

Imperialist Nostalgia and Orientalist

Vision in William Dalrymple's *City of Djinn*s

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Abstract

India, which had once been the “Jewel in the Crown” of British Empire ceases to be its colony now. However, the end of Empire has not brought an end to imperialism, which, according to Edward Said still “lingers where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices” (Said, 8). Though British Empire has retreated from its former colonies since long, the stereotypical and derogatory representation of India in western travel texts still exist. The British writers who visit their former colonies still adopt a superior approach and perpetuate the colonial ideology of British benevolence and superiority. Renato Ronaldo terms, this practice as “Imperialist Nostalgia.” In this paper I attempt to explore how William Dalrymple in *City of Djinn*s utilises the trope of nostalgia to foster Empire’s past glory. Further, I examine how William Dalrymple in *City of Djinn*s reinforces the

particular notions of British benevolence and superiority by constructing India as inferior and thus legitimizing the British rule in India.

Key Words: imperialism, colonial ideology, nostalgia, legitimizing, superiority

Edward Said in his text *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) asserts that “In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism as we shall see, lingers where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices” (Said, 1993: 8). Though British Empire has retreated from its former colonies since long, the stereotypical and derogatory representation of India in Western travel writings still exist. Salman Rushdie in his essay “Outside the Whale” criticizes the ‘Raj Revival’ in films, TV shows and books asserting that “there can be little doubt that in Britain today the refurbishment of the Empire’s tarnished image is under way” (“Grant”, 1984: 2). He further points out that these writers and producers propagate the notion that “British Empire represented something ‘noble’ or ‘great’ about Britain; that it was, in spite of all its flaws and meanness and bigotries, fundamentally glamorous” (“Granta”, 1984: 6). It is through colonial nostalgia that western travel writers of the postcolonial era perpetuate the colonial ideology of British benevolence and superiority. Contemporary travel writers according to Holland and Huggan “trade on” and play on, what the anthropologist Renato Ronaldo called “Imperialist nostalgia” (Holland and Huggan, 2000 : 29). They further assert that contemporary travel writers mythicize the past which “actually pertains to Empire” and their work attempt at “the restoration of the Empire’s former (imagined) glories, and the resuscitation of Empire’s erstwhile (imaginary) “subordinate” subjects” (Holland and Huggan, 2000: 29-30). Earlier patterns of British superiority still exist in western travel writings because “Gaping at the marvels of “foreign” peoples and culture, Holland and Huggan state, “they are apt nonetheless to assimilate them into a European frame of reference, thereby reinstating Europe-or, in the case of the gentleman England- as the ultimate arbiter of cultural value” (Holland and Huggan, 2000 : 33). Thus, although contemporary travel writers attempt to undermine the colonial discourse, they cannot help adopting a superior approach while describing their former colonies and people. William Dalrymple’s writings on India are no exception to it. In his book *City of Djinnns*, Dalrymple utilizes the similar trope of “imperialist nostalgia” to foster Empire’s past glory

and reinforce the particular notions of British benevolence and superiority thereby legitimizing the British rule in India.

City of Djinnns: a year in Delhi as the title suggests, is the outcome of William Dalrymple's stay in Delhi for a year. Dalrymple first came to India as a backpacker in 1984 and this very first encounter as he articulates, left him "dumb folded" and "hooked by India and Indian History" ("The Hindu", 2009). He wrote *City of Djinnns* on his second visit to India after five years. But the foundation of this monograph had been laid five years earlier when "In Delhi" he says, "I knew I had found a theme for a book: a portrait of a city disjointed in time, a city whose different ages lay suspended side by side as in aspic, a city of djinnns" (Djinnns, 9).

In *City of Djinnns* Dalrymple encompasses history, autobiography, and travel in order articulate his chief concern, his preconceived theme- uncovering the different layers of Delhi's past which "co-existed side by side" (Djinnns, 9) and to nourish his nostalgic longing for the imperial history of the British in India. His narrative moves back and forth in time to uncover different layers of Delhi's history and uses those layers to produce particular meanings. While writing, Dalrymple has a particular readership in mind which he acknowledges in an interview with Sanjay Austa. When asked, "Do your books cater to a particular audience?" He replies, "I write for the British audience. It demonstrates in how much I explain...." ("Spectrum"). Thus, aware that those at home are nostalgic for the empires past glory and long for an important distinction between them and other, Dalrymple constructs a narrative which reveals his preoccupations with a colonial past and his nuanced cultural concerns. All the more what he was about to seek in his travels had been conceived quite earlier when he had found a 'theme' for the book. His preoccupations with the narrative and preconceived notions directed his meeting with Iris Portal which he acknowledges in the text:

Before I went to India I went to Cambridge to see a friend of my grandmother.
Between the 1920s and the 1940s, Iris Portal's youth had been spent in that colonial
Delhi that now seemed so impossibly dated. I wanted to hear what she remembered.
(Djinnns, 75)

After the interview is over Dalrymple asserts, “But before I went I wanted to ask one last question.” He asks, “Do you think British rule was justified” (Djinns, 80). This assertion of Dalrymple reveals his chief interest which lies in bringing to the fore the benevolent features of British rule in India and thereby justify its presence in India.

At the very outset Dalrymple sets the ground for experiencing something exotic when he presents the city as ‘so unlike anything I had ever seen before’, a city ‘full of riches and horrors’, ‘a labyrinth, a city of palaces, an open gutter, filtered light through a lattice, a landscape of domes, an anarchy, a press of people, a choke of fumes, a whiff of spices’ (Djinns, 7-8). He further introduces the readers to the exotic landscape mentioning, “In the morning I would look out to see the sad regiment of rag-pickers trawling the stinking berms of refuse; overhead, under a copper sky, vultures circled the thermals forming patterns like fragments of glass in a kaleidoscope”(Djinns, 8). Here the narrator introduces the city by describing a scene rich in details and non-western particulars .

Lisle maintains that there is a ‘powerful sense of nostalgia that pervades contemporary texts’ (Lisle, 34) and ‘travel writers... harking back to their precursors, seeking solace for a troubled present in nostalgic cultural myths’ (Holland and Huggan, xi quoted in Lisle, 34). Dalrymple too looks for empire’s lost glory in Delhi’s imperial past and in doing so despises the present state of the city and people. Dalrymple is particularly skeptical of the Punjabi residents of the city who ‘managed to swell the capital’s population from 918,000 in 1941 to 1,800,000 in 1951’ (Djinns, 44). He indulges in nostalgia and mourns the loss of traditional values with the arrival of Punjabis stating:

This explained why Delhi, the grandest of grand old aristocratic dowagers, tended to behave today like a *nouveau-rich* heiress: all show and vulgarity and conspicuous consumption. It was a style most becoming of a lady of her age and lineage; moreover, it jarred with everything one knew about her sophistication and culture (Djinns, 44).

Hence, Dalrymple sees the present civilization of Punjabis, 'the boorish yeoman farmers' in decline against the 'oldest Urdu-speaking elite who had inhabited Delhi for centuries' (Djinns, 44). The Punjabi residents are the representative of present Delhi, the city where 'you could almost feel the old order crumbling as you watched, disappearing under a deluge of Japanese-designed Maruti cars, concrete shopping plazas and high-rise buildings'(Djinns, 23). Giving feminine attributes to modern Delhi he observes that, "Delhi was starting to unbutton. After the long Victorian twilight, the sari was beginning to slip" (Djinns, 24). Even among people he observes that the "Attitudes were changing too. A subtle hardening seemed to have taken place" (Djinns, 25). At several places Dalrymple compares present Delhi of "high rise buildings' to that of Delhi, which was 'still a low-rise colonial capital, dominated by long avenues of white plaster Lutyens bungalows" (Djinns, 23). He observes that these bungalows 'gave New Delhi its characteristic' and its townscape was the 'last surviving reminder of the town planning of a more elegant age' (Djinns, 23). Hence Dalrymple has a particular fascination for 'less claustrophobic avenues of Lutyens' Delhi compared to newly constructed Delhi indirectly suggesting that Indians have no sense of architecture and no beautiful piece of architecture has been erected since the fall of the British Empire. The implication is that this culture is past its prime. Dalrymple's encounter with Shamim and Ali Akbar Khan is one of the few examples where narrator's ideology is revealed. Father of Shamim and Ali was one of the most famous calligraphers in Delhi and their forbears were writers at the Mughal court. Deploring the condition of the city Ali remarks, "Look! This city is now so dirty. Everything is old and falling down. Why should I stay in a place like this? ... Delhi is finished" (Djinns, 53). To recollect similar memories Dalrymple also interviews Begum Hamida Sultan of Ali Manjil, Ahmed Ali, the writer of, famous book- *Twilight in Delhi*, Dr Jaffery, a historian and other 'Delhi Wallace. Sharing his memories of partition Dr Jaffery remarks, "In this city culture and civilization have always been very thin dresses. It does not take much for that dress to be torn off and for what lies beneath to be revealed" (Djinns, 190). Here it is evident that Dalrymple has been selective in presenting only those characters in his narrative who articulate his nostalgic vision of restoring the city of a 'more elegant age.'

Dalrymple attempts to characterize different ages in Delhi's history through the art and architecture representative of that particular age. Describing these Mughal and British colonial structures he asserts that these monuments symbolic of the past are not being taken care of thereby

suggesting indirectly that Indians have no sense of the past.. While describing the Haksar Haveli, a seventeenth century Islamic structure Dalrymple reports, “No one seems to care. It is as if the people of Delhi had washed their hands of the fine old mansions of the Old City in their enthusiasm to move into the concrete bunkers of the New” (Djinns, 56-57). Similar remarks are advanced by Mr. Prasad, Chief Engineer of the Northern Railways Board whose office was once William Fraser’s residency, a permanent British resident in the eighteenth century. He comments, “You see actually in India today, no one is thinking too much about these old historical places. India is a developing country. Our people are looking to the future only” (Djinns, 126). Dalrymple also cites the perspective of Pakeezah Sultan Begum, the granddaughter of Fateh-UL- Mulk, ‘the heir apparent of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafur II’, to strengthen his notion about lack of Indians’ sense of the past:

Look what this so-called government has done to my city.... My ancestors built the most beautiful city in the world.... Now no one is maintaining anything. These people have become so careless. They are not proud of their past (Djinns, 242).

Hence such representations relegate the present culture of India to periphery and which directly bring his home culture to the centre. However, strategically Dalrymple does not put forward his own perspective instead he allows a variety of characters, historical and present day to put forward his perspective while pushing his own persona to the background.

In Dalrymple’s narrative, frequent transitions occur between travel and history. He visits various areas of Old and New Delhi which in turn conduct him into the colonial past. His major concern is to search for reminiscences of affectionate memories of the British in India amongst people and places he visits. He employs romantic and sentimental qualities of the British residents of late eighteenth century to present Empire in redeeming light. Accounts and opinions of European travelers of British India and British stayers-on from Imperial Delhi such as Iris Portal, Haxby sisters, Nora Nicolson, Lieutenant William Franklin, Anglo-Indians Marion and Joe Fowler have been put forward in his narrative to endorse his imperial rhetoric. “As Greenblatt reminds us, the eyewitness, real or not, functions rhetorical strategy to persuade the reader of the “authenticity” of what is reported” (Holland and Huggan, 2000: 16).

On meeting Edith and Phyllis Haxby, British stayers-on from Imperial India, Dalrymple posits that “ their attitudes gave a sad insight into the fate of those Britons who not so long ago had dominated Raj Delhi, and who had opted to stay on in India after the Empire which created them had dissolved (Djinns, 86). Citing their ridiculous anecdotes of being mentally tortured by the prostitutes around their house, Dalrymple attempts to present the British stayers-on after 1947 as quite vulnerable after the end of British rule. Further the line “Britons who not so long had dominated Raj Delhi” suggests his nostalgic longing for a lost world. The similar craving is echoed when Phyllis says “... You know, Mr. Dalrymple, you people today has no idea what India was like before. It was... just like England” (Djinns, 88). This clearly reveals that the representation of binaries of us and others as well as superior and inferior is inherent in this text. Dalrymple’s interview with Norah Nicholson and Marion and Joe Fowler and Mr. Andrews further helps to strengthen his ideology. He met Norah Nicholson in 1984, when the first time he lived in India. Telling him about an incident when she was thrown out of her government lodgings after the end of British rule, she makes a comparison between English and Indians, “I am an Englishwoman with a little pride,” she would say. “I’m not one of these people to take advantage and I never like to force myself on anyone” (Djinns, 115). This position English at the highest level of hierarchy in terms of humility, kindness and culture. Later, at a point she says:

My only fear is that they will throw me off my little plot. I’ve been here twenty-four years and have applied for the land, but they ignore me because I refuse to give them a bribe. The boy wants my camera, but I’m damned if I’m going to pander to their corruption. There is no law and order and still less justice since the British left (Djinns, 116).

This suggests that during British presence in India there was law and order and justice and which is missing in post-colonial India, thereby indicating superiority of British over Indians in terms of administration. Similar sense of deprecation is seen in Dalrymple’s interview with Marion and Joe Fowler where they are all praise for everything English and look down on everything Indian whether it is Indian food, Indian landscape or Indian people. A sense of superiority is again expressed when Joe claims that, “They treat everyone the same in England. Not like here” (Djinns, 136). Mr. Andrews, an Anglo-Indian whom Dalrymple and his wife Olivia

meet in a British cemetery complying with Olivia's claim of the neglect of Residency building states, "The trouble with these people... is that they have no sense of history" (Djinns, 118). Here it can be argued that Dalrymple deliberately incorporates these patterned little narratives of the survivors of British Raj which, if summarized help to bring out the ideological implication of the text and setting up the ground whereby readers can perceive the British rule in India as benign and superior to that of Indians.

The generosity and superiority of the British in India are further reinforced through the description of two British residents in India during the first half of the nineteenth century. David Ochterlony and William Fraser were those British residents who had adopted 'Indian modes of dress and Indian ways of living'. Dalrymple's description of these two figures as "sympathetic and slightly eccentric Scotsman, whose love and respect for India was reflected by their adoption of Indian modes of dress and Indian ways of living" (Djinns 98) can be seen as an attempt to elide the imperial designs of the British in India. However the truth was that:

... The establishment of the British Residency in Delhi was considered an extension of the power from Calcutta, for British officials were appointed and sent from the headquarters. Those officials were held responsible to maintain the British autonomy VI's-à-is the Mughal empire, whereas the emperors were reduced to the receivers of the pension and allocations granted by the British (Kumar, 2013: 104).

In the description of Ochterlony and Fraser again Dalrymple maintains the hierarchy of difference presenting them as heroic, manly and superior compared to those of Indians as either effeminate or barbaric and inferior. Presenting Indians as submissive in his heroic portrayal of Fraser, Dalrymple avers:

He pruned his mustache in the Rajput manner and fathered 'as many children as the King of Persia' from his harem of Indian wives. His favourite relaxation was hunting the Asian lion, often on foot with a spear. He had 'a perfect monomania for fighting' and would always throw up his usual duties as an East India Company servant whenever a war broke out in the subcontinent. While he slept, his

bodyguard of the Indian tribes would unroll their mattresses and sleep around his couch (Djinns, 99).

Throughout the text, the description of these representatives of the Raj, they are presented as daring, heroic and generous while the Indian characters described during this period are either the servile cavalymen or the courtesans thereby giving a privileged, authoritative and the central ideological position to the former and the latter is shown as effeminate, erotic and sensual and therefore marginalizing it to the periphery.

Dalrymple maintains that before these residents were installed, a number of savage invasions led the city into steady decline. "By the end of the eighteenth century Delhi, shorn of the Empire had sunk into a state of impotent dotage. The aristocracy tried to maintain the lifestyle and civilization of the empire, but in a ruined and impoverished city raped and violated by a succession of invaders" (Djinns, 95). Even in the accounts of Lieutenant William Franklin in which Dalrymple heavily relies, "The environs are crowded with the remains of spacious gardens and the country-houses of the nobility," he wrote in his report. "The prospect towards Delhi, as far as the eye can reach, is covered with the remains of gardens, pavilions, mosques and burying places. The environs of this once magnificent and celebrated city appear now nothing more than a shapeless heap of ruins..." (Djinns, 97). With such representations Dalrymple's ideological implication becomes apparent that it was the powerful and civilized Empire that brought the city out of the wretchedness of its decline.

Throughout his description of the late seventeenth century Delhi, it has been portrayed as 'a city of gutted ruins' where 'pleasure and sensuality' was the only norm among the aristocrats. Delhi has been presented as fallen into degeneracy like a 'wasteland' where immorality and wantonness prevailed. 'Music, writing and much dancing all flourished; the old military aristocracy complained that it was now sitar and Sarangi players, not the generals and cavalymen, who were rewarded with honors and estates (Djinns, 156-157). Even in the description of the architecture of the time Dalrymple searches for exotic elements of 'Oriental eroticism' to buttress his assumptions of the age which is "not so much decaying miserably into impoverished anonymity as one whoring and drinking itself into extinction" (Djinns, 159). City of Djinns abounds in the

description of courtesans, dancers and harems which facilitate Dalrymple in evoking the images of exotic, erotic and feminized City that required heroic, masculine characters like Fraser, Ochterlony and Skinner for its salvation.

Dalrymple gives a fascinating and exhaustive description of the architecture; especially those built by Lutyens as evidence of what the Empire contributed to the growth and development of the country and brought it out of its ruined state. Nevertheless, Dalrymple admires several structures of Mughal Empire but his fascination for and inclination towards Lutyens' Delhi is quite evident in his elaborate description in the text. As he upholds, "The bungalows gave New Delhi its character: shady avenues of jamun and ashupal trees, low red-brick walls gave on to hundreds of rambling white colonial houses with their broken pediments and tall Ionic pillars"(Djinns, 23).

Dalrymple's imperial nostalgia is manifested in his mimicking of his colonial forbears. "One of my strongest memories from my first visit, he avers "was sitting in the garden of one of the bungalows, a glass to hand with my legs raised up on a Bombay Fornicator (one of those wickerwork planter's chairs with extended arms, essential to every colonial veranda). In front lay a lawn dotted with croquet hoops; behind, the white- bow front of one of this century's most inspired residential designs. (Djinns, 23). A sense of belatedness is echoed here. Debbie Lisle in her introduction to *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* points out:

Travel writers long to 'imagine the past' because their linear understanding of temporality is constantly being threatened by the forces of globalization. If the rest of the world is 'catching up' with the west, then the world is becoming a single homogeneous place with no obvious hierarchies of difference, and no guaranteed cultural superiority for western writers. To re-establish the teleological historical queue, travel writers produce a powerful *discourse of nostalgia* in order to cultivate a longing for the past (Lisle, 2006: 37).

Dalrymple too faces the same dilemma on his first visit to Delhi, where he 'had expected to find much that was familiar.' He expected that there would be a great obsession among the Indians 'with things Imperial British' as 'India had been influenced by England from the Elizabethan period.' On the contrary he observes:

Nevertheless, far from encountering the familiar, I was astonished how little evidence remained of two centuries of colonial rule... For all the fond imaginings of the British, as far as the modern Delhi-wallah was concerned, the Empire was ancient history, an age impossibly remote from our own (Djinns, 71).

Thus, it could be argued that in *City of Djinns* Dalrymple feasts on the past glories of Empire to resurrect its power and prestige in the present and thus influence his readers at home with this imperial rhetoric of superiority. Since such hierarchies of difference are not apparent in the City at present, the modern aspects of Delhi do not appeal to Dalrymple and therefore he represents them as corrupt, competitive, exploitative, amoral and materialistic. However, aware of being judged negatively Dalrymple fictionalizes his account of the people and places he visits. He presents his encounter with the people in the form of dialogues and conversation give authenticity to his account. He presents the Indian stereotypes as humorous and eccentric thus renders them as natural and also establishes the superiority of the west by passing judgments on the people he encounters.

Dalrymple presents Punjabis as the representative of modern Delhi. He seems to be quite skeptical about the Punjabis and therefore sees eccentricities in every walk of their day to day life. While the Puri family, his landowners and Balvinder Singh, his taxi driver forms the backdrop against which he represents the Punjabi Delhi as the modernized but unsophisticated and uncivilized East, he himself is the representative of cultured and civilized West. He secures binaries of superior/inferior, civilized/uncivilized, disciplined/unrestrained, scientific/superstitious etc. Through the interpretation of persons and places he comes across.

There are many instances in *City of Djinns* where Europe is interpreted as a leading and emulated culture. Mrs. Puri's conversation with Dalrymple about Mr. Puri highlights this notion, "He likes flush toilet and Star TV. Everybody likes flush toilet and Star TV. How can you leave these things once you have tasted such luxury?" (Djinns, 13). The racial and cultural difference is advanced through his use of technology better gadgets. This is highlighted in his conversation with the customs officer, Mr. Prakash Jat on his return from Karachi:

“‘You are a lucky man,’ said Mr. Jat. ‘We are breaking all regulations letting you out of India without your items.’ Then he added: ‘By the way, much am I liking your [reads from label] Discoblast Cassette Recorder with Anti- Woof and Flutter Function.’ ... Then, casting a shady look on either side, he added in a lowered voice: ‘Sahib, you want to sell? I give you good price’” (Djinns, 69).

Such representations are interspersed all through the text. While Dalrymple was departing after his meeting with Haxby sisters, he highlights, “I got up, said goodbyes, and promised to send them the English brassieres and stockings they had asked for- they seemed to have trouble with domestic Indian brands... (Djinns, 89). In one more instance where Dalrymple presents his conversation with Mrs. Puri is regarding ‘permanent arrangement’ of house rent, he mentions:

Our rent, in pounds sterling, was to be sent monthly to Mrs. Puri’s bank account in deepest Ludhiana... Fluctuations in the value of the pound were, however, to be made up in Marks and Spencer underwear which we would get our friends to mail out from Britain.

‘You must understand,’ explained Mrs. Puri, ‘that we are not having your Marks and Spencer lingerie in India’ (Djinns, 155).

The chapter on ‘hijras’ in City of Djinns gives Dalrymple, one more possibility where he can represent the country as exotic and technologically backward to that of European countries. The claim that, “Yet today eunuchs have apparently died out everywhere except in the subcontinent... In all there are thought to be some three-quarters of a million of them are surviving” (Djinns, 170) presents the country as unchanging and exotic despite globalization. Europe is projected as technologically superior because in Europe, such eunuchs “have a full sex change. But in India the technology for this does not exist” (Djinns, 180). Such representations reflect the ideology where West is viewed as progressive, developed, emulated and superior to the East and this western consumerism is seen as a weakness of the non-western people.

The Indian bureaucracy and the administration are also high on the list of negatives in many of the travel writings about India and the same finds voice in the City of Djinns too. Dalrymple ironically mentions the traffic rules in India:

Although during my first year in Delhi I remember thinking that the traffic had seemed both anarchic and alarming, by my second visit I had come to realize that it was in fact governed by very strict rules. Right of way belongs to the driver of the large vehicle. Buses give way to heavy trucks, Ambassadors give way to buses, and bicyclists give way to everything except pedestrians. On the road, as in many other aspects of Indian life, Might is Right (Djinns, 15).

Here, mentioning that 'Might is Right' in many aspects of Indian life, it is apparent that the narrator suggests the opposite for the English's life. Similarly mocking at the working of Indian Bureaucracy that the 'slow wheels of bureaucracy' did process his application for accreditation as a foreign correspondent 'but not until about a year' he states 'after the newspaper I represented had ceased publication' (Djinns, 20). Further talking about Telephone Nigam he asserts:

The Telephone Nigam is India's sole supplier of telecommunications to the outside world... This is something every person who works for the organization knows; and around this certainty has been building an empire dedicated to bureaucratic obfuscation, the perpetration of difficulty, the collection of bribes and, perhaps more than anything else, the spinning of great glistening cocoons of red tape (Djinns, 20).

Indian bureaucracy is akin to the 'glistening cocoons of red tape' to his western eyes. Moreover, Indian English, better known to the purists as Hinglish has always been a favourite topic of ridicule and Dalrymple is no exception to it. He specially ridicules obituaries and matrimonial advertisements. In his mockery of Hinglish, Dalrymple shows himself to be a prude however; it is hardly surprising given his penchant for showing off his Oxford background. Besides these he makes several other points in the text with respect to poverty, the filthiness of the landscape, social inequality, ill-equipped houses etc. In the course of the book. Such representations buttress the text's central concern of establishing the superiority and generosity of the Empire. However, in his deliberate nostalgia for the past, Dalrymple badly mucks up Delhi's present.

It could be argued that though there are many unknown facets of Delhi's past that Dalrymple eruditely uncovers, nonetheless, *City of Djinn*s is not objective reporting rather it is a selective hunt for the data to buttress his preconceived notion of Empire's past glory. The people he encounters and interviews throughout the text are selective and he inserts his own perspectives in between to support his ideology.

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