

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-60491-9 - Fielding: Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon  
J. H. Lobban  
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FIELDING'S *VOYAGE TO*  
*LISBON*

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THERE would not, perhaps, be a more pleasant, or profitable study, among those which have their principal end in amusement, than that of travels or voyages, if they were writ, as they might be, and ought to be, with a joint view to the entertainment and information of mankind. If the conversation of travellers be so eagerly sought after as it is, we may believe their books will be still more agreeable company, as they will, in general, be more instructive and more entertaining.

But when I say the conversation of travellers is usually so welcome, I must be understood to mean that only of such as have had good sense enough to apply their peregrinations to a proper use, so as to acquire from them a real and valuable knowledge of men and things; both which are best known by comparison. If the customs and manners of men were every where the same, there would be no office so dull as that of a traveller: for the difference of hills, valleys, rivers; in short, the various views in which we may see the face of the earth, would scarce afford him a pleasure worthy of his labour; and surely it would give him very little opportunity of communicating any kind of entertainment or improvement to others.

L. F.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## 2 THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To make a traveller an agreeable companion to a man of sense, it is necessary, not only that he should have seen much, but that he should have overlooked much of what he hath seen. Nature is not, any more than a great genius, always admirable in her productions, and therefore the traveller, who may be called her commentator, should not expect to find every where subjects worthy of his notice.

It is certain, indeed, that one may be guilty of omission as well as of the opposite extreme: but a fault on that side will be more easily pardoned, as it is better to be hungry than surfeited, and to miss your dessert at the table of a man whose gardens abound with the choicest fruits, than to have your taste affronted with every sort of trash that can be pick'd up at the green-stall, or the wheelbarrow.

If we should carry on the analogy between the traveller and the commentator, it is impossible to keep one's eye a moment off from the laborious much read doctor Zachary Grey, of whose redundant notes on Hudibras I shall only say, that it is, I am confident, the single book extant in which above five hundred authors are quoted, not one of which could be found in the collection of the late doctor Mead.

As there are few things which a traveller is to record, there are fewer on which he is to offer his observations: this is the office of the reader, and it is so pleasant a one, that he seldom chuses to have it taken from him, under the pretence of lending him assistance. Some occasions, indeed, there are when proper observations are pertinent, and others when they are necessary; but good sense alone must point them out. I shall lay down only one general rule, which I believe to be of universal truth between relator and hearer, as it is between author and reader; this is, that the latter never forgive any observation of the former which doth not convey some knowledge that they are sensible they could not possibly have attained of themselves.

But all his pains in collecting knowledge, all his

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

3

judgment in selecting, and all his art in communicating it, will not suffice, unless he can make himself, in some degree, an agreeable, as well as an instructive companion. The highest instruction we can derive from the tedious tale of a dull fellow scarce ever pays us for our attention. There is nothing, I think, half so valuable as knowledge, and yet there is nothing which men will give themselves so little trouble to attain; unless it be, perhaps, that lowest degree of it which is the object of curiosity, and which hath therefore that active passion constantly employed in its service. This, indeed, it is in the power of every traveller to gratify; but it is the leading principle in weak minds only.

To render his relation agreeable to the man of sense, it is therefore necessary that the voyager should possess several eminent and rare talents; so rare, indeed, that it is almost wonderful to see them ever united in the same person.

And if all these talents must concur in the relator, they are certainly in a more eminent degree necessary to the writer: for here the narration admits of higher ornaments of stile, and every fact and sentiment offers itself to the fullest and most deliberate examination.

It would appear therefore, I think, somewhat strange, if such writers as these should be found extremely common; since nature hath been a most parsimonious distributor of her richest talents, and hath seldom bestowed many on the same person. But on the other hand, why there should scarce exist a single writer of this kind worthy our regard; and whilst there is no other branch of history (for this is history) which hath not exercised the greatest pens, why this alone should be overlooked by all men of great genius and erudition, and delivered up to the Goths and Vandals as their lawful property, is altogether as difficult to determine.

And yet that this is the case, with some very few exceptions, is most manifest. Of these I shall willingly

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

#### 4 THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

admit Burnet and Addison; if the former was not perhaps to be considered as a political essayist, and the latter as a commentator on the classics, rather than as a writer of travels; which last title perhaps they would both of them have been least ambitious to affect.

Indeed if these two, and two or three more, should be removed from the mass, there would remain such a heap of dulness behind, that the appellation of voyage-writer would not appear very desirable.

I am not here unapprized that old Homer himself is by some considered as a voyage-writer; and indeed the beginning of his 'Odyssey' may be urged to countenance that opinion, which I shall not controvert. But whatever species of writing the 'Odyssey' is of, it is surely at the head of that species, as much as the 'Iliad' is of another; and so far the excellent Longinus would allow, I believe, at this day.

But, in reality, the 'Odyssey,' the 'Telemachus,' and all of that kind, are to the voyage-writing I here intend, what romance is to true history, the former being the confounder and corrupter of the latter. I am far from supposing, that Homer, Hesiod, and the other antient poets and mythologists, had any settled design to pervert and confuse the records of antiquity; but it is certain they have effected it; and, for my part, I must confess I should have honoured and loved Homer more had he written a true history of his own times in humble prose, than those noble poems that have so justly collected the praise of all ages; for though I read these with more admiration and astonishment, I still read Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, with more amusement and more satisfaction.

The original poets were not, however, without excuse. They found the limits of nature too strait for the immensity of their genius, which they had not room to exert, without extending fact by fiction; and that especially at a time when the manners of men were too simple to afford that variety, which they

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J. H. Lobban

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

5

have since offered in vain to the choice of the meanest writers. In doing this, they are again excusable for the manner in which they have done it,

*Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promant.*

They are not indeed so properly said to turn reality into fiction, as fiction into reality. Their paintings are so bold, their colours so strong, that every thing they touch seems to exist in the very manner they represent it: their portraits are so just, and their landscapes so beautiful, that we acknowledge the strokes of nature in both, without enquiring whether nature herself, or her journeyman the poet, formed the first pattern of the piece.

But other writers (I will put Pliny at their head) have no such pretensions to indulgence: they lye for lying sake, or in order insolently to impose the most monstrous improbabilities and absurdities upon their readers on their own authority; treating them as some fathers treat children, and as other fathers do lay-men, exacting their belief of whatever they relate, on no other foundation than their own authority, without ever taking the pains of adapting their lies to human credulity, and of calculating them for the meridian of a common understanding; but with as much weakness as wickedness, and with more impudence often than either, they assert facts contrary to the honour of God, to the visible order of the creation, to the known laws of nature, to the histories of former ages, and to the experience of our own, and which no man can at once understand and believe.

If it should be objected (and it can no where be objected better than where I now write<sup>1</sup>, as there is no where more pomp of bigotry) that whole nations have been firm believers in such most absurd suppositions; I reply, the fact is not true. They have known nothing of the matter, and have believed they knew not what. It is, indeed, with me no matter

<sup>1</sup> At Lisbon.

Cambridge University Press

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J. H. Lobban

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## 6 THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

of doubt, but that the pope and his clergy might teach any of those Christian Heterodoxies, the tenets of which are the most diametrically opposite to their own; nay, all the doctrines of Zoroaster, Confucius, and Mahomet, not only with certain and immediate success, but without one catholick in a thousand knowing he had changed his religion.

What motive a man can have to sit down, and to draw forth a list of stupid, senseless, incredible lies upon paper, would be difficult to determine, did not Vanity present herself so immediately as the adequate cause. The vanity of knowing more than other men is, perhaps, besides hunger, the only inducement to writing, at least to publishing, at all: why then should not the voyage-writer be inflamed with the glory of having seen what no man ever did or will see but himself? This is the true source of the wonderful, in the discourse and writings, and sometimes, I believe, in the actions of men. There is another fault of a kind directly opposite to this, to which these writers are sometimes liable, when, instead of filling their pages with monsters which no body hath ever seen, and with adventures which never have nor could possibly have happened to them, they waste their time and paper with recording things and facts of so common a kind, that they challenge no other right of being remembered, than as they had the honour of having happened to the author, to whom nothing seems trivial that in any manner happens to himself. Of such consequence do his own actions appear to one of this kind, that he would probably think himself guilty of infidelity, should he omit the minutest thing in the detail of his journal. That the fact is true, is sufficient to give it a place there, without any consideration whether it is capable of pleasing or surprising, of diverting or informing the reader.

I have seen a play (if I mistake not, it is one of Mrs Behn's, or of Mrs Centlivre's) where this vice in a voyage-writer is finely ridiculed. An ignorant pedant, to whose government, for I know not what

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

7

reason, the conduct of a young nobleman in his travels is committed, and who is sent abroad to shew My Lord the world, of which he knows nothing himself, before his departure from a town, calls for his journal, to record the goodness of the wine and tobacco, with other articles of the same importance, which are to furnish the materials of a voyage at his return home. The humour, it is true, is here carried very far; and yet, perhaps, very little beyond what is to be found in writers who profess no intention of dealing in humour at all.

Of one or other or both of these kinds are, I conceive, all that vast pile of books which pass under the names of voyages, travels, adventures, lives, memoirs, histories, &c., some of which a single traveller sends into the world in many volumes, and others are, by judicious booksellers, collected into vast bodies in folio, and inscribed with their own names, as if they were indeed their own travels; thus unjustly attributing to themselves the merit of others.

Now from both these faults we have endeavoured to steer clear in the following narrative: which, however the contrary may be insinuated by ignorant, unlearned, and fresh-water critics, who have never travelled either in books or ships, I do solemnly declare doth, in my own impartial opinion, deviate less from truth than any other voyage extant; my lord Anson's alone being, perhaps, excepted.

Some few embellishments must be allowed to every historian: for we are not to conceive that the speeches in Livy, Sallust, or Thucydides, were literally spoken in the very words in which we now read them. It is sufficient that every fact hath its foundation in truth, as I do seriously aver is the case in the ensuing pages; and when it is so, a good critic will be so far from denying all kind of ornament of stile or diction, or even of circumstance to his author, that he would be rather sorry if he omitted it: for he could hence derive no other advantage than the loss of an additional pleasure in the perusal.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## 8 THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Again, if any merely common incident should appear in this journal, which will seldom, I apprehend, be the case, the candid reader will easily perceive it is not introduced for its own sake, but for some observations and reflections naturally resulting from it; and which, if but little to his amusement, tend directly to the instruction of the reader, or to the information of the public; to whom if I chuse to convey such instruction or information with an air of joke and laughter, none but the dullest of fellows will, I believe, censure it; but if they should, I have the authority of more than one passage in Horace to alledge in my defence.

Having thus endeavoured to obviate some censures to which a man, without the gift of fore-sight, or any fear of the imputation of being a conjurer, might conceive this work would be liable, I might now undertake a more pleasing task, and fall at once to the direct and positive praises of the work itself; of which indeed I could say a thousand good things: but the task is so very pleasant that I shall leave it wholly to the reader; and it is all the task that I impose on him. A moderation for which he may think himself obliged to me, when he compares it with the conduct of authors, who often fill a whole sheet with their own praises, to which they sometimes set their own real names, and sometimes a fictitious one. One hint, however, I must give the kind reader; which is, that if he should be able to find no sort of amusement in the book, he will be pleased to remember the public utility which will arise from it. If entertainment, as Mr Richardson observes, be but a secondary consideration in a romance; with which Mr Addison I think agrees, affirming the use of the pastry-cook to be the first; if this, I say, be true of a mere work of invention, sure it may well be so considered in a work founded like this, on truth; and where the political reflections form so distinguishing a part.

But perhaps I may hear, from some critic of the most saturnine complexion, that my vanity must have

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

---

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

9

made a horrid dupe of my judgment, if it hath flattered me with an expectation of having any thing here seen in a grave light, or of conveying any useful instruction to the public, or to their guardians. I answer with the great man, whom I just now quoted, that my purpose is to convey instruction in the vehicle of entertainment; and so to bring about at once, like the revolution in the Rehearsal, a perfect reformation of the laws relating to our maritime affairs: an undertaking, I will not say more modest, but surely more feasible, than that of reforming a whole people, by making use of a vehicular story, to wheel in among them worse manners than their own.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

IN the beginning of August, 1753, when I had taken the Duke of Portland's medicine, as it is called, near a year, the effects of which had been the carrying off the symptoms of a lingering imperfect gout, I was persuaded by Mr Ranby, the King's premier serjeant-surgeon, and the ablest advice, I believe, in all branches of the physical profession, to go immediately to Bath. I accordingly writ that very night to Mrs Bowden, who, by the next post, informed me she had taken me a lodging for a month certain.

Within a few days after this, whilst I was preparing for my journey, and when I was almost fatigued to death with several long examinations, relating to five different murders, all committed within the space of a week, by different gangs of street robbers, I received a message from his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, by Mr Carrington, the King's messenger, to attend his Grace in Lincoln's-inn-fields, upon some business of importance; with which I immediately complied; when his Grace sent a gentleman to discourse with me on the best plan which could be invented for putting an immediate end to those murders and robberies which were every day committed in the streets: upon which, I promised to transmit my opinion, in writing, to his Grace, who, as the gentleman informed me, intended to lay it before the privy council.

Tho' this visit cost me a severe cold, I, notwithstanding, set myself down to work, and in about