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Eighteenth-Century Day Excursions: Finding Authority in the Narration of Brief Visits and "A Diversity of Objects"

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Abstract: This article argues that a focus on the day excursion as a particular form of journey, with its inherent limits in relation to scale, distance, and duration, enables us to bring recent critical thinking on microtravel as a form with "foundations in the depth or intensity of description" into dialogue with scholarship that has given sustained attention to modes of descriptive practice that were specific to eighteenth-century British literature and the narrative representation of interior domestic space. The three English travellers under consideration are John Loveday (1711–1789), Dorothy Richardson (1748–1819), and Caroline Lybbe Powys (1738–1817). All made numerous home tour journeys of different kinds but never published their records of their travelling in their lifetimes. All displayed sustained interest in interior description, whether that was for the purpose of antiquarian research, as was the case with Loveday, and to some extent, Richardson, or as a means of collecting, arranging, and performing domestic aesthetic sensibility, as in the writing of both Richardson and Powys. The small local journeys analysed here speak of privileged leisure: the accounts offer experimentation in the narration of journeys made within limits, but those limits are rarely of opportunity. Yet these young travellers still negotiate authority: in the practice of day excursioning, and in writing up those experiences, we see each traveller utilising this compact form to find opportunities for self-assertion, employing the formulaic structures of antiquarian record and country house catalogue in order to articulate an independent curatorial voice.

Keywords: travel writing; day excursion; John Loveday; Dorothy Richardson; Caroline Lybbe Powys; Microtravel; eighteenth century

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1. Introduction

One of the directions that the field of travel writing studies has taken in recent years is towards a focused attention on forms of travel that are small, short, and slow. This has been variously figured as a shift in attention from horizontal to vertical travel, and from speed and distance to forms of close and careful attention to what is proximate. It also draws attention to the layering of memory, history, imagination, and sensory perception that contributes to our experience and representation of journeying. In the introduction to the recent *Microtravel: Confinement, Deceleration, Microspection*, Charles Forsdick, Kathryn Walchester, and I (2024) have traced the developments in these critical ideas in detail. That work reminds us that the practice of microtravel is not new. The eighteenth century saw the burgeoning of British travel abroad in the continuation and evolution of Grand Tour travel to Europe, and in "big maritime and landward expeditions sponsored by governments and scientific institutions" (Korte 2015, p. 174); however, it was also rich ground for the development of more localised forms of travel and knowledge construction, not least via the

home tour. Furthermore, Michael Cronin has emphasised that exploration of what is nearby can lead to an expansion, rather than a contraction, of an individual's engagement with the world. What he calls a "politics of re-enchantment" that begins at the level of the local has the potential to enable, not close off, wider understanding (Cronin 2012b, *Expanding World*, p. 103). This article has two key aims. Firstly, it intends to extend the critical examination of what might be termed "microtravel" to a certain kind of eighteenth-century travel text that is yet to be explicitly read in those terms: the day excursion, and more particularly, accounts of day excursions that tend towards the description of antiquarian or "country house" subject matter and that often remain in manuscript form during the author's lifetime. Secondly, I put the recent critical thinking on microtravel as a form with "foundations in the depth or intensity of description" into dialogue with scholarship that has given sustained attention to modes of descriptive practice that were specific to eighteenth-century British literature and the narrative representation of interior and domestic space (Forsdick et al. 2024a, p. 6).

Almost two decades ago, Cynthia Wall, writing about *The Prose of Things*, highlighted the symbiotic relationship between country house guidebooks and travel witing form and discourse: "The textual praxis of the house guide combined with published travel accounts to bring description even more into cultural consciousness, even more into public demand, even more into literary space" (Wall 2006, p. 177). And more recently, Freya Gowrley built on an already rich critical field of eighteenth-century studies that is "notably preoccupied with things" (Gowrley 2022, p. 7).[1] She demonstrated how the literary description of country house interior space in travel journals and letters has formed part of a wider, emerging cultural discourse around the idea of the home, and the concept of domestic materiality, in the period 1750–1840. In the process, she employed Clifford Geertz's notion of "thick description", as has recent critical discussion of vertical travel (Gowrley 2022, p. 34; see also Pettinger 2019, p. 277). This article argues that a focus on the day excursion as a particular form of journey, with its inherent limits in relation to scale, distance, and duration, enables us to bring these strands of critical thinking together in order to examine eighteenth-century travel accounts that have yet to be considered within the wider context of travel writing's capacity to convey forms of local experience and microattention, perhaps because they do not fit neatly into the slow travel or pedestrian model. The three English travellers under consideration are John Loveday (1711–1789), Dorothy Richardson (1748–1819), and Caroline Lybbe Powys (1738–1817). All made numerous home tour journeys of different kinds, but never published their records of their travelling in their lifetimes, and all displayed sustained interest in interior description, whether that was for the purpose of antiquarian research, as was the case with Loveday, and to some extent, Richardson,[2] or as a means of collecting, arranging, and performing domestic and aesthetic sensibility, as in the writing of both Richardson and Powys. The small, local journeys analysed here speak of privilege and leisure: the accounts offer experimentation in the narration of journeys made within limits, but those limits are rarely of opportunity. Yet, these young travellers still negotiate questions of authority as they prepare their manuscripts for a reading audience. For example, Loveday is trying to establish himself as a serious scholar within the field of antiquarianism, and Richardson and Powys, like all women who authored travel writing in this period, had to carefully navigate often complex and sometimes contradictory views on the appropriateness of female authorship in this genre (see Kinsley 2008, chap. 2). In the practice of day excursioning, and in writing up those experiences, we see each traveller utilising this compact form to find opportunities for self-assertion and employing the formulaic structures of antiquarian record and country house catalogue in order to articulate an independent curatorial voice.

2. Day Trips and Excursions

There is a tendency to think of the day excursion as a nineteenth-century invention. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) cites the first usage of "day trip" in 1838, and of "day tripper" in 1851 (*OED* 2024), with the touristic concept itself and its democratising principle of providing leisure travel to the masses generally attributed to Thomas Cook, who is also credited with the creation of "mass tourism". The first day trip he organised took place in 1841, when he chartered a train from Leicester to Loughborough in order to transport people to a temperance meeting. Subsequent enterprises included a trip for 3000 schoolchildren who "were transported to Derby for tea so that they would be out of Leicester while the horseraces were exerting their pernicious moral influence on that town", with what Maxine Feifer described as the first professional "pleasure excursion", a round trip from Leicester to Liverpool, taking place in 1845 (Feifer 1985, pp. 167–68; see also Brendon 1991). In addition, popular Victorian magazines such as *The Leisure Hour*, aimed at a working-class readership, popularised the practice of self-directed "home tourism", with articles promoting "minor excursions people could undertake as a day trip from London and other cities" (Korte 2024, p. 66). In fact, Barbara Korte argued that "there is a clear correlation between the short form of the single article and minor forms of travel" in the magazine (Korte 2024, p. 70). There were, however, forms of non-work day travel that existed before the development of Cook's tours, and it is to examples of those in the previous century that this article turns. Whilst the term "day trip" was yet to emerge, "excursion" (as well as later derivative terms such as "excursioning" and "excursioner") was used in relation to brief or short trips and journeys, often with a sense of the diminutive (*OED* 2024). It is a particularly appropriate term for my purpose, because it also carries with it the sense of moving into the unfamiliar that characterises even the most local of journeys discussed here: an "excursion" equates to "an act or instance of moving beyond a usual area of activity or expertise; a short period of attempting to explore or become involved in a new or different area of interest, activity". The *OED* emphasis on an excursion as a journey "made with the intention of returning to the place from which one sets out", correlates with Michael Cronin's "interstitial travel writing", which itself is a strand of the defamiliarisation that he identifies as a key element of endotic travel (Cronin 2012b, *Expanding World*, p. 12). The place of embarkation and return in the examples discussed below may or not be "home", which, as Rune Graulund reminds us, is, in any case, a "slippery subject": "quite concrete" for some and "less material" for others, it is capable of meaning radically different things depending on an individual's subject position (Graulund 2019, p. 118). As we consider eighteenth-century day excursions, we find home meaning different things: sometimes a lodging away from home functions metonymically for "home" when used as a base from which to make daily trips that function in more or less explicitly acknowledged ways as journeys within journeys.

3. John Loveday's Antiquarian Excursions and Textual Accumulation

The traveller and antiquarian John Loveday journeyed extensively throughout Britain and Ireland, often in the pursuance of research that functioned within local, collaborative networks of knowledge exchange.[3] Oxford and the friends he made there were central to the development of these interests in local exploration, and the rhythms of University life established rhythms for his movements—between Magdalen College, his family home in Caversham, Berkshire (historically in Oxfordshire), and other destinations of interest—and for the dissemination of his notes about what he saw and discovered. The scholar and antiquary Thomas Hearne was a central influence in Loveday's Oxford years: decades older than Loveday, he nevertheless became a close friend, and much of Loveday's travelling and research was undertaken with the intention of providing information for Hearne's

own publishing projects. In this sense, Hearne's relationship to Loveday resembles that between the later Welsh travel writer, naturalist, and antiquarian Thomas Pennant who is discussed by Mary-Ann Constantine in this Special Issue, and the numerous informants or collaborators who helped him to gather material for his research and publications. As Sarah Markham has demonstrated, the practice of generous scholarship which Loveday formed early on via the relationship with Hearne extended out much more widely: "He corresponded with many scholars, to whom he was always ready to give assistance", but shied from public acknowledgement of those efforts (Markham 2004). Other significant correspondents included Thomas Warton, John Byng, and Gilbert White, with whom Loveday developed a friendship and correspondence in the later years of his life, which emerged from White's growing interest in the antiquarian history of his native village of Selborne, and also through a shared interest in their pet tortoises (see Foster and Markham 1989). White's "enduringly popular" *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne, in the County of Southampton* was published in 1789, the year of Loveday's death; he was himself a frequent traveller—despite a literary legacy which bound him to his dwelling place—and was an avid reader of travel writing, the techniques of which informed his *Natural History* (Menely 2004, pp. 46, 52–53; also Maddox 1986, pp. 46–48).[4] The correspondence between the two writers reveals the extent of the contribution Loveday made to the antiquarian content of White's volume, a relationship often obscured in modern editions because it is a part of the work subsequent editors have chosen not to reproduce.[5] However, in its epistolary structure and acknowledged debt to a range of informants, White's work speaks to a "community of knowledge" (Menely 2004, p. 55) much like the one Loveday had been part of in his more active years.[6]

There are 126 tour accounts authored by Loveday, spanning 1729–1765; they were written on "loose papers" (Markham 2004), and none made it into print in his lifetime, although the *Diary of a Tour in 1732 through parts of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland* was published in 1890, a century after his death, by his grandson. Loveday's accounts of his journeying record day excursions as well as tours of several weeks and range from a short paragraph to many pages in length. They have been carefully edited by Sarah Markham, Loveday's descendent and biographer, with each account being numbered and labelled a "tour" regardless of the duration of the journey.[7] The first "tour" of the volume epitomises the "endotic travel" described by Michael Cronin: "an exercise in staying close by, not leaving the familiar and travelling interstitially through a world we thought we knew" (Cronin 2012b, *Expanding World*, p. 11). It is a visit to St. Peter's Church, Caversham in 1728, a walk that took him "simply up the slope behind the house" (Markham 1984, p. 25). He was 17 years old at the time, had recently begun his studies at Oxford, and had already established what would become a long friendship with Hearne. The primary purpose for this first account, which, in manuscript, consists of two papers, appears to be to compile a set of notes for Hearne. The text mostly comprises of transcriptions of inscriptions found within the church, and it begins and ends within the building itself; the "journey" being narrated in this young antiquary's first foray into travel narration is therefore the pacing of the short distances within the building. The Church frames his movement, and the proliferation of text that is the product of this hyper-local excursion speaks rather of stillness than movement, of patient observation and transcription.

Yet, there is already an assertion of scholarly and editorial authority in this account as Loveday employs what Stuart Sherman calls the "redaction topos" (Sherman 1996, p. 210), pointing out that discernment has been necessary, and that diligent, scholarly replication of detail does not require *everything* to be recorded. "There are several other insignificant Gravestones", he wrote, "There are Gravestones for several of Brigham's Daughters here not worth transcribing" (Loveday 2010, p. 2). The account mediates between the antiquarian

site and Hearne as the intended recipient of the writing; in a moment like this, Loveday reminds Hearne that his experience and observation exceeds what is on the page, and that information is withheld. This is reinforced by the second sheet recording this day's excursion, which Markham notes does not appear to have been shared with Hearne. On it, the inscriptions for Brigham's daughters *are* included, suggesting that while Loveday may not have considered them "worth transcribing" for Hearne, he placed enough value on them himself to want to make a record of them. This is Loveday's church, just behind his home, in which his ancestors were buried, and which inscribes his own family's history as well as that of others: "Over the Altar are 2 Flags of the Loveday's Family". Whilst the account initially appears scholarly and transactional in its reproduction of inscriptions for the professional interest of Hearne, closer inspection reveals a more complicated text. In both parts of the account, there are moments of speculation, with repeated use of "perhaps" and "suppose", and of questioning. For example, of the church bells, Loveday wrote: "There is a tradition that a Brigham gave one of the Bells, perhaps it was the Treble Bell, and the Donor Brigham who dyed in 1696 who was a great Lover of Ringing" (Loveday 2010, p. 2). The statement reveals that the information Loveday is sharing is partly comprised of local, communal knowledge that is oral rather than written, passed on generationally and at least partly consisting of hearsay. In this sense, the thick description of the text does move beyond the walls of the church, into the community beyond, where that knowledge circulates. It also extends its reach through its subject matter where, towards the end of the account, Loveday briefly pivots to the landscape beyond the church and its grounds, to consider a site of death rather than of burial: "From Potmann-Brook-Bridge to Caversham Bridge 2721 feet; at the former, says Tradition, was once a Gallows" (Loveday 2010, p. 3). The traveller remained in the church, but his mind, and therefore his description, moved out beyond it to measure out the space between locations via prior understanding and experience, rather than as paced out in the present time of this day excursion.

It is tempting to read the account of St. Peter's Church as a formative work that demonstrates the young Loveday courting Hearne's patronage and cutting his teeth as an antiquarian travel writer. The brief excursion, and the relative shortness of the travel text, could suggest an author testing out the form. However, it is not the case that day excursions served only as a practice ground from which Loveday built to longer tours, because he continued to make and record those kinds of journey throughout his writing life. Some of those other accounts are similarly focused on the narration of a single interior space, with the journey to and from the site elided as was the case with the Caversham Church. The account of a visit to Oxford Cathedral in 1734, for example, consists of a breathless itinerary which piles historical information with observed and measured architectural and antiquarian detail. It is a text of "plenitude and particularity" (Sherman 1996, p. 210), beginning:

> 20 June 1734. Oxford Cathedral: Guymundus, the 1st Prior of the Regular Canons of the Order of Saint Augustine, who were placed here in 1111, began the present Church which (as B.Willis thinks) was finished in his, & his two Successors' times, the last of whom occurs Prior in 1188, and a Successor of his occurs in 1191. The Choir, Cross-Isle, & Nave are much of the same Heigth: the Cross-Isle is the highest of the three, & the Nave is just 4 foot higher than the Choir on account of the vaulting of the latter. The Roofs of the Nave & Cross-Isle are rafted-under in Braketts & Pannels; but the Choir & every other Isle throughout the Church are vaulted or arched with Stone; there is much Work & Ornament in the Stone Roof of the Choir, not so of the Isles which are all much of the same heigth. (Loveday 2010, p. 236)

There is a sense of "approach" here, but it is not that of a traveller as his path leads him to his destination: instead, we are led to the present time of the cathedral via the story of its foundation (and via intertextual references to other sources), and the text leaps between temporal and spatial dimensions, from 1191 into the Choir. The final, single-sentence paragraph teeters on the comedic as it anticlimactically turns to mundane and domestic matters after the intense and hectic pace of the preceding description: "The Cathedral wants white-washing to a very great degree. The Prior's Lodgings belong to Dr Barton, Canon of the 2d Stall" (Loveday 2010, p. 237). To read Loveday's work as microtravel is to recognise more than temporal and textual brevity, or the inclusion of circumstantial, minute detail. The tight frameworks within which travelling occurs—the short distance walked from the house to Caversham Church behind it, and the distillation of day excursions into textual accounts that are bounded by the walls of buildings—engender narratives that achieve expansion though historical record and both individual and community memory rather than movement through space.

4. Dorothy Richardson: Adolescent Authorship and the Day Excursion as Textual Construct

There are a number of parallels between the travel accounts of John Loveday and those of Dorothy Richardson. A generation younger than Loveday and residing in the north of England rather than the south, Richardson nevertheless similarly participated within regional networks of antiquarian scholarship and publication but published very little in her lifetime. Like Loveday's, her travel accounts span decades and remained in manuscript form, in Richardson's case, constituting five journal volumes which narrated journeys made through England between 1761 and 1801 (Kinsley 2003, 2005). Richardson's journeying also began early in her life: the first entries in her travel journals are three accounts dating from 1761 when she was 13 years old (although the accounts in their final form may have been written up at a later point, from notes), and all narrate country house visiting. Textually, these journeys function as day excursions; however, the point of embarkation was not Richardson's own home. Gestures towards the origin points of the visits suggest that there is a wider journey context that remains unelaborated. Two excursions to Wentworth House and Wentworth Castle,[8] made on subsequent days in March 1761, were made with "Miss Fenton of Bank Top near Barnsley" (Richardson 1761–1767, p. 1). There was therefore more extensive travel behind these visits: Richardson has made the journey of over 50 miles to Barnsley from her home in Thornton-in-Craven, then in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The third of these early day trip accounts describes Nostell (which Richardson spells Nostal), the "Seat of S^{r} Rowland Winn", which Richardson visited in July of the same year (Richardson 1761–1767, p. 11). The journey was made from nearby Crofton, implying again a wider undetailed context of travel into Yorkshire and residence with friends or acquaintances. The question of nomenclature is tested here: what is the difference between a day excursion made from home, and one that forms part of a longer journey or tour? Like Russian dolls, we find journeys contained within journeys.[9] The travel author can choose to display or conceal those layers of travelling experience, and in these early tour accounts by Richardson, we see a concentration on and isolation of the single country house visit as a distinct event, in a way that formally aligns her approach with Loveday's account of the trip to Caversham Church, despite the fact that his point of departure is "home", while Richardson begins from the homes of others. The textual presentation of part of a longer tour experience within a textual format that elides that wider context can also be found in print publications in the period; such texts act as reminders of the constructedness of travel accounts, and the often-complicated relationship between the "real" journey undertaken and a traveller's written depiction of it. The fashion for extracting and anthologising travel

writing further obscures the reader's understanding of the nature of the journey in which a text originated. Richard J. Sullivan's *A Description of the High Peak in Derbyshire* (Sullivan 1788) is a case in point. It presented, as a standalone account, what is acknowledged as an "extract" from the *Tour thro' Part of England, Scotland and Wales*, which was first published in 1780 (Sullivan 1780) and then revised for further editions. A short guidebook for a day excursion is available as an alternative to the larger, original tour, the duration of which is itself obscured by the artificial epistolary structure of the original account. Shrinking and reduction of the primary textual production effects a concentration and a hyper-localisation the journey.

Each of Richardson's day excursion accounts begins with an emphasis on both departure and companionship, and in each case, the tone is relatively informal: "I went along with Miss Fenton of Bank Top near Barnsley"; "I went along with Miss Fenton to see Wentworth Castle the seat of the Earl of Strafford"; "I went from Crofton with M^{rs} Traviss &c to see Nostal the Seat of S^{r} Rowland Winn" (Richardson 1761–1767, pp. 1, 6, 11). What follows in each case is a structured and often formulaic description of the houses, their interiors, and grounds. However, there is more mobility in Richardson's early writing than in Loveday's, and she paid more attention to situating a building in its landscape: there is an aesthetic sensibility on display in her travel writing generally, particularly in her engagement with picturesque aesthetics (Kinsley 2005), and also in her preoccupation with establishing, or noting the obstruction of, sightlines. We are introduced to each house as it is observed from a distance before we are taken inside, and in the case of Wentworth House, Richardson managed to simultaneously convey a sense of the house as viewed from outside, and the prospect as seen from the inside out: "The Situation is low, & there is a Hill before the House that greatly obstructs the Prospect. The Front extends 600 & 6 Feet & is very magnificent" (Richardson 1761–1767, p. 1). The description of the interiors of these grand houses shows the young Richardson practising and recording exact observation and measurement, but also exercising her taste and judgement, with architectural features, furniture, paintings and other objects being categorised with "staple adjectives" (Wall 2006, p. 84) as "beautiful", "fine" or "well preserved". Rooms and paintings are numbered and listed in line with established and popular textual practices of her day. To give a brief example, again from the account of Wentworth House:

> 3rd the Dining Room; the sides are painted; (the five senses) the Floor p[?]d Plaister. Pictures 1st over the Chimney Piece: Ld Rockingham and Lady Charlotte Wentworth when they were children—2nd the three Children Thomas Earl of Strafford left, when he was beheaded.—
>
> 4th the Library. It is a very large Room; & has Bookcases round it; over them are Busts of Pope, Milton, Addison &c.—At one end stands two large Globes, an Orrery & a number of mathematical instruments.–
>
> 5th and 6th Lord Rockingham's two Dressing Rooms; they are both hung round with Pictures, of his own Houses—(Richardson 1761–1767, p. 2)

Critical writing on slow travel, microtravel, or the practices of microattention in journey texts have yet to pay sustained attention to interior descriptions in this cataloguing format, that are common in eighteenth-century day excursion accounts. However, eighteenth-century room-travel, and in particular, Xavier de Maistre's 1794 *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (A Journey Around My Room), is often cited as a seminal text in the history of microspection and microtravel (Cronin 2012b, *Expanding World*, p. 12; Forsdick et al. 2024a, p. 7), making it fitting that we pay more attention to travellers' experiences of interior spaces, and the bounded, object-filled accounts they produce. Wall has drawn our attention to the eighteenth-century turn in prose description towards an increasingly attentive detailing of

the "things" to be found in domestic interiors. The "happy fetishisation of lists" that had begun in the seventeenth century gathered pace and began to offer new forms of language and understanding:

> Lists are historically and generically a part of description at large, in that they gather *things* together, to create a visual heap, a heap capable, moreover, of structural meaning. (Wall 2006, p. 88)

Significant evolutions in prose description are, said Wall, a consequence of the fashion for British home tour travel, the visiting of country estate houses so often included on touristic itineraries, and the confluence between the authorised guides to those houses and the version created by travellers themselves which might partly mimic, but also nuance or revise, the official narrative offered by the property owner. The prevalence of those patterns of description in the manuscript accounts of Richardson as an adolescent traveller certainly supports that argument. And it is an argument that adds further weight to one of the claims we have made for travel authorship since the early emergence of travel writing studies as a critical discipline: that the development of the novel in the English language tradition in the eighteenth century is fundamentally indebted to texts of travel (see, for example, Thompson 2011, pp. 51–52; Youngs 2013, p. 38). Wall wrote that "Travellers' diaries and country-house guidebooks represent perhaps two of the most important textual praxes in the development of novelistic description" (Wall 2006, p. 189). Bringing the critical framework provided by the recent focus on microtravel and microattention into dialogue with this scholarship on the narration of domestic space and innovations in prose writing provides an opportunity to attend more closely to the antiquarian or country house day excursion. Such visiting might bring "description further towards gentrification", but we also see it exploited in order to *call into question* the authority of the narratives told via the arrangement of these homes: comprehensive textual and descriptive "heaping" can actually reveal, by close and minute attention, flaws and unfinishedness.

Richardson's day excursions of 1761 disclosed contradiction and incompletion within the minutiae of the normative cataloguing structure of her interior descriptions, which served to reinforce her own authority as a sharp and observant excursioner, while calling into question the official accounts offered to her. In the replication of country-house guidebook formats, and the narration of architectural and decorative features that often reoccurred from one house to another, there was an inevitable repetition. "The Great Staircase is Stone, & has Iron Banisters Gilt" from her account of Wentworth Castle, for example, echoes in the description of the stairs at Nostell where "The Steps are Stone with Iron Banisters" (Richardson 1761–1767, pp. 8, 12). However, there were moments when Richardson herself alerted us to repetition and invited the reader to contemplate its meaning. In the galleries at both Wentworth House and Wentworth Castle, she observed the same painting—"Thomas Early of Strafford dictating to his Secretary by Van Dyke"—and included it in the numbered list of paintings she viewed at each residence. In her second account, that to Wentworth Castle, she drew the reader's attention to the fact that they have already seen this picture listed, just a few pages before, in the account of Wentworth House. In a note she writes: "(L^d Rockingham and L^d Strafford both call their Pictures of him the Original)" (Richardson 1761–1767, pp. 1, 9). There is a lot suggested in that parenthetical line. The insight gained by her day excursioning, and back-to-back visits to these two houses, exposes an awkward problem. The word "call" sits heavily in the middle of the sentence, suggesting that neither man supports his claim with evidence, and the implication that one of them must be false casts suspicion on both of these men of the nobility, one of whom—Lord Rockingham—would become Prime Minister four years later. At Nostell, absolute satisfaction was denied to Richardson in other ways. The house could not be fully recorded because it was not yet complete—"we pass'd thro several

unfinish'd Room [*sic*]"—and, once again, the family's word had been offered as authority but could not substitute for the traveller's own verification of information. The text ends with: "I was told there is a very fine Family Picture of Sr Tho^{s} Moore & his Children in the House by Hans Holbens, but we did not see it—" (Richardson 1761–1767, p. 17). The final note of the excursion is therefore one of incompletion and frustrated authentication. In these examples we see evidence that "the tourist was not necessarily a passive absorber of country-house ideology" (Wall 2006, p. 194). In Richardson's day excursions, we see a young traveller learning how to assert and develop her own creative and critical identity via the ostensibly prescriptive format of the country house catalogue. As Michael Cronin says of the "strategies of defamiliarization" that are "central to the functioning of the home tour", "[a] narrowing of focus, a reduction in scale can in fact lead to an expansion of insight" (Cronin 2012a, Home Truths, p. 230).

5. Caroline Lybbe Powys: Stillness, Repetition, and an "Interval of Time"

The frustrated conclusion to Richardson's account of her day excursion to Nostell, and the knowledge gap implied by her closing long dash, sets up the possibility or necessity for further revisiting of this site in order to fill in the lacunae left in the text. Caroline Lybbe Powys was a traveller who shared Richardson's interest in the detailing of country house interiors and explicitly wrote about repetition. Powys displayed a desire to travel slowly and observe what is close at hand, which she came to frequently articulate in aesthetic terms via employment of William Shenstone's distinction between landscape and prospect, "the former as expressive of home scenes, the latter of distant images" (Shenstone 1764, p. 129).[10] She kept two sets of journals: her "annual journals" and the journals of the "long excursions" made with her family each summer, which she keeps at the request of her father. In an account of Longford Castle, which forms part of her "Five Days Tour, 1776", Powys lamented not being able to go slowly enough to see everything worth seeing in its significant art collections: of the paintings, she stated that "I cannot innumerate half, for tho' there is a Catalogue to every room, we could not allow ourselves time to see them with just attention" (Powys 1776, p. 8). She made clear that her own writing does not merely reproduce the catalogue provided by the Radnor family, the owners of the house, and that such lists cannot substitute for her own careful, personal observation and experience. There is also an implication here that Powys felt constricted by her own itinerary: that her and her companions had imposed temporal limitations on their visiting experience that rendered it insufficient. Freya Gowrley has written of Powys's journals and letters that the "objectscape functioned as a social code of materiality in which performances of knowledge, taste and hospitality were central" (Gowrley 2022, p. 30). Read in those terms, Powys's description of Longford Castle articulates a recognition that the time constraints (self-) imposed on this visit mean that opportunities for the performance of knowledge and good judgement have been lost. However, Powys also recognised that repetition and revisiting are commonplace in home tour excursioning, which opens up the possibility that the deficiencies of one experience might be compensated at a later return to the site. On the same day, her and her party visited Wilton House, the residence of Lord Pembroke, and she recalled the delight of revisiting a place travelled to before:

> [W]e could not resist seeing Lord Pembrokes [sic], tho' we all had often before indeed I fancy few pass by as at the porters Lodge, where he desired us to set down one Name and ye number of our company, we saw by the book there had been to see it y^{e} last year two thousand three hundred & 24 persons. Merely to <u>See</u> tis certainly one of the finest sights in England, but to reside at, tis too Grand too Gloomy and what I style most magnificently uncomfortable; [. . .] where [sic] I Lord Pembroke I'd have two superb Galleries one for Pictures, y^{e} other for

> Statues Busts &c of which many here it seems are no where else in the world to be met with, they would then appear to advantage, whereas now the whole House gives one an Idea of a Statuaries Shop. (Powys 1776, pp. 9–10)

Powys recognised the urge to revisit this property, and the fact that it is a compulsion likely shared by others given the numbers listed in the house visitor book, which itself reminds us of the popularity of country house visiting in this period. Wall described Powys as "generally not one to complain; as a writer and traveller, friend and wife, she delights in just about everything". However, she also noted that "even in the greatest houses she exercises the tourist's prerogative to imaginatively rearrange" (Wall 2006, pp. 196–97). We see that powerfully here, where Powys seemed emboldened by the familiarity with this house that she has built up over repeated visits to imagine herself *as* Lord Pembroke, and to radically improve upon his arrangement of his property. Here, we see the difference between the form of microtravel offered by English home tour day -excursioning, and women's continental tours of the same period discussed by Emma Gleadhill, in which she observed that "women collected objects and drew or wrote object-oriented impressions with the understanding that they would not be able to return to the time and place of travel" (Gleadhill 2024, p. 163). Where proximity makes revisiting possible, familiarity adds layers to the traveller's impressions that expand temporally into both the past, through the memories of earlier experiences, and into the future, as alternative realities for the space are conceived.

In contrast with the examples discussed above, in which Powys yearned for more time, one earlier diary entry which constituted a day excursion of sorts is striking for the way in which it describes time being stretched out. Powys wrote what she titled "The journal of a day, or short abstract of more than twenty hours pass'd by one of the innumerable parties assembled at their Majesties' coronation. In a letter to a friend in the country" (Powys 1899, p. 87). In it, Powys presents herself as a reluctant attendee at the coronation of King George III and Queen Charlotte, an event that took place on 22nd September 1761 (which was, incidentally, the same year that Richardson made her early touristic excursions) and was written up for her friend three days later. This was a period of transition for Powys (née Girle), after the death of her father and before her marriage, during which her and her mother were living in Caversham, Berkshire, the village where John Loveday grew up. She framed the occasion ominously within the context of a journey embarked upon in bad weather:

> On Monday last I set out from my Uncle's in Kent, very early in the morn, and thro' as much rain as I believe ever fell in one day, arriv'd at the Metropolis by the hour of dinner; a gloomy prospect the badness of the weather, as I then thought of the morrow. (Powys 1899, p. 87)

In what follows, Powys's emphasis on the term "day", and enumeration of "more than twenty hours", is clarified: the account will describe the events of almost one full 24-h cycle. Her narration began as she joined a family party who travelled to Westminster Abbey in a convoy of carriages the night before the coronation, to take up vigil in hired rooms in the adjacent Broad Sanctuary, from where they would watch the procession. The account is therefore unusual—certainly unlike anything we see in the accounts by Loveday and Richardson—in that it narrates nocturnal experience, and Powys played with the juxtaposition between the pomp and ceremony of this unique national event, and the mundanity of the time spent waiting: "most of us were to sit up, and of course cards (the usual triflers of the time of idle people), were propos'd, and the remaining dark hours employ'd at commerce and lottery" (Powys 1899, p. 89). An account of journeying becomes a narration of stillness, but waiting does not lead to boredom. As the time passed in the

"commodious" space of the apartment, Powys again asserted herself as narrator of the "objectscape" and her immobility as viewing subject enables comprehensive cognition:

> From this time we waited, but not with impatience, till twelve [midday], for there was a diversity of objects to satisfy the most unbounded curiosity, nor could anything be conducted, as far as was within our sight, in better order; even the very mob (tho' such amazing multitudes), seem'd that day to have forgot their native rusticity, and seem'd willing to be rul'd and kept in exact order. (Powys 1899, p. 89)

While recent critical writing on later microtravel, such as Eleanor Lischka's work on Proust, has demonstrated the ways in which immobility, confinement or limited movement can lead to a decentring of ocularcentrism in favour of alternative forms of experience such as, in Proust's case, the auditory. Powys here articulated from her position of stillness what might be termed a conventional eighteenth-century privileging of the visual as a means of organising experience of the outside world. Her text acquired the structure and organisation of the coronation arrangements she saw taking place around her. The coronation staff, and, by implication, her textual depiction of the spectacle they had created, successfully managed objects, events, and the "very mob" who were "willing to be rul'd and kept in exact order", an order imposed upon them at the levels of both event and text. However, some of the claims made for a writer like Proust also carry weight here, where we see "time conquering space" and that "the exploration of space is filtered through the temporal self" (Lischka 2024, p. 222). The slow time of waiting enables another, non-textual form of representation and communication: "'Twas in this interval of time I exercis'd my pencil and took the sketch you my friend and Mr. B. requested" (Powys 1899, p. 89). Powys's phrasing here captures the multiple meanings of "exercise" as an active verb, as defined by Samuel Johnson in his contemporaneous *Dictionary of the English Language*. In this "interval of time", drawing offered Powys a form of employment and a way to keep busy, but also an opportunity to hone her skills via repetitive action: "To make skilful or dexterous by practice; to habituate" (Johnson 1773).[11] In stillness, and in this space in time, Powys conveyed a sense of her own action and progression.

After a rich description of the coronation procession itself in all its grandeur and dazzle, in which "each female shone indeed, in jewels, gold, silver, past description fine" (Powys 1899, p. 89), the journey home, or rather back to the home of Powys's uncle, was described as another period of enforced slowness in which the traveller's "patience" was "exercise[d]". However, again, the consequence was not boredom but a recognition of the pleasure to be found in deceleration: "Sometimes, indeed, we went not ten steps in half an hour's time, yet the way seem'd not tedious, for the streets were so illuminated" (Powys 1899, p. 92). Powys measured her progress in steps in a conflation of transportation modes that cast her carriage ride as strangely pedestrian. The homeward journey, although slower, contrasted markedly with the gloomy outward one; the diurnal structure of this journey and proceedings, and the journal account of them, employed the intimacy of the diaristic mode to record and communicate individual experience of historic national celebration and pageantry, embodied within the micro-textual format of the day excursion.

6. Conclusions

In early June 1746, John Loveday visited Chiswick House, the home of the third Earl of Burlington, on his way home from a five-week stay in Bromley with his family, which, in turn, had facilitated numerous day excursions. In his record of the visit, the paintings he records includes one of the poet Alexander Pope, whose house in Twickenham he had visited some years earlier (see Loveday 2010, pp. 325–26): "[William] Kent has paintings here, one is an head of Mr Pope, a Profile, but the different side of his face from what

I have before seen" (Loveday 2010, p. 408). It is a statement of repetition but also of newness, and a reminder of the inflections and nuances of what might otherwise seem to be increasingly familiar experiences accumulated over years of local excursions and visiting. Across all the travel accounts considered here, such attention to small details has been shown to offer insight and enable assertion and judgement. In tours and journeys of longer duration, depth of experience and understanding are accumulated over time, and in journeys further away from home, over distance, sometimes to the point where a traveller's destination becomes a surrogate dwelling place. The day excursion format, and the kind of interior, often domestic, experience the excursioners considered here narrate, displays knowledge acquisition in an alternative way: through the textual "heaping" of information and objects. Loveday, Richardson, and Powys nevertheless found ways to expose problems, raise questions, and introduce individual experience via that format. Powys, in particular, expressed a relish for deceleration and the way it facilitates close attention to what is close at hand. Critical writing on microtravel has recognised the danger that its focus on slow or vertical travel returns our attention to a leisured class who, although their travels might not take them very far, nevertheless have the capital to invest in the pursuit; there is a risk of gentrification in the hyperlocal. Recent work has countered that by thinking about, for example, narratives of enforced confinement, journeys curtailed by illness, and walking as evidence of social disenfranchisement (see the essays in Forsdick et al. 2024b). As we consider new directions for the study of eighteenth-century travel writing, it is important to make the case for a historically inflected application of theories of microtravel in order for it to be valuable. In this period day excursions constituted a significant element of home tour travel, and while it often took travellers to sites that might, in many ways, serve as material, brick-and-mortar representations of social and wealth inequality—cathedrals, country estate houses, the environs of Westminster—to visit and observe those sites offered an opportunity to claim and curate them through travel authorship and therefore to disrupt conventional and assumed power structures. Thinking about the eighteenth-century British day excursion in relation to adjacent scholarship on microtravel *and* contemporary innovations in the employment of listing and cataloguing as transformational modes of prose description allows us to recognise anew the literary value of these little-known works of travel writing and the many accounts like them, including from authors outside of England, that have yet to receive critical attention.

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Notes

1 A particularly pertinent contribution to this body of work for a reader more generally interested in the "micro" is another volume, to which Gowrley has contributed a chapter: (Smith and Tobin 2022).

2 While Richardson's travel journals do contain some antiquarian information and observation, the Richardson collection held by the John Rylands Library also contains two volumes of separate antiquarian notes which more fully demonstrate her interest in this area (Richardson n.d.).

3 He also made one journey to the Continent: a tour to the Low Countries between May and July 1737 (see Markham 1984, chap. 13).

4 Meneley challenges dominant ways of reading White via a green studies or localist lens: "The ideologies that have shaped the White myth—pastoralism, nationalism, and social ecology—share an idea of place according to which the integrity of a particular locale is preserved by its isolation and threatened by external forces, especially those seen as having a global reach". He argues instead that "White's cosmopolitan parochialism draws attention to the intellectual limitations of the pervasive nostalgia for stable, insular locales that one finds in ecocriticism and social ecology" (Menely 2004, pp. 51, 61).

[5] For example, in the modern Penguin edition of White's *The Natural History of Selborne*, Richard Mabey writes that "I have not included the *Antiquities*, nor *Naturalist's Calendar*, the *Observations on Various Parts of Nature*, or the miscellaneous poems that are occasionally bound up with it. They have little in common with the *Natural History* either in quality or in originality, and do little more than blunt the extraordinary pitch of condensation which White achieved in his one true book" (Mabey 1987, p. xxvii).

[6] There is, of course, another link to Pennant here, as the correspondent to whom the first section of letters in *The Natural History of Selborne* are directed.

[7] The Tour accounts are in the possession of the family, and a complete collated, transcribed, and edited edition of the works—*The Tours of John Loveday Of Caversham, 1728 To 1765, Transcribed from the Original Documents by Sarah Markham*—is available by request via the excellent website maintained by the family: https://www.johnlovedayofcaversham.co.uk/ (accessed on 20 January 2025).

[8] What Richardson calls "Wentworth House" is Wentworth Woodhouse, Rotherham, then seat of the Marquis of Rockingham.

[9] Gowrley highlights the same practice in Powys's summer tours: "Typically, these tours employed the home of a family friend or relative as a base from which they could visit properties in the surrounding area". She relates this to the role of the "public friend" and wider networks of sociability (Gowrley 2022, pp. 46–47).

[10] Shenstone elaborated his thinking about the difference between "landskip" and "prospect" in his posthumously published "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening" (Shenstone 1764). Powys makes reference to his work on numerous occasions, aligning her principles with his, and also giving credence to the class assumptions embedded within his aesthetic agenda. This preference for the local, and observing what is nearby, is evident in her writing about her travels and visits to the country estates of others, but also her understanding of the way her own marital home, Hardwick House in Oxfordshire, will, in turn, function as a site for touristic experience. For example, describing one of the views from her Hardwick estate, Powys writes: "at Hardwick they talk of a view of the Sea from our Hill of Clumps, but this meer [sic] Extent as Shenstone calls it, is what the vulgar value, but with that Author I much more admire y^{e} pleasing near landscape" (Powys 1776, pp. 21–22).

[11] Johnson substantially revised the way he defined "exercise" in its noun and verb forms between the 1st and 4th editions of the Dictionary, which can be seen in the online *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary*: https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=exercise (accessed on 20 January 2025).

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