Making and Unmaking Man: Further Reflections on Sterne's Allusions to Charron's Of Wisdome

Abstract: This article reconsiders the role that the allusions to Pierre Charron's treatise De la sagesse, *in its English translation by Samson Lennard,* Of Wisdome, *have in* Tristram Shandy. *Charron was a disciple of Montaigne and an advocate of philosophical scepticism in early seventeenth-century France. He was influential, especially in the Jansenist circles, but his reception was, and still is, not uniform, as some regarded him as an anti-dogmatic apologist of Christian values, while for others he was simply an impious free thinker. After an overview of Sterne's references to Charron, noticed by François Pellan and Melvyn New, the article concentrates on a further possible allusion to* Of Wisdome *in the last chapter of volume 9 of* Tristram Shandy *that mentions Plato and Diogenes together. The article maintains that the odd coupling of those two ancient philosophers might have derived from a chapter in* Of Wisdome *that Sterne already used in the famous incipit of his* Tristram Shandy. *In this view, beginning and end of* Tristram Shandy *appear to join in calling attention to two of the main themes that run through it, thus providing a sort of ideal dénouement to a story that set the duty of caring and nurturing against men's instinct for 'undoing and killing one another [and] ruining and destroying our own kind', as Montaigne had said and Charron, and then Sterne, restated in their own ways.*

Pierre Charron's *De la sagesse* (1601-1607), translated into English by Samson Lennard as *Of Wisdome* (?1612), was possibly one of Sterne's favourite repositories of learning and moral ideas. In the Florida edition of *Tristram Shandy*, Melvyn New points to Sterne's indebtedness to Charron, acknowledging François Pellan's seminal article on Sterne's borrowings from *Of Wisdome* (*TS Notes*, 18-19, 39-40, 550).[1] New says that Charron's *Of Wisdome* is 'a more important book for Sterne than we have yet fully realized' because it is 'a rich compendium of the ideas of Renaissance skepticism'.[2] Charron's sceptical attitude helped to free his readers from an '"obstinacie in opinion", which [Sterne] often labels "hobby-horsical behavior"'.[3] Other Sterne scholars consider Charron, together with his master, Michel de Montaigne, one of the principal sources of Sterne's comic scepticism.[4]

'Sage Charron', as Alexander Pope called him,[5] was one the most influential thinkers of the *crise pyrrhonienne* that developed in early seventeenth-century France after the impact of the Reformation on

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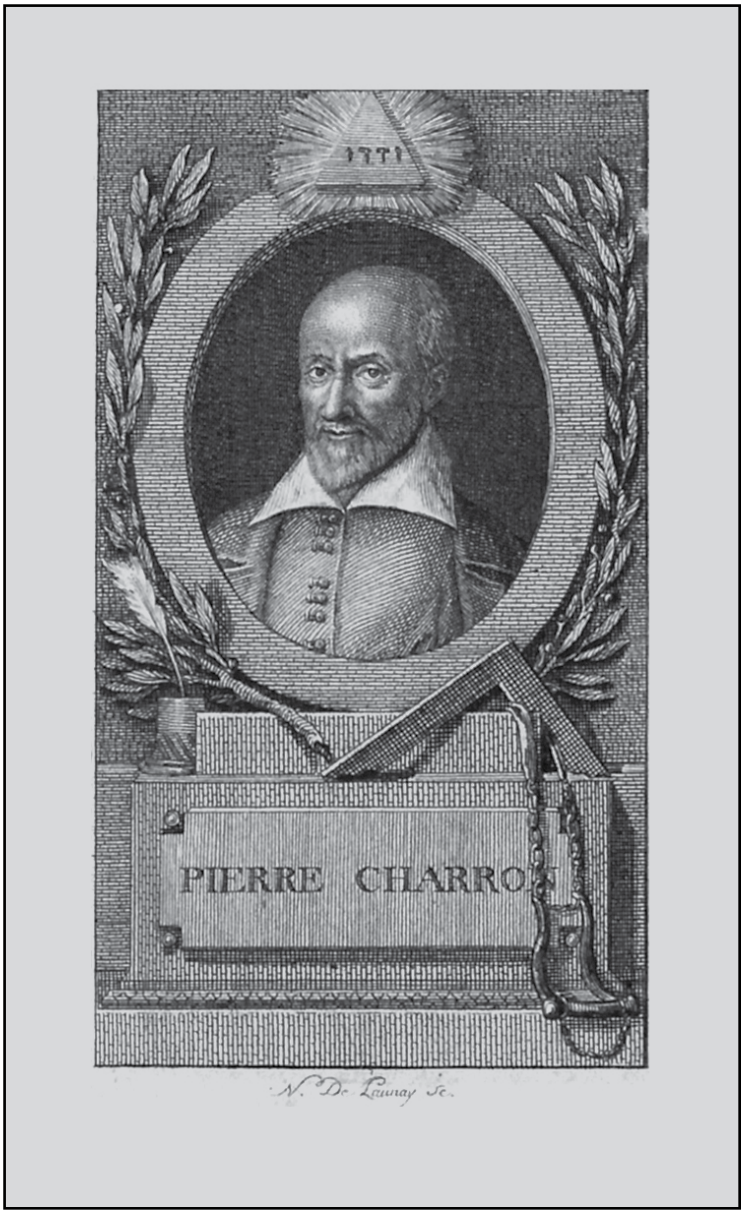

Fig 1 Nicholas de Launay, 'Pierre Charron', 1771

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Catholic thought.[6] He was a friend and admirer of Michel de Montaigne, and Sterne scholars in fact consider him as an acolyte of the latter. New says that 'Charron was an avid student of Montaigne and [...] much of his work is simply a reordering of the *Essays*' (*TS Notes*, 40) and that *Of Wisdome* 'summarizes the views of Sterne's beloved Montaigne'.[7] Tim Parnell writes that *Of Wisdome* 'is heavily dependent upon Montaigne's *Essays*'.[8] Whether Charron was indeed an imitator and organiser of his senior's more random thoughts is a contested issue, but it is true that many passages of *De la sagesse* resonate with the ideas expressed in the *Essays*.[9]

In the absence of direct evidence of Sterne's opinion on Charron it is impossible to ascertain whether he thought the latter to be an imitator of Montaigne or an autonomous thinker who provided him with fresh ideas about man's folly and wisdom, and also whether Sterne saw Charron as a good Christian or, instead, a philosophical libertine.[10] Some of the *idées reçues* in circulation about Charron must have been known to Sterne and might have influenced his opinion on the French writer, but they were ambivalent if not ambiguous. Charron was regarded as a *fideistic* pyrrhonist of the kind Popkin and other scholars describe as someone for whom 'the most basic tenets of Christianity had to be approached through faith and not through philosophical enquiries',[11] and in fact he was respected by religious thinkers such as Duvergier d'Hauranne, the leader of the Jansenists, the group of French Catholics who upheld doctrines of original sin, predestination, and dependence on grace for salvation. On the other hand, some believed that he was the inspirer of those free thinkers, the *libertins érudits* and the *esprits forts*, who held irreligious or even atheistic positions. For instance, the Marquis de Sourdis protested that Charron 'fait semblant de former un sage, et en effet il forme un impie',[12] a view that was widespread, although it depended on the strictures expressed by his most severe enemies, about which Sterne might have read in compendia such as Moréri's *Dictionnaire* or Bayle's *Dictionary*.[13] All in all, it is safe to say that the *libertines* shared Charron's anti-dogmatism, his ideas on the relativity of social and moral criteria, the unreliability of custom, and the necessity of suspending one's judgement, because, as he says with words that seem to anticipate the gist of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*,

> it is necessarie that we know all sorts of men, of all aires, climats, natures, ages, estates, professions, (to this end serves the traveller and the historie) their motions, inclinations, actions not only publicke, [...] but private, and especially the more simple and peculiar, such as arise from their proper and naturall iurisdiction [...] but especially that we enter into our selves, taste and attentively sound our selves, examine every thought, word, action.

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Charron taught both his God-fearing and his more free-thinking admirers that 'man is in truth on the one side a poore, weake, pitifull, and miserable thing, and we cannot but pitie him: and on the other, we shall find him swollen and puffed up with wind, presumption, pride, desires, and we cannot but disdaine and detest him'.[14] His sceptical and humanist approach became a model for many thinkers and writers.

Charron was influential in England, too. He was read by Francis Bacon, who took inspiration from *Of Wisdome* for his theory of the idols, as well as by Joseph Glanvill, who absorbed Charron's pyrrhonism in his ideas of scientific scepsis.[15] *De la sagesse* was translated by Samson Lennard, as mentioned, in the early 1610s, and later by George Stanhope (1697); both translations were reprinted several times. The English believed that Charron was a pious and good Christian, as Stanhope writes in the introduction to his translation: 'a person of Wisdom and Conduct, Serious and Considerate; a great Philosopher, an eloquent Orator, a famous and powerful Preacher, richly furnished and adorned with the most excellent Virtues and Graces both Moral and Divine; such as made him very remarkable and singular, and deservedly gave him the Character of a Good Man and a good Christian'.[16] Charron became, in Stanhope's and in his contemporaries' view, the true version of the complete philosopher of Renaissance humanism: learned, sage, prudent and full of virtues. That so wise and righteous a man should find the opposition of some zealots, such as Father Garasse or the theological doctors of *La Sorbonne*, who accused him of impiety, could not go unnoticed by Sterne. If he indeed read it, Sterne might have liked Bayle's description: '*Charron* [...] had a penetrating Wit; he discovered at a great Distance all that could be said by two Disputants. He took his Measures accordingly, explained himself ingenuously, and made use of no Cunning to obtain the Victory. But he found himself the worse for it; for the World dislikes such Candour'.[17] In Bayle's portrait, Charron emerges as a witty and Quixotic defender of truth, who looks so much like the 'unhackneyed' and unceremonious Yorick portrayed in volume 1 of *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne might have also liked that, to use José R. Maia Neto's words, Charron's 'two basic predicaments of man–the sources of all other predicaments–are *Misery* and *Presumption*', the former designating 'our current fallen condition' and the latter being 'a residue of the glorious state we enjoyed before Adam's sin'.[18] The idea that Sterne's characters oscillate between those two conditions might seem reductive, yet it describes well the two extremes of his own sceptical approach to the meaning of man's life in this 'sublunary' world.

It is evident then that the identification of what Sterne borrowed from Charron is of high importance because it corroborates the impression of

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an ideal cultural proximity between them. As we have seen, it was François Pellan who, in 1972, first pointed to Sterne's 'indebtedness to Charron' in *Tristram Shandy*.[19] Among the 'striking similarities' between *Tristram Shandy* and *Of Wisdome*, Pellan notices Sterne's specific allusions to two chapters from the first book of Charron's work (xxii, 'Of Carnall Love', and xxxix, 'Of Misery') in Walter Shandy's final oration, at the beginning of volume 9, chapter xxxiii, which starts with the words 'That provision should be made for continuing the race of so great, so exalted and godlike a Being as man—I am far from denying' (*TS*, 9.33.806-807). Charron's passages, from which Sterne borrows, derive from *Of Wisdome*, Book I, chapter xxii, 'Of Carnall Love', and chapter xxxix, 'Miserie'.[20] As Pellan observes, Sterne does not quote verbatim or in an orderly way from them; in fact, he borrows ideas and terms which he reworks through inversions and synonyms: he 'starts with the statement of the main thesis: lust debases man (see *Of Wisdome* I, xxiii), then comes the prolepsis (see *Of Wisdome* I, xxii), which in turn leads to the refutation of the objections that had been anticipated (see *Of Wisdome* I, xxxix)'.[21]

The second example Pellan gives is found at the very beginning of *Tristram Shandy*, Book 1, chapter i, which refers to a passage in Book III, chapter xiv, of Charron's text, about the 'duties of parents and children'. While verbal echoes are less direct and striking than in the previous example, in the description of Walter and Elizabeth Shandy's 'disastrous' copulation under the bad auspices of the grandfather clock, Sterne's text provides a witty reworking of, or a jocular variation on, Charron's assertion that

> [w]e men go unadvisedly and headlong to this copulation, onely provoked thereunto by pleasure, and a desire to dis-burthen our selves of that which tickleth and presseth us thereunto: if a conception happen thereby, it is by chance, for no man goeth to it warily, and with such deliberation and disposition of body as hee ought, and nature doth require.[22]

In this case, Sterne assimilates the meaning of Charron's passage and bends it to his own narrative purposes and vocabulary, according to Pellan.[23] It may be said that Charron's dicta about the parents' duties towards their children, even from the very act of procreation, inspired Sterne's incipit on the beginning of Tristram's life 'ab ovo' (or *ab semine*).

There are more allusions to Charron in Sterne's works. Melvyn New notices that a passage in *A Sentimental Journey* ('The Passport. Versailles'; *ASJ*, 116) may derive from *Of Wisdome*, Book I, chapter xxxvii (on 'Debility or Infirmity');[24] and that in the sermon, *Felix's Behaviour toward Paul, Examined*,

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Sterne rewrites what Charron says about ambition and covetousness in *Of Wisdome*, Book I, chapters xx-xxi (*Sermons*, 19.180.27-30; *Sermons: Notes*, 217).[25] James Gow, in his Ph.D. dissertation, finds one more allusion to Charron in Sterne's sermon, *The Prodigal Son* (*Sermons*, 20.186.7-12), which develops 'the gist' of the conclusion of *Of Wisdome* on the topic of man's eloquence.[26] All those references reinforce the possibility that Charron might indeed have been one of the main sources of Sterne's ideas about man and true knowledge, and that his thought was influenced also by the works of the *crise pyrrhonienne* of the seventeenth century and their fideistic solution to the sceptical dilemma.[27]

Here I would like to concentrate on one of the borrowings noted by Pellan in Walter's oration that does not perfectly match the equivalent sections in *Of Wisdome*. New observes that, while the beginning and end of the passage can be easily set *vis-à-vis* Charron's text in Lennard's translation, there is no passage in Charron matching, either verbatim or through rewriting, its central section (from ' I know it will be said' to 'recalcitrate against it?'):

> —— That provision should be made for continuing the race of so great, so exalted and godlike a Being as man — I am far from denying — but philosophy speaks freely of every thing; and therefore I still think and do maintain it to be a pity, that it should be done by means of a passion which bends down the faculties, and turns all the wisdom, contemplations, and operations of the soul backwards —— a passion [...] which couples and equals wise men with fools, and makes us come out of our caverns and hiding-places more like satyrs and four-footed beasts than men.
>
> I know it will be said, continued my father (availing himself of the *Prolepsis*) that in itself, and simply taken —— like hunger, or thirst, or sleep —— 'tis an affair neither good or bad—or shameful or otherwise. —— Why then did the delicacy of *Diogenes* and *Plato* so recalcitrate against it? and wherefore, when we go about to make and plant a man, do we put out the candle? and for what reason is it, that all the parts thereof — the congredients — the preparations — the instruments, and whatever serves thereto, are so held as to be conveyed to a cleanly mind by no language, translation, or periphrasis whatever?
>
> —— The act of killing and destroying a man [...] is glorious — and the weapons by which we do it are honourable —— We march with them upon our shoulders —— We strut with them by our sides —— gild them —— We carve them —— We in-lay them —— We enrich them —— Nay, if it be but a *scoundril* cannon, we cast an ornament upon the breach of it. — (*TS*, 9.33.806-807)

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According to New, the passages in *Of Wisdome* that Pellan finds to correspond to Walter's tirade do not mention Diogenes and Plato. He finds the two philosophers coupled in Charron's chapter on 'Ambition' (Book I, chapter xx), the same that Sterne uses for his sermon, *Felix's Behaviour toward Paul, Examined* (see *TS Notes*, 550-51):

> Ambition hath many and divers wayes, and is practised by divers meanes: there is one way straight and open, such as *Alexander, Caesar, Themistocles* tooke; there is another oblique and hidden, which many Philosophers and professors of piety have taken, who goe forwards by going backwards, goe before others by going behinde them, not unlike to wier-drawers, who draw and goe backward; they would fain bee glorious by contemning glory. And to say the truth, there is greater glory in refusing and trampling glory under foot, than in the desire and fruition thereof, as *Plato* told *Diogenes*.[28]

Here Charron alludes to the animosity between Plato and Diogenes that had become a well-known anecdote among Renaissance thinkers.[29] However, Sterne does not seem to have had Plato and Diogene's scuffles in mind when he composed Walter's final speech. Although the description of the philosophers and divines who go forward by going backward like 'wier-drawers' (or 'water-men', as Stanhope translates) is fascinating because it makes one think of Tristram's regressive-progressive narration (and Walter's water-drinking habits), Charron's passage on ambition does not match Walter Shandy's discussion of men's squeamishness in sexual matters and is inconsistent with the gist of his tirade.

Implicitly discarding Charron as the source for Sterne's coupling of the two philosophers, Robert Folkenflik believes that Sterne might have taken the Diogenes and Plato reference from Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.[30] Burton's passage is found in the same section from whose Preface on 'love-melancholy' Sterne also took his motto for volume 9 (but not much else, whilst Burton's presence was heavy in volume 8):

> *Plato* calls beauty for that cause a priviledge of Nature, *Naturae gaudentis opus*, natures masterpiece [...] *Socrates*, a tyranny, *which tyrannyzeth over tyrants themselves*, which made *Diogenes* belike call proper Women Queenes, *quod facerent homnes quae praeciperent*, because men were so obedient to their commands. [31]

However, the context of Burton's discussion is the power of love and does not seem relevant to Walter's final oration, although it contains a misogynistic stricture on the tyranny of female beauty that the latter might have liked.

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My argument is that Sterne indeed had Charron in mind throughout that passage, weaving into it yet another section from *Of Wisdome* alongside those taken from 'Of Carnall Love' and 'Of Misery'. It is a section that he knew well because it is the same that contains the discussion on those 'men [who] go unadvisedlie and headlong to [...] copulation', i.e., chapter xiv of Book III, on 'the duties of parents and children' (see above). In it, Diogenes and Plato are presented within the span of a couple of lines:

> Againe, a man must apply himselfe to this encounter after one maner, a long time after his repast, that is to say, his belly being empty, and he fasting (for a full panch performes nothing good either for the mind or for the bodie) and therefore *Diogenes* reproached a licentious yong man, for that his father had begotten him drunke. And the law of the Carthaginians is commended by *Plato*, which enioyned a man to abstaine from wine that day that he lay with his wife.[32]

Even if that passage does not show a direct similitude with Sterne's text, yet it presents a verbal echo, the allusion to the two philosophers, and a general correspondence in the sexual theme.[33] Although the passage does not help to explain through verbatim correspondences why Walter speaks of Diogenes and Plato's 'delicacy' that makes them 'recalcitrate' against sex,[34] its focus on procreation matches the topic of Walter's speech–at least initially (Walter subsequently gets lost in the eulogy of war-making).

The proximity of Walter's phrases to Charron's above-quoted passage may be understood as a twisted allusion to the restrained way in which the two philosophers considered the act of procreating. The allusion is twisted because Walter's 'eloquence rekindle[s] against the passion', while Charron believed it to be a natural desire that only needs to be channelled towards a healthy procreation. Charron wrote that sex is a natural 'congredient' of man's life and there is nothing shameful in it;[35] Walter admits that sex is natural only according to some philosophers ('I know it will be said' is a concessive clause) but he is not of their same opinion when he mentions 'recalcitrating' Plato and Diogenes to support his own hypothesis. Moreover, if Walter is partly right in using Plato as an advocate of *sophrosyne*, modesty, and temperance in 'the desire for meat and drink and the passion of sex',[36] he finds in Diogenes a very bad advocate of sexual abstinence, considering his extreme views on the satisfaction of bodily desires in the most natural ways, even in public places.[37]

If Walter impresses Diogenes for service in the wrong army, as it were, the cynical philosopher takes an implicit revenge in the ironical and unexpected way Walter's tirade is cut short, as often in *Tristram Shandy*, by an interruption,[38] when Obadiah enters the room with the piece of

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news of the possible impotency of the parish bull. The true conclusion to Walter's harangue is provided by Yorick's final witticism on the 'cock-and-bull story', a remark that works as the replacement of the parson's former failed attempt to 'batter [Walter's] whole hypothesis to pieces' (*TS*, 9.33.807).[39] Thus, even if there is not a verbatim correspondence between the Diogenes-and-Plato passage in *Tristram Shandy* and the passage in *Of Wisdome*, Book I, chapter xiv, the two are in tune for the themes therein considered, which can be summarized by a sentence found elsewhere in the same chapter of Charron's treatise: '*Plato* was wont to say, that he knew not in what a man should be more carefull and diligent than to make a good sonne'.[40] Charron's (and Plato's) maxim corresponds to a Latin sentence mentioned elsewhere by Tristram, '*quanto id diligentius in liberis procreandis cavendum*' (*TS*, 9.33.558).[41] It is indeed a matter of 'delicacy' that Yorick brings to an end through one of his piquant 'ejaculations'.[42]

The last chapter of *Tristram Shandy* ends on the same note on which the first chapter had kicked off the story of Tristram's life: birth-giving. Thus, the *omega* of Tristram's story sends us back to its *alpha*, in a circular and paradoxical way. Sterne seems to have used the same sections of Charron's book both at the beginning and at the end of his story, which reinforces the interpretation of *Tristram Shandy* as a complete book, though in its eccentric, 'double' fashion.[43] Sterne's allusion, albeit oblique, to those parts of *Of Wisdome* concerning 'the duties of parents and children' is an indication that we have followed the story of the relationship between a child and his parents and relatives, in a humorous *anamnesis* of his existence (his life *and* opinions) through that relationship. It should have been Walter and Elizabeth's duty to mind what they were doing when they begot Tristram, and to be 'carefull and diligent' in making 'a good sonne'; equally, Tristram's account of his life is the execution of his own filial duty, *sub specie autoriale*, to become a wise man who has learned to honour his parents and family, even despite the fact his father tried to 'intoxicate' him with pedantic learning rather than sound wisdom.[44]

Therefore it is tempting to follow Pellan and believe that 'the reading of *Of Wisdome* sparked off *Tristram Shandy* itself, that Sterne discovered in it a means of illustrating Locke's theory [of associationism, matching Charron's idea that "the life of a human being is determined from the very first moment"] and pushing it to a logical extreme', even if, according to Pellan, Sterne would never acknowledge 'so uncongenial an author as the Reverend Canon Pierre Charron' among his direct sources.[45] I believe that Pellan is wrong in finding Charron such an uncongenial author: not only did *Of Wisdome* help Sterne to open and conclude his work, but provided him with the quintessence of his whole story: one's life is determined by

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one's parents but is also based on one's duties as a child and as a human being; life is given by others and, at the same time, forged by the one who receives it.[46] Moreover, his narrator becomes a true disciple of Charron, refusing pedantry and learning true wisdom, though in a jocosely zig-zagging way.[47]

Sterne completed his *Tristram Shandy* not only by offering his narrator's 'choicest morsel', Uncle Toby's unfortunate courtship of Widow Wadman, but also by summing up the major themes of his character-narrator's story: creating and nurturing life but also posing a threat to it and endangering the human species. As we have seen, in the last chapter of his novel Sterne, through a reference to Charron's chapter on 'Misery', highlights the conjunction of the motif of birth-giving, which triggers *Tristram Shandy*'s first books and is the focus of Walter's obsessions and frustrations, with that of war-making, which is Toby and Trim's hobby-horse and a sort of *fil rouge* running through all the nine volumes. This conjunction foregrounds the paradox, which has been present in the whole story without ever being solved, of man's creating *and* uncreating nature. This paradox owes much to the Erasmian and sceptical tradition that finds its highest expression in Charron's work on wisdom: '[t]here is but one way to beget, to make a man; a thousand and a thousand meanes, inventions, arts to destroy him': *homo sacra res per iocum et lusum occiditur*.[48]

That paradox was central in Montaigne's thought before Charron. Sterne refers directly to Montaigne several times in *Tristram Shandy*,[49] but in his last chapter, as Pellan and New observe, 'a comparison of the two versions clearly shows that in this instance Sterne is using the student, not the master' (*TS Notes*, 19, 550). All the same Montaigne is visible too in this last chapter, not only because Charron's text draws heavily on Montaigne's 'Upon Some Verses of Virgil',[50] with which Sterne's version too has points of contact, but also because of another, important passage from another *Essay* by Montaigne to which Sterne's text is linked, again through Charron. The passage is found in the 'Apology for Raymond Sebond', and worked as the model for Charron's reflections on the 'action of destroying and killing' man. Montaigne affirms that war, man's most imposing and glorious activity according to many people, in fact shows man's weakness, imperfection and viciousness:

> As to what concerns War, which is the greatest and most magnificent of human Actions, I would very fain know, whether we would serve for an Argument of some Prerogative, or, on the contrary, for a Testimony of our Weakness and Imperfection; as in Truth the Science of undoing and killing one another, and of ruining and destroying our own Kind,

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> has nothing in it so tempting, as to make it be coveted by Beasts who have it not [...] I never read this Divine Observation [Montaigne refers to an example of a war among the bees, taken from Virgil's *Georgics*], but that, methinks, I there see Human Folly and Vanity represented in their true and lively Colours. [...] In the dreadful embattelling of so many thousands of armed Men, and so great Fury, Ardour and Courage, 'tis pleasant to consider, by what idle Occasion they are excited, and by how light ones appeas'd.
>
> > —*Paridis propter narratur amorem,*
> > *Graecia Barbariae diro collisa duello* (Hor., *lib.*1 *Epist.* 2).
> > Of wanton *Paris* the illicit Love
> > Did *Greece* and *Troy* to ten Years Slaughter move.
>
> All *Asia* was ruin'd and destroy'd for the ungovern'd Lust of one lascivious *Paris* [...] This Furious Monster [an immense army described by Virgil in his *Aeneis*, book 7], with so many Heads and Arms, is yet *Man*, feeble, calamitous and miserable *Man*. 'Tis but an Ant-hill of *Ants*, disturb'd and provok'd by a Spurn.[51]

Montaigne's opinion on man's wretchedness resonates in Charron's chapters on 'Misery' and 'Vanity', because vanity depends on 'the greatest alterations of the world, the most generall and fearfull agitations of States and Empires, armies, battels, murthers [that] have risen from light, ridiculous and vaine causes [...] a testimony of the vanitie and follie of man'.[52] In another section on the 'Military profession', Charron weighs the pros and cons of war-making, conceding that military men show valour, heroic virtue, and glorious behaviour (as did Montaigne in 'Of Experience'),[53] but adding that

> the Art and experience of undoing one another, of killing, ruinating, destroying our owne proper kinde, seems to be unnaturall, and to proceed from alienation of our sense and understanding; it is a great testimonie of our weaknesse and imperfection, and it is not found in beasts themselves, in whom the image of Nature continueth farre more entire. What follie, what rage is it, to make such commotions, to torment so many people, to runne thorow so many dangers and hazards both by sea and land, for a thing so uncertaine and doubtfull as the issue of warre, to runne with such greedinesse and fiercenesse after death [...] What frensie and madnesse is this for a man to abandon his own bodie, his time, his rest, his life, his libertie, and to leave it to the mercy of another? [...] And all this, to serve the passion of another, for a cause which a man knowes not to be iust, and which is commonly uniust: for warres are commonly uniust.[54]

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Montaigne's 'the Science of undoing and killing one another, and of ruining and destroying our own Kind', Charron's 'the arte and experience of undoing one another, of killing, ruinating, destroying our owne proper kinde', and Sterne's 'act of killing and destroying a man [which ...] is glorious' resonate with the same pacifist stance and accusation against man's weakness and imperfection.[55] It is the typical humanist *lamentatio* against the unreasonableness and cruelty of a belligerent and bloodthirsty 'lust', epitomised by Erasmus' *Complaint of Peace* (1517);[56] it also has connotations of a mock-eulogy and satire of the *teterrima belli causa*. The 'Human Folly and Vanity' of war-making is the outcome of those 'trivial Things' that society confuses with 'dire Offence' and 'mighty Contests', as Alexander Pope, an ideal follower of Erasmus, acknowledged in his mock-heroic rewriting of epic belligerence for his own times.[57] Stories of war and peace may be excited by 'idle Occasion[s]', but are also calamitous, as are most of the 'cock and bull stories' produced and narrated by that feeble and miserable creature, man. Those cock and bull stories are Sterne's way of assimilating the content of mock-heroic poetry, sending it back to its Erasmian origins, and obtaining 'a great testimonie of our weaknesse and imperfection'.

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NOTES

1 See François Pellan, 'Laurence Sterne's Indebtedness to Charron', *MLR*, 67 (1972), 752-55. Pellan provides convincing evidence that Sterne used Lennard's translation instead of George Stanhope's (754). Lennard translated the second edition of *De la sagesse*, which alters the original disposition of the chapters and parts of the approach to several controversial issues that received much criticism. Charron described his second version, which was published posthumously in 1607, as 'softened', 'adoucy'; see Lucienne Auvray, 'Lettres de Pierre Chárron à Gabriel Michel de La Rochemaillet', *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1-3 (1894), 323.

2 Melvyn New, 'Job's Wife and Sterne's Other Women' (1990), in Marcus Walsh, ed., *Laurence Sterne* (Longman, 2002), 85, n. 2.

3 Ibid., 70.

4 See Donald R. Wehrs, 'Sterne, Cervantes, Montaigne: Fideistic Skepticism and the Rhetoric of Desire', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 25 (1988), 127-51, and J.T. Parnell, 'Swift, Sterne, and the Skeptical Tradition', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 23 (1994), 220-42.

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5 *Epistle to Cobham*, ll. 146-47: 'What made (say Montagne, or more sage Charron!) / Otho a Warrior, Cromwell a Buffoon?' Thus Bishop Warburton annotates Pope's lines: 'Charron was an admirer of Montaigne; had contracted a strict friendship with him; and had transferred an infinite number of thoughts into his famous book De la Sagesse; but his moderating every-where the extravagant Pyrrhonism of his friend, is the reason why the poet calls him more sage Charron'; *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 3-2, *Epistles to Several Persons (Moral Essays)*, ed. F.W. Bateson (Methuen, 1951), 27.

6 The study of this crisis is the focus of Richard H. Popkin's pioneering *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (OUP, 2003).

7 Melvyn New, *Tristram Shandy: A Book for Free Spirits* (New York: Twayne, 1994), 77.

8 Parnell, 'Swift, Sterne, and the Skeptical Tradition', 228.

9 See Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, 'Pierre Charron, "disciple" de Montaigne et "patriarche" des prétendus esprits forts', *Montaigne Studies*, 19 (2006), 29-42. Among those who think that Charron depends heavily on Montaigne are Popkin, *The History of Scepticism*, 57-61 and José R. Maia Neto, *The Christianization of Pyrrhonisim: Scepticism and Faith in Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Shestov* (Dordrecht-Boston: Kluwer, 1995), 17-25. That Charron was Montaigne's disciple is contested, however, by other scholars, including Renée Kogel, *Pierre Charron* (Genève: Droz, 1972), 25-76, especially 26; Jean Daniel Charron, 'Did Charron Plagiarize Montaigne?', *French Review*, 34 (1960-1961), 347-48; see also François Kaye, *Charron et Montaigne. Du plagiat à l'originalité* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université de Ottawa, 1982), and Michel Adam, *Études sur Pierre Charron* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1991). The idea that Charron was a disciple of Montaigne dates back to François Guizot, Émile Faguet, who called *De la sagesse* 'Montaigne's herbarium', and Sainte-Beuve, for whom Charron was Montaigne's 'aide and disciple'; see Jean Daniel Charron, 'Did Charron Plagiarize Montaigne?', 347, and *The 'Wisdom' or Pierre Charron: An Original and Orthodox Code of Morality* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 15-16. Those scholars based their opinion on the strictures expressed by some contemporaries of Charron, such as the Jesuit Father Garasse and Father Marine Marsenne, who coined the expression sécrétaire or petit disciple of Montaigne 'to further their attempt to knock the idol of the libertins from their pedestal'. According to Jean Daniel Charron, 'it is necessary to stop seeing in Charron a disciple of Montaigne', thus abandoning 'the long-harboured belief that Charron plagiarized Montaigne'; Jean Daniel Charron, *The 'Wisdom' of Pierre Charron*, 19,

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127, 129, 132-33. According to Renée Kogel, 'Charron is not a disciple of Montaigne. He borrowed from him, as he borrowed from others, but he had his own ideas about "how to live well and to die well" [...] De la sagesse is Charron's composition, written according to a carefully worked-out plan. This plan did not come from the Essais and is in fact, the most original aspect of De la sagesse'. Kogel lists other influences on Charron including Juan Huarte de San Juan and Jean Bodin. He stresses Charron's Stoicism (*cum modicum*, as his active wisdom made him reject stoic ataraxia) more than other commentators, and believes that his adherence to a Socratic programme to obtain wisdom made him depart from Montaigne; see Kogel, *Pierre Charron*, 26, 36-42, 57-63, 68-72, 104. On Garasse's and Marsenne's anti-sceptical views see also Popkin, *The History of Scepticism*, 100-1, 112-19.

10 Popkin thinks that Charron's épochè paved the way to an increased belief in the ultimate truth of religion; Christian Belin too stresses Charron's faith in *L'Oeuvre de Pierre Charron 1541-1603: Littérature et théologie de Montaigne à Port-Royal* (Paris: Honore Champion, 1995). On the other hand, Tullio Gregory draws attention to Charron's anti-religious aspects in *La Genèse de la Raison Classique, de Charron à Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), 115-56 – in English as 'Pierre Charron's "Scandalous Book"', in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, W. Hunter, D. Wootton, eds. (OUP, 1992), 87-109. Charron started to exert his influence after Pierre Gassendi praised him in 1621, whilst in his lifetime he 'appears to have been little known and without connections', as Alfred Soman writes. According to Soman, '[n]ot until the 1620's–during the trial of Théophile de Viau, the beginnings of Jansenist attack on the Jesuits, and the emergence of the clique of the so-called libertins érudits–does De la sagesse become a significant book in the history of French thought'; Alfred Soman , 'Pierre Charron: A Revaluation', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 32: 1 (1970), 66, 77.

11 Anton M. Matysin, *The Specter of Scepticism in the Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 31. Popkin says, '[b]ecause he was a professional theologian, Charron was able to connect the scepticism of Montaigne more systematically with the main antirational currents in Christian thought, thereby providing a more thoroughgoing Christian Pyrrhonism by uniting the doubts of Pyrrho with the negative theology of the mystics' (*The History of Scepticism*, 57).

12 'he pretends to teach how to become wise, but in fact he forms an impious man', Marquis de Sourdis, quoted in René Pintard, *Le*

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libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVII siècle ([1943] Genève: Éditions Slatkine, 2000), xxxix. The attacks on Charron were started by the Doctors of the Sorbonne, by Father Garasse and Father Mersenne, and were carried on by Jean Boucher, Charles Cotin, Pierre Chanet, and other anti-pyrrhonists; see Popkin, *The History of Scepticism*, 99-111. According to Mersenne, who devoted a chapter of his book, *L'Impieté des déistes, athées et libertins de ce temps*, to confute Charron's ideas, the latter's notions were dangerous to faith, although Mersenne tended rather to blame the libertines who took inspiration from him. Garasse's attack on Charron's atheism was more devastating, although misdirected and mystifying. Some reacted against Garasse's accusations saying that Charron never adopted an atheistic or anti-Christian attitude and instead wanted to advocate an anti-dogmatic approach to faith. However, the question remains if Charron wanted to develop a morality independent of religion in a sceptic revision of the Stoic doctrine of ataraxia. According to José R. Maia Neto, 'Charron says that the main condition for achieving the summum bonum (ataraxia) is "freedom of spirit", that is, to judge everything but submit (assent) to nothing'. In fact, 'Christianity has no privileged status in Charron. It just corroborates his view that without wisdom man is miserable and full of errors. Nor is Christianity absolutely necessary for delivering man from this miserable condition'; see *The Christianization of Pyrrhonism*, 22 and 29. See also Winfried Schröder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus. Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- and Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Frohmann-Holzboog, 1998).

13 In 1604 the Sorbonne censured *De la Sagesse*, which was put on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1605. Moréri wrote that 'le P. Garasse a dit aussi beaucoup de mal de Charron, qu'il fait passer pour le patriarche des esprits forts de son siècle' ('Father Garasse too said many bad things about Charron, whom he passed off as the patriarch of the freethinkers of his century'); see *Le Grand dictionnaire historique ou Le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane* (Paris: Coignard, 1725), 3: 85. Bayle conceded that 'the Candour of this learned Man, in representing the Objections of the Libertines, contributed greatly to make people doubt of his Christianity. It is certain that he did not enervate the Objections'. In a footnote, however, Bayle added that 'the Venom, which might be in Montagne's Writings, would be a great deal less dangerous, than That, which should be found in Charron's Books'. Bayle saved Charron from the disapproval of those who considered him an Epicurean or an atheist, saying that it was 'easy to prove both by his Writings and Actions, that he did not doubt of the Truth of Christianity'. Yet he

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admitted that Charron picked up the accusations made by the libertines against the scandals and the violence of his own religion, according to his candid view on Christianity; see *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle* (Knapton et al., second edition, 1735), 2: 453-56. On the way in which the French freethinkers took their views from Charron, see Tullio Gregory, 'Pierre Charron's "Scandalous Book"', and Silvia Berti, 'Scepticism and the Traité des trois imposteurs', in *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, R.H. Popkin, A. Vanderjagt, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 216-29 (especially 226-29).

14 Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdome. In Three Books. Translated by Samson Lennard* (Edward Blount, ?1612), 236.

15 See José R. Maia Neto, 'Scepticism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, D. Clarke, C. Wilson, eds. (OUP, 2011), 230-31, 240.

16 *Of Wisdom. Three Books ... by Sieur de Charron, made in English by George Stanhope* (Tonson et al., 1729), 'A Brief Account of the Author'.

17 *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, 2: 456.

18 Maia Neto, *The Christianization of Pyrrhonism*, 18.

19 Pellan, 'Laurence Sterne's Indebtedness to Charron'.

20 Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 86-88: 'Carnall love is a sever and furious passion, and very dangerous unto him that suffereth himself to be carried by it [...] As it is naturall, so is it violent and common to all, and therefore in the action thereof it equalleth and coupleth fooles and wise men, men and beasts together. [...] This action then in it selfe, and simply taken, is neither shamefull nor vitious, since it is naturall and corporall, no more than other the like actions are: yea, if it be well ordered, it is iust, profitable, necessarie, at the least, as it is to eat and drinke'; and 145-46: 'The action of planting and making man is shamefull, and all the parts thereof, the congredients, the preparations, the instruments, and whatsoever serves thereunto is called and accounted shamefull, and there is nothing more uncleane in the whole nature of man. The action of destroying and killing him honourable, and that which serves thereunto glorious: wee [gild] it, we inrich it, we adorne ourselves with it, wee carrie it by our sides, in our hands, upon our shoulders [...] When we goe about to make a man, wee hide our selves, we put out the candle, we do it by stealth. It is a glorie and a pompe to unmake a man, to kill him; wee light the candles to see him die, wee execute him at high noone, wee sound a trumpet, we enter the combat, and we slaughter him when the sunne is at highest. There is but one way to beget, to make a man; a thousand and a thousand meanes, inventions and arts to destroy him'. The spelling of

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Lennard's translation changes according to editions; we do not know which edition Sterne might have used. The (unreliable) catalogue of Sterne's library does not help, as it contains only one reference to an edition of Stanhope's version. We have seen that Pellan gives evidence that Sterne used Lennard's version, instead (see note 1 above).

21 Pellan, 'Laurence Sterne's Indebtedness to Charron', 753.

22 Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 491-92.

23 Pellan says, 'We do not see in this second passage a close copy of Charron's text, as in the case previously considered. The vocabulary and the tone are unmistakenly characteristic of Sterne. There are, however, striking similarities between the two. Both authors are concerned with a "duty" of parents, who should keep in mind that the purpose of the sexual act is not merely to "satisfie their lustfull pleasure", but that they may "plant" a man, and therefore cannot be too careful'; 'Laurence Sterne's Indebtedness to Charron', 755. The *Florida Notes* to *Tristram Shandy* (39-40) suggest also to consider the 'Preface' of *Of Wisdome* for a repository of notions such as the idea 'that the conditions of conception determined the future of the child'.

24 See Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 130. New says that Charron's passage 'is here paraphrasing his mentor, Montaigne', i.e., his essay 'That we taste nothing pure', which quotes Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* ['medio de fonte leporum, / Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat']. New adds: 'Montaigne and Charron provide a somewhat different slant than Lucretius, one that makes clear even to the most recalcitrant that the reference, as in Sterne, is to sexual climax'; Melvyn New, 'Some Sterne Borrowings from Four Renaissance Authors', *Philological Quarterly*, 71 (1992), 302.

25 See Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 79-86. According to New, Sterne picks four sentences from Charron and makes them into apophthegms; 'Some Sterne Borrowings from Four Renaissance Authors', 303.

26 Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 587-88. See James S. Gow, *Contexts of Sterne's Sermons* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wales Swansea, 2003), 183. Gow sees another possible allusion to *Of Wisdom* in the diagrams of which Sterne was fond, which he might have read not only in Chamber's *Cyclopaedia* but also 'in one of his favorite compendiums, Pierre Charron's *Of Wisdom*'; James Gow, 'Scholia to A Sentimental Journey', *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats*, 37: 2 and 38: 1 (2005), 177-78.

27 In Book I, chapter xvi, 'Of the Imagination and opinion', Charron uses Epictetus' sentence that Sterne sets as the epigraph for his first volume of *Tristram Shandy*, 'It is not the truth and nature of things, which doth thus stirre and molest our soules, it is opinion, according

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to that ancient saying; Men are tormented by the opinions that they have of things, not by the things themselves'; Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 70.

28 Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 82. In *Tristram Shandy: A Book for Free Spirits*, 78, New says that Sterne added the invocation of Diogenes and Plato to Charron's argument, 'as representative of the inadequacies of classical philosophy'.

29 This is how Francis Bacon related one of their squabbles: 'Plato entertained some of his friends at a dinner, and had in the chamber a bed, or couch, neatly and costly furnished. Diogenes came in, and got upon the bed, and trampled it, saying, I trample upon the pride of Plato. Plato mildly answered, But with greater pride'. The original of this story is in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers.* See Francis Bacon, *The Philosophical Works*, ed. John M. Robertson, reprinted with the texts and translations, with the notes and prefaces, of J. Ellis and R.L. Spedding ([1905] Routledge, 2011), 873.

30 See Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. R. Folkenflick (New York: The Modern Library, 2004), 657.

31 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Volume III, Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 3.2.2.2, 69 (3.2.3.2, 451, in the 1638 edition from which Folkenflick quotes).

32 Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 492. See Laurence Sterne, *La vita e le opinioni di Tristram Shandy, gentiluomo*, ed. Flavio Gregori (Milan: Mondadori, 2016), 1051-52.

33 In Stanhope's translation of the first pages of this chapter there is no mention of Plato and Diogenes. Stanhope, as noted by Pellan, often summarises and paraphrases Charron's text. Another passage in *Of Wisdome*, in which Plato and Diogenes are mentioned together, is found in Book I, chapter xiv, 'Of the humane Spirit, the parts, functions, qualities'. Here Plato is said to refuse 'an embrodered and perfumed robe offered him by Dyonisius, saying, That he was a man, and therefore would not adorne himself like a woman [...] Diogenes washing his calewarts, and seeing Aristippus passe by, sayd unto him, If thou knewest how to live with colewarts, thou wouldst never follow the court of a Tyrant. Aristippus answered him, If thou knewest how to live with Kings, thou wouldest never wash colewarts'; *Of Wisdome*, 60. This example of reason's 'divers faces', and how man can find a specious interpretation for anything, seems to me a less convincing candidate as a source for Sterne's passage in *TS*, 9.33. Even less relevant is the passage in Book I, chapter lviii, in which Plato and Diogenes

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are mentioned among those philosophers who were the servants of powerful men 'but continued in effect and truth more free than their masters'; *Of Wisdome*, 220.

34 A metaphor full of allusions to equine behaviour, by the way. See *OED* s.v. recalcitrate, v., 1: 'Originally: to kick out, to kick backwards. Later in extended use: to show vigorous opposition or resistance; to be obstinately disobedient or refractory'.

35 Charron says that the sexual act 'in it selfe, and by nature is in noe way shamefull, it is truely naturall'; *Of Wisdome*, 87.

36 Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (Methuen, 1960), 48.

37 According to Diogenes Laertius, Diogenes even approved of masturbation in public affirming that he wished he could equally rid himself of hunger by rubbing his belly. This famous anecdote is also reported by Montaigne in his celebrated 'Apology for Raymond Sebond', the masterpiece and testament of his sceptical humanism. There he speaks of Diogenes who 'play[ed] the Beast with himself in Publick, [and] wish'd in the presence of all that saw him, that he could fill his Belly by that Exercise'; see Montaigne's *Essays. In Three Volumes*, 2: 297. Montaigne's original text is cruder than Cotton's translation: 'Car Diogène, exerçant en public sa masturbation, faisait souhait en présence du peuple assistant qu'il pût ainsi saolûer son ventre en le frottant'.

38 As Walter says of Tristram, he is the 'child of interruption'. Walter refers to the coitus interruptus on the night of his begetting, but it is a synecdoche of the many interruptions that happen in his story, including the final interruption of Walter's advice to Toby in matters of conjugal sex, which we will never hear.

39 Battering dogmas and opinions to pieces was Diogenes' strategy in his disputes and is one of the most important tenets of Cynic philosophy (incorporated, though in a mitigated form, by pyrrhonists in their épochè). Obadiah's reference to the sexual life of the parish herd as well Yorick's saucy remark, which overturn whatever Walter was going to say, work in the same way as Diogenes' famously witty and sharp replies.

40 Charron's phrase is again contained in the chapter on the 'duties of parents and children', in *Of Wisdome*, 491.

41 The Latin phrase comes from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first noted by John Ferriar, *Illustrations of Sterne* (Cadell and Davies, 1812), 1: 93. It is not taken from Cardan, as Tristram says, but from the sixteenth-century French physician Jean Fernel's *Medicina* (Paris: André Wechel 1555), *Pathologiae*, lib. VII, *De Morbis Eorumque Causis*, Liber I,

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15, as Burton correctly reports. The copy-text for the Florida Edition writes 'diligientias' for diligentius' and the Florida editors amend it as 'a simple error' (*TS*, 2: 859). See also Melvyn New and Norman Fry, 'Some Borrowings in *Tristram Shandy*: The Textual Problem', *Studies in Bibliography*, 29 (1976), 323: 'Sterne also altered this quotation in a more dramatic fashion, "liberis procreandis cavendum" for "procreandis liberis observandum". The alteration in meaning is so subtle (perhaps the difference in connotation between "How much more care then should we 'exercise' in begetting our children" for "... should we observe ...") that it argues Sterne's care in writing as well as his knowledge of Latin'. Indeed, *cavēre* means 'to beware', as well as 'to be aware', with the negative implication of 'avoiding' (that something may happen); its positive equivalents in Latin are *videre* ('to see to') and *observare* ('to take care of', 'to provide'). *Cavendum* seems to correspond more to Walter's reluctance to the act of begetting (*cave coitum!*) than Tristram's wish that one should pay more attention ('observance') to its correct performance. Is this a 'Freudian' slip of the tongue by Tristram?

42 On the proximity of 'delicacy' and 'ejaculation', see Melvyn New's fundamental observations in his essay 'Laurence Sterne', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists*, ed. Adrian Poole (CUP, 2009), 63-79 (especially 71-72); my discussion, in the following pages, of the paradox of life-giving and life-destroying is indebted to New's essay and his other observations on Sterne and Montaigne and Charron.

43 I refer to Jonathan Lamb's *Sterne's Fiction and the Double Principle* (CUP, 1989), and, with regard to the conclusion of Tristram Shandy, to Mark Loveridge's 'Stories of COCKS and BULLS: The Ending of Tristram Shandy', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 5: 1 (1992), 35-54.

44 In the chapter on the 'duties of parents and children', intoxication is Charron's word for learning devoid of wisdom: 'It should seeme that learning doth intoxicate, and as it were hammer a mans braines, and makes him to turne sot and foole, as king Agrippa said to S. Paul; Multa te literae ad insaniam adducunt: Much learning maketh thee mad'. Yet, Tristram shows that he can learn even from his father's most 'foolish' aspects, by absorbing them and mitigating them in his far less dogmatic approach to knowledge. In this he is a disciple of Charron who wrote that 'wise men may learne more of fooles, than fooles of wise men' (which in turn is a quote from Cato). The final sentence in Charron's chapter on the 'duties of parents and children' seems to anticipate the quintessence of the story narrated by Tristram: 'A childe shall finde no difficulty in these five duties, if he considers how chargeable he hath beene to his parents, and with what care and

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affection he hath been brought up. But he shall never know it well, until he have children of his owne, as he that was found to ride upon a hobby-horse playing with his children, entreating him that so tooke him to hold his peace untill he were himselfe a father, reputing him till then no indifferent Iudge in this action'. Tristram, who does not have children, has transformed his own parents into the adopted children of his story, with whom he has ridden their–and his own–hobby-horse. Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 505, 509, and 520.

45 Pellan, 'Laurence Sterne's Indebtedness to Charron', 755.

46 Melvyn New writes: 'that Sterne quotes Charron in the opening chapters of Tristram and returns to him seven years later for the conclusion seems to have been overlooked by those determined to posit the work's postmodern disorganization'; 'Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison and Sterne: A Study in Influence', *Modern Philology*, 115: 2 (2017), 230-31, n. 40. It is difficult to determine if Sterne chose to refer to Charron both at the beginning and at the end of *Tristram Shandy* out of a principle of organization: his method of composition is not based on plans and systematic schemes. It may be an indication, however, of Sterne's will to conclude his novel, in the etymological sense of enclosing it within the alpha and omega of his topics and issues (cum claudere). Wayne Booth, in 'Did Sterne Complete Tristram Shandy?', *Modern Philology*, 48: 3 (1951), 172-83, famously started the debate between those who believe that *Tristram Shandy* is completed, as Booth himself does, and those who maintain that it is open-ended. The truth probably lies in the middle: Sterne decided to conclude his novel; however, he might have sent it on for more volumes, encouraged by its peculiarly Menippean or Rabelaisian form of narration through additions of materials, as well as by his own serial method of composition. For a summary of positions and a considerate view on the matter, see Thomas Keymer, *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel* (OUP, 2002), 143-50 and n. 80.

47 More than Montaigne, Charron stresses the possibility and importance of acquiring wisdom despite one's personal disadvantages deriving from birth ('de la semence des parens'), inadequate parental care and upbringing; see José R. Maia Neto, *Academic Skepticism in Seventeenth-Century French Philosophy: The Charronian Legacy 1601-1662* (Cham-Heidelberg-New York-Dordrecht-London: Springer, 2014), 36 n. 87.

48 Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 145. Charron quotes (imperfectly) from Seneca's *letter to Lucilius*: 'Homo, sacra res homini, iam per lusum ac iocum occiditur' ('Man, an object of reverence in the eyes of man, is now slaughtered for jest and sport'); see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistolae Morales*, transl. Richard M. Gummere, (Cambridge: Harvard

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University Press, 1953), vol. 3, epistle 95. 3, 78. Seneca condemned gladiatorial games and, by extension, war itself.

49 There are more than thirty references to Montaigne's works in the *Notes to the Florida edition of Tristram Shandy*. As Judith Hawley says, 'Sterne derived from Montaigne not just sentiments to decorate his text, but rather was influenced by his way of thinking and writing: a digressive style which enacts an incorporation of life into philosophy and philosophy into life'; 'Tristram Shandy, Philosopher', *Textual Practice*, 31: 2 (2017), 241.

50 'What has render'd the Act of Generation, an Act so natural, so necessary, and so fit for Men, a Thing not to be spoken of without blushing; and to be excluded from all serious and regular Discourses? We boldly pronounce kill, rob, betray, but the other we dare only to mutter betwitxt the Teeth'; Montaigne's *Essays*, 3: 72.

51 Montaigne's *Essays*, 2: 158-61; my emphasis.

52 *Of Wisdome*, Book I, chapter xxxvi, 'Vanitie', 129.

53 In Book III, chapter xiii ('Of Experience'), Montaigne praises the military profession for being 'noble in it's Execution [...] and noble in it's Cause'; Montaigne's *Essays*, 3: 377. Here Montaigne makes a eulogy of virile and active life rather than of the art of war. As Roger Manning explains, 'Montaigne always assumed that he belonged to the sword nobility'; *War and Peace in the Western Political Imagination: From Classical Antiquity to the Age of Reason* (Bloomsbury, 2016), 202.

54 *Of Wisdome*, 218-19; my emphasis.

55 Montaigne writes: 'comme de vrai, la science de nous entre-défaire et entre-tuer, de ruiner et perdre notre propre espèce, il semble qu'elle n'a pas beaucoup de quoi se faire désirer aux bêtes qui ne l'ont pas'; Charron: 'L'action de le perdre [l'homme] & tuër honnorable, & ce qui y sert est glorieux: l'on le dore & enrichit, l'on s'en pare, l'on le porte au costé, en la main, sur les espaules'. Charron picks his 'perdre et tuër' from Montaigne's 'entre-tuer, ruiner et perdre'. Although the hendiadys 'to kill and destroy' was rather common, there is a clear echo in Sterne of the common verbal choices in Montaigne and Charron, reinforced by the English translations by Cotton and Lennard.

56 Robert P. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor: Erasmus, Colet, and Vives on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496-1535* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962); see also Jonathan Lamb, 'Shandeism and the Shame of War', in *Tracing War in British Enlightenment and Romantic Culture*, Neill Ramsey, Gillian Russell, eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 16-36.

57 See *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 2, *The Rape of the Lock*, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (Methuen, 1940), 127, 144. Pope was

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a Catholic follower of Erasmus; Sterne, of course, was a different kind of follower, however he must have appreciated the fact that, as Chester Chapin writes, Erasmus was 'an apostle of moderation, tolerance, charity, and a foe to bigotry, obscurantism, and sectarian animosity'; Chapin, 'Alexander Pope: Erasmian Catholic', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 6: 4 (1973), 424. On the presence of Erasmus in Sterne see Wehrs and Parnell, note 4 above, and Jack Lynch, 'The Relicks of Learning: Sterne among the Renaissance Encyclopedists', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 13: 1 (2000), 1-17.

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