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**Consumer specialization
and the Romantic transformation of
the British Grand Tour of Europe**

by

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Consumer specialization and the Romantic transformation of the British Grand Tour of Europe*

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Abstract. This paper posits that significant changes in 19th century British recreational travel patterns resulted from a change in the manner in which tourists used entertaining stimuli in order to attain pleasure. Consumers no longer merely viewed arousing stimuli, but attempted to use them to produce emotional states of being which they could partially modify to intensify pleasurable feelings (Damasio 2003). The impetus for this modification stemmed from an increasing awareness that emotional responses could be to some degree self-cultivated, as embodied in the Romantic ethos that became popular at the time via the emergence of the paperback novel and magazine industry (Campbell 1987). By learning how to manipulate and modify mental images in a way that may not necessarily correspond with objective reality, Romantic tourists learned to elicit pleasure through engaging of their imagination. Such a change in the mode of pleasure seeking had important long run economic consequences for tourist regions throughout the European continent.

Keywords: Consumer specialization; Emotions; Tourism; Romanticism

JEL Classification: D11, D13, O12, O40

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1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries of the 20th century, contributing an estimated US\$ 3.3 trillion (11%) to global GDP (Clancy 1998). A fundamental motivation driving recreational travel is the desire to experience the unknown as consumers long to explore new and arousing environs that are unfamiliar (Stagl 1995). At the same time, technological progress has yielded many alternative forms of recreation, such as watching television and reading novels, that can satisfy the modern consumer's curiosity in a much more convenient fashion. As Herbert Simon once queried: why do people *really* travel? If it is to 'gain information' about a particular place, he contended that anything that can be learned on a trip to a foreign country (of less than one year's duration) can be learned more quickly, cheaply and easily by visiting San Diego Public Library (Simon 1996, p. 306). This begs the question of how demand for recreational travel grew in spite of the emergence of a number of alternative forms of recreation and Information Storage and Communication Technologies (ISCTs). A start to answering such a question requires us to take a closer look at the human tendency to engage in exploratory behavior and how this behavior may trigger consumers to learn and accumulate knowledge.

This paper uses insights from biology and psychology about the nature of the human tendency to engage in exploratory behavior to understand significant changes in recreational travel patterns and how these have co-evolved with the emergence of ISCTs. In particular, British tourism underwent a significant transformation in the 19th century in which there was increased demand for European destinations that were considered 'desolate' and did not appear, at first sight, to offer much entertainment value in comparison to well established destinations such as Paris and Rome. While there are a number of factors that contributed to this transformation, this paper postulates that one important driving force was a change in the manner in which entertaining stimuli was used by consumers to attain pleasure. Specifically, as result of a specialisation process inspired by the Romantic literature, consumers no longer merely viewed arousing stimuli, but rather used them to cultivate emotional states of being which they could then partially modify to intensify pleasurable feelings (Damasio 2003). The impetus for this modification stemmed from an increasing awareness that emotional responses could be self-cultivated, as embodied in the then popular Romantic ethos (Campbell 1987). Through learning how to manipulate and modify mental images in a way that may not necessarily correspond with objective reality, Romantic consumers thus learned how to elicit pleasure from using their imagination.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature in biology and psychology about the human predisposition to engage in exploratory behavior and constructs two opposing hypotheses

about how the recreational travel demand may be affected by the emergence of more convenient forms of entertainment. Section 3 then examines what evidence there exists for these hypotheses in the Romantic transformation of the British Grand Tour. Section 4 reviews evidence from the cognitive sciences about the notion embedded in the Romantic ethos that it is possible for consumers to interact with their emotional states in order to magnify these states. Section 5 reviews evidence for this change in the nature of pleasure seeking and how the Romantic literature inspired a significant change in British holiday destinations. Section 6 concludes.

2. Novelty demand in the face of the information revolution

A fundamental motivation for travel is the human predisposition to engage in exploratory behavior and gain exposure to new and arousing environs. This section examines what is known about this human predisposition and explores differing ideas about how the demand for recreational travel is affected by the creation of new and more convenient forms of recreation made possible via the emergence of new Information Storage and Communication Technologies (ISCTs), such as books, television and radio. On the one hand, more convenient forms of recreation could be seen as a substitute for recreational travel and diminish its demand. However, if one takes into account how such new forms of recreation can stimulate the accumulation of knowledge and the refinement of consumer's tastes (Witt 2001), these could be seen to compliment and increase the demand for recreational travel.

Scholars posit that a major motivation for recreational travel is the human predisposition to actively explore their environment, a longing to learn and experience the unknown (Stagl 1995; Scitovsky 1976).¹ Historical evidence suggests that it was common to travel in order to gain exposure to many different types of arousing and novel stimuli. For example, in pre-industrial Britain, this took the form of visiting regional fairs and festivals that offered a wide range of entertainment, including alcohol consumption, gambling, theatre troupes, street entertainers, and street sports, such as football (Vorspan 2000, p. 912). Elsewhere, art galleries, famous theatrical performances, sporting events, ballroom dances, museums, and big crowds, are all types of traditional stimuli that have significant arousal potential and have long motivated travel (Adler 1989; Feiffer 1986; Towner 1996).

In biology, exploratory behavior is defined as the tendency of organisms to interact with the environment when there is no obvious reward (Loewenstein 1994, p. 81). Rats have been found to be willing to endure electrical shock in order to explore novel stimuli with no apparent connection to reinforcement (Dashiel 1925; Nissen 1930; Montgomery 1953). Monkeys have been observed to attempt

¹ Commonly described as *Wanderlust* in the tourism literature (Gilbert and Abdullah 2004).

to solve a puzzle with no external incentive for doing so (Harlow 1950), and that the opportunity to explore acts as a source of reinforcement that triggers monkeys to discriminate neutral stimuli which are associated to this opportunity (Butler 1953). Across species, the tendency to engage in exploratory behavior is correlated with brain size and is thought to play an important role in the development of learning mechanisms and the brain (Fagan 1981).

One approach to studying this tendency to explore is to examine both i) the internal state of the organism and ii) the nature of the stimuli which it is exposed to (Berlyne 1960). Regarding i) arousal is defined as the level of alertness or activation of an individual, ranging from extreme drowsiness to extreme wakefulness (Berlyne 1960). One of the factors that have been identified as heightening the organism's level of arousal is the deprivation of food and water, while satiation of hunger tends to reduce arousal (Scitovsky 1976, p. 29). It has been posited that consumers tend to seek an Intermediate State of Arousal (ISA) that is, as Scitovsky puts it, being 'between strain and boredom' (Scitovsky 1976, p. 15, see also Zuckerman 1994; Steenkamp and Burgess 2002). When the consumer's arousal level is above the ISA, they typically look for ways of reducing arousal towards the ISA (e.g. relaxing after a stressful day, cooling down when too hot). When it is too low, they look for ways of increasing arousal (e.g. watching television when bored, exercising).

Regarding ii), arousal potential is the extent to which a stimulus is capable of raising arousal, and to generally excite the nervous system. Certain properties of stimuli contribute to their arousal potential. For example, the psychophysical properties related to the physical and chemical characteristics of the stimuli, e.g. their loudness, color and temperature, are found to positively contribute to their arousal potential. Furthermore, their collative properties (novelty, congruity and complexity) can also positively influence arousal potential (Berlyne 1971). These depend on the comparison, or collation of various stimulus elements with each other or with previous experiences of the consumer (Steenkamp et al. 1996). A very potent source of arousal is novelty (Scitovsky 1976, p. 31). Importantly, prolonged exposure to a certain stimulus reduces its novelty, in what is called the 'habituation' process. As a result, habituation can induce regular changes in the novelty that consumers seek exposure to (Chai et al. 2007).

When recreational travel is viewed from this perspective, it represents a relatively difficult means of attaining exposure to arousing stimuli as it requires a number of skills and entails various risks. Compared to other forms of entertainment, it takes a relatively long time and there is a high degree of uncertainty at the time of purchase about the hedonic value of the act, making it a 'experience good' (Ruprecht 2002, p. 53). While it is an activity rich in arousing stimuli, there are also many potential inconveniences to endure, for "traveling involves the austerity of summer housing, the discomfort of

unfamiliar beds and baths, hazards of restaurant food, crowding, exposure to weather, danger of reservation not being honored (Scitovsky 1976, p. 194). With respect to pre-industrial Europe, Braudel summarizes the history of transport as “bad roads, ridiculously low speeds,” (Braudel 1992, p 42). At the same time, such risks could increase the appeal of tourism, since such risks can be considered a form of novelty (van der Berghe 2002). Beyond risks, travel could necessitate the acquirement of skills such as being able to converse in foreign languages and calculating wildly varying exchange rates between different local currencies.

Consequently, one could argue that a reduction in the consumers’ incentive to travel would take place as a result of the emergence of new forms of recreation that are more convenient, less risky and require less skill. One of the most notable features in the development of modern consumption patterns is the many forms of information and entertainment have emerged, such as watching television, reading books, listening to radio. Technological progress has yielded new forms of Information, Storage and Communication Technologies (ISCT) that have fundamentally magnified the unique ability of humans to store and communicate knowledge and information in extra-somatic ways, which forms the basis of cultural evolution (Flinn 1997).² For most of history, the only means of communicating was through speech and painting. In approximately 4000 B.C. the first pictographic writing appeared, while in the 15th century the printing press was reinvented in Europe and led to the emergence of various types of newspapers, books and magazines. In the 19th century motion picture and the cinema emerged, as did the phonograph. Finally, the 20th century witnessed the emergence of radio, television, and the internet (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989). Today, the average household in developed economies today contains books, magazines, radios, television, DVD players, computers, and stereo systems (Vogel 1998). Considering that in the early 18th century only around 22% of English households owned books (Weatherill 1988; p. 26), this change represents a large addition of entertainment means to the consumer’s local habitat in a relatively short period of time.³

Beyond storing and communicating knowledge, these ISCTs also provide quantitatively more arousing stimuli as well as higher quality stimuli (Winston 1998), thereby fundamentally changing the means by which consumers can seek entertainment. Scitovsky also argues that modern forms of entertainment are more convenient as they require relatively fewer ‘skills’ on the part of consumers (1976, p. 226). For example, to read a book requires consumers to be literate, whilst watching television only

² Economic historians have noted the importance of ‘external storage systems’ as the taproot of modern technological culture (Donald 1991).

³ We equate ‘entertainment’ with consumption act that aim to satisfy the want for arousal. It refers to “the act of diverting, amusing, or causing someone’s time to pass agreeably.”(Vogel 1998).

requires consumers to direct attention towards the source of the stimuli. Thus he conjectures that consumers tend to favor more convenient forms of entertainment for a number of reasons. Firstly, relative to high-skill forms of entertainment there is a ‘rational bias’ against acquiring consumption skills because, when deciding to invest in the attainment of skills, the consumer “cannot attach a dollar value to the skill of enjoying a concert or a ballet... With so many unknowns so utterly impossible to estimate, it seems rational... to discount the benefits heavily and to opt instead for adding to our production skill and their easily quantifiable benefits,” (1976, p. 231).⁴ A similar conclusion may be reached from the perspective that an increasing level of income raises the opportunity cost of time (Lindner 1970).

Hypotheses 1: As technological progress yields new means by which consumers can gain exposure to arousing stimuli, consumers tend to substitute away from less-convenient means of attaining arousal towards those recreational activities that are more convenient.

In terms of the welfare implications, this preference for more convenient forms of entertainment could have negative effects on consumer welfare because convenient forms of entertainment are relatively poor sources of novelty (Scitovsky 1976, p. 233; Bianchi 2002). In other words, relative to high-skill forms of entertainment, consumers tend to become bored with convenient forms of entertainment more quickly. Consequently, as novelty gets used up in the act of enjoyment through the process of habituation, consumers naturally tend to become less responsive to a stimulus after prolonged exposure (Wathieu 2004).

However, this hypothesis ignores the fact that modern forms of entertainment, apart from delivering arousing stimuli, also deliver information which can influence consumer learning processes. In economic history, it is generally agreed that ISCTs have aided the learning and innovation processes of suppliers by reducing access costs of knowledge and promoting its dissemination amongst agents (Mokyr 2002, p. 43). Likewise, consumers using ISCTs are not only exposed to arousing stimuli, but also information that fosters consumer to learn about the stimuli. For example, children’s book about dinosaurs may not only contain arousing pictures of dinosaurs, but could contain information about what they look like, their habitat, and so on. While such information could be ignored by consumers, it can not be denied that such information may stimulate consumers to learn about the nature of the arousing stimuli, even if such accumulation of knowledge is not the *a priori* purpose of the consumer reading the book.

In this respect, a more recent theory of consumer specialization provides a better theoretical framework in which to study how consumer learning is linked with the underlying human predisposition

⁴ By ‘production skill’ Scitovsky was referring to skills relevant for employment.

to seek exposure pleasure and avoidance of pain. According to Witt (2001), the consumer specialization process is the result of the interplay between two distinct but related learning processes: associatory learning and insightful learning. On the one hand, via the laws of associatory learning consumers tend to accumulate a set of likes and dislikes about things and activities that enable them to avoid pain and deliver pleasure (Skinner 1953). This set of likes and dislikes can guide what consumers tend to insightfully learn about (Witt 2001). At the same time, insightful learning can influence the set of likes and dislikes consumers possess because knowledge may lead consumers to change the details of a consumption act in such a way that would enable new associations to be made between reinforcement and neutral stimuli (2001, p. 36). Together the two effects may be mutually reinforcing and lead to the refinement of both what consumers know and what they like. This type of consumer specialization can be responsible for a wide range of industries that care for the particular preferences of specialized consumers.

Employing this theory of consumer specialization, an entirely different understanding can be derived of how ISCTs and more convenient forms of entertainment have impacted consumer learning processes. Firstly, the increasing accessibility of information which has taken place due to the emergence of ISCTs could foster consumer specialization because it enhances consumer's ability to gather detailed information about aspects of the consumption act. Moreover, many ISCTs foster social discussion about entertainment activities, such as book clubs or web blogs about movies. Such discussions may focus the consumer's attention on information, as information which is communicated in social settings tends to have a higher likelihood of drawing the attention of consumers (Witt 2001:36). By triggering consumer specialization, ISCTs can foster the demand for recreational travel. As consumers specialize, they are more inclined to modify and vary consumption acts because of their detailed knowledge and refined tastes. In the context of entertainment, specialized consumers may seek to vary the manner in which they are exposed to the arousing stimuli, even though such a variation may be less convenient, more costly and require knowledge. For example, mountain climbing in the Swiss Alps may initially come to the attention of a consumer via watching a television program about this activity. Viewing such arousing stimuli through the television may lead the consumer to buy climbing magazines or to engage in minor climbs, an act through which they may gain more knowledge about the activity and what particular types of climbs they like. Eventually, with rising income, this learning process may lead them to engage in a range of relatively difficult climbing expeditions. Thus a single learning process related to gaining exposure to 'mountain climbing' entails different stages in which there is a significant change in the means used to satisfy the underlying want for arousal. In this way, the relatively convenient forms of entertainment that initially stimulated the specialization process can complement high-skill forms of entertainment that are undertaken by relatively specialized consumers.

Hypothesis 2: By fostering consumer specialization processes, recreational activities that emerged with new Information, Storage and Communication Technologies complemented rather than substituted other less convenient recreational activities, such as recreational travel.

In relation to the habituation process, it is worth noting that the tendency to alter and modify aspects of the consumption act may also change the rate of habituation and the degree to which habituation influences consumption activities related to the want for arousal. Habituation is the phenomenon by which a response to a repeated stimulus wanes over time (McSweeney and Roll 1998). Studies have found the following factors have been found to significantly impact the habituation rate:

a) Intensity of stimulus The weaker the stimulus, the more rapid and/or the more pronounced is habituation (Wathieu 2004). On the other hand, very strong stimuli may yield no significant habituation (Thompson and Spencer 1966).

b) Interstimuli Interval: The time period between stimuli exposure (interstimuli interval). Habituation is more rapid and complete when these intervals are short rather than when they are long. If the time lapse between exposures is reduced, then it takes fewer total exposures to the stimuli for organisms to become habituated (Wathieu 2004).

c) Variety effects: Exposure to a variety of stimuli slows down habituation (McSweeney and Swindell 1999). By exposing an organism to a variety of related stimuli (e.g. the same stimuli presented in different colors and shapes, different types of foods), habituation to one specific stimulus is significantly slowed.

d) Dishabituation an increase in the organism's responsiveness to a stimulus, the counterpart to habituation, may occur if the stimuli is presented in a new context (McSweeney and Swindell 1999).

In the case of recreational travel, this consumption act can be varied in many potential dimensions, such as what destinations are visited, the speed at which they travel through a particular region, what accommodation is used, what type of transport is used, how long the consumers stay in one particular destination, and the frequency at which consumers are exposed to the same type of attractions (e.g. museums). It is possible that such modifications could alter the rate at which a consumers habituates to a stimulus. For example, if consumers alter the speed at which they travel through a particular region, this may change the interstimuli interval, which in turn influences the rate at which consumers become habituated to arousing stimuli, such as 'forests' or 'mountains'. Furthermore, consumers can vary the

strength of exposure by, for example, viewing a landscape first hand rather than viewing it on television or reading a description in a novel. Alternatively, via the above-mentioned variety effects, consumers can delay habituation to a particular stimulus by exposing themselves to a variety of stimuli. Sampling a number of different variants of one specific category of arousing stimuli (e.g. forests) thus leads to consumers slowing down habituation to each particular stimuli.

In this section we have discussed how the emergence of ISCTs have influenced the manner in which consumers engage in exploratory behavior. Given their ability to foster learning, we argue that the emergence of new recreational activities made possible via ISCTs may have stimulated rather than inhibited the consumers demand to engage relatively inconvenient forms of recreation, such as recreational travel. Moreover, consumer specialization has important effects on how consumers tend to engage in exploratory behavior as it not only influences the quantitative amount of novelty that consumers can enjoy (Scitovsky 1976, p. 235), but it also influences the rate at which consumers become habituated to stimuli, which can dampen impact of habituation on such consumption activities. In this sense, the process by which consumers acquire consumption knowledge is not just a cost that must be incurred in order to gain access to some given amount of arousing stimuli. Instead, it is transformative in that the discovery of new sources of stimuli may significantly change what types of stimuli consumers perceive as arousing and the activities they undertake in the pursuit of viewing new and arousing stimuli.

3. The Grand Tour of Europe

This section reviews the significant changes that took place in the British Grand tour of Europe and the extent to which these changes support the two main hypotheses discussed in the previous section. The British Grand Tour of Europe is typically described as “A tour of the principal cities and places of interest in Europe,” (Towner 1985, p. 297). In the tourism literature, the Grand Tour is frequently discussed since it was the first openly secular form of travel in the 16th century and led to the creation of an identifiable tourist infrastructure in destination countries. Over time the Grand Tour underwent two significant changes in terms of destinations visited, the motivations for travel, and associated consumption activities undertaken (Adler 1989).

3.1 The Original Grand Tour

During the 16th and 17th century the Grand Tour emerged as a means of educating young aristocrats (Towner 1996, p. 100). Over time, interest was gradually directed away from places of learning towards more entertaining locations. This is reflected in a decline in the number of visitors who attended university: between 1547 and 1840 85% of tourists who embarked on the Grand Tour attended university

in the period between 1604 and 1639 (Towner 1985, p. 310). This fell to around 20% in 1814 and to virtually nothing by 1840. The average length of the tour also dramatically declined from around 30 months in the period from 1604 to 1638 to around 4 months in the 1830s.⁵ In this period, educational centers in Europe also featured less significantly in travel itineraries, including Padua and Siena in Italy as well as Saumur (Feiffer 1986). Instead major centers such as Paris and Rome came to dominate the Grand Tour from the 1660s on (Towner 1985, p. 321).

Visits to these locations took a large proportion of the tour, with tourists making only a few short stays at other locations. Hence, this decline in duration seems to have been accompanied by a decline in the diversity of places visited. From the perspective of the traveler who is motivated by the want for arousal, it seems logical that consumers would have focused on the major cities because they were better connected in terms of travel infrastructure and offered a multitude of attractions. Rome especially was well equipped with stimulating attractions because of its history as the capital city of the Roman Empire. Many cultural events were also frequently staged in cities, including operas, concerts and theatre performances. Minor cities that were visited less frequently included Venice, Florence and Naples as well as Cologne and Frankfurt (Towner 1996).

Furthermore, the focus of traveler's attention changed significantly as entertainment moved to center stage. Not only was more time dedicated to activities, such as tea parties and sports (Feiffer 1986, p. 96) but foreign forms of entertainment were also embraced, for example carnivals in Italy. This pursuit of pleasure inevitably led to prostitution becoming more pronounced and institutionalized in major travel destinations such as Paris and Rome (Littlewood 2002). The changing tone of travel was also reflected in guidebooks, which gave practical hints to the tourist about recreational activities available at various destinations (Feiffer 1986, p. 100).

3.2 The Romantic transformation of the Grand Tour

The Second and more dramatic transformation took place in the period from 1780 to the 1870s the average time spent on the Grand Tour dropped even further to well below 10 months by the start of the 19th century (Towner 1985, p. 315). Simultaneously, the destinations that tourists visited and the routes by which they traveled altered considerably. Tourists increasingly spent time visiting scenic destinations that were located away from the previously popular urban destinations. One of the greatest benefactors of this change was Switzerland. Previously and up to the middle of the 17th century, the Alps had possessed a mainly negative image: they were seen as a barren, cold and dangerous place to be avoided by travelers

⁵ The impact of improved transport technology and income may have also played a role in reducing the duration of the Grand Tour.

(Bernard 1978). Now perceptions changed and consequently Switzerland emerged from a transit route for tourists traveling to Italy to becoming a major touring location in its own right. Lake Geneva in particular became a focal point for trips to smaller towns, such as Chamonix and Lauterbrunnen. Between 1789-1792 the former had recorded on average around 800-1200 annual visitors (Bernard 1978, p. 33). In 1777 the first guidebook to the region was published and it is estimated that in 1785 ‘a large proportion’ of the 40,000 English tourists visited Lausanne between June and October (Buzard 1993, p. 97). Note that the railway made its first appearance in Switzerland in 1844, around 50 years after the first recorded rise in popularity (Buzard 1993, p. 41).

In terms of destinations, the Rhine Valley had changed from simply being a convenient route to a tourist attraction in its own right, where tourists particularly enjoyed viewing the steep crags and ruined medieval castles and abbey (Feiffer 1986, Buzard 1993). Similarly, certain travel routes changes so that travelers could enjoy new types of scenery. For example, routes from Paris to Italy started to pass by Dijon, the Jura Mountains, Geneva and the Simplon pass (Towner 1985, p. 314). The route to Rome also changed away from passing Adriatic coastal towns, such as Ancona and Loreto, towards inland routes with more picturesque medieval towns in central Italy, such as Arezzo and Perugia (*ibid*). According to Towner, who studied the personal accounts of travelers, these changes reflected “a passion for the medieval and a love of wild nature with its sublime and picturesque scenery” (Towner 1985, p. 314).

Aside from the Grand Tour of Europe, it is also interesting to note that in this era certain domestic locations also became popular travel destinations. In particular, the middle to late nineteenth century witnessed the resurgence in the popularity of the English Lakes District which had since the 1700s been abandoned in favor of overseas destination (Towner 1996). In the early nineteenth century, new hotels opened in the town of Windemere, Rydal and Grasmere (Botton 2002). Spending recreational time in natural environments became a widely popular pastime with an increasing number of organized trips to savor the Scottish countryside (Brendon 1991). In the late nineteenth century co-operative holiday associations were also formed to organize countryside holidays for the working class (Snape 2004).

In relation to what type of activities tourists undertook whilst traveling, these became more individualistic and sedate. Daytime outdoor pursuits included sea-bathing, botanizing and observing the natural coastal scenery (Lickorish and Kershaw 1975). In line with visiting less populated areas, it also became popular to seek out peasants living in hills, to study their dances and costumes. Evening entertainment was no longer arranged solely around the social assembly rooms, but now included playing cards or reading (Brookfield 1950, p. 111). Moreover, there was shift in the preference for the type of

lodging, driven by an appreciation of a more private, less formal way of living (Soane 1993). Typical souvenirs included gems and crystals as well as plant specimens from the Alps (Feiffer 1986).

3.3 Accounting for the Romantic transformation

What can account for these significant changes in the Grand Tour? In relation to the first phase, changes in the tour appear to support the notion contained in Hypothesis 1 that consumers will tend prefer more convenient forms of recreation relative to less convenient forms of recreation. Initially, the tour started out as a cumbersome trip lasting several months covering many destination of economic, political as well as educational significance. At the end of this period, the tour was a much more convenient and shorter trip in which consumers, faced with a tightening time constraint, spent more time in places which offered a multitude of potential sources of arousal, such as Paris and Rome. The type of activities and undertaken during the trip focused more on recreational activities and less on educational activities, such as attending universities.

On the other hand, in relation to phase 2, the Romantic transformation of the Grand Tour seems to support hypothesis 2 that by stimulating a consumer specialization process, new forms of entertainment can complement rather than substitute less convenient means of entertainment. Specifically, Colin Campbell argues the Romantic literature which was popular at the time stimulated consumers to learn new facts and methods about how to engage in pleasure-seeking activities (Campbell 1987). In particular, the Romantic ethos fostered an increasing awareness amongst consumers that the emotions were located within the self. Prior to the Romantic era, pleasure derived from interacting with an object was seen to be a property of the external object; e.g. the pleasure derived from viewing a painting was seen as a property of the painting itself. The Romantic ethos taught that pleasure was situated within the self, and was only elicited by external stimuli, e.g. viewing a painting elicits pleasure from within the self. Given that pleasure is an internal reaction, a stimulus' pleasure-giving significance is also a function of its subjective perception by the consumer and not just its objective characteristics. Hence "man becomes aware of his own awareness poised between the two" (Campbell 1987, p. 73).

This growing realization that pleasure lay within the self lead to increasing curiosity about how such emotional responses could be elicited with the self. This new knowledge inspired Romanticists to devise new ways to elicit pleasure. For example, they sought to gain pleasure not via the exposure and manipulation of external stimuli, but by the manipulation of imagined stimuli (Campbell 1987). The Romantics use of nostalgia is a good case in point. A Romantic can choose to indulge in a nostalgic reminiscence of some earlier experience or event. They then 'immerse' themselves in this particular 'day-

dream', imagining themselves in that time and place –with the consequence that they experience pleasure (1987, p. 35). Such growing self-consciousness consequently resulted in an introjection of the power of agency and emotion into the being of man. Consequently, there emerged an impetus to understand the laws which link the inner and outer world in order to grasp precisely which certain features connected with each other.

At first sight, Campbell's hypothesis may not do any better than previously considered theories in explaining the emergence Romantic tourism. Indeed if Romantics were able to elicit pleasure from imagined stimuli, what need did they have for undertaking long and expensive journeys to remote regions in Europe to view external stimuli that could be otherwise imagined? The answer we propose is that while external real stimuli are not always necessary to elicit emotions, the extent to which they are not necessary -the degree to which hedonism is autonomous- depends on the acquired skill that consumers may or may not develop. As Campbell himself emphasizes, imagined hedonism is an 'exceptionally difficult exercise' (1987, p. 76). To understand more about the nature of this learning process the next section review recent advances in neuroscientific theories about how human cognition, under certain circumstances, may interact with emotion to increase their perceived intensity.

Finally, it should also be noted that other important factors also contributed to these changes in tourism patterns. Firstly, urbanization in Britain may have increased the appeal of natural surroundings to consumers since the provided a sharp contrast to urban living environments. In Britain, the bulk of urbanization occurred in the 19th century. At the beginning of the 1800s only 30% of the British population lived in towns and cities of more than 2000 inhabitants, however, this had risen to more than 50% by 1850 and to 75% by 1900 (Cameron 1993). Urbanization had a very significant impact on consumption patterns (Plumb 1982; McKendrick et al. 1985; Clark et al. 1995; Horrell 1996; Mokyr 2000). At the same time, it should be noted that the Romantic transformation of the Grand Tour is started in the 1780s and thereby preceded the main phase of urbanization. In terms of consumer motivations, perhaps these tourists were also motivated by status in that a new generation of nouveau riche emerged who had the means to imitate the consumption activities of the elite. One could identify literary greats and famed travelers like Rousseau and Wordsworth as a type of 'superior class' whom consumers sought to imitate. Yet such an explanation is contradicted by the fact that the Romantic movement represented a revolt against the aristocratic way of life which the act of status seeking embodied (Campbell 1987, p. 183). Indeed, the elite ridiculed Romantic literature and satirized it for many years for its perceived 'celebration of the banal' (Botton 2002, p. 137). Thus such an explanation seems problematic as

consumers would imitate the actions of those who were ridiculed by the wealthy.⁶ The status approach seems to be better suited to explain changes in the earlier era of the Grand Tour which was dominated by aristocrats who actively sought to gain status (Feiffer 1986, p. 75).

4. Evidence from the cognitive sciences

Emotions are a distinctive class of psychological phenomena marked out by their automaticity, unique behavioral and physiological signatures (Ekman 1971, p. 140). These phenomena are complex events that lead to changes in the musculoskeletal system, endocrine system changes as well as the autonomic nervous system. Furthermore, it has been generally accepted that they result from exposure to –or removal of– rewarding and punishing conditions of different strength (Rolls 1999).

While it has been further shown that emotional responses can occur in reaction to stimuli that have not been detected by higher cognitive processes (Zajonc 1980; Zajonc 1984), to date no one has explicitly opposed the notion that in the right circumstances higher cognitive processes can interact on emotional processes (Griffiths 2001). Recently, Damasio (2003) posits that under the right conditions, such interaction can indeed occur. He begins by distinguishing between emotions and feelings. Feeling is the idea or perception that the body is in a certain state of being. While functionally similar to emotions in that they exist to regulate the organism, feelings exist at a higher level in that they are aligned with the ‘conscious’ mind. Because they evolved earlier in human phylogeny, emotions also precede feelings when people undergo emotional experiences and thus can be understood as the mental foundations for feelings. Yet the two are so intimately related in a continuous process that they are usually perceived as a single phenomenon. Damasio uses the example of experiencing joy as stimulated by relaxing at a beach to illustrate this difference (Damasio 2003, p. 83). First, the relaxing experience triggers emotions, physical changes in the body which sequentially leads to the *feeling* the body being at ease.

Importantly, this perception of a body state itself has two consequences for the state of the mind: First, thoughts with consonant themes may appear. Interestingly, Damasio uses Wordsworth’s writings in describing this effect: “sensations sweet felt in the blood and felt along the heart” lead to a situation where these sensations seem to be “passing even into [your] purer mind in tranquil restoration,” (Damasio 2003, p. 84). Secondly, a style of mental processes may be stimulated in which there is a increased speed of image and more images are abundant- the mind is filled with thought whose themes create pleasurable

⁶ For almost 200 hundred years, many scholars have equated any type of imitation with status-driven behavior (Campbell 2001). Yet imitation as an example of social observational learning does not necessarily equate to the gain or loss of social status (Bandura 1986). Hence scholars advocating such an analytical narrative need to explicitly account for how imitation leads to the gain or loss of status.

experiences: “when you direct attention away from the state of sheer well being of the moment, you can enhance mental representations that did not pertain directly to the body,” (*ibid*).

Next, the mind may realize that it has itself adapted a mode of thinking in which mental images have a sharp focus and flow effortlessly- it may form meta-representations of its own mode of operation. This explains how people can perceive that there is change in rate and manner in which they produce thoughts and perceptions. However such higher order operations do not always occur,

“In many circumstances, especially when there is no or little time to examine feelings, feelings are solely the perception of a certain body state. In other circumstances, however, feelings (also) involve ... *the perception of a certain accompanying (cognitive) state, which are consequence of feelings,*” (Damasio 2003, p. 86).

The central consequence of such meta-representations is that these enable the conscious mind to exercise a limited control in changing both the actual body state itself as well as the mind’s perception of the effect such a body state has on its functioning. These dual possibilities are realized by altering its own somatic maps, or by altering the signal transmission between the amygdala and the cerebral cortices, respectively (Damasio 2003, p. 95). Hence the state of being and the brain’s perception of it can influence each other in a sort of ‘reverberative process’.

Here it is worth noting that the internal changes in the body states are perceived as a set of images. They are like visual perceptions of physical objects that impinge on the retina and temporarily modify the patterns of sensory maps in the visual system (Damasio 2003, p. 91). Just as in the case of visual perception there is a part of the phenomenon that is due to the object, and a part that is due to the internal construction that the brain makes of it. The important difference is that in the case of visual perception, the mind cannot actually modify that object which triggered the initial emotional response. But in the case of perceiving change in the body state, the brain can directly act on the very object it perceives.⁷

Consequently, a two step process has been outlined as to how the mind can influence emotional responses: Firstly, exposure to emotionally competent stimuli which can either be externally perceived or internally recalled leads to emotional responses that result in change of the body state as well as corresponding changes in the mind. Secondly, the perception of these internal changes can, under the correct circumstances, enable the mind to alter the actual body state in such a way as to affect the actual feelings. In short, feelings are complex mental processes that can be interactive in nature. Once emotions

⁷ Evidence for the interactive nature of feeling came from investigating brain activity of subjects undergoing emotional experiences. It was found that recalling such emotional events triggered changes of body-sensing areas in the brain. It was also found that actual changes in body states (such as changes in skin conductance) always precedes the point of time at which the subject began to perceive feelings (Damasio 2003).

are triggered there can be a temporary cognitive engagement of the body, which leads to subsequent dynamic variation in perception (Damasio 2003, p. 92).

There are four relevant points of Damasio's observations for Campbell's hypothesis. Firstly, feelings cannot be simply willed in the absence of emotionally competent stimuli. There is a fundamental difference between 'feeling happy' and 'thinking happy' (Damasio 2003, p. 87). Feelings are more than a collection of thoughts with a certain themes, consequently they must be initially triggered by subconscious emotional processes which generate a state of being. Secondly, where conscious mental processes do play a role in influencing the state of pleasure is in the reverberative process between the perception of body state and the mind state. By perceiving that body state has changed the 'state of mind' the mind itself can, during the unfolding of emotions, actively interfere to some degree with its own perception of the body state and the actual body state itself in a way that can intensify the emotional experience. Hence it is possible for people to concentrate and temporarily interact with their emotional responses in such a way as to intensify or prolong the level of feeling they perceive.

Thirdly, the ability to change one's own perception of the body state would have greatly benefited from the knowledge which consumers were exposed to in the Romantic literature- that emotional responses are located within the Self. This inspired consumers to reproduce the circumstances where a cognitive interaction with emotions can take place, as was described in detail by Wordsworth and others. Finally, given that body and mind states interact by means of the 'creation and manipulation of images' (Damasio 2003, p. 91), one can understand how the consumer's faculty of imagination played a direct role in intensifying emotions. Through learning how to manipulate and modify mental images in a way that may not necessarily correspond with objective reality, Romantic consumers learnt how to use their imagination in order to elicit pleasure.

Armed with a better understanding of how higher cognitive processes can interact with emotional responses, one can begin to appreciate how changing consumption patterns in the Romantic era occurred as result of consumers no longer simply seeking to gain pleasure from consuming arousing stimuli as direct inputs (as Scitovsky suggests), but rather engaged in a new mode of pleasure-seeking in which arousing stimuli were used to produce states of being with which consumer could then interact. Naturally, this interaction required a practice and particular skill, which implies that consumers had to gain experience and experiment in order to efficiently engage their imagination to elicit and intensify pleasure.

One of the specific conditions this type of interactive emotional pleasure demands is an environment that possesses a sense of calm in which consumers can properly compose and vary their

thoughts. If the external surrounds are too stimulating, although they may be pleasurable, they inhibit people from being able to concentrate on their emotions responses. It makes sense that Romantic consumers actively abandoned intensely stimulating tourist destinations such as Paris and preferred relatively tranquil and peaceful surroundings that were better suited to this meditative exercise. Hence this change reflected a new demand for environments in which entertaining stimuli were relatively less arousing.

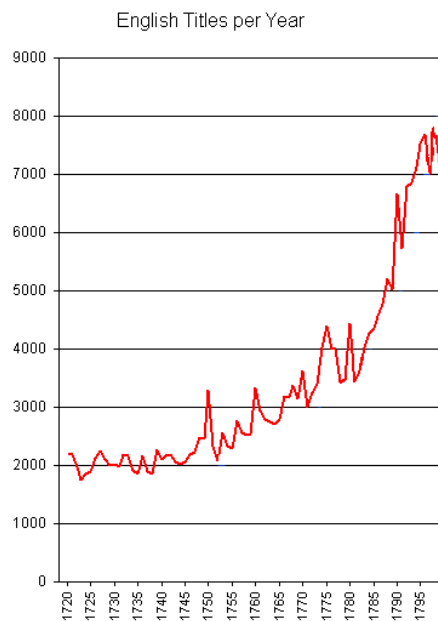
Though such a new mode of pleasure-seeking is perceivably mentally intensive as well as time consuming in nature, it did deliver some important benefits to consumers. Firstly, although such experiences still require some emotionally competent object like a landscape or a poem, the new ability to alternatively cultivate and influence one's own emotional response implied that the emotionally competent object declined in relative significance in the overall consumption process. By modifying the production process rather than its inputs, a more cost efficient method of experiencing, experimenting and learning about the nature of pleasure was achieved.

Secondly, by engaging in their own pleasure production processes, consumers gained the extra benefits that come with all 'tailor-fitted' and individualized goods. Whereas previously entertaining stimuli, as direct inputs, were shaped solely by others (i.e. theatricals, artworks, poetry and music) the final product in the Romantic mode of consumption was partially shaped by consumers themselves, allowing consumers to better suite these to their own tastes. Thirdly, this new power to vary and experiment with cultivating emotional responses would have slowed down the rate at which the consumers became habituated to the external stimulus. In dynamic time, orthodox producers of entertainment can create complexity via the proliferation of variations on the original stimulus (Chai et al. 2007). Each additional variation may increase the amount of attention accorded to the good as long as they continue to surprise and intrigue consumers. Nevertheless the major problem faced by producers is of knowing when the time is right to add another dimension of complexity; introducing a new variant too early may lead consumers to view the good as too complex for initial adoption. In the case of the Romantic mode of pleasure-seeking, the consumer is the producer and in this sense they have the ability to self-determine when variation and what variation should occur, in a way that could never be matched by a producer. Thus the rate at which Romantic consumers became habituated to the entertaining stimuli would have been relatively slow compared to consumer partaking in the traditional hedonistic mode of pleasure seeking.

5. The impact of the Romantic ethos on tourism

This section examines the evidence about the impact that the Romantic ethos had on British recreational travel patterns. There is much evidence to suggest that literature had a strong impact on British culture in the late 18th century. This was a period in Britain in which reading material became widely available (McKendrick et al. 1985; Altick 1998; St Clair 2004). Previously in the 17th century, most books were relatively expensive and were mainly theological or classical in nature and mainly owned by lawyers, clergymen, gentry or prosperous merchants (McKendrick et al. 1985; Weatherill 1988). The change was the result of the original information revolution, namely the invention of the modern printing press, which led to the production of a many different forms of literature (McKendrick et al. 1985; Raven 1992). While in the early 1690s printing was a restricted medium confined to a few enterprises in London, Cambridge, Oxford and York, by 1800 a printing press was located in almost every small town in the country, with hundreds located in London alone (Raven 1992). This change was itself heavily aided by technological developments related to the improvement of paper quality and engraving techniques (ibid). Thus even before the introduction of steam-driven mechanized printing in 1814, English booksellers and publishers produced an immense diversity of books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines and periodicals, as seen in Figure 1, which shows the total number of titles published every year (including magazines and periodicals):

Figure 1 British print literature in the 18th century



(English Short Title Catalogue 2006)

With its rise, reading habits diffused widely amongst the British population (Raven 1992; Altick 1998). Total sales of newspapers in England jumped from 7.3 million in 1750 to over 16 million in 1790 (Raven 1992, p. 34). While the average number of new novel titles between 1740 and 1760 remained roughly stable at around 20 per annum, this number exploded to 60 in 1770 and rose to around 90 at the beginning of the 19th century (Raven 1992, p. 34). As a way of making Romantic novels more affordable, they were sold in quarters, each sold for a price of approximately 30 British shillings (in 1812), which amounted to half the weekly income of a professional (St Clair 2004, p. 186). Beyond cheaper prices, St Clair (2004) notes how in the 1790s a ‘explosion in reading’ was fostered by the abolition of perpetual copyright, which led to the flourishing of literary piracy. The state also encouraged aspiring authors to publish in the form of Queen Anne’s 1710 Act ‘for the encouragement of learning’, which was designed to reward the inventiveness of authors with the sole right of publication for a term of fourteen years. However, this was not effective until 1774 as a monopoly still governed the publishing industry keeping book prices restrictively high (St Clair 2004:101).

Historical evidence also suggests that the diffusion of reading habits had unprecedented social ramifications. In terms of contents, in the late 18th and 19th century English literature was dominated by Romanticism. A major theme of this group of artists, poets, writers, musicians, and thinkers was the

natural scenery and its role in human's moral renewal (Campbell 1987, p. 181). As a new social philosophy, authors such as Rousseau and Wordsworth sought to inspire a quest for the natural in readers and preached the doctrine of natural man (*ibid*). Civilization was perceived as a form of corruption and people were urged to return to nature (Feiffer 1986, p. 141). Natural surroundings were seen as a type of stimuli that helped people learn about intuition. For example, Joseph Addison wrote in an essay on the pleasures of the imagination, of a 'delightful stillness and amazement' that he had felt whilst viewing certain scenery such as open champion country, vast uncultivated deserts, and huge heaps of mountains and high rocks (Botton 2002, p. 165). Similarly, Hildebrand Jacob lists places most likely to inspire sublime pleasure: oceans, the setting sun, precipices, caverns and mountains (*ibid*). Specific geographic locations that were described by this literature included Switzerland, Italy, the English Lakes District and various coastlines (Bernard 1978; Buzard 1993; Soane 1993; Towner 1996; Prickett 2002).

In terms of how the Romantic movement affected consumer learning patterns, evidence suggests that the literature was a prominent topic of conversation. By 1750 circulating libraries were established in 119 towns that provided consumers access to the latest literature (McKendrick et al. 1985, p. 270). Furthermore, book clubs, such as the Women's literary society, were formed where people met on regular occasions to discuss novels and played an important social role in Victorian Britain (Snyder 2004). The late nineteenth century also saw the formation of the National Home Reading Union to improve the standard of working-class leisure reading (Snape 2004, p. 145). Hence this evidence suggests that literature became a popular topic of conversation as an increasing percentage of the population gained access to reading materials as well as to new opportunities to discuss this literature in libraries, book clubs and reading unions.

Secondly, such literature did not only provide exposure to arousing stimuli, it also provided knowledge and information about these stimuli. A primary example is the emergence of the travel writing genre, in which the European travel experiences of authors such as Jean-Jacques Rosseau, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron and James Boswell became popular amongst readers (Feiffer 1986, p. 135). Furthermore, many Romantics wrote travel guides to certain scenic areas. An example is Wordsworth's guide for independent travelers in "Guide to the Lakes District" (Buzard 1993, p. 20). The aim of this guide, which is also recognized as an important part of his literary accomplishment, was of "supplying the tourist with directions (of) how to approach the several scenes (of the Lakes) in their best... order" (Buzard 1993, p. 23). Elsewhere in Germany, Goethe, who considered himself to be a natural scientist as well as a writer, recorded his travels in the Thuringian forest which were later used as guides by visitors (Lohman and

Mundt 2002, p. 214). The result was a mini-boom in the number of hotels and inns in the Thuringian forest which was unprecedented in the 18th century (*ibid*).

Regarding how the Romantic ethos changed the manner in which arousing stimuli were used by consumers to intensify pleasurable feelings, the previous section has already outlined how Romantics, such as Wordsworth, recorded in their writing the cognitive process in which they would consciously focus and enhance the positive emotions elicited by the viewing of beautiful scenery. Evidence that this type meditative exercise was also undertaken by consumers can be found in the travel diaries of tourists in this era. Studies of the travel diaries have found distinct changes in the tone and content of their writing (Chard 2002). Whilst previously travel diaries were relatively factual recordings of the places visited, in the Romantic era the tourists' diaries suggest that travelling was done not only as a way gathering knowledge of the world, but as a kind of 'adventure of the self' in which there was strong focus on how travelers were emotionally affected by viewing certain scenes (Chard 2002, p. 60). A major feature of these tourist diaries was emotionally-charged language used to describe the tourist's reaction to particular attractions that had been popularized in literature, such as the famous Mount Vesuvius volcano. This use of extravagant hyperbole tended to create anxiety in sightseers that their emotional state of being to a particularly beautiful scene may appear ridiculous to the reader (Chard 2002, p. 49). Given that readers are only exposed to the scene indirectly through the writings of the author, this indirect way of experiencing a scene may indeed fail to elicit the state of being as that felt by the author who views the scenes firsthand.

Finally, there is also some interesting preliminary evidence that shows how specialized Romantic travelers valued the ability to modify the manner in which they were exposed to arousing stimuli. This is captured in their opposition to relatively fast modes of travel by means of coach and train transport. The train in particular was in the 19th century a radically novel experience, given that trains could cover considerable distance in about one-tenth of the time required for horse-drawn coaches (Harvey 1990, p. 241). The experience of riding in a speedy train was likened to being 'shot' through the landscape, an act causing disorientation (Larsen 2001, p. 82).

The Romantic opposition to train travel was less based on the grounds of environmental degradation or seen as a matter of encouraging the inferior classes to travel, but objected more to the rate at which consumers were exposed to landscapes. The chief critique of this mode of travel was that tourists would have little ability to vary the rate at which they were exposed to arousing scenery. Romantics argued that this diminished the value of being exposed to the arousing stimuli, rendering the act of exposure 'superficial'. For example Wordsworth, in opposing the construction of railway lines in the English Lakes District, argued that tourists cannot "gain material benefit from a more speedy access that

they now have to this beautiful region...” because “..the perception of what has acquired the name of picturesque and Romantic scenery is so far from being intuitive, that it can be produced only by a slow and gradual process,” (Wordsworth 1844). Romantics feared that the blurred nature of the landscape, caused by an accelerated rate of exposure to stimuli, would positively augment traveler’s boredom in such a way that tourists would pay more attention to their guidebooks than to the arousing landscapes through which they were passing (Buzard 1993, p. 36). Hence, travel by train was seen as ultimately reducing the ability of consumers to gain proper exposure to arousing stimuli because the rate of exposure was too fast. This argument makes sense in the light of the evidence that habituation can be reduced by slowing down the rate at which consumers are exposed to arousing stimuli. As an alternative, Romantics advocated walking, which was seen as a form of travel that everyone could participate in (Edensor 2000). Indeed, many Romantics actively organized workers in tramps through the countryside (Snape 2004). This is because the slower pace of walking enables consumers to have a relatively greater freedom to vary the manner in which they are exposed to the environment, and in Thoreau’s words, walking “returns the walker to his senses” (Edensor 2000, p. 86).

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined how the relationship between the human tendency to engage in exploratory behavior and the demand for recreational travel has evolved in the face of technological progress that has yielded a wide variety of more convenient means by which consumers may access information and gain exposure to arousing stimuli. Using Witt’s theory of consumer specialization (Witt 2001), we have argued that new mediums of information and entertainment, such as the emergence of books, have fostered demand for high-skilled consumption activities, such as recreational travel. This complementary relationship stands in contrast to previous predictions that consumers would be less likely to engage in for high-skilled consumption activities due to the risks involved and the skill required by consumers (Scitovsky 1976).

To answer Simon’s question, why do people travel given the availability of so many more convenient ways to gain information and seek entertainment, we have to understand the true impact these new technologies and activities have had on the consumer’s tendency to engage in exploratory behavior and accumulate knowledge about consumption activities. New forms of recreation may not only to satisfy the consumer’s demand for arousing stimuli, but they may also stimulate consumer to learn and specialize in certain consumption activities, which could lead them to engage in more high-skill consumption activities, such as recreational travel. Specifically, we examined how the British Grand Tour of Europe was transformed during the Romantic era due to the emergence of the Romantic literature. This social

philosophy dispersed knowledge amongst the British reading public about the nature of pleasure and how it may be elicited via recreational travel. The Romantic ethos aimed to fundamentally change how consumers sought to gain pleasure from sightseeing by informing consumers about consumption techniques through which emotions can be self-cultivated. It encouraged consumers to not only view novel and stimulating scenery, but to also focus on the emotional response which these sceneries elicited.

In the cognitive sciences, evidence suggests that, under certain circumstances, the mind can indeed influence and magnify the body's state of being. Historical evidence suggests that Romantic novels had a strong influence on British culture. Tourist diaries during this era do indeed show that tourists had a heightened awareness of the emotional response triggered by natural scenery. Famous Romantic authors, such as William Wordsworth, also described in detail the emotional response that were elicited by natural scenery and actively encouraged readers to focus on the emotional response these sceneries elicit. The Romantic literature also reveals that Romantics highly valued the ability to control the manner and rate at which they were exposed to natural scenery, providing further evidence that a specialization process did in fact take place.

Of central significance to this learning process was the consumer's faculty of imagination through which the interaction between conscious thoughts and unconscious emotional responses occurs. By learning how to manipulate and modify mental images in a way that may not necessarily correspond with objective reality, Romantic consumers learned how to use their imagination in order to self-cultivate pleasure. This type of interaction may help light on how the manner in which the pursuit of risk and (self-)deceit is an intrinsic part of modern recreational travel (van den Berghe 2002). More generally, it may also help explain browsing behavior and the possibility that consumer gain procedural utility from merely thinking about the possibility of purchasing goods and services (Earl and Potts 2000). In the context of long run economic development and the phenomenal impact technological progress has had on the consumer's general habitat, a better understanding of the nature of emotions and their role in consumer learning patterns can shed light on how consumption patterns have evolved in the face of the growing variety of consumptions activities and techniques that have emerged in developed economies.

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