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JEREMY BLACK

FRANCE AND THE GRAND TOUR
IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*

The people seem to live happy and in plenty, which is entirely owing to their government, for if they were harrassed with any taxes they must starve; They seem very sensible of the value of their liberty, and indeed one cannot help seeing it in a very strong light, after all having pass'd through rich plentiful countries in France where the people are miserable to the greatest degree, and in this country where a great deal of industry seems necessary to procure the necessaries of life the peasants are well cloath'd and many of them rich, ... Captain Humphrey Fish, Berne, October 1726¹.

In the eighteenth century large numbers of British men and a certain number of British women travelled for pleasure, as never before. Whether they went on the classical Grand Tour or took a shorter trip, most visited France. The purpose of this article is to consider this phenomenon in the first half of the century, or, to be more specific, in the period 1713–44. This was the longest period in the century in which Britain and France were not at war. The eighteenth century has often been described as ›the second Hundred Years War‹. In the background to any examination of British tourists in France, the role of Anglo-French hostility must be considered.

Large numbers of British tourists visited Paris. For British travellers it was most commonly the first port of call on the Grand Tour, the point of departure for Lyons and points south. It was the most visited European city for British tourists, and it tended to be the city where they stayed the longest, though cost limited this for some travellers². An interesting source on these tourists are the letters written by British envoys in Paris, both their official correspondence and their private papers. The private correspondence of the Earl of Stair – envoy 1714–20 – and of Earl Waldegrave – envoy 1725, 1727–8, 1730–40 – can be freely consulted though unfortunately scholars are denied access to the papers of Stephen Poyntz – 1728–30 – and Horatio Walpole – 1723–30³. Diplomats commented on some of their visitors, for most tourists of any social stature expected to be, and were, entertained by the envoy. Spark Molesworth,

* Unless otherwise stated all dates are given in new style. Old style dates are marked (os). Quotes are given as in the original.

1 Fish, ›Bearleader‹ (Governor) of Charles Spencer to Spencer's grandmother, Sarah, Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, 8 October 1726, London, British Library (hereafter BL.), Additional Manuscripts (hereafter Add.) 61444.

2 Spark Molesworth to Hugh Gregor, 24 March 1739, BL. Add. 61830.

3 Stair's papers are held in the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh, Waldegrave's at Chewton House, Chewton Mendip. I would like to thank Earl Waldegrave for giving me permission to consult these papers.

on his way to Naples, seeking a cure to the consumption which was to kill him that year, passed through Paris in 1739. He carried a letter of introduction to Waldegrave, and dined at his house, *where I met some English who were very glad to see a brother Englishman... I dined there very agreeably without any ceremony and with more ease than I could have expected at such a table*⁴. The diplomats reported large numbers of tourists. In 1727 Waldegrave wrote, *there are a good many English now in town*. Two years later Thomas Robinson, the Secretary of Embassy, reported the same, and in 1732 Waldegrave wrote, *the town swarms with English. I had near upon a Dozen of Newcomers dined with me yesterday, and shall have near as many more tomorrow*⁵.

The impression of large numbers was confirmed, and created, by other sources. In 1728 the London magazine, »The Political State of Great Britain« reported that at the dinner given by Horatio Walpole to celebrate the first anniversary of George II's coronation the company included *fifty Lords and Gentlemen of the British Nation*. A decade later a London newspaper referred to *that fondness for gadding beyond seas, which is at present so epidemical in this country*⁶. Visitors in Paris were conscious of the presence of many British tourists. In 1734 the Honourable George Stanhope informed his brother Philip second Earl Stanhope, *there are a great number of English here*. The following year Robert Knight, Lord Bolingbroke's brother-in-law wrote *We have had a pretty many English Gentlemen, and some Ladies, within these 3 months last past, ...*⁷.

Though Paris was the principal attraction in France other areas were also visited. Knight listed in 1735 three parties who intended to see more than Paris. The Duke of Richmond, who had inherited the French Duchy of Aubigny, in Berry, was taking a group there that included his wife, Lady Hervey and Lady Fitzwilliam. Lord Berkeley and his wife, Lord Bolingbroke and his were near Amboise, Berkeley nursing his health, Bolingbroke in self-imposed political exile. Finally *Lord Lonsdale, and Mr. Lowther his brother, are lately come hither to pass a month, and then intend to make a Tour by Bourdeaux, La Rochelle, Toulouse, Montpellier, Marseille, and Toulon, till november next, then they propose to return hither*⁸.

A study of the routes taken by British tourists in France reveals, as would be expected, that the country was visited in a very uneven fashion. Brittany, Auvergne and France Comté saw nearly no tourists. British tourists if they travelled in France tended to concentrate on the Loire Valley, Guyenne and Languedoc. The Loire had many attractions. It was less expensive than Paris, and yet relatively accessible both to it and to the Channel coast. For these who travelled to Europe as part of their education, as Simon second Viscount Harcourt did, towns such as Angers, Tours and Saumur possessed many facilities. It was possible to learn French and to learn such

4 Molesworth to Gregor, 24 March 1739, BL. Add. 61830.

5 Waldegrave to the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 4 December 1727, BL. Add. 32753; Robinson to Charles Delafaye, Undersecretary of State for the Southern Department, 9 July 1729, Waldegrave to Delafaye, 6 December 1732, London, Public Record Office, State Papers (hereafter PRO.) 78/197, 78/201.

6 A. BOYER, *Political State*, London 1728, p. 457; *The Nonsense of Common Sense* 3 January (os) 1738.

7 George to Philip Stanhope, 25 October 1734, Maidstone, Kent County Record Office U1590 C708/2; Knight to the Earl of Essex, Ambassador in Turin, 6 August 1735, BL. Add. 27734.

8 Knight to Essex, 6 August 1735, BL. Add. 27734.

courtly arts as dancing and fencing from tutors in these towns; as Harcourt did in 1732. The principal attraction further south was Montpellier, a leading medical centre and attractive town, much favoured by those in search of better health, such as Dr. Josiah Hort, Bishop of the Irish see of Ferns, who visited Montpellier and Marseilles in 1725. William Mildmay visited Montpellier in 1730, and noted its attractions as a health resort,

*Montpelier, which Town being situated on a little Hill from whence its takes its name, is esteemd the finest Air almost in Europe... As the University is here establish'd principally for Physicians, who are cheifly famous for their particular method of curing the French Disease [venereal disease], so any stranger that makes any residence in it is suspected either to be a Doctor, or to want one... a stranger here may keep a very good table at a small expence, ...*⁹.

However, most British tourists did not seek to make a tour of France, nor did most of them need the *Montpellier Bolus*, or any other cure for venereal disease until they had completed their travels. The classical Grand Tour involved primarily time in Paris and in Italy, and, after Paris had been seen, other French towns were only visited in the course of travelling to or from Italy. Thus, far more British tourists visited Lyons and Marseilles than Bordeaux and Toulouse, just as many German tourists, en route for Paris, visited Strasbourg. The routes followed by most reflected the wish to see Paris and Italy as quickly as possible. The hazards and inconveniences of a Channel crossing dictated as short a crossing as possible. Dover to Calais was the usual route. From there to Paris, and then to Lyons. From Lyons routes diverged, either to cross the Alps over the Mt. Cenis pass, or to go down the Rhone and travel from Marseilles to Genoa in a felucca, a small boat that some, such as Dr. Swinton in 1731 found dirty and unpleasantly dependant on the weather¹⁰. This basic route accounts for the area of France seen by most travellers. The place, other from Versailles, that was visited most and described best by British tourists was the Duke of Bourbon's seat Chantilly that lay on the main Paris-Calais highway. It was described by many travellers, including Robert Trevor in 1728, Mildmay in 1730, William Barnard in 1734 and Spark Molesworth in 1739¹¹. Similarly the town most described after Paris was Lyons, or 'Lions' to George Lyttleton. Lord Henry Grey passed through in 1716 on his way to Geneva and sent his father, the Duke of Kent, an interesting letter that noted the economic conditions in the town, *the ruin of that City, where the number of poor that I saw in passing was a terrible and pitiable sight. The manufactures are quite down the ablest workmen having broke, and the Journeymen retire most to Turin, ...*¹². Lyons was visited by British tourists going to and/or coming from Italy, such as Lyttleton in 1729, Mildmay the following year, Charles Stanhope and Sir Robert Myrton in 1732, Pococke in 1733. This route to and from Italy was much the most attractive to British

9 Journal of William Mildmay, Winchester, Hampshire Record Office, 15M50/1302 (hereafter Mildmay) pp. 44–5.

10 Journal of Dr. Swinton, 18 May (os), 6 June (os) 1731, Oxford, Wadham College Library, A4 A(11).

11 Robert Trevor to his half-brother Thomas Trevor, 19 May 1728, BL. Add. 61684; Mildmay, pp. 8–9; Barnard to Newcastle, 7 Sept. (os) 1734, BL. Add. 32689; Molesworth to Gregor, 24 March 1739, BL. Add. 61830.

12 Grey to Kent, 20 July 1716, Bedford, Bedfordshire County Record Office, Lucas Papers, (hereafter Bedford), L30/8/34/4. I would like to thank Lady Lucas for permission to consult these papers.

tourists. It enabled them to visit Paris, without a detour, and avoided the discomforts of a maritime trip, such as that planned by the Duke of Bedford in 1732 and feared by his wife¹³. The Duchess' dislike of sea travel was widely shared – most found the Channel and the North Sea harrowing enough¹⁴ – and comfortable maritime transport was difficult to arrange. There was no system of passenger ships.

The more common alternative to the route through France was one through the Empire. Several variations were possible. A passage to Flanders and the United Provinces could be arranged readily. Then a traveller could journey up the Rhine, across to Munich, south to Innsbruck and cross the Brenner to Italy, as George Parker did in 1719. Another common route was via Hanover, Dresden, Prague and Vienna to Venice. Neither route was as comfortable as those through France for France possessed conveniences for travellers which were lacking further east. Indeed a major factor that encouraged travel in France, Italy and the Low Countries was the difficulties of travelling in other areas.

The two principal difficulties involved accommodation and the roads. Facilities for tourists, indeed for travellers, were spartan in many areas of Europe. Viscount Molesworth complained of *scurvy accommodation* in Augsburg in 1720, and a London newspaper claimed in 1722, *in Germany a man may travel many days and not find a bed to lie upon; the Poor People and their Cattle have the same covering, and the same Pillows*. The diplomat George Woodward wrote to the Under Secretary of state in the Northern Department in 1729, *there is not an inn in Poland, that I have seen fit to lodge a dog, I'll only compare them to the worst in Westphalia and leave you to judge of them*. It was difficult to arrange accommodation in Iberia, or, as William Bentinck and the Earl of Crawford found, in Bohemia¹⁵.

Over most of Europe the roads were very bad. They were notoriously so in many areas of the Empire, particularly Westphalia and Saxony¹⁶. Bad weather made them far worse¹⁷, and the situation was further exacerbated in much of Europe by the difficulty of obtaining horses. The system of post – stages was poorly developed. Edward Finch wrote from Königsberg in 1740, *there is no such thing as posting, so that I am reduced to make use of the same horses... from hence to Riga*, and the recipient of his letter, Lord Harrington, (William Stanhope before he was ennobled) had complained of the same problem in Spain in 1729¹⁸.

13 Duchess of Bedford to Sarah Malborough, no date, June 1732, BL. Add. 61449 f. 120.

14 Molesworth to Gregor, 24 March 1739, BL. Add. 61830; Haslang, Bavarian envoy in London, 17 February 1741, Munich, Hauptstaatsarchiv, Kasten Schwarz 17211.

15 Molesworth to Stanyan, 27 November 1720, PRO. 92/30; The Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post 15 December (os) 1722; Woodward to Tilson, 28 May 1729, PRO. 88/35.

16 Whitworth, envoy in Berlin, to Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 9 November 1720, PRO. 90/12; Count Dehn to the Duke of Bevern, 5 November 1726, Wolfenbüttel, Staatsarchiv, 1 Alt 3 Nr. 27; Waldegrave to Newcastle, 24 June 1730, BL. Add. 32767; William Bentinck to his mother, the Dowager Duchess of Portland, 18 January 1727, BL. Egerton Mss. (hereafter Eg.) 1711.

17 Lord Glenorchy, envoy to Copenhagen, to his father-in-law the Duke of Kent. 15 November 1720, Bedford, L30/8/10/4; Count Toerring, Bavarian envoy to Prussia, to His father, Count Toerring – Jettenbach, Bavarian foreign minister, 5 August 1740, Munich, Hauptstaatsarchiv Bayerische Gesandtschaft, Berlin, 10.

18 Finch to Harrington, 9 May (os) 1740, PRO. 91/24; Stanhope to Horatio Walpole and Poyntz, 30 September, Stanhope to Keene, envoy in Spain, 12 October 1729, BL. Add. 32763 f. 324, 326–7.

The situation in the favoured areas for travel was far from perfect, but at least it was better. There were complaints. The Ferrara – Bologna road was bad in winter, the Siena-Viterbo and Bologna-Florence roads bad all year round, those between Venice and Ravenna »most extraordinary bad«¹⁹. Charles Stanhope wrote in October 1732 upon his arrival in Lyons from Italy, *we left our chaises at Pont Beauvoisin, and came here post on horseback in about 10 hours after the most tiresome journey I have ever yet had, both from the badness of the roads and the places we lay at, ...* Viscount Molesworth thought the roads from Paris to Augsbourg via Strasbourg *exceeding bad*, Spark Molesworth wrote of his arrival in Lyons in 1739 after a *very fateaguing journey from Paris of 6 days and half, ye weather being all ye way very bad, and ye roads I believe in this countrey were never so bad, for where they could be bad they were so indeed*²⁰.

Travel in France, Italy and the Low Countries was far from perfect, but conditions were better than elsewhere, and this was particularly important given the high rate of accidents and the low level of medical care. Where conditions were bad they were very bad: *everything necessary for the subsistence of myself and servants must be carryed with me, since I am assured that it will be impossible even to find bread and salt in any place nor in many so much as water...*²¹. It was bad enough having to cross the Channel and the Alps without running further risks. In addition France was a less dangerous place to travel in than many others. It is impossible to estimate how many tourists were murdered and/or robbed but there are relatively few references to such crimes in France. The most spectacular occurred in September 1723. Four English travellers were murdered seven miles south of Calais soon after their arrival in France. They had foolishly advertised the large sums they were carrying by failing to be discreet when they changed their English guineas into Louis d'ors. The murders of Messrs. Davis, Locke, Mompesson and Sebright made a great stir. A monumental cone was erected on the site and when it was defaced the following year an engraving depicting the cone and its inscription was printed in London. The murders were remembered for several years. In September 1725 the newsletter »Wye's Letter« reported *Charles Evelyn, Esq; and some other English Gentlemen, were lately robb'd between Calais and Lyons, by several Highwaymen, and were afraid of being killed as the Gentlemen near Calais were; but however, they had the good fortune to escape.*

However the murders near Calais created such a stir precisely because they were so unusual. One paper began its account, *The following scene of villany and Murders being so uncommon and surprising*²². The accounts left by British tourists to France do not suggest fear. France, and in particular Paris, was well policed by British standards, the brawls British tourists were involved in, such as that in Paris reported in the London press in May 1730²³, tended to be provoked by riotous visitors and often

19 Parker to his father the Lord Chancellor, the first Earl of Macclesfield, 14 February 1721, BL. Stowe Mss. 750.

20 Stanhope to Essex, 18 October 1732, BL Add. 27732; Molesworth to Stanyan, 27 November 1720, PRO. 92/30; Spark Molesworth to Gregor, 8 April 1739, BL. Add. 61830.

21 Finch to Harrington, 9 May (os) 1740, PRO 91/24.

22 Applebee's Original Weekly Journal 27 June (os) 1724; Wye's Letter 16 September (os) 1725; Northampton Mercury 23 September (os) 1723.

23 London Evening Post 21 May (os) 1730

involved drink, and British diplomats were prepared to help protect tourists if they encountered difficulties with the law. The situation elsewhere in Europe was either worse, or believed to be so. Policing was rarely as effective as in France, Italians were regarded as naturally troublesome, if not murderous, many mountainous and wooded areas, such as the Carpathians, were the haunt of brigands, and when the Earl of Radnor travelled for pleasure from Vienna to Constantinople in 1730, his trip took on some of the attributes of a military expedition²⁴.

Aside from the negative factors discouraging travel elsewhere there were positive aspects attracting tourists to France, and, in particular, Paris. A major one was fashion. *Here are at present more of our country than French*, noted the second Earl Cowper of Paris in 1729, and the popularity of visiting Paris, the oft-remarked habit of the British of travelling in groups and preferring their own company²⁵, and the practice of regarding a lengthy stay in Paris as an essential component of travel abroad, all combined to ensure that most tourists spent a long time in the city. The dominance of French cultural and social fashions in Europe was another important element. It was believed essential for a gentleman to know how to dance, fence, hunt and speak French. France was regarded as the best place to acquire these skills, either Paris itself or other less costly alternatives, the Loire Valley, Luneville, the capital of the independant Duchy of Lorraine which possessed an Academy patronised by such travellers as Charles Spencer in 1726, or Switzerland, specifically Geneva and Lausanne which had the advantage of combining opportunities for acquiring French culture and social skills with a Protestant environment where Britain was well respected and the moral tone more sober than that of Paris.

Paris did not impress all British tourists. John Lord Boyle, the eldest son of the Tory Earl of Orrery visited the city in 1725–6, confessed that he was 'heartily tired of the Place', wished that he was still at Oxford University, and when he had returned to England wrote, *I do not in the least regret my absence from the Gayest City in the World*. Possibly Boyle's complaints should not be taken too seriously. He admitted that visiting the town with his father limited his enjoyment, and suggested that he would appreciate Paris more were he was his own master. Robert Trevor, a younger son of the Lord Privy Seal, Lord Trevor, visited France in 1728–9, staying in Paris in both years, and joining the household of the diplomat Stephen Poyntz, one of the Plenipotentiaries at the international peace congress held nearby at Soissons. In May 1729 he wrote to his half-brother Thomas Trevor, from Soissons, *The end of last month I quitted Paris without the least regret, being heartily tired of it...*²⁶.

Such jaded comments were not usual. Paris, (and France), could upset but that was more usually on the grounds of cost than of boredom. Indeed Trevor's letters to his half-brother, never previously studied and only recently released to the British Library from Blenheim, suggest that he found much of interest in France. Trevor was

24 Radnor to Robinson, 11 November 1730, Bl. Add. 23780.

25 Cowper to his sister, Lady Sarah Cowper, 8 September 1729, Hertford, Hertfordshire County Record Office, Panshanger Mss. D/EPF 237. *Mist's Weekly Journal* 18 September (os) 1725; *Daily Post Boy* 27 September (os) 1731.

26 Boyle to Councillor Kempe, 25 December (os) 1725, Boyle to Mr. Travanion, 2 January (os) 1726, Boyle to Mr. Salkeld, 13 December (os) 1726, Countess of CORK and ORRERY (ed.), *The Orrery Papers* 2 Vols., London 1903, I, 42, 43, 48; Robert to Thomas Trevor, 24 May 1729, Bl. Add. 61684.

an able, curious and well-educated man, particularly interested in scientific matters. Setting off from London on 23 April (os) 1728 he sent his first letter to his half-brother a fortnight later from Paris,

...I assure you the face of the oarth, however that of the ladys may be, is not much changed between Barnett²⁷, and Versailles; nor did I meet with scarce one plant, animal, or insect upon my route, that was foreign to us in England... it is no disparagement to any country to resemble England; tho' I myself am so far a prosylyte as to confess the advantages are on ye side of France, especially those parts that lay round Paris, than which nothing can be finer. France (by that I mean the part i've seen) is an open country without any downs, or grass, but covered with poor crops of corn, and some woods; no country seats, and except about Calais, and towards Flanders but few convents are to be met with: all the gentry, and most of the religious being in the great towns which are all fortified, and at ye distance of thirty, or forty miles asunder: this was the face of things till I came to Chantilly... when all of a sudden I was surprised with ye unimaginaire beautys of that place, and ye country about it.

He described Chantilly and a visit to Versailles, where he was most impressed by waterworks and gardens, and continued.

The plantations along the roads, ye vinyards, and nobility's seats, and gardens infinitely surpass everything in England: the trees here are much finer, and fuller of leaves yn with us; they have to be planted thicker, and yet not only suffer ye grass to grow under them, but even protect, and make it thrive, this convenience with a particular lustre of the sunshine and brightness in the air are two most obvious distinctions, I think, between France and us... my chief amusement is walking in ye evenings in ye publick gardens etc.; where the numbers and humours of the people during these Whitsuntide holy days here have been very surprising to me: What think you of seeing a grass plott just after a shower covered with silk sacs, and embroidered coats laying all together: but for all the freedom of this nation, I've made no acquaintance yet with them²⁸.

Trevor's comment on the social, and possibly sexual, freedom of the Parisians was one made by other British visitors. Trevor spent the early summer in Paris visiting the sights, such as the Duke of Orleans' picture collection in the Palais Royal²⁹, before going on a brief trip to Lorraine, where he failed to purchase some of Callot's engravings, and of which he noted,

a considerable part of it is sowed with tobacco, and oirgimum (which they call Turkish) wheat, which they told us was for their horses, but I believe they often made a meal of it themselves. When the Crown of France restored this Dutchy to its ancient master upon the treaty of Riswick, it still reserved its three strongest and largest towns Verdun, Toul, and Metz together with ye country that depends upon them; these three bishopricks made a considerable hole in this government, and enable the French to take the rest, when they please.

The last observation was to be proved accurate in 1733 when the French occupied the duchy with no difficulty. Trevor continued the letter, commenting on French fruit and writing of Soissons,

In the mountains round this town, (which is an hundred miles from any parts of the sea,) I have found a vast variety of sea shells: some of the rocks are nothing but one vast

27 Barnet, the Trevor seat just north of London.

28 Robert to Thomas Trevor, 19 May 1728, BL. Add. 61684.

29 Robert to Thomas Trevor, 3 July 1728, BL. Add. 61684.

*cake of these shells: the small ones are so very rotten they will scarce bear the handling, but the larger ones are very sound...*³⁰.

The following summer he returned to his geological theme,

*Among other natural curiosities of Haute Fontaine, such as sea shells (to appearance) found in the solid rocks, and some to a considerable size, for example periwinkles as long as my thigh, I found a quantity of wood perfectly and really petrified: its weight; and substance, and solidity greater than common stone*³¹.

It is important to quote Robert Trevor's letters at length because they provide excellent evidence with which to refute the contemporary critique of travel, namely that tourists spent all their time, and much of the country's money, in whoring, gambling, drinking and spurious connoisseurship, and failed to improve either themselves or their country by their travels³².

»Mist's Weekly Journal«, the leading London Tory newspaper carried a savage attack on English tourists in Paris in 1725,

*If you ask them questions concerning the laws of governments of the countries they have visited, you will find they know no more of those matters than they do of Terra Australis incognita; and the whole account of their travels is generally no more than a journal of how many bottles they have drank, and what loose amours they have had. Of old, not Boys, but men, were sent to travel, for the views of men in leaving their own country was not to see fashions, to examine how perriwigs or coats were made, but to enquire into the excellency of the laws of other nations, and, by comparing them with their own, to supply their defects: Thus Solon and Lycurgis made themselves perfect in the laws of all Greece, and prevailed with Athens and Sparta to recieve such of them as they found to be better than their own*³³.

Clearly this critique was accurate for some tourists, but it is equally true that evidence to the contrary can be found in the journals and correspondence of many tourists. The journals kept by the Scot Andrew Mitchell, later envoy in Berlin and a Member of Parliament (M. P.)³⁴, by William Mildmay, or by Lord Quarendon, later Member of Parliament and a prominent Tory³⁵, and the correspondence of George Parker and of Boyle all reveal intelligent observation and an absence of crude xenophobic responses. The extent of the knowledge they acquired can be questioned. In a parliamentary debate in 1737 an opposition speaker claimed, *our travellers who make but very superficial enquiries into the manners or customs of any country they pass through, may perhaps imagine the people in France or Holland are more heavily, or more oppressively taxed, than the people of this Kingdom, because they hear the people complain there as well as they do here; but any gentleman who understands these things, and has made a proper enquiry, may soon be convinced of the contrary*³⁶;

30 Robert to Thomas Trevor, 27 August 1728, BL. Add. 61684.

31 Robert to Thomas Trevor, 15 July 1729, BL. Add. 61684.

32 Mist's Weekly Journal 18 Sept. (os) 1725, 8 July (os) 1727; Craftsman 6 July (os) 1728, 7 July (os) 1739, 12 July (os) 1740; The Nonsense of Commonsense 3 Jan. (os) 1738.

33 Mist's Weekly Journal 18 Sept. (os) 1725.

34 BL. Add. 58314–20.

35 Oxford, Oxfordshire County Record Office, Dillon papers, XX/a/7a; J. BLACK, *An Englishman Abroad in the 1730's*, in: *Postmaster*, 6, (1980) pp. 18–21.

36 W. COBBETT, *A Parliamentary History of England*, 10, London 1812, p. 137.

How far tourists can be expected to make *à proper enquiry* into complex fiscal matters is open to debate, but what is clear is that a certain number of travellers regarded their European tour as a form of political and social education. Tourists were also inclined, as could be expected, to relate their experiences to the contemporary political situation in Britain. George Lyttelton wrote to his father from Lyons in October 1729, condemned many features of French life, and added *the spirit of Whiggism grows upon me under the influence of arbitrary power*³⁷. It was natural to compare the British and French situation. Waldegrave wrote in 1732 of Lord Onslow, whose brief visit to Paris had made him *already half a Frenchman... he says he never saw such a country in his life and cannot praise this, without reflecting on his own*. Sacheverell Stevens in the dedication to his travel book claimed that it was written to show the superiority of English liberty over foreign tyranny³⁸.

In the background to the comments on France was an ever present sense of national hostility. This sense owed much to the experience of recent warfare, and to the role France played in British political mythology and ideology as the paradigm of political, social, religious and cultural evil, the insidious and powerful enemy at the gate. These feelings were in no way diminished during the Anglo-French alliance of 1716–31. This alliance was of crucial importance to both powers during this period, and served as the basis of their foreign policy. Furthermore, the French alliance played a major role in protecting the Hanoverian succession against the Jacobite threat. Nevertheless, despite the political importance of the alliance, neither power made any attempt to broaden the basis of good relations. The commercial hostility of the late seventeenth century, symbolised and marked by very high tariffs and by protectionist legislation, was not lessened. Religious legislation, deemed unfriendly by the other power, was still passed; in Britain in the wake of the Atterbury Plot, a Jacobite plot whose exposure owed much to information supplied by the French ministry, and in France in the mid 1720s. Public attitudes remained hostile. The French foreign minister noted the London response to the 1723 murder of British tourists near Calais,

*Je ne suis point étonné que le menu peuple de Londres ait tenu les discours que vous marqués par rapport au meurtre commis aux environs de Calais, mais je n'aurois pas crû que des personnes de distinction, et des gens sensés eussent pû les adopter, ni regarder comme l'effet d'une disposition generale dans la nation, le crime d'une troupe de voleurs*³⁹.

British travellers, in turn, noted French hostility. Edward Southwell, MP. for Dublin, after a continental tour with his son, later MP. for Bristol, wrote that the French were very strongly Jacobite in their sympathies. In 1730 Earl Waldegrave noted in his journal, *The Duke of Norfolk dined this day at Mr. Walpoles his grace observation upon the French hating of us*⁴⁰. This ever present sense of hostility must

37 George to Sir Thomas Lyttelton, 16 Oct. 1729, M. WYNDHAM, *Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols., London 1924, I, 26.

38 Waldegrave to Tilson, 15 Aug. 1732, PRO. 78/201; S. STEVENS, *Miscellaneous Remarks made on the spot, in a late seven years tour through France, Italy, Germany and Holland*, London 1756.

39 Morville to Chammorel, French Chargé d'Affaires in London, – Oct. 1723, Paris, Quai d'Orsay Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, supplément, 7, f. 94.

40 Southwell to the Earl of Nottingham, 26 Nov. (os) 1723, Leicester, Leicestershire County Record Office, Finch Mss, DG/7/4952; Waldgrave journal, 1 Sept. 1730, Chewton.

have influenced tourists, though it is difficult to assess its full impact. The 1730 Dunkirk crisis – a parliamentary storm in Britain over repairs to the harbour of Dunkirk being made contrary to the Peace of Utrecht – led travellers such as Thomas Robinson and William Windham to include the port on their French itinerary. The frequency of visits to scenes of conflict in recent wars must also have had an impact. In 1734 both the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry and Dr. William Barnard visited Lisle. Barnard noted meeting at Bethune a gentleman who told him *that his Mother used to keep him in awe, with the Duke of Marlborough's name*⁴¹. Thus admiration for the other country, a feature far from rare in this period (though France was showing few signs of the anglomania that was to influence it later in the century), did not replace an awareness of hostility and rivalry. British tourists should not however be condemned for unthinking xenophobia. France and Britain were in truth rivals, even during the period of their alliance. Commercial, colonial and maritime competition was an important feature of this period. French sympathy for the Jacobite cause was still very strong. Those British travellers who responded to a sense of threat by expressing traditional precepts against absolutism, Catholicism and France were, to some degree, resorting to an understandable defensive mechanism. Travel to France was a difficult challenge. The British tourists of this period lacked the easy sense of national self-confidence and power that was to characterise their successors in the great explosions of tourism from 1763 and 1815. In this, as in so much else, the early and the later eighteenth century Grand Tour were dramatically different.

41 Duchess of Queensberry to Mrs Herbert, 4 Aug., Barnard to Newcastle, 7 Sept. (os) 1734, BL. Add. 22626, 32689.