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The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe and Its Primacy in Seventeenth Century Mughal Historiography: A Re-Evaluation

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Sommaire

Auteur: C. P. Mitchell

Titre: *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* et sa primautê dans l'historiographe mogole du dix-septième siècle: une réévaluation.

Section: Institut des études islamiques

Diplôme: M.A.

Cette thèse est une étude d'une des sources primaires la plus consultée sur l'Inde mogole du 17ème siècle. *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe,* écrit par le premier ambassadeur anglais à la cour de Jahângîr, a été vu traditionellement comme un récit succinct et perspicace. D'ailleurs, les historiens se sont basés sur les observations de Thomas Roe et ses conlusions pour offrir certaines interprétations de la cour de Jahângîr; en particulier son déclin comme forum "d'absolutisme universel" et sa transformation en arène d'intrigue et rivalité.

Roe, comme enfant de la société Jacobin, a perçu les événements et institutions mogoles du point de vue d'un anglais du 17ème siècle, donc ses observations sont loin d'être "objectives." Pour appuyer cette analyse, notre thèse examinera a) la vie de Roe en Angleterre et ses relations avec les mouvements litèraire et politique du jour; b) la prèsence des métaphores et du langage Jacobin dans son texte. Aussi, on soulignera les incongruités entre ses observations et la situations actuelle par une comparaison avec les documents indigénes mogoles. Finalement, cette étude examinera les tendances historiographiques de l'ére coloniale et comment elles ont contribué à l'usage continuel de cette source.

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Acknowledgments

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

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ب	b	ص	ṣ
پ	p	ض	ẓ
ت	t	ط	ṭ
ث	s	ظ	ẓ
ج	j	ع	ʿ
چ	ch	غ	gh
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ک	k
ذ	z	گ	g
ر	r	ل	l
ز	z	م	m
ژ	zh	ن	n
س	s	و	v
ش	sh	ه ، ة	h
		ی	y

Vowels and Diphthongs (see Note 5)

ـَ	a	ـَا ، ـٰ	ā (see Note 6)	ـِی	ī
ـُ	u	ـَی	á (see Note 7)	ـَوْ	aw
ـِ	i	ـُو	ū	ـَیْ	aī

Introduction

"No where else is to be found so full and so trustworthy an account of events in the time of the Moghul court," concludes W. Foster in his introduction of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.* This statement, written in 1899, was consistent with colonial scholarship's reliance on European primary sources in early modern Mughal studies. Although later decades witnessed a proliferation of translated Mughal sources and document studies, European travelling accounts remained cemented in the evolving historiographical infrastructure. *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe,* a compilation of the English ambassador's journal entries, notes, and correspondence from 1615 to 1619, is considered a valuable, first hand account of the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahângîr (r. 1605-1627). Despite the detail of Roe's observations of the court machinations between Khurram (the later emperor Shâhjahân), Âṣaf Khân (empress Nûrjahân's brother and father of Mumtâz Maḥal), and Nûrjahân or of Jahângîr's propensity for vice, their use necessitates extreme caution. William Foster (1899), Beni Prasad (1922), and E.B. Findly (1993) constitute nearly a century of persistently understanding Thomas Roe's account as a viable, accurate, and objective representation of early modern Indian reality.

The latent concern of this thesis is the relative ease with which scholars use non-Mughal sources. The purpose here is not to expose examples of spuriousness in Roe's account, thereby providing a "true" or "real" assessment of Jahângîr's court. Rather, this investigation purports to i) recognize and reveal existing subjective elements hidden among the author's perceptions and conclusions regarding seventeenth century Mughal identity, and ii) examine some of the underlying causes explaining *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe's* historiographical domination. Sustaining such an investigation entails a number of approaches, each with its own objective.

The first chapter will research and present the literary, dramatic, courtly, political, and diplomatic discourse common to early seventeenth century England,

of which Roe was an active participant. The second chapter will involve a thorough examination of topics in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* where Roe implicitly applies European, specifically English, nuances and assumptions ; these subjective outlooks are then juxtaposed with those of surrounding contemporary documents, most notably *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî* (Emperor Jahângîr's memoirs). Lastly, the third chapter will assume an historiographical angle by reviewing prevalent trends of colonial and post-colonial scholarship contributing to the current primacy of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.*

The initial chapter endeavors to understand the milieu in which Roe (1581-1644) operated prior to his departure for India in 1615. His Renaissance educational training, alongside notables like John Donne and Ben Jonson, was typical of the Humanist tradition where aspiring scholars were taught philosophy, drama, literature, history, and rhetoric. His status as a minister of parliament and his subsequent involvement in the famous "Addled Parliament" of 1614 suggests a person well versed in ongoing political discourse. Besides being an intense period of constitutional debate between an absolute monarch and the House of Commons, James I's reign also gave rise to innovative literary styles and genres; their inclusion here will contribute to the chapter's objective of understanding early seventeenth century English perception of state, government, and culture. Appreciating the perspective of a learned Jacobean noble and politician is critical. Thomas Roe, upon being confronted with a politically and culturally alien entity, turned to English terminology and metaphors to convey the surrounding reality to his future audience.

The efforts in the first chapter come to fruition in the ensuing section, a critical reexamination of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.* Arriving at Surat and travelling through Burhanpur, Ajmer, and Mandu, Roe's sojourn in Mughal India was dutifully recorded until 1617; the remainder of the text comprises letters and sporadic journal entries. The purpose of this chapter is to explore Roe's commentaries on political and social institutions and developments. Prince Khurram's rise to power, the intrigues of the queen, Nûrjahân, and Jahângîr's hedonist lifestyle are but a few of the dominating themes in Roe's work. While important as events, Roe's dramatic portrayal is remarkably similar to the concurrent trends of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in England. Particularly, Roe's

perception of how Nûrjahân usurped her husband's power and administered the empire herself is directly responsible for later scholars' presentation of Jahângîr as an ineffective, submissive ruler who was unable to avert the machinations of his wife and other relations. Furthermore, the comparison of Mughal imperial offices with those of James I attests to Roe's use of European models to supplement his portrayal of the pre-modern subcontinent.

Understanding the depth of Roe's ethnocentric presentation of Jahângîr's court is facilitated by reading contemporary Muslim Indian documents. The principal source, *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, recounts the years 1605-1617; the remainder of Jahângîr's reign is documented in Mu`tamâd Khân's *Iqbâl Nâmâh-i Jahângîrî* and Khwâja Khâmgâr Husainî's *Mâ' aṣir-i Jahângîrî*. These texts and others (histories, advice manuals, bureaucratic documents) can provide an historian with sufficient understanding of Mughal self-perception and their ruling institutions. This comparative methodology illustrates some interesting features. For example, the ambassador's well-recorded frustration with Jahângîr regarding possible trade concessions with England finds no representation in Mughal records. This discrepancy suggests radically different perceptions of the role of trade and international relations. Nonetheless, scholars can be prone to overlooking this important disparity. Roe's account supersedes documents like Jahângîr's and, consequently, the Mughal empire is describe in vague terms as economically and diplomatically stagnant. The rationale of this chapter is two-fold: first, more attention to contradictions and variations in primary sources is needed. Mughal historians' tendency to accept one source as gospel with little or no textual juxtaposition needs rectification. Second, Mughal sources of this period rarely mention increasing European participation. If Mughal documents largely ignore European trade envoys and travellers, how can we explain interpretations where Roe's arrival as the ambassador of James I is touted as being "memorable in the Mughal annals"?

It is in the final chapter that we trace *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe's* development as a primary source in nineteenth and twentieth century historiography. Lauded as the "first of the long line of remarkable Englishmen," Roe was given, and continues to play, a critical role in our current understanding of Mughal India under Jahângîr. The position of power enjoyed by the English East

India Company and the British Empire in the nineteenth century was retroactively misapplied to the early seventeenth century. More specifically, Roe's arrival and his quasi-successful negotiations with Jahângîr have been interpreted as the first stage of English dominion in the subcontinent. However, crediting Roe with such an accomplishment badly misconstrues seventeenth century trade priorities and the English East India Company's resources in the face of a powerful indigenous empire. While Marxist and anti-colonial scholars (Mukherjee, Hasan) have stripped Roe of his ideologically pro-British imperial significance, remnants of Roe's subjective conclusions continue to linger in recent works. Most evident is the famous theory of the Nûrjahân "junta," put forward by Beni Prasad in 1922. Prasad's documentation, resting mainly on Roe's account, is largely replicated in Findly's 1993 work, *Nur Jahan*. Consequently, by examining the scholarly forces responsible for Roe's historiographical inflation, this chapter will supplement the thesis' overall objecting of calling attention to the use of subjective, first hand accounts in secondary sources.

There can be little doubt that successive centuries saw consistent encroachment by European powers into South Asia. However, interpreting the reign of Jahângîr from the vantage point of colonial and post-colonial positions has distorted the information provided by Roe and others. The increasing availability of Mughal sources, combined with recent theories in historiography, has ushered in new possibilities of interpretation. This thesis, through its various methodologies of contextualization, textual phenomonology, cultural comparison, and historiographical investigation, will hopefully realign the use of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* as a primary source within the spectrum of early seventeenth century Mughal studies.

Chapter One:

Thomas Roe and Jacobean England

Thomas Roe's *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* has been described as a "picture of the India of the early seventeenth century which is of exceptional value and interest" and that "his position afforded him excellent opportunities for observation, while a natural gift for literary expression imparted a vividness to his descriptions which is often lacking in the writings of other travellers of the period."[1] Such glowing statements of the nineteenth century applauding the accuracy of this text have since been slightly qualified. However, there can be little doubt that many South Asian historians still consider Thomas Roe's text excellent source material for understanding Mughal historical events. Incorporating a European source in Mughal studies without appreciating the critical issue of perspective is dangerous. Its accredited "objectivity" needs to be reinterpreted. The first step towards such a reevaluation is examining Thomas Roe's own cultural context of early seventeenth century England. It is impossible to embrace the written observations of a culture by a foreigner without appreciating his or her social, literary, and educational background. Furthermore, this appreciation is better fulfilled by superseding simple biographical details and exploring some of the key political issues and literary styles that were circulating in England during Roe's upbringing and early career. It is these ideas and modes of expression which are directly or indirectly represented in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.* Reading this text from a twentieth century perspective, thereby ignoring the critical role of context, only serves to hinder an understanding of Thomas Roe and his role in Mughal historiography.

The implications of investigating the politico-literary milieu of Elizabethan and Jacobean England (1559-1624) go beyond simple interest when one realizes that it was an era of incredible innovation, where understandings of the roles of monarchy, court, government were being reassessed.[2] The flourishing of the

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1 William Foster, "Introduction," in *The Embassy of Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogol 1615-1619, As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. W. Foster, London: Hakluyt Society, 1899, p. 2.

2 Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, "Politics of Discourse: Introduction," in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. , Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p. 1

English Renaissance, with literary giants such as Donne, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Milton shattered traditional literary styles and forged new ones. Within these dynamic decades, we find Thomas Roe: courtier, government official, and ambassador. The question remains however: how can we link the aforementioned political and literary trends with this son of a haberdasher?

Startling discoveries appear during an examination of Roe's education and early career. During his tenure at Oxford, he shared friendships with blossoming literary figures such as John Donne and Ben Jonson. Shortly afterwards, Roe served as the Esquire of the Body to the Queen Elizabeth, a position introducing him to the elements of Renaissance court culture. After Elizabeth's death in 1603 and the succession of James I, Roe served as an ambassadorial envoy to Spain and the Palatinate, thus laying the foundation for his later standards of international etiquette and diplomacy. And finally in 1614, one year before his departure to India, Roe was nominated and elected as a member of parliament in the notorious "Addled Parliament"; this event witnessed the political elite ushering in a new era of constitutional debate by questioning the monarchy and its obligations to the English people. By examining each of these four stages of Roe's life (student, courtier, ambassador, and politician), one can introduce and expand on the the four dimensions of the English context that are critical to evaluating The *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*: a) popular literary styles; b) Jacobean court culture; c) European modes of diplomacy; and d) early seventeenth century British understanding of government and monarchy.

The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe is important as an historical source because of its commentary on Mughal politics and court events. However, Roe's interpretations of his experience in India are not those of an objective court observer. His rendition of Jahângîr's style of rule, parts of which still lingering in current scholarship, can be better understood and reinterpreted by learning more about Roe and the early seventeenth century English society that moulded his outlook and perception. The four features of English context that I have listed represent the best approach for a variety of reasons. Literature and drama were often used for analogous purposes in political commentary; in Roe's case, this trend allowed for a "romantic" presentation of Mughal court events. Second, Roe's portrayal of Mughal diplomatic practice, awkward and irreverent, stemmed from

personal frustration. This frustration grew as the Mughals failed to accommodate his own, deeply-imbued sense of diplomacy. Lastly, the context of court and politics is particularly crucial to this chapter because *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* is so highly esteemed for its portrayal of Mughal political and court relationships. If we can appreciate Jacobean, and, consequently Roe's, definitions of politics and court relationships, various descriptions of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* become easier to explain.

1.1: Roe's Education and the Influences of the English Literary Renaissance

Details of Roe's early childhood are somewhat scarce. What is known, however, is that he was baptized in March, 1581, in Low Leyton, Essex, son of Robert Roe, a prominent haberdasher and landowner. Thomas' father died in 1587, leaving his mother free to marry Sir Richard Berkeley of Stoke Gifford, near Bristol.[3] Roe was fortunate enough to live in Rendcomb Manor of Gloucestershire as Sir Richard's step-son and, consequently, became familiar with upper middle class etiquette and self-presentation. The calibre of Roe's new station in life was best indicated by Queen Elizabeth's entourage staying at Rendcomb Manor for two days in 1592.[4] Thanks to his stepfather's status, at the age of twelve Roe was able to enrol at Magdalen College in Oxford where he received instruction in Latin, rhetoric, mathematics, logic, and metaphysics. In 1597, he left Magdalen College and continued his education at Middle Temple, where only "gentlemen of blood" were admitted. The four Inns of Court (Middle Temple, Inner Temple, Lincoln's Inn, and Gray's Inn) were combined with the eight Inns of Chancery to form, in effect, a third university in England. Here at what was commonly referred to as "the Inns," Roe became familiar with verse, poetry, epigrams, play writing, and the phenomenon of masque performances.[5]

Records discuss Roe's membership in the exclusive circle, The Mermaid Tavern Club; here, future literary figures, such as John Donne and Hugh Holland, debated and discussed wit and rhetoric over "the quintessence of the Spanish,

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[3] Michael Brown, *Itinerant Ambassador: The Life of Sir Thomas Roe*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970, p. 5

[4] Michael Stachan, *Sir Thomas Roe, 1581-1644: A Life*, London: Michael Russel Ltd., 1989, p. 1

[5] Ibid., p. 2

French, and Rhenish grape." Roe was also a good friend of Ben Jonson, considered one of the most influential playwrights, besides William Shakespeare, during the Jacobean period. Although not as formidable as his colleagues' of The Mermaid Tavern Club, Roe's literary talents were sufficient enough that his eulogisms were included in the published editions of Jonson's plays, *Sejanus* (1605) and *Volpone* (1607). In fact, Jonson was so impressed by Thomas Roe's character he dedicated the following epigram to his friend,

> Thou hast begun well ROE...
> He that is round within himselfe and streight
> Need seeke no other strength, no other height;
> Fortune upon him breakes her selfe, if ill,
> And what would hurt his vertue makes it still.
> ...Be always to thy gather'd self the same:
> And studie conscience, more than though would'st fame.
> Though both be good, the latter is worst
> And ever is ill got without the first."[6]

Thomas Roe's friendship with John Donne is attested to by a lengthy correspondence; in fact, Donne so cherished his colleague, he wrote "I have bespoke you a New Year's gift, that is, a good New Year, for I have offered your name with my soul heartily to God in my morning's best sacrifice." Donne continues the letter by asking "if for custom you will do a particular office in recompense, deliver this letter to your Lady now, or when the rage of 'The Mask' is past." Donne seems to be making a direct reference to Ben Jonson's masque performance of *The Hue and Cry after Cupid* in the court of James I in 1607.[7] Evidently, the premier poet of Jacobean England recognized some level of Roe's literary ability during their friendship at Oxford. Their discussions focused mostly on political topics with occasional references to circulating plays and published writings.[8]

Roe's affinity for drama and acceptance of its role as a social distraction is also seen in a letter to Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia; he explains how a recent closing of the theatres "makes our statesmen see the good use of them...for if our heads had been filled with the loves of Piramus and Thisbe...we should never have cared who

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6 Charles H. Herford and Percy Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, Vol. IX, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954, p. 319

7 This letter was written in December of 1607. Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, Vol. II, London: William Heinemann, 1899, p. 182

8 Ibid.

made peace or war, but on the stage."[9] Given Roe's education, the literary circles he moved with, and close friendships with *litterateurs* like Jonson and Donne, we can conjecture that Roe was not only aware of the literary world, but actually participated in it on a limited scale. The ramifications of this conclusion only become clear if the language and style of the playwrights and poets is understood; this, combined with highlighting the relevant issues and concerns of the Jacobean court, can help us analyze the tone and subject matter of Roe's text, written some two decades later.

The year 1603 not only represented a watershed in English politics, but also a new system of court dynamics. Influential elements of England, ecclesiastics, courtiers, nobility, and ministers of parliament, had admired Queen Elizabeth's ability to astutely gauge any given situation and implement the necessary practical policies of state. With Elizabeth's designation of James VI of Scotland as her successor, many Englishmen viewed the future leadership with some hesitation and anxiety. It was generally feared among the ruling circles that James was too inexperienced with the mechanics of English politics and his upsetting experiences with the heavily Calvinist Scottish Kirk might threaten inroads accomplished by the English Protestant movement.[10] On the other hand, James's moderate religious policy, combined with his intense dedication to the concept of divine monarchy, was seen as a potential stabilizer to what had been a tumultuous sixteenth century for England.[11]

James VI's approach to rule was largely rooted in his experiences as the young king of Scotland. The execution of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, and his fiery debates with the egalitarian Calvinists, hardened his beliefs regarding issues of legitimacy and monarchical infallibility.[12] James's views find early elucidation in two works penned as king of Scotland, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Monarchies* (1598). The opening verse of *Basilikon Doron* waxes poetic on the

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9 This letter was written in October of 1630. Two decades earlier, Roe had been Elizabeth's gentlemen-in-waiting prior to her marriage to the Prince of the Palatinate. Michael Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987, p. 90.

10 The Scottish Kirk, the head ecclesiastical institution, had obvious problems with James' conception of divine monarchy . D.M. Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, London: Fontana Press, 1973, p. 330

11 The furore over the Protestant Reformation, Queen Mary's stringent Catholic policies between 1553-1558, and the war with Spain were some of the key issues for England in this period.

12 J.P. Sommerville, "James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L. L. Peck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 58.

virtue of kingship,

> God giues not kings the stile of Gods in vaine,
> For on his throne his Scepter doe they sway:
> And as their subjects ought them to obey
> So Kings should feare and serve their God againe.
> If then ye would enjoy a happie reigne
> Observe the statutes of your heauenlie King.[13]

His theory of divine kingship is further espoused in *The Trew Law of Monarchies*, "...the kings are called Gods by the propheticall King David, because they sit upon God his Throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give unto him." Furthermore, "by the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation; And as the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and vertous government of his children; even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects."[14] Although his convictions on the divine origin of royal prerogative eventually became a source of contention with the House of Commons in later Parliaments, James's language and style of monarchy fostered interesting responses in areas of architecture, numismatics, art, literature, drama, and prose.

Jonathan Goldberg meticulously details the shifts in English architecture, art, and coin designs during the first decade of the seventeenth century; his observations warrant the conclusion of James being keen to resurrect Roman classicism in its purest form to supplement his personal "style of gods."[15] However, it is the structural and stylistic changes within the dramatic arts that merit attention here. The Roman heritage of theatre and public performance was a new and potential source of style and subject matter for English playwrights. Consequently, the seedling Elizabethan interest in Classical drama blossomed into a full-grown passion during the reign of James I. Not only were plays becoming increasingly popular with both the elite and the common, their plots, style, and language were assuming a distinctly 'Roman' flavour.

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13 The *Basilikon Doron* was written as an instruction manual on kingship for James's son, Henry. Cecile C. Hanley, *Jacobean Drama and Politics*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972, p. 8.

14 Charles H. McIlwain (ed.), *The Political Works of James I: Reprinted from the Edition of 1616*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 54-55.

15 Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983, pp. 44-46.

Many Renaissance literature scholars (Tennenhouse, Goldberg, Sharpe) have endeavored to describe the interrelation of drama and ongoing sociopolitical issues. Moreover, they see playwrights' scripts as commentaries on contemporary issues. The Jacobean stage represents a viable means by which historians can investigate the nature of court politics, machinations, and self-perception. As Goldberg comments, "the theater, that tragic scaffold, was a place for self-knowledge precisely because it mirrored state, because its representations duplicated public life."[16] While this approach is certainly valid, it is largely founded on the premise of "art imitating life." By assuming the reverse supposition, i.e. "life imitating art," some intriguing observations are possible. It is the contention of this discussion, because of the recent inundation of play and masque performances, Jacobean court language increasingly implemented dramatic analogies and terminology.

Cultural historians, such as Graham Holderness, represent a new approach to Renaissance studies which is somewhat parallel to this discussion. He supports the assertion of how drama has an active, occasionally dominant, role in the making of history. Moreover, the court of James I, with its propensity for Roman and masque plays, became an institution which was as much cultural as political. He seals his point by stating: "the business of a Tudor or Stuart court might have been understood more as transactions in the symbolic language of authority then in the material details of implementing power."[17] These recent studies on court culture have proposed the idea of the Renaissance court being key to understanding early seventeenth century English expression on a common scale. In other words, scholars are beginning to interpret the court and its participants as creators and diffusers of later popular motifs, language, and terminology. Holderness argues that "the court is a profoundly historical institution, and simultaneously as the source of a particular symbolic language, which seems to have been powerful enough to enter and pervade the general culture at almost every level."[18] The aforementioned innovations in Jacobean court and drama, i.e. the exchanging of vocabulary and motifs, Roman classical trends, etc., were most likely directly

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16 Ibid., p. 150.

17 Graham Holderness, "Endgames," in *Shakespeare: Out of Court; Dramatization of Court Society*, ed. G. Holderness, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, p. 238.

18 Ibid. Other sources adopting a similar approach include Levy's edited work, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, Tricomi's *Anticourt Drama in England, 1603-1642*, and Goldberg's *James I and the Politics of Literature.*

observed by Roe as an ambassadorial envoy and gentleman-in-waiting; linking Roe with this interchange between stage and court is further concretized by his close relations with Donne *et alia.* In short, Roe operated within a milieu where "stagecraft collaborates with statecraft in producing spectacles of power."[19]

The early modern paralleling of the English king with the main character of a play, with the stage as the court and the audience as his subjects, was a common device of theater. As Greenblatt notes, "royal power is manifested to its subjects as in a theater, and the subjects are at once more absorbed by the instructive, delightful, or terrible spectacles and forbidden intervention or deep intimacy."[20] "We princes are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world," Elizabeth once remarked.[21] The following excerpt from James I's *Basilikon Doron* typifies the familiar Jacobean metaphor of king and actor,

> Kings being publike persons, by reason of their office and authority, are as it were set upon a publike stage, in the sight of all the people; where all the beholders eyes are attentively bent to looke and pry in the least circumstance of their secretest drifts: Which would make Kings the more carefull not to harbour the secretest thought in their minde, but such as in the owne time they shall not be ashamed openly to avouch...
>
> It is a trew old saying, That a King is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly doe behold: and therefore although a King be never so praecise in the discharging of his Office, the people, who seeth but the outward part, will ever iudge of the substance, by the circumstance; and according to the outward appearance, if his behaviour bee light or dissolute, will conceive pre-occupied conceits of the Kings outward intention...[22]

Here we discern James's disdain in being a "publike" figure forced to contend with the problems of inner intention and outward appearance. James struggled to reconcile the polarized nature of responsible rule: accessibility to his subjects while concurrently maintaining a sense of awe and unapproachability. This theme of mystique is not uncommon with James I; repeated instances of "the mysterie of the Kings power" appeared in his speeches and writings.[23] James believed his royal

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19 Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: the Politics of Shakespeare's Genres*, New York: Methuen Inc., 1986, p. 15.

20 Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion," in *Glyph*, Vol. 8 (1981), p. 57.

21 J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601*, Vol. 2, London: Jonathan Cape, 1965, p. 119.

22 McIlwain (ed.), *Political Works of James I*, p. 5 and p. 43

23 Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, p. 56

prerogative to be an enigma, an inner sanctum from which all others were excluded. In fact, one of his favourite admonitions was "incroach not upon the Prerogative of the Crowne."[24] Whether James felt his status as king was shrouded in some unquestionable, ineffable mystery or that he was simply a solitary, taciturn individual, the end result was the same: the monarch, along with the court circles, became increasingly isolated.[25] This trend was best exemplified by the growth of the masque performance phenomenon. Jerzy Limon describes the masque as "the appearance of a group of noble personages dressed in elaborate disguise to celebrate a particular occasion and to honour their monarch...the fundamental job of the masque writer is to provide a fiction to explain the disguised arrival."[26] While these performances were often presented for the benefit of the king, it was not uncommon for James and other members of the royal family to assume corresponding roles in the production. Episodes like this indicate a trend where the monarch actually went beyond analytical similes and effected the concept of "player-kings."[27] The "actor-king" motif, be it in masque performances or in James's political commentary, is intriguing. If we acknowledge recent studies which emphasize the court as a disseminator of symbolic language, it is plausible that the educated strata of Jacobean England utilized dramatic terminology in its perception and discussion of kingship.

There are far too many conventional plays of the Jacobean era to examine here; however, there are a number which, cursorily examined, provide key insights to understanding early seventeenth century dramatic expression. Predictably, many playwrights had agendas beyond simple entertainment. They, and sympathetic courtiers, considered plays excellent vehicles by which they could comment and, in some cases, criticize the behavior of both court and king. In addition to the increasingly idiosyncratic statements on the mystery of divine kingship and his

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24 Jonathan Goldberg, "James I and the Theater of Conscience," in *English Literary History*, Vol. 46 (1979), p. 380.

25 Malcolm Smuts, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L.L. Peck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 109.

26 Jerzy Limon, "The Masque of Stuart Culture," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L.L. Peck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 209.

27 Linda L. Peck, "The Mental World of the Jacobean Court: An Introduction," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L.L. Peck, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 7.

affinity for self-isolation, James I's handling of patronage and finance was becoming an issue of some scrutiny and alarm. After assuming the throne of England, James initiated a program of patronage that shocked the established gentry. During the 1590s, records place the number of knights at 550; after three years of rule, James had tripled it.[28] A comparison of Elizabethan and Jacobean patronage practices hints at the scope of James's generosity: despite ruling twice as long, Elizabeth only created 878 knights and 18 peers, whereas James bestowed 1900 knighthoods, 200 baronets, and 65 peerages.[29]

Financially, the situation was even more dire. In spite of inheriting a debt of £400,000, James inaugurated his reign with staggering expenditures. He established three households (for himself, his wife, Anne, and his son, Henry) which doubled household expenses from £40,000 to £80,000 in the first year of his reign.[30] Annual royal disbursements soared from £300,000 to £500,000; by 1612, the year James's trusted official Lord Cecil died, the royal debt reached £600,000.[31] To complement the three households, as well as the large number of royal estates he had acquired (there were ten), James was forced to increase his spending for court officials and household staff. By 1614, fees and annuities dispensed from the Exchequer to support this infrastructure went from £27,000 (1603) to £104, 860.[32] As M.P. John Hoskyns, (a colleague and friend of Thomas Roe's) stated, "the royal cistern had a leak, which, till it were stopped, all our consultations to bring money unto it was of little use."[33]

To further complicate matters, James's court was, like many contemporary Renaissance courts, racked with favouritism and factional competition. It soon became obvious there was a network of patrons and clients coordinating political activity.[34] Simply put, the two main competing groups were centered around the

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28 In fact, James actually knighted 432 men on his accession day. Linda L. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990, p. 32.

29 Hanley, *Jacobean Drama and Politics*, p. 12

30 Albert H. Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England, 1603-1642*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989, p. 7

31 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 339.

32 Levy, *Court Patronage*, p. 34

33 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 338.

34 Levy, *Court Patronage*, p. 53.

family of the Howards, known as the "Spanish" faction, and the "French" faction, which included the Duke of Lennox and other Scots who had come to England with James in 1603.[35] As the titles suggest, these groups' designs revolved around fostering good relations with either Spain or France; as a result, competition for the king's attention was fierce and often conducted in clandestine fashion. Favouritism was best illustrated in George Villiers' meteoric rise despite numerous accusations of ineptitude and inexperience; nonetheless, Villiers prospered thanks to his good, possibly intimate, relationship with James I.[36]

These events and trends were the obvious sundry characteristics of James I's court. Consequently, many playwrights took it upon themselves to write and stage productions which, in couched language and veiled allusions, were subtle warnings to the king and his immediate circle of favourites. As mentioned earlier, one of the key developments of Jacobean drama was the restoration of Roman classicism. The majority of productions were based on famous Roman figures and events; specifically, the years 1603-1624 witnessed an emphasis on tragedy as the dominant motif for playwrights. Defined loosely as "the fall of princes: (the) misfortune of the highly placed," tragedy revelled in insane despots, heightened rhetoric, bloody images, terrorized innocents, and revenge.[37] This genre of tragedy is referred to as Senecan; its purpose was to present terrible spectacles which strove to subtly reveal man's inner nobility, a virtue often lost or temporarily swept aside in violent circumstances.[38] Jacobean playwrights occasionally orchestrated their tragedies to parallel ongoing events and situations in the court. The production would end with a soliloquy lamenting the lost age of just monarchs and untainted courtiers. In cases of plays making blatant allusions to the Jacobean court, the authorities were swift and uncompromising. John Dary's *The Isle of Gulls*, performed in 1606, presented the main character Duke Basilius (a reference to James's work, *Basilikon Doron*) retiring to the country while his principal minister, Dametas, was left to dispense gifts and patronage to a greed-racked court.[39] Recognizing Duke Basilius as James and Dametas as Lord Cecil, authorities closed down the production team and

35 Ibid., p. 54

36 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 367

37 John Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 171.

38 Ibid., p. 173

39 Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England*, pp. 34-36.

the Act to Restraine Abuses of Players, a bill designed to censor any threatening drama text, was passed in May of 1606.[40] Political and personal satire became so daring that Samuel Calver warned, "the plays do not forbear to present upon their Stage the whole Course of this present Time, nor sparing either King, State, or Religion, in so great Absurdity, and with such Liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them."[41]

The key issue is, in years spanning Roe's education and early career as a courtier (1593-1614), there was a proliferation of dramatic productions which were increasingly similar in their depictions of monarch and court. While acting companies had, to some extent, prospered under Elizabeth, it was during the Jacobean era that plays became the dominant cultural medium for the ruling elite. In fact, upon his accession, James I appropriated all three existing acting companies (Admiral's, Worcester's, and Lord Chamberlain's) as his personal servants.[42] Graham Holderness comments on the new influences of playwrights and their texts, "thus in 1603, Shakespeare's company became the King's Men, His Majesty's Servants, and entered into the closest possible relationship an acting company could possess with the monarch and the monarch's court."[43]

Specifically, *Sejanus*, written by Ben Jonson and performed in 1603, tackled the issue of rampant political corruption in an organized state. Jonson, true to the Humanist tradition, implemented the *Annales* of the Roman historian Tacitus to portray the decay eroding Caesar Augustus' government; the character of Macro, ally of Sejanus, is used as an agent to uncover this moral stagnation.[44] The motif of using an impartial observer to reveal elements of vice and avarice was not uncommon. Termed the "disguised Duke plays," Marston's *Malcontent* (1602) and *The Fawn* (1604), Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1603), Middleton's *The Phoenix* (1603) and Sharpham's *The Fleer* (1606) all present a leading figure winding his way through the various strata of society, uncovering abuse after abuse. As

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40 Ibid., p. 46

41 Sir Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I*, ed. E. Sawyer, Vol. 1, London: 1725, p. 271.

42 Graham Holderness, "Introduction: Theatre and Court," in *Shakespeare: Out of Court: Dramatization of Court Society*, ed. G. Holderness, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, p. 132.

43 Ibid.

44 Ben Jonson, *Sejanus* in *The Selected Plays of Ben Jonson*, Vol. 1, ed. J. Procter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 3.

Tricomi states, "within this satiric perspective, the corruption of government and of men in high places, including judges, courtiers, and nobility, looms large."[45] Degeneration of government became a prevalent image in Jacobean drama. Corruption originates with the King, which is then passed through the aristocracy onto the favorites and minions of the court. If we adopt the argument of how drama can dictate popular language and perception which is then disseminated to the public by the court, it can be conjectured that Roe was part of a medium which increasingly looked to theatrical dimensions (language, plots, characters, motifs) to express itself.

1.2: Roe's Introduction to Jacobean Court Elements

Thanks to the powerful influence of his stepfather, Sir Richard, and the wealth of his natural father, Roe was appointed to be an Esquire to the Body of Queen Elizabeth in 1601. His orders were to guard the monarch's "person by night, to set the watch, and to give the word and to keep good order in the whole house by night, as the Lord Chamberlain and his officers are to do by day."[46] After Elizabeth's death and James I's arrival in 1603, Roe was able to maintain his position as a courtier after being appointed a gentleman-in-waiting for Princess Elizabeth, James's only daughter.[47] Roe's tenure as a courtier was interrupted by sojourns to Europe (1604-1606), North America (1607-1608), and Guiana (1609-1611). However, between 1612 and 1614, Roe returned to Princess Elizabeth's service and also served as a Gentleman of James I's Privy Chamber.[48] Little detail is available concerning Roe's involvement in the Jacobean court. Nonetheless, by exploring the dynamics of James's court we can begin to understand the infrastructure of courtier relationships and the modes of behavior in a Renaissance political arena. Looking to Roe's account, historians of the colonial era have interpreted Jahângîr to be an inept king haphazardly bestowing favours to a disorderly, competitive court. However, an investigation of James I's own court suggests some similarities with Roe's later portrayal of the Mughal equivalent. This section's objective is the highlighting of Jacobean court practices to prove Roe's later commentary was partially rooted in his

45 Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England*, p. 14.

46 Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 5.

47 Brown, *Itinerant Ambassador*, p. 7.

48 Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 36.

experiences as an English courtier.

James I's reign has been characterized as morally and financially stagnated; specifically, historians look to James's extravagant gift-giving as an explanation of the crown's economic crisis.[49] They also point out the arrival of the Scottish courtiers and their subsequent rise under the auspices of the formerly Scottish king. An emphasis was placed on the crown's cannibalising of patronage, i.e. selling various honors, titles, licenses, and offices, to regenerate the royal coffers.[50] However, a new generation of court historians (Zagorin, Levy, Smuts) have argued how the language and behavior of the Jacobean courtiers was consistent with early modern administration. While acknowledging that there was increasing pressure to curb these corrupt practices, this new generation of scholarship stresses the existence of a general understanding among the ruling elite of how patron-client relations were to be conducted; furthermore, critics of royal patronage did little to challenge this understanding. Early modern perceptions saw the king as a guarantor of justice and dispenser of favour. Royal largesse significantly expanded under the Tudors and continued into the Jacobean era. James's *The Trew Law of Monarchie* describes how benefits are shared between a monarch and his subjects. This concept of symbiosis was largely based on the Stoic philosopher Seneca's *On Benefits,* an influential text among Jacobean humanists with their newfound affinity for anything Roman.[51] The basic idea was that, in return for a gift or bounty, a subject reciprocated with unyielding loyalty and service. This type of reward was essential to the king because he could, thereby, reinforce the reciprocal bonds established between the Crown and the political elite.[52] James's advice manual, *Basilikon Doron,* refers to this definition,

> The more frequently that your court can be garnished with them (gifts); thinke it the more your honour; acquanting and employing them in all your greatest affaires; sen it is, they must be your armies and executors of laws...as may make the greatest of them to thinke, that the chiefest point of their honour, standeth in striuing with the meanest of the land in humilitie towards you, and obedience to your laws."[53]

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49 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 347.

50 Levy, *Court Patronage*, p. 4.

51 Ibid., p. 12.

52 Ibid., p. 14.

53 McIlwain (ed), *Political Works of James I*, pp. 25-26.

Operating on the principle of using "trew liberalitie in rewarding the good, and bestowing frankly for your honour and weale," James believed that duty and servitude would naturally follow from the grateful recipients.[54] Considering there was no central or local bureaucracy, nor a standing army, the function of gift-giving and office sales was central to the power of the monarchy. As Holderness comments, "court members saw themselves as part of a court which was a microcosmic model of the universe of which the king was the creator and controller."[55] The significant increase in the number of offices being created and the expansion of landed gentry resulted in vigorous competition; consequently, controlling access to the Jacobean court was a valuable commodity. To participate in the court, one was forced to navigate a complicated system of court patronage; in this, one engaged the services of a broker who could guarantee adoption by a major patron in the court.[56] Predictably, corruption like this did not go unnoticed. Court observers, believing an avaricious society was doomed, were quick to criticize. John Chamberlain described the competition as "the court fever of hope and fear that continuously torments those that depend upon great men and their promises."[57] An anonymous discourse discusses how "the courtier knoweth the secrets of Court, judgeth them not, but useth them for his particular advantage. He is a great dissembler, for he that knoweth not how to put on that vizard is not fit to live in the courts of princes."[58]

Factional activity is another well-documented Jacobean court feature. Led by the Lord Treasurer, Robert Cecil, the "Spanish" Faction did its best to pressure both court and king towards positive relations with Spain. Consisting of Henry Howard, the Lord Privy Seal, and Thomas Howard, the Lord Chamberlain, the Spanish Faction exercised some dominance between 1603 and 1612, highlighted by the negotiated peace with Spain in 1604. Their efforts were constantly frustrated by the French Faction, comprised of the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Carlisle, the Earl of Pembroke, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, and James's wife, Queen Anne.[59] Most of the leading Jacobean courtiers took gifts and pensions from one of

54 Ibid., p. 52.

55 Holderness, "Introduction: Theatre and Court," p. 132.

56 Levy, *Court Patronage*, p. 40.

57 Smuts, *Court Culture*, p. 77.

58 Ibid., p. 78.

59 Levy, *Court Patronage*, p. 54.

these factions or, in some cases, from both.

There were, however, modifications in the patronage system after James's accession. Traditionally, most courtiers coveted a position in the Privy Chamber; it was here that the bureaucratic agencies of the Secretaryship and the Exchequer conferred and debated matters of policy with the king . Unable to position his Scottish entourage in the English-dominated Privy Chamber, James ensconced his countrymen in the Bedchamber and it soon became a political and administrative institution. The Privy Chamber was relegated to formal, ceremonial duties, while the Bedchamber became the focus of the monarch's private life.[60] This newly restricted access to the king's person only contributed to favouritism trends in the Jacobean court. Records mention Roe's appointment as a Gentleman to the Privy Chamber at some point between 1603 and 1614; however, Roe's participation in this court intrigue is undocumented. Nonetheless, he was certainly aware of these groups, their mandates, and methods of operation.

1.3: Thomas Roe's Early Ambassadorial Assignments and European Perceptions of Diplomatic Etiquette

England's war with Spain had dominated the last two decades of the sixteenth century and James I's first goal was to cease hostilities. With the practical details of the negotiation already settled, a massive retinue was assembled under the Earl of Nottingham to finalize the peace process in the summer of 1604.[61] After being knighted by James I in July 1603, Thomas Roe, in addition to being appointed Princess Elizabeth's attendant, was selected as one of the 650 Englishmen sent to Spain. The English entourage was indeed a spectacle. With trumpeters, footmen and pages leading a procession of hundreds of nobles through the streets of Santander, a stir was caused among the Spanish populace. Roe was present at the opening ceremony to observe how "the King (of Spain), descending from his chair, gave entertainment to his Lordship (Nottingham) with most kind and affable behavior, appointing him to sit down by him and that very near; which especial favour was much observed, and reported as a thing never used to any ambassador before that

60 Neil Cuddy, "The Revival of the Entourage: the Bedchamber of James I, 1603-1625," in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. D. Starkey, New York: Longman Inc., 1987, p. 173.

61 Stachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 7.

time."[62] During the gift-giving ceremony, six horses with embroidered saddles and cloths, two crossbows, four fowling pieces richly garnished and inlaid with gold, and a pair of bloodhounds were given to the King and Queen of Spain. On the last day of formalities, the King presented Nottingham with a diamond ring valued at £3000. Nine years later, Roe was once again sent to Europe as part of a royal entourage escorting Princess Elizabeth to her new husband, the Prince of the Palatinate. While the procession was not nearly as sumptuous as the embassy in Spain, the mission was characterized by several days of formal dinners, hunting parties, and elaborate galas.[63]

Early seventeenth century understanding of an ambassador's duties, both in England and Continental Europe, was highly regimented. Essentially, there were two types of ambassadors. First, there was the ordinary resident ambassador who served in a foreign country for a period of three years, during which he looked to routine diplomatic matters. The second type was the special ambassador of ceremony; this official was higher in rank since his duties involved attending special negotiations or treaty signings.[64] Observing proper protocol in England was so elaborate, a special officer was appointed to "receive and entertaine, Ambassadours, and Princes, during their abode in England; in all honourable manner as is used in France and other places."[65] Typical reception of a foreign dignitary included the Master of Ceremonies meeting the arriving ship at Dover with royal coaches and wagons to transport the retinue to London. The procession was often welcomed by the Lord Chamberlain and a body of courtiers, who would then escort the ambassador and his staff to luxurious lodgings.[66] Within a few days, James I would meet the embassy at Whitehall Palace, amidst an atmosphere of splendour and grandeur. Taking pains to acknowledge the innumerous gradations of honour, a series of courtiers greeted the ambassador and ushered him into James's presence. This ceremony was finalized by the exchanging of gifts between the king and the ambassador. These gifts went beyond simple material value and

62 Ibid., p. 9.

63 Ibid., p. 38.

64 G.P.V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant or the Court of King James I*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 56.

65 Ibid., p. 57.

66 Ibid.

were often construed as symbolic representations of the relationship between two monarchs. Given the competitive nature of seventeenth century politics, it was not uncommon to use gift-exchange to make an impression. Consequently, gifts often assumed gigantic and expensive proportions.[67]

The resident English ambassadors, routinely dispatched to various courts, constituted a small corps of career diplomats. The chief duty of the ambassador was to speak for his king, gauge the views and policies of the court he was accredited to and to inform his own government about significant developments. He was also expected to foster a climate as favorable as possible to his nation and, in doing so, would occasionally offer gifts to state functionaries in key positions. Above all else, the resident ambassador was obliged to maintain and, if possible, expand English prestige. Consequently, an ambassador had to seriously scrutinize diplomatic rhetoric to ensure there were no damaging nuances or allusions. Ambassadors were instructed to preserve any national claims or prerogatives while concurrently limiting those of their competitors. If a court had five or six foreign representatives, competition became fierce and unyielding. With an entire nation's prestige dependent on protocol, disputes arose over procedures, titles, seating arrangements, etc. became commonplace.[68]

1.4: Thomas Roe, The 1614 Parliament, and the Political Discourse in Early Seventeenth Century England

Having served as courtier, ambassador, and tradesman (he had been part of an expedition sent to explore the Amazon river mouth in lower Guiana), Roe continued his eclectic career by turning to politics. In 1614, the political climate was significantly strained. Two parliaments (1604, 1610) had ended prematurely due to incessant quibbling over issues of prerogative and finance between the Crown and the House of Commons. Acknowledging that he needed financial assistance from Parliament to surmount the royal debt of £680,000, James decided to call another Parliament in the spring of 1614.[69] Thomas Roe secured a nomination for one of the two burgesses in the borough of Tamworth, located between Staffordshire and

67 Ibid., p. 58.

68 Ibid., pp. 63-67.

69 Thomas L. Moir, *The Addled Parliament of 1614*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958, p. 10.

Warwickshire.[70] By April 5, 1614, 472 members of both the Houses of Commons and Lords had arrived at Westminster to be sworn in by the Lord Steward, the Earl of Nottingham. Although rumors of "undertaking" (essentially fixing the nomination and election of M.P.s to support a pro-Crown caucus) were already circulating, neither James nor the House of Commons predicted this session's unequivocal failure and its later dubious title, "The Addled Parliament of 1614." This particular parliament became the forum in which "constitutional" elements directly challenged James I's absolutism, thus bringing to the forefront a critical debate on the nature of English monarchy, law, and the constitution. However, before the details of the 1614 Parliament can be discussed, we have to probe into the underlying trends of Jacobean political thought and how they affected early seventeenth century English perception of the monarchy. This section is as important as the above discussions of Roe's exposure to literary trends, court dynamics, and understandings of diplomacy. Confronted with a foreign empire state in 1615, Roe compared and evaluated the Mughals on the basis of his experiences with the Jacobean political environment.

The underpinnings of Jacobean political thought were James I's respect and admiration for the Divine Right of Kings. Discussed briefly before, this approach to kingship contended how, although kings might come to power by a variety of means (election, conquest), a monarch's authority was still derived from God alone.[71] During the 1610 Parliament, James's opening remarks were provocative, "The State of the Monarchie is the supremest thing upon earth: for Kings are not onely God's Lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himselfe they are called Gods."[72] As Christianson observes, James believed that "just as God chose to channel his grace through the church, so kings chose to exercise their power through courts of law and parliaments; like God, they could not go back on their word."[73] In matters of law, James I stated "From this imitation of God and Christ, in whose Throne wee sit, in the government of all Common-wealths, and especially Monarchies, hath bene from the beginning setled and

70 Strachan, *Sir Thoms Roe*, p. 47.

71 Sommerville, "James I and the Divine Right of Kings," p. 63.

72 McIlwain (ed.), *Political Works of James I*, p. 307.

73 Paul Christianson, "Royal and Parliamentary Voices on the Ancient Constitution, c. 1604-1621," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L.L. Peck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 77.

established. Kings are properly Judges and Judgement properly belongs to them from God: for Kings sit in the Throne of God, and thence all Judgement is derived."[74]

These declarations were not inconsistent with early seventeenth century English political thought. People agreed that the king was God's anointed, His vicar on earth, who was responsible for administering divine justice to man. Sir Henry Finch, in his *Law, or a Discourse Thereof*, describes how "the king is the head of the commonwealth, immediate under God. And therefore carrying God's stamp and mark among men, and being as one may say, a God upon a earth, as God is a king in heaven..."[75] During the 1610 Parliament, when M.P.s raised the question of whether the monarchy was answerable to common law, John Cowell replied that the king of England was "above the Law by his absolute power" and "to simply binde the prince to or by these laws were repugnant to the nature and constitution of an absolute monarchy."[76] Englishmen were probably not surprised with James's elucidation of divine right; this concept of how the king derived authority from God dates back to the Middle Ages and became a given understanding during the Tudor era. However, James I's constant need to reaffirm his infallibility in written testimonies and speeches brought the issue to the forefront. With the rise of Renaissance Humanism, many English thinkers began to entertain the idea of a king's authority being limited by English law and the constitution. As Judson remarks, "to believe in both the divine right of kingly authority and at the same time in its limited nature was perfectly natural and consistent for many excellent seventeenth century minds."[77]

A component of this debate was the relationship between royal prerogative and the rights of the English subject. It was commonly understood that the king was due his prerogatives as long as they did not interfere with the welfare of the people. Furthermore, thanks to the integration and growth of the state under the Tudors, institutions and administrative government began to entrench themselves in the political landscape. At the turn of the sixteenth century, the state, represented by

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74 Ibid., p. 85.

75 Margaret A. Judson, *The Crisis of Constitution, An Essay in Constitutional and Political Thought 1603-1645*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949, p. 17.

76 John Cowell, *The Interpreter*, Cambridge: 1607, sig. $2QR^{r}$, $3A3^{v}$.

77 Judson, *The Crisis of Constitution*, p. 20.

Parliament and the Judiciary, was intricately connected with the monarchy. Participants in the political arena, royalist or parliamentarian, accepted parliament without question and agreed, to some extent, on its role in English polity.[78] Supporters of the Crown during the Jacobean era (Bacon, Ellesmere, Wentworth), as well as proponents of parliamentary prerogative (Coke, Sandys, Phelips), agreed that parliament was an instrument by which the king and his subjects, lords and commoners, could assemble and debate relevant issues, "it was the highest council and court of the king, and also of the realm. In it the king was most absolute, and by it the subjects' rights were best maintained and strengthened."[79]

Despite these common understandings, James I's first Parliament in 1604 was fraught with difficulties. Prophetic of future sessions, crown and parliament met to satisfy their own agendas. In the case of 1604, James was keen to effect a union between Scotland and England while the House of Commons intended to take this opportunity to raise and address grievances of abuse and corruption.[80] The House of Commons called for a curbing of both the wardship and purveyance institutions. When a tenant-in-chief died and left an heir under the age of eighteen, one of the king's prerogatives allowed him to appoint a guardian. The practice of wardship was hotly contested because the Crown, hoping to relieve its financial burden, sold these profitable wardships to aspiring courtiers and nobles. The appointed guardians would ignore their wards' education and upbringing to the point that when the ward came of age, he found his "woods decayed, old houses, stock wasted, land ploughed to the bare."[81] This concern turned to outrage when it was discovered that the Master of the Court of Wards, Lord Cecil, was working in conjunction with the Lord Treasurer to raise cash for the Crown.[82] The other item on the parliamentarian agenda was purveyance. The Crown could force merchants to sell at a discount to supply the various royal households. James I's lavish spending on his three households aggravated this already resented prerogative.[83] The English

78 Ibid., p. 68.

79 Ibid., p. 69.

80 Wallace Notestein, *The House of Commons, 1604-1610*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971, p. 64.

81 Ibid., pp. 86-87.

82 Ibid., p. 88.

83 Alan G.R. Smith, "Crown, Parliament and Finance: the Great Contract of 1610," in *The English Commonwealth, 1547-1640*, ed. P. Clark, A.G.R. Smith, and N. Tyacke, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979, pp. 114-115.

people and the House of Commons considered wardship and purveyance serious grievances and wanted them attended to immediately. However, the Parliament came to a standstill when James refused any infringements on his monarchical right to practice these institutions.[84]

The 1610 Parliament was simply a continuation of the issues discussed six years earlier. However, one key difference was the debate over impositions. Impositions were additional customs, over and above tonnage and poundage, levied at the ports for the purpose of protecting native trade. This regulating power had always been regarded a right of the Crown.[85] Discontent over a decline in foreign trade and the provocative language used by the king in his revised *Book of Rates* (1608), brought the dispute to the attention of the House of Commons. James reacted harshly by sending a message through the speaker, "to command the House not to dispute of the king's power and prerogative in imposing upon merchandises exported or imported."[86] An outraged Parliament responded by stating their ancient privilege of freedom of speech was "an ancient, general, and undoubted right of Parliament" and that they were free "to debate...all matters which do properly concern the subject and his right or state."[87] In fact, John Chamberlain was so worried about the ramifications of James's strident absolutism, he wrote how the king

> made another speech to both the Houses, but so little to their satisfaction that I hear it bred generally much discomfort, to see our monarchical power and regal prerogative strained so high and made transcendent every day, that if the practice should follow the positions, we are not like to leave to our successors that freedom we received from our forefathers, nor make account of anything we have long that they list that govern.[88]

Unwittingly, James had introduced the precarious matter of the ancient constitution vis-á-vis parliament's right to debate matters of state. The king intensified the situation by chiding the House of Commons further, "you should not go to the root and dispute my prerogative and call in question that power which I have in possession, confirmed by law, derived from my progenitors and which my

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84 Notestein, *The House of Commons*, p. 95.

85 J.R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983, p. 43.

86 Ibid., p. 44.

87 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 337.

88 Notestein, *The House of Commons*, p. 325.

judges have denounced."[89] Parliament equated the taking of impositions with the taking of property and to take property violated a subject's rights and the law of the land. Sufficiently alarmed that the ancient constitution was in danger, members of parliament, many of whom were lawyers, began to research historical documents in an attempt to provide interpretations of the English constitution which avoided the derivation of authority from monarchs alone.[90] Although the House of Commons was eventually assuaged after James agreed to declare it illegal, by statute, to levy future impositions without the consent of Parliament, the 1610 Parliament represented a critical stage in constitutional thought for England. The other significance of the failed 1610 Parliament was James's growing disenchantment with the House of Commons, manifesting in a deep rooted unwillingness to summon a future session. After the 1610 session, James claimed he had suffered "more disgraces, censures and agnominies than ever Prince did endure" and that "no house save the house of Hell" could have treated him as the Commons had done.[91]

Needless to say, the chances of an auspicious beginning for the 1614 Parliament were slim. Opposition in the Parliament centered around Sir Edwin Sandys, Sir Dudley Digges, Nicholas Fuller, John Hoskyns, and Christopher Brooke, the last two being close friends of Roe's from his days at Oxford.[92] From the outset, the crux of the debate between the royalists and the parliamentarians was whether or not further bills should be introduced addressing the question of impositions. The first month was spent haggling over the order of business and which issue should be tackled first. The royalists, keen to repair James's dire financial situation, hoped to table bills of supply calling for parliamentary contributions to the crown debt.[93]

Members of parliament insisted on debating the royal prerogative to levy impositions. Pro-crown representatives, specifically Sir Henry Wotton and Sir Ralph Winwood, declared that historical precedents did not deny a hereditary king's right to impose. These speeches elicited strong reactions from the opposition, most notably Thomas Roe himself, who argued that all kings had originally received

89 Christianson, "Royal and Parliamentary Voices," p. 78.

90 Ibid., p. 95.

91 Sommerville, "James I and the Divine Right of Kings," p. 67.

92 Moir, *The Addled Parliament of 1614*, p. 59.

93 Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts*, p. 47.

their crowns by election and with the consent of their subjects.[94] Debate became more heated with Bishop Neile of Lincoln's personal attack on the House of Commons during an opening speech to the House of Lords. Greatly incensed, the Lower House insisted that King James punish the Bishop of Lincoln and moved to suspend the session until the matter was settled. A deadlock ensued until Neile made a public apology; unfortunately, by this point the House of Commons had been stirred into serious agitation.[95] A series of bitter statements were issued concerning Neile's behavior, including one from Thomas Roe; he proposed that the Commons should enter an order to disable Neile "ether to be aboute the kinge or to be a bushop or to be amonest reasonable men, but to runne awaye and bewayle his estate in the woodes amongest wilde beastes."[96] The House continued its berating of various Lords until James issued an ultimatum that either the members approve a bill of supply or parliament would be dissolved . Near hysteria resulted when John Hoskyns delivered a speech referring to the swarm of Scots around the king and how a wise prince would send the foreigners home as King Canute had done with his Danish followers some centuries earlier.[97] Sir Christopher Neville added to the frenzy by calling the court personages of James's court "spaniels to the King but wolves to the people."[98] Outraged, James closed the parliament and had Hoskyns and several others arrested and sent to the London tower.

During the 1614 Parliament, Roe was appointed to a number of committees to investigate various matters. While there are no written records of Roe's suggestions during these committee sessions, his comments and recommendations in the House suggest that he had a cautious, rational approach to the issues at hand. While certainly supportive of preserving parliamentary prerogative and the ancient constitution, Roe was also fearful of an unruly Lower House igniting the king's propensity for arbitrarily dismissing parliaments. However, his remarks against Wotton, Winwood, and Neile, in addition to his close friendships with members like Christopher Brooke and John Hoskyns, suggest that Thomas Roe was not an active proponent of absolute monarchy.

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94 Moir, *The Addled Parliament of 1614*, p. 115.

95 Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 347.

96 *Commons Debates, 1621*, Vol. VII, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971, p. 649-650.

97 Moir, *The Addled Parliament of 1614*, p. 138.

98 Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 53.

1.5: Conclusion

This chapter's objective was to contextualize Thomas Roe as a Jacobean noble, courtier, and ambassador. In doing so, some interesting characteristics surfaced. First, dramatic and literary works partially dominated early seventeenth century expression in English society. The presentation of despotic or beleaguered monarchs, surrounded by scheming court elements, in an age of lost virtue was popular entertainment and subject matter for the Jacobean courtier. Second, courtier characteristics were discussed to suggest that Jacobean court behavior relied heavily on sponsorship and favouritism. The confrontation between powerful groups of elite, extensive lobbying, and the flourishing of prominent favorites were salient features. Interestingly, this vividness is imparted to Roe's account of the Mughal court.

Trends of early seventeenth century diplomacy were introduced since they figure so predominantly in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.* Jacobean perceptions of international etiquette were highly defined; strict rules regarding protocol and reception were enforced for fear of offending a representative of a European monarch. Great receptions were accorded to ambassadors by host nations, including lodgings, stipends, gifts, and, most of all, respect. The last section on English political thought was incorporated to reinforce the changing perceptions of kingship to early seventeenth century Englishmen. The growth of state institutions, highlighted by the Parliament, ushered in innovative debates concerning the infallibility and prerogative of the Crown. This debate was intensified by James I's persistent refusal to allow the House of Commons a share in implementing and maintaining state policy.

Chapter Two:

'In Myne Owne Eies': Subjective Elements of The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe and Their Incongruency With Mughal Indian Reality

Thomas Roe's sojourn in India dated from Sept. 23, 1615 until August of 1618. Instructed to "vse all the Meanes you can to advance the Trade of the East India Company," Roe endeavored to establish a formal trade agreement between the Mughal Empire and England, vis-á-vis the E.E.I.C. (English East India Company).[1] However, unlike previous trade emissaries (Hawkins, Middleton, Best, and Downton)[2] , Roe was unique in a number of aspects. First, his designation was two-fold: English ambassador and *de facto* negotiator for the India Company. While previous Company representatives enjoyed the occasional meeting with Mughal officials, Roe was incorporated as a court fixture. When Emperor Jahângîr moved his court from Ajmer to Mandu (1617), and then on to Burhanpur (1618), as Mughal kings were known to do, Roe dutifully followed. Second, Roe indulged his literary background by providing us with a two-volume journal of his observations and perceptions of the Mughal Empire. Few travellers, before and after Roe, had the inclination or the commitment to meticulously record court compositions, current events, and ongoing trends in the Mughal political landscape. The combination of these two traits, constant access to Jahângîr's court and a resolve to present a future reference source, partially explains *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe's* authoritative position in Mughal studies.

This chapter is not a simple presentation of Roe's actions or travels in India; nor, is it a descriptive essay of the Mughal Empire from 1615 to 1618. What interests us here is how exactly Roe expressed his observations during these years. *The*

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1 *Instruccions for Sir Thomas Rowe, knight, autorised by vs vnder our Great Seale of England to repaire as our Ambassadour to the Great Magoar*, in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated In His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. W. Foster, Vol. 2, London: Hakluyt Society, 1899, p. 552.

2 William Hawkins arrived in India on Aug. 24, 1608. He was able to negotiate with the Mughals on a limited scale but left three years later. Henry Middleton's mission came in 1611 which was soon followed by Thomas Best's squadron of ships in Sept. of 1612. In 1614, Nicholas Downton arrived off the coast of Surat and engaged the Portuguese in a small naval conflict. See Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976, pp. 39-41.

Embassy, comprising roughly 600 pages, is too lengthy for a line by line analysis. However, by citing relevant quotes, we can get an overall sense of Roe's descriptive language and motifs. Presenting these quotes non-chronologically is not problematic since this discussion's stated purpose is to examine *how* an observation is expressed rather than *what* the observation is. However, realizing that a quote without context can be confusing, we have occasionally prefaced excerpts with a brief explanation. It should be noted that much of Roe's account is economic in orientation: discussions with English trade factors, negotiations with Mughal officials, and ruminations on Indian Ocean traffic. While Roe's understanding and discussion of trade practices could constitute an independent study, this thesis is evaluating the viability of *The Embassy* as a source for interpreting Mughal sociopolitical events and developments. Although the historiographical influences of Roe's journal is discussed later, it is one argument of this thesis that later historians have used European sources, specifically Roe's, to castigate Jahângîr's reign.

While working on his translation of *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, Henry Beveridge wrote an article in 1907 for the *Indian Magazine* in which he stated that Jahângîr's "account of himself also has its charm, for it reveals the real man, and so he lives for us in his Memoirs just as James VI - to whom he bears a strange and even ludicrous resemblance - lives in the 'Fortunes of Nigel' or Claudius in Suetonius and Tacitus."[3] Beveridge's close comparison of Jahângîr with his English contemporary is not surprising. While the "Whig" trend of nineteenth century scholarship depicted a slovenly and inept, yet strangely contemplative, James I, the colonial era of Mughal historiography presented his Indo-Muslim counterpart as "fond of sport, art and good living and by the lack of the finer intellectual qualities [unable] to attain the ranks of great administrators."[4] Later scholars have discreetly ignored the significance of Jahângîr's hedonist qualities, but E.B. Findly has recently revived their importance in an effort to prove "he had neither the desire nor the temperament to tinker with regional boundaries or with the machinery of

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[3] Henry Beveridge, "Preface," in *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, trans. and ed. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909, p. ix.

[4] Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig and Sir Richard Burns, *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 4, Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1937, p. 182. For another James I-Jahângîr comparison, see Stanley Lane-Poole's *Mediæval India Under Mohammedan Rule*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1906, pp. 298-99.

government."[5] and that "he was not willing to dirty his hands in the building and maintenance of a political state."[6] Views such as these are dictated by a reliance on European sources which are far from flattering in their portrayal of the Mughal empire under Jahângîr. As one of these sources, *The Embassy* augmented its description of Mughal India with interpretations and conclusions on a number of political and social features. By examining some of these commentaries and juxtaposing the issues involved with relevant contemporary Mughal sources, we can highlight the extent to which Thomas Roe's account caters to Jacobean topics and language.

2.1: 'Familiarizing' Mughal India: A Possible Method of Textual Analysis

Before the text can be analyzed, we need to address a number of questions regarding the nature of historical sources. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the definition of history assumed a distinctly scientific flavour. Termed "positivism," this trend of scholarship highlighted the polarization of fact and fiction. While history was deemed the recorded representation of factual reality, fiction was conveniently categorized as the responsibility of literature. Continuing until the early twentieth century, history came to be understood as a method of objectively understanding the past. History produced an understanding akin to that of physical sciences and mathematics. However, the relatively recent trend in historiography and philosophies of history and language, represented by Ranke, Collingwood, Levi-Strauss, Derrida, and Foucault, has seriously scrutinized this demarcation between history and literature. Intent on exploring the modes of expressing reality, philosophers have called attention to "the extent to which the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other."[7] The efforts of White and others concentrate on how these characteristics intermingled in the modern era. But what about the seventeenth century ? Can we accurately assert that historical sources shared

5 E.B. Findly, *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India*, Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1993, p. 63.

6 Ibid., p. 65.

7 Hayden White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. H. White, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 121.

positivism's insistence that literature, with its similes, metaphors, and analogies, was strictly imaginative and non-factual ? Renaissance Humanism certainly made no such distinction. Francis Bacon's "Division of History and Learning" from *De augmentis scientiarum* discusses history as the midway point between philosophy and poetry, or reason and imagination.[8] Humanists collectively studied poetry, prose, history, philosophy, rhetoric, and languages with little sense of discernment. These subjects were not categorized separately with distinct modes of expression. In Roe's case, we have an Englishman, well trained in Humanist thought, presenting a portrait of an utterly foreign cultural entity. To what extent can we trust Roe to ignore his Renaissance upbringing and report his experiences in an "objective capacity"? Theoretically, was it even possible for Roe, limited by language and experience, to present anything Mughal as "objective"? In fact, could Roe recognize, or be interested in recognizing, the distinction between "subjective" and "objective" descriptions ?

Nietzsche tells us that the real value of history lies "in inventing ingenious variations on a probably commonplace theme, in raising the popular melody to a universal symbol and showing what a world of depth, power and beauty exists in it."[9] Similarly, Collingwood postulated a "constructive imagination" whereby the historian fills any serious gaps of "what happened" with his own deductions, thus imbuing a historical period with twentieth century perception.[10] But what about the historical source itself ? Traditional historians stipulated that narrative accounts are insights into a past reality. Many students of history have looked, and continue to look, upon a narrative as a factual portrayal of "what really happened."[11] There are underlying assumptions in this approach to source studies. First, there is a supposition that historical records provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding to the researcher. That is to say, a historian can construct a presentation of a past era, reign, or society by comparing and juxtaposing various sources. However, a number of problems present themselves at this point. Are the sources being used accurate ? Are they biased ? Are they properly translated ? Most

8 D.R. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, p. 151.

9 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins, Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1957, p. 37.

10 R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946, p. 239.

11 Hayden White, "Interpretation in History," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. H. White, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 51.

important, can the historian rely on sporadic written texts for a detailed knowledge of another "reality"? The other latent assumption of the "what really happened" approach is that the author of an historical source aspires towards objectivity in his or her own account. Historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, conditioned by a prevalent sense of what is objective and what is not, have presupposed that narrators shared their belief that the "objective phenomena of observed nature are the ultimate constituents of reality."[12] Was Thomas Roe, a product of Renaissance Humanism, keen to subscribe to this objectivity while presenting his experiences in India ? To answer this question, we need to learn more about what exactly Roe destined for his journal.

William Foster, the nineteenth century editor of *The Embassy*, tells us that "besides the fair copy made for his own use, Roe had others prepared from time to time to send to England."[13] In addition to these copies, Roe also dispatched letters to James I, Thomas Carew (1595-1635), and Thomas Smythe (1558-1625); some of this correspondence is included in Foster's compilation. After his return, Roe apparently presented a copy to the East India Company as a reference source. The scope of Roe's readership widened significantly in 1622 when the geographer and editor of *Hakluytus Posthumus: or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Samuel Purchas (1575-1626), requested permission from the E.E.I.C. to use Roe's journal.[14] There are two important points worth considering here. While determining motives is next to impossible, we can, however, deduce some distinct possibilities. First, we need to remember Roe's educational background and personal relationship with the influential figures of the English literary Renaissance. His self-fashioning as poet, historian, and philosopher, suggests that Roe might have been eager to see his account widely distributed. In addition to circulating his own copies, Roe became well known thanks to Purchas' efforts. The second point, dealing with how Roe determined the subject matter of his journal, is more complicated. Anyone reading *The Embassy* will be struck by its dichotomous nature. On one hand, we have long passages describing his impressions of the king, political events, and the

12 S.K. Heninger, "Framing the Narrative," in *Perspective as a Problem in the Art, History, and Literature of Early Modern England*, ed. M. Lussier and S.K. Heninger, Lewiston: Edwin Press, 1992, p. 4.

13 William Foster, "Introduction," in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated In His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. W. Foster, Vol. I, p. lxi.

14 Ibid., p. lxii

relationships within the court. On the other hand, we find lengthy sections discussing economic affairs: shipping of English goods, collecting on negligent accounts, or fostering good relations with the silk exporters of Persia. Realizing that his benefactor, the E.E.I.C., expected a detailed account of the economic state of affairs in India yet still motivated to present a monumental reference source for historians, it seems possible that Roe wrote his journal to appease both the Company's expectations and his own personal ambition. If one examines the court minutes of the East India Company on February 27, 1622, an interesting note is found,

> ...one Purchas that wrote of the Religions of all Nacions hath now vndertaken a greate volume of all there voyages and did desire to haue a sight of some of the Companies Iournalls that might give him lighte for the settinge downe the Companies voyages into the east Indies, *wherein he desires to see but the Historicall part and will medle with nothinge elce; Particularly he desires to see Sir Thomas Roes Iournall.*(italics mine)[15]

The implications of this request are not insignificant. Purchas, generally interested in all E.E.I.C. travelling accounts, took pains to specifically cite the text he was most interested in: *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe.* Moreover, Purchas' petition comes only *four* years after Roe's return. Foster infers that Purchas copied much of Roe's correspondence from "Sir Thomas Roe's own book."[16] Purchas' access to Roe's personal copy, in addition to the geographer's formal request to examine the Company's version shortly after Roe's arrival, suggests that he discovered the "historicall" significance of this work from either Roe himself or one of his colleagues.

In a letter written to Lord Carew on January 17, 1616, Roe advises his friend, "if you be also weary of reading, I am glad. I shall desire your Lordship to let Master Hackwell reade the Iournall; for I promised him one, but I had not leasure to write it."[17] William Hackwill (1574-1655) was an "olld acquayntance" of Roe's who happened to be an historian, or antiquarian.[18] Furthermore, Roe wrote his friend, Lord Pembroke, on November 30, 1616, that he aspired to reduce his observations "into a meethood, and though this kingdome almost concerne not Europe, yet the

15 Feb. 22, 1622. Excerpt from *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company*, ed. E.B. Sainsbury, Vol. 1, London: 1907.

16 Foster, "Introduction," p. lix

17 This letter is incorporated in Vol. 1 of Roe's Journal from pages 110 to 114. This exact quote comes on page 114.

18 George Lord Carew, *Letters From George Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1617*, ed. John Maclean, London: Camden Society, 1860, p. 106.

Historye may, as well as some of those that are farther remooued by tymes past, and for subiect perhaps as woorthy."[19] The conclusion here is three-fold: a) Roe meant for his source to supersede economic significance and be valued as an historical account; b) his Humanist background motivated him to make *The Embassy* available to the public; and c) he did so by informing Purchas of its potential contribution who could then have it published and distributed.

The ramifications of this conclusion are interwoven with the hypothesis of whether or not Roe intended an "objective" or "realistic" presentation of India. Previously, it was conjectured how Renaissance thought did not rigidly delineate history and literature; this is partially illustrated by Jacobean productions of Roman tragedy and comedy as blueprints for proper government and kingship. Furthermore, English poets integrated history and poetry, "since the poetic and dramatic forms offered the writer ready-made subjects without binding him to relate the literal truth in the manner of the chronicler."[20] This use of popular myths and morals is important here. Thomas Roe was an intermediary between a strange and mysterious Mughal reality and the contemporary readership of England. This relationship between the Mughal Empire, Thomas Roe, and the Jacobean public has two critical features. First, we know that the Humanist tradition did not acknowledge a discrepancy between literary and historical styles of expression. Consequently, many of Roe's "factual representations" employ literary devices and methods of that period. Second, and more important, it is possible that Roe looked to conventional myths, plots, and paradigms to "familiarize" the Mughal Empire for seventeenth century Englishmen. In Hayden White's words "the original strangeness, mystery, or exoticism of the events is dispelled, and they take on a familiar aspect, not in their details, but in their functions as elements of a familiar kind of configuration."[21] It is the speculation here that Thomas Roe catered to "subjective" observations and depictions in a sincere attempt to "realize" an alien political and cultural entity. By endowing unfamiliar institutions and events with recognizable qualities, Roe could transcend the difficulty of transposing another

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19 Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated In His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. W. Foster, Vol. 2, p. 364.

20 Woolf, *The Idea of History*, p. 77.

21 Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. H. White, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 86.

"reality" in a written text.

This leads us to ponder the role of language in such a transmission. Predictably, Roe's narrative cannot describe Indo-Islamic characteristics with precise Mughal terminology or definitions; rather, the narrative calls to mind images in the same way a metaphor behaves in literature. Termed an "extended metaphor," the familiar image in historical narratives "does not give us either a description or an icon of the thing it represents, but tells us what images to look for in our culturally coded experience in order to determine how we should feel about the thing."[22] In Roe's case, we have a foreign observer using these "extended metaphors," or familiar cultural images, to make the Mughal experience assume some sort of sense for his future English audience. If Roe's aim was to introduce his English colleagues to the unfamiliar, he had to use figurative, rather than technical, language. Given Roe's lack of fluency in Persian and understanding of Mughal/Islamic institutions, the only available instruments were metaphorical and figurative language. Philosophers of language stress how language cannot be value free and that figurative language tends to carry cognitive baggage. These tropes, consisting of metaphors, metonumies, and synecdoches, can be imbued with cultural biases and perceptions. Consequently, Roe's use of Jacobean extended metaphors establishes an "Anglified" perception of the Mughal Empire. On this supposition, the Mughal system of kingship, government, court practices, and other salient features lose their original identity.

To illuminate the superficiality of Roe's observations, this chapter has also been designed to examine Jahângîr's empire from Mughal perspectives. To do so, Peter Hardy adroitly suggests that we need to acknowledge the danger of applying the language of western conceptual systems to those of the Mughals.[23] As a result, we will appreciate that Mughal concepts of, for example, "monarchy," "justice," "diplomacy," and "nobility" are incongruent with Western definitions. This study cannot adequately reflect the depth of Mughal organization and administration; nor can it fully analyze the multi-faceted theories of state and government. However, by selecting core interpretations of the areas Thomas Roe emphasizes, we can hopefully illustrate the originality of Indo-Islamic polity and Roe's inability to

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22 Ibid., p. 91.

23 Peter Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings in Mediaeval South Asia," in *Islam and Society in South Asia*, ed. M. Gaborieau, Paris: Éditions de L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1986, p. 39.

wholly reflect it. These theories, in turn, are substantiated by examining indigenous accounts of the period. These include histories, political treatises, manuals, advice literature, and other pertinent historical documents.

2.2: 'Affinitye With a Theater': Pre-Generic Plot Structures in Jahângîr's Court.

After a one month stay in the port of Surat, Thomas Roe set out in early November, 1615 for Ajmer to secure an audience with the emperor Jahângîr. His early travels took him throug*h many cities: Vyâra, Nâvapûr, Chopra. Roe's interest in these cities was minimal; however, he takes care to note his impressions while in Burhanpur, the royal residence of Jahângîr's second son, Parvaiz. Arriving on November 14, 1615, Roe was ushered into the prince's presence,

> Here liues Sultan Peruies, the kings seconnd sonne, houlding the State and Customes of his father...In the Inward Courte he satte, high in a Gallerie that went round, with a Cannipe over him and a Carpett before him, in great but barborous state. Comming toward him throrowgh a lane of People, an Officer came and brought me woord I must touch the ground with my head, and my hatt off...Soe I passed on, till I came to a place rayled in, Right vnder him, with an assent of 3 steepes, wher I made him reverance and he bowed his bodye; and soe went within yt, wher stood round by the side all the great men of the Towne with their handes before them like slaues. The place was Covered overhead with a Rich Cannapie, and vnderneath all Carpetts. *To discribe it rightly* it was like a great stage..."(italics mine)[24]

The analogy is somewhat obvious and reminds us of the typical Jacobean trend to implement dramatic similes and metaphors in political settings. The italicized portion is particularly intriguing. What exactly motivated Roe to preface his simile with "to discribe it rightly"? Is this a deliberate attempt to present the scene in an objective fashion ? If this is indeed a factual representation, why does he "liken" it to drama, a milieu where the dominant style of expression is fiction ?

In much the same vein as the previous discussion of "familiarizing" Mughal India, we come to the concept of "emplotment." There is little doubt that Roe, consciously or subconsciously, integrates his observations with explanations or interpretations. Consider, for example, his summation of Burhanpur, "in this towne...your swyne lye better than any man."[25] This is not a quantitative analysis,

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24 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, pp. 90-92.

25 This is found in a letter to the East India Company, Nov. 24, 1615. Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 100.

complete with statistics, observations, etc., of the Mughal socioeconomic system; rather, this statement is indicative of the qualitative tone that pervades the entire text. This tone can be construed as a byproduct of the underlying desire to "emplot" the surrounding social and political developments. White describes emplotment as "the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures."[26] Keen to "familiarize" the Mughal experience, Roe endowed his explanations with a narrative element, essentially a form of story telling. This quasi-fictional approach to presenting history was, by no means, contrary to Jacobean practice as D.R. Woolf adequately demonstrates in his *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England.* No set of events is inherently tragic, epic, or comedic with a discernible beginning, middle, and ending. Reality is transformed into these qualitative adjectives of 'tragic' or 'epic' by human perception; this is, in fact, a moralizing process of what we see or experience. Illustrations suggest that Roe, intricately versed in the subject matter and popular motifs of literature and drama, moralized or "explained" his observations to accommodate popular Jacobean *mythoi* or plot structures. As Lévi-Strauss states, "In spite of worthy and indispensable efforts to bring another moment in history alive and to possess it, a clairvoyant history should admit that it never completely escapes from the nature of myth."[27] It is possible Roe's descriptions were references to "pre-generic plot structures" that could facilitate his future English audience's understanding of Indian politics and society.

After leaving Burhanpur in late November, Roe was stricken by a debilitating fever, writing: "I was soe neare death that my owne company gaue me ouer; but God raysed me a little."[28] He arrived one month later, on December 23, at the city of Ajmer where the king's court was temporarily established. However, it was another eighteen days before Roe recuperated and was able to present himself to the Mughal emperor.[29] On January 10, 1616, Roe was first introduced to the court of Jahângîr, "The World-Grasper,"

> At the *Dunbar* I was led right before him, at the enterance of an outward rayle, where mett

26 White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," p. 83.

27 From Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1966, p. 187.

28 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 100.

29 Roe's early travels, essentially a series of distances and cartographic references, are recounted from page 100 to 104 of Vol. 1.

> mee two Principall Noble slaues to conduct mee nearer. I had required before my going leaue to vse the Customs of my Country, which was freely granted, soe that I would performe them Punctually. When I enterd within the first rayle I made a reuerance; entering in the inward rayle a Nother; and when I came vnder the king a theird. The place is a great Court, whither resort all sorts of people. The king sitts in a little Gallery ouer head; Ambassidors, the great men and strangers of qualety within the inmost rayle vnder him, raysed from the ground, Couered with Canopyes of veluet and silke, vnder foote layd with good Carpetts; the Meaner men representing gentry within the first rayle, the people without in a base Court, but soe that all may see the king. This sitting out hath soe much affinitye with a Theatre - the manner of the king in his gallery; The great men lifted on a stage as actors; the vulgar below gazing on - that an easy description will informe of the place and fashion.[30]

Here a direct analogy is presented between the court and theatre, with the ruling elite surrounding Jahângîr portrayed as actors and the remainder of the courtiers depicted as audience members. We have already discussed the Elizabethan and Jacobean concepts of the "player-king" in popular and political literature. Furthermore, this particular trait was a component of a larger argument suggesting that the Jacobean literate populace catered to dramatic metaphors and similes in their perceptions of the English monarchy. Consequently, Roe's presentation of the Mughal court displaying "so much affinitye with a Theatre" is not surprising. Roe's insistence that this analogy is appropriate ("an easy description will informe of the place and fashion") does not necessarily dictate the presence of dramatic elements in the Mughal court. Yet, Thomas Roe's implementing of seventeenth century English figurative language, in this case the analogy of the "player-king," was critical in furnishing a sense of meaning for his Jacobean compatriots.

In the fall of 1616, Jahângîr ordered his son, Prince Khurram, to invade the Deccan (comprising the kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda) to quell a series of recent revolts.[31] "It was reported [Khurram] had desired the king to lett [Roe] accompany him in the warrs" and the ambassador was instructed to leave Ajmer and ride to the Mughal army's camp.[32] Because Prince Khurram was the provincial governor of Gujarat, with Surat as its principal port, Roe saw the royal order as an opportunity to rectify dwindling negotiations for English trade privileges. After meeting the Prince in his royal tent,

> By and by came out a Cloth of gould Cloake of his owne, once or twice worne, which hee

30 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 108.

31 Beni Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, Allahabad: The Indian Press Ltd., 1940, p. 230.

32 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, pp. 332.

> Caused to bee putt on my back, and I made reuerence, very vnwillingly. When his Ancester Tamerlane was represented at the Theatre the Garment would well haue become the Actor; but it is here reputed the highest of fauour to giue a garment worne by the Prince, or, beeing New, once layd on his shoulder.[33]

This is a deliberate reference to the Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587), a play circulating London during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. This is the only acknowledgment of an actual Jacobean theatrical production in *The Embassy*. However, it does represent an excellent example of Roe visualizing his perception of Prince Khurram by citing a popular piece of theater. Roe's observation, "the Garment would well haue become the Actor," compares an aspect of Mughal reality, in this case the prestige of the royal robe, to its counterpart on the London stage. In general, this reference to Tamerlane is indicative of Roe's use of popular imagery to "generate *rapprochement*." Furthermore, this imaging "is the concrete milieu in which and through which we see similarities."[34] The Jacobean reader would have been reminded of Marlowe's Prologue,

> From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
> View but his picture in this tragic glass,
> And then applaud his fortunes as you please[35]

Roe's comparison of Khurram to the Scythian conqueror becomes further significant if we recall one of Tamburlaine's monologues,

> The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
> That cause the eldest son of heavenly Ops,
> To thrust his doting father from his chair,
> And place himself in the empyreal heaven,
> Moved me to manage arms against thy state.[36]

By this point in the journal, Roe was convinced that Khurram, in league with

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33 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 334.

34 Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. H. Adams and L. Searle, Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1986, p. 428.

35 Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, ed. J.W. Harper, London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1971, p. 7

36 Ibid., Act II: Scene vii, lines 12-16

other members of the royal family, was usurping his father in a bid to control the empire.[37]

Subtler descriptions and observations, catering to generic plot structures and *mythoi*, are found throughout the text. First, the "disguised Duke" motif, whereby a character *in cognito* revealed latent political corruption and avarice, appears in *The Embassy*. In a letter written on Oct. 30, 1616 from Ajmer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, Thomas Roe reveals some deep-rooted and unsavoury characteristics,

> ...to show...what friendships it hath needes and affected; the ambitions and diuisions in the Present state, that like impostumes lye now hidd, but threaten to breake out into the rending and ruine of the whole by bloody war; the Practices, subtiltyes, and carriages of factions and Court-secretts, falysly called wisdom, wherein I assume your Grace they are pregnant, and excell in all that art which the diuell can teach them...[38]

With the verb "to show," Roe enacts himself as the investigator who brings to light the "impostumes," "practices," and "subtiltyes" which "lye hidd" and "pregnant" underneath the facade of the Mughal political structure. The role of self-fashioned detective continues in another discussion of the Mughal climate,

> ...these later troubles were not vnwoorthy Committing to writing; but because they are of so remote Partes many will despise them [and?] because the People are esteemed barberouse few will beleue them; therfore I content my selfe with the Contemplation, but I could deliuer as many rare and Cunning Passadges of State, subtile euasions, Policiyes, answers, and adages, As I beleeue for one age would not bee easely equald.[39]

This literary style is reminiscent of Jonson's Tacitean *Sejanus* (1603) and its main character, Macro, winding his way through the decaying infrastructure of Augustus' Roman empire. Roe's rendition of the competitive political climate, facilitated by a direct reference to the historian Tacitus, reflects the Jacobean appeal of citing the lessons of Roman history,

> So that I may say of this tyme and the constitution of this state as Tacitus did of the Empire of Roome when it was contended for by Otho and Vitellius: *Prope euersum orbem etiam cum de principatu inter bonos certaretur: vtrasque impias preces, vtraque detestanda vota*

37 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, pp. 163-164.

38 Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 308-309.

39 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 281.

inter duos quorum bello solum id scrircs deteriorem fore qui vicissitt.[40]

In addition to the "disguised Duke" theme, there are passages applying other elements of pre-generic plot structures. Specifically, these excerpts ring of the Senecan tragedy motif discussed earlier. By October of 1616, Roe was in a position to build and record his own conclusions of the Mughal court. One of the key developments of this period of Jahângîr's reign, according to scholars like B. Prasad and E.B. Findly, is the evolution of a faction, or "junta," consisting of Nûrjahân (the emperor's wife), Âṣaf Khân (Nûrjahân's brother), I`timâd al-daula (their father), and Prince Khurram.[41] While the validity of this "junta" argument has come under some debate, there is little doubt that Roe believed the circulating court rumors.[42] Several passages address this factional in-fighting and the "junta's" schemes to rid itself of the danger posed by Jahângîr's oldest son, Khusrau. While the emperor is described as kind and tender hearted, yet easily manipulated, Khurram and Nûrjahân are painted as the malevolent court elements. Khusrau, endowed with benign and heroic qualities, is presented as the leader of the opposition party.[43] However, he was imprisoned in 1607 after allegedly attempting to assassinate his father. The following excerpts are Roe's interpretations of the "junta" and their unscrupulous dealings,

> The ambitions of this young Prince [Khurram] are open, the Common talke of the People; yet his father suffers all, but entends him not the kingdome; for Sultan Corsoronne, the Eldest brother, is both extreamly beloued and honored of all men, almost adored, and very Iustly, for his most Noble Partes; and this king knowed and loues, but thinckes his [Khusrau] liberty would diminish his owne glory, and sees not that his sly youth [Khurram] doth more darken him by ambitious Practices then the other [Khusrau] could by

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40 This has been translated as,

> The world...was well-nigh turned upside down when the struggle for empire was between worthy competitors, yet the Empire continued to exist after the victories of Caius Julius and Caesar Augustus; the republic would have continued to exist under Pompey and Brutus. And is it for Otho and for Vitellius that we are now to repair to the temples ? Prayers for either would be impious, vows for either a blasphemy, when from their conflict you can only learn that the conqueror must be the worse of the two."

Part of this passage was omitted by Roe, hence obscuring the sense of the entire quote. Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals and the Histories*, Vol. 1, Trans. A. J. Church and W.J. Brodribb, Chicago: Encylopedia Britannica, 1952, p. 50.

41 For more information on this "junta," see Beni Prasad's *The History of Jahangir*, pp. 153-175.

42 This theory is primarily challenged in Nurul Hasan's article, "The Theory of the Nur Jahan Junta - An Examination," in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Trivandrum Session*, Vol. 21 (1958), pp. 324-335.

43 Members of the opposition apparently included Mahabât Khân (provincial governor of Kabul, 1617-1623], Khân `Âlam [leading noble and ambassador to Persia, 1611-1619], and Khân Jahân Lodî [provincial governor of Multan, 1620-1626].

vertuous actions. Thus hee [Jahângîr] Nourisheth diuision and emulation betweene the brethren and Putteth such Power in the hand of the younger [Khurram], supposing he can vndoe yt at his Pleasure...

...I cannot omitt, to show wisdome and Patience in a father, fayth in a seruant, falshood in a brother, impudent bouldnes in a faction that dare attempt anything, when the highest Maiestie giues them liberty beyond eyther the law of their owne Condition or the limitts of Policye and reason. The Prince Sultan Coronne [Khurram], Normahall [Nûrjahân] the deare queene, Aunt to his wife, Asaph chan [Âsaf Khân] his father-in-law, brother to the Queene, and Etiman Dowlett [I'timâd al-daula], father to them both, being they that now gouerne all and dare attempt anything, resolued it was possible for them to stand if the Prince Sultan Corsoronne liued, whom the nobilitye loued, and whose deliuery or life would Punish their ambitions in tyme; therfore Practised how to bring him into their Power, that poyson might end him. Normahall attemptes the king with the false teares of womans bewitching flattery: that Sultan Corcoronne was not safe, nor his aspiring thoughtes deposed.[44]

The whole Court is in a whisper; the Nobility sadd; the Multitude, like it selfe, full of tumor and Noyce, without head or foote; only it rages but bendes it selfe vpon doe direct end. The issue is very dangerous; Principally for vs, for among them it matters not who wynns. Though one [Khusrau] haue right and much more honor, yet hee is still a moore [Muslim], and cannot bee a better Prince then his father, who is soe good of disposition that he suffers ill men to gouerne, which is woorse then to be ill; for wee were better beare Iniuryes of Princes then of their ministers.[45]

...Normahall fullfill[s] the obseruation that in all actions of Consequence in a Court, especially in faction, a woman is not only alwayes an ingredient, but commonly a Principall drugg and of most vertue; and shee showes that they are not incapable of Conducting busines, nor herselfe voyd of witt and subtiltye. It (this discourse) will discouer a noble Prince, an excellent wife, a faythfull Counceller, a Crafty stepmother, an ambitious sonne, a Cunning fauorite: all reconciled by a Patient king, whose hart was not vnderstood by any of all these.[46]

There is little evidence to suggest that Roe was in a position to witness these developments firsthand. Three of the key sources of this period, *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, *Iqbâl Nâmâh-i Jahângîrî*, and *Mâ' aṣir-i Jahângîrî*, do not discuss an English embassy being in India; nor, is any mention made of a European living in the court between 1615 and 1618. He occasionally met with the emperor and other members of the court; these meetings, congenial and relaxed affairs, would not have been serious political strategy sessions. Furthermore, as far as *The Embassy* indicates, Roe only

44 Oct. 10, 1616. Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 281

45 Oct. 17, 1616. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 294.

46 Dec. 9, 1616. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 364.

saw Nûrjahân briefly on two occasions.[47] References such as the "Common talke of the people" and "the whole Court is in a whisper," suggest that Roe had limited access to the Mughal political landscape. Nonetheless, these perceptions are transformed into the familiar Jacobean plot structure of tragedy plays. Jahângîr becomes a wise and "Patient king," whose "hart was not vnderstood" yet still "suffers ill men to gouerne." Senecan qualities such as these better describe the Mughal emperor's situation as he struggles to maintain an era of just kingship in a milieu of machinations and violent competition,

> Breefly, I stand on very fickle termes, though in extraordinarie Grace with the King, who is gentle, soft, and good disposition; yet on Poyntes and disputes with an insolent and Proud sonne of his, into whose handes he hath remitted all Power, which hee is neyther woorthy not able to manage.[48]

Nûrjahân is depicted as the "Crafty" step-mother using "witt and subtiltye" to manipulate the strings of power while shielding herself behind her husband's royal prerogative. The Jacobean readership would recollect Shakespearean tragedies, such as *Hamlet, Macbeth,* and *King Lear,* whose leading female characters entice their husbands and sons into acts of political sedition. Khurram, the "sly youth," is slotted as the principal antagonist in this dramatic presentation; his "cunning" subterfuge against his brother establishes the tragic element. Lastly, Khusrau, "beloued and honored of all men...very Iustly," is transformed into the protagonist. His "vertuous actions" would guarantee the restoration of the Mughal empire; and, if freed, he "would Punish their [the faction's] ambitions in tyme." Roe's juxtaposition of the two brothers, with Khusrau representing good and Khurram symbolizing evil, is almost blatant,

> ...wherin if Sultan Corsoronne preuayle in his right, this kingdome wilbe a sanctuary for Christians, whome he loues and honors, fauouring learning, valour, the discipline of warr, and abhorring all couetousnes and discerning the basse Customes of taking vsed by his ancestors and the Nobilitye: Yf the other (Khurram) Wynne wee shalbe the loosers, for he is most earnes in his superstition, a hater of all Christians, Proud, Subtill, false, and barberously Tyranous.[49]

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47 "At one syde in a wyndow were his two Principall wifes, whose Curiositye made them breake litle holes in a grate of reede that hung before yt to gaze on mee. " Nov. 2, 1616, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 321 and "Suddenly newes came to put out all lights, the King was come; who entred on an open Waggon, with his Normahall, drawne by Bullocks, himselfe Carter, and no man neare." Jan. 8, 1618, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 458.

48 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 310.

49 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 283.

Two items should be noted here regarding Khusrau's supposed patronage of Christians. First, his imprisonment in 1607 hardly placed him in a position to negotiate with a foreign minority. Second, Roe never actually met Khusrau and, once again, we can sense Roe relying on gossip and rumours. As chapter one suggested, Thomas Roe's Humanist education, in addition to his *literatteur* companions, introduced him to such plot structures and popular myths. Here, we can see a reappearance of certain Jacobean modes of dramatic styles and motifs in *The Embassy* : actor-king analogies, "the disguised-Duke" structure, as well as the popular Senecan tragedy.

2.2.1: A Mughal Perspective of the "Junta" Argument

There is little doubt that members of the supposed "junta" enjoyed high *mansabs* and prestigious official appointments. Âṣaf Khân acted as *wakîl* from 1621 to 1627 while I'timâd al-daula served as *wakîl* from 1612 to 1621 (the emperor's principal advisor) and *dîwân-i kul* (financial coordinator) from 1611 until 1621.[50] Neither is Khurram's extraordinary rise in *mansabs* a matter of debate.[51] However, the contention that these individuals operated in a coordinated fashion as the *exclusive* recipients of Jahângîr's largess is problematic. As Nurul Hasan has admirably argued, there is no evidence to suggest that Nûrjahân, Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I'timâd al-daula worked conjunctively to supersede the policies of the emperor.[52] Nûrjahân's power and prestige, minimally referred to in Jahângîr's memoirs, is mainly established through *Iqbâl' Nâmâh-i Jahângîrî* and *Mâ' aṣir-i*

50 Irfan Habib, "The Family of Nur Jahan During Jahangir's Reign: A Political Study," in *Mediaeval India - A Miscellany*, Vol. 1 (1969), p. 90.

51 Khurram was promoted from 8000/5000 in 1607 to 30,000/20,000 in 1617. Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, p. 165.

52 Hasan, "The Theory of the Nur Jahan 'Junta'," pp. 324-335.

Jahângîrî.[53] Yet, these sources were written under the later patronage of Shâhjahân (r. 1628-1658). Allowing that Shâhjahân was keen to rationalize his rebellion in 1622, it is of little surprise to find Nûrjahân's depiction to be a power-hungry threat to Mughal sovereignty.[54] Moreover, scholars have concentrated on the "junta's" rise in *manṣabs* while curiously rejecting the significance of the numerous and substantial appointments for Mahâbat Khân, Khân A`zam, Khwâja Jahân, Khwâja Abu'l Hasan, and others.[55] Given that a) no indigenous sources mention any "faction"; b) later Mughal historians (Mu`tamad Khân, Khwâja Kâmgâr Husainî) were, if not mainly, partially responsible for projecting Nûrjahân's excessive influence; and c) other prominent nobles received significant displays of patronage, it seems probable that twentieth century historians have used *The Embassy* as a convenient means of transforming the relative power of Nûrjahân, Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I`timâd al-daula into a coordinated quartet of domination.

Evidence from *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, although "penned" by the emperor, indicates that he was strenuously involved with the administration of his empire; moreover, the personages of the "junta" did not conduct themselves as one might suspect given their degree of power. Throughout the text, we find innumerable instances of the emperor bestowing appointments, invigilating cases, and attending to the routine details of maintaining a state; as he states, "it is a long business."[56] He was so convinced of his importance to jurisprudence that, despite being feverish and weak, he went "every day, according to my rule to the public *Dîwân-khâna* (hall

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53 The principle quote from Jahângîr's memoirs comes in 1621: "I gave the establishment and everything belonging to the government and Amirship of I`timâdu-daula to Nûrjahân Begam, and ordered that her drums and orchestra should be sounded after those of the king." Vol. 2, p. 228. *Iqbâl' Nâmâh-i Jahângîrî* places Nûrjahân's rise to power much earlier in 1616: "All her relations and connexions were raised to honour and wealth. No grant of lands was conferred upon any woman except under her seal. In addition to giving her the titles that other kings bestow, the Emperor granted Nur Jahan the rights of sovereignty and government... Coin was struck in her name, with this superstition: 'By order of the King Jahangir, gold has a hundred splendours added to it by receiving the impression of the Name of Nur Jahan, the Queen Begam.' On all firmans also receiving the Imperial signature, the name of 'Nur Jahan, the Queen Begam,' was jointly attached. At last her authority reached such a pass that the King was such only in name." Mu`tamad Khân, *Iqbâl Nâmâh-i Jahângîrî*, in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, ed. H.M. Eliot and J. Dowson, Vol. 6, London: Trübner and Co., 1875, p. 405.

54 Hasan, "The Theory of the Nur Jahan 'Junta'," p. 326.

55 Ibid., p. 330.

56 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk Jahângîrî*, trans. and ed. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909, Vol. 1, p. 23.

of audience) and entered the Jharoakah and *ghusal-khâna* (parlor)[57] in my usual manner, until signs of weakness showed themselves in my skin."[58] Regarding his relationship with the leading elite, there are only descriptions of their loyalty and subservience which manifested itself in flowery praise and gifts. In 1615, the year the "junta" was supposedly enjoying its zenith, Jahângîr describes one of Khurram's many expressions of loyalty,

> At the end of the day of Thursday, I went to the house of Bâbâ Khurram and remained there till a watch of the night had passed. His second offering was laid before me on that day. On the first day he paid his respects he laid before me a celebrated ruby of the Rânâ...which the jewellers valued at 60,000 rupees...On that day certain other things from among the offerings of Bâbâ Khurram were accepted. Among them was a little crystal box of Frank work, made with great taste, with some emeralds, three rings, four Iraqi horses, and various other things, the value of which was 80,000 rupees.[59]

With respect to I'timâd al-daula's alleged rise in power through favouritism and duplicity, Jahângîr states that he was appointed as *wakîl* because of his "previous service and great sincerity and ability."[60] In fact, when one noble, Ṣâbit Khân, took to "unbecoming speeches" about I'timâd al-daula and Âṣaf Khân, he was severely reprimanded and later punished by Jahângîr for failing to comply.[61] Âṣaf Khân's loyalty is alluded to during his grandiose reception of Jahângîr in 1616,

> I went to the house of Âsaf Khân, and his offering was presented to me there. From the palace to his house was a distance of about a kos. For half the distance he had laid down under foot velvet woven with gold brocade and plain velvet, such that its value was represented to me as 10,000 rupees.[62]

Descriptions such as these, specifically ones citing the gift processions of powerful nobles, hardly allude to a weak and easily-manipulated king. Jahângîr's own memoirs, bolstered by other document studies, point towards an active, if not lively, ruler who closely adhered to the administrative policies established by his father, Akbar. Perhaps the problem lies with Akbar's legacy as a great empire builder

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57 Originally the *ghusal khâna* was the bath chamber attached to the emperor's quarters. However, as time went on it became used for meetings with high-ranking nobility. Jagadish N. Sarkar, *Mughal Polity*, Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1984, p. 90.

58 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 266.

59 Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 285-86.

60 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 199.

61 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 278.

62 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 320.

and ardent campaigner; modern historians have compared their respective accomplishments and interpreted Jahângîr's reign as a period of relative stagnation. Notwithstanding, the interpretation of an opposing faction, largely founded on Roe's text, has contributed to these historiographical trends.

2.3: Factions and Favourites: Roe's Depiction of the Mughal Court and Indo-Islamic Administration.

Roe sees the nobility as self-seeking, opportunistic, and avaricious. Notable examples includes Khurram, Âṣaf Khan, and I'timâd al-daula; while these individuals were apparently frustrating his trade ambitions, others (Ẓû'l Faqâr Khân, 'Arab Khân) persistently ignored their debts to the E.E.I.C.[63] Moreover, Roe interprets the nobility contingent as a collection of favorites who advanced their status through bribery and gift-giving. Roe also believes the relationships of the court to be a series of power struggles between dominating circles of elite; Roe "places" the well-intentioned, yet insufferably naive, emperor at the core of this dynamism. Moreover, Jahângîr's propensity for "toys" and "lavish gifts" contributed to the recent assertion that "what most satisfied Jahangir was what gave him pleasure, and what gave him most pleasure were things he could see."[64] However, interpreting the emperor's appreciation for material items as simple aesthetics does not justify Jahângîr's status as a connaisseur and *afficianado*. While certainly passionate for miniature painting, literature, and hunting, he also supplemented his hobbies with a detailed knowledge and acumen.[65]

Roe's tenure as esquire to Elizabeth I (1601-03), gentleman-in-waiting for Princess Elizabeth (1603, 1612-14), and Gentleman of the Privy Chamber under James I (1612-14), introduced him to a number of Jacobean court mechanisms. Key features included a symbiotic system of patronage between the monarchy and its subjects, a network whereby an aspiring courtier curried favor through bribes and gift-giving, and, lastly, a number of interest groups who contended for James I's countenance. Further to the premise of Roe "familiarizing" the Mughal experience, we detect a

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63 One of Roe's duties as the head E.E.I.C. official was to track down and settle outstanding debts with various Mughal nobles. Much of Roe's journal discusses his frustration in dealing with Ẓû'l Faqâr Khân's evasiveness.

64 Findly, *Nur Jahan*, p. 65.

65 For a good insight into these features of Jahângîr's lifestyle see M.A. Alvi, *Jahangir - The Naturalist*, New Delhi: The National Institute of Sciences of India, 1968.

recurrence of these three traits when examining Roe's remarks on the Mughal court.

Many historians have succeeded in illustrating the intricacy and individuality of the Mughal administration and its incorporation of the nobility.[66] However, other scholars have reduced Jahângîr's reign to the upper echelons of the court. More succinctly expressed, scholars relying on European accounts, specifically *The Embassy*, have failed to appreciate the underlying sophistication of the Mughal empire's structure and, possibly motivated by a sense of drama and intrigue, have focused on the proceedings of a few well-placed court personalities.[67] Consequently, the complementing objective of this section is to explore the elements of the central administration, including the *mansabdârî* system, and its relationship with Emperor Jahângîr. However, undertaking such a discussion is next to impossible without understanding the role of the emperor in the Mughal context. In doing so, we can begin to appreciate the status and obligations of the Mughal courtier and why Roe's presentation is misrepresentative. Lastly, the phenomena of gift-giving, which Roe vehemently equates as "daylye bribing," will be explained as part of the Indo-Muslim practice of *nazr*.

In the same letter to Lord Carew where Roe makes his allusions to the "player-king" Jahângîr, we find our author explaining the Mughal system of patronage and appointment,

> Once a week he sitteth in iudgement patiently, and giueth sentence for crimes Capitall and Ciuill. He is euery mans heire when he dyeth, which maketh his rich, and the Countrey so euill builded. The great men about him are not borne Noble, but Fauorities raised; to whom hee giueth wonderfull meanes. They are reckoned by Horses; that is to say; Coronels of twelue thousand Horses, which is the greates (whereof are foure, besides his sonnes and wife): so descending to twentie Horses. Not that any of these are bound to keepe or raise any at all; but the King assigneth them so much land as is bound to maintaine so many Horses as a rent, each horse at fiue and twentie pounds sterling by the yeere, which is an incredible Revenue giuen away, so many (that is, almost all but the Ploughmen, Artificers, and the Tradesmen in Townes) liuing vpon it. But as they dies, and must needs gather, so it returneth to the King like Riuers to the sea, both of those he gave to, and of those that haue gained by their owne industry...They [nobles] all rise by presenting him, which they striue to doe both richly and rarely, some giuing a hundred thousand pounds in iewels at a

66 While many works exist on this subject, noteworthy texts include M. Athar Ali,*The Mughal Nobility Under Aurengzeb*,Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965, and I.H. Qureshi, *Administration of the Mughal Empire*, Karachi: University of Karachi Press, 1966.

67 Probably the most absurd example of this brand of scholarship is Waldemar Hansen's *The Peacock Throne* , New York: Holt Rinhart and Winston, 1972; however, Findly's 1993 work on Nûrjahân perpetuates this trend on a subdued scale.

time.[68]

In fact, this statement is somewhat accurate. *Manṣabdârs*, "holders of rank," were expected to equip a requisite number of armed cavalrymen (*sawâr*) and had a personal numerical rank (*zât*).[69] These holdings were not hereditary; after the *mansabdâr* died, his sons were allowed to retain the *mansabs* if the emperor considered them capable. This system was an intricately constructed method by which the king could ensure the continued ability and loyalty of his nobility. However, Roe's presentation does not wholly reflect the complexity of this institution. He asserts that the *mansabdârs* are not nobleborns but are "Fauorites raised," a description reminiscent of the English court where favourites, like Robert Carr and George Villiers, prospered as a result of their personal relationship with James I. Moreover, Roe's understanding of *zât* and *sawâr* as gifts, or "wonderfull meanes," which the nobility are not "bound to keepe or raise at all" is a parallel interpretation of James I's patronage policies. Roe's comment of how the nobles "all rise by presenting him, which they striue to doe both richly and rarely" implies an exchanging of titles and ranks for gifts, a well-documented characteristic of the financially strapped Jacobean monarchy. (For further discussion on Mughal nobility vis-á-vis the emperor, see section 2.3.2, pp. 68-71)

Predictably, court dynamics, specifically the means of self-advancement, are a popular topic for Roe. By October of 1616, the English ambassador realized that the Mughals were hesitant to shrug off the economic influences of the Portuguese *Estado da India*. Believing that their continued presence would only impede the success of the E.E.I.C., Roe strove to convince the Gujarat governor, Khurram, to trade exclusively with the English,

> I went to the Prince...because I had found his disposition was to draw my dependance on him, and that hee was ambitious of respect, I was indulgent toward him, and, hoping to take him in his owne Nettes, I propounded to him certayne offers which I pretended to receiue in Command from the King my Master to deliuer to his father, but for respect for his Highnes I addressd my selfe to him, both to acquaynt him with the Propositions, to desier his fauour, and to obteyne his Mediation to present mee to the King at Night.[70]

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68 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, pp. 110-111.

69 For a good indication of Mughal bureaucratic sophistication see John F. Richards, *Document Forms for Official Orders of Appointment in the Mughal Empire*, Cambridge: Burlington Press, 1986.

70 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 286

Roe's hope of using Khurram as a means of breaching the Mughal king's inaccessibility is interesting. While this verbal exchange probably took place, one should be careful in assuming that Roe actually stated his goals to Khurram in terms of desiring "fauour" and obtaining "Mediation." The passage represents *Roe's* reflections and presumptions on the best way to gain favor in the court. Whether or not this was considered a viable approach by the Mughals remains unstated in the text.

In one of his many letters to the E.E.I.C., Roe instructs his sponsors on their future policies in the Indian subcontinent. Much of the letter discusses the holistic trade practices in the Indian Ocean; however, in a postscript, Roe suggests,

> The best way to doe your busines in this Court is to find some Mogol that you may enterteyne for 1000 *rupees* by the yeare as your solicitor at Court. Hee must bee authorised by the King, and then hee will better serue you then ten Ambassadors. Vnder him you must allowe 500 *rupees* for another at your Port to follow the Gouernor and Customers and to aduertise his Cheefe at Court. These two will effect all....[71]

This observation is reminiscent of Linda Levy's discussion on Jacobean court patronage, "access to resources at the Early Stuart court was controlled by major patrons."[72] His advice to procure a "Mogol solicitor" suggests there were a number of hirable court agents who would lobby on the behalf of any wealthy interest group. This device of using English terminology for court systems and developments continues in a reported discussion between Âṣaf Khân (Nûrjahân's brother and high-ranking noble) and Roe in Mandu on November 6, 1617,

> I went to Asaph Chans, hauing receiued his Passe; vnto whom I shewed the Pearle according to promise. Though the sorts fit not the Countrey (iust as I was informed hereafter), yet their performance with him gaue him such content that I was confident I may vse the Pharoahs words: The Land is before you, dwell where you will, you and you Seruants. For the price wee talked not, but he vowed such [much ?] secrecie; and for my sake, who haue shewed this confidence in him, hee will giue more than they are worth, and not returne one, and pay readie mony, of which hee professeth not to want, and to lend mee what I want...Finishing these complements with him in his Bed-chamber, he rose to Dinner, hauing invited me and my people.[73]

This conversation took place in "his Bed-chamber," a designation connoting the well-known Jacobean institution where James I and his advisors withdrew to

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71 This letter was written on November 24, 1616, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 351.

72 Linda Levy, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990, p. 40

73 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 444.

ruminate on state matters. Roe's use of "bed-chamber," combined with Âṣaf Khân's avowed "secrecie," could be construed as an allusion to Jacobean court procedure. This trend continues in a letter written to the E.E.I.C. on Nov. 24, 1616,

> At my deliuerie of the first (set of presents) sent by mee Contentment outwardly appeared, but I will acquaynt you with the Cabinettes opinion, by which you may Judg. Three exceptions were taken by the King and his *Priuadoes*. 74

Here, the Mughal administration is styled as a "cabinette," an obvious application of English governmental nomenclature. Moreover, this term is reinforced by Jahângîr's counsel being depicted as *privadoes*. A Spanish term, *privadoe* ("an intimate friend") was used by Jacobean contemporaries to designate a trusted companion of James I.

The portrayal of competing Mughal factions, essentially Khusrau and his supporters versus Khurram, Nûrjahân, Âṣaf Khân, and I'timâd al-daula, has already been analysed for its affiliation with the common Jacobean plot structure of tragedy. However, another aspect is worth calling attention to. In the first chapter, we touched upon the machinations between the Spanish and French factions of James I's court; this "faction" motif surfaces repeatedly in *The Embassy*. After a year of fruitless negotiation with Khurram and Âṣaf Khân, Roe became convinced that he was facing a hostile network. He had hoped to secure a *farman*, a royal seal of approval for heightened English commerce in Mughal coastal areas. However, neither Roe nor the Mughal authorities could agree upon on the points making up the proposed *farman*. Roe began to see "the faction" as decidedly pro-Portuguese and logically concluded they were also firmly opposed to an English presence,

> I saw now the faction, but was irresolute what to doe. Asaph Chan was a broken reede; the Prince gouerned by him; the King was my only refuge, from whom I was sure of Iustice if I Complaynd, but I feard I should drawe vpon me the hate of Normall the beloued queene, Ante to Sultan corrons [Khurram] wife, sister of Asaph Chan, whose daughter the Prince married, and all that Powerfull faction, against whom, though I might once preuayle, yet the aduantage of tyme, language, and oportunitye, the Power of a wife, a sonne, and a fauorite, would produce reuenge. soe that I resoued to temporize, and to see if I could remoue Asaph Chan from his opinion, and then all would follow; if not, to take a desperate remedy, when I saw all other ways were desperat.75

> Hee [Khurram] answered with scorne that his father nor hee needed not our assistance; he ment not warr with the the Portugall for our sakes, neyther would euer deliuer any fort to

74 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 346.

75 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 118.

vs to receiue his owne at our Curtesye.[76]

It is possible to believe that the situation was not nearly as polarized as Roe's depiction. These, and other interpretations, imply that the Mughals were keenly observing European activities and strategically playing them off one another. Roe rationalizes his inability to arrange a *farman* by forming and accentuating an organized opposition - a well-entrenched, powerful faction. By depicting this "faction" as favoring his arch-rivals, the Portuguese, Roe was then able to explain his lack of success. The "junta's" pro-Portuguese mandate is further bolstered here,

> ...how the Portugalls haue Crept into this Kingdome, and by what Corners they gott in; the enterance of the Jesuits, their entertaynment, Priuiledges, Practises, endes, and the growth of their Church, wherof they sing In Europe so loud Prayses and glorious successes.[77]

This dominating "factional" element of the Mughal court can be clarified by three factors: a) Roe's wish to make court activities familiar by implementing the recognizable metaphor of "faction"; b) increasing this familiarity by making the Portuguese-English competition analogous to the Spanish-French rivalry currently dominating the Jacobean court; and c) extrapolating this rivalry to various nobles of the Mughal court so as to justify his lack of success. Mughal accounts are silent regarding this court intrigue between nationally-aligned factions. References to the Portuguese and English can be found in documents contemporary to Roe[78]; however, these are few and far between and can hardly substantiate the portrayal of a European-dominated Mughal court. Furthermore, contrary to Roe's observations, Mughal-Portuguese relations were not amicable in the second decade of the seventeenth century. The *Estado da India's* policies were hardly adaptive to the pre-existing trends of peaceful commerce in the Indian ocean. With the ultimate goal of controlling all naval trade and disallowing any peaceful competition, the Portuguese had instituted the *cartaze* system. All Indian ships were expected to purchase and carry a pass (*cartaze*) which listed the eligible ports of trade and types of

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76 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 279.

77 This description appears in a letter written to the Lord Bishop of Canterbury on Oct. 30, 1616, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 309.

78 The sole reference from *Tûzuk* comes in January of 1615, "In the roadstead of the port of Surat a fight took place between the English, who had taken shelter there, and the Viceroy [leading Portuguese official of Goa]. Most of his ships were burnt by the English fire. Being helpless he had not the power to fight any more, and took to flight." Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, pp. 274-275.

cargo to be carried; violating the stipulations of the *cartaze* could result in a seizure by Portuguese authorities.[79] Particularly offensive was the strict control of all *hajj* traffic to Mecca. Relations degenerated further in 1613 after the *Estado da India* boarded and looted the Rahimi, a royal vessel of Jahângîr's family. Muqarrab Khân, the governor of Surat, was ordered to beseige the Portuguese-held port of Daman and the Jesuit church at Agra was closed down.[80]

2.3.1: Monarchical Status and Power in Mughal India

Understanding court features and dynamics in the Mughal setting is impossible without appreciating Indo-Islamic perceptions of kingship. The underlying foundations of the emperor's prerogative and right to rule are key to, not only the workings of the court and the surrounding administration, but to the entire *ethos* of the empire. The Mughal approach to kingship and its role in the Indian context is somewhat unique. A number of variables account for the singularity of this system: a predominantly Hindu populace, deeply rooted ties to the Timurid dynasty, and an amalgamation of Sunni and Shi`ite definitions of authority. Mughal perceptions of monarchical authority are an area of some debate; motives aside, historians of pre-modern India have presented a wide spectrum of interpretations on this matter with conclusions varying from arbitrary despotism to enlightened Muslim rule. Scholarship, however, is in agreement that the Mughal ruler exercised almost unlimited power in every significant department of the empire: governance, revenue, judiciary, army, etc. The extent of these prerogatives, combined with the relative success of the Mughals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has raised several questions: how was the emperor able to maintain his status as the epicenter of the empire ? How were the Hindus harmonized to the idea of Muslim minority rule ? How did he reconcile the wide-ranging prerogatives of his office with the strict dictates of the *Sharî`ah*, whereby the Muslim community is

79 A.R. Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Trade*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 10.

80 Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, p. 175.

accredited with the power of approving or rejecting individual rulers ?[81] By examining the prototype of the model emperor, designed by Abu'l Fazl for Akbar, we can begin to appreciate the Mughal rationalization of these questions. Furthermore, we can analyze the extent to which Jahângîr adhered to Akbar's policies by looking at contemporary documents of the 1605-1627 period.

The principal sources for understanding Akbar's rationale of kingship is the *Akbar Nâma*; this history is supplemented by the incredibly valuable *Â'în-i Akbari*, an appendix of imperial regulations and guidelines. The architect of this manual, Abu'l Fazl (1551-1602), was well-trained in political analysis, philosophy, mysticism, and the science of rhetoric. Furthermore, Abu'l Fazl was Akbar's principal advisor and right-hand man in all state matters and policies. At this stage, conquests had significantly expanded the parameters of the empire hence incorporating a diversity of indigenous ethnic groups. This development, combined with the unprecedented need to extrapolate the emperor's influence to newly-acquired, yet distant, territories, contributed to the designing and streamlining of the Mughal emperor as the 'Perfect Man' and supreme authority. Abu'l Fazl was forced to contend with potential challenges from the Mirzas, described as "Akbar's collateral Timurid princes."[82] However, the traditional argument of Akbar claiming monarchical infallibility[83], has recently been challenged by Khaliq Nizami who believes the *mahẓar* allowed the emperor a "certain power of *ijtihad*...for administrative considerations and the welfare of mankind."[84]

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81 It should be noted that Indian Muslim scholars have often inflated the significance of the relationship between the emperor and Islamic law, especially since the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. A good example of this thinking can be found in Naqvi's *History of Mughal Government and Administration*, Delhi: Kanishka Publishing House, 1990. The ramifications of any incongruencies between ruler and law was probably debated more over a theoretical level during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, English historians, particularly V.A. Smith, have looked to the signing of a *mahẓar* by Akbar's ulema as a "infallibility decree." As Aziz Ahmad points out, this simply gave Akbar the "right of *ijtihâd*...on a legal point [where] there was a difference of opinion." Aziz Ahmad, "The Role of Ulema in Indo-Muslim History," in *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 31 (1970), p. 7. As for Jahângîr's reign, evidence indicates, as S. Alvi comments, "the continued acceptance of the legitimacy of temporal power, stripped of the theocratic trappings, in Sunnî political thought." Sajida Alvi, "Religion and State During the Reign of Mughal Emperor Jahângîr (1605-1627): Nonjuristical Perspectives," in *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 69 (1989), p. 103. Practically speaking, Akbar and Jahângîr were not threatened by overly orthodox groups' insistence on adhering to the letter of the law viz. à viz. a ruler's prerogatives.

82 John F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority Under Akbar and Jahangir," in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J.F. Richards, Madison: South Asian Studies Publication Series, 1978, p. 263.

83 This is best represented in V.A. Smith's *Akbar The Great Mogul, 1542-1605*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892, p. 179, p. 214.

84 Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, 1989, p. 317.

Â'în-i Akbari reiterates previous theorists' arguments regarding the need for authoritative rule, "if royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor selfish ambition disappear. Mankind being under the burden of lawlessness and lust, would sink into the pit of destruction"; furthermore, "protection of subjects means a worship for household of sovereignty."[85] Realizing the intricacies and subtleties underpinning a ruler's title, Abu'l Fazl ignores *sulṭân* and advances the term *pâdshâh*. He explains the etymology by equating *pâd* with stability and possession while *shâh* represents origin and lord; hence, *pâdshâh* designates a superior king or emperor.[86] Furthermore, Akbar and his *wazîr* worked diligently to establish a metaphor between the emperor and the empire, whereby resistance to Akbar was synonymous with an a challenge to the sanctity of the imperial system as a whole. The pivotal characteristic of Abu'l Fazl's ideology, however, is the effectuation of legitimacy through affirming the "divinely illumined right of the Emperor to rule mortals with lesser qualities."[87]

In the preface to *Â'în-i Akbari*, royalty is described as "a light emanating from God and a ray from the Sun, the illuminator of the universe, the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues. Modern language calls this light *farr-i îzidî* (the divine light), and tongue of antiquity called it *kiyân khura* (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one."[88] Abu'l Fazl asserts the divine right of Akbar's rule by tracing a series of lineages, starting with Adam, through the Biblical prophets, to the first Turco-Mughal figure, Mughal Khân.[89] This transmission of divine illumination continues with Babur, whom Abu'l Fazl describes as "the carrier of the world-illuminating light (*ḥâmil-i Nûr-i jahân âfruz*)," to Akbar.[90] Having established the invulnerability of his claims, the "divine light" argument was protracted to ratify Akbar's monarchical infallibility. Abu'l Fazl supersedes the religio-legal constraints on Muslim leadership by asserting that "He [Akbar] is a king whom on account of his wisdom, we call *zûfunûn* (possessor of sciences), and our guide on the path of

85 Abu'l Fazl, *Â'în-i Akbari*, Vol. 1, trans. and ed. H. Blochmann, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927, p. 2.

86 Ibid.

87 Richards, "The Formation," p. 263.

88 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

89 Richards, "The Formation," pp. 262-63.

90 Ibid., p. 264

religion. Although kings are the shadow of God on earth, [Akbar] is the emanation of God's light. How then can we call him a shadow ?"[91] This sacred largesse imbues the recipient with the necessary qualities and virtues to govern successfully: trust in god and prayer, devotion, and, most important, a paternal love for his subjects.[92]

Documentation suggests Jahângîr closely followed his father's policies and governmental innovations. The relationship between God and the Mughal ruler is alluded to in Jahângîr's reaction to Khusrau's rebellion in 1606, "they overlooked the truth that acts of sovereignty and world rule are not things to be arranged by the worthless endeavors of defective intellects. The Just Creator bestows them on him whom he considers fit for this glorious and exalted duty, and on such a person doth He fit the robe of honour."[93] The centrality and importance of Jahângîr in the Mughal state is further indicated by the advice manuals of the period. Sânî's *Mau`iẓah-i Jahângîrî* describes how the imperium governs "the lives, possessions, properties, and honor of the people."[94] This theme is continued in the later *Maẓhar-i Shâhjahânî* by Yûsuf Mîrak; he considers sovereignty to be critical to humanity's protection against oppression.[95]

The "divine light" motif is also evident in a series of inscriptions found in the imperial center of Ajmer. A ruined palace's vault bears an ode to Jahângîr,

> The king of seven climes, of lofty fortune, whose praise cannot be contained in speech,
> The lustre of the house of king Akbar, emperor of the age, king Jahângîr,
> When he visited this fountain through his bounty, water began to flow and dust turned to elixir
> The Emperor gave it the name Chashma-i Nûr from which the water of Immortality acquires its relish.[96]

The record states that this palace, built around a spectacular fountain, was built at Jahângîr's behest in 1615. The emperor himself refers to the fountain and

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91 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, p. 631.

92 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 3.

93 Jahangir, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 51.

94 Muhammad Bâqir Najm-i Sânî, *Advice on the Art of Governance: An Indo-Islamic Mirror For Princes: Mau`iẓah-i Jahângîrî*, trans. and ed. S.S. Alvi, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, Introduction, p. 15.

95 Sajida S. Alvi, " *Maẓhar-i Shâhjahânî* and the Mughal Province of Sind: A Discourse on Political Ethics," in *Islam and Indian Religions*, ed. A.L. Dallapiccola and S.Z. Lallemant, Vol. 1 (1993), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, p. 241.

96 S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through Inscriptions*, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, 1968, p. 37.

the building of the palace in his memoirs.[97] Jahângîr is ascribed the mystical power of turning dust to magical elixir; furthermore, the "fountain of light" is an obvious metaphor to Jahângîr status as a divinely-sponsored king. Sânî, in describing the role of a Mughal emperor, makes use of this particular device in a poem,

> the pure water of the fountain of emperor
> Akbar's deepest hope,
> Abû al-Muzaffar Nûr al-Dîn Muhammad Jahângîr *pâdshâh*.[98]

On his day of accession, Jahângîr gave himself the "title of honour (*laqab*) Nûru-d-dîn, inasmuch as my sitting on the throne coincided with the rising and shining on the earth of the great light."[99] Sânî concludes his advice manual with a series of verses; the "light" motif is used in here,

> As long as with the radiance of the sun,
> The highest levels of the sky are illuminated
> May the surface of this earth be an envy of [all]
> Paradise
> Because of the justice of the clear-headed emperor.[100]

Jahângîr's personal recognition of this ideology is attested to by a poem he recites in his memoirs,

> O God, Thy essence has shone from eternity
> The souls of all the saints receive light from Thine,
> O king, may the world ever be at they beck,
> May thy Shâh-Jahân ever rejoice in thy shade
> O Shadow of God, may the world be filled with thy light
> May the Light of God ever be thy canopy[101]

2.3.2: The Emperor and His Nobility

This monarchical ideology directly governed the relationship between the Mughal emperor and his subjects. The exclusiveness of Akbar's position, i.e. guarantor of justice and stability, symbolic religious authority, beneficiary of God's will, centralized his role in state maintenance. Furthermore, while the emperor

97 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, pp. 269-70, p. 341.

98 Sânî, *Mau`izah*, p. 43.

99 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

100 Sânî, *Mau`izah*, p. 100.

101 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 29.

was regarded as the symbol of unity and potency, the nobility were seen as a potential source of disintegration and anarchy.[102] By no means was this view exclusive to the Mughals; Baranî's *Fatawa-i Jahândârî* of the Delhi Sultanate period (1206-1526) warns a king to "follow the traditions of the Real King of kings in selecting virtuous persons for appointment as your confidential officers and partners in your supreme command."[103] Cognizant of the danger posed by competitive noble elements, especially remote ones, Akbar looked to both his constructed ideology and previous Turkic traditions. First, the sacred nature of his station dictated that "at the sight of it (the Divine Light) everyone bends the forehead of praise to the ground of submission."[104] To resist or rebel against the emperor was tantamount to agitating a divinely-endowed universal order. However, this alone could not dissuade sedition and Akbar organized his empire to secure a close bond with his noble elite. Using the term "patrimonial-bureaucracy," Stephen Blake advances a noteworthy argument of how the Mughals were deeply influenced by Mongol patrimonial models of government. Specifically, he asserts that "patrimonial domination [like that of the Mongols] originates in the patriarch's authority over the household. It entails obedience to a person, not an office."[105] This system, in turn, was revived, modified, and implemented by Akbar to guarantee the loyalty of his nobility and his personal participation in all facets of government. The *mansabdârî* system, essentially the imperial allotting of rank and payment to competent nobles, represented a reciprocal relationship between Akbar and his officers. *Mansabs* were conferred in return for loyal, consistent service in both the military and the administration.[106] By stipulating a) when and how much *mansabdârs* were promoted and b) that powerful *mansabdârs* were to be kept relatively close to the imperial court, Akbar fashioned his empire on this extended-household model. Moreover, loyalty and subservience to the patriarchal figure of the emperor were the only means of advancement.[107]

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102 Sarkar, *Mughal Polity*, p. 71.

103 Ziyâ ad-Dîn Baranî, *Fatawa-iJahândârî*, trans. and ed. M. Habib, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1960, p. 94.

104 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

105 Stephen Blake, "The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals," in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 39 (1979), No. 1, p. 79.

106 M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire: Awards of Ranks, Offices, and Titles to the Mughal Nobility (1574-1658)*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. xi.

107 Blake, "The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire," p. 90.

Service and submission were central tenets in this relationship. The *Â'în-i Akbari* states that nobles are obliged to report to the emperor regularly and serve on a series of rotational guard duties; furthermore, strict ordinances outlined proper behavior and demeanour for nobles in the emperor's presence.[108] This code of behavior, as Richards notes, was founded on the principle of *khânazâd*, or "devoted, familial hereditary service to the emperor."[109] He further contends that this principle has it roots in the Turkic institution of military slavery. Nobles, serving in either military or administrative capacities (sometimes both), were designated as *khânazâd*, or "offspring of a slave."[110] Hence, we can interpret Mughal imperial governing as essentially an extrapolation of the Mongol household-oriented pattern of rule; in this, we see the emperor as a divinely-sanctioned patriarch figure who maintained close relations with the extended members of his household through the *manṣabdârî* system. Furthermore, the identification of the nobility as *khânazâd*, combined with the king's status as the "light of God," guaranteed a submissive, yet intensely loyal, military and administrative elite.

Sânî's section, "On the Etiquette of Royal Service," of his mirror for princes provides a valuable noble's perspective on the relationship between an emperor and his ruling elite,

> ...he [the noble] must never ignore the dues for these bounties and favors [granted to him]. He must concentrate his energies on showing them allegiance and he must serve them with utmost sincerity, conviction, and good will. He must not neglect in any matter the well-being of his benefactor. Had he a thousand lives, he must sacrifice them for one moment of his lord's peace of mind. He must throw himself in the most perilous situation for requital of the favors of his patron and for leaving his name [inscribed] on the record of Time for his devotion [to his master].[111]

Jahângîr himself attests to the continuation of the *khânazâd* designation while discussing the recruitment and appointment of *manṣabdârs*:

> If the details were to be described of all the commanders and servants' appointment by me, with the conditions and rank of each, it would be a long business. Many of my immediate attendants and personal followers and nobles' sons, house born ones (*khânazâdân*) and

108 Â'în, Vol. 1, pp. 267-268.

109 John F. Richards, "Norms of Comportment Among Imperial Mughal Officers," in *Moral Conduct and Authority:The Place of* Adab *in South Asian Islam*, ed. B.D. Metcalf, Bekerkely: University of California Press, 1984, p. 262.

110 Ibid., p. 264.

111 Sânî, *Mau'iẓah*, p. 74.

zealous Rajputs, petitioned to accompany this expedition.[112]

In addition to alluding to his own status as the central administrator, Jahângîr's reference to *khânazâdân* substantiates Richards' argument of an emperor perceiving his surrounding nobility with metaphorical terms like "slave" and "master" and, furthermore, how this understanding was preserved after Akbar's death. This "slave" analogy, or *khânazâdan*, is found in a number of examples throughout Jahângîr's memoirs.[113] While the nobles were described as "the pillars of the country" (*arkân-i mamlakat*) upon whom the ruler relied heavily, it was commonly understood that the nobility were deeply indebted to the Mughal emperor on the basis of his very existence, "[the wise men] have also likened royal service to an ocean [and the employee] to a merchant embarking on a voyage - [the merchant] either accrues immense profit or becomes trapped in a whirlpool of annihilation."[114]

2.3.3: Mughal Administrative Features

Roe's use of Jacobean terms ("*privadoes*," "cabinettes") in describing various features of the Mughal bureaucracy has to be carefully scrutinized. This, combined with underlying tones of chaos and arbitrariness, directly contributes to a misrepresentation of Mughal administrative practices. Alluded to earlier, Jahângîr was the pith of the imperial administration. His participation in revenue collection, *manṣabdâr* recruitments and appointments, and provincial administration is attested to by a large, surrounding bureaucracy of scribes (*munshîs*), court reporters, heralds, military paymasters (*bâkhshîs*), and administrative assistants. Ṣânî states, "without the ruler's regulation of administration neither the decrees of *Sharî`ah* are promulgated, nor is the basis of the emperor strengthened."[115] Pervading these institutions was the *manṣab* system. All officials originated from the *manṣabdâr* class and their duties required both military and administrative skills.[116] Traditionally, people of the sword (*aṣḥâb-i saif*) were delineated from people of the

112 In 1605, Jahângîr led an expedition against the Rânâ. Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

113 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 60, p. 109, p. 309, Vol. 2, p. 17, p. 37.

114 Ṣânî, *Mau`izah*, p. 72.

115 Ibid., p. 46.

116 Blake, "The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire," p. 89.

pen (*aṣḥâb-i qalam*); however, in the Mughal context they interchanged and overlapped to comprise the "pillars of the citadel of empire" (*qâ`imah-i qaṣr-i saltanat*).[117] As Richards observes, "by the early years of the 17th century the diverse Mughal elite had become a corporate body of paid officers, with status and posting ultimately determined by the wish of the emperor."[118] The nobles were recruited as *mansabdârs* on the basis of a number of criteria: being related to close kinsmen already in service (*khânazâds*); having similar status in a nearby kingdom or empire; being a hereditary chief of a recently incorporated tribe or clan; and, finally, exhibiting promising skill and acumen.[119]

State maintenance was facilitated by dividing the empire into *ṣûbas* (provinces) each having a nearly identical infrastructure of governors, officials, and sub-officials. The close connection between the imperial capital and provinces is best represented by the *faujdârs* (regional commanders with military and executive responsibilities) being answerable, not to their governors, but to corresponding imperial officials in the Mughal court.[120] The highest station, next to that of the emperor, was the *wakîl* whose responsibilities included advising his overlord and ensuring a swift response to royal orders. The next official was the *wazîr-i mamâlik*, or *dîwân-i kul;* his duties included finance management and supervising his three principle subordinates: the *dîwân-i tan* (*jâgîr* assignments and salaries of *mansabdârs*), the *dîwân-i khaliṣa* (administering the revenue-producing lands under the emperor's direct administration), and the *dîwân-i bayûtât* (controlling imperial household expenditures). The *mîr bâkhshî* was responsible for regulating the distribution of *mansabs* and ensuring that each *mansabdâr* maintained the expected number *sawârs*. Concurrently, the *ṣadrus ṣudur* oversaw the disbursement of imperial land and cash grants. Provincial governors (*nâẕim, ṣâḥib-i ṣûba*) acted as regional military commanders and were directly answerable to the emperor; provinces were then proportioned into regions and administered by *faujdârs*.[121] Within the Imperial household, departments addressing domestic concerns co-existed side-by-side with departments of far more significance and importance.[122]

117 Sânî, *Mau`iẓah*, Introduction, p. 17.

118 Richards, "The Formation," p. 272.

119 Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, pp. xvi-xviii.

120 Ibid., p. xxi.

121 Ibid.

122 Blake, "The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire," p. 83.

Moreover, by Jahângîr's period, offices, particularly the *dîwân*, were shared between two or more officials; this fluidity is also seen in the closely regulated, transferring of officials from one department to another.[123]

Probably the most damaging feature of Roe's observations of the Mughal administration is their emphasis on three or four key personages. His discussion of Jahângîr, Khurram, I'timâd al-daula, and Âṣâf Khân, gives the impression that the empire was directly administered by a small number of individuals. The court itself was officiated by a comprehensive civil and military system; other bureaucratic dimensions of the empire (provinces, regions, and villages), are ignored in Roe's account and the reader, consequently, fails to grasp the complexity of Mughal governance.

2.3.4: 'Daylye Bribing': A Mughal Explanation

In 1617, a full five years before his son's rebellion, the emperor described the arrival of Prince Khurram in Mandu, roughly 90 miles north-west of Burhanpur,

> ...he entered the fort of Mandu auspiciously and joyfully, and had the honour of waiting on me. The duration of our separation was 11 months and 11 days. After he had performed the dues of salutation and kissing the ground, I called him up into the jharokha, and with exceeding kindness and uncontrolled delight rose from my place and held him in the embrace of affection. In proportion as he strove to be humble and polite, I increased my favours and kindness to him and made him sit near me. He presented 1,000 ashrafis and 1,000 rupees as *nazar* and the same amount by way of alms.(italics mine)[124]

This quote is particularly intriguing because it makes note of a) the salutation process required of nobles and princes and b) the mandatory presentation of *nazr*. These two procedures are critical to the relationship between a Mughal noble and his emperor. Discussed earlier, *The Embassy* depicts the Mughal court as an arena of factional competition, avaricious negotiations, and unabashed bribery. Nonetheless, a Mughal emperor's style of rule was founded on personal contact and expressions of commitment from the ruling elite. The physical act of prostrating oneself was of itself an acknowledgment of your loyalty. Nobles, regardless of station or rank, were expected to perform the necessary steps of salutation.[125] The guidelines for this act

123 Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, p. xxii.

124 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 394.

125 M. Bhatia and K. Behari, "The Mughal Court Etiquette and Matters of Protocol," in *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. 56 (1978), p. 112.

were set out in *Â'în-i Akbari*:

> Men of deeper insight are of the opinion that even spiritual progress among a people would be impossible unless emanating from the king, in whom the light of God dwells; for near the throne, men wipe off the stain of conceit and build up the arch of true humility...His Majesty has commanded the palm of the right hand to be placed upon the forehead and the head to be bent downwards. This mode of salutation, in the language of the present age, is called *kornish*, and signifies that the saluter has placed his head into the hand of humility, giving it to the royal assembly as a present, and has made himself in obedience ready for any service that may be required of him. The salutation, called *taslîm*, consists in placing the back of the right hand on the ground, and then raising it gently till the person stands erect...When His Majesty seats himself on the throne, all that are present perform the *kornish*, and then remain standing at their places, according to their rank, with their arms crossed, partaking, in the light of his imperial countenance, of the elixir of life, and enjoying everlasting happiness in standing ready for any service.[126]

The apparent formality of this procedure was not particular to Akbar's reign. Jahângîr describes the arrival of many nobles who performed "the dues of salutation" or "came to pay [their] respects (*kûrnish*)." Obeisance such as this was designed to reinforce the mutual sense of loyalty when in the presence of the emperor. The other feature, *nazr*, is also frequently referred to in the emperor's memoirs.[127] Roe's simple summation of this as the "giuing of trifles is the way of preferment," does not adequately reflect the importance of gift-giving in the building of political relationships. Furthermore, Roe's experience in Jacobean England, where bribery was a central means of upward social mobility, distorted his interpretation of this phenomena.[128] *Nazr* originally described a pre-Islamic promise or vow after making a sacrifice to god; the consecration "placed the person making the vow in connection with the divine powers, the *nadhr* was an *'ahd*, whereby he pledged himself. A neglect of the *nadhr* was a sin against the deity."[129] The procedure of *nazr*, as a symbolic gesture of devotion, is also mentioned in Qur'ânic scriptures.[130] In the Mughal setting, this gesture manifested itself in gold and silver rupees or other valuable items; the act of presenting a large gift was metaphoric of the donor acknowledging the king as the source of all his wealth and

126 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, pp. 166-168.

127 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 54, p. 66.

128 F.W. Buckler, "The Oriental Despot," in *Legitimacy and Symbols*, ed. M.N. Pearson, Ann Arbor: Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia, 1985, p. 243.

129 J. Pedersen, "Nadhr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. VII, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, and the late Ch. Pellat, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993, p. 847.

130 2: 270, 76:7,*The Holy Qur-an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, ed. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Washington: American International Print, 1946.

being. However, European travellers misunderstood the procedure as bribery or a periodic collection of tribute. Consequently, Roe's statement that "for such is the custome and humour of the King, that he will seize and see all, lest any Tory should escape his attention," is a misinformed judgment at best.[131] Later interpretations of Jahângîr's appetite for gifts also look to his memoirs for vindication; yet, on many of these occasions they are specifically referred to as *nazr*.[132]

Mughal documents of this period (histories, treatises, mirrors for princes) all point to the political and, in some cases, religio-spiritual, power of the emperor. Furthermore, imperial ideologies constructed under Akbar profoundly influenced the role of the noble in the Mughal state. It is plausible that Turkic patrimonial tendencies, whereby the ruler is the patriarch and the surrounding elite are household members, contributed to nascent Mughal political perception of the sixteenth century. Indigenous sources of Jahângîr's period attest to the continuation of these understandings of monarchy, administration, and nobility. However, these features fail to appear in Roe's commentary on the Mughal court. Rather, *The Embassy* implements recognizable Jacobean terminology and court procedures to facilitate understanding for an early seventeenth century English readership.

2.4: Mughal Absolutism; A Warning to the English King ?

Mughal political institutions are rarely discussed in detail by Roe. Descriptions are mostly confined to commentaries on the status of monarchy with its inherent prerogatives and responsibilities. Early Stuart England, it should be remembered, was predominated by issues of royal absolutism and its relationship with ancient constitutional law. Furthermore, Roe was an active participant in this debate under the auspices of the 1614 Parliament. His suggestions and comments during that session indicate a man who, while respecting the need for monarchical authority, also feared the demise of subjects' rights guaranteed by the natural law of England. Adopting an approach that Roe hoped to "familiarize" Mughal India, this section will highlight excerpts which are reminiscent of the political issues and rhetoric circulating England from 1603 to 1614.

131 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 402.

132 See, for example, Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 50, p. 115, p. 186.

The "Lawes of Nations," a concept appearing in circumstances where Mughal authorities apparently comprimise Roe's unalienable rights, is a common theme in *The Embassy*. While securing the arrangements for his future journey to Ajmer during the fall of 1615, Roe recounts a conversation with the governor of Surat,

> I tould him...that I was a stranger and Could not be suddenly prouided for so great a Iourny. Hee tould me I should haue his assistance. I thanked him, and replyed I did expect no more then what the Lawes of Nations cast vpon me, securitye and safe Conduct in his Gouernment.[133]

While negotiating a special *farman* for the port of Surat, Roe broaches this concept through a series of articles proposed to Khurram in August of 1618. The majority of the proposed points are economic in nature but Roe's postscript provides an interesting insight,

> That in all causes of complaynet of controuersie the Governors and *Cazies* of the place should doe them [the English] speedy justice and protect them from all Injuries or oppressions whatsoeuer...that which I demand is bare justice and which no man can deny that hath a hart cleare and enclined to right, and no more then the Lawes of Nations doth freely giue to all strangers that arriue, without any contract; and in no case so much as the great kyng doth promise and command.[134]

The significance of these examples becomes clearer if we were to understand common Jacobean perceptions of law and its role in society. The crisis of the 1610 and 1614 Parliaments, i.e. the monarchy's alleged encroachment on the rights of the House of Commons, witnessed the evolution of the "Common-law mind." This was essentially the belief in the existence of an "immemorial ancient constitution;" in this respect, Jacobean lawyers made conscious attempts "to push the origins of the law so far back in time that they lay, in effect, beyond infinity."[135] In theory, historians and lawyers alike contended that "all laws in generall are originally equally ancient." Any differences between various national customs and legal systems thus resulted from variations and limitations on a natural law originally imposed by God.[136] Consequently, Roe's contention "they haue no written Law. The King by his owne word ruleth...he giueth sentence for crimes Capitall and

133 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 66.

134 *Articles Proposed to the Prince Sultan Coronne, Lord of Amadauaz and Suratt, By the Ambassador, Vpon the Breach With the Portugalls, August 15, 1618*, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 508.

135 Woolf, p. 25.

136 Richard Tuck, "'The Ancient Law of Freedom': John Selden and the Civil War," in *Reactions to the English Civil War*, ed. J.S. Morill, London: Macmillan Ltd., 1982, p. 143.

Ciuill...and the Countrey so euill builded," interpets Jahângîr's inflated absolutism as contributing to the absence of a legal system which might protect the rights of his subjects.

This equation, whereby natural law disappears in the wake of strident absolutism, is summarized excellently in Roe's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury,

> A discription of the land, customes, and manners, with other accidents, are fitter for wynter-nightes. They are eyther ordinary, or mingled with much barbarisme...Lawes they haue none written. The Kyngs judgment byndes, Who sitts and giues sentence with much patience, once weakly, both in Capitall and Criminall causes; wher sometymes he sees the execution done by His Eliphants, with two much delight in blood. His Gouernors of Prouinces rule by his *Firmanes*, which is a breefe lettre authorising them. They take life and goodes at pleasure.[137]

We can detect a subtle commentary of how overly rigid definitions of absolute monarch impinge on the rights of his subjects. In a letter to Sir Ralph Winwood, James I's Secretary of State, compares his interpretation of Mughal polity with that of Europe,

> I could write your Honor may remarckable accidents in this Gouerment and Kingdome. All the Policye and wicked craft of the Diuill is not practised alone in Europe; here is enough to bee learned, or to be despisd.[138]

The theme of Mughal political villainy is easily found in *The Embassy*. Roe's sees an equation between Jahângîr's inflated definition of monarchy and "the Cuntry" being "slauish" and how "swyne lye better than any man."[139] Roe's appreciation of his own country's political climate, where absolutism was being juxtaposed with common law, is subtly integrated within his interpretations of the Mughal empire. This apparent lack of a comprehensive legal system is followed by a remark on Jahângîr's ability to implement "customes...mingled with much barbarisme." Furthermore, the conclusion of how the Mughal approach to authority is "enough to bee learned or to be despisd" presents a prototype of dangerous monarchical absolutism. The most telling feature of this particular commentary, however, is that it was sent directly to Sir Ralph Winwood. The idea of issuing a polemic on unyielding royal authority directly to James I would have been

137 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 123.

138 This letter was written on Nov. 30, 1616, Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 358.

139 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 100.

untenable; however, by using the king's principal and closest advisor as a recipient and potential intermediary, Roe could participate, on a limited basis, in this critical Jacobean debate.

2.4.1: Jahângîr's Obligations as a Mughal Emperor.

Roe's depiction of the Mughal monarchy is discernably one-dimensional. The English ambassador was overwhelmed by the breadth of Jahângîr's power and, as a result, the journal is consistent in its presentation of a despotic Oriental monarchy. Despite extended powers and prerogatives, as attested by Roe, an emperor was expected to reciprocate by ensuring the continued operation of his administration; in Abu'l Fazl's words, "for monarchs the worship consists in the proper discharge of their duties to their subjects."[140] Only by being personally involved in day-to-day state business could the emperor guarantee the social and political stability he promised to the masses.[141] Specifically, Hindu and Muslim groups looked to the emperor as the supreme dispenser of justice. While a comprehensive system of judicial officials (*qâẓîs*) existed, it was commonly understood that the emperor tried both criminal and civil cases. Furthermore, he heard all appeals, and his personal sanction was needed for sentences of capital punishment.[142] The most visible manifestation of the emperor's role in judicial affairs was the evolution of the *jharoka-i darshan.* This institution was innovated during Akbar's reign to facilitate public appearances before the emperor. Predictably, this accessibility further illustrates the personal, patriarchal nature of Mughal rule. Adapting a previously Hindu facility was one of the many examples of Muslim Indianization common to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In espousing the principles of justice and equality for all, thus promoting stability and social order, Akbar appeased the Hindu majority while concurrently preserving Mughal sovereignty.[143] The Mughal approach, in context, very well reflected the twelfth century axiom of the political theoretician Niam al-Mulk (1017-1096), "a polity can endure without disbelief but it cannot last without justice."[144]

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140 *Â'în*, Vol. 1, p. 163.

141 Ibn Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970, p. 85.

142 Ibid., p. 320.

143 Sarkar, *Mughal Polity*, p. 192.

144 Ibid., p. 473.

Jahângîr's acknowledgment of his role in dispensing justice is well-documented in *Tûzuk*. Shortly after his accession, he wrote: "the first order that I gave was for the fastening up of the Chain of Justice, so that if those engaged in the administration of justice should delay or practise hypocrisy in the matter of seeking justice, the oppressed might come to this chain and shake it so that its noise might attract attention."[145] This was complemented by a proclamation of twelve ordinances, varying from the banning of river toll fees to prohibitions against facial disfigurement.[146] In fact, `Usmân, a sufi poet from Ghazipur, lauded Jahângîr's chain of justice in his poem *Chitravali*.[147] Furthermore, there seems to be evidence that Jahângîr saw merit in his father's *sulh-i kul* policy and did his utmost to see it continued,

> The administration and government of the Panjab was bestowed on Sa`îd Khân, who was one of the confidential nobles and connected with my father by marriage. His origin was from the Moghul tribe, and his ancestors were in the service of my forefathers. At the time of his taking leave, as it was said that his eunuchs oppressed and tyrannized over the weak and poor, I sent a message to him that my justice would not put up with oppression from anyone, and that in the scales of equity neither smallness nor greatness was regarded. If after this any cruelty or harshness should be observed on the part of his people, he would receive punishment without favour.[148]

There is documentation beyond the emperor's memoirs further illustrating his vigilance in guaranteeing the rights of minority groups. In a *farmân* from 1608, Jahângîr ordered the governors, officials and *jâgîrdârs* of *sûba* (province) Gujarat to safeguard the temples and *dharamsalas* of the Jain community. The Gujarati officials were also directed to ensure that the houses of the disciples were left undisturbed and that no taxes were levied on pilgrims visiting the tirtha of Shatrunjaya.[149] However, we have to make an important distinction between Jahângîr's conviction to promote justice as a Muslim and his obligations as the ruler of an empire. Thanks to S. Alvi's research, we know that the Mughals separated law and justice from religion, evident in their creation of the department of justice, *Mahkamah-i `Adâlat*, a separate institution from the ecclesiastical department,

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145 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 7.

146 Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 7-10.

147 Alvi, "Religion and State," p. 106.

148 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 13.

149 S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents (1526-1627)*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1989, p. 82.

Maḥkamah-i Sharî`ah.[150]

We can conclude that Jahângîr conformed to the model of empire established by his father, Akbar. The perception of the monarch being shrouded in Divine light, in addition to his roles as judge and head administrator, continued into the first three decades of the seventeenth century and beyond. Moreover, the argument that the emperor represented a patriarchal figure who maintained a close relationship with his nobility class, seems to apply to Jahângîr's relationship with the *manṣabdârs*. The patriarchal element of Mughal rule, where the emperor looked upon his ruling elite as a family household, stemmed from Turco-Mongol traditions of the fourteenth century. Most important, however, the emperor ruled with daily, personal affirmations of loyalty from his subjects. These various features of monarchical status and power do not find any representation in *The Embassy*. Even if Roe was interested in presenting Mughal kingship from an indigenous perspective, he would have been forced to try and understand a wide-ranging number of variables: Turkish and Mongol culture and history, Sunni and Shi`ite definitions of authority, the *Sharî`ah*, and, most importantly, the administrative legacy left by Akbar at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Nonetheless, various historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in using Roe as a viable account, have failed to observe the vast discrepancy between seventeenth century English models of government and the Mughal equivalents. The most glaring example is the accessibility of the monarch to his people. While Roe interprets the centrality of Jahângîr's position in the Mughal court as that of a lead actor in a play, Indo-Muslim accounts prove this exposure was symbolic of the Mughal personal, patriarchal approach to administering an empire. Furthermore, Roe's description of court sedition does not reflect the deeply imbued understandings of loyalty and subservience held by the noble elite. Another incongruency, although far less obvious, is the perception of political authority and its position in the state. The language of Mughal authority and its acceptance, is a language of personal allegiance and loyalty between a bestower and a recipient of favours and gifts. Moreover, this dialogue of authority cannot be sustained without repeated personal encounters. This is somewhat different from Jacobean understandings of authority. In James I's case, his authority is of a *contractual*

150 Alvi, "Religion and State," p. 106.

nature, with specific terms and obligations understood between the two parties: the king and his subjects.[151] This contractual approach establishes a status quo, where both parties have a static, unyielding understanding of their relationship. Jahângîr's authority, however, is based on the premise of *consensus* where the nobility expresses loyalty and accepts his master's rule. Consequently, while the consensual nature of this relationship is decidedly one-sided in the favour of the emperor, there exists a dynamism and personal involvement in the Mughal court that has no counterpart in England.

2.5: 'To Repayre a Ruynd House'; Roe's Struggle with Mughal Diplomacy

Certainly polemical, if not bordering on abusive, Roe's interpretation of Mughal diplomacy, "barbarous" and "want of Ciuilitye," can be explained by his previous ambassadorial assignments in Spain (1604) and the Palatinate (1613). Roe's perception of Mughal attitudes towards sovereign nations and their representatives differs slightly from the literary, court, and political metaphors found in *The Embassy*. Roe expends little energy in "transforming" or "translating"; he initially rejects Mughal diplomatic practices outright. However, within his diatribe, we find a change, or evolution, of sorts. The views expressed in the first two months are founded on European diplomatic value systems. These ethnocentric attitudes begin to change when Roe witnesses the arrival, and eventual success, of the Persian ambassador, Muhammad Rizâ Beg, in October of 1616. Hereafter, there are increased instances of Roe commenting on the Mughal affinity for gift-giving in international relations. Lastly, six months before his departure, Roe slowly begins to grasp the Mughal approach to ambassadorship and why his designation as an ambassador/trade envoy was so problematic. It should be noted, however, that Roe's polemic tone continues throughout the text without any acquiescence to the Mughal system.

Undoubtedly, Roe fashioned himself as leading a critical ambassadorial mission on James I's behalf; he was adamant on maintaining and, if possible, advancing English prestige in India, as was the standard practice of seventeenth

151 Hardy,"The Authority of Muslim Kings," p. 47.

century European diplomacy. This strategy was augmented by his jealous preservation of various honors in matters of protocol, procedure, and titles. With great pomp and ceremony, the English entourage arrived off the coast of Surat in September of 1615. Roe's self-presentation and the subsequent reaction of the Mughals is described,

> I mention these only to lett the Company vnderstand how meanly an Embassador was esteemed at my landing; how they subiected themselues to all searches and barbarous Customes, and became sutors to the Gouernors and great men, who, as appears by the discourse Following, sufficiently vnderstand the rights belonging to the qualetye; and that therefore, if it seeme to any that shall heare of my first carriadge that I was eyther too stiff, to Punctuall, too high, or to Prodigall, lett them Consider I was to repayre a ruynd house and to make streight that which was crooked.[152]

Roe spent the next month in Surat, seeing to various affairs of the local E.E.I.C. factory, shipping stores and munitions to shore, and negotiating with the port governor. Unfortunately, the prestige of his arrival was soured when port officials insisted on inspecting the incoming goods from the English ship *Lion*. Roe's reaction reflects his English understanding of ambassadorial protocol,

> ...and that in Europe and most parts of Asia all Ambassadors and theyr traines were so far priuiledged as not to be subiect to Common and barbarous vsage...for that I could not answere it with my head to loose the right and freedome due to the Embassador of a Christian king. They answered it was also more then the Gouernor could avow to let them passe vnsearched: it was a great curtesy don to my person, and sufficient acknowledgment of me, all others pretending my place having neuer had so much honor: that it was absolutely the Custome of this Cuntrie, and they Could not breake it. I replyed: I had thought that they vnderstood that free kyngs and theyre Ambassadors had beene aboue ordinary customes; which since they would not take notice off, I would not perswade them to breake thyrs, and I was resolued I would not dishonor my selfe; but I would send to the great Mogull and attend his Majesties answere: that I hoped they had come to entertayne and honor me, not to enslaue and entangle me with barbarous Customes.[153]

> At last they Came, and with many good woordes, did assure they had no purpose to Injure mee; and that they only entended to doe what I yeeilded too, there in priuat, that they might certifie all was finished, least the officers of the Custome howse (they knew no Ciuility) should stay me at the enterance of the Towne; and perswaded me to be yet Content withall. I answered I was euer equall with my woorde, and that though they had taught me to breake my woord, it was a lesson I scornd to learne: but I would bee a wittnes of theyr fashion, least they vnder Coulor of Ceremony did vse villany.[154]

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152 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 46.

153 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 48.

154 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 51.

A day later, Roe fell into a disagreement with the governor of Surat over matters of international etiquette; specifically, he was affronted by the governor's insistence that Roe make the first visitation,

> Within an hower he sent me a Messenger to perswade me to come visitt him, and that then he would bring me to my house & do me all Honor, and all my desires should be fulfilled. I replyed it was too late to offer me Curtestyes, especially vnder pretence of dishonoring my Master: That it was the Custome of Europe to visitt those of my qualety first, and that I diurst not breake yt in penaltye of my head, haveing expresse Command from my Master to Mayntayne the Honor of a free king, and top visitt none but such as first did that respect due to his Majestie: and that therfore I would neuer doe yt. He returned me answere it was the Custome of this Cuntry that all Embassadors did first Come to the Gouernors, and that he was seruant to a Great King as well as I: that no man could be a better man than he, except he were made so by his Master...I replyed: ...and hee beeing Gouernor for the Prince (as yet a subject) I could not thinck he wronged himselfe to visitt me that did represent the Person of a King...for the prescedents of former men, they were noe rules to me that was a full Ambassador, and they, though sent by the king, yet were but Agents to prepare my way and to negotiate in the behalfe of the Honorable Company.[155]

This collision between Roe's ambassadorial style and the indigenous customs of the Mughals goes beyond linguistic or cultural miscommunication. One problem was the lack of any formal precedence established by the E.E.I.C.. The reference to "former men" alludes to Captains Hawkins and Best and their limited trade negotiations with Mughal coastal areas in 1608 and 1612 respectively.[156] The arrival of an imperial entourage, sharing the same nationality as Hawkins and Best, probably confused the port officials. Furthermore, Roe's affiliation with a trading company, while concurrently representing a sovereign king, would have offended Mughal sensibilities. Given this, Roe's mandate as both a procurer of trade privileges and political representative only hampered his success. Nonetheless, Roe failed to see the importance of this distinction and berated the Mughal lack of respect "due to the Embassador of a Christian king." Roe was convinced that European modes of diplomacy should supersede any existing indigenous practices: "That is was the Custome of Europe to visitt those of my qualetye first and that I diurst not breake yt."[157] Roe ignores the justification of these searches as being the "Custome of this Cuntry" and insists that the Mughals adhere to European

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155 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 54.

156 Holden Furber, *Rival Empires*, p. 40. Roe comments on this, "I landed at Suratt, where I was esteemed an Imposture like my predecessors; two befoer having taken the title of ambassador. Master Hawkins and Master Edwards, but so that they haue almost made yt ridiculous to come vnder that qualetye..." Roe, Vol. 1, p. 98.

157 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 47.

standards of international etiquette. Yet, such port procedure, i.e. searching, itemizing, and taxing of all incoming goods, was part of a much larger Mughal administrative infrastructure.[158]

After Roe's arrival at the court of Ajmer in January, 1616, accusations of maltreatment lessen in appearance. This, combined with his own admission that E.E.I.C.-Mughal relations were stagnating, suggests Roe's realization that his adamant, ethnocentric approach to diplomacy was not facilitating matters. In October of 1616, Roe recounts a conversation with the Mughal emperor,

> ...[Jahângîr] fell of to: what hath the king [James I] sent mee ? I answered: many tokens of his loue and affection: That my Master knew hee was lord of the best Part of Asia, the richest Prince of the east, that to, send his Maiestie rich Presentes were to Cast Pearles into the sea...[159]

Jahângîr's question as to what *James I* had sent reflects the Mughal belief that gifts posses a symbolic value by which a monarch expresses his commitment by personally sending a token of love and friendship. However, unbeknownst to Jahângîr at this time, the E.E.I.C., not James I, was responsible for providing gifts.[160] Whether or not Roe realized the implications of this distinction is unclear; notwithstanding, it seems he was beginning to appreciate the importance of gift-giving in the Mughal context of diplomacy. Two days later, he makes particular note of a gift procession by Abdullâh Khân.[161] On Oct. 19, 1616, Roe describes Muhammad Rizâ Beg's arrival and carefully itemizes the gifts being offered to the Mughal emperor ,

> The Persian Ambassador Mahomett Roza Beag about noone came into the Towne with a great troup...His owne trayne were about 50 hourse, well fitted in Coates of Gould, their bowes, quivers, and Targetes richly garnished, 40 shott, and some 200 ordinary *Peons* and attenders on bagage. He was carried to Rest in a roome within the kinges outward court till euening, when he came to the *Darbar* before the king, to which Ceremony I sent my Secretary to obserue the fashion. When hee approached, He made at the first rayle 3

158 John F. Richards, "Mughal State Finance and the Pre-Modern World Economy," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 23 (1981), p. 307.

159 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 288.

160 Roe suggests a number of potential gifts in later letters to the Company.

161 Abdala-chan came to visitt the Prince, so brauely attended as I haue not seene the like. To the gate his drums and musique a horsback, about 20, made noyse enough, fifty Peons with white flagges carried before him, and 200 souldiers well mounted in Coates of Cloth of Gould, veluett, and rich silkes, which entered with him in ranck; Next his Person 40 targiteers in like liueryes. He made humble reuerence, and presented a black Arabian horse with furniture studded with flowers of gould and enameld and sett with small stones. The Prince according to Custome returnd a Turbant, a Coate, and a Gyrdle. Ibid., Vol.2, p. 292

> *Teselims* and one *Sizeda*(which is Prostrating himselfe and knocking his head against the Ground)...The King according to Custome haue him a handsom turbant, a vest of gould, and a girdle, for which againe hee made 3 *Tesselims* and one *Sizeda*, or ground curtesye. Hee brought for Presentes 3 tymes 9 horses of Persia and Arabia, this beeing a Ceremonius Number among them, 9 mules very fayre and lardg, 7 Camells laden with veluett, two Sutes of Europe Arras (which I suppose was Venetian hanginges of veluett with gould, and not Arras), two Chestes of Persian hanginges, on Cabinett rich, 40 Muskettes, 5 Clockes, one Camell laden with Persian Cloth of gould, 8 Carpettes of silke, 2 Rubyes ballast, 20 Cammelles of wyne of the Grape, 14 Camelles of distilld sweet waters, 7 of rose waters, 7 daggers sett with stones, 5 swoordes sett with stones, 7 Venetian looking glasses, but these soe faire, so rich that I was ashamed of the relation.[162]

These gifts far surpass the quality and quantity of Roe's offerings. In fact, he seems intimidated by the scope of these gifts, especially those of Europe: "these so faire, so rich that I was ashamed of the relation." Nonetheless, Roe mocks the Persian emissary in a description of the court two nights later, "Hee appeared rather a Iester or Iugler then a Person of grauety, running vp and downe..."[163] Despite Roe's embarrasement for his Persian counterpart, Shâh 'Abbâs' representative was ultimately sucessful in soliciting funds from Jahângîr; moreover, while *Tûzuk* carefully recounts Rizâ Beg's sojourn, no mention is made of Roe's entire four-year mission in India.[164] Roe wrote a letter to the E.E.I.C. within three weeks of the Muhammad Rizâ Beg's ceremony, describing in meticulous detail the nature and presentation of gifts to the Mughal emperor.[165] This can be construed as a turning point for Roe's ambassadorial experience in India. One can sense Roe sizing up his situation: ethnocentric attitudes, the meagre quality of English gifts, and the Mughal refusal to combine imperial diplomacy with trade matters were all hindrances in soliciting a trade *farman*.

This realization is evident in two conversations towards the end of Roe's tenure in Mughal India. The first, dated Feb. 11, 1617, indicates Jahângîr's confusion regarding Roe's station and the calibre of gifts being presented,

> Then, said he, I haue onely one question to aske you, which is, I wonder much, now I haue seene your Presents two yeares, what was the reason why your King sent a Merchant, a meane man, before you with fiue times as many, and more curious Toyes that contended all, and after to send you his Ambassadour with a Commission and his Letter mentioning Presents, and yet what you brought was little, meane and inferiour to the

162 Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 295-97.

163 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 302.

164 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. 374.

165 This letter covers many aspects of the situation in the Mughal Empire and the Indian Ocean; the references to gifts, however, come on pages 346 to 347, Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2.

other.[166]

The second conversation, on Feb. 14, 1618, is certainly more telling as Âṣaf Khân addresses Roe's two-fold capacity of commercial agent and political emissary,

> This Counsell Asaph Chan first gaue, telling me we were fooles and had brought vp a Custome to our owne hurt: the King expected nothing of merchantes but to buy, and at entrance (as fashion) a toy, and when anie petition, the like: that when we haue in the name of the King it should be seldomer, and then benefitting his honour. He demanded who practized this Course but yourselves, neither Duitch, Persians, nor Armenian merchantes; neither did the King expect it.[167]

In a letter to James I, written a day after Âṣaf Khân's admonition, Roe acknowledges the difficulty of his mandate,

> I dare not dissemble with your Maiestie their pride and dull ignorance takes all things done of duty, and this yeare I was enforced to stande out for the honor of your free guifts, which were sceazed vncivilly. I haue sought to meyntayne vpright your Maiesties greatenes and dignitie, and withall to effect the ends of the Merchant; but these two sometymes cross one another.[168]

Unfortunately for Roe, this understanding only came a few months before his return to England. It was his unyielding belief in the superiority of European modes of diplomacy that hindered his success in securing an English monopoly in India. Yet, his opportunity to observe the ambassadorial trains of other Muslim nations, most notably the Persians' arrival, alerted Roe to the importance of gifts in Mughal international etiquette. However, this discovery should not have been a surprise for the English ambassador. Chapter one's discussion on European perceptions of diplomacy cited the phenomena of gift exchanging between native monarchs and visiting ambassadors. Why, then, does Roe see the Mughal insistence on gifts as an aberration of his own sense of diplomatic negotiations ?

2.5.1: Diplomacy in the Indo-Islamic Context

Convinced that he was being foiled at every turn, Roe concluded the Mughals not only had little proper respect for international norms of etiquette, but their

166 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 390.

167 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 487.

168 Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 496-97.

existing standards were surreptitious and founded on a voracity for gifts. Nonetheless, scholarship, particularly of the colonial era, has traditionally emphasized the significance of Roe's mission. He has been accredited with introducing "proper diplomacy" to the Mughal context, thus laying "the first step in a march of conquest which has only of late years reached its limits."[169] By the same token, Roe is applauded for his ability to overcome the underdeveloped criterion of Mughal diplomacy and their stagnant sense of economics; as William Foster comments, "the victory rests with the Englishman, whose cool and resolute fence proved more than a match for the Oriental cunning of his adversary."[170] These interpretations are dubitable for a number of reasons. First, there is a modern assumption of commercial trade being naturally entwined with political negotiation. Second, Mughal understanding of ambassadors, with their underlying responsibilities and objectives, was a central feature of inter-state relations. The importance of these duties was heightened by a strictly defined sense of protocol and etiquette. This section will examine the theoretical role of diplomacy in a Muslim state. In doing so, I will illustrate the extent to which Jahângîr practised diplomatic decorum when dispatching or receiving ambassadorial trains to and from surrounding Muslim political states.

Nizâm al-Mulk dedicated an entire chapter of his *Siyâsat Nâma* to analyzing the importance of ambassadors; in addition to his various objectives (delivering of messages, negotiating of treaties, subtle reconnaissance of the land), an ambassador, above all, was viewed as an embodiment of a foreign king's sovereignty.[171] Nizâm al-Mulk warns "whatever treatment is given to an ambassador, whether good or bad, reflects on the respect for the king who sent him."[172] He continues his analysis by listing the requisite proficiencies of an ambassadorial envoy:

> [an embassy] requires a man who has served kings, who is courageous in speaking, but does not talk too much, who has travelled widely, who has a knowledge of various branches of learning, knows the Qur'ân by heart, who has a retentitive memory, is far-

169 William Foster, "Preface," in Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated In His Journal and Correspondence*, Vol. 1, ed. W. Foster, London: Hakluyt Society, 1899, p. 2.

170 William Foster, "Introduction," p. xiii.

171 S. Rizwan Ali Rizvi, *Nizam al-Mulk Tusi: His Contribution to Statecraft, Political Theory and the Art of Government*, Lahore: Asraf Printing Press, 1978, p. 149.

172 Nizâm al-Mulk, *Traité de Gouvernement* (*Siyaset-Name*), trans. and ed. C. Schefer, Paris: Éditions Sindbad, 1984, p. 164.

seeing, and has a pleasant appearance and a cheerful countenance.[173]

Another component of Islamic diplomacy was the ambassador's couriering and presentation of royal letters. Such letters were drafted by a leading *munshî* (scribe) of the court; in fact, the composition of *maktûb* was strictly outlined in Nakhchiwânî's *Dastûr al-Kâtib*.[174] This form of communication's importance is confirmed by the discovery and presentation of Mughal-Safavid correspondence by Riazul Islam in the late 1970s.[175] These royal letters were highly ornate and indulged in flowery, bordering on excessive, praise. A sovereign addressed his counterpart with a series of titles, covering from five to seven lines of the letter; failing to do so was construed as an insult.[176] The Mughal esteem for ambassadors is attested to by their incorporation into the *manṣabdârî* system. Prior to departure, an ambassador's status was usually registered by a *manṣab* increase of 500 or a 1000; his rank was also included in the accompanying royal letter so as to inform the receiving sovereign of the envoy's high station.[177] If an ambassadorial mission was successful, the envoy was rewarded with a *manṣab* increase. For example, when Khân 'Âlam returned from his six-year ambassadorial sojourn in Iran in 1619, Jahângîr "loaded him with all kinds of favours and kindnesses, and added to his rank and dignity."[178]

Jahângîr's organization and dispatching of ambassadorial trains was impressively elaborate. The demeanour of an ambassador, the size of his entourage, and the quality of gifts, were all measures by which the host sovereign judged an empire. Besides the ambassador, principal diplomatic officials included the *wâqi`a nigâr* (official reporter) and the *taḥwîl dâr* (keeper of the gifts).[179] Sincere in fostering good relations with his "brother," Shâh 'Abbâs of Iran, Jahângîr sent Khân

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173 Translated from French into English. Ibid., p. 165.

174 Riazul Islam, *A Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations*, Vol. 1, Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation, 1979, p. 10.

175 Ibid.

176 Naimur R. Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations: A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations Between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986, p. 379.

177 Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations: A Study of the Political and Diplomatic Relations Between the Mughal Empire and Iran*, Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation, 1957, p. 226.

178 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 115.

179 Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations*, p. 228.

'Âlam to Isfahan in 1611.[180] The chief Safavid source, Iskander Beg Munshî's *Tâ'rîkh-i 'Âlam-i Âra-i 'Abbâsî* , comments on the Mughal ambassador's arrival,

> ...but all were agreed from the beginning of this divine dynasty no ambassador ever came from India or Rum with such splendid and lavish equipments; and it is doubtful whether, even in the days of the great kings of the past, such an embassy ever came from a foreign land...from the day Khan Alam set foot on Persian soil, he had with him 1000 royal servants, his own private servants and 200 falconers and hunters. He also had with him mighty elephants with golden ornaments and turrets of innumerable kinds, and Indian animals such as lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys, deer, cows, etc...[181]

Jahângîr's welcoming of ambassadorial entourages was equally sumptuous. As soon as he heard the news of an impending arrival, he ordered the suitable arrangements. The *mehmândâr*, an official host, was responsible for arranging proper accommodations and seeing to the ambassador's wishes. During an ambassador's residency in Mughal India, he was treated as a royal guest and a considerable portion, if not all, of his expenses were subsumed by the king.[182] There are many references to the arrival of Persian and Uzbek diplomatic envoys in *Tûzuk*; for the most part, they are lavishly received with cash, jewels, and *mansabs*.[183] In fact, one letter to Shâh 'Abbâs in 1620 relates how Jahângîr was so impressed with the Zainul Beg's tenure in India that if the Persian ambassador ever chose to return, he was willing to travel to Kashmîr and receive the envoy himself.[184] Although Jahângîr's treatment of Persian ambassadors was tempered by his wish to control Qandahar, his attitude to other Muslim envoys was similarly grandiose,

> the ambassador of 'Izzat K., the ruler of Ûrganj, by name of Muhammad Zâhid, came to the Court...I distinguished him with the eye of kindness, and on the spur of the moment gave the ambassador 10,000 darbs (Rs. 5,000) as a present, and ordered the officials of the *buyûtât* to prepare and send things as he might ask for.[185]

However decently diplomatic envoys were stewarded, Jahângîr expected an

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180 A. Rahim, "An Aspect of Diplomacy of the Mughal Age," in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 9 (1961), p. 289.

181 As translated by Abdur Rahim, *Mughal Relations With Persia and Central Asia*, Aligarh: Muslim University of Aligarh, 1936, p. 28.

182 Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations*, p. 230.

183 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 1, p. p. 133, p. 193, p.299, pp. 337-338, p. 374, Vol. 2, p. 94, p.115, p. 186, p. 195, p. 211.

184 Calendar No. J.85, Islam, *A Calendar of Documents*, p. 200.

185 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 165.

ambassador to observe proper protocol while in his court. Besides performing the obligatory *kornish* or *taslîm*, the ambassador was additionally bound to bestow an adequate number of premium presents.[186] Mentioned earlier, these gifts were indicative of the prestige and power of an ambassador's master and his respect for the host sovereign. However, based on Jahângîr's memoirs, these gifts also represent an ambassador's expression of loyalty. For example, the Mughal emperor noted how,

> Zambîl Beg, ambassador of the ruler of Persia, had the good fortune to kiss the threshold. After performing salutation, he laid before me the gracious letter of that brother of high degree, containing perfect friendship. He presented 12 'Abbâsî (coin) as *nazar*, four horses with rappings, three tûghun (white) falcons, five mules, five camels, nine bows, and nine scimitars.[187]

Mughal understandings of sovereign-nobility relations, i.e. expressions of loyalty through the giving of the material vow, *nazr*, were, apparently extrapolated to diplomacy. While European observers defined such gift-giving as a means of currying favour, the Mughals perceived an ambassador's *nazr* as, not only an acknowledgment of the emperor's power and dominion, but essentially a vow of obedience. This paralleling of envoys with high-ranking nobility is further seen in various *mansab*-like transactions of the period. In 1621, the Persian representative, Zambîl Beg, was presented with control of a village valued at Rs. 16,000.[188] Further evidence comes, surprisingly, from Thomas Roe's account; on August 17, 1616, he describes how he was summoned into Jahângîr's presence and given a "picture of him selfe [Jahângîr] sett in gould hanging at a wire gould Chaine...it beeing the Custome, when soever hee bestowes any thing, the receiuer kneeles downe and putts his head to the ground (which hath been exacted of the Embassadores of Persia)."[189] However, improper behavior or insufficient *nazr* only hampered an ambassador's success. When a Turkish emissary arrived in 1608, Jahângîr deemed his entourage insufficient and coolly dismissed him.[190]

An embassy's mandate was another possible impediment in the Mughal court. Regarding Nizâm al-Mulk's theory of diplomacy, Rizvi states: "the ability of

186 Farooqi, *Mughal Ottoman Relations*, p. 231.

187 Jahângîr, *Tüzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 186.

188 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 211.

189 Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 1, p. 244.

190 Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, p. 44.

the negotiator, however, is limited by the nature of the matters of negotiations well as the equation established by the relative strength of the parties and their real interests."[191] Jahângîr's quasi-divine status, combined with the formidable strength of an excellently organized empire, certainly determined the tone of all diplomatic discourse. While according other Muslim states' ambassadors with respect and luxurious accommodations, Jahângîr's perception of the world beyond the Indian subcontinent was close to disinterest; the only exception was his "brotherly" relationship with Shâh 'Abbâs.[192] Of course, this relationship was significantly stressed by the Shâh's invasion of Qandahar in 1622.[193]

In summation, the Mughals possessed an intricate, if not entirely consistent, appreciation for diplomatic matters. As Jahângîr declares, "the maintenance of the compacts and treatises of great princes is the cause of the order of Creation and repose of mankind."[194] Mughal diplomacy was mostly characterized by the exchange of elaborate entourages with Shâh 'Abbâs and other Muslim rulers. Key features of this milieu were the exchange of royal letters, the appointment of special ambassadorial officials and administrators, and adhering to standardized protocol. Especially worth noting is the reinterpretation of gift-giving as a material transaction. Mughal sources, principally *Tûzuk-i Jahângîrî*, suggest gifts were symbolic of an ambassador's profession of loyalty to his hosting overlord. Lastly, topics of diplomatic discourse invariably included issues of sovereignty, territory, conquests, and religious matters; commercial issues were of no value given the Mughal indifference for overseas trade.

Considering these characteristics, it is of no surprise that Thomas Roe felt out of his element. While European standards of international etiquette were similar in some respects (special ambassadorial appointments, transmission of royal letters, lavish entourages with equally lavish accommodations), there are some critical discrepancies. Both Jahângîr and Âṣaf Khân were genuinely puzzled by Roe's two-fold capacity as imperial representative and trade negotiator. Mughal definitions of diplomacy could not fathom a king's representative being sent to secure trading

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191 Rizvi, *Nizam al-Mulk Tusi*, p. 155.

192 This is evident in a number of examples throughout *Tûzuk*. Vol. 1, p. 193, p. 194-196, pp. 378-88, 374, Vol. 2, p. 178, p. 186, p. 195, pp. 240-45.

193 Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, p. 293-295.

194 Jahângîr, *Tûzuk*, Vol. 2, p. 242.

farmâns . Second, England's relative distance and unimportance did little to alter Jahângîr's world view. Roe, unfamiliar with Mughal monarchical theory, could not realize the epicentral outlook of Indo-Muslim emperors. Third, and most important, Roe's rendering the value of *nazr* to "daylye bribing ," was a dramatic and naive simplification of a well-entrenched Mughal value system.

2.6: Conclusion

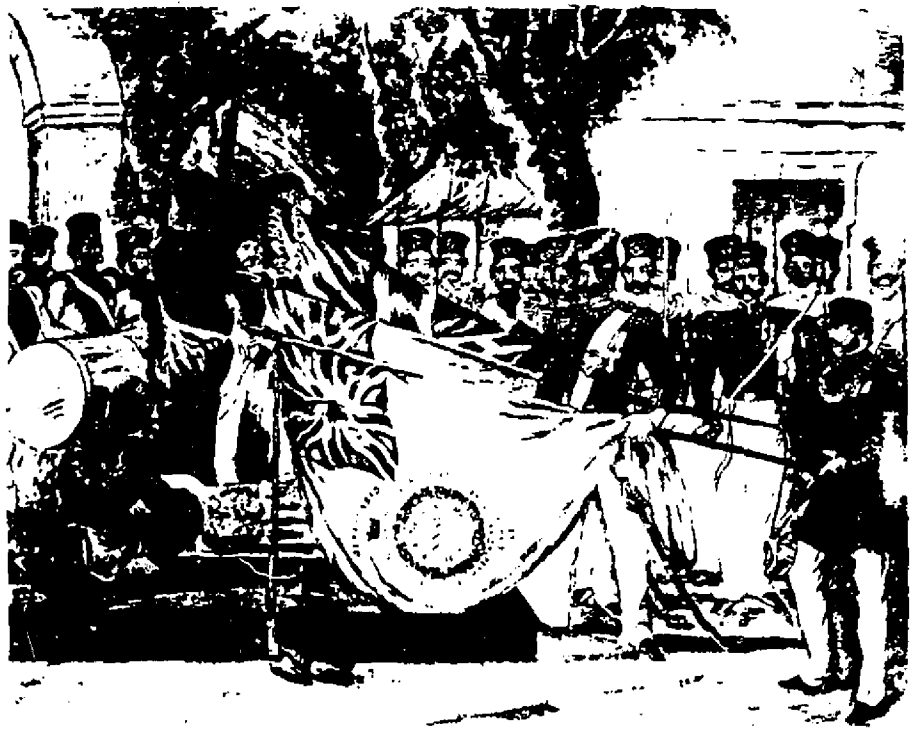
On February 16, 1618, Thomas Roe wrote to his colleague Sir Thomas Smythe: "these Princes and Customes are so Contrarie to ours that I shall trauell much in myne owne eies..."[195] Since the author himself realized the ineffable nature of another culture, he turned to commonly understood terms and concepts to succeed with the daunting task of conveying his impressions to an uninformed, inexperienced audience. Using "familiarization" and "encodation," Roe's figurative language helped his English readership picture or imagine his perceptions while in India.

This chapter was designed to explore interwoven subjective threads in *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* and how they related to concurrent trends in Jacobean England. Evidently, there is no rhyme or reason to this process; examples of Jacobean culture or polity vary from Senecan tragedy references to governmental-administrative metaphors. The end result is the same: elements of the Mughal empire, predominantly, monarchy, nobility, and diplomacy, lose their indigenous value and become transformed into a much more familiar system.

[195] Roe, *The Embassy*, Vol. 2, p. 498

Chapter Three:

Historiographical Currents and The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe



During the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the E.E.I.C reoriented their holistic trade practices of the Indian Ocean and East Asia to an intense focus on the Indian subcontinent. As the construction of Company factories intensified, especially in the area of Bengal, there was a concurrent growth of problematic issues and concerns in understanding and administering the economic facets of Indian life. Consequently, the eighteenth century witnessed the Company's patronizing of British scholars to research, translate, and interpret indigenous documents in an effort to yield some potential solutions.[1] However, the resulting proliferation of Indian histories and gazeteers was intricately connected with two influential factors: a) contemporary English trends of intellectual and academic thought; and b) understanding India's history, both Mughal and pre-Mughal, in relation to the looming economic and political presence of the British. The predominant intellectual trends of this period, be it Utilitarian or Romantic, had profound effects on Indian historical writing; moreover, various traits of this initial wave of academic work has only recently begun to be questioned under the guise of "colonialism discourse."[2] Subtly inserted among these nineteenth and early twentieth century works is Thomas Roe's ambassadorial mission.

Described as contributing "greatly to the establishment of his countrymen's position," Roe and his modest accomplishments figured significantly in rationalizing the lengthy, yet ultimately successful, evolution of British rule in India.[3] Politically, Roe was used by historians as a means of solidifying England's historical claim to India during a competitive, occasionally violent, era of overseas empire building. Academically, the illumination of Roe's efforts in India reflected

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1 J.S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India: The Assessments of British Historians*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 23.

2 Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's* The History of British India *and Orientalism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 8.

3 William Foster, "The East India Company, 1600-1740," in *The Cambridge History of India: British India 1497-1858*, Vol. 5, ed. H.H. Dodwell, Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1958, p. 80.

the Utilitarian conviction that history moves in a progressive, linear fashion; as a result, the history of India is seen as thousands of years of painful evolution, culminating with Roe's arrival and the subsequent imposition of the English. The critical point here is that it is impossible to understand Roe's historiographical domination of early seventeenth century Mughal India without examining the intellectual and cultural environment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, this chapter's objective is to present a simple outline of the nature of colonial British historical writing and how *The Embassy* was able to satisfy various academic agendas of the period.

Moreover, in an effort to establish the viability of this thesis to contemporary scholarship, both a quantitative and qualitative investigation will be made of recent publications to determine the extent to which the nineteenth century's emphasis on *The Embassy* continues unabated. Intertwined with some of these contentions is the argument that historians, when using Roe as an authoritative source, have consciously or subconsciously perpetuated some of the journal's motifs presented in chapter two; in other words, some scholars' renditions of Jahângîr's court adhere suspiciously close to the drama-oriented portrayal of the seventeenth century Renaissance diplomat.

3.1: Colonial British Historical Writing on India

Prior to the late eighteenth century, there were no English histories of India; furthermore, the inaccessibility of translated Persian and Hindi documents confined scholars to European travelling accounts. In the 1760s, Alexander Dow precipitated British interest in India by publishing his three volume *History of Hindostan* which was largely based on recently translated Persian sources. Dow best represents the Enlightenment trends circulating Europe where reason supersedes faith and empiricism is the only valid form of knowledge. Dow's *History* caters to the popular literary style of other English histories; this is manifested in various tales and scenes with the best example being his lengthy recounting of Nûrjahân's dramatic rise to power.[4] The Enlightenment movement soon gave way to the Evangelical trend of the early nineteenth century. The earliest and most characteristic of the Evangelical

[4] Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India*, p. pp. 6-11.

works, Charles Grant's *Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain,* considered the British nation morally obliged to apply principles of Christianity and western education.[5] British Evangelicals strove to rejuvenate a supposedly morally deprived and stagnant India through "the pure and benign principles of [British] religion."[6] An equally ethnocentric stance was assumed by the later Utilitarians whose mandate was founded on the need to introduce English concepts of government and law. It was out of this vein that the most influential work of the nineteenth century on India was produced in 1817: James Mill's *The History of British India.*

Ascribing to the booming capitalist economy of an industrialized England, Mill presented India's history believing that "progress is the natural law of society."[7] While ancient India was racked with "immortality and suffering," the Mughal dynasty was a relatively prosperous age which was comparable to the feudal era of mediaeval Europe.[8] However, self-enlightenment for the Indians was impossible without the economically and politically evolved British.[9] Interpretive values aside, Mill's work assumes an important paradigmatic quality in its use of historical sources and general approaches to historiography. After the Company's late eighteenth century wholesale sponsorship of document translation, a growing number of Persian sources were now available to aspiring British historians of Mughal India.

However, Mill and others of the Utilitarian bent were skeptical of the value of Persian historians; in fact, Mill found many of them unreliable due to inaccuracies, ignorance, and carelessness.[10] Historiographically, Mill felt it was incumbent on the historian to use deductive faculties to fill any vagaries or obscurities: "any good man of understanding without seeing a history, is able, almost, to *imagine* the disposition of the people when he reads its ancient statutes and ordinances. (italics mine)"[11] The suggestion to "imagine" invites dangerous

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5 C.H. Philips, "James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, and the History of India," in *Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, ed. C.H. Philips, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 218.

6 Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India*, p. 65.

7 James Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1972, p. 5.

8 Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 252-255.

9 Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India*, p. 172.

10 Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol. 2, pp. 219-221.

11 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 147.

subjective elements and one is reminded of White's recent warning, "once it is admitted that all histories are in some sense interpretations, it becomes necessary to determine the extent to which historians' explanations of past events can qualify as objective, rigorously scientific, accounts of reality."[12]

Heralding of British success in India reached an apex in the 1850s with the wide-spread English debate regarding the role of the E.E.I.C. in administering the Indian subcontinent. Convinced that progress was the guiding law of historical development, historians, like John William Kaye, redoubled their efforts to show how British administrative principles and policies indicated a marked improvement over those of the Mughals.[13] This, in turn, further impacted on the British evaluation of indigenous Mughal sources. Henry Elliot, both a protege of Mill and a staunch advocate of Utilitarianism, significantly expanded the availability of translated documents in his *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians* (1867). Nonetheless, one wonders at his conviction in this project when he states: "the full light of European truth and discernment begins to shed its beams upon the obscurity of the past, and [relieves] us from the necessity of appealing to the Native Chroniclers of the time, who are, for the most part, dull, prejudiced, ignorant, and superficial."[14]

As the decades passed, the British became increasingly dogmatic concerning their achievement in India. Historians of the late nineteenth century (Hunter, Hume, Wedderburn, Cotton) stressed that "political power was the great shaping force of civilization, and the great lever by which the vast majority were raised to a higher mental and moral plane."[15] Furthermore, these "philosophic historians" refuted the contention that British dominion came as a result of a sudden miracle; they perpetuated Mill's Utilitarian argument of the British Raj being a logical conclusion to the long-working forces of history.[16] In one historian's words, the British success in India "was no sudden achievement but an indomitable endurance

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12 White, "Interpretation in History," p. 51.

13 Nihar Nandan Singh, *British Historiography on British Rule in India*, New Delhi: Janaki Prakashan, 1986, p. 91.

14 Henry Elliot, "Preface," in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, Vol. 1, ed. H.M. Elliot and J.D. Dowson, London: Tübner and Co., 1867, p. xvi.

15 E.T. Stokes, "The Administrators and Historical Writing on India," in *Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, ed. C.H. Philips, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 401.

16 Ibid., p. 403.

during a century and a half of frustration and defeat."[17]

Three critical features of these early historiographical trends are important here. First, there was a pervading sense of linear progress, or evolution, where historians looked admiringly upon the early E.E.I.C. and their capacity to circumvent difficulties and plant the seeds of a future empire. The second characteristic, almost a subsidiary of the first, was a general depiction of the Mughal empire as a politically stunted and socially depraved state entity. Thirdly, while translated indigenous sources were valuable for practical, administrative information, their contribution to sociopolitical history was deemed limited and biased. As will be shown, these three qualities had significant ramifications for *The Embassy* and its place in Mughal historiography.

3.2: Appeasing Colonial Interests: The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe *in Early Modern English Historiography.*

As one of the first Englishmen of note to personally negotiate with the Mughals, historians of this period have endowed Roe with quasi-heroic properties. In Lane-Poole's estimation, he was "a true Elizabethan, with the gallant bravery, the passionate devotion to king and country, the great-hearted fanaticism of his age."[18] Foster parallels this tone, "English prestige...was raised to a high pitch by Roe's gallant bearing and indomitable will"[19] while The *Cambridge History of India* lauds his "stout resistance to indignities."[20] This style of writing is largely due to the Victorian tendency to explain English international superiority in terms of national character. As E.T. Stokes comments, "the function of the historian was to inform and exhort by presenting the national character in its highest examples, and [by doing so] he was to demonstrate how individual character moulded history."[21] Consequently, Thomas Roe was imbued with all the biographical features ("indomitable", "gallant", "passionate") that national heroes and heroines share.

Historians also recounted his feats in Mughal India in an equally favourable

17 W.W. Hunter, *History of British India*, New York: AMS Press, 1966, p. 11.

18 Stanley Lane-Poole, *Mediæval India Under Mohammadan Rule*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1906, p. 307.

19 Foster, "Introduction," p. xliv.

20 Haig and Burns, *The Cambridge History of India*, p. 162.

21 Stokes, "The Administrators and Historical Writing on India," p. 385.

light, "when [Roe] came to India, the English were very nearly on the point of being driven out of even their slight hold at Surat...the Mughal authorities were accustomed to treat the English as beggars to be spurned. All this changed before he left."[22] Furthermore, Roe's mission "was the first step in a march of conquest" and "the scarlet liveries which escorted the ambassador through Rajputana were prophetic of a time when a descendant of King James would rule over an Indian empire vaster and infinitely more prosperous than ever owned the sway of a Mogul."[23] One historian, J.D. Rees, goes so far as to describe Roe's arrival as being "memorable in the Mughal annals"; this statement, besides being patently inaccurate (there is no Mughal recognition of Roe's mission in any extant documents), is typical of the ethnocentric style dominating works of this period.[24]

In the eyes of colonialists, Roe secured the anchor by which British imperialism was able to grow and consolidate. Such views, however, badly misrepresent the relationship between the English national government and the E.E.I.C.; moreover, to see English activity in South Asia as nationally or imperially motivated is ambitious at best. The E.E.I.C., during the years 1614-1618, was represented by a small circle of English mercantile elite distributing large amounts of capital.[25] In addition, the number of English factories in India were not only limited but they represented a very minute percentage of factories spanning the Western Indian Ocean, Persia, Ceylon, Southeast Asia, and the Orient. The implications of Roe's ambassadorial success become even further downsized when one appreciates the relative strength of native trade elements, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, all of whom were participating in the "country trade system" of the Asian economic theater.[26] While there is no disputing the later British monopoly in South Asia, one has to be cautious in asserting that a) the English exercised any control over India in the 1610s; and that b) Roe was directly responsible for the later ascendancy of the English.

Furthermore, as Holden Furber succinctly points out, the historiographical trend of describing early E.E.I.C. missions as "imperial" or "colonial" is suspect.

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22 Lane-Poole, *Medæval India*, p. 308.

23 Foster, "Preface," p. 2.

24 J.D. Rees, *The Muslim Epoch*, New Delhi: Asian Publication Services, 1978, p. 129.

25 Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History*, London: Longman House, 1993, p. 4.

26 Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of Caravan Trade*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, p. 103.

Records of the early seventeenth century make no use of the terms "British empire" or "English" in connection with India. Documents of this period only refer to commercial potential; in fact, the British government, fearful of disturbing the recent peace with Spain (1604), made endeavours to distance itself from the occasionally aggressive policies of the E.E.I.C.[27]

Historians of this period also sought to manipulate Roe's frustration and indignation. As chapter two argued, Roe's reaction to Mughal practice of diplomacy and polity is partially explained by his own experiences in James I's court and a lack of familiarity with the Mughal context. However, this polemic tone connected neatly with the colonial agenda of downplaying the Mughal system so as to further rationalize later British hegemony. Many colonial-era histories imitate the satirical undertone of Roe's observations. Vincent Smith comments on how *The Embassy* faithfully recounts "a court saturated with intrigue, treachery, and corruption."[28] James Mill empathizes with Roe's resentment regarding Mughal protocol, "the rude court of India was not a place where the powers of an ambassador could be exerted with much effect."[29] Foster reflects Roe's disdain for Jahângîr when stating: "despite his drunkenness, his occasional lapses into cruelty, his weak-minded submission to the influence of his wife and of his favourite son, the portrait of Jahangir is not favourable...the Conqueror of the World was the slave of a woman."[30]

Lastly, *The Embassy's* publication and distribution in 1899 came at an auspicious time when native sources were esteemed as "a mass of gossiping *Bukkurs* and gasconading *tawareekhs*."[31] While European travelling accounts were used for occasional insights into various Mughal courts over the centuries, Roe's comprehensive and detailed manner quickly solidified its position in early seventeenth century Mughal historiography. Coming at an age where any historical account was accepted as an objective representation of a past reality, historians of the early modern period rarely considered the inherent danger of relying on a foreigner's perception of a non-European setting. In fact, skepticism of Mughal

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27 Holden Furber, "The Theme of Imperialism and Colonialism in Modern Historical Writing on India," in *Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, ed. C.H. Philips, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 332-334.

28 Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1923, p. 369.

29 Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol. 1, p. 611.

30 Foster, "Introduction," p. xvi.

31 T.E. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Vol. 2, London: John Murray Ltd., 1884, p. 137.

sources, best represented in Elliot's preface to his compilation of Indian Muslim historians, contributed to the persistent dependence on European, especially English, accounts. V.A. Smith totes *The Embassy* as a "faithful record of the manner in which business was done"[32] while Elphinstone argues that "[Roe's] accounts enable us to judge the state of India under Jehangir."[33]

Ironically enough, the quasi-artistic element in Roe's writing is considered a virtue in Foster's opinion,

> ...his position afforded him excellent opportunities for observation, while a natural gift for *literary expression* imparted a vividness to his description which is often lacking in the writings of other travellers of the period. The result is a *picture of India* of the early seventeenth century which is of exceptional value and interest.(italics mine)[34]

The use of the italicized words strike this author as, not qualified recognitions of the literary essence of Roe's presentation, but an indiscreet, possibly deliberate, acceptance of a literature-oriented subjectivity. This contention blends well with recent theories concerning the close relationship between the writing of history and literature. Specifically, scholars of historiography interpret many twentieth century histories as a refashioning of past events into stories complete with protagonists, antagonists, and conflict; furthermore, as White observes,

> the events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of [facts] and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone, and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like - in short, all the techniques that we would normally expect in the emplotment of a novel or a play.[35]

It is plausible that historians, especially of the nineteenth century, have considered *The Embassy* ,with its inherent literary and dramatic undertones, a convenient tool of satisfying this historiographical trend.

3.3: Contemporary Mughal Studies and Thomas Roe

The waning of the colonial era ushered in a new generation of Indian

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32 Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 369.

33 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *History of India*, Vol. 2, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1988, p. 181.

34 Foster, "Preface," p. 2.

35 White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," p. 84.

scholars working on Mughal studies. However, as Peter Hardy has suggested, men like Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Ishwari Prasad, and S.R. Sharma were "immigrants into an already well-settled colony" of historical research.[36] As a result, histories written from the Indian perspective did little to question or disturb Roe's central position in Mughal historiography. Prasad continues the English edification of Roe with adjectives such as "natural shrewdness" and "dextrous"; meanwhile, Roe's account is presented as providing a "vivid picture of the court and faithful character of all the prominent members of the royal family."[37] S.R. Sharma and Beni Prasad continue the near-exclusive use of *The Embassy*; yet, an exception should be noted for Prasad who cautions his reader on many of Roe's inaccuracies.[38]

Nonetheless, we can still discover elements of British colonial historiography in recent works. These studies faithfully replicate, without discernment, Roe's dramatic flair in their interpretations of Jahângîr's court. Anil Kumar describes the royalty as "main figures" in a "political drama"[39] while Bamber Gascoigne makes note of Roe's analogy of Jahângîr's court to that of a public theater in London without any qualification.[40] E.B. Findly has catered to the tragedy motif wholly, "the business of the [junta] was such that no matter what the personal style of the players, the faction in power was sure to be seen as cunning and avaricious as having duped an innocent, if lame, emperor into their hands."[41] Findly's estimation of Jahângîr is eerily similar to those of the nineteenth century, "envisioning the uniqueness of his own appearance in the world, Jahangir became self-centered and self-indulgent. He developed grand and inflated views of himself..."[42] She uses this characterization to impinge on the Mughal sense of diplomacy, "it was a kindred diplomatic policy that dreamt of placing his empire, with him as its symbol, at the center of all other nations of the earth." However, Findly makes no reference to Indo-Islamic definitions of international relations in these categorical statements and, instead, explains how "it would have taken a substantial personality to allow such a

36 Peter Hardy, "Modern Muslim Historical Writing on Medieval Muslim India," in *Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, ed. C.H. Philips, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 297.

37 Ishwari Prasad, *The Mughal Empire*, Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1974, p. 435.

38 S.R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India: A Study in Medieval History*, Bombay: Kitabs Ltd., 1954, pp. 506-510. For Prasad's evaluation of Roe, see Prasad, p. 399.

39 Anil Kumar, *Asaf Khan and His Times*, Patua: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1986, p. 45.

40 Bamber Gascoigne, *The Great Moguls*, London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1971, p. 144.

41 Findly, *Nur Jahan*, p. 56.

42 Ibid., p. 65.

mockery to unfold over so many years, but perhaps by his later life he was such a man: hopelessly entangled in fantasies about his political role."[43] While some scholars have endeavored to liberate Jahângîr of such unflattering terms as "inept," "innocent," and "submissive," strong threads of Roe's original perceptions, augmented by colonial historians, have continued to appear in modern historical works. Some of these include Jahângîr's hedonist lifestyle, a lack of respect for international diplomacy, and an overall feeling that the Mughal court was akin to a theatrical production. The most tenacious thread, however, is the perception of a well-established "junta" controlling every mechanism of the empire.

3.4: The Crystallization of the "Junta" Theory

The most conspicuous feature of Jahângîr's reign, evidently, is the hegemonic quartet of family figures. Led by Nûrjahân, the "junta" dominated Jahângîr "so completely that he delegated all his powers and functions to them and accepted their decisions without reservations."[44] Discussed earlier, Persian sources are silent regarding any coordinated behaviour between Nûrjahân, Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I'tmâd al-daula. Furthermore, the native histories which do chronicle Nûrjahân's rise to power appeared under the patronage of Shâhjahân; his earlier revolt in 1622 could then be rationalized as a legitimate rebellion against a power-hungry wife of the emperor. This "junta" theory, nonetheless, has continued as an accepted component of Jahângîr's reign during the years 1611 to 1620.

While Nurul Hasan has done much to undermine the documentation of this argument, little has been said regarding how this theory became so fashionable. Understanding of history, as any historian will concede, is a fluid phenomena; one generation of historical scholarship readily accepts one particular interpretation while a later generation will sponsor another. In this case, a review of historical studies published between 1817 and 1993 suggests that the "junta" is a relatively recent construct. A comparison of publications before and after Prasad's *The History of Jahangir* (1922) reveals a discernible difference in how scholars perceived the royal family of this period. A quantitative and qualitative examination of three modern works, *The History of Jahangir*, Gascoigne's *The Great Moguls*, and Findly's

[43] Ibid., pp. 72-74.

[44] Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, p. 459.

Nur Jahan, suggests that any "faction" evidence rests on observations made in *The Embassy*. These three works have been selected for their extensive documentation and use of footnotes. While reading modern histories of the Mughals, specifically of Jahângîr, I have noted that many make little effort to document statements or interpretations. For a historiographic study such as this, sporadic references are problematic when one is trying to determine how and why scholars make certain assertions.

In essence, we have the appearance, or crystallization, of an unprecedented theory in 1922: based mainly on one source, this argument has significantly moulded contemporary scholarship's evaluation of the early seventeenth century Mughal court. The suddenness of the "junta" argument is attested to by its non-existence in earlier scholarly works. In 1817, Mill commented on the Mughal scenario as follows,

> through the influence of the favourite Sultana, the vizarit was bestowed upon her father; her two brothers were raised to the first rank of Omrahs, by the titles of Ustad Khan and Asaf Jah; but their modesty and virtues reconciled all men to their sudden evaluation; and though the emperor, naturally voluptous, was now withdrawn from business by the charms of his wife, the affairs of the empire were conducted with vigilance, prudence, and success; and the administration of [Jahângîr] was long remembered in India, as a period of justice and prosperity.[45]

While Mill makes note of the relative power of Nûrjahân's relations, there is no suggestion of usurpation or collaboration between the family members. Likewise, Elphinstone discusses the ascendancy of Nûrjahân with no speculation of factional organization. J.D. Rees' *The Muslim Epoch* (1894) has little to say regarding any collusion between the leading family members and focuses any discussion of political scheming to the Queen Begam. In 1903, Lane-Poole concluded that Nûrjahân was "aided by her subtle brother, Asaf Khan" but did not mention a relationship with Khurram or I'timâd al-daula.[46] V.A. Smith comes closest to alluding to a factional element, "Jahangir, half fuddled with strong drink and opium, had not the strength of will to resist the wiles of his designing queen, her equally unscrupulous brother, Âṣaf Khân, and the subtlety of Prince Khurram."[47] However, once again, we find no use of "junta" or "faction" in this or any other

[45] Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol. 1, p. 610.

[46] Lane-Poole, *Medæval India*, p. 320.

[47] Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 369.

interpretation of Smith's.

After 1922, Nûrjahân's relationship with Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I'timâd al-daula transformed from one of informality to an organized and deliberate usurping of power. Beni Prasad's *The History of Jahangir*, discussed in more detail further on, made the speculative leap, primarily based on *mansab* records, that Nûrjahân and her cohorts personally ruled the empire from 1611 until 1620, after which Khurram's accumulated power allowed him to operate on his own. The speed and willingness with which this theory was incorporated by Mughal historians was impressive. S.R. Sharma reproduced whole passages of Prasad's original argumentation in his 1954 *The Crescent in India*.[48] *The Cambridge History of India* comments how "within a month of his arrival at the court of Ajmer, Roe discovered the power exercised by [Nûrjahân] and her clique."[49] .S.M. Ikram, a prominent Pakistani historian after the 1947 Partition, wrote, "Nur Jahan, Asaf Khan, and Prince Khurram had co-operated in controlling the affairs of the country."[50] Both Gascoigne and Findly consistently implement "junta," "quartet of power," "faction," "cohorts," and "players" in their descriptions of court movements during this period. J.F. Richards describes the arrangement between these family members as an "alliance" who "exerted enormous influence over Jahangir."[51] Kumar's interpretation of the state of affairs illustrates well the extent to which the "junta" theory has been accepted and expanded since 1922, "not even a blade could move on the chessboard in Mughal politics in the period of [Nûrjahân's] sway without the wish of this clique presided over by Nur Jahan with a doting Jahangir to rubber stamp its decision."[52] Abdur Rashid's article on Jahângîr in Volume Seven of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, a generally pro-Hindu history, serves as an exception to the norm; however, the conclusion "neither Nûr Jahân nor the other cliques really dominated over [Jahângîr] so far as the principles of foreign and domestic policy were concerned" might have been influenced by Jahângîr's well-known judicial policies and his fair treatment of

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48 S.R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India*, pp. 504-507.

49 Haig and Burns, *The Cambridge History of India*, p. 163.

50 S.M. Ikram, *Muslim Rule in India and Pakistan (711-1858 A.C.)*, Lahore: Educational Publishers, 1961, p. 315.

51 J.F. Richards, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Mughal Empire*, Vol. 5•1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 102.

52 Kumar, *Asaf Khan and His Times*, pp. 46-47.

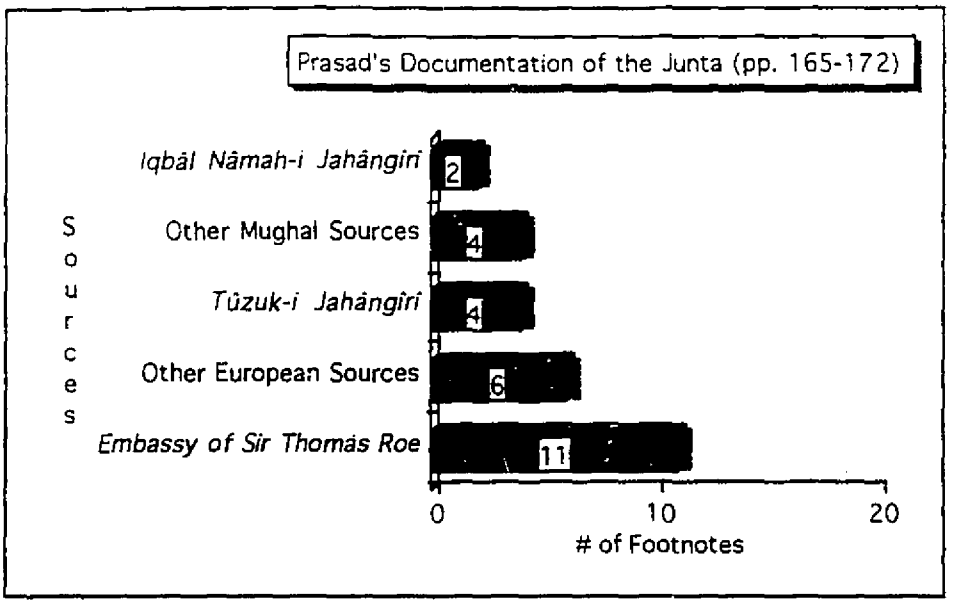
Hindu minorities.[53] Gascoigne and Findly aside, the afore mentioned scholars did not adequately substantiate their conclusions on this matter. Consequently, it is difficult to determine the degree to which they rely on Roe's account of the Mughal court.

Beni Prasad, conveniently the architect of the "junta" premise, was the first to sufficiently document his findings on the relationship between the Queen and the others. Prasad introduces his theory by recounting the oft-mentioned recreational talents of Jahângîr; in doing so, he sets the tone where "Jahangir leaned more and more to ease and sloth and Nur Jahan grew more and more experienced and inured to power."[54] Nûrjahân's power is attested to by the non-contemporary documents of Mu`tamad Khân and Khwâja Khâmgâr Husainî. He then discusses the individual growth in power by Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I`timâd al-daula by citing *m a nṣab* boons from the emperor. These individual bases of power are then connected to the Queen to suggest that "for the next ten years, this clique of four supremely capable persons practically ruled the empire."[55] However, the documentation of this conclusion is questionable. I have taken the liberty of compiling a chart to illustrate the extent to which European accounts, specifically *The Embassy*, contribute to the "junta" theory,

53 Abdur Rashid, "Jahângîr," in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 7, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974, p. 195.

54 Prasad, *The History of Jahangir*, p. 160.

55 Ibid., p. 165.

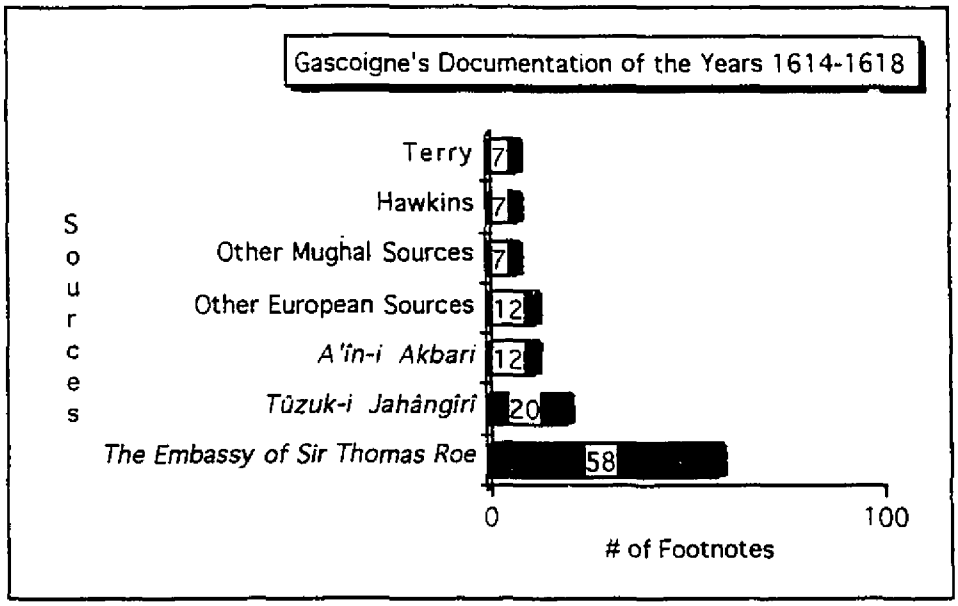


It is within these pages that Prasad discusses the "two-faction" system, with Khusrau and Mahâbat Khân one one side and the "junta" on the other, dominating the years from 1611 to 1620. However, Khusrau's defeat at the hands of Khurram *et alia* in 1616 caused "deep consternation in the palace and the court and country" yet was "naturally deemed a great victory for the junta."[56] These statements, and others like them, are documented to by *The Embassy*; furthermore, Prasad uses Roe's observations during the years 1616 to conclude that "all through this period, the hopes and aspirations, the intrigues and conspiracies, of the rival parties kept the court in constant agitation."[57]

Bamber Gascoigne's work, published in 1971, is a monarch-by-monarch treatment of the Mughal empire. His chapter on Jahângîr, roughly fifty pages, heavily subscribes to the premise of a "junta" presence, "during the greater part of Jahangir's reign the quartet of advisers whose voices could so easily sway the

[56] Ibid., p. 170.
[57] Ibid., p. 171.

emperor consisted of Nur Jahan and her father and brother together with Prince Khurram."[58] If we examine Gascoigne's use of sources covering the years 1614 to 1618, wherein he discusses the "quartet of advisers" at length, we find the following distribution of footnotes,



Once again, we discover an overwhelming use of *The Embassy* while elaborating on this period of Jahângîr's reign. It should be noted that, in addition to discussing the political climate of the Mughal empire, Gascoigne also includes descriptions of Jahângîr's daily routine, Mughal admiration for European art, and various Indo-Islamic festivals.

Findly's *Nur Jahan*, published in 1993, is an amalgamation of new and old theories. Like Prasad and Gascoigne, she contends that

> Roe discerned at once the nature and relations of all the *characters* arrayed before him and believed full well that in the peculiarities of their *familialalliances* lay his fate. Powerless before what he called the "treacherous faction," Roe found that there was another equally as powerless as he: the emperor. While Jahangir was his only refuge and source of justice, he

58 Gascoigne, *The Great Moghuls*, p. 138.

was, nevertheless, also at the mercy of the faction's whims.(italics mine)[59]

Findly's use of the term "character" and "familial alliances" to describe the system of courtier relationships is interesting. Throughout her chapter, "The Rise of the Junta," there is an undercurrent of drama, where one son is pitted against another due to the machinations of all-knowing Queen ("Nur Jahan's control of [information gathering and policymaking] could be found in all parts of the government"); meanwhile the king, having "bowed to the effects of alcohol and opium," was "powerless" to put a stop to the ongoing "fratricidal fighting".[60] Any dramatic elements, Findly contends, are explainable by Jahangir's aesthetic approach to ruling his empire,

> What satisfied Jahangir was what gave him pleasure, and what gave him the most pleasure were things he could see. He was guided not by principles of right or wrong or standards of good behavior, but by an affective and material order, which could be known, admired, and manipulated by him as viewer...*All this, Roe noted, was part of the theater-like quality of Jahangir's court.*"(italics mine)[61]

Akin to Foster (1899) and Gascoigne (1971), we find another example of an historian not acknowledging the latent implications of Roe's dramatic analogies. While this thesis has endeavored to argue that Roe's metaphors and synedoches might have been part of a larger attempt to "familiarize" the Mughal reality, historians, like Findly, accept the Englishman's account as an objective representation. In doing so, they prolong and preserve Roe's 380-year old observation of the Mughal court having "soe much affinitye with a Theatre." Furthermore, Findly's documentation points to Western scholarship's trend of relying on Roe's account,

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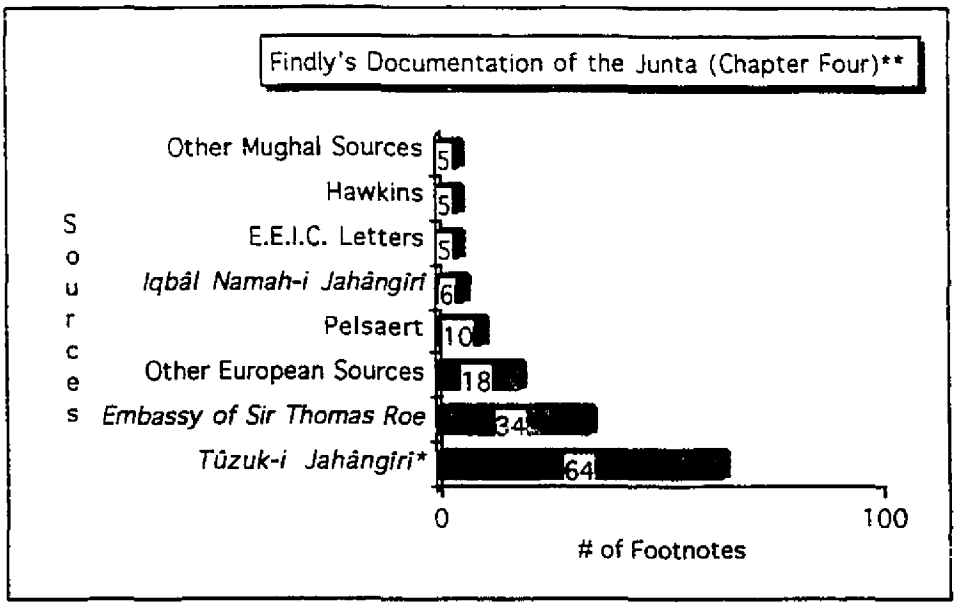
59 Findly, *Nur Jahan*, p. 57.

60 Ibid., p. 58.

61 Ibid., pp. 62-63.



Findly qualifies her extensive use of European accounts by stating, "I have made extensive use of quotations from original texts in order to ground opinions, events, and people and to make clear as possible what was known and thought, and when and by whom."[62] It seems E.B. Findly is not dissuaded or hindered by the obvious question of whether a historical source can faithfully describe what someone is "thinking." The overwhelming utilization of European accounts (48.9%) in this chapter is questionable given they are used to discuss, not only the highest level of political activity, but the personal state of affairs between the ruling elite. Overlooking the danger of inaccuracy and misrepresentation, Findly totes European observations as "the earliest documentation for scandalous portions of

* Many of the citations from this source are used to discuss the distribution of *manṣabs* to the various family relations of Nûrjahân. Jahângîr's memoirs do not discuss the "junta" on any occasion.

** It should be noted that this chapter includes a lengthy discussion of Nûrjahân's early life and her marriage to Jahângîr; any discussion of factional activity comes toward the end of the chapter.

62 Ibid., p. 7.

today's oral traditions."[63]

Much like Prasad, Findly describes the relative power of the various family members in an individual context; the missing piece, the piece which transforms the four personages into a "quartet of power," is provided by *The Embassy*. Furthermore, the earlier topic of Roe juxtaposing the Portuguese and the English, with their corresponding Mughal allies in the court, is a ongoing theme in *Nur Jahan*. Roe's ambassadorial mission is inflated in this setting, "the story of the first English embassy to the Mughal court and of its difficult relations with Nur Jahan and her junta is irrevocably bound to the history of the other main European presence: the Portuguese."[64] Mughal sources very rarely mention European competition, let alone any formal "alliances" between various Mughal nobles and one of the European companies. Nonetheless, Findly ignores this disparity and, making full use of Roe and other accounts, states,

> Shahjahan was in fact regularly partial to the Portuguese cause. Perhaps because the alliance with the Portuguese was an older one, or because the current English representation was a more successful match for the prince, Shahjahan was consistently hostile to English concerns and more open instead to those of their European rivals...It was no surprise then that Roe quickly developed a preference for the fickly disfavoured Khusrau, who was seen not only as an advocate of all Christians, but a genteel and well mannered diplomat.[65]

3.5: Conclusion

The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe has enjoyed healthy representation in almost every history of India written since the early nineteenth century. The political and administrative climate of India in the nineteenth century contributed to a genuine interest in learning more of India's past. However, concurrent with this exploration of India's heritage, were various trends in historical scholarship that directly affected how the Mughals era was perceived. Three fundamental characteristics of colonial scholarship's treatment of India's early modern period were: a) presenting the Mughal dynasty as an interim stage of progressive development between the primitive Indian kingdoms and the present British Raj; b) highlighting unsavory Mughal features in an effort to rationalize the

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., p. 129.

65 Ibid., p. 142.

administrative policies of the English in India; and c) a disdain for Persian sources of the Indo-Islamic period. Various qualities of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* matched these trends in British historical writing on India. First, Roe was the first English ambassador to visit Indian soil, thus establishing a linear connection between early seventeenth century English activity and the later claims being made in the nineteenth century. Second, the polemic tone of Roe's writing was advantageous to the British historical mandate of presenting the Mughal rulers and the court as politically and morally stagnant. Lastly, *The Embassy's* status as an English, "objective" account superseded the use of "biased" and "ignorant" indigenous sources of the period.

As historical scholarship of the Mughal period continued to grow in the twentieth century, it seems that *The Embassy* maintained its authoritative position. Indian and non-Indian historians continued the British colonial reliance on Roe's observations. In 1922, interpretation of Jahângîr's reign was drastically altered with the introduction and incorporation of Beni Prasad's "junta" theory, whereby Nûrjahân, Khurram, Âṣaf Khân, and I`timâd al-daula manipulated the emperor in their quest to directly rule the empire. However, histories written prior to 1922 only mention the relative power of the Queen and make no reference to any organized factions. Nevertheless, a survey of a number of post-1922 histories indicated a faithful subscription to this argument. In an attempt to explore the underpinnings of this theory, this chapter examined three scholars (Prasad, Gascoigne, and Findly) and their documentation of these court machinations. In all three, it was discovered that *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* represented a significant portion of the cited references. It is plausible to contend, not only is the "junta" theory a recent construct, but its principal source of substantiation lies with the ambassador's observations and perceptions.

Concluding Remarks

In essence, the study of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* has been a study of context and its fluidity from one period to another. Its production in the early seventeenth century was congruous with a singular stream of language and world consciousness. Roe's characterization of the Mughal empire from 1615 to 1618 parallels many of the literary devices and mechanisms of expression common to the Jacobean era of England. One of the critical features of Renaissance Humanism was the imbrication of factional and fictional representation. Historical topics and themes were interwoven with literary milieus while historians repeatedly catered to literary motifs and styles in their discussions of the past. It is is difficult, knowing this, to qualify *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* as a factual medium, with inherent qualities of objectivity and realism. If anything, this text, from a seventeenth century perspective, floats in an environment where fiction and fact were barely discernible.

One of the stated purposes of this thesis was to emphasize the contextual nature of Roe's writing. In chapter one, we explored the four dimensions of Jacobean society Roe interacted with: literary, courtly, diplomatic, and political. A careful study of Roe's background and his journal, *The Embassy*, has revealed the possibility of Roe catering to Jacobean governmental terminology, popular plot structures, and *mythoi*. Some predominating motifs and themes included literary allusions to Senecan tragedies, "player-king" analogies, and the manipulation of "the disguised Duke" device while commenting on a court racked with corrupted factional elements. In discussing the composition of the court, Roe made use of Jacobean terms and, quite possibly, inflated the presence of an opposing "faction" to rationalize his inability to procure a *farman*. Moreover, Roe possibly portrayed a corrupted version of Mughal monarchy to predict the disastrous implications of royal prerogative completely subjugating the rights of a nation's citizens. Lastly, Roe's understanding of Mughal international etiquette was examined as an example of how European models of diplomacy failed in an Islamic environment. Roe's

rendition of Mughal diplomatic practices, while initially hostile, eventually became more conciliatory when the ambassador realized that the Mughal authorities saw an ambassador/merchant as contrapositive. Nonetheless, Jahângîr's emphasis on the need for valuable and impressive gifts was depicted as greedy and lacking in composure.

The Mughal perspective on many of the issues discussed by Roe was offered to highlight any incongruencies in *The Embassy*. The main characteristic of Roe's interpretation of the court was the bitter power struggle between the "junta" and other members of the court. Contemporary Mughal documents, however, do not substantiate this interpretation. A simple explanation of the *manṣabdârî* system and its contribution to the maintenance to the empire was presented to impress the complexity of Mughal organization; furthermore, the details of such a wide-ranging, multi-faceted bureaucracy will have hopefully reminded the reader of the dangers of focusing on the machinations of a few well-placed individuals to understand how an empire is maintained. A deeper investigation of sources revealed that *manṣabdârs* viewed themselves as "slaves" to the emperor and how the empire was analogous to a extended household; this relationship was periodically reinforced by the extending of a vows, or *nazr*. Roe, and others, made the superficial observation of this being the equivalent to bribery or tribute; however, the phenomena of *nazr* is rooted in an Islamic tradition and its later manifestation under the Mughals took the form of material items and cash. Lastly, a brief overview of Mughal diplomatic practice was provided in defiance of Roe's assertion that Mughal sense of international etiquette was "want of Ciuilitye and barberisme."

The nature of historical sources as "factual representations of reality" was part of the nineteenth century trend in scholarship to define history as an "objective" discipline. Recent philosophies of history, however, argue that historical accounts are simply subjective, moralized accounts of a past reality. This has been the underlying concern of this thesis in trying to understand *The Embassy's* role in nineteenth and twentieth century Mughal historiography. Some historians who have relied on Roe's account for understanding Jahângîr's reign have failed to appreciate the contextual nature of his journal. Moreover, they did not acknowledge the inherent danger in using a European account when making general interpretations of a non-European reality.

As contextual values changed, logically an inevitable process, understanding of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* changed as well. With the phenomena of categorization beginning in the nineteenth century, scholars strove to delineate literature and history. Once described as "the study of the real versus the study of the imaginable," the discipline of history became understood as a rational science while literature was slotted into the forum of imagination and creativity.[1] *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe's* status as a "recording of events" dictated its incorporation as a factual representation rather than a literary production.

Despite these efforts, historical writing could not be entirely separated from the legacy of its close relationship with literature. Peripatetic styles of writing histories, with intriguing moral conundrums and dramatic personal conflicts, continue to be produced.[2] In the case of Roe's text and its subtle inclusion of Jacobean pre-generic plot structures, a comfortable connection resulted. Yet, historians' use of this source has been somewhat bipolar. Bound by a modern conceptual system where Roe's text should be naturally construed as objective, scholars are still influenced, consciously or subconsciously, by the subjunctive, narrative element of this seventeenth century written work.

The alleged irreconcilability between fact and fiction is conveniently overlooked by historians while using *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* as a source for understanding Mughal India. Consequently, we look to Roe's observations to objectively conclude certain interpretations, yet we are motivated by Roe's dramatic undertones to present the years of 1615 to 1618 as a narrative, complete with characterization, plot movement, and conflict.

The danger of not appreciating Roe's propensity for literary allusions and Jacobean terminology is compounded by the colonial-era cementing of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* in pre-modern Mughal historiography. In addition to Roe's narrative style suiting concurrent trends of episodic historical writing, nineteenth century historians were keen to elevate Roe as the English national hero who established the seedling infrastructure of the later British Empire in India. As Peter Hardy comments, "[historians] tend to regard the past as valid and the interests of

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1 White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation," p. 124.

2 Norman L. Jones, "History Without Teleology: Framing the Historical Narrative," in *Perspective as a Problem in the Art, History, and Literature of Early Modern England*, ed. M. Lussier and S.K. Heninger, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, p. 137.

the people of the past as valid only in relation to the present."[3] Moreover, the availability of a first-hand account written in English relieved historians of the onerous task of working with indigenous documents. Developments such as these are hard to overcome and, as an examination of recently written works suggested, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe* has maintained a prominent position in the spectrum of available seventeenth century Mughal sources.

A survey of Mughal documents from this period supports very few of Roe's interpretations. Roe's observations of monarchy, nobility, and diplomacy, which historians consistently use in their quest to understand Mughal sociopolitical features, appear to be incongruent with Indo-Islamic definitions. Nonetheless, such discrepancies are often overlooked and Roe's "Anglified" rendition of Jahângîr's court and empire remains intact. This thesis is, by no means, a call to eliminate the use of *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*. What it is, however, is a focused study of how important context is to understanding how and why observations are expressed the way they are. This, in turn, is part of a larger concern addressing the use of European sources in non-European settings.

[3] Hardy, "Modern Muslim Historical Writing on Medieval Muslim India," p. 307.

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