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## Beyond Cultural and Religious Border in *White Mughals*

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### Abstract:

*The nonfiction writer goes behind the facts to get at truth. Dalrymple spends a long span of time about his subject in Hyderabad. He relates what he imbibes to the problems and worries and interests and desires of the people. He realizes the primary, instinctive and intuitive interest of the people – their problems, their relations with other people. His research, thereby, has been an encouragement and help for other historical writings. Research consists of going where something happens, looking acutely, listening accurately, questioning participants and ultimately giving the information a cohesive and organic look. Dalrymple's White Mughals is beautifully intervened with historical, political and geographical matrix without inclining towards anyone in particular. He explores history for tracing the root of a particular event. He includes all the topographical, regional and geographical aspects of Hyderabad. Politics naturally made place for itself in his writing since much of the life is determined and directed by the political authorities of Hyderabad. His writings are an amalgam of history and other important disciplines. History, like nonfiction, encompasses human races culture, society, politics, customs and religion. It not only provides men with an insight to understand their evolution but also explains their existence and supplies precautions for their tomorrow.*

**Keywords:** *History, culture, religion, politics, society.*

### INTRODUCTION:

Collingwood explains in his *Idea of History* as, “The past which a Historian studies isn't a dead past but a past which in some sense is still living in the present” (195). But to study history simply as a dead past is another dejection. It facilitates the present and the future as far as understanding is concerned. It is a science since it is a systematic and chronological study of facts but it becomes art while overting these facts. It is man's composition to understand the deeds of past. Collingwood remarks in his *Idea of History* as: “History is the knowledge of past in present and self knowledge of the Historians own mind as the present revival and reliving of the past experiences” (171-72).

Notwithstanding its differences from history, it is its similarities with history which is quite wonderful to know. Dalrymple believes that the past does leave an unaffected impact on the present and it has its rood in the depths of past. He exposes the facets of a love affair in his *White Mughals* and leaves his readers engaged for the most authentic presentation. History is incomplete without culture, politics and religion. It travels across not only history but political, social and religious position of the concerned areas. This helps the readers in deriving a clear and unending picture of a particular region. It also helps to understand the validity, utility, culture and tradition. The facts which are exposed in *White Mughals* cannot be easily evaded as it stands for reality and can't be considered as Dalrymple's imaginative venture. Nevertheless in this tremendous and ever changing world with infinite discrepancy in its physical, cultural, linguistic and even in intellectual form one final judgement is too narrow to satisfy the general mass.

### Beyond Cultural and Religious Border:

Dalrymple discusses the point of race and society in the early period of British Empire in India in his novel, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India*. This book provides an adequate way to understand a world growing ever more complex. He presents the tragic love story of James Achilles Kirkpatrick and Khair-un-Nissa in an extraordinary way. But before analysis, is is worth raising certain

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questions. Does Dalrymple sentimentalize empire and race relations and is he trying to critique Said's *Orientalism*? He puts his ideas in his *White Mughals* as:

We have been conditioned to expect, either by the conventional Imperial history books written in Britain before 1947, or by the nationalist historiography of post-Independence India, or for that matter by the post-colonial work coming from new generations of scholars, many of whom tend to follow the path opened up by Edward Said in 1978 with his pioneering *Orientalism*. (xli)

Intermixing of races and ideas, ways of living and use of Indian attires, do not suit anybody's version of events, he says: "It is, after all, always easier to see the things in black and white" (xli). He tries to explore the human narrative only with letter of Kirkpatrick and other British officials, the Persian chronicles of the time. He applies a new historic approach to his study here when he studies the events in the light of historical documents, and letters of that particular period. His attempt was ambitious and a difficult job. He defends the early British Indophiles from the improper charge of Orientalism.

*White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India*, is a book that sees Indian religion as an alternative to the spirit of rational scepticism of the West. One of the book's central points is that learning about other cultures resolves a dissolving of strong centers of observation. It conveys that there was no uniform image of India – narratives differs not only due to the profession and personal backgrounds of the writer but also a series of social contexts and historical reasons shaping the narrative. What surprises Dalrymple is that he himself is the product of interracial liaison of that period and have Indian blood in his veins.

He is also surprised to see the enthusiasm with which people engage in their religion as a significant center of life. The book records the religious practices, history of the land, the geographic, political, or economic aspects of Hyderabad. Dalrymple seeks a self understanding by examining an alien culture; on the other hand Naipaul constructs hierarchy of civilizations. The narrative voice is restrained, in his own words to that of an outsider. The observation of ossified customs and rituals of a two thousand years old tradition that adheres to rules that sustain a system of belief, and find security in the observations. It is interesting to ask at this point, given the antiquity of the religion, what the nature of transculturation has been. Dalrymple does not see the painful hybridity that Theroux or Naipaul sees. He insists that modernity is accepted on its own terms. This is a change from a writer like Foster, who constructs the other in terms of a limiting inherited past.

## CONCLUSION:

The title of *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* clearly indicates its theme that the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth century period in India had 'a succession of unexpected and unplanned mingling of peoples and cultures and ideas.' At one stage, the book shows the tragic love story of James and Khair-un-Nissa. On the other hand, the story deals with the trade, military and political dealings. Dalrymple tries to draw the attention of the reader by presenting a fascinating picture of sexual attitudes and social etiquette, finding an 'increasingly racist and dismissive attitude' among the British ruling class towards mixed race offspring, after the rise of Evangelical Christianity. The author reveals open-mindedness to religion and culture. Yet the ritualistic aspect of the religion is narrated with increasing frequency, like the birth of a baby, the extraordinary rites that accompany and the mournful period of Muharram. Besides, his understanding of the religion is free from stereotyping.