Conclusion
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This study has tried to unravel the complex levels of interaction between the Mughals and the Europeans in India. Interactions between the Europeans and the Mughals were not restricted to matters of trade and commerce, but extended to socio-cultural spheres as well.

In so far as Mughal perception of European trade is concerned, there was the gradual realization that the Europeans enjoyed maritime supremacy and were for that reason, masters of the seas. There was, in Mughal perception, a very fine line of separation between control over the seas and piracy. Very often European attempts to dominate the seas and the overseas trade were construed in Mughal perception as a form of piracy. Relegation of European maritime supremacy to the domain of piracy allowed the Mughals to treat the Europeans merchants as no different from other merchants engaged in trade and commerce. Despite their maritime supremacy, therefore, Europeans were never considered as political powers who could challenge the Mughal might in India. At the same time, a mutual appreciation of each other’s powers through what is conveniently termed as
‘balance of terror’ there had developed varying levels of relations between the Mughals and the European merchants. At the provincial and local levels of administration at least, there were repeated instances of growing cooperation between the Europeans and the Mughal authorities. Cooperation did not preclude conflicts and therefore, the relation between the Mughals and the European merchants was a paradoxical one, a relationship in which cooperation and conflict went together.

The Mughal court created an atmosphere of receptivity of doctrines, practices and beliefs of Christianity by discussion over theological and metaphysical issues in the munazara debates during the time of Akbar. Books on Christianity were gifted by Jesuit fathers and several translations of Christian works were done as well. Christianity was both studied and tolerated during Akbar’s reign. The interest in European beliefs began to decline during the succeeding period, but never quite disappeared, reappearing, for example, in Mughal art and architecture.

In so far as the Mughal response to European science and technology is concerned, the Mughals displayed a ‘selective reception’ for European technology. The European ‘toys,’ as the Mughal called them, indeed aroused curiosity of the Mughal court and served to shape and reinforce the image of Europeans as a
technologically ingenious people. Some of such things were purchased, bought and even imitated by the Mughal kings and nobles but the response remained a sporadic one-intermittent and discontinuous. The reasons for the lack of sustained interest in European technology were complex, and it would be wrong to attribute it to any monocausal explanation.

We notice a similar negligent attitude towards European medicine. Despite the fact that a number of physicians were employed and respected for their skill in medicine, even as early as the period of Akbar, and their number only grew over the century,\(^1\) there is no evidence of any effort by the Mughal elites to study or incorporate the European advances in medicine. There was an obscurantist reliance on the traditional systems of medicine. (Fryer observed that anatomy is not approved wherein they lean too much on tradition).\(^2\) And good physicians continued to be compared with Galen and Avicenna.\(^3\)

Apart from the occasional information regarding Eastern Europe from the Ottoman Turks, the initial interaction of the

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\(^3\) *Zakhiratul Khawanin*, II, pp. 271-2; *Nobility under the great Mughals*, Z.A. Desai (based on *Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin*), p.184.
Mughal Emperors like Akbar and Jahangir with the Jesuit fathers directly helped in shaping their perception of European political system. Although a few questions were occasionally asked by the Mughal Emperors from Portuguese fathers or European envoys or other visitors at the court, the Mughals never displayed a serious concern to understand contemporary European polity. The European countries were not given a respectable political status, and were treated as a minor political force at the Mughal court. This comes out from the following noticeable things: European ambassadors were not respected and were not even mentioned in court histories or private memoirs of Mughal kings; despite repeated efforts of the ambassadors of different European countries, they could not conclude a 'treaty' with the Mughals; the gifts given by European ambassadors were treated as exotic and fashionable but were not construed as symbolic of equal political associations; letters of European kings were never answered, nor was any embassy ever sent to any Eastern or Western European country (though many such embassies were ostensibly planned).

The Europeans, in the Mughal perception, came from a place which was socially and culturally inferior not only to the Mughal Empire but also the other empires in the Islamic world-the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Uzbeks.
The image at Mughal court of Europe was that of an ‘inconsiderable island.’ Aurangzeb questioned that representation, but made no effort to move beyond the sketchy and obscure understanding of the European political system. There is no work of the period, dealing even cursorily, with European political structure. The Arab literature on geography of the world had included knowledge of European races, rivers, islands and mountain ranges but these were full of hyperboles and speculations. The Mughal elite stuck to Ptolemaic geographical concepts and made no attempt to improve upon that knowledge. Curiously, maps and atlases brought by Europeans, even gifted by them to Mughal rulers, such as by Jesuit Father Monserrate to Akbar and by the English ambassador Thomas Roe to Jahangir were treated with little interest and were often returned. And again, very few geographical treatises were written during this period and whatever was written was heavily influenced by Ptolemaic geography and had nothing new to offer on European geography.

By the close of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, there seems to have developed greater interest in the European world. This was owing to the political ascendancy of the Europeans in India, and did not signify a change in the contemporary intellectual set-up. It would still be wrong to
overemphasize the point, because one of the greatest theorists of
the eighteenth century, Shah Waliullah could still not see the
threats of British ascendancy in India, and continued to see the
Marathas and the Jats as threats to the Mughal imperium.