

## From Initiate to Individual: Grand Tour Narrative and Lejeunian Autobiography

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Two broad approaches characterize the scholarship of autobiography. One tradition, exemplified by Georg Misch's four-volume *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (1949–69), sees autobiography as a transhistorical mode with deep roots in the Western literary tradition; Misch's treatment runs from Socrates to Carlyle. More recent scholarship has tended to see autobiography as a genre with a specific history and a point of origin. This is the approach of Michael Mascuch, for instance, whose 1997 *Origins of the Individualist Self* dates the first autobiography quite precisely; Mascuch gives the honor to James Lackington's 1791 *Memoirs*. This study shares the assessment of Mascuch and many others that autobiography is in a meaningful sense an eighteenth-century invention. Its purpose is not, however, to retell the story of the emergence of autobiography, much less set a date to it, but rather to use the concepts of recent autobiographical theory to identify and describe a hitherto underanalyzed predecessor, the British tour narrative.<sup>1</sup>

The tour narrative, a record of the progress of a leisured English gentleman through a Grand Tour of France and Italy, is a surprisingly stable genre that runs from the mid-1600s through the turn of the nineteenth

century. It is also an uncanny uncle to autobiography, sharing autobiography's nonfictional, retrospective, first-person stance, but focusing outward towards cities and sights rather than inward on personality and development. If the rise of autobiography correlates with and produces the emergence of what Mascuch calls the "individualist self," tour narrative creates a different kind of selfhood, which I christen the "initiated self." The individualist self is written as a unified, self-directed agent who controls the course of his or her own life; the initiated self is written as a unified agent who enters into a privileged textual (and, by implication, sociopolitical) community through demonstrated superiority in a sequence of binary categories, most importantly reasonable/superstitious, Protestant/Catholic, male/female, educated/ignorant, and free/enslaved. If autobiography is the story of becoming oneself, tour narrative is the story of a becoming a member of a caste. For historians of modern selfhood, the tour narrative presents a novel prospect: a subjective self which is not autobiographical.

I open by outlining the generic framework of the tour narrative, defining it and autobiography, and using Philip Lejeune's concept of the autobiographical pact to show how the two genres share significant narratological and referential features, yet resist blending into each other. I then examine James Boswell's *An Account of Corsica, the Journal of a Tour to That Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* ([1768] 2006). Boswell is able to diverge from the tour narrative generically, adding some autobiographical elements, because he diverges from the beaten track of the Grand Tour geographically, focusing on little-known Corsica rather than France and Italy. In closing, I describe the late eighteenth-century end of the initiated self as a discursive practice, showing how it is disrupted by the French Revolution in Joshua Lucock Wilkinson's *The Wanderer* (1795).

## Definitions and Distinctions

At Two Miles distance from Milan there stands a Building, that would have been a Master-piece in its kind, had the Architect design'd it for an Artificial Eccho. We discharg'd a Pistol, and had the Sound return'd upon us above Fifty Six times, though the Air was very foggy. The first Repetitions follow one another very thick, but are heard more distinctly in proportion as they decay: There are Two

parallel Walls that beat the Sound back on each other, 'till the Undulation is quite worn out, like the several Reverberations of the same Image from two opposite Looking Glasses.

—Joseph Addison, 1705

The echo of the Villa Gonzaga-Simonetta made it a destination for curious travelers from the seventeenth until well into the nineteenth century, and Joseph Addison's precisely quantified description of a reverberating pistol shot is an apt epigraph for a discussion of Grand Tour narratives of that era (Lauterbach 1996, 150).<sup>2</sup> From John Raymond's 1648 *An Itinerary Contayning a Voyage Made through Italy* to the end of the eighteenth century, when the Napoleonic wars and changes in transportation technology brought the Grand Tour to an end, the tour narrative constitutes a genre that is strikingly continuous, stable, and self-aware.<sup>3</sup> Theorists have commented on the difficulty of defining travel narrative as a genre, but the eighteenth-century tour narrative comprises texts whose strong family resemblances make for relatively sharp generic horizons (Borm 2004). In contrast both to utilitarian guidebooks and scientific or historical surveys, the tour narrative features a first-person narrator who recounts his personal experiences mingled with observations about the topography, economy, culture, politics, and religion of France, Italy, and elsewhere in continental Europe. I use the masculine pronoun consciously; Grand Tour travel writing by women is extremely rare, though Hester Piozzi's *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany* (1789) is one notable exception near the end of the period. Unlike novels and political pamphlets, tour narratives were almost never anonymous; their title pages advertised both the name of the author and the educational and economic credentials, generally some variation on "M.A.," "Esq.," "F.R.S.," or "Gent.," which qualified him for prestigious leisured travel. They were also self-consciously repetitive, citing and correcting their predecessors: Johann Georg Keyssler, Tobias Smollett, James Boswell, and Piozzi, among others, all cite Addison's *Remarks* (1705) and are cited by subsequent travelers in their turn. The echo of what has already been written reverberates, just like the report of Addison's pistol. While other travel genres of the eighteenth century report back on *terra incognita* in the New World or Northern or Eastern Europe, the tour narrative generally confines itself to what Addison calls "classic ground" (1914, 50). Towards the end of the eighteenth century in particular, it becomes conventional to apologize for adding one more

tour to the number already available, and the hoary topos of publication at the request of friends makes multiple appearances as an excuse (Walker 1790, advertisement; Hobhouse 1796, iii; for a variant see Smith 1793, xiii). R. S. Pine-Coffin's *Bibliography of British and American Travel in Italy to 1860* (1974) illustrates numerically the dominance of tour narrative, as distinguished from other genres of travel book, in the textual representation of Italy to eighteenth-century British readers. Whereas only nine tour narratives are published in the seventeenth century, compared to fourteen political or scientific surveys and six guidebooks, the eighteenth century furnishes 50 tour narratives (this figure includes translations) but only twelve guides and seven surveys. These figures, though approximate and certainly incomplete, are highly suggestive. Learned and leisured eighteenth-century gentlemen wanted to record their travels in text, and the fact that such records were not in short supply was no deterrent.

Oddly, tour narratives were not autobiographical. Both parts of this claim—that the eighteenth-century tour narrative was not autobiographical, and that this fact is odd—require some theoretical and historical explication. Even more than travel writing, autobiography has resisted conclusive definition as a genre (see Marcus 1994, 229–72 for a history of approaches). Nevertheless, this study takes as its starting point Philippe Lejeune's influential concept of the “autobiographical pact,” according to which autobiography is defined as a “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (1989, 4). In explication, Lejeune observes that this definition activates no fewer than four categories: the form of language (narrative prose), the subject treated (individual life, story of a personality), the situation of the author (a real person identical with the narrator), and the position of the narrator (identical with the principal character, whose actions are narrated retrospectively). First formulated in 1975, Lejeune's definition has been the subject of critique by both deconstructionist and feminist critics, who question its “relations of mutual support between signature, proper name, and other ostensible markers of authorial identity” and the male-centered canon it delimits respectively (Marcus, 259–60; Nussbaum 1989, 4). But if taken (as Lejeune explicitly prescribes) as an historically contingent concept—a “historical,” rather than a “theoretical” genre, to use Tzvetan Todorov's distinction—the autobiographical pact remains extremely useful (Todorov 1975, 21).

In first proposing his definition, Lejeune dated and located the origin of autobiography in eighteenth-century Europe. The program of research opened by Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" and other studies demonstrating how concepts such as "authorship" are historical constructs has vindicated this placement. Indeed, a wide variety of scholarly approaches, some defining autobiography quite differently from Lejeune, have concurred in locating the origins of autobiography in the eighteenth century. These include Roy Pascal and Georges May's attention to the canonical texts of Rousseau, Franklin, Gibbon, and Goethe; Felicity Nussbaum's use of religious and women's writing; Michael Mascuch's concept of the "individualist self" in the *Memoirs* of James Lackington; and James Treadwell and Robert Folkenflik's analysis of the history of the word "autobiography" itself (Pascal 1960, May 1978, Nussbaum 1989, Mascuch 1997, Folkenflik 1993, Treadwell 2005). To distinguish the set of texts whose important commonalities are encapsulated by the concept of the autobiographical pact from the far wider range of texts that have received scholarly attention under the name of "autobiography," I will describe them using the term "Lejeunian autobiography." This means that the argument that follows has a limited scope, but the fact that it is limited to texts written from a subject position (male, English, gentleman) that has traditionally been both privileged and universalized does not mean that I seek to replicate or assume that universalizing move.

Within this theoretical framework, tour narrative and Lejeunian autobiography stand in a curious relationship. The tour narrative satisfies three of the four criteria for Lejeune's autobiographical pact: it is prose narrative whose author and narrator are identical to each other and to the protagonist whose actions are narrated in retrospect. The only criterion which the tour narrative fails to satisfy is the second, that of the subject treated. The attention of the first-person narrator in tour narrative is almost invariably outward: toward Catholic religious observance rather than the narrator's own spiritual development, or toward the political organization of a foreign government rather than reflection on the narrator's own ambitions or vocation, to pick two examples. This is odd because personal development was the stated rationale for genteel travel in the eighteenth century. As John Moore puts it in the coda to his *View of the Society and Manners of Italy* (1781), "a young man [. . .] will see mankind more at large, and in numberless situations and points of view [. . .] his mind will be enlarged. He will be enabled to correct the theoretical notions he may have formed of human nature, by the practical knowledge of men" (2:493-94).

Moore concludes his second volume ironically, with Horace's dictum that the traveler changes the heavens above him rather than the spirit within him: *coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*. The reader of a standard English tour narrative in the eighteenth century could scarcely judge the truth of this remark, because even the most garrulously anecdotal accounts pay far more attention to *coelum* than to *animum*, as in Smollett's 1766 *Travels through France and Italy*, which includes eighteen months' records of the weather in Nice. As Barbara Korte (2000) puts it, "accounts of this type of journey tend to reveal only little or nothing about the traveller's subjective experience—even though edification is a process essentially directed at the subject" (47–48).

Scholars including Korte and Charles Batten have argued convincingly that, over the course of the eighteenth century, travel narrators become more personal, less concerned with topographical or anthropological description and more with anecdotes about the experience of travel itself (Korte, 53–61; Batten 1978, 77–81). Smollett's *Travels*, with their exhaustive attention to the uncomfortable inns, inedible food, and incompetent physicians of the continent, is considered a bellwether in this regard, and Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* ([1768] 2002) was very influential. But Smollett, who traveled for health rather than education, does not structure the work around a narrative of personal edification or development. On the contrary, his splanetic personality has the rigidity of a Theophrastan caricature and serves as a benchmark against which his changing environment can be assessed. Smollett's first and last letters alike find him complaining about the coldness of French inns. His work is insistently and entertainingly personal, but the narrating personality does not develop over time, and thus the work is not autobiography in Lejeune's sense.

Two further cases may illustrate more clearly the claim that eighteenth-century tour narratives resist becoming autobiography despite the close affinities between the two genres. Narratives that approach Lejeune's second criterion (attention to individual life and the story of personality) swerve away from other generic features of tour narrative and autobiography. Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* depicts both self-reflection and change in personality through the formative experience of travel. In Yorick's two encounters with the Franciscan monk Father Lorenzo in Calais, for instance, we see the narrator appear first as a brusque and sanctimonious Protestant traveler. His statement that monks "have no other plan in life, but to get through it in sloth and ignorance, *for the love of God*" could be a direct quotation from Addison, Smollett, or numerous others (Sterne, 10).

But in the pages that follow, Yorick wrestles with his conscience, and finally, under the beneficent eye of the Belgian lady encountered outside the inn, he exchanges snuff-boxes with Lorenzo and reports how the experience has subsequently molded him: “many a time have I called up by [Lorenzo’s snuff-box] the courteous spirit of its owner to regulate my own, in the justlings of the world” (27).

The *Sentimental Journey* was enormously influential throughout European culture in the decades following its publication (the anecdote cited above became the basis of a fad for snuff-box exchanges in Germany) and is frequently cited by tour narratives, including Adam Walker’s *Ideas Suggested on the Spot* (1790, 3), Benjamin Hobhouse’s *Remarks* (1796, 22), and Joshua Wilkinson’s *The Wanderer* (1795, 1:202).<sup>4</sup> But the *Sentimental Journey* is not a tour narrative. The pseudonym on its title page (Mr. Yorick) connects the text not to an author whose name and credentials establish him as a genteel, educated British traveler, but to a fictional character in Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, and a dead one at that. As the *Sentimental Journey* adds to the tour narrative the self-awareness characteristic of Lejeunian autobiography, it subtracts the referentiality that is integral both to the tour narrative and to Lejeune’s autobiographical pact.

A less well-known example of this same pressure at work is John Moore’s *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany* (1779a). The first edition appeared anonymously and opens with two letters in which the narrator describes suffering ruinous losses at dice and a plan of retiring to the continent to retrench his finances. Yet over the course of the two-volume narrative, the strongly sketched gambling character recedes, and the narrator becomes the recognizable figure of a learned Englishman on the Grand Tour as a companion to the Duke of Hamilton. In a second, “corrected” edition published in the same year and by the same publishers, Strahan and Cadell, Moore identifies himself as “John Moore, M.D.,” and the compulsive gambler has been safely relegated to the third person, a “young friend” whose play creates “uneasiness” in the mutual friend who receives Moore’s first travel letter (1779b). “John Moore, M.D.” is also the author of the equally conventional continuation, *A View of the Society and Manners of Italy* (1781), whose defense of educative travel is cited above. Only when the narrator/protagonist changes his motive for travel from a personal story (in this case, gambling losses) to a generalized search for gentlemanly edification and pleasure can he be identified with a verifiable author. Moore’s first edition aroused the disapproval of Samuel Johnson in terms that emphasize the importance of a named, nonfictional narrator to

the eighteenth-century understanding of travel writing as a genre; James Boswell reports that Johnson “censured [Moore] for assuming a feigned character, saying, (in his sense of the word,) ‘He carries out one lye; we know not how many he brings back’” (Boswell 1980, 1312).<sup>5</sup>

### **The Individualist Self and the Initiated Self**

Like two positive magnetic poles, the eighteenth-century tour narrative and the autobiography are similar yet repel each other when brought together. To explain why this is the case, let us return to Addison’s echoing Milanese villa. If the fifty-six-fold repetition of the traveler’s pistol shot is read as an emblem of the successive tours which proceed at regular intervals from the eighteenth-century British presses, Addison’s visual metaphor for the echo, “the several Reverberations of the same Image from two opposite Looking Glasses,” implies the subject position of their authors. In his 1956 “Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,” one of the founding texts of modern autobiography criticism, Georges Gusdorf associates the rise of Western autobiography with the early modern invention of the mirror: “autobiography is the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image” (35). Addison’s looking-glass metaphor, however, does not describe the observer looking at himself (a viewer examining him- or herself full-faced in one of two parallel mirrors will block the infinite regression of reflections), but rather regarding an unspecified “Image” as it shrinks to the vanishing point. Just as the echo of the Villa Simonetta was experienced not by standing between the two walls but from an upstairs window above one of them, Addison’s evocation of *glaces à répétition*, as parallel mirrors were called, implies a subject who is present to observe a curiosity but not himself a central part of what is being observed (Lauterbach 1996, 150; Goldberg 1985, 173).

This subject is the eighteenth-century Grand Tourist. Able to enjoy or critique Catholic religious practice from the vantage point of secure Protestantism, equipped to read the inscriptions and ruins of the Italian landscape by a classical education, unconstrained by gender-based prohibitions or taboos, and exempted from status competition with locals by Britain’s economic power and political “liberty,” the traveler as depicted by Addison is the spectator who does not become the spectacle. Moreover, the absence of autobiographical introspection means that the subject position postulated by the tour narrative is transitive. Addison’s tour is not unique to Addison. His route can be followed, his observations and experiences can be tested and if necessary corrected. More to the point, the experience of



reading his tour narrative is one of joining the club of traveling subjects. The Grand Tour was often undertaken in groups, or at the minimum with a qualified, educated English guide, and the tour narrative makes the reader an imagined part of the group. This is one reason why tour narratives are frequently cast in the form of letters, even when, as in the case of Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*, these bear little resemblance to any actual letters sent at the time of travel. The epistolary tour narrative places the reader in the position of a correspondent who shares the traveler's interests and status (Martz 1942, 68–69). Even the awkward claim that a tour was published at the request of or for the use of friends serves the purpose of inviting the reader into the circle of participants in the tour project. The professional writer and tour guide John Breval even opens his *Remarks on Several Parts of Europe* (1726) with a list of subscribers headed by Frederick, the Prince of Wales, and including numerous nobles and literary figures.

Michael Mascuch, adopting Lejeune's concept of the autobiographical pact, argues that the subject of autobiography is "the individualist self," the author who constructs himself as personally autonomous, the creator of a personal life story in which the self "becomes its own telos" (22–23). Mascuch is quite precise in dating this phenomenon, arguing that the first individualist self is the bookseller and self-made man James Lackington, whose *Memoirs of the First Forty-Five Years of My Life* was published in 1791, five years after what is believed to be the first appearance of the word "autobiography" in print (Folkenflik 1993, 1). In contrast, we might christen the subject of the tour narrative "the initiated self," the author who constructs himself as the spectator of a range of pleasurable and edifying experiences, the follower of a largely set route (Addison's "classic ground") over the course of which the self demonstrates its membership in the privileged side of the binary oppositions of Protestant/Catholic, reasonable/superstitious, male/female, classically educated/ignorant, free/enslaved, etc. The traveler both encounters his opposites (superstitious Catholic worshippers, oppressed serfs, uncivil innkeepers) and recognizes his *semblables* (polite British ambassadors, cosmopolitan foreign nobles, classical inscriptions and ruins). Initiation (from the prefix *in-* plus the verb *eo*, "to go") captures etymologically the process enacted in the tour narrative, in which the subject goes on a journey in order to establish membership in a larger group.

Scholars such as R. S. Pine-Coffin, Donald R. Johnson, and Chloe Chard have noted the tendency of eighteenth-century tour narrative to draw sharp contrasts between England and the continent, usually to the

disadvantage of the latter; discussing the *Remarks*, Johnson argues that Addison repeatedly

confronts the reader with examples of fallen grandeur, of squalor resulting from tyrannic rule, or lost economic potential owing to the nobility's disdain for honest trade: all veiled warnings of what occurs when a society is not constantly vigilant in protecting its trade, its religion, and its political freedom.

(1976, 32)

Similarly, Chard analyzes tour narratives' treatment of monasticism and cicesbeism (cicesbei escorted other men's wives to public entertainments) as un-British practices that are at once too restrictive and too licentious (1999, 91–92; see also Pine-Coffin 1974, 1–60). The concept of the initiated self brings to the fore the first-person focalization of these assessments. The contrast between England and the continental other runs continuously through the literature of the long eighteenth century; tour narrative is distinctive, however, in narrating this contrast from the perspective of a named author/narrator.

### **Boswell as Individual and Initiate**

Freshly returned from his own Grand Tour of 1764–66, James Boswell published his contribution to the tour narrative genre, *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* in 1768. Unusually, however, the work is divided into two distinct parts. The longer first section, “An Account of Corsica,” offers a conventional description of the island, presented in a detached and objective tone. The shorter second part, the “Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli,” is a first-person account of Boswell's experiences during his visit. (Boswell paginates the work continuously but distinguishes the two parts with different running titles; to make the division clear I will hereafter refer to work as a whole as the *Account* and the two sections as the “Account of Corsica” and the “Journal and Memoirs”; all page references are to the 2006 Boulton and McLoughlin edition.) This two-part division allows Boswell to present himself as no other travel writer of his era does, both as traveling initiate and as autobiographical individual.

Boswell opens the second part of his book, the “Journal and Memoirs,” by establishing himself as a typical Grand Tourist, a man who has “resolved to pass some years abroad, for my instruction and entertainment” ([1768]

2006, 161). The justification of travel as *utile et dulce* was such a commonplace in eighteenth-century discussions that it furnishes the title of Charles Batten's 1978 study, *Pleasurable Instruction*. But in the same paragraph, Boswell asserts the desire to go beyond the conventions of the standard tour, and, by extension, the generic expectations of the standard tour narrative: "I wished for something more than just the common course of what is called the tour of Europe; and Corsica occurred to me as a place which no body else had seen, and where I should find what was to be seen no where else, a people actually fighting for liberty" ([1768] 2006, 161). A literal deviation from the well-worn route to Rome and back, Corsica is also a symbol of new discursive possibilities.

Yet the self whom Boswell the author constructs in the opening "Account of Corsica" is a standard tourist initiate. When he had departed London five years before, in 1763, for a year of study and two years of travel on the continent, Boswell had been much less interested in striking off the beaten path. Instead, he had anticipated the pleasure of rereading Addison's *Remarks* at the sites which the book describes: "I shall certainly take Addison's *Travels* with me, as you hint," he wrote to his close friend John Johnston. "I shall read them abroad, with high relish" (1966b, 98). Boswell kept this resolution, as subsequent letters to Johnston and diary entries demonstrate. Thus, near the beginning of his Italian tour, he reports, "Milan is described by Ausonius as Mr. Addison has remarked. I have great satisfaction in comparing ancient and modern sentiments manners and Buildings" (1966b, 153–54).

The key word here is "comparing." When Boswell reads Addison, he finds Addison reading the Latin classics. Addison's chapter on Milan includes not only the description from Ausonius to which Boswell alludes, but quotations from Silius Italicus, Juvenal, and Claudian. This is a conscious strategy on Addison's part, as his *Preface* explains:

Before I entered on my voyage I took care to refresh my memory among the *Classic* authors [. . .] I must confess it was not one of the least entertainments that I met with in traveling, to examine these several Descriptions, as it were, upon the spot, and to compare the natural face of the country with the Landskips that the Poets have given us of it.  
(1705, 18)

One of the most popular tour narratives of the eighteenth century, Addison's text models within itself the activity of reading a previous text, of

comparing a prestigious but dated description with the current state of the thing itself. Addison's binocular vision provides a model for how his own book should be read, one which Boswell adopts wholeheartedly: "Does not the Spectator's having been here give a value to it?" Boswell asks when describing the Swiss city of Soleure to Johnston. "It is mighty agreeable to read Mr. Addison's observations and then look at what he has described. I have found many Alterations or more properly new works since his time" (1966b, 147). Here Boswell identifies with Addison under the persona of "the Spectator," the silent narrator of the eponymous periodical conducted by Addison and Richard Steele from 1711–12. Boswell initiates himself into the status of Grand Tourist not through sympathetic identification with Addison as a person, but by comparing his visual "observations" with those of the "Spectator" who has gone before.

Most British tourists in Italy followed some variant of Addison's itinerary, even if, like Boswell, they visited the included cities in a different order. Because he had spent the year 1763–64 studying at the University of Utrecht and proceeded from Holland directly into Germany, Boswell in fact took the Grand Tour in reverse, entering Switzerland and Italy from Germany and ending rather than beginning with Paris. But Boswell ended his Italian travels with a substantial detour from the Addisonian route by spending six weeks in Corsica, 12 October to 20 November 1765.<sup>6</sup> When Boswell began two years later to compose his *Account*, the book that was to make his reputation as an author, he repeated this pattern from life by both imitating and going beyond the model provided by Addison's *Remarks*. Addison's mixture of first-hand observation and classical quotation provides a clear antecedent for the larger first section of the book, the "Account of Corsica"; if anything, Boswell out-Addisons Addison by citing Greeks such as Herodotus, Callimachus, and Strabo, in addition to the Roman poets to whom the *Remarks* are confined. The first-person narrator of the "Account of Corsica" is strictly an observer, weighing and reporting evidence: "I never indeed could hear of any other fish in their rivers or fresh water lakes, except trout and eel" (41). In the "Journal and Memoirs," in contrast, the tone and structure shift towards a more subjective narrative voice. The first-person narrator becomes Boswell the traveler, recording his own impressions, emotions and experiences in Corsica, particularly during the time he spent with Pasquale Paoli, the Corsican revolutionary general and politician:

I employed myself several hours in rowing, which gave me great spirits. I relished fully my approach to the island,

which had acquired an unusual grandeur in my imagination. As long as I can remember anything, I have heard of “The malcontents of Corsica, with Paoli at their head.” It was a curious thought that I was just going to see them.

(165)

Indeed, Boswell is nearly unique among eighteenth-century tour narrators in focalizing the experience of travel through a consciousness that includes moments of Lejeunian autobiographical self-reflection. At several places in the text, Boswell records his ambitions, his insecurities, and his plans for the future:

Talking of various schemes of life, fit for a man of spirit and education; I mentioned to him that of being a foreign minister. [. . .] Never was I so thoroughly sensible of my own defects as while I was in Corsica. I felt how small were my abilities, and how little I knew. Ambitious to be the companion of Paoli, and to understand a country and a people which roused me so much, I wished to be a Sir James MacDonald [i.e., a brilliant Scottish polymath].

(202–3)

He candidly records his struggles with “a mind naturally inclined to melancholy” and the fear that he has “become for ever incapable of taking a part in active life,” paired with the stimulating and inspiring effects of fellowship with the heroic Paoli, in whom Boswell “saw my highest idea realized” (192).

The contrast between Boswell’s reticence as a narrator and active presence as a character in the first and second parts of the *Account* respectively was noted at the time by Samuel Johnson, who observed to Boswell that

Your history is like other histories, but your journal is in a very high degree curious and delightful. There is between the history and the journal that difference which there will always be found between notions borrowed from without, and notions generated within.

(Boswell 1964, 2:70)

The same contrast has led Thomas M. Curley to see the *Account* as part of the “greater autobiographical emphasis in English travel accounts” of its era, a work whose “final autobiographical portion [. . .] provided Boswell with a narrative model for his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1786) and *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791)” (1991, 89–90; cf. Dowling, 1979, and Viviers 2002, 32–53). The “Journal and Memoirs” does fix in print an autobiographical self-awareness characteristic of Boswell’s personal writings such as the *London Journal* or the “Ebauche de ma Vie” (a short character sketch written for Rousseau during Boswell’s visit to him in Switzerland), both of which remained unpublished until the mid-twentieth century.

But in deviating from Addison’s model, Boswell’s book also continues to follow it. The binocular effect of Addison’s *Remarks* is two-fold: first, the narrator compares classical landscape descriptions with the actual state of Italy and Switzerland at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Then, in turn, the book implicitly invites the same kind of comparison from its reader, who is imagined to be an English gentleman on the Grand Tour—perhaps one collecting materials for his own tour narrative. We have already seen that Boswell himself accepted this invitation, touring Italy with Addison in hand. After his own tour in 1701–3, Addison was in fact hired as a guide for the young Marquess of Hertford, and though the trip fell through due to a money dispute, the book is nevertheless a projection of the role of cicerone for the multitudes of British gentlemen who traveled through Italy in the eighteenth century (Smithers 1954, 83–85).

Boswell was not the only Briton of his era to visit Corsica. But in comparison to Rome, Naples or Venice, the island was virtually unknown. And though the enormous success of the *Account* and the publicity it brought to the Corsicans’ struggle for independence did bring an eminent train of British travelers to Corsica in Boswell’s wake, it never became a permanent fixture on the Grand Tour. The second half of Boswell’s book, the “Journal and Memoirs,” is thus a substitute for the second order of binocularity in the *Remarks*, replacing the in-person inspection that Addison’s text imagines for its reader. Just as Boswell compared Ausonius’s descriptions to Addison’s descriptions to his own impressions, the reader of the *Account* can compare Diodorus Siculus’s descriptions to an Addisonian description of modern Corsica in the “Account of Corsica,” which he or she can compare in turn to Boswell’s own discovery of the island and its people in sequential, diaristic time in the “Journal and Memoirs”:

Diodorus Siculus describes Corsica as an extensive island, very mountainous, abounding in large forests, and watered with many rivulets: [. . .] Indeed the interior parts of the island are in general mountainous, though interspersed with fruitful valleys; but have a peculiar grand appearance, and inspire one with the genius of the place; with that undaunted and inflexible spirit, which will not bow to oppression. [. . .]

([1768] 2006, 36)

My journey over the mountains was very entertaining. I past [sic] some immense ridges and vast woods. I was in great health and spirits, and fully able to enter into the ideas of the brave rude men whom I found in all quarters.

([1768] 2006, 173)

Boswell, in other words, records the subjective experience of travel's edifying effects, the mind being "enlarged" by "knowledge of men," as John Moore put it thirteen years later, that is left implied in standard tour narratives published both before and after the *Account*, since he knows he is reporting on travel that falls outside the standard route (Moore 1781, 2:493–94). Geography is a metaphor for psychology: Corsica is to the classical Grand Tour as Boswell's individualistic self in the "Journal and Memoirs" is to the less introspective initiated self of the standard Addisonian tour.

In the "Journal and Memoirs," Boswell's narrator becomes in places a Lejeunian autobiographical individual, inspired by Paoli and his Corsican freedom struggle. But the prefatory material to the *Account* as a whole constructs Boswell as the initiated tour narrator, whose experience abroad has allowed him an entrée into prestigious and learned society at home. The volume opens with a letter to Boswell from George Lyttelton, an aristocratic politician, patron of the arts, and minor author who had himself taken the Grand Tour in 1728. A dedication to Paoli follows, succeeded by a preface in which Boswell acknowledges the collaborative nature of his work, crediting French historical materials, informative foreign and domestic correspondents, and even a British chaplain resident in Leghorn, Andrew Burnaby, whose journal Boswell interwove with his own in the composition of both the "Account of Corsica" and "Journal and Memoirs" sections of his text. Boswell's foregrounding of his debt to Burnaby demonstrates his interest in constructing the *Account* not as a

psychological record but as a complete report. Similarly, his warm acknowledgement of Thomas May (an “ingenious gentleman” who “favoured” Boswell with translations of several epigrams of Seneca after Boswell requested submissions in the *London Chronicle*) represents the text as an extension of a shared classical heritage which men like May, “a gentleman whose situation is life is genteel, and his fortune affluent,” share with Boswell and his readers ([1768] 2006, 12).

Boswell’s narrator in both halves of the *Account* constructs a self committed to participation in the signifiers of the genteel Grand Tourist: shared classical culture, the practice of male virtue and heroism, and above all “liberty.” He identifies Corsica as a natural ally for Great Britain on the basis of its uncorrupted virtue and unremitting heroic resistance to the tyranny embodied by mainland Italy, particularly Genoa. At the close of his preface, Boswell avows that “For my part, I should be proud to be known as an authour; and I have an ardent ambition for literary fame” ([1768] 2006, 14). But he continues by explaining that authorship creates the precise opposite of an autobiographical self:

The authour of an approved book may allow his natural disposition an easy play, and yet indulge the pride of a superiour genius when he considers that by those who know him only as an authour, he never ceases to be respected. Such an authour when in his hours of gloom and discontent, may have the consolation to think that his writings are that that very time giving pleasure to numbers [. . .].

(14–15)

As Boulton and McLoughlin point out in their introduction, Boswell removed a great deal of “self-scrutiny, attention to his own manners and appearance, [and] the record of his mood swings” when revising his notes from Corsica into the published “Journal and Memoirs” (Boswell [1768] 2006, xlix). In contrast to the founding autobiographical invocation of Rousseau’s *Confessions*, first published in 1782, which declares that “[h]ere is what I have done, what I have thought, what I was” (5), Boswell’s preface to the *Account* declares that he wishes to be an author not in order to reveal himself but to become someone else, someone “respectable” (14). Boswell’s innovative self-depiction in the “Journal and Memoirs” notwithstanding, the avowed purpose of the *Account* as a whole is the construction of an initiated self.



### Wilkinson's *Wanderer* and the End of the Tour

Published a generation after Boswell's *Account*, the title page of Joshua Lucock Wilkinson's *The Wanderer* (1795) follows the format of a standard tour narrative, promising *A Collection of Anecdotes and Incidents, with Reflections, Political and Religious, During Two Excursions, in 1791 and 1793, in France, Germany, and Italy*. The author signs his name and signals his educated English status as "Joshua Lucock Wilkinson, of Gray's-Inn." From the beginning of his dedication "[t]o the Public," however, Wilkinson's text complicates or reverses the signifiers that have hitherto constituted the tour narrative's initiated self. Standard tour narratives describe the complications of securing dignified transportation and the inconvenience of having luggage and books rummaged by customs officials, with coach hire and purchase, post horses, and sedan portage over Mount Cenis as repeated topoi (Smollett, as usual, is particularly scathing about French customs). Wilkinson instead reports in his first two sentences that he traveled "on foot," and that "a few books, two shirts, and a thin cotton jacket, formed all my equipage: a slender stick was my only defense: and a small knapsack contained all my wealth" (1:v). While Addison opens with an account of his learned preparations for travel, Wilkinson confesses that he knew no French at setting out (Addison was also unable to speak French when he left for the Grand Tour, as his letters witness; he did not advertise that inability, however, in his published *Remarks*.) Wilkinson also writes that he left without a passport. Genteel English travelers, though customs officers took great interest in them, had been immune to the controls the *ancien régime* imposed on the mobility of its own citizens. After 1791, however, revolutionary French fears of invasion from abroad meant that an Englishman without papers was taking a significant risk (Torpey 2000, 21–50).

In the pages that follow his arrival in France, the protean Wilkinson turns on its head the standard progress of the initiated self, which defines itself through contrast with the foreign other and recognition of its own classical past. He and his traveling companion reject the identity of the English "*Mi Lord*" since their "purse was too light to preserve the reputation of our countrymen" (1:31–32). Wilkinson nearly always records receiving respect when he confesses himself to be an Englishman, yet revels in recording and creating misrecognitions and suspected disguises. These can be minor—as when he explains to the Genevan guard in broken French that he is "*un de la loi*" and is taken for a "*legislateur*" rather than a "*notaire*"—or fantastical, as when he is arrested in the Swiss town of Rolle on suspicion of

being the King of France (1:31, 40–41). Over the course of the narrative, Wilkinson is taken for or gives himself out to be a Polish nobleman, a German, a tailor, and a peddler (1:32–33, 35, 76). Like Boswell before him, his penchant for public journaling causes him to be taken for a spy (2:102; cf. Boswell [1768] 2006, 175n31). At one point, he bribes a Jacobin bureaucrat with two guineas to give him a passport in the name of “William Baron Grenville of Wotton, privy counsellor of his majesty, and also his secretary of state for the foreign department.”<sup>7</sup> The initiated self for Wilkinson is merely one role among many.

*The Wanderer* is not, however, an autobiographical work according to Lejeune’s criteria. Wilkinson makes veiled allusions to his personal relationships, particularly in his opening pages. For example, on first arriving in France, he reports how his mind “frequently returned with lingering fondness, to the object of the heart” (1:22), and he records subjective responses to vistas of outstanding natural beauty along his route as when he writes, “The instant, when from the heights of Jura I discovered the lake of Geneva, was an instant of extacy and transport” (2:156). Nonetheless, *The Wanderer* is not structured around a narrative of development of self-discovery. On the contrary, the traveling narrator withdraws from much of the second half of the book, which comprises essays on abstract subjects such as “Superstition,” “Churches,” and “Slavery and Liberty.” The opening pages of *The Wanderer* lead the reader to expect an autobiography, but the work as a whole is no such thing.

The literary-historical significance of *The Wanderer* is not that it marks the rise of travel writing as autobiography, but rather that it marks the end of tour narrative as initiation. Wilkinson’s tour narrative no longer records the process by which the subject becomes an English gentleman, and instead becomes a site for role play and criticism of both England and the continent. The reason is easy to find in the text: the French Revolution, which overshadows Wilkinson’s entire tour, destabilizes the categories that determine the initiated self. Wilkinson’s anti-clericalism and disgust at what he takes to be the loose sexual morals of Italian women connect *The Wanderer* to numerous previous tours. But in Wilkinson’s sympathetic account, the French other, and not the British self, has become the site of liberty and reason. The rank hierarchies upon which the English milord relied have been permanently undermined. Even the classical world is no longer taken as a good in itself but is subject to evaluation by modern criteria: “Mankind are forever extolling the vast and magnificent works of the Romans; but I am more inclined to admire the public works, destined

for public convenience, than those immense buildings which flattered the vanity, or contributed solely to the luxury and amusement of a lazy populace" (1:272). Wilkinson describes a revolution in French opinion occurring as he travels: "They no longer idolized their grand monarch: merit in rags was more prized, than ostentation, and titled ignorance" (1:168). Though the narrator does not draw the connection explicitly, the distinction between "merit in rags" and "titled ignorance" recalls the contrast between the baggage of the stereotypical Grand Tourist and Wilkinson's "small knapsack." It has long been recognized that the restrictions on travel created by the Napoleonic wars put an end to the institution of the Grand Tour; *The Wanderer* suggests that at the same time that war made genteel travel physically impossible, the upheaval of the French Revolution posed a destabilizing ideological challenge to the assumptions and self-constructions of the Grand Tour's literary product, the tour narrative.

For Paul Fussell, writing about texts of the 1920s and 30s, the autobiographical quality of travel writing is axiomatic: "Travel books are a sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative—unlike that in a novel or romance—claims literal validity by constant reference to actuality" (1980, 203). As we have seen, something close to the opposite was the case for eighteenth-century tour narratives, which took up the personal focus of Lejeunian autobiography only when they jettisoned its referentiality (as in Sterne, Moore) or deviated from the standard tour route (as in Boswell). Autobiography begins in the eighteenth century and remains a vital literary presence today. Tour narrative, in contrast, is a generic casualty of the French Revolution and the end of the Grand Tour as an upper-class British rite of passage. An understanding of tour narrative as distinct from autobiography sharpens our conception of both. In particular, it adds a chapter to the history of the modern self by identifying a genre that is personal without being autobiographical. If the autobiography is an account of an autotelic self, which must declare its own uniqueness in order to assert its individuality as a subject, the tour narrative is an account of one man's initiation into the caste of rational, genteel British manhood, and an invitation to its reader to follow along the same initiatory path.

## Notes

1. Both travel writing and autobiography have been discussed extensively in relation to the novel, but scholars of the period have not hitherto brought the two genres into dialogue (Spacks 1976; Adams 1983; McKeon 1987). Adams notes the lack of attention to the relationship between travel writing and autobiography, and the juxtaposition has received little critical attention since his time of writing (166).

2. An architectural serendipity, the echo ceased after the building was damaged by bombardment in the Second World War—it remains a sonic attraction in the early twenty-first century, however, as the home of Milan's Accademia Internazionale della Musica.

3. For the history of the Tour itself, as distinguished from narrative accounts of it, see Black 1992.

4. For the "Lorenzo cult" in Germany, see Howes 1974, 429.

5. Johnson does not refer to Moore by name; the identification is supplied by R. W. Chapman.

6. For the originality of Boswell's visit to Corsica, see Boswell (1768) 2006, xviii.

7. Addison in fact became secretary of state in 1717, and part of the purpose of his tour was preparation for diplomatic service. Wilkinson is closer to Rousseau, who on a whim pretended to be an Englishman with the absurd name of "Dudding" while traveling through France (Smithers 1954, 356; Rousseau [1782] 2000, 244).

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