch in the presence of a lady he was understood to be making a proposal, if not a proposition – and if she wound hers up in return no other reply was necessary;

and the street – walkers of London approached prospective clients with the question “Sir, will you have your clock wound up?”²⁷

Apart from the private realm, *Tristram* added a touch of amusement to the domestic matters, appearing as *A Receipt for a Soup for Tristram Shandy* (published in verse by a more agreeable contributor of the above mentioned *Gentleman’s Magazine*). *The Grand Magazine* responded to the soup’s receipt by offering a sequence of three articles on *Tristram Shandy: A new Game at Cards with rules and directions*. And, remembering that a horse made a valuable possession of the eighteenth century English Gentleman, indeed there was a racehorse named after Tristram Shandy.²⁸

In the 1760s, *Shandyism* gained a status of a socio - cultural phenomenon having penetrated the different spheres of public life. *Tristram Shandy* tended to strengthen the writer’s reputation through confrontations and controversies. Praised by the common reader, Sterne remained a suspect for his fellow clergymen and literati. What drove Sterne’s foes was “dirty wit” or his bitter laugh on the subject of the social taboos, on the ups and downs of the human nature that *Tristram* came to uncover. But, in the very spirit of Sterne’s satire, his hostile fellow writers, as, for example, Samuel Richardson and Samuel Johnson could not help reading the novel.

Samuel Johnson would contribute to the argument. Akin to Richardson, he would also “have the patience to run through” the novel and disapprove of its author. Boswell reported Johnson’s remark of 1776: “Nothing odd will do long. *Tristram Shandy* did not last”.²⁹ (Thus, a mocking *Shandean* epigraph to the Cambridge issue of 1968 to mark the bicentenary of Sterne’s death).³⁰ Five years later Johnson would

have an argument with a member of Bluestocking Club, “the lively Miss Monckton”. Due to Boswell’s report, Johnson could not stand “when she insisted that some of Sterne’s writings were very pathetick”:

Johnson bluntly denied it. “I am sure (said she) they have affected me.” – “Why (said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about,) that is because, dearest, you are a dunce.”³¹

Johnson’s and Miss Monckton’s remarks contributed to the continuing vivid (though not always pleasant) dialogue between Sterne and his audience throughout the late eighteenth century. At the same time, Boswell’s records help to uncover Sterne’s position of a loner in the contemporary to him world of polite letters. The readers of a different social stature blamed and praised *Tristram*’s author having known very little about him, apart from his fictional *alter ego* functioning in a provocative way.

Contrary to Johnson’s, Sterne’s small inner circle of trusted friends (which made a contrast to his wide social contacts) included neither the society’s celebrities nor the dedicated devotees. He did not have Boswell as a biographer. Members of the Bluestocking group (with few exceptions) aptly attacked Sterne on the grounds of his supposed indecency and infidelity that was discussed in their correspondence.

Elizabeth Carter (1717 – 1806), a poetess and a Greek scholar, wrote to her fellow Bluestocking Elizabeth Vesey (1715 – 1791): “Real benevolence would never suffer a husband and a father to neglect and injure those whom the ties of nature, the order of Providence, and the general sense of mankind have entitled to his first regards”. “Yet

this unhappy man”, - noted the correspondent, passing to her friend the misconceptions about Sterne’s treatment of his wife and daughter, “by his carelessness and extravagance, has left a wife and child to starve...”.³² Admittedly, the Bluestockings’ criticisms persisted until the posthumous publication of Sterne’s letters edited by his daughter Lydia in 1775.

Throughout the eight years of Sterne’s career as a writer who is “read by all the world”, clerical and literary circles remained suspicious. And Garrick, believed to be a friend, would betray Sterne in the most casual way, by revealing his affair with a singer Catherine Fourmantel to Bishop Warburton. Sterne’s patron at the beginning, the bishop turned into a foe, assured that *Tristram’s* author mocked him in the novel and deceived his “well – wishes”. He thanked Garrick for “the hints I received from you... concerning our heteroclite Parson”. “I heard enough of his conduct in town since I left it”, - wrote Warburton to Garrick, - “to make me think he would soon... disable me from appearing as his friend or well – wisher”.³³ Cash commented on the consequences of Garrick’s misconduct, that “Sterne, who continued to treat Garrick as a friend, may never have discovered what lay behind the severe letters that Warburton would write that summer and may not have been aware that he had acquired a reputation for misbehaviour”.³⁴

Yet there was a kinder note in the hostile choir: Edmund Burke (1729-1797) welcomed Sterne’s “so happy an attempt at novelty” at a time “when a tame imitation makes always the whole merit of so many books” (Heritage, 106). Unlike his fellow London literati Burke assumed that “the story is in reality made nothing more than a vehicle for satire on a great variety of subjects” and pointed at the “happy” aura of the book:

The character of Yorick is supposed to be that of the author himself. There is none in which he has succeeded better; it is indeed conceived and executed with great skill and happiness.³⁵

Burke's concern of the novelty of *Tristram Shandy* reflects his understanding of the unique position within the London literary hierarchy that Sterne came to occupy. He might have been aware of the envious "talk of the town" speculating on a "dubious" persona a clergyman turning into a successful secular writer. Burke alludes to an independent spirit of polite letters: "the story of the hero's life is the smallest part of the author's concern".³⁶ Was it Burke's remembrance of Sterne the loner that provoked his remark to Hannah More on Johnson's circle: "How many maggots have crawled out of that great body"?³⁷

Notwithstanding the rumours and arguments, first editions of the volumes I-VIII (with an exception of volume IX) of *Tristram Shandy* would consist of 4000 copies, and all of them would be sold. As Cash pointed out, "Sterne could manage to keep a clientele of 4000 readers without being a favourite of the entire reading public".³⁸ Many of these purchasers had become his friends and associates in London. The novel's success provided the writer with a reputation of "the man of Humour" and "the toast of the British Nation" as his appreciative reader, Sir Thomas Robinson of Newby, Yorkshire wrote to his son.³⁹ In Robinson's words, Sterne "was in Vogue".⁴⁰ The nature of this "Vogue" deserves a further explanation. It meant a succession of the social honours bestowed on the writer on behalf of his dedicated audience. In 1760 Sterne would be elected to the Society for the Encouragement of

Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, usually called the Society of Arts. The Society's membership revealed a mosaic of the famous names given the noblemen and artisans who gathered in the rented rooms in Castle Court, Strand. Amongst the honourable members there were noblemen, such as Lord Chesterfield and John Spencer; literati, Johnson, Gibbon and Lord Lyttelton; actors, Garrick; and a Bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu, the first lady to be elected. In spite of Sterne's acquaintance with many of them, he was nominated by a certain Thomas Ryder, who was most likely to be his "common reader" (in comparison to the uncommon readers as mentioned above). Sterne's participation was commemorated in a vast mural by James Barry *Elysium, or the State of Final Retribution* designed for the Society's meeting room in 1798. Cash wrote:

There, peering over the head of Alexander Pope, is the smiling face of Laurence Sterne, finger on his temple as in the Reynolds portrait; he seems to be turning his back to those next to him – Gray, Mason and Goldsmith".⁴¹

In the same year of 1760 Sterne sat for a portrait by Reynolds at the request of Lord Ossory. Reynolds, charmed by his company and conversation, would accept no fee. Referring to the portrait and a mezzotint made by Ravenet, Sterne wrote in his characteristic self-mocking manner: "There is a fine print going to be done of me, so I shall make the most of myself and sell both inside and out".⁴² It was through this new acquaintance (or his friendship with Garrick) that he met Hogarth who agreed to

illustrate the second edition of *Tristram Shandy*. All copies of the second edition had the frontispiece by Hogarth and most of them contained a dedication “To the Right Honourable Mr. Pitt”, then Secretary of State. Though unacquainted with the Great Commoner, Sterne had no hesitation to send his dedication over to Pitt with a brief note asking his approval a month before the second edition emerged.

Yet the novel went into a fourth print run in its first year, let alone several piracies. The poet Grey wrote to Thomas Wharton that *Tristram Shandy* “is still a greater object of admiration, the man as well as the book”.⁴³ Sterne’s acquaintance, John Croft recalled “dinners for a month to come” so that “it almost amounted to a Parliamentary interest to have his company at any rate”.⁴⁴

All in all, Sterne’s life and career took a new turn. In a year he became a social entity associated with the height of British culture.

The Sermons of Mr. Yorick (1760 – 1765)

The debates aroused by the first two instalments of the novel (the remaining volumes III-IX would be issued in the period of 1761- 1767) anticipated the sensation that followed an edition of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* some six months later (the critical aspects of which will be discussed further). Bearing in mind Sterne’s clerical background, by publishing a collection of sermons he may have meant to balance the ambiguous reputation of *Tristram Shandy*. The preliminary agreement made with James Dodsley was for the second edition of the novel and for two volumes of sermons. The collection of fifteen sermons was brought out in the form and type of *Tristram Shandy*, with the portrait by Reynolds as engraved for frontispiece. Yet at the time when the novel was published anonymously, the sermons were to reveal the

author's name: *Sermons by Laurence Sterne, A.M. Prebendary of York, and Vicar of Sutton on the Forest, and of Stillington near York.*⁴⁵

There were four London editions within a year, the fifth edition emerged in 1763; the ninth – in 1768; the eleventh – in 1769. The first Dublin edition was issued in 1761. In regard to the clerical response, sermons X and XI were anthologised in volumes IV and II in *The Practical Preacher* in 1762.⁴⁶ And, in a way of a posthumous award, sermons VII and XIII from *Mr. Yorick's* collection appeared in the eighth volume of *The English Preacher* in 1773.⁴⁷

As explained in the preface, *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* alluded to a fictional persona of parson Yorick, whom the readers of *Tristram Shandy* came to like. Sterne wrote:

The sermon which gave rise to the publication of these, having been offered to the world as a sermon of Yorick's, I hope the most serious reader will find nothing to offend him... I have added a second title page with the real name of the author: - the first will serve the bookseller's purpose, as Yorick's name is possibly of the two the more known; - and the second will ease the minds of those who see a jest, and the danger which lurks under it, where no jest was meant. (*Sermons*, 5)

Between the preface and the second title there was printed a list of six hundred and sixty – one subscribers, in which the names of the society people were accompanied

by those of the clergy; and the university Dons gathered with artisans, as Garrick, Hogarth, and Reynolds. It proved to be the most profitable of Sterne's – Dodsley's publishing endeavours.⁴⁸ Young Boswell congratulated Sterne as "the most taking composer of sermons that I ever read" in the following stanzas:

On Sterne's discourses we grew mad;
 Sermons, where are they to be had?
 A strange enthusiastic rage
 For sacred text now seizes'd the age.
 Around St. Jame's every table
 Was partly gay and partly sable.

My Lady Betty, hob or nob!
 Great was the patience of old Job.
 Sir Smart breaks out, and one and all
 Adore St. Peter and St. Paul.⁴⁹

It was Sterne's being a preacher and a secular writer that is largely agreed to have qualified him to evoke "a strange enthusiastic rage for sacred text now seizes'd the age". Remembering that Sterne's was the age of reason, it was indeed "an enthusiastic rage" that had moved the common reader to embark on reading a book of sermons in a way of both an amusement and enlightenment of the heart. The author subscribes in a preface to the sentimental merit of his sermons that come "more from the heart than the head" (*Sermons*, 5).

Given their emphasis on sensibility, *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* kept surprising the audience. These were to be the shortest sermons the eighteenth century reader had ever heard of. As the story goes:

William Seward was told by a Bath bookseller's boy that Bishop John Hinchcliffe of Peterborough once sent a servant... to get Smallridge's Sermons. The man asked instead for "*small religious* Sermons and the Bookseller after examining his Catalogue for the smallest sent him Sterne's".⁵⁰

The positive response to the *Sermons* may be illustrated by the fact that Sterne was invited to preach the annual charity sermon on Sunday, May 1761 in a chapel of the Foundling Hospital. It was then a fashionable charity foundation numbering, apart from noble patrons who stood as godfathers to foundlings, Handel who had frequently performed there; Hogarth and Reynolds who donated their paintings for the sake of deserted children.⁵¹ The board of governors turned to Sterne's popularity in order to raise money for the hospital. "...I will give you a short sermon, and flap you in my turn,"- thus Sterne's response to George Whatley's (1709 – 1791) invitation (Whatley was Treasurer of the Foundling Hospital) – "preaching (you must know) is a theologic flap upon the heart, as the dunning for a promise is a political flap upon the memory: - both the one and the other is useless where men have wit enough to be honest".

(*Letters*, 134) As *Lloyd's Evening Post* informed the readers, a sermon on parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus attracted a large and generous congregation.

Yesterday morning a charity sermon was preached at the Chapel, belonging to the Foundling Hospital for the support of the children maintained and educated in the said hospital, by the Rev. Mr. Sterne, to a numerous audience, several of whom were persons of distinction, and a handsome collection was made for the further support of that charity.⁵²

Sterne's association with the charity establishments contributed to his image of a "good man", as expressed in the following letter of September 1760 by Georgina, Countess Cowper to her friend Anne Granville Dewes: Pray read Yorick's sermons, (though *you would not read Tristram Shandy*). They are more like Essays. I like them extremely, and I think he must be a good man.⁵³

A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy (1768)

Fostered by the numbered admirers, the image of Sterne the "good man" would reach its apogee at the time of publication of *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768). A prelude to *A Sentimental Journey* was Sterne's tours through France and Italy that he had embarked on in 1762 - 1765 and in 1767 for health reasons. An artistic account of the two journeys would serve as a farewell to the reader. Suffering from "consumption", or, in the medical terms, tuberculosis of the lungs, Sterne did not have much choice then to take a leave from his clerical

duties, which was granted by the Archbishop of York, and escape to a country with a better climate. As France and England were nominally at war, he could obtain no passport but managed to receive letters of recommendation to members of the French ministry from Pitt. The writer might have been in such a poor health that the *London Chronicle* reported on his arrival: "Private Letters from Paris bring an account of the death of the Rev. Mr. Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*".⁵⁴ Yet, having recovered in France, Sterne could have assured the reader, anticipating Mark Twain's witticism, that the news of his death were exaggerated. The public mourning proved to be sincere, lamenting that "it is to be hoped no man, but one who can boast of a better heart and greater knowledge, will, for the future, ever employ his pen to sully the reputation of a man who has given the world the greatest character that human nature can attain to". Thus a letter sent to St. James's Chronicle of February 1762 by an old soldier, who signed himself *A Plebeian*.⁵⁵

"Well! Here I am, my friend, as much improved in my health, for the time, as ever your friendship could wish", the consumptive Sterne wrote to Garrick on his arrival to Paris on 19 March in 1762, where he was gratified to find that "Tristram was almost as much known here as in London, at least among your men of condition and learning, and has got me introduced into so many circles..." (*Letters*, 157 - 158)

Those many circles included that of Baron d'Holbach, the Encyclopaedist, who according to Sterne "offered any security for the inoffensiveness of my behaviour in France". (*Letters*,) At d'Holbach's, Sterne made the acquaintance of Diderot, then midway through the *Encyclopédie*; who would later imitate Sterne in his *Jasques le Fataliste*.⁵⁶

Before embarking on his continental journey, Sterne appointed a new publisher to look after the publication of the volumes V and VI of *Tristram Shandy*. The new publisher, Thomas Becket (1722 – 1813), did not enjoy a reputation comparable with that of James Dodsley. He established his business in partnership with a Dutchman Dehondt, (who retired from the firm in 1772) in December 1761 and swelled profits by the importation of foreign books, among which those of Rousseau and Mme Riccobini were prominent. In 1780 Dehondt confirmed that Sterne's patronage was "extremely profitable".⁵⁷ Becket owed an interest in the *Public Adviser* and helped to conduct the *Monthly Review* for his friend Ralf Griffith. Remaining a faithful friend, he was destined to attend Sterne's body through the chapel, named the Ascension, on to his grave in 1768. Becket was to say "forever farewell" to Sterne. Was it a quirk of *Fortune* that the man, who faithfully followed a sad procession to the remote graveyard in a rainy day of March 1768, be called Becket (forgetting the eighteenth century way of spelling the name). Anticipating an important part that the works of Sterne would play in the twentieth century Modernism and Postmodernism, the publisher's name might be arranged by the Providence. Becket was to publish *A Sentimental Journey* and the posthumous collections of Sterne's letters and sermons.⁵⁸

The aftermath of the two tours to the Continent in a search of health and inspiration was "an Original work", as the writer informed his publisher. He believed that this new outcome is "likely to take in all kinds of Readers", yet warning ironically that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating", as expressed in a letter to Becket of September 1767 (*Letters*, 393). The two octavo volumes of *A Sentimental Journey* emerged in February 1768, three weeks before the author's death. There were three hundred and thirty – four sets printed in two styles. In the first style, in the

small octavo volumes with pages measuring about six inches by three and three quarters, the price was five shillings. In the second style, in two larger octavo volumes on imperial paper with wide – margined pages measuring about seven inches by four, the price was half a guinea.⁵⁹ The list of subscribers included the most notable names, as, for example, the Duke of Grafton, the First Lord of the Treasury and the ecclesiastical titles names like York and Peterborough.⁶⁰

As the audience expected an Italian part in continuation, there was an attachment assuring the subscribers that the forthcoming two volumes “will be completed and delivered to the Subscribers early the next winter”.⁶¹ A case of these two volumes is still uncertain: some of the biographies agreed that it was a Shandean jest, Cross believed that “there were to have been, it is clear, four volumes of the *Sentimental Journey* – two for France and two for Italy”.⁶² Either left unfinished or completed, the novel offers a broken line as the end – or at the end of a sensual passage of the traveller’s encounter with a lady and her maid, all three being placed at night in the same room by an inn keeper.

The first edition was exhausted within a month; and in March 1768 the *London Chronicle* reported an appearance of the second reprint. Yet it was March when Death, as Sterne once confirmed with a bitter irony in *Tristram Shandy*, has knocked at his door again. “My dearest Lydia”, he wrote to his daughter in a letter of March 1768, “- *My Sentimental Journey*, you say, is admired in York by everyone – and ’tis not vanity in me to tell you that it is no less admired here – but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion? – the want of health bows me down... this vile influenza – be not alarm’d I think I shall get the better of it...” (*Letters*, 417)

March, 18 was the day when the Londoners learned that “the famous Dr. Sterne” is dead.⁶³ Some of the newspapers added a dramatic touch: Hamlet’s line on “Poor Yorick, ...a fellow of infinite jest” to their standard obituaries.⁶⁴

The Sternean Vogue and Imitations

Side by side with the eulogies came the forgeries and imitations; though different by nature, these were the tokens of public attention. The following decade brought to life a question of Sterne’s plagiarism. On the one hand, the increasing popularity of his works provided the numerous imitations; on the other the writer himself was charged in plagiarism.

Sterne’s friend and former Cambridge fellow John Hall – Stevenson (1718 – 1785) published two volumes of *Yorick’s Sentimental Journey* (1769)⁶⁵ which he claimed was based on the literary projects that Sterne had shared with him.⁶⁶ Interestingly, French and Russian translators of *A Sentimental Journey* of 1780s – 1800s would aptly accept Hall – Stevenson’s improvisation as a sequel of Sterne’s.⁶⁷

Richard Griffith (1704 – 1788) published *The Posthumous Works of a Late Celebrated Genius* (also known as *The Koran*) (1770) which was generally recognised as genuine.⁶⁸ This literary fake, mastered by Griffith, would gain recognition on the Continent having emerged in German, French and Russian translations. Interestingly, the old printed catalogues of the British Library and the Cambridge University Library mention *The Koran* under Sterne’s entry (though with the imitator’s name). Yet *The Koran* shows only a tip of the iceberg, for the British audience of the 1770s-1790s has witnessed a flood of similar imitations, especially of *A Sentimental Journey* and the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*. Published in the *Monthly*

Review in July 1781, Samuel Badcock's critique on the subject of the pseudo correspondence of Yorick and Eliza (anonymous *Letters between two Lovers* and *Letters Supposed to Have been Written by Yorick, and Eliza*) would serve as an example. Badcock wrote:

Every coxcomb who was versed in the small talk of love, and who had acquired the knack of writing without thinking, fancied himself to be another Yorick! And as it was exceedingly easy to assume the virtue of sentiment, and as easy to adopt its cant, the Elizas too were very numerous!⁶⁹

Badcock (1747-1788), a dissenting minister and one of the *Monthly's* prolific reviewers, treats Sterne as a classical writer whose reputation is high enough to stand the attacks of literary imposters, who tended to copy his sentimental manner yet "without one grain of his wit and acuteness".⁷⁰ Badcock, thereafter, believes it to be his duty- for the sake of English literature and, on a large scale, of national pride - to "restore that esteem for good sense, learning and simplicity, which a fondness for those frivolous and idle productions had a tendency to banish from our country".⁷¹

A Sentimental Journey proved to be the most fruitful of Sterne's works in regard to the large number of imitations and continuations it had brought to light. There were, for example, *Sentimental Lucubrations* by Peter Pennyless (1770, reprinted in Philadelphia in 1793), *Sentimental Tales* (in two volumes, 1771), *The Sentimental Magazine* (1773-1776), and *Unfortunate Sensibility, in a Series of*

Letters; dedicated to Mr. Yorick in the Elysian Fields (1784). In 1823 a book emerged with the title *Maria, or A Shandean Journey of a Young lady through Flanders and France, by my Uncle Oddy*.⁷²

During the period of 1770s – 1790s extracts from Sterne were included into anthologies, such as S. J. Pratt's *New Universal Story Teller*, William Enfield's *The Speaker*, and Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts* and *Elegant Epistles*.⁷³

The readers hungered after Sternean imitations. Meeting their requirements, the *European Magazine* of November 1782 No. 6 published a sequence of allusions to/imitations of *A Sentimental Journey* entitled *The Man of the Town*. Lacking the mirthful spirit of the original, these sentimental novelettes reveal the common understanding of Sterne as a melancholic, “pathetic” writer. Sterne's gusto for the ambivalent picaresque scenarios is forgotten for the sake of the pre-Romantic decorum; and, fittingly, the following extract appeals not to the writer but to his grave. “In compliance with my friend Clarinda's request”, wrote an anonymous contributor to *Sterneana*, “I waited on her this morning, to have the melancholy pleasure of accompanying her to Sterne's grave...” Accompanied by the popular characters of *A Sentimental Journey*, Clarinda “rested her arm on a corner of the grave – stone”, and “expressed her veneration, with a pencil, on the stone”.⁷⁴

Notwithstanding the “melancholy pleasures” of the sentimental imagination, the true Shandean spirit was alive, providing a source of inspiration for dramatists, artists and musicians. There was a dramatisation by Leonard MacNally: *Tristram Shandy: A Sentimental Shandean Bagatelle*, performed at Covent Garden on 26 April 1783 which ran into two prints the same year. According to *The European Magazine*, “the whole was received with great applause by a numerous auditory”.⁷⁵

Reynold's first portrait of Sterne was exhibited twice in 1761 and 1768 by the Society of Artists of Great Britain. There was the bust by Nollekens made when the writer was in Rome. The first edition of Sterne's *Letters* (1769) shows his daughter with the Nolleken's bust; the publishers advertise a reproduction of it at the end of the third volume: "price 1. 7 s bronzed, an exceeding good likeness".⁷⁶ Nowadays the original belongs to the Laurence Sterne Trust situated in the Shandy Hall in Coxwell, Yorkshire.

Yet the common reader would probably be more familiar with the satirical prints that circulated throughout the country. Patch, a London – based engraver produced two favourite caricature – paintings: "Sterne and Death", now at Jesus College; and "Sterne in Ranelagh Gardens". There were thirty paintings, drawings and engravings of Sterne's personages or scenes as exhibited by the Society of Artists, the Free Society of Artists, and the Royal Academy respectively in a period of 1760 – 1800.

For example, one of these paintings, *Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman* by C. R. Leslie, was reproduced on a pot – lid. These paintings were also reproduced and "transferred to a variety of articles of all sorts and sizes, from a watch – case to a tea – waiter".⁷⁷

Sterne's sole exercise in a genre of sentimental song: "a musical dialogue" of 1760 had a considerable vogue.⁷⁸ The two chapters of *A Sentimental Journey*, *The Temptation* and *The Conquest* inspired one of Haydn's minuets. Three English composers: Billington, Carnaby and Moulds wrote songs on Sternean motives which were performed in the public gardens as well as in private drawing – rooms in the late eighteenth – early nineteenth century.⁷⁹

In a letter to Garrick of April 1762 Sterne provides a key to his fame in England and on the Continent: “I laugh till I cry, and in the same tender moments, cry till I laugh...” (*Letters*, 163) Thus the motto of the man who is responsible for the sentimental vogue disseminated in eighteenth century Europe, though he came too late to “father” the sentimental movement and left too early to enjoy the fruits of his labours. The truthfulness of this motto is proved by the uncommon and unsympathetic reader in the stature of a master of sentimentalism, Samuel Richardson: “Yet I will do him justice; and, if forced by friends, or led by curiosity, you have read, and laughed, and almost cried at Tristram, I will agree with you that there is subject for mirth, and some affecting strokes...”.⁸⁰

The posthumous editions of Sterne’s works (1769 – 1790s).

Sterne was survived by his wife Elizabeth (nee Lamley 1714 – 1773) and daughter Lydia (1747 – 1780). The mother and daughter lived in France; therefore Elizabeth’s brother – in – law, the Rev. John Botham took charge of all manuscripts and papers he had found among Sterne’s effects. Notwithstanding the widow’s request to send the papers down to her, the Rev. Botham destroyed part of them instead, driven by the pious zeal. Paradoxically, Sterne’s letters to Mrs. Draper, (his muse and *Eliza* of *A Sentimental Journey*) of a personal nature survived the “pious holocaust”, as Cross recalled Rev. Botham’s dangerous enthusiasm.⁸¹ Eventually the papers came into Mrs. Sterne’s hands and were edited in the view of further publication.

The sermons might have come to her mind as the better proposition, for, contrary to the letters, they did not require much editorial supervision. Becket agreed to pay 400 pounds for the copyright for three volumes of sermons, yet he demanded a year's credit.⁸² Elizabeth and Lydia, in need of money that would provide them with a comfortable living in France, turned to Strahan, a rival publisher. "...Unless you could be pretty sure of getting us more than 400," – wrote Lydia to Strahan, rejecting carelessly all that Becket had done for her father, – "the offering them might perhaps come to Beckett's knowledge – yet believe me, Sir, we had rather anyone had them than Becket – he is a *dirty fellow*" .⁸³ As a result of Lydia's negotiations, the copyright was purchased for 400 in cash by a group of publishers formed by Strahan, Cadell and Becket. The first posthumous edition of sermons emerged in June 1769. The cost of the *Sermons by the late Rev. Mr. Sterne* as advertised by Becket, was 7 s. 6 d.⁸⁴

In 1775, Lydia brought a collection of *Letters of the late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne to His Most Intimate Friends*. The advertisement for the newspapers, organised by Lydia Sterne - Medalle and Becket, described the contents of the three forthcoming volumes as:

Embellished with an elegant engraving of Mrs. Medalle, from a picture by Mr. West, (with a dedication to Mr. Garrick) Some Memoirs of the Life and family of the late Mr. Laurence Sterne. Written by himself. To which be added, 1. Genuine Letters to his most intimate friends on various subjects, with those to his wife, before and after marriage; as also those

written to his daughter. 2. A Fragment, in the manner of
 rabelais. Now first published by his daughter (Mrs. Medalle)
 from the originals in her father's hand – writing. Printed for T.
 Becket, Adelphi, in the Strand.⁸⁵

The engraved portrait by West represented Lydia in the fashionable dress of the period bending over the bust of her father. Yet this sentiment did not prevent the gossips on Sterne's unhappy family life that, having shadowed the writer's reputation, circulated throughout the late eighteenth-century. Lydia's and Becket's were the first posthumous editions available for English audience and translators.

Sterne in Eighteenth- Century Criticism

The published works on the writings of Sterne emerged in the early 1760s. The reviews of *Tristram Shandy* as published in 1760 in *The Monthly Review* and in *The Critical Review* afford an illustration of the critics' disagreement. An unsigned notice on Smollett's *Launcelot Greaves* (*The Critical Review* of 1762), placed Sterne amongst the most popular authors of his age. An anonymous critic refers to the character of Tristram Shandy's uncle Toby as an embodiment of mirth and good humour, akin to Fielding's Adams and Western and Smollett's Bowling and Trunnion:

Instances of the *vis comica* are so rarely exhibited on the stage, or in the productions of our novelists, that one is almost induced to believe wit and humour have taken their flight with public virtue. ...How different from this is the ridiculous simplicity of Adams, the absurd vehemence of Western, the boisterous generosity of Bowling, the native humour of Trunnion, and the laughable solemnity of uncle Toby! Each of these characters is complete; without relation to any other object they excite mirth; we dip with the highest delight into a chapter...⁸⁶

The commotion, provoked by the publication of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* in the same year- the publication that revealed a *novel* image of a clergyman and an author operating under a jester's disguise, had not changed *The Critical's* generally positive attitude towards Sterne. An unsigned review of May 1760 informed the reader of the recent issue of the "lectures on morality" addressed to the readers whose hearts Sterne had already "captivated with good – natured wit, and facetious humour":

Let the narrow – minded bigot persuade himself that religion consists in a grave forbidding exterior and austere conversation; let him wear the garb of sorrow, rail at innocent festivity, and make himself disagreeable to become righteous; we, for our parts, will laugh and sing, and lighten the

unavoidable cares of life by every harmless recreation: we will lay siege to Namur with uncle Toby and Trim, in the morning, and moralise at night with Sterne and Yorick... We could almost venture to pronounce, concerning the goodness of the author's heart, by his choice of subjects, most of which must have occasioned serious reflections in every man who has felt the distresses of his fellow – creatures.⁸⁷

The Critical's praise for "the goodness of the author's heart", as the whole concept of *The Sermons'* spiritual merit might be designed to defend "Mr. Yorick" from the numbered "narrow – minded bigots". On the contrary, *The Monthly Review* was, as Howes has pointed out, "likely to read Sterne lectures on the necessity for maintaining the dignity of his clerical character and to applaud his "pathetic" passages while censuring his breaches in decorum in the humorous parts of his work".⁸⁸ It was *The Monthly* that promoted an ambiguous image of Sterne as a clergyman mounting the pulpit in "a Harlequin's coat"⁸⁹: a memorable metaphor that would be echoed in the Victorian criticism. A review of May 1760 by Owen Ruffhead and William Rose (a leading critic and a co-founder of the magazine respectively) accused the author of *The Sermons* with the almost biblical zeal:

Before we proceed to the matter of these sermons, we think it becomes us to make some animadversions on the manner of their publication, which we consider as the greatest outrage

against Sense and Decency, that has been offered since the first establishment of Christianity – an outrage which would scarce have been tolerated even in the days of paganism. Had these Discourses been sent into the world, as the Sermons of Mr. Yorick, pursuant to the first title-page, every serious and sober Reader must have been offended at the indecency of such an assumed character.⁹⁰

Due to the fact that the two reviews emerged in the same month, it would be difficult to say whether the *Critical's* reference to the “narrow – minded bigot” who believes in “a grave forbidding exterior” as the kernel of religion anticipated or parodied the *Monthly's* cry for the “serious and sober reader”. The two reviews illuminate the controversy that marked the early publications of Sterne and added the fuel to the literary fights and theological debates on the subject of his morals.

Despite the disagreements on the subject of the *Sermons'* ecclesiastical and moral nature, it proved, as mentioned above, to be the most profitable of all Sterne's publications. A brief moment of reconciliation came after the publication of *A Sentimental Journey* in 1768. *The Critical Review* and *The Political Register* believed it to be the best work of Sterne. *The Monthly* alone remained sceptical towards the novel's literary merit. Private opinions were also favourable: Walpole, for example, thought of Sterne's sentimental travelogue as “exceedingly good-natured and picaresque” and “infinitely preferable to his tiresome *Tristram Shandy*”.⁹¹ Fanny Burney would express a more personal view confessing in a diary: “I am going to

charm myself with poor Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*".⁹² The writer's wish to write a book that "would "teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do" (*Letters*, 400 – 401) seemed to come true. Favourable reviews coincided with the eulogies, lamenting the death of "Yorick": the very essence that Sterne was accused of and praised for and by which he had entered the eternity.

His posthumous reputation of an influential yet controversial author was consolidated in the 1770s-1780s, when a string of publications came to light in London and, thanks to the pirate's copies, in Dublin. Lydia Sterne - Medalle, as shown above, had laid the foundations to a tradition of anthologising Sterne's works. The typical contents of this kind of editions offered the reader a mosaic of fictional and epistolary "disjointed pieces" accompanied by a biographical note and an editor's preface. The selective principles were based on the editor's individual taste, led by the ethical and aesthetical requirements of the moment. *The Beauties of Sterne* (1780) could serve as an illustration. The book enjoyed a commercial success: seven reprints appeared at the end of 1782 and the twelfth reprint came by 1793.⁹³ The subtitle fittingly addressed the reader with the "sensible heart", promising "all... Pathetic Tales and most distinguished Observations on Life", with the editor's assurance that "the chaste part of the world" would not be offended.⁹⁴ The humorous aspects of Sterne's, due to the editor's effort, had ceased to exist and, thereafter, the tenth edition of 1787 had to readdress the issue by adding a few satirical extracts. It was Sterne's 'sentiment' that would serve as a litmus paper to test the poetic essence of polite letters in the 1780s – 1790s. Wordsworth, for instance, spoke of Yorick as having "a deal of the male mad – cap in him".⁹⁵

Tuned to the music of time, Vicesimus Knox's (1752 – 1821) *Essays Moral and Literary* (1782, the thirteenth edition-1793) welcomed Sterne into the classroom.

Though uncertain about the moral values of Sterne's, Knox assumes his artistic gift for "the pathetic" which is revealed in "the power of shaking the nerves, or of affecting the mind in the most lively manner in a few words".⁹⁶

It was a precedent that, a decade earlier, could not have been expected from a minister and headmaster of Tonbridge School.

Clerical Responses to Sterne (1760s-1790s).

Apart from being imitated, Sterne was to suffer posthumously the burden of a plagiariser. Dr. John Ferriar stated in *The Illustrations of Sterne* (1798) that, though the pathetic elements in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* were original, the humorous aspects were built on the borrowing from Rabelais, Swift and their fellow satirists. Ferriar's investigations were to be revised by contemporary to him critics in favour of Sterne; but *The Illustrations* had played against his image as a classical writer. *The Illustrations* were employed by some members of the Evangelical movement in an attempt to devaluate the writer's contribution to English literature. William Wilberforce and Hannah More accused Sterne in "a morbid sensibility in the perception of indecency" and compared his sentimentality with a "disease".⁹⁷

Yet the two Evangelical critics played an old fashioned tune which was known since the 1760s. Sterne's ambiguous position of a clergyman and a novelist gave rise to the early debates on his writing from the point of view of Anglican Church he belonged to. The roots of this argument dated back to a pamphlet published anonymously in 1760 in response to the first instalment of *Tristram Shandy*. Yet the most striking example of the common belief in Sterne's digression from the High

Church would be a reference to Methodism found in a lampoon of 1760. Issued twice in the same year, *A Letter from the Rev. George Whitefield, M.A. to the Rev. Laurence Sterne, M.A.*, “attacks both Sterne and the Methodists, two very different targets” (Heritage, 100). Though an authorship of George Whitefield (1714-1770), a prominent evangelist and leader of the Calvinistic branch of the Methodists, proved to be a fake, a link with the Evangelical movement was present. An unknown author employed the biblical lexicon when addressing Sterne as a sinner who yet has time to confess: “Sterne, Sterne! If thou hadst been full of the Holy Ghost, thou would’st never have written that prophane book, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, to judge of which, by the hand that wrote it, one would think the author had a cloven foot”.⁹⁸ The two “apostates”, as the pamphlet’s author recalls both the writer and the Methodist’s preacher, had never met. Sterne might have been familiar with the early Wesleyan activities associated with the York Minister where he preached occasionally in the 1740s-1750s. He criticised Methodists in his letters of that period. On Wesley’s behalf, there was a well known remark on *A Sentimental Journey* (which is still quoted in regard to the novel, for example, in the recent *Everyman’s* edition). At the same time, a question of Sterne’s – Wesley’s association, that seemed obvious to the eighteenth century critic, requires a further investigation which is out of the scope of this research. The author of *A Sentimental Journey* may have read or heard of Wesley’s collection of sermons, entitled fittingly *The Wandering Thoughts*.⁹⁹ Wesley, in spite of his disapproval of the word *sentimental*, would publish (with the author’s permission) a revised version of *A Man Of Feeling* by Henry Mackenzie, recommending to use the extracts from the novel in the Methodists’ sermons.¹⁰⁰ An association with the early Methodists, known for their democratic principles, throws light on Sterne’s flexibility and tolerance towards the question of faith. This may

explain his “openness” towards the Continental audiences of different denominations: Sterne’s phenomenon could hardly have set a precedent in the eighteenth century English literature, for his Catholic (French), Lutheran (German) and Orthodox (Russian) readers, as it is shown in the following chapters, would have accepted Sterne as ‘one of ours’ rather than a ‘foreigner’. In general, by linking Sterne with his fictional ‘alter ego’, a country parson Yorick, the eighteenth century criticism had aptly placed the writer’s biographical data, largely based on his service as a minister (and retrieved mostly from the memoirs, anecdotes and gossips) within the context of his writings. Thus the endless allusions to ‘dirty wit’ of the clergyman who dares to reveal and, moreover, sympathise with the human ‘taboos’ of a confessional nature. In other words, from the conservative point of view, as expressed by *The Critical Review*, Sterne’s clerical position was supposed to dominate and shape his literary work. The Evangelical critique, including the allusions to the Methodists, illustrates spiritual and secular controversies that surrounded Sterne’s name as the preacher and the writer.

Notwithstanding it was not ‘dirty wit’ but a unique fusion of the ‘pathetic’ (referring to Sterne’s sentiments) and humorous that won him a “sensible heart” of the common reader. The reader, who aptly ordered the tenth edition of *The Beauties* or embarked on reading a chapter on Sterne in the thirteenth reprint of Knox’s book.

Sterne on the Continent

The history of Sterne’s reputation and influence in the English-speaking world tells only a small part of the story. European literati quickly adopted Sterne’s unconventional writing style. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, French,

German, Dutch, Russian and Italian readers recognised the true value of his novels and soon had them translated. Sterne was first known on the Continent through the original English editions and the French and German translations. In the 1770s-1800s, Sterne's works were translated into Dutch (1776-1779, 1788)¹⁰¹, Russian (1789, 1793, 1795), Italian (1813)¹⁰² and Hungarian.¹⁰³ Sterne's reputation on the Continent was of a different kind than that in England. As the historical data suggests, the eighteenth-nineteenth century Continental audience preferred *A Sentimental Journey* to *Tristram Shandy*.¹⁰⁴ *Tristram Shandy* gained an artistic recognition much later due to the twentieth-century shift towards metafiction, characteristic of Modernism and Postmodernism.¹⁰⁵ "Partly as a result of the dominant popularity of Sterne's travels, perhaps partly as a result of the difficulty in translating Sterne's bawdier humour", writes Howes, – "there were fewer attacks upon the supposedly immoral tendency of his work and in general fewer comments on the more boisterous *Tristram Shandy*".¹⁰⁶ In France, Germany, the Netherlands and Russia translations of Sterne's novels emerged in the main stream of the Enlightenment movement– and in the main stream of the Romantic movement in Italy and Hungary. The question of the "supposedly immoral tendency" (Howes) of *Tristram Shandy* or *A Sentimental Journey* was rarely raised within the Continental intellectual context.

There was, for example, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's famous statement of 1768, published in a preface of the first German translation of *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) that he would have given five years of his own life if Sterne could have been spared for another five years of writing.¹⁰⁷

I will explore now Sterne's reputation on the Continent in a way of a 'prelude' to the history of Sterne's reputation in Russia. German, French and Dutch took a priority in translating *Tristram Shandy*, *A Sentimental Journey* and *Letters from*

Yorick to Eliza in the 1760s-1770s, and Russian came fourth. These translations circulated throughout Europe and contributed to the writer's wide recognition and popularity. Apart from Sterne's success as a writer, his socio-cultural status as a thinker was rethought and challenged. The most important 'arbiters' responsible for Sterne's reputation on the Continent were Germany and France that I am going to discuss.

Sterne in Germany

In Germany in the 1760s, the works of Sterne gained an immediate success which paved the way for the first translations of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* into a foreign language. At that time the German writers were eager to learn from English models in their efforts to develop a new national literature. As Hörner shows in his article on the early German translations, the eighteenth century German renderings of Sterne's novels reflected the literary norms characteristic of the Enlightenment (Zückert's translation of *Tristram Shandy* of 1763-1765) and Sturm-und-Drang movement (Bode's translation of *A Sentimental Journey* of 1768 and *Tristram Shandy* of 1774).¹⁰⁸ Both translators praised Sterne as a man of letters.

"Mr. Sterne of London as we all know, doubtless had the intention to depict in a humorous manner the follies ingrained in his countryman and, at the same time, to spread among his jests some serious truths", wrote the German scholar and translator Johann Friedrich Zückert (1739-1778), – "It was believed that some service would be done to the German public by translating this book, however difficult that task might be".¹⁰⁹ The German translator praises Sterne's "humorous manner" which was much criticised by the English reviewers of the 1760s by assuming that Sterne "spread

among his jests some serious truths". Similarly, in his introduction to the German translation of *A Sentimental Journey* Joachim Christoph Bode (1730-1793) notes that Sterne's novel has enriched the German language by introducing a new word 'sentimental' and, thereafter, a new concept associated with this word.¹¹⁰ Sterne's 'sentiments' were welcomed by the German reader. "I received his *Sentimental Journey* to read through, and if my knowledge of English will not prove inadequate, how gladly I will travel with him", wrote the critic and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), – "I am already partly so accustomed to following his sentiments through their delicate threads all the way into the soft inner marrow of his humanity. . .",¹¹¹

Sterne's popularity was increased when in the spring of 1769 the writer Johann Georg Jacobi (1740-1814) initiated the Lorenzo cult in the memory of a fictional character, Father Lorenzo, whom a protagonist of *A Sentimental Journey* has met and befriended in France. The members of Jacobi's circle carried snuff boxes like the one Father Lorenzo gave Yorick. "Yorick had awakened in the better souls many a truly good feeling that lasted in its simplicity and purity", wrote Jacobi, – "on the other hand, others sought to feel emotions through art which they would have liked to have, but which were not theirs, and still others contented themselves with the mere outward appearance of Sentimentality".¹¹² Another lifelong admirer of Sterne was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) who acknowledged Sterne's influence upon his literary development.¹¹³

The English writer was rarely criticised by German literati though some of them expressed their dislike of Sternean cults which sprang up in the 1770s. These cults took the form of real-life imitations of favourite scenes and characters. For example, a poetic cemetery was set up in the park of Marienwerder with graves for all

Sterne's characters. Louise von Ziegler of Darmstadt went further than her fellow Sternean admirers by imitating in her dress - sense his sentimental heroine, Poor Maria.¹¹⁴ However artificial these cults were, they demonstrate German understanding of Sterne as an advocate of brotherhood and benevolent ideas.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Germans paid a special attention to Sterne's philosophy of life. Immanuel Kant refers to Sterne's originality in the notes for his book on philosophical anthropology.¹¹⁵ "Sterne the man seems to have been only too closely related to Sterne the writer", writes Friedrich Nietzsche in praise of Sterne's 'originality' and broad vision of human universe, "his squirrel-soul leaped restlessly from branch to branch; he was familiar with everything from the sublime to the rascally." Like Russian thinkers, Nietzsche would celebrate Sterne's quest for freedom and artistic independence. In his opinion, Sterne was "the most liberated spirit of all time."¹¹⁶

In general, in Germany Sterne was treated as a humanitarian and a man of the Enlightenment whose works contributed to the development of German national literature. German literati interpreted his concept Sensibility as an epitome of self-development which is a token of the man's enlightenment and progress. The European reader was to benefit from German translations of Sterne's novels which emerged at the dawn of his vogue on the Continent and circulated mostly within the German-speaking countries, like, for example, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Russia where German was a language of the educated circles associated with academia and universities. In these countries, the German concept of Sterne's Sensibility as a force of literary development and moral enlightenment was influential.

Sterne in France

Sterne's novels were enthusiastically received in France in part because of his two journeys to the country in 1762-1764 and 1765-1767 of which the writer left a sympathetic account. Yet *A Sentimental Journey* (translated by Frénais in 1769) and the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* (translated by Peyron¹¹⁷ in 1776) were more popular than *Tristram Shandy* which was translated in 1777 (translated by Joseph Pierre Frénais (d. 1789)). *Journal Encyclopedique*, for example, reviewed *A Sentimental Journey* with admiration and *Tristram Shandy* with a tone of disapproval yet it acknowledged the novel's success with the French reader. "It is hard to see how such nonsense could have such a prodigious success", complained an anonymous reviewer, – "everyone agrees, after reading this little book, that it has no common sense and yet it is in great demand – what an absurdity!"¹¹⁸ In this instance, French critique echoed negative responses found in English periodicals.

It was not only the common reader who admired Sterne's works. The references to Sterne made by the leading French writers of the age, like Voltaire (1694-1778) and Denis Diderot (1713-1784), demonstrate their keen interest in his writings. In 1771 Voltaire addressed Sterne as "England's second Rabelais" in the second volume of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* and compared his artistic method with that of Callot.¹¹⁹ Voltaire's opinion was shared by Diderot, who had announced that "this book so mad, so wise, and so gay is the English Rabelais". Diderot was to imitate "the English Rabelais" in his *Jacques le Fataliste*. In her study of Sterne's influence on Diderot, Alice Fredman confirms that "Diderot's and Sterne's names have been coupled by critics from the eighteenth to the twentieth century."¹²⁰

Towards the end of the century another well-known writer, Madame de Staël (1766-1817), commented on a philosophical nature of Sterne's humour. "There is

moodiness, I would say almost sadness, in this gaiety”, noted Madame de Staël (in her *Essai sur les Fictions* (1795)), – “he who makes you laugh does not participate in the pleasure that he causes”.¹²¹ Whereas in Germany Sterne’s novels proved to be more popular within artistic and literary circles, the French readership was of a broader nature. Among Sterne’s admirers, for example, there were the Romantic writer Charles Nodier (1780-1844) and the Minister of Justice and senator Dominique-Joseph Garat (1749-1833).¹²² Regardless the occasional critical response, like that of the *Journale Encyclopédique*, Sterne was held in high esteem by the French literati. In general they appreciated Sterne’s Sensibility and his ‘Shandean smile’ and it was, perhaps, a combination of sentimental feeling and humour that appealed to the French audience.

The French connection is important in the context of the Russian reception of Sterne that will be discussed in the following chapters. The Russian reader first became acquainted with Sterne’s novels through French critique and translations of *Tristram Shandy*, *A Sentimental Journey* and *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*. Most of critics and readers of Sterne belonged to the French-speaking Russian gentry. Pushkin, Lermontov and Tolstoy first read Sterne in French. In 1846, by the time when all Sterne’s works were available in Russian, Dostoyevsky recommended his brother to read *Voyage Sentimental*.

As has been shown above, the reception of Sterne’s novels on the Continent was in general less controversial than that in England. Sterne’s concept of Sensibility, revealed in *A Sentimental Journey*, was widely recognised and discussed by the common public whereas *Tristram Shandy* was better known within the literary circles.

When the first Russian translated extract of *A Sentimental Journey* emerged in 1779, the educated Russian reader would have already read Sterne in

the German and French versions and was aware of European debates on the nature of Sternean Sensibility. His works came to Russia in their 'Continental cloak' in which the eighteenth century Russian audience first became acquainted with *Tristram Shandy*, *A Sentimental Journey* and the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*.

The aim of this thesis is to clarify just what Sterne's influence on Russian literature was and to define the unique phenomenon 'Sterne' acquired in Russian culture and cultural self-consciousness. The following chapters will consider Sterne the writer and the place of his writings in Russian literature. The focus is on the special period in Russian history (the 1760s – 1790s) when political and intellectual hopes for the nation's future became concentrated on the educating, liberating and enlightening role of Western literature – personified in Sterne and his philosophical and social mode of behaviour.

¹ Reverend Baptist Noel Turner, *Account of Dr. Johnson's Visit to Cambridge, in 1765*, as quoted in Alan B. Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 138.

² Entry dated 11 February 1772 in *The Journal of John Wesley*, as quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 229.

³ F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition*

⁴ Alan B. Howes, 'Introduction', in *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, edited by Alan B. Howes (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London and Boston, 1974), p. 26.

⁵ See *The Sterne Family: a Sketch Pedigree* in Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Early and Middle Years* (London: Methuen, 1975), pp. xxvi-xvii.

⁶ See *The Sterne Family: a Sketch Pedigree* in Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Early and Middle Years*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

⁷ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Early and Middle Years*, p. 4.

⁸ Wilbur L Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, 3rd edn., 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), I, p. 2.

⁹ See Alan B. Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 16. Jane Austen parodied Sterne in her juvenilia; Nabokov referred to Sterne in his *Lectures on Literature* and in *Lolita*.

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- ¹⁰ Sterne received his degrees from Jesus College, Cambridge, graduating B.A. in January, 1736 – 1737, and M.A. at commencement in July, 1740. See Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 31.
- ¹¹ See the 1760's – 1780s editions of Sterne's sermons and letters, for example, *Original letters of the late Reverend Mr. Laurence Sterne* (London: Printed at the Logographic Press, 1788).
- ¹² *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize s Ovetami*. Sochineniie Sterna s frontispisom i portretom, perevel s frantsuzskogo N. Karin (Moskva: Rüdiger and Claudii, 1795), p. XII.
- ¹³ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination. English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), p. 135.
- ¹⁴ J. C. T. Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment, 1760 – 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 135.
- ¹⁵ Ralf Strauss, *Robert Dodsley* (London: 1910), p. 260.
- ¹⁶ Burke never admitted publicly to being editor of the *Annual Register*. Thomas W. Copeland has established his authorship for the book reviews in "Edmund Burke and the Book Reviews in Dodsley's *Annual Register*", *PMLA*, lvii, (June 1942), 448 -468.
- ¹⁷ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Early and Middle Years*, p. 294.
- ¹⁸ Lewis S. Benjamin Melville, *Life and Letters of Laurence Sterne* (London, 1911), I, pp. 205-206.
- ¹⁹ As qoted in Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 175.
- ²⁰ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 172.
- ²¹ Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine. Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996), pp. 69-70.
- ²² Alan B. Howes, "More Handels Than One" in Howes, Alan B. (ed.): *Sterne. The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 1.
- ²³ As quoted. in Alan B. Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 128.
- ²⁴ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, pp. 128 – 129.
- ²⁵ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 90.
- ²⁶ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment, 1760 – 1800*,. p. 7.
- ²⁷ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*,. p. 8.
- ²⁸ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 7.
- ²⁹ James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. by Robert Hunting (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), p. 449.
- ³⁰ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 9.
- ³¹ *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, pp. 108-109.
- ³² Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 203.
- ³³ Garrick's response to Bishop Warburton is discussed in Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Later Years* (London and New York: Methuen), 1986, pp. 51-52.
- ³⁴ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Later Years*, p. 52.
- ³⁵ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 106.
- ³⁶ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 106.
- ³⁷ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination. English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 151.

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- ³⁸ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Later Years*, p. 294.
- ³⁹ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Later Years*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁰ Cash, *Laurence Sterne. The Later Years*, p. 18.
- ⁴¹ Cash, *Laurence Sterne The Later Years*, p. 83.
- ⁴² Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, I, p. 197.
- ⁴³ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*,
- ⁴⁴ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, I, p. 199.
- ⁴⁵ *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall – Mall, 1760).
- ⁴⁶ *The Practical Preacher*, (London, 1762).
- ⁴⁷ *The English Preacher*, 8 vols., (London, 1773).
- ⁴⁸ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 218.
- ⁴⁹ James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, p. 228.
- ⁵⁰ Cash, *Laurence Sterne, The Later Years*, p. 41.
- ⁵¹ Markman Ellis, *The politics of sensibility. Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15.
- ⁵² Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 49.
- ⁵³ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 79.
- ⁵⁴ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, I, p. 264.
- ⁵⁵ A letter signed A Plebeian, "St. James's Chronicle" (February, 16 – 18, 1762). As quoted in Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, I, p. 265.
- ⁵⁶ See Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, pp. 274 – 276.
- ⁵⁷ Becket's biography is discussed in Lewis Perry Curtis, ed., *Letters of Laurence Sterne* (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press), p. 167-168, n.1.
- ⁵⁸ For Becket's editions of Sterne's works see my *Bibliography*.
- ⁵⁹ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 155.
- ⁶⁰ As quoted in Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 156.
- ⁶¹ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 155.
- ⁶² Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 155.
- ⁶³ *Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1889), pp. 215-216, as quoted in Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 166.
- ⁶⁴ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, II, p. 166.
- ⁶⁵ *Yorick's Sentimental Journey*, 4 vols, (London: Printed for T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1769).
- ⁶⁶ Sir Sydney Lee wrote a biography of Hall – Stevenson for the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- ⁶⁷ French and Russian translations are discussed in the following chapters.
- ⁶⁸ *The Posthumous Works of a late celebrated Genius*, 2 vols. (London, 1770). (This edition circulated in the late eighteenth century under a title of *Koran or The posthumous Works of a late celebrated Genius*.)
- ⁶⁹ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 248.
- ⁷⁰ As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 248.
- ⁷¹ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 248 – 249.
- ⁷² Oates, J. C. T. *Shandyism and Sentiment, 1760 – 1800*, pp. 14 – 19.
- ⁷³ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 18

⁷⁴ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 17 - 18

⁷⁵ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 26

⁷⁶ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 28

⁷⁷ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, p. 29

⁷⁸ The “dialogue” was designed for Catherine Fourmantel, who appeared at York in the spring of 1759 to fulfil her engagement to sing at the Assembly Rooms.

⁷⁹ Oates, *Shandyism and Sentiment*, pp. 14 - 19

⁸⁰ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 129.

⁸¹ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 177 – 178.

⁸² Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 180 – 181.

⁸³ Cross, , *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 180.

⁸⁴ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 180.

⁸⁵ The final title differed from that of the advertised by Lydia and Becket: *Letters of the late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne, To his most intimate Friends. With a Fragment in the Manner of Rabelais. To which are prefix'd, Memoirs of his life and Family. Written by himself. And Published by his Daughter, Mrs. Medalle*, 3 vols. (London: Printed for T. Becket, the Corner of the Adelphi, in the Strand, 1775).

⁸⁶ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 145.

⁸⁷ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 76.

⁸⁸ Howes, Alan B.: “The Publication of Tristram Shandy (1760 – 7)” in Alan B. Howes.: *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p. 6.

⁸⁹ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 77.

⁹⁰ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 77.

⁹¹ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 202.

⁹² Ellis, Annie Raine. (ed.): *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, London: 1889, i. 45.

⁹³ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 12.

⁹⁴ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 256.

⁹⁵ Ernest De Selicourt, ed., *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 2nd edition, revised by Chester L. Shaver (London: 1967), i. 56 – 57.

⁹⁶ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 251 – 254.

⁹⁷ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 301 – 302.

⁹⁸ Howes, *Sterne. The Critical Heritage*, p. 101.

⁹⁹ John Wesley, *The Wandering Thoughts* (Bristol, 1762).

¹⁰⁰ John Butt, *The Mid – Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p.

¹⁰¹ In her study of Sterne’s first translation into Dutch, Zaneveld argues that the early Dutch followers of Sterne came from the academic and literary circles.¹⁰¹ In 1776, for example, the *Bibliothèque des Sciences*, a voice of the Dutch Enlightenment (published in French in Hague) described Sterne as the “Peintre de la Nature”. This portrait was mirrored by the prolific Dutch writer De Perponcher (1741-1819), who reflected on “the Sensibility of Yorick, who manages to derive such graceful and moving scenes, touching the soul in its innermost sensitivity, from the most banal events and occasions”. “Petroncher’s appreciation of Sterne”, writes Zaneveld, – “showed reservations, or at least reticence, about *Tristram Shandy*, but a strong admiration for *A Sentimental Journey*.” Like French critics, De Perponcher was impressed by Sterne’s psychological analysis, his focus on the inner world and artistic ability “to derive such graceful and moving scenes . . . from the most banal events and occasions”. The

Dutch writer might have had in mind *A Sentimental Journey*. Therefore it was Sterne the author of *A Sentimental Journey* who appealed more to Dutch literati despite the fact that *Tristram Shandy* was translated first due to the enthusiastic effort of its publisher. The Dutch analogy is important in the context of early Russian renderings of Sterne that will be discussed in the following chapters.

¹⁰² The most famous Italian translation, that of *A Sentimental Journey* by poet and scholar Ugo Foscolo, emerged at Pisa in 1813. On Sterne's reputation in Italy see a recent book by Sante Matteo, *Textual Exile. The Reader in Sterne and Foscolo* (New York. Berne. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang).

¹⁰³ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ Sterne's readership on the Continent is discussed by Alan B. Howes in *The Critical Heritage*. For Sterne's readership on the Continent also see Harvey Waterman Thayer, *Laurence Sterne in Germany* (New York: Macmillan, 1905); Francis Brown Barton, *Étude sur l'Influence de Laurence Sterne en France au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1911), Giovanni Rabizzani, *Sterne in Italia* (Rome: Formigini, 1920)

¹⁰⁵ On Sterne's influence on European Modernist and Postmodernist fiction, see Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984).

¹⁰⁶ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p.

¹⁰⁷ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 427.

¹⁰⁸ Wolfgang Hörner, 'Lorenz Sterne: Early German Translations, 1763-1800', *The Shandean*, 4 (1992), 11-48.

¹⁰⁹ As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 422.

¹¹⁰ As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 427.

¹¹¹ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 426.

¹¹² As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 429.

¹¹³ W. R. R. Ringer's book *Laurence Sterne and Goethe* (1918) mentions all the references to Sterne.

¹¹⁴ See Harvey Waterman Thayer, *Laurence Sterne in Germany* (New York: Macmillan, 1905), p. 89.

¹¹⁵ As quoted in Bernard Fabian, 'Tristram Shandy and Parson Yorick among some German greats', in *The Winged Skull* (papers from the Laurence Sterne Bicentenary Conference), edited by A. H. Cash and John M. Stedmond (London: Methuen,; Kent State University Press, 1971), p. 196.

¹¹⁶ As quoted in Ian Campbell Ross, *Laurence Sterne. A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. vii.

¹¹⁷ I was not able to find about Peyron's biographical data.

¹¹⁸ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 382.

¹¹⁹ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 391.

¹²⁰ Alice Green Fredman, *Diderot and Sterne* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 3-4.

¹²¹ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 407.

¹²² See Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 409 and 418.

Chapter Two

Sentimental Metaphysics:

Russia in the Age of Sensibility

A full answer to the question why Sterne came to take such an important place in Russian self-consciousness – would take into account the complex interaction of social, intellectual, literary and political developments in eighteenth-century Russia. A few perspectives on the problem are offered in this chapter.

The eighteenth-century debates on Sensibility

Sensibility and the sentimental were matters of political and literary debate in the second half of the eighteenth century. As Markman Ellis has pointed out in his recent research on the politics of Sensibility in eighteenth century Britain, it was regarded as a positive and progressive influence: “a desirable virtue - a pleasure that improves the mind of the individual and society in general.”¹

This work is intended to explore the notions of Sensibility and Sentimentality and Sterne’s conception of Sensibility taken within different national contexts (English and Russian respectively), in relation to the social, political and cultural transformations that the age of Sensibility had to offer. In this instance we rely on the broad definition suggested by Ellis:

The terms “Sensibility” and “Sentimental” denote a complex field of meanings and connotations in the late eighteenth century, overlapping and coinciding to such an extent as to offer no obvious distinction. Despite the attempts of some recent critics, it is not possible to legislate between the closely allied terms “sensibility” and “sentimental” in the mid-eighteenth century, especially as they are used in the novels. . . . Sensibility operates within a variety of fields of knowledge, beyond the strict confines of history and literature. These include: (1) the history of ideas (moral sense philosophy); (2) the history of aesthetics (taste); (3) the history of religion (latitudinarians and the rise of philanthropy); (4) the history of political economy (civic humanism and *le doux commerce*); (5) the history of science (physiology and optics); (6) the history of sexuality (conduct books and the rise of the domestic woman); and the history of popular culture (periodicals and popular writing).²

These could be divided into spiritual matters (philanthropy, moral sense philosophy, taste, civic humanism) and a social and physical approach (physiology and optics, the rise of the domestic women, popular writing). These twentieth century recollections of the phenomenon of sensibility echo the eighteenth century reflections on the subject. The following is an extract from Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary*:

Sensibility

(sensibilité, French)

1. Quickness of sensation.

Modesty is a kind of quick and delicate feeling in the soul; it is such an exquisite sensibility, as warns a woman to shun the first appearance of every thing hurtful. (Addison's *Spectator*).

2. Quickness of perception.³

Johnson's *Dictionary* depicts sensibility as a phenomenon of English life and a mode of behaviour. Therefore, similarly to the twentieth century approach, sensibility is associated with the established cultural and philosophical code by articulating on both physical ("as warns a woman to shun the first appearance of everything hurtful") and spiritual levels ("a quick and delicate feeling in the soul"). Interestingly, taken in its eighteenth and twentieth century versions, sensibility lacks any cultural or social boundaries: it responds either to the élité subjects such as philosophy and aesthetics or to common matters, such as popular writing.

This is, perhaps, the secret of its 'adaptability' to different national cultures, which had very little in common apart from an interest in sensibility. The traces of this originally English phenomenon can be found, for example, in eighteenth century Germany, France and Russia.

Of these three, Russia although mentioned by two eighteenth century English novelists, Defoe and Sterne, remained "terra incognita". Defoe would send his

Crusoe through Siberia (in the second part of the novel) and Sterne would describe an imaginative journey to the mysterious Russian continent in *Tristram Shandy*.⁴ Yet an illustration of Sterne's novel (made by an English artist in 1996)⁵ depicts an archetypal image of 'Russia under Western eyes' which, perhaps, has not changed for the two centuries. The monumental Winter Palace is covered by snow and, in front of this architectural masterpiece of European baroque, a couple of the "poor folk", wearing traditional fur coats, make their odd presence. The mocking image would be the last to meet the refined requirements of the age of Sensibility.

Nevertheless, seen in an unsentimental light, Russia had been already playing an important part in political issues when Sterne published his *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*.

Russia under English eyes (1700 – 1790s)

Despite the fact that allusions to Russia can be found in the works of Shakespeare and his fellow English writers, it was Peter the Great's visit to London in 1698 that brought the Russian theme to British audiences.

Thomson, for example, would depict the Russian tsar as a warrior and a statesman of creative vision in *The Seasons*:

Sloth flies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,
Of old dishonour proud: it glows around,
Taught by the royal hand that roused the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade:

For what his wisdom plann'd, and power enforced,
 More potent still, his great example show'd.⁶

Subsequently, a number of poetical, fictional and historical works on Peter I emerged in London in the 1730s - 1770s. According to a library catalogue that was printed in York in 1768 one of these editions belonged to Rev. Laurence Sterne and remained in his collection until its posthumous sale. Sterne had in his possession three volumes of *History of the Life of Peter I, Emperor of Russia* by Mottley published in London in 1739.⁷ The fact that an Anglican clergyman and a writer, famous for his encyclopaedic knowledge, apart from his interest in human eccentricity or 'hobby-horses', became interested in the Petrine theme, provides a proof of the fame Peter I's persona enjoyed in the British isles. The Russian Emperor welcomed British subjects in St. Petersburg. Merchants, officers, doctors, architects, not to forget adventurers, made their fortunes in Russia under the tsar's protection and patronage. Absorbed in the projects of the future enlightenment and reformation of the Russian State, Peter I would recollect the English voyage that may have been his first introduction to Western democracy and the Parliamentary system respectively.

The question of the 'unspeakable truth': the truth versus a sovereign would remain a painful dilemma for educated Russians throughout the eighteenth century. It might be added to this account that the enlightened democratic intentions of the eighteenth century Russian rulers, as, for example, Peter the Great's respect for the British Parliament, did not go any further than a matter of personal admiration and had no influence on the wide circles of the Russian society.

This was also the case of the British community in St. Petersburg that remained an isolated island: 'a small England' on the banks of the Neva river, in terms of any philosophical links or cultural contacts with Russians. As Anthony Cross has pointed out:

The British colony, with its solid core of merchants, played a conspicuous and important role in the life of the city; by the end of Catherine's reign, it numbered some 1500 souls and enjoyed its own distinctive life style: there was an English church, a club, a coffee house, an inn, and, for a short period, an English Masonic lodge and an English theatre. British visitors, for business or pleasure, arriving by land or on one of numerous British ships that plied the Baltic during the ice-free months, found "English grates, English coats, English coal and English hospitality, to make me welcome, and the fire-side cheerful", and opportunities for moving in the best Russian society.⁸

These Russian and English worlds that took their residency on the banks of the Neva did not have much in common apart from the well-developed trade connections. Given the commercial focus, the British community was not to promote Sterne's works in Russia. The first advocates of Sterne would be Russian *Anglophiles* of Catherine the Great's reign. Catherine II's accession to power in 1762 brought radical changes to the Russian-English alliance. In the period of almost forty years that

followed Peter I's death in 1725, the string of rulers, obliged by their German family connections, did not see England as a political ally.

Unlike *Gallomania* of the Empress Elizabeth's⁹ court (1742-1761) or the Prussian military sympathies of Peter III's milieu (1761-1762), Catherine II was the first Russian ruler to express an interest in the highlights of English literary scholarship. A volume of Catherine's (then a Grand Duchess and a wife of the heir) correspondence with the British Ambassador Sir Charles Williams of the 1750s comes as a proof of her pro-British sentiments at that time.¹⁰ The Grand Duchess's enthusiasm in cultural matters flattered the Ambassador. He intended (in a letter written in 1759) to send the charming and intelligent Grand Duchess the best English comedies (perhaps, the works of Shakespeare) and Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*.¹¹ I assume that Catherine the Great was to be among the early readers and advocates of Sterne's novels. By exploring Sterne's reception in Russia, I will discuss Russian understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon of Sensibility given the political and cultural context of the age.

In the 1760s, Catherine II established cultural and educational links with London. Russians were encouraged to study and work in the United Kingdom. A few scholarships were granted to the gifted students as a token of the Empress's attention. These graceful diplomatic manoeuvres were to foster the enlightened image of the Empress. Catherine the Great was indeed the first Russian monarch to enjoy world recognition as a woman of letters, whose treatises on education, history, charity work and political matters were translated into French, English and German and were widely read in Europe. Yet European writers, dramatists and poets depicted Catherine the Great as a benevolent 'mother' of the nation without having seen her. "Cato is

better seen at a distance”, replied Catherine the Great to Voltaire who wished to visit her in St. Petersburg.¹² As “seen at a distance” she charmed the European audience. For example, a sentimental tale in verse by Robert Merry: *Paulina; or, the Russian Daughter* (1787) was crowned by a final footnote that the heroine had escaped the temptations of the secular world and found spiritual salvation. Merry’s idealised image of Catherine II was to illuminate her sensible and tolerant nature.

The Russian writer Pushkin (1799-1837) would also emphasise a benevolent side of the Empress’s social persona. Pushkin’s rethinking of the age of Sensibility was reflected in *A Captain’s Daughter* (1836). It was a story of a young officer Grinev: a Russian *Candide* and his bride called in the spirit of the age Maria. These sentimental lovers were to suffer the consequences of Pugachev’s upheaval in 1774-1775. Maria, a damsel in distress, and, fittingly, an orphan of a civil war, goes to St. Petersburg to seek the Empress’s protection. Pushkin’s portrait of the Empress is based on artistic insight and the recollections of his acquaintances and relatives, who happened to meet Catherine II in their young days:

Early the next morning, Maria Ivanovna woke, dressed and went quietly into the Palace grounds. It was a beautiful morning; the sun lit up the tops of the linden trees, already tuning yellow under the cool breath of autumn. ...Suddenly a little white dog of English breed ran barking up towards her. Alarmed, Maria Ivanovna stopped in her tracks. At the same moment she heard a pleasant female voice saying: “Don’t be frightened, it does not bite. And Maria Ivanovna saw a lady

sitting on the bench opposite the monument. . . . She was wearing a white morning-gown, a night-cap and a jacket. She seemed to be about forty. Her full, rosy face expressed dignity and calm, and her blue eyes and slight smile had indescribable charm. . . . Everything about the unknown lady involuntarily attracted her and inspired her confidence.¹³

With the characteristic sentimental twist, Pushkin reveals the royal identity of “the unknown lady” who turned to be a sympathetic and attentive listener of the orphan’s sad story. The same morning, having been invited to the Palace, Maria Ivanovna meets her new friend again:

The Empress turned towards her with a kind smile, and Maria Ivanovna recognised her as the lady with whom she had talked so openly a few minutes previously. ...Maria Ivanovna took the letter and, bursting into tears, fell at the Empress’s feet. The Empress raised her up and kissed her. “I know you are not rich,” she said, “but I owe a debt to the daughter of Captain Mironov. Do not worry about the future. I shall take it upon myself to look after you. After encouraging the poor orphan, the Empress dismissed her.”¹⁴

But, this sentimental and emotional approach demonstrated one of the facets of the royal character and could be gracefully replaced into a cold and formal persona. In this instance the flexibility of the Empress's self-presentation makes an opposition to those English women who were brought up in the sentimental vogue. An eighteenth century tale, purveyed by James Walker in his travelling account of Russia (1821) would illustrate the point. Walker depicts an English lady, Baroness Dimsdale, who wished to express her sincere gratitude to Catherine the Great for the generous gifts, including a title, given to her husband. Baron Dimsdale (1722-1800) was an English doctor, who inoculated the Russian imperial family against smallpox.

Elizabeth Dimsdale, (1732-1812) before she married at the age of forty-eight her sixty-eight year old and widowed second cousin and moved to St. Petersburg with him in 1781¹⁵, presented an archetype, common in the sentimental and Victorian novel. She was a spinster sister of a parson, who would probably share her time between reading Richardson and participating in the local charitable committees. Therefore, the Baroness followed the fashion of her age by emphasising her sincere feelings and opening her heart to Catherine II. The Empress has demonstrated her understanding of the English sentimental code. Walker wrote:

...The Baroness was more to be admired for the warmth of her honest feelings, than her knowledge of the graces, etiquette, and forms of a court. She was not, however, to be denied; and the Empress, being apprised of her wishes, appointed a day to receive her ladyship. The lady went; the baron, in fear and trembling, accompanied her; and as he

feared, so it fell out. The gratitude of his honoured spouse so far got the better of her good breeding, that, when her majesty entered the saloon, instead of half kneeling to kiss the hand held out with so much grace, she flew towards her like a tiger, and almost smothered the poor empress with hugging and kissing. As soon as the suffering sovereign could disengage herself, and shake her feathers, after so rude and boisterous an embrace, she walked on smiling, and told the baron, that *madame son epouse* was *tres aimable*; and to her attendants she very coolly said, *Ces choses arrivent quelque fois*.¹⁶

Written in 1821, Walker's account of the English lady "hugging and kissing" "the poor Empress" lacks the subtleties of the spirit of their time. With sentimentality regarded as a literary curiosity and a meaningless fragment of the past, Walker could not see any depth in the story. The English lady followed the concept of Sensibility that praised the virtue of being sincere. Catherine II, though not pleased by the breaking of etiquette, was able to understand the sentimental code of behaviour: "she walked on smiling, and told the baron, that *madame son epouse* was *tres aimable*".

Pushkin's description of Catherine II's benevolent treatment of the orphan and Walker's account demonstrate Russian respectful attitude towards the sentimental mode, that of benevolence and tolerance. From the 1780s onwards this mode was increasingly associated with the Sternean impact on Russian culture.

Catherine the Great and the politics of Sensibility.

Lionel Trilling, in his reflections on *Sincerity and Authenticity*, has argued that the eighteenth century man was subconsciously involved with sentimental writing, having reshaped his life in accordance with the fictional model. Trilling illustrates this phenomenon by recalling Rousseau's youthful dream of happiness as revealed in *Confessions*. Paradoxically, his dreamy embodiment of happiness had neither a philosophical nor social but a fictional flavour, having coincided with the sentimental ideals depicted by Jane Austen. "My expectations", Rousseau confessed, – "were not boundless. One charming circle would be enough; more would be an embarrassment. . . . A single castle was the limit of my ambition. To be the favourite of its lord and lady, the lover of their daughter, the friend of their son, and the protector of their neighbours: that would be enough; I required no more".¹⁷

Trilling commented that the author of the influential eighteenth century treatises and novels "wished, in short, to be Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, not, of course, in her creep mouse days, but in her time of flowering, when her full worth is known and her single-mindedness and sincerity have made her loved by all."¹⁸

The discussions on Sensibility in life and literature as found in the intimate genre of correspondence, diaries and memoirs were to be extended to the actual 'trying on' the sentimental garb. This phenomenon was of an international nature, having bound together men of letters who, living the Enlightenment, aptly explored and exploited an enigma of Sentimentalism.

John Wesley (1703-1791), as it was shown in Chapter One, revised (with the author's permission) Henry Brooke's (1703-1783) sentimental novel, *The Fool of Quality* (1764-1770) and, therefore, converted a work of fiction into a didactic

treatise.¹⁹ Wesley's audience believed in his authorship and, perhaps, in authenticity of his character, a hero of their time: the man of feeling. Therefore the sentimental artefacts were to play an influential part within the different realms of eighteenth century life, linking together man's personal experience, his intellectual *credos* and cultural expectations.

Russian literati would also aptly submerge in the sentimental context. The following letter, written by Catherine the Great in 1774, serves as an illustration of the complexities of Russian involvement with the sentimental culture:

See for yourself, for you are a man of reason, whether so much senselessness can be confined to so few lines? A stream of quarrelsome words is flooding from my head. What a pleasure it must be for you to confront such a distracted mind, I do not know. O, Monsieur Potemkin, quel fichu miracle Vous avés opéré de dérange ainsi une tête, qui ci – devant dans le monde passoit pour être une des meilleures de l'Europe?

It is time to become wiser, indeed. . . . You will become repugnant to him through your senselessness. It is high time to stop writing, otherwise I will doodle in sentimental metaphysics, which serve no other purpose but it does not do me any good. God knows there is a lot of love but it would

be much better if he is not aware of this. . . . Farewell, my

Giaour, Cossack, Moscovite.²⁰

The names of a correspondent and an addressee were the highlights of the eighteenth century history: Catherine II wrote to Prince Potemkin (c. 1739-1791). The Empress wished her private notes to be burned, but Potemkin rescued them. Finally, some of these notes were to be found by a Catherenian scholar among the diplomatic dispatches in the most unsuitable place for amorous correspondence: the archives of the Moscow Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As seen in symbolic light, a fragile piece of paper: a personal memento of the age of Sensibility has found its place in the annals of history.²¹

At first glance, the correspondent follows the mainstream of the sentimental tradition, lamenting after the Richardsonian heroines that love is suffering, love is ephemeral and love is alien to reason: “God knows there is a lot of love but it would be much better if he is not aware of this”. At the same time, a sharp analytical comment on the “sentimental metaphysics”, depicted as a social and psychological twist (let alone the linguistic side), reveals the uncommon Richardsonian reader, who is focused more on the nature of sensibility than on its literary pathos.

We suggest that Catherine II’s allusion to “sentimental metaphysics” was more than a personal touch of self-irony. It might have illustrated the Empress’s reflections on the Russian mentality (which, undoubtedly, she associated with Potemkin) that demanded an adaptation and rethinking of the English sentimental tradition.

There are two questions that might be discussed with regard to the letter: its linguistic novelty (the word *sentimental* was new to Russians) and ambivalent meaning (the Empress linked the two opposite philosophical notions of *metaphysics* and *sentimentality*). And, finally, how has the Empress's revised version of Sensibility influenced Russian cultural life?

Before embarking on a discussion of Catherine II's concept of Sensibility, as mirrored in her private correspondence with Potemkin, we might introduce the biographical data. Contrary to sentimental transformations of 'Rousseau the Fanny Price' or 'Wesley the Man of Feeling', the Empress, as depicted in numerous biographies, seemed to lack this kind of metamorphosis. Yet there are revealed in her letter to Potemkin against all the odds of her origin, character and political intentions.

Born a German princess, Catherine II rarely spoke her native language after 1743, when she arrived in St. Petersburg at the age of fourteen. A daughter of a German prince of the House of Anhalt-Zerbst and of a princess of Holstein, she was invited to Russia by the Empress Elizabeth (1742-1761) and affianced to the Grand Duke Peter, heir to the throne. The marriage was encouraged by the two European monarchs but for different reasons. Frederick the Great of Prussia foresaw the political advantages for Germany in this alliance. Elizabeth I was moved by the sentimental recollections of her late fiancé, a prince of Holstein and Catherine II's uncle, who died before the wedding ceremony. The marriage turned out to be a failure and ended tragically in 1762 when the ill-fated Peter III was assassinated and Catherine II came to power. Her creative activities were shadowed by recurrent peasant revolts. One of them, led by a Cossack Pugachev (1774-1775), assumed the proportions of a civil war. The highlights of Catherine the Great's reign were:

educational, financial and local government reforms, annexation of the Crimea and the Northern shores of the Black sea, strengthening of international diplomatic connections.

There is a common opinion that, in spite of her successful social and military strategies for Russia's sake, Catherine the Great was alien to the language and culture of her adopted mother-land. Isabel de Madariaga has argued:

The frequently repeated assertion that the Russian court in Catherine's reign spoke French rather than Russian is not true. It is based on the attacks by the satirical journalists... But such attacks were commonplace in most countries at this time, regardless of the actual reality. Moreover, out of courtesy, leading Russian statesman and courtiers spoke French to visiting foreigners, who could not be expected to know Russian.

But the private and the official correspondence between Catherine and her leading ministers and officials (and her lovers) at this time is – with a few exceptions – written in Russian. In addition this period saw not only the multiplication of translation into Russian, but the flowering of literary works. . . Catherine herself wrote most of her literary works in Russian, and some in French. She did not

know English, though there are occasional suggestions that she could read it.²²

Another historical commonplace showed Catherine the Great as an autocrat on the Russian throne. According to twentieth century scholarship, summarised in the aforementioned edition of Catherine II's private letters, her political and cultural endeavours were always consulted with and supported by the members of her Russian inner circle and her 'alter ego': "Giaour, Cossack, Moscovite" of the letter, Prince Potemkin, respectively.²³ Prince Grigorii Potemkin-Tavricheskii – a former graduate of Moscow University and an officer of the St. Petersburg's Izmaylovskii regiment, is to be remembered as the most outstanding personality among Catherine the Great's milieu. The most trusted friend and partner (in both, political and marital terms) he exercised great influence over the Empress. His main achievement was progressive administration of the South - Eastern Russia, particularly the Crimea, for which he received the title of prince of Tauris (prince Tavricheskii in Russian).

It might be added to this biographical account, that, since Potemkin's tragic death in 1791, there were numerous Western and Russian attempts to 'fictionalise' his private persona. Whereas Catherine II's Sensibility was hidden, the sentimental side of Potemkin's nature was revealed to Russian and European audiences by articulating almost at the edge of theatrical affection, but yet believed to be sincere and trustful even by sceptical Englishmen. For example, a travelling account of *A Tour of Russia, Siberia and the Crimea* by Parkinson (1791) gives a sympathetic view of Potemkin's achievements by depicting him as a self-made man with a broad political vision.

Interestingly, Parkinson pays attention to the ambiguous position Potemkin ('a favourite' in the vulgar common terms) suffered throughout his life, and express his belief in authenticity (yet eccentricity) of Potemkin's feelings for the Empress. However, critical towards Russians in general, Parkinson depicts him as a sentimental character, although a "strange mixture of things with regard to the time of day". Parkinson's tribute to Potemkin throws light to the way Englishmen, willingly or not, tried to understand the Russian concept of Sensibility:

His only support was the Empress. For at heart every body else was his foe. No Man possessing so much power ever did so little mischief. The Empress is still supposed to go on with his plans. . . . Gould says that he comprehended and understood everything. . . . At the Revolution in 1762 the Empress having no sword, she took one from Potemkin who happened to stand in the way. He afterwards distinguished himself by affecting madness out of his love for her Majesty, and used to be walking perpetually under her windows, mimicking all the airs and attitudes of insanity.

Potemkin was a strange mixture of things with regard to the time of the day. He would place (himself) under a Fountain and suffer the water to come all over him without changing his clothes. He was uncommonly hardy; and used to sleep in a latticed sort of Tent through which he could see all round

him (Gould). Gould does not hesitate to suspect that he was poisoned.

Garing ... told us, if he had lived, he very much believed that he would have turned Priest at last. . . ²⁴

Potemkin's nature, as shown above, that of a lonely, devoted and eccentric character, ready to repent of his sins and become a priest, but poisoned by a foe, would have fitted in a sentimental novel. The story of his affection "for her Majesty" serves as an illustration that, indeed, life is stranger than fiction. Did Parkinson, a shrewd observer of the Russian life, apply to the favourite sentimental and romantic motif that those who are madly in love are, in reality, sane and sincere? The Empress may have shared this opinion when she confessed her sentimental feelings for Potemkin, the feelings that confused – and confronted her belief in reason: "O, Monsieur Potemkin, quel fichu miracle Vous avés opéré de dérange ainsi une tête, qui ci-devant dans le monde passoit pour être une des meilleures de l'Europe?"

Catherine's and Potemkin's understanding of a double nature of the phenomenon of Sensibility reflects the Sternean concept:

– Dear Sensibility! Source inexosted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! Thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bed of straw – and 'tis thou who lifts him up to HEAVEN – eternal fountain of our feelings! (*A Sentimental Journey*, 98).

So what was it to be sentimental in the mid-eighteenth century Britain, on the Continent – and in Russia? Was it the same phenomenon – and the same *sentiment*, designed to link the nations? Or was it a bridge between Western and Eastern mentalities respectively? To answer this question, we have to comment on the English roots of this linguistic and cultural phenomenon.

The word *sentimental* was first recorded in the 1750s but it was Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* that gave the word a fashionable run.²⁵ An early reference was to be found in Lady Bradshaigh's (c. 1706-1785) letter to Samuel Richardson of 1749 and quoted since by a number of the nineteenth and the twentieth century scholars. Lady Bradshaigh asked the novelist:

What, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word sentimental, so much in vogue amongst the polite, both in town and country? I have asked several who make use of it, and have generally received for answer, it is – it is – sentimental. Every thing clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word... I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a sentimental man; we are a sentimental party; I have been taking a sentimental walk.²⁶

Lady Bradshaigh's ironic description is similar to Catherine's treatment of *sentimental metaphysics*. The Russian Empress brings together the two notions of

sentimental and metaphysics that “the polite” aptly “make use of”, yet unable to understand their meaning. But the ironic connotation is to be the other side of the coin. When Richardson called his didactic collection of 1755 *A Collection of . . . Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, he highlighted the moral pathos of the new literary trend. Four years later, the idea of sentimental feelings as a token of moral improvements of human society would be treated in a philosophical treatise: Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). From the 1750s onwards the notion of ‘sentiment’ was associated with the moral instruction of ‘the heart’ (Richardson) and of ‘the mind’ (Smith). The link between the intellectual and emotional, literary components of ‘sentiment’ as a phenomenon of social life is present in Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary*. Johnson explored both philosophical meaning of ‘sentiment’ and its linguistic and literary counterpart:

Sentiment

(Sentiment, French)

1. Thought, notion, opinion.
2. The sense considered distinctly from the language or things, a striking sentence in a composition.²⁷

Sentimental fiction played a twofold part by fostering imaginative sympathy for the distressed and providing the moral instructions. For example, an editor of a later sentimental compilation entitled *The Beauties of Sterne. . . Selected for the Heart of Sensibility*²⁸ (1782) demonstrated the same intention of enlightening the audience (“the beauties” in this instance allude to the uplifting and inspirational vigour of literature) yet on the condition that the readers would have sensible hearts.

Seen in this light, Catherine the Great's *sentimental metaphysics* could be explained as an echo of the mentioned above emphasis on the moral – and moralising zeal of sentimental literature. (The Empress was undoubtedly familiar with the works of Richardson and Adam Smith). For *metaphysics* may be interpreted in this context as a code of spiritual doctrines, focused on the idea of purification of human nature. In this way, *Sentimental Metaphysics* would make a synonym to *Moral and Instructive Sentiments* or *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* interpreted metaphysics as a doctrine. At the same time, Johnson demonstrated its ambiguous meaning by quoting an ironic passage from Shakespeare accompanied by an extract from Watt's *Logics*.

Metaphysics

Ontology, the doctrine of the general affections of substances existing.

The mathematics and the metaphysics

Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.

Shakespeare

. . . The topics of ontology or metaphysics, are cause, effect, action, passion identity, opposition, subject . . . and sign.

(Watt's *Logics*).²⁹

Presumably, Catherine II's twofold interpretation of metaphysics was close to Johnson's opinion. The Empress was aware of the cultural and linguistic subtleties, connected with the word *sentimental*, as depicted in the letter. Catherine II regrets her secret passion, hidden from the world where *sentimentality* stands apart from the mainstream of common morality associated in her mind with conservatism of *metaphysics*. But, as a woman in love, she is trapped, "doodled in sentimental metaphysics", and can not stand, in all respect to her royal position, 'above physics' (remembering the original meaning of the word: *Meta* (above) *Physics*).

Yet Catherine the Great brought together the opposite notions of the spiritual and physical universes, where *Metaphysics* refers to spiritual macrocosm whereas *Sentimental* alludes to the individual's sensitive microcosm. Though expressed in a highly personal context, this controversial idea of equality between the humble human being and his (hers) ephemeral feelings and the spiritual doctrine focused on the idea of eternity of universe links Catherine the Great with one of the most unorthodox thinkers of her time, Laurence Sterne. Both agree in the cosmic vision of one man's 'life and opinions'. Perhaps, the Empress reflected on *Tristram Shandy's* entrance into this world when placing her suffering 'senselessness' passionate *self* in the centre of metaphysical universe: "It is shameful, disgraceful and sinful for Catherine II to succumb to an overbearing passion." ³⁰

Apart from the personal connotations, *sentimental metaphysics* expressed a certain social view that of the sentimental feelings being a trap. Catherine the Great might have formed her controversial opinion during the heyday of the sentimental 'great expectations' in Europe. Her views would be understood a decade later, in 1789-1790, at the time of French Revolution. At that time Sensibility became the

target of criticism. In other words, the ideals of philanthropy, social compassion and the individual's moral development, praised by the sentimental writers, led not to the perfect European society, aided by the humanitarian intentions, but to the cruel emotional and political outburst of the French Revolution. In 1793, for example, an English artist Gillray produced a string of caricatures depicting images associated with the cultural icons of his era. One of these caricatures, called "New Morality", depicted an archetypal figure of Sensibility: as a damsel in distress associated with Sterne's heroine, the poor Maria. Gillray's 'damsel' mourns a dead bird in her hand with her feet resting on the severed head of the French king. Mark Ellis argues that "the ambiguity observable in the figure of "Sensibility" in Gillray's "New Morality"" is a significant replication of a similar and equally significant ambiguity in the ethical status of sentimentalism in the later decades of the eighteenth century."³¹

In 1790, the Russian writer Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826) expressed the similar sentiments in a sombre vein:

The eighteenth century comes to the end: what do you see at
the world stage?

. . . Where are these people we were fond of? Where are the
fruits of Science and Wisdom? Where is the elevation of the
moral and meek creations born for happiness? – The age of
Enlightenment! I do not recognise you – I do not recognise
you in blood and fire!³²

Both, the Russian writer and the English artist reflected on the political massacre as the final episode of the age of Sensibility. At the end of the century, frightened and confused by the threat of the French Revolution, Europeans came to realise the controversy of the sentimental cult.

Apart from the independent philosophical and social view of the phenomenon of Sensibility, as shown above, there was a new linguistic approach involved. In his monumental study of the linguistic characteristics of the word 'sentimental', Erämetsä notes that Sterne "gave the term new connotations with little or no connection with the earlier usage". "The concept of 'sentimental' for Sterne included the quality of being emotionally susceptible to certain kinds of experience and situations, which were likely to create the highest possible pleasure", comments Erämetsä, – "These sensations were savoured with witty and whimsical impulsiveness . . .".³³

By using the word 'sentimental', the Russian Empress hinted at Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*. She was among few educated Russians to include the new word in her everyday lexicon. As we have shown above, the new connotations of the word associated with Sterne (emotional zeal and "whimsical impulsiveness") are revealed in the context of Catherine II's letter. For, contrary to the elaborate style of her official letters, Catherine II's private correspondence suggests the 'stream of consciousness' on her part that is reflected in her emotional epistle to Potemkin.

Having introduced the fashionable English word to the Russian society, the Empress may be regarded as a medium. Anthony Cross has argued that Catherine the Great read Sterne and his fellow English novelists, Richardson and Fielding respectively, in French or German renderings.³⁴ Isabel de Madariaga, in the above mentioned extract, has pointed out that the Empress "did not know English, though

there are occasional suggestions that she could read it.”³⁵ Whether Catherine the Great owed her linguistic reflections to the original *Sentimental Journey* or to the German or French translation, she might have been interested in the literary tradition associated with the word ‘sentimental’. The Russian conversion ‘sentimental’nyj’ that she had gracefully suggested was a novelty either for the multilingual St. Petersburg’s literati or for their German and French fellows.

Within the eighteenth century Russian literary context the word ‘sentimental’nyi’ has not been recorded. Russian translators of the works of Sterne experimented with the Russian synonyms of the word: ‘chuvstvennyj’ (sensual) and ‘chuvstvitel’nyj’ (sensitive) without using ‘sentimental’nyj’ (sentimental). The eighteenth century editions to which I refer are mentioned in the bibliography.

For example, the first translated extract of *A Sentimental Journey* by Arendt was introduced under the name of *Yorick’s Sensual Journey through France and Italy* (1779). This title reappeared in subsequent renderings and was mentioned in prefaces of other translated works of Sterne. For example, a Russian translator of *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza* (1789) Apukhtin introduced Sterne as “the immortal author of *A Sensual Journey*”³⁶. The other version of the same title: *A Sensitive Journey*, proved to be popular among poetic circles. In the 1790s a Russian poet Glinka recollected *A Sensitive Journey* as an inspired book in which “the heart and the mind would always find something”³⁷. When the first complete Russian edition of *Sterne’s Journey through France and Italy* emerged in 1793, the translator Kolmakov solved the problem by simply rejecting the word ‘sentimental’ and replacing it with the writer’s name. The word ‘sentimental’ was not recorded until the early 1800s, when a Russian translator of the *Beauties of Sterne* (1801) Galinkovsky explained it in a footnote. “Sentimental (Santimental’nost’)”, Galinkovsky argues, “means a delicate, fine and

real Sensibility”.³⁸ Russians were not alone in their pursuit of an equivalent to this phenomenon.

Similarly, a German translator Bode, when puzzled how to render the English word ‘sentimental’ asked for aid his friend Lessing, who “coined the adjective *empfindsam* after the analogy of *mühsam*, thus giving, through Sterne, a new word to the German language”³⁹. The result was a refined title yet without any innovative literary touches: *Vorbericht to Yoricks Empfindsame Reise* (1768). Bode, like the Russian translators, was keen on finding an analogy in his native language rather than to assimilate the foreign word in the German linguistic context.

Frénais, the French translator, was the one to compromise by accepting the word in the hope that it would prove useful for expressing the new ideas. Presumably, it was his *Voyage Sentimental* (1769) with which Catherine the Great was familiar, but she might have been introduced to the English original through the British diplomats accredited at the Russian Court.

For the multilingual Empress, who willingly immersed herself in the Russian cultural context, the linguistic twists and puzzles were a part of her everyday routine. Therefore she felt comfortable to adapt the original English expression instead of looking for Russian equivalents. Significantly, Catherine II was ahead of her time having recognised the philosophical and literary burden of the word ‘sentimental’, “so much in vogue amongst the polite”⁴⁰.

The Russian reader of the Age of Sensibility

The Russian Empress might have been ahead of her time in her rethinking of Sterne's sentimental approach. In general, literature of the age of Sensibility played an important part in Catherine the Great's enlightening projects. The literature of Sensibility started to penetrate Russia in the 1760s, at that time presented by the minor sentimental authors (as, for example, an anonymous author of *Sirota Aglinskaia*, (*The Fortunate Parish Girl*, translated by Kharlamov). The 1760s translations as, for example, Fielding's *Journey from this World to the Next* translated in 1766 by Kharlamov, demonstrated the reader's desire for an entertaining rather than a moral component. Within a decade Russians would have been reading Swift, Sterne, Defoe, Richardson, Frances Burney and their fellow leading sentimental novelists.⁴¹ This was the dawn of the 'intensive reading' in Russia, brought to life by Catherine the Great's 'westernisation' of the publishing trade.

In 1783, Russian intellectual context was deeply influenced by Catherine II's proliferation of printing presses. These private presses were run by people of different origins, from noblemen to peasants. The educational zeal of the common Russian reader was enlivened within a short period of time. In the 1780s, Russia reflected the enthusiastic establishment of reading and publishing enterprises in the English counties in the 1730s; when, according to Samuel Johnson's ironic remark, "almost every large town has its weekly historian, who regularly circulates his periodical intelligence"⁴². The enthusiastic publishing activities resulted in new Russian journals; textbooks; and original and translated works of fiction and poetry disseminated throughout the vast Empire. The booksellers' networks seemed to

benefit as well, for French, English and German editions of sentimental novels became available to an educated audience.

A major problem hindering the Russian gentry and the educated middle class from enjoying sentimental fiction was a poor command of foreign languages. Russian gentry spoke French, while German and, to a lesser extent, English were the languages of trade and military matters. Germans were to contribute to Russian education, for Russians studied at German universities and many Germans were employed by Moscow and St. Petersburg academic institutions. French and Germany were the channels through which many works of European literature came through. According to Levin, from 1762 to 1801, 382 novels were translated from French, 126 from German, 8 from English.⁴³ It might be added to this account, that the works of the English novelists were rarely translated from the original, but from the German or French. For this reason a *Society for the Translation of Foreign Books* (1768-1783) was designed to introduce the achievements of European cultural life to the common Russian reader. Interestingly, the name of Sterne was not mentioned among the potential authors which included, among other English writers, his fellow satirist Swift and Fielding and Richardson. Sterne was to wait until Novikov's private publishing enterprise took care of his *Letters from Yorick to Elisa* in 1789.

Sterne's works should have been ignored by official translators because of their ambiguous association with two opposite streams of Russian fiction, that of sentimental tales and picaresque novels. Both genres made a successful appeal to the growing middle class Russian reading public. As Gasperetti would put it, "the reading public... was swelled by an infusion of readers of rather humble backgrounds".⁴⁴ Targeting the new literary audience, "the printed literature of

subculture... came out in one edition after another".⁴⁵ For example, two best-selling Russian novels of the period, *Vanka Kain* and *Milord George* by Komarov, were published seven times in the eighteenth century whereas translated novels of a didactic and enlightened nature published by Moscow University Press usually run one print.⁴⁶ Consequently, an early feature of eighteenth-century Russian fiction is the display of a string of social prejudices.

The Russian reader of Swift and Richardson was not interested in the 'pulp fiction' of the subculture, but he did read Sterne's works. Alien to this 'genteel' audience, Russian writers of picaresque novels were also interested in Sterne's novels. For example, a leading sentimentalist writer Karamzin was recalled by contemporary to him critics as the "Russian Sterne".⁴⁷ He cultivated a sentimental style in accordance with his view of literature as a medium for the expression of refined and elegant feelings.

At the same time, Chulkov (ca. 1743-1792), a precursor of the nineteenth century Russian picaresque novel (that was far from expressing refined feelings) and an author of *The Comely Cook, Or The Adventures of a Debauched Woman* (1770), was also associated with Sterne. Gasperetti demonstrated Sterne's influence on Russian picaresque authors. "Chulkov is a master parodist who used his wit and whimsy of the subculture to challenge the norms of official literature", writes Gasperetti, – "it would be appropriate to see Chulkov as something like the Russian Sterne".⁴⁸ The works of Sterne provided a connecting link between these two opposite levels of readership by influencing both sentimental and picaresque trends in Russian literature.

Laurence Sterne in Russia: publishers, censors and the reading public

Russian issues of the works of Sterne may serve as an example of the social and intellectual developments that took place within the eighteenth century publishing milieu. Having epitomised a shift towards private enterprise, these developments were to reveal a hidden 'class agenda' that was mentioned above which influenced the choice of publication. If a proposed publication was considered to be of an intellectual nature it would have been unlikely that a merchant entrepreneur was going to run the risk of producing an unprofitable item designed for a narrow circle of Russian literati. The choice of text published would reveal much about the publisher, indicating his background, his moral and artistic principles and, finally, his social connections. In this instance, a brief sketch of Russian publishers and censors of Sterne's works would be appropriate. It is more difficult than one might expect to establish the sales-figures of his novels in Russia, for few of the eighteenth century booksellers' annual catalogues survived and none of them mentioned Sterne's books.

The first Russian rendering of the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* was issued by Novikov's Typographical Company in Moscow in 1789. *Yorick's* sentimental letters had already gained recognition and commercial success in England and on the Continent, and were to meet the requirements of Russian educated society. This edition was by and large intended for the educated audience. It was censored by a university professor Barsov.

The next edition of the *Letters* was issued by the private entrepreneurs Rüdiger and Claudia who at the time owned the Moscow University Press in the 1790s. The fact of censorship is resumed, once again, by Andrey Briantsev, "a professor of

Logics and Metaphysics and a censor of books issued by the University Typography”.⁴⁹ According to Marker’s study of the eighteenth century private publishing, Rüdiger and Claudia were among “the intellectual publishers” because of their “long-standing” association with Moscow University.⁵⁰ Presumably, this publication was designed for the university milieu and Moscow sentimental audience.

In 1793, the Academy of Sciences Publishing House contributed to the eighteenth century *Sterneana* by publishing three volumes of *A Sentimental Journey* and *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza*.⁵¹ This academic publication did not require censorship, and it proved to be the sole eighteenth century Russian edition of Sterne’s works that entered the world without being censored. Interestingly, in terms of price, the book might have been considered as both sophisticated and popular by targeting the upper middle class, bourgeoisie and gentry as the potential purchasers. The price for three volumes, one rouble fifty kopecks, was quite high for a novel. The common reader could have purchased a translated novel for less than a rouble.

It became clear at the end of the century that Russian renderings of Sterne found their reader within the genteel, bourgeois and academic circles.

The Initial Reception

Karamzin: “The Russian Sterne”

In the 1790s, the fact of Sterne’s widespread popularity and critical esteem was reported by Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826), the leader of the Russian Sentimental movement and editor of the *Moscow Journal*:

Modern English literature is hardly worth mentioning. Only the most mediocre novels are now being written here, and there is not even one good poet. The line of immortal British writers was concluded with Young, the terror of the happy and comforter of the unhappy, and Sterne, the original painter of sentimentality⁵².

It seems useful to start from this peculiar link between “the original painter of sentimentality” and his lifelong admirer, Karamzin, who was to play the part of a medium between the English writer and his Russian readers. Karamzin’s references to *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* have been studied in depth in the recent works of Cross, Craven, Lotman and Kanunova to which we refer in the bibliography. Though these scholars have debated the extent of Sterne’s influence on Karamzin, they agree that his dialogue with Sterne continued throughout his literary career.

Born in a family of provincial gentry, Karamzin was educated in Moscow, where he began his literary career as an editor and translator. In the 1780s, he edited the first Russian journal for youth, *Reading for Children*, and translated Gessner, Haller, Shakespeare, and Lessing. Apart from his fluency in French and German, he was among the few Russian literati to have a good command of English and read English authors, Sterne among them, in the original version.

The vogue for Sterne was then at its height, and Karamzin paid tribute to the English writer in his *Letters of a Russian Traveller* (1792) in which he recorded his

journey through Europe in 1789-1790. In 1791, he returned to Russia and founded a new monthly review, *The Moscow Journal* (1791-1792) in which he published translated extracts from *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* accompanied by the editor's notes.

In the *Letters*, Karamzin followed Sterne in a number of narrative devices, by rethinking and challenging the sentimental tradition within the Russian context. The allusions to the English writer are manifested both in the narrative structure, that of a travelogue, and the narrative voice, that of a 'sentimental traveller' with whom Sterne's protagonist is identified. In *A Sentimental Journey*, Sterne presents a catalogue of different kinds of travellers paying attention to the 'sentimental traveller'. "It is sufficient for my reader, if he has been a traveller himself, that with study and reflection hereupon he may be able to determine his own place and rank in the catalogue – it will be one step towards knowing himself", Sterne wrote. Therefore, he explains to the reader "a sentimental journey" is "one step towards knowing himself" (*A Sentimental Journey*, 10).

In his biography of Karamzin, Lotman has argued that the image of the sentimental traveller echoed the call of the times⁵³. "The common reader had adapted the phraseology and played the part of the sentimental traveller", wrote Lotman.⁵⁴ Characteristically, in the *Cambridge History of Russian Literature* Altshuller refers to Karamzin's times as a "transition to the modern age"⁵⁵ of which Russian interest in the culture of Sensibility was indicative. Thereafter, Karamzin's interest in the persona of "the sentimental traveller" was indeed the "call of the times" in that is the Russian 'discovery' of the socio-cultural context of the age of Sensibility.

Sterne and Karamzin saw life as a spiritual journey. Karamzin's protagonist is indeed a Russian pilgrim looking for the Enlightenment of the heart that was

associated with Sterne's philosophy of life. For example, in a letter from Calais he voices the theme of compassion and forgiveness by referring to a scene from *A Sentimental Journey* where Yorick, indulged in a feast, meets a humble monk Father Lorenzo and refuses him charity. Sterne depicts Yorick's sense of guilt and the monk's forgiveness (*A Sentimental Journey*, 6-7).

At the end of the story, his Russian traveller recollects the moment when Yorick "made his peace with Father Lorenzo and – his own conscience".⁵⁶ Karamzin focuses on Sterne's motif of moral improvement which is revealed in his recollection of Yorick's repentance when he humbly "exchanged his tortoise-shell snuff box for Father Lorenzo's horn one" and this memento was "dearer to him than any set with gold and diamonds".⁵⁷ Karamzin's moral message corresponds with Sterne's reflections on the nature of a sentimental traveller.

Sterne's motif of sentimental devotion which, in his opinion, forms the kernel of human relations is echoed in Karamzin's recollections of a tale of Amanda and Amandus, "the tender lovers"⁵⁸ from *Tristram Shandy*. Yet the Russian traveller makes a telling point that his sentimental Russian audience would have fully grasped. He was not able to find Amandus and Amanda's grave where Sterne lamented their "tender and faithful spirits" because "the French think now about their revolution and not of mementos of love and tenderness".⁵⁹ Here, Karamzin refers to the question of the cruelties of the real world, so destructive and so lacking in humanity. Yet, unlike Sterne, in focusing on the moral issues he misses the humour. In the original, the grave is forgotten because of human vanity and the narrator comments ironically on the fact that the sentimental memorial does not exist.

Letters gave rise to the new genre in Russian literature of a sentimental travelogue in which the narrator focuses on the events of his inner life and gives a

detailed account of his experiences and impressions. A group of Karamzin's fellow Russian sentimentalists was much associated with this genre. Emerging in the early 1800s, these 'post-Karamzinian' sentimental travelogues included *My Journey or the Adventures of a Single Day* (*Moe Puteshestvie, ili Prikliuchenie Odnogo Dnia*, 1803) by Nikolay Brusilov and *A Journey to Little Russia* (*Puteshestvie v Malorossiiu*, 1804) by Peter Shalikov and others. "It was a sentimental traveller, the Russian Sterne whom Karamzin's contemporaries sought and found in *Letters*", argues Cross, – "and it was *Letters* as an example of the sentimental manner and mannerism that his opponents parodied".⁶⁰ Karamzin's pioneering part in introducing the English writer to the Russian audience would be satirised in Shakhovskoi's *The New Sterne* (1805).

In 1792, Karamzin published *Poor Liza* (*Bednaia Liza*), a sentimental tale of a peasant girl who, deserted by a nobleman, commits suicide. Liza's story reflects that of Sterne's *Poor Maria*: both heroines are 'damsels in distress' – meek, amiable and innocent girls deceived by their beloved. Whereas in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* Maria's modest social background is not emphasised, in *Poor Liza* Sterne's motif of a poor damsel is intertwined with the Russian theme of a peasant girl – a social outcast – who is in love with a nobleman. Both writers call for the reader's compassion. As in the *Poor Maria* cult, of which Karamzin might have been aware in the course of his journey through Europe, the Russian audience worshipped *Poor Liza*. The success of the story was such that the pond in which Liza supposedly drowned herself became a favourite place of pilgrimage for the citizens of Moscow.

In her study of Sterne and Karamzin, Kanunova assumes that the works that followed *Poor Liza* (*Natalya the Boyar's Daughter* (*Natalia Boyarskaia Doch*), 1792,

Julia (1796) and *A Knight of Our Time* (*Rytsar Nashego Vremeni*,) 1799), all bear a resemblance to Sterne's style but, at the same time, demonstrate his re-thinking of Sterne's concept of Sensibility.⁶¹ Karamzin became more attentive to Sterne's sense of humour and, thereafter, his ironic digressions. In *Natalya the Boyar's Daughter*, for example, he imitates Sterne's dialogue with the reader: "My gentle reader! Do excuse me for this digression! Sterne was not the only one to be a slave of his quill!"⁶² Similarly, in *A Knight of Our Time* Karamzin imitates Sterne's narrative style by using digressions, misplacing the chapters and condensing the second chapter to ten ironic lines. *A Knight of Our Time* is indicative of the changes in Karamzin's attitude towards Sterne. For example, he depicts a protagonist's father as a kind man, but different from "the famous Tristram's uncle Toby" for he is "kind in his own way and his kindness is of the Russian stature".⁶³ The story reflects the character's psychological development in the Russian socio-cultural context. Kanunova assumes that Karamzin's focus on the psychological approach made Sterne "the painter of Sensibility and philanthropist" less important to him than Sterne "the humorist and detractor of the aesthetic principles of the age of Reason"⁶⁴ to whom he referred in 1799.

During the same decade of the 1790s, Karamzin acted as a critic of Sterne's novels. His notes on "the original, inimitable, sensitive, kind, clever, beloved Sterne", published in 1791 – 1792 in the *Moscow Journal*, paved the way for an idealised image of the writer by commenting on the "incomparable" status of Sterne in eighteenth century literature:

Sterne the incomparable! In what learned University didst
 thou study how to feel so tenderly? What rhetoric revealed to
 thee the secret of how with two words to wring the subtlest
 fibres of our hearts?⁶⁵

In 1796, the Russian writer and critic Martynov publicized Karamzin's contribution to the Russian 'discovery' of Sterne. "My Children!", wrote Martynov in his short-story *Philon*, - "Remember Sterne and Karamzin!"⁶⁶. A reviewer of *Priiatnoe I Poleznoe Preprovozhdeniie Vremeni* (*A Pleasant and Instructive Pastime*) referred to Karamzin as "our sensible, tender, amiable and charming Sterne".⁶⁷ "Frolicking, Karamzin plays the Sternean harpsichord"⁶⁸, wrote another critic, comparing the writer's narrative device of capturing and depicting the nuances and subtle changes of the human character with refined harpsichord music. This musical association echoed Karamzin's own picture of Sterne as one who "so artfully with the sound of his strings commands our feelings".⁶⁹

Karamzin's interest in Sterne's moral philosophy and artistic principles helped to provide models for Russian sentimentalist writing and contributed to a better understanding of eighteenth century European literary and intellectual development.

Sterne and Radishchev

Another facet of Sterne's impact on Russian sentimental writing is presented by the works of Alexander Radishchev (1749-1802). The circumstances of his life were different from that of Karamzin's peaceful career. Karamzin was born in 1766, in the same year as a student of St. Petersburg School for Pages, Radishchev was sent to the University of Leipzig to obtain a legal education. In Leipzig he came under the influence of Herder, Abbé Raynal, Sterne and other writers and philosophers of the Enlightenment. Graduating from the University and returning to Russia in 1771, Radishchev entered a career in the civil service. He worked in the Senate, then was a military procurator, and finally found employment at the St. Petersburg customhouse, whose director he became in 1790. In the same year he founded a private press and issued anonymously his *Journey from St. Peterburg to Moscow* which was modelled in its plan on *A Sentimental Journey*. The book was an attack on serfdom and for this he was condemned to death. The Empress, however, lightened the sentence and Radishchev was sent to Siberia for ten years. Vorontsov, Radishchev's former patron and the ambassador to England at the time, commented on Radishchev's fate:

I think that the condemnation of poor Radishchev is an extreme punishment. What a punishment and what a pacification for a blunder. What will it be for a real crime and a real revolt? Ten years in Siberia is worse than death for a man who has family. His children would be separated

from their father or deprived of an education if he takes them with him. It makes one shudder.⁷⁰

Radishchev attempted to defend himself by pointing at Sterne and Raynal as his major influences:

At that time I worked for Mr. Dahl for customs affairs and among other things I bought the *History of the Indies of Reynal*. . . . I started reading it in 1780 or 1781. I was fond of his style. It was such a pleasure to read his high-flown style and his daring expression. . . . It was not before 1785 that I returned to my reading and finished the remainder of Raynal. At that time, for practice in the style, I embarked on writing about the facts of public trade. The following year, reading Herder, I began to write about the censor. . . . Accidentally, I read a German translation of *Yorick's Journey*, and on reflection decided to follow him. Therefore, I can truly say that the style of Reynal led me from confusion to confusion, to the completion of my foolish book, which was finished at the end of 1788, at the censor in 1789 and printed from the beginning of January 1790.

By wishing to imitate this writer, I produced this monster. O fool, fool! . . . O you, unhappy and beloved children learn

by my example and escape the ruining vanity of being a
writer!⁷¹

He survived the ten years of the Siberian exile to be released by Catherine II's son Paul I and invited by her grandson Alexander I to participate in the work of a Commission on Laws. He saw the light of liberal reforms but soon after, disillusioned in his best political foresights, committed suicide.

Radishchev assumed the idea of literature as moral education and endeavoured to convey this idea in his early work *Zhitie Feodora Vasilevicha Ushakova* (*Life of Feodor Vasilievich Ushakov*, published in 1789). Dedicated to the memory of his university associate Feodor Ushakov, *Life* is a literary account of the author's university days. In it, Radishchev used Sterne's favourite narrative device of a sincere dialogue with the reader. Princess Ekaterina Dashkova, a director of St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, has noted that *Life* was written in the style of Sterne.⁷² Radishchev was interested in Sterne's detailed investigation of the protagonist's inner life, converting an account of a man's ordinary existence into a work of art. (He emphasised this approach in the title of his book, *Zhitie*, which corresponds with the English *Life of a Saint*). Like Sterne, he was sincerely concerned about the protagonist's spiritual development. Radishchev would follow this approach in his most significant work, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*.

Both writers see life as a spiritual journey but Sterne discusses this journey in positive terms, whereas Radishchev's conviction is that life is a sacrifice. For Sterne, nature is a "web of kindness", for Radishchev, a "stern stepmother".

If nature has so wove her web of kindness, that some threads of love and desire are entangled with the piece – must the whole web be rent in drawing them out? - Whip me such stoics, great governor of nature! Said I to myself – Wherever thy providence shall place me for the trials of my virtue – whatever is my danger – whatever is my situation – let me feel the movements which rise out of it, and which belong to me as a man – and if I govern them as a good one – I will trust the issues to thy justice, for thou hast made us – and not we ourselves.

(*A Sentimental Journey*, 79)

I looked about me – my heart was troubled by the sufferings of humanity. I turned my eyes inward – I saw that man's woes arise in man himself, and frequently because he does not look straight at the objects around him. Is it possible, I said to myself, that nature has been so miserly with her children as to hide the truth forever. . . . Is it possible that

this stern stepmother has brought us into the world that we
know only calamities, but never happiness?⁷³

(*A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*)

Radishchev's narrator embarks on a journey on which he meets people of different social backgrounds. Similarly to Sterne, he describes the experiences and feelings of the author-narrator by employing the fragmentary narrative structure associated with *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*. His book divides into various poetic digressions, fragments, inserted verses, sketches, and meditations. In spite of this similarity in the narrative structure, Sterne's social point of view is different.

Radishchev's main concern is social injustice and cruelty of the landowners to their serfs, who, in his opinion, have to be liberated and granted the land. Therefore Radishchev's narrator is focused on the idea of the "social virtues" that he praised in his *Journey*:

Virtues are either individual or social. Individual virtue grows out of gentleness, kindness and compassion, and its root is always good. The impetus toward social virtue frequently arises from vanity and ambition. But this should not keep you from practising the social virtues. The cause they serve is what makes them important.⁷⁴

On the contrary, Sterne advocates 'individual virtue' which is the moving force of human progress by illuminating its spiritual nature: "I will trust the issues to thy justice, for thou hast made us – and not we ourselves" (*A Sentimental Journey*, 79). As the Russian critic Veselovsky argued, Sterne favoured spiritual freedom and Radishchev political liberty.⁷⁵

Yet in an article on Sterne and Radishchev, Lang gave Sterne credit for having influenced the anti-slavery zeal of *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*. Both writers "heard and recorded the appeal of the oppressed . . . and both played their part in the awakening of humble public opinion".⁷⁶ Praise for liberty was an important part of the concept of Sensibility to which both writers refer.

Apart from "the awakening of humble public opinion", Radishchev's concept of Sensibility is of a different nature, for he "offsets sentiment not with humour, but with indignation and sombre gloom".⁷⁷ For both writers sorrow is an essential component of the concept of Sensibility, but they interpret it in an opposite vein. Sterne created sentimental allusions and laughed at them. For example, he reflects on the ambiguous nature of Sensibility in his story of poor Maria. By depicting a 'damsel in distress' and his sentimental feelings for her, the narrator gives a hint of an erotic desire. Maria's singing, for example, is a manifestation of her sorrow but at the same time it is a demonstration of her femininity. "Maria, tho' not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms – affliction had touch'd her looks with something that was scarce earthly – still she was feminine . . ." Sterne wrote. A passage on poor Maria is followed by the narrator's reflections on a nature of Sensibility:

- Dear sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious
in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! Thou chainest thy
martyr down upon his bed of straw – and 'tis thou who lifts
him up to HEAVEN – eternal fountain of our feelings! . . .

(*A Sentimental Journey*, 98)

Radishchev has rejected Sterne's approach by responding to the question of Sensibility with sombre feeling.⁷⁸ He echoes poor Maria's tale in a chapter *Klin* where he depicts the narrator's meeting with the humble character of a blind singer. "How sweet is the sorrow", the narrator exclaims:

How it refreshes the heart and its sensibility! . . . It seemed to me then (as indeed I always think) that the blessing of a soul filled with sensibility assists one in the path of life and removes the thorns of doubt. . . .⁷⁹

The sorrow leads to compassion and pity and, thereafter, the sentimental journey is but another word for moral improvement. Craven writes:

What he found in Sterne was not only the form and sensibility that determined the style of his *Journey*, but

Yorick's private morality that he believed he could improve on. Bent on using the imaginative work to conjure up man's responsibility to his fellowman, he ignored Sterne's laughter. Radishchev wanted to quicken the consciences of those in power, not to create an enduring work of art. Radishchev read Sterne for his morality, not for Sterne's interest in the soul and consciousness.⁸⁰

Radishchev's interest in the narrative form of 'a sentimental journey' and aptness to change its focus towards social justice illustrates his indebtedness to and his rethinking of Sterne's concept of Sensibility

Sterne and the Russian reader

Whether Russian readers thought of Sterne as "the original painter of sentimentality" (Karamzin)⁸¹ or as the phenomenon 'Laurence Sterne', he was accorded a literary status quite unlike that which any other English writer has ever enjoyed. For however one regarded his 'sensibility' and 'benevolence' and his views on questions of moral interest, it was common ground among his readers that he was a significant author and no one could deny his widespread popularity. This 'human facet' of Sterne's creations was much praised by the Russian literati. "Sterne's purpose was not to describe the city, the government, agriculture, commerce, the arts; but he wanted to examine people", wrote the sentimental poet and critic Muraviev (1757-1807), - "A single word, a silence, a look, a sensation, hidden in the heart, provided the material for every word in his book"⁸². Muraviov's biographer,

Rossi, confirms that he imitated Sterne's artistic qualities in his unfinished travelogue *An Idle Traveller*, written in the 1790s in the style of *A Sentimental Journey*⁸³. "O beloved Sterne! Sensitive philosopher, thou art able to solve such enigmas!", wrote a sentimental author, Kamenev, – "Thou art the master who penetrates into the secret recesses of the heart. . . "⁸⁴.

Russian diaries and memoirs attest to the popularity of Sterne's sentimental philosophy during the 1790s and it was this side of Sterne's heritage that drew the warmest response. For example, recollecting his life in a remote estate in the 1795, the Russian writer Glinka refers to *A Sentimental Journey* as his valuable possession, for "the mind and the heart will always find something pleasant there".⁸⁵ In his Notes Glinka depicts his solitary walks in the countryside, enlightened by imaginary dialogues with Sterne.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Russian writers and readers were all paying Sterne respectful attention.

Sensibility as a mode, at once benevolent and enlightening, proved attractive to the writers of the Russian Enlightenment. Russian literati knew about the highlights of English sentimental fiction since the 1760s. At the same time the first translated English novels emerged in Russia having paved a way to the common interest in English sentimental tradition and Sterne's works respectively. This interest in Sterne's concept of Sensibility coincided with a search for new cultural and social models. His concept was to be interpreted in a different way by the Empress in the 1770s and Karamzin and Radishchev in the 1780s-1790s. Karamzin's rethinking of Sterne's concept led him to advocate moral improvements as a moving force of

Russian social and cultural development. On the contrary, Radishchev's interpretation of a nature of Sensibility led him to propose radical social and political reforms.

Catherine the Great, akin to contemporary to her Russian literati, was inspired by the cult of sentimentality. Her reasons are to be found in her private letters in which the sentimental reflections create a striking opposition between Catherine the ruler and Catherine the 'woman of feeling'. Perhaps the most poignant instance of this theme appears in a letter to Potemkin in which Catherine the Great refers to sentimental affection and the indignity of personal response by alluding to Sterne's interpretation of the word 'sentimental'. Catherine the Great's determination to fashion the Sternean mask of a sentimental heroine will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹ Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 5.

² Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p. 8.

³ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, reprint (London: Times Books, 1983), p. XVIII.

⁴⁴ Sterne knew about the contemporary to him Russian political life thanks to his friend, George Macartney. See Chapter III of this work.

⁵ Martin Rowson, *Laurence Sterne: The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (London: Picador, 1996) (a collection of illustrations).

⁶ Anthony G. Cross, *The Russian theme in English literature: From the Sixteenth Century to 1980 An Introductory Survey and a Bibliography* (Oxford: Willem A. Meeuws, 1980), p. 10.

⁷ *A Facsimile Re production of a unique Catalogue of Laurence Sterne's Library* (London: James Tregaskis & Son, 1930), p. 36 (item N 900).

⁸ Anthony G. Cross, "The British in Eighteenth-Century Russia", in *An English Lady at the Court of Catherine the Great. The Journal of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale*, ed. by Anthony G. Cross (Cambridge: Crest Publications, 1989), p. 3.

⁹ Elizabeth I, the Empress of Russia was Peter the Great's daughter and Peter III's aunt (The other Elizabeth, the Empress of Russia, was Alexander I's wife).

¹⁰ In 1909 Catherine the Great's correspondence with Sir Charles Williams was published in Russian. The correspondence has been recently discussed by Lopatin, who points out that Catherine (then a Grand Duchess) borrowed money from the British Ambassador in the 1750s. See Viacheslav Lopatin, ed., *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin: Lichnaya Perepiska 1769- 1791* (Moskva: Nauka, 1997), pp. 485, 628.

¹¹ See E. B. Tarle, *Sochinenia*, 12 vols. (Moskva: Goslitizdat, 1957-1962), IV, p. 472.

¹² See Isabel De Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 98.

¹³ *The Complete Prose Tales of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin*, trans. by Gillon R. Aitken (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), pp. 461-62.

¹⁴ ¹⁴ *The Complete Prose Tales of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin*, pp. 461-62.

¹⁵ See Anthony Cross, "Introduction", in *An English Lady at the Court of Catherine the Great. The Journal of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale, 1781*, ed. by A. G. Cross (Cambridge: Crest Publications, 1989), pp. 8-12.

¹⁶ *An English Lady at the Court of Catherine the Great. The Journal of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale, 1781*, p. 12.

¹⁷ Lionell Trilling, *Sincerety and Authenticity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 75.

¹⁸ Lionell Trilling, *Sincerety and Authenticity*, p. 75.

¹⁹ Henry Brooke, *The Fool of Quality; or, The History of Henry Earl of Moreland*, 5 vols. (London, 1764 -1770); John Wesley's abridgement, 2 vols., 1781. As quoted in John Butt, *The Mid-Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Geoffrey Carnall (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 572.

²⁰ *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaya Perepiska: 1769-1791*, (Moskva: Nauka, 1997), p. 18.

²¹ See Viacheslav Lopatin, "Pis'ma, bez kotoryh istoria stanovits'a mifom", in *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaya Perepiska. 1769-1791* (Moskva: Nauka, 1997), pp. 473-541.

²² Isabel De Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History*, p. 96.

²³ Viacheslav Lopatin, "Pis'ma, Bez Kotoryh Istoria Stanovits'a Mifom", pp. 473-541.

²⁴ John Parkinson, an Oxford Don, published an account of his journey to Russia in 1792-1794.

John Parkinson, *A Tour of Russia, Siberia and Crimea: 1792-1794*, ed. by William Collier, Russia Through European Eyes series (London: Frank Cass & CO. LTD, 1971), pp. 27-8.

²⁵ On the origins of the word 'sentimental' see Erik Erämetsä, *A Study of the Word "Sentimental" and of other linguistic characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England* (Helsinki, 1951).

²⁶ As quoted in Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings* (London: J.M. Dent, 1994), p. XIII.

²⁷ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*.

²⁸ *The Beauties of Sterne, Selected for the Heart of Sensibility* (London, 1782).

²⁹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*.

³⁰ *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin: Lichnaya Perepiska 1769 – 1791*, p. 18.

³¹ Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, p. 201.

³² Jurii. Lotman, *Sotvorenije Karamzina* (Moscow: Kniga, 1987), p. 239.

³³ Erik Erämetsä, *A Study of the Word "Sentimental" and of other linguistic characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England*, p. 125-6.

³⁴ Anthony G. Cross, *U Temzskih Beregov: Rossiane v Britanii v XVIII veke*. (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii Proekt, 1996), p. 247.

³⁵ Isabel De Madariaga, *Catherine the Great*, p. 96.

- ³⁶ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize, i Elizy k Yoriku. S Priobchsheniem pohval'nogo slova Elize. Perevel s fransuzskogo Gavriilo Apukhtin* (Moskva: V Universitetskoj Tipografii u N. Novikova, 1789), pp. 7-8.
- ³⁷ *Zapiski S. I. Glinki* (Sankt Peterburg, 1895), pp. 132-45.
- ³⁸ *Krasoty Sterna ili Sobranije Luchshih ego Pateticheskikh Zamechanij na zhizn' dl'a chuvstvitel'nyh serdets. Perevod s Aglinskogo. Moskva, v Senatskoj Tipografii u Selivanovskogo* (Moscow, 1801), p. 11 (the translator's footnote).
- ³⁹ Wilbur L. Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 158-59.
- ⁴⁰ As quoted in Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*, p. XIII.
- ⁴¹ Jurii Levin, "The English Novel in 18th – century Russia", pp. 143-168.
- ⁴² As quoted in: John Brewer, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, p. 132.
- ⁴³ Jurii Levin, "The English Novel in Eighteenth Century Russia", in *Literature, Lives and Legality in Catherine's Russia*, ed. by A. G. Cross and G. S. Smith (Nottingham: Astra Press, 1994), p. 144.
- ⁴⁴ David Gasperetti, *The Rise of the Russian Novel: Carnival, Stylization and Mockery of the West*, p. 55.
- ⁴⁵ David Gasperetti, *The Rise of the Russian Novel: Carnival, Stylization and Mockery of the West*, p. 55.
- ⁴⁶ See Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University press), pp. 84-5.
- ⁴⁷ See Maslov, V. I., "Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature kontsa XVIII I nachala XIX vekov", in *Istoriko-Literaturnyi Sbornik, Posviashchennyi V. I. Sreznevskomu* (Leningrad, Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo, 1924), pp. 344-76.
- ⁴⁸ David Gasperetti, *The Rise of the Russian Novel: Carnival, Stylization and Mockery of the West*, p. 59.
- ⁴⁹ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku. Sochineniie g. Sterna. Perevod s frantsuzskogo* [N. G. Karin] (Moskva: Universitetskaia Tipografiia u Rudigera i Klaudiia, 1795) (a title page).
- ⁵⁰ See Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800*, p. 112.
- ⁵¹ *Sternovo puteshestvie po Frantsii i Italii pod imenem Yorika, Soderzhashchee v sebe: Neobyknovennyye, lubopytnyye I Ves'ma Trogaiushchiie Prikl'ucheniia, S Priobshcheniim Druzheskikh Pisem Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku, s anglitzkogo podlinnika perevel Alexey Kolmakov*, 4 vols. (St. Peterburg: pri Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1793).
- ⁵² *Moskovskii Zhurnal*, February, 1792, as quoted in Laurence Sterne, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 458.
- ⁵³ Iu. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina* (Moskva: Kniga, 1987), p. 232.
- ⁵⁴ Iu. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina*, p. 232.
- ⁵⁵ Mark Altshuller, 'Transition to the Modern Age: Sentimentalism and Preromanticism, 1790-1820' in *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, edited by Charles A. Moser, revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 92-136.
- ⁵⁶ As quoted in Sterne. *The Critical Heritage*, edited by Alan B. Howes, (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London and Boston, 1974), p. 457.
- ⁵⁷ Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 457.
- ⁵⁸ N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannyye Sochineniya*, II vols. (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1984), I p.294.
- ⁵⁹ N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannyye Sochineniya*, I p. 294.
- ⁶⁰ Anthony G. Cross, *N. M. Karamzin: A Study of His Literary Career. 1783-1803*. (London and Amstrdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), p. 70.
- ⁶¹ F. Z. Kanunova, 'Karamzin i Stern', in *XVIII Vek* (Leningrad: Nauka, 19), p. 264.
- ⁶² N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannyye Sochineniya*, I, p. 632.
- ⁶³ N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannyye Sochineniya*, I, p. 585.
- ⁶⁴ F. Z. Kanunova, 'Karamzin i Stern', p.264.
- ⁶⁵ *Moskovskii Zhurnal*, February, 1792, as quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 458.

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- ⁶⁶ See Maslov, V. I., "Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature kontsa XVIII I nachala XIX vekov", in *Istoriko – Literaturnyi Sbornik, Posviashchennyi V. I. Sreznevskomu* (Leningrad, 1924), p. 368.
- ⁶⁷ See Maslov, V. I., "Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature kontsa XVIII I nachala XIX vekov", p. 362.
- ⁶⁸ Maslov, V. I., "Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature kontsa XVIII I nachala XIX vekov", p. 362.
- ⁶⁹ Moskovskii zhurnal, III (April 1791), p. 51. As qtd. in Ju. D. Levin, "The English Novel in 18th-Century Russia", in *Literature, Lives and Legality in Catherine's Russia*, ed. by A. G. Cross and G. S. Smith (Nottingham: Astra Press, 1994), p. 165.
- ⁷⁰ *Arkhiv Knyazia Vorontsova* (Moscow: Tipografiia Lebedeva, 1879), IX, p. 181
- ⁷¹ As quoted in Kenneth Craven, 'Laurence Sterne and Russia – Four Case Studies' (unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1967), p. 101.
- ⁷² See V. N. Maslov, 'Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature Kontsa XVIII I Nachala XIX Veka', in *Istoriko-Literaturnyi Sbornik*, edited by V. I. Sreznevskii (Leningrad, 1924), p. 363.
- ⁷³ Alexander Nikolaevich Radishchev *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, translated by Leo Wiener, edited by Roderick Page Thaler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 40.
- ⁷⁴ Alexander Nikolaevich Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, p. 121.
- ⁷⁵ Alexey Veselovsky, *Zapadnoe Vliianiie v Novoi Russkoi Literature*, 5th edition (Moscow, 1916), p. 103.
- ⁷⁶ David Marshall Lang, 'Sterne and Radishchev', in 'Revue de Littérature Comparée', XXI (January-March, 1947), p.260.
- ⁷⁷ David Marshall Lang, 'Sterne and Radishchev', p. 260.
- ⁷⁸ David Marshall Lang, 'Sterne and Radishchev', pp. 254-260.
- ⁷⁹ Alexander Nikolaevich Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, pp. 215-6.
- ⁸⁰ Kenneth Craven, 'Laurence Sterne and Russia – Four Case Studies', p. 117.
- ⁸¹ N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannye Sochineniya*, I, p. 632.
- ⁸² As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 458.
- ⁸³ See L. Rossi, 'Sentimental'naja Proza Muraviova. Novye Materialy', in *XVIII Vek*, 19 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1995), pp. 114-146.
- ⁸⁴ As quoted in Howes, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 458.
- ⁸⁵ S. N. Glinka, *Zapiski* (St. Petersburg: 1895), p. 132, 145.

Chapter Three

Laurence Sterne and Catherine the Great:

Russian Fictional Memoirs

This chapter discusses Catherine the Great's interpretation of the sentimental vogue in Europe in the late eighteenth century, and of the works of Laurence Sterne in particular. I have endeavoured to analyse Catherine the Great's rethinking of Sterne's novels that were to provoke the cult of sentimentality and to give the word 'sentimental' its fashionable run in Britain and on the Continent.

Catherine the Great in search for new literary models

Amongst its many admirers all over the world, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* numbered Russia's Catherine the Great. Catherine's fondness for Sterne's fictional reminiscences is registered by the unmistakable influence that, along with the equally eccentric *A Sentimental Journey*, *Tristram Shandy*¹ exerted over her satirical articles. William Brown writes:

In 1783-1784, a periodical began publication under the nominal editorship of Princess E. R. Dashkova, entitled: *Conversational Journal of Lovers of the Russian Word* (*Sobesednic Liubitelei Russkogo Slova*). A feature of this

journal was an anonymous “column” in each issue headed:

Fact and Fable (Byli I Nebylitsy).

Catherine’s authorship of this was an open secret. In it she

clumsily attempts to imitate the style of Laurence Sterne’s

Tristram Shandy, with its planned illogicality, its whimsical

breaking of continuity, etc. *Fact and Fable* . . . does give

evidence of Catherine’s remarkable receptivity to new literary

fashions.²

Similarly, in his article *The Empress as Writer* Gukovsky argued that *Fact*

and Fable “imitated Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, with its casual chatter

about this and that, its intimate, homey conversational tone, inconsistency

in movement of themes and thoughts”.³

The following is a brief abstract from the Preface of *Fact and Fable*:

O great felicity! A wide field is opened to me and to that of

my fellow writers who are infected by a disease of

scribbling on paper with a quill dipped into ink. The

Conversational Journal is in print now-do write and send

your writing-it will be published! My heart is full of

gladness. I assure you, that although I do not speak a single

language properly and have never learned grammar and

other arts, I will not lose this wonderful opportunity of

publishing *Fact and Fable*. I wish to have the pleasure of seeing them in print.⁴

Catherine's interest in Sterne coincided with her search for new literary models, and Shandyism as a mode, at once festive and ironic, proved attractive to the authors of the Russian Enlightenment she had been patronising. At the same time, there were personal reasons why Catherine was inspired by Sterne's intricate manner of artistic self-representation. The Russian Empress was in her forties at the time she began writing her satirical essays, for example, nearly the same age as Laurence Sterne when, on a rainy day in the year of 1759, he embarked upon *Tristram Shandy*. It was time for both to sum up their respective experiences of life. Behind the mask of a fictional narrator, Sterne reflected on his lonely childhood and on the days he spent in Cambridge, when his only source of financial survival was a scholarship for poor students established many years previously by a powerful grandfather, the Archbishop of York. So too with Catherine: the grimaces of poverty that marked the childhood and youth of the future Empress found necessary expression in companionable literary forms.

When Catherine started her recollections, she did not much care for the European gossip current at that time — the kind of gossip that would reach a posthumous apogee in the pages of Byron's *Don Juan*:

The courtiers stared, the ladies whispered, and

The Empress smiled, the reigning favourite frowned-
 I quite forget which of them was in hand
 Just then, as they are rather numerous found,
 Who took by turns that difficult command
 Since first her Majesty was singly crowned:
 But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
 All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

(*Don Juan*, IX, st. 2)⁵

Sterne himself may have received the same idea of the Russian Empress, courtesy of his British diplomat friend George Macartney⁶ (1737-1806). Macartney met Sterne in 1762, when he had come abroad as companion to Lord Holland's son, Stephen Fox. A man of "great charm of person, and little money",⁷ Macartney had "talked and pushed himself into a celebrity among his contemporaries"⁸, among whom he found Lord Holland to be a patron. By his patronage he was appointed, at the age of twenty seven, Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Catherine the Great in 1764 and before setting out had been knighted. He might have shared with Sterne his interest in the world politics and exotic places, and, in particular, the Russian Empire. Having moved to St. Petersburg some two years later Macartney would keep his friend informed on the diplomatic matters.⁹ Back from Russia in 1767, the young diplomat would subscribe to Sterne's *Sermons* (volumes III and IV) and to five sets on imperial paper of *A Sentimental Journey*.¹⁰

His life, except of befriending the famous writer, did not have much in common with polite letters. Following his diplomatic path, Macartney served as

Governor of the Carribean Islands (1775-1779), Governor of Madras (1780-1785), Ambassador to China (1792-1794), and the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope (1796-1798). In 1794, he was created Earl Macartney in the Irish peerage.¹¹ Within the parameters of this study, Macartney's diplomatic service serves as link between Sterne and Russian audience which is to be explored in a chapter on Sterne and Catherine the Great.

Macartney's was a different world for Sterne, who, recalling their conversations either in person or in letters, would mention Russia as a snowy *terra incognita* in the forthcoming volume of *Tristram Shandy* and recorded in his letter to Garrick of January 1762 which remarks on the Empresses Elisabeth I's demise: "We are all going into mourning" (The Empress was the ally of Louis XV during the seven Years War). (*Letters*, 152)

We may surmise that both before and after Macartney's return late in 1767 the two discussed Catherine the Great and her lovers between them, hence the joke on the subject of the succession to the Russian throne in a letter to Macartney that was one of the last that Sterne ever wrote:

My dear Friend,

For tho' you are his Excellency, and I still but parson

Yorick- I still must call you so- and were you to be next

Emperor of Russia, I could not write to you, or speak of

you, under any other relation. . . I should long, long ago

have acknowledged the kindness of a letter of yours from Petersburg; but hearing daily accounts you was leaving it- this is the first time I knew well where my thanks would find you-how they will find you, I know well- that is the same I ever knew you. (*Letters*, 404-405)

Be that as it may, the Catherine the Great who appreciated the wilfully eccentric, not to say grotesque characters of Sterne's fictions could not help thinking of the "grotesque image" of herself that would be passed down to posterity. Memoirs must have seemed the only form of self-defence — *apologia pro sua vita* — but autobiographical genres offered a mixed blessing to the woman who pronounced the significant phrase "I do not care about Peter" just prior to the murder of her estranged husband¹². Fictional memoirs, on the other hand, written in the puzzling manner of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*, gave her a unique opportunity at once to realise her artistic potential and to create an idealised picture of herself as a sentimental and sensitive intellectual. It was not, of course, until many years after her death, when Catherine was remembered largely as an historical figure, that the forbidden memoirs which had been wandering over Russia in various forms were finally published in London in 1859 by the exiled Russian writer Alexander Herzen¹³. Nearly a century apart, the controversial literary 'memoirs' of Catherine the Great and Laurence Sterne came to light in the same city.

In resorting to Sterne, the famous intuition that never failed Catherine II in political situations had again come to her rescue. Indeed, she was one of few who, at

the very beginning, saw beyond the sentimental surface of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* to recognise the potential of their formal mosaic and the dynamic poetics of their irrepressible and histrionic self-consciousness. In choosing Sterne, she chose a direction which suited, not just her own, but the literary needs of the newly-born Russian novel; the extremes of sentimental and psychological curiosity in the bizarre self-dramatizations of Sterne would eventually find various, often profound embodiment in nineteenth - century: Russian fiction: supremely, in the novels of Gogol, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky.

When Voltaire wrote that women are in power in Russia, he had in mind two women especially: his royal correspondent, Catherine II, and Princess Ekaterina Dashkova (1744-1810), Director of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Catherine's fictional rewriting of the experiences of her girlhood and youth at the Court of Elizabeth I, *Memoirs of Catherine I*, is a web of truth and invention, differing markedly from the story of her young days as it is recounted in the various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century biographies of her written by Russian and European historians. Her youth is remembered in even more strongly contrasting terms, however, by another privileged though hardly disinterested witness: Princess Dashkova herself, who, having been Catherine's best friend in their younger days, was estranged from her royal patroness in the 1770s, mostly because of her independent way of thinking.

One of the best educated noble ladies of her time, Princess Dashkova was affected by the ideas of the European Enlightenment in the early stages of her academic career. Later, however, she seems to have come under the strong influence

of the sentimental movement, giving the *Memoirs* she wrote at the end of her life a touch of the bitter sentimentality characteristic of one of her favourite writers, Laurence Sterne. Where Dashkova was attracted to the sentimentality of Sterne's dramatic self-expression, Catherine adopted his puzzling and intriguing modes of self-analysis, substituting for the sentimental feelings of Dashkova's personal recollections her own dry humour and intellectual games.

In the following passage, Catherine recalls manoeuvres inspired by her husband's follies:

As the Grand Duke was almost always ill-tempered with me, for which I could see no reason but that I was not very friendly with . . . Countess Elizabeth Worontsov, who was again becoming the favourite of the harem, I decided to treat His Highness to a feast in my garden at Oranienbaum in order to soften his temper if that were at all possible. Feasts were always vastly appreciated by His Highness. . . .

The Grand Duke and all his entourage . . . even my most inveterate enemies, sang my praises and extolled my fête for several days; neither friend nor foe had left without carrying some trifle as a memento. . . . They boasted and showed off my gifts, which in reality were mere trifles, none of them exceeding a hundred roubles in value, but it was satisfying to be able to say: "This comes from the Grand Duchess; she is kindness itself, she distributes gifts to everyone. . ."

In short, I was found to be the possessor of qualities
which had been ignored until now.¹⁴

Throughout a passage that pretends to no more than matter-of-fact recollection flicker the tragicomic, as well as more sinister ironies of Tristram Shandy on the imperfect nature of human beings: the self-exonerating “reason” for her husband, the Grand Duke’s ill temper; the appeal to one form of appetite (a feast) to distract him from his other, sexual appetite — indeed, the ‘innocent’ appeal that Catherine makes to infantile attractions in all cases, from food to trifles, resulting in her husband’s and his entourage’s recognition that she possessed “qualities”. It is, however, precisely in this affected innocence and these unspecified “qualities” in Catherine that the *crowning* irony of the passage lies, for the qualities recognised are of a very different nature from the ones of which the reader is subtly but unmistakably apprised. What the reader recognises in Catherine are qualities of dissimulation and political manipulation that are mirrored in the authorial control she exercises over anecdote and interpretation in the *Memoirs* themselves.

Though the sophisticated image of a multi-faceted Catherine that is portrayed in her *Memoirs* was played down in the more modest and severe recollections of the Princess Dashkova in her old age, still a similar “Shandean” image of the young Catherine emerges on occasion:

She could be childishly gay. I was passionately fond of
music; she did not care much for it, and though my husband

quite liked it, he was in no sense a performer. Sometimes, however, Her Majesty would ask me to sing. On one occasion, as soon as I had finished, she made a sign to my husband and said: "Come, Prince, let us sing too."

And they began what she called "the music of the spheres", both of them screaming loudly and discordantly enough to frighten anyone, yet with the serious, self-satisfied expression of people who imagine they are giving immense pleasure to others and are delighted with themselves. . .

At other times it would be a "cat's concert". Then she would caterwaul, taking care to add appropriate words of her own invention, which made us split our sides with laughter.¹⁵

Dashkova, it appears, could not escape Catherine's personal charm. Nor could she escape her bitter sense of humour, for Catherine's "gay behaviour" turns into a *danse macabre* when it is recalled that these concerts took place only a few months after she had received the letter about her husband's murder.

Drunk and terrified, Alex¹⁶ sent off that fine epistle to her majesty a few moments after Peter III's death. . . .

It was written in Alexis' own hand, and he wrote like a stevedore. The vulgarity of his expressions, his incoherence (he was dead drunk at the time), his prayers for forgiveness and the sort of surprise he himself showed at the catastrophe made this a very interesting document for those who would like to confute the horrible slanders that had been spread about the Empress, who might have had weaknesses, but was not capable of any kind of crime.¹⁷

Far from simply offering a sentimental defence of her former friend, this passage helps to clarify the key-link between the real Catherine and her fictional alter-ego in the carnivalesque image of Death, an image which shadowed Dashkova's recollection of Catherine, from the "cat's concerts" in celebration of her freedom through to the at once pathetic and comic image of the "drunk and terrified" murderer. The self-Epitaph of Catherine's that Dashkova recalls serves only to deepen the shadow:

Here lies Catherine II, born at Stettin the 21/2 April/May 1729.

She made the triple resolution to please her husband,

Elizabeth¹⁸ and the nation.. She neglected nothing in trying to achieve this. She forgave easily and hated no one. Tolerant, undemanding, of a gay disposition, she had a republican spirit and a kind heart.¹⁹

In the light of Dashkova's story of the murder, the mention of Catherine's "resolution to please her husband" turns the whole affair into a macabre carnival in which the mask of death is too easily replaced by a mask of innocent frivolity. In all, Dashkova's recollections allow us to experience the "Shandean" mask of Catherine the Great — the mask of the eccentric intellectual with "a republican spirit and a kind heart" — even as we watch the dark sides of her nature.

Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* in the context of Russian fictional memoirs

The formal or generic variety of the different pieces included in *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great* and the way in which Catherine has linked them all together also suggests the influence of Sterne, specifically of the mosaic narrative structure characteristic not only of Sterne but also of the eighteenth-century Russian writers amongst his contemporaries. From the point of view of genre, Catherine's *Memoirs* attest to a suggestive link between "A Sentimental Journey" and the works of nineteenth century Russian writers. Tolstoy himself was an attentive reader both of Sterne and of Catherine's recollections. One finds Sterne's idea of self-knowledge at the bottom of both Catherine's and Tolstoy's fictional travel to the past. Tolstoy, for example, relubricates the childhood recollections of Alexander I (*The Posthumous Notes of the Starets Fedor Kuzmich*). He left his story unfinished at the significant moment of the appearance of Catherine's Jester. This symbolic character connects all the participants in the fictional performance- the Empress, talking with General Orlov, the murderer of her husband and her grandson, the future tsar and the hermit, listening

to them. The image of the jester links Tolstoy's fictional memoirs with Sterne's concept of the bitter carnival:

She looked at us with a smile, continuing her conversation with a big, tall, and stout General, decorated with the ribbon of St. Andrew, who had a terrible scar across his cheek from mouth to ear. . . This was Orlov, "Le Balabre". . . We came up to grandmother and kissed her white, plump hand. She turned it round and her bent fingers caught my face and caressed me. Lanskoy came up and handed her an open snuff - box. Grandmother took a pinch and looked at her jester Matrena Danilovna, who was approaching her.²⁰

Spiritual autobiography in Sterne's and Catherine II' works

The life-stories of Tristram Shandy, his uncle Toby, Yorick, Le Feuvre, Poor Maria, and many other of Sterne's fictional heroes, derive from the genre of Protestant spiritual biography in its 16th-18th century form. Furthermore, one finds traces of the 17th century spiritual autobiography in those passages that are focused upon a character's path. In many aspects, the fictional "lives" in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* originated from this spiritual genre. Sterne's model of spiritual autobiography is recognisable in Catherine's *Memoirs*. To explain Catherine's attention to this genre, one has to remember that she intended her

Memoirs for posterity and for her beloved grandson Alexander I as a way of creating a correct image of the “first intellectual on the Russian throne”.

Sterne’s flexible modification of canonical genres gave her an opportunity to express the attractive sides of her artistic nature. While this framework helped to mask those shadowy factors which played against her enlightened image.

One of the central images of Sterne’s artistic universe is that of the “bitter carnival”. Sterne and thereafter Catherine the Great inverted carnivalesque stereotypes in order to create their own distinctive narrative art. Both could be placed among the contributors to the psychological trend of the sentimental movement. Their characters perform a few parts instead of one. For example, just as Yorick, Sterne plays the parts of a preacher and of a holy fool; so Tristram Shandy plays the part of a country gentleman, a writer and so on. Catherine II presents herself in different roles: for example, that of the shy Princess and of the neglected wife of the heir. At the same time, she appears as the brave individual, who tells the courtiers the truth, sometimes under a mask of Folly. This fact connects both Sterne and Catherine with the medieval tradition of street theatre, especially with the jester’s sacred and secular activities. In this instance an image of Death could find its ironic embodiment.

Sterne wrote:

Now as my spirits, little have I to lay to their charge-nay so
very little (unless the mounting me upon a long stick, and

playing the fool with me nineteen hours out of the twenty-four. . .) that on the contrary, I have much-much to thank 'em for. . .

And when Death himself knocked at my door-ye bad him come again; and in so gay a tone of careless indifference did yet do it, that he doubted of his commission-
 '-There must certainly be some mistake in this matter',
 quoth he.

(*Tristram Shandy*, VII, I, 459)

Catherine the Great similarly enjoyed the way of literary folly. This partly relates to the miserable position as a neglected wife of the heir to the Russian throne who dreamed how to dispose of her. Catherine turned the hopeless situation into a tragicomedy by performing the hazardous role of a jester. To give an example of her mockery, here is a passage of her *Memoirs*:

His Highness came to my room one day after dinner and declared that I become insufferably proud and that he would soon bring me to see reason. At this, he stood with his back to the wall, half drew out his sword, and showed it to me. I wanted to know what this signified, and whether he intended to challenge me to a duel, in which case I, too,

ought to have a sword. He pushed it back into its sheath and told me that I had developed an evil temper.²¹

This manner of introducing a tragicomic twist: the real duel and its comic parody, is paralleled in the carnivalesque nature of the works of Sterne. In this connection we might remember Bakhtin's concept of the carnival image of the body. The grotesque body is giving birth and dying, at the same time, it is "conceived, generated and born".²² One might further notice three main aspects which help to establish the links between Sterne and Catherine the Great in respect of with carnivalesque vision of the world. These are:

1. The memoirs as offered by a fictional narrator
2. A dialogue of a highly personal nature
2. A concept of the cyclic nature of life.

Sterne and Catherine II are looking for a fictional cover and for an appropriate literary mask. In other words, both Sterne and Catherine preferred the image of fictional carnival and its multifaceted narrator as opposed to Rousseau's idea of autobiography. To adapt Joyce, Rousseau's fictional alter ego represents "a portrait of the artist as a sincere man"; while Sterne's literary self-embodiment depicts "A Portrait of the Artist, wearing a mask". In one way, Rousseau's pathetic reflections on his fate find a mocking answer in the works of Sterne. The following is an extract from Rousseau:

Wrenched somehow out of the natural order, I have been
 plunged into an incomprehensible chaos where I can make
 nothing out and the more I think about my present situation,
 the less I can understand what has become of me. How
 indeed could I ever have foreseen the fate that lay in wait
 for me? How can I envisage it even today, when I have
 succumbed to it?²³

And here is Sterne's mocking "answer" to the question of one's misfortunes:

I wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them,
 as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what
 they were about when they begot me. . . I am verily persuaded
 I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from
 that, in which the reader is likely to see me.

(*Tristram Shandy*, I, i, 35).

Catherine the Great follows Sterne's dictum: "I knew I was human, therefore a
 limited being incapable of perfection".²⁴ Sterne emphasised, for example, that to
 read a novel for a man is "like reading himself, and not the book". He wrote to Dr.
 John Eustace (February 9, 1768):

It is too much to write books and find heads to understand them. A true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him. His own ideas are only call'd forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within, so entirely correspond with those excited, 'tis like reading himself, and not the book.

(Letters, 411)

Catherine the Great follows Sterne's example. She creates the carnivalesque stories which are based on the truthful account of her life. She "brings half the entertainment" along with her, like Sterne. For example, here is a story about her husband's "military games":

One day when I walked into His Imperial Highness's apartment . . . I was struck by the sight of an immense rat which he had hanged, with all the paraphernalia of torture, in the middle of a small room. . .

I asked what was the meaning of this; he then told me that the rat had been convicted of a crime and deserved the severest punishment according to military law. For it had climbed over the walls of a cardboard fortress standing on a table in this recess and eaten two sentinels on duty, made of starch, one on each of the bastions, and he had had the criminal court-martialled. . .

I could not help laughing at the madness of the whole thing,
 but this greatly displeased him, because of the importance
 he attributed to procedure. I retired and apologised,
 pleading womanly ignorance of military law, but he
 continued to sulk with me for having laughed at him.²⁵

Heteroglossia in *Tristram Shandy* and in *The Memoirs*

So far as personal dialogues are concerned, there is another link between Sterne's and Catherine's literary creations. Remembering Bakhtin's terminology, we could classify this phenomenon as "Heteroglossia".²⁶ There are different narrative voices, characteristic of Sterne's writing, which are apt to interrelate and supplement each other. Their "fusion" creates a special effect of polyphonic narrative. Catherine follows a similar pattern; we hear the tragicomic voices of her contemporaries, who are intriguing, weeping, laughing and even unconsciously mocking each other. The reader listens to the angry voice of Elizabeth I, who "sent her nephew to hell",²⁷ to the Grand Duke, who "shouted like a trooper"²⁸, to the whispering which was going on between the courtiers.

I would argue that in Catherine's situation of an "outsider" in Russia, polyphonic narrative gave the only chance of an artistic self-defence and of self-expression. "Heteroglossia" as a part of the *Memoir's* poetics gave her an opportunity to complete her image, based on other people's impressions. It also helped to create a dialogue between Catherine the Great and her readers.

As for the concept of Life as a cycle, both Sterne and Catherine have a tendency to mask their literary creations within a carnivalesque image of the narrative. The concept of carnival is cyclic. Bakhtin wrote:

Pre-romanticism and Romanticism witnessed a revival of the grotesque genre but with a radically transformed meaning.

It became the expression of a subjective, individualistic world outlook very different from the carnival folk concept of previous ages, although still containing some carnival elements. The first important example of the new subjective grotesque was Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, a peculiar transposition of Rabelais' and Cervantes' world concept into the subjective language of the new age.²⁹

Generally speaking, carnival (whether in a "market-place" or in a "bookish" embodiment) is an image of an eternal cycle. Sterne's and Catherine's reflections on the subject of the cyclical nature of human life parallel one another. For example, Yorick's best sermon was about mortality: in other words, Yorick imagined Life as a cycle and, thereafter, saw human evolution as a digression.

Amongst these, there is that particular sermon which has led me into this digression. - The funeral sermon upon poor Le

Fever, as if from a hasty copy. - I take notice of it the more,
because it seems to have been his favourite composition. - It is
upon mortality. . .

(*Tristram Shandy*, I, ii, 55)

Catherine illustrated her understanding of the cyclical nature of human existence with the help of a parable about a gardener.

He used to tell fortunes, and what he foretold for the
Empress came true: he predicted she would come to the
throne. This man told me, and repeated as often as I
wished, that I should be sovereign Empress of Russia. . . He
did more, he fixed the date of my coming to the throne six
years before it took place. He was an odd man and spoke
with unshakeable conviction. He affirmed that the Empress
did not wish him well because his predictions had come true
and that she had sent him away because . . . she was afraid
of him, now that there were no further throne for him to
promise her.³⁰

Catherine demonstrates here the vision of Life as a cycle, with poverty being replaced by glory which, in turn, is being replaced by Death. Just as Catherine's concept of

life as the “bitter carnival” is related to Sterne’s poetics, so his modification of the novelistic genre has also played a distinctive part in the evolution of eighteenth century Russian literature.

In conclusion, the points of intersection between Sterne and Catherine II’s writings clarify the phenomenon of his influence on Russian literary evolution via the genre of fictional memoirs. We have traced the Sternean motif of the sensitive intellectual through her *Memoirs of 1771*. The Empress’s determination to fashion the literary mask of a suffering, yet self-mocking, sentimental heroine features prominently in the history of the late eighteenth century politics of Sensibility.

¹ The question of Catherine the Great’s allusions to Sterne was also briefly discussed in V. I. Maslov, “Interes k Sternu v Russkoi Literature kontsa XVIII - nachala XIX vekov” in *Istoriko-Literaturnyi Sbornik Posviashchennyi V. I. Sreznevskomu*, (Leningrad: Priboi, 1924), p.363.

² William Edward Brown, *A History of Eighteenth Century Russian Literature* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1980), p. 216.

³ Grigorii Gukovskii, ‘The Empress as Writer’, in *Catherine the Great. A Profile*, edited by Mark Raeff (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 80.

⁴ *Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II: Proizvedeniia literaturnye* (St. Petersburg: A.F. Marks, 1893), p.25.

⁵ Byron, *Don Juan*, The Oxford Authors Series (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.54.

⁶ George Macartney returned from Russia late in 1767.

⁷ Macartney’s family history is discussed in Lewis Perry Curtis, (ed.): *Letters of Laurence Sterne* (Oxford: At the Calendon Press, 1935), p. 405.

⁸ See George Trevelyan, *Early life of Charles James Fox* (London, 1908), p. 46 n.

⁹ George Trevelyan, *Early life of Charles James Fox*, p. 46 n.

¹⁰ Wilbur. L. Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), I, pp. 268-9.

¹¹ Macartney’s diplomatic career is discussed in *Letters*, p. 406.

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- ¹² Peter III (1728-1762), Emperor of Russia (1761-1762), succeeded Elizabeth I; married Catherine II in 1744.
- ¹³ *Zapiski Imperatritsy Ekateriny II. Izdanie Iskandera*, perevod s frantsuzskogo (London: Trübner, 60, Paternoster Row, 1859).
- ¹⁴ *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), p. 275.
- ¹⁵ *The Memoirs of Princess Dashkov* (London: John Calder, 1958), p. 91.
- ¹⁶ Orlov, Alexis, Count (1737-1808): The Chief organizer of Catherine's seizer of power; head of the deposed Emperor's bodyguard, responsible for his murder.
- ¹⁷ *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, p. 90.
- ¹⁸ Elizabeth I (1709-1761), Empress of Russia (1741-1761), daughter of Peter the Great and his second wife, Catherine I. Her death is mentioned in Sterne's letter to Garrick written from Paris in 1761: "We are all going into mourning..." (Elizabeth I was the ally of Louis XV during the Seven Years War) (*Letters of Laurence Sterne*, p. 152).
- ¹⁹ *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great* , p.377.
- ²⁰ *Tolstoy Centenary Edition* (Oxford University Press: London, 1934), XV, p. 395-397.
- ²¹ *The Memoirs, of Catherine the Great*, p. 233.
- ²² Michail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélèn Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.26.
- ²³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (London: Penguin Classics, 1979), p.2.
- ²⁴ *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, p. 300.
- ²⁵ *Memoirs of Catherine the Great* , p. 212.
- ²⁶ See Michail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, translated by Caryl Emerson, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), chapter one. ("Dostoyevsky's Polyphonic Novel and its Treatment in Critical literature"), pp. 5-47.
- ²⁷ *Memoirs of Catherine the Great* , p. 299.
- ²⁸ *Memoirs of Catherine the Great* , p. 297.
- ²⁹ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 36-7.
- ³⁰ *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, p. 237.

Chapter Four

Sterne in the Eighteenth-Century Russian Translations

Sterne was first known in Russia through the original English editions or the French or German translations, but as his popularity increased, his works were translated into Russian. *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, with three Russian editions before 1800, was more popular than *A Sentimental Journey*, with one rendering. The reader's interest in the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* can be explained by the fact that the epistolary tradition was so popular among European and Russian writers during the age of Sensibility. It is significant that no complete translation of *Tristram Shandy* was published in Russia during the period. There were no translations of *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*.¹ Translated fragments of Sterne's works appeared in the pages of Moscow and St. Petersburg journals from 1779 to 1796. In this chapter, I intend to discuss the various Russian translators of Sterne and investigate the intellectual and literary context of three complete translations that emerged in the eighteenth century.

Arendt's translation of *Yorick's Sentimental Journey*: 1779

In 1779, the first translated extract from *A Sentimental Journey* emerged in *St. Petersburgskii Vestnik* (*St. Petersburg Messenger*) a medium for ideas during the Russian Enlightenment.² Levin writes:

In 1778 in G. L. Briako's *Sanktpeterburgskii Vestnik* there was an anecdote about how "Mr. Sterne, the famous English writer", when inspecting the sights of Paris, fell on his knees before the statue of Henry the Great. And the next year in the same journal an extract was published from *Yorick's Sentimental Journey*, "The Monk in the French Town of Calais". . . .³

Martynov points out that Briako's journal was founded for the educated Russian reader interested in the broad context of European culture.⁴

Grigorii Briako (1740s-1793) was a diplomat, historian and distinguished translator from French and German.⁵ In 1763, he graduated from Trinity Academy in Kiev and moved to St. Petersburg where he continued his studies in philosophy, this time as a student of St. Petersburg University. In the 1770s, he worked as a translator in Peter the Great's archives under the supervision of the famous Russian historian Prince Shcherbatov who had a high opinion of Briako's academic abilities.

In 1778, Briako endeavoured to voice the ideas of the Enlightenment in his journal *St. Petersburgskii Vestnik* to which Russian literati, like the poets Gavriil Derzhavin (1743-1816) and Vasilii Kapnist (1738-1823), the painter, architect and writer Nikolai Lvov (1752-1803) and others were eager to contribute. Briako and his fellow critics published articles on European science and arts, geography and history and other subjects of an enlightened nature. In 1781, the journal ceased to exist for political reasons after the publication of Derzhavin's poetic adaptation of the eighty first psalm entitled *For the Rulers and Judges*, which was considered as a threat to

Catherine II.⁶ Briako was sent on a diplomatic mission to Venice and then Vienna where he died in 1793.⁷

Therefore, the first Russian article on Sterne emerged in an intellectual context characteristic of the Russian Enlightenment. Given the popular eighteenth-century belief in benevolence, it is not surprising that the editor is interested in Sterne's philanthropic nature, revealed in a chapter of *A Sentimental Journey* in which the protagonist praises the memory of Henry IV, a king who is remembered for his tolerance and good deeds. Similarly, the translated extract makes the reader reflect on the questions of moral duty and compassion which are addressed in the course of Yorick's encounter with the monk.

The fourth volume of *St. Petersburgskii Vestnik* (1779) is missing from the British Library collection, so I will focus on the intellectual context of these publications. The translator was the German scholar Feodor Arendt (1743-1829), employed by Catherine the Great to assist the members of her Cabinet with Russian and German renderings of the official papers.⁸ Arendt came from a family of Protestant clergy and studied theology and law at Königsberg University. From his young days Arendt had been involved in the translation business. His works included, for example, the German translation of Catherine the Great's *Nakaz* (1769), Sumarokov's *History of the Sterelitzs' Upheaval* (1768) (the Streletzs were an ancient Russian militia) and eleven volumes of the proceedings of the Russian Economic Society (1766-1769). Arendt believed in the translator's fidelity to the source text; in his opinion, it is better "to be mistaken" unwillingly than "to distort" the original idea on purpose.⁹

In 1768, he moved to St. Petersburg where he served first as a translator at the Collegium of Foreign Affairs and then, after 1781, at her Majesty's Cabinet. In the 1770s-1780s, Arendt played an important part in St. Petersburg's intellectual life by editing *St. Petersburgisches Journal* which was a medium for the ideas of the European Enlightenment. He contributed to the Russian press with translations of German articles of an artistic and scientific nature and, vice versa, to the German press with renderings of Russian political treatises, studies in history and fiction. According to Martynov, Arendt was also a co-editor and enthusiastic contributor to Briako's *St. Petersburgskii Vestnik*.¹⁰ He translated Sterne's work from the German, most likely from Bode's rendering of 1769 which was praised by German literati for its literary qualities.

During his 'Russian years', Arendt developed research skills by participating in a *Comparative Dictionary of all Languages and Nominations* (1787-1789) edited by the scholar and explorer Pallas. One outcome of their dialogues on linguistic matters was Arendt's book on the *Origins and Affinity of European Languages* (issued in Germany in 1818) to which Catherine the Great made some suggestions and corrections.¹¹ He remained a scholar after his return to Germany in 1793 and was granted a pension for his services to Russia which he recalled as "the second motherland"¹². The first Russian reference to Sterne, in other words, emerged in the main stream of the Enlightenment movement.

Arendt's publication in *St. Petersburgskii Vestnik* was followed by three selected translations from English in Karamzin's *Moskovskii Zhurnal* (*The Moscow Messenger*) in 1791-1792.¹³ In his detailed study of Russian translations of Sterne, Maslov argues that these extracts were rendered by the anonymous contributors to

Moskovskii Vestnik.¹⁴ The choice of translated chapters, that of 'Maria', 'a Beggar and His Dog' and 'A Story of Le Fever', demonstrates the shift towards sentimentalism, for these 'pathetic' tales gained a widespread popularity in Europe in the heyday of the sentimental vogue.

Before 1800, another three translated excerpts, entitled *Trimov Katekhizis* (*Trim's Catechism*); *Otryvok iz Tristrama Shandy* (*An Extract from Tristram Shandy*) and *Glava 45* (*Chapter Forty Five*), were published in Moscow journals *Priyatnoe i Poleznoe Prepovozhdeniie Vremeni* (*A Pleasant and Instructive Pastime*) (1794) and *Muza* (*A Muse*) (1796).¹⁵ In his biography of the Russian writer, critic and translator Galinkovskii, Lotman argues his authorship of the two translations (*An Extract from Tristram Shandy* and *Chapter Fourty Five*) which were published in *Muza*.¹⁶ The selected translations that emerged in *Sanktpeterburgskii Vestnik* in 1779, *Moskovskii Zhurnal* in 1791 and 1792, *Priyatnoe i Poleznoe Prepovozhdeniie Vremeni* in 1794 and *Muza* in 1796 were indicative of the increasing popularity of Sterne's works in Russia. During the same period of the 1780s-1790s three complete translations of Sterne's works were to be published in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The first complete translation, that of *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, was issued in 1789 by Novikov, a leading Moscow publisher and head of the Moscow Freemasons. Thereafter, one of the most significant phenomena of Russian Sterneana was the Freemasons' adaptation and dissemination of the *Letters*. This translation revealed a broad spectrum of interpretations, from the pathos of the German at one extreme to the didactic, almost clerical and Orthodox zeal of Russian renderings at the other.

Laurence Sterne and Freemasons: the first Russian translation of *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*

When Laurence Sterne died in London in March 1768 his demise was lamented by many of his admirers in England and on the Continent. Garrick, a prominent Shakespearian actor and a friend of Sterne's, wrote a touching epitaph:

Shall Pride a heap of sculptor'd marble rise,
Some worthless, unmourn'd titled fool to praise;
And shall we not by one poor grave-stone learn
Where Genius, Wit, and Humour, sleep with Sterne.¹⁷

The epitaph was thought by Sterne's contemporaries to be a "sweet" tribute to the most notorious of the English writers after Swift. Yet, unlike Swift's mortal remains, which rested in peace in Dublin cathedral, Sterne's body was to suffer a bizarre series of the posthumous metamorphoses. His corpse was stolen from his grave by resurrectionists and carried the next day in a case to Cambridge, where it was sold to a professor of anatomy. It was said later that none involved in the robbery knew that the body was Sterne's. The discovery came about by a mere accident. Cross writes:

The professor of anatomy invited two friends to view the dissection of a nameless corpse that had just arrived from London. The work was nearly over when one of them out of curiosity uncovered the face of the dead man and recognised the features of Sterne, whom he had known and associated with not long ago. The poor visitor fainted at the sight, and Professor Collington, on learning what a famous man lay under his scalpel, took care to retain the skeleton... There is, moreover, an old manuscript note at the end of a copy of the first edition of the *Sentimental Journey*, wherein the writer says that the story was confirmed by Dr. Collington.¹⁸

All this was in the service of the age of reason, with its emphasis on rationalism and the scientific approach, an age which Sterne himself, with a medieval relish for death and the grotesque, mocked and criticised. Strangely enough, this allegorical story could serve as a sombre illustration of the eighteenth century argument between the politics of sensibility, with its emphasis on humanity and tender feelings, and the rationalism of Enlightenment, that praised science for the sake of science. It was, indeed, a debate to which the author of *A Sentimental Journey* contributed generously – on the one side with his works, and on the other with his mortal remains.

Because many believed that Sterne's body no longer reposed in a graveyard, the grave was left neglected and without a stone for many years. Finally, the members of

a spiritual order with which Sterne was never associated erected a headstone. Two Freemason brothers, who had read Sterne's books but never seen the man, inscribed an epitaph, summarising his literary career and attributing to him all the virtues of the Brethren to which he did not belong:

If a sound Head, warm Heart, and Breast humane,
 Unsullied Worth, and Soul without a Stain;
 If mental Powers could ever justly claim
 The well-known tribute of Immortal Fame,
 Sterne was the man, who with gigantic Stride,
 Mowed down luxuriant Follies far and wide...¹⁹

The Freemasons' contribution has been since criticised by some of Sterne's admirers, yet nobody else cared enough for his memory to mark his grave. The Freemasons' praise of Sterne's "sound Head, warm Heart and breast humane" is also in the striking opposition to Garrick's secular tribute to "Genius, Wit, and Humour", highlighting the eighteenth century virtues of sensibility and wit respectively, with Sterne's name providing a link between them.

Before we embark on the Russian Freemasons' translation, it should be said that British and Continental Brethren, in spite of the different trends presented within their structure, were united. The first and the main link between the English, Scottish, Swedish, German and other systems would be the original legend that inspired the

Freemasons' ceremonies and gave the Craft its name. The legend goes back to the biblical times of King Solomon, who built the Jerusalem Temple. To control the multilingual crowd of craftsmen and masons, the headmaster, called Hiram, had to invent a special network of signs and words to be understood by all. The decisive command was a secret word that only Hiram knew. Three envious craftsmen, wishing to learn the magic word, killed the Master and hid the body near the temple. Once the disciples, searching for the Master, overheard the laments of the murderers, the puzzle of his disappearance was solved and the truth came to light. Freemasons' ceremonies are based on the symbolic recollection of these events.²⁰

As Gould argues, Britain was to be the motherland of the first Freemasons' organisations. Sir Christopher Wren was reputed to be the first Grand Master, but contemporary evidence is lacking and the story is not recognised by twentieth-century authorities. Nevertheless, Continental (especially German and Russian) sources persisted in calling Wren the founder of English Freemasonry.²¹ The Masons' moral code - *A Book of Constitutions* by Anderson - was published in London in 1723 after the grand Lodge of England was established in 1717. This influential Lodge was to control the Russian lodges established in St. Petersburg from the 1750s to the 1770s.²²

With regard to the origins of the Russian Craft, the Emperor Peter the Great was said to have acquired a knowledge of Freemasonry from Sir Christopher Wren during his visit to England in 1698 and to have founded a Lodge on his return to Russia. But Peter the Great's status in Freemasonry is as dubious as Wren's. However, the authenticity of his Lodge, a social club that welcomed British citizens (officers, teachers and scholars recruited to work in Russia), has been argued by

contemporary English scholars. These scholars, associating Peter the Great's establishment with the "secret clubs of virtuosi, or 'alchemists', so popular in contemporary England", claim that "it is quite possible (that it) had Masonic connections".²³ The intimate, not to say family links between the British and Russian Brethren may be illustrated by the fact that the first Provincial Grand Master of Russia, General James Keith (1696-1758), appointed in 1740, and the Grand Master of England, John Keith, Earl of Kintore, were cousins. The case of the Keith brothers, by the way, demonstrates the political, religious and national tolerance praised and developed by subsequent generations of Freemasons, for they were Scottish Jacobites appointed by an English establishment.²⁴

The actual establishment of Russian Masonry took a long time, as the first eight recorded lodges date from the early 1770s. Interestingly, like their English fellows and in the spirit of the age, the St. Petersburg Masons followed the radical and democratic ideas of individual freedom and self-development, and were apt to imitate the English pattern of the Mason and the Gentleman. Artistic, musical and literary skills were welcomed and, akin to their European brothers, such as Mozart, Russian writers, dramatists and musicians of Catherine's reign became attracted by Masonic concepts. The first Russian Provincial Grand Master, appointed by the Grand Lodge of England in the 1770s, Ivan Elagin (1725-1793), represents a link between the arts on the one hand and the Craft of Freemasonry on the other. For Elagin, called by his contemporaries a Mason and a Gentleman, was the head of the St. Petersburg theatres.²⁵ The Masons' network also operated within the milieu of the university and scholarly publishing.

The foundation of Russian lodges under English patronage coincided with a growing interest in the politics of sensibility and in Sterne's works. The Freemasons' connections served the cultural purpose of introducing, among other things, secular texts on literature and philosophy that were popular in England and on the Continent but unknown to Catherine II's literati. Due to 'visiting Brothers' from England, the fashionable concepts of Sensibility, not to mention the sentimental vogue inspired by Sterne, penetrated the secluded world of St. Petersburg's Lodges. John Robison (1739-1805), a Scot and a member of St. Petersburg's Lodge "Perfect Union", published his account of Russian Freemasonry in Edinburgh in 1797. In it, he reflects the assimilation of the sentimental tradition by Freemasonry when he recalls that the characteristic "song of brotherly love" was chanted in a less characteristic but "most refined strain of sentiment".²⁶

Bode's rendering of *A Sentimental Journey*

The general interest in sensibility, featured in Robison's account, was rethought and reinterpreted in the light of the Masons' moral code and enlightened intentions. Yet it was not the English but the Germans who were the first to understand the didactic potential of the works of Sterne. A Berlin publisher and a prominent Freemason Joachim Christoph Bode (1730–1793) translated *A Sentimental Journey* as early as 1768 (the book came into its second printing in 1769). Howes emphasises that Bode "was responsible for starting the Sterne cult in Germany with his translation of *A Sentimental Journey*".²⁷ Well known within German literary circles, Bode was acquainted with Lessing and Goethe, who were life-long admirers of Sterne. Goethe owed to Bode his brief participation in a Freemasons' Lodge.

Gould indicates that Bode's Grand Lodge of Hamburg had established connections with Russia in 1768.²⁸ At the same time, the Lodge was known for its strong links with the Grand Lodge of England.

In relation to German perception of Sterne, we suggest that he was treated as a thinker by Bode's fellow Masons. The poet Schwerin (1744–1816), for example,²⁹ paid tribute to Sterne by naming his clandestine Lodge *Eliza of the Warm Heart*. It opened in 1774 in Hamburg a year after Sterne's *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* emerged in London. Bode's interest in Sterne's concept of sensibility is reflected in the *Preface* to his translation. Recalling his conversation with Lessing on the subject of a German word for "sentimental", Bode draws the reader's attention to Sterne's philosophical concept of life as a "difficult" yet "sentimental" journey. At the same time, in Bode's opinion, translation is also a journey through a different national mentality:

If Sterne was permitted to invent a new word, then his translator is also permitted to do the same. The English had no adjective at all from sentiment; we have more than one from *Empfindung*... but all these say something different. Be bold! Say *empfindsam*! If a difficult journey is a journey with much difficulty, then a sentimental journey can also be a journey with much sentiment. I am not saying that the analogy would be entirely to your advantage. But whatever the reader may not understand by the word at first, he will gradually become accustomed to understand.³⁰

As well as emphasising the concept of self-knowledge shared by Freemasons and explored in *A Sentimental Journey*, Bode's rendering of Sterne meets the patriotic and liberating requirements of the German Enlightenment and *Sturm und Drang* movement by extending that allegory to include the idea of the development of the national character. In relation to the literary and philosophical merits of Bode's translation, Zwaneveld emphasises his social ambitions, which "went further than the mere transfer of foreign text". According to Zwaneveld, Bode "took an active part in resuscitation of German literature and was praised by his contemporaries for his linguistic creativity".³¹ One of his aims in translating the works of Sterne was "to enrich the national literature with an original work in the German language, shaped according to the fashion of his time".³²

In 1768, Bode's translation became the channel through which Sterne's works came to Russia. Reflections on Bode's rendering of *A Sentimental Journey* are to be found in the St. Petersburg satirical and political journal, *The Painter*, which originated from the Masonic milieu. The first work was entitled *A Fragment of a Journey* and, with a pathos that brings to mind Sterne's story of poor Maria, it reflected on the poverty and humiliation of man. The second piece alluded to Sterne more openly, both in the title *A Journey Written in the English Taste* and in its discussing questions of individual self-development and the importance of the charitable attitude.³³ The less obvious influence of *A Sentimental Journey* is to be found in the idea of benevolence, or, in Sterne's words, the "web of love" (*A Sentimental Journey*, 79) emphasised by the anonymous author. Although deriving from the German Masonic rendering, this allusion to *A Sentimental Journey* offers a

Russian interpretation of Sterne's concept of "Dear Sensibility", one based on Christian, spiritual love rather than on the more secular philanthropy and benevolence depicted in the German version.

Novikov's Sterne edition: socio-cultural context and readership.

The first complete Russian translation of Sterne, *The Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, came out in 1789. The publisher was Nicolai Novikov (1744-1818), a well-known name both in the publishing trade and in Moscow literary circles. We know almost nothing about the socio-cultural context of this publication. The Sterne translation is rarely mentioned among Novikov's editions. Levin wrote:

In 1789 N. I. Novikov issued . . . the translation, not of one of the writer's renowned novels, but of the posthumous *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*. However, from the preface of the translator, Gavril Apukhtin, at that time still a youthful pupil at the Moscow Noble Pension, one may conclude that by this time the English author's name had become well known to a relatively wide circle of Russian readers. . . .³⁴

Levin, an expert in the field of the eighteenth-century English-Russian literary connections, and the other scholars working in this field did not emphasise the significance of this first complete Russian translation of Sterne or paid any attention

to the “pupil” who was its translator. What type of person was Apukhtin and what were Novikov’s motives in publishing a translation of a lesser known work of Sterne – lesser known, that is, than *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*?

His reasons, it seems to me, were likely to be of an ideological rather than a commercial nature. At that time, the Russian reader would have preferred a complete translation of *Yorick’s Touching Journey* or *Yorick’s Sensual Journey*, which are two of the titles given to Russian anthologies of extracts from *A Sentimental Journey* and published during the 1770s and 1780s. Though Novikov, it should be said, would no doubt have heard that the censor cut the original, published in London in 1773 by Eliza’s real-life prototype, Elizabeth Draper. (The complete version of *The Letters* emerged only in 1904).³⁵

Novikov’s creative activities have some points of intersection with the German publisher and Freemason Bode. Both were interested in Masonic literature and in Sterne translations and both were key figures of the German and Russian Enlightenment respectively. The connection between Freemasonry and the Enlightenment can be visualised in the form of a circle. The Masonic concept of “enlightenment of the heart” instead of enlightenment of the mind was linked with Sterne’s idea of self-knowledge as a sentimental journey through the depths of human nature. Their interest in metamorphoses and the spiritual potential of the human mind brings all these concepts together. These authors imagine the human mind as a physical substance influencing both the universe - the macrocosmos - and the microcosm of man’s existence.

‘The Life and Opinions’ of Nikolai Novikov

A publisher, a journalist, a writer and head of the Moscow Freemasons – Novikov played a key part in the history of the Russian Enlightenment. He never belonged to the circle of the Russian Sentimentalists gathered around Karamzin and the idea of creating a sentimental cult was alien to his practical and earthbound mind. Novikov’s motives in publishing *The Letters* must have been of an ideological nature: his intention, to promote both the Enlightenment and Masonic concepts that were linked to eighteenth century Russian culture. The circumstances of his upbringing and education were to play an important part in his career as a publisher.

Nikolai Novikov came from a family of Russian gentry. He received his primary education at home and, at the age of twelve, entered the Moscow Gymnasium, known for its enlightened methods in teaching languages. The pupils were intended to enter Moscow University to which the Gymnasium was attached. According to Jones, Popovskii, the first rector of the newly founded University (1755) and also Novikov’s lecturer, “was renowned for his translations, via the French, of Locke’s *On Education* and Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man* (Russians were eager to point to the suitability of the name “Popovskii” for their “Russian Pope”)”. The “Russian Pope”, whom Novikov would recall among the first Russian intellectuals in his *St. Petersburg Academic News* of 1777, had undoubtedly bestowed on his pupils a taste for serious reading and a knowledge of European philosophical thought.³⁶

In 1762, Novikov joined the Izmaylovskii Guards at St. Petersburg, but retired in 1768. In 1768 – 1774 he worked in the civil service as a translator in the College of Foreign Affairs. In 1766, Novikov set up his publishing company and ventured on publications of a historical, philosophical, educational and literary nature. From the beginning his career as a publisher and a book-seller was linked with Moscow University. He borrowed money from Vever, who was a publisher and an owner of the university's bookshop. Vever, a renewed man of letters, paid special attention to issues of an educational nature and, therefore, was keen on the idea of translations from European languages. In 1779, Novikov rented the Moscow University printing press for ten years and moved to Moscow. According to Jones, translated works "formed the bulk of the output in his first few months to the end of 1779":

Noteworthy among the translations the following year were the versions from the French by Ambrose, Prefect of the Moscow Academy, of Milton's *Paradise Lost* which was dedicated to Archbishop Plato, the translation of Blackstone on English Law by S. Desnitskii, who had graduated from Glasgow University, a work printed at the expense of Catherine's Cabinet, and also Desnitskii's translation of Thomas Bowden on agriculture. Ivan Lopukhin rendered Young's *Triumph of Faith Over Love* into Russian. That Septuagint of translators which Catherine had attempted to marshal to bring the gospel of the Enlightenment into Russia was set to work again, and Novikov was still able to

utilise the early initiatives of the *Society for the Translation of Foreign Books* and his own *Society for the Printing of Books*...³⁷

From the list of Novikov's publications, two branches can be distinguished. Firstly, there was an ideologically and commercially safe branch of translated fiction, dictionaries and historical issues. This side of Novikov's publishing enterprise enjoyed royal patronage, for Catherine the Great offered him free entrance into her Imperial Archives. His other branch of satirical magazines and Freemasons' moral writings seemed likely to meet with disapproval from the authorities. From 1769 to 1774 he had edited four satirical journals: *The Drone* (1772-1773), *The Tatler* (1770), *The Painter* (1772-1773) and *The Bag* (1774). He also edited a Masonic magazine *Morning Light* (1777-1780) that gained wide popularity in Russian educated circles. The financial audacity of the first branch matched the risky enterprise of the second branch. Novikov must have been full of moral ideals and enlightened aspirations to take these risks. Not surprisingly, his idealism and expectations had led him to membership in a Masonic Lodge in 1775. Jones writes:

Masonry for Novikov was not a force which would mould his outlook: rather Novikov found in the practice of masonry a convenient receptacle which suited the philosophy which he had already worked out for himself in a decade of energetic work and thought directed at the enlightenment of his country.³⁸

In contrast to the St. Petersburg lodges, linked with the Grand Lodge of England, the Moscow brethren kept contacts with the Fellow Freemasons in Germany. Through his publishing and translating business Novikov was to meet Schwartz, a lecturer in Metaphysics in Moscow University and a prominent member of Berlin Rosicrucian Lodge.³⁹ Schwartz was to become Novikov's friend and an associate in Masonic matters. As Cross has pointed out, "By the beginning of the 1780s Moscow became the main centre of new developments. . . . connected with the activities of the famous Moscow-Schwartz Lodge."⁴⁰ It was Schwartz, who, due to his German connections, introduced Novikov to Bode's translation of *A Sentimental Journey*, having indicated the didactic potential of Sterne's work.

Gavrila Apukhtin's translation: the shadow of doubt

Who inspired and supervised the translation before Novikov embarked on publishing Sterne? And why was Sterne so important for Russian masons of the era of Enlightenment? The only scholar to draw attention to Sterne's translator was Bakounine in her 1936 study of Masonic biographies. In 'Spiritual Lives' (adopting the genre of seventeenth-eighteenth century Protestant biography), Bakounine explored the lives of Sterne's Russian publisher and several translators, including those of Novikov, Apukhtin, Karamzin. Apukhtin's name is linked with Novikov⁴¹ because of their shared membership of the Masonic lodges:

Apukhtin, Gavriil Petrovich

1760–1835

Major, puis-conseiller d'état'effectif Organisateur de l'école d'agriculture de la Société Impériale de Moscou pour l'Economie Rurale. [A traduit *Pisma Iorika k Elize I Elizy k Ioriku*, par Stern, 1789]

Membre des II. Elizabeth à la Vertu, Alexandre du Lion d'Or, Sphinx (2) et du Chapitre du Phenix. Grand Trésorier de la Grande loge Provinciale.⁴²

In 1789, Gavriilo Apukhtin and Nikolay Novikov belonged to the Moscow Lodge. At the time of publication Apukhtin was a novice; members of Novikov's Brethren would have been his spiritual teachers. The translator's idealism is apparent in the *Preface*:

These letters, composed by Mr. Sterne, the immortal author of *A Sentimental journey*, are worthy of being mentioned as a creation of a man who combined rare gifts with perfect Sensibility. . . . Their letters are filled with the most tender expressions of passionate but Platonic, visionary love of which Sterne was a model.⁴³

Apukhtin confirms the Moscow Freemasons' idea of Sterne as a neo-Platonist and a free thinker with a gift of "perfect Sensibility"⁴⁴. Sterne is also depicted as the spiritual guardian of Eliza and her children, and as her teacher and benevolent friend. Apukhtin emphasised his humble position as a student and his own Platonic feelings by dedicating "these first fruits of my scholarly achievements" to "Her Excellency Anna Grigorievna Neplieva" as a "humble embodiment" of his admiration.⁴⁵

In his translation, Apukhtin employed solemn and lofty archaic language of the sort to which the Russian reader had been accustomed from spiritual literature and poetry. His translation is a didactic monologue designed to remind the reader of his own moral obligations in connection with Sterne's story. The following translated extracts from Apukhtin's (1789), Kolmakov's (1793) and Karin's (1795) renderings of the *Letters*, demonstrate a difference in their narrative voices:

I probably shall never see you more; yet flatter myself you will sometimes think of me with pleasure, because you must be convinced I love you. . . . - 'tis now out – so adieu; heaven watch over my Eliza. Thine, Yorick.

(*The Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, 17)

И так я уже может быть не увижусь с тобою Елиза! . . .

Но льщусь надеждой, ито ты иногда с удовольствием обо мне вспоминать будешь. И так прости. Да благоводит небо охранять мою Елизу!

(Apukhtin)⁴⁶

Может быть, я больше не увижу тебя, Элиза, но
ласкаюсь, что ты иногда с удовольствием будешь
вспоминать обо мне. И так, прощай! Небо да блюдет
мою Элизу. Твой Йорик.

(Kolmakov)⁴⁷

Элиза! Я может быть с тобою не увижусь, но я надеюсь,
что ты с удовольствием обо мне подумаешь. Прости,
прости! Небо да хранит мою Элизу. Твой Йорик.

(Karin)⁴⁸

Apukhtin's lexicon is based upon the bookish Church Slavonic tradition employed by the authors of the spiritual odes. For example, he uses the verb *льстить* that in this context is associated with spiritual literature. His narrative voice reflects an idea of spiritual guidance: when *льщусь надеждой* corresponds with hope, *небо благоводит* means Divine protection. By illustrating differences in the translator's vocabularies, I will refer to the major linguistic source of the nineteenth-century spoken Russian, Dahl's *Slovar' Russkogo Jazyka* (*Dictionary of the Russian Language*) (1861-1868). Vladimir Dahl, (1801-1872), was the distinguished Russian ethnographer, lexicographer and writer of tales. Dahl associates with humble human expectations given the formal context of his examples

Льститься, Желать, Надеяться

Я льщусь надеждой, смею надеяться

(Dahl)⁴⁹

At the same time, *благоводить* might have been associated with Church Slavonic and never used in spoken Russian, therefore, this word is missing in Dahl's *Dictionary*. Unlike Apukhtin, Kolmakov and Karin employ a secular Russian vocabulary, based upon colloquial speech (Kolmakov) and of the sentimentalists' writing (Karin). Kolmakov and Karin sought to bring the language of translation closer to spoken Russian, particularly to the speech of the educated middle class (Kolmakov) and the gentry (Karin). In the quoted passage, Kolmakov uses the verbs *ласкаться* and *блюсти*, characteristic of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth-century spoken Russian.

Ласкать изъявлять нежное участие, расположение.

(Dahl)⁵⁰

Блюсти соблюдать, хранить, оберегать, быть охраняему, берегаему.

Блюсти одежду снову, а честь смолodu.

(Dahl)⁵¹

In the Karin, надеяться and хранить, both of which are still used in Russian spoken language, refer to the literary Russian.

Надеяться, верить.

Век живи, век надейся.

(Dahl)⁵²

Хранить

Храни тебя Бог!

(Dahl)⁵³

The language of their translations is closer to the nineteenth-twentieth century norm than that used by Apukhtin, though it lacks his emotional zeal.

Apukhtin's *Preface* and therefore his translation were tuned to the Freemasons' favourite motif of virtue as a sign of both social and personal improvement. A song of the Freemasons of his time depicts a similar image of the benevolent man shown in the *Preface*:

Know, that he who knows

The honoured law is a Freemason,
 That the one who maintains virtue,
 Who runs from the wicked,
 Who helps his friends?
 Who lives by the law?
 Know, that he is a Freemason ⁵⁴

Smith argues that “the Masons felt themselves to be involved, however, in more than a disinterested quest for moral improvement”. They believed, he continues, that “it is worth reiterating the public nature of virtue: far from a simple personal attribute or empty mark of fashion, virtue was a constituent and highly contested element of political discourse and held to be an indispensable ingredient for the perfection of the social body”.⁵⁵ Whatever the case, a more powerful character than a fifteen-year-old novice shone out from the translated pages of *The Letters*. We suggest that Apukhtin’s translation was surely supervised by Novikov and his fellow Masons. Owing to a shortage of biographical data, Apukhtin’s career is surrounded by several puzzling questions. Why did he translate *The Letters* at the age of fifteen? How and why was a fifteen-year old pupil entrusted with the Sterne translation, recalled by many translators in Europe as the most difficult they had ever done? And how did he come across the name of the renowned publisher and bookseller Novikov? Did Apukhtin’s Masonic fellows bring them together? Moreover, why did Apukhtin’s literary career end suddenly in 1789, soon after the publication took place? Why did he leave the Moscow University few years later to join the most dangerous of enterprises – the Russian army fighting at the Turkish front?

Some possibilities suggest themselves. The translation could have been a literary mystification, using Apukhtin's name as a politically correct "cover". His Masonic connections, so dangerous for a young student, might have then helped him to escape to the Turkish front in 1792 as the only choice available to him, apart from the political imprisonment for which his Master Novikov was destined. 1792 was the year of the political execution of many members of Novikov's Brethren. But the problems started a few years earlier, in 1789, when the threat of the French Revolution and German interference in Russian matters *via* Masonic channels led to Catherine the Great's suspicion towards the Freemasons.⁵⁶ In 1789, Novikov and his Moscow Brethren may have invented an attractive image of a young and innocent pupil, a novice who translated Sterne moved by his enlightened heart.

The terms of the Freemason's artistic tribute, as reflected in the first Russian translation of 1789, can not be neglected, if only because a glimpse through the eyes of the Freemasons gives us insight into the way 'translation' re-shapes the original artefact to serve its own cultural priorities and prejudices. The first Russian translation of Sterne reflected the politics of Sensibility in Russia, having indicated, on the one hand, Russian intellectual endeavours and on the other, social achievements and shortcomings of Catherine the Great's reign.

Kolmakov's translation of *A Sentimental Journey*: 1793.

In 1793, a publishing house of St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences issued three volumes of *Sterne's Journey through France and Italy under a name of Yorick*,

containing the unusual, curious and touching adventures; the critical reflections and notes which give a trustful account of the nature and spirit of French Folk, also contains tender feelings, subtle and witty utterances, moral and philosophical thoughts, based on the perfect knowledge of human heart to which the amicable letters from Yorick to Eliza and from Eliza to Yorick are enclosed. Vasily Kolmakov (died 1804) came from a family of provincial clergy and was educated at the Trinity Academy in Kiev, an 'alma-mater' of many Russian scholars and thinkers of clerical background. A gifted student, he was granted a scholarship on behalf of the Russian government to continue his studies in England. Kolmakov and his fellow pensionaries were to participate in Catherine II's project which aimed to benefit from British achievements in agriculture by educating Russian students at English universities. Thereafter, Kolmakov's fellows were enrolled in different courses at the universities of Cambridge, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Kolmakov found a patron and mentor in a stature of a head of Russian Embassy Church in London Father Samborsky. Apart from his studies, Kolmakov assisted clerical staff of the Embassy Church for eight years. "Mr. Kolmakov, as usual, stays at home and on the pretext of serving within the church does not give it a thought on inquiring on aspects of agriculture".⁵⁷

Kolmakov has published a book on agriculture but his main concern was about English fiction, of which he was a devoted reader. In 1784, he returned to St. Petersburg and was appointed a lecturer in English at the Admiralty College. Samborskii's name is important in this context, first, because of his positive moral impact on the students; secondly, because he might have recommended Kolmakov to St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences publishing house. A scholar and a man of letters, Samborskii was held in high regard by Catherine the Great and her officials and

should have promoted his young protege, who could not have any connections within St. Petersburg's academia. He has endeavoured to render Sterne, who, as one nineteenth century Russian translator put it "is one of the most difficult writers to translate", whereas his publications included a book on agriculture, a collection of odes (1791) and a rendering of *Koran* (1792) (his source text was in English).⁵⁸ Assuming that Russia would have benefited by and large from cultural contacts with Britain, Kolmakov intended to contribute to the Russian Enlightenment by translating Sterne, whose clerical background might have been of special importance to the former graduate of the Trinity Academy.

As the translator's note indicates, *Sterne's Journey* was translated from English. Kolmakov's translation proved to be commercially successful and was sold at a high price of a rouble and a half. Kolmakov's edition targeted a different and much broader audience of the educated middle-class and bourgeois reader than that of Apukhtin's circle of enlightened gentry or Arendt's milieu of St. Petersburg's literati. Kolmakov was apt to soften the ironic subtext of Sterne's work. His clerical and teaching background is revealed in his linguistic addiction to 'polite' lexicon signified by the elaborate narrative structures and bookish language. For example, he ignores the ironic meaning of the first line by translating "the most civil triumph in the world" with the help of two Russian expressions, *преучтивый* (the "most courteous man") and *предовольный* ("the most contented man").

They order, said I, this matter better in France -

You have been in France? – said my gentleman, turning quick upon me with the most civil triumph in the world. . .

(*A Sentimental Journey*, 1)

В таких случаях, сказал я, лучше делают во Франции. –А

Вы были там? Спросил меня с преучтивым и

предовольным взглядом господин, с которым я спорил.

(Kolmakov)⁵⁹

Kolmakov's lack of understanding Sterne's ambiguous sense of humour achieves its apogee in the final scene in which the protagonist shares a room in an inn with a lady and her maid because there is no other bed-chamber in the house.

But the Fille de Chambre hearing there were words between us, and fearing that hostilities would ensure in course, had crept silently out of her closet, and it being totally dark, had stolen so close to our beds, that she had got herself into the narrow passage which separated them, and had avanc'd sofarup as to be in a line betwixt her mistress and me -
So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's (*A Sentimental Journey*, 105).

Но горничная девушка, услыша спор наш и опасаясь, чтоб не
 дошло дело до драки, вышла потихоньку из чуланчика, и
 понеже очень было темно, то она вошла в узенький проход
 между нашими постелями, и стала на одной линии между
 мною и госпожою — и так я, протянувши свою руку, поймал
 горничную девушку.

(Kolmakov)⁶⁰

The artistic method that “transforms erotic emotion into sensibility”⁶¹ leaves the reader confused whether Yorick’s encounter with Fille de Chambre is of an erotic or of an innocent nature. The translator finishes the line, thereby radically changing the narrator’s voice. The Russian version depicts the common adventure of a gentleman traveller who “has caught hold of a maid”. Faithful to his Russian tune, Kolmakov turns Fille de Chambre into a Russian maid, “gornichnaia devushka”, having transformed an ambiguous scenario, staged in a far-away France, into a Russian picaresque tale.

The translator’s preference of Russian colloquial speech, like, for example, the above-mentioned replacement of Fille de Chamber with “gornichnaja devushka”, transforms *A Sentimental Journey* into a ‘Russian journey’. The fact that Kolmakov’s narrator speaks and acts in the same vain as the Russian middle-class reader might

have been beneficial for his audience which was ignorant towards European socio-cultural context but eager to learn about it.

Karin's translation of *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*: 1795.

Nikolay Karin's rendering of the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* of 1795 (from French) conveys the spirit of the last decade of the century by addressing the artistic principles of Sentimentalism and, at the same time, paying respect to Russian Classicism. A lack of the translator's biographical data suggests that the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza and from Eliza to Yorick, with the inclusion of a portrait of Mr. Sterne and a picture of Eliza's grave* was his only literary publication and he either has died young or retired in his young days from social and artistic life.

At the time of publication Karin might have been a student of Moscow University. The book was censored by a university professor of Logic and Metaphysics Andrey Briantsev and issued by the university publishing house.⁶² In his dedication, Karin acknowledges the fact that he is a novice in the translation business, "these first and immature fruits of my studies are designed for the sensitive and gentle hearts; for those, who love mankind".⁶³ At first glance, the dedication voices a sentimental motif of "the sensitive hearts". "This book is dedicated", continues Karin, -"to His Excellency, Gentleman of Chamber of Her Majesty's Court, Count Dmitrii Ivanovich Khvostov".⁶⁴ Written in the sentimentalists' manner, Karin's dedication is yet controversial because of his addressee, Count Khvostov (1757-1835), a Classicist poet and opponent of the Sentimentalists. Khvostov's didactic zeal reflected in his odes and fables made him a favourite target of the Sentimentalists' and Romantics' epigrams, for example, by Viazemskii and Pushkin. He lived to see that

his classical style become outmoded, and withdrew from literature in the 1820s. “Khvostov created a strange world containing doves with teeth and donkeys with claws and heels, where carp shriek from pain and ravens have mouths and lips”, writes Altshuller, - “Contemporaries did not understand what Khvostov was trying to do. . .”.

By dedicating his work to the Classicist poet, Karin on the one hand, subscribed to the enlightened image of Sterne the man of letters. On the other hand, his ‘humble’ dedication could have been ironic. Karin would have expressed his irony by imitating Sterne’s dedication to Pitt: “Your Excellency’s most obedient, devoted and humble servant, Peter Karin”. But, however “devoted” and “obedient” to the principles of Classicism, the “humble servant” belonged to the generation of Russian Sentimentalists to whom Khvostov’s “strange world” (quoting Altshuller) became alien and old-fashioned.

In his preface, Karin depicts Sterne in the sentimental tradition, yet with a touch of Khvostov’s didactic pathos. Sterne is a preacher and writer who “possesses joyful spirit” and is able to express the “most tender” manifestations of “Love which is essentially Platonic”. The translator views Sterne’s philosophy as an epitome of benevolence by referring his reader to the story of Le Fever, a ‘pathetic’ tale about an orphaned boy adopted by a retired soldier. Karin writes:

He looked at everything and noticed everything in a different way that was peculiar to him alone; the most mundane actions, when described by his quill, took a shape both attractive and touching. Mere trifles could enliven his works.

All that was his and of him exemplary, even his very sermons, published under the name of Yorick, present pure moralising in a simple and natural way. His style is also his and his alone. His health being tender and delicate, Sterne had a gloomy and thoughtful visage; however his disposition was full of wit and humour. One could see him by turns Cervantes, Montaigne and Rabelais, but aside from that he possesses that flower of feeling, that suppleness of reflection, that is beyond my power to convey. Read the story of Le Fever in *Tristram Shandy*, and there will be no more need for my elaboration.⁶⁵

The sentimental mode of Karin's work is further revealed in his comments on an enclosed "allegorical picture of Eliza's grave" which depicts "Three Graces who carry an urn with Eliza's ashes". "The frame-work includes the following symbolic images", explains Karin to his candid reader, "a sacrificial altar, flower crown and a book placed on the wings of Time".⁶⁶ Here, he reflects the Sentimentalists' preoccupation with death. In the Karin, Sterne's narrative structure characteristic of the age of Sensibility, of letters from a dying man separated from his beloved, is matched by the Russian Sentimental vocabulary. Fittingly, Karin uses a Russian idiom for the word 'sentimental', чувствительный, characteristic of Karamzin's writings.⁶⁷ Видела ли ты их чувствительными к чести твоего имени (Karin).

For God's Sake, write not to them; nor foul thy fair
characters with such polluted hearts. . . .

(Letters from Yorick to Eliza, 16)

Ради Бога, не пиши к ним, не марай прекрасной твоей
души с такими развратными сердцами.
(Kalmykov)⁶⁸

Ради Бога, не пиши к ним ничего, не оскверни
добродетельной своей души знакомством развращенных
сих сердец.
(Karin)⁶⁹

The 'Karamzinian' impact can be further traced in comparison between Apukhtin's formal and 'bookish' narrative voice and Karin's more elegant and 'polished' way of writing which reminds of the nineteenth-twentieth century literary standards. For example, Apukhtin's reader would have associated the expression *марать прекрасную душу* with the language of didactic literature. Characteristically, Dahl illustrates the verb *марать* by referring to the formal Russian expression which in English means to tarnish somebody's honour

Марать человека, честь его.

Он себя марает, бесчестит.

(Dahl)⁷⁰

Karin's translation has a more secular connotation, and is associated with the moral code. Dahl explains the verb by referring to the expression "adversary defiled churches", in other words, it is a secular action.

Осквернить, обесчестить.

Церкви осквернены неприятелем.

(Dahl)⁷¹

Karin's rendering is indicative for the "transition age" of the 1790s (quoting Altshuller)⁷² when Russian writers and translators searched for the new literary modes of which Sentimentalism was to play the leading part.

The above-mentioned likening of Sterne to a man of the Enlightenment and neo-Platonic philosopher on the one hand and a painter of the "most tender" facets of human nature on the other, expressed the translators' urge to represent him as a contemporary writer who would have understood the Russian reader's need for moral education and self-development. The similarity in the translators' treatment of Sterne is significant in the sense that they are united by an attempt to articulate the philosophical and moral element in his works and ignore altogether the 'humorous' side of his artistic nature. It is not far from the truth to say that Russian translators rendered Sterne's works according to their social and literary background but they did

make possible the rapid spread of his popularity which was to achieve its peak in the 1800.

¹There was no complete translation of the *Sermons*. In 1801 a collection of translated extracts emerged, entitled *Nravouchitelnyie Rechii i Nekotorye Nravstvennye Mneniia g. Sterna* (Moskva: V Senatskoi Tipografii u Selivanovskogo, 1801).

² The corresponding volumes with an article on Sterne and the translated extract are missing from the British Library collection. I was able to find only few volumes circa 1780.

³ Ju. Levin Levin, Ju. D., "The English Novel in Eighteenth Century Russia", in *Literature, Lives and Legality in Catherine's Russia*, ed. by A. G. Cross and G. S. Smith (Nottingham: Astra Press, 1994), 147.

⁴ I. F. Martynov, 'Zhurnalists, istorik i diplomat XVIII Veka Grigorii Leontievich Briako', in A. N. Radishchev i Literatura Ego Vremeni. XVIII Vek, 12 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1977), p.233.

⁵ On Briako's biography see I. F. Martynov, 'Zhurnalists, istorik i diplomat XVIII Veka Grigorii Leontievich Briako', p.225-42.

⁶ I. F. Martynov, 'Zhurnalists, istorik i diplomat XVIII Veka Grigorii Leontievich Briako', p.233.

⁷ I. F. Martynov, 'Zhurnalists, istorik i diplomat XVIII Veka Grigorii Leontievich Briako', p. 240.

⁸ On Arendt's authorship see V. N. Maslov, 'Perevody Sterna na Russkii Jazyk', p. 344.

⁹ N. D. Kochetkova, 'Bogdan Fedorovich Arndt' in *Slovar' Russkikh Pisatelei XVIII Veka*, I (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988), p. 39.

¹⁰ I. F. Martynov, 'Zhurnalists, istorik i diplomat XVIII Veka Grigorii Leontievich Briako', p. 231.

¹¹ N. D. Kochetkova, 'Bogdan Fedorovich Arndt', pp. 40-41.

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¹³ 'Maria', *Moskovskii Zhurnal*, I, 4 (Moscow:1791), (translated from English); 'Bednyi s Sobakoi. Otryvok iz Styernova Sochineniia', *Moskovskii Zhurnal*, III (1791), pp. 277-83 (the source language is not indicated); 'Istoriia Lefevra', *Moskovskii Zhurnal*, V (1792), p. 203 (translated from English). All translations are anonymous. On Karamzin's publications of Sterne's works see Maslov, p. 345. I was not able to find the required volumes of *Moskovskii Zhurnal* in the British Library Collection.

¹⁴ V. N. Maslov, 'Perevody Sterna na Russkii Jazyk'

¹⁵ 'Trimov Katekhizis' in *Priatnoe i Poleznoe Preprovozhdenie Vremeni*, II, (Moscow:1794), pp.43-6. (translated from French by D. J.); 'Otryvok iz Tristrama Shandy', in *Muza* II, 5 (Moscow: 1796), pp.143-5; (translated by J. . . , the source language is not indicated); 'Glava 45' in *Muza*, IV (Moscow:1796), pp. 23-9 (translated by J. . . , the source language is not indicated); see V. N. Maslov, p. 346.

¹⁶ Ju. M. Lotman, 'Pisatel', *Kritik i Perevodchik Ja. A. Galinkovskii* in XVIII Vek, 4 (Moskva-Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk, 1959), p. 234 (a footnote).

¹⁷ As quoted in Wilbur L. Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, 2 vols., 3rd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), II, p. 170.

¹⁸ Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, pp. 168-169. As Arthur H. Cash has argued, the story was genuine. In 1969 St. George's burial ground was sold to a contractor and Mr. Kenneth Monkman, honorary secretary of the Laurence Sterne Trust obtained permission to search for and remove Sterne's remains and to give Laurence Sterne another funeral in his former parish church at Coxwold, Yorkshire. When Mr. Ross, an anatomist, was compared the skull with Mr. Monkman's copy of the Nollekens bust of Sterne, it matched perfectly. Cash points out, that "The crown (of the skull) had been sawn off" (Cash, *The Later Years*, p. 354) and the eighteenth century legend turned out to be true.

¹⁹ As quoted in Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, p. 170.

²⁰ The origins of the Craft and Russian Freemasonry are discussed in *Gould's History of Freemasonry, its Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs, etc.*, ed. by Dudley Wright, 5 vols. (London: Caxton Publishing Company, no date).

²¹ See "Freemasonry in Russia" in *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, IV, ch. V, pp. 173-201.

²² *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, II, pp. 3-55.

²³ As quoted in A. G. Cross, "British Freemasons during the Reign of Catherine the Great", *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, IV (1971), 43-72.

²⁴ A. N. Pypin, *Russkoie masonstvo XVII I pervaya chetvert XIX veka*, ed. by G. V. Vernadsky (Petrograd, 1916), pp. 89-90.

²⁵ Cross, *British Freemasons during the Reign of Catherine the Great*, pp. 46-48.

²⁶ Cross, *British Freemasons during the Reign of Catherine the Great*, p. 57.

²⁷ Alan B. Howes, ed., *Sterne. The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 427.

²⁸ See "Freemasonry in the German Empire" in *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, IV, ch. III, pp. 91.

²⁹ See *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, IV, pp. 89-161.

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³¹ Agnes Zwaneveld, *A Bookseller's Hobby-Horse, and the Rhetoric of Translation: Anthony Ernst Munnikhuisen and Bernardus Brunius, and the First Dutch Edition of "Tristram Shandy" (1776-1779)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), p. 101.

³² Agnes Zwaneveld, *A Bookseller's Hobby-Horse, and the Rhetoric of Translation*, p. 101.

³³ See N. V. Baranskaya, "Eshche ob avtore "Otryvka Puteshestviia v *I * T""", in *XVIII Vek* (Moskva-Leningrad: Akademiya Nauk, 1958), VII, pp. 226-42.

³⁴ Ju. D. Levin, "The English Novel in 18th Century Russia", in *Literature, Lives and legality in Catherine's Russia*, trans. by G. S. Smith (Nottingham: Astra press, 1994), pp.143-67.

³⁵ A story of the publication is discussed in Wilbur Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), II, pp. 208-209. Cross was to publish the first authoritative edition of the works of Sterne in 1904.

³⁶ Gareth W. Jones, *Nickolay Novikov: Enlightener of Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 8.

³⁷ Gareth W. Jones, *Nickolay Novikov: Enlightener of Russia*, p. 165.

³⁸ Gareth W. Jones, *Nickolay Novikov: Enlightener of Russia*, p. 164.

³⁹ Schwartz's university career is discussed in Alexander Levitskii, "N. I. Novikov i M. M. Kheraskov. Maponskaya Tema v Tvorchestve", in *Novikov i Russkoye Masonstvo* (Moskva: Rudomino, 1996), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Anthony Cross, *British Freemasons during the reign of Catherine the Great*, p. 49.

⁴¹ See Gareth W. Jones, *Nickolay Novikov: Enlightener of Russia*, p. 134.

⁴² Tatiana Bakounine, *Répertoire Biographique Dea Francs Maçons Russes (XVIII et XIX siècles)*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Institute D'études Slaves, De L'université de Paris), pp. 6-8.

⁴³ *Pisma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku. S Priobshcheniiem Pokhvalnogo Slova Elize. Perevel s frantsuzskogo Gavrilu Apukhtin* (Moskva: v Universitetskoi Tipografii u N. Novikova, 1789), p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Pisma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku*, p. 7.

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⁴⁷ *Sternovo Puteshestviie po Frantsii i Italii, s aglinskago podlinnika perevel Alexey Kolmakov*, III vols. (St. Petersburg: pri Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1793), p. 20.

⁴⁸ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize s Otvetami, Sochineniie L. Sterna*, s frontopsisom i portretom; perevod s frantsuzskogo (Moskva: Claudii and Rüdiger, 1795), p. 29-30.

⁴⁹ Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovy Slovar'*, IV vols. (Moskva: Terra-Knizhnyi Klub, 1998), II, p. 641.

⁵⁰ Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovy Slovar'*, II, pp. 614-5

⁵¹ Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovy Slovar'*, I, p. 246.

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⁵⁴ As quoted in Douglas Smith, "Freemasonry and the Public in Eighteenth century Russia", in

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⁵⁵ Douglas Smith, "Freemasonry and the Public in Eighteenth century Russia", p. 293.

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"Freemasonry and the Public in Eighteenth century Russia", pp. 281-304.

⁵⁷ As quoted in A. G. Cross, *U Temzskih Beregov. Rossiiane v Britanii v XVIII veke* (St.

Peterburg: Gumanitarnoe Aгенstvo, 1996), p. 83.

⁵⁸ On Kolmakov's biography see A. G. Cross, *U Temzskih Beregov. Rossiiane v Britanii v XVIII veke*, pp. 71, 79, 83, 86, 87, 96, 103, 296.

⁵⁹ *Sternovo Puteshestviie po Frantsii i Italii*, p. 12.

⁶⁰ *Sternovo Puteshestviie po Frantsii i Italii*, p. 138.

⁶¹ Howard Mumford Jones, *Revolution and Romanticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 110.

⁶² See the title page, *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku s Otvetami. Sochineniie g. Sterna. Perevod s frantsuzskogo* [N. G. Karin] (Moskva: Universitetskaia Tipografiia u Rudigera i Klaudiia, 1795).

⁶³ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku s Otvetami*, p. X.

⁶⁴ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku s Otvetami*, p. X.

⁶⁵ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku s Otvetami*, p. XI.

⁶⁶ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize i Elizy k Yoriku s Otvetami*, p. XI.

⁶⁷ For example, *Chuvstvitel'nyi i Cholodnyi* by Karamzin.

⁶⁸ *Sternovo Puteshestviie po Frantsii i Italii*, p. 36.

⁶⁹ *Pis'ma Yorika k Elize s Otvetami*, p. 28.

⁷⁰ Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovy Slovar'*, II, p. 778.

⁷¹ Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovy Slovar'*, II, p. 1805.

⁷² Mark Altshuler, 'Transition to the Modern Age: Sentimentalism and Preromanticism, 1790-1820', in the *Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, edited by Charles A. Moser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 92.

CONCLUSION

In establishing an outline of the history of Sterne's perception within eighteenth-century Russia, it was essential to develop a vocabulary appropriate to considering Sterne's themes in Russian socio-cultural context: Sterne's motif of carnival, Sterne's polyphonic narrative, Sterne's concept of the Enlightenment of the heart in the age of Reason, Sterne's rethinking of the biblical phenomenon of Folly are terms which emphasise his liberating influence on the Russian literary and philosophical thought. The favourable reception of Sterne's works by Karamzin and Radishchev and the early translations of the *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* and *A Sentimental Journey* as well as the critical discussions in Russian media of the 1770s-1790s brought Russia into the mainstream of eighteenth-century European politics of Sensibility.

What is perhaps even most evident is that the early Russian reflections on Sterne laid the essential template to govern literature. This template had a profound influence on subsequent generations of Russian writers and critics.

From the general themes of benevolence and compassion to specific devices and approaches, the works of Sterne provided models for many aspects of Russian intellectual and cultural development. When viewed from this perspective, it becomes evident that Sterne's fondness of the polyphonic narrative and his emphasis on an enigmatic concept of a carnival nature of life strike a sympathetic chord in Russian fiction and memoir writing. In a variety of ways, the eighteenth-century rethinking of Sterne's works holds the key to fully comprehending some of the greatest achievements in Russian literature.

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A few notes about the bibliography: most of the books listed have been referred to in the notes after each chapter. When chapters in edited books have been used as sources, they are referred to under the name of the author of the chapter, but the book itself is usually listed if there are also other parts of the book that are of relevance for our topic. Books in Cyrillic are transcribed, but when there is an English translation, this translation is listed.

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