While introducing the character of Uncle Toby in the novel, Sterne says that he will not follow the usual methods adopted by writers in drawing characters. Some draw their characters in a high-flown, melodramatic manner (drawing by 'wind instruments'); some again will draw a man's character by his external actions ('evacuations'), ignoring his inner ideas and motives ('repletions'). Some swear by realism and write but what they see; they are like 'the Pentagraphic Brethren of the brush' skilled in taking copies. Others, again, will draw you 'in the Camera' or private chamber - which method is unfair, because it produces an inverted image of the object and will represent you 'in some of your most ridiculous attitudes'.

Our author will not use any of these devices of characterization. He will draw his Uncle Toby's character from his 'hobby-horse', that is, by his ruling passion. Elsewhere too - in a letter to a correspondent, and in his sermon, The Character of Herod - he says that a man's character is best drawn by his ruling passion; for the various shapes we put on are but 'so many different attempts to gratify the same governing appetite'.

(a) Ruling passion:

Now, this concept of ruling passion was widely prevalent in Sterne's time, though the idea was not new. Ben Jonson
explained his concept of humour (derived from medieval medicine), on which he based his comedy, in these words —

"As when some one peculiar quality
Both so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour"

(From Every Man Out Of His Humour, Introduction)

This 'humour' means the predominant disposition, or idea, in a man. Locke, from whom much of 18th century thought was derived, conceived the 'Predominant passions, or inclinations' as one of the factors leading to error of understanding. Earlier, Dryden, following Jonson, defined humour as

"some extravagant habit, passion, or affection, particular to some one person, by the oddness of which he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men."

Pope called the ruling passion 'the mind's disease'. It was believed that character was governed by the ruling passion. Lord Chesterfield advised his son on the need of finding out a man's 'predominant passion' to know his character. The philosopher Hume honestly admitted his love of literary fame to be his 'ruling passion'. Fielding noted 'some fine women' being led by the 'ru­ling principle' of vanity. His Sophia Western says that

"Our inclinations are not in our power"

— to which the wise Allworthy agrees, adding that

"we cannot force our inclinations, much less can they be directed by another."

The splenetic Smollett charges the entire French nation with the 'ruling passion' of vanity. Dr. Johnson's Quisquilius has his ruling passion in 'patriotism'. The concept overflowed into the 19th century, when Hazlitt mocked at it as a silly obsession.
Sterne made good use of this ruling passion, while drawing his characters. About the vital relationship between his a man and his/hobby-horse, he says, in his free comfi vein -

"A man and his Hobby-Horse, tho' I cannot say that they act and react exactly after the same manner in which the soul and body do upon each other: Yet doubtless there is a communication between them of some kind: and my opinion rather is, that there is something in it more of the manner of electrified bodies, - and that, by means of the heated parts of the rider, which come immediately into contact with the back of the Hobby-Horse, - by long journeys and much friction, it so happens, that the body of the rider is at length filled as full of Hobby-Horsical matter as it can hold;- so that if you are able to give but a clear description of the nature of the one, you may form a pretty exact notion of the genius and character of the other".16

In other words, first entering a person's mind in a casual manner, the ruling passion rules his whole being, and determines his character. First entering 'upon the footing of mere whims' they end 'in downright earnest'. But, with Sterne, the ruling passion is not necessarily an affliction. While Walter Shandy's exclusive absorption into philosophy is his besetting sin, in that it clouds his common sense and hampers his humanity (see character-sketch of Walter Shandy), his brother Toby's ruling passion for the science of fortification is not. Walter's hobby-horse took away his peace of mind and begot his spleen (that little subacid soreness of humour). Toby's ruling passion, on the other hand, was a spiritual delight to him. Sterne says -

"To one who took pleasure in the happy state of others, there could not have been a greater sight in the world"19

than to see Toby engaged in his toy-wars on the bowling-green.

In the beginning, of course, the author suggests that Toby had not acted well in 'giving' himself up to the government' of
his ruling passion, and even utters a warning against it. The reason obviously is, that Toby's obsession with the science of fortification prevented his wound from being completely cured (see ante, Chap. V, p. 81) — which later resulted in his disappointment in love, Sterne regarding love as the supreme bliss of life. Nevertheless, we are told that Toby's heart was 'all benignity' without its fulfilment in the tender passion. In an inspired passage, Sterne says of the blessedness of the bowling-green. Moreover, Toby's hobby-horse did not rule his character absolutely; he could dismount it, to respond to the call of humanity — as he did when he left his 'campaigns' for a while to attend to the dying Le Fever. Then, unlike his brother, Toby can also sometimes get out of his ruling passion and place himself in another's position. Thus, while he has no faith in his brother's theory of names, he becomes greatly worried on his account for the mis-naming of Tristram. We see, therefore, that though Toby's ruling passion for the science of fortification distinguishes it, it is neither a flaw in his character, nor is it his predominant or exclusive characteristic; nor, again, is it at odds with his humanity, which the outstanding feature in his character. Thus, while using the prevailing concept of the ruling passion, Sterne does not follow it slavishly. While it exercises an over-all power on character, it is not necessarily an undesirable feature, nor always the sole determinant of character.
(b) Psychological analysis:

Locke - we have stated earlier (see ante, Chap. X, pp. 178-9) - located the identity of a person in his continuing consciousness. Following Locke, Sterne apprehended the human personality in psychological terms. This leads him to analyse the minutiae of feeling and mental states. Sterne's supreme interest is a human being, who exists in his feelings and in the glow of his consciousness. At Montreuil, traveller Tristram's chief object of observation is not architecture, or manners, but Janatone, the inn-keeper's daughter. And Janatone interests him not objectively - by her rank or office, or by her physical beauty, or for any sensational event about her, but because she is a human being, who, being liable to decay, must be 'measured' in her present subjective existence, in her continuing consciousness;

"...he who measures thee, Janatone, must do it now - thou carriest the principles of change within thy frame".27

How surprisingly close is it to the Bergsónian concept of the human personality as a perpetual continuation of feeling, which

"itself is a being which lives and develops and is therefore constantly changing".28

In this, Sterne is different from the other novelists of his age, who bring about an ordered external world in illustration of their moral precepts or their philosophy. Their novel is a string of incidents or adventures, with or without organic unity. Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Austen and others are all interested in character, in their different ways; but their stories are arranged adventures of the principal...
character or characters. Of them, Richardson is most interested in recording the detailed mental states of his characters (through their personal letters); but still, 'action' is very important for him, as can be seen, for example, in the interest created by the advances of Pamela's young master, her skilful evading of them, and the ultimate triumph of her virtue. So, in Clarissa our interest is focussed on the incidents leading to the climax of the heroine's self-sacrifice. And so with all conventional novelists; their novel, with all its character-interest, is more less an episodic illustration of set ideas - such as, reward of virtue (Pamela), or vindication of it (Clarissa), the evils of imprudence (Tom Jones), the mistake of 'first impressions' (Pride and Prejudice). Sterne cannot proceed with action in their manner. He was baiting the conventional story-teller, when he wrote, in his account of the Shandy brothers getting down the stairs -

"Is it not a shame to make two chapters of what passed in going down one pair of stairs? For we are got no further yet than to the first landing, and there are fifteen more steps down to the bottom; and for aught I know, as my father and my uncle Toby are in a talking humour, there may be as many chapters as steps".

This 'talking' is more important, to Sterne, than getting down the stairs. The Shandy brothers' going down the few steps took narrator Tristram five chapters (BK IV, Chs.9-13), which tell us of what passed in their (Shandy brothers') minds, as well as in his (narrator's) own.

It is psychological, not episodic, interest which sustains the Shandy world. Very little happens in this world. The few things that happen - for example, Tristram's birth -
and broken nose, the christening blunder, Bobby's death (which is merely reported), Tristram's window-sash accident, Walter's writing his *Tristrapaedia* - are but occasions to spark off successive series of ideas. After Tristram's accident, for example, the philosophic Mr. Shandy gathers up his books on circumcision, and begins reading from them and discussing the many learned views on the subject. His reference to the 'polemic divines' in this connection provokes a long quotation (from Rabelais) from parson Yorick as an illustration of their nature. Yorick's reading from the book reminds Mr. Shandy of his own book, *Tristrapaedia*, from which he begins discussing. The Shandy parlour is back to life again. Uncle Toby lights his pipe, parson Yorick draws his chair close to Walter Shandy, corporal Trim snuffs the candle, Walter stirs up the fire and taking up his book, and coughing thrice, launches his discourse. The various theories of the origin of society, of the father's right over his child, of the son's duty towards his father, of Catechism, and so on, are discussed. When Walter takes up his chapter on Health, the ancient Hippocrates and the modern Lord Verulam (Bacon) come in; Toby's lay interpretation, in his own military terms, of his brother's learned theory of health is followed by an appropriate illustration, given at the instance of Toby, by corporal Trim, of 'radical heat and radical moisture' from their past life in the army. Then comes Walter's enunciation of his scheme of scholastic education for his son. We have travelled far from Tristram's accident, but we have travelled true to the mental activity of the characters.
Meantime, Dr. Slop (who had been called by Mrs. Shandy) pops in for a while and goes out, and then reappears, for his ridiculous encounter with maid Susannah during the dressing of Tristram's wound. The train of ideas released by the accident, in the minds of the several characters, become more important and interesting than the accident itself.

The significance of the ass scene in the novel is as psychological as it is humanistic. The ass - it may be remembered - has strayed to Tristram's hotel - door, and Tristram silently and lovingly converses with him and even offers him a macaroon. Then turning the situation inward, he, as narrator, analyses what really might have been his motive in that act of offering the macaroon to the ass, was it sheer altruism, or secret satisfaction of a hidden ego? Perhaps the latter. He writes -

"... at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit of seeing how an ass would eat a macaroon - than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act".

The same psychological interest makes the life of his Sentimental Journey. The chapter, The Address, for example, records no real address; for the 'sentimental traveller' could not actually meet Monsieur Duc de Choiseul. It is only an account of what passed in the author's mind as he went along to meet the dignitary. He was going for his passport (without which he had come from England) - that is, to beg a favour of the Duke. This was against his grain; but there was no help; it was 'an act of compulsion', and not of choice; for, without the passport he stood
the risk of being clapped in the Bastille. So he was going to Choiseul, forming many plans of servile address. He was ashamed of himself for this, and felt he "deserved the Bastille for every one of them". He began "conceiving the attitudes and tones to win myself into Monsieur le Duc de C's good graces". But before doing so, he must first observe the Monsieur and try to know his character from his physical expressions and attitudes, and then make his address accordingly. But why all this? - he asks himself again; and contemplates musing on the equality of man, on the virtue of self-respect; he then decides that, instead of feeling small before the great dignitary, he would conduct himself 'with all the gaiety and debonairness in the world'. But this will be the other extreme. So, at last he makes up his mind, that he should not worry about his Address; he tells himself -

"A heart at ease, Yorick, flies into no extremes—tis ever on its center". 41

The monologue helped him regain his self-confidence. As the planned interview did not ultimately come about, the Address exists only as a psychological reality. In the same manner, the real interest in the scene of the Temptation and its Conquest, in the Journey, is neither romantic, nor moral, but psychological. Here the conflict of desire and piety, of sense and spirit, in the 'sentimental traveller', has been drawn in the form of a complicated inward experience of a Temptation which he ultimately conquers. There is a subtle analysis of a state of mind, trembling nervously in the grip of desire which almost broke his self-control and brought him
to a state of near-capitulation.

Particularly interesting is Sterne's analysis of the different psychological responses of his characters, released simultaneously by a single situation. Thus Phutatorius's awkward and sudden cry ("Z—ds'!"), at the Visitation Dinner excites different ideas in the gathering, and at the same time. The author first explains the nature of the mysterious exclamation, by saying that it was "in a tone of voice, somewhat between that of a man in amazement and one in bodily pain". Then he makes an analysis of its varied reception in the several minds of the gathering. And, in his usual humorous vein, he indicates four kinds of responses. A few, having nice ears for music, were perplexed at the cry, which, though it was a good concord of sounds indicating amazement and physical pain, was entirely out of place here. Some others, who knew little of music, took the cry to be an exordium to an oration, which -- they thought -- Phutatorius was going to make. Some again took it to be an involuntary and meaningless oath, while some interpreted it as 'a real and substantial oath' meant for Yorick, for whom Phutatorius had no love. But none of them knew the real cause of the exclamation -- namely, the ludicrous fall of the chestnut.

We note this simultaneity of psychological responses not only in a comic situation, but also in the serious situation -- as the one brought about by Bobby's death. As Trim breaks the sad news to the other servants in the kitchen, they grieve from their hearts; but lightning sparks of selfish calculations instantaneously flash upon their minds. Maid Susannah thinks of the 'green satin night-gown' of Mrs. Shandy. The 'fat foo-
lish scullion', who - we are told - was kept by Mr. Shandy 'for her simplicity', silently thanks her own stars that she had not died herself, and Obadiah is concerned about the extra work his master, that is, Walter Shandy, would put him to in reclaiming the Oxmoor common, now that his (W. Shandy's) other plan of sending Bobby abroad had miscarried. Sterne's characters are realized for us not through what they do, for they 'do' nothing practically, but through what they talk and think and feel in the different situations. This, instead of boring us, becomes even more interesting than external adventure; because here we tap man's activity at its inward source in the mind or heart. Sterne - we should remember - says in his novel that, in order to understand him one must thoroughly know Locke, whose Essay, he reminds us, is "a history-book . . . of what passes in a man's own mind".

(c) Physical gesture:

One of the beauties of Sterne's art is his depiction of the body-mind relationship in his characters. That Sterne attached great importance to the psychological significance of gesturing can be seen from his statement, that "A man's body and his mind ... are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining; - rumple the one, - you rumple the other". Sterne's characters communicate by their gestures, tones of voice, expressions of the eye, as much as by their words or action. Walter Shandy's mental transition from discord, (caused by his son's broken nose) to harmony, is signified by the transition from one attitude (lying prostrate on the bed).
to another (getting up from the bed). The novelist records minute little details of Walter's lying prostrate on the bed and of his getting up. This is how Walter falls on his bed -

"he threw himself prostrate across his bed in the wildest disorder imaginable, but at the same time in the most lamentable attitude of man borne down with sorrows... The palm of his right hand, as he fell upon the bed, receiving his forehead, and covering the greatest part of both his eyes, gently sunk down with his head (his elbow giving way backwards) till his nose touched the quilt; - his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber-pot, which peeped out beyond the valance - his right leg (his left being drawn up towards his body) - hung half over the side of the bed, the edge of it pressing upon his shin-bone." 50

Sterne's comic intent of holding up to ridicule the dry philosophic grief of Walter Shandy gains its effect by this presentation of the minutiae of Walter's physical movements. The amorous Wadman, who had matrimonial designs towards the good Toby, overhears with excitement the conversation of Toby and Trim; and when the conversation turns to Toby's wound (in the groin), her curiosity leaps up; she

"instantly stopped her breath - unpinned her mob at the chin, and stood up upon one leg -. 51

This posture is like a dumb show; it reveals not only the lady's mental state - which was one of burning curiosity in a matter very delicate and vital for her, but it creates also the atmosphere of silent overhearing.

The Sentimental Journey is full of such dumb shows. As the owner of the hotel learns that the 'sentimental traveller' has come to Paris without a passport, he suddenly retires three steps from his 'as from an infected person'. While the traveller's new-found, faithful valet La Fleur advances
three steps towards his master

"with that sort of movement which a good soul makes
to succour a distress'd one". 52

The contrary simultaneous gestures of the hotel-owner and La
Fleur bespeak their minds more eloquently than words — the
former suspecting the traveller as an undesirable person, the
latter sympathizing with him in his difficulty and eager to
help. About La Fleur's gesture, the author says that

"from that single trait, I know his character as
perfectly, and could rely upon it as firmly, as
if he had served me with fidelity for seven years". 52

As he goes to meet Monsieur le Duc de C — for his passport,
the author plans to read the Duc's character from his
face and 'the turns and expressions of his body and limbs'.

Facial expressions and looks, too, are significant
in portraying mind. As the author meets poor Maria's mother
at Moulines, her very looks tell him the sad story of her dau-
54
ughter even "before she open'd her mouth". The grisset's repet-
ated alternate looks at the gloves, to the window, and at her
customer, the 'sentimental traveller', and his following exactly
her example, in The Gloves scene in S.J., beautifully reveal th-
55
their warmed-up hearts and a delicate hesitancy of speech. The
author adds —

"She had a quick black eye, and shot through two
such long and silken eye-lashe with such penet-
ration, that she look'd into my very heart and
reins"; 56

and he felt that he "lost considerably in every attack".

The rendering of gestures into appropriate language
is called 'translation' by the author. This translation' of
gestures, of
"the several turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations, into plain words", 57

is a vital aid to mutual understanding and fellowship. For his own part - the author says -

"I do it so mechanically, that when I walk the streets of London, I go translating all the way; and have more than once stood behind in the circle, where not three words have been said, and have brought off twenty different dialogues with me, which I could have fairly wrote down and sworn to".57

When we note this body-mind equation in Sterne, we find it difficult to accept J.B. Priestley's view that the Shandies, unlike the great comic characters of Dickens, are 'funny in the idea', not 'in the actual expression of themselves'. In fact, as we have seen, Sterne is rarely satisfied with merely reporting a mental state; he must present it visually - in minute details of posture. The simple Toby's sudden interruption to the self-important Dr. Slop's discourse on the science of obstetrics, confounded Slop and irritated Walter. Walter's splenetic excitement brought a suffusion of blood on his countenance, and is revealed in his instinctive comic movements. We find him

"taking his wig from off his head with his right hand, and with his left pulling out a striped India handkerchief from his right coat pocket, in order to rub his head, as he argued the point with my uncle Toby".60

Sterne attaches significance to Walter's use of the right hand, (for taking off the wig), instead of the left, for the sake of the comic effect; for, had Walter used the left hand for the wig, he would have easily taken out his handkerchief by his right hand from his right pocket; and this would not make him
the comic figure he became - with the 'violent knitting' of
his eye-brows and 'the extravagant contortion of his body' -
by the 'transverse zigzagery' of his approach to the right
coat pocket by the left hand. The author says here that

"the circumstances with which every thing in this world
is begirt, give every thing in this world its size and shape!"

As Walter sets himself ready for an oration on 'the mystery'
of life, he at once took the Socratic posture "so finely pain-
ted by Raffael" -

"he holds the fore-finger of his left hand between
the fore-finger and the thumb of his right, and it
seems as if he was saying to the libertine he is
reclaiming - 'Your grant me this - and this: and this, I don't ask of you - they follow of them­selves in course'."

As Toby cuts his brother's inspired discourse on the philos-
ophy of noses, with the unphilosophical question, "Can noses
be dissolved?", Walter's comic discomfiture is appropriately
expressed in his posture -

"My father thrust back his chair - rose up - put on
his hat - took four long strides to the door - jerked it open - thrust his head half way out - shut the door again - took no notice of the bad hinge - returned to the table - plucked my mother's thread-paper out of Slawkenbergius's book - went hastily to his bureau - walked slowly back - twisted my mother's thread-paper about his thumb - unbuttoned his waistcoat - threw my mother's thread-paper into the fire - bit the satin pin-cushion in two, filled his mouth with bran - ".

In the same manner, the comic effect and charm of
Toby Shandy's character derive from the presentation of his
physical attitudes, which are correlated to his mental move-
ments. Thus, on one occasion, as he finds his brother's phi-
losophic exposition on a rather silly subject intolerable, he
gently takes off his hand from his brother's knee (on which he had put his hand a moment before), reclines his body slowly back in the chair, raises his head.

"till he could just see the cornice of the room, and then directing the buccinatory muscles along his cheeks, and the orbicular muscles around his lips to do their duty - he whistled Lillibullero".66

Not only the Shandy brothers, the other characters too, exist in their appropriate stance and gesture, which provide life to Sterne's comedy. Toby and Trim talk of fighting, and at once enact its various positions with instinctive gestures, with whatever aid they find ready at hand - namely, the chairs in the room, Toby's crutch and stool, Trim's stick, and so on. Dr. Slop's mental confusion at Toby's sudden reference to the 'prodigious armies in Flanders' is expressed in his looking with that perplexed vacuity of eye which puzzled souls generally stare with - first in my uncle Toby's face - then in his (i.e. Walter Shandy's) - then up - then down - then east - east and by east, and so on, - coasting it along by the plinth of the wainscot till he had got to the opposite point of the compass, - and ... he had actually begun to count the brass nails upon the arm of his chair".69

As the funny Didius rises to make his learned speech he is presented to us as "laying his right hand with his fingers spread upon his breast". This posture, while indicating the seriousness of Didius's purpose, heightens the comic effect of the scene. Sterne thus presents the Shandy world as funny, not only 'in the idea', but also 'in the actual expression of themselves'. The 'idea' is presented in the 'expression'; they are correlated.

While the physical movements of Dickens's characters
are broad - by which the great humorist evokes boisterous laughter (as, for example, in the case of Jerry Cruncher's 'rolling and surging' in bed under the 'patchwork counterpane', as he was waking up, "until he rose above the surface, his spiky hair, looking as if it must tear the sheets to ribbons", or of the 'high-shouldered' Hubble's walking with his legs extraordinarily wide apart, so that the little Pip could see "some miles of open country between them"), those of Sterne's are fine and delicate.

(d) Media of communication:

Locke regarded determinate language, or words having definite or distinct meaning, as the clear signs of ideas, and therefore, the medium of communication of thought. But in the Shandy world, language is not the only medium of communication. We have seen how gestures play a large part in conveying meaning, in Sterne. Moreover, sometimes language becomes even inadequate as a medium of communication. Words, we find, do not have a fixed meaning. A word may have different meanings for different persons - particularly, for those living in their own worlds of fancy. The meaning of words is conditioned by subjectivity. Sterne derives wonderful results from his drawing of characters by their ruling passion. Walter Shandy does not understand his brother Toby and corporal Trim (who are kindred spirits and have hobby-horsical affinity) on most occasions; nor do Toby and Trim understand Walter. When Trim said he was bringing two 'mortars', Walter shandy took the
word in its medicinal sense (i.e., to mean a vessel for pounding drugs), whereas Trim had used it in the military sense, that is, to mean mock-weapons for his master's 'campaigns' on the bowling-green. Similarly, the 'bridge' Dr. Slop was making for the just-born Tristram's nose (which was broken by the scientific apparatus of Dr. Slop) is taken by Toby, absorbed in his 'campaigns', to mean the draw-bridge he had asked Trim to make (for the existing one had been broken, and Trim was actually making a new one at the time).

"You must know, my uncle Toby mistook the bridge— as my father mistook the mortars". 75

The comedy of this failure of inter-communication by words or determinate language runs throughout Tristram Shandy, chiefly between the Shandy brothers who are immersed in their respective hobby-horses of learning and arms. Trim, Toby's ever-faithful servant and invariable companion, is on his master's side; while they understand each other, they do not understand Walter Shandy. As Walter discourses on the virtues of grammatical learning, and on the use of auxiliary verbs in particular, corporal Trim points out that the Danes,

"who were on the left at the siege of Limerick, were all auxiliaries". 76

When Walter ends his scholastic discourse on health (the burden of which was that, the whole secret of health depends on the "due contention betwixt the radical heat and radical moisture within us"), Toby, without understanding a word of his brother, asks his Trim to relate what happened at the siege of Limerick, when, down with burning fever, they (Toby and Trim) reinforced themselves with hot wine and spices (their 'radical
heat'), which proved a fair match for the moisture caused by heavy rains (their 'radical moisture').

"Upon my honour, added my uncle Toby, you might have heard the contention within our bodies, brother Shandy, twenty toises".78

Walter refers to the 'regular succession of ideas of one sort or other' following 'each other in train' in the human mind; and Toby at once thinks of 'a train of artillery'. Walter gives up in disgust.

This failure of Lockean communication in the Shandy world is interpreted by John Traugott in terms of a gap between the ideal and real worlds of Walter and Toby Shandy respectively. Traugott says that the novel (T.S.)

"comes alive with the drama implicit in Locke's failure to find a convincing relation between two worlds, real and ideal". 80

But, as we have seen, the lack of inter-communication between the Shandy brothers is due to 'hobby-horsical', or temperamental, rather than metaphysical, causes. It is their absorption in their respective ruling passions of philosophy and science of war, not any divergence between the ideal and real worlds, that prevents their evoking the expected response from each other.

We try to bind life by set rules, but it eludes us. Life's inner laws do not always conform to reason, to rational calculations. And where this non-conformity results in amusement, in pure joy for the on-lookers, we have the real comedy of life.

(Characters in the novel):

Walter Shandy.
Characters in the novel:

Walter Shandy.

(a) The philosopher. In Walter Shandy, Sterne ridicules scholasticism, that is, dry learning divorced from life and subsisting on blind acceptance of tradition. The ignorance of the learned has always been a favourite theme with humanists. Montaigne notes that in his youth he had seen often "a pedant brought in, in most of the Italian comedies, for a vice or sport-maker". Mechanical feeding of memory - Montaigne said - "leave both understanding and conscience empty".

Obsession with theories takes us away from life itself. It starves the heart, which is the seat of virtue and awakener of universal fellowship. Sterne the humanist, therefore, indicts scholasticism, and subjects it to hearty laughter.

"Defend me, gracious Heaven!" - he says - "from those persecuting spirits who made no allowances for these workings within us.- Never - O never may I lay down in their tents, who cannot relax the engine, and feel pity for the force of education, and the prevalence of opinions long derived from ancestors!" 84

Sterne's festive wit lights sharply on Walter Shandy, the representative of this lifeless, 'heart-less learning, a pitiful victim of his own theories.

Walter Shandy is 'a philosopher in grain,- speculative, - systematical', having "an itch, in common with all philoso-
phers, of reasoning upon every thing which happened, and ac-
counting for it too". He apprehends all experience only in
terms of some philosophic theory on the subject. And he has
a theory upon every subject on earth. When his wife brought
him to London on a false alarm, he was irritated, and said to
himself —

"Certainly the woman could not be deceived
herself if she could, — what weakness!" 87

And at once the idea of weakness

"led his imagination a thorny dance ...(and)
set him upon running divisions upon how many
kinds of weaknesses there were ", 88 —
namely weaknesses of the body, weaknesses of the mind, and so
on; and he began syllogizing within himself. Walter Shandy
was a great reader of books; he had an innate, and strong
metaphysical propensity. He was, of course, no 'classical' or
'modern' scholar; for, we are told,

"he had never read Cicero ...nor Isocrates, nor
Aristotle, nor Longinus amongst the ancients;
nor Vossius, nor Scippius, nor Ramus, nor Far-
naby amongst the moderns; — and what is more
astonishing, he had never in his whole life the
least light or spark of subtlety struck into
his mind, by one single lecture upon Crackenthorp
or ... any Dutch logician or commentator; — he
knew not so much as in what the difference of an
argument ad ignorantiam, and an argument ad hom-
inem consisted; so that I well remember, when he
went up along with me to enter my name at Jesus
College in ***, — it was a matter of just wonder
with my worthy tutor, and two or three fellows
of that learned society, — that a man who knew
not so much as the names of his tools, should be
able to work after that fashion with them". 89

Walter Shandy was a great reasoner and a born orator; "he was
certainly irresistible; both in his orations and disputations".

We have evidence of this inspired eloquence on the occasions
of his philosophic grief over the misnaming of Tristram and
Walter's eloquence was both a strength on Bobby's death.
strength, because eloquence was natural to him, and weakness to him; and he overcame his worries by it; weakness, because

"he was hourly a dupe to it", 92

and it whetted his spleen. Referring to his eloquence, the author says -

"This clue will unravel what otherwise would seem very inconsistent in my father's domestic character; and it is this, that, in the provocations arising from the neglects and blunders of servants, or other mishaps unavoidable in a family, his anger, or rather the duration of it, eternally ran counter to all conjecture". 93

Once when his favourite servant Obadiah (for whom he had love and even respect) disappointed him in a quaint project, his eloquence on the subject turned into a volley of curses at the poor servant -

"See here! you rascal, ... what you have done!" 95

But it was his wit that solely mattered with him; and so, as he indulged a repartee at the servant, he was immensely pleased.

"Triumph swam in my father's eyes, at the repartee - the Attic salt brought water into them - and so Obadiah heard no more about it". 95

This amply reveals the ridiculous character of Walter's airy eloquence. Though not a scholar in the true professional sense, he was well-read; he was particularly interested in books of quaint learning (as, for example, on the theory or theories of noses). He had also read some ancient philosophers, like Socrates (to whose oration he refers, while discharging his grief on his son's death), Cato, Seneca, Epictetus, and so on. Walter's interest in books is also revealed in his composing a Life of Socrates ("This book my father would never consent to publish"), his 'Dissertation simply upon the word Tristram',

"..."
and also in his *Tristramphaedia*. He stuffed his head with ideas, culled from the books he read. He 'picked up' opinions and held fast to them, without judging or weighing them himself. He had plenty of 'wit', but no 'judgment' (in the sense of Locke).

Theories ruled his life. He

"saw all things in lights different from the rest of the world".103

His complete isolation from reality can be seen, among other things, in his eloquence on the subject of door-hinges, while he could not get door-hinge of his parlour repaired for ten years;

"his rhetoric and conduct were at perpetual handy-cuffs. Never did the parlour-door open - but his philosophy or his principles fell a victim to it; - three drops of oil with a feather, and a smart stroke of a hammer, had saved his honour for ever".104

Even during his marital act, it is not the heart's warmth, but his philosophical calculations, that excite Walter Shandy. Sterne laughs heartily at such a philosopher, whose learning has lost touch with life. Walter's pet theories, however, are those of names and noses. These theories, which have been already referred to (See ante, Chap. V, p. 85-6), only reveal the absurdity of learned folly. Of the long chapter of noses, Sterne said in a letter to a friend that

"the principal satire throughout that part is levelled at those learned blockheads who, in all ages, have wasted their time and much upon points as foolish".107

No less interesting are his theories of love and grief. Like the anchorites, who regarded the amorous passion as a temptation of the devil and who sought to subdue it by fasts and self-mortification, Mr. Shandy believed love to be a lower appetite. And so, when he learnt that his brother Toby was in love, he
wrote him a long 'letter of instructions', advising him as to how he should conduct himself in this unwholesome passion. His own marital life was the very driest. His indifference to her emotional life almost amounted to cruelty. Love, to him,

"is not so much a sentiment as a situation, into which a man enters".109

Walter Shandy regards even the marital act as just one of his household duties, to be disposed of, like other duties,

"on the first Sunday-night of every month throughout the whole year, ... in order, as he would often say to my uncle Toby, to get them all out of the way at one time, and be no more plagued and pestered with them the rest of the month".110

Walter Shandy becomes perhaps even more funny in his philosophic grief over his son's (Bobby's) death. On this occasion, he is so much carried away by his philosophical ideas on death, that he not only forgets his grief, but even becomes happy-

"Labour, sorrow, grief, sickness... are the sauces of life ... My son is dead - so much the better".111

It is interesting to note how Walter's philosophy, or rather philosophic obsession, itself becomes its undoing. The scientific apparatus of Dr. Slop, on the importance of which Walter theorises so vigorously, breaks Tristram's nose, and throws him (Walter) into grief. His suggestion of the best name, i.e. Trismegistus, for his son, on philosophic grounds, ends up in bringing Tristram the worst name (in Walter's scale of names). Walter's over-dose of philosophy has made "his whole life a contradiction to his knowledge". His reason, 'that precious gift of God' to man, has served only "to multiply his pains, and render him more melancholy and uneasy under them!" Such
a habit of mind, as Longinus said,
"by over-elaboration, ends in frigidity". 115
Walter Shandy may be counted as one of those metaphysical
maniacs about whom Bolingbroke remarked —

"Of all fools, the most presumptuous and
at the same time most trifling, are meta-
physical philosophers and divines". 116

With Walter Shandy, learning has become, as it
"is, in too many cases" — what Hazlitt calls —
"but a foil to common sense; a substitute
for true knowledge" 117

(b) The man. Walter Shandy's exclusive, and absolute,
absorption into theories and metaphysical ideas has almost
dehumanized him. His supreme indifference to the facts of
life and to human relationships has begot 'that little sub-
acid soreness of humour' in him, which distinguishes his
character, and is revealed in his relations with his quiet,
innocent wife, and sometimes with others. His exclusive
cultivation of the head brought an imbalance in his personality.
Toby's ignorant interruptions to his inspired discourses often
irritated him. He was also unpredictable.

"There was that infinitude of oddities in him,
and of chances along with it, by which handle
he would take a thing, — it baffled, Sir, all
calculations. — The truth was, his road lay so
very far on one side, from that wherein most
men travelled, — that every object before him
presented a face and section of itself to his
eye, altogether different from the plan and
elevation of it seen by the rest of mankind". 119

Walter's comment on Toby's and Trim's military learning —

"Oh! there is a husk and shell, Yorick, which
grows up with learning, which their unskilful-
ness knows not how to fling away!" 120

— has an ironical application to himself.
But there are good points in his character.

"My father was a gentleman of many virtues". 121

We are told of his honesty and integrity, of his very graceful

discharging of his financial obligations. He sometimes can

argue with sweet reasonableness, as when he did while explain-

ing his philosophy of names. — Though he cannot bear with his

brother Toby's ignorance, he has great regard and love for

him.

"My father ... had the truest love and sonderness

for my uncle Toby, that ever one brother bore
towards another". 123

When Toby got his wound at Namur, Walter brought him to his

own house in London, and made the best arrangements for his

treatment and cure.

"And what was a much more sincere mark of his

affection still, he would never suffer a fri-

end or an acquaintance to step into the house

on any occasion, but he would take him by the

hand, and lead him upstairs to see his brother

Toby, and chat an hour by his bedside". 124

Walter had no sympathy for his brother's ruling passion for

the science of fortification, and would sometimes even ex-

press his irritation at it

("I wish the whole science of fortification, with

all its inventors, at the devil"). 125

But this irritation never went with any malignity, or bitt-

erness of spirit. His displeasure seldom passed into disd-

ain;

"his anger at the worst was never more than a

spark". 126

Sometimes he was himself pained at his ill-humour. Thus,

once when he was disgusted with Toby's discourse on forti-
The 'contrariety of humours', or the lack of intellectual sympathy between them — each being absorbed in his own ruling passion — thus did not affect their moral or human relationship, the flow of love and good-will between them.
Walter Shandy was not only a kind brother, he was a kind master too. With all his admiration for Dr. Slop's scientific learning, he could not bear to see his servant Obadiah so badly cursed by the doctor; for - we are told - Walter "had a great respect for Obadiah". He respected the personality of his servant, and even discussed with him his plans of using the legacy of a thousand pounds he got from his aunt, in the same way he did with brother Toby and parson Yorick. Trim was not exaggerating, when he said to the other servants of the Shandy house, that they were 'in the service of two of the best of masters' (meaning Walter and Toby) and "know not what want or care is".

The pity is, Walter Shandy's innate properties of the heart lay atrophied by his cold philosophy. Walter symbolizes the folly of building a life-system on theories, in utter disregard of the workings of the heart. His learning thus, instead of advancing life, sits as a load on it. David Hume wrote -

"The passion for philosophy, like that of religion, seems liable to this inconvenience, that, though it aims at the correction of our manners and extirpation of our vices, it may only serve, by imprudent management, to foster a predominant inclination, and push the mind, with more determined resolution, towards that side, which already draws too much, by the bias and propensity of the natural temper".

Walter Shandy is a fitting illustration of this 'passion for philosophy'.

......
Toby Shandy.

Toby Shandy is Sterne's embodiment of the concept of humanity. Hazlitt called this character "one of the finest compliments ever paid to human nature".

My Uncle Toby was a Captain in the army, and was rendered unfit for service when he received his wound at Namur. We are not told much of Toby's life in the army; but there are a few references, in the novel, to his bravery as a soldier. When Obadiah describes him as 'a kindly-hearted gentleman', corporal Trim, who had served under Toby in the army and has been for years his constant companion and servant, adds -

"and as brave a one too ... as ever stept before a platoon. - There never was a better officer in the King's army, - or a better man in God's world".

Captain Toby and corporal Trim were together at the siege of Limerick (1690), and also in the battle of Steenkirk (1692), an account of which Toby later gives to parson Yorick. Referring to his master's qualities as a soldier, Trim says that he would face death without the least fear and had a rare composure of spirit. Though a soldier, and a lover of the science of war, Toby was no militarist. When Trim says -

"your honour ... loves glory, more than pleasure", Toby tells him -

"I hope, Trim, I love mankind more than either".

A war sometimes has to be fought in vindication of humanity, and to 'shorten the strides of Ambition'; and
"whenever that drum beats in our ears, I trust, corporal, we shall neither of us want so much humanity and fellow-feeling, as to face about and march". 

Toby Shandy's predominant quality is his humanity, This can be seen in his relations with his own people in the family, with his servant Trim, with friends and acquaintances, and equally, with the wider life around him. Toby's love and regard for his elder Walter Shandy is too deep to be disturbed by any surface irritation caused to him (Toby) by the oddities of his philosophic brother. No trace of ill-will ever ruffled Toby's even, sweet disposition, his 'benignity of temper' which Sterne considered to be man's cardinal virtue ("not only our duty, but our interest and wisdom"). He can easily bear, too, his brother's occasional impatience with his own hobby-horse of the science of fortification, or with his own ignorance. Once, during his harangue on his son's death, as Walter loses his temper at Toby for the latter's ignorance of history or philosophy, and calls him a 'Simpleton!'; Toby not only retains his calm of spirit, he even feels sorry for his brother's distraction and invokes God's blessings on him. Toby's deep affection and regard for his sister-in-law Mrs. Shandy, to whom her husband was indifferent for her lack of learning, is evident in that brief, but beautiful, scene, where, as she is stunned by the news of her son's death, he gently takes her by the hand out of the room. Toby's servant Trim is more a friend than a servant to him. His loving concern for Trim, and respect for his personality, may be seen in his reassuring his servant to speak his opinion.
freely without any fear or hesitation.

"Prithee, Trim, said Yorick, without staying for my father's leave, - tell us honestly - what is thy opinion concerning this self-same radical heat and radical moisture? ... Speak thy opinion freely, corporal, said my uncle Toby. - The poor fellow is my servant, - not my slave,- added my uncle Toby, turning to my father." 146-147

For Trim's lame knee, Toby would not suffer him to stand while he (Toby) dined; but Trim, out of veneration for his master, would not listen;

"this bred more little squabbles betwixt them, than all other causes for five-and-twenty years together". 147-148

Trim is his master's confidant. Toby speaks of his love to him, and acts on his advice in the matter. Toby was not a man of affluence, but whatever little he had he shared with his servant. His words to him in this connection breathe a rare nobility of spirit -

"whilst thy master is worth a shilling - thou shalt never ask elsewhere, Trim, for a penny". 149-147

Uncle Toby's humanity extended beyond the range of his relations and acquaintances, and embraced the entire creation. The report of the illness of Le Fever, an unknown soldier, at the inn, disturbs him. He sends his Trim immediately to bring a full report of the sick man; and then, on learning of the seriousness of the case, the next morning, rising earlier than usual, he rushes to the inn to look after him personally. It is a beautiful picture the novelist sketches of the scene. Toby

"entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology, sat himself down upon the chair by the bed-side, and, independently of all modes and customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it, and asked him how he did, - how he rested in the night, -
what was his complaint, - where was his pain, - and what he could do to help him - and without giving him time to answer any one of the enquiries, went on, and told him of the little plan which he had been concerting with the corporal the night before for him. - You shall go home directly, Le Fever, said my uncle Toby, to my house, - and we'll send for a doctor to see what's the matter, - and we'll have an apothecary, - and the corporal shall be your nurse; - and I'll be your servant, Le Fever".

After Le Fever dies, Toby takes charge of his orphan boy, sends him to school, and prepares him for a military career. Later, as young Le Fever offers to go to the wars, Toby equips him for the journey, and bids farewell to him in touching words. He embraces the boy, gives him his farewell kiss,

"slipped sixty guineas, tied up in an old purse of his father's, ...into his hand, - and bid God bless him".

Young Le Fever

"parted from my uncle Toby, as the best of sons from the best of fathers".

My Uncle Toby did not bear the slightest ill-will towards anybody, not even towards the wrong-doer and the vicious. When corporal Trim indicted, and rightly, the ceremonialism of the clergy, who have greater concern for formal prayers than for humanity, their 'fuss and hypocrisy', Toby tells him-

"Thou shouldst not have said that, Trim,...for God only knows who is a hypocrite, and who is not".

When Trim refers to a particular people, boasting of their achievements, as 'a pack of liars', Toby says that they (those people) are 'somehow or other' only deceived'

"My uncle Toby was a man patient of injuries; - not from want of courage;  - (for) he was a man of courage : -... nor did this arise from any insensibility or obtuseness of his intellectual parts; -... but he was of a peaceful, placid nature, - no jarring element in it, - all was mixed up so kindly within him; my uncle Toby had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly".
Toby's humanity was fortified by his virtues, like simplicity, modesty, simple faith in God. It was his child-like simplicity that brought about his amorous disappointment;

"a child might have looked into his hand - there was such a plainness and simplicity in his playing out what trumps he had - with such an unmistrusting ignorance of the ten-ace - and so naked and defenseless did he sit upon the same sofa with widow Wadman, that a generous heart would have wept to have won the game of him". 155

With this he had 'a most extreme and unparalleled modesty',

"stood eternal sentry upon his feelings". 156

Toby's modesty begot his self-control, that kept off all irritation in his talks with his argumentative brother. This modesty acquired a grace from his God-fearing nature, for uncle Toby

"feared God, and reverenced religion", 157

without making the least fuss about it; and we are told also -

"never spoke of the being and natural attributes of God, but with diffidence and hesitation -". 158

Being a true man of religion, he laid more stress on its substance than on its form. A humanitarian, he interpreted religion in terms of duty. Like the deists, he believed in universal religion, and regarded duties as divine commands. As he himself said to his Trim -

"God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it, - it will never be enquired into, whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one." 159

Thus Toby's humanity, which springs from his susceptibility to feeling, from his lofty moral nature, is nurtured by his rel-
igion. Toby's creator calls him 'the first - the foremost of created beings'. Sterne loves his Uncle Toby so much, because his own cardinal concept of humanity finds beautiful expression in this character. And as we get to know Uncle Toby, who had so much of 'the milk of human nature, and so little of its asperities' we only feel - as his own brother did - "'tis piteous the world is not peopled by creatures which resemble thee". 144

The bowling green. For about thirteen years (from 1701 to 1713) Uncle Toby, with the active assistance of his faithful Trim, staged the campaigns of Marlborough on his bowling-green (Bk.VI, Chs, 21-31). The author says that, there could not be a more lovely sight in the world than to watch Toby and Trim sallying forth - Toby with a copy of the Gazette (reporting the progress of the campaign) and Trim with a spade on his shoulder - to execute a breach in the 'fortification' made by the men of Marlborough. It was in the second year of his campaign that Toby put up, at a corner of the bowling-green, a handsome sentry-box, where a few years later, after his 'campaigns' ended, the amorous Wadman 'attacked' him. Torn away from his hobby - horse (Toby's 'campaigns' on the bowling-green had to end with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713), Toby felt very sad; and the sadness went so deep into his heart, that though he was no orator he broke forth into an inspired oration on the 'justification of his own principles and conduct in wishing to continue the war' in reply to Walter Shandy's ridicule of his (Toby's) hobby-horse. Toby's 'Apologetical Oration' is a fine defence of his hobby-horse and of his atti-
tude to war. Toby knows the evil that war is;

"so soft and gentle a creature born to love, to mercy and kindness, as man is, was not shaped for this".166 167

As a boy - Toby says - he wept at the story of the ravages of the Trojan War-

"And when king Priam came to the camp to beg his body, and returned weeping back to Troy without it, - you know, brother, I could not eat my dinner-. "167

But war sometimes is forced on us, when it becomes a spirited defence against tyranny. It is one thing to stand up against aggression,

"to leap first down into the trench, where he is sure to be cut in pieces :- 'Tis one thing ... to enter the breach the first man.- To stand in the foremost rank, and mark bravely on with drums and trumpets, and colours flying about his ears :- ... and 'tis another thing to reflect on the miseries of war".167 165

A war, fought 'upon principles of liberty, and upon principles of honour' is nothing but

"the getting together of quiet and harmless people, with their swords in their hands, to keep the ambitious and the turbulent within bounds ;" 166 166

Toby says that his pleasure in enacting his sieges on the bowling-green has been fostered by his faith in humanity. 168 168

In Toby's oration on war, Yoseloff sees the novelist's subtle satire on militarism. He says -

"In Toby's 'Justifications of his own principles and conduct in wishing to continue the war ' Sterne wrote the perfect epitome of absurdity of all military philosophers who attempt to show by humanistic reasoning that way is necessary or desirable".169 167

But if we take this view of Toby and his bowling-green, the very thematic 'motif' of the novel, based on the moral phil-
osophy of the age, which works mainly through the benign character of My Uncle Toby, is defeated. It would be unjust to the author to assume that his Uncle Toby, who cannot even hurt a fly, because God's world is "wide enough to hold both thee and me", can be in any way an agency for the working of the author's satiric intention. Sterne's loving treatment of this character, and of corporal Trim, and also of other old soldiers among his minor characters (e.g., the two Le Fèvers in T.S., the old French Officer in the Paris theatre and the poor Chevalier at Versailles in S.J., and so on) rules out such a possibility. Moreover, there is no reason to believe, that Sterne stepped clear out of two centuries to join the small band of modern pacifists. While he believed that war "makes bad men worse", he believed also that a real good man, like Toby, will have his manners 'softened' by it. Toby's hobby-horse of the bowling-green is, therefore, not at odds with his humanity.

**Corporal Trim**

Uncle Toby is incomplete without his corporal Trim, his servant and constant companion, friend and fellow-spirit. Corporal Trim gives charm and colour to his master's character and personality.

Trim entered the army a year before the siege of Limerick (1690). He was in Captain Toby's own company, and was disabled by a shot on his left knee in the battle of Landen (1693). This disabled him from active service; and he became Toby's personal servant;
"...as the fellow was well-beloved in the regiment, and a handy fellow into the bargain, my uncle Toby took him for his servant; and of excellent use was he, attending my uncle Toby, in the camp and in his quarters as a valet, groom, barber, cook, sempster, and nurse; and indeed, from first to last, waited upon him and served him with great fidelity and affection". 174

Trim's real name was James Butler. It was in the army that he got the name by which we know him;

"and my uncle Toby, unless when he happened to be very angry with him, would never call him by any other name". 174

And as Toby would rarely be angry with him, or with anybody, the nick-name of Trim stuck to him.

There cannot be a more watchful, more sincere and more skilful servant than corporal Trim. His one concern is the welfare and comfort of his master. He was one steady flame of fidelity for all the twenty-five years they were together.

We are told of the various capacities in which he served his master - namely, as 'an excellent valet, groom, cook, sempster, surgeon, and engineer', and so on. And once he became 'an excellent upholsterer too' to his master, making a bed for him.

There are beautiful little pictures of Trim's devotion to his master. As Toby expresses his desire to go out to see the ailing Le Fever at the inn, Trim asks him not to stir out in that 'bad night', saying -

"it is so cold and rainy a night, that ...'twill be enough to give your honour your death"; 177

and he offers to go out himself. It was with great difficulty that his master persuaded him to keep sitting behind him as he(Toby) would dine; for Trim insisted on standing by his master's side - which Toby would not allow 'in consideration of
the corporal's lame knee'; but

"the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such, that, with a proper artillery, my uncle Toby could have taken Dendermond itself, with less trouble than he was able to gain this point over him; for many a time when my uncle Toby supposed the corporal's leg was at rest, he would look back, and detect him standing behind him with the most dutiful respect:"

and this as has been mentioned before (see ante, p. 235) even bred 'little squabbles' between them.

But more than all this, Trim was a spiritual brother to his master. The idea of Toby's bowling-green was first mooted by Trim, and Toby blushed with joy at the idea. And they staged the 'campaigns', too, together. He made his master's 'armaments'. Thus - we are told - he made 'two mortar-pieces for a siege' out of an old pair of jack-boots in the family. For his master's field-pieces "he had dismantled every sash-window in my uncle Toby's house" and taken the 'leaded weights'. But Trim showed a fine inventive genius when, out of two Turkish tobacco pipes, received as a present from his brother Tom, he made an excellent device for keeping up a constant firing upon the enemy.

"The corporal sat up the best part of the night" in bringing his project to perfection, to him the infinite delight of his master. Toby not only took his aid in forging his many 'weapons' of warfare, he also conferred and held 'councils of war' with him. The author says that there can be no more delightful scene than Toby's and Trim's loving absorption in their 'campaigns' on the bowling-green.

In his service to his master, and in other ways too,
Trim reveals his human qualities. His actions, or ideas, are never motivated by considerations of self-interest or vanity. When parson Yorick reminds Trim of the latter’s mishap in the battle of Steenkirk (in which the corporal "had been run over by a dragoon in the retreat" on account of the fault of the commander), Trim’s mind goes at once to the sad fate of his comrades-in-arms, and not to himself. His forthright acceptance of the responsibility for the grievous accident to Tristram by the window-sash reveals his high ethical sense and moral courage. Immediately after the accident, he runs to his master to tell him the story and of his own part in it, for he had removed the weights and pullies from the window-sash to make his master’s field-pieces out of them. He holds himself to blame, to save Susannah (who was holding Tristram during the accident).

"'twas my fault, an' please your honour,-- not hers. Corporal Trim, replied my uncle Toby,--if any thing can be said to be a fault, ...'tis I certainly, who deserve the blame,--you obeyed your orders".186

Trim’s goodness is matched by his master’s. Trim’s heart, like his master’s, quickly warmed up in sympathy for others. The appeal of the Story of Le Fever derives in no small measure from the sentiments of love and sympathy of Toby and Trim for the sick soldier. With his report to his master of the sad condition of Le Fever, Trim mixes up his own heart’s overflowing pity—

"But alas! the poor gentleman will never get from hence, said the landlady to me,—for I heard the death-watch all night;-- and when he dies, the youth, his son, will certainly die with him; for he is broken-hearted already".187

Trim does not allow Le Fever’s little boy to prepare the toast for his father; and as he does it for the boy, he offers
him a chair, too, to sit on by the fire.

Trim is very susceptible to the amorous passion. The fair Beguine's tender care of him during his sickness in the war awakened his love for her. Years later, he woos Mrs. Bridget, Mrs. Wadman's house-maid successfully. Among his other qualities, may be mentioned his talent for speech and storytelling, which contributed in no small measure to his popularity among the servants of the Shandy household. He was illiterate, but his heart-felt oration on the death of Bobby deeply moved the servants in the kitchen. His story of his own amours stirs the gentle passion in his master.

Corporal Trim has a significant place in the Shandy house. He is a vital figure in the three important scenes of the Shandy world - the parlour, the kitchen and the bowling-green. Toby and Trim, as we have mentioned before, are the two allied spirits of the bowling-green. In the parlour, Trim reads the key-sermon on Conscience to the Shandy brothers, and evokes their interesting psychological responses, which are revealed in their characteristic little, running comments on the contents of the sermon. The account of the Gymnast-Tripet encounter cannot be read by Yorick to the Shandy brothers, without Trim joining the audience. And the author's comments on the account of the empty encounter (which symbolizes the utter uselessness of theological polemics) is appropriately conveyed by Trim, who says, after Yorick finishes his reading -

"'Twas a Tom-fool-battle, an' please your reverences, of Captain Tripet's and that other officer, making so many summersets, as they advanced". 194
In the Shandy kitchen, among the servants, Trim is the most popular and beloved figure. And as he talks to them on any important matter (as on Bobby's death), they surround him and listen to him with rapt attention, almost amounting to reverence.

**Parson Yorick**

Parson Yorick appears early in the novel (Bk.I, Ch.10), and is soon disposed of, too (Chapter 12, in Book I, reporting his death, ends with his epitaph). Later in the novel (which does not strictly follow chronology), during the Shandy brothers' conversation, he reappears as their friend, touching the 'action' of Tristram's birth and growth at a few points; for example, it was Yorick's sermon - the important sermon on Conscience - that Trim reads to the Shandy brothers at the time of Tristram's birth. The Shandy brothers consult him on the possibility of changing the name of Tristram; he participates and behaves rather strangely in the Visitation Dinner; we also find him conversing intermittently with the Shandy brothers as Walter Shandy reads from his *Tripartiadia* and discourses on various points arising out of the book; we find him also entering into the Shandy world well before Tristram's birth, for Yorick is said to have composed the funeral sermon on the death of Le Fever (in 1706, the year of Dendermond; Tristram was born in 1718). Yorick also joins the Shandy family in their discussion on love.
At the close of the novel, too, Yorick appears with the Shandy brothers during Walter Shandy's oration on war and the amorous passion. Parson Yorick thus occupies an intimate place in the Shandy world.

Tristram says that parson Yorick was 'originally of Danish extraction', and that the Yorick of Hamlet was his ancestor. Parson Yorick was lean of form;

"he never carried one single ounce of flesh upon his own bones", and, like his creator,

"found himself going off fast in a consumption". And his horse, too, was like him - 'a lean, sorry, jackass of a horse ... full brother to Rosinante'. Parson Sterne, too, - we learn from a letter to his friend - had a 'lean horse'. Yorick was a good soul, selfless and generous. He rode his lean horse, to save his expense for a good one, which he had to incur every nine or ten months; for, we are told, he could not refuse to lend his horse to others, at their requests, and got back his horse every time in a hopeless condition; this made him purchase a new horse every now and then. So at last he wanted to economize on his horse, and continued with 'the last poor devil ... with all his aches and infirmities'. He economized on his horse, so that he could have more to himself to help his parish with. This real cause of his riding his lean horse he withheld from the people, for sheer considerations of modesty; he chose

"rather to bear the contempt of his enemies and the laughter of his friends, than undergo the pain of telling a story, which might seem a panegyric upon himself".
Complete lack of egoism distinguished his character; in this, he was like 'the peerless knight of La Mancha'. Yorick's generosity is seen not only in his foregoing his personal comfort and saving his money for the needy; it is also seen in his assistance to the poor widow in his parish to settle in her profession of midwifery.

Parson Yorick, like his creator, valued the concept of 'practical divinity', which had a wide currency in that Age of Enlightenment, when the emphasis shifted from theology and dogma to humanity, from polemics to the practices of virtue (see ante, Chaps. I - Deism, II - Moral Philosophy, and also VII - Sterne's Sermons). We have noted that the moral philosophy of the 18th century, with its emphasis on the basic goodness of man, helped in giving religion a humanistic bias. Yorick is such a humanist clergyman. Yorick's casual reference to the 'polemic divines' enthuses Toby, at whose request he (Yorick) reads the account of the Gymnast-Tripet encounter from Rabelais (Gargantua and Pantagruel Bk.I, Ch.35) to ridicule their (i.e. the polemic divines') vanity and empty showmanship. Yorick composed and preached such sermons as were free from learned vocabulary, were easy of understanding, and appealed straight to the heart.

"To preach, to shew the extent of our reading, or the subtleties of our wit - to parade in the eyes of the vulgar with the beggarly accounts of a little learning tinselled over with a few words which glitter, but convey little light and less warmth - is a dishonest use of the poor single half hour in a week which is put into our hands - 'Tis not preaching the gospel - but ourselves - For my own part,... I had rather direct five words point-blank to the heart". 211
It was his humanity that endeared him to his parish so much.

Indeed,

"he never could enter a village, but he caught the attention of both old and young. - Labour stood still as he passed - the bucket hung suspended in the middle of the well, - the spinning-wheel forgot its round,". 212

Yorick was not a gloomy or grave parson. He considered gravity 'an errant scoundrel', its very essence being 'design, and consequently deceit'. Gravity is often a cloak for ignorance or folly, or even hypocrisy - a trick to win approbation. Parson Yorick was open-hearted and free-spirited. He

"loved a jest in his heart". 214

Not that he was frivolous; he knew where to be serious or earnest, but he could not affect gravity. Yorick's easy gaiety of spirits, and disregard of form or formalities, made him easy enemies in the Church. His jesting spirit was combined with an utter lack of worldly wisdom;

"poor Yorick carried out one ounce of ballast; he was utterly unpractised in the world".215

He had little worldly wisdom, which (worldly wisdom) - he did not know - often acts as 'a guard to virtue'.

"It is not enough that your designs, may, that your actions, are intrinsically good; you must take care that they shall appear so" 216

Yorick gave his honest views on men and matters frankly, 'too oft without such distinction of either person, time, or place'. If, for example, he noted a dirty act, he would unreservedly speak so, without considering who the author of the act was. 218

And his 'bon mot' 'gave wings' to his indiscretion, and he
had to suffer for this. His enemies smote him (how, we are not told) hard, when his

"preferment (in the Church) was b'ripening"; 219 and he died in heart-break.

In his leanness of body and ill-health, his disregard of formalities, his love of jest, and, above all, in his humanity, Yorick is very much like his creator. Sterne's identification with Yorick may be seen in his issue of his sermons under the name of Mr. Yorick, in his calling himself Yorick in some of his letters,* and even to the French dignitary, the Count de B — during his French travels. Parson Yorick is an idealized image of parson Sterne himself, a projection of his creator's own personality.

Mrs. Shandy

Though the lady of the Shandy house and the mother of Tristram, whose birth makes the central 'action' in the novel, Mrs. Shandy stands an isolated figure in the Shandy world. She has no place in the interesting and interminable talks of the Shandy brothers, in which corporal Trim and even outsiders, like parson Yorick and Dr. Slop, often join. She figures in very few scenes of the novel; and she speaks little too.

Mrs. Shandy is not moved by any ideas. Nothing excites her intellectual curiosity.

"A temperate current of blood ran orderly through her veins in all months of the year, and in all critical moments both of the day and night alike".222 This was a perpetual source of irritation, 'an eternal source of misery' to her philosophic husband. Even when he tries to
engage her in an argument — as, for example, in his ridiculous, one-sided discussion on Tristram's breeching, she does not respond; she simply agrees with whatever her husband says to her. Mr. Shandy finds it impossible to continue a 'learned' dialogue with her, and gives up in disgust.

We have referred to Mr. Shandy's irritation at her for her lack of interest in his learned discourses. But her blessed unconcern in matters of philosophy, her lack of wit, is really no disqualification for her as a human being. Mrs. Shandy may not know who Socrates was, but it would not be correct to assume that she was dull-headed, or 'a universal blank', or that she had no common sense. Her ready acquiescence to whatever her learned husband says — whether it is a discourse on breeching, or on love — flows from her common sense, as much as from her constant fidelity to him. Should she be arguing with a husband, who, for example, is greatly delighted at the learned theory that

"the mother is not of kin to her child"? Her psychological condition may well be realized from the total absence of any kind of emotional relationship with her husband. We have noted how Walter's dry intellectualism has scotched his heart. Even his relations with his wife were governed by philosophical formulae. The ridiculous absurdity of it is driven home to us by the humorist Sterne's imputation of a learned motive for Mr. Shandy's lying with his wife. We are told that he sought such union, not for emotional satisfaction, but as a means of warming himself up for arriving at truths, or correct judgments on problems that he was faced with. The ancient
Goths of Germany - says Tristram - had a wise custom of their own to debate every matter of public importance twice - once drunk and once sober - so that their judgment could combine vigour with discretion. Mr. Shandy, who was mightily taken with this idea of the ancients, could not, however, follow it up their way, because he was not given to drinks. For arriving at 'just' decisions, he, therefore, sought vigour another way - namely, by lying abed with his wife. It was on one such 'bed of justice' that he sought to discuss a problem of 'public importance' - namely, that of breeching his son.

Walter Shandy's continued, almost cruel, apathy to his wife's emotional life has made her indifferent to life itself. She has little happiness in her marital life, for her husband is concerned not with the sentiments of love and marriage, but with their 'system'. Thus, while Mrs. Shandy feels, and says, that love 'replenishes the earth', he tells her that 'it (love) keeps heaven empty'. Indeed, Mrs. Shandy is the greatest victim of her husband's scholasticism. Merely to note her 'inability - or lack of desire - to say anything for herself', 'her placid, vegetal existence', or to regard her as a mere 'foil' to Walter Shandy's character - as James Aiken Work did, is not to do full justice to Mrs. Shandy. Mrs. Shandy is almost a tragic figure in the comic Shandy world - a figure of silent suffering endured with admirable calm.

Widow Wadman

Widow Wadman is introduced as the occasion of Toby's amours.
"A daughter of Eve, for such was widow Wadman, and 'tis all the character I intend to give of her -"237

-says Wadman's creator. Sterne, who conceived love as a leaven of life, and thought that

"a man's heart is ever the better for it",238

and who wrote in an earlier instalment of his novel that the story of Toby's amours would be 'the choicest morsel of my whole story! ', might have intended to give Mrs. Wadman a greater place in his work than she actually occupies. Though she is once just mentioned in Book II during the Shandy brothers' conversation, she really figures in the last two Books (VIII & IX) of the novel. This may well be due to the fact that the author did not live to continue his story, to redeem his pledge to keep his story

"a-going these forty years, if it pleases the fountain of health to bless me so long with life and good spirits". 241

And even in these two Books (VIII & IX) we have more of Toby and Trim than of Wadman.

We have mentioned before (Chap. V, p.94 ante ) that Toby first met widow Wadman as he with Trim posted down to the country from his sick-bed in London, to stage his toy-war on the bowling-green. Toby was then so much absorbed in his hobby-horse that though he brought all the implements of his 'warfare', he forgot to bring a bed, and had to accept of a bed at Mrs. Wadman's, for a night or two, till his Trim made one in his (Toby's) house. Her first sight of Toby lit the gentle passion in her, who had passed 'many bleak and Decemberly nights of a seven years' widowhood'. But she had to wait several
years, till the end of Toby's 'campaigns' on the bowling-green with the Peace of Utrecht. It was then that the story of Trim's own amorous experience kindled the soft passion in his master; and Mrs. Wadman, who was overhearing the conversation, found her most opportune moment for attack. She came close to Toby in the sentry-box, and asked him to examine her left eye for 'a mote - or sand - or something'. The simple Toby looked again and again into her eye

"with twice the good-nature that ever Galileo looked for a spot in the sun", 245 but found nothing in the eye, which was 'furtively shotting out' 'one lambent delicious fire' into Toby. As Mrs. Wadman left, Toby confessed to his Trim that he was in love.

The good Toby puts Humanity at the top of Mrs. Wadman's many virtues. We are not told much about this capital quality in her. But she had one important quality, of which Toby, with his heart of a child, took little notice; this was her amorous ingenuity. This is revealed in her timing, as well as the nature, of her 'attack' on Toby in his sentry-box. Watching Toby and Trim approach into her house, she takes care to place a Bible on her table in order to make a favourable impression on the pious Toby. As she speaks, to Toby, of the responsibilities of the marriage state and gently asks him his reasons for matrimony, the simple Toby only says - 'They are written ... in the Common-Prayer Book'. As she speaks of children and the mother's burden (obviously expecting Toby to say something fine in her praise), Toby refers to God's dispensation and His universal kindness, to the great disappointment of Mrs. Wadman; Toby's
'unmistrusting ignorance of the ten-ace' is set in beautiful contrast to the amorous and worldly wisdom of widow Wadman. Wadman's creator, however, never intended her to be a mere passionate character, motivated by mere worldly considerations. Toby's recommendation of her 'humanity' - as already referred to, and of 'the compassionate turn' of her character, must have some basis. That there was nothing low or wanton in her love is borne out by her creator's description of her eye, shooting out 'one lambent delicious fire' at Toby, as an eye that was 'neither a romping or a wanton one - nor ... sparkling - petulant or imperious', but one that was 'full of gentle salutations - and soft responses'. Widow Wadman's craving for the physical fulfilment of her gentle passion was a very natural one - particularly in her, who not only had been widowed seven years, but now sought in her new husband what she had missed in her former one who had been 'afflicted with a sciatica'. Toby says to his brother of "the shock I received the year after the demolition of Dunkirk, in my affair with widow Wadman". The failure of Toby's amours must have been a greater shock to the other party.

Dr. Slop Dr. Slop was the 'scientific operator' who had been brought to aid the village midwife during Tristram's birth at the instance of Walter Shandy - the ceaseless experimenter with new ideas, and whose scientific instrument breaks the nose of the just-born Tristram. Tristram's birth provides the principal
occasion of Slop's participation in the Shandy world; but he
joins the Shandyan discussion on other occasions too; and every
time he is made fun of for his orthodox Romanism and certain
oddities of character and bearing.

Dr. Slop's very appearance is ridiculous. He is intro-
duced as

"a little squat, uncourtly figure ... of about four
feet and a half perpendicular height, with a breadth
of back, and a sesquipedality of belly, which might
have done honour to a sergeant in the horse guards".255

And as he is splashed in mud ('with the broadest part of his
sunk about twelve inches deep in the mire') in the accident wi-
thè Obadiah, and then enters the Shandy parlour 'with all his
stains and blotches on him', he looks

"like Hamlet's ghost, motionless and speechless, for
a full minute and a half at the parlour-door (Obadi-
ah ... holding his hand)". 257

Dr. Slop is the only character in the novel that lacks
any grace, any redeeming quality. His self-importance and pre-
tensions to knowledge are much in evidence during his convers-
ations with the Shandy brothers. His easy irritability and
utter disregard of human values may be seen in his opening his
battery of curses on little provocation. This illness of spirit
in Dr. Slop is combined with a low and false sense of humour, and
involves him in that comic encounter with maid Susannah, in
which he is worsted. When he indulges in a dig at her modesty,
during the dressing of Tristram's wound, she protests. But
the foolish doctor persists in casting his low wit at her; he
suggests that if she would not hold the candle and look, she
might hold it and shut her eyes.
"That's one of your popish shifts."  

- The angry Susannah retorts. The defiant Susannah, while 'rowing' the candle without looking at it, accidentally sets fire to Slop's wig. Slop gets furious, and calls her an 'impudent whore'. Susannah tells him -  

"I never was the destruction of anybody's nose."  

This home-thrust at the doctor completely threw him off his balance. The comic encounter closes with Dr. Slop's throwing the cataplasm (meant for Tristram's wound) on her face and Susannah's  

"returning the compliment with what was left in the pan".  

Dr. Slop has to thank himself for this discomfiture, brought about by his own folly, his false flair of wit.  

Dr. Slop is mightily taken with his Catholic religion. As the humanist Sterne indicts Popery for its stress on ceremonies and disregard of natural human relationships, he makes a butt of Dr. Slop wherever he appears. When, for example, during the Shandy brothers' conversation on the spiritual power of love Dr. Slop 'triumphantly' cuts in -  

"'Tis Virginity ... which fills paradise",  

Walter Shandy ridicules him -  

"Well pushed, nun!"  

Even Trim does not spare him. When Trim, during his conversation with Walter Shandy on Toby's chances of success with the amorous Wadman, tells him (W.S.) in his military phraseology that the lady cannot withstand his master's (i.e., Toby's) attack, Dr. Slop interrupts and jeers at him; he asks Trim,  

"And whence ... hast thou all this knowledge of woman, friend?"
to which, corporal Trim at once retorts —

"By falling in love with a popish clergywoman".264

Slop is similarly subjected to cruel banter by the Shandy brothers and Trim through their interspersed comments on the sermon on Conscience, as Trim reads it in the Shandy parlour.

In Dr. Slop Sterne (who was almost perpetually ailing) also seems to poke fun at the pretensions of the new medical science of his day. His disgust with doctors comes out in more than one personal letter of his. From Montpellier he writes to a friend —

"My physicians have almost poisoned me with what they call bouillons refraiçissants ...".266

From Toulouse he writes to Hall-Stevenson of his ill condition in the hands of the 'physicians here' whom he calls 'the arrantest charlatans in Europe, or the most ignorant of all pretending fools'; he continues that he

"withdrew what was left of me out of their hands, recommended my affairs entirely to Dame Nature".267

In still another letter, he, in his usual humorous vein, writes of the mistake of his doctors — 'my two scientific friends' — in London, and of his withdrawing from their hands 'to nature, to time, or at the worst to death'. No wonder, our Dr. Slop, who so much vaunts his 'tiretete', his 'new-invented forceps', his 'crotchet', his 'squirt', and all his 'instruments of salvation and deliverance', and whose scientific instrument — as Susannah aptly tells him at his face — breaks the nose of Tristram, is held up to ridicule by the author.

'Lower' Characters

Sterne's 'lower' characters include the serving and
poorer classes, existing by the side of the principal characters and playing minor roles.

(a) Their individuality. Though not principal figures in the story, Sterne's 'lower' characters have an individuality of their own. Corporal Trim, though he is Toby's servant, has an important place in the novel, giving meaning and significance to Toby's character. Trim is almost a part of his master's personality, sharing in the latter's psychological and emotional experiences; the distinctness of Trim's own personality, however, can be noted in his initiative and intelligence in advising his master - whether about Toby's 'campaigns' on the bowling-green, or about his (Toby's) amorous adventure. So the 'sentimental traveller's' valet La Fleur reveals his individuality in his perennial cheerfulness of spirit (which his master commends as 'shaming me into one of a better kind'), his amorous propensity, his ready wit and advice to his master in drafting a love-letter, and so on.

In the novel, even those who receive no more than a passing notice leave their impress on our minds. In the beginning of the novel, we have the poor midwife, who is introduced as

"a thin, upright, motherly, notable, good old body of a midwife, who with the help of a little plain good sense, and some years' full employment in her business, in which she had all along trusted little to her own efforts, and a great deal to those of dame Nature, - had acquired, in her way, no small degree of reputation" 274

in her village. She had been left a widow, and we are told that, at forty-seven with three or four small children she was
"a person of decent carriage,—grave deportment,—
a woman moreover of few words, and withal an obj-
et of compassion". 274

Her quiet good nature and natural ability 'called out the
louder for a friendly lift', which she received from parson
Yorick. A few words have given life to a rather insignificant
character.

The poor inn-keeper in the Story of Le Fever is like-
wise a pencil-sketch; but still he has a distinct individuality
of his own. As Uncle Toby is eating his supper, the landlord
comes to him

"with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or
two of sack" 275

for the unknown soldier, who has recently arrived at his inn and
taken ill.

"If I could neither beg, borrow, or buy such a thing—
added the landlord,—I would almost steal it for
the poor gentleman, he is so ill.—I hope in God he
will still mend, continued he,—we are all of us
concerned for him". 275

He is equally concerned for Le Fever's little son too, who, he
tells Toby,—

"has tasted almost as little as his father ... (and)
has not stirred from the bed-side these two days". 276

Nothing more is said about the poor inn-keeper, but still he
wins his way into our hearts; he is marked out for his fine
qualities of the heart, the active principles of which—ac-
\n
\(\text{See ante, chap. II, pp. 32-8.}\) Even about Le Fever, a stranger
to the Shandy village, who only struggles into the inn to die
and cannot even speak a word, Sterne says through Toby that

"there must be something more than common in him" 277
to win the affections of his host in so short a time. And when he dies, he is buried with due honours in Yorick's chancel, and the parson preaches a funeral sermon on him. Servant Obadiah and maid Susannah are characterized by their unstinted devotion to Mr. and Mrs. Shandy respectively. They, again, throw light on the ridiculous Dr. Slop's character — Obadiah by being the cause of Slop's splashing in the mud and of his profuse cursing (see ante, chap V, pp. 82 ff.), and Susannah by downing him (Slop) in the comic encounter over the dressing of Tristram's wound (Chap. V, p. 87). Then, we have the 'fat, foolish scullion' in the Shandy kitchen, who — we are told — was kept by Mr. Shandy 'for her simplicity' and who on hearing of Bobby's death thanked her stars that she was not dead herself. And Jonathan, the coachman, — when Obadiah tells him that death is not at all frightful 'in the field' — says,

"I never mind it myself ... upon the coach-box". His warmheartedness and regard for Toby beautifully come out in a few words —

"I would sooner ... drive such a gentleman for seven pounds a year — than some for eight". 281

Sterne's 'lower' characters are distinguished by a dignity and self-respect, Trimm's personality, we have seen, is respected in the Shandy house. For Obadiah

"My father had a great respect", We find Walter Shandy consulting Obadiah, too, about the disposal of the legacy of the thousand pounds he (W.S.) received from Aunt Dinah. In his conversations with Madame de L—, the honour of his master is the uppermost concern with La Fleur.
The begging monk at Calais is a picture of sublimity. Maid Susannah protests to Dr. Slop for his aspersion on her modesty.

(b) Their place in the Shandy world. The servants in the Shandy house are an essential part of it, not in the usual sense of their indispensable service to their masters, but in the more dignified sense of their psychological and emotional relationship with the Shandies. The delightful Shandean procession to the Visitation Dinner, the description of which narrator Tristram omits from his story on artistic grounds, had corporal Trim and Obadiah riding 'two coach-horses a-breast', leading the way 'as slow as a patrole' with Uncle Toby 'in his laced regimentals and tie-wig' and his brother Walter following slow on their horses. Again, while Toby and Yorick march slowly abreast to the Shandy house, after Tristram's accident, Trim follows a few paces behind them; and Susannah is 'put in the rear' to give an ideological completeness to the procession. Toby and Trim march together in their respective amorous adventures.

The parlour of the Shandy household has its counterpart in the kitchen of the servants. Walter Shandy's learned oration in the parlour runs side by side with Trim's lay oration to the servants in the kitchen on the same subject, namely, Bobby's death. The philosophic Shandy's indifference to the facts of earthly existence finds its echo in the minds and moods of his servants, though they are not cast in his mould; otherwise, there was no reason why the creaking door-hinge could not be repaired in ten years. This inaction in leaving the door-hinge long unmended helped in disseminating the parlour...
sentiments straight into the servants' world;

"whenever an extraordinary message, or letter, was
delivered in the parlour — or a discourse suspended
till a servant went out — or the lines of discontent
were observed to hang upon the brows of my father or
mother — or, in short, when any thing was supposed
to be upon the tapis worth knowing or listening to,
'twas the rule to leave the door, not absolutely shut,
but somewhat a-jar — ...which, under covert of the
bad hinge (and that possibly might be one of the many
reasons why it was never mended), it was not diffic­
ult to manage; by which means, in all these cases, a
passage was generally left ... wide enough ... to
carry on ...this windward trade" 291

between the two worlds.

The servants of the Shandy house not only share in
the emotional experience of their masters; there is a spiritual
brotherhood among themselves. Though they have their own indi­
viduality, none is realized in isolation. One's mood finds its
echo in another's. Before Susannah ran to Toby's house to repo­
rt Tristram's accident by the window-sash, she had told the st­
ory to the cook, the cook to coachman Jonathan, Jonathan to
Obadiah, and Obadiah reported it to Walter Shandy;

"so that by the time my father had rung the bell half
a dozen times to know what was the matter above,—
was Obadiah enabled to give him a particular account
of it, just as it had happened". 292

In the Sentimental Journey, too, the scene of the servants'
merriment ('the fille de chambre, the maitre d'hotel, the cook,
the scullion', with the domestic animals,too, dancing to the
notes of La Fleur) in the kitchen of the Amiens hotel, is a
beautiful picture of their easy, harmonious relationship.
Sterne's picture-gallery is neither very grand nor
great; but it is a very lively, varied, and interesting one.
They are all alive, in their sentiments and sensibility, by the
touch of their creator's own sensibility, warm humanity and humour.