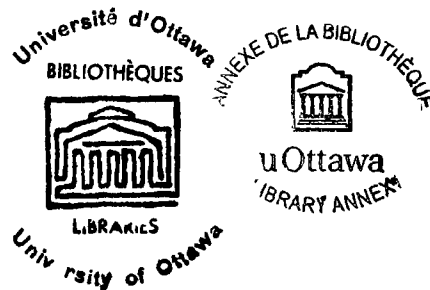


THE ORIGINALITY OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION
IN THE CHRONICLES OF TRAVELLERS TO INDIA:
MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO MID-EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY

by

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Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies as
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in History



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
OTTAWA, CANADA, 1976

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ABSTRACT

A global approach to the study of European civilization may be followed by disastrous consequences especially when undertaken by a young student of History. Yet, regardless of the end results, the experience and knowledge acquired in the preparation of this thesis has been immense and has turned a difficult challenge into a fascinating and most worthwhile exercise.

In order for this thesis to see the light of day, strict limits had to be set from the very beginning. The time zone we were to operate within was roughly defined as mid-seventeenth century to mid-eighteenth century, The majority of the works used were written between 1660 and 1690, an even shorter time span. The number of chronicles employed was purposely kept relatively low. We examined fifteen groups of writings including the Jesuit Relations, the writings of famous travellers like Bernier, Chardin and Tavernier, as well as those of lesser known writers like Nicolaus Manucci, Abbé Carré, Robert Knox and Alexander Hamilton. Furthermore, the material read was to cover travels strictly in and about India and the Mogul Empire. This was to limit the number of oppositions which could be drawn between Europe and the rest of the world. The question was less "how many" oppositions might be found but more "how well" such oppositions might be documented. And, finally, we were to accept rather uncritically everything the chroniclers saw and experienced in the East and concentrate all our attention on what was said either directly or indirectly about European civilization.

These limits and other elements of method are discussed in greater detail in the introduction. The widest possible use was made of all the collected data and still some authors surface more often than others. Evidently, travellers to India were not evenly prompted to draw comparisons between East and West. The series of short biographical sketches beginning on page 8 attest to the diversity of the chroniclers interests and backgrounds.

In the final part of the introduction, we have tried to define the chroniclers' awareness of a separate and unique Western identity. Then, in the remaining body of our thesis, divided into six chapters, we have related the principal features with which, unknowingly, the chroniclers portrayed the originality of European civilization. Here are a few of these features.

The chroniclers condemn the abuse of royal power in Mogul India and proclaim Western monarchs the champions of reason, justice, and of the well-ordered State. The right of property is seen as a natural right, as the basis of individual freedom, and as the source of Europe's greater prosperity. (CH.I)

Humble origins and a mean life are said to be incompatible with the Western concept of nobility. Yet, the noble order is not an exclusive society, it does admit into its company men of quality and merit of less fortunate birth. (CH.II)

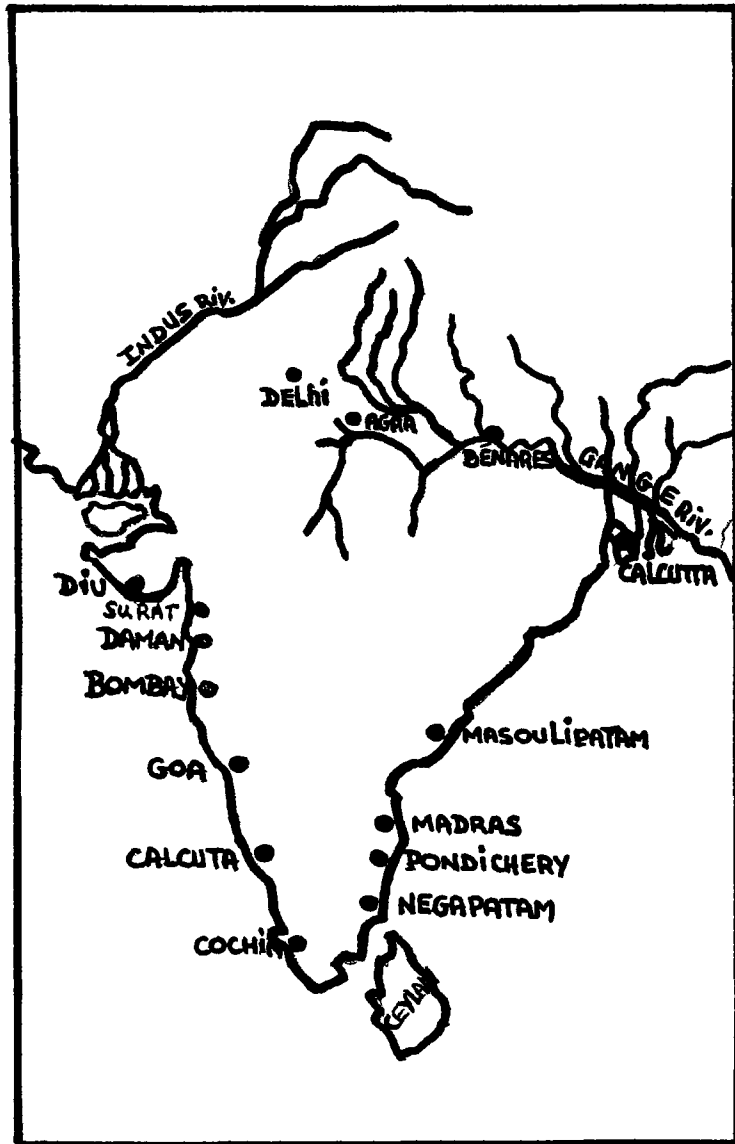
When justice takes on more elaborate forms, as in Europe, it becomes less tolerant in the punishing of criminals. More important, Western laws were found to be more flexible, more adaptable to the changing needs of society. (CH.III)

Order, the theme of our fourth chapter, becomes an inherent quality of the Western mind. The chroniclers' idea of an ordered society called for a high level of interaction between the different constituent bodies which together should form the coherent and functional whole. Order then became the source of power and strength when discussed in the sense of military discipline. The success of any administration also depended on order; this time in the sense of methodical efficiency requiring standardized business procedures and a systematic application of the laws. Order wherever present always received praise, disorder was condemned. For a European, order was something of beauty, intelligent, and powerful. (CH.IV)

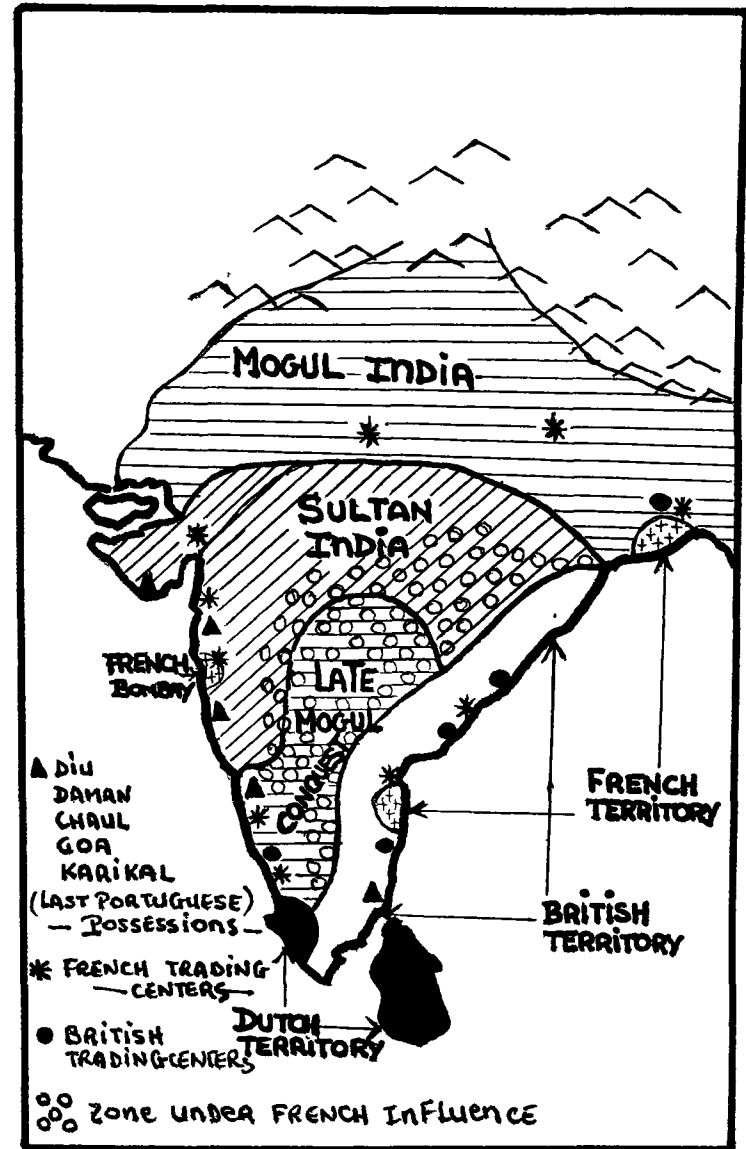
The chroniclers' writings also made possible a chapter comparing daily life habits, manners and customs in Europe and India. We successively examined the ways of greeting, the forms of civil discourse, the rules of fashion, practices concerning health, hygiene, and other aspects of man's physical well-being, and differences in dwellings, culinary practices, and table manners. (CH. V)

Finally, in matters of science and techniques, we were brought to recognize a strong and imposing Europe. What best characterized the Western mind at the turn of eighteenth century was its profound will to improve upon the current level of acquired knowledge, its desire to go beyond not fearing nor hesitating in front of the yet unknown. Its principal attribute and that which explains Europe's rapid technological growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the attention to details, the need for precision and exactitude. (CH.VI)

It will be observed that the list of features and peculiarities which have characterized the European civilization is by no means complete. To extend and complete this list, chronicles of travellers to other parts of the world would require study. Aside from chronicles, there are many other types of documents which could help to document the present list. In the spirit of the eighteenth-century European mind, we must continue to improve upon our present knowledge, we must go beyond, not fearing nor hesitating.



PRINCIPAL TOWNS VISITED BY EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS



INDIA (CIRCA 1700)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to isolate and explain some of the dominant traits of the European civilization. This shall be done by examining the writings of seventeenth and eighteenth-century travellers to India. The documentary source immediately limits the scope of this project. Europe's originality will only suggest itself through a series of comparisons and contrasts with the Indian civilization.

Travel accounts have long provided historians with an excellent source of information for the study of extra-European societies. We shall attempt a reverse operation and show that these documents can serve European civilization studies as well. Travellers to distant parts of the world encountered societies whose social, political, and economic structures differed radically from those known in Europe. Such confrontations lent themselves rather well to comparative analyses. European travellers constantly passed value and moral judgments on the things they saw and experienced. In their writings, they sought above all to report what they considered novel and peculiar. Now considering that man's needs are fundamentally the same all over the world, we can say that what differs from one society to another are the means by which these needs receive satisfaction. Different societies have simply accommodated

themselves differently to the ever pressing realities of the world. When the chroniclers depict features peculiar to India, we know that there will usually be a corresponding European peculiarity. Such correspondences appear either in the form of direct references to Europe, or in the form of inferences. Our task is to document these oppositions as thoroughly as possible.

Of course, not every distinguishing feature can be taken for a dominant trait of the European civilization. We have retained as such only those peculiarities which the chroniclers frequently insisted upon. The results find themselves expressed in the choice of themes discussed in our different chapters. The material concerning such concepts as power, property, nobility, rank, prestige, justice, and order was quite voluminous. Separate chapters were required to deal specifically with one or two of these concepts at a time. The last two chapters feature a number of peculiarities which received only infrequent mentions. These cannot be considered dominant traits. Such peculiarities deserved to be noted, however, for they broaden our understanding of the European civilization.

It may be questioned why we have restricted our research document to the use of chronicles and especially to chronicles relating solely to India. This dissertation, it must be observed, is only a small contribution to a much broader research project. In an effort to enlarge our understanding of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century concept of Europe, historians

from several different countries have begun content analysing various types of documents (encyclopedias, dictionaries, gazeteers, private memoirs, diplomatic correspondence, exotic literature, etc...). Others, like myself, have chosen to work with period chronicles. Where some have begun studying the chronicles relating to the societies of North Africa, the Near East, China and the Americas, our attention has focussed on the writings of travellers to India.

India, moreover, has the advantage of being a highly evolved and complex civilization with structures and tradition which reach far back in time. The more evolved the civilization, the greater the possibilities for travellers to draw comparisons on all levels. Our study has confirmed the authenticity of this claim.

Finally, as this thesis was researched in Canada, it was necessary to have on location sufficient chronicles for either one of the regions mentioned above. We were fortunate to find that for India, Canadian libraries were particularly well stocked in these documents. The project was therefore made feasible on this ground. Unfortunately, we have not always been able to locate original editions. A few French authors, for example, had to be read in translations, French versions not always being available.

We have only judged it necessary to make a few brief remarks on our research method. Before undertaking the actual reading of our select group of chronicles, we carried out a

study in the techniques of content analysis,

We wanted to know whether or not it would be possible to submit the content of the chronicles to quantitative analysis. Having examined several works making use of different levels of content analysis methodology, we were brought to conclude that quantitative analysis is feasible only when the form and content of the documents used are highly homogeneous. In our case, the chronicles did not meet these requirements. Our chronicles borrowed several different forms of presentation: some consisted of collections of letters, some took the diary and journal forms, and others appeared in the standard narrative form. Moreover, these documents were highly heterogeneous in content. As a result, we were brought to use the least technical level of content analysis. We proceeded through a careful reading of all the content matter, noting as we went both the direct and indirect references to Europe. Then we arranged our material into different themes. The dominant characteristics which emerged were not predetermined, they were allowed to announce themselves from within.

It appears necessary to explain why we have not included a chapter on religion. Surprisingly enough, the chroniclers wrote very little on religious themes. They were conscious that, in India, church and state were not two distinct and separate powers, each with their own sets of institutions, like the case was in Europe. The missionaries wrote at length about their missions and the great obstacles which confronted them.

But the issues they discuss belonged to a context all of its own and bore little resemblance to the religious climate in Europe. The Catholics called the Protestants "heretics", and the Protestants replied by calling the Catholics "papists". Apart from this, Europeans in India seemed to manage very well together regardless of their religious persuasions. Interestingly the chroniclers tend to blend the concepts of race and religion into one. A missionary admitted there were three orders of Christians in India: transplanted European Christians, Indo-Portuguese or half-caste Christians, and Indian Christian converts. The European settlements, in India, welcomed within their walls Christians of all denominations. However, a special section known as the "White Town" was reserved for European Christians while a "Black Town" lodged all the non-European Christians. In all appearances, the race factor in the present context served to divide what the religious factor had seemingly fused together, a fragile fusion at that. Europeans suddenly discovered that what ultimately differentiated them from the rest of the world was not so much religion as the colour of their skin.

Since this paper deals with the ideas of the chroniclers rather than with their adventurous lives, the following short biographical notices will enable us to locate these travellers in their historical context.

François Bernier (1620-1688)

Frenchman, born in Anjou, the son of a leaseholding cultivator. Studied medicine at the University of Montpeltier. Befriended the philosopher Gassendi. Travelled extensively in Europe before visiting India. Witnessed Aurenzeb's rise to power. Came under the protection of a wealthy Mogul Lord. His Indian travels cover the years 1656-1668. The author offers a penetrating account of the Mogul war of succession (1658-1659). His considerations on the social, political, and economic structures of the Mogul Empire are particularly useful. Bernier's knowledge of the Indian civilization remained slight, he was much better acquainted with places like Surat, Agra, and Delhi which he describes in great detail. A staunch critic of the Great Mogul's despotic regime; he favored royal absolutism, Western style. Bernier's manuscript was first published in Paris in 1670.

Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651-1725)

An Italian noble born in Radicena in the province of Calabria. Doctor of Civil Law, turned to travelling to escape family disputes. Owing to his great fortune, Careri travelled in style. Visited India in 1695 as part of a world tour which had begun in Egypt (1693) and ended in Mexico (1699). A master of details, treated physics, astrology, zoology, religion, and politics with equal ease. The first Italian version of his Giro del Mondo appeared in Naples in 1700.

Abbé Carré (Abbé D. Barthélemy Carré de Chambon)?

Colbert charged the abbé with two successive missions to India. In 1666, Carré accompanied director general Caron to Surat to establish the Compagnie des Indes Orientales. Carré was again dispatched to India in 1672 with letters for de la Haye, Governor of St. Thomé. His chronicles cover the period of this second mission. His hinterland crossing from Surat to St. Thomé is an exciting piece of travel literature. The difficulties on the road, the dangers encountered, the pains of hunger, the maladies, and the variety of manners and customs from village to village, are all recounted with detailed precision. The second part of Carré's journal contains an extraordinarily vivid eye-witness account of the siege of St. Thomé. Published in 1699, Carré's relation failed at the time to solicit much enthusiasm.

François Catrou s.j. (1659-1737)

Catrou's Histoire générale de l'Empire du Mogol depuis sa fondation jusqu'à présent is a free translation of Manucci's chronicles. The author supplemented the Venetian's writings with material drawn from other chroniclers (Maffei, Pietro della Valle, Thomas Roe, Bernier, Tavernier, D'Herbelot, etc.). The first volume is devoted to the history of the Mogul Kings. The second and third volumes depict Manucci's adventures among the Moguls during Aurenzeb's rule. The author often breaks away from Manucci's narrative to examine certain peculiarities in

greater depths. On such occasions, Catrou draws useful comparisons with the European civilization. Catrou edited the Jesuit literary organ Journal de Trévoux from 1701 to 1712. He also published an unsuccessful twenty-one volume History of the Romans.

Jean Chardin (1643-1712)

Son of a wealthy jeweller in Paris, Chardin undertook his first Eastern trade assignment for his father in 1664, a venture which brought him first to Surat and thence to Ispathan. In the span of a decade, Chardin amassed a huge fortune in the diamond trade. In 1681, due to the persecution of French Huguenots, Chardin went to London. He was appointed court jeweller and knighted by Charles II. In his leisure time, Chardin devoted himself to a serious study of the Indian and Persian cultures and discovered the charms of the Orient. Rather than condemning differences between East and West, he tried to explain them.

John Fryer (1650-1733)

Fryer graduated from Cambridge's Trinity College with a degree in medicine. In 1672, he joined the East India Company as surgeon. Between 1672 and 1682, he served in Masulipatam, Diu, Surat, Swally, and Ispathan. Fryer's knowledge of India was mainly limited to places along the Indian sea coast. Yet, with a mind for details, his writings abound with information

concerning botany, zoology, geology and meteorology. His manuscript was published in 1683, shortly after his return from India. In later years, Fryer was elected fellow of the Royal Society.

Alexander Hamilton (1650-1723)

Scottish by birth, Hamilton spent 36 years in the East (1688-1725) as a licensed free-merchant. Most of his manuscript concerns his business activities, his fortunes and misfortunes. He had such a formidable knowledge of East India trade that the English were constantly seeking his advice and services. Hamilton also wrote about people and society. He had a profound dislike for the Portuguese clergy in Goa calling them "zealous bigots", "idle drones", and "notorious hypocrites". He spoke out on the backwardness of the Indian civilization, yet he admired the natives for their deep sense of morals. Hamilton's chronicles were published in Edinburgh in 1727, two years after his return from India.

Robert Knox (1640-1720)

Another Scotsman with strong puritan principles, he was the son of an East India Company naval captain. Both father and son were taken into captivity when their boat^{was} shipwrecked on the coast of Ceylon in 1660. The father died but the son retained in Ceylon for close to twenty years. Robert Knox spent these years observing and recording the social and physical

aspects of Ceylon. A large segment of his work deals with the trials and tribulations of a difficult escape through unmarked lands and forests. Finally rescued by the Dutch, he returned to England and published what is known as the earliest detailed account of Ceylon in the English language.

Jesuit Relations

The Jesuit Relations from India cover the years 1693-1755. The letters deal with a wide range of topics. Some were published purely for the sake of religious propaganda, others, more scientific, concern the pearl fisheries, the mechanical arts, the study of heavenly bodies, irrigation and the devastations caused by great floods, time, weights and measures, and the topography of the land. The missionaries also wrote about the social and political structures of India, the forms of justice, Indian folklore, religious ceremonies, and Indian superstitions. The letters which contained the most useful comparisons with Europe were those written by the Jesuits Barbier, Bouchet, Bourzes, Mauduit de la Lane, Martin and Tachard.

De la Flotte

De la Flotte visited India between 1757 and 1761. His chronicles which appeared in essay form were published for the first time in 1769. The biographical dictionaries yield no information at all on Monsieur de la Flotte. This traveller was nevertheless an experienced mariner interested in the

geography of nations. His description of the Coromandel Coast is of an unusual precision. On other subjects, the author tends to be somewhat brief but his remarks are generally lucid and to the point.

Nicolao Manucci (1639-1717)

Manucci left Venice at the age of 14 never to see Europe again. A certain Henry Bard travelling to Persia and thence to India took Manucci into his service. A few years later, Manucci was introduced to the Mogul court. He was offered employment which he readily accepted. Manucci spent the next forty years following the Great Mogul from one court to another. He recounts his personal experiences throughout these forty years and with first hand information, depicts in the most detailed manner, the activities and life style of the Mogul Court. Manucci's manuscript was first published in 1907. Having spent the greater part of his life in India, Manucci draws exceptionally few comparisons with Europe.

Peter Mundy

Born in Cornwall, England, Mundy was employed by the East India Company from 1628 to 1634. In this short span of time, he was promoted from factor to company register to accountant. When his five year contract expired, he took his leave and returned to England. His Indian travels are presented in diary form. His descriptions of Surat, Agra and Potna are

particularly vivid. His considerations on the social and economic consequences of the famine of 1630-1632 constitute a first rate historical document.

Domingo Fernandez de Navarrete (1618-1686)

A Dominican friar, famed for his part in the Chinese rites controversy. During a return voyage to Europe, he stopped in India and visited Goa, Golconda and Masulipatam. His brief study in India refused him the possibilities of a greater understanding of the Indian civilization. Based on first impressions, his remarks are often unfounded and tend to superficiality. Nevertheless, Navarrete offers a unique Spanish point of view of India.

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier

Born in Anvers, the son of a cartographer, Tavernier spent the greater part of his life travelling. By the age of 22, he had already visited most of Europe. Tavernier then turned his attention to the Orient. He was essentially interested in diamonds and in Indian mining techniques. Between 1631 and 1658, he undertook six voyages to India. His chronicles contain lengthy descriptions of the famous diamond mines of Colconda visited in 1641. He also spoke about India's mineral wealth and outlined the commercialization of precious stones. His Indian travels brought him great fame. He was annobled by Louis XIV and retired a wealthy man.

Jean de Thévenot (1633-1667)

Thévenot was born in Paris. His uncle, Melechisedech de Thévenot, the editor of a famous multi-volume collection of travels, encouraged his nephew's interests in geography and in the natural sciences. Thévenot visited India in 1666. He died the following year on his return to Europe. His manuscripts were subsequently published by two close friends, the Sieur de Larsandre and the French orientalist Petis. They appeared in Paris in 1684. Thévenot was conversant in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. This facilitated his contacts with the local people everywhere he went. Thévenot's chronicles **ARE unusual** due to the individual attention the author gives to each Indian province.

Before turning to the study of specific themes and concepts, we shall try to show how the chroniclers identified themselves as Europeans and how they perceived European unity.

Admittedly, travellers to India were not in command of a highly sophisticated knowledge of the physical characteristics of their own continent. Had they been, they would not have remained so consistently silent on questions relating to the size and shape of Europe, to the general topography of the land, or to the geographical limits of what they termed Western Europe. Our globe trotters were probably even less acquainted with the early history of their civilization judging especially by the want of information on the origins and peopling of Europe. Exceptionally, the chroniclers do provide some vague suggestion

as to the air and climate of Europe. Crossing the Bember Hills, François Bernier relates that he suddenly felt himself "transported from a torrid to a temperate zone". He adds:

We had no sooner scaled that frightful wall of the world and begun the descent on the other side, than we breathed a pure, mild, and refreshing air. What surprised me still more was to find myself, as it were, transferred from the Indies to Europe: the mountains we were traversing being covered with everyone of our plants and shrubs, save the hyssop, thyme, marjoram, and rosemary. I almost imagined myself in the mountains of Auvergne, in a forest of fir, oak, elm and plane trees, and could not avoid feeling strongly the contrast between this scene and the burning fields of Hindoustan.¹

Such passages are indeed rare and offer but shaky grounds on which to consider the originality of Europe's natural setting. True, the chroniclers in this study were interested in India primarily from a social and cultural point of view and were therefore little inclined to draw comparisons with Europe on other levels. Yet, the absence of such information can also be interpreted to suggest that the natural geography of nations was not held as an important conditioning factor in the growth of civilizations; that what ultimately differentiated societies were more the social and political structures and the quality of men and ideas which led them forward. To achieve a more thorough understanding on how Europeans defined their own political and geographical limits, we would need to examine the principal dictionaries and gazetteers of the period, chroniclers to India displaying unusual silence on all these questions.²

While efforts to define and delimit the extent of Europe are relatively scarce, the chronicles contain ample evidence that Europeans were fully aware of their separate and unique identity. Expressions like "after the European manner", "after the European fashion", "like our European style", and references to "le génie des Européens" (in the sense of technical ingenuity), are all common utterances. Our travellers clearly understood that the nations of Europe shared certain ways of life and certain modes of thought which were absent from the places they visited in the Eastern world. Whether French, English, Italian, or Spanish by birth, the chroniclers chose more often to extend their remarks to embrace Europe as a whole rather than limiting them to their respective mother-country. This sense of belonging to a collective or united Europe appears in expressions like "our Western Empires", "our countries", and "our Christian States". Passing through Surat, abbé Carré, Colbert's special envoy to India, describes the French, English, and Dutch commercial establishments as "our three companies".³ When Europeans of different nations gathered together in distant lands, they experienced a greater awareness of the social, cultural, and religious ties which united them. Their Western heritage was something they shared not only with their countrymen but also with Europeans at large.

On what authority do the chroniclers allow themselves to extend their remarks to embrace Europe as a whole is sometimes questionable. In our list of travellers, Tavernier, Thévenot,

Bernier, and Careri were alone to have extensive European travels to their credit. Careri's Viaggi per Europa, published in Naples in 1701, for example, relates the author's experiences in Italy, France, England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Spain, and Portugal. The other travellers are seemingly without much first-hand knowledge of Europe. Chardin knew Persia and parts of India better than he had ever known Europe; Carré was well-acquainted with the French court and the fashionable Parisian salons but apparently with little more; Manucci had left Venice at the age of fourteen never to return; Fryer, Mundy, and Knox had never stepped outside their country until they joined the East India Company and set sail for Asia; Hamilton was in the same situation, only he went to India as a licensed free-merchant; and, finally among the French Jesuits assigned to the India mission, few could actually claim previous travel experiences outside France. It would seem then that when the chroniclers refer to Europe and to Europeans, their frame of reference in many instances is narrower than they suppose it to be. This is particularly noticeable in passages where the authors use both the place-name of their country and the place-name Europe as if the two were one and easily interchangeable.

Occasionally, the differences in national backgrounds become the source of interesting contradictions. For example, Navarrete, the Spanish Dominican friar, reports that the Mogul King's residence in Agra "might vie with the best in Europe",

adding that "before it is a square which is not inferior to any in Spain; those of Barajas or Lerma are not better."⁴ Only a few years earlier, Francois Bernier had reassured his French readers that the royal residence was "a handsome and noble building, but not to be compared to Fontainebleau, Saint-Germain, or Versailles."⁵ Whom are we to believe is rather inconsequential: the point of interest lies elsewhere. The above verdicts clearly illustrate that while national standards formed the usual basis of comparisons, rendered judgments were commonly extended and applied to Europe in a more general way. On occasion, we do encounter comparisons drawn between India and ~~an~~ individual country of Europe, but these remain, on the whole, notably fewer in number. Manucci, for example, was prompted at times to write about the splendours of Venice and Rome, which, even after many years in India, he still vividly remembered. Careri who was born in Calabria but who made Naples his principal residence tells us at one point that some of the Indian ways of greeting "in Italy would be taken for an affront and laugh'd at" and "in Naples would certainly produce a duel".⁶ Though probably more widely applicable, Careri's comments in this case are not attributed to other parts of Europe. In general, however, individual nations are only infrequently referred to, the majority of mentions go to Europe.

Among these references directed to individual states, France definitely obtains the largest proportion. One obvious explanation is the substantially greater importance attached to

French chronicles in this study, but there are other reasons as well. Travellers of other nationalities clearly acknowledge a French hegemony in Europe. Simply listen to John Fryer's reasons for publishing his travels:

To inform those busy translators, that the industry of our own nation is not fallen beneath that of France, whose language and manners we so servilely affect, as to think nothing excellent, or "alamode", which has not a French dress.⁷

Fryer's attack on the "busy translators" is clearly a reaction to the invasion of French literature in his country. Confining ourselves strictly to travel literature, we know that Bernier, Tavernier, and Thévenot's chronicles were within only a few years of their first French editions, translated into English. In almost each case, a Dutch, German, and Italian version quickly followed. The opposite, however, rarely holds true. Except perhaps for a few partial translations or free adaptations in abbé Prevost's enormous collection Histoire Générale des Voyages, few English chronicles went to press in the French language. That Europe was enthralled by French manners and French styles leaves little doubt. Louis Réau, in his important work L'Europe française au siècle des lumières, has brilliantly portrayed the rapidity with which Europe adopted practically everything "made in France." Two centuries earlier, Voltaire had written about this French cultural hegemony in similar terms:

Cette heureuse influence ne s'est pas même arrêtée en France; elle s'est étendue en Angleterre; elle a excité l'émulation dont avait alors besoin cette nation spirituelle et hardie; elle a porté le goût en Allemagne, les sciences en Russie, elle a même ranimé l'Italie qui languissait, et l'Europe a dû sa politesse et l'esprit de société à la cour de Louis XIV.⁸

For a while, and especially at the time when the majority of our travellers were writing their memoirs, the prestige of France knew no bounds. Fryer readily concedes in 1693:

Of later years, that stirring King Lewis the XIVth (who was well instructed first by Mazarine, and since having been no bad proficient under so expert a Master) has made himself to be taken notice of in Europe by his conquests and attempts upon Flanders and the Low countries by land; and has by his foreign expeditions, acquested the world's admiration.⁹

French styles were not only "alamode" in Europe, they also seem to have been popular in Portuguese India. Attending a wedding in Goa, the Italian Careri reports that the Portuguese bride was "richly clad after the French fashion." Elsewhere, he informs us that the Portuguese judges in India insist on wearing their "huge periwigs after the French fashion."¹⁰ But if the English and Italian occasionally acknowledged a French hegemony in Europe, imagine the compliments the French chroniclers were to pay their mother country. Comparing the capitals of the world, Bernier bestows these splendid praises upon the city of Paris:

You need not quit Paris, however, to contemplate the finest, the most magnificent view in the world; for assuredly it may be found on Pont-neuf. Place yourself on that bridge during the day, and what can be conceived more extraordinary than the throngs of people and carriages, the strange bustle, the various objects, by which you are surrounded? Visit the same spot at night, and what I fearlessly ask, can impress the mind like the scene you will witness? The innumerable windows of the lofty houses seen from the bridge exhibit their chastened and subdued lights, which the activity and bustle, observable in the day, seem to suffer no diminution until midnight... Yes, my friends, when you are on the Pont-neuf at Paris, you may boldly avow on my authority that your eyes behold the grandest of all artificial scenes in the world excepting possibly some parts of China and Japan, which I have not visited. What will this view be, what will be its beauty when the Louvre is completed? ...That work of man so displayed indicates the capital of a great empire, the seat of a mighty monarch. I may indeed say, without partiality, and after making allowance for the beauty of Delhi, Agra, and Constantinople, that Paris is the finest, the richest and altogether the first city in the world.¹¹

France, in the eyes of many, was unmistakably the way of the world, and the chroniclers whether conscious of it or not frequently express this notion of a French Europe.

Admittedly, the chroniclers' concept of Europe is still not very clear. It would be unfair, however, to suggest they were without one. The obvious is sometimes the most difficult to discern, and, in this case, we can easily assume that the concept of Europe was so well engraved in the European mind that to comment on it was simply uncalled for. Europe was the

most technically advanced and, thus, the most powerful civilization in the world. Moreover, Europeans alone in the world enjoyed the benefits of "revealed religion and rational laws". The natives of India by opposition, Hamilton will declare, have but

wild notions of a deity, overclouded with superstition and folly which deserves our pity and charity; and that our duty towards God and our neighbour is, by the Holy Scriptures, set before us in the brightest lights, while theirs is to be groped out by the dark glimmerings of very fallible reason.¹²

Europeans had seen the Light, and it was their duty and mission to bring it to the rest of the world. Not words but actions became the rule of the day. Our travellers left Europe with these attitudes but some returned changed, often humbler men. Even our proud Scotsman will be forced to concede:

I have known many of them (Indians) practice very much holiness in their lives by the help of morality, so that some animadversions on our advantages, compared with their disadvantages may be, in some measure, both useful and delightful to all thinking man.¹³

Paul Hazard sums up similar feelings in a discussion of Chardin's works:

The notion of "superiority" on which he had hitherto been brought up, as it were, was now no longer valid. Henceforth he must think in other terms.

"Differences" not "superiority" was now the appropriate word; a striking psychological readjustment.¹⁴

In retrospect, we can speak of a certain unity of concept of Europe but with this exception. The longer a European traveller stayed abroad, the greater normally was the change in his concept of Europe. For the "touriste pressé", on the other hand, the traditional notion of a superior European race underwent little or no change at all; often, in fact, the experience of travelling through distant parts of the world served only to reinforce his original ideas.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, p. 405.
2. See Michel Devèse's introductory chapter in L'Europe et le monde à la fin du XVIIIe siècle.
3. Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré in India and the Near East 1672-1674, Vol., I, p. 148.
4. Navarrete, The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete 1618-1686, Vol., II, p. 310
5. Bernier, op. cit., p. 283.
6. Careri, "Indian Travels of Careri" in Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, p. 170.
7. Fryer, Preface, Vol. I, p. 6.
8. Voltaire, Le siècle de Louis XIV, Vol. I, p. 36.
9. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 112.
10. Careri, op. cit., p. 170 and p. 198.
11. Bernier, op. cit., p. 285-286.
12. Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies, Vol. I, p. 7.
13. Ibid.
14. Paul Hazard, The European Mind, p. 18.

CHAPTER I

POWER AND PROPERTY

Travellers to India found plenty of faults with the political and economic structures of the Mogul Empire. They **criticized heavily** the despotic character of the Mogul King and the absence in India of private property. They simply could not understand how the Mogul's Imperial domains could equal in extent the entire surface of his Empire. Just as shocking was the sight of an entire population, "both in body and goods" and "from the highest to the lowest", reduced to living "like slaves or very like slaves", wholly at the Mogul King's command.¹ With these impressions, the chroniclers were brought to comment on just how the notion of power and the notion of property differed in Europe.

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The Ruler and the Ruled:

The chroniclers report that in India, the Mogul King was "absolute", "despotic", and "tyrannical". Moreover, his rule was "arbitrary" in the highest degree, his will and pleasure dictated his every move, and his head served as his sole counsellor. Careri declares: "The Great Mogul is so absolute, that there being no written laws, his will in all things is a Law, and the last decision of all causes, both civil and criminal".² There was plenty for Europeans to be shocked about. In their minds, a true monarch was a man of dignity, a man worthy of every respect, and, above all, a man beloved by all his subjects, not feared. Where in Asia could such a prince be found? Cruelty, instead, the chroniclers agreed, was the natural disposition of these Oriental despots.

Rien ne met à couvert des extravagances de leur caprice; ni probité, ni mérite, ni zèle, ni service rendus; un mouvement de leur fantaisie, marqué par un mot de la bouche, ou par un signe des yeux, renverse à l'instant les gens les mieux établis, et les plus dignes de l'être, les prive des biens et de la vie, et tout cela sans aucune forme de procès, et sans prendre aucun soin de vérifier le crime imputé.³

Looking to Europe and using the French monarchy as our Western model, we are momentarily struck by the equally unlimited extent of the French royal powers and prerogatives. The King of France occupied the supreme command of the nation. All the power

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was concentrated in his sovereign person. He alone could declare war, raise troops, and, in the end, promulgate peace. In the spheres of justice, finance, and security, his powers were just as extensive. His will and pleasure was expressed through royal decrees, ordinances, and edicts all of which had the irreversible force of law.⁴ The kings of France were indeed absolute monarchs but, and this is what the chroniclers firmly insist upon, they were, unlike the Great Mogul, neither despots nor tyrants.

But if the French King was just as powerful as the Mogul, what prevented him from abusing his royal prerogatives? It must be remembered that the State in France was only intrusted to the King; the King was not, as in Mogul India, the State all by himself. Furthermore, the first duty of a French King was to serve the general welfare of the state. We must look upon him as a public servant elevated "by the grace of God" to the highest office in the realm. The Mogul King, on the other hand, was a stranger in his own land, a conqueror, a self-appointed master compelled by necessity to maintain his nation in a perpetual state of subjection. No law could restrain the King; the King was the law.

The chroniclers criticize the absence of "written laws" governing the status and privileges of the Mogul King. In Europe, some laws were written but not all. Written constitutions had not come of age. The most constitutional country in the world at the turn of the eighteenth century was England but her constitution was neither written nor systematic. In professor Mousnier's words,

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the English Constitution was simply "un ensemble de coutumes, avec quelques lois écrites: Grande Charte, Pétitions des Droits, Bill des Droits, etc. C'est une Constitution coutumière et, avant l'ère des Constitutions écrites, toutes les constitutions furent coutumières."⁵ It must be observed, however, that customary laws had the strength of written laws. This was true in Europe, it was also true for the customs and traditions which governed the caste system in India. The Mogul King was not subject to Indian laws; he and his conquering companions were above such laws. In contrast, there were some fundamental laws in Europe which society long ago had appropriated itself and which could not be altered, not even by the most powerful of all Kings.

Among such laws figured an abstract vision of society, a law which took its roots in the very nature of things, and which was beyond any man's capacity to change. This law, the chroniclers knew it well; they never specify its content but they indirectly refer to it in all their arguments against the Mogul. They believed like most Europeans that a natural order existed in all things and that it would be wrong to interfere with the Laws of Heaven. Listen to the reasons of the seventeenth-century jurist for maintaining the traditional orders in society:

Il faut qu'il y ait de l'Ordre en toutes choses, et pour la bienséance et pour la direction d'icelles... Car nous ne pourrions pas vivre ensemble en égalité de condition, mais il faut par nécessité que les uns commandent et que les

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autres obéissent. Ceux qui commandent ont plusieurs Ordres, rangs ou degrés. Et le peuple qui obéit à tous ceux-là est encore séparé en plusieurs ordres et rangs, afin que sur chacun d'iceux il y ait des Supérieurs, qui rendent raison de tout leur ordre aux Magistrats et aux seigneurs Souverains. Ainsy, par le moyen de ces divisions et subdivisions multiples, il se fait de plusieurs Ordres un Ordre général et de plusieurs Etats un Etat bien réglé, auquel il y a une bonne harmonie et consonance et une correspondance et rapport du plus bas au plus haut: de sorte qu'enfin par l'Ordre un nombre innombrable aboutit à l'unité.⁶

Travellers in the Mogul Empire never admit to finding any such orders. To them, there was a mighty tyrant and all the rest were slaves. For a moment, they did imagine the possibility of one exception. The Mogul population of India had in fact the appearance of a privileged group. Moguls, whom the chroniclers also called Moors, dwelled for the most part in the capital cities of Agra and Delhi. Many of them descended from the people of Great Tartary but not all. Persians, Arabs, and Turks often passed for Moguls as well. "To be considered a Mogul," Bernier wrote, "it was enough if a foreigner had a white face and professed Mahometanism!"⁷ Numerically, the Moguls were weak. In 1701, Father Diusse estimated that for the whole of India there was only one Mahometan to every two to three hundred gentiles.⁸ The Moguls enjoyed, nonetheless, a very special privilege. They alone had access to army posts and government offices, the King trusting nobody outside Mahometans. But upon a closer examination, the

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chroniclers observed that the King was just as unfair with his Mogul Lords as he was with all his other subjects. To illustrate this point, Fryer tells us that Mogul officials were required to leave their wives and children as pledges at court while they directed the wars or were administering cities or provinces. The King feared that without this precaution, "they should be tempted to unyoke themselves and slip their neck from the servitude imposed on them."⁹ These men at the top, these commanding officers clearly belonged to a privileged group, but their rights, the chroniclers argued, were not protected by the crown, they were not guaranteed constitutional rights. "The Mogul raises them to dignitaries, or degrades them to obscurity, according to his own pleasure and caprice."¹⁰

In Europe, group status was treated in an entirely different way. A King could not change the rights and privileges which tradition had assigned to the different orders in society. He could, by special favor, improve the condition to which a man was born, he could not reduce it. In France, for example, on the day of his coronation, the King pledged to maintain the orders and to protect their separate rights and customary privileges. Admittedly, this made social structures in Europe somewhat rigid, but they did not exclude the possibility of social promotion through personal merit. Recent studies have shown how, in the course of several generations, some families rose gradually from peasant origins to positions of trust and responsibility within the state

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and eventually passed into the nobility.¹¹ The King's essential role in all this was to maintain peace and unity within each of the orders and safeguard the union of all the orders with the crown. In this way, to restate Loyseau, "il se fait de plusieurs Ordres un Ordre général et de plusieurs Etats un Etat bien réglé."

If the Mogul Empire was, by European standards, a disordered society, who was to blame? Next to the King, the absence of proper advisory bodies within the state was judged especially intolerable. Various forms of pressure groups gathered around the Mogul, but none of these seemed qualified to provide the King with sound advice. Manucci was particularly intrigued by the role of the royal governesses. He provided Catrou with the material to write:

Ces Dames, vénérables par leur âge et par leur sagesse, ont chacune un office et un nom répondant aux charges et aux titres des principaux officiers de la Couronne... C'est par l'entremise des Dames du Palais, qu'on fait entrer dans l'esprit du Prince ce qu'on a proposé que légèrement dans la salle d'audience et dans l'appartement des bains. Elles font à proprement parler le conseil intérieur du Mogul.¹²

Another way to influence the Mogul was simply to bring him very expensive presents. Many Mogul Lords ruined themselves in this way. Behind such presents, intentions varied. They were offered

sometimes for the sake of an ostentatious display, sometimes to divert the King from instituting an inquiry into the exactions

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committed in their official situations or governments, and sometimes to gain the favor of the King, and by that means obtain an increase in salary.¹³

Europeans found this practice utterly disgraceful and worse still when the King refused admittance to draw a greater present.¹⁴

But what was even more regrettable, the chroniclers agreed, was that, finally, no one ever informed the King about the true needs of his people. Their grievances went unheard and, consequently, unattended. As we turn to France on this question, we are immediately confronted with an absolute monarch surrounded by a whole network of advisory bodies: "conseil du roi", "parlements", "cours souveraines", "états généraux", "états particuliers", "assemblées de notables", "assemblées d'ordres", etc. None of these organs could actually overrule the King's power, but they exerted a restraining effect on his persons, and thus, prevented the abuse of royal powers and prerogatives.¹⁵

In retrospect, the criticism was not so much that all the power was concentrated in the hands of one man but that this power, in the Mogul's case, was exercised without moderation and without respect for the general welfare of the Empire. European Monarchs emerged, on the other hand, as the champions of reason, of justice, and of the well-ordered state.

The Principle of "Meum ac Tuum":

European travellers were generally surprised to learn that the principle of "meum ac tuum" was ignored in India. Private

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property or the right to property constituted in their minds the very foundations of European liberties. In Mogul India, the King was the absolute lord and master of all the lands and the indisputable heir to all his subjects' goods. The chroniclers investigated in considerable depths the social and economic consequences of such a system. Independently of one another, they all came to the conclusion that the practices observed in Europe in matters of property had infinitely more advantages.

The lands of the Mogul Empire were distributed and administered by private individuals but they were not theirs to keep nor to hand over to their sons. The King granted tracts of lands to military officers, governors and civil administrators in the form of salaries or pensions. The revenues from these lands went to support the troops and the governors in their public offices. Surplus revenues were annually turned over to the King at prescribed rates. Indian Princes continued to rule over several parts of the Empire. They obeyed the Mogul and paid him occasional tributes as well. Their thrones were hereditary whereas all the other Mogul offices were not. These Princes were said to be in Hindoustan similar to what the Dukes of Guyenne, of Brittany and of Normandy had formerly been in France.¹⁶ The remaining lands constituted the King's peculiar domains and were rented out at high prices to Mogul contractors. Once in charge of the land, the Mogul officials had an almost absolute authority over the peasants and nearly as much over the artisans and merchants of the

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towns and villages which came under their jurisdiction.

This system, the chroniclers observed, led to enormous abuses. In the first place, there was no permanence of office and thus, no political stability. "Les Gouverneurs et les Intendants se révoquent et se destituent au gré du Prince. Tel Gouverneur ne dure pas quatre jours."¹⁷ Indian Princes were in a similarly precarious situation since they held "no certain place of abode, the King altering it at pleasure."¹⁸ Eager for wealth but insecure as to the time of their appointments, Mogul officials pillaged the land, stripped it of all its riches, and left the people in utter desolation. "Il se pressent fort de s'enrichir. D'autres plus avides encore leur succèdent."¹⁹ The oppressed masses had absolutely no means to defend themselves against these tyrants. Bernier sadly remarked:

There is no one before whom the injured peasant, artisan, or tradesman can pour out his just complaints; no great lords, parliaments, or judges of local courts exist, as in France, to restrain the wickedness of those merciless oppressors.²⁰

This, in short, was the situation witnessed by travellers to India and reported in their respective journals.

The system of property in Europe was altogether different. Peasant farmers in the large majority owned in various forms at least a small parcel of land. European monarchs were not the sole proprietors of the land. In fact, some Kings had practical-

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ly no lands at all. The private estates of the House of France by the eighteenth century had been converted for the most part into state property. In other words, the King, in his private person, had no rights on these lands. These public estates were precisely the lands which supported the state machinery. The King could levy taxes on all the other lands but he did not own them nor could he take them away from their rightful owners.²¹

Royal domains were administered by government officials but all the other lands were privately controlled. Noble lords, for example, administered all their private holdings. The useful domain of the larger seigneurie was usually divided up and handed over to peasant farmers who, in compliance with certain customary regulations, enjoyed the land as if it was their own. In fact, the same parcel of land could be held by the same family one generation after another. These small plots of land constituted a form of private property. Both contracting parties had specific privileges as well as certain obligations to respect. Both the Lords and the peasants were protected in their rights by customary laws which varied extensively from country to country, even from region to region. The system was not always perfect but the chroniclers definitely preferred it to what they observed in India. The peasants of Europe, at least, felt free and enjoyed the fruits of their labour.

Europeans were shocked and demoralized at the extravagance with which public authority was abused in these Eastern parts

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of the world. "La fraude et l'usure règnent dans le commerce et l'exercice des charges est un véritable brigandage."²³ For everything the chroniclers found excessive and irregular in the actions and government of the Mogul Lords, we must oppose to comparable matters in Europe, a greater degree of compassion and clemency. The chroniclers were irritated, for example, to see that the poor peasants of India sometimes had their cultivated lands taken away from them and "that which is untill'd given them in lieu of it."²⁴ They strenuously objected to the "three parts of the crop, sometimes more" which the peasants were forced to make over to the King.²⁵ They were critical of the cruel and unjust violence with which the peasants were driven to the fields. Finally they condemned all the thefts committed in India, stealing having become a means of survival for some, and, for others, just another way to speedy wealth and comfort.

Le vol est un autre moyen plus court de devenir riche; il est ici fort en usage et je ne crois pas qu'il y ait de pays au monde où les petits larcins soient plus détestés et où les grands soient plus impunis.²⁶

The absence of private property in India also had a detrimental effect on the level of agricultural production. The chroniclers observed that European peasants put infinitely more care and more efforts in cultivating their lands than was usually the case in India.

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Il ne faut pas mesurer les revenus qu'on tire des terres de l'Indoustan sur le pied de ce qu'elles produiraient en France. On voit aux Indes de grands pays incapables de culture. On en trouve d'autres dont le sol serait fertile, mais que les habitants négligent. On ne s'applique pas dans l'Indoustan à faire valoir le fond de l'Empereur avec le même soin, qu'on emploie en Europe à faire valoir son propre domaine.²⁷

It was all simply a matter of pride. In Europe, a man could enjoy the fruits of his labours. His lands provided him a means of subsistence and a sense of independence and he was not about to give them up. The vigorous resistance in England to the enclosure movement is sufficient evidence. In India, there was no reward for a hard day's work and the peasants often preferred idleness than to serve their cruel masters. Many of them fled to other territories in search of happier fortunes.

La difficulté est de trouver à la campagne des laboureurs qui veuillent se charger du grand travail de cultiver les terres, toujours sans profit, et seulement pour leur nourriture. C'est donc avec violence qu'on conduit les paysans à l'ouvrage. De là, leurs révoltes et leurs fuites, dans les terres de Rajas Indiens, qui les traitent avec un peu plus d'humanité. C'est ainsi que les terres du Mogul se dépeuplent insensiblement et qu'elles restent en friche.²⁸

François Bernier devoted an important letter to all these questions.²⁹ In his opinion, the loss of respect for the right of property in the East was essentially due to the Asian Princes'

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"blind and wicked ambition to be more absolute than is warranted by the laws of God and of nature." Bernier could not be any clearer. The right of property is a natural right. He even sees it as "the basis of all that is good and useful in the world." Later, he adds that the principle of property in Europe is "the hope by which a man is animated, that he shall retain the fruits of his industry, and transmit them to his descendants, that forms the main foundation of everything excellent and beneficial in this sublunary state."³⁰ Bernier confirms what the other chroniclers have already suggested. Private property in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe had the welcomed effect of inciting the people to work, to protect and improve their situation in life, and, even for some, to be more enterprising. The European civilization was more progressive and more dynamic than any other in the world, the chroniclers agreed, but this would not have been the case if the right of property had not been recognized. For Bernier to conclude:

How happy and thankful should we feel that in our quarter of the globe, Kings are not the sole proprietors of the soil! Were they so, we should seek in vain for countries well cultivated and populous, for well-built and opulent cities, for a polite, contented, and flourishing people... Where, I must ask again, should we find Princes, Prelates, Nobles, opulent citizens, and thriving Tradesmen, ingenious Artisans and Manufacturers? Where should we look for such cities as Paris, Lyons, Toulouse, Rouen, or if you will London, and so many others? Where should we see that infinite

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number of towns and villages; all those beautiful country houses, those fine plains, hills and valleys, cultivated with so much care, art and labour? And what would become of the ample revenues derived from such industry, and industry beneficial alike to the sovereign and the subjects? The reverse of this smiling picture would, alas! be exhibited.³¹

There was no hesitation about it, Europeans enjoyed a higher standard of living and generally a more comfortable way of life. The quality of food, clothing, and lodging was judged to be much superior in Europe. To take but one example, a Jesuit missionary reports that the peasants of Europe lived in virtual palaces compared to the miserable huts which lodged the Indian folk. "Trois ou quatre pots de terre sont tous les meubles de leurs cabanes."³² We will have occasion elsewhere to compare in greater details these material differences. For the moment, we simply wish to summarize the principle reasons ~~invoked~~ invoked by the chroniclers to explain the happier lot of European peasants and of Europeans in general.

We are first made to think of a European as a free individual. Freedom exists in Europe by virtue of certain natural rights. These rights, moreover, are protected by laws, laws which, according to Bernier, "are so reasonable that the King is the first to obey them."³³ Europeans, therefore, have the clear impression of living in a "just society". By opposition, Mogul India, a society where individual freedom is neither acknowledged nor respected,

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must be viewed as a form of "unjust society". The chroniclers depict this society with a very revealing group of word-symbols. The most frequently used are "slave", "servitude", and "misery". This constant preoccupation with the human condition in India suggests two things: that the chroniclers were struck by the low level to which human dignity was reduced to in these parts of the world, and secondly, that they consciously cherished the rights, liberties, and freedom which were theirs in Europe. It is important to note, however, that the seventeenth-century notion of a "just society" was not conceived in terms of equal rights. Rights varied according to the condition to which a man was born. The nobility, for example, had infinitely more rights than the peasantry, but what was important was that everybody's rights were honored and protected by law. This was obviously not the situation in Mogul India; the opposite usually held true.

Notes to Chapter I

1. Robert Knox, "An Historical Relation of Ceylon", in The Ceylon Historical Journal, 1956-1957, p. 24. Elsewhere, concerning the Mogul Government, we read: "L'empereur seul en est l'Ame. Comme sa juridiction n'est pas plus partagée que son domaine, toute l'autorité est dans sa seule personne; ...tout le reste doit plutôt être regardé comme des esclaves, que comme des sujets." François Catrou s.j., Histoire générale de l'Empire du Mogul depuis sa fondation jusqu'à présent, Vol. II, p. 319. The opposition subject-slave is often echoed in the chronicles.
2. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, New Dehli, 1949, p. 240.
3. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol. V, p. 229.
4. François Olivier-Martin, Histoire du droit français des origines à la Révolution, Paris, 1951, p. 328-329; also Pierre Goubert's chapter II, "Images et pouvoir du Roi", in L'Ancien Régime 2; les pouvoirs, Paris, (Coll. U), 1973.
5. Roland Mousnier, La plume, la faucille et le marteau, Paris, (P.U.F.), 1970, p. 44.
6. Loyseau, "Traité des ordres et simples dignités", avant-propos, p.l., in his Oeuvres, Paris, 1610.
7. François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, (1656-1668), Westminster, 1891 edition, p. 3.
8. Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Etrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol. X, p. 208.
9. John Fryer, A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' Travels, (1672-1681), 1967 edition, Vol. II, p. 110.
10. Bernier, op. cit., p. 212.

11. Recent historiography has produced several excellent works which deal in part with this question. Here are a few examples: J.F. Bluche, Les magistrats du Parlement de Paris au XVIIIe siècle, (1715-1771), Paris, 1960; R. Forster, The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century, Baltimore, 1960; Yves Durand, Les Fermiers Généraux au XVIIIe siècle, Paris, 1971; and Jean Meyer, La noblesse bretonne au XVIIIe siècle, 2 vol., Paris, 1966, second edition, 1972.
12. Catrou, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 254.
13. Bernier, op. cit., p. 271.
14. Careri, op. cit., p. 241.
15. For comparative remarks on French, English, and Dutch concepts of Royal absolutism, see Roland Mousnier, Les XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, which is volume IV in the series Histoire Générale des Civilisations, Paris, 1965, p. 245-257.
16. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 209, (Father Diusse).
17. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 64, (Father de Bourzes).
18. Careri, op. cit., p. 241.
19. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 172, (Father de la Lane).
20. Bernier, op. cit., p. 225.
21. Olivier-Martin, op. cit., p. 323.
22. For the duties and responsibilities of landlords and tenants toward each other seen from a legal point of view, refer to Loyseau, "Traité des seigneuries", in his Oeuvres, Paris, 1610.
23. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 58, (Father de Bourzes).
24. Careri, op. cit., p. 241.
25. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 301. Frequent mentions.
26. Lettres, op. cit.
27. Catrou, op. cit., Vol II, p. 302-303.

28. Ibid.
29. A portion of this letter addressed to Colbert is reproduced in Appendix II.
30. Bernier, op. cit., p. 232-238.
31. Ibid, p. 232.
32. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 58, (Father de Bourzes).
33. Bernier, op. cit., p. 236.

CHAPTER II

NOBILITY, RANK, and PRESTIGE

In reply to Madame la Comtesse de Soudé's inquiry into whether or not distinctions of rank and precedence were observed in India, Father de Bourzes from his mission in Madura reasoned:

Oui, Madame, comme il y a partout des montagnes et des vallées, des fleuves et des ruisseaux, partout, et aux Indes plus qu'ailleurs, on voit des riches et des pauvres, des gens d'une haute naissance, et d'autres dont la naissance est vile et obscure.¹

Inequalities of wealth and inequalities of birth could be seen the world over but as the chroniclers were quick to learn, these were not the only factors which distinguished the upper classes from the lower ones. India too had its groups of wealthy and highborn citizens, but, try as the chroniclers did, none of them seemed to fit the European concept of nobility. The Mogul Lords, the Indian Princes, and the Brahmans stood high in the social hierarchy of their respective societies; the chroniclers, however, would not consider them nobles, at least not in the European sense of the term. Some went even further and suggested that nobility was something confined to the European civilization. Chardin, for

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example, was quite definite on this point: "Il n'y a point de noblesse en Perse, non plus que dans tout l'Orient."²

In this chapter, we have brought together the travellers' reasons for not admitting the upper classes of India and of the Eastern world on a par with the European nobility. Unknowingly, the chroniclers were revealing what in their minds constituted the dominant traits of the European nobility. Moreover, the following pages reveal what the chroniclers believed to be the ideals and aspirations of the European nobility at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The Mogul Lords or the Omrahs as they were usually called, were next to the Great Mogul himself the most powerful and prestigious men in the Mogul society. These great officers who took pride in being what they themselves called "the pillars of the Empire" were not even of noble extraction.³ Generally, they were persons of low descent, some having been originally slaves. Yet, they were precisely the men whom the king preferred to the greatest governments and to the chief posts both at court and in the army. In the Mogul society, social origins were hardly a handicap to social promotion, the values and preoccupations of this people laid in an entirely different direction. The Mogul folks had originally been a small but successful conquering lot. After having subdued a large Indian population, they had organized themselves into a veritable military society. A large standing army had been

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necessary not only to counter the threats and fears of an eventual overthrow, but also to better impose the Great Mogul's will over the conquered natives. The Indian civilization had not been dismantled, it retained all its traditional structures; the Mogul society had simply superimposed itself to the former. With the Mogul people, the military function held a place of first importance. In fact, for them, it was practically the only function worthy of respect and consideration. Distinctions of rank here corresponded roughly to the different ranks in the army.⁴ Progression through the ranks was generally slow. As Bernier put it: "Advancement through special favour proceeds slowly for it is an almost invariable custom to pass gradually from small salaries, and inconsiderable offices, to situations of greater trust and emolument."⁵ The Omrahs had begun at the bottom like everyone else and had simply scaled their way up to the top of this socio-military hierarchy. To be elevated to the rank of an Omrah was the height of all ambition. The Omrahs lived in grand style. The outward manifestations of their superior rank could almost have been mistaken for that of a great European noble but, as we shall see, the chroniclers were not so easily deceived.

The Omrahs appropriated themselves high-sounding titles which had little in way of resemblance with those customarily used in Europe. "The Disposer of Thunder", "The Destroyer of

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Rank", "The Learned", and "The Perfect", were among their favourite appellations.⁶ The reason why such names were given to the great in the East instead of names derived from domains and seigneuries was all quite simple. "They take these names", observed Careri, "because being no titles of Earldoms, Dukedoms, or the like, as is us'd in Europe, they cannot, like our princes, take the name of those lands, for they all belong to the King."⁷ The difference of titles would be inconsequential if it did not have a direct bearing on the very character of the European nobility. Since the Mogul Lords could not be proprietors of land, the chroniclers concluded that they could not be independently wealthy like the noble families of Europe. The Omrahs' revenues consisted solely of pensions either in land or money "which the King gives, augments, retrenches, or takes away at pleasure."⁸

The Omrahs of Hindoustan cannot be proprietors of land, or enjoy an independent revenue, like the nobility of France and the other States of Christendom. Their income consists exclusively of pensions which the King grants or takes away according to his will or pleasure. When deprived of this pension, they sink at once into utter insignificance and find it impossible even to borrow the smallest sum.⁹

An Omrah could not be considered a noble because he was not a member of an "ancient family" which possessed wealth arising from a "private domain". This may seem like a very classic definition of nobility, yet, it was precisely the one on which the chroniclers

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argued their case against the Omrahs' pretensions to greatness. In the European mind, it was not quite sufficient to become a great lord, the real test of nobility was in maintaining this status beyond the first generation, and, as we have said, the Omrahs were simply not in a position to do so.

In Europe, nobility was like wine; the older the vintage, the better the quality. The western concept of nobility was not just a matter of titles and privileges; it also included responsibilities. While the European nobles did not live in fear of having their domains taken away from them, they had to be ready at all times to come to the King's assistance. In a moment of crisis, it was the nobility which in a way guaranteed the continuation of the state. Bernier provides an excellent example to illustrate this point.

In Europe, when the exigencies of the times prevented the government from immediately discharging an arrear of debt, an officer, or even a private soldier, may contrive to live for some time by means of his own private income; but in the Indies, any usual delay in the payment of the troops is sure to be attended with fatal consequence.¹⁰

For the nobility, this kind of personal sacrifice was not only a sign of loyalty but also a form of moral responsibility. In Olivier-Martin's Histoire du droit français, we read:

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Le noble doit faire profession de désintéressement; il doit se vouer, dans la mesure de ses possibilités, au service du roi et notamment servir à ses armées ou sur ses vaisseaux; il doit à tout le moins exercer un patronage matériel et moral sur ceux qui l'entourent ou qui dépendent de lui. Ces obligations sont avant tout, d'ordre moral et ne sont pas faciles à sanctionner.¹¹

However poorly defined, the European nobility had a tacit agreement with the crown. In return for special rights and privileges, it vouched to serve and uphold the state with every man at its disposal. European Nobles served in the state apparatus often without pay. Some did receive royal pensions but others lived quite comfortably off the family patrimony. Once acquired, nobility in Europe was hereditary; the King could not take it away. If in Mogul India, the Omrah's family was easily extinguished, the noble families of Europe tended instead to improve and consolidate their social, political, and financial standing from one generation to the other. To the chroniclers, these were perhaps the most fundamental differences between the Mogul Lords and the true character of nobility, but there were others as well.

The nobility in Europe as a social order had no powers of its own but had what Loyseau called the "aptitudes" to govern and command.¹² This can easily be understood. Nobles derived sufficient revenues from their lands that they did not have to labour daily for a living. In fact, to have done so would have been considered a disgrace to their status. Instead, in their leisure

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time, they prepared themselves dutifully for more important social functions. We might say that they were simply in a better position than most to acquire and develop the necessary talents to govern and command. By contrast, the Mogul Lords, according to the chroniclers, were destitute of education, they were not men of quality.

The Great Mogul cannot select for his service, princes, noblemen and gentlemen of opulent and ancient families; nor the sons of his citizens, merchants and manufacturers; men of education, possessing a high sense of propriety, affectionately attached to their sovereign, ready to support, by acts of valour, the reputation of their family, and, as the occasion may arise, able and willing to maintain themselves, either at court or in the army, by means of their own patrimony; animated by the hope of better times, and satisfied with the approbation and smile of their sovereign. Instead of men of this description, he is surrounded by slaves, ignorant and brutal; by parasites raised from the dregs of society; strangers to loyalty and patriotism; full of insufferable pride, and destitute of courage, of honour, and of decency.¹³

The reference, in the preceding passage, to the sons of merchants and manufacturers would suggest that members of the rising bourgeoisie in Europe were equally capable of governing and commanding. The nobility was not an exclusive society; there were means of penetrating into its rank.

More than special aptitudes, the European concept of nobility embodied an entire way of life. To own a large estate and live in a beautiful château were more than symbols of prestige; for the

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nobility, they were practically a prerequisite. The nobility, moreover, had to have "suites of pages, lackeys, and officials, keep up carriages and stables, furnish their palaces, keep open table."¹⁴ They had to raise their children up "virtuously", and then procure them positions and employment "worthy of their station in life."¹⁵ No measure seemed extravagant enough if it enhanced the honor and prestige of the family name. In their own way, the Mogul Lords lived magnificently too. They had large establishments of wives, servants, camels and horses but, in their case, all this high living could at any moment, come to an abrupt end. Sons were not even permitted to inherit after their father as was the custom in Europe. In fact, in Mogul India, the courtiers were not even descendants of Omrahs; the King, as heir to all his subjects' goods, would not allow any family to long maintain its distinction.

An Omrah's position was, therefore, a very insecure one. Omrahs came and went at the King's good pleasure. For mentioning this feature as often as they did, the chroniclers must have been opposing in their minds the more stable and permanent character of the European nobility. This is not to say that nobles never ruined themselves. Many, in fact, did; either by running up expenses which "amounted to more than the revenue of the house", by "the extravagance of their table", by the general mismanagement of their affairs, by committing injustices, or by engaging in

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activities considered disgraceful to the noble status.¹⁶ There were risks but the old established nobility knew that in the last resort the King could be counted upon to save the family honor. In a recent discussion of the financial problems of the French nobility, Professor Goubert remarked:

La plupart du temps, les dépenses des Grands excédaient leurs recettes, et de beaucoup, sans d'ailleurs qu'ils en fussent troublés. Pour éviter les poursuites, les ventes forcées et les saisies, qui pourtant survenaient parfois, les Grands avaient recours au roi. Et il les sauvait habituellement, soit en leur conférant des bénéfices ecclésiastiques supplémentaires, ou des charges à la cour et en province, soit encore en payant simplement leurs dettes.¹⁷

Impoverishment did remain, however, the principal way by which European nobles lost their rights and privileges. When a noble suddenly found himself in a disastrous financial situation, he could ask to have his privileges suspended while he rebuild himself a small fortune outside the nobility, usually in a 'bourgeois' line of activity. The problem of derogation is extremely complex and while the chroniclers do not directly refer to it, they do suggest that what ultimately differentiated nobles in good standing from members of the Third Estate, was the former's tax-exemption privilege.¹⁸ Writing about the East, Chardin observed:

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Il n'y a point de taxes sur les personnes; elles sont libres par toute la Perse, et la taille y est entièrement inconnue: sur quoi je remarquerai que cette exemption de taille générale en Orient m'a souvent fait penser que c'est peut être la raison de ce qu'on n'y connaît point la différence de noble et de roturier.¹⁹

Interestingly, personal taxes are seen here as a unique feature of the European civilization.

The European nobility had long been exempt from paying personal taxes but by the turn of the eighteenth century this privilege had become one of its most distinguishing features. Other wealthy groups had arisen in Europe, they introduced themselves in practically every field of activity, they competed with the nobility for the high government offices, they even purchased large estates and began imitating the noble way of life. But unless the King granted these bourgeois families letters of nobility, they would never be exactly nobles for they were not exempt from paying the burdensome 'taille'. The rising bourgeoisie in Europe could almost be compared with the Mogul Lords; they were wealthy and powerful but they were not of noble extraction, and, therefore, not nobles at all. On the other hand, an impoverished noble who adopted a bourgeois trade naturally lost his tax-exemption privilege. Bourgeois activities were considered incompatible with the nobility's disposition to serve the state. In such instances, nobles paid taxes like everyone else. Failure to put one's house

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in order within a reasonable delay could lead to a permanent loss of nobiliary privileges. Therefore, to be born a noble or to be ennobled by the King was not quite sufficient; for a noble to acquit himself of his social function, wealth was also of prime necessity. Poverty and a mean life was quite contrary to the European concept of nobility. In professor Meyer's words: "La richesse décide ainsi de l'appartenance à une élite, la pauvreté élimine."²⁰

The chroniclers could not really understand that while Mahometans showed great respect and consideration for high offices, dignities, extraordinary merits, and especially wealth, the high born in Asia received but a faint acknowledgement. This was so contrary to European values. On the high born in the Islamic World, Chardin wrote:

On a quelque considération pour les gens sortis du sang de Mahomed et des imans, qui portent par distinction d'honneur un turban vert, et à qui l'on donne des noms fort relevés, comme 'seyd', et 'mir', termes arabes qui signifient 'noble' et 'prince', d'où les Espagnols ont fait leurs mots de 'cid' et d''amiral'. Mais, comme ce sont presque tous des gens sans bien et sans emploi, le nom qu'ils portent est presque le seul avantage qu'ils retirent de leur naissance.²¹

In other words, while the high born usually lived in distress, Omrahs, for example, who were everything but high born, lived extravagantly well. No, the chroniclers concluded, the European

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concept of nobility did not flourish in this Mogul part of the world.

As the chroniclers turned their attention from the Mogul society to the Indian civilization per se, they witnessed two other social groups which shared certain affinities with the European nobility: the Indian Princes or Rajas and, naturally, the Brahmans, India's first and noblest caste. The chroniclers were immediately struck by the fact that, in India, the religious function held a predominant role. They could not quite understand why the Indian Princes should be considered inferior in rank to the Brahmans. Were European Princes not the products of the noblest of noble families? Father Caron, writing to the Ursuline sisters of France, observed:

En Europe, ce sont les meilleures familles
qui occupent les Trônes: de tous les
Princes du Carnate, je n'en connais pas un
- seul qui soit de la première caste, quel-
ques-uns même sont d'une caste fort obscure.²²

Indian Princes belonged to the ancient families of the caste of Rajput (or Kshatriya) which was only the second noblest caste of India. What complicated matters for our travellers was that the Rajas were, though inferior in rank and prestige, wealthier and more powerful than the Brahmans. This seemed to contradict the high opinion Brahmans had of themselves. In time, Europeans like Father La Lane came to understand that in India nobility was founded on birth, not wealth:

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Les Brames, qui sont les Nobles et les Savants du pays, sont pauvres pour la plupart: ils n'en sont ni moins estimés ni moins fiers, parce que la vraie grandeur, chez les Indiens, se tire de la naissance seule, et non pas des richesses.²³

The Mogul Lords were wealthy but of vile birth: the Brahmins were high born but generally lived quite miserably. In either case, the conditions of true nobility as the chroniclers understood them, were not met. This somehow left the Indian Princes. Although they were not considered nobles by their own people, their group came closest perhaps to the European concept of nobility. In the European mind, the Rajas performed a noble function and, materially, they were not strangers to comfort, luxury, and extravagance. Yet, the chroniclers observed that there were several practices among the Indian Princes which were entirely opposed to European manners. A discussion of these adds new elements to the European concept of nobility.

The chroniclers tell us that the procedure in matters of royal succession was quite different in India. A King's eldest son was not as in Europe, the natural heir to the royal crown. Father Bouchet, who devotes an entire letter to this question, explains:

Ce n'est pas toujours le fils aîné des Rois et des Princes, des Palleacarrens, et des chefs de Bourgade qui doit succéder aux états ou au gouvernement de son père. La coutume veut que les aînés succèdent, quand

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leurs bonnes qualités les en rendent capables. Mais lorsqu'ils ont peu d'esprit, et qu'ils semblent peu propres à bien gouverner, et qu'au contraire le cadet a de grandes dispositions pour remplir les devoirs d'un Prince, le Roi dispose les choses de telle sorte, qu'il fait tomber ses états au cadet.²⁴

In theory, this custom seemed quite reasonable, but, in practice, the chroniclers observed, it was the source of much political turmoil. When a young prince was appointed to succeed his father, his authority was often challenged by his other brothers leading occasionally to open wars, assassinations and fratricides. This, in Europe, was less likely to happen, the principle of primogeniture having long been established.²⁵ In fact, any attempt to deviate from this principle tended to arouse public opinion. Another problem connected with the above was to determine in India who were truly the King's sons. Since a woman was allowed by custom to live with several men, it could not be known who was the father of the child she brought forth. Consequently, in matters of succession, the child of the sister was generally preferred because there was no doubt of the line by the female.²⁶ This problem was far less complicated in Europe. A King may have had several mistresses but only the children born to the queen could eventually claim royal rights. Concerning the Mogul crown, succession, we are told, more often depended "on force than right".²⁷ And in Persia, Chardin simply says that the crown was usually made over to

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a male child from either male or female royal blood.²⁸

In Europe, a young prince was trained from early childhood in the arts of war and government so that, when the time came, he would be fully prepared to take on his father's responsibilities. The chroniclers were shocked to learn that this practice was not at all observed in India. As late as 1760, La Flotte reports that:

C'est une politique parmi les Princes Indiens de tenir renfermé celui de leurs enfants qui doit leur succéder; il arrive de là qu'un Prince prend possession d'un Etat sans la moindre expérience, et sans connaissance des Lois, ni du gouvernement.²⁹

These princes had indeed a very strange concept of political continuity. In Europe, the familiar cry, "The King is dead: Long Live the King" served to emphasize the permanent and unceasing character of the monarchy.

If succession and educational practices differed from the princely families of Europe to those of India, glamor and extravagance attended princes the world over. The chroniclers found rather peculiar, however, the means by which Indian Princes marked the magnificence of their high office. They were very much offended and found quite unjust the practice among Asian Princes of keeping locked up in the Royal seraglios large retinues of the most beautiful women in the world. The King of Bijapur, for example, had for sheer sake of pleasure, 1,400 women at his service. Europeans were shocked at the idea that human beings could be held as play

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things. More than once are these seraglios compared to the royal horse stables of Europe.

In Europe, the magnificence of our Christian princes is shown by a splendid stable of the finest horses from all over the world, so these Eastern princes show their power and grandeur by their seraglios, where they have women brought from every foreign Kingdom.³⁰

Held in similar abomination was the practice in India of giving one of these girls in reward to a court favorite just like a horse from the royal stables was occasionally offered to a person of merit in Europe.³¹ There was no other place in the world, according to the chroniclers, where human beings were treated with such little consideration.

The Great and the wealthy have always sought public esteem by constructing beautiful edifices, by leaving the world a legacy not to be quickly forgotten. Europeans were fond of building majestic châteaux, museums, opera houses, and grand hotels. In India, the same goals were achieved by the construction of artificial ponds and magnificent wells. In Europe ponds and wells had no symbolic values, but in India they were the most prestigious contribution to society. Social stratification in India was based on the principle of religious purity. The Brahmans were by birth the purest of all and thus, headed India's social hierarchy. But purity, regardless of the caste to which one belonged, could be lost in a thousand different ways. Bathing in rivers, streams,

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and ponds was one of the principal ways by which one could recover lost purity or prevent the loss of it altogether.³² Consequently, the men who placed such sacred bathing areas at the disposal of their fellowmen naturally earned considerable social esteem. Fryer explains that these magnificent constructions were built at "extraordinary costs and charges, some purely for pomp, and to transmit their names to Posterity; others for the sake of Travellers, but most for the sake of Religion, in which they are extravagantly profuse, every great city striving to out-vye each other."³³ The means differed but the idea of enhancing one's social prestige preoccupied both the prominent citizens of India and Europe alike.

European Princes may have shown more respect for the human condition, but they were also extremely jealous of their privileged status. For one thing, in Europe, a Prince was of the highest nobility whereas in India this was not at all the case. Secondly, the Royal families of Europe had much to lose if they failed to produce a direct heir to their respective crowns. Their family fortunes were intricately tied up in the fortune of their crowns. Matters of royal succession in India could be handled in a much looser way. All the crowned heads of India were of the caste of Rajput. The entire caste believed it descended from former Princes and since they could only marry among themselves, each one of their numbers could, theoretically, claim to be a royal heir. In Europe, royalty was a matter of a small num-

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ber of families chosen by God and crowned by the ages.

Seeing Indian Princes inferior in rank to Brahmans made the chroniclers wonder why the former, who were wealthier and more powerful than the latter, had never attempted to alter the existing social hierarchy. Such an interrogation shows to what extent early travellers to India misunderstood the caste system. The values and preoccupations of the Indian civilization were first and foremost religious in character. The Brahmans were, therefore, the true Princes of India. In the spiritual, there was no superior authority than a Brahman. In other matters, the Brahmans were dependent on the temporal princes. But since material life held only a secondary role in this society, the superior status of a Brahman and the way he lived were never challenged. And to prevent any confrontation between the temporal and the spiritual authorities, many Brahmans became royal counsellors and watched over the actions of their temporal princes.³⁴ Brahmans, it must be remembered were not only religious men, they were also the keepers of science. They maintained a very tight control on education. Father Pons, who published one of the very first books on Indian poetry, observed that:

Ceux qui sont de la véritable Caste des Rajas ou Raje-Poutre peuvent être instruits dans les sciences par les Bracmanes mais ces sciences sont inaccessibles à toutes les autres castes, auxquelles on peut seulement communiquer certains poèmes, la grammaire, le poétique, et des sentences morales.³⁵

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The Brahmans were the sole depositors of science and were extremely jealous of this special attribution, believing that science was the true character of nobility. By monopolizing the world of science, the Brahmans knew full-well that their status could not be troubled.

By opposition, science in Europe was not the exclusive property of the nobility. The learned men of Europe were in a large proportion nobles but this was simply due to the fact that education was largely elitist in character. Otherwise, science did not belong to any one group in particular. The travellers were perhaps the first to appreciate this difference. They were not nobles themselves yet they could practically all claim to have had a fairly complete education for the period. The rising European bourgeoisie placed much emphasis on education seeing in it the possibilities of social advancement. Given a wider opening, sciences progressed much more rapidly in Europe. In India, Brahmans simply memorized the content of ancient books which they then repeated to their students "d'une façon mystérieuse, pour en imposer plus facilement."³⁶ The missionaries report that they could rarely have constructive debates with Brahmans for when they reached a point of difference, the latter refused to argue beyond what was written in their books. Friar Navarette reports the following incident:

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The priest came to us, and we discours'd him with the help of some servants of the French Company, who spoke several languages. He gave a very bad account of the origins of those three Gods, made them all men, and said they came thither upon the waters of the Sea from very far Countries and had produc'd the World. We objecting how it could be made out that they had produced the World when there was before them a Sea, and other countries from whence they came thither? He answered, "It was so written in their Books." Speaking of the parents of his Gods, he asserted they were of other countries; and we answering, "Then there were Men before those Gods": he laugh'd and said, "I say nothing but what is in the Book."³⁷

There were others and even more fundamental differences between the Brahmans and the European nobility. In both groups, for example, there were seen to be degrees or ranks of nobility but these divisions were based on two entirely different principles. Father Tachard wrote: "Il y a divers degrés de noblesse parmi les Brames, comme il y en a en Europe parmi les Gentilshommes."³⁸ Unfortunately, Tachard does not describe these different ranks. For Europe, he may have been thinking of the traditional split between the Sword and the Robe. But what were the different degrees of nobility among the Brahmans? Fryer was somewhat more explicit on this matter. He explained that the Brahmans were organized into several sub-castes but that together they essentially formed but two large families; the Butts and the Sinais. At one point in their history, the Sinais had been forced by famine to eat fish. This had made them "greatly despised by the

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purer Butts, having never deviated from their Pythagorean Institution and primary abstinence of all living creatures."³⁹

From this time on, the Sinais had been considered of a less noble stock than the Butts. In Europe, of course, the quality of one's nobility was not calculated on a religious principle at all. It was simply thought that the further back in time a person traced his noble ancestry, the more authentic were his claims to nobiliary privileges. The ancient aristocratic families of Europe constantly defended their social pre-eminence over the newly 'parvenus' nobles.⁴⁰

Brahmans and European nobles alike displayed a number of prestigious marks or symbols which served to denote their superior status and set them apart from the rest of society. The nature of their symbols, however, took entirely different forms. The Brahmans were honored by wearing under their left shoulder a cotton-string band known as the brahmanical cord. In Europe, nobles enjoyed the unique privilege of wearing the sword at all times. There were other symbols as well. Indian castes and sub-castes were distinguished by the cuts of their beards, by the different paintings drawn on their bodies, and, occasionally, by the winding of their turbans. The Brahmans painted their foreheads with a "Pythagorean Y". Each sub-caste drew this symbol in its own peculiar way. Consequently, when two Brahmans met, both could tell to which sub-caste the other belonged.⁴¹ Similarly, in Europe, social groups were differentiated by the style and quality of their

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clothing, by their manners, and often even by their speech. The chroniclers remained particularly vague about the actual significance of all the different status symbols employed in India. This is not too surprising. The symbols used on the coat of arms of the distinguished European families would certainly have caused Asian travellers the same sort of puzzlement.

The caste of Brahmans and the European nobility finally differed in their concept of dignity. The chroniclers were shocked to find Brahmans performing menial tasks and especially cooking their own meals. The Brahman, however, performed this duty without the slightest embarrassment. To him, "ce serait se rendre odieux et indigne de son état que de manger quoi que ce soit qui eût été préparé par des gens d'une caste inférieure."⁴² The French missionaries sent out by the Missions Etrangères had to adopt themselves to this practice for otherwise the Brahmans would not converse with them. In a letter to the Ursuline Sisters in France, Father Caron explained:

C'est ici un noble emploi que de se faire la cuisine à soi-même. C'est pour cela que quelquefois pour me faire honneur on m'a dit: c'est vous sans doute, mon Père, qui vous faites votre cuisine; voulant par-là me faire entendre qu'il n'y avait personne d'une naissance ni d'un mérite assez distingué pour me la faire.⁴³

The chroniclers found an even greater contradiction in the fact that while the Brahman categorically refused to be served by any-

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one inferior to his own status, he did not fret about going out of his way to help out elements of the lowest castes.

Un Brame ne doit jamais manger en présence de qui que ce soit des autres castes; mais ce qui paraîtra singulier et bien contradictoire en même temps, c'est que ce Brame qui a une si haute idée de sa pureté et de son extraction, qu'il n'estime personne digne de lui aller seulement puiser de l'eau, ne rougit pas de servir un homme d'une caste inférieure et d'exercer les plus bas offices.⁴⁴

This concept of dignity was diametrically opposed to the one shared by European nobles. A noble's function was to lead and command his fellowmen, not to serve them. His honor and dignity derived from glorious deeds and accomplishments, not from domestic chores.⁴⁵

In this third and last case, the problem was evidently not one of extraction as it had been with the Mogul Lords and even with the Indian Princes. The Brahmans' social behaviour was such that, in the chronicler's mind, it could not in any conceivable way, suppose greatness. Brahmans may well have been honored and highly respected in their own society but in Europe they would have passed for ordinary *people* unless, of course, we assimilate them not to the noble order but to the clergy, an alternative which chroniclers often adopted.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Etrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol XII, p. 57.
2. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol. V, p. 290.
3. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 243.
4. For a short but useful study on the different forms of social stratification, see Roland Mousnier, Les hierarchies sociales de 1450 à nos jours, Paris, (P.U.F.), 1969.
5. François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, (1656-1668), Westminster, 1891, p. 212.
6. Ibid, p. 6.
7. Careri, op. cit., p. 222.
8. Bernier, op. cit., p. 5.
9. Ibid, p. 65..
10. Ibid, p. 220.
11. Ibid, p. 639.
12. Loyseau, "Traité des ordres et des simples dignités", p. 9, in his Oeuvres, Paris, 1610.
13. Bernier, op. cit., p. 230.
14. Abbé Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré in India and the Near East, (1672-1674), London, 1947-1948, Vol. I, p. 250.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Pierre Goubert, L'Ancien Régime I: la société, Paris, 1969, p. 162.

18. For the legal aspects of the question of derogation, see Olivier-Martin, Histoire du droit français des origines à la Révolution, Paris, 1951, p. 639; a more recent discussion of this problem appeared in Jean Meyer, No-blesses et Pouvoirs, Paris, 1973, p. 64-74.
19. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 408.
20. Meyer, op. cit., p. 74. For an enlightning discussion on the social ideals of the European nobility, see Actes du Colloque International sur la Notion d'Europe, (1961), Paris, 1963, p. 32-37.
21. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. V. p. 290.
22. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XIII, p. 165.
23. Ibid, Vol. XV, p. 266.
24. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 239.
25. Olivier-Martin, op. cit., p. 308.
26. Jean de Thévenot, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 122.
27. Careri, op. cit., p. 222.
28. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 240.
29. De La Flotte, Essais historiques sur l'Inde, Paris, 1769, p. 258.
30. Carré, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 147.
31. Ibid.
32. For a more in-depth study on the rules and regulations governing caste life in India, see J.H. Hutton, Castes in India: its Nature, Function, and Origins, Cambridge University Press, 1946; and Louis Dumont, Homo hierarchicus: essai sur le système des castes, Paris, 1966.
33. John Fryer, A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' Travels, (1672-1681), 1967 edition, Vol. II, p. 95.

34. Dumont, op. cit., p. 351-355.
35. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XIV, p. 56.
36. Ibid, Vol. XI, p. 175, (Father de la Lane).
37. Fernandez Domingo Navarette, The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarette, (1618-1686), 1962 edition, Vol, II, p. 320.
38. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 286.
39. Fyer, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 101.
40. On the internal composition of the French nobility, see Philippe Du Puy de Clinchamps, La Noblesse, Paris, (Coll. Que sais-je?), chapters 1 and 2.
41. On all these items, Fryer, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 101-108.
42. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 282, (Father Tachard).
43. Ibid, Vol. XIII, p. 165.
44. De La Flotte, op. cit., p. 284.
45. On the kind of noble deeds which French Kings honored and rewarded, see J.-P. Labatut, Les Ducs et Paris de France au XVIIe siècle, Paris, 1972, p. 89-97.

CHAPTER III

THE WAYS OF JUSTICE

Eastern justice, the chroniclers tell us, was altogether lacking in method and proper legal procedures. Chardin recalls that when he first arrived in the Orient he mistook the natives for barbarians seeing that they did not proceed methodically in the punishing of their criminals and law-breakers.

J'étais surpris qu'ils n'eussent point de prisons publiques, point d'assemblée pour examiner les criminels juridiquement, point d'exécuteur public, ou bourreau, point de place de supplice, point d'ordre, ni de méthode dans les exécutions.¹

This did not mean that criminal offences went unpunished; only that in this part of the world the fine institutions which marked European justice had not yet come of age. The chroniclers observed that in India there were actually two different forms of justice. The first was a kind of public justice administered in the towns and provinces by Mogul officials; the second was a private form of Indian justice whereby each caste settled the business of their own law offenders. By examining the chroniclers' objections to these systems, several peculiarities in the ways of European justice can be identified.

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A) MOGUL JUSTICE

Mogul justice was characterized primarily by its simplicity and its speed. These two factors, according to the chroniclers, were also the cause of great injustices. In the Mogul regime, a person suspected of theft, for example, was immediately stopped and, without trial, tortured until a confession was obtained. After five or six days, had the suspect not confessed, the authorities simply released him. At no time was the suspect's house searched for possible stolen goods.² Consequently, whether the suspect was guilty of crime or not, the offended person was usually certain never to be compensated for his losses. Moreover, the innocent in this system were often punished unjustly. The fundamental problem as the chroniclers saw it, was that Mogul justice was rendered with far too much haste. Europeans, we are thus made to believe, employed in such matters a greater degree of circumspection.

If, by European standards, criminals in Mogul India were unfairly tripled, they were, perhaps as a compensation, not half as harshly punished. This impression derived from the fact that in Mogul India, whipping and cudgelling, the usual correction inflicted upon criminals, went for all sorts of crimes.³ Mogul justice had not developed a grading system whereby different crimes were subject to different forms of punishment. Adjusting the punishment to the seriousness of the crime was evidently of greater concern in Europe. The death sentence did exist in Mogul India

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but only the king could pronounce it. In such cases, the executing of justice was equally sudden: "On exécute les criminels sur le champ. Les uns sont foulés aux pieds des éléphants, les autres décapités, et les autres piqués par des couleuvres dont le venin est mortel."⁴ On the whole, however, the death penalty was not nearly as often assigned as in Europe. We might say that where justice takes on more elaborate forms, it also becomes less tolerant in the punishing of criminals.

Civil matters were handled with a similar degree of irregularity. Very few formalities were observed. Again, the town governors rendered speedy justice. When a person sued another for debt, he was asked to produce either an obligation, bring forth two witnesses, or take an oath.⁵ None of these measures seemed to please the chroniclers. Obligations were not considered proper legal documents, for, unlike in Europe, India had no system by which business and personal contracts were systematically recorded.

Comme il n'y a point de notaires, il n'y a point aussi de greffe, ou registre public, pour garder les contrats des particuliers. Toute la précaution qu'on prend est de faire tirer diverses copies authentiques. J'accepte de cela un registre des contrats de mariage, qui se garde chez le cazy, où chacun a la liberté de faire enregistrer son contrat.⁶

To have witnesses testify in one's favor was another doubtful sort of evidence. The chroniclers abound with references to the

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widespread practice of bribing judges and witnesses alike.⁷ The Jesuit de la Lane reports that by this practice, "les criminels échappent souvent au châtement que méritent les crimes les plus noirs."⁸ Elsewhere, Father de Bourzes tells us that justice always swung in favor of the highest bribe, and he concludes: "Dès qu'on est riche, on est toujours innocent."⁹ Finally, as for the oath, there were no standard procedures. Thévenot remarked: "If he be a christian, he swears upon the gospel; if a Moor, upon the Akoran, and a Heathen swears upon the cow."¹⁰

In the light of the above objections, Mogul justice seems to have been altogether void of good form and rational method. Its ways were "speedy and "sudden" and thus, by European standards, improper and unfair. In Europe, we know that criminals benefited from formal court hearings. Charges brought against them were clearly enunciated and before a verdict was pronounced, an accused could speak out on his own behalf. Since a man could not be convicted without evidence, crimes had to be investigated, people interrogated, and the case brought before the judges. The lapse of time between the crime and the execution of justice was naturally much longer. The Western system somehow prevented precipitated judgements. This in itself was perhaps a sufficient reason for our chroniclers to prefer their own kind of justice, but there were other reasons too. One of these concerned the quality and integrity of the magistrates.

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In Mogul India, the local governors who posed as judges were not at all qualified magistrates. They were essentially military men who governed in all things at their own will and pleasure.

On ne voit aux Indes ni Financier, ni Gens de robe; les Intendants ou Gouverneurs sont chargés tout à la fois, et de l'administration de la justice, et de la levée des deniers, et du gouvernement militaire.¹¹

In Western Europe, justice, finance, and military matters constituted three separate branches of government. European nations maintained these administrative divisions even in some of their distant colonies. The Portuguese administration of the town of Daman, for example, was headed by three principal officials. A Governor was charged with the military command of the town, and then came the 'feytor' and the 'ovidor' whose functions Carré describes as follows:

The 'feytor' represents the King, receives all the revenues of the town, and expends them on useful and necessary things. The 'ovidor' administers justice, a very honourable position with the Portuguese. He has jurisdiction over any troubles, discords and brawls that may arise: also he has the power on any death, to take over the heritages of orphans or absent heirs, to avoid their being dissipated by the other people, who else might get possession of them...¹²

The Portuguese 'ovidor' applied himself strictly to matters of justice. His office earned him considerable social esteem and

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a handsome salary. Such advantages usually discouraged European judges from abusing the authority invested in them.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the once flourishing Portuguese Indian Empire had fallen into shameful neglect with the result that the local Portuguese officials no longer served as a model of sound European administration. Carré writes that "nowadays they have degenerated and are slack, cowardly, and effeminate, given over to sloth and pleasures, and leading odious and immoral lives."¹³ Such remarks about the Portuguese are quite frequent in the chronicles. Careri, who was a Doctor of Civil Law, found, during a visit to Goa in 1695, the situation of Portuguese justice quite hopeless. What he says about the Portuguese magistrates tends to suggest that such slackness would never have been tolerated in Europe. His remarks, moreover, indicate the necessity in Europe for magistrates to undergo proper legal training.

There are no Doctors of Civil Law throughout the Portuguese Dominions in India, and those who follow this employment, through their ignorance prove bad advocates, or councillors, and sollicitors, and some times plead both for the plaintiff and defendant. Besides, for the most part causes are decided by ignorant captains or governors without the approbation of an assessor. This happens for want of an University and colleges to teach the law; and because the Portuguese Doctors will not go so far from their country, by reason of the little profit they should make in India.¹⁴

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Incidentally, while in Goa, Careri was offered a particularly attractive position in the Portuguese courts. The offer, unhesitatingly, was declined.

Judicial decisions in Mogul India were not only arbitrary, they were also irreversible.¹⁵ This was another reason for disapproving so strongly of Mogul justice. The chroniclers could not accept that the decisions rendered by local judges should be absolute and final. They preferred the European system whereby local judgements could be appealed and brought to higher courts. Europeans seem to have understood that the laws of men were imperfect and given to interpretation and that judges were by no means infallible. Courts of appeal were especially required to prevent hurried and faulty judgements. These High Courts were inextricably linked to the ways of European justice. We find them wherever European justice prevailed. In Portuguese India, the chroniclers found among other standard European institutions, a High Court of Appeals. A chancellor assisted by six to eight regular judges (or desembargadores) presided over this court. Also known as the Relacao of India, this court administered justice in both civil and criminal matters. It had power over the local 'oidors' and tried all appeals brought from any part of the dominions which extended from the Cape of Good Hope in Africa to the town of Macao in China.¹⁶ With the English, the system was not altogether different. In their Indian possessions, English soldiers were submitted to martial law while the freemen, common.

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A President sat in Council both in Surat and in Bombaim and supervised the work of the Justiciary (i.e. a superior court), the Court of Pleas, and that of a Committee for the Regulation of Affairs.¹⁷ In cases of non-submission, the English were simply discharged from their employment and sent home. For more serious offences, we are told that they were sent to Bombaim "there to have a Legal Trial, according to the Laws of England."¹⁸ We might say that, for the sake of a proper trial, Europeans preferred travelling to the place of a superior court, however great the distance may have been, than having, like in Mogul India, their rights profaned by the arrogance and arbitrariness of some petty local judge. If Europeans preferred the court system to all other, it was more for its fairness than for its expediency. In fact, court proceedings tended to be rather long and somewhat tedious but the chances of arriving at the truth or at a fair settlement seemed to the chroniclers imminently greater than in the haphazard ways of Mogul justice. Clearly, travellers to India, retained, in matters of justice, a marked preference for their own Western institutions.

B) CASTE JUSTICE

The chroniclers also shared a number of strong reservations about Indian caste justice. Described briefly, each caste was responsible for the social and moral conduct of its members. When

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caste rules were broken, the offending person brought shame and disgrace upon himself and also upon the entire caste. Transgressors were brought before assemblies of caste elders there to be tried and punished according to the laws of the community. The proceedings were quite simple. The accused pleaded his own case, the judges, chosen among the caste notables, deliberated, and a sentence was then pronounced.¹⁹ Contrary to what some of the chroniclers would have us believe, the system worked fairly well. In the first place, even though the caste judges were not legal experts, everybody in the caste respected their authority and submitted to their decisions. Moreover, a caste which failed to punish its recalcitrant members was considered void of honor and lost the respect and esteem of all the other castes. Since each caste was extremely jealous of the rank it held in the social hierarchy, the practice was usually to be intransigent with law-breakers who only embarrassed and humiliated the entire community.²⁰ In spite of the more reasonable ways of caste justice, the system failed to please our Western observers. While some of their remarks seem entirely unfounded, others allow us to draw interesting comparisons with the ways of European justice.

Indian laws, we are told, were not codified. "Ils n'ont ni codes, ni digestes", wrote Father Bouchet.²¹ This, in itself, was of little consequence for European laws were not always carefully codified either. What was much more unusual, was the chro-

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niclers' discovery that Indian jurisprudence was entirely embodied in books of proverbs and maxims. When disputes over the law arose, quoting an appropriate proverb was a sure way in India of bringing about a quick reconciliation. This approach was not altogether different from the practice among Christians of quoting passages from the bible. Always giving in to ancient proverbs, however, left very little room for the introduction of new ideas. The old wisdom constantly prevailed over the best reasons: the mind of India was somehow trapped between the covers of her ancient books. Fryer found this whole situation rather disheartening. He wrote:

Custom and tradition are only Venerable here; and it is Heiny to be wiser than their Forefathers; ... Whereby Society and Communication, the characteristic of Man is wholly lost. What then is to be expected here where sordid Thrift is the only Science?²²

Few of our travellers actually had access to the treasure house of Indian wisdom. When, occasionally, missionaries obtained permission to examine the content of some of the old Indian manuscripts, their reports often turned out to be quite favorable. After reading the maxims which depicted the virtues of the ideal judge, Father Bouchet became quite enthralled with Indian wisdom and actually urged Europeans to take notice of some of the finest precepts in the world. The group of maxims in question proposed the following:

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Un Juge doit posséder la matière dont il est question; il doit savoir parfaitement toutes les maximes qui tiennent lieu de droit; il doit être homme de bien; il faut qu'il soit riche pour ne pas se laisser corrompre par l'argent; il doit avoir plus de vingt ans, afin que l'indiscrétion qui est le partage de la jeunesse ne l'engage pas à précipiter ses décisions; il doit avoir moins de soixante ans, parce que l'esprit commence à s'affaiblir dans les sexagénaires, et ils ne sont plus capables d'une grande application; s'il est ami ou parent d'une des parties, il doit se désister de la qualité de juge de peur que la passion ne l'aveugle; il ne doit jamais juger seul quelque bonne intention et quelques lumières qu'il puisse avoir.²³

Regardless of whether or not these principles were fully respected, the Indian notion of a judge was indeed, even for a European, a quite honorable one. What retained the chroniclers' attention, however, was less the content of Indian wisdom than the form in which it was contained. Europeans could hardly understand why, when a law was discussed for example, Indians always employed for their arguments the subtle style of the proverb or the fable. In Europe, the language of the law was preferred unambiguous, direct, and to the point. But here as well as in other parts of the Eastern World, the manner was to avoid speaking directly of the issue at hand. Chardin, who gave this matter considerable thought, came up with an interesting explanation why Asians employed so many parables in their speech. Quite simply, he says, it was all on account of their despotic governments:

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De tout temps les peuples d'Orient ont été gouvernés, comme ils le sont encore aujourd'hui, par des rois qui ont un pouvoir illimité, qui jugent sur-le-champ et sans procédure juridique, qui, d'un seul mot de leur bouche et sans autre forme, font périr ceux qu'ils condamnent, et dont les ministres et les officiers agissent de même manière, chacun selon l'étendue de son pouvoir. Il est donc dangereux de les choquer par des leçons; et de là est venu qu'on enseignait la sagesse par des fables, et particulièrement, qu'on donnait les conseils, les exhortations, les refus, les justifications avec des fables lesquelles adoucissant la sévérité de la chose, et ne la disant qu'indirectement, évitaient d'irriter les personnes éminentes que la moralité de ces fables regardait.²⁴

Assuming that Chardin's explanation is at least partly valid, then, by opposition, Europeans, because of their more liberal political structures, would have enjoyed the faculty of speaking out more freely on similar matters of law and government. We know that the French parliaments, for example were granted the unusual liberty of admonishing their kings, a privilege which despotic governments would never have tolerated. Village riots and general uprisings, so frequent in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe, also attest to the outspokenness of the European people. Problems and events in Europe were confronted boldly, without evasion and without subterfuge. The language was never passive or submissive, the tone adopted was usually firm and spirited.

Another series of reflections dealt more specifically with the origins of Indian laws. One of the chroniclers was informed

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by the local people that the laws and structures of the Indian society had been "universally received" and transmitted through the ages from one generation to another. Caste rules and regulations were entirely based on the ancient ways of their forefathers. Consequently, by knowing the old customs, one was automatically well-versed in the laws of India.²⁵ In fact, the natives of India were instructed early in their youth in the exact ways of the different castes. They quickly achieved a perfect knowledge of all the rules which were to regulate every aspect of their lives. Since these rules had the strength of law, everybody in India was considered quite capable of pleading his or her own case before the caste assemblies.²⁶ In Europe, the situation was altogether different. Children were reared according to certain moral principles, they learned to differentiate between good and evil, to respect the teachings of the church, and to live honorably, but they were not expected to memorize all the laws by which their society was governed. In fact, this would have been difficult to do for what was peculiar about European laws was that they were constantly being transformed. The idea in Europe was less to apply the law rigidly than to adapt the spirit of the law to changing circumstances. Consequently, what was generally understood in Europe, were the concepts of Western justice, not the laws in their detailed applications.

It must not be thought that European laws were so complicated that only legal experts could understand them. The difference was

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simply that the laws in Europe were subject to changing interpretations. What European jurists hoped to accomplish by recording and commenting the laws was less to propose formal law-codes than to explain the latest changes and interpretations of the law. In India, such works were entirely unnecessary. The laws which India honored existed by virtue of a general agreement among the people and especially by virtue of their traditional usage. Precisely because the laws derived from the practices of holy ancestors, nobody in India imagined that they ought ever to be changed. Father Bouchet, who devoted an entire letter to Indian caste justice, repeatedly points out that the people of India had such a formidable attachment to the revered ways of their distant ancestors that nothing could persuade them to abandon or to alter not even their most contradictory laws. No matter how inconsistent with modern realities some of the old caste rules seemed to be, pleading them before the judges was almost always certain to prevail. Not even the most enlightened caste judge would dare to introduce changes in the law. Father Bouchet observed:

Dès là qu'on a pu prouver que sa prétention est fondée sur la coutume suivie dans les castes, et sur l'usage du monde, c'en est assez; il n'y a plus à raisonner, c'est la règle, et l'on doit s'y conformer. Quand vous auriez des démonstrations que cette coutume est mal établie et qu'elle est sujet à de grands inconvénients, vous ne gagneriez rien, la coutume l'emportera toujours sur les meilleures raisons.²⁷

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To illustrate this point, Father Bouchet reported that by a strange Indian custom, the children of two brothers or of two sisters were declared brothers and sisters between themselves but that the children of a brother and a sister were only recognized a cousin relationship. When someone tried to explain to them that the relationship in either case was exactly the same, the natives simply refused to see clear in the matter. "Cette objection leur paraît absurde et ils regardent ceux qui la proposent comme des gens qui combattent les premiers principes."²⁸ What Father Bouchet clearly had in mind in making these remarks was Europe's greater ability to adapt her laws to the changing needs and aspirations of society. When a law no longer fulfilled its original purpose, when it became inconvenient or simply embarrassing, Western governments simply abandoned it and decreed a more appropriate law in its stead. In this way, European laws were seen to be much more flexible than those of India. While India cultivated traditions and remained locked in her past, European nations were accommodating themselves to the ever changing requirements of the present.

If the chroniclers occasionally seemed rather sparing in their remarks about Indian justice, the reason may be that they preferred to remain silent on a matter that they did not fully understand. When they did venture certain comments, it often happened that these were entirely unfounded. This was the case, for example, when Father Bouchet complained about the moderation

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with which Indian justice punished murderers and cut-throats.

He wrote:

S'il se trouvait un Etat en Europe où il n'y eût aucune peine de mort, et où l'exil ne consistat, comme aux Indes, qu'à sortir par une porte de la ville et à rentrer par l'autre, à quels excès ne s'y abandonnerait-on pas?²⁹

True, the caste judges never proclaimed the death sentence, but they did employ another punitive measure which in terms of severity was not altogether unlike the death penalty. This punishment was known as excommunication or caste exclusion which, in substance, was actually nothing less than a form of civil death. By it, a man was stripped of all his caste rights and privileges, he was disowned by his family and friends, and reduced to a life of misery and beggary.³⁰ The chroniclers, unfortunately, never quite grasped the full significance of excommunication. In Europe, this sort of punishment would have been entirely inoperative for excommunicated criminals would simply have moved on to another province, changed their names, and began their lives anew; such were the possibilities in a world of greater social mobility. In India, however, a man's antecedents followed him wherever he went so that breaking with one's past was virtually impossible. Since the natives of India could not be received into a caste other than their own, upon excommunication, they had no place to go other than staying in the same village repenting their crimes.

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The only advantage this sentence had over the death penalty was that after a period of imposed penitence, the outcasts were sometimes allowed to reintegrate society. In a way, temporary exclusion corresponded to a sort of prison term, the length of which depended on the seriousness of the crime. But the chroniclers fail to make this observation; they simply insist on the fact that without the death penalty, there can be no effective means of ridding society of its unwanted elements. If a project favoring the abolition of capital punishment had been presented to our late seventeenth-century travellers, it would have certainly received a negative vote.

On the question of the relationship between crime and punishment, the chroniclers raised a second point which equally deserves our attention. It was observed that only certain crimes in India were punishable by law, not all. When an Indian of one of the ill-reputed castes assassinated a Brahman, for example, he was sure to be punished most severely. But when a member of a more illustrious caste took the life of one of his base fellows, he was usually acquitted without the slightest reprimand. On this point, Father de Bourzes reported:

Il y a telle Caste si basse et si méprisable que ceux qui en sont, n'oseraient regarder en face un homme d'une caste supérieure; et s'ils le faisait, il aurait droit de les tuer sur-le-champ.³¹

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These curious ways naturally shocked the chroniclers who believed that murderers, regardless of their social status, should all be equally judged and punished. In India, however, human lives were not all equally valued. Consequently, in matters of crime, the social quality of the offender often determined the nature of the punishment. This was true not only for murder cases, but also for religious offences with the single difference that in the latter case, the upper castes, because of their greater contention to purity, received heavier sentences than the lower ones. This last consideration draws us into the realm of social values and attitudes, the study of which may best be reserved for a later chapter.

The chroniclers' opinions of Eastern justice were on the whole quite unfavorable. Mogul justice, on the one hand, was rendered with little or no respect for form; Indian justice, on the other, was administered with such exactness that it became exaggeratedly rigid, even unreasonable. By contrast, European justice seemed to strike the perfect balance between good form and sound logic. The chroniclers never cease to boast the quality and efficiency of Western institutions. To them, the East had yet to discover the European advantages of order, method, and discipline. This applied to matters of justice and, as the following chapter will show, to several other areas as well.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol. VI, p. 98.
2. Jean de Thévenot, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 28.
3. Ibid, p. 29.
4. François Catrou, s.j., Histoire générale de l'Empire du Mogul depuis sa fondation jusqu'à présent, Paris, 1705-1715, Vol. II, p. 234-235; also John Fryer, A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, (1672-1681), 1967 edition, Vol, I. p. 91.
5. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 27.
6. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 97.
7. Alexander Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies, London, 1930 edition, Vol. I. p. 98.
8. Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Etrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol. XI, p. 172.
9. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 65.
10. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 27.
11. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 63, (Father de Bourzes).
12. Abbé Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré in India and the Near East, (1672-1674), London, 1947-48, Vol. I, p. 167-168.
13. Ibid.
14. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 170.
15. This was also true of Indian caste justice. See Catrou, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 234; and De La Flotte, Essais historiques sur l'Inde, Paris, 1769, p. 251-258.

16. Careri, op. cit., p. 198.
17. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 177-178.
18. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 224.
19. Father Bouchet devotes an entire letter to caste justice. See Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 204-249, Additional observations are provided by Father de Bourzes in Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 62-64.
20. Louis Dumont, Homo hierarchicus: essai sur le système des castes, Paris, 1966, especially chapter VIII, "Le gouvernement des castes: justice et autorité", p. 213-233.
21. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 210.
22. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 180-181.
23. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 220-221.
24. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 3-4.
25. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 207-220.
26. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 63.
27. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 207.
28. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 208.
29. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 233.
30. Dumont, op. cit., p. 227-228.
31. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 62.

CHAPTER IV

ORDER AND DISORDER

In their writings, the chroniclers often give the impression that compared to Europe, the Eastern World was the scene of extraordinary disorder. It must immediately be cautioned that the opposition order-disorder as the chroniclers present it is for the most part, historically inadmissible. A society must be judged on its own merits, not on other peoples' standards; a precept which travellers to India rarely observed. Yet, the idea of a distinctive European sense of order is perhaps the most captivating notion to emerge from the chroniclers' writings. The material related to this theme is extremely diversified; it is also fairly abundant. Europe is credited with a superior sense of order in a number of different contexts. We shall examine these under separate headings. The precise meaning of the word 'order' changes slightly from one context to another. Our task will be to articulate these differences and explain the advantages Europe supposedly drew from her profound respect for the ordered ways.

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Social Order

To use European models to explain certain Eastern peculiarities was a standard procedure among the chroniclers. When the pieces were seen to fit together, it was usual to applaud; when they did not, which was often the case, the chroniclers would imagine disorder. This method is not entirely new to us. In a previous chapter, we saw that the Brahmins' claims to nobility were considered illegitimate and repudiated because they did not correspond to the Western concept of nobility. In this case, the chroniclers emphasized differences. In other instances, the method also served to point out similarities. The travellers' descriptions of India's social structures is a good case in point.

According to our Western observers, the caste system and Europe's society of orders were founded on an identical principle. The alleged resemblance, of course, is incorrect. India's caste hierarchy was based on a principle of religious purity, not as the chroniclers believed, on a principle of functional and complementary social orders. Several factors account for the chroniclers' total misunderstanding of the caste system. In the first place, the closed and uncommunicative character of the Indian people denied the chroniclers the much needed opportunities to expand their knowledge of that society. Secondly, Europeans rarely went to live among the caste Indians - Jesuit missionaries excepted after 1700- so that any information concerning the underlying structures of

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the Indian society had to be secured from second-hand sources and most of the time from mere hearsay. Thirdly, even with *the* information they *possessed*, the chroniclers never really tried to consider the caste system as a separate and unique social organization. Instead, they preferred to equate India's social structures to those of Europe. In doing so, the distinctive character of the caste society was wholly lost.

The chroniclers may have been misinformed but they also believed, it seems, that man's needs were such that all societies more or less resembled each other. Perhaps this explains their rather evasive treatment of India's social structures. To them, the caste system in its general outlines did not warrant any special consideration, nor did it receive any. It was discussed only incidently, usually in broad and general terms, rarely being allowed more than a few scanty remarks at a time. For our purpose, however, these remarks when grouped together are not entirely void of interest. They evoke, among other things, the chroniclers' solid acceptance of society's three traditional orders.

Whether the practice was to speak of "degrees among the people", or "ranks", or of "orders", it was usual for the chroniclers to divide the Indian society into three principal bodies. John Fryer described India's social organization in the following terms:

The Nation is distinguished by Three Ranks. The Priests make the first. The second Form is that of the Nobles, who are all bred Soldiers, and therefore called Nairos... The last, and lowest are the Artizans and Tillers of the Earth.¹

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Surprisingly, Fryer does not even mention the word 'caste'. He simply detects the presence of a clergy, a noble order, and a peasantry. Other writers associate the priests with the Brahmans, nobles with the caste of Rajputs, and the third rank, with the Sudras and Banians. The Sudras were effectively "Artizans and Tillers" but the Banians constituted a separate caste; they were all merchants, bankers, and brokers and apparently "the expertest people in the world for making money of anything."² We know India to have had an infinitely larger number of castes but to the chroniclers the four above-mentioned were the only ones which really mattered. All the others were said to be sub-castes ~~and~~ were viewed somewhat like the French and English guilds.

Anciently, there were no more tribes but these four; but in succession of time, all those who applied themselves to the same profession, composed a tribe or caste, and that is the reason they are so numerous.³

The order of subordination observed between these principal castes was another factor which may have induced the chroniclers into mistaking the caste system for a society of orders. "The Banians", we are told, "yield to the Sudra, the Sudra to the Rajput, and these as all the rest do to the Brames."⁴ This social hierarchy was indeed most like any in Western Europe. Were the merchant classes not long considered inferior in status to the small land owning and farming communities? Were both these groups not inferior to the time-honored clergy and the proud noble order?

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The chroniclers then examined the social preoccupations of these different castes and discovered another series of parallels with their own society. The Brahmans, like the Western clergy, were concerned with man's spiritual needs, and, therefore, spent their lives professing doctrine. Rajputs, like the European nobilities, devoted themselves to the causes of government and national security and in this perspective were assigned a military function. Finally, all the other inferior castes, like the Third Estate in Europe, laboured, usually with their hands, either in the fields or in workshops, at the task of providing society with the material necessities of life. The chroniclers could hardly criticize such a system: it was too much like their own.

In a society of orders, each rank was in a way the guarantor of its own solidarity. The orders united to defend their traditional privileges; they also sought by whatever means to enhance their status and social prestige. On these points, the Indian society hardly differed. Thévenot reports that a Rajput who abandoned his military vocation to take up a lesser trade was "despised in the tribe and passed for base fellow, void of honor." Similarly, when a peasant farmer decided to bear arms, this "did not reflect well upon him since that is an honorable trade and of a superior caste." A caste had no respectable alternative but to continue the work traditionally assigned to it and "none of their off-springs can quit it without being reckoned infamous in his tribe."⁵ These social attitudes and restrictions were perhaps, by Western standards,

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somewhat rigid, but they were not unjustified. They served, much as in Europe, to maintain the traditional orders intact.

At first view, the caste system did in fact compare rather well with the social structures of Europe. Yet, as the chroniclers themselves were to recognize, the two systems were not entirely alike. There were several puzzling features which did not fit the Western model at all. But the model was not challenged. Instead, the difficult pieces were used by the chroniclers to point out irregularities, inconsistencies, and even contradictions within India's social organization. Here are a few examples.

To begin with, Indian castes were found to be extremely jealous of their respective social distinctions. We are even told that: "Il n'y a guères de Nation qui ait tant de délicatesse que celle-ci sur ces sortes de prérogatives."⁶ Yet, for such a prestige conscious people, how could it be that all alike from the highest to the lowest affected much the same simple life style? The people of India, as some of our travellers were to discover, attached very little importance to material wealth. In fact, it was customary to appear poor even amidst the greatest riches. Father de Bourzes observed that: "Les riches cachent leur bien avec soin, et que souvent avec de grandes richesses ils ne sont ni mieux logés, ni mieux vêtus, ni mieux nourris que les plus indigents."⁷ To draw public attention on one's private fortune was not to be recommended. "Il n'y a point d'accusation à laquelle on prête plus volontier l'oreille, ni de crime qui soit plus

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sévèrement puni."⁸ Concealing one's wealth from public view was done for fear of Mogul confiscation. The chroniclers also associate this practice with some mysterious afterlife doctrine.⁹ Whatever the true cause, wealth did not contribute like in Europe to an individual's social ascendancy; it did not draw respect and admiration, it did not earn high offices, nor could it purchase a noble status: "Le Roi ne peut la donner, ni les particuliers l'acheter."¹⁰ In India, an individual's social status was purely a gift of birth. The absence of the wealth factor as an instrument of social promotion suddenly made the Indian society appear stale, motionless, and unattractive, it made it unduly rigid, and seemed to negate all possibilities of social advancement.

The low level of social and political interaction between the different castes of India was another source of puzzlement. Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that Indian natives were not permitted to marry out of their own caste. To perpetuate this custom, it was usual for parents to marry their offsprings at a very tender age, in some cases as early as four and five years old.¹¹ By disallowing inter-caste marriages, the chain which had initially been thought to link all the castes together began to break down. Each caste seemed to constitute a separate and independent 'tribe', a word often used by the chroniclers. The primary function of each 'tribe' was to assure its own reproduction and thus, in a way, its own survival. Moreover, each 'tribe' was governed by different

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sets of rules and regulations; there were no laws which governed the Indian society as a whole. (See previous chapter.) Caste religion was no less exclusive, each caste possessing its own household gods. Thévenot reports that while some castes (not all) went to their devotions at the same time, "they adore what idol they please, without addressing themselves solely to him to whom the temple is dedicated... some carry their idols with them when they know that he whom they worship is not there."¹² In this context, each caste could well be considered as a separate sect. Finally, Indian castes differed in language, manners, and customs. The chroniclers were often surprised to find neighbouring castes speaking entirely different dialects. "One great misfortune that attends us European Travellers in India", Hamilton wrote, "is the want of knowledge of their languages, and they being so numerous, that one entire Century would be too short to learn them all."¹³ At the economic level, Indian castes did of course depend on each other, but, as the chroniclers point out, this phenomenon was neither national nor provincial in scope; it was at best a matter of regional cooperation.

How then, in such a system could there possibly be any internal unity? How, in a moment of crisis, could such a fragmented society act in unison? Hear Careri's reply:

Now considering so great a number of sects (i.e. castes) and such a variety of manners, which makes it impracticable for them to be unanimous in government, it is not to be

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thought strange that so small a number of Mahometans should subdue such a multitude of Gentils; since Division and Discord have ever been the most efficient cause in the world to overthrow the greatest monarchies.¹⁴

Clearly, the problem was one of coherence. The caste system was not sufficiently well-integrated to produce like in Europe, the effect of a highly functional whole. The different orders composing Western societies interacted with each other on all levels. Relationships were clearly defined. Privileges and obligations were assigned in such a way as to maintain a constant equilibrium between the orders. Otherwise, the European system was relatively free and open. Obedience to the King and service to the nation was not incompatible with the pursuit of private interests.

Military Order

The chroniclers did not only question the efficiency of India's social order, they also criticized her for her lack of military discipline. The chroniclers abound with remarks such as:

I could never see these soldiers destitute of order, marching with the irregularity of a herd of animals, without reflecting upon the ease with which five-and-twenty thousand of our veterans from the army in Flanders, commanded by Prince Condé or Marshal Turenne, would overcome these armies, however numerous;¹⁵

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or again, as La Flotte observed: "On ne connaît point d'ordre dans les marches, chaque soldat va à son gré, et se contente de suivre le gros du corps auquel il est attaché."¹⁶ The issue was not to know whether or not these men lacked courage and valour; the chroniclers concede that the Indian soldier endured a great deal of fatigue. The problem *lay* elsewhere. To become excellent soldiers, discipline in the ranks needed much improvement. Catrou adds that India would do well to acquire "la science de la guerre et l'adresse à se servir des armes."¹⁷ In short, by Western standards, Indian armies were so poorly trained that though their numbers be ever so great, they could never overcome a well-ordered European army. "A comparer les armées de l'Indoustan avec celle d'Europe, on peut dire que celles-là feraient, dans un combat, beaucoup inférieures aux nôtres."¹⁸

In the present context, the notion of order takes on an entirely new dimension. Order in the sense of military discipline was for European nations a source of power and strength. In Indian armies only numbers counted: "Celui qui a la plus nombreuse armée a presque toujours l'avantage sur son adversaire."¹⁹ In Europe, military success depended partly on numbers but also on an effective command structure, on the arrangement and position of the troops on a battlefield, on an experienced handling of the weaponry, and on strict discipline throughout the entire army. Indian armies employed little or no strategy at all. In Europe, military strategy had developed into a veritable science. Yet, there could be

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no successful strategy without order and discipline. The eighteenth-century Dictionnaire de Trévoux gives the following military use of the word 'order':

Se dit de l'arrangement des parties d'une armée de terre ou de mer, de la disposition des bataillons et escadrons pour marcher, ou pour combattre et de même des vaisseaux. Un ordre de bataille est quelquefois d'une, de deux ou de trois lignes. On marche en deux ou trois colonnes selon le terrain et pour éviter la confusion.²⁰

In Europe, war was an extremely serious matter. Indian life, however, continued much the same on the battle trail as it did in peacetime. On this subject, La Flotte provides us with a number of interesting details. He observed, for example, that Indian soldiers carried the provisions of rice and the cooking utensils while the wives followed behind with the weapons. The wives also brought along all their children which made the armies very numerous and paralysed them in their movements. At the slightest sign of defeat, confusion immediately set in and the armies broke up and deserted. The death of a chief was followed by a frantic dispersement of the troops and calling them back to order was usually an impossible task. In time of war, Indian soldiers were often seen carrying out private business with the enemy and then returning to their posts without ever the slightest reprimand. Evidently, there was less animosity between warring nations in this part of the world than was usually the case in Europe. But

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then, as La Flotte points out, the aims and purposes of war in India were often ill-defined. An army might engage in battle and retreat when the odds were still clearly in its favor. Finally, contrary to European manners, there was no formal declaration of war and binding peace treaties were seldomly contracted.²¹

India's idea of war was that of an open confrontation with the enemy. Her armies made very few sieges and they were unskilled in the art of defending a fortified place.²² Weapons were of an inferior quality. Thévenot writes that the swords made in India were "very brittle." The English, however, furnished them "with good ones brought from England."²⁴ Firearms were seldom employed. "On s'y sert plus d'armes blanches que d'armes à feu." The absence of firearms was used to explain why Indian battles claimed fewer lives and fewer casualties than European wars.²⁴ Indian cannons were never brought out on the battlefield; their use was restricted to the defence of the towns. Most of the time, however, these cannons were defective. One chronicler reports that "since they melt the metal in diverse furnaces, some of it must need be better than others. When they mingle all together, their cannon commonly is good for nothing."²⁵ The Mogul army exceptionally sponsored an artillery division. But for a long time this division was manned by Europeans attracted into the Mogul service on promises of high wages. "Formerly when the Moguls were little skilled in the management of artillery", Bernier observed, "the pay of the Europeans (Portuguese, English, Dutch,

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German, and French) was more liberal, and there are still some remaining who receive 200 roupies a month."²⁶ On all these counts, the chroniclers could boast of an evident Western superiority. Yet, it was believed that given order and discipline, the Indian soldier could quickly become just as competent as his Western counterpart.²⁷

Administrative OrderA. Government Administration

It was ascertained in earlier chapters that the principal weakness with the Mogul government was its want of experienced and reliable administrators. There was a government but unlike in Europe there were no branches of government. Responsibilities were neither divided nor clearly defined. Local governors ruled over their respective provinces very much like tyrants; they had little or no respect for justice; imperial orders were complied with only hap hazardly, and in their reports they preferred to conceal the truth than elaborating on the sorry plight of the people. These Mogul lords each had their own special views on justice and their own private methods for collecting taxes. How then in such a system could there possibly be any systematic application of the law, any standardized business procedures, any methodical efficiency? From the chroniclers' point of view, the Mogul government suffered from profound administrative disorder.

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European nations were not exempt from administrative blunders but they were seen to manage their public affairs with much greater skill. There were competent and trustworthy administrators at all the different levels of government; there was harmony between the different branches of government; and there were checks and balances built into the Western political systems to avoid the abuse of public authority. Europe's preference for the elaborate and sophisticated forms of government was perhaps due in part to necessity but it seems to me that this choice was also determined by Europe's natural inclination for the efficient and ordered ways.

B. Business Administration

Order in the sense of methodical efficiency was something Europeans admired. Our travellers to India, for example, admired the English and the Dutch trading companies for their fine administrative methods; they were generally less impressed with the French and the Portuguese. Carré who devoted lengthy passages to the question of India trade policies clearly favored the English business approach. As early as 1672, he predicted that the English were to experience more success in their East India business ventures than the French. Though highly patriotic on other issues, Carré did not hesitate to criticize the French for their lack of integrity and for their bungling administration. Using the Abbé's notes, we shall compare the French and English administrative policies and see exactly why the English methods received greater praise.

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A first point concerned the division of executive responsibilities. Unlike the French, the English in the East had appointed three heads independent of one another. Each of the three company presidents had a separate jurisdiction and limited powers which according to Carré was "an excellent policy to prevent the jealousy, pin-pricks, and disorders that are apt to occur in places where several chiefs try to rule together."²⁸ These remarks were especially directed to the French company in Surat. In 1672, Carré had witnessed the **sudden** arrival in this town of a new director-general. Caron who was already in office refused to recognize the new appointment on the grounds that his own mandate had not officially been revoked. Bitter conflicts between the two men ensued, and Carré to comment; "Oh, unhappy France! We never wish to be contradicted or to believe that anyone is superior to ourselves."²⁹ To make matters worse, just as Caron prepared to leave, a third director-general appeared on the scene. The leadership question was far from being resolved.

Things came to such a point that the other officers of the Company did not know what to do or how to conduct themselves toward the two directors. One took offence if the other was consulted first about business to be handled, letters to be signed, orders to be given, and the like. All this placed our affairs in a state which gave entire satisfaction to the English and Dutch.³⁰

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Such confusion and personality clashes at the top executive level was seen by Carré and other chroniclers as one of the most persistent weaknesses of the French administration.

The English were also admired for their sense of administrative continuity. In the French companies, there was no continuity at all. All the new directors brought with them from France relatives, friends, and hangers-on whom they immediately put into office and employments.³¹ The English President in Bombain told Carré that he found these practices "very prejudicial to the advancement and ability of the (French) Company", and also "very prejudicial to those who were thus deprived of appointments, of which they were more deserving from their practical knowledge of trade and business in this country."³² In the English companies, such arbitrary appointments were absolutely forbidden.

The President had express orders not to advance anyone, nor to give employment by favours, or on any other consideration whatever but that of appointing only those who were found capable from long experience in trade and on a strict examination of their capacities and even of their morals.³³

The morals of the English were indeed superior to those of the French. Carré reports that no sooner arrived in India, the French caused trouble and often deserted. They spend their full six months advanced wages on debauchery and claim for more. The English were only allowed two months advanced wages and "the

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orders on this point are so well established that no one thinks of complaining or railing about it, as I have always seen done in our French Company."³⁴ Carré also claims that there was something in the oriental climate which incited Europeans to seek feminine company more than at home. Many of them ruined both their health and finances by going with Indian women. Some took Portuguese women for their brides but under conditions which subjected them "like slaves" to Portuguese customs. Others preferred to buy foreign girls brought from Georgia, Persia, or Basra in Arabia and marry them "after having them baptized and trained in their customs and religion." The English, however, had a policy which obliterated all these inconveniences:

They send from England every year some young ladies as wives for their officers. They thus establish families and gain tranquility with honour and usefulness to their nation, for their children are brought up to know the manners and customs of the country, and by their familiarity with them are capable of rendering good service in Trade and Commerce.³⁵

The inability of French navigators is another subject which Carré dwelled upon. He found that the factors and military sent out to India were for the most part strangers to the mariner's art. He calls them "idlers" and "shirkers" who hide between the decks of a ship among filth and foulness for whole months at a time for fear of being made to work. In English ships, he observed instead, "men of whom the least is capable of handling a

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ship in all seas."³⁶ Here, again, the English had a policy which Carré admired and fully approved. In English ships, it was compulsory for everybody to learn the essentials of navigation.

This is done in such a thorough way that the whole crew to the least sailor can learn navigation: the masters and mates are not anxious, as among us, to hide their knowledge of navigation, but on the contrary, are delighted to teach what they know, so that all may learn something.³⁷

For service in their East India Company, the English also appear to have been far more selective than the French.

From what class do you think these boys come from? Possibly miserable children of fishermen and soldiers, or children sent to sea by their parents who can no longer support them? No, no; these boys are not of that class, but are mostly the sons of members of parliament in England, or of noblemen and the richest merchants of London and principal towns. It is esteemed an honour to send boys to learn the business of navigation, in the hope that one day, they may command a man-of-war or a merchantman. The parents of these children apprentice them to an experienced captain, usually for seven years, and pay fees for this period, or else give him a handsome present.³⁸

In the offices and factories of the English Company, Carré found righteous and honourable men, all of whom were qualified and experienced in the duties assigned to them. They were not, as among the French, mere adventurers and profit seekers. We

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rarely hear in the chronicles of English deserters, of English abandoning their posts to seek better fortunes elsewhere. Among the other nations, and especially among the French, this was unfortunately a widespread phenomenon. The English appear to have been much more devoted and loyal to their nation than the French but then the English administrative policies were inducive to such results whereas the French methods evidently were not.

From the executive level down to the merchant crews, the English had succeeded in establishing order and discipline, they had also created a climate of stability and prosperity and we might even add a certain degree of job security. This was clearly the product of well-conceived and well-implemented policies. But England was not alone to have developed an efficient trade organization, and the English were the first to acknowledge it too. Fryer, for example, had much more admiration for the Dutch who aside from their efficient administration had visions for the future. Speaking of the Dutch, he wrote:

They being as powerful for men, riches and shipping in Batavia, as in Europe; which is grounded on a different principle from our East India Company, who are for the present profit, not future emolument. These, as they gain ground, secure it by vast expenses, raising forts and maintaining soldiers. Ours are for raising auctions, and retrenching charges; bidding the next Age (i.e. generation) grow rich as they have done, but not affording them the means.³⁹

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Cultural Order

Travellers to India were generally disappointed with the exterior appearance of Indian buildings. Even the Emperor's palaces in Dehli and Agra were by Western standards dull and unimaginative pieces of architecture. "Ils n'ont rien de la régularité, et de cette belle ordonnance qu'on admire dans la structure des grands édifices de Rome et de Venise."⁴⁰ Concerning Indian buildings in general, Bernier claimed that "the columns, the architraves and the cornices were, indeed not formed according to the proportion of the fine orders of architecture so strictly observed in French edifices."⁴¹ Aside from the Indian pagodas and the two Mogul palaces, India had few other large buildings. Nowhere in the countryside could ^{there} be found residences "to be compared to Fontainebleau, Saint Germain or Versailles, ... nor seats such as Saint Cloud, Chantilly, Meudon, Liancour, Vaux, or Ruelles, or even the smaller country houses belonging to private gentlemen, citizens, or merchants."⁴² In fact, between Dehli and Agrā, a distance calculated at 50 or 60 leagues, there were "no fine towns such as travellers pass through in France."⁴³ Europeans everywhere delighted in large and impressive buildings but after the experience of Portuguese Goa, the "Rome of India" as some called it, the Moguls began to resent and even became suspicious of such formidable structures.⁴⁴ In the town of Ganjan, on the East coast between Madras and Bengal, the Mogul people

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objected to the construction of solid brick buildings. They are reported to have said: "Nous connaissons bien le génie des Européens, s'il leur était permis d'user des briques pour leurs maisons, ils élèveraient bientôt des forteresses."⁴⁵

By adopting this policy, the Moguls recognized that European abilities in matters of construction and architecture far out-ranked those of India. Accordingly, the impression that Indian buildings were wanting in order and just proportions would seem entirely justified.

The chroniclers were also critical of the general appearance of towns, market-places, bazaar buildings, and Indian gardens. The streets of Benares were "narrow and crooked";⁴⁶ the bazaar buildings in Surat were "like peddlars stalls";⁴⁷ the shops in Dehli were wanting in "the brilliant appearance which so much contributes to the beauty of European towns";⁴⁸ and as for Indian gardens, "they are but rude compared to ours of Europe."⁴⁹ Yet, when a traveller came to a place built by Europeans, impressions immediately changed. The Portuguese town of Basseim, for example, was found to be "very well built in European style, with broad streets, a fine square in the center, and several lovely churches."⁵⁰ The idea of a Place Royale in the centre of the town where all activities converge was common to most European towns of the period.

Of all our chroniclers, Bernier was alone to suggest that the Indian and the European styles of architecture answered to

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entirely different sets of climatic needs. In Europe, lodging-houses were several stories high. In India, houses were single story and were open without any door, "free to all the world." Moreover, whereas in Europe all the buildings were grouped close together, Indian buildings were interspersed with extensive gardens and open spaces. Bernier explained these differences in the following terms:

That what is useful and proper at Paris, London, or Amsterdam would be entirely out of place at Dehli. Without doubt, the cities of Europe may boast of great beauties; these, however, are of an appropriate character, suited to a cold climate. Thus Dehli, also may possess beauties adapted to a warm climate. The streets S. Jacques or S. Denis transported hither, with their closed houses and endless stories would not be habitable due to the tremendous heat for six months of the year.⁵¹

Architectural beauty is presented here as something quite relative. Nevertheless, Europeans did attach great importance to forms and proportions. We know, for example, that the different orders of architecture were used in Europe to translate rank and social prestige.

Au militaire convient une façade martiale, i.e. l'ordre dorique; à l'ecclésiastique, un hôtel moins sévère: à lui l'ionique. Quant au magistrat - ces nobles de robe du Parlement de Paris, il faut que son hôtel fasse souvenir de sa valeur, sa piété, son urbanité; à lui l'ordre composite, synonyme paraît-il d'urbanité!⁵²

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India's fine art production also made a rather poor impression on our chroniclers. With respect to drawings and paintings, the Indian artist was found to be "chiefly deficient in just proportions and in the expression of the face."⁵³ For the most part, he painted "dull pieces", he had no sense of "perspective", and though he worked well with symbols, he knew not how to capture nature.⁵⁴ In short, Indian arts and crafts were "rudes et brutes en comparaison de la perfection où l'Europe les a portés."⁵⁵ These defects would soon be corrected, the chroniclers believed, if Indian artists possessed good masters and were instructed in the "rules of art".⁵⁶

The words 'method', 'discipline', 'form', 'style', 'perspective', 'proportion', 'time', 'measure', 'unity', 'rules', 'regulations', 'symmetry', and so many more are all closely connected to the European concept of order. The scope of this concept is extremely broad. In a way, it covers practically every aspect of the European civilization. Order, moreover, appears as an inherent quality of the European mind. Our chroniclers are concerned with order in the sense of clarity, in the sense of discipline, and in the sense of efficiency. In these terms, there can be no such thing as "disorder", there can only be "more" or "less" order. That the chroniclers consciously set out to determine the level of order in India seems highly improbable, but when they met order, they were mentally trained to admire and appreciate it; and when they encountered disorder, it was difficult for them not to condemn it.

Notes to Chapter IV

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2. Jean de Thévenot, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 89.
3. Ibid, p. 90. Careri furnishes the names and professions of 84 castes, in same, p. 255-257; also see Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré and the Near East, (1672-1674), London, 1947-48, Vol. II, p. 595.
4. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 90; and De La Flotte, Essais historiques sur l'Inde, Paris, 1769, p. 167-168.
5. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 88-89.
6. Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Etrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol. XII, p. 61, (Father de Bourzes).
7. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 60.
8. Ibid.
9. François Catrou, s.j. Histoire générale de l'Empire du Mogul depuis sa fondation jusqu'à présent, Paris, 1705-1715, Vol. II, p. 304-305.
10. Lettres, Vol. XII, p. 62.
11. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 90 and p. 117-118. Useful descriptions of Indian marriage customs in Careri, op. cit., p. 248-255; in La Flotte, op. cit., p. 284-306; and in Navarette, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 333 and *passim*.
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13. Alexander Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies, London, 1930 edition, Vol. I, p. 7.

14. Careri, op. cit., p. 258.
15. François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, (1656-1668), Westminster, 1891 edition, p. 55.
16. La Flotte, op. cit., p. 258.
17. Catrou, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 263.
18. Ibid.
19. La Flotte, op. cit., p. 258.
20. Trévoux (Dictionnaire de), Trévoux, 1721 edition, see the word 'Order'.
21. La Flotte, op. cit., p. 258-260.
22. Ibid, p. 263.
23. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 61.
24. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol. V, p. 175; also mentioned in La Flotte, op. cit., p. 260.
25. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 61.
26. Bernier, op. cit., p. 217.
27. Ibid, p. 208.
28. Carré, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 157. For a detailed description of the English administration in Surat, see Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 215-218.
29. Carré, Vol. I, p. 142.
30. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 144.
31. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 394.
32. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 183.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 683.
35. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 686.

36. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 678; and Navarette, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 340.
37. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 682.
38. Ibid.
39. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 124.
40. Catrou, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 224-225.
41. Bernier, op. cit., p. 294.
42. Ibid, p. 283.
43. Ibid.
44. Navarette, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 336.
45. Lettres, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 28, (Father Tachard).
46. Peter Mundy, The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, London, 1914-1919, Vol. II, p. 122.
47. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 248.
48. Bernier, op. cit., p. 248.
49. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 263.
50. Carré, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 178.
51. Bernier, op. cit., p. 240.
52. Jean Meyer, Noblesses et Pouvoirs dans l'Europe d'Ancien Régime, Paris, 1973, p. 83-84.
53. Bernier, op. cit., p. 255.
54. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 55; and Chardin, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 202-203.
55. Chardin, ibid, Vol. V. p. 201.
56. Bernier, op. cit., p. 255.

CHAPTER V

ATTITUDES, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

The chroniclers provide us with a wealth of information on India's daily life. They wrote about the ways of greeting, the forms of civil discourse, and the rules of fashion; they listed practices touching health, hygiene, and other aspects of man's physical well-being; they described the interiors of Indian dwellings, found peculiarities with Indian culinary practices, and even talked about Indian table manners. The Indian ways of life caused European travellers many unsuspected surprises. The frequent use of words like "unusual", "bazaar", "singular", and "extravagant" bears this out. We cannot speak, however, of a profound culture shock. The chroniclers reacted forcefully to practices like "sati" (i.e. widow-burning), terming them "barbarous inhumanities" and "shocking exhibitions". But on the whole, such remarks are numerically few. In fact, if we set aside strong objections concerning religious observances and Indian marriage customs, we can say that the chroniclers were generally willing to accept differences without necessarily condemning them. As Chardin made clear in an opening passage of his manuscript, his sole purpose was to inform his readers about "tout ce qui mérite l'intéret et la curiosité de notre

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Europe."¹ In other words, he sought to present facts, not with the intention of judging them but with that of enlightening Europeans on what went on in other parts of the world. To be sure, the chroniclers' attention in matters of daily life habits was concentrated on the novel. They reported practices which were either absent from the Western culture or which were simply performed differently from one place to the other.

Each society has peculiar prescribed forms of social behaviour. What may be considered polite and civil in one society may sometimes be taken for an affront in another. In matters of greeting, the Indian people had forms which were often contrary to those practiced in Europe. In the first place, they used their left hand everywhere Europeans were taught to practice their right hand. "Ils ont la distinction de la droite et de la gauche, mais notre main gauche est leur main droite, comme dans tout l'Orient."² Secondly, where Europeans uncovered their heads to honor someone, Indians did not. To do so was considered a sign of disrespect and a liberty which was only taken with close friends.³ Thirdly, it was customary in Europe for inferiors to bow before their masters, the most graceful reverences being reserved for people of quality and of superior merit. But in India, the practice was for equals to bow their bodies and for inferiors to salute laying their hands on their head.⁴ Finally, when encountering an acquaintance while riding in a

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carriage, the least civility in Europe was to smile and offer some sign of recognition. In a similar situation in India, the proper manner was to withdraw inside the carriage and close the windows, this being done to the Vice-Roy himself.⁵ The above differences would seem to concern less the concept of greeting than the techniques on how to perform such acts.

The tone and character of the Indian discourse was another point which struck the chroniclers as somewhat peculiar. The tone was generally "modest and civil", speech was not accompanied with so many gestures and body movements, and the volume was never so loud as when Europeans spoke.⁶ The chroniclers also observed that Indians sat in positions without changing their postures for long periods at a time. To this Chardin replied: "Les Orientaux sont beaucoup moins frétilans que nous."⁷ What was more, the Indians proved to be more even-tempered and less quarrelsome than Europeans. They were not so easily carried away but, on occasion, when enraged, they did indulge in the use of foul language. What amazed the chroniclers, however, was that these people never employed profane language.

Mais ce qu'il y a de fort louable, c'est que quelque emportement qui leur arrive, et parmi quelques débauches ou gens perdus que ce soit, le nom de Dieu est toujours sacré et réservé. On ne l'entend jamais outragé. Le blasphème est non seulement inouï mais encore inconcevable à ce peuple là. Ils ne peuvent pas comprendre que parmi les Européens on renie Dieu, quand on est en colère... Leurs paroles sales sont toutes prises des parties du corps que la pudeur ne veut pas qu'on nomme.⁸

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Further evidence that seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europeans cluttered their speech with an insufferable amount of cursing was found in the Jesuit Relations. Missionaries complain having to contend with the immoral behaviour of Europeans.⁹ Their corrupt manners and evil tongues embarrassed the work of the Catholic missions. From the province of Madura, Father Martin wrote that it was easier to convert natives who had had no previous contacts with Europeans.

Ils n'ont presque aucun des obstacles qui se trouvent parmi les autres Peuples, parce qu'ils n'ont point de communication avec les Européens, dont quelques-uns ont gâté et corrompu par leurs débauches et par leurs mauvais exemples presque toute la Chrétieneté des Indes.¹⁰

In his rules for gentlemanly behaviour, St. Jean-Baptiste de la Salle warned Europeans against the excessive use of foul language. He wrote:

Il faut prendre garde de n'avoir pas sans cesse le nom de Dieu dans la bouche; et de ne pas mêler dans les discours les noms de Saints, quand ce ne serait qu'inutilement et sans aucun mauvais dessein; mais seulement par habitude: car on ne doit pas prononcer les noms de Dieu et des Saints avec irrévérence et sans une juste raison et il n'est jamais séant de mêler dans les discours ordinaires ces sortes de paroles, Jésus! Maria! Hélas, mon Dieu! Il n'est pas même séant de prononcer de certains juremens qui ne signifient rien, comme Pardi, Mardi, Morbleu, Jarni, etc., ces sortes de paroles ne doivent jamais être dans la bouche d'une personne bien née.¹¹

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These t_eachings would have been unnecessary had Europeans not indulged in the frequent use of curses.

According to the chroniclers, Orientals were the world's greatest flatterers. Bernier observed that "the vice of flattery pervades all rank"¹² and Chardin to add: "Ce sont des sépulchres blanchis, suivant l'expression de Jésus-Christ".¹³ The Indians were unacquainted with modesty and self-abasement. Amused, Bernier wrote: "Finding my modesty only increased their praise, I determined to accustom my ears to their flattery as I had done to their music."¹⁴ Elsewhere, Father Bouchet tells of an incident which occurred to one of his colleagues:

Je crois devoir donner ici un conseil à ceux que la Providence destine à ses missions, c'est de ne jamais parler d'eux-même en présence des Idolâtres. Un missionnaire ayant dit, par un sentiment d'humilité, qu'il était un grand pécheur, un Gentil qui l'écoutait, alla aussitôt le redire à tous ses compatriotes: "Et il faut que cela soit vrai, ajoutait-il, car il l'avoue lui-même."¹⁵

The European civility in matters of compliments and flattery called for moderation, honesty, and simplicity. This may well have been observed in the humbler strata of society but when Montesquieu listed the virtues and vices of the European aristocracy, he included among their principal vices; pride, flattery, arrogance, and haughtiness.¹⁶

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The Indian manner of dress furnished the chroniclers with additional comparative elements. We learn, for example, that Indian fashions never changed. "A l'égard des modes indiennes, elles sont toujours les mêmes, ces peuples ne changent guère leurs usages, surtout pour la manière de se vêtir."¹⁷ For men and women, the usual dress consisted of a large cotton garment wrapped around the body. For footwear, they put on sandals which differed from those sometimes used in Europe "car elles ne tiennent que par une espèce de grosse cheville à la tête, qui attache les deux premiers doigts de chaque pied à cette chaussure. On a toutes les peines du monde à s'y accoutumer."¹⁸ These Easterners wore neither socks nor stockings "but put their shoes on the naked feet."¹⁹ What impressed the chroniclers was the simplicity of the Indian costume. It had little resemblance with the more elaborate fashions known in Europe. Western fashions apparently charmed the natives of India especially if we judge by Fryer's account of the following incident:

I was placed close by him, he like an hermit, having the Court brought to him, admired the splendour as well as the novelty of our European Dress: asking my servant if I lay in them, because it is their fashion not to undress to go to bed, but lye in the same clothes they wear in the day.²⁰

If we turn to Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle's recommendations for the proper manners of dress, we will be struck by

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the importance Europeans attached to keeping up with the latest fashions.

On doit indispensablement les suivre: car comme l'esprit de l'homme est fort sujet au changement, et que ce qui lui plaisant bien ne lui plaît pas aujourd'hui, on a inventé et on invente tous les jours de différentes manières de s'habiller, pour satisfaire cet esprit changeant; et qui voudrait s'habiller aujourd'hui comme on s'habillait il y a trente ans, passerait pour ridicule et pour singulier. Il est cependant de la conduite d'un homme sage, de ne jamais se faire distinguer en rien.²¹

It would have been quite unthinkable for Europeans to adopt the Indian single piece garment. Proper dress prescribed close-fitting and well-adjusted clothes.

Rien n'est plus malséant qu'un habit qui ne convient pas à la taille de la personne qui le porte; cela défigure tout un homme, particulièrement lorsqu'il est ou trop ample ou qu'il a plus de largeur ou plus de longueur qu'il ne convient à la personne qui s'en sert.²²

If by Western standards the Indian dress appeared simple and unimaginative, the same could not be said for the ornaments and trinkets which accompanied them. Chroniclers were impressed and sometimes even shocked by the amount of gold and silver poured into fanciful jewelry. Some even spoke of an exceptional waste of precious metals.

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A large quantity is melted, re-melted, and washed in fabricating women's bracelets, both for the hands and feet, chains, ear-rings, nose, and finger rings, and a still larger quantity is consumed in manufacturing embroideries, silken stuff, gold lace worn on turbans, gold and silver cloths, scarfs, turbans and brocades. The quantity of these articles made in India are incredible. All the troops from the Omrah to the men in the ranks will wear gilt ornaments, nor will a private soldier refuse them to his wife and children, though the whole family should die of hunger; which indeed is a common occurrence.²³

Fryer also wrote about the extravagant use the natives of India made of their precious metals.

Their women are manacled with chains of silver (or Fetters rather) and hung with Earrings of Gold and Jewels, their noses stretched with weighty Jewels, on their toes Rings of Gold, about their waist a painted clout, over their shoulders they cast a Mantle.²⁴

In Europe, expensive jewelry immediately symbolized one's superior social status. For a person of a lower condition to dress like a wealthy seigneur was considered incompatible with his station in life.

Il ne serait pas séant qu'un pauvre fut vêtu comme un riche, et qu'un roturier voulut être habillé comme une personne de qualité... Pour ce qui est des habits qui ont quelques ornements ils ne conviennent qu'à des personnes qui sont d'une qualité distinguée.²⁵

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In India, the quality and value of clothes and ornaments had no real social significance, whereas in Europe, they served to further underline social stratification. Moreover, the frequent changes in European fashions suggest that Westerners were not only fascinated with everything novel but also capable of rapid adaptation.

A number of interesting comparisons were drawn between the Indian and European household. Indians were seen living in miserable huts, their floors covered with hay, with practically no furniture at all. "On n'a pas grand meuble dans l'Orient, on ne se sert ni de table, ni de chaise, ni de bois de lit, ni d'armoire, ni, à beaucoup près, de tant d'ustensiles de cuisine."²⁵ At meal time, the table was spread on the ground without napkins or tablecloth. These people were unacquainted with the use of forks, knives and spoons. They ate their food with their hands from large leaves which they then disposed of. Thévenot explains these manners in the following way.

They use no dishes, for fear somebody of another religion or tribe may have made use of this dish out of which they might eat; and to supply that, they put their victuals into large leaves of trees, which they throw away when they are empty.²⁶

European table manners were altogether different. It was customary to observe the following etiquettes: "On doit se servir

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à table d'une serviette, d'une assiette, d'un couteau, d'une cuiller et d'une fourchette; et il serait tout-à-fait contre l'honnêteté de se passer de quelqu'une et toutes ces choses en mangeant."²⁷

The chroniclers also report that the Indians neither spoke nor drank till they had done eating.²⁸ Describing a meal offered to him by some villagers, Bernier wrote: "Not a word was uttered during dinner, my elegant hosts were fully employed in cramming their mouths with as much "pelau" (i.e. stew) as they could contain."²⁹ Since the Indians bathed their entire bodies both before and after meals, there was no discomfort in eating with the hands. For Europeans, these manners did seem somewhat uncivilized.

Before examining oppositions dealing with food, health, and diets, it may be interesting to look for a moment at the role of the woman in the Indian society. What we learn on this issue is **SCANT** but not without interest. Father de Bourzes who listed several peculiarities concerning the treatment of women in India was to conclude at the end: "Nous n'osons presque dire qu'en Europe les usages sont tout différens."³⁰ What were these peculiarities? First, contrary to Western manners, an Indian woman was more her husband's slave than his companion. Regardless of her social rank, she was never allowed to eat at the same table with her husband. While the husband communicated

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using the most ordinary forms of address, the wife was never suffered to speak to her husband or about him with less than the most respectful terms. The children's attitude towards their mother was no less humiliating.

La femme sert le mari comme si elle était son esclave, et les enfans comme si elle était leur servante, de là vient que les enfans s'accoutument peu-à-peu à la regarder comme telle, à la tutoyer, à la traiter avec mépris, et quelquefois à porter la main sur elle.³¹

In the Christian world, such disrespect for the mother would never have been tolerated. Children's respect for their parents was one of the Church's fundamental teachings.

Europeans in India were never particularly well-liked by the natives. They were despised for their drunkenness and for the delight they took in eating cow-flesh. "Ce qui les frappe particulièrement, c'est que les Français s'enivrent et mangent de la chair, chose si horrible parmi eux, qu'ils regardent comme personnes infâmes ceux qui le font."³² Europeans were appropriately called the "beef-eaters". The Jesuit missionaries who adapted themselves to the Indian life style, ate neither meat, nor fish, nor eggs, nor wine, nor any other such beverage. This was done to imitate the Brahmans who fed themselves solely on butter, pulse, herbs, sugar, and fruits. Moreover they drank nothing but water wherein they put ~~weak~~, coffee and tea.³³

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The other inferior castes made use of fish and flesh, "unless it be the cow, which they all have in veneration."³⁴ The austerity of the Brahman's diet especially was more than some missionaries could cope with. The latter frequently complained about their ~~simple~~ diets.³⁵ Evidently, ^{the} Indians ate much less than the people of Europe. According to Chardin: "Nous sommes des loups et des bête carnassières en comparaison d'eux."³⁶ Bernier says that the pains of hunger were not as sensibly felt in India ~~as~~ as in colder climates: "Compared to these people, our European devotees (i.e. friars and hermits) are mere novice."³⁷

Chardin offers a series of arguments to explain why Orientals were more frugal than Europeans. He goes beyond climatic reasons to suggest a correlation between the appetite and physical exercises. "Les Orientaux ne s'excitent pas l'appétit par ces exercices du corps qui nous occupent si fort, comme la promenade, la danse, la paume, le mail, etc..."³⁸ Orientals were unacquainted with the remedy known to Europeans as "exercise". Asian women avoided unnecessary movements. The men went horse riding but they never walked needlessly. They performed such exercises strictly for pleasure, never for reasons of health. Chardin also points out that tobacco which curbs the appetite was immoderately used in the Orient. Furthermore, wine and other alcoholic beverages which stimulate the appetite were taken in

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only small quantities. Orientals also made an immoderate use of opium and, between meals, drank many refreshing beverages: two additional factors which apparently diminished the appetite.³⁹

The chroniclers agree that in matters of food and drink, Indian temperance and sobriety far exceeded that of Europeans: "Ils sont fort sobres et n'excèdent jamais dans le boire ni dans le manger; ils naissent avec une horreur naturelle de toute boisson qui enivre."⁴⁰ With respect to cow-~~flesh~~, Indians had "autant d'horreur de la chair de ces animaux, que les Européens en ont de la chair de cheval."⁴¹

India's choice of a simple diet and her restrictions on certain foods corresponded to a particular set of economic factors. The chroniclers tell us that India's climate placed important restraints on the kinds of foods produced. "Leurs climats n'ont pas autant d'alimens, c'est-à-dire, ni la variété ni l'abondance des nôtres."⁴² India's meat consumption fell below the level which was customary in Europe. Due to the great heat, meat was less savory. Warm climates made meat preservation difficult. Moreover, India's great deficiency of pasture land made it impossible to maintain numerous herds of cattle. According to Bernier, "the whole would soon disappear if animal meat were eaten in anything like the proportion in which it is consumed in France and in England, and the country would thus remain uncultivated."⁴³ By opposition, Europe's greater consumption

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of meat would have been linked to an economic factor of supply. India's great veneration for the cow derived, the chroniclers believed, from such natural factors. Hear Thévenot's explanation: "She (the cow) furnished them more food, by means of her milk, than all the rest put together, and that she brings forth the ox which is so useful to the world, seeing he makes it subsist by his labor, and feeds men by his pains."⁴⁴

Interestingly, while Europeans were found to have a more varied diet, the Indian was judged healthier. Careri observed that, "the Indians are well shap'd, it being rare to find any of them crooked."⁴⁵ Women were very fruitful. "They are so easily brought to bed, that some of them go abroad the same day they have been delivered to wash themselves in the river."⁴⁶ Country people lived to a good old age. This happy condition was "the Reward of their Temperance, indulging themselves neither in strong Drinks, nor devouring Flesh as we do."⁴⁷ Bernier, a medical doctor, explained that India's warmer climate favored good health:

The gout, the stone, complaints in the kidney, catarrhs, and quartan agues are nearly unknown; and persons who arrive in the country, afflicted with any of these disorders, as was the case with me, soon experienced complete cure. Even the venereal disease, common as it is in Hindoustan, is not of so virulent a character, or attended with such injurious consequences, as in other parts of the world.⁴⁸

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Bernier goes on to say that while there was a greater enjoyment of health, Indians were physically and mentally less vigorous than Europeans. This was consequent upon excessive heat which he considered "a species of unremitting malady, which attacks all persons indiscriminately."⁴⁹ In the following chapter, we shall examine exactly how India's physical and mental feebleness handicapped her scientific development. Europe, by opposition, will emerge as the more dynamic and progressive of the two civilizations.

Notes to Chapter V

1. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol. I, Preface, p. 6.
2. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 417.
3. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 418.
4. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, New Dehli, 1949, p. 247.
5. Ibid, p. 170.
6. Ibid, p. 247.
7. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 420.
8. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 410; also Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol. XII, p. 66 (Father de Bourzes).
9. The Jesuit Relations contain numerous references to the drunkenness and debouchery of Europeans in India. Another traveller criticizes their irreverent behaviour in churches. "Missionaries have to contend with another sad impediment—the irreverent behaviour of Christians in their churches. So dissonant from their belief of the peculiar presence of God upon their alters, and so different from the conduct of Mahometans, who never venture when engaged in the service of their Mosques even to turn the head, much less to utter a monosyllable one to the other, but seem to have the mind impressed with profound and awful veneration", in François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, (1656-1668), Westminster, 1891, p. 292.
10. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 59.
11. Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, Les règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne, Rouen, 1760, p. 159.

12. Bernier, op. cit., p. 264.
13. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 415.
14. Bernier, op. cit., p. 264.
15. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 280.
16. Montesquieu, De l'esprit des lois, Paris, 1961, Vol. III, p. 28; also see Jean Meyer, Noblesses et pouvoirs dans l'Europe d'Ancien Régime, Paris, 1973, p. 104.
17. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 83 (Father de Bourzes).
18. Ibid, Vol. X, p. 60 (Father Martin).
19. Jean de Thévenot, "Indian Travels of Thévenot.", in Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranath Sen, 1949, p. 52.
20. John Fryer, A New Account of East India and Persia being nine years' travels, 1672-1681, 1967, Vol. I, p. 335.
21. De la Salle, op. cit., p. 53-54.
22. Ibid, p. 51.
23. Bernier, op. cit., p. 223-224.
- ~~24.~~ **FRYER, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 89.**
25. De la Salle, op. cit., p. 51.
25. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 432.
26. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 115.
27. De la Salle, op. cit., p. 74.
28. Careri, op. cit., p. 247.
29. Bernier, op. cit., p. 121.
30. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. XII, p. 65.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid, Vol. X, p. 60 (Father Martin).
33. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 114-115.

34. Ibid.
35. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. X, p. 144 (Father Bouchet), Vol. X, p. 136 (Father Mauduit) and Vol. X, p. 60 (Father Martin).
36. Chardin; op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 26.
37. Bernier, op. cit., p. 321.
38. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 26.
39. Ibid, Vol. III, p. 427 and Vol. IV, p. 26-27.
40. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 173 (Father de la Lane).
41. Ibid, Vol. XII, p. 76 (Father de Bourzes).
42. Chardin, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 26-27.
43. Bernier, op. cit., p. 326.
44. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 91.
45. Careri, op. cit., p. 246.
46. Thévenot, op. cit., p. 118; also see Careri, ibid, p. 248.
47. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 180.
48. Bernier, op. cit., p. 253.
49. Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

SCIENCE AND TECHNIQUES

Were Europeans more intelligent than Asians? Surprisingly, the chroniclers never say so outrightly. They suggest that Europeans had a much greater desire to learn and to acquire science. This in itself did not make Europeans more intelligent. But there was one very important difference. Whereas Europeans were enthralled with every new scientific discovery, Asians were hardly preoccupied at all with the advancement of science. The students of philosophy in India had "slow and indolent tempers" and were "strangers to the excitement which the possibility of advancement in an honourable position produces among the members of European universities."¹ As for talent, they were perhaps just as gifted as Europeans but were less inclined to develop their genius. They lived for the present never preoccupying themselves with the future.

Ils apportent au monde des talens naturels aussi bon qu'aucun autre peuple; mais il n'y en a guère qui pervertissent ces talens autant qu'ils le font... Ils aiment à jouir du présent, et ils ne se refusent rien qu'ils puissent se donner n'ayant nulle inquiétude de l'avenir... Quand il leur arrive quelque disgrâce, ils n'en sont point accablés,

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comme la plupart des autres hommes.
Ils disent tranquillement: mek toub
est, cela est écrit, pour dire, il
était ordonné que cela arrivât.²

Admitting that both civilizations were equally intelligent, what would have launched Europeans on the search for greater knowledge? Chardin believed that Europeans were a tense and worried people trying by every means to satisfy their curiosity and uncertainties. Travelling was one of these means.

Notre inclination de voyager, de quel-
que beau nom qu'on la qualifie, qu'on
l'appelle louable curiosité, envie de
savoir, de connaître, et de se faire
connaître; toutefois, c'est mon sentiment
que si l'on en recherche bien la source,
on la trouvera dans nos besoins et dans
notre inquiétude naturelle.³

Asians, on the contrary, had a profound aversion to such undertakings.

Ils n'aiment ni la promenade, ni les
voyages. Pour ce qui est de la promena-
de, c'est une des choses qu'ils trouvent
fort absurde dans nos manières et ils
regardent des tours d'allée, comme des
actions de gens hors de sens... Pour ce
qui est des voyages, ceux de simple cu-
riosité sont encore plus inconcevables
à ces gens que les promenades. Ils ne
connaissent point le volupté que nous
ressentons à voir des manières différen-
tes des nôtres et à ouïr un langage qu'on
n'entend point.⁴

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They saw absolutely no point in travelling unless it was to acquire wealth or to carry out business transactions. Foreigners travelling through their land who were neither merchants nor artisans were often mistaken for spies.⁵ In Europe, travelling was considered an essential part of one's education. It was an occasion to broaden one's horizons and to appease some of the curiosities touched off by years of book learning. In the case of our chroniclers, some had travelled to India with dreams of acquiring great wealth and fame and in this, some actually succeeded.

Tavernier retired a financially wealthy man. He purchased an estate in Switzerland and an apartment in Paris and lived in high fashion befriending only the best of the French aristocracy. Chardin, Bernier, Hamilton, Mundy and others also derived much wealth and consideration from their travels. More than for material gains, these men sought to expand their knowledge of the world and to communicate their findings to others. Regardless of the psychological motives which inspired Europeans to travel, the experience of doing so quickly turned to their advantage.

By comparison, the Indians formed a much more inward looking people. They showed little enthusiasm for what went on in other parts of the world. Chardin underlined their great ignorance of the rest of the world. Their knowledge of geography was inconsequential. They possessed neither maps nor charts

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tracing the contours of other continents.

Cela vient, Chardin wrote, de ce qu'étant peu curieux de voir les autres pays, ils ne se soucient guère des distances, ni des routes pour s'y rendre. Il n'y a parmi eux ni relations des pays étrangers, ni gazettes, ni nouvelles à la main, ni bureau d'adresse. Cela paraîtra bien étrange aux gens qui passent leur vie à demander des nouvelles et qui s'y intéressent jusqu'à y mettre leur santé et leur repos! et à ceux aussi qui étudient avec tant de soin les cartes et les relations; mais cela est pourtant fort vrai.⁶

Europeans experienced a great fascination for the outside world. The first round of ocean voyages set off a great scientific revolution. It suddenly became important for Europeans to obtain accurate information concerning distances, the course of rivers, and the physical outlines of other continents. The art of navigation had turned into a veritable science.

What the chroniclers could difficultly understand, was that even the most enlightened orientals were without much knowledge of the rest of the world.

Les ministres d'état, généralement parlant, ne savent non plus ce qui se fait en Europe... La plupart même n'ont qu'une idée confuse de l'Europe, qu'ils prennent pour une petite île dans les mers du Nord.⁷

The chroniclers were absolutely shocked to learn that Asians still imagined the world to be flat and triangular. Some even

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argued that there were seven nations on top of the world and seven more below it.⁸ Similar ignorance prevailed with regard to world history. Father Pons pointedly remarked: "De toutes les parties de la belle littérature, l'histoire est celle que les Indiens ont la moins cultivée."⁹ Confused as to Europe's geographical location, how could they be acquainted with the western forms of government?

Il n'y a pas dix hommes en Perse qui savent que la Hollande est une République, quoique depuis 80 ans la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de Hollande soit établie en divers lieux du royaume, et nommément dans la ville capitale, ce qu'on ne peut imputer qu'à une très grande ignorance de l'histoire.¹⁰

By contrast, Europeans were great lovers of history. Most of our chroniclers devote important selections of their writings to the history of the lands they visited. They collected information on the rise and fall of the Mogul dynasties, they drew vivid portraits of ancient conquests and of more recent wars and they spoke about natural catastrophes which had once hit India. History evidently appealed to them and to their readers if we judge by the popularity of travel literature in this period. Europeans' interest in history may well be coupled with their greater awareness of their own social evolution.

Asian countries, for the most part, showed little inclination for the study of history and geography. They had, however,

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long-established traditions in other sciences. Their approach to science was quite unusual.

Ils ne tiennent proprement pour gens savans, que ceux qui savent toutes les sciences et qui les savent toutes également; mais ils ne tiennent pas pour tels, ceux qui ne savent qu'une partie de ces sciences, encore que ce soit dans un degré excellent; aussi s'appliquent-ils à toutes en général, tenant qu'elles sont comme dans un enchaînement les unes avec les autres, qui engage à les parcourir toutes de la première à la dernière. C'est peut-être là une des principales raisons qui les empêchent de pénétrer aussi avant dans chaque science, qu'on le fait en Europe.¹¹

This universalist approach to science discouraged any further specialization. Knowledge had become static and unlike in Europe, it was no longer expandable. Moreover, access to the difficult sciences was impeded by the Brahmans' strict control on all learning. Popular education consisted merely in teaching poems, maxims and proverbs. Admittedly, Indian knowledge of mathematics, was quite considerable; they were skilled in arithmetic and were familiar with algebra.

Arithmetick being the most profitable science, is the best understood by them; to which they have a natural propensity, and will in a trice, without the help of Pen or Ink, cast up the difficultest sums, and never pause upon it.¹²

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On the whole, however, our chroniclers were disappointed with the level of the Indian sciences. Passing through Bénarès, the holy city of Brahmanism, Bernier had occasion to inspect the colleges and local libraries. His impressions read: "L'Université de Bénarès ne mérite pas sa renommée et la science de ses savants se réduit à peu de choses."¹³

The chroniclers suggested several reasons for the slow progress of Indian sciences. By the turn of the eighteenth century, Indian books were still being manually written on palm-tree leaves. There were many ancient books, but most of these were written in verse of which Indians were great lovers. Moreover, most of these works were written in sanscrit making them difficultly accessible to the masses.¹⁴ Writing remained an exclusive art; it had not become a popular form of expression. The scarcity of books, coupled with their ignorance of the printing press, seriously hindered the diffusion of knowledge. Except for the town of Bénarès, we never hear of great libraries or of private citizens owning important collections of books. The chroniclers could conclude that in comparison to Europe, there was little indeed to encourage the advancement of Indian sciences.

The above factors had not prevented India from pursuing her traditional interest in astronomy. The chroniclers report that Indian astronomers were skilled in the sun's course through

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the zodiac, they had their wandering and fixed stars and were exact in the eclipses of the two inferior luminaries.¹⁴ They also recognized nine planets and twelve zodiac signs like in Europe.¹⁵ However, in predicting an eclipse, western calculation was slightly more accurate. The missionary Mauduit reports the following incident:

J'examinai leur calcul, et je ne le trouvai pas tout-à-fait juste, ce qui me donna l'occasion de faire un type de cette éclipse, où j'en marquai exactement le temps et la durée. J'envoyai ce type à Cangivaron et dans les villes voisines. Il se trouva juste car l'éclipse arriva précisément à l'heure que j'avais marquée, ce qui donna à ces Peuples une haute idée de la science des Brames du Nord; c'est le nom qu'on nous donne en ce pays.¹⁶

Jesuit missionaries often employed their scientific skills to impress local officials and obtain their protection. To this effect, Chardin rightly observed:

Ces missionnaires se sont insinués par leurs sciences. Leurs télescopes et autres nouveaux instruments d'astronomie ont plu. Leur habileté à ouvrir la veine et à guérir heureusement les plaies et les blessures a gagné le coeur des grands et des petits dans ce pays-là où il n'y a personne qui s'y entende bien.¹⁷

The Brahmans hid their scientific knowledge so well that, at the appointed hour on the day of an eclipse, they suffered

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inferior castes to perform all their superstitious rituals.¹⁸ Bernier was to show, however, that even in Europe, old superstitions survived long after the arrival of scientific explanations. Recalling the foolish reactions of the French people to the eclipse of 1654, he wrote:

The sight of the eclipse was impressed upon my mind by the childish credulity of the French people, and by their groundless and unreasonable alarm; an alarm so excessive that some brought drugs as charms to defend themselves against the eclipse; some kept themselves closely shut up, and excluded all light either in carefully-barred apartments or in cellars; while thousands flocked to their respective churches, some apprehending and dreading a malign and dangerous influence; others believing that the last day was at hand, and that the eclipse was about the shake the foundations of the world. Such were the absurd notions entertained by our countrymen, notwithstanding the writings of Gassendi, Roberval, and other celebrated astronomers and philosophers, which clearly demonstrated that the eclipse was only similar to many others which had been productive of no mischief, that this obscuration of the sun was known and predicted, and was without any other peculiarity than what might be found in the reveries of ignorant or designing astrologers.¹⁹

Bernier launched a furious attack on the Indian astrologers and on all those who allowed themselves to be guided by the signs of heaven.²⁰ India cherished the belief that: "No circumstance can happen below, which is not written above."²¹ In

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truth, the Indian people rarely did anything without consulting the astrologer: "No commanding officer is nominated, no marriage takes place and no journey is undertaken without consulting Monsieur the Astrologer."²² The enlightened element in Europe had long ceased to have recourse to such persons.

In Franquistan (i. e. Europe) where the sciences flourish, professors in astrology are considered little better than cheats and jugglers, that it is there much doubted whether the science be founded on good and solid principles, and whether it be not used by designing men as a means of gaining access to the great, of making them feel their dependence, and their absolute need of these pretended soothsayers.²³

Medecine was another field of science where Europeans declared themselves superior. Our chroniclers could difficultly understand why the Indians preferred death rather than submitting to surgery.²⁴ The reality of the problem was that the Indians had, by Western standards, but extremely backward notions of medecine.

Nos Indiens sont si ignorants, qu'ils ne mettent aucune différence entre l'artère et la veine. La plupart ne savent pas même si c'est une artère ou un nerf qui bat, ni quel est le ressort et le principe de ce battement.²⁵

India had no appointed surgeons; at best, she had barbers who were occasionally called upon to draw blood from ailing

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patients.²⁶ Carré describes an incident that had profoundly disturbed him. He had arrived in Bijapur suffering from an acute fever. One of his followers informed him that there was nobody in the immediate vicinity to provide him with the proper medical attention.

But as to providing someone who can give you remedies and treat your illness, you are aware that there is no doctor, or surgeon amongst us; we hardly know what such a man is, and Europeans are only consulted when one of them happens to be passing in this country.²⁷

Except for foreigners, India had no medical doctors of her own. We learn that the natives never opened the body of man or animal to examine how the parts functioned together.²⁸ Bernier recalls that on occasion, when he opened a living goat or sheep for the purpose of teaching his Mogul protector how the blood circulates, the entire household would run away with amazement and horror.²⁹

In India, most illnesses were treated either by fasting or by bleeding the patient. Cholera was cured "by burning the heels with a red hot spit till the patient feels the heat of the fire."³⁰ Friar speaks of India's ignorance of medicine in the following terms.

They are unskill'd in Anatomy, even those of the Moors who follow the Arabians, thinking it unlawful to dissect Human bodies; where upon Phlebotomy is not under-

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stood, they being ignorant how the veins lye; but they worry themselves Martyrs to death by Leeches, clapping on an hundred at once, which they know not how to pull off, till they have filled themselves, and drop of their own accord... Chirurgery is in a bad plight, amputation being an horrid thing... Pharmecy is in no better condition; Apothecaries here being no more than Perfumers or Druggists; at best, for he that has the boldness to practice, makes up his own Medecines...³¹

There can be no doubt that in the field of medicine, Europe had far greater abilities.

What special skills did the chroniclers attribute to the Indian civilization? There was a general consensus that India excelled in the production of fine crafts. In the following passage, Father Pépin evokes the beauty of Indian craftsmanship.

Les arts dans l'Inde ne manquent pas d'une certaine perfection; les ouvriers y ont une adresse et une habileté surprenantes; ils excellent à faire des toiles, à peindre des fleurs sur verre, dans les ouvrages d'orfèvrerie... et ceci avec des outils et des métiers très simples.³²

Later, speaking more specifically about the region of Bengal, he added:

Ce pays-ci est de tous ceux que je connaisse celui qui fournit le plus de matières à écrire sur les arts mécaniques... Les ouvriers y ont une adresse et une habileté qui surprend. Ils excellent surtout à faire de la toile... Les orfèvres y travaillent

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en filigrane avec beaucoup de délicatesse, ils imitent parfaitement les ouvrages d'Europe, sans que la forge dont ils se servent ni leurs autres outils, leur reviennent à plus d'un écu.³³

European craftsmen employed a much more advanced technology. They used elaborate machinery along with a wide range of small precision instruments. European technicians were also advantaged by a much more complete set of weights and measures. In Eastern countries, craftsmen settled for approximations rather than exactitude. According to the chroniclers, they had no scientific means for measuring time and space. They were unacquainted with the use of clocks, watches, and hour-glasses.³⁴ They measured time "by the dropping of water out of a Brass bassin, which holds a Ghong, or less than half an hour."³⁵ They measured distances according to the approximate time it took to walk from one place to another. Father Coeurdoux remarked: "Cette manière de mesurer l'espace par le temps ne nous est pas entièrement étrangère puisque nous comptons aussi quelquefois par heures et journées de chemin."³⁶ Finally they had no measures to differentiate between solid and liquid weights.³⁷ By opposition, European weights and measures were judged to be far more complete and more precise.

The above limitations did not deter Asian craftsmen from producing interesting pieces of work. It would seem, however,

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that while the latter worked from a mental representation of the desired object, European technicians worked from detailed specifications, designing their projects with the help of geometry and arithmetic.³⁸ The difference in working methods suggests two different forms of thought. The advantage of mathematical precision was to allow Europeans to develop an increasingly more complex technology. It would be difficult to produce telescopes, nautical devices and other highly sophisticated precision instruments without the use of exact measurements. Accordingly, India's technical development was delayed by a form of thought which precluded scientific accuracy.

Notes to Chapter VI

1. François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire 1656-1668, Westminster, 1891, p.336.
2. Jean Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient, Paris, 1811, Vol.111, p.405-406.
3. Ibid., Vol. V, p.118-119.
4. Ibid., Vol.111, p.426-427.
5. Ibid., Vol.111, p.429.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Bernier, op. cit., p. 340; Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions Etrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus, Toulouse, 1810, Vol XI, p.187 (Father de la Lane) and Vol XI11, p. 276 (Father Calmette); and De la Flotte, Essais historiques sur l'Inde, Paris, 1769, p.234-238.
9. Lettres édifiantes, op.cit., Vol. XIIV, p.61.
10. Chardin, op. cit., Vol.V, p. 123 and p.291. On this point John Fryer has also written: "The Dutch, Though a Commonwealth in Europe, find it propertest to bear the face of a Monarchy here, appointing a General in Batavia whose Power is extensive over all India" in A New Account of East India and Persia being nine years' travels 1672-1681, 1967, Vol. 11, p.114.
11. Chardin, op. cit., Vol.1IV, p. 196.
12. Fryer, op. cit., Vol.11, p. 103.
13. Quoted in Zenobia Bamboat's Les voyageurs Français dans l'Inde aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, New York, 1972, p.54.

14. Jean de Thévenot, "Indian Travels of Thévenot" in Indian Travels of Thévenot and Careri, edited by Surendranāth Sen, New Delhi, 1949, p.122; and John Francis Gemelli Careri in same, p.247.
15. Fryer, op. cit., Vol.11, 93.
16. Lettres édifiantes, op.cit., Vol.XI p. 188. Father de la Lane devotes an entire letter to the signs and symbols of Indian astronomy.
17. Ibid., Vol. X, p.220.
18. Chardin, op. cit., Vol.VI, p.155-156.
19. Father Mauduit described these rituals as follows: "Ces Peuples superstitieux s'imaginent qu'un dragon engloutit ces deux astres (i.e. sun and moon) et les dérobes à nos yeux. Ce qui est plus ridicule, c'est qu'afin de faire quitter prise à ce prétendu monstre, ils font, pendant ce temps-là, un charivari épouvantable et que les femmes enceintes s'enferment avec un grand soin dans leurs maisons, d'où elles n'osent sortir, de peur que ce terrible dragon, après avoir englouti la lune, n'en fasse autant à leurs enfants", in Lettres édifiantes, op.cit., Vol. X p.220.
20. Bernier, op.cit., p.300-301.
21. Ibid., p.244-245 and p.339.
22. Ibid., p. 161.
23. Ibid., p. 161.
24. Ibid., p. 162.
25. La Flotte, op. cit., p. 244-246.
26. Lettres édifiantes, op.cit., Vol. XI p.131 (Father Martin).
27. Chardin, op.cit., Vol. 1 p. 175.
28. Abbé Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré in India and the Near East 1672-1674, London, 1947-1948, Vol.1. p. 271.

29. Ibid., Vol. 1. p. 273-275.
30. Bernier, op.cit., p. 339.
31. Careri, op. cit., p. 162.
32. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. 1 p. 287.
33. Lettres édifiantes, op.cit., Vol XI, p. 203.
34. Ibid.
35. Fryer, op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 92.
- 36 Ibid.
37. Lettres édifiantes, op. cit., vol.XV, p. 140-141.
38. Chardin, op. cit., Vol 1V, p. 177.
39. Referring to European craftsmen, Roland Mousnier once remarked; "Dans leurs tâtonnements, ils font une chose que ne fait jamais un Asiatique: ils se servent tout de même d'un peu de géométrie élémentaire et d'arithmétique. Entre les démarches de leur esprit et celles d'un fabricant asiatique, il y a donc une différence prodigieuse, un abîme," in Actes du Colloque International sur la notion d'Europe (1961), Paris, 1963, p.21.

CONCLUSION

European civilization was praised throughout this study for its youth and vitality. We talked about freedom of movement and freedom of expression, about a greater capacity for change, and about Europe's inquisitive mind. Opposed to India's closed mentality, Europe emerged as the more dynamic and progressive of the two civilizations. While the subjects dealing with daily life habits yielded only relative differences, those concerning education, modes of thought, and science showed where Europe drew her principal advantages. The chroniclers' rather impressive list of Western peculiarities remains incomplete. Europeans had many fine qualities and, granted, these deserved praise. But there was also another Europe, one of religious persecution, political tensions,

and open social conflicts. These features rarely surfaced in the chroniclers' writings. In fact, many facets of the European civilization are never discussed at all. The chronicle is therefore a limited document; it cannot provide all the elements necessary to an exhaustive study of the concept of Europe.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, the chronicles do offer plenty of food for thought. One example was the chroniclers' reaction to the inequalities and injustices which subsisted in Mogul India. Europe, by opposition, was said to have nurtured a much greater compassion for the human condition and for man's basic dignity. It would be interesting to document this point of view and see exactly how Europeans fought against different forms of oppression. Knowing precisely what Europeans were oppressed with at different points in their history would contribute to a better understanding of their concepts of justice and equality and of the evolution of these concepts.

Due to their misunderstanding of the India civilization, chroniclers sometimes drew comparisons between Europe and India which were totally unfounded. In the course of this dissertation, we pointed out some such errors but not all. What was important was not whether the chroniclers had properly mastered the Indian civilization or not, but what they could tell us about Europe. In some instances, erroneous judgments were actually quite revealing; they emphasized, among other things, a number of Western

choices and preferences. The chroniclers' description of India's caste system is a good case in point. Faulty as it may have been, the description served to highlight a number of received ideas concerning Europe's society of orders.

For a more thorough understanding of the dominant traits of the European civilization, several features introduced in this study would require further development. An important statistical study could be carried out on the correlation between different forms of land tenure and their respective levels of agricultural production. This study could also show the importance of the economic factor in the transformation of European forms of land tenure and in the evolution of the Western concept of private property. In such matters, qualitative statements such as those furnished by the chroniclers have little value unless they can be statistically documented.

A more exhaustive examination of the notion of order would be most welcomed. All that we were able to ascertain was that Europeans seemed to have a special inclination for order, method, and discipline. We also presented a number of different contexts in which the notion appeared. But this does not tell us at what point in time Europeans ^{became} consciously aware of the advantages of the ordered ways. When was strict discipline introduced in the armies? When were standard business and administrative methods

adopted in Europe? Why were rules and regulations suddenly devised for practically every field of endeavor? Why was it that now everything had to be arranged into all sorts of classifications? It would be necessary to investigate why this movement began, where it began, where it spread to, and at what pace it developed. In fact, the entire history of the notion of order has yet to be written.

With the aid of the chronicles, we have succeeded in defining some of the principal traits of the European nobility. Unfortunately, for lack of more detailed information, we were unable to account for the many differences which opposed one form of European nobility to another. In his book, Noblesses et Pouvoirs, Jean Meyer draws useful comparisons between the different European concepts of nobility and power. Studies in comparative social and institutional history such as this one are, unfortunately, too few in number. Many of the peculiarities of the European civilization discussed in this thesis could be further elaborated upon using the comparative approach.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I.

An excerpt from a letter to Colbert on the decline of Asian states due to the loss of respect for the right of property.¹

From what I have said, a question will naturally arise, whether it would not be more advantageous for the King as well as for the people, if the former ceased to be sole possessor of the land, and the right of private property were recognised in the Indies as it is with us? I have carefully compared the condition of European states, where that right is acknowledged, with the condition of those countries where it is not known, and am persuaded that the absence of it among the people is injurious to the best interests of the Sovereign himself. We have seen how in the Indies the gold and the silver disappear in consequence of the tyranny of Timariots, Governors, and Revenue contractors—a tyranny which even the monarch, if so disposed, has no means of controlling in provinces not contiguous to his capital—a tyranny often so excessive as to deprive the peasant and artisan of the necessaries of life, and leave them to die of misery and exhaustion—a tyranny owing to which those wretched people either have no children at all, or have them only to endure the agonies of starvation, and to die at a tender age—a tyranny, in fine, that drives the cultivator of the soil from his wretched home to some neighbouring state, in hopes of finding milder treatment, or to the army, where he becomes the servant of some trooper. As the ground is seldom tilled otherwise than by compulsion, and as no person is found willing and able to repair the ditches and canals for the conveyance of water, it happens that the whole country is badly cultivated, and a great part rendered unproductive from the want of irrigation. The houses, too, are left in a dilapidated condition, there being few people who will either build new ones, or repair those which are tumbling down. The peasant cannot avoid asking himself this question: 'Why should I toil for a tyrant who may come to-morrow and lay his rapacious hands upon all I possess and value, without leaving me, if such should be his humour,

¹ François Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire, (1656-1668), Westminster, 1891 edition, p. 226-238.

the means to drag on my miserable existence?'—The Timariots, Governors, and Revenue contractors, on their part reason in this manner: 'Why should the neglected state of this land create uneasiness in our minds? and why should we expend our own money and time to render it fruitful? We may be deprived of it in a single moment and our exertions would benefit neither ourselves nor our children. Let us draw from the soil all the money we can, though the peasant should starve or abscond, and we should leave it, when commanded to quit, a dreary wilderness.'

The facts I have mentioned are sufficient to account for the rapid decline of the Asiatic states. It is owing to this miserable system of government that most towns in Hindustan are made up of earth, mud, and other wretched materials; that there is no city or town which, if it be not already ruined and deserted, does not bear evident marks of approaching decay. Without confining our remarks to so distant a kingdom, we may judge of the effects of despotic power unrelentingly exercised, by the present condition of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Palestine, the once wonderful plains of Antioch, and so many other regions anciently well cultivated, fertile, and populous, but now desolate, and in many parts marshy, pestiferous, and unfit for human habitation. Egypt also exhibits a sad picture of an enslaved country. More than one-tenth part of that incomparable territory has been lost within the last eighty years, because no one will be at the expense of repairing the irrigation channels, and confining the Nile within its banks. The low lands are thus violently inundated, and covered with sand, which cannot be removed without much labour and expense. Can it excite wonder, that under these circumstances, the arts do not flourish here as they would do under a better government, or as they flourish in our happier France? No artist can be expected to give his mind to his calling in the midst of a people who are either wretchedly poor, or who, if rich, assume an appearance of poverty, and who regard not the beauty and excellence, but the cheapness of an article: a people whose grandeess pay for a work of art considerably under its value, and according to their own caprice, and who do not hesitate to punish an importunate artist, or tradesman, with the korrah, that long and terrible whip hanging at every Omrah's gate. Is it not enough also to damp the ardour of any artist, when he feels that he can never hope to attain to any distinction; that he shall not be permitted to purchase either office or land for the benefit of himself and family; that he must at no time make it appear he is the owner of the most trifling sum; and that he may never venture to indulge in good fare, or to dress in fine apparel, lest he should create a suspicion of his possessing money? The arts in the Indies would long ago have lost their beauty and delicacy, if the Monarch and principal Omrahs did not keep in their pay a number of artists who

work in their houses, teach the children, and are stimulated to exertion by the hope of reward and the fear of the korrah. The protection afforded by powerful patrons to rich merchants and tradesmen who pay the workmen rather higher wages, tends also to preserve the arts. I say rather higher wages, for it should not be inferred from the goodness of the manufactures, that the workman is held in esteem, or arrives at a state of independence. Nothing but sheer necessity or blows from a cudgel keeps him employed; he never can become rich, and he feels it no trifling matter if he have the means of satisfying the cravings of hunger, and of covering his body with the coarsest raiment. If money be gained, it does not in any measure go into his pocket, but only serves to increase the wealth of the merchant who, in his turn, is not a little perplexed how to guard against some act of outrage and extortion on the part of his superiors.

A profound and universal ignorance is the natural consequence of such a state of society as I have endeavoured to describe. Is it possible to establish in Hindustan academies and colleges properly endowed? Where shall we seek for founders? or, should they be found, where are the scholars? Where the individuals whose property is sufficient to support their children at college? or, if such individuals exist, who would venture to display so clear a proof of wealth? Lastly, if any persons should be tempted to commit this great imprudence, yet where are the benefices, the employments, the offices of trust and dignity, that require ability and science and are calculated to excite the emulation and the hopes of the young student?

Nor can the commerce of a country so governed be conducted with the activity and success that we witness in Europe; few are the men who will voluntarily endure labour and anxiety, and incur danger, for another person's benefit,—for a governor who may appropriate to his own use the profit of any speculation. Let that profit be ever so great, the man by whom it has been made must still wear the garb of indigence, and fare no better, in regard to eating and drinking, than his poorer neighbours. In eases, indeed, where the merchant is protected by a military man of rank, he may be induced to embark in commercial enterprises; but still he must be the slave of his patron, who will exact whatever terms he pleases as the price of his protection.

The Great Mogol cannot select for his service, princes, noblemen and gentlemen of opulent and ancient families; nor the sons of his citizens, merchants and manufacturers; men of education, possessing a high sense of propriety, affectionately attached to their Sovereign, ready to support, by acts of valour, the reputation of their family, and, as the occasion may arise, able and willing to maintain themselves, either at court or in the army, by means of their own patrimony; animated by the hope of better times, and satisfied with the

approbation and smile of their Sovereign. Instead of men of this description, he is surrounded by slaves, ignorant and brutal; by parasites raised from the dregs of society; strangers to loyalty and patriotism; full of insufferable pride, and destitute of courage, of honour, and of decency.

The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court, and to pay a large army maintained for the purpose of keeping the people in subjection. No adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of that people. The cudgel and the whip compel them to incessant labour for the benefit of others; and driven to despair by every kind of cruel treatment, their revolt or their flight is only prevented by the presence of a military force.

The misery of this ill-fated country is increased by the practice which prevails too much at all times, but especially on the breaking out of an important war, of selling the different governments for immense sums in hard cash. Hence it naturally becomes the principal object of the individual thus appointed Governor, to obtain repayment of the purchase-money, which he borrowed as he could at a ruinous rate of interest. Indeed whether the government of a province has or has not been bought, the Governor, as well as the timariot and the farmer of the revenue, must find the means of making valuable presents, every year, to a Visir, a Eunuch, a lady of the Seraglio, and to any other person whose influence at court he considers indispensable. The Governor must also enforce the payment of the regular tribute to the King; and although he was originally a wretched slave, involved in debt, and without the smallest patrimony, he yet becomes a great and opulent lord.

Thus do ruin and desolation overspread the land. The provincial governors, as before observed, are so many petty tyrants, possessing a boundless authority; and as there is no one to whom the oppressed subject may appeal, he cannot hope for redress, let his injuries be ever so grievous or ever so frequently repeated.

It is true that the Great Mogol sends a Vakea-Nevis to the various provinces; that is, persons whose business it is to communicate every event that takes place; but there is generally a disgraceful collusion between these officers and the governor, so that their presence seldom restrains the tyranny exercised over the unhappy people.

Governments also are not so often and so openly sold in Hindustan as in Turkey. I say 'so openly', because the costly presents, made occasionally by the governors, are nearly equivalent to purchase-money. The same persons, too, generally remain longer in their respective governments than in Turkey, and the people are gradually less oppressed by governors of some standing than when, indigent and greedy, they first take possession of their province. The tyranny of these men is also

somewhat mitigated by the apprehension that the people, if used with excessive cruelty, may abandon the country, and seek an asylum in the territory of some Raja, as indeed happens very often.

In Persia likewise are governments neither so frequently nor so publicly sold as in Turkey; for it is not uncommon for the children of governors to succeed their fathers. The consequence of this better state of things is seen in the superior condition of the people, as compared to those of Turkey. The Persians also are more polite, and there are even instances of their devoting themselves to study.

Those three countries, Turkey, Persia, and Hindoustan, have no idea of the principle of meum and tuum, relatively to land or other real possessions; and having lost that respect for the right of property, which is the basis of all that is good and useful in the world, necessarily resemble each other in essential points: they fall into the same pernicious errors, and must, sooner or later, experience the natural consequences of those errors—tyranny, ruin, and misery.

How happy and thankful should we feel, My Lord, that in our quarter of the globe, Kings are not the sole proprietors of the soil! Were they so, we should seek in vain for countries well cultivated and populous, for well-built and opulent cities, for a polite, contented, and flourishing people. If this exclusive and baneful right prevailed, far different would be the real riches of the sovereigns of Europe, and the loyalty and fidelity with which they are served. They would soon reign over solitudes and deserts, over mendicants and barbarians.

Actuated by a blind and wicked ambition to be more absolute than is warranted by the laws of God and of nature, the Kings of Asia grasp at everything, until at length they lose everything; or, if they do not always find themselves without pecuniary resources, they are invariably disappointed in the expectation of acquiring the riches which they covet. If the same system of government existed with us, where, I must again ask, should we find Princes, Prelates, Nobles, opulent Citizens, and thriving Tradesmen, ingenious Artisans and Manufacturers? Where should we look for such cities as Paris, Lyons, Toulouse, Rouen, or, if you will, London, and so many others? Where should we see that infinite number of towns and villages; all those beautiful country houses, those fine plains, hills and valleys, cultivated with so much care, art and labour? and what would become of the ample revenues derived from so much industry, an industry beneficial alike to the sovereign and the subject? The reverse of this smiling picture would, alas! be exhibited. Our large towns would become uninhabitable in consequence of the unwholesome air, and fall into ruins without exciting in any person a thought of preventing or repairing the decay; our fertile hills would be abandoned, and the plains would be overrun with thorns and weeds, or covered with pestilential morasses. The excellent accommodation for travellers

would disappear; the good inns, for example, between Paris and Lyons, would dwindle into ten or twelve wretched caravansaries, and travellers be reduced to the necessity of moving, like the Gypsies, with everything about them. The Eastern Karavans-Serrah resemble large barns, raised and paved all round, in the same manner as our Pont-neuf. Hundreds of human beings are seen in them, mingled with their horses, mules, and camels. In summer these buildings are hot and suffocating, and in winter nothing but the breath of so many animals prevents the inmates from dying of cold.

But there are countries, I shall be told, such for instance as the Grand Signior's dominions, which we know better than any without going as far as the Indies, where the principle of meum and tuum is unknown, which not only preserve their existence, but maintain a great and increasing power.

An empire so prodigiously extensive as that of the Grand Signior, comprising countries whose soil is so deep and excellent that even without due cultivation it will continue fertile for many years, cannot be otherwise than rich and powerful. Yet how insignificant is the wealth and strength of Turkey in comparison to its extent and natural advantages! Let us only suppose that country as populous and as carefully cultivated as it would become if the right of private property were recognised and acted upon, and we cannot doubt that it could raise and support armies as numerous and well-appointed as formerly: but even at Constantinople three months are now required to raise five or six thousand men. I have travelled through nearly every part of the empire, and witnessed how lamentably it is ruined and depopulated. Some support it undoubtedly derives from the Christian slaves brought from all quarters; but if that country continue many years under the present system of government, it must necessarily fall and perish from innate weakness, though, to all appearance, it is now preserved by that weakness itself; for there is no longer a governor, or any other person, possessed of pecuniary means to undertake the least enterprise, or who could find the men he would require to accomplish his purpose. Strange means of preservation! Turkey seems to owe its transient existence to the seeds of destruction in its own bosom! To remove the danger of commotion and put an end to all fears on that subject, nothing more appears necessary than the measure adopted by a Brama of Pegu, who actually caused the death of half the population by famine, converted the country into forests, and prevented for many years the tillage of the land. But all this did not suffice: even this plan was unsuccessful; a division of the kingdom took place, and Ava, the capital, was very lately on the point of being captured by a handful of fugitives from China. We must confess, however, that there seems little probability of the total ruin and destruction of the Turkish empire in our day—it will be happy if we see nothing worse!—because the

neighbouring states, so far from being able to attack it, are not in a condition to defend themselves effectually, without foreign aid, which remoteness and jealousy will always render tardy, inefficient, and liable to suspicion.

If it be observed that there is no reason why eastern states should not have the benefit of good laws, or why the people in the provinces may not complain of their grievances to a grand Visir, or to the King himself; I shall admit that they are not altogether destitute of good laws, which, if properly administered, would render Asia as eligible a residence as any other part of the world. But of what advantage are good laws when not observed, and when there is no possibility of enforcing their observance? Have not the provincial tyrants been nominated by the same grand Visir and by the same King, who alone have power to redress the people's wrongs? and is it not a fact that they have no means of appointing any but tyrants to rule over the provinces? either the Visir or the King has sold the place to the Governor. And even admitting that there existed a disposition to listen to a complaint, how is a poor peasant or a ruined artisan to defray the expenses of a journey to the capital, and to seek justice at one hundred and fifty or two hundred leagues from home? He would be waylaid and murdered, as frequently happens, or sooner or later fall into the Governor's hands, and be at his mercy. Should he chance to reach the royal residence, he would find the friends of his oppressor busy in distorting the truth, and misrepresenting the whole affair to the King. In short, the Governor is absolute lord, in the strictest sense of the word. He is in his own person the intendant of justice, the parliament, the pre-sidial court, and the assessor and receiver of the King's taxes. A Persian, in speaking of these greedy Governors, Timariots, and Farmers of Revenue, aptly describes them as men who extract oil out of sand. No income appears adequate to maintain them, with their crowds of harpies, women, children, and slaves.

If it be remarked that the lands which our Kings hold as domains are as well cultivated, and as thickly peopled as other lands, my answer is that there can be no analogy between a kingdom whose monarch is proprietor of a few domains, and a kingdom where the monarch possesses, in his own right, every acre of the soil. In France the laws are so reasonable, that the King is the first to obey them: his domains are held without the violation of any right; his farmers or stewards may be sued at law, and the aggrieved artisan or peasant is sure to find redress against injustice and oppression. But in eastern countries, the weak and the injured are without any refuge whatever; and the only law that decided all controversies is the cane and the caprice of a governor.

There certainly however, some may say, are some advantages peculiere to despotic governments: they have fewer lawyers, and fewer law-suits, and those few are more speedily decided.

We cannot, indeed, too greatly admire the old Persian proverb, Na-hac Kouta Better-Ez hac Deraz: 'Speedy injustice is preferable to tardy justice.' Protracted law-suits are, I admit, insupportable evils in any state, and it is incumbent upon a Sovereign to provide a remedy against them. It is certain that no remedy would be so efficacious as the destruction of the right of private property. Do away with this meum and tuum, and the necessity for an infinite number of legal proceedings will at once cease, especially for those which are important, long, and intricate: the larger portion of magistrates employed by the King to administer justice to his subjects will also become useless, as will those swarms of attorneys and counsellors who live by judicial contests. But it is equally certain that the remedy would be infinitely worse than the disease, and that there is no estimating the misery that would afflict the country. Instead of magistrates on whose probity the monarch can depend, we should be at the mercy of such rulers as I have described. In Asia, if justice be ever administered, it is among the lower classes, among persons who, being equally poor, have no means of corrupting the judges, and of buying false witnesses; witnesses always to be had in great numbers, at a cheap rate, and never punished. I am speaking the language of several years' experience; my information was obtained from various quarters, and is the result of many careful inquiries among the natives, European merchants long settled in the country, ambassadors, consuls, and interpreters. My testimony is, I know, at variance with the account given by most of our travellers: They happened, perhaps, in passing through a town, to see two poor men, the dregs of the people, in the presence of a Kadi. Our countryman may have seen them hurried out of court to receive, either the one or the other, if not both, hard blows on the soles of the feet, unless the parties were immediately dismissed with a 'Maybalé-Baba', or a few soft words which the magistrate sometimes utters when he finds that no bribe can be expected. No doubt, this summary mode of proceeding excited the admiration of our travellers, and they returned to France, exclaiming, 'O, what an excellent and quick administration of justice! O, the upright Kadis! Models for the imitation of French magistrates!' not considering that if the party really in the wrong had possessed the means of putting a couple of crowns into the hands of the Kadi or his clerks, and of buying with the same sum two false witnesses, he would indisputably have gained his cause, or prolonged it as long as he pleased.

Yes, My Lord, to conclude briefly I must repeat it; take away the right of private property in land, and you introduce, as a sure and necessary consequence, tyranny, slavery, injustice, beggary and barbarism: the ground will cease to be cultivated and become a dreary wilderness; in a word, the road will be opened to the ruin of Kings and the destruction of Nations. It is the hope by which a man is animated, that he

shall retain the fruits of his industry, and transmit them to his descendants, that forms the main foundation of everything excellent and beneficial in this sublunary state; and if we take a review of the different kingdoms in the world, we shall find that they prosper or decline according as this principle is acknowledged or contemned: in a word, it is the prevalence or neglect of this principle which changes and diversifies the face of the earth.

APPENDIX II⁷On the happy lot of French nuns compared to the problems confronting other social groups.¹

I should much like to find myself now at the abbey of St. Antony at Paris, at that of Poissy, at St. Sauveur of Evreux, in the cloisters of Rouen, or those of the nuns of Bourges, la Guiche, or Moncey, or any other nunneries, where I have been many times at the grilles of these ladies. They overwhelm you with lamentations longer than those of the Prophet Jeremiah, showing the hardship of their lives, and the sorrows they feel at being cloistered, also their displeasure at not seeing the outside world. They imagine for the most part that this word 'world' signifies nothing else but comforts, pleasures, pomps, and other voluptuous and delightful things. They are woefully mistaken, for, when all is said and done, the world contains nothing but toil, sorrows, suffering, deception, falsehood, and other like miseries. As proof of this, it is not difficult, knowing what is going on around us, to judge and see clearly which is the bigger part, pleasures or suffering.

What does one see in this world? (Take these headings:) the court, war, marriage, the merchant, ordinary folk and peasants. What is there at court, which we consider as the centre of all pleasures and every delight? You see a king who spends all his time, and the best days of his life, in giving orders, in trying to increase his glory, extend the limits of his kingdom, and keep peace and unity among his subjects, so that if he does spend a few hours or moments in recreation to relax a little from the important affairs which are continually on his mind, one certainly cannot say that the king enjoys many real pleasures or contentment in this world. War appeals to the nobility and other principal men of the kingdom, who pass their entire life at court, begging for employment. From prestige they are obliged to spend more than their income to maintain their position, and to keep up their regiments in a state to avert reprimands and rebuffs from their generals. They must go

¹ Abbé Carré, The Travels of the Abbé Carré in India and the Near East, (1672-1674), London, 1947-48, Vol. I, p. 248-255.

into battle, attack towns, and sleep in the open, exposed not only to their foes, but also to the inclemencies of the weather, without counting hunger, thirst, and other miseries, which occur in a military career. This is what must be endured for many years to acquire the honour of being a captain, major, or colonel of the regiment, or a general of an army; but of the hundreds of people who aspire to the same employment there can be only two or three who are rewarded, and that only after suffering hardships, many wounds, and much shedding of blood. Thus it cannot be said that the nobility derive much satisfaction or contentment in this world.

The merchant is not more fortunate or happy in his business and trade. How many calamities and misfortunes he has to endure! He is obliged to travel in strange countries, and brave perils of the sea, constantly risking his life with his goods. He has to deal with foreign brokers and agents, who for the most part take much of his profits; he has to give his goods on credit, and frequently receives only rebuffs and menaces in repayment, so that, if a merchant does sometimes try to take a little recreation, to feast, and to amuse himself on the quiet, the pleasure he gets out of these levities does not compensate for his anxieties and continual worries. Therefore you cannot say that the merchant is happy and contented in this world.

Marriage: there are few of these that are exempt from thorns, crosses, worries, discords, tribulations, jealousy, hatred, and such-like calamities. Let us consider those of the upper classes. They must have suites of pages, lackeys, and officials, keep up carriages and stables, furnish their palaces, keep open table, and incur many useless expenses, which often amount to more than the revenues of the house. Monsieur and Madame are well aware of this. They often consult about it with much dismay; but there is no chance of reform, neither in their way of living, the table expenses, nor the stable, for 'What would our friends say? We must keep up our usual style of living.' On the other hand, there are the farmers and stewards, who make a good thing for themselves out of the profits of the estate, so that at the end of the year the two are often astonished to find their revenue is halved and their expenses doubled. Sometimes Monsieur is a gambler, and Madame likes society and luxury: each one incurs excessive expenses, and soon their affairs are in a bad way. I wish they would live within their income, and both be more careful; but even then they cannot avoid other thorns and worries that prevent them from the perfect enjoyment of such pleasures as they have. They always live in fear of a reverse of fortune, of which we have enough examples in France to-day. If God gives them children, they must take great care to bring them up virtuously and in a manner worthy of their station in life. They must also procure positions and employments for them, which is not easy in

this high society. The parents are always anxious to raise the condition of their children above their own; but this cannot be done without great trouble. After that and sometimes enormous expense, the children are often found to have evil habits, which lead to their forming different views from those of their father and mother. They may lead licentious lives and quickly dissipate the savings which their parents have amassed with such care and self-denial. So vanish the fine hopes and grand ideas that they had for their children; and such poignant thorns and sorrows are certainly more bitter than the few pleasures and comforts they have enjoyed. And if these marriages, which are seemingly happy, entail so much disgrace and disappointment; it stands to reason that those of a lower standard will suffer greater ones. I will not weary you by enlarging on this, but assert that it is not in marriage that pleasure and happiness will be found in this world.

Is happiness then, to be found among ordinary folk? For an artisan, take a baker for example, he must work all night, sifting his flour, making his yeast, and kneading the dough. He passes the day with his head and half his body in a burning oven, which dries him up in such a way that he can hardly earn enough to quench his thirst. Let us take a tailor: he has to work all day, sitting cross-legged like a Turk, his food a few prunes, pears, turnips and the like, which are sold in the street. He can hardly earn enough to buy a decent coat for Sundays and saints' days. All other craftsmen have equal trouble in earning their bread to support their wives and a crowd of children who must continually be fed to obtain any peace. Therefore it is not amongst these folk that happiness or pleasure is to be found in this world.

Finally the peasants. What can be said about them? Have they more happiness and pleasure than these others? Alas! I see only sweat and toil and dire poverty. Some have to dig all day in the heat of the sun: others have to cultivate vines, or to care for trees, the fruit of which they will never enjoy. I see them returning home in the evening, a spade on their shoulders, a plough-axle (sic) and a bill-hook behind their backs, with a bundle of thorns on their heads or shoulders, at the end of a wooden fork. All they have to eat with their families at home is a piece of rye or barley bread, the colour of the sods they have just turned. If some are fortunate enough to have a bit of salt-pork and a few cabbage-leaves from their master's garden, they must eat this with the door shut. For, if it was known that there was a salting-tub in the house, the parish collector would at once raise his poll-tax. So it is not with these poor peasants that you find luxury, ease, or pleasures of this world.

I have not spoken of the lawyers or judges, as I consider them to be the most unhappy people on earth, mainly for the reason that they are generally hated by everyone, without regard

to the troubles, worries, and sleepless nights that they suffer in trying to master their cases and to administer justice to everyone. I consider them to be the most unfortunate people in the world, and therefore worthy of all pity.

There, my cloistered ladies, is what the world is like! And kindly allow me to tell you that, if there is a happy life in this world, full of sweetness and pleasure, it is that of you nuns. You are sheltered from the troubles, miseries, and the calamities which I have just depicted. You are really the only ones who enjoy complete happiness in this world.

The Mother-Abbess, or any lady of rank in her convent, is delighted when she hears the news that her uncle, her brother, or other relation, has received a good post at the court, or has been made a general. She much enjoys the pleasure of telling this good news to her friends; and when she learns that her relation has gained a great battle or taken a town, she does not fail to appropriate the best part of the glory acquired by him. It does not trouble her if this appointment, which he has bought in court circles or in the army, has nearly ruined those of the family, who are still of the world. She does not see his wife, children, and other relatives weeping with sorrow and in continual fear, when they learn at the same time that this general has been badly wounded in his day of victory, or that he is in great danger or has lost some of his baggage and the best of his servants; or, even if he is not wounded or in danger now, that there are other battles to come, in which he may be killed, to the complete ruin of his family. This only shows that no one can enjoy the fruit of such victories with as much pleasure and satisfaction as these good nuns. They alone taste the honey and see the roses, leaving the thorns for the world, as well as the work and anxieties entailed in gathering the palms and laurels of glory that bring honour to noble houses.

When a young girl of position or good family enters a convent, it almost always happens that she is the most virtuous, the wittiest, and the best looking of her family. She is, therefore, the parents' favourite child. They have had much trouble in bringing her up, and just as they were hoping that she would be a comfort to them, she says God is calling her, and goes into a convent. Consequently, all the best fruits of marriage are for my ladies, the nuns, to the grief of the parents, to whom are left only those children who may cause them great displeasure and worry. If the girl is a merchant's daughter, the convent receives a large sum of money as her dot, without having any of the trouble, work, vigils, or dangers, with which this merchant has acquired it. What do you wish for more, ladies? You complain you have no liberty. What liberty do you want more than you have now? You can receive visits from your relations and all decent people and converse with them. Do you wish to hear of what is going on at court or in the towns

or elsewhere? You will not lack persons of the court, abbés and others, who will be enchanted to show you the specimens of their wit, as they gallantly tell you all you wish to know. Do you want to leave the cloisters to travel? You can get books in which you will cross raging seas with less danger or fear than if you were in the strongest ocean-going ships. You will cross the Arabian deserts without fear of wild beasts, or feeling the sun's ardent rays, and enduring a thousand other trials, which I myself have experienced. Would you learn about the customs and ways of living of the orientals? You can learn all this with pleasure from naïve descriptions of them, without leaving your cloisters. After all this, ladies, is your condition really so hard? I consider it the highest, the pleasantest, and the least troublesome of any in the world.

But come, follow me, and I will show you real cloistered women, without any liberty whatever, who do not know what the world is like and can justly complain of their miserable condition. They are women of quality, who only associate with royalty, but nevertheless they are unhappy. Come to Bijapur, where you will see 1,400 women shut up within four walls and cloistered as you are, but with this difference. They have no grilles, nor parlours, nor confidants to bring them news and letters, nor relations and friends to visit them. If a new one comes into this flock, she is so abashed that she cannot give any news of her country, relations, or circumstances to the others, nor even say what sort of animal a man is. No! no! do not be astonished at what I tell you; they are not merely things I have heard, but what I have seen myself. They occur in every oriental country, where kings and nobles have brokers who are sent to Georgia (the home of the most beautiful women in Asia), Persia, Basra, the Red Sea, Arabia, and other eastern places. There they buy girls who, being destined for sale, have seen hardly anything of the outside-world (*M. n'ont jamais veu le jour que par le petit faucet*); so that, when these dealers in human flesh deliver them to their masters, they are amazed and bewildered at being placed among so many women, who gently tame them, dress them in sumptuous clothes, and teach them what they have to do. The eunuchs, when shown to them at first, terrify these girls, who take them for monsters, and they are not far from wrong, as they have nothing manlike about them and have a frightful appearance, which can inspire only horror. I have noticed a strange thing about these monstrosities. The more hideous they are, the more they are sought after by these people, the reason being that they offer no temptation to the women whom they guard. They are mostly big scoundrels, whose very glance is capable of terrifying the bravest. Their colour is dreadful, and their faces ape-like, with thick lips. It is not, therefore, surprising that these monsters—are respected and feared by the people of the country....

As I have just said, these eunuchs are shown to the young novice, who is told that these are men and that all others are like them. This is to make the women loathe the sight of men; so that afterwards, when the king, prince, or other person for whom they are destined, arrives, and they find that he is more pleasant to look at, they conceive deeper love and affection for him. They imagine he is the only man in the world with that face, and that every other man is like the eunuchs, as they are never allowed to see any one else.

The condition, then, of these poor ladies is indeed most miserable—no liberty, no hope of getting out or hearing anything sweet or agreeable except from a single man, or from these unnatural monsters in charge. You can thus judge of the condition of these oriental women, and see how unhappy they are, and how they have no pleasure or contentment but that of showing their beauty only to one man! It would be a real punishment to our French belles, if they were compelled to display their charms and attractions only to him to whom they are bound.

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