A Peaceable Kingdom in the East:
Favourable Early Seventeenth-
Century Representations
of the Moghul Empire

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Résumé : *Cet article a pour objet de comparer les perspectives divergentes des Portugais, des Danois et des Anglais vis-à-vis de l'empire moghal en se fondant sur les récits de voyages britanniques du dix-septième siècle. Si les Portugais qualifiaient les autochtones d'« étrangers » barbares, les Britanniques, qui formaient la English East India Company, avide d'échanges avec l'empire, considéraient l'aristocratie moghal et les Musulmans comme des partenaires commerciaux civilisés et dotés d'une riche culture. Bien que les premiers voyageurs brossent un sombre tableau du peuple hindou, qui n'avait pas de liens directs avec la English East India Company, les auteurs des récits de voyages britanniques décrivent l'empire moghal comme un peuple hautement civilisé et faisant preuve d'une tolérance singulière à l'égard des autres religions.*

The complexity of the discourse generated by the encounter between the English travellers and the natives of the Mughal empire in the seventeenth century is still not fully understood. Many current approaches to the seventeenth-century English travel narratives on “India” revolve around the East-West dichotomy used by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). For instance, Jyotsna Singh argues that most of the seventeenth-century English travel narratives set up “moral boundaries between Christian Europe and the ‘brutish’ Indians.” She claims that “English travelers / writers are often caught up in the ideological codes of the time, such as the naturalized belief in the superiority of ‘Christendome’ over the non-Christian ‘heathens,’ despite the fact that the latter might act in ways morally superior to certain Christians.”¹ At the same time, current approaches assume the idea of a homogeneous “Europe” vis-à-vis “India” in the seventeenth century. Kate Teltscher maintains that seventeenth-century European narratives on

“India” cross “boundaries of nation and creed” and therefore “for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it is possible to speak of a European tradition of writing about India.”²

While there are numerous instances to support Teltscher’s view, the significant question remains to be asked: can these diverse narratives be amalgamated to convey a single “European” vision of “India” in the seventeenth century? A comparison between the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch trade set up in “India” shows that the approach of each of these nations to the Mughal empire was very distinct from the others’. There was no single discourse. Trade, for the Portuguese, involved the ideas of dynasty and religious conversion; the Dutch linked trade with national security; for the English the primary consideration was commercial, and differences of culture or religion decidedly secondary. The contrasting approaches of the European nations to the Mughal empire not only bring into question the idea of a homogeneous “West”; they also reveal ideas that governed the different European perceptions of the natives in the Mughal empire. In my reading, which challenges the current line of thought, I demonstrate that in keeping with the Portuguese idea of a dynasty, the Portuguese represent the natives as barbaric “others” in their writings, while the commercial concerns of the English East India Company make the English see the Mughal aristocracy and the Muslims as mutual trade partners, who are highly civilized and cultured in their way of life. The Hindus, on the other hand, who were generally categorized as “gentiles,” and with whom the English East India Company was not directly involved, are at times described in negative terms, especially by the early travel writers. However, the overall picture of the Mughal empire that emerges from the seventeenth-century English travel narratives is one of a highly evolved civilization with an incredibly high level of religious tolerance, which questions a straightforward Orientalist reading.

Awareness of the different approaches is not new. W.W. Hunter, in 1899, observes that the Portuguese model in “India” was entirely alien to the constitution of the English East India Company:

The Portuguese system had been created by a dynasty; it worked by, and for the benefit of, the crown. Its ships were the King’s ships, its cargoes were bought and stowed by the King’s people, the pursuer or financial superintendent of the voyage was nominated by the King’s Secretary, and the officers were appointed by the Admiralty. Even the King granted a license to private merchants.³

In 1977 Bailey W. Diffie and George D. Winius observe that the Portuguese idea of trade differed from the other Europeans nations since it was under the direct control of the king:

What distinguished the medieval Portuguese *feitoria* from all other national operations ... was the active interest the crown had long possessed in its own trading. The Portuguese *feitor* was ... the king's own commercial agent, buying on his account everything from baubles for the queen's adornment to copper for the mint and arms for raging war. In any case, the king found it natural to be both father and competitor to his merchants.⁴

Further, the Portuguese idea of trade is directly associated with the idea of conquest:

[The] royal policy is plainly reflected in the year-by-year pattern: the fleets were smaller in the early years before the Portuguese fully realized that in order to trade, they must first conquer ... After Cabral's return and his report that opposition to the Portuguese in India was growing, the fleets increased in number; the Voyages of 1502, 1504, and 1505 were each composed of upward of twenty vessels, some of them intended not to carry spices home to Portugal on the return monsoon but to remain in India as warships.⁵

The idea of a conquest is also reflected in the Portuguese narratives of the period, such as Luís Vaz de Camões's *Lusiads*, in which he states that the conquerors "will keep the idolatrous heathen, and all such as may be tempted to wage war against your beloved people, severely in check." In keeping with the idea of the Portuguese empire, the Muslims throughout the *Lusiads* are represented as "treacherous unbelievers," "savages tribes," "barbarous hordes [and] infidel dogs," to whose land the Portuguese have come to "spread the faith of Christ, bringing to its peoples a new way of life under a new sovereign ... Our [the Portuguese] purpose is to spread the Christian faith." Similarly, the Hindus are seen as "barbarous heathen[s]" whose religion is "full of lies and superstitions."⁶ Moreover, the idea of a Portuguese dynasty was so pervasive that the Portuguese used arms against the "infidels," even when it did not serve their trade interests. For example, in 1502, the Samorin of Calicut, who was on good terms with the Portuguese, refused to yield to Vasco da Gama's demand that all Muslims who were involved in the clash with Cabral two years ago be delivered up to the Portuguese for punishment. Da Gama's "response must have taken the Samorin by surprise":

[He] gave the order to hoist anchor, swung his ships in close to the shore, and opened fire, hurling stone and metal cannonballs into the city's streets for an entire day before sailing off toward Cochin. In addition to this inexplicable and barbarous act, which killed indiscriminately, he committed one even more appalling: he butchered or burned alive several hundred innocent fishermen who had assumed that peace was in the offing and had sailed out beyond the Portuguese fleet to pursue their day's catch.⁷

Further, R.S. Whiteway observes that in 1540 “all the Hindu temples in the Island of Goa were destroyed, as act of intolerant bigotry due to the direct orders of the King of Portugal.” The records of the first provincial Council of Goa, held in 1567,

show the drastic measures adopted by the state at the command of the Roman Catholic Church, for the conversion of Muhamedans and Hindus. No Christian could have infidel servants in his house, be cured by an infidel doctor or be shaved by an infidel barber. Neither Hindus nor Muhamedans could have any public worship, purchase anything appertaining to their religion.⁸

In contrast to the national character of the Portuguese system, the Dutch enterprise was “semi national.”⁹ W. W. Hunter (1899) claims that during the long period of struggle with the combined forces of Spain and Portugal, Holland’s “national safety so vitally depended on maritime trade, that it became as clear a duty of the Dutch Government to promote private commerce as it was for private commerce to fight the battles of the republic.” However, with the amalgamation of all the local groups spread over several states of the Dutch East India Company into one powerful company in 1602, the Company acquired a “quasi national” character. The Republic vested in the company “the power to make war or peace, to seize foreign ships, to establish colonies, to construct forts, and to coin money.” The whole charter, Hunter observes, reads “like a Protestant counterpart of the privileges granted to Portugal by the Bull of 1493, except that religious proselytism drops out of view, and a commercial company takes the place of the King.” Similarly, the composition of the English East India Company was not influenced by religious considerations, but it went a step further, since unlike their Dutch counterpart the “London merchants who met together under the Lord Mayor in Founders’ Hall in September 1599, had no ... ambitious scheme of a quasi-State organization in their minds.” They merely

sought a remedy for a block that had taken place in the Indian trade. Their Muscovy company, dating from Queen’s Mary’s charter in 1554, had failed to establish a direct overland commerce with India, and even its dealings with Russia and North-eastern Europe had of late dwindled away. Sir Walter Raleigh, lamented that formerly “we sent store of goodly ship to trade in those parts, and three years past we set out but four, and this last year two or three.” The Dutch have gained all the foreign freight, “whilst our ships lie still and decay, or go to Newcastle for coals.”¹⁰

The picture seems clear: for the Portuguese, the idea of “dynasty” went hand-in-hand with trade; the Dutch linked trade and “national safety”; the

motivation behind English trade, however, was mainly commercial. Yet this difference disappears in most current approaches, which assume that a motive discernable in one European power can be ascribed to them all. While Teltscher, as mentioned earlier, posits the idea of a common “European tradition,” Shankar Raman emphasizes a general idea of “European colonialism” vis-à-vis “India” in the seventeenth century: “European colonialism (and, to a large extent ‘Europe’ itself) grew out of a perceived need to defend itself against various Islamic powers and to *recover* lands ceded in preceding centuries.” This general idea of “European Colonialism” dissolves the clear divergences in the approach of the various European powers to “India” in the seventeenth century:

The term *colonialism* is used here as a shorthand for the various discourses and practices generated by the European colonial enterprises—which partook of a shared set of epistemic assumptions and orientations. The particular relationships among colonial centers and colonized peripheries that formed from the sixteenth century onward seem peculiar to European expansionism.¹¹

While dealing with Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Raman takes for granted a direct link between English trade and colonialism in the seventeenth century: “Titania’s description ... cunningly instrumentalizes the discourse of mercantile colonialism to justify her ownership of the child. The Indian mother is ‘rich’ with the boy, just as the air of India is rich with spices that the ‘embarked traders’ seek.”¹² However, Shakespeare’s play deals with the idea of mercantile relations between England and “India” and not colonialism, as argued by Raman, which is clarified by critics such as Nabil Matar, who observes that:

Historians and critics who have inaccurately applied postcolonial theory to a precolonial period in British history forget that in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, England was not a colonial power—not in the imperial sense that followed in the eighteenth century ... Britons never used the term *colonization* to describe their relations with the Muslims. In the Americas, Ireland, and elsewhere in the western hemisphere, words such as *colony*, *plantation*, and *settlement* were used to define the status of Britons there, especially after they defeated the natives and imposed their military superiority. Such words do not appear in the English discourse about the Muslim Empire. While Englishmen went as “colonists” to America, they went as “factors” to Islam.

Moreover, notwithstanding the dangerous allure of Islam:

Queen Elizabeth cooperated commercially and diplomatically with both the Turks of the Ottoman Empire and the Moors of the Kingdom of Morocco, and never entertained or articulated—and nor did her subjects—projects for colonizing them. On the contrary, and instead of exhibiting her superiority to the Moroccan

ruler, Ahmad al-Mansur (1578–1603), Queen Elizabeth repeatedly sought military and diplomatic help from them.¹³

Similarly, the English East India Company in “India” was mainly a trading concern with no clear-cut colonial designs in the seventeenth century. Philip Lawson, in a history of the East India Company, observes that “clauses in the charter ensured that the Company would be a restricted trading concern whose focus lay entirely on trade and profit, not conquest and colonization.” Therefore:

The East India Company was not a quasi-national endeavour like its main counterpart, the Dutch East India Company, because the English charter licensed a company of individual merchants to manage their own affairs and trade in the East under their own coat of arms and colours. This Company would only be checked if such activity threatened national diplomatic goals and priorities. Yet the state and the English Company remained enmeshed in this endeavour for over the next two centuries partly for the obvious reason that both hoped to profit from it.¹⁴

Further, in contrast to the Portuguese design of a Christian empire based on the colonization of the “infidels,” Queen Elizabeth, in her letter to the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1583, commends his “humanity” and conveys the idea of a “mutual and friendly trade”:

The great affection which our Subjects have to visit the most distant places of the world (not without good will and intention to introduce the trade of merchandise of all nations whosoever they can; by which means and mutual and friendly traffic of merchandise on both sides may come), is the cause that the bearer of this letter, John Newberry, jointly with those that be in his company, with a courteous and honest boldness do repair to the borders and countries of your Empire. We doubt not but that your Imperial Majesty, through your grace, will favourably and friendly accept him. And that you would do it the rather for our sake, to make us greatly beholding to your Majesty, we should more earnestly and with more words require if we did think it needful. But by the singular report that is of your Imperial Majesty’s humanity in these uttermost parts of the world we are greatly eased of that burden, and therefore shall use the fewer and less words.¹⁵

John Keay explains that to counter the monopoly of Spain and Portugal, Queen Elizabeth put forth the idea of trade based on mutual friendship between trading partners:

In His “infinite and unsearchable wisdom”, according to the test of Queen Elizabeth’s standard letter of introduction to eastern princes, God had so ordained matters that no nation was self-sufficient and that “out of the abundance of ffruit which some region[s] enjoyeth, the necessitie or wante of others should be supplied”. Thus “severall and ffar remote countries” should have “traffique” with one another and “by their interchange of commodities” should become friends.

“The Spaniard and the Portingal”, on the other hand, prohibited multilateral exchange and insisted on exclusive trading rights. Such rights, if granted, would be interpreted as tantamount to surrender of sovereignty. Any prince, warned the Queen’s letter ... who traded with only one European nation must expect a degree of political subordination to that nation.¹⁶

Elizabeth’s invitation for a friendly trade between the English merchants and the Mughals is in keeping with the idea of “liberty” of the empire in the seventeenth century. David Armitage highlights the connection between trade and “liberty” in the seventeenth century. He observes that writers such as Charles Davenant recognized the fact that

Commercial conditions of contemporary Europe rendered trade a “necessary evil” for every state. Commerce would now be the only guarantee of either stability or greatness, and since a nation could no longer be like Sparta, it should take the course of Venice (and other commercial republics) in order to reach the eminence of Rome but with one major proviso, that it should not lead to the military expansion that had caused the collapse of Roman liberty ... An empire of the seas could provide *grandezza* without the need for large armies, extended military commands, or the takeover of civilian government by overmighty generals. Instead, maritime empire could enrich the nation, render it stable in the arena of international power politics, and offer greatness without endangering liberty.¹⁷

The idea of trade based on alliance and not military conquest is evident in Thomas Roe’s travel writings in which the Mughal empire is constructed as a friendly trade partner of its English counterpart. The English would rather have the Mughals as an ally than an enemy, and therefore Roe gives the significant warning about the incompatibility between trade and conquest: “A war and trafique are incompatible. By my consent, you shall no way engage your selues but at sea, wher you are like to gayne as often as to loose ... lett this bee recieued as a rule that if you will Profitt, seeke it at Sea, and in quiet trade; for without controuersy it is an error to affect Garrisons and land warrs in India.”¹⁸ Roe warns against any kind of military action since it would only harm trade.

The dissociation of trade from the idea of a “Christian empire” makes it questionable to argue that Christianity “crucially provides the moral imperative for the discovery, and later conquest, of the non-Christian, ‘heathen’ lands.”¹⁹ Armitage observes that the “ideological origins of English nationalism, British nationhood and, in turn, British imperialism have all been traced back to the Protestant reformations in England and Scotland.”²⁰ He states that such historians as Richard Drayton, by looking back from the point of view of the eighteenth century, identify “Christian providentialism [to be] the ideological taproot of British imperialism.”²¹

However, Armitage argues, Christianity alone did not give England justification enough to conquer land in the seventeenth century:

The claim that God's grant of the earth to Adam (Genesis I: 28) authorized all succeeding humans to spread across the face of the earth paralleled Sir Robert Filmer's argument that this divine commission had made Adam monarch of the whole world, and his successors absolute monarchs. Locke, in the first *Treatise of Government* (c. 1681), accused Filmer of thereby confounding *imperium* with *dominium*, and further denied that 'by this Grant God gave him now *Private Dominion* over Inferior Creatures, but right in common with all Mankind; so neither was he *Monarch*, upon the account of Property here given him'. Mere succession from Adam would not be argument enough for either absolute monarchy or rights of dominion.²²

Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the claim that it was a simple case of Christian superiority allowing the English to take over the "heathen" lands, as argued by Singh. If the goal of the English contact is to generate a healthy trade with the Mughals, then reading the English travel narratives as "colonial discourse" in any simple or direct sense will distort their meaning. For instance, much is made of Roe's statement about the impending unrest in the Mughal empire. Singh observes: "Departing from India, the Ambassador did not foresee that he had established the foundation for the later, colonial rule, though he made an uncanny prediction about the forces of unrest within the Mogul empire—and 'of a tyme when all in these kingdoms will be in combustion'."²³ However, reading Roe's statement in context reveals not imperial ambition, but a highly specific concern about trade and commercial investment. Instead of predicting "the forces of unrest" that would help lay the foundations of the British empire in India, Roe simply warns about not expanding trade, since the impending civil unrest in the Mughal empire could harm English trade interests. After warning about the possibility of a civil war, he states: "This I insert to this end that you may beware scattering your goodes in diuers Partes and engaging your stock and seruants farr into the Countrey; for the time will come when all in these kingdoms wilbe in combustion." In fact, Roe predicts that if Sultan Khusru takes over the Kingdom from Jehangir then it will be a "sanctuary for all Christians, whome he loues and honors, fauoring learning, valour, the discipline of warr, and abhorring all couetousnes and discerning the basse Customes of taking vsed by his ancestors and Nobilitye." However, if Prince Khurram takes over, then "wee [the English] shalbe the losers, for hee is most earnest in his superstition, a hater of all Christians, Proud, Subtill, false, and barbarously Tyranous."²⁴ Thus, instead of making any vague statements about the collapse of the

Mughal empire opening the way for the English to take over, Roe talks about a specific historical situation which may or may not play out in the interest of the English, so they need to be cautious about expanding trade at that point in time.

In keeping with the idea of a mutual and friendly trade between the Mughals and the English, Roe and almost all the other seventeenth-century English travel writers, instead of representing the Mughals as barbaric “others,” by and large portray the Mughal empire as a highly evolved civilization, which possesses a high level of religious tolerance. However, the current approaches to these narratives highlight the opposite. For instance, Singh, following Said, emphasizes moments of cultural superiority to the exclusion of moments of mutuality between England and the Mughal empire in her reading of the narratives: “Roe often describes his post as a backward place of hardship ... [The] sense of wonder remains with the Ambassador during his contact with the courts of the Mogul. It seems to offer a counterpoint to the ideological distinctions between ‘civilization’ and ‘barbarism’ only to temporarily elide into exoticism.”²⁵ There are many passages in the English travel narratives that would support an Orientalist reading, but when situated in the socio-historical context of the seventeenth century these passages reveal a far more complex meaning. There are some instances when Roe makes general statements about “India” as being barbaric and uncivilized on the whole. In his letter to Lord Carew, dated 17th January, 1615, he says that India is “the dullest, basest place that I euer saw, and maketh me weary of speaking it.” To Master Lescke, Minister of Gods Word at Suratt, he writes: “Religions infinite; laws none. In this Confusion what can be expected?”²⁶ Roe also looks down upon the Hindus. In a letter to the Lord Bishop of Canterbury, dated October 30th, 1616, Roe mocks the Hindu religion:

The gentiles are of more sortes, some valiant, good souldiers, drinking wine, eating hogges-flesh, but woorshipping the figure of a beast; superstitious in washing, and most earnest in their profession ... There haue their synogoages and holy Men, Prophetts, Witches, sooth-sayers, and all others the Diuelles impostures.²⁷

These statements are usually cited to argue that Roe’s views about “India” fall within the East-West binary used by Said in *Orientalism*. However, not only are such statements few and far between, but they can be better understood keeping in mind Roe’s peculiar status in “India”: he was both the ambassador of the King and simultaneously the representative of the East India Company. He was the official ambassador from the court of James I, but his finances were met by the Company and not the King. Keay points out that it was in order to counter the Portuguese influence that an English ambassador

was needed in “India”. Following the encouraging news of Thomas Best’s activities in Surat, the Company felt that the time has come to

Step up investment in India; and to match Portuguese influence there, the Directors hit on the idea of appealing to King James to appoint an ambassador to the court of Jehangir. This was a novel departure, especially in the context of oriental diplomacy which scarcely recognized commerce as a legitimate reason for accreditation. It seemed sensible enough, though, to King James, especially when the Company volunteered to meet all the ambassadorial expenses.²⁸

This dual role imposed upon Roe, as representative of both the King and the Company, sometimes forced him to make contradictory statements about “India,” depending upon the recipient of his letters. It is in his letters to the English King and the nobility that Roe, at times, looks down upon the Mughal empire and asserts that James’s England is as great if not greater than any other empire in the world. But, on the other hand, as we shall see later, he generally highlights the Mughal empire as a civilized trade partner in his letters addressed to the Company.

In his letter to James I, dated 29th January, 1615, he argues that the Mughal empire is barbaric in comparison to England:

To relate the Customes of this Cuntry, the state of the Court of their gouernment, were fitter to beguile the weariness of the way (like a tale) at your majesties stirrop then for a discourse in earnest ...the Gouernment is so vncertayne, without written law, without Policye, the Customes mingled with barbarisme, religious infinite, the buildings of mudd (except the Kings howses and some few others): that eauen this greatness and wealth that I admired in England (reseruing due reuerence to the Persons of Kyngs) is here, wher I see yt, almost contemptible, and turnes myne eyes with infinite longings to see your Maiesties face and happiness.²⁹

Roe’s representation of “India” is governed not only by the recipient of his letters, but also by a range of personal reasons. One of his main worries was that he would not return to England as a rich man. Foster observes that Roe’s fortune, “which was probably in the first instance but moderate, seems to have been ... seriously impaired” before leaving for “India.”³⁰ The opportunity to be the English ambassador in “India” was seen by him as a sign of God’s grace: “I esteeme it an infinite mercy of God that when I had fully ended and wasted my patrimony and saw no way but scorne ...before I suffred disgrace hee vndertooke mee, and being as it were new borne, hee restored mee to a new Inheritance and sett me right, for I doubt not but to equall my wastes.”³¹ However, in “India” he never received any special gifts from Jehangir. He expresses his disappointment to Master Secretary Wynwoode: “I shall not returne a rich man, and then many will condemne mee for want of Prouidence or witt to get yt.”³² Foster

mentions that it was the custom for an ambassador to be “treated as a guest of the monarch to whom he was accredited, and Roe had therefore expected a handsome allowance. This he never obtained, though both his predecessor and the Persian ambassador received gifts of money from the Mogul.”³³ While writing to the Earl of Southampton, Roe’s complaint that “India” is a backward place “with no ciuill arts” is accompanied by his personal disappointment with Jehangir, who refused to give him any allowance:

I thought all India a China shop, and that I should furnish all my frendes rarietyes; this is not that part. Here are almost no ciuill arts, but such as straggling Christians haue lately taught But I not alone Cossened in this hope, but in the Kings liberallitye. He allowes me nothing but a house of Mudd, which I was enforced to build halfe ... Yet though I lue in such a house, perhaps many wayes in more state, and with many more seruants then any Ambassador in Europe ... But this my expected liberallitye fayling makes all tedious and loathsome; for though the King has often sent to me, yet this bounty is only expressed in whyld hogges.

In the same letter he also mentions his continual illness in “India,” which is another reason for his negative portrayal: “Since my arriuall in this Country, I haue had but one Month of Health and that mingled with many relapses, and now I am your poor seruant scarce a Crowes dinner.” A number of times when he seems to describe “India” as barbaric, he also mentions his illness. At another point he states: “there was not a misery nor punishment which either the want of Gouernment or the naturall disposition of the Clime gaue vs not.”³⁴

Roe was under immense pressure from both the Company in England and its factors in “India” to achieve the desired treaty with the Mughals. In the end he was not very successful. He was frustrated by Jehangir’s and Prince Khurram’s lack of commitment to any kind of trade agreement between the East India Company and the Mughal empire. The Mughals generally favoured the Portuguese over the English and at times also tried to play one European nation against the other. Roe, in the entry dated May 29th, 1616, acknowledges the Mughals’ preference for the Portuguese over the English:

Concerning the Portugalles Creditt here I euer made my Iudgement by report, but now experience showes me the difference made betweene vs and them; for they were sought after by euery body; wheras they see to buy our Commodities for Almes. Besides, their Neighborhood and advantage to hinder that trade into the red sea, is euer more ready then ours to doe harme, because they are settled. So that only for a little feare we were entertained, but for our trade or any thing wee bring, not at all respected.³⁵

The first *farman*³⁶ allowing the English to trade at Surat stated that the English could only trade in the region if they would allow the Portuguese ships to trade at the port without any objections. Roe rejected the *farman* and later tried to secure a treaty that would allow free access to the English to all the ports in the Mughal empire. But eventually Jehangir turned down Roe's demand. It is at such moments of failure when Roe expresses his frustration: "An Ambassador liues not in fitt honor. I could sooner dye then be subiect to the slauerye the Persian is content with. A meaner Agent would among these proud Moores better effect your business ... I haue moderated it according to my discretion, but with a swolne hart."³⁷ When Prince Khurram, an enemy of the English, was given the title of Shah Jahan, which confirmed that he would be the successor to Jehangir, Roe expressed his desire to return to England. In a letter dated October 8th, 1617, written about the same time, he speaks his disillusionment: "I pine here while others are in the wayes of preferment."³⁸

Further, there were serious disagreements between Roe and the Company's factors in "India," who never saw Roe as belonging to the Company and made no bones about the fact that he was a failure in establishing any significant trade negotiations with the Mughals. Thomas Kerridge and Thomas Rastell, in the documents dated February 9th and 15th, 1619, mention that Roe's achievement in "India" was of no consequence:

The priuelidges he [Roe] sought weare ever denied in capitulacions, the custome of other princes. His Lordshipp att departure had only two severall firmans, one of the Kinge and another of the Prince. Confirminge our trade and continewance; ...[However] none of the comaunds are exactly performed longer then agreeable to the wills of the offecers or there masters profitt, and under pretence thereof do us any injurie, which will not bee reformed by intercession.

On March 12th and 13th, 1619, Kerridge tells the Company of matters being detained by the Moghuls against English favour:

This detention, as itt is an unsupportable wrong, soe itt intralleth us to many other inconveniences ... if His Lordship [Thomas Roe] had pleased, might long ere this have bine remedied by stopping their laste yeares junck at barr for a generall reformation of all our greivances and satisfaction of all our debts abroad.³⁹

Roe, according to the factors, was not only to blame for their losses, but was also overpaid. Joseph Hopkinson, on December 2nd, 1620, blames Roe for not informing the Company about the danger they faced from the Portuguese on the seas. He refers to "Sir Thomas Roes error, who it seems made the Company beleieve all the Por[tugalls] in India were dead...", and continues with astonishment to note that Roe "is highly esteemed by most

of the Company who least understand their owne bussines, and had 2,000*l.* gratuity and 200*l.* annuitie given him so long as he lives.”⁴⁰

Foster points out that “these were exaggerations. Roe’s gratuity was 1,500*l.*, and the allowance was only for a year or two,”⁴¹ but the overstatement of Roe’s wages is evidence of the hostility of the factors towards him. Roe, on the other hand, in a letter to the Company dated 24th November, 1615, complains of the Company’s lack of regard for him:

I can say little of the estate of your [the East India Company] business: only it is kept in the brest of some few men, and your jealousy to giue mee any authoritye of your business or factors hath disabled me to looke into many things that should haue redounded to your profit. I know not what suspect you had that I would eyther abuse them or your stocke; but you were deceiued to my great ease and your owne disaduantage, It beeing so diuulged here (as I thincke, by your expresse command, or for some other vayne end) that I haue nothing to doe with the merchants nor their busines, not that they neede make me no account of any thing; wherby if I fynd just fault or giue honest counsell, the meanest can say it concerns not mee.⁴²

Later, in another detailed letter to the Company dated 24th November, 1616, Roe mentions the tension between him and the factor Captain Keeling, highlights his own deplorable financial condition, and concludes that there is no need for an ambassador in “India.” He begins by stating the “vnkindness conceiued between mee and Captain Keeling” and then addresses his financial situation:

Paying my mens wages all here (else they could not liue) out of my allowance, and the desier to appeare handsome and Honorable abroad, with the liberalities not brought to your account, make mee soe bare that you neede not feare my trading nor growing rich. The Kinges bountyes are rather Markes of honor then of Profit. I haue supplied a yeare in presentes of myne owne stock and aske not to diminish yours a Penny in Indya. All your other seruantes part not with a knife but at four for one ready Mony I shall not returne richer by 500*l.* for my stay.

He concludes that there is no need for an ambassador in “India,” since “the best way to do business in this Court is to find some Mogol that you may entertheyne for 1000 *rupess* by the yeare as your solicitor at Court. He must bee authorised by the King, and then hee will better serue you than ten Ambassadors.”⁴³ Throughout Roe’s journal his desire to return to England and the unfavourable representations of “India,” instead of arising out of any “Orientalist” bias, are related to personal and professional issues: his desire for financial stability, the hostility of the factors, and the pressure from the Company to achieve a noteworthy trade agreement with the Mughals.

Moreover, Roe's task in "India" was not to focus on how to present the Mughal empire to the English. It was the exact opposite. In order to achieve any significant trade settlement between England and the Mughal empire, Roe had to repair the image of the Company and England in "India," which had been tarnished by the Company's factors. In a letter dated January 24th, 1616, Roe observes that so far the English representatives had not been able to conduct their business in "India" with any dignity. The last factor, William Edwards, had "suffered blowes of the porters, base *Peons*, and beene thrust out by them with much scorne by head and shoulders without seeking satisfaction, and ... carried himselfe with such Complacency that hath bredd a low reputation of our Nation."⁴⁴ At the same time, factors such as William Hawkins had been posing as ambassadors, which had seriously impaired the dignity of the Company. The first attempt made by Hawkins and others at reaching a trade agreement with the Mughals had come to nothing. In 1612 "Jehangir ... under pressure from the Portuguese ... had dismissed Hawkins and ... ordered Mukarrab Khan to get rid of the English fleet ... [and] after four years the first English attempt to trade with the Moghul empire had come to nothing."⁴⁵ Thanks to the confusion created by Hawkins and others in the past, Roe found his job to be much harder than what he had expected:

this place is either made, or of itselfe vnfit for an ambassador. I speak against myself, but I will enforme truth; For though they vnderstand the qualeyte, yet they haue much adoe to vnderstand the priuiledges which that qualeyte with vs doth require, the rather because they haue euer beene sought too humbly and they expect as much of mee.⁴⁶

In the given context, Keay observes, Roe saw his job as

"repaying a ruined house and making straight that which was crooked" by in both speech and conduct, conveying an altogether more exalted and dignified impression of English society and sovereignty. He would make no secret of his contempt for India; it was "the dullest, basest, place that I ever saw and maketh me weary of speaking it". Nor would he brook any nonsense from Mogul officials who "triumph over such yield but are humble enough when held up."

But even while informing the Company about his difficulties in "India," Roe's "posturing was based on 'quality' and class consciousness not colour and race consciousness. If he was scathing about Jehangir's subordinates he was no less disdainful of the English factors."⁴⁷ Roe did not take any nonsense from the Mughal officials, but he was equally critical of the Company's factors. In an entry dated April 21st, 1616, Roe highlights the "extreame druncennes, ryott, quarreling" of the factors, and on May 22nd

he states that he is ashamed to mention the behaviour of another factor: “one Jones, a youth that was runn away from me to an Italian and protected himself vnder the name of the king to the infamy of our Nation.”⁴⁸ The negative portrayal of the factors runs through almost all the seventeenth-century English travel narratives. Keay observes that the Company had banned private trade and lewd behaviour, but the factors continually ignored the “injunctions against private trade ... blasphemy, gaming and drunkenness.” The seventeenth-century “English seafarer ... was [not] a God-fearing paragon of Puritan virtues but exactly the opposite.”⁴⁹ Edward Terry also looks down upon the factors whom he argues are “sent to East-India” when “their friends [in England] knew not what to do with them ... so they might make their own Graves in the Sea ... A very cleanly conveyance (but how just and honest, I leave to others) for Parents to be rid of their unruly Children.” Terry gives the example of a “most intemperate mad youth” who attacked the Prince’s servant on his way to the court “for refusing to hold his horse, with his horse whip [and] discharg’d his pistol laden with a brace of bullets directly at his body.” He concludes: “we were not at any time in any dangers of suffering by that people [natives], but some of our own Nation were procuring causes for it.”⁵⁰

Unlike the negative portrayal of the English factors and the Hindus, as stated earlier, the Mughal aristocracy and the Muslims are generally portrayed as being civilized and cultured almost throughout the narratives. In contrast to the letters to King James or the nobility quoted earlier, in his letters to the Company and other entries in his journal Roe conveys a favourable picture of “India,” highlighting the compatibility between England and the Mughal empire. He was personally unhappy with Jehangir’s “allowance” to him, but he nevertheless praises the court of Jehangir where he was “freely granted” to “vse the Customes of my [his] country” and observes that the King bid him:

welcome as to the brother of my Master ... He asked some questions, and with a seeming Care of my health, offering me his Phisitions, and aduising mee to keepe my house till I had recoured strength; and if in the interim I needed anything I should freely send to him, and obteyne my desires. He dismissed me with more fauour and outward grace (if by the Christians I were not flattered) then euer was showed to any Ambassador, eyther of the Turke or Persian, or other whatsoeuer.⁵¹

Roe would like to believe that the English were treated even more warmly than the Persians or the Turks who were culturally closer to the Mughals. Instead of looking down upon the Mughals, Roe, in a letter to the Company, dated 24th November, 1615, argues that the Company needs to improve upon the quality of gifts it sends for the Mughal courtiers:

The Presentes you haue this yeare sent are extreemly despised by those who haue seene them; the linyng of the Coach and Couer of the Virginals scorned, beeing veluett of these parts and faded to base Tawny; the kniues little and meane ... your Pictures not all woorth one Penny, and finally such error in the chooyce of all things, as I thincke no man euer heard of the Place that was of Councell. Here are nothing esteemed but of the best sorts: good Cloth and fine, and rich Pictures, they coming out of Italy ouerland and from Ormus; soe that they laugh at vs for such as wee bring. And doubtlesse they vnderstand them as well as wee.

Roe does not see the Mughals as exotic “others” but consistently highlights the parallels between the English and the Mughals. In his letter to the East India Company dated 25th January, 1615, he observes how Jehangir dresses up in the English fashion: “He [Jehangir] sent to me, though 10 a clock at night, far a seruant to tye on his scarfe, and swoorde the english fashion, in which he took so great a pride that he marched up and downe, draweing yt and flourishing, and since hath neuer beene without yt.” In the journal entry dated 2nd November, 1616, he describes how Jehangir sat in his new English coach attended by an English servant: “Thus armd and accomodated, hee [Jehangir] went to the Coach, which attended him with his New English Seruant, who was Clothd as rich as any Player and more gaudy, and had trained four horses, which were trapped and harnassed in gould velvuetts. This was the first he euer sate in, and was made by that sent from England.” Jehangir’s Queen “Noormahal” also rides in an English coach: “The English Coach newly couered and trimed rich, which hee had giuen the queene Normahall, who rode in it.”⁵² On the other hand, there are numerous incidents when the English pass themselves off as Muslims due to one reason or another. John Ovington in 1689 observes that some Europeans in “India” would rather dress like the Muslims than the Hindus: “If any European thinks fit to dress himself, and take upon him the Indian garb, he therein compliments the Moors, and pays his respect to their manner of wearing and putting it on.”⁵³ In fact Thomas Coryat, as Terry points out, went “up and down the *Mogol’s* territory ... wearing alwayes the *Habit* of the Nation, and speaking their *Language*.”⁵⁴ William Nicols, a factor, to save himself from Jews in [Masulipatan], disguises himself as a Turk: “There were three Jews [and] if I travelled with any money the Dogges [Jews] would cut my throat. So I made away with all my money, and attired my selfe in the Habit of a Turke.”⁵⁵ William Hawkins is flattered when Jehangir adds the Muslim title of “Khan” to his name: “hee [Jehangir] called me by the name of English Chan, that is to say, English Lord, but in Persia, it is the Title for a Duke, and this went currant throughout the Countrey.”⁵⁶

The compatibility between the two is possible primarily because the English recognize the Mughal empire as a place of religious tolerance. Foster observes that in the documents of the *English Factories in India: 1618–21*, “there is no trace of intolerance or persecution of any man on account of his religion—a statement which could scarcely be made of any European country at the same period.”⁵⁷ The documents of the *English Factories in India: 1624–29* cite “The Agreement Between the English and the Surat Authorities” which officially allows the English to follow their religion in “India”. Both English and Muslim are to follow the code of conduct outlined in the agreement:

That the English may have the free exercise of their own religion. And in case any quarrell or difference arise betwixt an Englishman and a Musselman, the Captain shall repair to the Governour and they together examine the cause thereof; if the fault shall be proved to be in the Englishman, his punishment is refered to the Captain; if in the Mussleman, the Governor is to punish him; but if the Captain do refuse to doe justice on his people that offend, the Governour may.⁵⁸

Alexander Hamilton, writing towards the end of the century, observes that in the town of Surat “there are above a hundred different Sects ... but they never have any hot Disputes about their Doctrine or Way of Worship. Everyone is free to serve and worship God their own Way. And Persecutions for Religion’s sake are not known among them.”⁵⁹ Michael Strachan observes that in Turkey Coryat endured various insults to his religion in silence, but after his arrival in “India” he “decided to take advantage of the tolerance practiced in the Great Mogul’s dominions and launched into an extempore oration, giving vent to his pent-up hatred of the Mohammedan faith in the most violent terms”:⁶⁰

What thy Mahomet was, from whom thou dost derive thy religion, assure thy selfe I know better than any of the Mahometans amongst many millions: yes, all the particular circumstances of his life and death, his nation, his parentage, his driving camels through Egipt, Siria, and Palestina, the marriage of his mistris by whose death he raised himselfe from a very base and contemptible estate to great honor and riches, his manner of cozening the sottish people of Arabia ... The truth whereof if thou didst know aswell, I am perswaded thou wouldest spit in the face of thy Alcaron [Koran] and trample it under thy feete.

Coryat further asserts that Muslim prayers “with ... vain repi[ti]tions and divers other prophane fooleries ... doe even stinke before God, and are of no more force then the cry of thy camel when thou doest lade or unlade him.” During his stay at Agra Coryat climbed up into a turret from which he faced a minaret near by, and when the mullah mounted the minaret to call the people to repeat “No God, but one God, and Mohammed the

ambassador of God,” Coryat shouted him down with “*La ilaha-l-lah Hazarat Isa Ibn Allah*”—“No God but one God, and Christ the Son of God.” However, in his letter to his mother Coryat is aware of the fact that had he “spoken thus much in Turkey or Persia against Mahomet they would have roasted me upon a spit; but in the Mogols dominions a Christian may speake much more freely then hee can in any other Mahometan country in the world.”⁶¹ Coryat appreciates the religious tolerance in the Mughal empire and uses it to differentiate between the English and the Muslims in terms of religion.

The point to be noted, here, is that the English differentiate between themselves and the Muslims mainly on the basis of religion, and only occasionally with regard to a racial or an “Oriental” bias. Aijaz Ahmad while questioning Said’s definition of “Orientalism” observes that most of the examples Said gives to support his claims fall within the discourse of Christian belief and heresy and not what Said terms “Orientalism”. He takes up Said’s example of Dante’s treatment of Muhammed in *Inferno* to show that Dante makes no distinction between Occident and Orient:

Dante’s treatment of Ibn Rushd—who he places at least on par with Socrates and Co., and towards whom Dante is altogether more forgiving—shows that the poet makes a severe distinction between belief and heresy, but none between Occident and Orient, as would be clear if Said were to reflect upon the fact that Judas, Brutus and Cassius do actually come even after Muhammad, in closer proximity to Satan himself.⁶²

Similarly, in the English narratives there are instances when the natives are seen as barbaric “others” within the Christian discourse of belief and heresy, and are generally not differentiated in terms of race or colour, or of occident and orient. However, most current approaches to these narratives do not make a distinction between the discourse of Christian belief and heresy and the discourse of “Orientalism.” Singh, as mentioned earlier, observes that the English travellers are “often caught up in the ideological codes of the time, such as the naturalized belief in the superiority of ‘Christendome’ over non Christian ‘heathens’.” She makes the above statement in the context of religion, but later, following Said, conflates it with the discourse of “Orientalism” by arguing that it is the “superiority” of the English in terms of religion that forces Roe to perceive the natives in the Mughal empire as less than human: “Like other European travelers/writers, the Ambassador [Roe] represents the Mughal court in a series of *spectacles* that both exoticize and demonize the natives.”⁶³ However, Singh does not substantiate her claim of Roe’s attempt to “demonize the natives” with any examples from the text. Roe, as mentioned earlier,

instead of attempting to “demonize the natives” draws parallels between the English and the Muslims.⁶⁴ Apart from Jehangir, Roe also praises other Muslims he met during his stay in “India.” For instance, he talks in detail about “Gemal Din-Vssin [Jamaluddin Husain] ... vizeroy of Patan and lord of four Cittyes in Bengala, [a] good natured and right harted ould man,” who received him with “extraordinary familiarity and kindness.” Jamaluddin Husain praised “the good Prophet Jesus and his lawes, and was full of very delightfull and fuictfull discourse.” During dinner Husain tried to sit apart from Roe and his companions thinking the English might feel “a kind of uncleanness to mingle with [them],” but Roe persuaded him to sit next to him: “I [Roe] tould him Hee promised wee should eate bread and salt together: that without his Company I had little appetitie. Soe hee rose and sate by mee, and wee fell roundly to our victualles.”⁶⁵

A comparison with the representations of the Africans in the English narratives would further substantiate Ahmad’s point about the distinction that needs to be made between the discourse of Christian belief and heresy and what Said terms the discourse of “Orientalism.” Unlike the natives in the Mughal empire, the Africans are clearly differentiated on the basis of race and colour, which can be accommodated within Said’s discourse of “Orientalism.” Almost all English travel writers consistently view the Africans as savages, at times equating them with beasts. For instance, Roe observes that the natives of “Soldanya” in Africa are the “most barbarous in the world, eating Carrione, wearing the gutts of sheepe about their Necks for health and rubbing their heads ... with dung of beaste and durte ... They know no kind of god or religion ... [and] are the basest banished people, that knowe nothing sauoring of man ... [though] they speake and walke like men.”⁶⁶ According to Terry, the “poor, ignorant, and most miserable Negroes [are] born for sale, slavery, and slaughter.” The inhabitants on the “Bay of *Souldania*” are “Beasts in the skin of men, rather than men in the skins of beasts, as may appear by their ignorance, habit, language, diet, with other things, which make them most brutish.” The “*Coorees*,” another African tribe, are compared to animals by Terry:

For their speech, it seemed to us an inarticulate noise, rather than Language, like the clucking of Hens, or gabling of Turkies ...[and] when they were hungry ... like hungry dogs would gnaw, and eat the raw guts ... they would eat any reffuse thing, as rotten and mouldy Biskets, which we have given them, fit indeed for nothing but to be cast away; yea, they will eat that which a ravenous Dog in *England* will refuse ... which makes me almost to believe, that those wretched creatures have but three senses, wanting the benefit both of Smelling and Tasting.

They not only appear to the English to be like animals, but the English treat them like animals by giving them food which was “nothing but to be cast away”. Not only are these tribes “barbaric” but they reject any attempts made by the English to “civilize” them, which Terry emphasizes with the help of an example of a Negro who

was brought to *London*, and there kept, for the space of fix months, in Sir *Thomas Smith*’s house (then Governour of the *East-India* Company) where he had good diet, good clothes, good lodging, with all other fitting accommodations; now one would think that this wretch might have conceived his present, compared with his former condition, an Heaven upon earth; but he did not so ... never any seemed to be more weary of ill usage, than he was of Courtesies; none ever more desirous to return to his home Country than he ... And not long after, when he had his desire, and was returned home, he had no sooner set footing on his own shore, but presently threw away his *clothes*, his *Linnen*, with all other *Covering*, got his sheeps skins upon his back, guts about his neck, and such perfum’d cap (as before we named) upon his head; by whom that Proverb mentioned, 2 Pet 2.22. was literally fullfill’d, *canis as vomitum: the dog is return’d to his vomit, and the swine his wallowing in the mire*.⁶⁷

Terry’s perception of Africans is echoed in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958); a character, the District Commissioner, plans to write a book about “*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of Lower Niger*.”⁶⁸

While dealing with the natives in “India,” on the other hand, Terry observes that the “Stature of the Natives of *East-India* ... are like us [the Europeans], but generally very streight; for I never observed not heard of any crooked person amongst them ... And further, among many other things I took special notice of there, I never observed any deformed Person, no Ideot or natural Fool, in those parts.” But Terry does discriminate in terms of religion; like Coryat he looks down upon Islam:

The *Ring-leader* to it [Islam], the chief Founder of it was *Mahomet*, an *Arabian* by Birth, born ... of very mean and low *Parentage*, but a Man fill’d with all *subtilty* and *Craft* ... composed a Rellgion that hath nothing in it, or that favours of nothing so much, as of rude Ignorance, and most palpable Imposture; it being a *Monster* of many Heads; a most damnable *mixture* of horrid *impieties*.⁶⁹

The distinction Terry draws in terms of religion is usually cited to support the view that his representation of the Mughal empire fits into Said’s discourse of “Orientalism.” Teltscher argues that Terry “keeps as his basic premise the familiar concepts of Christian ritual, and everything that he notices is as a discrepancy from, or analogy to, the Protestant and Catholic forms.” Terry is “typical in projecting images of English society onto Indian society and recording the differences. For the most part, the repre-

sentations follow Said's model of binary oppositions: India is presented negatively as inverse of England."⁷⁰ She claims that Terry constantly creates "India" as an earthly paradise, but only to puncture it simultaneously which makes everything in "India" to be an aberration from the norm set by England. For instance, he gives the following description of "India":

For places of pleasure they have curious Gardens, planted with the fruitfull Tress and delightfull Flowers, to which Nature daily lends such a supply as that they seeeme never to fade. In these places they have pleasant Fountaynes to bathe in, and other delights by sundrie conveyances of water, whose silent murmure helps to lay their senses with the bonds of sleep in the hot seasons of the day.⁷¹

But, according to Teltscher, this image of an "earthly paradise" is disrupted when in the next paragraph Terry observes:

But lest this remote Countrey should seem like an earthly Paradise without any discommodities: I must needs take notice there of many Lions, Tygres, Wolves, Jackals ...and many other harmfull beasts ... In out houses we often meete with Scorpions, whose stinging is most sensible and deadly ... the abundance of Flyes in those parts doe likewise annoy us, for in the heate of the day their numberlesse number in such as that we can be quiet in no place for them.

However, Terry concludes that "India" is just like any other country with its good and bad points, when he states: "there is no Countrey without some discommodities, for therefore the wise Disposer of all things hath tempered bitter things with sweet, to teach man that there is no true and perfect content to be found in any Kingdom, but that of God."⁷²

But Teltscher rejects Terry's "suggestion of divine balance" to argue that his "insistence on the horrors of Indian fauna ... implies that he regards Indian wildlife as an aberration from the norm set by England."⁷³ Teltscher's reading seems to be a case of forcing a text to fit into the parameters laid down by Said's definition of "Orientalism," since instead of comparing "India" to England, Terry makes it amply clear that "there is no Countrey without such discommodities ...[because] there is no true and perfect content to be found in any Kingdom, but that of God." At the same time, Terry's statement about the so called "horrors of Indian fauna" is read out of context by Teltscher, since instead of deliberately puncturing "India" by highlighting its wild life as an aberration from the norm set by England, Terry's statements about the inconveniences in "India" are mostly confined to Section IV of his book, which is titled, "Of the Discommodities, Inconveniences, and Annoyances that are to be found or met withal in this Empire."⁷⁴ Instead of representing the Mughal empire as an "aberration

from the norm set by England,” Terry’s narrative, which is divided into 30 separate sections, is full of praise and admiration for life in the Mughal empire. He gives an elaborate catalogue which not only covers “India’s” geographical features but also highlights the lifestyle of the people by giving intricate details of their rituals and ceremonies, their eating habits, their pastimes etc. He praises the culture, but also gives ordinary and mundane details which totally undermine the “exotic” or “barbaric” image of “India” often read into these narratives. For instance, Terry gives details about the hobbies and pastimes of the people:

For their pastimes within doors, they have Cards, but much different from ours in the figures made in them, and in their greater number of suits. Those Cards I have often seen; and have been more often told, that they have very good skill in that most innocent and ingenious game we call Chesses ... For their Pastimes abroad they have Hawks of divers kinds, greater and less, and Partridges, and other choice Fowl great store to fly at. They have Hares, and Antilops, with other wild Beasts to hunt, and these not a few. Their dogs for chase are made somewhat like our Grey-hounds.

The picture of the Mughal empire that emerges from Terry’s narrative, even while highlighting its grandeur, is one which portrays it to be as ordinary and mundane as any other empire in the world. Such a portrayal is possible because even while undermining the tenets of Islam, Terry is able to see the Muslims as civilized human beings with a highly evolved culture. He consistently appreciates the civility of people in the Mughal empire: “Here people in general ... are civil to Strangers as to their own Country-men; for they use when they meet one another, or when they meet strangers, to bow their Heads, or to lay their right Hands on their Breasts, and to bow their Bodies as they pass, saluting them with many well wishes.” The English were provided with soldiers to guard them but they “never had the need of their help for ... defence. The truth is, that the People there are in general very civil, and we never had any affronts or ill usage of them, if we did not first provoke them.”⁷⁵ Instead of constantly looking at the Muslim customs as “an aberration from Protestant and Catholic forms,”⁷⁶ Terry appreciates the fact that in “Complements they [the Muslims] express many good wishes to one another, as *Salam Allacum*, God give you health; the reply, *Allacum Salam*, The fame health God give you.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, all Muslims are not grouped together, since Terry makes a distinction between the different classes of the people with whom he interacts:

When we visit the people there of better quality, they entertain us with much humanity; first rising up to us, they bow their Bodies, and then entreat us to sit with them in their Carpets, where they are free in their discourse ... If we have any

business with them, they return very civil and fair Answers, and for our further entertainment give us *Beetle* or *Paune* to chew. (410)

He is also astonished to see the respect given to old people in general:

I shall insert another most needful particular to my present purpose, which deserves a most high commendation to be given unto the people in general, how poor and mean soever they be; and that is, the great exemplary care they manifest in their piety to their *Parents*, that, notwithstanding they serve for very little ... but five shillings a Moon for their whole livelyhood and subsistence; yet, if their parents be in want, they will impart at the least half of that little towards they necessities, choosing rather to want themselves, then that their *Parents* should suffer need. (417)

Not only are the Muslims well mannered, but they live a life of temperance, therefore “they have more old people then we [the English]; a thing not to be wondered at, if we consider the great Temperance of that people in general in their eating and drinking” (416). One of the things that most impresses Terry is “*Indian Cookery*” (408) and the eating habits of the people in general. He observes that “the Mahometans ... [are] not much given to their Palate; but are very careful of, and temperate in their Diet” (406). He gives details of the various kinds of food eaten by the Muslims and observes it was as good as the one made by Jacob for “Father Isaac”:

They stew all their flesh as their Kid and other Venison, &c. cut into sippets, or slices, or little parts, to which they put Onions, and Herbs, and Roots, and Ginger and other Spices, with some butter ... [which] make a Food that is exceedingly pleasing to all Palats, at their first tasting thereof most savoury Meat, haply that very dish which *Jacob* made for his Father *Isaac*, when he got the blessing, *Gen.* 27. (407)

For the dinner at Asaf Khan’s house, where he was invited along with Roe, Terry “tasted of all set before me [him], and of most did but taste, though all of them tasted very well.” He goes on to describe all the dishes in great detail and observes that it was better than the way it was done in England: “It was better a great deal, than if it had consisted of full and heaped dishes. Such as sometimes amongst us provided, for great and profuse entertainments” (408). He concludes that even though it was difficult to sit “cross-leg’d” for a long time, the “feast in that place was better than *Apicius*, that famous *Epicure* of *Rome*, with all his witty Gluttony ... could have made with all provisions had from Earth, and Air, and Sea.” He also makes a distinction between the food eaten by the upper and the lower classes: “The meaner sort of people there eat Rice boyled with their green-Ginger and a little Pepper ... [and] their ordinary Food is made ... of a coarse well tasted

Grain, which they bake upon their thin iron plates.” But the “poor people” also enjoy good health since they “find this a very hearty Food, for they who live most upon it, are as strong as they could be, if they had their diet out of the King’s Kitchen” (409).

Even while praising the architecture and the cities in general, Terry does not see England as the norm and attempts to understand the style of architecture as governed by practical needs and the lifestyle of the people in general. He observes that “they build their houses low, not above two stories, and many of their tops flat and thick, which keep off the violence of the heat; and those flat tops, supported with strong Timber, and coated over with a plaster ... keep them dry in the time of the Rains” (399). He praises the city of Chitor even though it was a “shadow of its Beauty while it flourished in Pride” (355). But he adds that “the Houses there are not at all Palaces,” though still there are a few “buildings in Cities and Towns [and] some of them handsom, others fair, such as are inhabited by Merchants, and none of them very despicable.” The lack of great architecture is not due to lack of ability or talent in the people, but is related to the lifestyle of the people. There are no great houses in the cities because “all the great men there live a great part of the year, (in which their Moneths are more temperate, as from middle of *September* to the middest of *April*) in Tents, Pavilions, or moveable habitations, which, according to their fancies, changing they move from place to place, changing their air as often as they please” (398–99).

If Terry praises some aspects of the Mughal culture, he also criticizes others. For example, he scorns Muslim rituals around death:

Their mourning over their Dead is most immoderate; for besides that day of general lamentation at the end of their *Ramajan*, or Lent ... they houl and cry whole days for their friends departed, immediately after they have left the world, and after that time is passed over many foolish women, so long as they survive, very often in the year, observe set days to renew their mourning for their deceased friends, with abundance of (seemingly) affectionate tears. (431–32)

But his criticisms do not arise out of an Orientalist bias, and on the whole he appreciates Muslim customs. According to him there are not any great works of literature written by Muslims, but he adds that “for the people themselves, they are men of very strong reason, and will speak *ex renata*, upon any offered occasion, very exceeding well; and doubtless they are a people of such strong Capacities, that, were there literature amongst them, they might be the Authors of many excellent works” (413).

Thus, Terry, even while making a distinction in terms of religion, gives a balanced view of “India” highlighting both sides of the picture. Further,

even within the discourse of Christian belief and heresy there are exceptions, since Terry appreciates some of the tenets of Islam and the devout life of the Muslims in general. He observes that it “cannot be denied ... that there are some things in the precepts which *Mahomet* has prescribed to be received and observed by his followers, that are good; laid down in eight commandments.” For instance: “First, *That God is a great God, and the only God, and Mahomet is the Prophet of God. Second, That Children must obey their parents, and do nothing to displease them either in word or deed*” (420).⁷⁸

He gives the example of a “Mahometan of good quality” whom he tried to convince that if they [Muslims] “could conclude their Petitions in the Name of Jesus Christ, they might find much comfort in those their frequent performances, in that great duty.” But the Muslim told him that he “needed not to trouble my [his] self with that, for they found as great comfort as they could desire in what they did.” He, in turn, gives Terry the example of a devout Muslim who did not give up his faith even when he “became so poor that he had nothing left to buy bread for his family.” But, in spite of his “poor condition he was resolved still to ply his devotions.” Eventually his family was visited by the angel Gabriel who left for them “a very good quantity of Gold bound in a white Napkin” and his “little grett, or sand ... was all turn’d into precious stones, which amounted unto a very great value in money.” But they both gave a part of it “to the poor,” and the Muslim concludes that “if we do not neglect God, God will not forget us.” Terry observes that “unto which conclusion we may subscribe” whether or not we believe the story. At the same time, he regrets that Christians are not as devout as the Muslims:

It is a very great shame that a Mahometan should pray five times every day, that Pagans and heathens should be very frequent in their devotions, and Christians ... so negligent in that great prevailing duty ... For a Mahometan to pray five times a day, and for one that is called a Christian not to pray ... five times in a week, a moneth, a year! (424–25)

He is ashamed of the “disorderly” English cook at Surat who called a Muslim a “heathan dog” and also tried to attack him with his sword. He criticizes the behaviour of the English cook and observes, “it will not be amiss to enquire who was the *heathan dog* at this time, whether the debauched drunken Cook who call’d himselfe a Christian, or that sober and temperate Mahometan who was thus affronted” (quoted in Roe, vol. 1, 52–53). Throughout his narrative, he attacks the moral conduct of the Christians in “India”. He observes that Christianity has become synonymous with deceit and dishonesty in “India”. Whenever people are accused

of being dishonest, they would say: “What, dost thou think me a *Christian*, that I would go about to deceive thee?” The natives “who live near the Port where our [the English] ships arrive ... say thus in broken English which they have gotten. *Christian Religion, Devil Religion; Christian much drunk, Christian much do wrong, much beat, much abuse others.*” He agrees with the natives that “the Christians ... do enough to make Christianity itself evil spoken of; as a Religion that deserves more to be abhorred, than imbraced” (418).

Similarly, in the portrayal of Jehangir religion does not seem to be the dominating factor in the narratives of the English travellers. Even while highlighting Jehangir’s cruelty, Terry is able to represent him as a civil, kind, and religiously tolerant ruler who is open to the idea of trade with the Europeans. Terry’s portrayal of Jehangir reflects how trade between England and the Mughal empire takes priority over the religious aspect. Jehangir is not only an “infidel” but a tyrant who “measureth his power by his Sword or Launce” and

there are no Lawas for Government kept in that Empire upon record ... to regulate Governours there in the administration of Justice, but what are written in the breasts of that King and his Substitutes; and therefore they often take liberty to proceed how they please, in punishing the Offended rather than the offence, mens persons more than their Crimes. (450)

But Terry, the English chaplain, overlooks Jehangir’s “infidel” status and his acts of cruelties, since they did not interfere with Jehangir’s collaboration with the English in trade: “we English did not at all suffer by that inconstancy of his, but there we found a free Trade, a peaceable residence, and a very good esteem with that King and People ... And we had a very easie way upon any grievance to repair to that King” (455). Terry follows this up by all the good qualities of Jehangir: he is kind and just to all his subjects and makes himself available to the common public three times a day (456). Moreover, Jehangir is particularly kind towards Terry: “[Jehangir] sent one of his Grandees to me [Terry], to let me know, that the King bade me welcome thither, that I should have a free access to him when ever I pleased, and if I would ask him any thing he would give it me ... and very many times afterward when ... I appeared before him, he would still shew tokens of Civility and Respect unto me” (476). He highlights the religious tolerance of Jehangir and the people in general: “Priests or Ministers of any Religion find regard and esteem amongst the people” (475). He gives the example of the Jesuit who mocked Islam and “Mahomet” in the Mughal court; who argued

That the great worth and worthiness shining in the Person of Christ, was by far more excellent than any thing observable in *Mahomet* ... that the feigned, foolish, and ridiculous miracles, which they say were done by *Mahomet*, were nothing comparable to the Miracles done by Christ, who ... did greater Miracles than ever done before or since him. (477)

But the “King [Jehangir] heard patiently ... [and] at last sent him away back again to Goa honourably, with some good gifts bestowed on him, telling him, as Felix did, after he had reasoned before him, *that he would call for him again when he had a convenient time*” (477). Terry remarks that all the “Jesuits in East-*India* ... have liberty to convert any they can work upon, unto Christianity. The *Mogol* hath thus far declared, that it shall be lawful for any one, persuaded so in conscience, to become a Christian, and that he should not by doing so lose his favour” (478). He gives the example of a convert whose faith was tested by Jehangir, who “with many threats commanded him to renounce his new profession: the man replied, that he was most willing to suffer any thing in that cause, which the King could inflict”:

The Mogol then began to deal with him another way, asking him why he thought himself wiser than his Fore-fathers, who lived and died Mahometans; and further added many promises of riches and honour, if he would return to his Mahometism ... but ... he [Jehangir] perceived that his resolution indeed was to be a Christian, and he bid him so continue, and with a reward discharged him. (478–79)

Similarly, Roe, even while cataloguing Jehangir’s acts of cruelties, highlights his religious tolerance.⁷⁹ In his journal Roe repeatedly praises him: “Christians, Moores, Iewes, hee meddled not with their faith: they Came all in loue and hee would protect them from wrong: they liued vnder his safety and none should oppresse them.” In his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Roe also mentions Akbar’s religious tolerance who “gaue grant to all sortes of men to become Christians that would, eauen to his court owne blood, professing it should bee noe cause of disfauour from him.” The various references to Jehangir’s cruelty are balanced by a number of instances highlighting his kindness, which makes him as good as any Christian king. Roe is astonished to see Jehangir’s kind treatment of “a beggar ... a Poore sillyould man, all ashd, ragged, and Patched.” Not only does Jehangir accept and eat the cake given to him by the beggar, but

When his Collation of banqueting and drinck came, whatsoeuer hee [Jehangir] tooke to eate, hee brake and gaue the beggar halfe; and after many strange humiliations and Charetyes rising, theould wretch not being Nimble, hee tooke him vp in his arms, which noe Cleanly bodye durst haue touched, embracing him; and 3 tymes laying his hand on his hart, calling him father, hee left him, and all vs, and me in admiration of such a virtue in a heathen Prince. Which I mention

with envye and sorrow, that wee having the true vyne should bring forth Crabbes, and a bastard stock grapes: that either our Christian Princes had the deuotion or that this Zeale were guided by a true light of the Gospell.⁸⁰

Hawkins also mentions Jehangir's respect for the Christian religion, who in his prayer has the "Pictures of our Lady and Christ ... placed, graved in stone."⁸¹ Coryat reports: "He [Jehangir] speaketh very reverently of our Saviour, calling him in the Indian tongue, Ifazaret Eesa, that is, the great Prophet, Jesus: and all Christians, especially us English, he useth so benevolently, as no Mahometan Prince the like." Coryat, also gives a few examples highlighting Jehangir's religious tolerance and his hatred for religious turncoats. He gives the example of an Armenian who

desirous to turn Moore procured a noble-man to bring him to the king; whom the king asked why hee turned Moore; whether for preferment? Hee answered: No. Some few monthes after, craving some courtesie of the King, he denyed it him, saying that hee had done him the greatest favor that could be, to let him save his soule: but for his bodie, hee himself should provide as well as he could.

In another instance, Jehangir tests the faith of the servant of an Armenian who had embraced the Christian faith, by offering him various temptations to give up Christianity:

The king practiced by faire speeches and large promises to withdraw him to the folly of Mahomet offering him pensions, means, and command of horse, telling him hee had none but foure rupias a moneth wages, which was a poore reward for quittin his professed faith; but if hee would recant, hee would heape upon him many dignities; the fellow answering ... that he was a Christian in his heart, and would not alter it. This way not taking effect so the King turned to threatnings and menacings of tortures and whippings; but the proselyte man-fully resolving to suffer any thing, answered hee was readie to endure the kings pleasure. Upon this resolution, when all men expected present and severe castigation, the King changed his tune, highly commending his constancie and honestie, bidding him goe and returne to his master, and to serve him faithfully and truly; giving him a rupia for his integritie.

However, a few days later Jehangir to test his faith asked him to take a gift of a pig to his master. But when the servant threw the pig in a ditch since he was mocked by a few Muslims, Jehangir reproached him: "Now I know you art neither good Christian nor good Mahumetan, I gave thee a pension; which now I take from thee, and for thy dissimulation doe command thee to have a hundred stripes."⁸² He asked all men to learn from this example that they were given liberty to choose any religion provided they are remain true to it.

Almost all the seventeenth-century English travellers consistently highlight the religious freedom in Jehangir's reign. Terry in his account concludes:

In that Empire all Religions are tolerated, which makes the tyrannical Government there more easie to be endured. The Mogol will speak well of all of them, saying, that a Man might be happy and safe in the profession of any Religion; and therefore would say, That the Mahometan Religion, was good, so was the Christian Religion good, and the rest good; and therefore by the way.⁸³

The English, instead of representing the natives in the Mughal empire as barbaric "others," highlight the empire as a place of religious tolerance and cultural values. There are moments when they differentiate themselves from the Muslims, but many such representations fall within the discourse of Christian belief and heresy and not what Said calls "Orientalism." Further, as seen above, there are many instances when even within the discourse of religion the English do appreciate some of the tenets of Islam. It did not matter that Jehangir was an infidel, since the English "there ... found a free Trade, a peaceable residence, and a very good esteem with that King and People."

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Notes

1. Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives / Cultural Dialogues: "Discoveries" of India in the Language of Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 23.
2. Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600–1800* (Delhi: OUP, 1995), p. 3.
3. W.W. Hunter, *A History of British India*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1899), vol. 1, p. 237.
4. Bailey W. Diffie, and George D. Winius, *The Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415–1580* (Minnesota: Minnesota UP, 1977), p. 313. A *feitor*, or factor, was a representative of the Portuguese king, whose task "was both to deal with foreign governments as the king's ambassador and to rule the Portuguese merchant community..." (also p. 313).
5. Diffie, p. 198.
6. Luís Vaz de Camões, *The Lusiads*, trans. William C. Atkinson (Middlesex: Penguin, 1952), pp. 65, 58, 64, 85, 164, 168–70.
7. Diffie, p. 224.
8. R.S. Whiteway, *The Rise of the Portuguese Power in India, 1497–1550* (Patna: Janaki Prakashan), 1979, pp. 60, 65–66.
9. W. W. Hunter, vol. 1, p. 237.
10. Hunter, vol. 1, pp. 237, 239–41.

11. Shankar Raman, *Framing "India": The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture* (California: Stanford UP, 2002), p. 5.
12. Raman, p. 244.
13. Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1568–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), pp. 11, 9.
14. Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History*, (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 20, 23.
15. Quoted in J. Courtenay Locke, ed., *The First Englishmen in India: Letters and Narratives of Sundry Elizabethans* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1930), pp. 31–32.
16. John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the East India Company* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 10.
17. David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), pp. 141–42.
18. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul (1615–1619)*, ed. William Foster, vols. 1 & 2 (London: Bedford, 1899), vol. 2, p. 344.
19. Singh, p. 22.
20. Armitage, p. 61.
21. Drayton is quoted in Armitage, p. 62.
22. Armitage, p. 96.
23. Singh, p.30.
24. Roe, vol. 2, p. 283.
25. Singh, pp. 38–39.
26. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 113, 168.
27. Roe, vol. 2, p. 312, In later writers who visited "India" in the latter half of the century, we see a highly complex portrayal of the Hindus. John Ovington admires the Hindus both for their intellect and the spiritual lives they lead: "[The Hindus] maintain a good habit of body, are as comly and proportionable as other people, and live to reckon as many years as those that pity their spare food. But in their thoughts they are often more quick and nimble, by that course of living they choose to delight in which renders their spirits more pure and subtle, and thereby greatly facilitates their comprehension of things." J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Suratt in the Year 1689. India in the Seventeenth Century*. ed. J.P. Guha. (Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1984), p. 141.
28. Keay, p. 99.
29. Roe, vol. 1, p. 120.
30. William Foster, "Introduction," *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul (1615–1619)*, ed. William Foster, vols. 1 & 2 (London: Bedford, 1899), vol. 1, p. vi.
31. Quoted in Foster, "Introduction," vol. 1, p. vi.
32. Roe, vol. 2, p. 358.
33. From a footnote by Foster on p. 134 of Roe's journal, vol 1. In fact the Company had almost taken it for granted that Roe would be getting an allowance from Jehangir, since it is made clear in the Company's agreement with Roe that part of his salary will be withdrawn when he gets an allowance from Jehangir. See Roe, vol. 2, p. 547.

34. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 134, and vol. 2, 393.
35. Roe, vol. 1, p. 183.
36. Keay observes that the farman was “a grant, confirming all the Company’s commercial and territorial privileges under the imperial seal, [which] would elevate its legal standing to a constitutionally equivalent to that of the various Nawabs and Governors with whom it was habitually embroiled” (Keay, p. 222).
37. Roe, vol. 2, pp. 350–51.
38. Roe is quoted here in Foster’s “Introduction,” vol. 1, p. xxxvi.
39. William Foster, ed., *English Factories in India: 1618–21* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 59, 79.
40. Foster, ed., *English Factories in India: 1618–21*, pp. 215–16.
41. Foster, ed., *English Factories in India: 1618–21*, p. 216.
42. Roe, vol. 1, p. 97.
43. Roe, vol. 2, pp 343, 350–51.
44. Roe quoted in Foster’s “Introduction,” vol. 1, p. xiii.
45. Keay, p. 87.
46. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 119–20.
47. Keay, p. 100.
48. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 163, 179.
49. Keay, p. 96.
50. Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India* (London: T.W. for J. Martin, 1655), pp. 394–96.
51. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 108–109.
52. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 97, 119; vol. 2, pp. 322, 324.
53. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, p. 140.
54. Terry, p. 350.
55. Samuel Purchas, *Haklutyus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes: Containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travells by Englishmen and others*, vols. 3 & 4. 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905–1907), vol. 3, p. 72.
56. Purchas, vol. 3, p. 14.
57. Foster, ed., *English Factories in India: 1618–21*, p. xlv.
58. Foster, ed., *English Factories in India: 1624–29* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 29.
59. Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, Intro. William Foster, 2 vols. (London: Argonaut Press, 1930), p. 96.
60. Michael Strachan, *The Life and Adventures of Thomas Coryate* (London: Oxford UP, 1962), p. 224.
61. Thomas Coryat, *Mr Thomas Coriat to his Friends in England Sendeth Greeting: From Agra the Capitall City of the Dominion of the Great Mogoll in the Easterne India, the laft of October, 1616*, fiche 3.
62. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 189.

63. Singh, pp. 23, 31.
64. For a critique of Said's *Orientalism* in the context of my paper see Richmond Barbour, "Power and Distant Display in Early English 'Ambassadors' in Moghul India," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61. 3 & 4 (1998), pp. 343–68; and his book *Before Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). Richmond Barbour in "Power and Distant Display in Early English 'Ambassadors' in Moghul India" observes that instead of representing the Mughal empire in barbaric or exotic terms, the travellers "left and saw that they left, their Mughal audiences with an impression of England as a peripheral and trifling realm. For domestic confidence in spectacles of state prompted envoys into performance that looked rather small abroad, at the same time their own theatricality equipped the English to read in Mogul spectacles the signs of an overestimating power" (347). In his recent book *Before Orientalism* Barbour has adjusted his position and deals in greater detail with representation of the Mughal empire and Jehangir in Roe's writings, by highlighting Roe's contradictory portrayal of the Mughal empire. However, Barbour does not deal with the representations of the Mughal empire by other seventeenth-century English travel writers in any detail, which is needed for a more comprehensive understanding of Orientalism in the seventeenth century. Besides Roe, he argues that Edward Terry highlights the "unmanliness and effeminacy" of the "Indian" natives, when Terry states that Mughal soldiers "dare not look a man of courage in the face" (159). But, as I have argued, Terry's portrayal of life in the Mughal empire is far more comprehensive than simply representing the natives as effeminate or unmanly.
65. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 238, 240–41.
66. Roe, vol. 1, pp. 12–14.
67. Terry, pp. 327, 331–33.
68. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 1958), p. 148.
69. Terry, pp. 376, 419.
70. Teltscher, pp. 24, 26.
71. Quoted in Teltscher, p. 18.
72. Terry, pp. 371–73.
73. Teltscher, p. 19.
74. Terry, p. 371.
75. Terry, pp. 405, 409, 392.
76. Teltscher, p. 19.
77. Terry, p. 410. Because of the abundance of quotations from Terry that follow, page numbers will appear in brackets after each, all from the same text.
78. For all the eight commandments see Terry's *A Voyage to East-India* (London: T.W. for J. Martin, 1655), pp. 420–21.
79. See Foster, "Introduction," vol. 1, p. xvi.
80. Roe, vol. 2, pp. 382, 313, 367.
81. Hawkins, p. 45.
82. Purchas, vol. 4, pp. 474, 492–93.
83. Purchas, vol. 4, p. 475.