

The Mind on a Journey:  
Moral History in Samuel Johnson's  
*Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*

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So many thinkers having written the novel of the soul, a wise man has appeared who has modestly written its history.

— Voltaire on Locke

The grammar of the book shall try to restore that of the itinerary.

— Michel Butor

I

The idea of travel itself has traveled a long course of evolution from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. By the time William Hazlitt wrote "On Going a Journey" in 1821, the idea of travel had been totally interiorized. To travel for him was to seek after the "mystery of our being," the revelation of which is conditioned on one's voluntary loss of the world, memory, and language. "Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties."<sup>1</sup> Traveling was defined negatively as an

escape from falsehood—false social identity, false abstract conceptions, false eloquence of sociable conversations—, and positively as a flight toward the truth of absolute self-identity— “lord of one’s self, uncumber’d with a name” (p. 141). The “elements of nature” are in fact the elements of the self, and it is one’s own “thoughts” that one finds “lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds” (p. 140); the “creature of the moment” only perceives the immediately present, and “all the rest of the world is forgotten” (p. 145); and no longer is there any need for awkward, never successful attempts at social conversation, because the self is envelopped in “that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence” (p. 137). Hazlitt’s journey is a flight away from foreign countries and surroundings as well as from an alien mode of being which threatens its true identity; it is a journey home, a descent toward the ineffable selfhood, solitary, silent and self-sufficient. “The mind then is ‘its own place;’ nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey.” (p. 145)

About two centuries before Hazlitt, in 1617, Joseph Hall also argued against foreign travels, but for different reasons. For him, traveling was nothing less than a solemn public enterprise which was to be justified only by its tangible fruits—the amount of new knowledge and sound belief acquired on journey and brought back home for public benefits. And for this very reason, he denied any claim of usefulness to foreign traveling. First, he firmly believed in his own enlightened age and country: “This age is so full of light, that there is no one countrey of the habitable world, whose beames are not crossed and interchanged with other; Knowledge of all affaires, is like musicke in the streets, whereof those may partake, which pay

nothing.”<sup>2</sup> The genuine community of knowledge has been sustained by circulation of books. Whereas traveling causes innumerable inconveniences and imperfections—chances missed, wrong persons turned to, things impossible to see all and see perfectly, verbal discourses never to be fully trusted, misleading information never corrected, etc.—, “travelling through the world of books” guarantees perfect comforts and rewards. Nothing is missed in books: “What hath any eye seene, or imagination devised, which the pen hath not dared to write?” (p. 36) Everything is systematized and guided to the clear and rational conclusions by the authority of learned authors: “A good booke is at once the best companion, and guide, and way, and end of our journey” (p. 34). The world seen “dry-shod” and “by our owne fire-side” (pp. 32, 31) is the only world knowable and worth knowing—a true “end of our journey.” If the objects of true knowledge are already there in books perused at our own fireside, the proclaimed “goals” and “fruits” of actual journeying out are all specious and dangerous. So-called polite learning is in fact mere expertise in unnecessary civilities, which is sure to lead both the proud and the ignorant to mutual debauchment. The darkness of ignorance and credulity is a stage for “holy fraudes”—“falsified reason,” “magical delusions and devillish incantations” (pp. 65, 66)—set up by the Popery cunningly masked and painted. And if one still insists on going abroad, it only betrays one’s serious moral weakness—dangerous curiosity and susceptibility to seducement, which deserve David’s malediction, “Make them unto a wheel, ô Lord” (p. 84). In other words, spatial mobility is a sign of spiritual instability, and immobility a sign of spiritual fortitude. “Motion is ever accompanied with

unquietnesse; and both argues, and causes imperfection, whereas the happy estate of heaven is described by rest; whose glorious spheres in the meane time, doe so perpetually move, that they are never removed from their places" (*ibid.*). Just as "constant settledness" of fixed star is free from anxieties and agitations of traveling planets, so the government of obedient sheep by judicial shepherds keep them safe in the strong folds of British laws (pp. vii-viii, 86). And just as our young legs and eggs are to be speedily transplanted onto our safer native soil, so the British gentry can be happy only at home in its "settled estate of our primogeniture," quite innocent of "the curse of Reuben, to runne abroad like water" to demigrate (pp. 6-7, 83).

Thus, although Hazlitt argued in terms of an internal state of private consciousness while Hall argued in terms of external objects of public knowledge, these two censurers of foreign travels shared the same belief in "home," a belief in the self in its pure identity and autonomy. Whether that "home" is located in the individual mind cut off from all external ties, as in Hazlitt, or fully embodied in the native society, as in Hall, the fundamental belief in the existence of home—a self or a society as an everlasting substance, an origin and end of our life's journey—was little shaken. Hazlitt spoke for Hall as well when he cautiously warned that "the time we have spent there [abroad]... appear to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another.... We are lost to ourselves, as well as for our friends" (p. 147).

Hall's followers, somewhat less confident in their actual state of "enlightenment," would speak more cautiously of a selective importation

and assimilation of foreign merits, and Hazlitt's predecessors had spoken of an aesthetic experience of an external world as it embodies one's incommunalbe sensibility. For instance, Francis Bacon ordered his diligent inquirer never to "change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his country."<sup>3</sup> Richard Hurd in his essay "On the Uses of Foreign Travels" (1759) repeated Hall's argument in a more elaborate form of a fictional dialogue between Shaftesbury and Locke. In the dialogue the fictional Shaftesbury defends, and the fictional Locke—obviously a mouthpiece for Hurd—attacks, the journey of the British travelers through the European continent. The Shaftesbury argues for foreign travel in terms of a "progress" from the British barbarity toward the European refinement, and a "progress" of the mind from confinement in the local and particular toward enlargement through the general and universal. The Locke, on the other hand, redefines the points of departure and goal of such "progress," and claims that the "progress" is in fact a "regress" from the solid British learning to the ornamental European learning, or a flight from the steady attachment to the fixed native soil to frivolous wandering pursuit for the changing and exotic. For Hurd's Locke, the progress was not from the English to the European, but rather from the sixteenth-century dark Europe of Aristotle, Calvin and Descartes to the seventeenth-century enlightened England best represented by Bacon, Boyle and Newton:

I see the day, when a scholastic theology shall give place to a rational divinity, conducted on the principles of sound criticism and well interpreted scripture: when their sums and systems shall

fly before enlightened reason and sober speculation: when a fanciful, precarious, and hypothetic philosophy shall desert their schools; and be replaced by real science, supporting itself on the sure grounds of experiment and cautious observation: when their physics shall be fact; their metaphysics, common sense; and their ethics, human nature. 4

Hence, Hurd's Locke confidently asserts that "they, who are latest in setting out, will arrive the soonest, certainly the safest, at their journey's end" (p. 188). They might as well never set out, for they in England are already at their "journey's end."

Hazlitt's precursors, on the other hand, were also perpetually at "the journey's end" on their "picturesque travels." William Gilpin, the most influential theorist of the picturesque, prepared the way to Hazlitt's idea of internalized journey by setting the mind free from external objects and making it conscious of its own creative operations. Gilpin set his argument for the picturesque in two stages. First in his "On Picturesque Beauty," he points out insufficiencies of both of the two traditional theories of beauty—the mimetic—deceptive theory of artistic representation and the formalist theory of proportion and unity in variety. Neither theory, he says, can account for the "picturesque" which "please from some quality capable of being illustrated by painting."<sup>5</sup> Gilpin himself admits that he failed to define the picturesque: "Thus, in our inquiries into *first principles* we go on, without end, and without satisfaction. The human understanding is unequal to the search, . . . We are puzzled, and bewildered; but not informed, all is uncertainty; a strife of words; the old contest" (p. 33). His final definition given in his letter to Joshua Reynolds is

merely verbal and tautological: the picturesque are "*such objects, as are proper subjects for painting*" (p. 36). However, his failure at definition is intentional: it was intended to do away with all rational analyses of beauty and picturesque in terms of objects in their natural or represented state. His intention is clearer in his second essay "On Picturesque Travel." In the essay he argues that since any objects—natural or artistic, beautiful or ugly, truthful or distorted—could be picturesque, the essence of the picturesque resides not in objects themselves but in the perceiver's mind which finds them picturesque. Thus the idea of picturesque is internalized as a function of mental operation, and the motive force behind the operation is said to be no longer reason but feeling, no longer passive perception but creative imagination. Hazlitt's "mystery of our being" is prefigured in what Gilpin calls "*deliquium* of the soul":

every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads it, previous to any examination by the rules of art. The general idea of the scene makes an impression before any appeal is made to the judgment. We rather *feel*, than *survey* it. (pp. 49-50)

And Gilpin's "impression" and "feeling" are free from any Lockean or Humean sense of the ultimate unknowability of objects:

There is still another amusement arising from the correct knowledge of objects; and that is the power of creating, and representing *scenes of fancy*; which is still more a work of creation, than copying from nature. The imagination becomes a camera obscura, only with this difference, that the camera

represents objects as they really are: while the imagination, impressed with the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules of art, forms it's [*sic*] pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste. (p. 52)

Imagination knows an absolute truth, simply because that truth has been created by imagination itself. In short, the world has been interiorized, and thereby has become a true world, absolutely intelligible and knowable. Hazlitt's identification of our "thought" with the "elements of nature" is fully anticipated by Gilpin's "hills planted by imagination": "The imagination can plant hills; can form rivers, and lakes in vallies; can build castles, and abbeys; and if it find no other amusement, can dilate itself in vast ideas of space" (p. 56).<sup>6</sup>

Thus, between Hall and Hurd on one hand, and Gilpin and Hazlitt on the other, the idea of travel has evolved, shifting its emphasis from public benefits to private truth. However, in the process of the evolution, the idea of travel itself as a spatial movement was strangely and persistently by-passed. Mobility was always defined and justified in terms of immobility. The process of movement was ridden with an anxiety for home—for a goal where one no longer has to move, or for an origin where one as yet does not have to move. One can peacefully rest only either in perfection achieved at a goal or in truth preserved at an origin. The state of moving is a state of imperfection or falsehood, expelled from truth or perfection. Between the two felicitous states of being in fullness, one is tormented with the process of becoming in which one is no longer nor as yet one's true self.

A real journey begins when one gives up such dream of a goal or

an origin, perfection or truth. If the idea of "home" is still needed to account for the fact of moving, it should be sought in the very process of moving, in the very fact of one's inability to stop and rest in peace. Whether one is physically moving in space or not, one's mind is perpetually moving in the process of becoming. And "home" for the mind lies in that never-ending process of moving ever within the region of human kinesis and imperfection. In so far as the traveler is still on his journey, he is already and always at "home," in the truth of his being in time as forever becoming, as forever moving between the heavenly felicities of absolute knowledge or absolute being, between the death-like stases of divine omniscience or nescience. David's malediction against those condemned in exile is thus transformed into a blessing for humanity in time, as is exuberantly declared by Tristram Shandy:

So much motion, continues he [Joseph Hall], (for he was very corpulent)—is so much unquietness; and so much of rest, by the same analogy, is so much of heaven.

Now, I (being very thin) think differently; and that so much of motion, is so much of life, and so much of joy—and that to stand still, or get on by slowly, is death and the devil—. 7

Immobility in heaven has been turned into a death to the traveler, and mobility on earth into a life, as it is lived by the traveler on his journey, the only attainable truth for being in time as forever becoming.

The same point had been made more soberly by James Howell in his *Instructions for Forreine Travell* (1642). He may appear to be another defender of Baconian "Merchant of Light," for he criticizes "a

Sedentary Traveller"—Hall's fireside traveler—as "[traversing] the world by *Hearsay*" and having only "a confused and imperfect kind of speculation, which leaveth but weake and distrustfull notions," and praises travel as "a *moving Academy*, or the true *Peripetique Schoole*" in which one acquires a solid understanding of the world through the direct experience of "one's own *Ocular* view, and personall conversation."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as for the travelers' journey home, he strongly warns against the folly to "wander from themselves, as well as from their Country, and to come back mere *Mimiques*" (p. 63), and commands the traveler instead to "evertuate himselfe to bring something home, that may accrue to the publique benefit and advantage of his Country" (p. 72), in order to "blesse God, and love *England* better ever after" (p. 75). However, apart from "publique benefit and advantage," Howell envisions another kind of a journey's end, another kind of knowledge to be acquired by "the Inward man": the traveler gradually

come[s] to discerne, the best of all earthly things to bee but frayle and transitory. That this World at the best is but a huge Inne, and we but wayfaring men, but Pilgrimes, and a company of rambling Passengers. That we enter first into this World by Travaile, and so passe along with Cries, by weeping crosse [to mile end] : So that it was no improper Character the Wisest of Kings gave of this life to be nought else but a continuall Travell. (p. 70)

Journey ends in the traveler's self-knowledge as a perpetual traveler, with no end where he can stop and rest, but forever on his way to "the knowledge of his Creator.... this Unum necessarium [which] should be the center to which Travel should tend" (pp. 71-2). The

traditional metaphor of life as a journey may transform life disoriented in mere succession of time into an orderly pilgrimage with teleological visions of an origin and an end. However, it is implied in the same metaphor that where the journey ends, whether in innocence regained or redemption attained, life ends too, that one is in life if and only in so far as one is already and still moving in time, within the human region of agitations and imperfections, with distant and tormenting dreams of innocence lost or redemption unattained. And that is the only eternal truth attainable by the perpetual traveler in time.

A journey has become a history. The traveler's "home" has been temporalized. The mind on a journey calls not for a philosophy of being, but for a philosophy of becoming. And it is precisely this kind of philosophy of becoming that Voltaire discovered in Locke when he hailed Locke as the first to have written not the "novel" but the "history" of the soul. Voltaire goes on to say:

Instead of defining at one fell swoop what we don't know, he [Locke] examines by degrees what we want to know. He takes a child at the moment of birth and follows step by step the progress of its understanding, he sees what the child has in common with the animals and in what it is superior to them, he consults especially his own experience, the consciousness of his own thought. 9

In Locke's philosophy, human understanding is to be understood not substantially as an innate mental faculty, but dynamically as an act of gradual acquisition through the temporal process of experience. The method of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is specified

by Locke himself as a "historical, plain method," and the book as a whole, which proposes to give an "account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have,"<sup>10</sup> may be adequately characterized, as Tristram Shandy describes it, as "a history-book. . . of what passes in a man's own mind."<sup>11</sup> It is important to remember here, however, that although human reason is to be defined in terms of its gradual acquisition in time, the process itself is treated substantially as part of the unalterable human condition. The process—a history or journey—of the human mind repeats itself endlessly: it will never transgress the human station allotted within a cosmic scheme of things to actually reach its hypothetical goal in supra-human omniscience. "The Great Chain of Being" is temporalized, but it never becomes the "ladders" for each species to climb in its evolutionary "progress."<sup>12</sup> Rather, what is redefined as a temporal process is the mode of human being situated eternally in the human station within the Chain of Being. Human being is ordained to be in the endless process of becoming himself, and only in so far as he is in such process, he is contained within his allotted state. His being is his becoming itself. Human movement is not defined by its origin—inferior animal state—nor by its goal—superior divine state: rather, it is defined by the fact of its movement itself. Occasionally Locke may speak of a journey's end, but he knows it will be a death to the process of journey and life: to reach an end and rest in peace will always be an impossible dream or self-defeating hybris for the being in time.<sup>13</sup>

The process of becoming in time is *par excellence* a psychological process. As is pointed out by Voltaire, one's "experience" is the sum

total of "the consciousness of [one's] own thought." As Locke referred the concept of human understanding—system of notions—back to a mental mechanism operating the gradual process of formation of those notions, he not only temporalized the Chain of Being but equally internalized it. The human mind moves within a psychological space: the mind on a journey travels not through a world of external objects, but through a world of its consciousness of those objects. Thus, the ideal of empirical study of the workings of the mind has gradually turned a philosophy of the mind into a psychology of the sentiment. It is true that within the process of formation of notions through combination ("tying together") of ideas Locke sharply distinguished a natural connexion of ideas traced and maintained by reason on one hand, and an unnatural connexion created by mere chance and custom on the other. The rational connexion of ideas is a foundation of human understanding, whereas the irrational association of ideas, "which seems to be but trains of motions in the animal spirits, which, once set a going, continue in the same steps they have been used to," only leads the mind astray into a "disease" or a "sort of madness."<sup>14</sup> Locke is still bound to a traditional stoical conception of the workings of the human mind as a contest between reason and passion, and his "psychology" is an ancillary to his philosophy of the mind, specialized in the diagnosis of pathological errors and the prescriptions of cures for them. However, Locke, almost in spite of himself, prepared the way for Hume's proclamation, about half a century later, of psychology of the sentiment as *the* philosophy of the mind. With Hume, "association of ideas" is no longer an unnatural and diseased clamping and jumbling of ideas; now it is said to be the principle of "the science of

human nature," and "the cement of the universe":

'Twill be easy to conceive of what vast consequence these principles [resemblance, contiguity, and causation, the three principles of association of ideas] must be in the science of human nature, if we consider, that so far as regards the mind, these are the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object exterior to ourselves. For as it is by means of thought only that any thing operates upon our passions, and as these are the only ties of our thoughts, they are really *to us* the cement of the universe, and all the operations of the mind must, in a great measure, depend on them. 15

Association of ideas is the sole creative binding force of a world knowable and meaningful for human beings: it lays the foundation for reality by binding its components, and for knowledge by connecting our ideas to external objects, as well as for society by linking us to others. To know something is to be connected to it, and thereby, in fact, to create that something to be known. Reality, world, society—all are an organic fabric formed and sustained by the principle of association and interconnection, linkage and communication—or, as one of the catchphrases cherished by the eighteenth century said, "commerce and conversation."

To sum up, the course of evolution of the idea of travel has been double: journey defined in terms of its goal has shifted its emphasis from public benefits to private truth, from external objects to the perceiving mind; at the same time, journey has gradually come to be redefined less in terms of its goal and more as a process itself to achieve that goal. The basic direction of the evolution was toward

internalization (psychologization) and historicization (temporalization). Journey through the world has become a moral history of the mind; a statesman-gentleman's grand tour through Europe has become a philosopher-writer's quest through his internal landscape. Or perhaps, the changes would be better described not as a straight line of evolution, in which one idea replaces another, but as a gradual widening of a matrix in which the idea of travel is reformulated. Travelers in any age would always justify their travels by their pedagogical value or social utility. Added in the eighteenth century to this traditional idea of travel was the idea of journey as a moral history, no longer for a generic Christian after the Celestial City as in Bunyan, but for a modern humanity in quest of its inner truth. Within this new matrix, Locke's "history of the soul" was a distant yet authentic fountain-head for, say, Rousseau's "history of the soul" or Mary Wollestonecraft's "history of [one's] own heart."<sup>16</sup> It is within such matrix of the new idea of travel that the following pages shall discuss Samuel Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775).<sup>17</sup>

## II

Johnson's first published book was an English translation of *A Voyage to Abyssinia by Father Jerome Lobo* by Joachime Le Grand (1735), and his last but one was *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775). In the opening sentence of his *Journey*, Johnson says, "I had desired to visit the Hebrides, or Western Islands of Scotland, so long, that I scarcely remember how the wish was originally excited."<sup>18</sup> His other numerous prefaces, introductions, essays and tales, including

the five short oriental tales in *The Rambler* and the two in *The Idler*, and, of course, *Rasselas*, all attest his life-long fascination with travel and travel literature.

In his early writings on travel literature Johnson repeatedly stresses the empirical standard of judgment. What he requires is notions derived from facts, or reflections generalized on the basis of direct observation of particular facts. First he demands factual authenticity. In the translator's "Preface" to *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, he praises Father Lobo who, "contrary to the general veins of his countrymen, has amused with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions," and who instead "appears by his modest and unaffected narrative to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses not his imagination."<sup>19</sup> And yet, as a translator-editor, Johnson does not hesitate to take the greatest freedoms with Lobo's text: he shortens or omits "a few passages" because they are "either insignificant or tedious"; he entirely leaves out "several memorials and letters" which only serve to "secure the credit of the foregoing narrative"; the only part of which he attempts an exact translation is "the dissertations" (p. 6).<sup>20</sup> That is to say, he discards the merely factual except what is "curious and entertaining," and retains those dissertations that are "judicious and instructive" (*ibid.*). The factual is evaluated over the romantic or fictitious, but the merely factual is devalued before the notional; the particular is appreciated, but only in so far as it is entertaining enough to naturally conduce to the instructive general. This patently neoclassical evaluation of the general over the particular is faithfully reflected in the concept of a correct mental set up—motive and goal—

which should preside over the process of empirical induction:

A generous and elevated mind is distinguish'd by nothing more certainly than an eminent degree of curiosity, nor is that curiosity ever more agreeable or usefully employ'd, than in examining the laws and customs of foreign nations. ("Dedication")

The particular objects excite curiosity, which is to be "usefully employ'd" in formulating the general notions of those objects—"the laws and customs" of human societies. However, such newly acquired notions may be further generalized only to almost defeat themselves in the pre-established conclusion or eternal truth about humanity; a philosophical explorer may only rediscover what has been already discovered: "he will discover, what will always be discover'd by a diligent and impartial enquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason, and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced in most countries their particular inconveniences by particular favours" (pp. 3-4). Here the conceptual hierarchy of the general over the particular begins to be silently and psychologically threatened. Eternity—timelessness—of the truth of the general nullifies the temporal process of particular endeavors to achieve that goal. The meaningfulness of the process is to be asserted only by suspending the vision of the goal, or by willing not to actually achieve it. Otherwise, the conclusion of universal human nature with the eternal "mixture of vice and virtue" would preclude the value of the particular acts of "examining the laws and customs." It is true that the possibility of such psychological subversion of the conceptual hierarchy of the general over the particular is only very faintly suggested here in

Johnson's first book, but it will remain, implicitly or explicitly, as one of the central issues at the heart of his later writings.

In his next important writing on travel literature in *The Idler*, No. 97 (1760), Johnson seems securely settled with the hierarchy of the general over the particular. He frankly admits his disappointment with his contemporary travel narratives and points out the problem in their mode of traveling. He criticizes the absence of solid facts, and, when they are present, criticizes them as being merely factual. He either accuses travelers of their "guesses," "confused remembrance," and credulity in unascertained information and unreliable hearsay, or criticizes the mere factuality of their descriptions of "the face of the country," "alike succession of rocks and streams, mountains and ruins," "catalogues of pictures" and copies of "inscriptions elegant and rude, ancient and modern."<sup>21</sup> Their narrations are either "such general accounts as leave no distinct idea behind them, or such minute enumerations as few can read with either profit or delight" (p. 298). They neither please the reader with "new images" on which "attention can fix, or which memory can retain," nor instruct him by judicious discernment between "something to be imitated [and] something to be avoided" (pp. 298, 300). Not the facts of things but of men—"the great object of remark is human life" (p. 300)—, not the private curiosities but public benefits—"something by which his [home] country may be benefited" (*ibid.*)—, those should be the aims of a "useful traveller," who alone can "enlarge our knowledge and rectify our opinions" (p. 298). To this idea of acquisition of solid knowledge for the social benefits is attached elsewhere by Johnson an almost Baconian primacy in a wider social system, pedagogical or commercial,

In the “Preface to *The Preceptor*, Containing a General Plan of Education” (1748), for example, he defends “the restless desire of novelty” and “the roving curiosity” as conducive to the “useful employment” of the mind as opposed to “idleness and play.” When the mind is thus once set in motion, “the motion of intellect proceeds in the like [i. e. similar to slow gradual changes in the natural world] imperceptible progression,” under the guidance of modern logic which governs “the operations of the mind, marking the various stages of her progress, and giving some general rules for the regulation of her conduct,” in order to “produce its effects upon common occasions [by] being frequently and familiarly applied.”<sup>22</sup> Particular pieces of information obtained collectively from direct experience, organized into a system of general knowledge, and applied by technology to the common life for the sake of a greater welfare of mankind—this is the same vision of an advancement of human knowledge presented in Johnson’s “Preface to Rolt’s *Dictionary*” (1751) as well as in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*. The title of Rolt’s dictionary, *A New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*—he wrote the preface without even reading the book—was enough to evoke a Johnsonian version of Bacon’s “Merchant of Light.”<sup>23</sup>

However, here again, as in the Preface to Lobo’s *Voyage*, Johnson’s confidence in the “progress” from the particular toward the general is undermined by his notion of the unchangeable human nature. Although he was convinced that Rolt’s *Dictionary* should “contribute to the advantage of all that make or receive laws, of all that buy or sell, of all that wish to keep or improve their possessions, of all that desire to rich, and all that desire to be wise” (p. 254), all did not desire to be wise, as he soon had to admit in his “Introduction to *The World*

*Displayed*" (1759).<sup>24</sup> Navigation may have "made continual, though slow, improvement" after the ark of Noah and "was now brought nearer to perfection," but humanity has not been delivered from its own human nature, its perennial "mixture of vice and virtue." "Merchants of Light" proved to be cruel and selfish colonialists; Columbus's voyage only "gave a new world to European curiosity and European cruelty" (p. 229). With "the indignation of a Christian mind" Johnson reports atrocities committed by Christians invasion and domination of new countries in contempt of all the laws and human rights; robbery, slavery, murders practiced under the dictate of self-interest and pride, avarice and thirst for power; cunning exploitation of inhabitants' ignorance for subjection, fraud and usurpation. The fact that the earlier colonialists were mainly Portuguese and Spanish Catholics does not mitigate "the indignation of a Christian mind" at the acts committed in the name of Christian civilization. The only hope is in that this particular historical fact be not generalized into a proof of irredeemable human corruption: "Out of so much evil, good may sometimes be produced;... the light of the gospel will at last illuminate the sands of Africa, and the deserts of America, though its progress cannot but be slow, where it is so much obstructed by the lives of Christians" (p. 249).

Short and fragmentary as they are, these writings of Johnson on or around travel literature adumbrate the basic terms and conceptual framework in which he is to write his own travelogue. In these essays and prefaces, he consistently values the factual over the imaginary, and the notional over the factual. If this is to determine a basic formal structure of his travelogue—a progress from the

observations and ascertainments of particular facts to the generalized reflections and judgments—, there is a counter-movement which flies from the general reflections back toward a rich variety of unorganized particulars. The progress from the particular to the general is counteracted with the flight from the abstract toward the concrete, from confinement toward liberty. The momentum for this counter-movement can be attributed either to the uncertainty of a final conclusion—whether or not, for example, the Christian promulgation can be justified after all—or to the psychology of an active mind—whether or not the insatiable “roving curiosity,” *prima mobile* of all mental and physical activities, can, or should, be subjugated to the finality and immobility of absolute certainty. The uncertainty of human knowledge and the dynamic psychology of human mind are for Johnson the two complementary aspects of the same law of human nature. The alternating movement and countermovement between the particular and the general, between human knowledge and motion, are to be finally reconciled into a perpetual circle of human nature, which is presented both thematically and structurally in Johnson's travel narrative.

In fact, for such thematic and structural subtlety, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* created a minor controversy when it was first published in 1775. Ralph Griffiths in *The Monthly Review* (1775)<sup>25</sup> argued that Johnson is a “philosophic traveller” in search for “the naked truth” of moral world, as opposed and complementary to a naturalist-antiquarian traveler in search for “the face of the country” such as Thomas Pennant in his *Tour to Scotland* (1771) and *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* (1774-6):

Mr. Pennant travels, chiefly, in the character of the naturalist and antiquary; Dr. Johnson in that of the moralist and observer of men and manners. The former describes whatever is remarkable in the face of the country—the extraordinary production of Nature—the ruins, the relics, and the monuments of past times; the latter gives us his observations on the common appearances and productions of the soil and climate, with the customs and characteristics of the inhabitants, just as particulars and circumstances chanced to present themselves to his notice. The ingenious Cambrian delights in painting sublime scenes, and pleasing pictures; while the learned English Rambler seems rather to confine his views to the naked truth,—to moralize on the occurrences of his journey, and to illustrate the characters and situation of the people whom he visited, by the sagacity of remark, and the profundity of reflection.

That Johnson's argument about the Ossian poems was not convincing or that he failed to convince himself about the Second Sight did not compromise the "philosophic traveller" but rather only highlighted his "modesty, and dignity of simplicity." For other reviewers, however, Johnson was "philosophic" in the worst sense of the word. For an anonymous author of *Remarks on a Voyage to the Hebrides, in a Letter to Samuel Johnson LL. D. (1775)*,<sup>20</sup> a "philosophic traveller" simply meant a subjective traveler, just venting out "the malice of his heart," whose book could be nothing but "a barren work...not only void of truth but very fertile of prejudice." He is made to appear almost solipsistic, "describing" what is in fact a projection of his own diseased self, when the reviewer concludes in a parody of Johnson's sentence that "to propagate error by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence with which the world was not *till now* acquainted; but stubborn audacity,

is the last refuge of detection," not forgetting to add that the moralist's quest for "the naked truth" was nothing but a thinly masked invidious desire after "the nakedness of a sister." The same view was heartily shared by James McIntyre,<sup>27</sup> who just calls Johnson names artlessly and untiringly, beginning—mildly—with "a boor without manners full of spite, a slave who is disrespectful to himself," accelerating with "a slimy, yellow-bellied frog" and "a toad crawling along the ditches," and ending his bestiary with "the brat in the midst of filth, the badger with its nose in his buttocks three quarters of a year, a sheep-tick that is called the leech." After the rabid McIntyre, Donald McNiol sounds insipidly scrupulous, but is just as rancorous in his *Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides* (1779).<sup>28</sup> He duly begins with insisting on the value of travel literature in general, which, by presenting with "candour and fidelity" "faithful portraits of men and manners... [and] a view of the world around us, as it really is," enlightens the reader so that "our candour increases with our knowledge, and we get rid of the folly of prejudice and self-conceit," only to denounce Johnson's complete and deliberate failure to perform the minimum duty as a travel writer. He convicts Johnson of pride and prejudice, "a stubborn malignity" and "illiberal invectives," "misrepresentation and abuse," all at the instigation of his "*master-passion*" of ineradicable hatred against Scotland. He only found what his passion had compelled him to see, and therefore his report "merit[s] no passion superior to contempt." Thus Griffith praised the *Journey* as philosophic, and McNiol and others condemned it as prejudiced. The two different critical axes each of them used—philosophic vs naturalistic or notional (moral) vs factual on one hand,

and prejudiced vs impartial or subjective vs objective on the other—produced diametrically opposed assessments, but the axes themselves appeared so interchangeable that it was sometimes difficult to keep them separate: the notional could be so easily the merely subjective, and the objective could often be the merely factual. Such subtlety or ambiguity has been posing a critical problem since the publication of the book up to the present.<sup>20</sup> Johnson himself, before anyone else, was fully aware of the problem, and his journey and *Journey* were in fact a product of his attempt to solve it.

### III

Soon after he set out on his journey, Johnson found himself in the wild mountainous regions near Anoch in the bosom of the Highlands, facing the “wide extent of hopeless sterility”: “The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation” (pp. 39-40). Confronted with such hopeless prospect, he is unshaken in his belief in the worth of the journey he had taken to see precisely that “matter incapable of form,” for, he asserts, “As we see more, we become possessed of more certainties, and consequently gain more principles of reasoning, and found a wider basis of analogy” (p. 40). He confronts nature as an empirical philosopher-conqueror before a vast tract of raw materials waiting to be formulated into a rational knowledge and utilized for human benefits. However, in the midst of irremediable “rudeness, silence, and solitude,” the philosopher-conqueror of nature is forced to gradually turn his

eyes inward to become a philosopher of human nature: "Before me, and on either side, were high hills, which by hindering my eyes from ranging, forced the mind to find entertainment for itself" (*ibid.*). Entertainments he finds in mental pictures supplied by imagination "excited by the view of an unknown and untravelled wilderness." Yet, instead of "a flattering notion of self-sufficiency, a placid indulgence of voluntary delusions, a secure expansion of the fancy, or a cool concentration of the mental powers," this *rational* philosopher of human nature found only "the phantoms... [of] want, and misery, and danger," and brought himself to a sober conclusion that "man is made unwillingly acquainted with his own weakness, and meditation shows him only how little he can sustain, and how little he can perform" (pp. 40-41). The philosopher of human nature refutes the conqueror of nature. The latter's hopeful prospect of "more certainties" and "more principles of reasoning" is reduced in the former's sober meditation to nothing more than one of flattering delusions of human power and self-sufficiency, one of many human follies in the face of the truth of human impotence and hopelessness. This short passage describing the inception of Johnson's writing of the *Journey* epitomizes, perhaps better than any other, an intellectual and artistic dynamics of the book as a whole—an evolving and never resolved inner strife in Johnson between the philosopher-conqueror of nature and the moralist of human nature.

As a matter of fact, Johnson's insistence on fact and veracity is persistent throughout the *Journey*. He strongly rebukes Hector Boece's false report of the breadth of Loch Ness (p. 30) and asserts that "his history [i. e. *Scotorum Historiae* (1562)] is written with elegance and

vigour, but his fabulousness and credulity are justly blamed" (p. 15). Boece's errors are condoned quite condescendingly as errors inevitable in "ages so long accustomed to darkness, which were too much dazzled with its [i. e. learning's] light to see any thing distinctly" (*ibid.*). Study of truth rather than elegance, "the examination of tenets and of facts" rather than blind trust in ancient authorities, had to wait until Johnson's own age of light and reason. Direct observation of particular facts and careful induction of general knowledge according to rational principles—this is the solemn task imposed upon a traveling "merchant of light" in the modern age, whose motto would be "reason and truth will prevail at last" (p. 104). A meticulous collector and recorder of facts, Johnson found that the causes for errors were legion: imperfect measurement—"no man should travel unprovided with instruments for taking heights and distances" (p. 146); imperfect mnemonics and dilatory notation—"how much a few hours take from certainty of knowledge, and distinctness of imagery; how the succession of objects will be broken, how separate parts will be confused, and how many particular features of objects and discriminations will be compressed and conglobated into one gross and general idea" (pp. 146-7); the passage of time—"there must have been some general reason, which the change of manners has left in obscurity" (p. 154); unreliability of "meteor"-like oral history as opposed to "written learning [which] is a fixed luminary" (p. 111)—"in an unwritten speech, nothing that is not very short is transmitted from one generation to another... and what is once forgotten is lost for ever" (p. 116); uncontrolled impatience to reach a conclusion—"Accuracy of narration is not very common, and there are few so rigidly philosophical, as not to

represent as perpetual, what is only frequent, or as constant, what is really casual" (p. 31); psychological conditioning and ulterior motivation—"antiquarian credulity, or patriotick vanity" (p. 152). In spite of all these stumbling blocks, Johnson managed to gain the ground for reasonable incredulity in the authenticity of the Ossian poems, as well as to ascertain the breadth of Loch Ness ("one mile to two miles" instead of twelve as is recorded by Boece), or "the incommodiousness of the Scotch windows" (p. 22). A doubt may occur that these are all petty discoveries and "diminutive observations" contemptibly trivial before the grand prospect of a rising edifice of human knowledge. An unwavering believer in the facts as the sole solid foundation for human knowledge, Johnson immediately dispels the doubt by reminding himself that

life consists not of a series of illustrious actions, or elegant enjoyments; the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessities, in the performance of daily duties, in the removal of small inconveniences, in the procurement of petty pleasures; and we are well or ill at ease, as the main stream of light glides on smoothly, or is ruffled by small obstacles and frequent interruption. The true state of every nation is the state of common life. (p. 22)

However, his system is to be undermined at its very foundation by the uncertainty of facts themselves. For instance, as to the report that Loch Ness never freezes, he successively examines the accuracy of the statement, the possibility of a causal connection with its banks or with the streams rushing into the loch, the impossibility of an effect of the loch's profundity, only to end with a hope for a future

discovery of the truth by a more diligent inquirer: "Natural philosophy is now one of the favourite studies of the Scottish nation, and Lough Ness well deserves to be diligently examined" (p. 31). Johnson's characteristically reflective activities are repeated, on a greater scale, about the problem of the "second sight" (pp. 107-110). Faced with the one of the most tenacious Scottish superstitions or popular beliefs, he is determined to "endeavour with particular attention to examine the question of the 'second sight,'" for, he is convinced, "it is desirable that the truth should be established, or the fallacy detected" (p. 107). The course of his search for the truth runs as follows: he first defines the phenomenon—"an impression made either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant or future are perceived, and seen as if they were present" (*ibid.*); next he confirms the absence of "any rule for determining the time between the sight and the event" and the involuntary character of the receptive faculty involved; makes an etymological inquiry into its Earse equivalent; proves the falsehood of the report that the "second sight" is limited to "phantoms of evil"; notices the general decline of the belief in it and the ministers' denial being categorical and premeditated because of their religious system; enumerates the reasons for incredulity in the merely local phenomenon whose "breach of the common order of things" is believed only by "a people very little enlightened" (p. 109); undermines those grounds for incredulity by pointing out the objectors' underlying and untested assumption of "more knowledge of the universal system than man has attained... depend[ing] upon principles too complicated and extensive for our comprehension" (*ibid.*); stresses the affinity of the special and highly intensified faculty of

the "second sight" with the general phenomenon of dreaming; admits that "where we are unable to decide by antecedent reason, we must be content to yield to the force of testimony"; recognizes the absence of motives for deliberate impositions; interviews the seers, who comprise both the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the educated; marks the difference between prescience of the meaning of an event and the seers' mere foresight without understanding of the events' significance. Indeed, "our desire for information was keen, and our inquiry frequent" (p.108). Yet, after all his painstaking inquiries and tentative answers, he still has to lament the shortage of time which thwarts his desire to "collect sufficient testimonies for the satisfaction of the publick, or of ourselves," he still has to suspect "the seeming analogy of things confusedly seen, and little understood" as well as "the indistinct cry of national persuasion...prejudice and tradition" (p.110). Things to observe, opinions to evaluate, questions to ask, information to verify, errors to detect, corrections to make—"many of my subsequent inquiries upon more interesting topicks ended in the like uncertainty" (p.51), and "of such questions there is no end" (p.61). Such an endless series of questions will never end in certainty; a journey of an inquisitive traveler is end-less. Finally Johnson admits that his quest for knowledge has failed, that the truth could not be established: "I never could advance my curiosity to conviction" (p.110). He concludes his long quest for the truth inconclusively: he "came away at last only willing to believe" (*ibid.*). His journey in quest for facts cannot achieve any finality of absolute knowledge; it merely ends, as Johnson himself is fully aware, in another form of credulity which had set the whole movement of

the philosopher's inquiry in motion in the first place.

Johnson's journey continues, nonetheless. He frankly, and almost indifferently, admits his failure to attain the factual veracity: "I brought away rude measures of the building [i. e. the two convents on Iona], such as I cannot much trust myself, inaccurately taken, and obscurely noted. Mr. Pennant's delineations, which are doubtless exact, have made my unskilled description less necessary" (p. 149). He warmly defends Pennant, a champion of factual data, against the charge of superficiality: "Pennant has greater variety of enquiry than almost any man, and has told us more than perhaps one in ten thousand could have done, in the time he took. . . . He tells what he observes, and as much as he chooses. . . . Pennant tells a fact. He need go no farther, except he pleases."<sup>31</sup> While liberally praising Pennant's factual accuracy, he is curiously indifferent to possible mistakes as to facts in his own travelogue: "I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than facts, the matter is not great."<sup>32</sup> In fact, his journey had a different purpose and goal, a different vision. His vision is expressed succinctly in terms of the proper objects of his observations when he asserts, echoing his *Idler*, No. 97, that "our business was with life and manners" (p. 32). Here Johnson is shown to subtly and doubly modify his initial vision as a philosopher-conqueror of nature: he abandons natural philosophy for moral philosophy, and founds his moral philosophy on the basis of this very act of abandonment. His empiricist concept of formation of human knowledge has been seriously threatened, as is seen above, by the uncertainty, if not total unknowability, of facts themselves. Methodical progression from the particular toward the general has proven impossible. At

this critical moment, instead of giving up the project altogether as impossible, he radically modifies his vision of human knowledge, by discarding the foundation of facts as merely factual, and aiming directly at the general as the notional. The rule of vertical ascent is first replaced with a horizontal choice between the two different categories of the natural and the moral; the linear vertical progression from the particular toward the general is transformed into the horizontal opposition between the factual and the notional, which then is retransformed back into a hierarchy of the notional over the factual. This is how Johnson overcomes his defeat as a natural philosopher, and declares himself as a moral philosopher. The way is now open for a moral philosopher with his firm belief that "whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings" (p.148), for whom it is natural, just, and quite easy, to further modify and expand the opposition of the factual vs the notional into a series of similar binary and eventually hierarchical oppositions of the animal vs human, the sensory-sensual vs mental-spiritual, the immediate vs remote, uniformity vs variety, the confined vs enlarged, necessity vs freedom, and finally, the barbarous vs civilized. It is in these newly reformulated terms that Johnson the moral philosopher sets out to observe the "life and manners" of Scotland.

Johnson's acclaim of Cromwell's conquest of Scotland and of the Union (1707) seems almost a crudely straightforward expression of what is called "the Whig-Progressive view of the Highlanders."<sup>33</sup> He justifies the conquest as an act of civilizing of the recalcitrant

barbarian people by the well-meaning enlightened one, and here a caesarean analogy is foreseeably at work: "What the Romans did to other nations, was in a great degree done by Cromwell to the Scots; he civilized by conquest, and introduced by useful violence the arts of peace" (p. 27).<sup>34</sup> Along the peace, the civilization through the conquest and the Union brought various improvements in trades, agriculture and general standard of living: the Scots used to be "content to live in total ignorance of the trades by which human wants are supplied, and to supply them by the grossest means. Till the Union made them acquainted with English manners, the culture of their lands was unskillful, and their domestick life unformed; their tables were coarse as the feasts of Eskimeaux, and their houses filthy as the cottages of Hottentots" (p.28); while after they were conquered and civilized, they are "softened by intercourse mutually profitable, and instructed by comparing their own notions with those of others" (pp.43-44). Johnson refuses to endorse any conventional pastoral myth: the peace and quiet of pastoral countries are in reality nothing but hopeless monotony and stagnation of the desolate backcountries with no progress, no market, no rotation of riches, no possibility of economic or social mobility, in a word, a sterile region "where [since] there is no commerce, no man can eat mutton but by killing a sheep" (p.101). They were bound to the immediate, both socially and intellectually, in space as well as in time: they lived in a region

where the climate is unkind, and the ground penurious, so that the most fruitful years will produce only enough to maintain themselves; where life unimproved, and unadorned, fades into something little more than naked existence, and every one is busy

for himself, without any arts by which the pleasure of others may be increased; if to the daily burden of distress any additional weight be added, nothing remains but to despair and die. (p. 138)

The "naked existence" bound people to daily labors to meet just barely enough the immediate necessities for mere physical subsistence, with no commercial stock surplus to send out or receive through commercial network of exchange, with no freedom of the mind to attempt at the superfluous and ornamental, with no capacity of the heart to feel sympathy or gratitude for others through emotional intercourses, with no room for the intellect to enlarge its view to see the mind predominate the hand and gradually form the intricately patterned fabric of a society. In short, the immediate knew no "commerce," economic as well as social, intellectual as well as emotional. Sociopolitically it has failed to integrate itself into a "general system" of a national government: "the sentence of a distant court could not be easily executed, nor perhaps very safely promulgated, among men ignorantly proud and habitually violent, unconnected with the general system, and accustomed to reverence only their own lords" (p. 46) : equally on the "face of the country," it has failed to have a long-term vision needed to foresee and prevent deforestation:

Plantation is naturally the employment of a mind unburdened with care, and vacant to futurity, saturated with present good, and at leisure to derive gratification from the prospect of posterity. He that pines with hunger, is in little care how others shall be fed. The poor man is seldom studious to make his grandson rich. It may be soon discovered, why in a place, which hardly supplies the cravings of necessity, there has been little attention to the

delights of fancy, and why distant convenience is unregarded, where the thoughts are turned with incessant solicitude upon every possibility of immediate advantages. (pp. 139-40)

The Scots had been confined in the prison of immediacy, and the British caesar came at last to break it open, connect and accommodate them into a system, circulate them through various forms of commerce. This was the essential aim, and achievement, of the British conquest and civilization of Scotland.

Apparently the general has reclaimed the particular, the remote has enlightened the immediate, reasserting "the dignity of thinking beings" in its full splendors. However, it is to be recalled here, Johnson had also exclaimed on the holy island of Iona that "to abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible" (p. 148). In fact, the emancipation of the particular by the general has been so often tantamount to the destruction of the local by the abstract. Thus the hierarchy of the general over the particular is *reversed* into the hierarchy, now threatened, of the local/immediate over the abstract/mediated. Johnson traces symptoms of various threats of such deracination of the local, successively in the related contemporary issues of commercialization, emigration and establishment of national jurisdiction. Johnson has hailed commercialization as a noble act of liberation from the "naked existence." However, money, the means for commercial circulation and material welfare of civilized nation, has failed to give a solid basis to civilization because of its "abstract" nature. Money is abstract in nature in the sense that "nominal and real value may differ" (p. 157). Its nature as a sign for exchange value has abstracted

—etherealized—the substance of use value of wealth: “Money and wealth have by the use of commercial language been so long confounded, that they are commonly supposed to be the same” (*ibid.*). Such confusion may only warn the wary traveler against the Scottish “illiberal desire of deceiving [him]” (*ibid.*), but, more seriously, the same “uncertain proportion between the value and the denomination of money... has brought much disorder into [the whole civilization of] Europe” (p. 142). The abstract nature of money corrupts the basis of the concrete; its “free,” “extensive” and particularly “modern” mobility through circulatory system corrodes the immediate and local, which have been bound to the specific form and locus of society as well as of livelihood:

Money confounds subordination, by overpowering the distinction of rank and birth, and weakens authority by supplying power of resistance, or expedients for escape. The feudal system is formed for a nation employed in agriculture, and has never long kept its hold where gold and silver have become common. (p. 113)

Just as it is “foolish” to try to abstract the mind from “all local emotion,” so it is an act of wisdom to resist the abstract: “The commodiousness of money is indeed great; but there are some advantages which money cannot buy, and which therefore no wise man will by the love of money be tempted to forego” (p. 86). The greatest among such advantages is, for Johnson, the Scottish feudalistic clan system as a whole. The abstract in the form of money threatens to create vacuities at the heart of the traditional sociopolitical sphere, bringing in nameless strangers and driving away the native inhabitants

to a nameless land. "When the power of birth and station ceases, no hope remains but from the prevalence of money" (p. 94). And for this "prevalence of money" the chiefs "degenerate from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords" (p. 89), who allow themselves to be dictated exclusively by the logic of money to eject their insolvent tenants and to let the land to "a stranger," who, by the same logic, treats each chief as merely "a trafficker in land" (p. 94). The ejected tenants, in their turn, who are now torn from the living social texture and deprived of "that security, that dignity, that happiness, whatever it be, which a prosperous community throws back upon individuals" (pp. 131-2), fall prey to the Siren's song of "American seducements" (p. 132); they now have nothing to protect them from the "epidemick desire of wandering, which spreads its contagion from valley to valley," until they desert their native soil altogether, creating "a lasting vacuity" in its social fabric, and leaving their country waste into "a desert" (p. 96). The British civilization may have conquered the Highland "system of insular subordination... [with] a muddy mixture of pride and ignorance" (p. 89). Yet the triumphant act of conquest ultimately defeats itself when all those who are supposed to be gratefully civilized and enlightened are in fact evacuating themselves from the ruins of time-honored but now lacerated communal soil in search of a wilderness beyond the sea.<sup>35</sup> Finally, Johnson detects the same threat of the abstract in the issue of the establishment of national jurisdiction in the Highlands. The integration of the Highlands into the national judicial system under one sovereignty is expected to connect the Highlanders' arbitrary local system of justice with "the general system" of law and government, to make the remote

mountainous inhabitants enjoy "the general benefits of equal law to the low and the high, in the deepest recesses and obscurest corners," to invite them to the membership of "the general community" of a civilized nation (pp. 46, 47). However, such "general system," which is purely contractual and therefore abstract, fails to penetrate into "the deepest recesses and obscurest corners"; it fails to be substantial and concrete enough to supplant lawfully the local and traditional "union of affections, and co-operation of endeavours, that constitute a clan" (p. 47). The Disarming Act of 1746, for example, "contravene[s] the first principles of the compact of authority: they exact obedience, and yield no protection" (p. 91). Just as the extensive circulation of money has brought in strangers and driven out the local inhabitants, so the abstract system of national power has destroyed the local system of distinctions and subordination, a well-stratified and orderly clan society consisted of the laird, tacksman, and tenants, in which the tacksman, for example, held "a middle station, by which the higher and the lower orders were connected" (p. 86). It is this principle of connection itself, the binding tissues of a living society, that is mercilessly severed by the abstract in the name of the "general system" and the "general community."

It would be hasty to conclude here that thus Johnson has completely revised his initial vision of the caesarean conquest of the barbarous northern regions. As has been pointed out above, there are two incompatible conceptual frameworks: the hierarchy of the general over the particular and that of the local over the abstract. However, the one never supplants the other completely. Rather, the two alternate with each other, each given relative predominance one

after the other in the course of Johnson's ongoing observations and reflections. How does Johnson end his journey then? He ends thus:

it is pleasing to see one of the most desperate of human calamities capable of so much help: whatever enlarges hope, will exalt courage; after having seen the deaf taught arithmetick, who would be afraid to cultivate the Hebrides? (p. 164)

The conqueror is on charge here, as ever. There is another ending, however, equally characteristic and persistent in theme and tone:

Such are the things which this journey has given me an opportunity of seeing, and such are the reflections which that sight has raised. Having passed my time almost wholly in cities, I may have been surprised by modes of life and appearances of nature, that are familiar to men of wider survey and more varied conversation. Novelty and ignorance must always be reciprocal, and I cannot but be conscious that my thoughts on national manners, are the thoughts of one who has seen but little. (*ibid.*)

Which ending is a true, authentic ending? Both are: Johnson's journey has double ending, and it means it "ends" open-ended. Neither one of the two endings cancels out the other, because each ending is in itself less closed than it appears.

Although the achievement of Braidwood's college of the deaf and dumb is great not only in arithmetic but in language skills, the achievement is presented as a result less of perfection actually achieved than of accidental freedom from universal human imperfection. For example, Johnson comments on orthography, as follows.

Orthography is vitiated among such as learn first to speak, and then to write, by imperfect notions of the relation between letters and vocal utterance; but to those students [at Braidwood's college] every character is of equal importance; for letters are to them not symbols of names, but of things; when they write they do not represent a sound, but delineate a form. (*ibid.*)

The fact that letters are set free, accidentally through the students' deafness in this case, from their conventional arbitrary yoke with sounds, just as figures in arithmetics, accounts for the achievement of Braidwood's pupils; it does not essentially "help" the universal "calamity" of the imperfection of human language.<sup>36</sup> As for the Earse language as a whole, it is viewed alternately as a barbarous dialect as opposed to the refined standard English, and as a precious mother-tongue as opposed to the alien, destructive *lingua franca*. It is a "rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood" (p. 114), and so it is a proof of a glorious linguistic conquest that its "peculiarities wear fast away; [the] dialect is likely to become in half a century provincial and rustick, even to themselves. The great, the learned, the ambitious, and the vain, all cultivate the English phrase, and the English pronunciation" (p. 162). However, as the English money has effaced the sociopolitical "distinctions of rank and birth," so does the English language mercilessly obliterate the linguistic peculiarities of the conquered nation: "Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remain only their language and their poverty. Their language is attacked on every side. Schools are erected, in which English only is taught, and there were lately some who

thought it reasonable to refuse them a version of the holy scriptures, that they might have no monument of their mother-tongue" (pp. 57-58). The conqueror destroyed the local system—a delicate organic system, linguistic as well as social, of distinctions and connections—, and yet constructed nothing to compensate for the devastation.

Is the second ending, then, after all, a more authentic ending for this compunctious English traveler? Here Johnson may only be following a conventional formula for a writer's modesty, and what he means may be that he has seen *much* enough of realities of the national manners to resist "curiosity [panting] for savage virtues and barbarous grandeur" (p. 58) or progressionists' fantasies about "pastoral countries" (p. 101). Unlike mediocre travelers, like Pennant, who have seen "little" except exotic natural history and cues for pastoral nostalgia, Johnson has seen much indeed amid the "wide extent of hopeless sterility." His mind, "[forced]... to find entertainment for itself" by the "uniformity of barrenness [which] can afford very little amusement to the traveler" (p. 40), has come with a wealth of notions and moral reflections on the local life and manners which finally lead him to justify the project to "cultivate the Hebrides." However, this optimistic penultimate ending, which is undermined by the precedent comment on the imperfection of human language, is equally undermined, instead of reinforced, by the final "conventional pose" of modesty. For the "conventional pose" is in effect a candid confession, given throughout the text, of Johnson's painful awareness of his own ignorance. He has seen much, yet it is not enough to allow him to reach an absolute certainty, a definitive conclusion, a single and unequivocal ending. He fails to prove the validity of his own

method, set up at the beginning of his journey, to achieve certainty and truth: "As we see more, we become possessed of more certainties." He sees more through observations and reflections, and yet there are always still more to see; the empiricist method of progressing from the wider range of particulars upward to the higher general truths has failed; such journey cannot *end* in any immovable final conclusion. Johnson's moral inquiries after the notions end inconclusively, just as his inquiries after the facts do, and for the same reason: a wide variety of questions asked by the active inquisitive mind in quest for truth—"of such questions there is no end" (p. 54). The journey after truth is endless; it keeps moving on endlessly in the human region of uncertainty between absolute ignorance and absolute knowledge.

#### IV

Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* is a double travelogue. It is a record of things seen and reflected upon on a journey through an external world, and it is also a record of the mind seeing and reflecting on a journey through an internal world. Inquiries after the fact is internalized into inquiries after the notions; it is "moralized" and "psychologized" in so far as the focus of the inquiries is more and more shifted from natural objects—valleys and mountains, climate and produce—to manners and life, a holistic structure of a community bound together through social institutions and traditions as well as through affections and fears, attachment and desperation. It is further moralized and psychologized as the focus is shifted again from the things seen to the mind seeing; the journey grows more and more reflective, until it becomes self-reflective, discussing the observer's

own ability to know, his own confidence and anxiety about the state of knowledge he is able or unable to attain. This double journey—the natural philosopher's journey after the facts and the moral philosopher's after the notions—has the *same* record of the failure to achieve each goal. It is not a record of that kind of journey which is from the very start defined retrospectively in terms of the goal finally achieved, and whose straight itinerary, therefore, progresses serenely always secured in the certainty of its immovable *telos*. Rather, it is a record of a journey without an end, which is set in motion by the sense of duty to achieve an end—certainty and truth of the things seen or of the mind seeing—and cannot stop because of the anxiety about the impossibility of that achievement. “To be ignorant is painful; but it is dangerous to quiet our uneasiness by the delusive opiate of hasty persuasion” (p. 119). Denied both the immobility of an origin in nescience and the immobility of an end in omniscience, the mind finds itself perpetually in motion through the middle region of half knowledge and half truth. The travelogue records such endless motion itself of the mind. It does not present any comforting vision of an origin nor of an end; it presents the mind ever moving on its way from an imaginary origin toward an unattainable end; it thereby celebrates the only “dignity of thinking beings” that is allotted to humanity, in the endless *process* of its journey. Thus the journey is historicized into a process; the travelogue becomes a moral history. It proposes to give us a modest history of the human mind, as Locke did, and to prove, as James Howell did, “the best of all earthly things to be but frail and transitory... and we but wayfaring men, but Pilgrimes, and a company of rambling Passengers.”

And Johnson's *Journey* not only describes such moral history of the human mind, but *embodies* it. Johnson as an author does not allow himself to transcend in his writing the universal condition of the human mind in its endless journey through the world. That is precisely the reason why the *Journey* has set in motion an endless critical controversy over its hypothetical single and ultimate "true" meaning. Michel Butor once commented on "the intense communication" between his own traveling and writing, as follows:

I travel to write, not only in order to find subject matters and materials, like those who go to Peru or China with a view to reporting at a conference or in newspaper articles. To travel, for me, at least to travel in a certain manner, is to write (because first of all, it is to read), and to write is to travel... The grammar of the book shall try to restore that of the itinerary.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, Johnson tries to restore "the grammar" of his journey in the "grammar" of his *Journey*. His journey has failed to attain its goal in absolute certainty, and for that reason, his writing refuses to achieve its goal in a single, unequivocal ending. As a discourser, that is, a runner to and fro, Johnson cannot present his book as a straightforward narrative progressing toward a definitive closure which draws the text teleologically to its final certitude. Instead, his narrative "progresses," if ever it does, by an inner momentum of uncertainty and self-mistrust. The text continually undermines itself passage after passage for its persistent doubts, tentative qualifications, and fruitless efforts to ascertain, about each fact and notion—from the depth of Loch Ness through the veracity of the second sight to the cause

and consequences of emigration—, creating innumerable inconsistencies among the statements and setting an unstoppable controversy in motion. This is the “grammar” of his discourse; it faithfully restores the “grammar” of his itinerary.

Where does the journey lead to, after all? It does not “lead” to anywhere, certainly not to the anesthesia of agnosticism nor to the opiate of complacent convictions. Cut from the prospect of a beginning or an end, the itinerary of the human mind finally begins to circulate around itself, delineating the circular contours of an eternal middle region without the possibility of transcendence or escape. This region is none other than the realm of Human Nature. The circular journey through this realm does not bring in a new light from abroad for the public benefit in the form of an ever-advancing civilized nation, nor does it bring out a new inner light from the private mythology of original sensibility. It neither “progresses” outward to a new society, nor “regresses” inward to a unique individuality. It does not aim either at the public instruction on useful objects or at the private indulgence in subjective pleasure.<sup>38</sup> Or it does both, after all, in the form of a public instruction on private pleasure—a universal moral teaching about the human state never completely free from the mixture of pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, or, to put it simply, about the eternal human imperfection. As long as the idea of human imperfection is expressed through the image of a journey—human motion in time being already and for ever on the way of an unstoppable quest for an unattainable goal—, the moral teaching is about the eternal state of human history. Such moral vision of human history informs the principle of both the itinerary of

Johnson's actual journey through the northern regions and the "plot" of his written record of that journey. The same human history runs through the time of the traveler's motion in actual space, and the time of the author's (and the reader's) motion in the space of discourse. The human history transcends the distinction between the physical and the verbal. Johnson's *Journey* restores, or repeats, his journey, not only as its faithful record, but essentially because it traces the same human motion in time. It would be no wonder then that the *Journey* repeats yet another history and travelogue of the same endless journey Johnson undertook sixteen years earlier—*The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (1759)—or even the one Laurence Sterne undertook seven years earlier—*A Sentimental Journey* (1768).

#### NOTES

- 1 William Hazlitt, "On Going a Journey," *Selected Writings*, ed. Ronald Blythe (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1985), pp. 141-2.
- 2 Joseph Hall, *Quo Vadis? : A Just Censure of Travell* ("The English Experience," No. 740; Norwood, N. J. : Walter J. Johnson, 1975), p. 33.
- 3 Francis Bacon, "Of Travel," *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (1625) in *Francis Bacon : a Selection of His Works*, ed. Sidney Warhaft (Indianapolis: the Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 92. Cf. Notice that in *The New Atlantis* the "Merchants of Light" are characterized as jealous patriotic benefactors of their native land: "For the several employments and offices of our fellows, we have twelve that sail into foreign countries, under the names of other nations (for our own we conceal), who bring us the books and abstracts and patterns of experiments of all other parts. These we call Merchants of Light" (*ibid.*, p. 455).
- 4 Richard Hurd, "Dialogues VII and VIII on the Use of Foreign Travel Between Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Locke," Vol. IV of *The Works of Richard Hurd, D.D., Lord Bishop of Worcester* (1811; New York: AMS Press, 1967), p. 224.

5 William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape* (1792; 2nd ed.; London: R. Blamire, 1794), p. 3.

6 That the truth thus regained by the picturesque and romantic school after a long period of empirical scepticism is *merely* a subjective truth is amply shown by the *growing difficulty* they had in actually talking about "the world and public opinion." Their "true world" is only their own, their "mystery" incommunicable and ultimately irrelevant to any other. The "truth" has been privatized; the "world" has been aestheticized. Anticipating our discussion of Johnson's *Journey*, we may observe here, for instance, that the Highland Gilpin saw in 1776 is strangely etherealized, deprived of any substantiality except that of his own aesthetic, "picturesque" sensibility, as is pointed out by Patrick Crutwell:

the less genuinely different Highland society became, the more the external differences which remained were found glamorous and picturesque—until the Highlanders, conceived almost as a single abstraction rather than as a number of real people, became virtually an element in the total picturesqueness of their native land. This, in fact, is how they are quite naively presented by the great prophet of the picturesque, William Gilpin himself. In *his* Highland journey, when he talks of "the picturesque appendages of this wild country," he begins with the livestock ("these *groups of cattle* were picturesque wherever we found them. . . . The sheep, diminutive and ordinary; but in their tattered rough attire, exceedingly picturesque"), and from them slides without a break to their owners:

Nor are the cattle of this wild country more picturesque, than its human inhabitants. ("These Are Not Whigs": [Eighteenth-Century Attitudes to the Scottish Highlanders]," *Essays in Criticism*, XV [1965], 408).

Similarly, argues Crutwell, for Elizabeth Montagu, one of the early enthusiastic "picturesque travelers," the Highland lies comfortably and quite innocuously within the fictional world of Ossian and books on the Rebellion read by cosy fireside in the metropolis:

In the middle of the century, one finds Elizabeth Montagu. . . deeply enthusiastic over Ossian, and enthusiastic for "picturesque" reasons:

. . . I honour him [James Macpherson] for carrying the Muses into the country and letting them step majestic over hills, mountains and rivers

instead of tamely walking in the Park of Piccadilly. . . .

—and largely because of Ossian, it seems, she is favourably disposed to the land he hailed from:

I have lately read in a book concerning the Rebellion, that barbarous part of our island may in good weather be seen with pleasure!" (*ibid.*, 409).

- 7 Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, ed. Ian Campbell Ross ("The World's Classics"; Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1983), p. 396. Cf. My "The Sense of a Middle: a Study of *Tristram Shandy*," *Doshisha Studies in English*, No. 36 (1984), 1-56.
- 8 James Howell, *Instructions for Forreine Travell* (1642; "English Reprints," Vol. IV; New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 11, 12-13.
- 9 Voltaire, *Letters on England*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), pp. 63-64.
- 10 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser (New York: Dover, 1950), I, 27.
- 11 *Tristram Shandy*, p. 70.
- 12 Cf. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), particularly chap. ix, "The Temporalizing of the Chain of Being."
- 13 Cf. Locke, *An Essay*, II, 360-61: "Therefore, as God has set some things in broad daylight; as he has given us some certain knowledge, though limited to a few things in comparison, probably as a taste of what [other superior] intellectual creatures are capable of to excite in us a desire and endeavour after a better state: so, in the greatest part of our concernments, he has afforded us only the twilight, as I may so say, of probability; suitable, I presume, to that state of mediocrity and probationership he has been pleased to place us in here; wherein, to check our over-confidence and presumption, we might, by every day's experience, be made sensible of our short-sightedness and liableness to error; the sense whereof might be a constant admonition to us, to spend the days of this our pilgrimage with industry and care, in the search of greater perfection. It being highly rational to think, even were revelation silent in the case, that, as men employ those talents God has given them here, they shall accordingly receive their rewards at the close of the day, when their sun shall set and night shall put an end to their labours."

- 14 Locke, *An Essay*, I, pp. 528, 30.
- 15 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Brigge, revised by P. H. Hidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), p. 602.
- 16 Rousseau, *Confessions* (1782), Book VII; Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1799), Letter IX. Cf. George B. Parks, "The Turn to the Romantic in the Travel Literature of the Eighteenth Century," *Modern Language Quarterly*, XXV (1964), 22-23, and Mitzi Myers, "Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written...in Sweden*: Toward Romantic Autobiography," *Studies in the Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Vol. VIII. ed. Roseann Runte (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 165-185.
- 17 On the general topic of travel and travel literature in the eighteenth century, I found the following useful: Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, Kentucky: U.P. of Kentucky, 1983) and *Travelers and Travel Liars 1660-1800* (New York: Dover, 1962); William Edward Mead, *The Grand Tours in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1914); Martha Pile Conant, *The Oriental Tales in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Octagon, 1966); Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1973); Thomas M. Curley, *Samuel Johnson and the Age of Travel* (Athens, Georgia: U. of Georgia P., 1976).
- 18 *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. Mary Lacelles, Vol. IX of *The Yale Edition of The Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1971), p. 3. All subsequent references to *The Journey* are from this edition. On the origin of Johnson's wish to visit the Highlands, Boswell notes: "he told me, in summer, 1763, that his father put Martin's Account [i. e. Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1703)] into his hands when he was very young, and that he was much pleased with it." (*The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, L. L. D.* [3rd ed., 1780], ed. R. W. Chapman [Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1924], p. 137).
- 19 *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, ed. Joel J. Gold, Vol. XV of *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (1985), p. 3.
- 20 For the editorial liberties Johnson took in "epitomizing" rather than translating

- the original, see Joel J. Gold, "Introduction" to *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, and also his "Johnson's Translation of Lobo," *PMLA*, 80 (1965), 51-61.
- 21 *The Idler and the Adventurer*, eds. W. J. Bate et al., Vol. II of *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (1963), pp. 298-300.
- 22 "The Preface to *The Preceptor*," Vol. V of *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, LL. D. (Oxford, 1825; New York: AMS Press, 1970), pp. 231-246.
- 23 "Preface to Rolt's *Dictionary*," *ibid.*, pp. 247-254.
- 24 "Introduction to *The World Displayed*," *ibid.*, pp. 210-230
- 25 *Johnson: the Critical Heritage*, ed. James Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 234-236.
- 26 *ibid.*, pp. 237-240.
- 27 *ibid.*, pp. 240-241.
- 28 *ibid.*, pp. 242-249.
- 29 The critical axes used in the contemporary controversy—the notional vs factual, and the subjective vs objective—persist, *mutatis mutandis*, in the modern controversy over the *Journey* which has been carried on less emotionally and more scrupulously among much more participants over a wider scope of issues. Except for the notable example of Patrick O'Flaherty who exactly repeats McNiol's argument, branding Johnson as an extremely biased reactionary Tory blinded with his preconceived questions and answers ("Johnson in the Hebrides: Philosopher Becalmed," *Studies in Burke and His Time*. XIII [1971], 1986-2001), most of the critics agree that Johnson's *Journey* is more philosophic than factual. Thomas Jemielly, quoting Johnson's letter saying he had dealt "more in notions than facts" in his *Journey*, argues that he is an analytical and reflective traveler attempting at a generalized presentation of an entire society, unlike the chronological-anecdotal Boswell in his travelogue of the same joint travel ("'More in Notions than Facts': Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*," *Essays in Criticism*, X [1960], 319-329). Mary Lascelles, arguing for the same point in a similar way, quotes approvingly the naturalist Gilbert White's comment on the *Journey*: "It is quite a sentimental Journey divested of all natural history and antiquaries; but full of good sense, and new and peculiar reflections" ("Notions and Facts: Johnson and Boswell on Their Travel," *Johnson, Boswell and Their Circle: Essays Presented to Lawrence Fitzroy Powell* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1965], pp. 215-229). The predominance of generalized

reflections over particular facts in the *Journey* is discussed within a larger framework of philosophical empiricism—Baconian philosophy and Lockean psychology—by Richard B. Schwartz, who stresses the mind's dynamic learning process of observing particular facts and distilling them in order to attain universal principles ("Johnson's *Journey*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, LXIX [1970], 292-303), whereas Francis R. Hart, in a similar vein of argument, points out the gradual shift of focus within the Enlightenment from the object of perception toward the nature of perception, quoting as one of the evidences Goldsmith's call in his *Citizen of the World* for "a journal of the operations of your mind upon whatever occurs, rather than a detail of your travels" ("Johnson a Philosophic Traveler: the Perfecting of an Idea," *English Literary History*, XXXVI [1969], 679-695). For others, the predominance of generalized reflections is a result not of any philosophical vision, but of an artistic manoeuvring. Arthur Sherbo argues that Johnson is simply writing the expected within a recognizable and popular genre of travel book whose demand for the instructive is met, characteristically more fully than the demand for the pleasing, by his generalized reflections ("Johnson's Intent in *The Journey to the Western Islands*," *Essays in Criticism*, XVI [1966], 382-397). For Thomas R. Preston, a theme of cultural development in the *Journey* binding together the elements of sociological analyses of the Highlands is generically conceived and artistically embodied through the Augustan parallelism found between the feudal Highlands and the heroic Greece ("Homeric Allusions in *A Journey to the Western Islands*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, V [1972], 545-558). Johnson's choice to be philosophic is a more pragmatic one according to Ralph E. Jenkins, who argues that his consciousness of his inevitable competition for public attention with Thomas Pennant's *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* published at the time Johnson was writing his *Journey* left him no choice but to be philosophic in order not to repeat the factual-naturalist Pennant ("'And I Travelled After Him': Johnson and Pennant in Scotland," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XIV [1972], 445-462). The philosophic in the *Journey* is interpreted by Donald T. Siebert, Jr. as a satire calculated to expand and then deflate the expectations, and aimed at travel writer's and reader's credulity, voluntary self-delusion, and hasty generalization—enthusiastic primitivism or narrow-minded chauvinism, including Johnson's own ("Johnson as

Satirical Traveler: *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, XIX [1974], 137-147). The content itself, as well as the form of Johnson's philosophic vision has been diversely interpreted. Jeffrey Hart interprets it as a jeremiad over the tragic destruction of intricate communal structure of Scottish agricultural, feudalistic and patriarchal society by the hand of modern British commercial bourgeois culture ("Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands: History as Art*," *Essays in Criticism*, X [1960], 44-59), and Bernard H. Bronson sees it likewise as a work of Johnson's imaginative sympathies, tintured with his personal conscience, for the Highlanders' loss of their traditional pastoral mode of existence ("Johnson, Traveling Companion, in Fancy and Fact," *Johnson and His Age*, ed. James Engell [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1984], 163-187). D. J. Greene, criticizing Jeffrey Hart's Johnson as a fundamentally misconceived, thoroughly sentimentalized Johnson, in fact the familiar Boswell-Macaulay Johnson, reminds that the *Journey* is a very serious and admirable sociological study by a man with no quarrel with "increasing opulence" ("Johnsonian Critics," *Essays in Criticism*, X [1960], 476-480). Greene's view is supported by R. K. Kaul, who underlines Johnson's wholehearted acceptance of the contemporary English civilization, a product of freedom through wealth from immediate economic necessities, and its well-stratified social organization much better than narrowly confined, constrictive feudalistic Scotland ("*A Journey to the Western Islands Reconsidered*," *Essays in Criticism*, XIII [1963], 341-350). Between the nostalgic Johnson and the progressionist Johnson, T. K. Meier finds an ambivalent Johnson in the face of the forces of change at work in the Highlands who is unable to choose the good and bad features of both the disappearing old system of life and the emerging new system ("Pattern in Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, V [1968], 185-193). Patrick Crutwell similarly finds Johnson utterly divided between a Tory vision of Scotland's tragic loss and a Whig vision of its desirable progress, and totally uncertain whether he should denounce the Scottish savagery or English commercialism, or should praise Scottish feudalism or English luxury ("These Are Not Whigs': [Eighteenth-Century Attitudes to the Scottish Highlanders]," *op. cit.*, 394-413). Finally, it is argued that the ambivalence in the content of the philosophic in the *Journey* is directly reflected in its artistic structure, the "plot" in particular, which embodies,

according to Edward Tomarken, a continuous process of dialectical movement, ultimately unresolved, of the traveler's evolving self-education ("Travels into the Unknown: *Rasselas* and *A Journey to the Western Islands*," *The Unknown Samuel Johnson*, ed. John J. Burke, Jr. and Donald Kay [Madison, Wisconsin: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1983], pp. 150-167). John B. Radner also finds Johnson shifting, troubled and ultimately inconclusive in his ongoing, never formally resolved discourse on, say, the Scottish emigration or the Disarming Act, and the *Journey* as a whole as representing a dynamic process of gradual deepening of Johnson's understanding through self-modification and self-rebuttal ("The Significance of Johnson's Changing Views of the Hebrides," *ibid.*, pp. 131-149). I have found particularly illuminating the arguments by Edward Tomarken and John B. Radner in pointing out the vital relationship of the philosophic content and the artistic form in the *Journey*, suggesting at the same time a possible direction to take for an answer for the inevitable problem of inclosure not only in the *Journey* but also in *Rasselas*.

30 Cf. Tristram Shandy on his journey "over so barren a track" has also turned himself into a traveler through human nature. "In short, by seizing every handle of what size or shape soever, which chance held out to me in this journey—I turned my *plain* into a *city*—I was always in company, and with great variety too . . . I am confident we could have passed through Pall-Mall or St. James's-Street for a month together, with fewer adventures—and seen less of human nature" (*Tristram Shandy*, p. 430).

31 Boswell, *Tour*, p. 307.

32 *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), Letter No. 357.

33 Patrick Crutwell, *op cit.*, p. 397.

34 Daniel Defoe's version of the similar caesarean analogy is found in his *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-26): "But our English Caesars have outgone the Romans. . . Oliver Cromwell, indeed, rode through; he penetrated to the remotest part of the island, and that he might rule them with a rod of iron in the very letter of it, he built citadels and forts in all the angles and extremes, where he found it needful to place his stationary legions, just as the Romans did . . . but then this is not as a foreigner and conqueror, but as a sovereign, a lawful governor and father of the country, to

deliver from, not entangle her in the chains of tyranny and usurpation" (*A Tour*, abridged and ed. Pat Rogers [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971], pp. 650-651). If Cromwell's conquest effected negatively a Scottish emancipation from the feudalistic "tyranny and usurpation," the Union of 1707 positively improved the Scottish economy and hence greatly advanced its national prosperity. Defoe never wearies to trace the same constant contrast between the states of Scotland before and after the Union, which the obscurantist receivers of the boon "almost universally exclaimed against though sometimes against all manner of just reasoning" (p. 652). What the Union brought to Scotland was commerce, which is "the life of nations, of cities, towns, harbours, and of the whole prosperity of a country" (p. 601). In his staunchly "Whig-Progressive view," the sole genuine goal of historical development of Scotland is England, which had taken a similar course after the Romans: "I hope it is no reflection [i. e. censure] upon Scotland to say they are where we were, I mean as to the improvement of their country and commerce; and they may be where we are" (p. 560). It is important to notice that Defoe was as self-conscious of his method of observation on his tour as Johnson: "as I shall not make a paradise of Scotland, so I assure you I shall not make a wilderness of it. I shall endeavour to show what it really is, what it might be, and what, perhaps, it would much sooner have been, if some people's engagements were made good to them, which were lustily promised a little before the late Union" (p. 561). Just as Johnson's quest for the factual is superceded, after its failure, by his quest for the notional, so Defoe's objective fact-finding mission was over-ridden by his pre-established chauvinistic vision of the Scottish improvement after the Union, with the result that his descriptions were often nothing more than a reconfirmation of his premeditated conclusions. In fact, Defoe did not even try to visit the Hebrides: "I am to own that we did not go over to those islands personally, neither was it likely any person whose business was mere curiosity and diversion, should either be at the expense, or run the risk of such a hazardous passage where there was so little worth observation to be found" (p. 669). If it is true, after all, that objective "facts" do not exist independently of subjective "interpretations" of them, then the difference in what Defoe and Johnson finally "saw" in Scotland was of the utmost importance. Johnson could have said of Defoe in his *Tour* what he had

said of Pennant in his *Tour*: "The dog is a whig" (Boswell, *Tour*, p. 261). Their "observations" were both meticulously factual and staunchly biased. Pennant's notion of "facts" to be seen—Scottish commercial and materialistic progress on one hand, and exotic cultural inheritance of ruins and pictures as well as picturesque beauty of nature uncontaminated by industry on the other—represent the two complementary aspects of the same vision of Scotland—of the same "Whig-Progressive view of the Highlanders."

- 35 Oliver Goldsmith deplors the similar situation in "The Deserted Village" (1770): "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, /Where wealth accumulates, and men decay: /...[where] trade's unfeeling train /Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain." Expectedly, the economic theme of the introduction of alien wealth to assist the native poverty is transformed into a moral theme of the contamination and devastation of the rural virtues of simplicity by the urbane vice of art and luxury: "O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree, /How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee! /.../Even now the devastation is begun, /And half the business of destruction done; /Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand, /I see the rural Virtues leave the land" Goldsmith's version of "the American seducements" is equally ominous: never appreciated as the picturesque, the "distant climes" are only a "dreary scene" with only bats and scorpions and tigers in complete contrast with the "native walks" with full-embodied familial/communal bonds among "the good old sire," "lovely daughters," "thoughtless babes" and "fond husband." "Unfeeling trade" and "silent bats" are symbols of the same inhumane abstraction of humanity out of its living society, the same destruction of societal bonds by the nameless and faceless. Five years earlier in "The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society" (1765), Goldsmith had posed a problem of what might be called "Choice of Society" after Johnson's "Choice of Life." He reviews various modes of society in Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland, and Britain. The British society, for example, is said to suffer from its excessive "independence," which refuses to acknowledge mutual dependence and bond: "The independence Britons prize too high, /Keeps man from man. and breaks the social tie; /The self-dependent lordlings stand alone, /All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown." Even worse, in the absence of abiding "Nature's ties," "Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law" reign and level down a vertical structure of social distinctions and subordination, until finally

"One sink of level avarice shall lie, /And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die." Goldsmith's review apparently concludes in almost nihilistic relativism and defeatism: "Vain, very vain, my weary search to find/That bliss which only centres in the mind." However, he never resorts to an inner spiritual Utopia like the Romantics; rather, as he explicitly states in the Dedication, his relativism leads him to assert constructively the inalienable value of whatever form of society it may be: "I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that each state has a particular principle of happiness." Thus, his "Choice of Society" ends with the impossibility to choose any one form of society over the others, but the impossibility is tantamount to the unconditional celebration of all possible human societies as long as they deserve the designation. (The references are to *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Peter Cunningham [London: John Murray, 1854], vols. I & II.)

36 Cf. My "The Fate of a Lexicographer: System and History in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*," *Doshisha Studies in English*, No. 41 (1986).

37 Michel Butor, "Le voyage et l'écriture," *Repertoire IV* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974), pp.9-10, 28. My translation.

38 For the gradual shift of the aim of travel literature through the eighteenth century from the instruction to the pleasure, from the objective to the subjective, see Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*. Batten discusses the course of development of travel literature from the objective (instructive) to the subjective (pleasurable) in terms of the consumption and exhaustion of formal conventions as well as the continual demand for novelty, and he finds the middle stage of the development in the latter half of the century in "pleasurable instruction" which is to be distinguished from the pure pleasure in the later, romantic travel literature, particularly the picturesque travel. I here have been proposing another middle stage, namely, what could be called the instruction of pleasure and pain, or a moral teaching on "the vanity of human wishes."