

Travelling on the Grand Tour meant “the upper orders were open to continental influences and willing to consider foreign habits.” (Black, J. (1999) *The Grand Tour* Stroud, Gloucestershire, Sutton, p.302). How were these influences reflected on return to England?

The term ‘Grand Tour’ is (and was) used to describe a tour of the Continent in the 18th Century. Primarily the domain of men of good birth and fortune, the Grand Tour was an education trip taking in the sights and sounds of France and Italy – Paris, Venice, Rome and Naples – to experience the social, political and cultural offerings of these cities. Chard describes it as “...structured as a sequence of noteworthy places and events.” This type of tour offered only a metropolitan view – just because a tourist visits Paris this does not give them an insight into the workings of France as a whole. This is a generalisation of the itinerary and tourist on the Grand Tour. An itinerary was not rigid. Depending on a tourist personal preferences a tour could also take in the Low Countries – Hanover, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Munich and Geneva – or any other cities of interest within France, Germany, Holland, Italy or anywhere that may be of interest. Whilst the Grand Tour could be described, certainly for the young men sent by their families, as a way to fill their time between school and marriage, where there could sow their wild oats and stay out of trouble, a few women also embarked on a Grand Tour, especially if they had controversial pasts and found it convenient to spend time away from England. Lady Craven is a prime example of this. Caught by her husband *in flagrante* with the French Ambassador, Lady Craven travelled through Vienna, Cracow, Russia, the Crimea, Constantinople, The Aegean and Italy and back to Vienna with numerous stop offs in between. The Grand Tour is seen as the precursor of modern tourism.

The men that travelled were the elite, they had the time and money to travel comfortably and they could saturate themselves in the art and culture offered by the Continent. They would be exposed to great painters and sculptures, the beautiful vistas of the landscape, the local food and drink, politics, social and cultural customs – would potentially be full immersed in the lifestyle of the country they were visiting. The tourist would send food and drink items home to families, would write letters and diaries, collect works of art for their galleries, take courses in art appreciation, take part in royal courts, encouraging the influence of the Grand Tour to be far reaching that those who travelled. Cheaper print made books depicting art, landscapes and architecture easily accessible to those who could not afford to pack their bags and set off across the Channel – a book is a lot cheaper than a boat ticket. Therefore any of the literate classes could for example, pick up a book of Italian architectural designs and build themselves a house in the Palladian style.

Peter Beckford (Black) described a 'good' tourist as "not looking at pictures and statues...but examining laws, customs and manners of other countries and comparing them with our own". A xenophobic attitude was not a healthy attitude. Showing admiration and gratitude for the great island of Great Britain was highly approved of, but forward thinking men and women had to have an appreciation and admiration of foreign customs.

The influences of the Grand Tour were varied and expansive. This becomes clear looking at the number of areas a Grand Tourist involved themselves in and how these influences were received in 18th Century England.

When tourists visited any major city or small village the aspect of socialising and being introduced to local society was a very important aspect. Travellers ate what was produced locally, regional dishes and produce rather than the Anglicised meals so prolific today. Cooking techniques and preparation methods were very different to what was commonly available at home. Knowledge and familiarity of different dishes took a long time to spread throughout Europe. The upper classes of England may have only been familiar with the French style. As the borders and barriers between countries opened up, this meant that more tourists were travelling further afield – often with a large entourage that may have included chefs. These English chefs may have been picked up kitchen techniques from native chefs and taken these home with them to prepare for dinner parties. Less accompanied travelers may have enjoyed a particular dish traditionally prepared with plenty of oil and garlic and recorded or requested the recipes and techniques to take home. Regional specialities such as cheese or wines were sent home for families and friends (as long as they could be easily transported without refrigeration). As today's culture of food and drink shows, cultural cuisine is not restricted to the county of origin. From Sir Francis Drake and the potato through to the open minded tourists of the Grand Tour and beyond, food and drink transgresses borders.

Black quotes Müllenbrook's article suggesting that travel literature in 18th Century England moved from a stereotypical view of foreign countries to a more sympathetic and appreciative stance. The reduction in the threat of war, the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty are two of the reasons cited that emphasized the strengthening of British self confidence by the end of the century – despite a number of fluctuations in alliances and political partnerships. This statement could be influenced by and influenced the Grand Tour, with different countries becoming popular due to political alliances, or being avoided due to war-like tendencies and also that as the Grand Tour became popular with other classes the people of England could accept the strange customs of 'foreigners' as they became more familiar with them.

The Grand Tour offered plenty of opportunity for experiencing the political machinations of a country. High ranking tourists were provided with letters of introduction from friends and families which allowed them into the highest echelons of court society, enabling them to experience the political cultures and customs of their hosts. Political experiences of 18th Century Tourists tended to be of the more obvious rather than the intricacies of day to day political workings. Black quotes reasons for this as tourists having to assess political systems in a foreign language, only visiting the more important larger cities – which provides a skewed view of the metropolitan process.

An essential part of the social education of a Grand Tourist was being introduced into a foreign court, which provided many opportunities to mingle with the ministers, diplomats, religious leaders and politicians. Although this was not the main objective of many a tourists social interactions, it offered a wealth of opportunity to expand political understanding, which could be brought back to England. The Universal Spectator of 3rd April 1742 declared;

“...some young noble men who have done an honour to their country abroad, and by acquiring a knowledge of men, of commerce, of the interest and tempers of foreign courts, with the different policies of different nations, will be of service to their country at home.”

The Public Advertiser of 3rd March 1792 also discusses the Law of Nations debate and the interests of Europe supported by those who have travelled the Continent and acquired a wealth of knowledge. Politically involved travelers could also report on the perception of Britain by foreign countries. Chesterfield in 1740 talked about travelers reporting on the ridicule expressed regarding the British conduct in war. (Black) A traveller may adopt or sympathise with European political views or practices that may seem outrageous to 18th Century British politicians, but depending on their status these views could be very influential in the corridors of power – because of recent constitutional changes in Britain, other political and governmental systems were of great interest. The voices of the time seem to accept that there were some European ideas that were worth of adoption, but were also wary;

“It is the duty every man owes his country, to observe the methods of government used in other states and *adopt that which is founded in wisdom and true policy* into their own.” (my italics)

Thomas Robinson in the House of Commons in 1734 goes on to warn “what may be a necessary step in one state, may prove to be the destruction of another.”

A tour of the Continent also provided great exposure to the arts. European art was deemed to be the best example of art – whether painting, sculpture or music. Experiencing as much foreign art as possible was a necessity for a majority of tourists.

Italian painters were the epitome, and any examples of their art were highly prized in Britain as, prior to the Grand Tour, these examples were only found in Italy. British artists travelled to Europe to be schooled by the masters, Grand Tourists purchased and commissioned paintings by the Italian artists and those British artists who made the Continent their home so were heavily influenced by the native art. When the Royal Academy was established in 1768 many more artists embarked on “picturesque tourism” attempting to absorb the motivations and skills of the European painters – as far as wars and uprisings would let them. Resident British artists sent paintings back to the Royal Academy, both satisfying and perpetuating the market demand for fashionable Italian-style art. The Grand Tour also allowed travelling artists to make useful contacts within the British aristocracy who would commission them to paint portraits or paint scenes of places the tourists had been – providing them with a unique postcard!

The artistic area was where the most vehement collecting took place. As well as tourists collecting many paintings from foreign and emigrated British artists, reproductions and fakes, tourists gathered coins (Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753)), medals and cameos (John Bouverie (1722-1750)) flooding the burgeoning art market in London. The quantity and quality of artistic works available to the wealthy ensured that great collections of works were held in the manor houses, also available to British artists who were unable to take the tour. The extent and availability of European art in England during this time saturated and overpowered the traditional British art leading to British art being heavily influenced by the Continental style.

An appreciation of foreign architecture was also important to the wealthy classes of Britain and a visit to the architecturally splendid European cities was another high priority. Many of the elite were interested, educated and well funded enough to take part in the building, refurbishing and rebuilding of their properties to emulate the Palladian, Ancient Greek and Roman styles. No longer was the design of the house and garden a separate entity – gentlemen were encouraged by Renaissance writers to think of the house and garden as singular. The garden and the house should complement each other, flattering one another, also with the interior of the house being considered as this drove how the garden was viewed by the residents and visitors. The 3rd Earl of Burlington was convinced that Andrea Palladio held the key to perfect architecture. Palladio's architectural rules were very attractive to English architects including Inigo Jones. Burlington and Jones together developed the Palladian school of architecture in Britain. It was not only the exterior of buildings that were subject to the Italian restyling frenzy. Interior designers from

Italy can to British to work on the great houses such as Burghley. Furniture and designs for furniture were also subject to the influences of the Continent. The European artists such as Canaletto, Cozen, Claude (known as the 'supreme garden designer') and Wilson painted landscapes of Italy that incorporated many buildings, bridges and other architecturally interesting objects within stereotypical Italian vistas. As these paintings inevitably made their way back to England, architects and home owners were stunned by their beauty and begin to landscape their gardens into a similar fashion, as well as developing their bricks and mortar into a more European style. Follies, grottos, statuary of collected sculptures from the Continent all began to appear in the landscapes gardens of England.

The Grand Tour also spread its influence into the scientific world. William Hamilton stayed in Italy observing Vesuvius in the 1770's and many of his writings were read back in England. These writings were indicative of the changes in thinking during the Enlightenment and directed opinion regarding the origins and violence of the natural world. The investigations of not just William Hamilton but of other Grand Tourists, including Whitehurst and his technical drawings, especially "A Section of Strata" – suggestive of mining tools - who developed their interests in geology and the building blocks of the landscape whilst visiting the Continent led to further scientific and mechanical developments in the Industrial Revolution.

The Grand Tour was a vast and varied collection of experiences. The men and women who ventured across the Channel were immersed in the daily lives of those they visited, stayed with and met along the way. Ranging from Paris to Germany to Russia to the Crimea and Italy, the Grand Tourists took part in the social, cultural and political goings on in every country they visited. Absorbing all that they could of the continental way of life, buying as much art as they would get, writing diaries, books, letters for private or public consumption, it is no surprise to discover how much 18th Century England was influenced by Europe. This is shown in the great galleries and collections - both private and public - of the adored Italian painters and sculptors, in the architecture of some of our great houses, in the food we eat and in the gardens we visit. The British public could not get enough of all things European, and adopted the styles and fashions with enthusiasm, perhaps highlighting the frustration of living on an island. Although originally the domain of the 18th Century ruling classes, the influences of the Grand Tour are still in existence today.

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