

INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

Date of birth: -

William Hamilton-Dalrympal born on 20 March 1965. He was born in Scotland. He was brought up on the shores of the Firth of Forth. He was brought up in Scotland. He is a Scottish historian and writer, art historian and curator, as well as a broadcaster and critic.

Early life and Education: -

Dalrympal is the son of Sir Hew Hamilton-Dalrympal, 10th Baronet, and Lady Anne-Louise Keppel, a daughter of the 9th Earl of Albemarle. He is a cousin of Virginia Woolf. His brother, Jock, was a first-class cricketer. He was educated at Ampleforth College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was first a history exhibitioner and then a senior history scholar. Dalrympal first went to Delhi on 26 January 1984, and has lived in India on and off since 1989 and spends most of the year at his Mehrauli farmhouse in the outskirts of Delhi, but summers in London and Edinburgh. His wife, Olivia, is an artist and comes from a family with long-standing connections to India.

Subjects of his Interest: -

Dalrympal's interests include the history and art of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Hinduism, Buddhism, the Jains and early Eastern Christianity. Every one of his ten books have won literary prizes. His first three were travel books based on his journeys in the Middle East, India and Central Asia. His early influences included travel writers such as Robert Byron, Eric Newby, and Bruce Chatwin.

Writings: -

He wrote his first book, *In Xanadu: A Quest* (1989), at 22 years of age, and in 1989, moved to Delhi to research *City of Djinns: a year in Delhi* (1993), which went on to win the 1994 Thomas Cook Travel Book Award and the *Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year Award.

His next book, *From the Holy Mountain: a Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* (1997), charts the demise of Christianity in the Middle East, and this was followed by *The Age of Kali: Indian Travels and Encounters* (1998), a collection of writings about India, which won the French Prix d'Astrolabe.

William Dalrympal also wrote and presented the television series *Stones of the Raj* and *Indian Journeys*, which won a BAFTA Award for Best Documentary Series. His Radio 4 series, *The Long Search*, also won the 2002 Sanford St. Martin Prize for Religious Broadcasting.

White Mughals (2002), the book which marked Dalrympal's shift from travel writing to history, won the 2003 Wolfson Prize for History, and the Scottish Arts Council

Book of the Year Award. A stage version by Christopher Hampton has been commissioned by the National Theatre and the Tamasha Theatre Company.

In 2006, William Dalrympal published *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857* to huge acclaim, topping the best seller lists in both the UK and India.

In 2002, he won the Royal Geographical Society Mungo Park Medal for his outstanding contribution to travel literature. In 2006 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of St. Andrews for his services to literature and international relations. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the Royal Asiatic Society, and lives between London and Delhi.

His latest books are *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* (2008), winner of the 2010 Asia House Award for Asian Literature, and *Return of a King* (2013) on the first Anglo-Afghan war, which won the Hemingway Prize and the Kapuściński Prize in 2015.

His books have won numerous awards and prizes, including the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize, the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, the Sunday Times Young British Writer of the Year Award, the Hemingway, the Kapuściński and the Wolfson Prizes. He is also one of the co-founders and co-directors of the annual Jaipur Literature Festival.

In 2018, he was awarded the President's Medal of the British Academy. The BBC television documentary on his pilgrimage to the source of the river Ganga, "Shiva's Matted Locks", one of three episodes of his 'Indian Journeys' series, which Dalrympal wrote and presented, won him the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Series at BAFTA in 2002. He has been five times longlisted and once shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize for non-fiction.

In 2012, Dalrympal was appointed a Whitney J. Oates Visiting Fellow in the Humanities by Princeton University. In 2015, he was appointed the OP Jindal Distinguished Lecturer at Brown University. He was also named in the 2020 Prospect list of the top 50 thinkers for the COVID-19 era.

SUMMARY: THE AGE OF KALI

The age of Kali is a 1998 travel book written by William Dalrympal. According to Hindu Mythology, Kali is a destructive God and as India was going through a chaotic time during 90's, Dalrympal named his book 'The Age of Kali'. The book's theme is trouble in the Indian subcontinent. Dalrympal travelled India for a decade and wrote down essays about many problems he witnessed. In this book, he reported as well as interviewed people thus portraying the violent period od 1990s through his words.

He reports about the state of Bihar which is taken over by such people who are only concerned about themselves thus looting wealth and depriving people from basic facilities. After stating this situation, he tells about caste system of India and Hindu political parties' hatred for Muslims.

Dalrympal says that interview is the most common technique of high-powered reporter but there is always disparity between the private and public persona. Here he gives examples of two of his interviews to support this statement. He says that Ramada

Vijayaraje Scindia is a leader of an extreme Hindu revivalist moment. This moment is responsible for not only attacks on Muslim mosque but also for massacres on Muslims yet when Rajmata was interviewed, she was very gentle, giving heart-warming feels as a grandmother. According to him, it becomes difficult to reconcile both sides. Similar was the disparity case of Benazir Bhutto, who was educated at Radcliffe and Oxford and stood against military rulers but in her personal life she was a spoiled rich girl who liked shopping and hairdressing. In politics, she was ruthless.

Dalrympal also visited villages where he saw Hindu tradition Sati, in which young widows burn themselves after death of their husbands. A young widow's burning had attracted the attention of authorities. He also went to Sri Lanka where he spent days with Tamil Tigers, a small group of men and women, including a large number of children fighting a bigger force. Children were more in number because they became more efficient soldiers knowing no fear or empathy. He spent days there seeing how they were trained and how was their life. He came to Pakistan as well, visited tribal areas, and was fascinated by beauty of landscape.

ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLE “THE AGE OF KALI”

ABOUT AUTHOR:

William Dalrympal is a Scottish historian and writer, a traveller, journalist and reporter as well as broadcaster and critic. His books have won numerous awards and prizes. He is also one of the co-founders and co-directors of the annual Jaipur Literature Festival.

ABOUT ARTICLE:

“The Age of Kali” is a travel book by Dalrympal. William Dalrympal has proved himself to be one of the most perspective and enjoyable travel writers of 90s. The Age of Kali emerges from Dalrympal’s uneasy sense that the religion is slipping into the most fearsome of all epochs in ancient Hindu cosmology, “the KaliYug, the Age of Kali, the lowest possible throw, an epoch of strife, corruption, darkness and disintegration.” The brilliance of this book lies in its refusal to reflect any cultural pessimism.

Dalrympal’s love for the subcontinent, and his feel for its diverse cultural identity, comes across in every page, which makes its chronicles of political corruption, ethnic violence, and social disintegration all the more poignant.

The scope of the book is particularly impressive, from the vivid opening chapters portraying the lawless caste violence of Bihar, to interview with the drug barons on the North-West Frontier, some of the most fascinating sections of the book. Dalrympal’s interviews with Imran Khan and Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan. “The Age of Kali” is a dark, disturbing book that takes the pulse of a continent facing some tough questions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

About the book

In his thought-provoking book, "The Age of Kali," acclaimed author William Dalrymple sheds light on the complexities and contradictions that define modern India. Through immersive storytelling and incisive analysis, Dalrymple exposes the underbelly of a nation grappling with social and political turmoil, religious tension, and profound cultural transformation. Delving into topics such as religious fundamentalism, economic inequality, and gender inequality, "The Age of Kali" not only challenges our perceptions of India but also impels us to question the foundations of our own society. With eloquence and passion, Dalrymple beckons readers to embark on a journey that is as enlightening as it is eye-opening, ultimately urging us to confront the painful realities that shape our world and inspire meaningful change.

Chapter 1:Overview

Hi, Welcome to Bookey! Today we will unlock the book *The Age of Kali* by William Dalrymple.

In the dense towns of the subcontinent, where ancient traditions coexist with modern chaos, lies a world that seems to pulsate with an energy both vibrant and sinister. It is this world that author William Dalrymple dives into headlong in his extraordinary book, "The Age of Kali". With a keen eye for detail and a masterful command of storytelling, Dalrymple takes us on a captivating journey through the dark underbelly of India and Pakistan.

Imagine yourself standing on a deserted street in Varanasi, a city that has continuously thrived for over 3,000 years. The scent of flowers and incense wafts through the air, intermingled with the pungent odor of sewage and decaying bodies. The Ganges River, considered sacred by Hindus, flows majestically beside you, carrying the ashes and sins of countless souls. As the sun sets, the ghats

light up in a brilliant display of colors, illuminating the myriad of human experiences that unfold here on a daily basis.

Amongst the throngs of worshippers, sadhus, and tourists, you spot a group of Aghoris - a sect of Hindu ascetics known for their extreme and often grotesque practices. Covered head to toe in ashes, their matted dreadlocks intertwined with human bones, they seem otherworldly. Curiosity takes hold of you as you observe one of them, smeared in human ashes, offer his own excrement as prasad (holy offering) to a local worshipper. This profound act of defiance against societal norms and spiritual awakening simultaneously repels and fascinates you, leaving an indelible impression on your mind.

Moving on from the spiritual realm, Dalrymple delves deep into the rapidly evolving political landscape of the region. He takes you to Pakistan, a country born out of the chaos and violence of the Partition, and paints a vivid picture of

Karachi, the troubled metropolis that serves as its economic heart. Here, power and influence are not determined by democratic processes, but by the ruthless game of politics and the barrel of the gun. The turf wars between rival political parties and the constant threat of violence hang in the air, as if part of the city's collective consciousness.

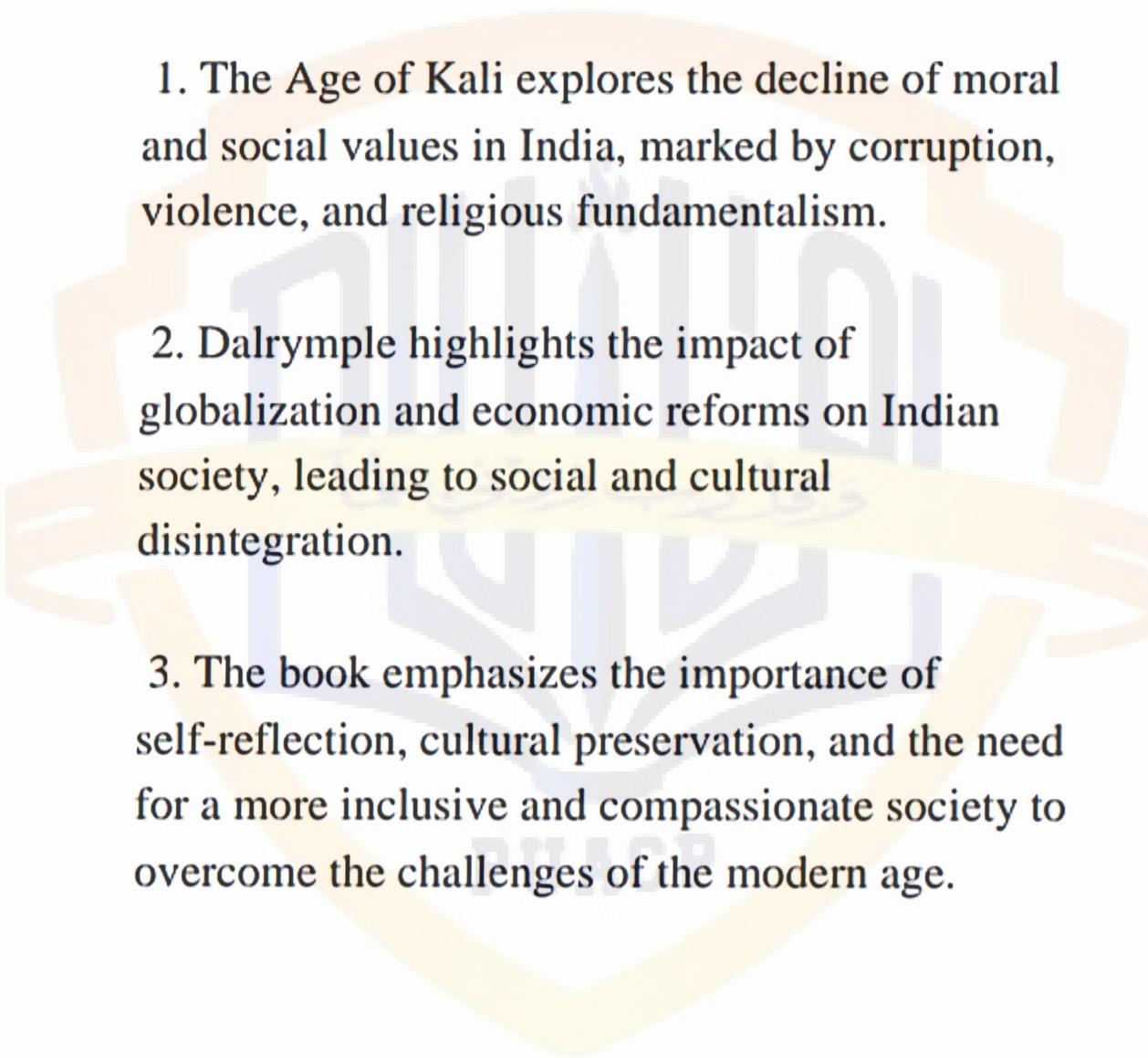
As your senses become attuned to the chaos and clash of competing ideologies, Dalrymple guides you to the realms of Bollywood, shining a spotlight on the entertainment industry that acts both as a mirror and an escape for the masses. From the opulent mansions of film stars to the crowded theaters of Mumbai, you witness the relentless pursuit of fame and fortune in a world teeming with dreams and disillusionment. Underneath the glittering façade, you'll learn of the darker side of the industry, where casting couches and ruthless maneuvering dictate the fates of aspiring actors and actresses.

"The Age of Kali" is a tapestry woven with these

and countless other stories, each thread adding depth and complexity to Dalrymple's exploration of a rapidly changing subcontinent. With his deft storytelling and razor-sharp analysis, he presents a harrowing yet fascinating portrait of an age marked by brutality, religious fervor, and the eternal struggle between tradition and modernity. It is a book that challenges our preconceptions and forces us to confront uncomfortable truths, leaving us both astounded and enlightened.

So, if you are ready to embark on a transformative journey through the heart of India and Pakistan, join William Dalrymple as he unravels the intricate web of human experience that weaves through "The Age of Kali". Prepare to be captivated, shaken, and ultimately enlightened by a book that grips you from the very first page and refuses to let you go.

In the upcoming text, we will explore the top three crucial concepts from this book.

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1. The Age of Kali explores the decline of moral and social values in India, marked by corruption, violence, and religious fundamentalism.
 2. Dalrymple highlights the impact of globalization and economic reforms on Indian society, leading to social and cultural disintegration.
 3. The book emphasizes the importance of self-reflection, cultural preservation, and the need for a more inclusive and compassionate society to overcome the challenges of the modern age.

Chapter 2: The Age of Kali explores the decline of moral and social values in India, marked by corruption, violence, and religious fundamentalism.

In *The Age of Kali*, William Dalrymple provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to the decline of moral and social values in India. One of the key factors he examines is the pervasive corruption that has seeped into all levels of Indian society. Dalrymple illustrates this corruption through various examples, such as the infamous case of Harshad Mehta, a stockbroker who manipulated the stock market in the 1990s. Mehta's actions not only caused financial chaos, but also exposed the systemic corruption within India's financial institutions. The fact that Mehta was able to exploit the system so brazenly highlights the lack of ethical standards and accountability in the country.

Dalrymple goes beyond financial corruption and explores various other forms of corruption that have become normalized in Indian society. For instance, he sheds light on the widespread practice of bribery, where individuals pay officials to expedite bureaucratic processes or secure favorable outcomes. This practice, which is so deeply ingrained in the fabric of Indian society, perpetuates a cycle of corruption that is difficult to break.

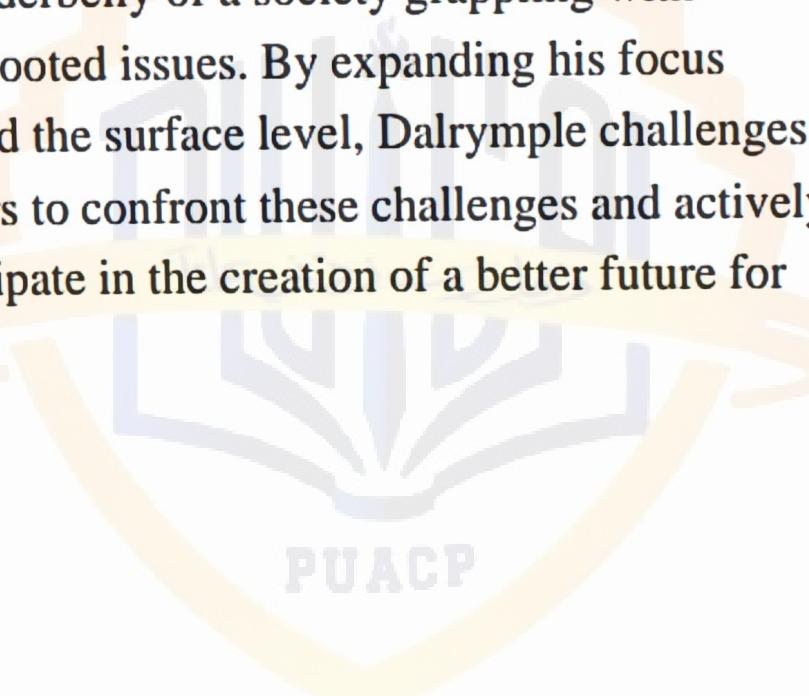
Another alarming aspect of India's decline in moral and social values is the rising violence that plagues the nation. Dalrymple brings attention to instances of communal violence, such as the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and the 2002 Gujarat riots. These incidents, fueled by religious and ethnic tensions, resulted in the loss of thousands of innocent lives. By highlighting these brutal acts of violence, Dalrymple emphasizes the erosion of social harmony and the breakdown of societal values that were once a foundation of Indian society.

Religious fundamentalism, particularly Hindu fundamentalism, is another troubling phenomenon explored in *The Age of Kali*. Dalrymple delves into the controversial destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992, where Hindu extremists demolished a centuries-old mosque claiming it was built on the birthplace of Lord Rama. The demolition of the mosque sparked violent riots across the country, further deepening the chasm between religious communities. By examining this incident, Dalrymple confronts the growing intolerance and extremism that threatens India's secular fabric.

Through his meticulous research and engaging storytelling, Dalrymple sheds light on the multiple facets of India's decline in moral and social values. While the issues he addresses are deeply concerning, his intention is not to merely paint a bleak picture of India. On the contrary, his purpose is to encourage readers to confront these challenges head-on and work towards a

more just and ethical society.

In conclusion, *The Age of Kali* by William Dalrymple provides a profound exploration of the decline of moral and social values in India. Through the examination of corruption, violence, and religious fundamentalism, Dalrymple exposes the underbelly of a society grappling with deep-rooted issues. By expanding his focus beyond the surface level, Dalrymple challenges readers to confront these challenges and actively participate in the creation of a better future for India.

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PUACP

The Age of Kali: Historical Context

Published in 1998, William Dalrymple's "The Age of Kali" delves into the complexities of the Indian subcontinent through travelogues and encounters. To understand the book's historical context, we need to consider several key factors:

1. The Kali Yuga Concept:

The book's title references the Kali Yuga, the final and "darkest" era in the Hindu cyclical view of time. Characterized by strife, instability, and suffering, the Kali Yuga is believed to have begun around 3102 BCE and is expected to last for 432,000 years. Dalrymple uses this concept as a lens to explore the various social, political, and religious issues he encounters during his travels.

2. The Late 1980s and Early 1990s:

"The Age of Kali" draws heavily on Dalrymple's experiences in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This period was marked by significant events in India and the surrounding region, including:

- **Rise of Hindutva:** The book explores the rise of Hindutva, a Hindu nationalist movement advocating for Hindu dominance in India. This movement was gaining momentum during this period, contributing to increased religious tensions and violence.
- **Political Turmoil:** The book documents political instability in countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan, including the Soviet-Afghan War and its aftermath.
- **Social Issues:** Dalrymple addresses various social issues like caste discrimination, poverty, and corruption, highlighting their impact on the lives of ordinary people.

3. Post-Colonial Legacy:

The book cannot be divorced from the context of colonial rule and its aftermath. India gained independence in 1947, and Pakistan in 1947, but the subcontinent still grappled with the legacy of colonialism. This included ongoing conflicts, border disputes, and the struggle to forge new national identities.

4. Western Perspective:

As a Western author, Dalrymple offers an outsider's perspective on these complex issues. His observations and interpretations, while insightful, can sometimes be skewed by his cultural background. This is important to remember when reading the book and evaluating its claims.

5. A Snapshot, not an Exhaustive Analysis:

It's crucial to remember that "The Age of Kali" is not a comprehensive historical analysis. It presents a collection of essays and travelogues, offering snapshots of specific situations and individuals. While these snapshots are valuable, they may not represent the entirety of a complex and diverse region.

THEMES

William Dalrymple's "The Age of Kali" resonates with several profound themes that intertwine throughout his travelogues and encounters. Let's delve deeper into some of the most prominent ones:

1. Religion and Identity:

Religion plays a central role in the book, particularly Hinduism and Islam. Dalrymple explores how these faiths shape individual and collective identities, examining concepts like pilgrimage, religious violence, and the rise of religious nationalism (Hindutva) in India. He delves into the complexities of religious coexistence, highlighting both harmony and conflict in the region.

2. History and Memory:

The book constantly grapples with the weight of history and how it shapes the present. Dalrymple visits historical sites like Mughal ruins and war-torn landscapes, prompting reflections on the legacies of colonialism, partition, and ongoing conflicts. He explores how individuals and communities remember (or choose to forget) the past, highlighting the power of memory in shaping narratives and identities.

3. Power and Violence:

Power dynamics and their consequences permeate the book. Dalrymple encounters various forms of violence, from state-sanctioned oppression to religious riots and individual acts of brutality. He investigates the roots of this violence, questioning who wields power, how it manifests, and the impact it has on individuals and societies.

4. Poverty and Inequality:

The stark realities of poverty and inequality are woven into the fabric of the book. Dalrymple visits slums, meets marginalized communities, and witnesses the struggles of ordinary people. He challenges readers to confront these issues, questioning the systems that perpetuate them and exploring potential solutions.

5. The Search for Meaning:

Despite the darkness and complexities he encounters, Dalrymple also seeks moments of beauty, resilience, and hope. He finds solace in art, literature, and encounters with individuals who strive for a better future. This search for meaning amidst hardship adds a layer of depth and humanity to the book.

6. The West and the East:

As a Westerner traveling in the East, Dalrymple grapples with his own cultural biases and limitations in understanding the region. He reflects on the power dynamics between the West and the East, questioning Western perceptions and advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the subcontinent's complexities.