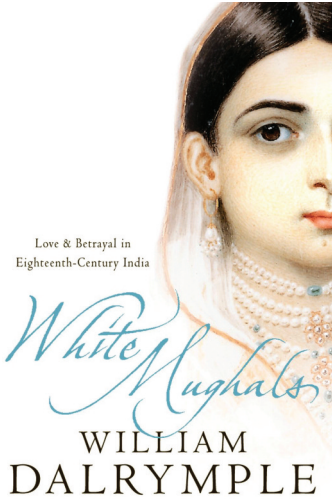


Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club Guide

July 2015



Reading Guide: *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* by William Dalrymple (2002)

1. According to some reviewers of *White Mughals*, the author William Dalrymple, “wishes to alert us to: ‘the Indian conquest of the European imagination.’” Do you believe that this is the crux of the book? Why or why not?
2. How did this book inform your knowledge of British India? Did it change your perceptions? Do you think that eighteenth-century British interactions were different than nineteenth-century interactions? Why or why not?
3. Why was James Achilles Kirkpatrick’s relationship so scandalous? What did you take away from it?
4. What did you think about Dalrymple’s writing style? Did you like it? Why or why not? Do you think he weaves a good story using his sources or is the book overly technical?
5. How do you think this book fits in with Rienzi’s collection? Does it help tell the story of some of the art objects, or help to contextualize the period?
6. Early in the book, Dalrymple notes that for Europeans who went to India, “possibilities for self-transformation were, at least potentially, limitless” (pg. 12). After reading the book, do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

About William Dalrymple

William Dalrymple wrote the highly acclaimed British bestseller *In Xanadu* when he was twenty-two. It won the 1990 Yorkshire Post Best First Work Award and a Scottish Arts Council Spring Books Award; it was also shortlisted for the John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize. His second book, *City of Djinns*, won the 1994 Thomas Cook Travel Book Award and the *Sunday Times* Young British Writer of the Year Award. *From the Holy Mountain* was awarded the Scottish Arts Council Autumn Book Award for 1997; it was also shortlisted for the Thomas Cook Award, the John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize, and the Duff Cooper Prize. A collection of his essays on India, *The Age of Kali*, was published in 1998. *White Mughals* won the 2003 Wolfson History Prize and the 2003 Scottish Book of the Year Award.

Dalrymple is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the Royal Asiatic Society and in 2002 was awarded the Mungo Park Medal by the Royal Scottish Geographic Society for his “outstanding contribution to travel literature.” He is married to the artist Olivia Fraser, and they have three children. They now divide their time between London and Delhi.*

* Biography from Penguin Books 2004 *White Mughals*.

Related Texts

- *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857* by William Dalrymple (2008)
Dalrymple explores the change from the Mughal Empire to the Raj.
- *The Making and Unmaking of British India* by Lawrence James (2000)
James looks at the colonization of India by the British, and how the East India Company, war, and fortune contributed to the rise and eventual decline of the Empire.
- *Sahib: The British Soldier in India 1750–1914* by Richard Holmes (2006)
Holmes looks at the military history and culture of the British in India, from the eighteenth century through World War I.
- *Begums, Thugs, and White Mughals: The Journals of Fanny Parkes (v. 8)* by Fanny Parkes, edited by William Dalrymple (2002)
The journals of Fanny Parkes provide an eyewitness account to nineteenth-century India, and the cultural interaction between the East and the West.

Education programs at Bayou Bend receive generous funding from Occidental Petroleum Corporation; The Crain Foundation; Houston Junior Woman's Club; Susanne M. and Melbern G. Glasscock; Mr. William J. Hill; The Susan Vaughan Foundation; Ralph H. and Ruth J. McCullough Foundation; William A. and Madeline W. Smith Foundation; and Denise Monteleone.

Education programs at Rienzi receive generous funding from the Sterling-Turner Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; the Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III Endowment; and the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment for Rienzi.