Chapter 3

Byron and the Network of Power: India and Russia

A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power',[...] defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies.[1]

Michel Foucault

3. 1. Introduction

The terms colonialism, Orient, Other, British Raj, on the one hand, and Bolshevism, collectivism, the Five-Year-Plan, Red Terror, on the other, introduced into the discourse of both Western and Eastern countries, are connected to the history of India and Russia respectively; this plays a prominent role in colonized India and Bolshevised Russia. Such terms show how power functions and by dint of a discourse, in Scott Wilson's words, through "both private spaces and public institutional spaces, [power] comprehends and deploys bodies as subjects of knowledge, knowledge that precisely presupposes these subjects as beings with bodies that are not only gendered and 'sexed' but also, at certain limits, produced by power as sick, infirm, feeble-minded, deviant, criminal, neurotic and perverted."[2] Indeed, it is hard to imagine how these terms might be discussed without a reference to power relations. The term colonialism is associated with the European invasions of other countries from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt up to British colonialism in India, in search of resources and markets, achieved under the auspices of their superiority in the scientific, technological and military spheres, which results in denigrating the colonized countries as 'barbaric and underhumanised' that must be ordered. The term Bolshevism is associated with the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, which, led by Lenin, seized control of the government in Russia (October 1917) and became the dominant political power.

One can trace the processes of transforming both the Indians and the Russians through the dominant ideologies, "by which [the Indian and Russian] subjects [were] formed, reformed and enabled to perform as conscious agents in an apparently meaningful world,"[3] as presented in Byron's travel books, *An Essay on India* (1931) and *First Russia, then Tibet* (1933). The former, in Byron's words, "a complement, or even as an antidote, to the voluminous body of expert and controversial testimony already existing," (*EI*: 1) which, as James Knox states, "appeared shorn of all travel narrative,"[4] illustrates India under the British colonial power and the Indians who are subjected to the colonial social network and cultural codes. Byron's argument at the beginning of the book shows his objective:

> My sojourn in India [about eight months] was a period of acute intellectual strain. The strain began as I stepped from an aeroplane at Karachi on August 4th, 1929; and it by no means ended when I boarded a P. & O. at Bombay on April 4th, 1930. I went to India, primarily in order to reach Tibet, secondarily because Lord Beaverbrook gave me a ticket. (*EI*: 4)

James Knox argues that Byron's "aim in [*An Essay on India*] was to cure the English of their sense of racial superiority."[5] This might be considered as a reason for Byron to title his book as such. Paul Fussell believes that what Byron "witnessed in India while travelling sixteen thousand miles by rail was an appalling spectacle of British snobbery, race prejudice, complacency, and imperiousness."[6] Moreover, Byron demonstrates evaluative and hierarchical dichotomies in the Western thought, which view one term as positive, 'superior', 'right', 'beneficial', 'progressive', and another as 'negative', 'inferior', 'wrong', 'retrogressive', and 'evil.' He shows how British colonialism transformed the Indian identity and indicates "the change that has come over India during the last half-century" (*EI*: 29). He remarks that the "Indian entity, in so far as it may exist, has been created by the English" (*EI*: 29).

After the mid-1920s, the Soviet Union opened its doors to foreign travellers; this provided an opportunity for the intellectuals who were interested in finding a political '*utopia*.'[7] *First Russia, then Tibet*, as a response to this conspicuous moment, is the account of Byron's travel with Christopher Sykes to the Soviet Union during six weeks in January-February, 1931-1932. During their journey, they visit Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. In the first half of the book, Byron comments on Russia under the Bolshevik dictatorship. In Russia, he encounters a network of surveillance, a panopticon system and a body of knowledge that

stemmed from the Bolshevists' collectivism and Iron Heel, which transformed the whole country into a large transparent architecture of authority administered and controlled by the proletariat dictatorship. Byron points out how Bolsheviks bolshevized Russia and imposed their ideology upon the people's life, art, knowledge, science and so on. Besides Byron's insight in analysing the Russian social strata that gives his book a prominent authority, one can see his blindness. There are various voices and ethnic cultures in Russia that are absent in Byron's book; for instance, there are "some 185 different racial groups: Ukrainians, Greater Russians, Uzbeks, Tartars, Khazaks, Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Lithuanians, Moldavians, Turkomans, Kirghiz, and many minority groups"[8] about which it remains silent. Byron's book remains silent also about the "Gulag narratives"[9] that reflect the voices of the political prisoners in the Soviet Union. However, he analyses critically the "machine cult emerging from the first Five Year Plan."[10] Byron's gaze is different from those travellers who aimed to chart the impact of the new ideology on the social and economic strata of the Soviet Union, and considered the country as the greatest symbol of political '*utopia*,' such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1937), who were thoroughly disillusioned with Labour prospects in Britain in 1932, and went to the Soviet Union in order to find their own utopia. They, in George Bernard Shaw's words, "unhesitatingly gave the Soviet system their support, and announced it definitely as a New Civilization."[11]

My objective is to illustrate Byron's analysis of certain underlying elements in these societies and the mechanism of power relationship as well as the aftermath of such a prevailing power. According to Edward Said, in order to legitimize and crystallize the imperial hegemony "each age and society re-creates its 'Others.'"[12] Byron highlights the consequences and outcomes of the dominance of British colonial power, solidified in a network of institutions and practices in the Indians' life, such as the assumption of 'racial superiority,' the suppressed identity, the destruction, transformation and reshaping of the social norms, and the problems that afflict the Indians from which the country hardly has recovered.

For Byron, the culture of each country is an open text. Christopher Sykes notes that Byron is able "to see foreign or unsympathetic states of mind from within"[13]; i.e., he reads the cultures of the travellees as he encounters them like a Foucauldian critic *avant la lettre*. As in his other books, Byron's microscopic, ethnographic, interpretive, "thick description," in

Geertz's term, enables him to face a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render."[14] In both countries, Byron's gaze is focused on the process of transforming these nations. Like a Foucauldian critic, Byron analyses these cultures, examines them as "a collection of archives,"[15] and shows the prevailing network of knowledge and discourse, which had been engraved and engrafted onto the mentality of these peoples. The prevailing ideology in a country begins to transform the people entirely; thereupon a new and different identity is born. Byron's argument, in *An Essay on India*, is focused on, in Homi K. Bhabha's term, the "Anglicized"[16] identity in India, a colonized society under British administration, whereas in the first half of *First Russia, then Tibet*, he analyses a Bolshevised identity and a country under a "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Unlike the narratives of travel and exploration written by the English voyagers and merchant adventurers,[17] whose objectives range from missionary, the records of the history of India, its geographical structure, population, national symbols, languages, to art, architecture, monuments, popular religions, festivals, food and drinks and so many other aspects, Byron in *An Essay on India* focuses his gaze on the social and cultural formation under the British colonial power. India contains a cultural diversity, "politically, in religion, in language, and in other ways."[18] Byron's blindness results in disregarding some of the above aspects. Moreover, one can refer to Indira Ghose who, in *Women Travellers in Colonial India: the Power of the Female Gaze* (1998), focuses her argument on the female gazes on India, which are different from Byron's gaze. Ghose's comment on the blindness of some women travellers in India at the very beginning of the book is remarkable:

> A woman traveller in India in the nineteenth century once asked of another lady—what she had seen of the country and its inhabitants since she had been in India. 'Oh, nothing!' the lady answered, 'Thank goodness, I know nothing at all about them, nor do I wish to: really I think the less one sees and knows of them the better!'[19]

At least two points are implied in the above quotation: first, the blindness of the woman who answered "Oh, nothing!" regarding the Indian social and cultural life; i.e., this woman is one of those colonial wives who see nothing, and during her travel to the exotic lands nothing is added to her perception; therefore, her horizon of understanding is not

changed. Second, the answer has a sense of denigrating the Indians, which reflects a colonial discourse about India. However, Ghose argues "not all women travellers to India were like this [woman]—on the contrary,"[20] there are women travellers who encounter the Indian social and cultural life quite differently. Ghose focuses her argument on the accounts of those women travellers who gaze at India through a different lens, and their gaze and writings are "certainly different from that of men."[21] More precisely, the "texts by women travellers focus on different aspects as compared to texts by male travellers. [Ghose in this book deals with those] women travellers [who] were particularly interested in [...] producing eyewitness accounts of the harem or zenana, a no-entry zone for male travellers."[22] Byron's *An Essay on India* remains silent regarding the perception and gaze of the women travellers who visit India.[23] There are many works dealing with British colonial power in India, ranging from fiction to critical analysis.

3. 2. Byron and the Contact between India and the West

At the very beginning of the book, Byron states the objective of his journey to India:

> Its purpose is to generalize and define in the light of history, where this testimony deals in complex and purely contemporary detail. If its material is largely personal, such is the material I have. The reader must himself assess the value of my experiences, and of the deductions I draw from them.
>
> It is a fact little realized in England that India, her peoples, and her problems, have lately begun to arouse a profound interest throughout the reading world. (*EI*: 1)

Byron's objective, in dealing with the Indian social life, is "to picture the chief mental components of the Indian nation: the masses, attached to land and religion; the Princes, typical royalties, firmly entrenched in an advantageous position and having little real sympathy for the social and political ideas which pass in our time for progress; and the westernized intelligentsia, who provide the political motive power of the country" (*EI*: 104). More precisely, his intention is to change the "outlook" of the observers of India, and satirically comments on the superficial analysis and projects concerning the contact between the West and India that he categorizes in four types:

> [First], the official commentators and commissions of inquiry, which, being prohibited from cognizance of all but the most tangible acts, bring only the trees into view and never the wood; secondly, the retired administrators, whose attitude, though discreetly expressed, is primarily that of the practical ruler without finer shades, and whose knowledge, always

> extensive and sometimes stupefying, is confined to one department or a few districts; thirdly, the sociologists, professional or inquisitive, whose works, through no fault of their own, are largely read for their revelations in sex. The fourth, British or Indian, poisons the air with a fog of second-hand arguments from the rubbish-heap of political economic theory. Its writers' sentimentalism reveres on the one hand the King-Emperor and the unspottedness of white womanhood; on the other, the rights of man and the suffering-profit which is martyrdom. Mistaking the slogans of an advertising age for the ideals of the past, it invests political and industrial forms with divinity, and then appeals to this divinity to support its contentions in the eyes of the world. It has accomplished nothing save to obscure the truth, and to obtain credit in advance for further ill-informed writings. (*EI*: 2-3)

Byron dissociates himself from the blindness and the limited, biased knowledge of all these four groups, and shows the details of the contact between the West and India. Directly or otherwise, these groups pave the way for obscuring the truth. In short, they have their own blindness. By contrast, Byron, through his insight, analyses the underlying elements in Indian social and cultural strata and sheds more light on what he terms as "problem."

Byron argues that the opening phase of the "contact between East and West" (*EI*: 9) was started by Alexander the Great, and was later continued by the "European traders of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries" (*EI*: 10). Thereafter, the beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the "Scientific Revolution" (*EI*: 10) which was "destined to transform the entire of the globe in a flash" (*EI*: 10). This movement was to "carry Western ideas" all over the world, as a result, the "real problem" began: "the early discoveries of the Scientific Revolution had two main effects. By accelerating first transport, and then the conveyance of news to an extent hitherto inconceivable, they so unified the territories of the world as to bring every civilization into contact with every other civilization, and to render every race susceptible to the influence of every other race" (*EI*: 10). This rapid influence, originating in the Scientific Revolution, transformed the standards and norms of other civilizations. These civilizations felt their "individuality thus threatened"; therefore, they began to resist the "demoralizing" of tradition.

> The second effect was to place in the hands of the West a weapon of such demoralizing superiority that no people or habit could withstand it. The West also received a temporary monopoly of force; but this effect was, and is, incidental. It is the moral weapon which has delivered the earth to Western civilization, and threatens the human race, for good or evil, with ultimate standardization. (*EI*: 10-11)

The "Scientific Revolution" was paradoxically so destructive and at the same time instructive that nothing could withstand its effects. It needed and produced new audiences: "[the] mechanical philosophy of the nineteenth-century physicist, that joint incarnation of prophet and engineer, who conceived the principle of the universe as governed by an eternal sequence of cause and effect like of an engine, now became paramount" (*EI*: 11). The "mechanical philosophy" interpreted the phenomena based on an "eternal sequence of cause and effect like that of an engine" (*EI*: 11). This new philosophy and ideology, engrafted onto the social structure changed the whole face of the world:

> Thus man was translated from the divine pedestal of his thought into a slough of atoms all acting in obedience to previously determined laws; and came to see himself as a negligible and indeed ridiculous entity that had blundered involuntarily into a purely mechanical scheme of creation. (*EI*: 11)

Consequently, life, to some extent, was transformed into an empty, hollow and mechanical entity, and man was dispossessed of his humanity, transformed into a 'hollow man,' having no soul, as the aftermath of the 'superiority of Western thought.' The impact of this superiority on the 'remoter peoples' was "tenfold reflected" (*EI*: 11). The rising and falling of tradition and values throughout the history brought about changes in man's insight, ideology and attitudes towards life and himself. Whatever was once on the pinnacle and pedestal of power, a moment later declined, and a new phenomenon took its place. Such replacements were done by violence. Divinity was redefined and the very term was attached to the new phenomenon that was a 'machine.' The Scientific Revolution paved the way for the "economic laws," what Byron calls the "strongest of all laws" (*EI*: 13). Nothing and nobody anywhere could escape its effects "neither the Esquimaux nor the Trobianders" (*EI*: 13).

In one way or another, every society had to adapt itself to the changes produced by the Scientific Revolution, which in different forms affected the social norms of even the remotest countries. Byron's commentary on the inferiority complex among the 'less advanced peoples' indicates an important point:

> If a swarm of strangers arrived on us from the moon furnished with aerial torpedoes at moderate prices, and then converted the summit of Mount Everest into a hive of industry,

> we ourselves should feel inferior, and wish to reform our way of life in accordance with the new methods. Thus it is with the less advanced people. (*EI*: 13)

The process through which imperialism penetrated all over the world and the confrontation of industrial world with the 'less advanced peoples' constructed a sense of superiority/inferiority among the advanced and less advanced countries respectively. The "indigenous industries" and the small factories were not able to resist the rapid, strong expansion of the large companies, cartels and trusts. Therefore, these 'less advanced peoples' had to 'accept the situation.' The Western superiority swallows all the existing traditions and imposes its own criteria on the people's life and surroundings; subsequently, in Byron's satirical words, "baseball has become the national game of the Japanese, and the Indian Congress party must needs invent a flag and national anthem" (*EI*: 14).

Byron shows that "Western ideas, such as justice, representative institutions, medical hygiene, honesty, and punctuality" (*EI*: 14) penetrate the core of social life. The "older traditions of schooling" have to be replaced by the "technical and scientific education in Western methods" (*EI*: 14). It is only in the sphere of art and "metaphysical speculation" that the East remains intact. The superiority/inferiority dichotomy thus overshadows the Eastern self-confidence, as Byron demonstrates ironically; this dichotomy is accentuated in "white pigmentation of skin" versus non-white skin. Byron comments on the new crusade that is carrying "the pale pink tegument of the dominant race" (*EI*: 15) instead of the "Cross" in its hidden battle with the 'Others'; consequently, "every white man in Asia is become an apostle, and is prepared to maintain his part in face of all opposition" (*EI*: 15).

Therefore, Byron concludes, no country is able to "close [its] gates upon the West and [its entire] works. It is not possible. Japan tried and failed. China did likewise" (*EI*: 16). Metaphorically speaking, the rapid change, produced by the Scientific Revolution, functions as a train that heads for a particular, fixed destination and cannot stop until it reaches its destination. As a result, none of the nations in the world can escape its impact, "even the Dalai Lama, secure behind the Himalayas, has succumbed to the amenity of a private electric-light plant. The continued expansion of Western ideas is inevitable" (*EI*: 16). The West makes the people dependent to its products in such a way that nobody can

shut his eyes on its effects. The people's mind is imbued with Western ideas and its political and social ideology. In Byron's words, the peoples' dependency is the "process of assimilation," (*EI*: 16) which is nothing but the acceptance of Western superiority or the "white man's complacent assumption and offensive expression of racial superiority" (*EI*: 17). The end-result of this acceptance is demoralizing the Eastern tradition and elevating a 'Golden Calf' in order to "obscure the higher and greater sense of Reality which is the immemorial property of the East" (*EI*: 18).

During and after the nineteenth century the British expanding will was stretched to the remotest parts of the world, it penetrated the mind of the peoples and propagated English goods. These goods took a variety of forms, from economic, religious and industrial to cultural, social, political and scientific, this resulted in the "superiority of Western man and his institutions over all others" (*EI*: 83). Each step forward is the confirmation and solidification of Western doctrine, in Byron's ironical and paradoxical words: "that civilization which could invent the flying shuttle must be more than merely fortunate; it must be the *right* civilization" (*EI*: 83). This doctrine functions as a two-edged sword that uproots the confidence of non-European peoples, and supports a superiority complex, which produces "the supreme assurance of the nineteenth-century Englishman in the rectitude of his own moral standards and his own acts" (*EI*: 83). The outcome is to crystallize the idea that the Englishman is capable "to invest the globe with his commercial imperialism," (*EI*: 83) and legalizes his presence as "the benefactor" (*EI*: 84) or "the harbinger of moral improvement to all the less advanced peoples within his orbit" (*EI*: 83). What becomes visible here is how different Byron is from other travel writers whose gazes are focused on denigrating the travellees, whereas Byron's gaze is focused on the analysis of the imperial eye/I and the aftermath of its presence, even though he has his own blindness.

The history of the contact between Britain and India goes back four hundred years to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The first Englishman who entered India, historians declare, was Father Thomas Stevenson, son of a well-known London merchant.[24] From the moment of the arrival of his all-important letter and its impact on the British merchants, a few of them took a crucial decision. Thus, they organized an expedition to India, launched with the blessings of Queen Elizabeth, in 1583. This

contact was solidified through the establishment of the East India Company by Royal charter, which contained within itself the hidden inception of British imperialism. The merchants, who provided money for the Company, desired a share of the spice trade with the East Indies; hence, a handful of British settlements grew up.

The subcontinent was subjected to different tyrannical invasions, and each of the conquering empires—from the Mongols, the Afghans, the Persians, and the Arabs to European interventions such as Portuguese, Dutch, France and lastly Britain, that came out on top in the form of the East India Company—imprinted its impacts on the Indian culture. Byron's understanding of the eternal contact between the East and the West has given his book an authority that is at pains to show the vicissitude of such a contact in the realm of art, architecture, commerce, philosophies and political issues. Let us have a look at Byron's comment on the contact between India and the West:

> Dutch, English, French, and Danes followed, maintaining precarious trading outposts, quarrelling amongst themselves and with Indian rulers, upholding this cause against that, gaining concessions here, concessions there; until, in the last half of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company, founded on the last day of the year 1600, had vindicated its superiority in force and diplomacy over all the other European outposts in India, and in so doing had embarked, for good and evil, on a course of political domination. None the less, in the eighteenth century, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the presence of the English in India was primarily commercial in intent, and the English settlers did not hesitate to express their resentment against the accredited representatives of the Home Government in their midst. (*EI*: 9)

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, India was a combat zone for European countries in order to attain the monopoly over Indian trade, the Dutch East India Company, the English East India Company and the French expanded to face each other over India as a market for their goods and capital. Eventually, the British colonial power dominated and confirmed its position in India and brought the whole country under its control. The establishment of the English East India Company was one of the first stages of British colonial rule and possession in India, which, as Denis Judd shows, was "triumphantly confirmed by the beginning of the nineteenth century, [and it] seemed to demonstrate more than anything else its towering imperial, naval, and commercial status as the world's first super power. From the British point of view, Empire without India was unthinkable."[25] R. C. Vermani, in *British Colonialism in India* (1983), illustrates the objectives of the Company:

> The original aim of East India Company in its trade with India was the typical aim of the monopolist companies of merchant capital—to make profit by securing a monopoly trade in goods and products of an overseas country. The governing object was [...] the endeavour to secure a supply of the products of India which found a ready market in England and Europe and could thus yield a high profit on every successful expedition that could return with a supply. It wanted a monopoly of trade with India so that there would be no other English or European merchants or trade companies to compete with. [...] The Company wanted to sell its products at as high a price as possible and buy Indian products as cheaply as possible so that it could make maximum profits.[26]

The Company had to remove other competitors from the battleground of profit making, and at the same time, it had to make more and more profits by means of exporting products at the highest and importing Indian products at the lowest price. In this regard, Byron concludes that "huge fortunes were made by administrators, advocates and merchants," who wanted to export their products to India and to "slake their thirst" in Indian "claret" (*EI*: 9). Because of British colonial intervention in India, which followed the objectives of gaining more and more profit, in Judd's words, "in a little over a century, Britain, through the agency of the East India Company, became the dominant European power in the subcontinent."[27] One of the significant objectives of the Company was establishing dominion in India, which might be considered as the origin of colonialism in this country, and one of its outcomes was the construction of a colonial discourse. The objective of this discourse, Bhabha points out, is "to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction."[28] Accordingly, the rule of the Company was to denigrate the Indians as unworthy of participating in governing and administrating their country, whilst on the other hand raising the British to a superior status predisposed to rule the Indians.

The Company wanted India to be regarded as a region for British commercial exploitation, holding the administrative whip with one hand and exploiting with the other; more precisely, as Denis Judd remarks, the "British rule was aimed at the continuing and increasing domination of the subcontinent. What better way to encourage this process than by convincing Indians that European administration was essentially just and fair minded, and certainly better than the rule of their own people might be?"[29] Judd states, "it was this company that was in due course to rise to paramount power in the

subcontinent and to lay the foundations for the magnificent imperial structure of the British Raj."[30] The East India Company was changed into a predominantly political and military organization. Therefore, as P. J. Marshall points out, "the new British territories in India were conquered by troops for the most part employed by the Company and not by the Crown; they were to be governed, in the name of the East India Company and not of George III, by the servants of the Company not by royal officials."[31]

3. 3. Byron and the devastated, colonized Subcontinent

The dominance of British colonial power in India transforms the economy, culture, and social structure of the country. Byron argues that the "Western ideas and Western economic theory" (*EI*: 53) touch and affect the remotest villages in India; moreover, the Western hegemony imposes a colonial system on the Indian social structure. There is hardly a spot or an aspect in the Indian life that escapes from the impacts of British imperialism. He shows that various factors work together in order to bring about the devastation of the Indian economy. The "first step is to deliver the ryot from the greed of his local usurer by the provision of proper credit facilities" (*EI*: 54). Byron points out that, "nine-tenths of Indian population live in the villages and are supported by them" (*EI*: 45). The great majority of the Indian "inhabitants are subjects [...] whose desire is to till their fields" (*EI*: 45). An Indian without a piece of land has no security, everything in his/her life, from end to end, depends on land, thus "the mass of cultivators free of bound, live very close to subsistence level" (*EI*: 47). The salt tax and excise duties are paid by the masses. Denis Judd similarly argues that the change "was literally a matter of life and death, since over 70 per cent of the population were completely dependent upon agriculture. To begin to make headway against deep-rooted traditions and practices was not easy."[32] Byron argues that the masses to "the European reader" have not any personality and they just exist as "an economic factor, and not as human being" (*EI*: 45).

The next step, as Byron shows, is "the introduction of agricultural machinery on a co-operative basis: the tractors and pumping-engines being hired out at regular rates per acre or gallon" (*EI*: 54). This brings the colonized India under the complete influence and rule of the "Western economic theory" in such a way that from the basis the whole system of

Indian agriculture is rooted out and transformed. Ulf Hedetoft indicates that the British negligence "of the traditional public responsibility for 'public works' activities (irrigation, drainage, etc.), result in the gradual decay of agricultural activity in the districts controlled by the British," and the exclusion of Indian textiles from the British market by "Parliament's decision in the early eighteenth Century"[33] exacerbate the devastation of the economic system in India. Through imposing taxes on the land followed by the exclusion of "hand-loom and the spinning-wheel," and simultaneously the development of the textile industry in Britain resulting in the "introduction of British textiles into the Indian market,"[34] the British colonial power transforms the Indian economy. India has to produce raw cotton for export and buy manufactured goods—including cloth—from England, while the cottage industries that produce textiles in India were ruined. Consequently, India is transformed from an exporting country into a market for British goods, particularly cotton textiles, into a state with a colonial economy, a supplier of raw materials, and a market for the manufactured articles from England as well as a region of investment for British capital. Similarly, Judd states that India is transformed into "the most important component part of the Victorian Empire. On average, nineteen per cent of British exports went to India, and hundreds of millions of pounds sterling were invested there."[35]

The prominent aim of the British in India was to transform the Indian infrastructure more than the previous ruling powers. The British traders who came to India with economic zeal gradually entered into politics and during the eighteenth century, the pendulum swung from commerce to administration; eventually, they turned to be the masters and rulers of the country, while the local powers supported them. Simultaneously, Britain imposed its cultural influences on India, at first, as in every other place, in the military field. To control the country, and keep tabs on the people in each part of the subcontinent, British imperialism needed the fastest means of transportation throughout the country; as a result, the Western technological, industrial and scientific inventions such as telegraph, irrigation systems, railways, and steamships follow expeditiously. Consequently, as Judd shows, "under British rule, Indian industry developed rapidly from the 1880s, so much so that by 1914 India was among the top fourteen most industrialized nations—a remarkable fact, even though its place was near

the bottom of the table."[36] British technological innovation, the "railway system" and the "centralized bureaucracy and legislatures" are introduced to the Indian social life. This new discourse convinces the "educated classes" in India that "India has been transformed" in both spirit and form (*EI*: 37).

Religion in India, as a "temperamental" and "commonplace" instinct is a means in the hands of Britain to produce the "cartridges of the Mutiny" (*EI*: 58) or resentment, for instance, by means of a "continuous tension [...] between the majority Hindus and the minority Moslems."[37] Meanwhile, the Christian missionaries, who combine hostility to Hinduism and Islam with the presentation of a new ethic, spread swiftly throughout the country. Therefore, religion is another means through which the process of colonization was solidified. The British treatment of the people's beliefs was paradoxical, on the one hand it prohibited suttee, whereas, on the other hand its reaction was neutral towards the clash of religions. It was through such an opaque policy that the British directed the attention of the masses towards minute and marginal subjects in order to marginalize and exclude the Indians from administrating their land. The "precept of English policy, [which provoked] the religious susceptibilities of the people," (*EI*: 58) stemmed from the discourse created, propagated and "[filtered] down from the intelligentsia to the masses" (*EI*: 56). Beneath this policy, there is the invisible hand of British imperiality.

The succeeding step in transforming the country was teaching Western ideology through "English Education," with the objective and policy of Westernizing the country. English, as a medium and a preliminary step for knowledge, science and conversation, is injected into the body of Indian culture; therefore, a new Western stream of thought enters the country together with the language. Byron argues that, following the imperial logic, the Indians had to be educated not by means of "their mother-tongue," (*EI*: 84, notes) but through a system of administration that trains them "in Western literature and science" (*EI*: 85). This, Byron concludes, is transforming and westernizing "Indian thought and habit of mind" (*EI*: 85). British colonial supremacy needs assimilation; hence, education "in Western literature and science" is the adequate means through which such an objective is fulfilled. The new ideology made the Indians accept that the "exigencies of the modern world should make the teaching of Western thought and science" (*EI*: 109) necessary. The Indians try to assimilate themselves to the "English

West"; they borrow "English institutions", "British capital" and above all, "it is the Englishman who has invented and who keeps the balance between the creeds, races, and castes, and maintains connexion between the provinces and states" (*EI*: 109).

Consequently, education, and other forms of social activities are transformed by the imperial will. This new discourse, to some extent, makes the Indians a docile nation accepting their own inferiority. The process of assimilation under the colonial hegemony transforms the nation and gives it a new identity, a "concrete body" that is, in Bhabha's words, "'Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'—a mimic man raised 'through [the] English School'" who is neither English nor Indian, but an "Anglicized" individual.[38] Similarly, Indira Ghose, in *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India* (1998), comments on the process of educating the Indians: "A turning point in British educational policy was marked by Macaulay's 'Minute Education' (1835). In this momentous policy statement the programme of Anglicization was implemented, with the aim of creating a class of mimic Englishmen."[39] Byron argues that, under the British administration, the "white ruler" provides India "with a *lingua franca*" (*EI*: 37); a means through which a colonial discourse is created and engraved on the Indian national body. To enter into an "intelligible discussion" one had to use such a "*lingua franca*." Judd comments on this process:

> [The] most potentially difficult Indians in the late-Victorian era were the educated 'babus.' These men were the products of the system of English education in India, and may well have graduated from Calcutta or Bombay universities. Inevitably, they held a very difficult position in society. In effect, they had been transformed into brown Englishmen, but in practice were denied the chance to get the best administrative jobs in their own country.[40]

In this regard, Edward Said's important point is that "far from a static thing then, identity of self or of 'other' is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies."[41] The Indian identity, constructed by British dominion, is the result of, and bound up with, the long historical, social, military, intellectual and political processes from the moment of colonizing this subcontinent.

Byron, ironically, describes the intelligentsia as those individuals "throughout India whose minds have been trained by the Western education, who are accustomed to think

and reason in Western terminology, and whose conception and ideal of progress have been borrowed from the West" (*EI*: 80). The intellectual's mental background is shaped by and imbued with the Western education, hence, he is a product of the Western educational system, and there is no place for an idea outside such an education in his mind. Wherever and whenever he begins to judge it is through the Western judgement and terminology, as if there were no ways to judge except by Western reasoning, and for him, the "conception and ideal of progress" are meaningful if they stem from the West. Like the Princes, the Indian intellectual has a hybrid identity, which is neither Indian nor English. He is an amalgamation of the Indian and Western mind, in fact none of them. Byron, satirically, calls them the "voice of India," and the "only instrument of political activity" (*EI*: 80). He traces the emergence of this identity and dates it back to the period of European colonialism in Asia. At first, the "train of events" was from Oriental culture to Western culture, whereas after settling in the "adopted country" (*EI*: 80-1) imperialism started the project of transforming, reforming or shaping a new personality, which is now the "voice of India." Byron demonstrates that the Indian intelligentsia "remains firmly embedded in the nineteenth-century past" (*EI*: 88); i.e., in terms of policy the Indian intellectual "looks to parliamentarianism, based on a limited but expanding franchise, to cure his ills, to soothe his dignity, to heal his religious dissensions, and to substitute for the drab matter-of-factness of an alien bureaucracy the grandiose blazon of FREEDOM" (*EI*: 88-9). In Byron's ironical words, the Indian intelligentsia's "outlook on everyday life tends to be obscured by a belief that knowledge and progress are still bound up with purely physical science and with its dogma that all phenomena are ultimately capable of physical explanation" (*EI*: 89). In addition, the Indian intellectual's ideal is "one of moral reminiscence and historical allusion, inflated by Western naturalism," and this educated social class resorts to the goals, "which European politicians, thinkers and artists are now discarding as the first conditions of error" (*EI*: 89). Byron considers the process of Westernization in India as a stereotyped model and starting point which proposes the process of assimilation under a colonial power and disregards recent developments in Western thinking.

Having established an authoritarian system of government by 1857, Britain completed its political control over India. The law westernizes and codifies the previous social

norms, in the name of humanity; consequently, what the British consider as social evils such as suttee, thugee, or female infanticide (killing of unwanted girl babies) are suppressed and discouraged. For instance, it was in 1829 that the "practice of suttee (or sati) was declared illegal in Bengal, an example later followed in other British provinces. Suttee was the supposedly voluntary burning alive of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. British disapproval of such an apparently barbarous custom was understandable."[42] Further, it was "between 1829 and 1837 [that] the Company also suppressed thugee. The 'Thugs' were composed of bands of robbers who strangled their victims as sacrifices to the goddess Kali."[43] Gail Ching-Liang Low comments on "British administration and rule during most of the nineteenth century, [which] produced an ambiguous relationship with Indian customs and traditions, through active manipulation of India's historical past and traditions."[44] By virtue of British influence on the country, the Indian identity is transformed, and a new codification dominates the whole strata of the country. The process of westernizing the country is both destructive and constructive. On the one hand, it is destructive when it deprives the nation of its possessions and transforms the people's identity; on the other hand, it is constructive when it frees the people from their social evils, or paves the way for the scientific, technological and economic improvements.

3. 4. Byron and the power and will of the "small minority" over the Indians

Byron shows that the contact between India and Britain is a problem: "not merely a political one. Politics are its clothes" (*EI*: 125). The presence of Britain in India is at the cost of transforming the Indian national identity and this continues so long as they remain in India; and Byron focuses that the British all occupy "the position of rulers and leaders at least for several generations to come" (*EI*: 126). Byron gives an account of "India, her peoples, and her problems," simultaneously, he pays much more attention to the aspects of power; that is to say, he tends to throw more light on British hegemony and colonialism in India and the strata of the Indian social and cultural structure.

He is more concerned with suggesting "certain new trains of inquiry into the real issue of the present controversy between England and India" (*EI*: 4). After his journey to India, the burden of thoughts that gives him "no peace and have destroyed the harmony of his

former way of life," (*EI*: 4) obsesses his mind. On the one hand, the journey has its impact on him and brings about changes in his life, on the other hand, he wants to unmask what other travellers were unable to observe; that is the "problem between English and Indians" which "can determine the character of all future civilization" (*EI*: 4).

Regarding the "problem" between Britain and the Indians, Byron concludes: "I reflect the opinion of that small minority within the small enclave of peoples in Western Europe, with whom alone rests either power or will to preserve the diminishing sanity of the race against a barbarous and rapidly expanding materialism" (*EI*: 4-5). The "small minority" imposes its power and will on the life and thoughts of others whom they consider as 'barbarous.' Britain produces a discourse in order to subjugate the whole world by it, and maintains that *they* and *they alone* can think in a way superior to the 'Others.' Such knowledge, which is dedicated to controlling the world, has the traces of the will of the "small minority."

Unlike his other travel books in which he is concerned mainly with architecture, Byron, in *An Essay on India*, focuses his argument on a cultural analysis of the impact of British sovereignty on life and society in India. He deals with the process through which British imperialism transforms India into a means, presents the country to the world as 'barbaric', 'underhumanised and incapable of independency,' and produces a discourse in India that hardly lets the Indians comprehend the world independently. He indicates that the corollary of British colonization and the denigration of Indian nationality was to present the Indians to the world as a 'discredited race'; in other words, it exposed the Indians as "unfit, both physically and mentally, for the bestowal of political autonomy," in "the eyes of the outside world" (*EI*: 41). Regarding the Indians' dependency on England and the "urgency of contact between East and West," (*EI*: 43) Byron argues that when imperialism "bestowed" machine, materials, plan and so forth on India, the question is "who will keep it working and repaired?" (*EI*: 43) Since the Indians, in the eyes of the outer world, were 'unfit', 'underhumanised and incapable of being independent,' therefore, the presence of a power apart from the Indians, namely a white ruler, was a vital factor in controlling, administrating and governing the country.

In a similar way, Judd emphasises and restates Charles Grant's[45] claim considering the "people of Hindustan" as "a race of men lamentably degenerate and base; retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation; yet obstinate in their disregard of what they know to be right, governed by malevolent and licentious passion, strongly exemplifying the effects produced on society by a great and general corruption of manners."[46] Judd also refers to the British philosopher, James Mill who "dismissed Indian law as 'disorderly compilation of loose, vague, stupid or unintelligible quotations and maxims selected arbitrarily from books of law, books of devotion, and books of poetry; attended with a commentary which only adds to the absurdity and darkness; a farrago by which nothing is define[d], nothing established.'"[47] In addition, referring to Sir Lucas King "the most recent editor of Leyden and Erskine's translation," Byron remarks on the denigration of the Indians by the European upper class: "Babur's opinion regarding India is nearly the same as those of most Europeans of the upper class, even at the present day" (*EI*: 31). To some extent, both Babur and the "European upper class" presented a denigrated picture of the Indians, and appreciated India for its "abundance of gold and silver" (*EI*: 31). The emphasis is on the fact that India presents a "scheme of social, political, philosophical, and artistic disintegration without parallel in human history" (*EI*: 32). Byron focuses his attention on the physical appearance of the country. He refers to Babur's[48] descriptions of both the people and the country, which presents a deformed picture of India: "the country and towns of Hindustan are extremely ugly, [...] all its towns and lands have a uniform look" (*EI*: 33). Besides his political analysis of the Indian social and cultural life, Byron also remarks on the impact of space on thought and argues: "the development of thought is bound up with visual surroundings" (*EI*: 33). As James Knox points out: Byron "to his study of the Indian character, [...] applied his theory of *genius loci*, calculating the visual effect of landscape upon activity of its inhabitants."[49]

The colonized India "has no opportunity of exercising her disintegrating genius on her white rulers" (*EI*: 35). There is a reciprocal interaction and negation between both the "white rulers" and the Indians, resulting in the inability of the former to "transmit their sympathies and understanding to the younger generations," and the Indian young generation who "eventually take their place in the commerce or administration of the

country" (*EI*: 35). Regarding the controversy between the East and the West, Byron presents two different worlds with different criteria and standards:

> In this context, it may be said that while the effort of the East, in civilization, has been primarily metaphysical, that of the West has been social; and that while the West has always held, or reverted to, the opinion that man's betterment on earth must be achieved through a process of continuous political experiment, the East, without necessarily disregarding this process, has concentrated first and foremost on the discovery of good by thought and ecstasy. (*EI*: 5)

The opposition is "metaphysical" versus "social," the "discovery of good by thought and ecstasy" versus the "process of continuous political experiment" for man's "betterment on earth"; two totally different "conceptions." Such dichotomies in Byron's view, "mirrored the unequal struggle between the materialism of the West and the spirituality of the East."[50] This goes back to the "problem" of India that originates and exists "since history."

India under the domain of British colonialism and suffering from the huge burden of inferiority upon her shoulders accepted the penetration of a "thousand new beliefs, prejudices, moralities, and tastes" (*EI*: 20). Then the process of "revising" starts and "all that has previously been told" has to be revised and it continues towards "revising the revision" (*EI*: 20). Byron argues that the "Western man's assumption of racial superiority has rendered" Western man "odious to the East" (*EI*: 27). He concludes that if these two extremes want to reconcile their opposition in a non-destructive way, they have to "find a way whereby the East may accomplish the assimilation of Western ideas to the furtherance rather than the destruction of her spiritual gifts; just as, in the past, Europe assimilated the Eastern ideas that had crystallized in Christianity" (*EI*: 27).

Imperialism has various means to bring a country under its control, and colonize it. It creates a discourse based on its own criteria, nourishes the nations both physically and mentally, even makes them accept and admire whatever it imposes on the people's life. The outcome of such a discourse is misunderstanding and misrecognizing the true in contrast to the false, and transforming the meaning of these concepts in accordance with the imperial will. The created knowledge trains the intelligentsia to propagate the imperial desires. Hence, for instance, in the colonized societies the meaning of nationalism is transformed based on the standards of imperialism. The country acquires a

"capacity to regard herself through the eyes of the outside world" (*EI*: 38) and to judge herself based on the imperial norms. Byron shows how the "Indian entity, in so far as it may exist, has been created by the English, [that is to say, India obtains her existence] from the English administration" (*EI*: 29). This might be considered exactly the point where Byron anticipated Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Britain, through a monopolized intervention in India, produces a discourse for the Indians to "achieve contact with the West through the English only" (*EI*: 38). Byron, satirically, sheds more light on the Indian identity, which is contrary to other peoples of the world who "were busy consolidating and rearranging themselves in accordance with their real or imagined national identities"—as an attempt to find the real consolidated identity—and concludes that "only the Indian, of all the great nations, could be observed in passive acceptance of a foreign rule and administration, which, though welcome for its material benefits, had been imposed by conquest and maintained by force" (*EI*: 38). The Indians admire the British for being more successful than they are, while rejecting many British habits and doctrines. Byron remarks that the Indians were a means in the hands of England to be used at war and "largely responsible for the conquest [in the bloody and incompetent invasion] of Mesopotamia" (*EI*: 39) or, to quote Judd, in "the notorious 'Mess-pot' campaign—in part of German Africa, and especially on the Western Front,"[51] or, in Byron's words, to impose "British dominations" all over the colonized countries as well as India, and eventually, to make the "world safe, for democracy" (*EI*: 39).[52]

Byron shows two social classes in India, the English who were directly involved in controlling the subcontinent, and the Indian Princes as the "prefects at an English public school," (*EI*: 67) and the "widely disseminated" states in India who "grew up side by side with the British dominion, by means of a haphazard series of treaties" (*EI*: 66). The latter was a social class that ruled the country, side by side with the British power, while "the whole system grew up side by side with the British dominion, by means of a haphazard series of treaties" which were "to be inviolable" (*EI*: 66). Their independence was superficial and spurious, somehow "less distinguished than the royalty" (*EI*: 66) in Europe. They have no right of their own, even if they treat the people under their subjugation according to their own criteria. The Central Government, through "political officers" with the "remarkable ability and tact" (*EI*: 67) continuously keeps tabs on these

princes. These princes and the Central Government preserved and "saved the British administration" (*EI*: 69). Byron, in a parodic way, comments that they (the princes) adapt themselves to the British will, one can trace the "Princes' inalienable devotion to the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress" either through their "signed photographs" or through their "wooden portraits" (*EI*: 70). The princes and their subjects desire and wish "to maintain the British power in India" (*EI*: 70). As an example, Byron recounts the "monologue delivered at dinner-table by a Prince of the very moderate importance, [as] a fair example" (*EI*: 78) to illustrate the hierarchy of power in India; at the top of each pyramid of power the authority has the right to kill and to let live:

> 'In my state I abolished slavery two years ago. I knew the Viceroy would be pleased. [...] Some of my zemindars sent him a petition of protest against the abolition. Naturally he took no notice. It was a wise move on my part. [...] In my state justice is very strictly administered. The judges are very clever men. Not long ago five men were tried for murder and all were found guilty. I suspected that the verdict was unjust. So I disguised myself as a trader in sweet and went down to the bazaar, where I found out the real truth. Three of them were guilty. Those I sentenced to death. The other two I set free.' (*EI*: 79-80)

The British authority in India grows independently, whereas the "states have been subject to a system of progressive political depression" (*EI*: 71). The Princes establish their power upon the "cleavage" between Moslems and Hindus as well as upon the chaos in governing different parts of the country. The "Sovereign Prince [is] guaranteed [by the] 'inviolable' treaty with the British crown" (*EI*: 73). Moreover, there are officials, acting "without precedent or advice [and] responsible to no one but the Viceroy," (*EI*: 73) who govern the country; i.e., there is chaos and instability in governing and administrating the country; the British, the Central Government, the Princes and the Officials each of them has its own system of governing the country. Due to this inconsistency, disintegration and prevailing chaos, none of these groups could consent to "a federal union" (*EI*: 74). Byron, satirically, compares such an amalgamation of different powers with the "picture of the princely lion embosomed for ever with the democratic lamb" and the "viceregal shepherd" who "lays down his bureaucratic plaid and military crook to snore" (*EI*: 74). The princes, who modelled themselves "on the modern sporting millionaires of the West," were possibly "educated [...] at an English public school and university" (*EI*: 76). The princes were "debarred from all intercourse with respectable English society in the big towns" and "all circumstances tend[ed] to lead [their] tastes and spirit farther and

farther away from the land of [their] birth" (*EI*: 76). They were the product of British imperialism, a puppet or Mr. Z, a picture of a hollow man.

British imperial doctrine crystallizes this notion in the mind of the "enormous mass of the population [that] a white man is the living embodiment of the power which rules them and secures their living" (*EI*: 111). This "living embodiment" carries its presence all over the country and to the remotest parts of the subcontinent, "the people bow their heads to the ground before him" (*EI*: 111). The British superiority complex and "the racial exclusiveness of the white-skinned rulers" (*EI*: 136) are manifested in what Byron quotes: the Indians "are an inferior race. Their company gives us no pleasure, nor ours them. We have nothing in common with them. We don't want them near our women."[53]

Indian society accepts the superior/inferior dichotomy, thereupon each individual tries to associate himself/herself with the superior Britain in order to get rid of his/her own inferiority. This association becomes an attribution of dignity; therefore, the Hindus enjoy "honorary rank in the British Army" (*EI*: 75). The "pattern of the [Indian] loyalty, like that of their palaces, is Western, and to Western habit they turn for an outlet of their natural vigour" (*EI*: 75-6). A letter, in a Ceylon newspaper, which begins with this question "WHAT MAKES A GENTLEMAN?," and ends with "Do you think a double-breast coat and a pair of goggles would make a gent?," (*EI*: 151) indicates how England has imposed a discourse on the Indians' life and makes them accept this biased discourse.

3. 5. Byron and "obscurantism and tyranny" in Russia

The history of each nation reveals the rise and fall of tyrannies and the consequences of such vicissitudes; it narrates the story of ideologies, philosophies, nations and cultures in relation to power, and the procedure through which one period is replaced by the next one incessantly, so long as man lives on earth. When one reads the narration of a nation, either through the written texts or through travelling to a country and analysing its culture, one comes across an invisible network of power relations behind each sign and object; in short, there is no sign or object without any intention. One might find it by reading the literary, historical and scientific texts of a given society, another one might read these signs through travelling to that country and directly analyse the social and cultural context, discovering how "power subordinates knowledge and makes it serve its

ends or how it superimposes itself on it, imposing ideological contents and limitations."[54] For Byron, the culture or the social structure of the land is an open text to be analysed and interpreted, and *First Russia, then Tibet* (1933) is his response to such a process of social and cultural reading. He represents his intention at the very beginning of the book, in "The Traveller's Confession":

> This book presents two excursions whose very diversity is symbolic of those formidable contradictions which make it a privilege and a puzzle to be alive in twentieth century. The first part is concerned with Russia, where the moral influence of the Industrial Revolution has found its grim apotheosis; the second with Tibet, the only country on earth where that influence is yet unknown, where even the cart is forbidden to traverse plains flatter than Daytona Beach, and the Dalai Lama himself rides in a man-borne palanquin. [...] In Russia the tradition has succumbed completely to the virus of the machine. In Tibet it has remained as completely immune from it. [...] by their appearance [,] Russia is lower and more colourless, Tibet higher and more coloured, than any country on earth. (*RT*: 10-11)

Even though he underlines the major points about Russia and Tibet, the first part of the book is concerned with something beyond the "moral influence of the Industrial Revolution" and the "virus of the machine" or being a "colourless" country or a "sort of caricature of the West." One of the *leitmotifs* in this book, as in Byron's other travel books, is the aspect of power; i.e., the dominance and hegemony of Bolshevism as an ideology, which *bolshevised* the social and cultural structure of Russia and engrafted a particular discourse and knowledge onto the body of the country.

The argument in the first part of *First Russia, then Tibet* is focused on a crystallized ideology and its manifestation in different ways in the discourse of every institution throughout the country; i.e., Leninism, which creates the seeds of a totalitarian police state, and the extensive party and government control over culture, its creators and institutions that rule the country with an Iron Hand. It also shows the way this ideology positions, subjects and subordinates the individuals to the interests of Bolsheviks as the ruling class. Because of this subordination, the whole country stoops to the Iron Hand of Bolshevism; in short, this ideology centralizes itself while marginalizing the other ideologies in the Russian social structure.

Moreover, it shows that the Bolshevik dogma defines the concepts, oppositions and hierarchies; as a result, Russia, to some extent, enters a state of cultural isolation from the rest of the world. This isolation stems from the dominance of "Materialist

philosophy," which separates Russia mentally "from the rest of the world"; such a mental isolation is crystallized "into a positive national egotism of the most pronounced kind" (*RT*: 50). Because of this isolation from the rest of the world, because of the "impossibility of travel," because of the impossibility of "corresponding with foreigners," and because of the impossibility of "obtaining foreign books" after the 1917 Revolution, Byron remarks, "both the educated and the semi-educated Russian honestly believe that in themselves alone is concentrated all the really progressive thought of the whole world" (*RT*: 50). This is a "mental chauvinism" (*RT*: 50).

In addition, the book represents the one-dimensional voices in the Soviet Union; i.e., the Bolsheviks, the Russian architecture, the Red Capital, the Red Army, the Russian dogmatism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Five-Year-Plan, Morgan the English communist, Kremlin, collectivism, Leninism, Stalinism, and the "Great Untruth," to name just a few. These voices and signs originate in the cultural activities and have meaning for the Russians. Byron reads the Russian culture as a text full of social productions, codes, conventions, and the modes of thinking, "a central system of practices, meanings and values, which [Raymond Williams] properly [calls] dominant and effective,"[55] that convey and have meaning for the Russians.

From the outset, Byron dissociates himself from the mere tourists and trusts to his "own arrangements."

> Nearly all foreigners buy their tours beforehand, and are therefore obliged to keep to set routes. This is not to say, as so many people infer, that the visitor is only shown what the authorities want him to see. On the contrary, free movement within Russia to-day—except in the Turcoman republics, which are reserved for American millionaires—entails fewer formalities than before the Revolution. The advantage of the conducted tours is simply their remarkable cheapness; and since they are, very conveniently, 'conducted', the tourist is naturally treated to the show-pieces of the existing regime. [...] I trusted to my own arrangements. (*RT*: 17)

It is a separation from what the authorities plan to show, an exclusion from the package tourists who are exposed to the "show-pieces of the existing regime." As Donald E. and Carolyn B. Lundberg illustrate, "all travel within Russia is arranged and controlled by the Soviet tourist agency Intourist. This includes hotel accommodations as well. Groups are always shepherded in and around Russia by Intourist guides, who must be very careful to hold the Party line in the interpretation of history and politics."[56] Contrary to the mere

tourists, Byron liberates himself from the predominant obligations that might conduct him to "set routes" and see what the authorities plan and conduct for him; in other words, he wants to dissociate himself from the blindness of the "conducted" tourists, following his own insight and trusting to his "own arrangements." This is the starting point for him to trace the unwritten lines between the social and cultural structure of the Russian text. By dint of this dissociation, Byron opens up the "mechanics of power"[57] in the Soviet Union, which, in Foucault's words, defines "how one may have a hold over other's bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines."[58]

Byron argues that in visiting Russia, the traveller "will discover, possibly against his will, a preponderance of what he has been taught to call obscurantism and tyranny which must necessarily outweigh the best of social purposes" (*RT*: 15). Russia is dominated by an ideology which influences the "best of social purposes." Wherever the visitor looks, he/she comes across the Soviet "obscurantism and tyranny" originated in Bolshevism and Bolshevik "dogma" that conceals even the "visual art in Russia" under its Red colour. This dogmatism is highlighted by Byron's metaphoric representation of the Russian life when Moscow bells' "clang echoed over the snow and along the red walls, a black smoke of crows shot up into the sky, cawing and croaking their contempt for the motionless anachronism, the Tsar's eagle" (*RT*: 23). Byron uncovers the reasons and forces at work in the Soviet Union, and illustrates that these forces are "older than the Revolution" (*RT*: 16) and "inherent in the country and people, though hitherto partially concealed beneath a Western veneer" (*RT*: 16); in short, the hidden forces refer back to the history of Russia. More precisely, the 1917 "Revolution and all that followed it were the outcome of processes that began with Russian history," (*RT*: 28) and will end with it. It stems from the Russian concept of progress as "a mass-advance," a "prompt delivery" (*RT*: 29). The individual and his role in the "social scheme" (*RT*: 29) are ignored; this is also represented in the Soviet literature.

The Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 radically changed Russian literature. In the 1920s, literature became a tool of state propaganda. Writers were not only forbidden to create works that were dissident, formally complex, or objective, but they were also expected to fulfil the dictates of the Communist Party to produce propaganda on specific,

often rather narrow, themes of current interest to it. One can refer to the Writers' Union, an organization formed in 1932 by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which abolished existing literary organizations and absorbed all professional Soviet writers into one large union. The union supported Communist Party policies and was the defender and interpreter of the single Soviet literary method, Socialist Realism, a literary method that in 1934 was declared to be the only acceptable one for the Soviet writers. Besides establishing fees, privileges, and other benefits for the writers, it maintained institutes for training young writers, provided vacation houses and resorts for its members, and acted as a liaison between the party and its own ranks. It also had the power to reprimand and even punish the writers who failed to follow its artistic mandates.

3. 6. Byron and the "dictatorship of the proletariat"

After the 1917 Revolution, Bolshevism, as a new ideology, resulted in the suppression of the old traditions and conventions. Everything was evaluated and tested based on and seen through the Bolshevik standards and lenses. Bolshevism imprints its criteria on the body of Russia, of what is 'right' and what is 'wrong.' Everywhere, from the educational system to the press, the arts and public entertainments, the Bolshevik will predominates. Byron remarks that the Soviet Union is a land in which the "only truths are the class war and the machine," and in such an oppressive atmosphere "all culture must be subservient to those ends" (*RT*: 40). The whole society suffers from "a stifling air" (*RT*: 40). In much the same way, Vita Sackville-West during her journey from Egypt to Iraq, then Persia, Russia, Poland and Germany in 1926, presented in *Passenger to Teheran* (1926), describes a similar atmosphere in Russia:

> On the third day we arrived at Moscow. I scarcely know how to write of Moscow; I have only that to say which others have said before, others who have had a longer and more privileged experience than I, and who even so have not succeeded in finding any definition. I was in Moscow a very short time, I spoke with very few Russians; yet I felt that if I were condemned to live there for long I should go mad.[59]

Bolshevism, as a new discourse, redefines licit and illicit, right and wrong, and in Foucault's words, "mark[s] the boundary of reason and unreason."[60] For instance, before the Revolution, the churches were the sanctuaries,[61] whereas under the domain of the

proletarian dictatorship the Kremlin "stood as the inmost sanctuary of all" (*RT*: 18). The October Revolution revolutionises everything, for instance, the "seven-day week has fallen into abeyance" (*RT*: 66). According to Robert C. Williams, it is under the dictatorship of Bolshevism that "Stalin experimented with transforming the calendar along the lines of the French Revolution, eliminating Christian terminology and chronology shifting from Julian to Gregorian calendars and contemplating a five- or six-day week with no Sunday."[62] Consequently, it creates a new norm and habit in the people's life, which is a new codification in accordance with Bolshevism. Byron comments on the social structure, arguing, "the proletariat is becoming bourgeois" (*RT*: 69); such a prediction comes true a few years after Byron's death.

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the peasants are pressed into the "collective farms" to work and produce collectively, therefore, the "number of capitalists has been diminished to one" (*RT*: 34). In this regard, one can refer to Barthes's argument that, power "never disappears. Make a revolution to destroy it, power will immediately revive and flourish again in the new state of affairs."[63] This is similar to Sackville-West's comment: Russia is "under a young system, dangerous, precarious, grappling on to its existence. [In Russia] communism is fighting for its life, it is unscrupulous, brutal, criminal; it forces us to say that the Russians have but exchanged one tyranny for another."[64] In addition, one can refer to the accounts of the German-American socialist Emma Goldman in her *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1923) and *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (1924). She is "deported from the United States to Bolshevik Russia, where she journeys south from Petrograd to the Black Sea, September, 1920-December, 1921. [She] observes that 'in reality the Russian people have gained nothing from the Bolshevist experiment' because monarchical absolutism has been replaced by party absolutism."[65] In a similar way, Morgan Philips Price, in *Russia, red or white: a Record of a Visit to Russia after Twenty-seven Years* (1948), comments on the Soviet system and believes that such a system is the "old imperial economy with new names."[66]

Byron's argument is focused on the contradiction in comprehending the concepts both in the Bolshevists' and in the Marxist sense. For instance, the use of the political term "the dictatorship of the proletariat" shows the discrepancy in defining the term

"proletariat" (*RT*: 32). In the Russian sense, Byron argues, it refers to "that hypothetical mass with whose aims Lenin, as a good Russian, necessarily identified his own" (*RT*: 32). Whereas the very term in the "Marxian sense, denotes a fluid supply of labour, without anchorage or possessions, at the beck and call of economic, i.e. capitalistic demand" (*RT*: 32). Byron believes that the Bolsheviks through the establishment of a tyranny and "an economic system" distanced themselves from "the very lynch-pin of the whole theoretical structure" (*RT*: 33). He argues that the Bolshevik tyranny "alienated the sympathies of the intellectual class"; hence, the Soviet Union with its "tyranny and economic system [...] was, and is, a total failure," (*RT*: 32-3) regarding Marx's theories. As far as the peasants resist against Bolshevising and exploitation and are "at odds with communist aristocracy of the towns," (*RT*: 34) Marx's theory of class struggle will go on. In this situation, truth and art are not objective but at the service of the 'Five-Year Plan.'[67] Under the dictatorship of Lenin's ideology and philosophy, the standards and norms in society are defined, evaluated and established.

For Byron, every culture is a book that a traveller can read to "enlarge his experience" by "seeing things" as they are rather than as they are supposed to be. Within the cultures, "past, present, and future exhibit a continuous interaction" (*RT*: 62). What Byron encounters in the Soviet Union is contrary to other parts of the world, since in this country he believes that the pyramid of social structure is "inverted: the apex, now reduced to the intelligentsia, has its nose in the ground" (*RT*: 62). It is unstable, in spite of the fact that it "now turned uppermost in mid-air," (*RT*: 62) and desperately, the Russians try to stabilize it. Byron argues that the minority, that is the Bolsheviks, the "Communist Party" through an "aristocracy of faith" have control over the majority who are "the lower, that of the politically angry, the peasants" (*RT*: 62). Byron, in his cultural analysis, attempts to shed more light on the process through which the culture, social institutions, habits, and all aspects in the life of a nation are transformed as soon as the new tyranny is established. When Bolsheviks take control over Russia, the borderline between good and evil is changed on the basis of the 'New Gospel'; "religion was their bane"; therefore, it falls "into very general desuetude," and the Bolsheviks consider it as "the opium of the people" (*RT*: 35). Byron believes that in several ways, man needs a kind of "faith or code without which life cannot be regulated" (*RT*: 35). Yet, in the Soviet Union, all the "pre-

existing religions were proscribed by the new philosophy" (*RT*: 35); thus, to control the society and people, the new philosophy turns into a "religion." God is substituted by the "Mass enthroned on earth" (*RT*: 35). This new religion with its "Mass-God" is the new opium prescribed for the society and it works. Beatrice Webb propagates this 'new philosophy': "Soviet Communism has a new ideology as well as a new economics. Soviet Communism puts no limit to the growth of man's knowledge. [...] It excludes, and dogmatically excludes, the supernatural, whether this takes the form of the primitive belief in good and evil spirits, or the more civilised reliance on an omnipotent God (whether or not opposed by a Devil) involving the immortality of all human beings, each individual being destined for Heaven, Purgatory or Hell."[68]

Byron illustrates the will to power and will to truth in the Soviet social structure, manifested in "the faith of Lenin," which is imposed on the people's life; it is through such a dictated discourse that the people comprehend the world, having "the city of Moscow" as "its fount" (*RT*: 62). Therefore, a particular social behaviour appears in accordance with Bolshevism. For the people, to know or comprehend means to participate in and enter into the complicated networks of power. Similar to the analysis of architecture of the land, Byron analyses the people's behaviour, appearance, even the people's way of walking and looking at each other, which stem from the prevailing power and discourse.

In his argument with Morgan, one of the English communists who fled into this 'Promised Land' and whose mind were saturated with Bolshevism, Byron directs the course of his discussion to the "soviet culture," to Morgan's enthusiasm concerning art. Morgan believes that it "must be a collective art, we've got to produce an intelligentsia that will think and create collectively" (*RT*: 24).[69] Manipulating such individuals shows that knowledge and intellectuality must be produced on the basis of the communist ideology, which considers *everything* as a struggle. Accordingly, Bolshevism as the dominant ideology in Russia confirms Foucault's claim "how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus, discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, or 'docile' bodies."[70] Such an intellectual views everything "as the manifestation of the class-

struggle," (*RT*: 26) and the 'product of environment.' Bolshevism analyses everything through a one-dimensional lens of dogmatism that considers other alternatives as wrong, this is what Byron considers the "desiccated husk of class ideology" (*RT*: 26).

Morgan's emphasis on the "collective art" (*RT*: 24), "collective uplift" (*RT*: 29) and collective creation by the intelligentsia reflects collectivism as a '*utopian*' dream that flourished in the 1920s. Generally speaking, as Robert C. Williams states, the "community and the collective-Russia, the masses, humankind and the party took precedence over the individual. The collective 'we' is immortal, while the individual 'I' will perish."[71] It is a '*utopian*' dream, an ideology capable of mobilizing the masses for direct action and strikes. The Bolsheviks and proletariat dictatorship are at the centre of this ideology, which, in Louis Althusser's words, relates the individuals to "their real condition of existence."[72] Byron's argument with Morgan is "one specimen out of many" (*RT*: 28) that shows how the whole society thinks and reasons in a one-dimensional way. This Russia is a "new world" for Byron, "beneath [its] insane babble of Marxian clichés" he tries to find out the undeniable forces, which are "beyond the fanatics and jargon that obscure every view in this modern Russia," (*RT*: 28) and produce a sort of blindness in Russia. Lenin was "one of the most remarkable characters in history, not only by virtue of influence on the fate of millions, but for his individual pertinacity and consistency in working towards an apparently impossible goal. [...] He found in Marx the raw material" (*RT*: 32) to fulfil his objectives. Byron interrogates the "theory of social evolution" by putting forward the crucial question "whether once the workers cease to be exploited, the Marxian law will continue to operate or not" (*RT*: 31).

One of the aspects that Byron does not portray in the Soviet Union is the people's suffering from poverty; that is what Vita Sackville-West and many other travellers encounter and describe in Moscow, for instance:

> All I can say is, that if Moscow is an elated city, I got the impression of a population furtively slinking along the walls; a people cowering away; a nation whose aspirations had been trimmed to a dead level, as a hedge. There was beggary, the depth to which one might sink; but no height, beyond that dead level, to which one might rise. [...] The general aspect of poverty in Moscow - the fact that no one dresses better than his neighbour - may have much, too much, to do with our hasty conclusions. We are too well accustomed to associate material prosperity with spiritual happiness. So, also, we are too impatient, we who have grown up in a country where change, although it seems quick to us, is a mere tortoise compared with such volcanic overthrows; we are too

> impatient, too intolerant of disorder, even temporary, to allow for the difficult and painful stage of transition.[73]

To some extent, Sackville-West's description is similar to what Louis Fischer, an American political journalist, writes: "the population of the entire country [the Soviet Union], however, suffers from the poor quality of food and from the lack of variety."[74] Byron's book is silent about the economic transformations of the country; in Paul Hollander's words, these transformations "were certainly among the most conspicuous and impressive aspects of change in the Soviet Union. Invariably the visitors were shown great construction projects, factories, dams, canals, hydroelectric plants, new farms, schools, housing, and the like. The visible transformation of the landscape, the sight of new cities, industrial plants, flood control projects, roads, bridges, newly cultivated lands—all these offered tangible and indisputable proof of the great changes taking place."[75]

3. 7. Byron and the Soviet Panopticon System

Much the same as Napoleon, who "set to organize" the state and "to arrange around [himself] a mechanism of power that would enable him to see the smallest event that occurred in the state he governed,"[76] the Russians, Foucault believes, have "merely adopted certain power and management techniques perfected by nineteenth-century European capitalism," they even "adopted [the European] disciplinary techniques, adding one new weapon, party discipline"[77] to keep tabs on the individuals at will. Accordingly, a panopticon system, metaphorically the Bolsheviks' "menagerie,"[78] is born "to induce in the [individuals] a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."[79] It functions as a "laboratory" in order to "alter behaviour, to train or to correct individuals"[80]; in other words, its function is to bring up an individual "according to [particular] systems of thought."[81] The new system in Russia controls the life of the individuals and trains them according to its standards. Similarly, Sackville-West describes such a process during her travel to Russia: "Communism has human nature as an opponent. To overcome this, the Soviet would say in self-justification, human nature must be crushed, coerced; it must be altered, willy-nilly; it must be reborn. Small wonder that a people undergoing the process of such coercion should

slink along the walls of the capital as malefactors dreading the descent of the hand of justice."[82] The individual is transformed into a new subject, and his/her gaze becomes a "part of the overall functioning of power"[83]; hence, he/she "in becoming the target for new mechanisms of power, [...] is offered up to new forms of knowledge."[84]

According to Foucault, "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and dangers."[85] In this respect, Byron's remark on the transformed educational system in Russia is worthy of notice, since within such a system "from the age of six" the child is brought up based on "the belief that the continuance of" the class struggle "is the proper aim of all human beings and the particular aim of all good Russians" (*RT*:39).[86] Byron argues that through this new imposed discourse the Russians, "from the ages of six to sixty," perceive the world and "a specious amorality is inculcated by the most elementary copybooks. Spy on your neighbour and cherish the machine! Is the motto of Russian childhood" (*RT*: 39). Sackville-West describes this panopticon system in similar terms: "Nothing visible happened, yet the air was charged; and tiny indications corroborated. People glanced over their shoulders at dinner to see whether the servants were listening; conversation became freer when the servants had left the room; dinner-parties were given indeed, but every guest arrived rather as though he had just escaped a lion in the street."[87]

The tyrannical Russian social structure, the Bolshevist's will, touching everything, and the very word "espionage," mixing with the individuals' life, are the lenses by means of which the Russians experience the world. The Soviet panopticon system functions, in Foucault's words, like a "laboratory of power"[88]; subsequently, as Byron states, "the whole air [in the Soviet Union] is poisoned by this evil. Every man lives in fear of his neighbour" (*RT*: 46). The prevailing power brings everything under its own control; nothing is free from this surveillant eye/I and ideology which blinds the Russians. Byron indicates the consequences of this blindness: "Owing to the intervention and the attitude that the greater part of the foreign Press has inherited from it, there has resulted in Russia a mental isolation from the rest of the world which was at first merely negative" (*RT*: 50).

In addition, Byron states: "[the] intelligentsia of Russia, both the survivors of the old and the children of the new ages, are victims of every disadvantage that dogmatism and jealousy can invent" (*RT*: 52). He quotes one of Dostoyevsky's characters in *The Possessed*: "one thing in his book is good, the idea of espionage. In his idea every member of the society spies on the others, and is bound to inform against them when necessary. All are slaves and equal in their slavery."[89] Byron argues, "this state of affairs consists in the universal, all-pervasive practice of espionage and suspicion conducted among all grades of the Materialist society. I heard it said that one in every fourteen persons in the whole of Russia is in some way or other an agent of the secret police" (*RT*: 45). Therefore,

> plotters, saboteurs, informers, kulaks, assassins, counter-revolutionaries, and the ever-renascent bourgeoisie, native or foreign, lurk behind every window, playing their assigned roles with the ineradicable malignancy of the Vauriens in Elmer Rice's *Purilia*. Against these vile creatures, the Communist Paragonians, members of that unspotted elite, the party proper, are engaged in ceaseless warfare. It is a kind of film-land, where all the types are prearranged and Goodness shines with perpetual brightness in its everlasting victory over Sin. Even prostitutes, being forbidden a trade-union, cannot flourish. (*RT*: 45-6)

The surveillance, dominating the Russian society, is under the control of the proletariat dictator "police known as the GPU" (*RT*: 46). It maintains a "victory" of "Goodness" over "Sin." It defines what has to be considered as "goodness" and "sin." Under the tense control of Bolshevist doctrine, the meaning of concepts, words, life, and so forth are changed and transformed. The "three-letter men" are present at every spot to spy and report; in other words, the Bolsheviks create a panopticon system by means of the GPU. Byron notices the tremor and fear on the people's face when he utters the "fatal syllables in public places" (*RT*: 46). A "spirit of malice and suspicion" rules the "whole Soviet Union" and the whole atmosphere in this country is "poisoned by this evil" (*RT*: 46). He argues that the present rulers in Russia are the previous prisoners sent to Siberia by the Tsarist state, whom Byron calls the "men of meaner mould"; accordingly, they infect the whole Russian life "with a spirit of malice and suspicion" (*RT*: 46). Because of such a suspicion, he concludes, "every man lives in fear of his neighbour" (*RT*: 46).

Foucault claims that there is no "escaping from power, that it is always-already present,"[90] and the articulation of knowledge becomes an expression of power. Barthes

argues, "power is hidden in any discourse."[91] Similarly, Byron demonstrates this expression of power:

> Education thus becomes a question of instilling into children (from the ages of six to sixty) the belief that the continuance of this struggle [that is 'class-struggle'] is the proper aim of all human beings and the particular aim of all good Russians. As far as general principles are concerned, a specious amorality is inculcated by the most elementary copybooks. (*RT*: 39)

The incontestable point is that power is an "ideological object," to quote Barthes, and it "creeps in where we do not recognize it at first, into institutions, into teaching."[92] The Russian educational system, from the outset, begins to conduct a secret observation and imprint it on the mind of schoolchildren through their books, "from which they learn to read, to train themselves as spies in their own villages" (*RT*: 46-7). The schoolchildren are treated like soldiers or machines. In Foucault's words, "something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit."[93] Byron encounters such a process when the "crowds of children trail round behind their teachers, as [he sees] them at the Burlington House exhibitions, imbibing knowledge of the hard and fast line between the new Right and the new Wrong as laid down in these Anti-God Museums" (*RT*: 39-40).

Byron satirizes the Russians who celebrate the "October Revolution in November" (*RT*: 47). He compares the disgusting and suffocating situation and the "despotism" of espionage, originating in the "priesthood of Materialism," with the Procrustean bed. The Bolsheviks cut whatever is beyond their standards or stretch it up to Bolshevik borderlines. It forces everybody to survive or deserve his fate "on account of his procrastination of soul" (*RT*: 48). Byron notices that "the inventors, planners, engineers, specialists, editors, architects, film-producers [...] suffer from [an] intolerable lack of freedom" (*RT*: 48). He argues that after the Revolution, the state imposes a sense of suspicion on the people's life and wants them to be careful about an enemy who is waiting for the right moment to attack them, yet the unidentified enemy never ever attacks them. Only the GPU, which is "getting too big for its boots," (*RT*: 48) throws the "blame for the failure of industrial projects on to specialists and foreigners" (*RT*: 49).

Bolshevism is so crystallized in Russia and encapsulates the whole society that everything has to be viewed through its lens of materialistic doctrine, contrary to other places in which the travellers and tourists observe and gaze freely. Life in the Soviet Union is imbued with communism in such a way that everything bears the mark of it. In Beatrice's admiring words, "the Communist cell, the basic organisation [is] found in every type of association, industrial and agricultural, scientific and cultural, even [...] games and sport."[94] Byron emphasises that whatever the tourist, the traveller, and the world in Russia need to observe is not the Five-Year Plan, or "the arid spectacle of Socialist construction" or Bolshevism which is "less attractive", "chiefly more obtrusive and more chauvinistic," and regards the "foreign visitor" suspiciously as a "subject for propaganda" (*RT*: 61) or "as a heretic" (*RT*: 62). On the contrary, the "landscape, people, habits of mind and behaviour, buildings, works of art, the new with the old, but seen always in relation to one another" are the main phenomena they need (*RT*: 61).

3. 8. Byron and the Soviet Aesthetics

Bolshevism, as the prevailing ideology and power incorporated in the Russian life, shows its presence everywhere. In Barthes's words, "in the most delicate mechanisms of social exchange: not only in the State, in classes, in groups, but even in fashion, public opinion, entertainment, sports, news, family and private relations, and even in liberating impulses which attempt to counteract it."[95] Byron shows that beneath the "Dialectical Materialism," the controlling doctrine which considers that "everything real holds in itself the germ of organic change," there is "that immemorial Russian sentiment of a cosmic national egoism" (*RT*: 54). This doctrine focuses on the "regeneration of the mass rather than of the individual" (*RT*: 54). Byron encounters the presence of a censorship among the intelligentsia, a "state of nervous insecurity" (*RT*: 33) and strain, which dominates their life. The "doctrine of Materialism" relates and "ascribes all artistic creation to the genius of the mass and epoch rather than to that of the individual," whoever tends to think contrary to this doctrine or does not believe in the "prevailing religion" can no longer "live here" (*RT*: 44). Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is a censorship over all artistic creation, the artists and writers are expected to create the works that conform to the doctrine of collectivism and Bolshevism. Under

the rule of Stalin during the 1930s, the "party controls over culture were extended by establishing single writers' and artists' unions, tightening censorship, and proclaiming an official doctrine of Socialist Realism as the measure of acceptable culture."[96] During this decade, one can distinguish "a marked extension of party controls over cultural matters."[97] Culture becomes a means of mobilizing the nation behind the great efforts of the Five-Year-Plan. The intelligentsia, the writers, and artists, are expected to "create works that conformed to the doctrine of Socialist Realism, not works that expressed their individual vision of reality."[98] Even though everything is expected to reflect the spirit and ideology of the party, one can trace the great innovations in art, literature and architecture in Russia during this period. Therefore, Byron's comments on Russia are affected by both his insight and blindness.

For Byron, one significant sign is the colour of the objects and the environment of the country through which he analyses the culture of the land. For him, the colour in architecture, for instance, refers to a meaning that stems first from the available substances in the land, and second from the symbolic meaning it conveys. What is of special interest for the analysis of cultures is to pay much more attention to the repetition of the master signs, since, as Barthes argues, "without repetition there is no sign, for we could not *recognize* it, and recognition establishes the sign."[99] Unlike Persian architecture which uses blue as its background originating in nature, in Russia what Byron encounters is "Red," originated in an ideology, which encapsulates the whole of the social institutions and cultural signs, such as "Red Russia", "Red Army", "Red Square", "red flag", "Kremlin rose aglow", or "rose-coloured brick," originating in the 1917 "Red Revolution." The repetition of the colour red, which covers the whole life in Russia, gives great prominence to it after the October Revolution; it corresponds to Bolshevism, collectivism, Leninism, the Five-Year-Plan, Marxism, Stalinism and the proletariat. There is hardly a place free from this colour, as a result of the dominance of Bolshevism, "[in] factories and clubs, the icon corner has been replaced by the Lenin or the Marx corner: hideous busts of pseudo-bronze stand on pyramidical pedestals draped in *red*, bowered in *red*, and backed with *red*" (*RT*: 37, my emphasis). The paintings portray heroic types of Soviet citizens at work, and the pictures of Bolshevists are considered as the "holy pictures."[100]

Red becomes the paramount "dogma" in various ways, as it is associated with the Revolution and Bolshevism, it touches everything, for instance, "the Red Capital in winter is a silent place" (*RT*: 17). Moreover, "[this], at last, was Red Russia; this horde of sable ghosts the Bolshevists, the cynosure of an agitated world. It was more than Russia; it was the capital of the Union, the very pulse of proletarian dictatorship, the mission-house of Dialectical Materialism" (*RT*: 18). Or elsewhere, "the Red Army!" (*RT*: 19); and "the Red Square was so called long before the Revolution, since the Russian word for 'red' and 'beautiful' is the same" (*RT*: 21). The phrase "Red Russia" is a sign that is associated with the dominance of Bolshevik imperialism all over Russia; it is a symbol of power, which penetrates everything; a sign of the "proletarian dictatorship," or what Byron terms the sign of the "mission-house of Dialectical Materialism."

For Byron, the architecture of the cities is a sign that recounts how the monuments and architecture of a land are the manifestation of the dominant power; it also shows the will engraved upon each of them. It is as if these signs illustrate the history of the country and the underlying will implied in them. For instance, Denis Judd, in his argument concerning British colonialism in India, points out that under the colonial power,

> the city of Calcutta came to symbolize British power. [...] It also became a city of some architectural note, with grand British buildings aping European models—for example the churches of St John's and St Andrew's were modelled on St Martin-in-the Fields, the offices of the East India Railway Station on the Palazzo in Rome, and the High Court upon the Ypres Cloth Hall.[101]

Much in the same way, Byron focuses his gaze on the "native architecture" in Russia, to "the golden helmets and onions of the churches, in the towered Kremlins, baroque palaces, Empire streets, Revivalist museums, and ferrocrete tenements, the history and character of the Russian people stand revealed" (*RT*: 55). He observes an incongruity in Russia "past and present" based on the "diverse architecture," (*RT*: 55) which symbolises it. Byron argues that through the Russian "architecture in particular," he can illustrate the "eventual development of Bolshevist taste," from the "eleventh century onward" (*RT*: 55).

Contrary to the claim of "the glib classifiers of Western Europe," who consider the Russian artistic creation Oriental, Byron believes that even though it "may have borrowed a motive here and there from the Moslems and Chinese," the kernel of its

aesthetic is "purely Russian" (*RT*: 56). He relates it to the Russian landscape, and remarks on the impact of environment on architecture: "the Russian scene provides neither form, nor colour, nor shadows of rich texture," and because of "its illimitable spaces and skies, its limpid summer clouds, and its precise outline of detail against the winter snow," this landscape provides and motivates the Russian architects to construct such a "grandiose and monumental" (*RT*: 56) architecture. He emphatically argues that architecture is commensurate with the landscape.

For him, architecture reveals nature, poetry, and the genius of the people. He states that the Russian architectural expression "has always borrowed the grammar of some foreign tongue and made it the basis of a language entirely his own" (*RT*: 56). In other words, the hybrid architecture indicates the impact of other cultures on the Russian life and "taste." The earliest is Byzantine, which Russia copied from the Greeks but Russianized, based on the Russian landscape. The next is Tartar, which introduced "walls and towers of Tartar pattern" (*RT*: 57) around the churches. Thereafter the Italians, "Venetian Gothic, classical pillarettes and arcades, machicolated balconies, elaborate rustications and a wealth of faience," (*RT*: 57) introduced innovation to Russian architecture. The "native motives," the impact of landscape, and the "foreign invasions," as well as the "process of westernization" bring about what exists in the present Russian architecture. Throughout the history of the nations, different cultures influence each other and new patterns appear in the artistic creation, literature, worldview, architecture and so forth. For that reason, it is impossible for a nation or a culture to close its gates to the influence of other nations and cultures. At one time this influence appears in the form of an invasion, imposing and engraving forcibly its impact; at another time, it appears implicitly by means of economic, industrial, political or cultural invasion. In each case, the cultures at one and the same time affect, and are affected, by each other.

Byron traces such a point in the architectural designs at Leningrad, emphasising the "establishment of a new autocracy, sustained by a new orthodoxy and a new phase of mental isolation," (*RT*: 71) which change the face of the city. He argues, "certainly the streets are mostly straight and the architectural styles borrowed from those of contemporary Europe" (*RT*: 71). He comments on the Russian taste in architectural styles which "demand of architecture colour, ornament, and, above all, a prodigious scale, [and

the] Western forms are made to serve these ends, heightened by a kind of emphatic eccentricity which is often fantastic" (*RT*: 71-2). Further, he argues, "Leningrad is a city not of architectural units but of architectural landscapes," and in its architecture "the national megalomania, combined with a sure instinct for bold, frank design, leaves no room for pretty vulgarity" (*RT*: 72). For Byron, the monuments in Leningrad are the manifestation of "the twin Revolutions of March and October," which he terms as the "poignant associations" (*RT*: 76). Russia is influenced by an "industrial and political tornado" so much so that "beneath the organized frenzy of Bolshevist Russia to be up and doing, the hospitable, easy-going country described by pre-power travellers is no longer recognizable"; in other words, this fanaticism obscures "the hospitable, easy-going country" (*RT*: 81).

Visiting St. Sophia at Novgorod, and tracing the history of the building that was "built between 1045 and 1052 in a style derived from Constantinople, but greatly heightened, and strengthened with massive piers in place of the slender pillars habitually used by the Greeks," (*RT*: 82-3) Byron shows the vicissitudes of different styles which stamped their effects on the face of the site. These vicissitudes create a kind of hybridity in the Russian art and architecture, such as the "Armenian influence", "German inspiration", "Latin inscriptions," and "Byzantine influence" (*RT*: 83). He also illustrates the impact of religion on the artistic creations, for instance, around the rim of Russian metalwork "runs a Biblical quotation" (*RT*: 83).

For Byron, the towers, the accumulation of architecture, the Tartars, "potentates, Tsars" and their emblem, "a golden eagle," domes, spires, cones, onions, crenellations as he "looked down to the river" then "looked up to the sky," after that "looked right and left: horizontally and vertically," (*RT*: 19) all in all are the juxtaposition and combination of history, art, cultural vicissitudes, innovation, Revolution on the one hand and power on the other. For him, the architectural designs and constructions are the means and signs through which he digs out the history of the land. Describing Lenin's tomb, Byron points out that the "original design" of the building "was of wood," while the "present [...] is stronger and more ruthless. It is constructed—or gives the illusion of being constructed—of superb blocks of stone, whose gigantic size is reminiscent of the Inca walls," (*RT*: 22) and the background of the scene is "in three colours, black, grey, and red," which reflects

the reconstruction of the site based on the standards of the new sovereignty.[102] Byron argues that "both the height and width, are calculated with the utmost nicety, so as to increase the effect of power and strength" (*RT*: 22). In other words, he puts stress on the different materials that are put together to create a "gigantic" sign of "power and strength;" a discourse which stems from an ideology through which the Russians come to perceive the world. The substance, for instance, the "superb blocks of stone," reflects the "power and strength," authority, and absence of fragility; it is the embodiment of a firm, inflexible view, which radiates from the new discourse, the proletarian power, from a "Revolutionary" song, and brings to the mind "many goblins on an infernal errand" (*RT*: 19). Consequently, architecture speaks and reveals our identity.

The form and content in an artistic creation (here architecture) are under the influence of landscape, nature, dynasties and external impact. Each nation focuses on a particular aspect, highlights and glorifies it as a master sign and symbol within its cultural context. Donald E. and Carolyn B. Lundberg state, "[almost] all of the great architecture in Russia dates from the Imperial days before World War I."[103] Before the 1917 Revolution and the dominance of Bolsheviks' will, the Russian art had a religious background that showed the impact of religion on the people's life. Whereas after the Revolution the

> most famous of all holy pictures in Russia—and the most efficacious in its transmission of human prayers to the authority competent to grant them—was the ancient Iberian Virgin of Moscow. [...] This stood in the Iberian Gateway, a double, twin-spired arch, [which] had lately been pulled down and an inscription erected, above the site of the Virgin, which reminds the passer-by of Lenin's familiar tag: RELIGION IS THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE. (*RT*: 103)

After the Revolution, the religious buildings lost their sacredness, as Byron mentions, one of these buildings among all "the monastery becomes a museum and a haven for savants, but was now deserted" (*RT*: 112). Art in every form functions in such a way that its outcome will move the people and will create an emotion in their heart. Regarding the Russian film, Byron concludes that every aspect in the Russian culture is affected by "the didactic unreality" of the "catechism in Right and Wrong" (*RT*: 43).

Byron highlights the process through which an artistic creation is born, then throughout history undergoes changes and is the subject of a never-ending change as long as man lives on earth. Each sign in man's life appears and carries a burden of meaning, and the

meaning is changed throughout the history of the sign. The same is true for architecture, narration of a nation, people's behaviour, and so forth. He traces such a rising and falling, appearing and disappearing of meaning in Russian painting and frescoes, and shows how the features in Russian painting are changed from one period to the next, and how these changes create a kind of discourse for both the people and the artists in comprehending the world. In other words, the artistic creation of each period, as a sign, reveals the changes in the history of a nation. Based on his arguments concerning architecture and the impact of various factors on it, in spite of the differences in the form of artistic creations, which originate in the time and place during and within which it is created, the content of art remains the same, whether it is religious, heroic or otherwise.

The "Great Untruth," (*RT*: 40) the underlying truth in the Russian life, under the proletariat dictatorship is "brought to the surface," when Byron is in a Moscow conservatorium to attend "a Beethoven concert conducted by Oscar Fried" (*RT*: 41). The audience, their faces and reactions illustrate what Byron is searching for, and he reads, or thinks he reads, his "own thoughts in their faces" (*RT*: 41).[104] There is a strong submerged expression in their faces that is at odds with "Materialism" and "can never conquer and that must ultimately and inevitably conquer Materialism" (*RT*: 41). In other words, in spite of the fact that the Bolshevik dictatorship tries to maintain and impose its doctrine on the people's life, apart from such an oppressive and suffocating situation and beneath the Iron Heel of collectivism, there flows an eternal stream of the people's affection contrary to Materialism.