

To Leap First Down into the Trench: *Tristram Shandy's* Critique of the Wounds of War

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Abstract

While scholars have mined Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* to understand the form and development of the novel as a literary genre, a central narrative element that has garnered significant scholarly attention is Tristram's troubled Uncle Toby – a veteran of the Nine Years War who bears a mysterious wound in the groin and who is obsessed with understanding war through the construction and use of miniature battle re-enactments. By recognizing Uncle Toby as a central character of *Tristram Shandy* and by contextualizing the novel as war literature, this essay demonstrates that Uncle Toby's struggles to express his ambiguous trauma suffered as a soldier become a critical commentary on the social structures and circumstances that lead to the experiences of wounded veterans. Situating *Tristram Shandy* in the context of war literature, this article reveals how Toby's character plays on Enlightenment conceptions of honour and valour as motivators for soldiers. Furthermore, the article argues that applying the theory of Moral Injury (long present but largely unnamed in war literature), rather than the tempting diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), allows for a more holistic understanding of Toby's critical commentary.

Keywords: *moral injury, wounds, soldiers, British army, veterans, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*

Uncle Toby's Wound: Physical, Psychological or Spiritual?

Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* is populated by disabled characters: Tristram has his own traumatic birth injury (a crushed nose), caused by Dr. Slop's forceps during delivery and he also bears a disfigurement from a complication of his circumcision. Corporal Trim carries a debilitating battlefield injury to his knee. Uncle Toby's war wound in his groin is a central motif throughout the novel. While Tristram makes explicit the nature of his birth injury, and Corporal Trim's knee injury is also described in straightforward terms, the reader gains little insight into the nature and extent of Uncle Toby's disability from the novel's beginning chapters to its closing, despite continual references to his ambiguous wound at every quintessential Shandian digression and narrative turn.

The bodily, psychological and spiritual recovery from war is no side plot of *Tristram Shandy*. Uncle Toby, who is a veteran of the Nine Years' War and who is obsessed with staging elaborate miniature military events with his companion Trim in order to make sense of the ambiguous wound that he received at the famous Siege of Namur becomes a recurring focus within the apparently erratic form of the novel. Most of Toby's interjections and many of Tristram's digressions deal with war, contributing

substantially to the humorous tone of the novel as the reader gradually begins to anticipate them and comes to understand the familial politics and patterns of the eccentric Shandy men. Yet, however humorous the effect of the Shandy men's obsessions and eccentricities, the reoccurring interjection of war stories into the philosophical discussions of the Shandy men creates a reading experience that is mostly about the topic of war. Practically all subjects that Tristram, William, Dr. Slope or Yourik broach are brought back to wounds, bullets and the methods, moral questions, or beauty of warfare by either Toby or Trim. Toby's character and his family's response to his obsession satirize 18th century Britain's obsession with the narrative of war and its supporting intellectual infrastructure of honour, valour and glory by revealing the moral tension and disappointment of a disabled veteran and his attempts to make sense of his experiences.

While scholars have tended to 'mine' *Tristram Shandy* 'for perspective on the genre of the novel as a whole, and the development of "realism" as the novel's new defining feature,'¹ *Tristram Shandy's* continuous emphasis on Uncle Toby and Trim's traumatic military experiences have recently received increasing scholarly attention as central thematic material of *Tristram Shandy*. In his exploration of Toby's miniature battle scenarios as a cultural precursor to historical re-enactment as a performative genre, Simon During rejects the tempting impetus to apply the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to Toby's troubled condition and ambiguous, multifaceted wound. During instead asserts that Toby's practice works to satirize larger contradictions of the time: those between 'Protestant nationalism and European cosmopolitanism, chastity versus libertinage, social participation versus retirement, marriage (for men) versus bachelorhood, professionalism versus classical ruling-class *otium*, and the contradictions attached to the notion of modern chivalry at the point at which it is just beginning to underpin the gentlemanly ideal.'² During argues that Toby's re-enactments engage more broadly with these contradictions, largely dismissing the commentary that Toby's re-enactments offer on the loss and confusion of personal trauma.

In contrast, in a disability-sensitive reading of *Tristram Shandy*, Anna Sagal positions Toby as 'a disabled veteran suffering from what modern psychology would term post-traumatic stress' while at the same time she acknowledges Toby's character as serving comic and other functions within the novel.³ Sagal applies trauma theory and the concept of PTSD, arguing that Toby's practice is necessitated by the central contradiction, or 'unbridgeable gap' between the experience of pain and the ability to express the pain in language.⁴ One valuable contribution of Sagal's reading is that it refutes those critics who have tended to see Toby's re-enactments as 'nostalgia for days gone by' and, instead, accepts his Hobby-Horse (the staging of elaborate miniature battles which will be discussed later in this article) as the serious artistic communication of a disabled veteran.⁵ However, my criticism of the application of the term PTSD is

¹ Alex Solomon, 'The Novel and the Bowling Green: Toby Shandy's Diagrammatic Realism', *Philological Quarterly* 95.2: (2016): 269.

² Simon During, 'Mimic Toil: Eighteenth-Century Preconditions for the Modern Historical Reenactment', *Rethinking History*, 11.3 (2007): 322.

³ Anna K. Sagal, 'An Hobby-Horse Well Worth Giving a Description of: Disability, Trauma, and Language in *Tristram Shandy*,' in *The Idea of Disability in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Chris Mounsey (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2014), 106.

⁴ Sagal, 111.

⁵ Sagal, 128.

that it does not thoroughly address the ambivalence of his wound, nor does it take into account what Toby philosophizes about the meaning of his own role as a soldier and the function of his Hobby-Horse.

Sterne wrote in a philosophical context of Enlightenment dualisms, where human existence was being parsed out and divided into body and mind. As Ala Alryyes puts it, dualistic thinking popular during the Enlightenment divorced “what passes in our minds” from our living human bodies.⁶ In describing Toby’s character and practice, Tristram declares: ‘Vain science! thou assists us in no case of this kind – and thou puzzlest us in every one.’⁷ Alryyes is critical of the application of psychological terms like ‘trauma, repetition, and compulsion’ to understand Toby’s condition and character, arguing that doing so ‘short-changes the poetics of the novel and glosses over how Sterne’s representation puns on the changing nature of the soul and its science, psychology.’⁸ With this in mind, I suggest that a reading of Toby’s re-enactments and romantic encounter with the widow Wadman that is more grounded in Tristram’s commentary on Toby’s character and Toby’s own commentary about war allows for Toby’s wound to be of the kind that cannot be encompassed by a clinical definition.

In my application of the theory of moral injury, I present Toby’s wound as not merely psychological or physical, both or either, but as a spiritual injury. Toby’s ambiguous wound comments on the contradictory nature and spiritual condition of his world. Furthermore, Toby’s Hobby-Horse works as an artistic ritual practice that represents and allows him to attempt to make sense of the inconsistencies of war from the perspective of a combat veteran. Toby’s primary struggle is to communicate to his family, post-war and back home in the English countryside, the nature and meaning of his injury and war experience. To this end, he turns to eccentric manipulation of miniature war architecture and obsessive study of military terminology. With Uncle Toby’s narrative, artistic expression and ambiguous wound, Sterne articulates several contradictory aspects of warfare and British soldiering during the 18th century and the moral uneasiness between the genial values of English domestic life and the brutality of its emerging warfare state. Uncle Toby must make sense of his physical traumatic experience as much as he does of his experience of being a soldier and the instrument of warfare in the context of the long 18th century.

Toby’s concerns about the techniques, bodily experience and moral implications of war are exemplary and by no means isolated. Uncle Toby’s obsessive descriptions of battles and sieges, as well as his philosophical justifications for and heavy-hearted reflections on the effects of war echo treatises on war published during the mid to late eighteenth century. Given that warfare is a defining context for this novel and a central cultural and technological characteristic of the eighteenth century, Toby becomes not an eccentric character with a strange, personal Hobby-Horse, but, as Alryyes argues, ‘a representative man,’ where Uncle Toby’s ‘war-mindedness only echoes the war-mindedness of European culture and knowledge in the long eighteenth century, where history cannot be separated from accounts of perpetual state wars and where science is intermingled with war science.’⁹ In the same way that Toby’s technological obsession

⁶ Ala Alryyes, ‘Uncle Toby and the Bullet’s Story in Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*’, *ELH* 82.4 (2015): 1127.

⁷ Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy. Gentleman*, eds Melvyn New and Joan New (London: Penguin, 2011): 411. Hereafter cited as *TS*, with page numbers in the text.

⁸ Alryyes, 1119.

⁹ Alryyes, 1100.

with war is exemplary rather than eccentric, his pondering of the moral implications of war is exemplary.

Uncle Toby as the Morally Injured: The Paradox of Soldiering in the 18th Century

Tristram continually paints his Uncle Toby as having a gentle nature, but couples this gentle nature with Toby's fetishistic obsession with the movements, objects and physical characteristics of sieges as elaborately staged violence. Bullets follow trajectories, launched out of firearms in order to kill or wound. And fortifications exist as implements for armies and individual agents to mangle bodies and take lives. His obsession with the implements and actions of war designed to do harm to human bodies complicates his consistent ethic of avoiding unnecessary or unjust harm. Tristram tells us that one incident of Toby revealing his nature left such an impression on him that it is the origin of Tristram's own attitude of general benevolence. Tristram tells us that Toby is surely a man of courage, but 'he was of a peaceful, placid nature,' to the extent that he 'scarce had a heart to retaliate upon a fly' (*TS*, 100). In this remembered incident at the dinner table from Tristram's childhood, Toby is harassed by a buzzing, overgrown fly, and Toby's response is 'I'll not hurt thee...I'll not hurt a hair of they head' and 'go poor Devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? – This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me' (*TS*, 100). Toby does not try to justify hurting such an insignificant, mindless animal; he sees no need to. Killing this fly would be meaningless and purposeless. This haphazard incident distils Toby's entire character for Tristram. He includes it in his narrative as illustrative of Toby's true nature. Yet, Toby is sent to such a bloodbath (the Nine Years' War) based largely on expansionist ideologies and rivalries between European dynasties.

Uncle Toby's contradictions become indicative not of Sterne painting the character of an isolated eccentric but of contradictory views surrounding soldiers and the British Army during the long 18th century. Toby both holds to the ideals of honour and of individual responsibility and is attracted to the destruction, pain and senselessness of the near-global warfare of the 18th century. Toby is so full of honour that he will even take the high road in not hurting an annoying fly, but, as a soldier, he loves war. This paradox reflects civilian tensions surrounding soldiers of the 18th century, where soldiers were simultaneously celebrated as symbols of national pride and honour and treated with suspicion and contempt as brutish, hyper-masculinized lovers of violence.¹⁰ Uncle Toby's status as both excessively emotionally affected, polite and compassionate (honourable) and obsessed by the instruments of war echo the famous conception of soldiers being both the 'scum of the earth' and 'fine fellows.'¹¹

Joshua Daniel, a scholar in ethics and religion, outlines the basic premises of the concept of moral injury, which exists most often in conversations about veterans: 'The basic idea is that, in combat, soldiers harm their own moral capacities by committing or participating in acts that they understand to be morally repugnant,' noting that although the term is relatively new, the concept certainly is not. He explains,

¹⁰ Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, 'Introduction', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815* (Lancaster: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 1.

¹¹ Linch and McCormack, 2.

In other words, 'moral injury' names a phenomenon that the fallout of recent wars has forced in front of us, but which itself is a perennial feature of moral life: all moral agents are vulnerable to committing or participating in acts they affirm to be morally repugnant. If this is true, then we can expect the history of moral thought to include discussions of moral injury, even as the term itself remains unused.¹²

Daniel notes that much of the discussion on moral injury has been in defining it as distinguishable from 'psychological and psychiatric diagnoses.' Contrasting moral injury and PTSD, he explains that both soldiers and the communities that created a set of conditions in which they were sent to war are affected by such a wound, since individuals were asked to/required to participate 'in acts that they understand to be morally repugnant' and they fail to re-enter the larger civilian community after returning home. And, importantly for Uncle Toby, 'moral injury is a violation of one's own moral agreement with one's own inner moral world.'¹³

The moral difficulties faced by British soldiers of the 18th century, although not named as 'moral injury,' lie directly under the surface of war writings published contemporaneously with *Tristram Shandy*. The intellectual and cultural infrastructure of the Enlightenment tied abstract concepts such as honour and valour to the actions of the soldier, although Soldiers were also subject to scrutiny by civilians.¹⁴ One artefact revealing the intellectual infrastructure of Enlightenment England that justified the morality of war which contextualized the publication of *Tristram Shandy* is *Essay on the Art of War*, published in London in 1761.¹⁵ The collection compiles short chapters on many of Uncle Toby's favourite military subjects, targeted in the paratext towards young officers and those new to service:¹⁶ defences, passages and (of course) sieges.

While this work anthologizes essays on such technical aspects of war, the first order of business is to discuss the moral implications of warfare. The starting chapters include sections on honour, valour and the moral questions of warfare, revealing a contradiction similar to the one that Toby laments. While honour is defined in terms of universally-admired actions with undiluted intentions, the reality of war – that it is the agent for direct harm on other human beings, as well as indirect harm on families and communities by proxy – is not a hidden subject but treated upfront. While soldiers with valour act as agents of necessity and do not hurt those who are considered unable to fight back (children, women, old men, etc.), *Essay on the Art of War* notes ample contemporary violations of this code of honour: 'The Civil Wars of England, Germany, France, Savoy, the Netherlands, the Conquests of the Spaniards in America, present us at every instant with Monsters, whom a Man of Honour ought to abhor. We cannot read without Horror the Wars of Hungary in the last Century. What Inhumanities have we not seen committed in our own? In Bavaria in the late War? In Pomerania in the present?'¹⁷ The ideals of valour and honour are just that – ideals, which give way in the midst of war and are quite evidently not upheld by all agents of war to begin with.

The preliminary section titled simply 'Of War' reveals the essential

¹² Joshua Daniel, 'Moral Injury and Recovery in the Shadow of the American Civil War: Roycean Insights and Womanist Corrections', *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 2 (2016): 151.

¹³ Daniel, 154.

¹⁴ Linch and McCormack, 1.

¹⁵ A. Millar, *Essay on the Art of War: In which the General Principles of All the Operations of War in the Field are Fully Explained: The Whole Collected from the Opinions of the Best Authors* (London: A. Millar, 1861).

¹⁶ Millar, vii.

¹⁷ Millar, 4.

characteristic of war, that it is about killing and injuring fellow humans on the field of battle. The text quickly turns to a justification for war, which is portrayed as both utterly unnatural and entirely necessary: '[w]ar, considered in its Effects, is of all human Actions the most terrible and the last natural: To pillage, burn, plunder, abandon all to the Fury of Arms, to strike, kill, massacre Men, our Fellow Creatures, who never did us Harm, what Madness? what Fury? But, however unnatural, however horrible, War is often a necessary Evil, which cannot be avoided.'¹⁸ The central content of war (injuring and killing) 'slips from view,'¹⁹ and the goal of one body being sent to battle to damage another body is quickly glossed by the intellectual infrastructure of 'necessity' and through language that places emphasis on collective action rather than individual action.²⁰ War, the author explains, is not the action of individuals killing other individuals, but the 'action of armies' maintained by sovereigns, with the goal of defending national values, resources and religions. This chapter moves quickly between seeing individual soldiers as agents of war and monarchs and political figures as the actors controlling warfare. Like Uncle Toby, *Essay on the Art of War* acknowledges this essential contradiction – that war is enacted for good, but begets ill – at the forefront of its treatment on war. Uncle Toby celebrates and physically re-enacts war at the same time that he mourns the loss, fear and physical and psychological harm that it begets.

Tristram Shandy exemplifies a similar tension between war as a collective action and war as an action of individual soldiers. When Tristram begins a new book to explain Toby's Hobby-Horse, he talks in broad historical terms about the Siege of Namur. He reminds the reader, 'In case he has read the history of King *William's* wars,' that its actors are 'the *English*' and 'the *Dutch*,' and its settings 'the gate of St. Nicolas' or 'the demi-bastion of St. Roch' (*TS*, 70). The actors are, for the most part, kings, nations and leaders of armies, spread out and moving on maps in sterile, broad strokes. A single army becomes 'a single gigantic weapon.'²¹ This type of abstractive style that veils the existence of the individual human body has long been an idiomatic element of war writing, where war's actors morph into 'a mythology of giants lumbering across rivers and stalking through forests.'²² In contrast, the individual soldier's relationship to war, as well as the essence and ambiguity of moral injury, are suggested in Uncle Toby's eloquent 'Apologetical Oration' in which he explains his reasons for wishing the war to go on longer and relates those reasons to his Hobby-Horse. The oration is framed as describing his reasons for regretting the peace that was achieved with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. In this speech, war begets the beauty of narrative – of the *Iliad* and the sentiment and painful beauty created through the context of war. Here, Toby reveals an irresolvable contradiction. War, in all its misery and destruction, begets beauty. Without the long and nonsensical siege of Troy, readers cannot mourn for Hector, which, to him, is beautiful. For Toby, this belief (or acceptance of such an obvious yet troublesome truth) is to be hidden and revealed only to kin, whose loyalty prevents initial rejection or categorization of this belief as 'evil' or 'bad.' Toby recognizes that his simultaneous attraction to and recognition of the ill of war is nonsensical. Similar to the conception of soldiers as both the agents of justice and scapegoats for powerful

¹⁸ Millar, 6.

¹⁹ Elaine Scarry, 'Injury and the Structure of War', *Representations* 10 (1985): 5.

²⁰ Scarry, 6.

²¹ Scarry, 8.

²² Scarry, 8.

oppressors,²³ Toby's is a contradiction that cannot be resolved.

Toby identifies the traditionally-ascribed meaning of warfare as he continues his oration: an individual soldier is honourable and brave, and the underlying myth is that individuals fight 'from public spirit and a thirst of glory' (*TS*, 415). Soldiers 'march bravely on with drums and trumpets, and colours flying about his ears' (*TS*, 415). From here, his oration takes a sharp turn into melancholia. The illusion of this grandeur of war that he has described is shattered by experience, where excitement morphs into terror and where knowledge of glory is not worth the price that has been paid to gain it. Toby's sharp caveat to his attraction to war is as poignant an encapsulation of the moral disappointment and individual experience of war as any: '—'Tis one thing, I say, brother Shandy, to do this,' or to reflect on the honour of warfare and the bravery of the soldier, '—and 'tis another thing to reflect on the miseries of war;—to view the desolations of whole countries, and consider the intolerable fatigues and hardships which the soldier himself, the instrument who works them, is forced (for sixpence a day, if he can get it) to undergo' (*TS*, 416). And, significantly, the 'instrument' acting in this scenario is neither a bullet, nor a king, or a country, or the designers and builders of fortifications – but the average foot soldier. In the end, he is the one who operates the rifle or cannon and marches to his own death. He is 'forced to undergo' these circumstances that he himself works, becoming both the subject and object of war.

Ascribing a different meaning to this irresolvable contradiction, Toby positions individual soldiers as ministers of necessity. War is certainly an unnatural activity, because (quoting Yorick), 'so soft and gentle a creature, born to love, to mercy, and kindness, as man is, was not shaped for this.' (*TS*, 416) Yet, war is a necessity enacted by those individuals who are 'quiet and harmless people, with their swords in their hands, to keep the ambitious and the turbulent within bounds.' (*TS*, 416) Soldiers come together at specific times and places to do what they need to do for their larger communities: a form of ministry, that is, performing 'An act of ministration, a task or service; a function, role, or office.'²⁴

Toby understands his Hobby-Horse as representative of the necessity and beauty of war. He ends his oration with a justification not for the continuation of war – but by relating the rationale for his Hobby-Horse, saying 'And heaven is my witness, brother Shandy, that the pleasure I have taken in these things,—and that infinite delight, in particular, which has attended my sieges in my bowling-green, has arose within me, and I hope in the corporal too, from the consciousness we both had, that in carrying them on, we were answering the great ends of our creation' (*TS*, 416). He sees his military re-enactments as a part of the 'great end of our creation,' as answering a call to ministry, or the call to take on and carry this role of the soldier as literal role-play and, in turn, use it as a means of healing.

Toby explores the role of a soldier through his Hobby-Horse, which becomes for him a spiritual practice, where spirituality is a 'a search for meaning and significance by contemplation and reflection on the totality of human experiences in relation to the whole world which is experienced and also to the life which is lived and may mature as that search proceeds.'²⁵ Even though the practice began as a way for Toby to revisit a

²³ Linch and McCormack, 1.

²⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides several useful definitions of this word, which is most obviously linked to religious offices, but also connotes agency and instrumentality, where an actor functions to fulfill a role that has been established by an agent beyond themselves.

²⁵ Ronald Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 323.

moment in his own past, it is important to note that Toby's Hobby-Horse develops into a means to organize and represent warfare and the history of a soldier and his role more generally. PTSD-centred theories about the role that the Hobby-Horse plays have difficulty encompassing its evolving nature over the course of the novel. Accepting Toby's loss as ambivalent and contradictory and taking Toby's understanding of his practice into consideration enables a more seamless, evolutionary understanding of Toby and Trim's later practice of 're-enactment' of events that are, for them, currently ongoing. Toby's oration suggests that it is not only about revisiting their own traumatic experiences of war, but also about making sense of, representing and experimenting with the larger geopolitical and technological world and their place in it.

Hobby-Horses (the Shandian vocabulary term Tristram introduces early in the novel to describe and theorize about leisure activities) work in a mysterious way to reflect the nature of their riders. In his explanation on how Hobby-Horses function, Tristram sees the relationship between body and soul as an imperfect but usable metaphor. The language of Hobby-Horses is markedly physical, if not sexual, where 'the heated parts of the rider, which come immediately into contact with the back of the HOBBY-HORSE. —By long journies and much friction, it so happens that the body of the rider is at length fill'd as full of HOBBY-HORSICAL matter as it can hold' (*TS*, 67). While there is a clear distinction created between the rider (a man) and the inanimate object or idea (the Hobby-Horse), the relationship between the two entities (rider and Hobby-Horse) is blurred to the point that distinguishing between action and reaction is impossible.

In anthropologist Mark Auslander's study of African American re-enactment of past traumatic community events (slave auction and lynching re-enactments), he demonstrates a similar collapse of the conventional distinction between subject and object, where actors taking on 'roles' through their interaction with objects allowed participants to establish the mere simulacrum of the event as real.²⁶ Toby and Trim's constructions in the bowling-green may also be described as simulacrums, where the essential elements needed to understand the situations (battles) in question are present and symbolically manipulated. Yet, these simulacrums are functional for Uncle Toby. They fulfil their purpose, despite their evident strangeness. And, as Tristram explains, 'In good truth, my uncle *Toby* mounted him with so much pleasure, and he carried my uncle *Toby* so well, —that he troubled his head very little with what the world either said or thought about it' (*TS*, 68). Toby's Hobby-Horse serves him well as a leisure activity: it allows him to have fun, while also serving a significant cognitive and emotional function.

Alex Solomon situates Toby's re-enactments as not only illuminating Toby's suffering, but also evoking a replacement of 'first-person narrative realism' that, 'for Toby and for writers and readers of novels, obviates the burden of situating local facts within larger events.'²⁷ But the 'facts' that Toby is trying to represent go beyond the nature and origin of his own wound and seem to extend toward a broader understanding of what Toby suggests in his Apologetical Oration. As I have noted above, in that speech, as transcribed by his brother Walter, he presents the role of the soldier as ministerial and necessary and his practice on the bowling-green stems from this understanding. In 'carrying on' these military engagements as mimesis, he has ritualized

²⁶ Mark Auslander, 'Touching the Past: Materializing Time in Traumatic "Living History" Reenactments', *Signs and Society* 1.1 (2013): 163.

²⁷ Solomon, 269-70.

military conflict and the role of the soldier in the context of his domestic world: the garden.

Certainly, the origin of the Hobby-Horse is to bring Uncle Toby relief from his ambiguous wound; in fact, this seems to be the only thing that is able to do so. However, Trim and Toby's practice seems to evolve far beyond the initial need to relieve the psychological pain surrounding the inability to communicate about his wound and into a mimesis of another kind, which comments on the larger world of the characters. As Stuart Sherman notes, Toby and Trim's practice on the bowling-green is foreshadowed by Tristram's commentary, where he warns that the 'Search of Truth' is endless (*TS*, 112). And like Tristram, Toby 'quickly becomes busied and dizzied with infinitudes,' where 'the shift from words to maps is only the first step in a carefully elaborated sequence.'²⁸ While Tristram turns to his narrative, for Toby, 'the micro-reconstruction of a defining autobiographical moment now long past – gradually metamorphoses into something very different,' which eventually leads to re-enactments of not the past conflicts of the Nine Years' War, but 'battles currently passing and to come.'²⁹ While the reader initially is introduced to Toby as a convalescing physically disabled veteran, it quickly becomes evident that his mysterious wound extends far beyond the physical.

These re-enactments of contemporary events rely on information gained not only from study of military tactics, implements and the principles of motion, but also on information sourced from the texts that civilians would read about the country's ongoing military engagements and 'by the accounts my uncle *Toby* received from the daily papers, – they went on, during the whole siege, step by step with the allies' (*TS*, 401). Their practice becomes a way not only to (re)gain access to the past, but also to represent the present. More specifically, to represent the motions, movements, and physical characteristics of these events, transposed into a distinctly domestic setting, or 'betwixt two rows of his cabbages and his cauliflowers' (*TS*, 401).

In the quest to bring order and meaning to the ambiguity and pain of Toby's wound and experience, these re-enactments take on distinct ritualistic aspects. As Ronald Grimes explains, '[w]hether conserving or transforming, rituals model actions into paradigms that wrap ideas and values in a blanket of feeling and multisensory experience.'³⁰ Grimes asserts that this occurs through artistic activity, or, 'the process of imaginative world-making. Whether performative, plastic, literary, visual, or digital, art transforms what *is* into what it *might be*.'³¹ Like any functional Hobby-Horse, these rituals work through imagination, to make real what is not, which is, as Auslander notes, a process through which simulations and ritualistic objects allow for a 'return to the prelinguistic domain of "the real" which is normally closed to us as adults.'³²

After Trim initially and humbly suggests that they improve their mimesis by going 'into the country,' where he would 'work under your Honour's directions like a horse and make fortifications for you something like a tansy,' Toby responds with childlike, pure enthusiasm for the idea (*TS*, 86). He agrees to the plan, with a 'blush as red as scarlet as Trim went on;—but it was not a blush of guilt,—of modesty,—or of

²⁸ Sagal, 112.

²⁹ Stewart Sherman, "'My Contemporaries the Novelists'": Isaac Bickerstaff, Uncle Toby, and the Play of Pulse and Sprawl', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 43.1 (2010): 112.

³⁰ Grimes, 315.

³¹ Grimes, 315.

³² Auslander, 163.

anger,—it was a blush of joy’ (*TS*, 86). Although Trim takes on a distinct secondary role in the relationship that is represented by Sterne as almost mentorship-like, Toby and Trim are of the same mind on this matter. Toby is pleased that his servant appreciates what he is trying to do through these ritualized performances; his specific suggestion to improve the re-enactments here demonstrates that Trim understands their larger goal as artistic representation of warfare.

Trim does not even have to finish the explanation of his suggestions for how to improve the re-enactments before Toby interjects with approval. Toby responds to Trim’s suggestion by cutting him off with ‘thou hast said enough,’ meaning that he is sure that they are of one mind about what the improvements will bring to the Hobby-Horse. Trim continues with the explanation that they can ‘begin the campaign...on the very day that his Majesty and the Allies take the field and demolish ‘em town by town’ (*TS*, 86-7). Toby cuts him off with the command to ‘Say no more’ and an assurance that he understands full well what this means. While this exchange may suggest a kind of annoyance at Trim’s characteristic talkative presentation of these possible details for the improvement of the Hobby-Horse, it reveals Toby’s overwhelming joy at the thought of these possibilities in the country bowling-green. They go out into a place set apart for these ritualistic endeavours to perform their spiritual work of understanding warfare as ‘answering the great ends of our creation,’ but also for the pure joy gained from doing so.³³

Interestingly, Grimes notes that rituals very often beg outsiders to wonder and inquire about the meaning, purpose and motivation behind them. For instance, Sagal even theorizes that Toby’s ritualistic pipe-smoking has a specific, identifiable and even reasonable purpose: it serves as a method of ‘avoidance of confrontation or stressful situations,’ where ‘[t]he recourse to his “social pipe”, too, becomes a method of avoiding conflict and a way of communicating certain emotions through the manipulation of objects – a companion behaviour to his hobby-horse.’³⁴ Yet, as Grimes also comments, answers from practitioners of rituals, when approached by inquirers, are typically along the lines of ‘Because we enjoy it...Because we feel better.’³⁵ While several scholars are now tending to characterize Toby’s condition as akin to post-traumatic stress disorder and his Hobby-Horse as a ritualization of trauma rather than a nostalgic, masculine return to Toby’s glory days as a soldier,³⁶ Uncle Toby and Trim’s re-enactments also serve an obvious comic function in the novel in the context of the near-constant, global warfare involving the British army during the eighteenth century. During this time, soldiers and veterans appeared frequently in literature and developed as both sentimental and comic stock characters to be ridiculed or pitied.³⁷ If Toby and Trim’s re-enactments work as an exaggerated, comical representation of British veterans, they only further demonstrate the tensions surrounding soldiers and the

³³ In this way, the Hobby-Horse serves as a kind of fetish in its Enlightenment context—religion—through which non-Western religions which collapsed the traditional distinction between subject and object (the fetish object) were seen as irrational and primitive (McCallum, 109).

³⁴ Sagal, 118.

³⁵ Grimes, 229.

³⁶ In addition to Sagal’s disability-focused reading of *Tristram Shandy*, Fiona Reid in *Broken Men: Shell Shock, Treatment and Recovery in Britain 1914-30* (London and New York: Continuum: 2010) also points to *Tristram Shandy* as offering an important and serious literary representation of the “old soldier” and suggests his condition is representative of what came to be called ‘neurosis’ or ‘shell shock.’

³⁷ Kate McLoughlin, *Veteran Poetics: British Literature in the Age of Mass Warfare, 1790-2015* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2018), 252.

inability of civilians to understand the needs of disabled serviceman.

Toby and Trim's imaginative world-making resembles ritual, but also play. In their private world of the garden, Toby and Trim arrange objects and implements, physically interacting with them in a way that allows them to 'lose themselves' in the work. In this way, the pain of the injury is relieved. They intently plan for, design and build their fortifications and other features to accomplish their end. They engage in specific, technical processes, such as taking 'the profile of the place, with its works, to determine the depths and slopes of the ditches, –the talus of the glacis, and the precise height of the several banquets, parapets' (*TS*, 400). Toby puts 'the corporal to work' yet the work is immensely enjoyable, so much that 'sweetly went it on' (*TS*, 400). Tristram even provides readers a clue into why this work was so enjoyable and these are as simple and wholesome as bodily interaction with the soil and the kind conversations and shared history between the two men. The work, which evidently spans from dawn to dusk, 'left LABOUR little else but the ceremony of the name' (*TS*, 400).

Scholars of historical re-enactment and leisure studies often refer to this experience of rapture as 'authenticity,' which occurs with bodily and psychological investment in an activity.³⁸ In this way, rituals operate as play, where participants are simultaneously keenly aware that what they are experiencing is, in fact, *not* real and yet, through interaction with objects, they allow the objects to act on them in such a way that they have an emotional response that is 'real' or 'authentic.'³⁹ As Auslander explains, the conception of physical objects as emotionally powerful is 'what structural anthropologists have long termed *structural operators*, allowing for dynamic exchange between the present and the past, and between the living and the dead.'⁴⁰ It is such an experience of authenticity that is valuable to Toby as a method of ministry to his ambivalent wound.

In short, it is no small incident that Tristram's guiding metaphor for the concept of Hobby-Horses involves a child's toy. Quite obviously, imagination and play are central to the practice of Toby and Trim. Helene Molgen, in *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel*, positions the Hobby-Horse as a method of resolving the Shandian 'inherited impotence and lack.'⁴¹

All the hobby-horsical activities of the men-Toby's war games, Walter's theories, Tristram's autobiography, Yorick's wit, Trim's inventions – are forms of play which help the self to assimilate instead of accommodating to the undeniable otherness of the real world. They are transitional practices, in D. W. Winnicott's sense, which allow inner and outer realities to be maintained as separate yet interrelated.⁴²

Molgen's reading of the Hobby-Horse as play incorporates fetishism to describe its function, but relies on a more traditional (male-centered or lack-centered) arrangement

³⁸ See Stephen Gapps, 'Mobile Monuments: A View of Historical Reenactment and Authenticity from inside the Costume Cupboard of History', *Rethinking History* 13.3 (2009): 395-409.

³⁹ For an extensive discussion of the concept of authenticity in historical reenactment, see Richard Handler and William Saxton's seminal article on the performative function of the genre, 'Dyssimulation: Reflexivity, Narrative, and the Quest for Authenticity in "Living History"', *Cultural Anthropology* 3 (1988): 242-60.

⁴⁰ Auslander, 162.

⁴¹ Helene Molgen, '(W)holes and Noses: The Indeterminacies of Tristram Shandy,' in *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press: 2001), 62.

⁴² Molgen, 58.

of the essential tenets of fetishism, where ‘An imitation horse’s head mounted on a stick that fits between its rider’s legs, the Hobby-Horse enables children’s mimicry of power...A fetish object, the Hobby-Horse disguises and discloses the fear if not the actuality of castration.’⁴³ However, Molgen’s ordering of the subject-object relationship centres around characters manipulating the objects, not the blurred type of relationship between Hobby-Horse and rider that Tristram establishes and is reflected in Toby’s practice.

In her discussion of the functionality of fetishism, Ellen McCallum notes that such a blurring of the subject and object relationship was taken as a sign of irrationality during the Enlightenment.⁴⁴ McCallum asserts that ‘fetishism inappropriately bridges the gap between subjects and objects by disregarding the injunction that relations to objects should be rational and unclouded by emotion while only relations to subjects can be passionate or loving.’⁴⁵ As such, it works to critique the concept of ‘reason,’ because it ‘contaminates knowledge with belief, dispassion with desire, defiling philosophy’s epistemological ideals...more than a deviant form of desire – it is a deviant form of knowledge.’⁴⁶ Despite his family’s negative reaction to his re-enactments, which are framed as a departure from ‘cool reason and fair discretion’ (*TS*, 83), they function to bring relief to Toby. The Hobby-Horse, Tristram tells us, is (almost) sexual, since ‘Never did lover post down to a beloved mistress with more heat and expectation, than my uncle *Toby* did, to enjoy this self-same thing in private’ (*TS*, 88). In an effort to make sense of and minister to his multi-faceted disabilities, Toby turns away from reason and to the realm of ritual and artistic expression through his Hobby-Horse. Certainly, such a function (blurring the lines between subject and object, or producing an alternative form of knowledge through imaginative, child-like ‘play’) is the means through which Toby finds relief, even though he cannot resolve the contradiction of his beliefs and experiences, but only minister to them, memorialize them and ritualize them.

The Pain of Misunderstanding

One key element of moral injury is the struggle of the soldier to be understood by those who were safe at home when the circumstances for the injury occurred. Toby’s philosophy-minded brother Walter (who, we learn early on in novel, was safe in London while Toby was away at war) echoes, or warps, elements of the Apologetical Oration near the close of the novel, where he opines: ‘—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—We gild them—We carve them—We in-lay them—We enrich them—Nay, if it be but a scoundrel cannon, we cast an ornament upon the breach of It.—’ (*TS*, 587) These comical lines suggest that Walter is trying to understand what his brother has been telling him, but he cannot quite do so. He repeatedly fails to understand or even demonstrate respect for his brother’s Hobby-Horse throughout the novel.⁴⁷ Walter has the right characters and agents – the foot

⁴³ Molgen, 59.

⁴⁴ Ellen McCallum, ‘The Language of Loss’, in *Object Lessons: How to Do Things with Fetishism*. (Albany: State University of New York Press: 1999), 109.

⁴⁵ McCallum, 109.

⁴⁶ McCallum, 109.

⁴⁷ Tristram continually reminds his readers that the bizarre nature of the Hobby-Horse is a kind of embarrassment or contention between his uncle and father: ‘My father, as you have observed, had no

soldiers and firearms of Toby's own orations – but the wrong arrangements of ideas. Walter fails to grasp the essential ambivalence that Toby is grappling with and his psychological need to make sense of his experience as a soldier.

It is clear that Walter does not quite understand what Toby is trying to explain about his Hobby-Horse. As Daniel notes in his discussion of Moral Injury and womanist strategies for societal recovery from such injuries: 'some evil can only be endured, not triumphed over, and so demands a ministerial form of response. Moral injury is such an evil.'⁴⁸ Whatever this evil that makes war a 'necessity' to be executed by soldiers cannot be eliminated, only ministered to. Toby's Hobby-Horse is a continual practice that allows him to endure and bring relief to his injuries, not cure or eliminate them. Toby's physical disability is certainly ambivalent; and the nature of his psychological disability is equally hard to put into words. However, what is clear is that there is a significant lack of communication and understanding between Toby and Walter and also a marked ambivalence on Toby's part about how he feels about warfare and the role of a soldier within his larger world and within the larger narrative of war.

Tristram's plans to write what readers anticipate as early as the third volume (his Uncle Toby's amours) finally culminate in the last two volumes, which relate, in a fairly straightforward manner, Uncle Toby's short courtship with the widow who lives next door to his estate. From the opening chapters that slowly piece together Toby's character and experience, his long convalescence as a wounded veteran, the origins of his hobby of creating miniature battles in his backyard garden and Tristram's continuous hints that the amours of Toby and the widow Wadman will be the best part of the novel prime the reader to pay special attention to the ambiguity of Toby's wound.

The purposeful ambiguity of Toby's wound to the groin draws continual attention to the *cause* of his disability. His mission throughout the novel is to represent and communicate the exact geographical location where he received the wound and spatially and mathematically understand the circumstances that led to it. But the larger circumstances that led to his wound and possible disability take place at the intersection of his identity as an honourable soldier of the British Army and the development of the art of war in the long 18th century. The doubt and contradiction surrounding Uncle Toby's wound are the subject of the last two chapters of the novel centring around Toby's amours with the widow Wadman, which Tristram labels as the kind of *chef-d'oeuvre* of his narrative several chapters before presenting it to his readers and critics.

The widow Wadman's attraction to Toby as a soldier and as a potential marriage partner comically mimics the phenomenon of 'Scarlet Fever,' or the preference of British women for military men.⁴⁹ Aside from the attraction of women to the stunning scarlet uniforms of British soldiers, military activity in a domestic setting brought excitement to 18th century women's otherwise quiet lives. As Carter notes,

Having large numbers of men quartered throughout the nation, who hosted and attended balls in their glittering ball-uniforms, engaged in mock battles, strode about the parade ground or marched through the streets with the boom of the military drum literally reverberating through the bodies of spectators, all brought novelty, diversion, gossip, spectacle and the possibility of a romantic adventure or flirtatious fantasy into women's

great esteem for my uncle Toby's obby-horse; he thought it the most ridiculous horse that ever gentleman mounted' (*TS*, 189).

⁴⁸ Daniel, 152.

⁴⁹ Louise Carter, 'Female Enthusiasm for Men in Uniform, 1780-1815' in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815* (Lancaster: Liverpool University Press, 2014): 156.

lives.⁵⁰

Women were portrayed as appreciating and seeking out military drills as sexualized spectacles and were also seen as willing participants and instigators of sexual liaisons with visiting soldiers rather than simply being seduced by more sexually experienced soldiers.⁵¹ Thus, the widow Wadman's amorous attack and attraction to observing Toby and Trim's miniature military enactments in the garden comically mimic 'scarlet fever.' Tristram observes that the widow is pleased that she 'could observe my uncle *Toby's* motions, and was mistress likewise of his councils of war' (*TS*, 501-2). The widow and her servant Bridget plot to increase communication and encounters between themselves and the two soldiers.

In addition to satirizing the phenomenon of 'scarlet fever,' Toby's much-anticipated amours with the widow Wadman draw further attention to the ambiguity of Uncle Toby's wound and the multi-faceted experiences of a disabled veteran of the British army. The reader is left to wonder to what extent his disability is manifest physically and to what extent it is manifest as psychological. The widow seems more concerned with Toby's physical disability than his psychological disability or moral recovery from his experience of war, even though these less 'visible' disabilities have a greater impact on Toby's actions throughout the novel, as manifest in his obsession with reconstructing and representing the narrative of war. Uncle Toby's status as a potential mate for the widow Wadman is complicated not only by the question of his physical disability, but also his psychological disability and subsequent obsession with making sense of his war experiences.

The story of Toby's amours with the widow Wadman are obscene in the most basic sense; the words on the page prompt the reader to continually imagine the character's genitals and picture both whole and disabled penises, as the widow Wadman does. The widow Wadman's obsessive quest to uncover the extent of damage done to Toby's groin and the nature of the injury is ultimately disappointed. Her servant, Bridget, finds out from Col. Trim that the wound is not as severe as it was rumoured to be: '—Upon my honour, said the corporal, laying his hand upon his heart and blushing, as he spoke, with honest resentment—'tis a story, Mrs. *Bridget*, as false as hell' (*TS*, 581). As Toby begins to fall in love with the widow, citing her great care and 'tender inquiries after my sufferings' (*TS*, 584), Trim must dutifully inform Uncle Toby that the widow has been inquiring about the place on his body where the wound is located, rather than the place on the ground, or the exact geographical location at the Siege of Namur where the damage was done and where his experience of war culminated in a bodily wound. After Trim informs Toby that the widow's interest stems only from her curiosity about his sexual ability, the joke is ultimately on the widow, because Toby no longer wants to marry her after discovering her obsession with his genitals.

Toby's revelation that the widow Wadman is not interested in his story so much as his sexual function comes as a shock to him, and he is left speechless. His response is a long, quiet whistle, and the gentle placement of his pipe near the fireplace, 'as if it had been spun from the unravelings of a spider's web—' (*TS*, 585). The pain born of this communicative failure between Toby and the widow Wadman adds to the theme of failed communication that has characterized Toby's relationship with his brother William throughout the novel. Toby's confusion is not only in the widow Wadman's

⁵⁰ Carter, 161.

⁵¹ Carter, 167-8.

sex-obsessed, fetishizing of Toby's military masculinity and status as a potential marriage partner, but also that he entrusted her with his war narrative that he treats as the definitive moment of his life, yet she did not grasp its importance. What he wanted to communicate about himself is rejected by her *in lieu* of seeking information about his physical condition. Toby has been trying to make sense of his experience of war for years and through various means throughout the novel and finally he believes he has secured a confidant – a woman – and hopes to share this experience with her, however fractured and hard to understand it is. But the widow Wadman is not genuinely interested in his narrative at all; her concerns are merely domestic and contractual and also resonate with contemporary disability studies conversations about the perception of disabled men as impotent, unsuitable as sexual partners.⁵² His psychological disability and the reason behind his obsession with the narrative of war remain hidden for the widow Wadman. For her, the disability that is concerning is physical in nature and can be overtly identified as posing a problem, or not, for a potential marriage. The widow Wadman's blunt approach to Toby's disability as being merely physical in nature undermines the multifaceted, hidden nature of Toby's disability and further critiques the tendency of civilians to misunderstand the needs and experiences of combat veterans.

Ultimately, while Trim informs the widow Wadman that Toby's physical disability is not so severe as she and Bridget had feared and would not be a hindrance to his technical sexual performance, it is clear that the damage to Toby's moral and psychological life is still smarting. While the extent of his physical disability is the central concern for the widow Wadman, Toby's intense need and inability to understand and communicate the circumstances of his wound and the definitive traumatic moment in which he received it ultimately affect his sexual and marital statuses more significantly than his physical wound. In short, Toby's amours with the widow Wadman reveal how holistically tied Toby's physical and psychological disabilities are. Although communicating how and where he received his groin injury at the Siege of Namur is the external motivator for Toby's intensive communications with the widow Wadman, given the context of Toby's artistic and philosophical exploration of war throughout *Tristram Shandy*, his need to communicate with her exposes his continued debilitating moral and psychological condition.

Uncle Toby's Wounds and The Soldier's Tale

Uncle Toby's physical wound and moral injury combat the spirit of science that made its way into 18th century views on warfare as well as its techniques.⁵³ Many scholars have pointed to Toby's un-linguistic or pre-linguistic turn as a methodology to understand his experiences. In contrast to published technical, hypothetical, theoretical and geometrical approaches to war that Toby refers to while recovering from his wound, Toby and especially Trim, turn more prominently to trying to dissect war as a narrative. Toby and Trim verbally tell their war stories as much as they physically and spatially try to represent their experiences. Toby's Apologetical Oration, in particular, accentuates the attraction to war in terms of story and epic, representing a turn away from science and precision and into the realm of the qualitative, of art and human

⁵² Ronald J. Berger, *Introducing Disability Studies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers: 2013), 30.

⁵³ Anders Engberg-Pederson, 'The Refraction of Geometry: *Tristram Shandy* and the Poetics of War, 1700-1800', *Representations* 123.1 (2013): 23-52.

expression. The Apologetical Oration stands out as one of the most straightforward sections of the novel, although his view on war is notoriously ambiguous and almost entirely avoids technical language and instead turns to literary references about war. Toby reveals the appeal of war as adventure and narrative and also the subsequent sorrow or even anti-climax reached when real knowledge of war is gained. This paradox is a recurring theme in war literature⁵⁴ and this is the issue at the heart of Toby's pain and confusion about his experiences.

While scholars have pointed to a number of contradictions that are evoked and emphasized both by the form that Tristram's narrative takes and by Toby's hobby, Solomon centralizes 'the fraught mediation between event and representation,'⁵⁵ meaning that the problem of language is what Toby and Tristram ultimately share, making Toby's Hobby-Horse akin to the narrative form used by Sterne. Furthermore, both Toby and Tristram try to place and understand the individual in their context and history. Perhaps this is why Tristram writes a book about himself that is really about his family and why Toby attempts to understand his wound through the larger structures and implements of war.

Certainly, '[t]he history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain of it' (*TS*, 69). Telling the story of his wound brings relief to Uncle Toby only to the extent that his story is understood and taken seriously by those to whom he tells his story. *Tristram Shandy* continually forces the reader to doubt the nature of Toby's wound--and if there really was a loss at all. As Sagal explains, 'the reader can neither know nor acknowledge Toby's pain... the exact nature of Toby's injury remains a much speculated-about mystery: an ambiguity that only points to Sterne's deliberate embodiment of Toby's disability as traumatic and life-altering.'⁵⁶ However, given that warfare is such a defining context for this novel and a central cultural and technological characteristic of the eighteenth century, Toby becomes not an eccentric character with a strange, personal Hobby-Horse, but, as also Alryyes argues, 'a representative man.'⁵⁷ Toby's world is one where the soldier bears much of the weight of the injury and the knowledge of the 'truth' about warfare, but a lack of understanding of the nature and extent of its wounds is clearly shared by all.

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⁵⁴ David Wood, *Perspectives in Military History Lecture: "What Have We Done? The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars*, Lecture, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, 18 April 2018, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

⁵⁵ Solomon, 273.

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A sări înaintea tuturor în tranșee. Critica din romanul *Tristram Shandy* referitoare la rănille provocate de război

Rezumat

Romanul lui Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, a fost abordat de majoritatea criticilor literari în încercarea de a înțelege dezvoltarea romanului ca gen literar, însă un element central al narațiunii lui Sterne care a reprezentat un punct de atracție pentru cercetători a fost și personajul

controversat, Unchiul Toby – veteran al Războiului de Nouă Ani care are o rană misterioasă în zona inghinală și care e obsedat de înțelegerea războiului prin construirea și utilizarea unor miniaturi pentru a reconstitui scene de război. Admițând faptul că Unchiul Toby este un personaj central în *Tristram Shandy* și punând romanul în contextul literaturii de război, acest articol demonstrează că străduința Unchiului Toby de a-și exprima trauma sa de veteran de război, greu de definit, devine un comentariu critic asupra structurilor sociale și a circumstanțelor care au provocat experiențele traumatice ale veteranilor răniți. Situând *Tristram Shandy* în contextul literaturii de război, articolul revelează cum personajul Toby folosește conceptele de onoare și de valoare din Iluminism ca factori motivați. Mai mult, articolul argumentează că aplicarea teoriei rănilor morale (atât de prezentă, dar în mare parte nenumită în literatura de război) în defavoarea aplicării diagnosticului de sindrom post-traumatic ne permite să înțelegem mai bine comentariul critic al Unchiului Toby.