

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND THE RISE OF  
TRAVEL LITERATURE

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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SAMUEL JOHNSON  
AND THE RISE OF TRAVEL LITERATURE

by

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## Preface

The Highlands are but little known even to the inhabitants of the low country of Scotland, for they have ever dreaded the difficulties and dangers of travelling among the mountains; and when some extraordinary occasion has obliged any one of them to such a progress, he has, generally speaking, made his testament before he set out, as though he were entering upon a long and dangerous sea voyage, wherein it was very doubtful if he should ever return.

Edmund Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland* (1754)<sup>1</sup>

Johnson was no ordinary traveller to Scotland. At sixty-three years of age and plagued by ill-health, he was travelling in a country known for its harsh terrain during an unfavourable season. Yet, although he was often ambivalent toward travelling, Johnson took particular interest in visiting Scotland. So, on 18 August 1773, along with James Boswell, he set out from Edinburgh on a tour of the Western Islands of Scotland that would involve travelling more than eight hundred miles in eighty-three days.

Johnson was part of the geographical exploration of the era, for in the same year he went to Scotland, Cook crossed the Arctic Circle, Constantine

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burt, *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland*, 2 vols., 1754, rpt., (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1974), I, pp. 4-5



Phipps sailed for the North Pole and James Bruce returned from Abyssinia. He knew that there was no comparison between his trip and the great voyages and explorations that were taking place and became quite embarrassed when friends praised his journey. " 'I am really ashamed of the congratulations which we receive,' " he said. " 'We are addressed as if we had made a voyage to Nova Zembla, and suffered five persecutions in Japan.' " <sup>2</sup>

Yet, there was a sense of adventure in going to Scotland. Conditions in some areas were at times primitive, and Scotland was viewed by many Englishmen and those on the continent as wild and uncivilized. Boswell wrote that when he mentioned the proposed trip to Voltaire, the latter looked at him as if "I had talked of going to the North Pole." <sup>3</sup> Fearing highwaymen, Johnson even brought pistols, gunpowder and bullets on the trip, but Boswell persuaded him to leave them in Edinburgh. Johnson himself had a prejudiced attitude toward Scotland, and Boswell defended this prejudice, arguing that it was against all nations, the Hebrides being no exception, and he wrote,

The truth is, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, he allowed himself to look upon all nations but his own as barbarians: not only Hibernia, and Scotland, but Spain, Italy, and France are attacked in the same poem ["London"]. . . . If he was particularly prejudiced against the Scots, it was because they were more in his way; because he thought their success in England rather exceeded the due proportion of their real merit; and because he could not but see in them that nationality which

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<sup>2</sup> *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell, 2nd ed., 6 vols., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), V, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, V, p. 14.

I believe no liberal-minded Scotsman will deny. He was indeed. . . much of a blunt *true-born Englishman*.<sup>4</sup>

But by the end of his journey, Johnson had changed his opinion of the Scottish people. He had witnessed everyday life in the Hebrides and now had a sense of understanding of the Highland character and way of life.

Scotland was a recurring part of Johnson's consciousness both before and after the trip: five of the six men who had worked on his dictionary were Scottish; he enjoyed making anti-Scots remarks for argument's sake; his best friend and disciple, Boswell, was Scottish; he had worked on proofs of Lord Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*; he had tried to get young Macaulay into Oxford, and had forwarded Gaelic books to the Bodleian. Johnson was also familiar with Scotland through literature. He had read Martin Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1703) as a child and was "much pleased with it,"<sup>5</sup> and while in Scotland he investigated many of Martin's subjects—second sight, the Scottish economy, antiquities, trees, education, and architecture. He had read Sacheverell while on the Isle of Man; Thomas Pennant, the traveller and topographical writer, who had published two books on Scotland (1771 and 1774); and probably Gray—whom he thought highly of as a travel writer—who had visited Scotland in 1765. Johnson was also probably familiar with watercolours of Paul Sandby, the founding father of English topographic painting.

Johnson was eager to write an account of his journey, to share his experiences and what he had learned in Scotland, and he knew that it was

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<sup>4</sup> *Life*, V, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, I, p. 450.

expected of him. There had been a great deal of curiosity over his trip, with much speculation and rumour—it was even reported that he had drowned travelling from the mainland to Skye—and there was Johnson's own belief that he had to share what he had learned on his trip. *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, printed just a year after his trip, was sent to the printer in pieces, not allowing for revisions of detail or thought, although he did stop the press twice to make changes regarding the English clergy and to add an elegy to young Col, whom he had met in Scotland. In the *Journey* he used details to aid those who could not see and experience for themselves and followed with generalizations and judgements. His experiences were fully thought out and his descriptions follow a logical sequence. Travel—especially his trip to a strange land—opened up a whole new experience for Johnson and provided him with valuable insight into human morals and customs.

In the first chapter of this thesis I have set up a social background to the eighteenth century in order to provide an understanding of what was happening in travel and exploration in Johnson's day. I have then attempted to establish a list of criteria used by reviewers in judging a travel book, based on the journals of the day, particularly the *Critical Review* and *Monthly Review*, to look at Johnson's concept of what a travel book should include, based on his own works, and to then look at his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* to see whether he followed the reviewers' criteria or his own ideas as established in his works or whether he left all of that behind when he went to Scotland and wrote for himself.

I have received a great deal of help from many people, from those who lent me books, to the staff at Memorial University Library, to those who

provided support, particularly my parents. The subject of travel literature was brought to my attention while visiting Scotland and I thank my good friend Kim for playing Boswell to my Johnson. I would also like to thank Dr. Ronald Rompkey for his supervision and numerous suggestions for improvement, for his prodding phone calls and letters throughout the years, and for making himself available to me at all times.

PJE

Halifax, Nova Scotia

August, 1994

## Chapter One

### Social Context

One of the most distinguishing features in the literary history of our age and country, is the passion of the public for voyages and travels.

*Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz  
in England in 1782.<sup>1</sup>*

Samuel Johnson lived in an age of exploration and discovery that was marked by inquiry into every part of the world as the British empire expanded. This geographical revolution and interest in travel had an immediate and immense impact on the literature of the day, from travel journals to excursion poems and prose fiction. Johnson's writings, his activities, and his friendships with travellers are all a reflection of this inquisitive age, just as his interest in travel is representative of eighteenth-century England's interest in voyages and travel.

Growing up in such a wondrous age of exploration and expansion, Samuel Johnson would naturally have shared this interest in travelling and have highly valued travel literature. Preoccupied with the study of mankind throughout his literary career, he was invigorated and stimulated by travel

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<sup>1</sup> *Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782* (1795), (London: H. Milford, 1924), "Preface by the Editor," p. 2.



because it provided him with new information on men and manners, which he used to supplement his views in drawing conclusions about mankind in general. Travel allowed for knowledge through the acquisition of new images and experiences, which added to the intellect and imagination. Like his character Omar, in *Idler* 101, he "wished to see distant countries, [and] listened with rapture to the relations of travellers" so that he "might feast [his] soul with novelty."<sup>2</sup> This interest in travel and the study of the manners and beliefs of foreign countries started when he read Martin's *Description of the Hebrides* in his father's bookstore at an early age and would continue throughout his career. It should be noted that although he loved travel and geography, he was forced to stay at home because of financial problems until he received a pension of £300 in 1762 that set him free from having to do literary hackwork. He made up for this lack of travelling by keeping abreast of travel related events and activities through his acquaintances, many of whom were travellers, and through reading.

A follower of Locke and his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Johnson held that travel had moral, therapeutic and intellectual significance, and viewed man as a free agent of empirical discovery. Locke believed that travelling stimulated the body and the mind and thus man was to be constantly moving in pursuit of knowledge, happiness, peace of mind, excitement and purpose of living. Johnson advocated this Lockean principle in *Rambler* 103, writing, "Every advance into knowledge opens new prospects,

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Idler and The Adventurer*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, eds. W.J. Bate, J.M. Bullitt, & L.F. Powell, (New Haven & London: Yale U. P., 1963), II, p. 311.

and produces new incitements to farther progress," which was in tune with the inquisitive nature of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Travelling was not some idle indulgence for Johnson but a source of learning and knowledge. Journeys provided him with the opportunity of examining human nature under various conditions, and allowed him to experience the actual process of travelling, which he enjoyed. He frequently talked of his life in terms of travel, referring to himself as a "kind of ship with a wide sail, and without an anchor," and remarked to Boswell, "If I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman." "But," he added, " she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation."<sup>4</sup> Such conversation would, no doubt, revolve around the manners and customs of those amongst whom he was travelling.

Travel also uplifted Johnson's spirits, keeping his mind from idleness

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, eds. W.J. Bate & A.B. Strauss, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P., 1969), IV, p. 184. In the "Epistle to the Reader" of his *Essay*, Locke wrote, "every step the mind takes in its progress toward knowledge makes some discovery, which is not only new, but the best too, for the time at least." *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, in *The Works of John Locke*, 10 vols., 1823, rpt., (Germany: Scientia Verlagsgaalen, 1963), I, p. xlv. Johnson and Locke valued the importance of facts and experience but Locke looked at the mind in a scientific nature whereas Johnson's view was moralistic, and both rejected the doctrine of innate ideas, stressing instead the importance of the social environment in molding opinions and conduct.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to John Taylor, rector of Ashbourne in Derbyshire, where Johnson frequently visited him, he wrote, "Is not mine a kind of life turned upside down? Fixed to a spot when I was young, and roving the world when others are contriving to sit still, I am wholly unsettled. I am a kind of ship with a wide sail, and without an anchor." *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. R.W. Chapman, 3 vols., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), II, p. 440; *Life*, III, p. 162.

that led to melancholy, which he suffered from. Improvements in transportation during this time allowed the public to travel freely and Johnson himself travelled throughout Britain, making frequent trips, or "annual rambles," into the middle counties of Oxford, Lichfield, Ashbourne, and Birmingham (See appendix A). His longer sojourns included visits to Scotland in 1773 with Boswell, and to the northern counties of Wales in 1774 and France in 1775 with the Thrales.

Both Boswell and Mrs. Thrale repeatedly noted his fondness for travelling. Boswell tells us that "He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it."<sup>5</sup> In her anecdotes, Mrs. Thrale relates how "he wished to travel all over the world; for the very act of going forward was delightful to him."<sup>6</sup> While at Oxford, Johnson was overheard saying, "I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go and visit the Universities abroad. I'll go to France and Italy. I'll go to Padua."<sup>7</sup> There were also numerous occasions when he expressed his desire to travel to places such as the Netherlands, Iceland, the Baltic, to accompany Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific, China, Poland, India, Cairo, Africa, and especially Italy, of which he wrote,

A man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The

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<sup>5</sup> *Life*, III, p. 269.

<sup>6</sup> Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1932), p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, I, p. 73.

grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> In 1776 a planned trip to Italy with the Thrales was cancelled because of the death of their son Harry. Johnson had hoped that the trip would still be made at a later date but it never happened. He had always longed to see Italy, studied its literature and had several Italian friends, including Giuseppe Baretti and Francesco Sastres.

India was of great political importance to the British empire at this time and Johnson kept himself familiar with the events taking place there. He had read colonial histories of India, his circle of acquaintances would have brought him into contact with those associated with India, and he was friends with Warren Hastings (1732-1818), the first governor general of India, and with Robert Orme (1728-1801), historiographer to the East India Company for over thirty years, and John Hoole (1727-1803), auditor with the East India House. He would have read their respective accounts of India, *Military Transactions of the British Nation in Hindustan* (1763-1778) and *The Present State of the East India Company's Affairs* (1772). He also knew Sir Eyre Coote (1726-83), empire builder and general who is remembered mainly for his service in India, and dined with him while in the Highlands.<sup>9</sup>

There was also a keen interest in China at this time that Johnson would have shared. He had reviewed Jean Baptiste Du Halde's *Description of*

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<sup>8</sup> *Life*, III, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> At Fort George, Johnson and Boswell were entertained by Coote "with such elegance of conversation as left us no attention to the delicacies of his table." *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Mary Lascelles, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P., 1971), IX, p. 26; hereafter cited as *Journey*.

*the Empire of China* for the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1742), had edited his friend William Chambers' *Designs of Chinese Building* (1757). And in *Rasselas*, he has Imlac praise the wall of China as one of man's greatest works.<sup>10</sup>

Johnson's many trips, particularly his trip to Scotland, attest to this interest in travelling. He took exceptional delight in visiting Scotland and repeatedly expressed his delight in roving among the Hebrides. In letters to Boswell in 1777 he wrote, "Our ramble in the islands hangs upon my imagination," and "If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean Journey."<sup>11</sup> In the same year Boswell remarked how he and Johnson "frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides; for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind." Johnson had once told him that "the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made."<sup>12</sup> In other letters to Boswell, Johnson asked, "Shall we ever have another frolick like our journey to the Hebrides?" and as late as 1783 he wrote, "I got an acquisition of more ideas by it than by anything I remember. I saw quite a different system of life."<sup>13</sup> The trip to Scotland left a

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<sup>10</sup> After examining the pyramids, "We have now," said Imlac, "gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China." *Rasselas and Other Tales*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Gwin J. Kolb, (New Haven & London: Yale U. P., 1990), XVI, p. 117; hereafter cited as *Rasselas*.

<sup>11</sup> *Letters*, II, p. 184; p. 199

<sup>12</sup> *Life*, III, p. 196; *Letters*, II, p. 153.

<sup>13</sup> *Letters*, II, p. 456; *Life* IV, p. 199.



most memorable and favourable impression upon his mind.

That Johnson's interest in and knowledge of travel manifested itself in his writings is no exception. Because of this attraction to and intrigue with anything foreign, Boswell tells us that the publisher Newbery found no great difficulty in persuading Johnson to write the introduction to *The World Displayed* (1759), a collection of voyages and travels. For this introduction, Johnson called on his geographical knowledge in summarizing exploration and navigation up to 1492. The advertisement announcing the first volume of this work, also attributed to Johnson, read,

Curiosity is seldom so powerfully excited, or so amply gratified, as by faithful Relations of Voyages and Travels. The different Appearances of Nature, and the various Customs of Men, the gradual Discovery of the World, and the Accidents and Hardships of a naval Life, all concur to fill the Mind with expectation and with Wonder. . . the History of a Voyage may be considered as the most useful Treatise on Geography; since the Student follows the Traveller from Country to Country, and retains the Situation of Places by recounting his Adventures.<sup>14</sup>

For the *Gentleman's Magazine* Johnson edited the "Foreign History" section and contributed such articles as the biographies of Francis Drake and Robert Blake (1740), and a "Dissertation of the Amazons" (1741). His *Account of an Attempt to Ascertain the Longitude at Sea* (1755) documented Zachariah Williams' successive failures to gain support for his findings, while his surveys of modern navigation, *Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain* and *Observations on the State of Affairs* (1756), together constituted a miniature history of exploration and colonization. In 1771 he wrote *Thoughts on the late*

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<sup>14</sup> *The World Displayed* in *Samuel Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications*, ed. Allen Tracy Hazen, (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1937), p. 217; Hereafter cited as *Prefaces and Dedications*.

*Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, which attacked European piracy in the South Seas. To acquaint himself with the subject he had read all the official accounts of the voyages edited by John Hawkesworth and John Douglas. All of these works reaffirm Johnson's views and interest in geography and travel literature. Many of his other writings, besides those directly related to travel, depended upon travel books, such as the *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*. Johnson also planned on writing a *Collection of Travels, Voyages, Adventures, and Descriptions* and translating Benzo's *New History of the New World*, Machiavelli's *History of Florence*, and a *Geographical Dictionary* from the French.

Travel books enjoyed an immense popularity during this inquisitive and golden age of travel because they stimulated a desire to learn and brought a new awareness of the globe. They allowed stay-at-home travellers to broaden their minds and knowledge of the world by visiting well-known places and taking part in the discovery and exploration of new lands. In Johnson's opinion, mankind was always eager to learn of "the sentiments, manners, and condition of the rest," and turned to travel books, regarded by the reading public as the modern substitute for medieval romances, in order to gratify this desire for knowledge. He reiterated this opinion in *Rambler* 103, writing that travel "enlarged" the mind and allowed for an "acquisition of dignity of character," while feeding curiosity, one of "the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect."<sup>15</sup>

Johnson supplemented his interest in travel with reading travel books, a favourite pastime and a serious intellectual pursuit that encompassed

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<sup>15</sup> *Rambler*, IV, p. 184.

geography, a subject he held essential to learning. In the preface to *The Preceptor*, he stressed the necessity of including geography in education, and for Alexander Macbean's *Dictionary of Ancient Geography* (1773), he reiterated this need:

The necessity of Geography to historical, political, and commercial knowledge, has been proved too often to be proved again. The curiosity of this nation is sufficiently awakened, and no books are more eagerly received than those which enlarge or facilitate an acquaintance with distant countries. <sup>16</sup>

Travel accounts documented human experience from around the world, provided a true portrait of human life, served the higher ends of morality and theology, incorporated his love of geography, entertainment and knowledge, and fed his curiosity.

An examination of the various catalogues of his library shows that travel books formed a major part of it. (See appendix B) Boswell has informed us that Johnson was "very intent upon ancient geography" and that he had a copy of *Pomponius Mela de situ Orbis*, which he read occasionally. He was particularly intrigued by the northern region of Europe and the Arctic, especially Greenland, having read Hans Egede's *Description of Greenland* (1745) and David Cranz's *History of Greenland* (1767), which chronicled the progress of Christianity there, and applied this research and knowledge of northern geography when he wrote of Greenland in *Ramblers* 186 and 187. Other travel books that he would have read or been familiar with included Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, Pennant's *Tour on Scotland*, Lord Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*, Twiss' *Travels through Portugal and*

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<sup>16</sup> *Prefaces and Dedications*, p. 134.

*Spain in 1772 and 1773, Keysler's Travels through Germany, Blainville's Travels through Holland, Addison's Remarks on Several parts of Italy, Bishop Pococke's Description of the East, 1743-5, Brydone's Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1773, Drummond's Travels through Different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and Several parts of Asia, Cook's Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, and Gray's letters of his trip to France and Italy with Horace Walpole.*

Although Johnson never got to meet James Cook (1728-1779), there was talk of his accompanying Cook on his second Pacific voyage (1772-1775). Johnson would have approved of Cook's dedication to the accurate and scientific gathering of information. Cook had brought trained scientists, including botanist Joseph Banks (1743-1820), with him on his first Pacific voyage to ensure that data were properly gathered and reported. It was Johnson's curiosity about the Pacific that brought him and Banks together. Their friendship grew throughout the years, and he had discussed Banks' Pacific voyage while in Scotland, going so far as to imitate the newly discovered kangaroo.<sup>17</sup> Boswell had met Cook in 1776 and petitioned the Royal Society for permission to join Cook on his third Pacific voyage (1776-1780). Johnson discouraged Boswell from making a Pacific voyage, feeling that he would not do justice to facts and research.

Eighteenth-century interest in travel and things foreign had its roots in the overseas discoveries, conquests and hitherto unparalleled geographical expansion that took place during the Renaissance. Foreign travel, particularly

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<sup>17</sup> According to Boswell, Johnson "stood erect, put out his hands like feelers, and, gathering up the tails of his hugh brown coat so as to resemble the pouch of the animal, made two or three vigorous bounds across the room." *Life*, V, p. 511.

during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, flourished for a number of reasons: Renaissance attitudes of mind and the humanist concept of self stressed the importance of the individual, personal reputation and fame; new advances were made in navigation and cartography; patriotic duty and diplomatic travel provided reasons for acquiring information beneficial to one's home country; a tradition of first-hand learning and study at foreign universities was being established; and human curiosity itself always served as a great motivator. Shakespeare referred to some of these varied reasons for travelling in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594), when Panthino discusses with Antonio the importance of allowing his son, Proteus, to travel abroad and says,

He wond'red that your lordship  
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,  
While other men, of slender reputation,  
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:  
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;  
Some to discover islands far away;  
Some to the studious universities.  
For any or for all these exercises  
He said that Proteus, your son, was meet;  
And did request me to importune you  
To let him spend his time no more at home,  
Which would be great impeachment to his age,  
In having known no travel in his youth.<sup>18</sup>

Commerce and colonization motivated travel as well, since economically, England was in a desperate plight and in dire need of new markets, trade, and cheap raw materials. Out of this economic expansion grew a mercantile

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<sup>18</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blake Evans Howard, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), Act I, Scene iii, ll. 4-16.



economy based on a unified middle class, who became the backbone of English society. Health and religion also encouraged travelling as many tried the baths of Italy and Germany for medicinal reasons, and the continent, particularly Jerusalem and Rome, lured the religious traveller, while missionaries, such as the Jesuits, went to various parts of the globe as part of their early training in converting their fellows to Christianity.

This was the age of great explorers like Drake, Raleigh, and Frobisher, who, as narrators of their own travels, were looked upon as heroes. Their achievements aroused public curiosity and created a demand for the latest voyage account. This demand was met by so many general collections, such as Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* and Samuel Purchas' *Purchas His Pilgrims*, that the Renaissance climaxed with its great collections, supported by translations and narrations of personal travel. This geographical literature was aimed at stimulating expansion and spreading news of the latest discoveries, which was of great importance to the life and letters of the time.

Firsthand learning became the new object of travel in the Renaissance, allowing one to acquire knowledge of men, manners, customs, art, science, and all other aspects of foreign culture. Also, Italian universities, having introduced Greek, the classics and the concept of humanism, were reputed to offer a better education than that which could be obtained from the Schoolmen in England. English colleges were anxious to learn of the teaching at foreign universities and subsidized journeys abroad, as did various rich churchmen.

The Royal Society, founded in 1662 for the purpose of studying geographical knowledge for its own sake and as the background to scientific

study, promoted voyages and travels by inviting foreign travellers to address the Society, funding explorations, according travel writers favourable mention, and publishing travel accounts in its *Transactions*. It supported the scientific or "philosophical" traveller who collected and observed natural phenomena around the world. The Society realized the importance of such observation and supplied travellers with a catalogue of directions, and stressed in its *Transactions* the importance of increasing "philosophical stock" by noting natural phenomena, inhabitants, products and all that was peculiar to a country, of keeping an exact diary, of the value of accurate observations, detailed facts and of the need for clear and precise utterances. It also followed a principle of scientific skepticism that advised travellers to be cautious of superstitions in getting at the truth.<sup>19</sup> Public interest became such that, during 1705-07, Edmund Halley edited its journals under the title *Miscellanea Curiosa*, with subsequent editions appearing in 1708 and 1726.

The great collections of voyages and travels, so popular in the seventeenth century, continued in the eighteenth century, on a grand scale for the most part, although minor general and regional collections also appeared. The earliest eighteenth-century collection appeared in 1704 in four folio volumes, entitled *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, some now first printed from original manuscripts, etc*, with subsequent editions appearing in 1732, 1747, and 1752.<sup>20</sup> The gentry readily funded large and expensive undertakings in

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<sup>19</sup> R.W. Frantz, 'The Traveller and the Royal Society' in "The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas 1660-1732," *University Studies* 32-33 (1932-33): 18 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Johnson was involved in the compilation of a catalogue for this collection.

promoting the arts.

Travel and discovery were given a new surge of interest at the start of the eighteenth century. As Europe slowed its colonial efforts, England, no longer content to follow in the wake of Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands, took the lead in expansion, conquering Canada and half of India, settling Australia, and trading to all areas of the inhabited globe, while conducting surveys of Australia, Antarctica, North America, west and central Africa, southern and central Asia and the Indian Empire. Patriotic obligations continued to be a motivation in sending men abroad to serve in English regiments. For example, George Cartwright was commissioned to the East Indies as a cadet in 1754 and later to Germany and Minorca, and Tobias Smollett served as a surgeon's mate aboard the H.M.S. *Cumberland* in 1740. Health reasons still encouraged travel, and many journeyed to the continent for medicinal purposes. Henry Fielding went to Lisbon to take advantage of the weather and water, and Tobias Smollett made two trips to the continent (1763-1765 and 1769-1771) in search of a favourable climate after being diagnosed with having slow consumption.

Scientific research and observation were now added to the economic, political and philanthropic reasons for exploration. Joseph Banks, a one-time president of the Royal Society, set a standard of biological exploration with his splendid collections and descriptions of plants and animals.<sup>21</sup> He travelled to Newfoundland, Holland, Iceland, and South America and accompanied Cook on his voyage to the South Pacific. George Cartwright's journal of his sixteen

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<sup>21</sup> *Joseph Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1766: His Diary, Manuscripts and Collections*, ed. A.M. Lysaght, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: U. California P., 1971).

years spent observing life in Labrador (1770-1786)—hunting, trapping, interacting with the natives—caught the attention of his contemporaries. Robert Southey claimed to have read the three volumes straight through, and related how Coleridge delighted in the "strange simplicity" of the work.<sup>22</sup> Such endeavours of human enterprise and endurance excited the interests of the public and created a demand for the latest exploration narratives. These systematic accounts, complete with details and charts, replaced the Renaissance sense of discovery and expansion that blended methodology and knowledge as a saleable commodity. This resulted in a transition from the romantic to the methodical. As J. Paul Hunter concluded,

The richer sweeps of the old wonder, elegantly folioed in the private libraries of the grander dreamers, had diminished to octavo accounts of "strange and surprising" discoveries that touched all continents, categorized the kind of this and the distance of that, and counted the stripes on the tulip. For every Hakluyt of an earlier century there were scores of new logs, descriptions, and narratives. Wonder was still the commodity, but increasingly it was categorized wonder, and countless writers exploited it, calculating their wares for armchair explorers whose curiosities were more practical and commercial than emotional or spiritual.<sup>23</sup>

Travel became popular and possible in eighteenth-century England as never before. England was relatively free of religious and political strife and secure from invasion; there was a growing security of government finances, and an increase in agricultural products brought improvements in transportation—new roads and canals—that increased social mobility,

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Southey's *Common-Place Book*, ed. John Wood Warter, 4th series, (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1851), pp. 515-16.

<sup>23</sup> J. Paul Hunter, *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance*, (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins U.P., 1975), p. 145.

stimulating travel into the countryside, reducing class barriers and spreading ideas. This less rigid separation brought the upper and middle classes closer together. Englishmen were bound by a national solidarity and freedom of choice because of these favourable economic and political conditions. England was experiencing a period of growth in what is now referred to as "consumer capitalism."<sup>24</sup>

The aristocracy, as a class, now had money in abundance and were secure in their wealth as never before. Stability and financial prosperity allowed the aristocrat to devote his energy and money to the finer things life had to offer. Huge mansions and country homes were erected, based on Italian styles; landscapes were rearranged to create an agreeable setting; great collections of books and art were amassed; particular attention was paid to dress; gambling and sports became national manias; new carriages and yachts were acquired; and to visually depict all of this, a new genre in painting evolved—the conversation piece—which portrayed real people (the gentry) enjoying themselves in their own homes and gardens, surrounded by their collections and prize wares. Looking for new vogues to imitate, the upper class now turned its attention to the continent, which stimulated a desire for travel. In this moneyed world, one most certainly had to travel to keep up with fashion.

With the promotion of travel as a learning experience, the aristocracy began experimenting with the idea of sending their sons abroad as part of

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<sup>24</sup> J.H. Plumb, "Lordly Pleasures" *Horizons* 15 (1973): 72-89. For more on England during Johnson's time, see Arthur Stanley Turberville, ed., *Johnson's England An Account of the Life And Manners of his Age*, 2 vols., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933).



their education. This went from an experiment to a custom and resulted in the Grand Tour becoming an integral part of aristocratic culture that reached its height of popularity in the eighteenth century. The Grand Tour, an indispensable form of education,<sup>25</sup> complemented the humanist goal of a classical education: the young aristocrat, under the guidance of a tutor, learned of men and manners, of art, science, politics and languages while being trained in fencing, dancing, music, riding and other fine gentlemanly accomplishments. It supplemented a university education, served as an ideal finishing school, provided a means of satisfying youth's natural restlessness, curiosity and sense of adventure, and allowed for the study of foreign art, architecture and sculpture. Such aims were supported by writers such as Thomas Nugent, who, in his *Grand Tour*, wrote of

that noble and ancient custom of travelling, a custom so visibly tending to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgement, to remove the prejudices of education, to compose the outward manners, and in a word to form the complete gentleman.<sup>26</sup>

The aims of the tour were basically the same as those promoted in the seventeenth century, only now the Grand Tour attained an unprecedented popularity as the number of tourists increased tenfold, the number due in large part to the increased wealth of the mercantile and professional classes. More than ever before, Englishmen flocked to the Continent to such an extent that the author of *Letters concerning the Present State of England* (1772)

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<sup>25</sup> William Edward Mead, *The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century*, (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour; or, A Journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and France*, 3rd ed., 4 vols., (London: J. Rivington & Sons, 1778), I, p. XI.

estimated that

where one Englishman travelled in the reigns of the first two Georges, ten now go on a grand tour. Indeed, to such a pitch is the spirit of travelling come in the kingdom, that there is scarce a citizen of large fortune but takes a flying view of France, Italy, and Germany in a summer excursion.<sup>27</sup>

Johnson, along with reviewers and writers such as Locke, Goldsmith and Gibbon, saw the folly of sending an inexperienced youth on a Grand Tour before his education was complete, because such inexperience and naiveté left him open to the corruption and temptations to be found on the continent. The average tourist was eighteen years of age, but many travelled at sixteen or younger. While the youth carried with him a greater capacity for learning, particularly in languages, the older individual profited more from his travels and was less likely to resent the guidance of a tutor. Johnson was of the opinion that a traveller should be old enough to benefit most from his travels, and, for example, on the poet James Thomson travelling with Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor, he wrote,

He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind.<sup>28</sup>

Against travelling at a young age before character and judgement were fully developed, Johnson argued that the young tourist's

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<sup>27</sup> Mead, p. 104.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets: with Critical Observations on their Works*, 4 vols., (London: J. Chapman, J. Bumpus, Baldwyn & Co, & J. Sawers, 1819), III, p. 325.

time may be employed to more advantage from nineteen to twenty-four almost in any way than in travelling; when you set travelling against mere negation, against doing nothing, it is better to be sure; but how much more would a young man improve were he to study during those years.<sup>29</sup>

Because of the youth of many travellers, a tutor often accompanied the young tourist, acting as advisor and guardian. This tutor, a well respected man of mature years, was to have a knowledge of foreign languages and countries, oversee his pupil's learning, and lead him from corruption and temptation while setting a social and moral example. He was to act as friend, confidant and teacher, taking over the role of parent. Such guidance would improve the tourist's views and activities and thus his travel journal. Some of the more renowned tutors included Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Smith, John Moore and Joseph Addison. The average tutor, however, fell quite short of these qualifications and was usually an incompetent, incapable of controlling or influencing his charge. Horace Walpole expressed his disapproval of tutors in a letter to Horace Mann:

and then there is another animal still more absurd than Florentine men or English boys, and that is, travelling governors, who are mischievous into the bargain, and whose pride is always hurt, because they are sure its never being indulged. They will not leave the world, because they are sent to teach it, and as they come forth more ignorant of it than their pupils, take care to return with more prejudices; and as much care, to instil all theirs into their pupils: don't assemble them!<sup>30</sup>

But the tutor was often well underpaid and had to put up with a spoilt and arrogant young gentleman for months on end.

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<sup>29</sup> *Life*, III, p. 352.

<sup>30</sup> *Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis, 48 vols., (New Haven: Yale U.P.; London: Oxford U.P., 1937-1983), XX, p. 170.

This ostentatious young man and his pompous tutor had already become the subjects of a great deal of satirical criticism. As early as the late sixteenth century, Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice*, exclaimed,

He hath neither Latin,  
French, nor Italian, and you will come into the  
court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in  
the English. He is a proper man's picture, but alas,  
who can converse with a dumb show? How oddly he  
is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his  
round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his  
behaviour every where.<sup>31</sup>

Writers in the eighteenth century continued to criticize the young tourist's false values and learning and argued that such badly written travel accounts were aiding the commercialization and prostitution of writing. Alexander Pope scorned those—the antiquarian, the amateur naturalist and the grand tourist—who devoted time to the trivial instead of humane and practical learning, and in the *Dunciad*, he satirized the tourist and the tutor:

Thro' School and College, thy kind cloud o'ercast,  
Safe and unseen the young Æneas past:  
Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down,  
Stunn'd with his giddy Larum half the town.  
Intrepid then, o'er seas and lands he flew:  
Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.  
Led by hand, he saunter'd Europe round,  
And gather'd ev'ry Vice on Christian ground;  
Saw ev'ry Court, heard ev'ry King declare  
His royal Sense, of Op'ra's or the Fair;  
The Stews and Palace equally explor'd,  
Intrigu'd with glory, and with spirit whor'd;  
Try'd all *hors-d'œuvres*, all *liqueurs* defin'd,  
Judicious drank, and greatly-daring din'd;  
Dropt the dull limber of the Latin store,

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<sup>31</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Scene ii, ll. 69-76.

Spoil'd his own language, and acquir'd no more;  
All Classic learning lost on Classic ground;  
And last turn'd *Air*, the Echo of a Sound!<sup>32</sup>

William Cowper's "The Progress of Error" also takes a satirical view of the writer who

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,  
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,  
With rev'rend tutor clad in habit lay,  
To teaze for cash, and quarrel with all day;  
With memorandum-book for ev'ry town,  
And ev'ry post, and where the chaise broke down;  
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart  
With much to learn, but nothing to impart,  
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,  
Sets off a wand'rer into foreign lands:  
Surpriz'd at all they meet, the gosling pair  
With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,  
Discover hugh cathedrals built with stone,  
And steeples tow'ring high much like our own;  
But show peculiar light by many a grin  
At Popish practices observ'd within.<sup>33</sup>

And again, in "The Modern Fine Gentleman" (1746), Soame Jenyns attacked the young tourist:

Just broke from school, pert, impudent, and raw,  
Expert in Latin, more expert in law,  
His honour posts o'er Italy and France,  
Measures St. Peter's dome, and learns to dance.  
Thence, having quick through various countries flown,  
Glean'd all their follies, and expos'd his own,

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*, Vol. 5, ed. James Sutherland, in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, 1943, reprint, (London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., & New Haven: Yale U.P., 1965), ll. 289-94; 311-22, pp. 372-73; p. 374.

<sup>33</sup> William Cowper, *Verse and Letters*, selected by Brian Spiller, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard U.P., 1968), ll. 369-384, pp. 214-15.

He back returns, a thing so strange all o'er,  
As never ages past produc'd before:  
A monster of such complicated worth,  
As no one single clime could e'er bring forth;  
Half atheist, papist, gamester, bubble, rook,  
Half fidler, coachman, dancer, groom, and cook.<sup>34</sup>

Having money, a knowing air, and introductions into the right circles, there was no pressing need or desire for the young tourist to acquire knowledge, especially with the lure of foreign entertainment at hand. With such aimlessness, English travellers drifted across Europe, none the wiser for their trouble, to such an extent that touring began to be viewed as "active idleness." The majority of the traveller's time was spent exploring entertainment halls and other ill-reputable areas, ignoring those places which offered some educational value. John Durant Breval, in *Remarks on Several Parts of Europe*, wrote,

So common it is to see them following a Wild Goose Chase under the conduct of some ignorant Tomb-Shewer; overlooking Things of the greatest Importance, while their attention is taken up with Trifles; and posting thro' a Town where they might spend a Week with Pleasure and Profit, to make a Month's Halt perhaps at another, which would be half a Day's Stop to a Man of Taste and Experience.<sup>35</sup>

The journals of those who travelled in "the gratification of a restless disposition," wrote a reviewer, "are always personal, and have little that can

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<sup>34</sup> *Minor English Poets 1660-1780*, intro. David P. French, 10 vols., (first issued as *The Works of the English Poets*, 21 vols., ed. Alexander Chalmers, London, 1810; New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967), VII, p. 298, ll. 1-12.

<sup>35</sup> John Durant Breval, *Remarks on Several Parts of Europe: Relating Chiefly to the History, Antiquities and Geography*, 2 vols., (London: Bernard Lintot, 1726), II, pp. 5-6.

amuse or interest."<sup>36</sup>

Most of the young tourists who did take time for sightseeing kept to the conventional sights, seeing nothing new or worthy of notice, and ignored the rules and suggestions offered by writers and reviewers. As a result, reviewers criticized their travel accounts, attacking those "flowery" and "marvellous" writers "whose fancy either embellishes what they saw, or supplies what they never had an opportunity of beholding." This commentary in the *Monthly Review* went on to say,

It is granted, that the description of fine churches, villas, gardens. . . may be of service to the stauary, painter, architect, and gardener. . . yet narratives, where only such topics are treated of, are not the most useful to such of our countrymen as either have not time, or cannot afford, to travel.<sup>37</sup>

Such travel accounts were usually flippant and filled with the trivial, repeating common knowledge with nothing new or interesting added.

William Hazlitt discussed such trivialities and generalizations in *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*:

If we meet with any thing odd and absurd in France, it is immediately set down as French and characteristic of the country, though we meet with a thousand odd and disagreeable things every day in England (that we never met before) without taking any notice of them.<sup>38</sup>

Most tourists were ill prepared for their tours, not knowing what to look for

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<sup>36</sup> *Monthly Review* 45 (1771): 561.

<sup>37</sup> *Monthly Review* 15 (1756): 453.

<sup>38</sup> *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, after the edition of A.R. Walker and Arnold Glover, 21 vols., (New York: AMS Press, 1967), X, p. 141.

or how anything was to be appreciated. Even those who had attended Oxford or Cambridge were not assured of having attained a high degree of scholarship, for in general the standards were low.

The average English tourist was chauvinistic in his attitude: he thought continentals to be inferior and flaunted the superiority of England and English ways, held foreign customs in contempt, rarely realized the significance of what he saw, and refused to admit the value of anything unfamiliar. The June 1768 issue of the *Monthly Review* wrote that such prejudiced travellers published accounts that "seldom answer any purpose but that of heightening national pride, and confirming national prejudices: instead of improving and refining the public taste, they debase and corrupt it."<sup>39</sup> The errors of travellers was a subject explored by many writers, including John Moore, who, in *A View of Society and Manners in Italy*, wrote,

Travellers are too apt to form hasty, and for the most part, unfavorable opinions of national characters. Finding the customs and sentiments of the inhabitants of the foreign countries through which they pass very different from their own they are ready to consider them as erroneous and conclude, that those who act and think in a manner so opposite to themselves, must be either knaves, fools, or both.<sup>40</sup>

As a result, most travellers occupied their time in coffee houses, surrounded by their fellow countrymen, praising England while criticizing all that was foreign.

In order to improve the quality of the travel account, the tourist was

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<sup>39</sup> *Monthly Review* 38 (1768): 447-48.

<sup>40</sup> John Moore, *A View of Society and Manners in Italy: With Anecdotes relating to some Eminent Characters*, 2 vols., (London: Printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1781), I, p. 460.



advised to follow a number of rules. Before setting out, the young gentleman was to read histories as they better prepared him for touring, and was to acquaint himself with the countries to be visited. This acquaintance was of great importance, as Count Leopold Berchtold affirmed in *An Essay to Direct and Extend the Inquiries of Patriotic Travellers*:

It is indispensably necessary for a young gentleman who desires to travel, either for his own improvement, the welfare of mankind in general, or for the happiness of his country in particular, to lay in a certain knowledge, before he undertakes the difficult task of travelling to real advantage.<sup>41</sup>

A degree of fluency in the languages of the countries to be visited was required to allow the tourist to question, thus gaining him a better understanding of the affairs of the country. At the same time his grasp of the languages would enable him to feel more at ease in a foreign city. The tourist was advised always to carry pen, paper and ink in order to record immediately his reactions and remarks. Thoughts were to be put to paper while they were still fresh in the mind, for the memory was not held to be accurate and reliable.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Count Leopold Berchtold, *An Essay to Direct and Extend the Inquiries of Patriotic Travellers, etc.*, (London, 1789), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Other items Count Berchtold recommended to be carried by the tourist, in addition to pen and paper, included pistols and swords, a telescope, maps, guidebooks—the most useful was Thomas Nugent's *The Grand Tour containing an Exact Description of most of the Cities, Towns and Remarkable Places of Europe* (1743); *The Gentleman's Pocket Companion For Travelling into Foreign Parts* (1772) was not recommended as it contained phrases ill suited for use by a young gentleman—well-stocked medicine chests (foreign doctors were considered quacks), Protestant hymn and prayer books, a linen overall, several shirts and handkerchiefs, breeches—preferably waterproof—a broad-brimmed hat, a pocket sundial or watch, iron fasteners for securing inn doors at night, a tinder box, spices and condiments (foreign cuisine was not to be trusted), a

Upon entering a town the tourist was to become acquainted with its laws in order to avoid confrontation with authorities. He was to ascend the highest spot to gain a view of the town while choosing those areas worthy of closer inspection. Measurements, contents, history and any other striking aspects of a building were to be listed, accompanied by drawings and sketches. Inquiries were to be made into all areas of interest—geography, history, trade, climate, agriculture, customs, manners, religion, and military—to ensure knowledgeable and reliable observations. One's fellow countrymen were to be avoided, and in order to meet the most eminent people, letters of introduction were necessary. British embassies and consulates, as well as Englishmen living abroad, were there to help with introductions and references.

Yet, among the throngs of the inattentive and common traveller were those who profited from what they saw, bringing the stay-at-home reader valuable personal observation. Such informative travel accounts helped provide travel literature with a set of conventions that gradually developed into a literary genre of its own.

With England relatively stable—financially and politically—and travel

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supply of tea and a tea caddy, penknife, and a portefeuille in which to carry necessary travel documents—passports, letters of credit and references, bills of health, etc. The traveller was advised to never travel by night but early in the morning, being lodged in an inn by dark, to never travel alone but avoid becoming too familiar with one's travelling companions, avoid women—both young and old as the former could compromise virtue and the latter would always demand the best seats—to always carry a supply of food as it warded off hunger and starving dogs, investigate one's room at each inn to ensure it is secure, never take out money in front of strangers and to always make sure that all luggage was secure.

to the continent easily accessible, the pastimes of travel and writing could be easily experienced. As a result, travel literature, in the form of the non-fiction travel book, became firmly established and reached its peak in eighteenth-century England, second in popularity only to theology. This unparalleled popularity grew out of an increase in travel, coupled with an all-consuming desire for information on foreign countries as well as England. Part of the travel book's popularity may also be attributed to a new freedom of speech and of the press that encouraged new creative and intellectual powers in the arts and sciences.

The travel account became the fashionable way for relating information obtained while travelling, especially since public interest in things foreign was growing. All classes of society were interested in the travel book, and because of its limitless commercial possibilities, the reading public was swamped with accounts of this or that voyage. In six months of 1771 the *Critical Review* reviewed some one hundred and twenty British and about thirty foreign travel books.<sup>43</sup> The general response to the travel account was favourable. As one commentator observed,

The occupation of writing travels is now become so fashionable that within these very few years we have made the grand tour, at least a dozen times, with different gentlemen, in our closets. The public are undoubtedly much obliged to those industrious itinerants, who seem to travel chiefly for the sake of communicating information. . . For our own part, however, we have no objection to these productions; for the ingenious gentlemen endeavour always to entertain us with something new.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> A.S. Collins, "The Growth of the Reading Public During the Eighteenth Century," *The Review of English Studies* 2 (1926): 290.

<sup>44</sup> *Critical Review* 34 (1771): 130-31.

The form attracted such authors as Addison, Boswell, Defoe, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne and many other writers of consequence. Their enthusiasm added to the popularity of the travel account and helped turn it into a respected literary form. "Of all the various productions of the press," wrote the *Critical Review*, "none are so eagerly received by us Reviewers, and other people who stay at home and mind our business as the writing of travellers."<sup>45</sup> A reviewer for the *Tatler*, as early as 1710, also expressed delight in travel books, and wrote,

There are no Books which I more delight in than in Travels, especially those that describe remote countries, and give the Writer an opportunity of showing his Parts without incurring any Danger of being examined or contradicted.<sup>46</sup>

To keep up with this increase in the publication of travel books, the *Gentleman's Magazine* established a monthly register that documented travel publications. Some of the travel books in the 1775 registry included Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, Burnaby's *Travels through the Middle Settlements in North America, etc.*, *A Gentleman's tour through Monmouthshire, and Wales etc.*, *An Epitome of the Nineteen Years Travels and Adventures of William Litligrow*, Twiss' *Travels through Portugal and Spain*, Parish's translation of *A Voyage to the Island of Mauritius (or Isle of France) etc.*, Chandler's *Travels in Asia Minor*, and *An entertaining Tour through several Parts of Burgandy, Switzerland, Savoy, and Dauphiny*. The magazine also contained a foreign affairs section that kept those at home up-to-date with the latest happenings on the

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<sup>45</sup> *Critical Review* 38 (1768): 174.

<sup>46</sup> *The Tatler* 3 (1710): 288.

continent. A quick perusal of the *Critical* and *Monthly Reviews* also shows the immense popularity of the travel book.

The catalogue of Laurence Sterne's library also provides a good example of the popularity of such books; it contained over seventy-five books on travel alone.<sup>47</sup> Many of his travel books were of the latest journeys: Perry's *Travels into the Levant*, Sandys' *Travels to the Holyland*, Blainville's *Travels through Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy*, DuMont's *Voyage to the Levant*, Thompson's *Travels*, Mission's *Travels over England, Scotland, and Ireland*, Burnet's *Travels thro' Switzerland, Italy, etc.*, and the list goes on.

Travel literature was not limited to the non-fiction travel book but found its way into fictional works, such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). This book embodied the economic individualism of the time. The hero leaves England to better his financial situation but is shipwrecked and leads a solitary life on an uninhabited island for twenty-four years. While on the island, he finds consolation in reading the Bible and comes to represent the qualities that elevate humanity from barbarism—courage, patience and industry.

Picaresque novels, which describe the adventures of a lively and resourceful hero on a journey and involve travel through the picaresque landscape of roads, stagecoaches and inns, also incorporated elements of the travel book. *Humphry Clinker* (1771) stressed the observation, judgement and conclusions of a travel book by discussing manners, customs, men and nature. Smollett discussed travel writers in the prefatory epistle of the work,

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<sup>47</sup> *A Facsimile Reproduction of a Unique Catalogue of Laurence Sterne's Library*, preface by Charles Whibley, (New York: AMS Press, 1973).

by "Henry Davis," which read,

Then there have been so many letters upon travels lately published—What between Smollett's, Sharp's, Derrick's, Thicknesse's, Baltimore's, and Baretti's, together with Shandy's *Sentimental Travels*, the public seems to be cloyed with that kind of entertainment—Nevertheless, I will, if you please, run the risque of printing and publishing. . . .<sup>48</sup>

Smollett's *Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), a spiritual autobiography and travel memoir, and *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751), whose Grand Tour is a satire on foreign lands, are also a series of picaresque adventures connected by the travels of the book's hero.

To combat ill-written travel books, eighteenth-century journals and writers began outlining what they expected from such accounts and criticized travel accounts openly in their pages, as a deterrent to future travel writers. For Johnson's part and adding to this interest, he championed racial and social justice, was against the acquisitiveness of imperialism, and approached travel literature as a neo-classic empiricist with an emphasis on morality and compassion.

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<sup>48</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, text ed. O.M. Brack, Jr., intro & notes T. R. Preston, (Athens & London: U. Georgia Press, 1990), p. 4.

accuracy and detail for entertainment he held in contempt.

With the increased popularity of travel literature, literary standards emerged that gradually governed the travel writers of the day. Critics insisted on the existence and validity of standards for form and content that were used in the criticism of all mediocre and good work. A travel book was to be, among other qualities, authentic, purposeful, accurate and impartial. The travel writer himself had to establish his credibility and authenticity by playing the role of researcher in providing facts, figures and observant descriptions.

In 1735 Johnson published an English translation of Joachim Le Grand's *Relation historique d'Abissinie* (1728), which was a French version of Father Jeronimio Lobo's *Itinerario* (1639-40).<sup>2</sup> The resulting *Voyage to Abyssinia*, a travel book that stands between a religious adventure and a moral tale, revealed his preoccupation with mankind and the exploration of truth about human life, and showed his interest in travel, history, geographical exploration and religion. In the work he showed his expectations of what a travel book was to include: he praised truth, accuracy, judicious first-hand

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<sup>2</sup> Lobo, a seventeenth-century Portuguese Jesuit missionary, was associated with the Royal Society through Robert Southwell, the British ambassador to Portugal. He wrote five essays for the Society on various topics, which were translated by Sir Peter Wyche and published in 1669. These essays were both popular and appealing and went through numerous translations, securing Lobo's reputation as an ideal authority upon Abyssinia. Le Grand, introduced to Lobo through a French translation of Wyche's work, translated a version of the *Itinerario*. The resulting *Relation* contained a translation of Lobo's Portuguese manuscript plus dissertations by Le Grand on various aspects of Abyssinia, from geography to religion. Le Grand, a careful writer and reviser, rearranged and revised Lobo's manuscript, reducing length and tightening style.

observations and a combination of pleasure and instruction, toned down fabrication and exaggeration, omitted and paraphrased details in changing emphasis, and coloured the work with personal opinions and attitudes, often slanting evidence. The preface to the work also affirmed his interest in universal moral truths and the moral uniformity of humanity, while the method of translation—exaggeration and fabrication are downplayed—indicated that he was against the cruelties and treacheries inherent in conquest.

According to the editor of the Yale edition of *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, Johnson translated closely in some areas, epitomized in others, omitted sections, expanded others, softened or added asperity to the tone, rearranged elements to increase clarity, balanced phrases for smoother syntax, inserted transitions for easier reading, and made editorial comments in pointing a moral.<sup>3</sup> This reinforces John Lawrence Abbott's judgement of Johnson's French translations: that in a given work, "what emerges is less a translation and more a recreation of the foreign text."<sup>4</sup>

Of his own translation of Le Grand's *Relation*, Johnson, in the Preface to the work, stated, "In this translation (if it may be so call'd) great liberties have been taken, which, whether justifiable or not, shall be fairly confess'd, and let the judicious part of mankind pardon or condemn them." He went on to admit that in the first part of the work he had reduced the narration into a

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<sup>3</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Joel J. Gold, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P., 1985), XV, p. xlviii; hereafter cited as *Voyage to Abyssinia*.

<sup>4</sup> John Lawrence Abbott, "No 'Dialect of France': Samuel Johnson's Translations from the French," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 36 (1967): 130.



"narrow compass," so much so that "it is by no means a translation but an epitome." Johnson was of the opinion that when translating, the original work was to be faithfully produced, but not word for word, in order to provide a sense of ease and originality, and so in this work passages have been shortened or omitted, and the dissertations, where he attempted an exact translation, contain abstracts.

Changes made in the work provide indications of Johnson's attitudes, emphasis and desire for truth. The Portuguese, representative of the "civilized," were guilty of exploitation, something Johnson could not condone. He had depicted the Portuguese as being guilty of unprovoked assault upon the natives in *The World Displayed*. In the introduction to that work, he had asked,

On what occasion, or for what purpose canons and muskets were discharged among a people harmless and secure, by strangers who without any right visited their coasts; it is not thought necessary to inform us. . . We are openly told, that they had the less scruple concerning their treatment of the savage people, because they scarcely considered them as distinct from beasts.<sup>5</sup>

Through the omission of details that explain their actions, Johnson presented an unfavourable picture of the Portuguese that suggests an intentional slanting of evidence. When translating the account of the encounter between the Portuguese soldiers and the Moor who was master of the camels, Johnson simply wrote that the Moor was "knock'd down by one of our soldiers."<sup>6</sup> This impression of Portuguese cruelty and disdain is heightened by omitting the

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<sup>5</sup> *Prefaces and Dedications*, p. 227.

<sup>6</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 34.

Portuguese efforts at peacemaking, the reason for their actions, and the Moor's motive; no mention is made of the fact that the Moor attacked a soldier. This omission of pertinent details suggests an anti-Portuguese bias.

Johnson deleted many Catholic references in order to downplay or minimize the religious tone of Lobo's narrative and he was keeping his Protestant readers in mind. He also presented an anti-Catholic bias through changes in tone and vocabulary, which was also indicative of Johnson's attitudes. Lobo praised the exiled Patriarch Alphonso Mendez, and both he and Le Grand suggest the Patriarch's concern for the people and the church, unlike Johnson, who referred to the Patriarch as "that prelate whose thoughts were always intent upon his Church of Aethiopia."<sup>7</sup> By changing the tone of the sentence, Johnson implied that the Patriarch had a possessive interest in "his" church. On the death of the Patriarch, Le Grand wrote that he had "toutes les qualités d'un saint et vertueux missionnaire," which Johnson translated as "he had all the qualities of a good and useful missionary."<sup>8</sup> Johnson's anti-Catholic prejudice reduced the role and influence of Patriarch Mendez. The Jesuit's case against the Abyssinians is also undercut through Johnson's word substitution, especially in the use of "hérétique" and "schismatique." The Abyssinians, referred to by Lobo and Le Grand as "les hérétiques," become "these people that adhered to the religion of their ancestors."<sup>9</sup> This shift in tone draws sympathy for the Abyssinians, who are

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<sup>7</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 133, note 5; p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 91.

presented not as heretics or schismatics but as a people separated from the church of Rome who wished to hold onto the church and faith of their ancestors. Because of his strong opinions on subject matter, Johnson omitted many of Le Grand's details, substituting his own balanced terms and arrangement of detail. These omissions, deletions, paraphrasings and expansions change the tone of the work.

Despite the many translation changes, Johnson, in the preface to the work, commended Lobo's account for being "so curious and entertaining," "so judicious and instructive," and praised him for amusing his readers "with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions,"<sup>10</sup> qualities essential to a book of travels. Later in the work, Johnson ridiculed the ancients and praised the Portuguese, who, he wrote,

have demolish'd the airy fabricks of renoun'd hypotheses, and detected those fables which the ancients rather chose to invent of the sources of the Nile, than to confess their ignorance.<sup>11</sup>

Lobo and Le Grand both criticized those who fabricated the source of the Nile, and argued, "It was difficult, it was even impossible to arrive at the source of the Nile, by tracing its channel from the mouth," to which Johnson added, "have taken the liberty of entertaining us with their own fictions." With this addition, Johnson embellished the French "ils ont inventé milles fables,"<sup>12</sup> which implied that fiction should never take precedence over fact in providing entertainment. He also frequently toned down fabulous

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<sup>10</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 87; p. 87, note 2.

statements. For example, the description of the 'zeura': "Cet animal est fort grand & d'une beauté merveilleuse, & les plus beaux ne se trouvent que dans l'Abissinie" became "a creature of large size, and admirable beauty" in his translation.<sup>13</sup>

In keeping with Johnson's philosophy of accuracy, emphasis is placed on Father Lobo as eyewitness through the rearrangement or omission of details and with the use of the phrase "I have seen."<sup>14</sup> For this reason, the description of the ostriches is revised to read, "These fowls, of which I have seen many, are very tame, and when they are persued, stretch out their wings, and run with amazing swiftness."<sup>15</sup> He omitted that the ostriches are so swift that no horse can overtake them and dismissed the notions that they "throw stones" at hunters, eat fire and digest iron. Such changes did away with the fictitious. Lobo is also portrayed as a judicious traveller, and in the preface, Johnson summarized,

He appears by his modest and unaffected narration to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses not his imagination. . . the reader. . . will discover, what will always be discover'd by a diligent and impartial enquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue. . . .<sup>16</sup>

Again, Johnson focused attention on the veracity and judiciousness of the

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<sup>13</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 10; p. 10, note 3.

<sup>14</sup> This emphasis on firsthand accounts and eyewitness verification is Lockean in nature.

<sup>15</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, pp. 3-4.

eyewitness, making Lobo the careful and truthful narrator of what he has seen. Such emphasis also suggests something about the audience the work was aimed at. Readers, while enjoying tales of the faraway and exotic, wanted a work to be entertaining and informative. Johnson's revisions show that he too expected both entertainment and instruction about the world beyond London and that travel and travel books were capable of providing such.

This was also the case in the "Essay on the *Description of China*," which has been attributed to Johnson,<sup>17</sup> that praised Père Du Halde's work for its ability to satisfy public curiosity about China, the subject of great public inquiry and admiration at this time. Du Halde is commended as being an authentic and accurate traveller who had "examined, compared, and digested the Observations of nearly thirty Missionaries" in providing an informative and entertaining account of China.<sup>18</sup> As a result of such judicious inquiry, the work, according to Johnson,

incontestably appears to be more Comprehensive and Copious not only than any other single Account, perhaps than 'all' that have hitherto appeared, and to leave very little Room for large Additions from

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<sup>17</sup> The "Essay on the *Description of China*," appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in June, July, and September of 1742, pp. 320-27, 353-57, and 484-86. Boswell ascribed the work to Johnson in *Life*, I, p. 157 and Dr. L.F. Powell, in support, wrote that "Johnson gave extracts from this translation, with brief comments," *Life*, II, p. 483. Arthur Sherbo also argued that the Essay is by Johnson. After comparing the work with Du Halde's original, he found that Johnson's Essay included extracts from *Description of China*, statements based on Du Halde's comments, and areas that were purely Johnson, "Samuel Johnson's 'Essay' on Du Halde's *Description of China*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 2 (1966): 372-80.

<sup>18</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 12 (1742): 320.

succeeding Travellers however diligent or Sagacious. <sup>19</sup>

Du Halde's work was based upon the observations of missionaries who, in the same vein as Father Lobo, are seen as nearly ideal travellers since they are "vacant to every Object of Curiosity," and being missionaries they were able to examine everything first hand, which "exempted them from the Necessity of trusting to uncertain Information."<sup>20</sup> Because of religious conversion they were familiar with the language, enabling them to infiltrate Chinese society while learning the customs and manners of the people. Johnson highly approved of their methods and recommended that travellers "make the Language of the Nation in which they reside their first Study. . . cultivate a Familiarity with the Natives. . . conform to their Customs, observe their Inclinations, and omit nothing that may produce Influence, Intimacy, or Esteem."<sup>21</sup>

Eighteenth-century journals, such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, show the wide and varied interest in travel literature, the popularity of the genre, as well as opinions of what a good travel book should include. The two most influential journals available during this time were the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*. These two journals were accessible, consistent in articulating their expectations, and interested in some measure of quality in a time when the market was being flooded with a vast quantity of travel accounts. Their reviews played a major role in initiating conventions: they established what

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<sup>19</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 12 (1742): 484.

<sup>20</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 12 (1742): 320; 321.

<sup>21</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 12 (1742): 320.

was expected of a writer and his travel book, helped determine its acceptance and longevity, and made the reading public aware of the various problems encountered.

The sole object of the *Monthly Review*, founded in 1749 by Ralph Griffiths, was to "give a compendious account of those productions of the press, as they come out, that are worth notice." Such an account should, "in virtue of its candour, and justness of distinction, obtain authority enough for its representations to be serviceable to such as would choose to have some idea of a book before they lay out their money or time on it."<sup>22</sup> When the *Monthly* was in its seventh year, the *Critical Review*, under Archibald Hamilton, appeared as a rival.

Not wanting its competitor to gain the upper hand on the market, the *Monthly* began borrowing ideas from the *Critical Review*. In its February 1757 issue, the *Monthly* announced that it would feature accounts of foreign books on a regular basis. It had previously used such articles infrequently, whereas the "Foreign Articles" section had been a regular feature of the *Critical Review* from the beginning. The *Monthly Review's* "Foreign Articles" section, however, was no match for the *Critical Review*. It relied on irregular letter writers and "puffed" importations of booksellers, whereas the *Critical* had steady communications with the major centres of Europe. The *Monthly* copied the *Critical Review's* section on "Painting and Engraving," which also proved to be inferior.<sup>23</sup> It also changed its cover claim, which stated that it

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<sup>22</sup> *Monthly Review* 1 (1749): 1.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Donald Spector, "The *Monthly* and its Rival" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 64 (1960): 159-61. See also *Monthly Review* 14 (1756): 161-68; 18 (1758): 94-6; 20 (1759): 257; *Critical Review* 11 (1761): 63.

was written "By Several Hands," since the *Critical Review* was written "By a Society of Gentlemen." Competition was fierce, and the two were constantly engaged in a battle of words. Yet they were remarkably similar. Both journals followed a policy of anonymity, both were published at the beginning of the following month, both included a "Monthly Catalogue" for brief mentions, and both used extensive quotations when reviewing the latest publications.

The general tone of the *Critical Review* was conservative and reactionary. It approved of some new currents of thought but for the most part disapproved of departures from accepted norms. The preface to the first volume stated that its reviewers had given "opinions only" without "prejudice, fear, or affection" and had striven to forget the author's person. The aim of their reviewers, according to the Preface, was to

exhibit a succinct plan of every performance; to point out the most striking beauties and glaring defects; to illustrate their remarks with proper quotations; and to convey these remarks in such a manner as might best conduce to the entertainment of the public.<sup>24</sup>

From its inception, the *Critical Review* supported travel literature, and in the first volume, it wrote that it was

a Species of writing which is adapted to all capacities, which affords continual food to that curiosity which is so natural to the mind of man, and that love of novelty which is inseparable from it, can never fail of admirers: it is no wonder therefore that voyages and travels should be universally read.<sup>25</sup>

Although it promoted travel books, it also pointed out faults and took strides

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<sup>24</sup> *Critical Review* 1 (1756): Preface.

<sup>25</sup> *Critical Review* 1 (1756): 309.



in developing criteria.

Reviewers for these magazine soon made their preferences known, and the majority of writers catered to their demands because a review could make or break a writer's reputation overnight. Travel writers acknowledged the power of reviews by taking into account the reviewer's opinions and striving to provide authentic, detailed and accurate travel books based on the actual observation of men and manners. Because of the reviewers, particularly those of the *Critical Review* and *Monthly Review*, travel books reached great heights of popularity, providing standards of useful information and entertainment.

At the top of the reviewers' criteria were pleasure and instruction, promoted through praise, recognition and their insistence on the value of literature of purpose. "No kind of writing is more entertaining and instructive," wrote the *Monthly Review*, "than voyages and travels."<sup>26</sup> The *Critical Review* also praised those "industrious itinerants" whose travel books "fill up many disagreeable intervals of time with a study which will always entertain and improve the understanding," and eight years later, in 1772, it was still forthright in its praise of those same "industrious itinerants":

The public are undoubtedly much obliged to those industrious itinerants, who seem to travel chiefly for the sake of communicating information. . . For our own part, however, we have no objection to these productions; for the ingenious gentlemen endeavour always to entertain us with something new.<sup>27</sup>

Because of this balance, many eighteenth-century readers viewed travel

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<sup>26</sup> *Monthly Review* 17 (1757): 30.

<sup>27</sup> *Critical Review* 18 (1764): 375-76; 34 (1772): 130-31.

accounts as being superior to fiction.

Johnson, too, saw the value of accurate and detailed observations obtained through judicious first-hand inquiry because such information provided insight into human nature. Only a curious and knowledgeable traveller could provide practical and moral information while balancing pleasure with instruction. Of this combination, Johnson remarked, "This world is now not contented to be merely entertained by a traveller's narrative; they want to learn something," and in *Idler* 97, he continued,

He that instructs must offer to the mind something to be imitated or something to be avoided; he that pleases must offer new images to his reader, and enable him to form a tacit comparison of his own state with that of others.<sup>28</sup>

Johnson was adamant that a travel work should be both pleasurable and instructive and he even criticized Shakespeare for sacrificing "virtue to convenience": he was "so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose."<sup>29</sup>

The expansion of education and the growth of the reading public at this time, especially women readers, required that works contain a stated moral purpose, with nothing that would offend the chaste ear. In response to this, many travellers directly stated that pleasure and instruction filled their pages. Henry Fielding, in the opening paragraph of the preface to *Voyage to Lisbon*, declared that

There would not, perhaps, be a more pleasant, or profitable study,

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<sup>28</sup> *Life*, III, p. 301; *Idler* 97, II, p. 298.

<sup>29</sup> *Johnson on Shakespeare*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P., 1968), VII, p. 71.

among those which have their principal end in amusement, than that of travels or voyages, if they were writ, as they might be, and ought to be, with a joint view to the entertainment and information of mankind.<sup>30</sup>

Reviewers encountered problems evaluating books that pleased but did not instruct and those that instructed but did not please. In *Voyage towards the North Pole* (1774), John Phipps selected only information that would instruct those interested in science and navigation, yet an anonymous account of the same journey, *Journal of a Voyage* (1773), aimed for a general audience and opted for pleasure over instruction. According to the *Critical Review*, the former was "intent on the improvement of navigation, geography, and natural history" whereas the latter work aimed "rather at gratifying the curiosity with novelty and anecdote, than disseminating useful information." The review went on to say that the *Journal of a Voyage* was "properly enough conducted" and those "such as read chiefly for amusement, or the gratification which uncommon occurrences afford, will not be displeased with this narrative."<sup>31</sup> Another reviewer encountered a similar problem after comparing Louis Antoine de Bougainville's *Voyage round the World* and a translation of Dom Pernety's *History of a Voyage to the Malouine (or Falkland) Islands* and concluded

It is evident that the former is greatly superior in point of useful information. The chief design of Dom Pernety being apparently to amuse his readers, he admitted into his work the relation of many trifling occurrences; while, on the contrary, M. de Bougainville has

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<sup>30</sup> Henry Fielding, *A Voyage to Lisbon*, in *The Works of Henry Fielding Esq.*, 10 vols., ed. Leslie Stephen, (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1882), VII, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Critical Review* 38 (1774): 178; 39 (1775): 470, 473.

been minutely solicitious, not only to give a faithful account of the natural history of the countries, and the manners of the people which he visited; but likewise to correct the errors of former charts, and improve geography more than any preceding navigator.<sup>32</sup>

Travelling was to overcome the writer's prejudices, and his travel journals were to be true and impartial in helping to defeat the prejudices of those who remained at home. The *Critical Review* viewed "inquisitive, sensible, and impartial" travellers as instrumental in eradicating prejudices because their travel books dispelled "unreasonable and gloomy antipathies against those manners, customs, forms of government, and religion, to which we have not been bred." Similarly, the *Spectator* wrote that the end of travelling was "to unlearn some odd Peculiarities in our Manners, and wear off such awkward Stiffnesses and Affectations in our Behaviour."<sup>33</sup> Pierre Jean Grosley, however, failed to leave his prejudice behind and coloured the narrative of his *Tour to London* with "pre-conceived" opinions. The reviewer was quick to condemn that Grosley had "multiplied" observations, "twisted" and "misapplied" facts, and even invented reasoning.<sup>34</sup> To help overcome prejudice and erase preconceived notions, the traveller was to acquaint himself with the histories and any other relevant information on the countries to be visited before leaving home.

Johnson discussed some of the necessary and required qualifications of a traveller in his introduction to Percy's review of Grainger's poem "Sugar-

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<sup>32</sup> *Critical Review* 33 (1772): 68.

<sup>33</sup> *Critical Review* 30 (1770): 195-6; *Spectator* No. 364, April 28, 1712. See also *Critical Review* 21 (1766): 401-06; *Monthly Review* 46 (1772): 48-53.

<sup>34</sup> *Critical Review* 33 (1772): 426.

Cane," which appeared in the *London Chronicle* in 1764. "To travel usefully in any country requires a course of study and disposition of mind suited to the objects which that country particularly presents to curiosity,"<sup>35</sup> he wrote. Acute powers of observation were to be combined with a rational mind, allowing the traveller to examine as a "philosopher" and describe as a "poet." In addition to these qualities of mind, the traveller was to have a knowledge of the area to be visited, for, according to Johnson, "books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind; his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another."<sup>36</sup> This comment was made in response to a remark made by George Dempster, who, in a letter to Boswell, was of the opinion that Johnson had

taken opportunity of ingrafting into the work [*A Journey to Western Islands of Scotland*] several good observations, which I dare say he had made upon men and things, before he set foot on Scotch ground, by which it is considerably enriched.<sup>37</sup>

That such foreknowledge enhanced a travel account, since it directed a traveller's observations and inquiries, was also supported by writers, reviewers and readers.

Reviewers expected a travel account to be "elegant" but not

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<sup>35</sup> *Prefaces and Dedications*, p. 170.

<sup>36</sup> *Life*, III, pp. 301-02.

<sup>37</sup> *Life*, V, p. 408. In this same letter Dempster also wrote that after reading the *Journey*, he had been "well entertained. His [Johnson's] descriptions are accurate and vivid. He carried me on the Tour along with him. . . The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished, that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious, regions, had all possessed his good sense."

"luxuriante" in description, it was to gratify curiosity and, most importantly as the *Critical Review* wrote, it was to "introduce and improve our acquaintance with men and things; display a comparative sketch of human nature, and to establish true notions of life and living."<sup>38</sup> The progress of humanity itself was an important and curious subject with the reading public, so this was a priority. The narrator was to describe the people, their customs and habits—such information improved knowledge and enabled the reader to better judge. Lord Chesterfield, in numerous letters to his son, stressed the importance of seeing people at their daily routines, because only through observing the day-to-day activities of common life could one become totally informed about a place<sup>39</sup>. Daniel Defoe was also dedicated to such observation, and declared,

I have endeavoured that these letters shall not be a journal of trifles . . . My business is rather to give a true and impartial description of the place; a view of the country, its present state as to fertility, commerce, manufacture, and product; with the manners and usages of the people . . . and to this I shall confine my self as strictly as the nature of a journey thro' the country requires.<sup>40</sup>

Writers such as Joseph Addison, Tobias Smollett, Sacheverell Stevens, Thomas Nugent, Richard Twiss, and Thomas Pennant also commented on human nature and daily living, earning the praise of reviewers. And in *A*

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<sup>38</sup> *Critical Review* 21 (1766): 322. See also *Critical Review* 7 (1759): 505-12; 25 (1768): 185-90; 34 (1772): 353-61; 39 (1775): 303-10; *Monthly Review* 42 (1770): 509-10; 46 (1772): 204-12.

<sup>39</sup> Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, *Letters to His Son*, intro. Oliver H.G. Leigh, 2 vols., (Washington: Dunne, 1901).

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 2 vols., 1928, rpt., (2 vols. in 1), (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1974), pp. 136-37.

*Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, Johnson was interested in the manners and history of the Highlanders, rather than the conventional travel book topics of natural history and antiquities, arts and sciences.

Both reviewers and writers stressed that travellers should not limit their subjects but inquire into all areas of life, from manufacture and medicine to agriculture and customs. Such peculiar and memorable information was beneficial to those who stayed at home, enabling them to compare and learn. In a letter to Warren Hastings, governor-general of India, Johnson focused on the educational value of travelling into new lands, while promoting a learning interest in India and Persia:

I shall hope that he who once intended to encrease the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language, will examine nicely the Traditions and Histories of the East, that he will survey the remains of its ancient Edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that at his return we shall know the arts and opinions of a Race of Men from whom very little has been hitherto derived.<sup>41</sup>

Johnson often gave such advice to his voyaging friends and acquaintances, suggesting subjects that would be of interest to the traveller and benefit those at home.

Johnson held curiosity in high esteem and discussed it in several of his works, including *Rambler* 150, where he wrote, "Curiosity is, in great and generous minds, the first passion and the last."<sup>42</sup> Here he discussed the role of curiosity in the acquisition of knowledge and told the story of Acastus, who was "prevailed upon by his curiosity to set rocks and hardships at defiance,

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<sup>41</sup> *Letters*, I, p. 403.

<sup>42</sup> *Rambler* 150, V, p. 34.

and commit his life to the winds." Similarly, his dedication to John Warren in *Voyage to Abyssinia* read,

A generous and elevated mind is distinguish'd by nothing more certainly than an eminent degree of curiosity, nor is that curiosity ever more agreeably or usefully employ'd, than in examining the laws and customs of foreign nations.<sup>43</sup>

And the section addressed "To the Public" in the Advertisement announcing the *World Displayed*, which editor Hazen has said "must surely be by Johnson," stated "Curiosity is seldom so powerfully excited, or so amply gratified, as by faithful Relations of Voyages and Travels."<sup>44</sup> Johnson believed that mental and moral growth, which enabled the study of men and manners, depended upon a lively curiosity. The *Critical Review* promoted the importance of curiosity and agreed that travel books were

A species of writing which is adapted to all capacities, which affords continual food to that curiosity which is so natural to the mind of man, and that love of novelty which is inseparable from it, can never fail of admirers: it is no wonder therefore that voyages and travels should be universally read.<sup>45</sup>

This was in line with eighteenth-century English thought that proclaimed that travel improved knowledge through experience and the acquisition of new images, while satisfying natural curiosity, leading to an improvement of character.

Information gathered as a result of this lively curiosity was to be

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<sup>43</sup> *Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Prefaces and Dedications*, p. 217.

<sup>45</sup> *Critical Review* 1(1756): 309.



obtained firsthand and be based on personal observation rather than on hearsay, with error being avoided through inquiry and questioning. This direct gathering of information ensured that a work was consistent and accurate, important qualities since authenticity was one of the reviewer's top criteria. Because of this emphasis on the personal, reviewers judged that autobiographical content served four functions: it provided order, conveyed entertainment, proved the author was accurate and truthful, and showed him to be the sort of man whose descriptions could be trusted.<sup>46</sup>

Personal colourings and details helped determine the authenticity of a work, so reviewers looked for details—dates, maps, names—combined with precise and accurate descriptions. Based on content, the *Monthly Review* wrote that the *Observations in a Journey to Paris* were the "genuine observations of a sensible traveller, and a good writer: —need we add, that his book affords information and entertainment!" and similarly the *London Magazine* claimed that *A Four Months' Tour through France* was "a sensible and entertaining description of the most capital places in France, enlivened with many anecdotes, and hath the marks of being faithfully given."<sup>47</sup> Books that lacked factual particulars and accuracy, such as Derrick's *Collection of Travels*, were accused of favouring the romantic.<sup>48</sup>

New travel books were often compared for faithfulness to established

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<sup>46</sup> Charles L. Batten Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-century Travel Literature*, (Berkeley & London: U. California P., 1978), p. 76. .

<sup>47</sup> *Monthly Review* 57 (1777): 245; *London Magazine* 45 (1776): 548.

<sup>48</sup> *Critical Review* 15 (1762): 43.

accounts. The reviewer of *A Soldier's Journal* found that it agreed "extremely well with the most authentic accounts that were published during the last war," while the *Critical Review* was convinced of the authenticity of Riedesel's *Travels Through Sicily* because it supported earlier travellers' observations, and wrote, "Baron Riedesel confirms the account of the prodigious size of the chest-nut tree, mentioned by Sir William Hamilton in his account of Mount Aetna."<sup>49</sup> Johnson supported such comparison in *Idler* 87 as a way of establishing truth because "Many relations of travellers have been slighted as fabulous, till more frequent voyages have confirmed their veracity."<sup>50</sup> This was the case with James Bruce, whose tales of Abyssinia were judged by reviewers to be fabulous.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these comparative checks, reviewers did misjudge. Both the *Critical* and *Monthly Reviews* mistakenly judged Joseph Marshall's *Travels through Holland, Flanders, etc.* authentic, based on internal evidence, and hailed Marshall as "a man of veracity" who had contributed "both to the amusement of his readers and the improvement of his country."<sup>52</sup> The *Critical Review* failed to recognize the fictional nature of *The Shipwreck and Adventures of Mons. Pierre Viaud*, was ready to classify *Observations on the Manners and Customs of Italy* as a compilation were it not for "some intrinsic evidence that the author had been in Italy," and was fooled by the

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<sup>49</sup> *Critical Review* 29 (1770): 154; 35 (1773): 60.

<sup>50</sup> *Idler* 87, p. 270.

<sup>51</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine* 59 (1789): 544.

<sup>52</sup> *Critical Review* 33 (1772): 360; see also *Monthly Review* 47 (1772): 38, 252.

observations of Gemeili Carreri on his voyage around the world. Carreri had "borrowed" information from others and was "a compiler rather than a traveller."<sup>53</sup>

Reviewers and readers alike were apt to be more lenient with foreign writers, who were considered to be more attentive to detail and observation. Some native writers even published under an assumed identity, as was the case with *New Observations on Italy and its Inhabitants*, said to be the work of two Swedish gentlemen, but actually written by Pierre Jean Grosley. The *Critical Review* explained the reasons for writing under an assumed name:

One was, because the French think, that foreign travellers are generally more attentive, more patient, and less superficial, than their countrymen; and, at the same time, more judicious and impartial in their observations. Another was, because this disguise enabled him to censure the national foibles and religions of the French with greater freedom.<sup>54</sup>

Such skepticism was to be expected in an age that had been fooled by the likes of "George Psalmanazar." Psalmanazar, as he called himself, had pretended to be a Formosan and wrote a book on his imaginary birthplace, going so far as to invent a Formosan language based on an alphabet of his own creation, which he taught at Oxford. Reviewers were also wary of the increasing number of fireside travellers whose works were popular because of their entertainment value. Fireside travellers never experienced the perils of travelling but wrote from the comforts of their own homes, drawing upon their imagination and other travel books as opposed to personal observation

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<sup>53</sup> *Critical Review* 31 (1771): 238-39; 22 (2nd ser.) (1798): 491-92; 492.

<sup>54</sup> *Critical Review* 28 (1769): 29.

and examination. The *Critical Review* accused John Northall's *Travels through Italy* of this, concluding,

But alas! we do not remember to have had the good fortune through the whole compass of the book, to meet with one description or observation that might not have been made by the captain without quitting his elbow-chair or his fire-side.<sup>55</sup>

The reviewer went on to say that the book contained nothing "but the hackneyed chit-chat of every French or Swiss smatterer in the five arts, and which we will venture to say has been published in above fifty different books of travel."

Because of the emphasis upon the authentic and the increasing number of false travellers, writers openly declared their devotion to accuracy. In the preface to *Voyage to Lisbon*, Fielding stated, "I do solemnly declare doth, in my own impartial opinion, deviate less from truth than any voyage extant."<sup>56</sup> Writers added particular details to their descriptions to prove that they had actually visited a place. Addison, in *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, made the public aware that he wrote from personal observations by providing descriptions such as the following:

At two miles distance from "Milan" there stands a building, that would have been a master-piece in its kind, had the architect designed it for an artificial echo. We discharged a pistol, and had the sound returned upon us above fifty six times, though the air was very foggy.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Critical Review* 21 (1766): 280.

<sup>56</sup> *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.*, 4 vols., (London: Jacob Tonson, 1721), II, pp. 15-16.

Smollett stressed that his observations in *Travels Through France and Italy* were from experience:

You must know, I made a second excursion to these ancient ruins, and measured the arena of the amphitheatre with packthread. It is an oval figure; the longest diameter extending to about one hundred and thirteen feet, and the shortest to eighty-eight; but I will not answer for the exactness of the measurements.<sup>58</sup>

The fact that Smollett made two visits to the ruins and included measurements, even if they were not exact, added credibility to his travels. The reader knew that he was actually there. Reviewers, in turn, acknowledged authentic accounts and established their credibility in the eyes of the reading public. For example, the review of the *Conduct of the Dutch of the Empire of China* read, in part,

Our traveller has enlivened his Journal with many entertaining observations and anecdotes; which, at the same time that they contribute to amuse the Reader, serve to convince him of the general authenticity of the work.<sup>59</sup>

Whatever the author chose to describe, he was to have a clear understanding based upon personal observation and examination. Reviewers praised those accounts that were not only observant and precise but avoided a narrow focus in favour of variety:

It is to be wished, that travellers were always attentive to examine, and to describe, the way of thinking, and the laws, of the inhabitants of those through which they pass. We should then perceive, and be enabled to judge of, mankind in all that variety of character which they discover, in different climates, and under the influence of different

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<sup>58</sup> Tobias Smollett, *Travels Through France & Italy*, ed. Frank Felsenstein, (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1979), p. 144.

<sup>59</sup> *Monthly Review* 25 (1761): 504.

institutions and manners.<sup>60</sup>

Writers followed suit. John Moore, in *A View of Society and Manners in Italy*, commented only after making the "fairest trials," the "most accurate observations," and examined "over and over with great attention."<sup>61</sup>

Laurence Sterne criticized those whose judgements were based on little information and never bothered to find out facts. Tristram, in *Tristram Shandy*, says,

That I think it wrong, merely because a man's hat has been blown off his head by chance, the first night he comes to Avignon,—that he should therefore say, "Avignon is more subject to high winds than any town in all France:" for which reason, I laid no stress upon the accident till I had inquired of the master of the inn about it, who telling me seriously it was so—and hearing moreover, the windyness of Avignon spoke of in the country about us as a proverb—I set it down, merely to ask the learned what can be the cause.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike the majority of travellers who made sweeping generalizations, Sterne had Tristram make inquiries first and only then did he comment.

The writer of travels was also required to write on the new or provide a new approach, bringing new light to an old topic. "Travels acquire one great part of their merit from being new," wrote Goldsmith for the *Critical Review*:

Every country seems like the pictures in a camera obscura, continually altering their tints, tho' the outlines be still the same. A single age

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<sup>60</sup> *Monthly Review* 42 (1770): 510.

<sup>61</sup> John Moore, *A View of Society and Manners in Italy: with Anecdotes relating to Some Eminent Characters*, 2 vols., (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1781), II, p. 239.

<sup>62</sup> Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, in *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, 3 vols., eds. Melvyn New and Joan New, (Gainesville: U. Presses of Florida, 1978), II, p. 644.

introduces new customs and manners, as well as inhabitants. . . From every new publication of travels, therefore, the reader has a right to expect recent information, that it at least excels all other accounts by giving, if not more authentic, at least more modern descriptions.<sup>63</sup>

According to Goldsmith, the writer could also provide new light on an old topic, "as novelty confers even on trifling occurrences some degree of importance, especially in the opinion of the observers." The author of *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747, and 1748* described objects as they were presented to him, while John Northall's *Travels through Italy* provided a new approach to his descriptions. A reviewer wrote, "He has considered things in a new light, and is particularly remarkable for the difference of his tour from that of any other traveller."<sup>64</sup> The *Critical Review* again supported this approach in 1775, writing, "Different itineraries afford diversity of observation; and in so wide a field, footsteps of those who have preceded."<sup>65</sup> Other travellers, finding some travel accounts incomplete, undertook to supply missing information and provided more complete knowledge on particular areas. Addison, in the preface to *Remarks on Several parts of Italy*, stated that in addition to the new subjects still available, certain topics were not yet exhausted. For his own part, he wrote,

I have taken notice of several places and antiquities that nobody else has spoken of, so, I think, I have mentioned but few things in common with others, that are not either set in a new light, or accompanied with different reflections.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Critical Review* 7 (1759): 504.

<sup>64</sup> *Critical Review* 21 (1766): 278.

<sup>65</sup> *Critical Review* 39 (1775): 304.

<sup>66</sup> *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, II, preface.

Reflections based on personal observations tended always to provide some new information. Johnson refused Boswell's request to write an account of his trip to Paris because, he wrote,

Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a hasty traveller, not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the publick any thing of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself.<sup>67</sup>

For this reason Johnson also persuaded Boswell from writing about his travels on the continent.

There was also the fear of being labelled a "whirlwind" or a "careless" tourist by not including enough detail. This hasty tourist is satirized in *Idler* 97, "Narratives of Travellers Considered," which detailed specific and characteristic faults of travel books. In this piece, Johnson criticized writers that described the "face" (mere topographical description) of the country only without offering anything new or any reflection on what they had seen. Those who "pass a desert, and tell that it is sandy; who cross a valley, and find that it is green," and "amuse the gentle reader with catalogue pictures. . . and recount the number of pillars or variegations of the pavement."<sup>68</sup> These people travelled with such haste, leaving no time for information gathering and often resorting to fancy and conjecture. For example, English reviewers and the reading public quickly pointed out the many silly mistakes made by Pierre Jean Grosley in *Tour to London*, causing one reviewer to comment,

How vain it is for a person, even of the greatest abilities, to attain, in

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<sup>67</sup> *Letters*, II, p. 39.

<sup>68</sup> *Idler* 97, p. 300.



the space of a few weeks, that knowledge of men and manners, which demands the study of years.<sup>69</sup>

It was important to the quality of a travel account that sufficient time be given to investigation and comparison in order to obtain a knowledge of the people and their manners. A lack of details and personal observations often cast doubt on a writer's authenticity, something to be avoided in an age marked so much by lying travellers that "the veracity of almost every traveller" was suspected.<sup>70</sup> Laurence Sterne ridiculed the whirlwind traveller who presumed to provide accurate descriptions after brief stays. Upon leaving Chantilly, Tristram says,

—No;—I cannot stop a moment to give you the character of the people—their genius—their manners—their customs—their laws—their religion—their government . . . qualified as I may be, by spending three days and two nights amongst them, and during all that time, making these things the entire subject of my enquiries and reflections—

Still—still I must away.<sup>71</sup>

The reviewer of *Six Months Tour through the North of England* advised the author, Arthur Young, "not to travel too fast,"<sup>72</sup> advice the author heeded because in the review of *A Farmer's Tour through the East of England* (1771) no such criticism appeared.

To counter such criticism, writers stressed in their titles the length of

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<sup>69</sup> *Critical Review* 34 (1772): 102.

<sup>70</sup> *Critical Review* 30 (1770): 196.

<sup>71</sup> *Tristram Shandy*, II, p. 604.

<sup>72</sup> *Monthly Review* 42 (1770): 269.

time devoted to travelling. Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland* was "Made in the Years 1766, 1777, and 1778." Louis Antoine de Bougainville travelled around the world "in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769," on a voyage "performed by Order of his Most Christian Majesty," and such information in the title gave his work added authenticity.<sup>73</sup> Stating duration assured readers that ample time had been taken to provide accurate observations.

The credibility of the writer himself was another important criterion. Both reviewer and reader wanted to know the traveller's "bona fides:" who he was, why and where he was travelling, how he got from place to place, and what precautions he took (journal, on-the-spot letter) in being faithful to the experience. They also expected to know what sort of information he was claiming to bring back, of what practical use it was, and what amusing things he had done, seen, said, suffered or thought. Since the quality of an account began with the traveller himself, these questions were of great importance. The traveller was expected to be candid, judicious, entertaining, familiar with languages and acquitted of prejudice. His visit was to be of sufficient duration to learn of men and manners, thereby ensuring the veracity of his information while allowing him to correct any hasty impression. The *Critical Review* claimed that to sustain a strict and critical examination of a foreign country, a writer required a variety of advantages which were rarely united in one person:

To describe with accuracy and precision the productions of nation or art, a previous knowledge of the subjects described is indispensably necessary; to discriminate and select anecdotes worthy of

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<sup>73</sup> Arthur Young, *Tour in Ireland* (1776-1779), (London: George Bell & Sons, 1892); *Monthly Review* 46 (1772): 204.

communications, requires judgement and taste; and to interest and amuse with the relation of incidental occurrences, it is necessary they should be, what in the nature of things they rarely will be, new or important.—Nor is this all—they will lose their effect, unless the relater possess the singular felicity of communicating to others the same impressions which those occurrences excited in himself.<sup>74</sup>

A more scientific approach had now replaced the romantic, encouraging the writer to apply natural good sense when visiting foreign countries. Common sense was appealed to in the absence of any perceived weaknesses and served as a necessary check in an age of moral corruption and vulgar extravagances. Thus, the traveller was to be both pragmatic and systematic, ensuring authentic and accurate descriptions based on full and judicious observations. Reviewers praised the candid and discerning writer who applied a common sense approach based on observation and examination, judgement and taste. "The traveller has everywhere described his route with clearness and energy," read the review of Wraxall's *Cursory Remarks*, "and his Remarks, though entitled *Cursory*, are extremely judicious."<sup>75</sup>

To further ensure accuracy, writers suggested that they took notes on the spot, knowing that reviewers would pick up on such declarations. Reviewers saluted such statements. As one commented, "Like a faithful narrator, he trusted not to his memory; but committed his remarks to paper as soon as he had examined their objects."<sup>76</sup> Johnson favoured the practice of

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<sup>74</sup> *Critical Review* 47 (1779): 417.

<sup>75</sup> *Critical Review* 47 (1779): 417; 40 (1775): 111.

<sup>76</sup> *Critical Review* 31 (1771): 121.

putting observations and inquiries to paper rather than leaving them to memory. Relying on memory, he commented while travelling in Scotland, was "more dangerous to the veracity of itinerary narratives, than imperfect mensuration," because the traveller who depended upon memory, waiting for more leisure and better accommodation, would, he postulated,

scarcely believe how much a few hours take from certainty of knowledge, and distinctness of imagery; how the succession of objects will be broken, how separate parts will be confused, and how many particular features and discriminations will be compressed and conglobated into one gross and general idea.<sup>77</sup>

Such dependence upon the memory caused guessing and contradiction, which undermined certainty and veracity. To counter this and ensure accuracy, Johnson kept a book of remarks during his trip to the Hebrides, preferring journals over histories since they allowed for personal experience and observation.<sup>78</sup> Using these criteria, he praised Boswell's journal of his trip to Corsica, and told him,

You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers. I know not whether I could name any narrative by which curiosity is better excited, or better gratified.<sup>79</sup>

Count Leopold Berchtold recommended that "travellers ought to commit to paper whatever they find remarkable, hear, or read, and their sensations on examining different objects; it is advisable to do it upon the spot."<sup>80</sup> Travel

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<sup>77</sup> *Journey*, p. 146; pp. 146-47.

<sup>78</sup> Johnson's book of remarks has never been found.

<sup>79</sup> *Life*, I, p. 70.

<sup>80</sup> *An Essay*, p. 43.

writers such as Moore, Nugent, Smollett and Young declared that their observations were based on accurate notetaking of sufficient duration. Personal observations, along with ensuring veracity and providing information, allowed travel books to differ, adding an autobiographical element to them.

Although the travel writer had to prove his authenticity by recording personal experiences, he could not tell too much about himself for fear of being labelled an egotist or a fiction writer. Displays of an author's vanity were chastised by reviewers as being the "most disagreeable of all subjects." Philip Thicknesse was criticized for his use of "conceited egotisms" and "hackneyed encomiums upon himself."<sup>81</sup> Writers guilty of this were often more interested in entertainment than instruction. Yet, despite the avoidance of "I," using "we" and "you" instead, eighteenth-century travel literature remained largely autobiographical.

In order to avoid labels such as "egotistical," "idle," or "careless," Charles L. Batten points out that travel writers often assumed roles: philosophical, splenetic, sentimental or picturesque. The role of the philosopher was the most common guise used by the eighteenth-century traveller, governing the "major travel accounts of the entire century."<sup>82</sup> Supported by the Royal Society and dedicated to accuracy, the philosophic traveller measured, questioned and examined, collecting information beneficial to the stay-at-home reader. Such an observant traveller was defined

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<sup>81</sup> *Critical Review* 25 (1768): 284; 22 (1766): 434.

<sup>82</sup> Batten, p. 72.

by one reviewer this way:

In the travels of a Philosopher, the discoveries of science, the improvements of art, the extension of knowledge,—in a word, the general advantage of mankind, or the particular benefit of his own country, are the objects of his attention.<sup>83</sup>

Philosophic travellers were inquisitive and investigative. They include travellers such as Addison who experimented with echoes, Smollett and his collection of thermometer readings, Young with his investigation of agronomy, and Samuel Johnson who exercised reason, tested authorities, tried conjectures, corrected inferences and sought out the cause of error while in Scotland. The philosopher, according to Count Berchtold, looked upon his home country "as a sick friend, for whose relief he asks the advice of all the world."<sup>84</sup>

The splenetic traveller, like the philosopher, had a perceptive mind and appeared quite frequently in travel accounts. Impervious to natural beauty, he grumbled and complained throughout his travels. Sterne's Yorick, in *A Sentimental Journey*, ridiculed the splenetic traveller, and classified travellers under various headings: idle, inquisitive, lying, proud, vain, splenetic, travellers of necessity, the delinquent and felonious traveller, the unfortunate and innocent traveller, the simple traveller, and the sentimental traveller. Yet this traveller became so popular that reviewers complained. "Every inch of the continent has been described with scrupulous exactness" by "vapourish travellers," wrote the *Analytical Review*.<sup>85</sup> Even Johnson

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<sup>83</sup> *Monthly Review* 28(1763): 215.

<sup>84</sup> *An Essay*, p. 85.

<sup>85</sup> *Analytical Review* 8 (1790): 160.

commented that "There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased."<sup>86</sup> Fielding, Smollett, and Sharpe, who travelled to warmer climates for medicinal reasons, assumed this persona. Travel often served as a cure for melancholy, the "English malady" that victimized the upper classes. The splenetic traveller, because of his melancholic temperament, was seen as a person whose descriptions and observations were to be trusted.

Countering the splenetic and philosophic were the sentimentalist and the picturesque travellers. The sentimentalist tended to describe everything in a favourable light and was happy and content seeing new places and people. The picturesque traveller also had a heightened sensibility, but unlike the sentimentalist, he continually revealed his cultivated and refined tastes for the beauties of art and nature, looking for beauty of every kind, and although he was able to see beauty everywhere, he usually sought it in nature.

Since travel accounts combined pleasure with instruction, principles of narration were to be considered. Narratives did have entertainment value. As Hawkesworth, in *Adventurer* 4, wrote, "No species of writing affords so general entertainment as the relation of events."<sup>87</sup> In choosing events, writers had to be extremely selective in order to avoid the trivial or appear fictitious. Such narratives often proved problematic because reviewers found it difficult to determine whether a work was fact or fiction. For example, *The Voyages and Adventures of the Chevalier Dupont* was classed as a novel but had

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<sup>86</sup> *Life*, III, p. 236.

<sup>87</sup> *Adventurer* 4 (1752): 19.

the appearance of a narrative of real adventures, occurring in a series of trading voyages, while the review of *Letters to An Officer* read, "If these narratives are founded in truth, which possibly, is the case, they are so much embellished as to wear the appearance of Novels."<sup>88</sup> Readers were apt to doubt the authenticity of narratives that appeared even slightly fictitious.

Diction, spelling and style were also considered. Language at this time was undergoing a "tightening process" and particular attention was being paid to word choice. A direct and practical style delighted readers with clear statements, detailed facts and descriptions. Such writing reflected a writer's conviction and established his reputation for truth and sincerity. This was more than an editorial peeve but a reflection of eighteenth-century attitudes toward language development. Swift had proposed an academy for language reform and stabilization, but while it became a reality on the continent, Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) served the purpose in England.

The Royal Society praised accurate and minute observations, encouraged clear and precise diction coupled with an abundance of detailed facts. Earlier writers who had indulged in long disquisitions on tradition and history now provided accurate and useful knowledge based on personal observation in precise language. Such stylistic simplicity separated itself from the older, often eloquent, travel books that contained a "diffuseness of language and an extravagance of hyperbole."<sup>89</sup>

Reviewers and editors were trying to stabilize vocabulary and keep it

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<sup>88</sup> *Monthly Review* 46 (1772): 625; 48 (1773): 328.

<sup>89</sup> R.W. Frantz, "The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas 1660-1732" *University Studies* 32-33 (1932-33): 57.



pure from foreign borrowings and importations, scrutinizing grammar, spelling and diction. John-Henry Grose's *Voyage to the East-Indies* was "incisserently penned" and criticized for its "stiff and laboured stile," full of "affectations" and "unheard of words and phrases." Grose had used words such as "parotry," "subjacent," and "improvidence," of which the reviewer wrote, "In what part of his travels our author pick'd up these uncouth strangers, we know not; certain it is, they are not of English growth; nor shall we, perhaps, very readily admit of their naturalization."<sup>90</sup> The language used in *Travels through Portugal and Spain*, by Richard Twiss, was said by the *Monthly Review* to be inaccurate, while the *Critical Review* criticized James Boswell for his word choice in his *Account of Corsica*.<sup>91</sup>

The extensive number of travel reviews show that reviewers considered and examined all classes of travel books. From a young tourist writing of his first grand tour to the experienced traveller and researcher, no one was above the reviewer's pen. These reviews also reveal the successful establishment of a set of conventions that were adhered to by travel writers and accepted by the reading public. Such a quantity of review material had considerable influence on writers, especially Johnson, who, in his works, supported and elucidated the criteria established by reviewers. But although we have seen that Johnson shared many of the reviewers' criteria, when it came to writing his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, he followed his

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<sup>90</sup> *Critical Review* 4 (1757): 319.

<sup>91</sup> *Monthly Review* 53 (1775): 193. Interestingly, the *Critical Review* 39 (1775): 303-10, 351-58, does not mention language in its review of *Travels through Portugal and Spain*; *Critical Review* 25 (1769): 181.

own advice: "He that would travel for the entertainment of others, should remember that the great object of remark is human life."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Idler* 97, p. 300.

## Chapter Three

### Johnson in Scotland and the Resulting *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

The narrative of a journey written by a person of great abilities proves universally interesting. Not only curiosity is then gratified with new scenes, and the imagination pleased with lively descriptions, but the understanding likewise receives its share of entertainment. . . . Amidst a deficiency of the works of art, or the improvements of industry, he can still amuse us with the genuine representation of nature, and attract our attention with philosophy and sentimental recreation. . . . Of this distinguished class is the writer with whom we are now engaged, whose excursion to the Hebrides will probably hereafter be regarded as the epoch of valuable information with respect to those remote islands.

*The Critical Review* (1775)<sup>1</sup>

According to the above review, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* fulfilled the criteria put forth by reviews and supported by travel writers and the reading public of what a well-written travel book should include. Johnson had used curiosity, imagination and philosophy in writing an interesting narrative that amused, entertained and instructed the reader with new scenes, lively descriptions and genuine representations of nature. But Johnson had something else in mind besides a reviewer's checklist when he wrote his narrative. He had gone to the Western Islands in order to

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<sup>1</sup> *Critical Review* 39 (1775): 33.

compare his notions of Scotland with Scottish realities—"till we have compared them [ideas] with realities," he wrote, "we do not know them to be just,"<sup>2</sup>—and in the opening paragraph of the *Journey* he established his main motive for travelling—the acquisition of new images and knowledge through "inquiry." Such inquiry broadened the basis of comparison, stimulated learning, and allowed him to look to experience and examination in paralleling his notions with realities and in reaching just conclusions about life. The result of this trip, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, is a philosophic travel book rather than a scientific account filled with specifics and details.

The *Journey's* unusual moral emphasis and its interest in the manners, social conditions and everyday occurrences of the people constituted a departure from the conventional travel book topics of natural history and antiquities. The *Journey* also differed from Johnson's other writings because of his own presence in the work and his concern with the outcome: he was interested in the past, present and future of the Highlands. Mary Lascelles noted that the work was different in its "intensity of concern as to the outcome" and concluded that, "The ideas burn, as in the heart of a fire, and are communicated in a manner he used nowhere else."<sup>3</sup> These departures have led to great debate and discussion over whether the *Journey* is actually a travel book and if so, what type of travel book it is.

Contemporary critics and reviews had only praise for the work. The *Gentleman's Magazine* drew attention to the journal's philosophical quality,

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<sup>2</sup> *Journey*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Journey*, p. xv.

observing that the "life and blood," the "flesh and spirit" of the work lay in its reflections.<sup>4</sup> Griffiths, writing for the *Monthly Review*, praised Johnson, the philosophic traveller, for his reflection, instructive narration and adherence to truth.<sup>5</sup> John Hawkins, author of *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, asserted that the *Journey* might properly be called a "dissertation," for it had "scarcely any facts" and consisted chiefly of "propositions which he hunts down, and enlivens with amusing disquisition."<sup>6</sup> He observed that men and manners engaged Johnson's attention and provided him with "new topics for reflection and disquisition," a mental exercise Johnson most delighted in. Hawkins also argued that Johnson's web was spun "not from objects that presented themselves to his view, but from his own pre-existent ideas," which were an "entertaining series of reflections." George Dempster agreed and praised Johnson for his "good sense." In a letter to Boswell, Dempster wrote, "The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of." In his opinion Johnson had "taken [the] opportunity of ingrafting into the work several good observations, which I daresay he had made upon men and things before he set foot on Scotch ground, by which it is considerably enriched."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* 45 (1775): 37-38.

<sup>5</sup> *Monthly Review* 52 (1775): 57-65.

<sup>6</sup> John Hawkins, *The Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.*, ed. Bertram H. Davis, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> *Life* V, p. 408. Johnson agreed with this, being of the opinion that "books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind: his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another." *Life*, III, pp. 301-2.

Unlike contemporary criticism, modern critics are divided over the placement of the work. "Johnson's *Journey*," wrote Walter Jackson Bate, "is a straightforward travel account, focusing on places that would be of interest to other travelers," and is distinguished from other travel books by Johnson's "inquiring into general social conditions."<sup>8</sup> In Arthur Sherbo's opinion, Johnson was writing in a recognizable and popular genre that held certain conventions of what a travel book should and should not include, and Charles L. Batten asserts that it belongs in the mainstream of the eighteenth-century travel journal.<sup>9</sup> Edward Tomarken views the work as "literary and historical, a carefully structured narrative which describes the Highland culture of 1773," and sees Johnson as a fictional character who, because of his travels, goes from ignorance to wisdom, following the theme of growth from innocence to experience.<sup>10</sup> Both George Savage and Jeffrey Hart also view the work as thematic in structure, with Savage showing Scotland as a metaphor of the "condition of isolated humanity everywhere," and Hart writing that it

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 470.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Sherbo, "Johnson's Intent in the *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*," *Essays in Criticism* 16 (1966) 382-97; Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature*, (Berkeley & London: U. California P, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> Edward Tomarken, "A Historico-Literary Text: Samuel Johnson in Scotland," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 4 (1977): 23; "Travels into the Unknown: *Rasselas* and *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*," in *The Unknown Samuel Johnson*, eds. John J. Burke, Jr., and Donald Kay, (Madison: U. Wisconsin P., 1983), pp. 150-67.

is "a highly-wrought work of art, possessing a complex organization."<sup>11</sup> Thomas Curley asks if the piece is more a moral work or a genuine travel book and answers that there is really only one adequate answer: the work is a "two-fold triumph of art and travel, displaying the moral patterns of his travel tales and the usual format of contemporary travel books."<sup>12</sup> Julius Nwaju Ogu compared Johnson's *Journey* to five contemporary travel books, including Pennant's and Martin's, and concluded that the work contained "too many reflections and is too philosophical to qualify as an ordinary travel narrative."<sup>13</sup> Yet, to other critics such as Joseph Wood Krutch, "Johnson was not especially gifted either as a traveller or as a writer of travel books."<sup>14</sup>

Compounding the controversy of defining the work and placing it in the context of his own critical development is Johnson's sometimes contradictory attitude toward travel, which parallels recent criticism of the

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<sup>11</sup> George H. Savage, "Roving among the Hebrides: The Odyssey of Samuel Johnson," *Studies in English Literature* 17 (1977): 495; Jeffrey Hart, "Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*: History as Art," *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960): 44-59. Hart argues that there are three themes of "compelling importance" in the *Journey*: the destruction of pre-Reformation Christian structure, the comparison of this past destruction with an analogous destruction Johnson sees taking place in the present, and the rise of a middle class progressive culture toward values which Johnson maintains an ambivalent attitude.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas M. Curley, *Samuel Johnson And The Age of Travel*, (Athens: U. Georgia P., 1976), p. 186.

<sup>13</sup> Julius Nwaju Ogu, "Two Perceptions of One Trip: Samuel Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* and James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, LL.D., Phd. diss., Howard U., 1978, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Wood Krutch, *Samuel Johnson*, (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1944), p. 417.

*Journey*. Although travel books occupied an important place in his library, many of his acquaintances were travellers and much of his writing is related to travel, Johnson's attitude toward travel was often ambivalent. For example, in *Rasselas*, Imlac says to the prince,

Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded. Truth such as is necessary to the regulation of life is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of the mind.<sup>15</sup>

His frame of mind often affected his health and influenced his opinion of travelling. En route from London to Edinburgh to start his tour with Boswell, Johnson predicted that he would be disappointed in his hope of seeing new manners because of humanity's moral uniformity, and wrote,

You have often heard me complain of finding myself disappointed by books of travels, I am afraid travel itself will end likewise in disappointment. One town, one country is very like another. Civilized nations have the same customs, and barbarous nations have the same nature. There are indeed minute discriminations both of places and of manners, which perhaps are not unworthy of curiosity, but which a traveller seldom stays long enough to investigate and compare.<sup>16</sup>

This irritable attitude may be attributed to the fact that Johnson had seen the country through which he passed before, was plagued by a number of physical

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<sup>15</sup> *Rasselas*, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> *Letters*, I, p. 340. Seven days after leaving Edinburgh, Johnson wrote of the difficulties of travelling in his letter to Mrs. Thrale of 25 August, 1773: "It has so happened that though I am perpetually thinking on you, I could seldom find opportunity to write. I have in fourteen days sent only one Letter. You must consider the fatigues of travel, and the difficulties encountered in a strange Country." *Letters*, I, p. 342.



complaints that only added to the discomforts of travel, and after six days and ten stops, he was only as far as Newcastle.

This disappointment in travel was reiterated in *Idler* 58, where he used words such as "disappointment," "clouded with misfortune," and "malevolence" in depicting a journey, which led him to write, "It is seldom that we find either men or places such as we expect them."<sup>17</sup> In this piece, entitled "Expectations of Pleasure frustrated," Johnson went so far as to distinguish between the realities of travel and the fallacies of imaginary voyages. The stay-at-home traveller avoids all inconveniences because, he wrote, "he has shade and sunshine at his disposal, and whenever he alights finds tables of plenty and looks of gaiety." Life, however, offered a different picture. The experienced Johnson knew that roads were "dusty," the air "sultry," the horses "sluggish" and the inn "crowded." Even with old friends, a traveller, is "coldly received, and ceremoniously feasted." The dismal picture of travel presented here is full of discomforts and disappointments.

But Johnson fully intended that his *Journey* be read, and some of the critical readings may be better understood by examining the work to see whether it articulates critical and aesthetic principles that are found in his other writings, as discussed in the previous chapters. And yet, the *Journey* is not a straightforward account filled with particulars and personal events and circumstances, as are Thomas Pennant's *Tours*<sup>18</sup> and Boswell's *Journal of a*

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<sup>17</sup> *Idler* 58, p. 181.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland* MDCCLXIX (1771) and *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides* MDCCLXXII (1774).

*Tour to the Hebrides*,<sup>19</sup> or even his own letters to Mrs. Thrale, which are filled with personal details that do not appear in his work.

Boswell's *Tour* is an actual journal, a day-to-day record rather than a travel book on the Hebrides. Being a chronological account, there is a direct relationship between the length of their visit and the length of the work, whereas the *Journey* is neither a journal nor a tourist guide. Boswell was always watching Johnson, recording minor details, snippets of conversation, reactions, debates and the topics discussed, which makes his work a biographical and anecdotal account of Johnson in Scotland. As a result, Boswell does not always describe scenes or things very clearly and his accounts are often imprecise. At the end of the *Tour* we are left with memories of people and events, but at the end of the *Journey* we are reminded of the problems in Scotland and the work that has to be done. Read together, the two works illuminate one another, for they contain different observations and responses, and are different in their language, focus and emphasis.

In writing of his adventures in Scotland, Johnson adopted Imlac's view of poetry that is expressed in *Rasselas*. Imlac tells his protégé Rasselas that

The business of a poet . . . is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances: he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recal the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations . . .

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<sup>19</sup> James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 1785.

But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life.<sup>20</sup>

This primary concern with the species—all modes of life and human nature—is also expressed in *Idler* 97, where Johnson wrote, "He that would travel for the entertainment of others should remember that the great object of remark is human life."<sup>21</sup> This regard for human nature runs counter to the true idea of empiricism. While in Scotland, Johnson was very much concerned with everyday interests, the manners of a people rather than romantic absurdities or incredible fictions, and at the beginning of his journey, he remarked,

But it must be remembered, that life consists not of a series of illustrious actions, or elegant enjoyments; the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessities, in the performance of daily duties . . . The true state of every nation is the state of common life.<sup>22</sup>

As a result of this moral emphasis, focus on human interests and blend of fact and reflection, Johnson was very selective in what he chose to examine and include, and not all of his observations are given equal importance. The resulting travel book is one whose focus is on the curious or unusual as well as common interests that include life and manners. Boswell tells us that

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<sup>20</sup> *Rasselas*, pp. 43-44. Besides Johnson's and Imlac's somewhat ambivalent attitude toward travel, there are other similarities between the *Journey* and *Rasselas*. Both works are journeys of exploration, for just as Rasselas left the happy valley to test notions against facts, so did Johnson leave London, and both combine a mix of hope and disappointment. Rasselas became disillusioned with foreign manners and is disappointed as his preconceptions clashed with reality which parallels Johnson's disappointment in discovering that a past way of life had disappeared.

<sup>21</sup> *Idler* 97, p. 300.

<sup>22</sup> *Journey*, p. 22.

Johnson had always said that he did "not come to Scotland to see fine places, of which there were enough in England; but wild objects,—mountains,—water-falls,—peculiar manners; in short, things which he had not seen before."<sup>23</sup>

In choosing to examine the different and the unusual, or as Johnson said "that which is strange is delightful,"<sup>24</sup> he was supporting his statement in *Idler* 97 that the writer of travels "must offer new images."<sup>25</sup> Because of this, he examined a wide variety of topics, from Loch Ness to his first observance of the use of brogues, a shoe stitched loosely with thongs. On the isle of Raasay, their welcome exceeded their expectations, so much so because of their remote locality that it "struck the imagination with a delightful surprise, analogous to that which is felt at an unexpected emersion from darkness into light."<sup>26</sup> In summing up his observations of Raasay and their reception, he wrote,

Such a seat of hospitality, amidst the winds and waters, fills the imagination with a delightful contrariety of images. Without is the rough ocean and the rocky land, the beating billows and the howling storm: within is plenty and elegance, beauty and gaiety, the songs and the dance.<sup>27</sup>

At Ulinish, they viewed all that was "worthy of observation," including a dun, an ancient circular enclosure, visited Talisker, "a place beyond all that I

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<sup>23</sup> *Life*, V, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> *Journey*, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> *Idler* 97, p. 298.

<sup>26</sup> *Journey*, p. 59.

<sup>27</sup> *Journey*, p. 66.

have seen,"<sup>28</sup> and noted that Inch Kenneth was remarkable for its pleasantness and fertility. At Montrose he mentioned the beggars because, he said, "I had opportunities of observing what I had never heard, that there are many beggars in Scotland," and went on to say, "Novelty has always some power."<sup>29</sup> And in the name of curiosity he examined second sight and discussed Braidwood school for the deaf and dumb.

As soon as he left Edinburgh, Johnson's curiosity was piqued by the sight of Inch Keith, a desolate island that his travelling companions had never taken the interest or time to visit. Its exploration introduces the methods of exploration, examination and reflection that he followed throughout his trip. After exploring the island in order to satisfy his curiosity, he speculated on the defensive system of the earlier Scots and contemplated the possible use of the island if it had been near London. Johnson examined the ruins of the fort but provided the reader with general observations rather than details, conjectures rather than particulars.

Johnson does delve into natural history at times, but it is usually accompanied by a human dimension. Upon entering what Johnson called the "bosom" of the Highlands just outside of Anoch, the group of travellers contemplated the appearance and properties of mountainous regions, but instead of providing a scientific or empirical account of the mountains that

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<sup>28</sup> *Journey*, p. 71; p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Journey*, p. 12. Johnson also mentioned the beggars in a letter to Mrs. Thrale: "There are however more beggars than I have ever seen in England; they beg, if not silently, yet very modestly." *Letters*, I, p. 323.

would include measuring them from sea level, Johnson was concerned with how they were seen by the human eye:

The height of mountains philosophically considered is properly computed from the surface of the next sea; but as it affects the eye or imagination of the passenger, as it makes either a spectacle or an obstruction, it must be reckoned from the place where the rise begins to make a considerable angle with the plain.<sup>30</sup>

The physical environment is not of interest itself but because of its human interaction—how the mountains are perceived and how they affect the imagination. The mountains, the physical environment, are used as a setting for human activity and he tells us that they have served as "the last shelters of national distress," are "every where the scenes of adventures, stratagems, surprises and escapes," are only passed with difficulty, and to anyone who hasn't seen them, they are living unacquainted with "one of the great scenes of human existence."<sup>31</sup>

It is after this experience that Johnson is prompted to write his narration, and what follows, the section entitled "Highlands," contains his most extended analysis of character of the trip and shows the analytical and philosophical qualities of the *Journey*. He introduces his subjects with general comments and follows with what Thomas Jemielity says is a "cause and effect analysis of the distinctive features of Highland society."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Journey*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>31</sup> *Journey*, p. 38; 40.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Jemielity, "More in Notions Than Facts: Samuel Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*," *The Dalhousie Review* 49 (1969): 325. In this article, Jemielity looks at the characteristics that make the *Journey* a philosophical, moral and reflective work and concludes that with Johnson's

Having provided a commentary on mountainous regions, Johnson was now able to "extend" his speculations and "investigate" the reasons for those peculiarities by which rugged regions are generally distinguished.<sup>33</sup> He considered the way things might have happened when discussing the difficulty in conquering mountainous lands, given the circumstances, and imagined the kind of battles fought, how every new ridge provided a new fortress and how invaders were dislodged by hunger. Using a cause and effect analysis, he concluded that mountainous countries commonly contain the oldest race of inhabitants because they are not easy conquered, that their lack of cultivation resulted in uncivilized and primitive ways, and that without outside contact they have remained distinct nations. He reasoned that isolation led to lack of cultivation, and that the savage manners of mountaineers are a product of situation and environment rather than being derived from their ancestors.

Johnson's other interest was with the manners and common, everyday occurrences of the people, and in this section he provided a commentary on all aspects of the Highland way of life—from dress, food and diet to housing, religion and hospitality. He noted, after making inquiries and observations, that the Highlanders are industrious but yet their efforts are often unproductive and fruitless:

But where the climate is unkind, and the ground penurious, so that the most fruitful years will produce only enough to maintain themselves; where life unimproved, and unadorned, fades into

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analysis, "the Highlands come alive in the *Journey* in a way impossible from a mere guidebook approach." (p. 324).

<sup>33</sup> *Journey*, p. 43.

something little more than naked existence, and everyone is busy for himself, without any arts by which the pleasures of others may be increased; if to the daily burden of distress any additional weight be added, nothing remains but to despair and die.<sup>34</sup>

A lack of cultivation and prosperity is also the result of these harsh circumstances. The inhabitants of Skye are described by Johnson as being of middle stature, reasoning that "in regions of barrenness and scarcity, the human race is hindered in its growth by the same causes as other animals."<sup>35</sup> This again is a cause and effect relationship: those of higher rank are less hindered by nature's hardships and are thus taller. The same rationale may be applied to his comments on the island women: "bloom and softness are not to be expected among the lower classes, whose faces are exposed to the rudeness of the climate, and whose features are sometimes contracted by want, and sometimes hardened by the blasts."<sup>36</sup> He connects the lack of supreme beauty in women, like the lack stature in men, to the harsh conditions of life.

Johnson had visited Scotland with the hope of observing a past way of life, that he would view and experience a feudal society where lairds had jurisdiction over their people, and where goods and services were used in place of money. He expected to witness an uncivilized and backward way of life and believed that an impression of the past unlike anything to be gathered from historians would be presented to him. Both he and Boswell

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<sup>34</sup> *Journey*, p. 138.

<sup>35</sup> *Journey*, p. 83.

<sup>36</sup> *Journey*, p. 83.



had hoped to experience things which they had not seen before, and in the opening paragraph of his *Tour*, Boswell wrote,

Martin's Account of those islands had impressed us with a notion that we might there contemplate a system of life almost totally different from what we had been accustomed to see; and, to find simplicity and wildness, and all the circumstances of remote time or place, so near to our native great island, was an object within the reach of reasonable curiosity.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately, Johnson was too late: the Scotland of Martin's day was no longer. Disappointed at having missed this, Johnson surmised that

There was perhaps never any change of national manners so quick, so great, and so general, as that which has operated in the Highlands, by the last conquest, and the subsequent laws. We came thither too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life. The clans retain little now of their original character, their ferocity of temper is softened, their military ardour is extinguished, their dignity of independence is depressed, their contempt of government subdued, and their reverence for their chiefs abated. Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remain only their language and their poverty.<sup>38</sup>

In Skye Johnson developed in detail the nature and effect of those changes: union with England, the breakdown of the clan system, emigration and the abolition of local jurisdictions. In keeping with the philosophical emphasis of the work, Johnson set aside mere topographical description in order to describe and analyze these problems of Highland society. He realized that while wealth can bring prosperity it can also ruin lives and he questioned the laws that were

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<sup>37</sup> *Life*, V, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Journey*, p. 57.

designed to assimilate the Highlanders into the Union since their culture was suited to the climate and topography of Scotland.

The clan system, a hierarchy held together by loyalty and honour, was being undermined because the islanders had learned the desire of growing rich, one of the effects of commerce with England. The laird had lost his domestic dignity and hereditary power, since money holds no loyalty, which also put the position of tacksman into jeopardy. Having lost many of their privileges and been divested of their power because of the imposed laws, the chiefs had raised rents in order to increase their revenues. Unable to pay these higher rents, many tenants had been ejected from their homes and forced to emigrate. Johnson regarded emigration as one of the disastrous effects of union with England, but provided a balanced account of the issue, relating both sides of the argument. He was of the opinion that a solution must be sought to this migration problem with great diligence, and of the Hebrides in particular Johnson wrote,

the loss of an inhabitant leaves a lasting vacuity; for nobody born in any other parts of the world will choose this country for his residence; and an island once depopulated will remain a desert, as long as the present facility of travel gives every one, who is discontented and unsettled, the choice of his abode.<sup>39</sup>

For Scotland to continue as a nation, the people must remain in the country. Johnson also considered domestic judicature convenient. Before 1747 justice was in the hands of the lairds, whom the people considered their natural judges, but unfortunately not all chiefs were men of knowledge and virtue, and punishments were often not in proportion to the crime, and the laird

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<sup>39</sup> *Journey*, p. 96.

often indulged his own will, holding his vassals in dependence. But since the abolition of local jurisdictions, he tells us that "right has been every where more wisely, and more equally distributed," the result being that "there is now happily an end to all fear or hope from malice or from favour."<sup>40</sup>

Although Johnson did not get to see the feudal way of life he had hoped for, he got to see something more—he was given the opportunity of observing a people caught up in the throes of change. This social change, brought about by the laws designed to break up the clans as a result of the defeat of the second Stuart uprising at Culloden, was forced upon the people, producing unease and discontent. Johnson had spent enough time in the Highlands to recognize the good intentions of the reformers but saw that they ignored the needs fulfilled by the existing system. Of the Highlanders' case, he concluded,

Their pride has been crushed by the heavy hand of a vindictive conqueror whose severities have been followed by laws, which, though they cannot be called cruel, have produced much discontent, because they operate upon the surface of life, and make every eye bear witness to subjection. <sup>41</sup>

The Disarming Act of 1746 deprived the Highlanders of their arms and compelled them to wear a new dress in abolishing the dissimilitude of appearance between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of Britain. The results of this act disturbed him because the seat of power was so far removed from the area, the people were isolated and defenseless, and a part of the Highland heritage had been lost.

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<sup>40</sup> *Journey*, p. 93.

<sup>41</sup> *Journey*, p. 89.

Johnson also broke from outright empiricism by including his personal opinions in the book, which appear as reflective analysis. His judgement was flexible throughout the tour and he often changed his mind according to the conditions he encountered and the information he acquired and assessed. For example, his attitude toward commerce depended upon the particular situation he found himself in. At Ostig, his attitude was one of ambivalence and he weighed the value of commerce in terms of its effect on the people, writing, "The commodiousness of money is indeed great; but there are some advantages which money cannot buy, and which therefore no wise man will by the love of money be tempted to forego."<sup>42</sup> Here, the traditions of a culture are priceless treasures that no amount of money can buy or replace, but in New Aberdeen, the effects of wealth are praised. Unlike Old Aberdeen, a town in decay, New Aberdeen "has all the bustle of prosperous trade, and all the shew of increasing opulence."<sup>43</sup> Johnson praised the large and lofty houses, the clean and spacious streets, two of the direct effects of money, and the new town's university. At Coriatachan in Skye his attitude is once again more ambivalent, for although union had helped the people, it had also taken a past way of life:

That their poverty is gradually abated, cannot be mentioned among the unpleasing consequences of subjection. They are now acquainted with money, and the possibility of gain will by degrees make them industrious. Such is the effect of the late regulations, that a longer journey than to the Highlands must be taken by him whose curiosity pants for savage virtues and barbarous grandeur. <sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Journey*, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> *Journey*, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Journey*, p. 58.

He is pleased that money has alleviated poverty but not that a feudal way of life has been replaced.

Johnson's widely discussed attitude toward trees also shows the flexibility and adjustment of his judgement; his responses are influenced by the conditions and circumstances surrounding his observations. He blamed the barrenness of St. Andrews and Aberbrothick on the people, since they had denuded the land without any thought to future supply, and viewed the situation as inexcusable and negligent because reforestation is both easy and inexpensive: "to drop a seed into the ground can cost nothing, and the trouble is not great of protecting the young plant till it is out of danger."<sup>45</sup> In Mull the attention of the people is taken up with daily problems of survival and the trees are connected with man's mortality. He reconsidered his position when he realized that planting required faith in the future, and wrote,

Plantation is naturally the employment of a mind unburdened with care, and vacant to futurity, saturated with present good, and at leisure to derive gratification from the prospect of posterity. He that pines with hunger, is in little care how others shall be fed. The poor man is seldom studious to make his grandson rich.<sup>46</sup>

Having obtained an understanding of the people and the conditions of life, Johnson reassessed his opinions of tree planting and admitted that "Neither is it quite so easy to raise woods, as may be conceived."<sup>47</sup> This willingness to reevaluate situations and alter judgements provided the reader with a

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<sup>45</sup> *Journey*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Journey*, p. 139.

<sup>47</sup> *Journey*, p. 140.

balanced rather than a narrow view of Scotland, and showed Johnson's flexibility.<sup>48</sup>

Johnson wasn't against providing facts but against unadulterated empiricism and he did follow comparative inquiry—he compared Scotland to England throughout the trip, researched Scottish history beforehand and kept a notebook. With second-hand reports often proving unreliable, Johnson made honest attempts at accurate measurements. Measurements were not only beneficial to the reader but they assured him of the author's veracity and authenticity. Johnson's notions were in accord with the standards of accuracy established by the Royal Society, and having said that no man should travel unprovided with instruments for taking heights and distances, he used a walking stick that, although "not critically exact," aided him in his measurements and admitted that some of his measurements were "rude," "inaccurately taken," and "obscurely noted,"<sup>49</sup> while others were estimations only. He corrected Boethius's claim of Loch Ness being twelve miles broad,

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<sup>48</sup> Critics tend to disagree on whether or not Johnson reassessed his opinions and gained new insight during his trip to Scotland. To Patrick O'Flaherty, Johnson lacked objectivity and surveyed Scotland from an "olympian vantage point": "His mind was so firmly made up, his views so hard and settled, that not even the raw evidence of primitive Scotland could provoke a rethinking of his preconceptions and biases." O'Flaherty contends that Johnson was a static rather than a dynamic thinker who returned from Scotland with his view unchanged. "Johnson in the Hebrides: Philosopher Becalmed," *Studies in Burke and His Time* 13 (1971): 1986-2001. This goes against the idea put forth by scholars, such as Clarence Tracy, Donald Greene, and Arthur Sherbo, that Johnson is a forerunner of the modern cultural anthropologist or sociologist.

<sup>49</sup> *Journey*, p. 149. For the benefit of his English readers he did convert Scottish measurements to English, as in the case of his computations of the island of Muack.

reasoning that if Boethius never saw the lake, he must have been very "incurious," or if he had seen it, then his veracity "yielded to very slight temptations."<sup>50</sup> Johnson also praised Boswell for his diligent inquiries and told the reader that their "desire of information was keen" and their "inquiry frequent."<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, however, this diligence often met with contradictions, for subsequent questioning often nullified the answers to previous questions.

Johnson endeavoured to determine the truth or fallacy of second sight and heard many tales of this "airy show" with "more or less evidence and distinctness."<sup>52</sup> He was unable to collect sufficient evidence for his own satisfaction because of time restraints and came away only willing to believe. The poems of Ossian were also dismissed because of lack of evidence: the original manuscripts could not be produced, the language was unwritten and the poem was too long to be remembered—even those who professed to have heard it were unable to recite lines. Johnson even challenged the editor to produce the original but was refused. The caves at Ulinish were said to be the cabins of the first rude inhabitants, but after examining them Johnson was not persuaded and provided reasons for his doubts: the caves were too low for a man to stand upright, they were narrow and damp and their construction resembled that of common present-day huts. He attempted to explain what the Scots saw as inexplicable—Loch Ness being open in winter—and when

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<sup>50</sup> *Journey*, p. 31.

<sup>51</sup> *Journey*, p. 117; p. 108.

<sup>52</sup> *Journey*, p. 108. "Evidence" is defined as "the state of being evident . . . indubitable certainty," p. 109, note 9.

told that the lead roofs of two churches were converted into money for the support of the Scottish army, Johnson suggested fraud and believed this to be rumour. After hearing a great deal about the force and terror of the Highland sword, Johnson inquired but found the art of defense not to be any part of common education, violence and courage being the only powers of common men.

At times Johnson could not observe firsthand and had to depend on secondhand information and on his imagination in recreating situations. He is content to rely on other sources for measurements and often referred to the works of previous travellers to Scotland, such as Pennant, Martin and Boethius. He directed the reader's attention to Pennant's "doubtless exact" delineations that made his "unskilful description less necessary."<sup>53</sup> He criticized Martin for not recording customs, opinions and ways of life that no longer existed, but part of this criticism may be due to the fact that Martin lived in the last century and was able to experience a way of life that was lost to Johnson forever. Johnson did, however, excuse Martin on the following grounds:

He probably had not knowledge of the world sufficient to qualify him for judging what would deserve or gain the attention of mankind. The mode of life which was familiar to himself, he did not suppose unknown to other, nor imagined that he could give pleasure by telling that of which it was, in his little country, impossible to be ignorant. <sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Journey*, p. 149.

<sup>54</sup> *Journey*, p. 65.



Boethius is excused for his credulity but not for his fabulousness, a fault, Johnson says, "for which no apology can be made."<sup>55</sup> The details of these authors helped Johnson define his own standards of measurements.

Johnson found that the people, being at such variance with themselves, frequently gave contradictory answers to his inquiries. First accounts appeared credible, but repeated questioning resulted in uncertainty and contradictions, as was the case with brogues, a loosely stitched shoe. He was told in the same house that making brogues was both a domestic art and a trade. He blames this on the "laxity" of Highland conversation that kept the inquirer in "continual suspense," and, in a cause and effect relationship, reasoned that such contradictions were the result of "an ignorant and savage people" who have been for ages "negligently heard and unskilfully related." This led him to conclude that the Highlanders were "seduced" by their fondness for their ancestors.<sup>56</sup>

Johnson wished for some means of comparing the present with the past, having told Boswell that all history not supported by contemporary evidence was romance. Johnson's interest in history is revealed throughout his trip to Scotland, when he visited historic places and landmarks and considered their significance. At Marischal College in Aberdeen, he viewed some "curiosities"—a Hebrew manuscript and a Latin translation of Aristotle's *Politicks* by Leonardus Aretinus—visited several cemeteries, noting at Inch Kenneth that few of the tombstones have inscriptions, and provided a philosophical account of the ruins at Iona. These ruins, or "edifices," are

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<sup>55</sup> *Journey*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> *Journey*, p. 51; p. 119.

records of the past that provided Johnson with an opportunity to reflect on history. The ruins at Elgin reminded him of Knox and the reformation, and at the castle of Macbeth in Inverness he paused to mention Cromwell's effect on the Scottish spirit, the lack of trees and union with England. Johnson saw a connection between the ruins and the religious and intellectual decay of society, emigration and the social and political isolation of the Highlands, and the many ruins become a metaphor of deeper ills that could destroy the society if left unchecked. Not only do the ruins represent decay, they also represent what Johnson both feared and despised—disrespect for tradition, indifference on part of the people, neglect and wanton destruction.

In trying to gather information on the past, Johnson found that instead of written histories, information was preserved by bards from memory. As a result, he deemed tradition to be a reflection of the past rather than truth: "Tradition is but a meteor, which, if once it falls, cannot be rekindled."<sup>57</sup> Oral traditions allowed for error and uncertainty because while they provided the most genuine representation of Highland life, they must be viewed with suspicion, for they have been for ages "negligently heard" and "unskillfully related."<sup>58</sup> But Johnson saw the value of customs, for they continued some of the practices, hopefully the better practices, of the past, and in his opinion, any narrations, however uncertain, deserve the notice of a traveller, because they are the "only records of a nation that has no historians, and afford the most genuine representation of the life and characters of the ancient

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<sup>57</sup> *Journey*, p. 111.

<sup>58</sup> *Journey*, p. 151.

Highlanders."<sup>59</sup> Aware that he was seeing the remains of a dying way of life, he took care in recording aspects of Highland manners and customs, and since Scotland was considered barbaric, any information, particularly the wild and strange, would delight readers. Also connected to this is Johnson's adherence to notes rather than to memory, for he wrote, we

will scarcely believe how much a few hours rake from certainty of knowledge, and distinctness of imagery; how the succession of objects will be broken, how separate parts will be confused, and how many particular features and discriminations will be compressed and conglobated into one gross idea."<sup>60</sup>

What interested Johnson was everyday customs and manners, and, as a result, the *Journey* was written as a blend of reflection and narrative, of the general and the particular. Thus there are pauses or reflective analysis as he took stock of all he had seen and assessed it for its intellectual and moral value. For, as Robert Orme, an Indian historian, said to Boswell, there was in the *Journey* "thoughts which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the Ocean!"<sup>61</sup>

Johnson debunked established but unsupported beliefs, provided reflection based upon concrete incidents and recorded his doubts or misgivings. And although his view of travel does reflect the Lockean theory that empirical data added to the intellect, he was more interested in comparing ideas. His work then is a philosophical study of humanity, and

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<sup>59</sup> *Journey*, p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> *Journey*, pp. 146-47.

<sup>61</sup> *Private Papers of James Boswell*, eds. G. Scott and F.A. Pottle, (privately printed, 1928-34), X., p. 148, as quoted in *Journey*, p. xxvii.

although he is descriptive, he does not visually evoke what he sees. He reminded us of his motive for visiting the Western Islands early on in the journey:

It is true that of far the greater part of things, we must content ourselves with such knowledge as description may exhibit, or analogy supply; but it is true likewise, that these ideas are always incomplete, and that at least, till we have compared them with realities, we do not know them to be just. As we see more, we become possessed of more certainties, and consequently gain more principles of reasoning, and found a wider basis of analogy.<sup>62</sup>

*A Journey To The Western Islands of Scotland* is more than a representative travel book of its day because Johnson's focus and particular interest in Highland life and manners separates and elevates it from his contemporaries. Johnson best summed it up himself in a letter to Boswell, having sent the work to the printer:

I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than facts, the matter is not great.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Journey*, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> *Letters*, I, p. 409.

## Conclusion

He that would travel for the entertainment of others, should remember that the great object of remark is human life. Every nation has something peculiar in its manufactures, its works of genius, its medicines, its agriculture, its customs, and its policy. He only is a useful traveller who brings home something by which his country may be benefited; who procures some supply of want or some mitigation of evil, which may enable his readers to compare their conditions with that of others, to improve it whenever it is worse, and whenever it is better to enjoy.

Samuel Johnson, *Idler* 97<sup>1</sup>

As we can now see, Samuel Johnson was very much a part of the developing genre of travel literature in the eighteenth century and his works and excursions reflect this preoccupation and national interest in travel. His writings, from his own works to his introductions and prefaces for the works of others, helped move travel literature forward, gave it credibility and confirmed it as a genre in the eyes of the public. And in reflecting the attitudes put forth by the reviewers in his works—authenticity, personal observation, impartiality, pleasure and instruction—he helped establish their criteria as being both necessary and practical in judging travel books. In

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<sup>1</sup> *Idler* 97, p. 300.

addition to the reviewer's criteria, he also believed that the traveller's main object of interest and remark was humanity and common life, as stated in the *Idler* quotation above, a quote that sums up his travelling philosophy.

Johnson's literary career illustrated this interest in common life,<sup>2</sup> his sense of adventure and his interest in the unusual, and *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, in particular, demonstrated this preoccupation. From Armadale on Skye he had written to Mrs. Thrale, "I have now the pleasure of going where nobody goes, and of seeing what nobody sees."<sup>3</sup> Unlike *Rasselas*, a fictional journey filled with conversations that used the fashionable conventions of oriental romance and the picturesque, the *Journey* was a real journey filled with observations and reflection. The travelling conditions of this trip need also to be remembered: his age, very poor eyesight and the time of year were not conducive to a walking tour of the Hebrides, yet Johnson set the pace and didn't ask for any special treatment.

*A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* was praised for its authenticity, consistency and personal observations and became firmly established with reviewers and the reading public. The *Monthly Review* called him an "able and entertaining writer," and pointed out his "singular investigation" in examining what his curiosity was attracted to, and the

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<sup>2</sup> In discussing these topics with James Boswell, he remarked, "All that is really *known* of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. . . . I wish much to have one branch well done, that is the history of manners, of common life." *Life*, III, p. 333.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, I, p. 323. In another letter to her, he also wrote that "every new scene impresses new ideas, enriches the imagination, and enlarges the power of reason, by new topicks of comparison."

works "animated and instructive narration."<sup>4</sup> The trip allowed Johnson to test his conjectures and formulate his judgements, and in doing so he became very sympathetic to the loss of Highland culture—a plight that holds our attention and imagination. This also pleased reviewers for it helped overcome the many prejudices the English held against Scotland and made them more sympathetic to the case of the Highlanders.

Johnson's *Journey* is a commentary on the life and manners of the Highlanders in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, which is a break from eighteenth-century empiricism. He disliked works that were strictly empirical, as indicated in *Idler* 97, and as he told us in *Rasselas*, he was interested in the whole of humanity, the species rather than the individual. His concern with outcome is also a departure from the conventional travel book topics of natural history and antiquities. The work is more than a topographical survey of distances, road conditions, flora and fauna, for it is filled with his inquiries into all areas of Highland society—the people, the effects of union with England, emigration, the breakdown of the clan system—and in a way the work can be viewed as semi auto-biographical for it contains his reactions and reflections on the day-to-day life of a people.

Travel literature as a genre was not confined to the travel journal but influenced drama, prose fiction, poetry, and topographical paintings of the eighteenth century. In poetry, vogues included the "excursion"<sup>5</sup> and

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<sup>4</sup> *Monthly Review* 52 (1775): 162.

<sup>5</sup> Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory—The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*, rpt., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), pp. 329 ff.

topographical poems. Johnson's *Journey* is linked to this descriptive or topographical poetry in that its use of description is highly selective and of human interest. When describing the landscape, both Johnson and the writer of topographical poems are subject to meditation and historical retrospection. For example, Pope's "Windsor Forest" (1713) used description that evoked historical reflection and political symbolism, just as Johnson meditated on the state of affairs in Scotland and compared present realities with the past.

Topographical poetry has been identified as having "four time-projections"<sup>6</sup> : writing in the present, a reflection of the historical past, an account of the mythological past and a vision of the future. In the *Journey*, Johnson described the people he encountered, the historical wars and politics that shaped the country, the mythological past of clansmen, lairds and feuds that he was too late to have experienced, and he looked to the future when discussing the problems of emigration and during his visit to Braidwood school. Late in the eighteenth century, the topographical poem was still being used. Wordsworth, in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), looked to the past as well as ahead to the future when carefully selecting what he chose to describe. In the description of his own journey, a walking tour through the Alps in the summer of 1790, which is described in *Descriptive Sketches* and *Prelude*, VI (1804-1805), Wordsworth, like Johnson, reflected on the relationship between the senses and the imagination and allowed the imagination to transcend the empirical.

Orientalism was another popular element of travel literature in the

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<sup>6</sup> John Wilson Foster, "A Redefinition of Topographical Poetry," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 (1970): 394-406.



eighteenth century. The earliest works on the Orient were fictitious, filled with exaggerations and fanciful descriptions of the Far East, but as travel and trade with the region improved, accounts became more accurate. One of the most popular and best-known works, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, which appeared in England around 1707, was into its sixth edition by 1725, with a new translation published as late as 1799.<sup>7</sup> Johnson was familiar with the work, but according to his diary, it was 1782 before he read it.<sup>8</sup> For the most part, this Oriental vogue provided writers with a new point of view in satirizing contemporary culture, and for readers and writers alike, it was a source of retreat from the mundane of daily life. Johnson did not place a high value on literature that encouraged escapism and offered no moral instruction.

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<sup>7</sup> The exact date of the first English translation and the name of the translator are unknown." *Gentleman's Magazine* 69 (1799): 55.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Diaries, Prayers, and Annals*, in Yale edition of the *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. E.L. McAdam, Jr., (New Haven & London: Yale U.P., 1958), I, p. 348.

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- . "Travels into the Unknown: *Rasselas* and *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*." In *The Unknown Samuel Johnson*. Edited by John J. Burke Jr. & Donald Kay. Madison: U. Wisconsin P., 1983. 150-67.
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## Appendix A

### Johnson's Travels During His Lifetime

Taken from *Boswell's Life of Johnson*. Edited by George Birbeck Hill. Revised by L.F. Powell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934. See Appendix B, pp.450-55.

1706-36	The first twenty-seven years of Johnson's life were spent in small country towns or villages—Lichfield, Stourbridge, Oxford, Market-Bosworth, Birmingham.
1735-7	Johnson spent the first eighteen months of his married life in Edial, near Lichfield.
1737	At age twenty-eight he moved to London.
1740	Visited Appleby in Leicestershire and Ashbourne.
1754	Oxford.
1755	Oxford.
1759	Oxford.
1761-2	Lichfield.
1762	In the summer of 1762 his pension was granted, providing him with the means to travel. He visited Devonshire and Oxford.
1763	Harwich and Twickenham.
1764	Langton in Lincolnshire, Easton Maudit in Northamptonshire, and Oxford. He visited Paris with the Thrales, going and returning by way of Compiègne, St. Quentin, and Calais.
1765	Cambridge, and Brighton.



1766	Streatham, and Oxford.
1767	Oxford, and Lichfield.
1768	Oxford, and Townmallings in Kent.
1769	Oxford, Lichfield and Ashbourne.
1770	Oxford, Lichfield and Ashbourne.
1771	Lichfield and Ashbourne.
1772	Lichfield and Ashbourne.
1773	Oxford, tour to the Western Islands of Scotland from 6 August to 26 November.
1774	Tour to North Wales—Lichfield, Derbyshire, Chester, Denbigh, St. Asaph, Conway, Bangor, Anglesey, Snowdon, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Birmingham, Oxford, Beaconsfield.
1775	Oxford, Lichfield, Ashbourne, Brighton and France.
1776	Oxford, Lichfield, Ashbourne, Bath and Brighton.
1777	Oxford, Lichfield, Ashbourne and Brighton.
1778	Warley Camp in Essex.
1779	Lichfield, Ashbourne and Epsom.
1780	Brighton.
1781	Southill, Sunninghill, Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield and Ashbourne.
1782	Oxford and Brighton.
1783	Rochester and Heale near Salisbury.
1784	Oxford, Lichfield, Ashbourne, Birmingham, Oxford.

## APPENDIX B

Travel and travel related books associated with Dr. Johnson, as extracted from:

*A Preliminary Handlist of Copies of Books Associated with Dr. Samuel Johnson.* Occasional Publication No. 17. Oxford: Oxford Bibliography Society, 1984.

Drinkwater, John, intro. *A Catalogue of Books By or Relating to Dr. Johnson and Members of his Circle offered for sale by Elkin Mathews, Ltd.* London: Elkin Mathews Ltd., 1925; Norwood editions, 1976.

Fleeman, J.D., intro. and notes. *The Sale Catalogue of Samuel Johnson's Library.* Facsimile ed. ELS Monograph Series, No. 2. *English Literary Studies*: U. Victoria, 1975.

Greene, Donald. *Samuel Johnson's Library An Annotated Guide.* Facsimile ed. ELS Monograph Series, No. 1. *English Literary Studies*. U. Victoria, 1975.

Addison, Joseph. *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy.*

Benzo. *New History of the New World.*

Birch. *History of the Royal Society.*

Blainville. *Travels through Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy* (3 vols., 1757).

Boswell, James. *An Account of Corsica, the Journal of a Tour to that Island and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* (1768).

Bruce, James. *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790).

Brydone, Patrick. *A Tour through Sicily and Malta* (1773).

Burney, Dr. Charles. *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Provinces* (1773).

Camden, William. *Britannia* (London 1586). Survey of the British Isles.

Capper, James. *Observations on the Passage to India, through Egypt, and across the Great Desert* (1783).

Cook, James. *A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World. . . in. . .* 1772, 73, 74, 75 (2 vols., 1777); *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*.

Cranz, David. *History of Greenland* (English trans., 1767).

Dalrymple, Lord Hailes. *Annals of Scotland*.

Drummond, Alexander. *Travels through Different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and several parts of Asia, as far as the banks of the Euphrates* (1754).

DuHalde. *Description of China* (1735).

Egede, Hans. *Description of Greenland* (1745).

Goldsmith, Oliver. *Citizen of the World* (1762).

Gray. *Letters of his trip to France and Italy with Horace Walpole*.

Greaves, John. *Miscellaneous Works* Thomas Birch ed., (2 vols., 1737). Deals with eastern travels, dimensions of the pyramids, etc.

H\*\*\*\*. *A Journal of Eight Days Journey to Kingston Upon Thames, etc. With Miscellaneous Thoughts etc. addressed to two Ladies of the Partie. To which is added An Essay on Tea, etc., with Several Political Reflections and Thoughts on Public Love: In Thirty-two Letters to two Ladies* (2nd. ed., 2 vols. 1757). Johnson reviewed this edition.

Hampton. *Polybius* (2 vols. 1772) English translation of Polybius' *General History*.

Hanway, Jonas. *An Historical Account of The British Trade Over the Caspian Sea: with a Journal of Travels from London through Russia into Persia; and back again through Russia, Germany, and Holland. To which are added, The Revolutions of Persia during the present century, with the particular history of the great usurper Nadir Kouli*. (First edition, with maps and plates, 4 vols).

- Hughes, Griffith. *The Natural History of Barbados* (London 1750).
- Keyser. *Travels Through Germany*.
- Le Grand, Joachim. *Relation Historique du R[everend] P[ere] Jerome Lobo de la Compagnie de Jesus. Traduite du Portugais, continuee & augmentee de plusieurs Dissertations, Lettres, & Memoires* (1728).
- Locke, John. *Works*.
- Ludolf, Hiob. *History of Ethiopia* (trans. 1682). This challenged Lobo's account of the Ethiopian church. Johnson discussed this controversy in his translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia* (1735).
- Lusignan, Salvator. *A History of the Revolt of Ali Bey, against the Ottoman Porte . . . with a description of Grand Cairo . . .* (London: J. Phillips, 1783).
- Macaulay. *History of England* (2 vols., 1763-5).
- Macbean, Alexander. *Dictionary of Ancient Geography* (1773).
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy*.
- Mallet, Paul Henri. *A Description of the Manners, Customs. . . of the Ancient Danes . . . with a translation of the Edda* (trans. by Thomas Percy (1770).
- Mariana, Juan De. *Mariana historiae de rebus Hispaniae* (1592). History of Spain.
- Martin, Martin. *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland. Containing a Full Account of their Situation etc.*, (Printed for Andrew Bell 1703). A copy taken to Scotland with Johnson and Boswell is now in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, inscribed by Boswell.
- Nicetas Acominatus. *Nicetae Choniatal, Annales, Bas* (1557). History of the Eastern Empire between 1117 and 1203.
- Pennant, Thomas. *A Tour in Scotland* (Chester: Printed by John Morik, 1771).
- Phipps, Constantine John. *Voyage towards the North Pole* (1774). An account of a polar expedition.
- Pococke, Bishop. *Description of the East* (1743-45).

- Pomponius Mela. *Situ Orbis*. Account of ancient geography.
- Psalmanazar, George. *Memoirs of XXX. Commonly known by the Name of George Psalmanazar, a reputed Native of Formosa. Written by Himself, etc.* (Printed for R. Davis, 1765).
- Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus). *De Geographia*.
- Revius, Jacobus. *Daventrial Illustratae, sive historiae urbis Daventriensis, libri sex* (1651). History of the city of Deventer in the Dutch Netherlands.
- Ridpath. *Border History of England and Scotland* (1776).
- Robertson, William. *The History of America* (2 vols., printed at Leipzig 1777).
- Rzaczynski, Gabriel. *Historia Naturalis curiosa regni Poloniarum, Magni Ducatus Lituaniae, annexarum provinciarum. Natural history of the kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and adjoining regions*.
- Salmasius (Claude Saumaise). *Polyhistoria Salmasii*. Commentary on Solinus's *Polyhistoria*, an encyclopedia of information on the ancient world.
- Shaw, Thomas. *Travels, or Observations relating to Barbary and the Levant* (2 vols., Oxford, 1738).
- Stow, John. *Survey of London* (1754). Topographical work.
- Stuart. *History of Scotland* (2 vols. 1784).
- Strabo. *Strabonis Geographia*. Account of ancient geography.
- Thickness, Philip. *The Traveller* (5th ed., London: W. Griffin, 1770).
- Twiss, Richard. *Travels through Portugal and Spain in 1772 and 1773* (London: G. Robinson, 1775).
- Wallace, George. *Thoughts on the origin of feudal tenures and the descent of ancient peerages in Scotland* (1783).
- The World Displayed, or a Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels* (Vols. 1-10 of 20, London: J. Newbury, 1760).

Zonaras, Joannes. *Zonnarae Annales Graec.* Chronicles of Byzantine history.

**Doubtful, erroneous, and implausible associations.**

Hakluyt, Richard. *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation, made by Sea or Land . . .* (1589). Alleged to have been used by Johnson in preparation of his Dictionary but *The Hakluyt Handbook* by D.B. Quinn, (Hakluyt Society, 1974) contains nothing in Johnson's hand and Hakluyt does not appear in the *Dictionary*.













## Chapter Two

### The Emergence of Conventions and Johnson's View on Travel Literature

The travel writer does not merely purvey information; . . .  
His role is to be the tourist's perfect companion: to be  
articulate, well-informed, a skilled raconteur; to include  
in what he tells a fair share of the unusual with a dash of  
the exotic; to tell it all with infinite zest.

Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Johnson had distinct views on travel: his works, such as *Voyage to Abyssinia*, *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, *Rasselas*, and his own travel book, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, promoted improved literary standards in travel literature and he supported virtues put forth by reviewers, such as authenticity, veracity and a combination of pleasure and instruction. According to his own works, a travel account was to provide knowledge based on personal experience, to be true and impartial and, most importantly, to include men and manners. He criticized whirlwind and topographical travellers for having too much description, too little judgement, and too little interpretation. Books that provided a balance of pleasure and instruction he viewed as authentic and reliable sources of information; those that sacrificed

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<sup>1</sup> Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 111.