Griffin Dennis

Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations

Final Paper

Thursday, 28 May, 2015

An Entropic Consideration of 18th Century India

"Was the 18th century a period of decline in India? Did the "fall" of the Mughal Empire hurl India into a period of political, economic, or cultural chaos? Or, are there alternative ways of regarding Indian conditions during this period?

The 18th century was a period of great political turmoil in the Indian subcontinent. It saw the fall of the once mighty Mughal Empire and the rise of a diverse array of military and political players as the century wore on. Though the fall of the Mughals was relatively swift, it is hard to point to one decisive event that. No one military force or decisive victory brought the whole empire crashing down. Instead, a continued assault from all sides wore down the once seemingly centralized administration in Delhi. In the wake of economic and military troubles in the early 18th century, regional powers began to gain more influence. Though there was certainly a large measure of upheaval during this period, there still remain historiographic questions as to the nature of the changes that occurred. Did the fall of the Mughal Empire necessarily cause a period of political, economic or cultural chaos? In answering this question, one must qualify any answer by asking the question "for whom?" The Mughal structures of rule and patronage were upended, but for some regions like Awadh, the period proved to be one of expansion and formation of local power structures. We can characterize The stage was set for the subsequent subjugation of the Subcontinent by British forces in the 19th century, past the point to which the East India Company had already advanced. The order that emerged in the mid 18th century would

First, we should consider the numerous factors that led to the ultimate demise of Mughal influence in the 1700s. The most obvious of these was the weakening influence of the Mughal military interests in the Empire's territories. Strained by the continuing conflicts in both the east and west ends of its empire, The Mughals were somewhat exhausted by the continuing assaults by British, Maratha, and Afghan forces. This is fairly clear historically, but the side effects of this were a draining of financial resources, and a focusing of troops and ordinance to the detriment of other regions. Of course, the detriment in this case is Delhi's, as the relative absence of the central authority combined with a newfound economic prosperity allowed some regions to at least nominally break from Mughal administration.

Awadh is perhaps the most notable example of this, breaking from Mughal rule in the early 18th century. Awadh was and continues to be a prosperous agricultural region of India. As such, the transition from Mughal rule to the 100+ year rule of the Nawabs was a relatively non-violent one. It was both a symptom and cause of further decline in the overall power held by Delhi.

Of course the British in the form of the East India Company played a great role in wresting territory from the Mughals, though by the time they arrived, they were taking advantage of what had already happened in the subcontinent. Something something economic consequences of trade and the effect on the Mughal economy. Something something industrial revolution. Something something Bengal. Something something Plassey.

Something Something tying these things together

Something Something conclusion.

Something something graduating.