Introduction

Every text requires some sort of interpretation as a part of the effort to appraise, improve, and enlarge the text's achievement, typically as a means to find a unifying structured framework through which we can make sense of an author's work. To understand and interpret a text is to "get beneath the accumulated crust of misinterpretation [...] and take a stand in the center of what is said and unsaid."[1] Metaphorically speaking, a text is a mirror, and is often a very good place to discover the conventions and codifications of a certain period; i.e., as a social product, the text might be "marked in the light (or shadow) of power."[2] From another vantage point of discussion, whoever holds *this mirror* before himself will see his own image, whereas the mirror has no image of its own; simultaneously, it reflects the image of every reader; in short, the image is at once "present and empty" but "unreal and full,"[3] and it masks the absence with an illusion of presence.

In much the same way, culture is a "symbolic [sign] system", an "acted document" and "consists of socially established structures of meaning."[4] It is like a text, a mirror, and a galaxy of signs, objects and codes. It is like a never-ending field full of divergent flowers, each is different from the others, while organized in a (dis)orderly manner. A traveller, through his journey and encountering this galaxy, finds himself at the centre, where his eyes can see a certain spectrum of the signs. In understanding the signs and recoding them in his travel book, he acts as a translator and translates the unfamiliar travellees[5] to his readers. As he moves from one place to another, from one sign to the next one, a new batch of meaning shows itself to him, whereas the social and cultural galaxy rarely shows itself completely to him; therefore, some parts of the travellees remains un-translated for the travellers, readers as well as critics. The traveller focuses his gaze on those signs and objects which he considers as master signs, whereas the other signs elude his gaze. Even those master signs might be mistranslated; hence, the traveller's blindness, which Robert Byron criticises: "Do people travel blind?" (*RO*: 202)

A traveller's blindness concerning the culture of the travellees might stem from his prejudices, his unfamiliarity with the codes and conventions of the exotic lands, and the constraints—to some extent originating from his relation with power, or his superiority complex—that separate him from social and cultural layers in the exotic lands. This blindness is transferred to the critics, which in turn induces the reader's blindness, in a never-ending chain of blindness and insight[6]; accordingly, all understanding of the culture and life of the people might be a shadow of understanding (the present approach is not free from such a chain). The end-result of the traveller's attempt at understanding another culture, which finds expression in his travelogues (here European travel accounts concerning the Orient), might be a denigrating representation of the people seen through a broken-distorted-looking-glass, as being 'underhumanised', 'amoral', 'disordered' and 'deformed'; this is what Edward W. Said argues in *Orientalism* (1978).[7]

My understanding is that "truth is [...] reached [...] dialectically"[8]; in this regard, a travel writer can understand the truth of the travellees provided that he has a dialectical dialogue with the objects, signs and codes during his expedition. We must bear in mind that this might not be a full understanding. To understand the culture of the travellees means to experience and understand what is meant by a dialogue between the traveller and the travellees. Metaphorically, the traveller and the travellees, these two participants, begin in conversation, continue it and try to understand each other not only through language. It is an understanding that enables the traveller to translate and reword the conventions and codes of the travellees for his own people; in other words, his function is to familiarize them with the unfamiliar world. For instance, Robert Byron, who pays a special attention to architecture, tries to engage in a dialectical dialogue with such artistic creations.[9] For him, the truth of architecture makes itself apparent in its being, thus he who "'understands is always drawn into the event whereby the meaningful validates itself. ... When [he] understands, [he is] drawn into an event of truth.'"[10]

Similarly, the reader attains the truth of a travel writer's works through a dialectical responsiveness to what the writer has encountered, experienced and understood during his journey, and represented in his text. It is a process of reciprocal interaction and interrogation between the reader and the text, which provides him with a means for a conceptual mastery of the text, and brings out a "*hidden* meaning, [and] what is unknown

to light: revelation and disclosure"[11] of truth. Through the fusion of the reader's world with that of the text and entering its world, the reader's horizon of expectations is broadened, similar to what a traveller experiences and understands in the travellees, which results in understanding the world and self-recognition. Gadamer argues that „*daß alles* [...] *Verstehen am Ende ein Sichverstehen ist.*" And he adds: „Insofern gilt in allen Fällen, daß, wer versteht, sich versteht."[12] In Joel C. Weinsheimer's words, "what we understand therefore is ourselves, and thus how we understand ourselves has an effect on everything else we understand."[13] Accordingly, as Richard E. Palmer argues, "understanding is a dialectical process of interaction of self-understanding of the person (his 'horizon' or 'world') with what is encountered,"[14] it is gaining knowledge.

What is more, a travel book truly presents us with a world, which is the "fusion of truth or being presented with the form."[15] Much the same as the reader who interrogates the text, the world of the text puts questions to him; subsequently, paying attention to the questions put to him, the reader converses with the text, experiences and understands it, which results in self-understanding. As concerns this point, to experience and understand Byron's *The Road to Oxiana*, for instance, means to enter its world, as well as Byron's world of understanding. It shows how Byron's horizon of understanding is enlarged and broadened, through his encountering the travellees, especially Persians, and he reaches a self-understanding and understanding the 'Other.' In other words, when he focuses his gaze on understanding and tracing the underlying elements in the history of the travellees and relates them to the present it means that he rises to a "'higher universality that overcomes not only [his] own particularity but that of the [Other] as well.'"[16]

The Road to Oxiana, which is at the core of my argument throughout this study, is a revolutionary modernist travel book. What is of special interest to me is Paul Fussell's argument, in *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (1980): "[what] *Ulysses* is to the novel between the wars and *The Waste Land* is to poetry, *The Road to Oxiana* is to the travel books."[17] Such a view stems, first, from the questions *The Road to Oxiana* poses to Fussell, and second, from his perception when comparing Byron's book to such masterpieces he already knows. It is also related to Fussell's knowledge concerning the revolution the author of each of those texts presents in a particular literary genre. Fussell's comparison points up the modernity of these texts. In fact, such

"Modernist fiction [*Ulysses* for instance] liberates itself by breaking open the conventional plot constructions of the nineteenth-century novel, thus releasing a stream of—apparently!—uncontrolled detail."[18]

Joyce's modernism in *Ulysses*—through fragmentation, collage, pastiche, a kind of chaotic montage of discourses and instable, fragmented interwoven chains of meaning, a gigantic attempt to gather in a single text a number of cultures, languages, literatures, and the creation of a chaotic galaxy—makes him an avant-garde writer. Unlike the preceding writers who produce "readerly-texts" (*lisible*)—"such as realistic novel that tries to 'close' interpretation by insisting on specific meanings"—Joyce writes a "writerly-text" (*scriptable*)— a text that "aims at the ideal of a 'galaxy of signifiers, and so encourages the reader to be a producer of his or her own meanings according not to one code but to a multiplicity of codes."[19] So does T. S. Eliot, for whom journey and displacement are constant motifs encapsulating many of the themes of inter-war travel writing in *The Waste Land*—through the squalid metropolis, fragmentation, muddled cultures, the flotsam and jetsam of a decayed civilisation, nostalgia for an earlier, lovelier world, fear of past and future horrors. These authors introduce a revolution in fiction and poetry in such a way that their texts will be interpreted by future generations incessantly.

Similarly, Byron creates a revolution in travel writing, which originates in his contribution "to the process of the modernisation of travel writing in the early decades of our century."[20] This revolution in travel writing refers to his insight in confrontation with the travellees; i.e., his trained eyes enable him to see and trace the hidden meaning in the minute objects. He does not separate the objects and signs from their history and cultural context and their relation to the present. One of the prominent points that Byron is concerned with is presenting the aspect of power, as a *leitmotif* in his travel books. For instance, in *The Road to Oxiana*, he traces Reza Shah's tyranny and its impact on the people's life, the decline of British imperialism and the growth of American hegemony, later manifested in Mohammad Reza Shah's regime, in Persia. In *An Essay on India*, he shows the impact of the British imperial eye/I on Indian identity; and in *First Russia, then Tibet*, he illustrates the presence of the Bolshevik Iron Heel and the deformity created by Red dogmatism in the Russian social and cultural context.

He is more concerned with understanding the Other and the Self, as the kernel of

modern travel writing, which "at its best reflects both the crisis of travelling and of travel writing as media of understanding oneself and the other, one's own culture and the culture of the Other."[21] Like Odysseus, Byron undergoes travail, encounters different cultures, nations, languages, places, and time (as far as each historical monument is the representation of an historical era). His *travail* gives him an insight into his own culture, Self and "the culture of the Other." *The Road to Oxiana* is an *Odyssey* of the present, a travel text, which "borrows freely from history, geography, anthropology, and social science,"[22] showing how Byron is familiar with nations as narrations. The book liberates itself from the "encyclopaedic information" of traditional travel writing, and it is "free to concentrate much more on the actual narration of the traveller's movements from place to place and on his [...] personal moods and subjective impressions."[23] Even though Byron tries to keep his "diary" aloof from Proust's writing, his description, analysis and representation of the cultural and social structure are imbued with the stream "of uncontrolled detail" (*RO*: 269) characteristic of modernist fiction. In much the same way that the "description of [...] the name *Guermantes* hypnotised" Proust, the "name *Turkestan* has hypnotised" Byron (*RO*: 269). Thus, "[in] the last two days, all the novelty and pastoral romance implied in the name Turkestan have come true; already a whole chapter of history has been transferred from the printed page to the mind's eye" (*RO*: 270). That is why Fussell compares Byron's modernism in *The Road to Oxiana* with that of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. It is as though the book is obsessed

> with frontiers and fragmentations, it juxtaposes into a sort of collage the widest variety of rhetorical materials: news clippings, public signs and notices, letters, bureaucratic documents like *fiches*, diary entries, learned dissertations in art history, essays on existing politics, and, most willingly, at least 20 comic dialogues—some of them virtually playlets—of impressive finish and point, which we appreciate the more when we have digested Sykes's later observation that because Byron was not just a poor linguist but a 'very poor' one, 'all the non-English conversations recorded in his book are invented.'[24]

Modern travel writing dissociates itself from traditional conventions, which is a step towards the modernisation of travel writing. This is a shift from travel writing as an act of objective informative-oriented representation to a subject-oriented representation of the travellees, which focuses on understanding the author's Self and the "Other's" Self. More to the point, "the modern travel writer has to transform that rag-bag or omnium-gatherum of information that the travelogue used to be into an intellectually more coherent and an

aesthetically more controlled structure."[25] Likewise, Helen Carr considering *The Road to Oxiana* as an example of the modern travel book, affirms that it

> has a modernist timber—it is composed of brief, sometimes quite imagistic, sporadic diary jottings, surprising juxtapositions, letters, reported conversations, historical facts, and anecdotes. Much is not explained, with the reader left to fill in: only near the end does one discover why this journey [*to Persia,*] has been undertaken.[26]

Accordingly, the text is modernist in its "timber" in such a way that the reader must fill in the gaps throughout the process of reading. Manfred Pfister argues that "the marked heterogeneity" of *The Road to Oxiana*—its compilation and juxtaposition of "narration, description, compilation of facts, historical summary, reflection, commentary"—links it with "Modernist aesthetics."[27] Such a view shows that Byron

> takes this hybridity of genre to extremes, juxtaposing in often pointed and ironic contrasts entirely different discourses and modes of representation. He thus foregrounds indeed, pace Bode, 'die Verfahren der Textualisierung': without having to resort to explicit metacommunication, the collage of heterogeneous elements in itself lays bare their divergent rationales and historical affiliations. [*The Road to Oxiana*], in spite of following one continuous journey from Venice to India, is extremely discontinuous and surprises its readers from short segment to short segment, and even within the segments, with unexpected turns of theme and argument or startling changes of voice and tone.[28]

Pfister adds, "as in the Modernist text, in *The Road to Oxiana* there are conflicting centripetal and centrifugal impulses at work: the will to unity and totality, and the awareness that they are no longer available."[29] In the preface to *First Russia, Then Tibet* (1933), "Traveller's Confession," his "most sustained attempt at stating his objectives as a traveller and travel writer, he defines as true travellers those rare persons for whom"[30] "exists an organic harmony between all matter and all activity, whose discovery is the purpose of their lives" (*RT*: 10). "Here it is, forcefully put: the will to and desire for, unity and totality which, in *The Road to Oxiana*, will find its expression in the quest for the Ruskinian and Yeatsian vision of a 'Unity of Being' lost in the past and still enshrined in monuments of art and architecture."[31] Elsewhere, Pfister argues that "Byron's modernisation of travel writing shares with High Modernism not only its literary self-consciousness, its disruptions of tradition, its subversions of discourses and genres, its openness to the heterogeneous, but also its paradox of a Modernism that tries to solve the social and political crises of modernisation in the West and in the East by turning away

from and against the modern world."[32]

As a "spiritual quest," the book opens up a *novel* epistemological and ontological horizon about the East. Pfister argues that Byron's journey is "a quest for greatness and the origins of greatness,"[33] and considers *The Road to Oxiana* as a "quest for the origins of Islamic architecture." They are "located in the East, in Central Asia, in Oxiana, and from there they have radiated into Islamic, Byzantine and Western art."[34] Such origins are similar to the rays of the *sun of civilization* in Archibald McLeish's poem "You Andrew Marvell"[35] (1930), which at first rises in the East, then gradually glorifies the West. *The Road to Oxiana* shows "the tension between the writer's compulsion to report the world [...] and his often-repressed desire to make the world conform to his preconception of it."[36] Nicholas Shakespeare, in *Bruce Chatwin* (1999), declares that "*The Road to Oxiana* was candid account of a journey made in 1933 through Persia and Afghanistan in search of Seljuk tombs—tall, cylindrical mausoleums whose existence was known to Byron only through some 'inadequate photographs.'"[37] Fussell considers it as "an artfully constructed quest myth in the form of an apparently spontaneous travel diary."[38] Hence, *The Road to Oxiana* is apt to be considered as the *Ulysses* or the *Waste Land* of modern travel books. It is a modern travel book, a displaced myth (what Northrop Frye considers a myth), which resembles the archetypal monomyth of heroic adventure, defined by Joseph Campbell, as tripartite:

> first, the setting out, the disjunction from the familiar; second, the trials of initiation and adventure; and third, the return and the hero's reintegration into society. Even if there is no return, the monomyth still assumes tripartite form, as in *Pilgrim's Progress*, whose title page declares that the hero's 'progress, from this world, to that which is to come' will be conceived in three stages: 'The manner of his setting out; His Dangerous Journey; and Safe Arrival at the Desired Country'. The first and last stages of the tripartite experience tend to be moments of heightened ritual or magic, even in entirely 'secular' travel writings. [...] As Campbell notes, the 'call to adventure' is the figure for the onset of adolescence; adult life is 'the travel'; old age, the 'return'.[39]

It is possible to identify such an archetypal pattern in the expeditions of travel writers who undergo *travail*, which results in transformation of their insight, perception and understanding. Byron exemplifies what other travellers were *blind* to observe and discover through their journeys to the East. He, by means of his *insight*, is able to perceive and affirm the splendour of the Persian world, for instance, through those "tall

cylindrical brick structures in Northern Persia." Unlike mere tourists, whom he considers "blind," Byron disapproves of the systematic stereotyping of the East by Western colonizers. Fussell, in *Abroad*, argues that Byron's "extravagant and often sentimental praise of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Islamic architecture provided him with an opportunity to do what he did best, namely, *oppose a prevailing opinion* [my emphasis]."[40] Byron familiarizes his own people with the unfamiliar world of the exotic lands. He articulates his experiences and understanding throughout his travel books, which bring out the hidden meaning of what is unknown to light.

Byron is different from the preceding travel writers, since he encounters and illustrates the Orient differently from the preceding travel writers, as Pfister demonstrates: "Byron's Orient, far from 'soft' and 'effeminate', is, at its best, hard and virile."[41] This shows how Byron "dissociates himself emphatically from the nineteenth century and aligns his virile Orientalism with certain anti-Romantic moves of High Modernism."[42] For Byron, travel means to experience, understand and recognize what other travellers are not able to see. For instance, "to travel in farther Asia is to discover a novelty *previously unsuspected and unimaginable* [my emphasis]."[43] By means of travelling to the East, his "lighthouse vision" moves from Europe to "touch new horizons," located in the East.[44] For Helen Carr, Byron's "passion is early Islamic architecture, [and it] gives him enormous pleasure and satisfaction, emotions rarely in evidence in other travel writing at the time."[45] His understanding the Persian world may be significantly related to Christopher Sykes' argument: Byron "in innumerable small observations in [*The Road to Oxiana*] showed that he understood the Persian world as very few have done."[46] It is a world that Sykes considers as "a piece of Europe [...] fallen into Islam," where Byron is "inwardly at peace"[47]; and to be "inwardly at peace" in Persia means to understand it and to be in agreement with such a world.

I am concerned with showing how Byron is "seeking his own personal truth" during his journey to Persia. Dennis Porter, dealing with Lévi-Strauss, in *Haunted Journeys*, argues that, "understanding is inseparable from self-understanding through the detour of otherness and a dialogic openness to the possibility of change."[48] Byron through his journeys, which have two-dimensional aspects, reaches a self-understanding on the one hand, and understanding the 'Other' on the other hand; i.e., the "time of his visit [of

Persia] was a time of [understanding the Persian world, his own self], exploration, [and] of changing ideas."[49]

Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), argues that, "nations themselves are narrations"[50]; to go a bit further, nations narrate their history also through monuments and architecture. In addition, Mohammed Arkoun, in his article "Spirituality and Architecture," quotes from Charles Jencks that "architecture is 'built' meaning. It fatefully expresses who we are."[51] What we must bear in mind is that power manifests itself in architecture. In this regard, for Byron one of the prominent objectives in travel is a study of architecture, through which he illustrates the underlying power structure during different periods. He articulates this explicitly when he deals with the historical monuments in Persia, India, Afghanistan, Russia, Tibet or Europe. Indeed, Sykes points out that Byron engages in a "Byronic struggle" when he is dealing with the "art of Safavides [for instance] and the forgotten glories of mediaeval Persia, Robert, of course, fighting valiantly against the popular side."[52] In *The Road to Oxiana*, architecture plays an important role through which the possibility of understanding the 'Other' and the Self are matched with each other. It is worth mentioning that Byron, in *The Byzantine Achievement* (1964), argues that:

> 'Art' in common parlance, implies the creation of form, in two dimensions or three, as opposed to other manifestations of 'artistic' expression, such as music or writing. And it was in art thus defined, in representation and design, in leviathans of architecture and microcosms of craftsmanship, that the Byzantine genius found its medium, and thereby bequeathed posterity a legacy both in concrete monument and formative affect. (*BA*: 187)

Likewise, Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick claim "that an understanding and engagement with architecture" paves the way for "any comprehensive understanding of culture. [...] It may be suggested that it is through architecture that particular cultures, as well as humanity as a whole, come to express and understand themselves. It is through confrontation with the buildings of another culture that we can recognise their otherness."[53] Byron's understanding of the nations is through the narrations embodied in their architectures; through such a "built meaning"—Gunbad-i-Qabus, Persepolis, the Shrine of Imam Reza and the Mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah, in Persia for instance—Byron analyses the cultures symbolically and semiotically. Through relating the monuments to the dominating power of the time and the people's present life, he shows the splendour of

culture and tradition hidden from other travellers' eyes.

James Clifford foregrounds "travelling as a cultural practice"[54]; such a view shows that travel and travel writing are closely connected with cultural studies. (Similarly, Mark Cocker mentions that travel books "have a mixed cultural pedigree."[55]) What is more, when the question of cultural interpretation becomes crucial, the issues related to travel texts are raised, such as political, aesthetic, or ethical spheres of human life. Architecture is a nation's heritage, which narrates the nation's past and present history, codes and conventions, desires and motives of the people. In respect of such views, Byron, like a cultural critic, through encountering the pre-Islamic and Islamic architecture in Persia, for instance, reads them, traces the underlying meanings manifest in their internal and external structure and illustrates the splendour and significance of such monuments and buildings in relation to power. Moreover, he emphatically illuminates the impact of Persian art, architecture and culture on other cultures.

This study traces the historical lines of travel and travel writing, briefly, in order to clarify the significance of *The Road to Oxiana*, *An Essay on India* and *First Russia, then Tibet*. In addition, it illustrates the place of Robert Byron within the history of travel and travel writing; i.e., it depicts the differences and affinities in Byron's writings and objectives to other travel writers. Byron's trilogy is a lens and a discourse through which the Orient is represented to the world. I am concerned with entering into a dialectical dialogue with *The Road to Oxiana*, *An Essay on India*, and *First Russia, then Tibet* "'to bring [them] out of the alienation in which [they find themselves as fixed, written forms], back into the living present of dialogue, whose primordial fulfilment is question and answer.'"[56] As Bruce Chatwin declares, *The Road to Oxiana* "is a lost book" or in need of being "rescued from the library shelves."[57] In other words, this is an attempt to bring Byron out of the libraries to be considered and reconsidered in the field of humanities and social sciences.

In the first chapter, my focus is on the definition of travel and travel writing by critics and the history of such terms. Moreover, I am concerned with tracing the different motives and objectives behind travel and the impact of travel on the travellers' life. I wish to give a brief history of the travellers whose attempts produce a discourse concerning the 'Other.' The chapter, very briefly, deals with Herodotus, Marco Polo, Mandeville,

Thomas Cook and the Grand Tour, Alexander von Humboldt and Laurence Sterne. Next, it covers briefly a few travellers of the 1930s and after, such as Norman Douglas, D. H. Lawrence, T. E. Lawrence, Evelyn Waugh, George Orwell, Patrick Leigh Fermor and Bruce Chatwin. Throughout my argument, I try to show different motives and objectives behind each traveller's expedition, which differentiate them from Byron, or associate them with him.

In the second chapter, my aim is to show different objectives of European travellers (mainly the British travellers) in travelling to Persia, their affinities and differences with Byron in presenting Persia as a discourse. What is important for me is to deal with the underlying elements in European travellers' discourses as different lenses by means of which Persia is gazed at and represented to the world. For instance, one can refer to Vita Sackville-West's *Twelve Days* (1928), in which she represents her impression of the Bakhtiari Country and the impact of such a short journey to Persia on her worldview. Such discourses or networks serve to help me to dismantle the prevailing Western discourse constructed about the Orient. Through differentiation between at least two categories of travel writers in terms of their objectives, one can find a picture of the Orient (here Persia) contrary to the image Arthur James Balfour created about the Orient, or to Lord Evelyn Baring Cromer's Orientals, who were represented as being "'devoid of energy and initiative,'" or as creatures who "cannot walk on either a road or a pavement [and are] inveterate liars, [...] 'lethargic and suspicious,' and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race."[58] The chapter covers the expeditions of travellers such as the Sykeses, Isabella Bird, Gertrude Bell, Vita Sackville-West, Freya Stark and Robert Byron.

Having Foucault's theory of power/knowledge in mind, in the third chapter, my focus is on *An Essay on India* and the first part of *First Russia, then Tibet*. In the former, Byron illustrates and assesses the impact of British colonialism on Indian identity, and in the latter, he shows the dominance of Bolshevik dogmatism in the Russian social and cultural life. I am concerned with illuminating the processes transforming both the Indians and the Russians, presented in these two books. His *An Essay on India* is an attempt to show India under British colonial power; whereas in *First Russia, then Tibet* Byron comments on Bolshevik dictatorship, a network of surveillance and a panopticon system, which

transform the whole country based on the Russian doctrine of class struggle.

In the fourth chapter, my focus is on Byron's reflection on Persia under the control of Reza Shah and on the ways Byron, through different signs, traces the workings of power during this period. My argument focuses on Byron's critical representation of Persia, in *The Road to Oxiana*, and on how he illustrates Reza Shah's tyranny like a Foucauldian critic *avant la lettre*. In dealing with architecture, signs and objects, Byron appears as a Barthesian critic *avant la lettre*, as well whose focus is on the underlying meanings behind each sign and who decodes them based on his own insight. Even though Byron journeys as a "camera-strapped" (*RO*: 17) traveller who might be considered as the agent of the British Imperial eye/I in Persia, he comments on the decline of British power, remarking on the mishaps of "Charcoal-Burners" on the one hand, and the growth of American hegemony in the form of an American Hospital and a new Chevrolet on the other. "Byron's attitude to British imperialism seems to be highly critical. His critique, however, is not anti-imperialist at all, as what he criticises is an imperialism that has lost its guts and moral mission. What he laments is 'the Betrayal Era of British foreign policy' (Byron 1981: 26), which thwarts the visitor to British Cyprus with a 'deliberate philistinism' (27), condescends in Syria 'to saving British face by the concealment of atrocities' (55) or provides in India a mere 'spectacle for complacent, boasting patriotism': 'if the English must be bothered to defend India, it shall be with a minimum of personal inconvenience'. (275—276)"[59] This chapter focuses on illuminating the aspect of power, here Reza Shah's tyranny, his early life and *coup d'état*, his main objectives in modernizing Iran, his dictatorship and codification of social institutions and the decline of the British empire, which Byron encounters during his journey to Persia.

In the fifth chapter, my argument centres on Byron's reflection on the architecture of Persia, from pre-Islamic to Islamic periods. I try to show one of Byron's objectives in Persia, which is to find the origin and character of Islamic architecture. Relating to this objective, I am concerned with showing Byron's aesthetic reflection on and analysis of Persian architecture. Similar to my argument in the preceding chapters, I focus on Byron's *leitmotif*, the aspect of power, manifested in Persian architecture and the means by which he illustrates power relations in a thick description and clipped "photographic illustrations"[60] of Persian pre-Islamic and Islamic architecture. For him, architecture and

monuments are "the most universal of the arts. [They enshrine] the past in a form more extensive, more varied, and more easily apprehensible than any other form of culture. [They exhibit] the taste and aspirations of the present to all who traverse the streets of a city and raise their eyes as they go" (*AA*: 9). They are not mere objects without any significance; rather they speak to him and reveal their underlying meanings, concerning history and culture of the nations. In these chapters, my argument is to show that "language is always on the side of power; to speak is to exercise a will to power: in the space of speech, no innocence, no safety."[61]

In the concluding chapter, my focus is on Byron's search for his own "personal truth,"[62] the impact of the travellees (mainly in travels to the East) on his horizon of world understanding and his metamorphosis, which are the consequences of his travels abroad. Regarding Gadamer's argument „daß *alles* [...] *Verstehen am Ende ein Sichverstehen ist*"[63] and the changes in one's worldview and horizon of expectations, my argument circulates around this German phrase: "*ein Wiederfinden des Ich im Du.*"[64] Through travelling to India, Russia, Tibet, Afghanistan, Persia and other countries and mediating between his own world and that of these countries the latter act as the Other (or *Du*) for Byron by means of which he reaches a self-recognition and recognition of the 'Other.' As an in-between person, Byron travels to the exotic lands and encounters the great works of art, architecture, people, cultural and social strata, and then by means of his travel books he represents/translates the unfamiliar travellees to his own people. This in turn results in transforming his horizon of understanding and refreshing his insight.