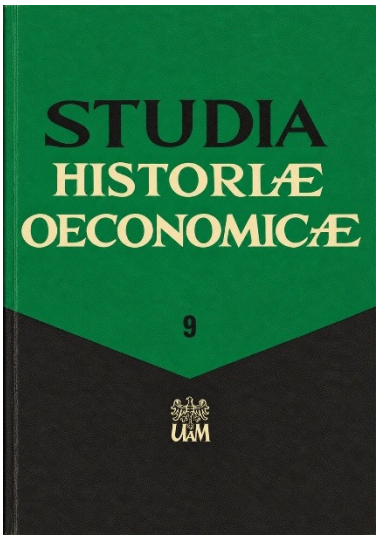


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PROGRESS AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT IN THE EYES OF RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE MAN

> In this doth Europe farre excell the rest.
> Spaine, Italy, France, high, low Germany,
> And England Northmost, equall with the best.
> The first most famous for sterilitie,
> The last hath fame for sweat fertilitie.
>
> John Norden, *Vicissitudo rerum* 1600[1]

The use of the phrase "in the eyes" in the title has been deliberate and should be understood literally. The paper will deal with disparities observed by people travelling over Europe in the 16th and the 17th centuries with their impressions, their criteria and capabilities of perception. The choice of travel surveys and diaries as the basic source determines the profile of the study: the countries and their problems will be seen neither from the point of view of detached scholarly treatises, nor from the point of view of the common people of those days. As writers and world travellers, the authors of these accounts, were by definition well educated. Most of them, however, were not leading intellectuals and in most cases could not pose as specialists in the matters in question. It is true that they were familiar with contemporary cosmographies and manuals on political science like, for instance, those by Sebastian Münster or Pierre d'Avity, and quite often they were acquainted with some aspects of foreign political systems. They knew ancient history, the Bible and the Christian tradition. Yet in spite of this knowledge very frequently they had to face problems the solution of which would have required from them a totally different education and experience. Nevertheless, their attitude toward economic, social and political problems of the nations then visited constitute valuable source-material for scholars of the period.

Naturally, the very notions of progress and under-development, so commonplace nowadays, do not fit the 16th and 17th centuries very well. As members of industrial society we consider the world as being dynamic. Exhilarating optimism proclaimed by many apostles of "progress" (understood in very many ways), is counter-balanced with dismal, though equally diverse, prophecies of inevitable catastrophy. Nevertheless, no one today can imagine the world as being static. The situation was different when population growth

[1] J. Norden, *Vicissitudo rerum* (1600), ed. D. C. Collins, Shakespeare Assoc. Facs. No. 4, London 1931, p. 95.

rate was low, increase of labour efficiency was slight and the absorptive power of the market fairly stable. Demographic catastrophies, the effects of military operations and local lows were more important than strictly economic changes or alterations in production and sales. Perhaps the term "progress" itself can hardly be applied to those years. In a situation where static elements dominate, the national wealth already accumulated in the past is of greater importance than the present national product, which represents a dynamic element. The contemporary term "wealth" — that "terme mal défini de nos jours"[2] according to J. B. Say — corresponds nowadays to the notion of "abundance" and does not agree with our habit of expressing everything in figures and of separating economic and other phenomena in a modern state.

An example will serve to illustrate the problem: comments on Provence by Jakub Sobieski (1588 - 1646). He was a well-educated statesman (the father of Jan III, the later King of Poland), who travelled widely in Germany, the Low Countries, England, Spain, Portugal and France (where he spent several years). He spoke and wrote French, Italian and Spanish. In Coimbra he conversed with Suarez and in Paris he was a confident of Henry IV. In 1611, after a trip from Spain to Italy, Sobieski wrote:

"That was the region of France which was defined by Julius Caesar with that word [i. e. province] for its excellence. He is believed to have said: among all provinces this is *the* province, and he took such a liking to it that it became his favourite place of residence; and rightly so, for in all France there is no county as rich in cities towns and people, as lavish with all kind of liquor and as cheerful in its location. Seas are there and cheerful rivers, alove groves, orange and lemon orchards, vineyards thick-set and exquisite, people and especially the fair sex exceptionally comely; even peasant women in their sleekness and fair complexion can rank with any gentlewomen; even old hags are not as ugly as elsewhere. There are lots of holy places and the bodies of saints rest in many a precinct. You will be shown the grave of St. Ann there. Two Marys are laid to rest in one town. In another, St. Martha, the sister of St. Mary Magdalen has been buried. In a small town called Tarascon lies the body of St. Mary Magdalen herself. Here lies St. Lazarus..., there, the woman of the company who lifted up her voice and said: 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee'[3]. There are many other saints' bodies they show you, and also relics and holy precincts. The air in Provence is good, very temperate; though the county is warmer, hotter than other provinces, yet the people live long and diseases are not as common as elsewhere"[4].

[2] Cf. *Dictionnaire des sciences économiques*, ed. J. Romeuf, Paris 1958, entry: Richesse.

[3] Cf. Luke XI. 27.

[4] J. Sobieski, *Dwie podróże Jakuba Sobieskiego ojca króla Jana III odbyte po krajach europejskich w latach 1607 - 13 i 1638* (Two journeys made by Jakub Sobieski, father of King Jan III, through the European countries in the years 1607 - 13 and 1638), ed. E. Raczyński, Poznań 1833, p. 129.

This description, exceptionally prolix for Jakub Sobieski, is worth consideration for several characteristic elements. A reference is made to Caesar as an authority on the continuous "excellence" of the land. The fertility of the soil and the quality of agricultural products (vineyards ... exquisite), are cited to provide the basis for the region's prosperity and "cheerfulness" (I shall return to the latter further on). The beauty of Provençal women of all ages, and the multitude of relics may seem a secondary factor in a country's economic development yet this observation differentiates our way of thinking from that of three hundred years ago.

Sobieski's argument quoted above proves to be the rule. Antoine de Lalaing, a courtier of Philip the Fair and his companion during journeys round the Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain, wrote that Cologne was a town: "...rice, puissante, marchande, fort peuplée, bien pavée, bien murée de gros murs et de grosses et fortes thours munies de très belles maisons matérièles et sumptueuses decorée". Further on he describes the relics of saints and his estimate of their number, including eleven thousand virgins of St. Ursula, reaches 23 - 24 thousand; "the land is so holy here that it does not accept other bodies, even those of innocent children". „Je tiens que, après Rome" — he concludes — "n'y a place en la crestyènete où il ait tant de corpz saints comme à Couloiggne"[5]. Thus the multitude of relics that permeate the soil of Cologne constitutes the basis of that city's true worth, both mundane and eternal.

Among the occasional telling observations on wealth and poverty that are scattered in the texts of travel accounts, one can distinguish certain common features. First, the idea that a country's wealth is usually centuries-old and, vice versa, that the antiquity of a civilization contributes to its prosperity. The latter idea was best expressed by Thomas Coryat, who tried to prove that the population on the left bank of the Rhine and on the right of the Danube was denser than on the opposite banks because these territories had once belonged to the Romans[6]. In turn, the duration of prosperity or poverty is, according to him, the consequence of unchanging factors like climate. The two greatest authorities on such matters were Jean Bodin and Giovanni Botero. J. Bodin analysed in the first chapter of vol. V of his "Les six livres de la république" (1st ed. 1576), the characteristic features of population of various geographic zones according to their distance from the equator as well as to the lay of the land. He characterized Northern peoples (including the Germans, the Flemings and the English), by physical strength, cruelty and skill in handi-

[5] *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, ed. M. Gachard, vol. I, Bruxelles 1876, p. 256, 334. These are, after all, the dominant impressions noted by foreign travellers in Cologne. Even less impressionable Protestants, quite frequently openly antagonistic toward the idea of relics, could hardly help being plainly astonished.

[6] T. Coryat, *Crudities*, London 1611.

craft; they lack cunning yet they are superior in military matters. The central peoples — the Spaniards and the French — are superior in political matters, they are excellent negotiators, merchants and lawyers, and they proclaim laws for themselves as well as for the others. Although transformation of these features is possible under a long-lasting influence of new "food, laws and habits" (the evolution of the inhabitants of Germany since the times of Tacitus may be given as an example), geographical position is still the dominating factor.

Botero developed a similar theory, though on a larger basis; he took into consideration more factors affecting the wealth of regions and largeness of towns, like the quality of soil, waterways, density of population, community of languages facilitating inter-regional communication and finally, local laws. The ideal conditions are not represented by affluence coming from the fertility of soil; Piedmont was able to feed Spanish and French armies for years, and yet it lacked large cities; England, excluding London, could serve as another example. What was really necessary was "the easines and commodiousnes of conduct, the carying out and bringing in... of commodities of wares too and froe". That is why God had created water[7].

I have paid attention to Botero's views because, as the author of *The Traveller's Breviat* and of *Relations of the Most Famous Kingdoms*[8], he was a well-known writer held as an authority by anyone travelling in Europe. One can see the influence of his views on other travel surveys. A great variety of suggestions the validity of which could be tested by a traveller surveying a given country, afforded an educated man a considerable freedom of choice; Botero's determinism did not discourage anyone at that time.

There was one country, however, the growth of which forced travellers to reconsider the constant ("natural") and changing ("artificial") factors in economic and social development — the Netherlands. The meagreness of Dutch natural resources contrasted with the economic prosperity of the United Provinces in the 16th and the 17th centuries. That contrast drew people's atten-

[7] G. Botero discussed these matters in several of his works; sometimes the same observations were repeated elsewhere and entire passages could be found shifted to another treatise. I am quoting: *A Treatise, concerning the causes of the Magnificence and greatness of Cities,* transl. from Italian by R. Peterson, London 1606 p. 18. Cf. also *The reason of State.* tr. P. J. and D. P. Waley, New Haven 1956, p. 38 ff. On the value of Botero's treatises in comparative studies cf.: E. A. Fischer, *Giovanni Botero,* Diss. Staatswiss. Fakultät, Zürich 1952, p. 50 - 85.

[8] G. Botero, *The Travellers Breviat, or An historical description of the most famous kingdoms in the World...*, tr. I. R., London 1601 (there have been later editions, too); *Relations of the most famous kingdoms and common-weales of thorough the World...*, London 1608. Both books were very popular among English travellers. *Relations...* in particular emphasized the significance of systematic comparison. The 1616 edition is in this regard much better than the previous one.

tion to the significance of man's labour[9]. Emphasis on hard work also modified a common opinion as regards the food-exporting countries of Eastern Europe, where rich crops were said to be obtained without effort. Yet certain writers showed a characteristic, though not logical, way of thinking: Poland exported much grain, hence her crop-yields must be high[10].

From the end of the 16th century a considerable body of literature was published to prepare international travellers for their tasks. These tasks were taken to be education and preparation for public service. "Instructions for foreign travel" gave readers what were regarded as the most significant items of information[11]. From among the hundreds of questions which were expected to be answered by the travellers (the questionnaire was compiled by Albert Meyer, the German author of a pamphlet translated into English in 1589), we can select a dozen or so. "Whether the place bee much or little frequented of travellers and merchants, or else desolate, or almost desolate" (chap. 4.8). "Whether it be of any name and fame, for power, wealth, force, multitude of people or not." (chap. 4.9) "Whether the people live long, and come commonly to good ages, or else die in their youth, or riper yeres, yea or not" (chap. 6.5; we may discern here the problem taken into consideration by J. Sobieski in Provence; the preceding four questions of Meyer's questionnaire referred to the climate). "The beautie, pleasantnesse, fertilitie, barrenesse, of the region, soile, grounde, fields, etc." (chap. 6.6). "The tillage and manuring of the soile, and fields, how much it is, after what sort they labour and till them, what graine or graines they sow, and how it yeeldeth" (chap. 6.9). "The naturall goodness of the soile, the haruest and increase of all sorts of fruits" (chap. 6.10) "The quantitie of grasse and hay, that the meadowes commonly yeelds..." (chap. 6.11). "The multitude of the people, wherein consisteth much of the strength of the realme..." (chap. 8.5). "The fare and dyet of the region..." (chap. 8.8.). "The industrial studies... of the inhabitantes..." (chap. 8.11). "The waightes and measures..." (chap. 8.15)[12].

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[9] Roger Ascham to Edward Raven, Augsburg, 20th January 1551, (on the Netherlands) "These countries be rich by labour and continuance of man, not by goodness of the soil." R. Ascham, *The Whole Works of...*, ed. Giles, London 1865, vol. I, part 2, No. CXVI, p. 250.

[10] The most penetrating remarks on the Duth development were those of Sir William Temple. However, his *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (1st edition 1673) were rather a political treatise than a traveller's relation. This book is a fine example of mutual influence of travel and political science.

[11] "Instructions for foreign travel" are discussed by nearly all authors dealing with travels and travellers. A very useful treatment of the subject and a bibliography referring mainly to English affairs may be found in C. M. Howard, *English Travellers of the Renaissance*, London 1914 (reprint New York 1968).

[12] A. Meier, *Certaine briefe and speciall Instructions for Gentlemen, merchants, studentes, souldiers, marriners etc...*, London 1589.

This meticulous questionnaire, full of those "yea or no's", could not have been followed throughout at all points; not even Arthur Young could cope with it. It reflects well, however, a range of interests and a scientific attitude diametrically opposed to the disposition of the majority of travellers. Most inquisitive explorers focussed their attention on their hobbies, frequently made meticulous notes of various ancient or later inscriptions (this kind of diary usually bores one to death); they also described medals and ancient coins purchased or merely seen during the trip. In the second half of the 17th century a new generation of traveller-naturalists arose who looked for plants and minerals (another huge questionnaire for their needs was compiled by Charles Linné)[13]. Yet the majority of travellers jotting down their observations, had to learn how to look and had to select the needed information according to various criteria. The instructions enumerated things worthy of interest and suggested ready-made patterns of observation.

A rich profusion of diverse remarks makes it very difficult to come to some definite conclusion as regards the question: which elements were considered by these authors simply as curiosities, and which were meant to represent an overall image of a country's wealth? This refers, first of all, to the most easily discernible discrepancies among social groups and classes. Here a traveller's judgement would depend greatly on his family background. Thus, if a Polish magnate like Jerzy Ossoliński, as a envoy to England, expressed his abomination for the peasant-like manners of the Dutch, his comments reflected only the contrast between social structures. Foreigners from Western Europe, in turn, were astonished by the disparities among social classes in Poland[14]. Yet people in general did not realize that the wealth of a country should not be measured only by the prosperity of the richest persons therein. The notion that the condition of the poorer classes, especially the peasantry, is more representative in this respect, was very slow in gaining popularity. A contemporary reader can often anticipate with considerable amount of prob-

[13] A person whose sensitivity has been directed to certain phenomena tends to pay special attention to them in a new environment. Analogically, a present-day tourist fond of photography "sees" differently from a tourist unfamiliar with a camera. I am approaching here an entirely uninvestigated problem of perception of travellers; its analysis would require the approach from the point of view of and with the methods adopted in psychology. For instructions that mould traxellers' views — cf. R. Dallington, *A Method of Travel...*, London (1605); T. Palmer, *An essay of the meanes how to make our travailes more profitable* (London) 1606; J. Howell, *Instructions for forraine Travell...*, London 1642.

[14] J. Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik (1595 - 1621)* (A Memoir 1595 - 1621), ed. W. Czapliński, J. Kolasa, J. Maciszewski, Wrocław 1953, p. 111: "In this way I avoided the boorishness of the conceited peasants who, full of vain spirit, believe that the whole world adores them as if they were fortunae et naturae miraculum". D'Hauteville, *An Account of Poland* [translated from French], London 1698, chap. XXII: *Of the Estates and Revenues of the Polanders*, p. 174 ff.; G. van Broekhuizen, *De nieuve bereisde Wereld, part II, Europe*, Amsterdam 1703, p. 488.

ability, the main course of the authors argument on the basis of enthusiasm or prejudice reflected on the very first pages of the survey[15].

Let me quote some reflections on Normandy by Peter Heylyn, a well-known author of manuals of world geography and of surveys written in the form of travel guides. "For my part I could never yet find, where the great witts of theirs [i. e. the Normans] lay... For what with the unproportionable rents they pay to their Lords on the one side, and the immeasurable taxes laid upon them by the King on the other, they are kept in such a perpetuated course of drudgery, that there is no place for wit or wisdome left amongst them. Liberty is the Mother and the Nurse of those two qualities..."[16]. It is worth noting that the word *Norman* here means a *peasant* from Normandy; this is fairly exceptional, because most authors drew attention primarily to the gentry, later distinguishing other classes as higher or lower from them, and as a rule, portraying them as different in terms of character, spirit and other qualities. This typically English commentary of Heylyn ("Liberty is the Mother...") is supplemented with other explanations of Norman poverty, first of all, pettifoggery. Finally, Heylyn draws a parallel between Normandy and Norfolk (with references to Ortelius and Camden): the soil and the long coast constitute the basis for analogy, yet "the *country* of Normandy, and the *people* of Norfolk, are somewhat the richer". The political system and want of freedom deprive the country of its natural wealth, for in Normandy "you would think the grain has a desire to kisse the earth his mother, or that it purposed by making it self away into the ground, to save the Ploughman his next years labour"[17].

Serfdom and the poverty of French peasants had been a favourite topic of English travellers since the times of Sir John Fortescue. "Commons or plebeians..." — runs a note about the French by Sir John Reresby, a Royalist who in 1654 set out for the Continent to await better times there — "of whom I may say, so as to the peasants, they are certainly the most miserable, slavish people in the world...". That is why, he adds, Charles V called the King of France "Rex asinorum, his subjects not being less passive than that sluggish animal, under those weighty burthens imposed upon them"[18].

Such a reflection suggests reliance on some general belief rather than direct experience. Champagne enjoyed (according to a survey of France by John Elliot) "the people active and given to good husbandrie... the townes wealthy,

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[15] The enthusiasm was not always disinterested; for example, travel surveys commissioned by various petty princes of the Reich, to extol their dominions.

[16] P. Heylyn, *A Full Relation of two Journeys: the one Into the Main-Land of France, the other Into some of the adjacent Ilands*, London 1656, p. 6.

[17] Ibid., p. 7 ff.

[18] J. Reresby, *Memoirs and Travels of...*, London 1904, p. 4. Cf. also d'Hauteville's remarks about Polish peasants, above, ref. 14.

the villages well inhabited, and to be breefe, they want nothing necessarye for mans life... Howbeit the people of Champagne are somewhat teastie and self-willed". "The Husbandmen of Poictow are slie, will deceave a man with pratling their pedlarly speech, dull wittee lubbers, malicious, disloyal and smally. to be trusted, lovers of brablings and novelties: but such as inhabite the Townes are utterlye of an another disposition, they are tractable, courteous... [etc.]". "Angoulême. The inhabitants of this countrie are quicke witted, standing upon their reputation, stout, great boasters, taking small delight in trafikke, living for the most part upon their rents... [so this must have referred to the squires]. The peasant dull witted, rude and clownish, given to toyle...". High Limousin is almost barren; "bread, flesh, fruit, wild-foule and venison are reasonable cheape, and it is good living at Limoges, or there about, because the inhabitants are sober and content with little, and drinke little wine, except it be in the townes". Finally the inhabitants of Dauphiné, "obedient, courteous, peaceable", are also "given to labour the earth and careful of their husbandry"[19].

In these passages are elements of informative value, woven into layers of stereotyed platitudes and common prejudices. It might be worthwile examining to what extent peasant risings of the first half of the 17th century could have influenced common opinion on the character of the French peasant; by Sir John Reresby he was yet considered as passive as a donkey. In the like manner, the reign of Charles I and its end, brought about a widespread opinion that the English were rebellious. Coming back to Elliot who wrote half a century earlier, we might observe that the general tenor of his remarks quoted above did not depart much from a common opinion held by the Poles about the inhabitants of Mazovia who, it was claimed, were born blind, just like kittens. The real poverty of the region and the comparative backwardness of the local petty gentlemen were transmuted by means of contemptuous anecdotes into vivid pictures of ridiculous Mazovian behaviour and outlandish characteristics[20].

I mention it because, analysing accounts of travels, one tries simultaneously to find answers to diverse questions. Noting all perceptions of a traveller in a given country, we must consider two problems: first, to what extent his observations reflected an actual state of affairs, and second, the general style of his argument. Among the mass of stereotypical and superficial information we can discern very few attempts at genuine comparative studies. That is why I would like to quote an observation of an English traveller, Fynes Moryson, whose accuracy and reliability of judgement has been noted already.

"The Husbandmen in Germany are not so base as the French and Italians,

[19] J. Elliot, *The Survay or Topographical Description of France...*, London 1592, pp. 46 - 71.

[20] W. Smoleński, *Szkice z dziejów szlachty mazowieckiej* (Essays on the history of the Mazovian gentry), Kraków 1908, p. 138.

or the slaves of other Kingdoms, but much more miserable and poore then the English Husbandmen: yet those of Prussia, a fat and fertile country, come nearest to the English in riches and good fare. The other being hired by Gentlemen to plough their grounds, give their services at low rates, and pay so great rent, to their Lords, as they have scarcely meanes to cover their nakednes with poore clothes, and to feed themselves with ill smelling coleworts and like meate. In Moravia incorporated to Bohemia, and lying betweene it and Polonia, the husbandmen are meere slaves... Also I understood by discourse, that the Marquesse of Anspach in Germany, hath many meere slaves for his husbandmen. But all other in Germany are free, howsoever without doubt they be greatly oppressed not only by the Gentry, but also by the Churchmen ... And it is probable that the neighbourhood of the Sweitzers, who rooted out their Noblemen, and got liberty by the sword, makes the Gentlemen of Germany lesse cruell towards the poore clownes. For either upon their cause, or for the fertility of the Country, no doubt the clownes in Suevia and other places neare Sweitzerland, live much better then in any other parts; as likewise in places neere Denmarke and Poland, admitting slaves generally, the poore people are more oppressed then any where else through Germany. ... And I shal in due place shew, that in Denmark and in Poland, the people are meere slaves, so as the Gentlemen and Lords recken not their estates by yearly rents, but by the number of their Bawren (or clownes) who are all slaves[21].

His choice of countries — Prussia, Denmark, Moravia and Swabia — indicates that Moryson followed his own observations. Prussia was honoured in being compared by an Englishman with his native country; most likely he referred here to the Vistula Fens. Moryson acquired additional information through books and conversations. Although his remarks directly concerned the situation of peasants alone, their correlation to the total economic condition of the countries is quite obvious[22]. The relationship between corvée, serfdom and the wealth of the community is acknowledged today by modern writers in

[21] F. Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell...*, London 1908, vol. IV, p. 330 ff. The author travelled in the years 1591 - 97 but published his survey in 1617. Although quoted by many scholars, Moryson's significance as an observer of economic phenomena, so far has not been fully appreciated. I deal with that subject in an article: „Un voyageur — témoin des prix européens à la fin du XVI^{e} siècle", *Mélanges en l'Honneur de Fernand Braudel*, Toulouse 1973, vol. I, pp. 327 - 336.

[22] However, in the 17th century the authors still had considerable difficulties in comparing living conditions in the coutryside. Even fairly accurate accounts of these conditions in particular countries did not lead to more general comparative inferences. Moryson's studies, though based upon rather flimsy observations, are really exceptional in this respect. Examples of numerous superficial literary commentaries on the subject may be found in J. Howell: *Instructions...*, (op. cit.), and in *A German Diet: or the Ballance of Europe...*, London 1653.

the same degree as suggested by Moryson. Other authors of his day however, gave preference to a factor of popular social psychology — "laziness".

The subject of laziness was usually emphasized by foreigners travelling through Ireland and Spain. Each of these countries, however, presented unique problems of its own. "Irish idleness" was considered to be different from Spanish because, among other reasons, the English (who provided the greatest number of surveys of Ireland) had as a rule an unfriendly and even hostile attitude to that country. "O, what a slavish servitude doe these silly wretches endure — wrote William Lithgow — the most part of whom in all their lives have never a third part of food, natures clothing, nor a secure shelter for the winter cold". Husbandry in this country was "bad and uncivill": husbandmen do not wish to learn anything, they are unfamiliar with harness so they tie the plough to hourses' tails. All rebels should be hanged and law and peace will ensue[23].

In Spain, according to the same author, there are "the most penurious Peasants in the world... whose Quotidian moanes, might draw teares from stones. Their Villages stand... wanting Gardens, Hedges, Closses, Barnes, or Backe-sides: this sluggish and idle husbandry, being a natural instinct of their neighbour or paternal Moores"[24]. But these comments are devoid of the personal aversion or disgust toward the Spaniards, manifested by Lithgow so emphatically in his description of "wild" Irishmen[25].

Fynes Moryson, who stayed in Ireland in the years 1599 - 1606 as a secretary of Lord Mountjoy, was critical towards the Irish and their customs but he was also critical towards the conduct of the English in that country. "The Irish thus given to Idleness, naturally abhorr from Manuall Artes, and Civill trades to gaine their owne bread...". He observed that local fishermen used to go out fishing only after their bread had run short. "And in my opinion — he continues in a characteristic style of his (which will be discussed later on) — this idleness hath bene nourished by nothing more... then by the plenty of the land, and great housekeeping, drawing the people from trades, while they can be fedd by others without labour. This experience hath shewed of old, as well in England, where the greatest robberies were commonly done, by idle servingmen swarming in great houses, as in the more northerne parts, and in Ireland, where the multitude of loose Followers hath of old been prone to fight their Lords quarrels, yea to rebell with them. Whereas no doubt the exercise of trades, and

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[23] W. Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse, Of the rare Adventures* (1632), Glasgow 1906 (page numbers according to the 1632 edition), p. 431 ff.

[24] Ibid., p. 445 ff.

[25] We realize how much depends on the author's attitude (no matter whether conditioned by national sentiments or personal preferences), when we compare the remarks of Lithgow (op. cit., p. 433) with those of a chronicler of Charles V (*Collections des voyages de souverains*, vol. III, p. 283), concerning the build of the bosom of Irish women.

the Custome of industrye to live every man of his owne, are a strong establishment of any Comon Wealth". Land should be distributed among the tenants and the turning from agriculture to shepherding should be prohibited, as in England[26].

Unfortunately, Moryson did not go to Spain (this having been impossible at the end of the 16th century), but we have numerous comments on that country from other thoughtful travellers. With the passing of time, in the 17th century Spain became a favourite subject of travel surveys of philosophical bent; for a long time it had been considered an enigma. Spanish idleness was believed, as Lithgow's commentary implied, to have derived from Arabic influence, and was at the basis of this enigma. As in other countries, separate cliché-judgements were also made of Spain, referring to psycho-social features and the alleged behaviour of various social groups or classes. One may say that the gravity, haughtiness and slowness of a hidalgo gave place to idleness when it referred to an Iberian peasant.

Laurent Vital, an alert and inquisitive chronicler accompanying King Charles I (soon after, Emperor Charles V) in his journey from the Netherlands to Spain, wrote the following comments about Asturias, "... ce pays est plain de haultes montagnes et vallées et en plusieurs lieux est inhabitable, pour les désers qui y sont; et en plusieurs de ces vallées y a de aussy fructueuse et fertille terre comme par dechà[27], comme prairies, jardins, terre à labeur ... et croy que si les gens y estoient aussy dilligens à labourer comme par dechà et cultiver les terres, qu'ilz auroient, sans comparaison, trop plus de biens qu'ilz n'ont: mais il ne leur chault de labourer, sinon seulement ce qui leur convient pour gouverner eulx et leur mesnye, car ilz sont la pluspart fondez sur gentillesse, jasoit ce qu'ilz soyent pauvres, et se disent tous estre nobles en vertu de certains priviléges qu'ilz ont acquis des roys de Castille... Mais, combien qu'ilz soyent anobliz, si ne sont-ilz guaire enrichiz; les hommes, femmes et josnes filles y vont communément sans chausses: ne sçay se c'est la costume, ou parce que le drap leur est trop chier"[28].

The provinces of Spain were considered exotic and exciting because of the contrasts of scenery and character. The Dutch, coming to Spain with the Burgundian court, had a patronizing attitude toward the inhabitants; they were fond of Spanish folklore, they noticed the beauty of women (and only wished they had dressed better)[29]. Some of them were intrigued with the problem of the Moors, their conversion to Christianity and adaptation in Spain; they discriminated between *Christianos viejos* and *nuevos* and they admired

[26] *Shakespeare's Europe.* Unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary, ed. C. Hughes, London 1903, p. 200.

[27] i. e. in the Netherlands.

[28] *Collection des voyages des souverains*, vol. III, p. 93 ff.

[29] Ibid., vol. I and III.

the industry of the *Moriscos*. Typical contrasts seen in Spain did not consist only in the differences between that country and the native land of the traveller. Even today, Spain strikes one with its variety of internal landscapes, alternating comparative barrenness with richness and fertility. The changing lay of the land and, above all, the scarcity or profusion of water, intensify the effect of the contrast.

The following remarks were written in Alcaniz, near Valencia, by Barthélemy Joly, an almoner and adviser of the French King: "Partout ilz en tout de mesme, vivans en loysir et faineantise, ne s'adonnans à aulcunes oeuvres manuelles ny à aulcune science, si ce n'est de vieilles histoires de leurs romans." "Tous ce pais [Aragon] est si sec qu'il est presque tout deshabité et là où il y a de l'eau, les peuplades sont le long d'icelle, aussy frequentees et habitees comme elles sont rares et en petit nombre." Earlier we read about Asturians walking barefoot; now we see that Joly (a century later, though), noticed high-heel shoes worn by peasant women of Castille and inferred that they were not used to hard work "like our women in France"[30].

It is difficult to compare surveys of Spain by various authors: too much depends on their own sensitivity and point of view. A radical inflation of prices and changes in the economic and political condition of Spain in the 17th century prompted many travellers visiting that country, to reflections which comprise both the *loci communes* of contemporary political science and their private impressions; it is very difficult to separate the two. Nevertheless, we often come across survey characterized by a considerable freshness of insight, like for instance, the two following little-known diaries of Polish travellers.

Jakub Sobieski was both fond of and knew how to describe tensely his impressions. While visiting a country he did not only travel through it, but tried to feel and understand it. "León", he said, is "a country barren and, due to its desert, melancholy for anyone trying to cross it." Asturia is "a country as disagreeable for travelling as the Kingdom of León, if not more; one feels like spitting while going through those mountains, rocks and deserts, and the only thing that causes some pleasure is the necessity of travelling along the coast, so that one can always see the sea, the rocks and the mountains". Galicia is "a kingdom poor and miserable; it is also barren, rocky and mountainous." "Near Lisbon [however] the country is surprisingly cheerful and beautiful, full of orchards, gardens, orange, lemon and olive groves, with vineyards all around." Sobieski's miserable experience in the "sordid country" on the road to Seville was rewarded by the splendid scenery of Andalusia: "as soon as we entered Andalusia, our eyes weary of wilderness, were rewarded by the

[30] *Voyage de Barthélemy Joly en Espagne (1603 - 1604)*, „Revue Hispanique" vol. XX, 1909, pp. 530, 470.

beauty, cheerfulness, wealth and fertility of the country; first we came across countless villages and populous towns. Indeed, this province of Spain is most densely inhabited; wherever you go, you may see lemon groves, olive trees, cypresses, datepalms and priceless vineyards, and truly, the wine there is counted among the best. In contrast to the desert and sand through which we were travelling for a week, we believed we had entered a paradise"[31].

Such a description resembles, in terms of mood, style and course of argument, the diaries from Spain written by the Italians of the Renaissance, like Francesco Guicciardini and Andrea Navigero. In general, the Italian travellers seem to have been particularly impressed by the presence of trees. They admired forests and groves whenever they happened to see them in foreign lands and they spoke of them in heaping superlatives. Saragossa was, according to Navigero, a "bellissima città. Il paese vicino al fiume è bello e ben piantato; tutto il resto incultissimo, desertissimo e sterilissimo"[32]. Cheerful (jocund, *allegro*) was for the Italians and, maybe, under their influence for the Poles, the most common and the most universal term of approval[33].

Another Polish traveller, an anonymous author, who visited numerous European countries and yet was particularly impressed by Spain, considered that country first of all as surpassing the others in "abundance". "If anyone says: it yields no bread because all bread comes from us[34], I will tell him — this is not so because the land is sterile but because there is no one to plough the soil... The people are few, for nearly everyone goes to work in foreign lands. It is not a secret how many Spaniards stay in Italy... Thus, no one should be surprised that they have little of their own bread, for there is no one to work for it, and they prefer to buy it, since it is easier to earn some money than to work on soil. But look at their own treasures: they have their own gold, good and highly valued; I know from my own experience in Toledo as well as in other places that our Polish ducats were accepted reluctantly and at a

[31] J. Sobieski, op. cit., pp. 105, 106, 109. 112.

[32] *Andreae Naugerii patricii veneti... opera omnia*, curantibus J. Antonio, C. Vulpiis, Patavi 1718, p. 349, and also 393, 401 (les Landes near Bordeaux). Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona who usually expressed his admiration sparingly, glorified the view of German lindens. *Die Reise des Kardinals Luigi d'Aragona durch Deutschland, die Niederlande, Frankreich und Oberitalien, 1517 - 1518*, beschrieben von Antonio de Beatis, ed. L. Pastor, Freiburg i. Br. 1905, p. 98.

[33] I have noticed only one instance in which the term „cheerful" (lustig) was ever used by an author writing in German in reference to towns or regions. This was in Erich Lassota's *Tagebuch des Erich Lassota von Steblau*, ed. R. Schottin, Halle/S. 1866, p. 25 (Constantina), p. 26 (Alanis), p. 28 (Monte Moro) and other in Spain and Portugal. It seems, though one would have to verify it, that the towns in Northern Europe have never induced any traveller to exclaim „how cheerful" in spite of their unquestionable beauty.

[34] An allusion to the import of cereals from Gdańsk which was organized by the Dutch.

low rate; and I was shown their gold, much superior to ours..."[35] His impressions from Seville, where he saw the unloading of merchant ships coming from the Indies, eclipsed anything he had previously experienced in the provinces of Castille and Aragon lacking trees and water[36]. "I saw plenty ingots of silver, not so many of gold, and such a quantity of oxhides that they were heaped high all around the town; then, there were loads of various spices, foreign goods... The people, to my mind, are very wealthy, for although there is a profusion of everything, it is all very expensive; secondly — tradesmen charge extraordinary high fees: a shoemaker, as I know from my own experience, would not even touch a shoe for a real, that is our four pennies.

It is easy today to impute naïveté of judgement to a traveller who, coming from a far-away country and dazzled by the wealth of Andalusia and all the treasures brought from the Indies, would not realize the gravity of situation of Spain in 1595. I am quoting his impressions as an example of a clash between two kinds of civilization; a man coming from the country of an extensive type of agriculture characterized by a slow development of commercial enterprises, came face to face with a diametrically opposite environment. His account of Genoa in the same diary serves even better to illustrate this. "All those people possess some kind of Mercurian quality; no one wishes to learn more than to write, to read and to count. Reckoning belongs to the greatest skills, and all around the town you will neither see nor hear anything but business contracts, calculations, cambia and various kinds of transactions... All people are exceedingly avid of gain"[37]. We might discern here also some more profound implications — experience with money accounts and the habit of reckoning were, as evidenced in numerous remarks, much more deeply rooted in Italy and England than in Poland in the 16th century.

Thirty years later, a courtier accompanying prince Władysław (the son of Sigismund III, king of Poland, who travelled incognito to Genoa), visited some palaces of the local nobility and was astonished by the small size of their kitchens. He wrote: "That small kitchen made the palace itself so large", and further on he assumes that "the people seem to be parsimonious, they prefer to do what posteritati servit and makes their country more elegant. It is just the reverse of our own ways, for we build a kitchen larger than the house we live miserably in, and so all our profits we turn in cloacam."[38]

[35] *Anonima diariusz peregrynacji włoskiej, hiszpańskiej i portugalskiej (1595)* (Anonymous diary of peregrinations through Italy, Spain and Portugal, 1595), ed. J. Czubek, Kraków 1925, pp. 65, 96.

[36] Yet the lack of timber and water does not escape the eyes of the Polish traveller; he says about Madrit that it is "a most squalid place", thus unknowingly joining a number of foreigners astonished by a complete lack of sanitation in that town. Ibid., pp. 77, 85 ff.

[37] Ibid. p. 55.

[38] *Obraz dworów europejskich na początku XVII wieku... skreślony przez Stefana Paca*

I approach here the whole problem of self-criticism which has its origin in the experience of facing a much more wealthy society; apart from traces of chauvinism and pride, this is the motif which reappears very frequently in the diaries of Polish travellers. It should be emphasized, however, that the alternative assumed in the above quoted passage was not the only one. From the opposite geographical point of view, that is, looking at the transalpine countries from Italy at the time when the Renaissance mode of life was just beginning to be accepted there, Niccoló Machiavelli (in 1507) could write the following remarks about wealth of Germany: "Perchè li populi in privato sieno ricchi, la ragione è questa: che vivono come poveri non edificono [scil. the palaces], non vestono e non hanno messerizie in casa, e basta loro abundare di pane di carne, e avere una stufa dove rifuggire il freddo: e chi non ha dell'altre cose, fa senza esse e non le cerca. Spendonsi in dosso due fiorini in dieci anni, e ognuno vive secondo il grado suo e queste proporzione, e nessuno fa conto di quello li manca ma di quello ha di necessità, e le loro necessità sono assai minori che le nostre"[39]. This ideal picture of truly Sombart-like Nahrungswirtschaft was developed by Machiavelli in greater detail and it actually reflected contemporary Italy rather than Germany. Moreover, at least in the case of Upper Germany, the account was excessively simplified — one needs only compare it with the impressions noted by Machiavelli's contemporaries: his friend Francesco Vettori or Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona[40]. A different approach became very popular in the 16th century. It consisted in classifying societies a priori as either "frugal" (being a positive characteristic) or "prodigal"[41]. This distinction was both moral and mercantile. Its essence was later manifested in the polemics on Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*.

Yet in the 17th century still another change in the way of reasoning seems to have taken place. It might have been defined as a transformation of rationalism. A variform, "expressionistic" mode of interpreting (and, let us stress once again, experiencing) other countries, the mode which was to re-appear

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(A picture of European courts in the beginning of the 17th century drawn by Stefan Pac), ed. J. K. Plebański, Wrocław 1854, p. 102.

[39] N. Machiavelli, *Rapporto delle cose della Magna. Fatto questo Ritratto sopra le cose della Magna*, (in:) N. Machiavelli, Arte della guerra e scritti politici minori a cura di Sergio Bertelli, Milano 1961, p. 209 ff.

[40] Cf. above ref. 32; the account of Vettori's journey is rendered ostensibly in belles lettres form.

[41] Fynes Moryson, seeing the Polish royal couple sailing modestly on a boat to Gdańsk, and having realized how meagre were the meals served to the royal court, concluded that the Poles were "very frugall". However, he observed the extravagance of Polish "sons of Castellani" visiting Italy; he had to call them "prodigall". During a very short stay in Poland he did not realize how limited royal finances were. *Shakespeare's Europe*, p. 390. Both themes also appear in his *Itinerary*.

later in a slightly altered form during the Romantic era, was at that time confronted with a new approach based on objective economic analysis. This kind of approach may be observed most often among English diarists. At the same time, one must admit that up to now, travel accounts have not been examined from this point of view, and that they may still provide an inexhaustible source of information.

Fynes Moryson, coming through poverty-stricken small towns in central Poland, noted: "... myselfe having in Poland and in Ireland found a strange cheapnesse of all such necessaries, in respect they want and the more esteeme silver, this observation makes me of an opinion much contrary to the vulgar, that there is no more certaine signe of a flourishing and rich commonwealth, then the deare price of these things (excepting the yeeres of famine), nor any greater argument of a poore and weake State, than the cheape price of them". The accumulation of wealth possessed by the upper classes ("kings, noblemen and merchants") tends to increase demand as it may be seen in England: "all things for diet and apparell and our very wanton desires, are sold at a much higher price then in former ages, because riches make us not able to want any thing to serve appetite, at what price soever it is sold"[42].

Moryson's observations would have been heartily applauded by John Ray, M. D., F. R. S. who, seventy years later, while travelling from the Netherlands to Italy, wrote the following remarks about Holland: "that the dearness of this sort of provisions is an argument of the riches of a town or country, these things being always cheapest in the poorest places ... All manners of victuals, both meat and drink, are very dear, not for the scarcity of such commodities, but partly by reason of great excise and impost wherewith they are charged, partly by reason of the abundance of money that is stirring there". Inflated ground rents and high prices of land raise the wages, because "were not the poor workmen and labourers well paid for their pains, they could not possibly live"[43].

The clash between two contrary modes of observation may be discerned by comparing the above quoted remarks on Provence of Jakub Sobieski with those of John Locke who visited the country in 1676. According to Locke, the country was "however commended, wherein I had seen more barren ground then fruitful, and yet had passed the best part of it. The people too, if one may judg by their clothes and diet, had, like the country, 5 acres of poverty for one of riches, for I remember at Aix in a gardiner's house, where we found them

[42] F. Moryson, *An Itinerary*, vol. VI, p. 70.

[43] J. Ray, *Travels through the Low Countries, Germany, Italy and France...* 2nd ed., London 1738 (Ray travelled in 1663), p. 44. I discuss more thoroughly the remarks of Moryson, Ray and others in a paper: Prices, Wages and Living Costs in Sixteenth Century Europe, presented at the Sixth Congress of Economic Historians, Copenhagen, August 1974.

eating, their Sunday dinner was noe thing but slices of congeald bloud fried in oile which an English gent. was with me would needs fast, though to the turning of his stomach"[44]. The years that passed between the two surveys were the period of economic and social depression in that part of the Mediterranean coast. Nevertheless, Locke's criticism had its origin, at least in part, in the difference between the English and Polish background as well as in the elimination of certain factors which had most fascinated the Polish nobleman.

Nowadays, the approach of Moryson, Ray or Locke seems to us much more natural than Sobieski's raptures about a profusion of relics, beauty of nature and comeliness of women. Yet I will risk a supposition that the latter approach is neither devoid of reason nor is it wholly alien to our own ways.

"There are lots of holy places" — wrote Sobieski; the distribution of relics in Europe would certainly present a highly diversified picture. The greatest number of important relics could be observed in the most civilized countries with old traditions. This was not only because the most eminent members of the Church had once lived there, but because the Dark Ages contributed to the appearance of many sham or false relics. This occurred in Provence as well as in Cologne where, it was believed, the soil was so permeated with holiness that it would not let anyone bury even innocent bodies. Julius Caesar's fondness for Provence could be understood as an element of its "wealth" because it symbolized the durability of its civilization. Longevity of inhabitants? or healthy air? These are symbols, too, whose significance in the times of helplessness of medicine was much greater than it is nowadays, when we feel content with our myths about robust old men from highlands living more than a hundred years[45].

No matter whether rational or not, those non-professional, vivid and suggestive descriptions of the countries' wealth may be understood best in reference to our private observations. This is the way we perceive things and express our experiences when we are not bound to formulate them in a more scholarly manner. Quite frequently some singular experiences (like, for example, the one of the anonymous Polish traveller with a shoemaker in Seville) tend to mould our conception of prices and the standard of life in a given country. Sometimes a stray piece of information about someone's salary, or some scene observed in a street serve as a ground for far-reaching, generalized assumptions[46]. Thus the 16th or the 17th century seen through travellers' eyes represent a historical scene both distant and surprisingly close to our own.

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[44] *Locke's Travels in France, 1675 - 1679...*, ed. J. Lough, Cambridge 1953, p. 88.

[45] It is worth remarking in this context that in today's world the mortality rate is as good an index of the relative prosperity of nations as per capita income.

[46] The problem of inferring the wealth of a country from the signs of luxury displayed by the rich is universal. In underdeveloped countries today the splendour of fashionable districts may often screen the poverty of bidonvilles or favellas from the sight of tourists.

A sample made up of surveys written by travellers, fairly representative for educated classes, is considerably differentiated in itself. The English, the Italian, the Dutch, the Poles and the Germans — each of the many nationalities — contributes its own experiences and peculiar point of view. Competence in a comparative approach and readiness to attempt a quantitative formulation of observations — these are the factors which are particularly open to modification and they undergo considerable transformation in the period in question.

The above examples of attitudes and reactions of people of past centuries who happened to confront alien environments, pose questions concerning the possibilities for future research. It would prove naïve to search for a uniform "type" of Renaissance or Baroque traveller. At the same time the mode of thinking peculiar for a given epoch may be best revealed in the case of a traveller's direct experience with some novel and surprising circumstance, and through his need to sharing his personal impressions. Though I have stressed elsewhere the value of the statistics which are sometimes included in travel accounts, I would also like to draw attention to the problems involved in the study of mental attitudes, problems which have not been so far investigated. Sources of this kind will serve well for the examination of a given mode of perception and argumentation and they may reveal conscious or unconscious systems of values and criteria of evaluation.

Hence, travel surveys, a source which may quite frequently provide most surprising information, should be analysed with the help of methods representative of various branches of scholarship. It is advisable, then, that a historian of culture who, so far, has investigated the material single-handed, should share it with both psychologists and economic historians.

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