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The representation of non-European
cultures in *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the representation of a non-European culture shown in the novel *Kim* written by the Indian author Rudyard Kipling. The first point includes information about the historical context in which the book was written. Next, the study includes a definition and use of the term Orientalism, described by Edward W. Said, who also analyzed *Kim*. There is also the biography of the author, which includes some characteristics of his works. The theory is followed by the summary of *Kim* and its respective analysis, which not only includes a description of the main characters, Kim and the lama, but also the main topics of the novel: the duality of identity, racism, religion and women and misogyny. Finally, some conclusions will be presented at the end of the project.

Keywords: Orientalism, non-European culture, identity, racism, religion.

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1. Introduction

British literature has always had influential writers, all of them with their ways of writing. Each of them has been different because, even though some had been influenced by others, they had their style and characteristics in their works. For example, Edgar Allan Poe influenced Arthur Conan Doyle. However, not all the authors have been influenced by other authors. Others have been influenced by circumstances they have lived in or known. This is the case of Rudyard Kipling, who was inspired by India in most of his works because it is where he had lived most of his life.

The aim of my TFG is to search for information and to know and learn how Kipling, who is the author I have chosen to talk about, has portrayed different cultures in British literature. I divided this project into three parts: the theoretical background, which includes the historical context, some comments on Said's literature study and a biography of the author; the analysis, and the conclusions.

First, I looked for the background and context of the years when the novel was written and the plot set.

I read the book of the literary critic Edward W. Said, I summarized the text by using the three terms he uses to describe what *Orientalism* and *Orientalist* mean. I also read a chapter from another of his books, called *Culture and Imperialism*.

When I finished the novel, I thought about how I could analyze it. After careful consideration, I decided that I had to pick what I think is the most important in the novel: some characters, which have ended up being only Kim and the lama, and some of all the topics that the book treats, which I concluded that the most important and remarkable for me were the following: the duality of identity during the novel, only in the case of the kid, since he is Irish and Indian; racism, which is noticeable in the whole story from part

of everyone; religion, which is a topic I decided to talk about because I thought it played a vital role during the whole novel; the last issue I chose to mention was the female figure represented in the book, I selected it because some critics consider the author a misogynist and I looked at how Kipling portrayed women and how the author described them.

2. Historical Context

This section of the project includes a summary of the historical context, which explains the situation that India was suffering due to the colonization of the British Empire during the time that goes from the beginning of the East India Company, in 1600, until the end of the British Raj, in 1947. It also includes some social characteristics like the economy or politics of the country.

2.1. British Empire

The East India Company, a British company founded in 1600, was formed with the aim of exchange in the Indian Ocean region, established in India with the authorization of their authorities because they made relationships in which both of them benefited. Still, on August 2, 1858, the Parliament passed the Government of India Act, in which most powers of the company were transferred to the British Crown. India became the most significant colony of the British Empire of the whole nineteenth century.

The British government abolished the East India Company, and they did it in favor of the direct rule of India. The Indian army had to be reorganized again because of a financial crisis caused by this abolishment. However, education and some public works like roads and railways, among others, were continued due to their value to the troops. The Indian society protested against the British influences, but it did not work, and its structure began to break down.

Kipling's novel *Kim* was published during the British Raj. This period started in 1858, when the British considered the structure of governance in India "after general distrust and dissatisfaction with company leadership resulted in a widespread mutiny of sepoy troops in 1857" (Britannica, 2020), and ended when India and Pakistan became independent in 1947.

The purpose of the British Raj was to help India extend its participation within the government through the Government of India Act. However, it failed to work because Britain was still having control of everything, and India did not have enough power to determine its future. Moreover, they had three armies, and they decided to reorganize them to make them 'safer' by mixing British and Indian soldiers. Still, the latter did not have permission to have some specific weapons.

Some historians point out that Indian society was divided, so it was not possible to unite them against the British, and these divisions were encouraged by the British because people of better classes than others were educated in English schools and served in the British army or the civil service (The National Archives, n.d.).

The economy was a commercial agricultural production of India, the opium trade to China and the tax on salt, which happened earlier but increased through the years. The use of railways destroyed the indigenous handicraft industries because England sent some cheaper products to India.

The country and its people had a significant impact on the life of British people in the aspects of politics, commerce, and trade, among others. Indian people who received a British education thought that they would be able to have the power of the Indian government.

3. Said's Literature Study

Part of the theoretical background of this project is based on the study of Edward W. Said, a literary critic who wrote a book dedicated only to talk specifically about Orientalism and its central and most essential ideas. This section also includes part of his analysis of Rudyard Kipling's book and why it is important for British literature.

3.1. *Orientalism*

Edward W. Said, who was born in Palestine in 1935, wrote *Orientalism* in 1978, a study of how the Occident sees the Orient and its cultural representations.

In *Orientalism*, Said argues that the best and wealthiest colonies have been in the Orient during years, and people are the source of various cultures and languages.

According to Said, an Orientalist may study, teach, or research the Orient. He considers it does not matter if the person is a historian or philologist; and he defines Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (Said, 2019, p. 2). It compares the nature, limits of human knowledge and the existence of the items between the Orient and the Occident. People have taken for granted the mentality of the Orient to create some theories or novels, among other documents.

The author gives a more historical and materialistic meaning to this idea. Orientalism may be analyzed as a corporate institution for handling the Orient so that the Western can dominate and have authority over it. Said says that European culture improved in the sense of identity when it set off against the Orient. It is obvious that there is a large difference between the history and cultures of East and West, and the author argues that “Orientalism derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain and France and the Orient” (Said, 2019, p. 4); these two countries, Britain and France,

had dominated the Orient from the start of the nineteenth century until the World War II. Since then, America has dominated the Orient.

Some Western countries could say that their histories or customs were better than a number of the Eastern, but the reality is that there are countries better off than the West say they are. As always have happened, there were dominance and power in the relationship between the Orient and the Occident.

Said talks about distortions and inaccuracies that can happen when discussing the Orient. He explains the three main aspects of his contemporary reality to explain the difficulties he had discussed. These three aspects are the distinction between pure and political knowledge, the methodological question, and the personal dimension.

3.2. Culture and Imperialism

Culture and Imperialism is another study by Edward W. Said. I have read chapter V because it comments on the novel *Kim*. In this chapter, the author remarks that Kipling was unique in British literature. Said explains that only Conrad, another author, can be considered along with Rudyard Kipling. When writing, they had different tones and styles, but both showed the experience of the British empire.

The author talks about how Kipling is considered less ironic and self-conscious than Conrad, and it was the author of *Kim* and *The Jungle Book* who acquired a large audience earlier. In contradistinction to Kipling, Conrad never wrote about India; he focused more on territories such as Africa or South America.

Said also mentions some other British literature authors who talked about India in their writings, for example, the philologist Sir William Jones or the politician and British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay. The author also argues that in *Kim*, Kipling writes from the point of view of the white man and from the perspective of a colonial system that had acquired the status of a virtual fact of nature. The varieties of territories and races

that were not Christian Europe were considered inferior. Also, when Kipling wrote the novel, the situation between India and Britain was changing because of the Rebellion of 1857; he was not neutral in the Anglo-Indian case; he portrayed the country the way he saw it because some characters also see India like Kipling used to see it, a part of an empire.

Lastly, Said says that the novel shows an absence of a conflict because Kipling thought there was not any conflict; he felt that being a part of the British Empire was the best that could have happened to India.

The conflict between Kim's colonial service and loyalty to his Indian companions is unresolved not because Kipling could not face it, but because for Kipling *there was no conflict*; one purpose of the novel is in fact to show the absence of conflict one Kim is cured of his doubts, the lama of his longing for the River, and India of a few upstarts and foreign agents (Cited in Said 1993: 146).

4. Rudyard Kipling

4.1. Biography

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was born on December 30, 1865, in Mumbai, India, and died in London, England, on January 18, 1936. He was a journalist and wrote short stories, poems and novels; those texts were about British soldiers in India, but he also had tales more aimed at children. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he became one of the most influential writers in England because he talked about stories of British soldiers in India and his tales for children. His most important novel written is *Kim*.

He worked in some local newspapers. Kipling became known as a writer of short stories and famous when he published his first collection, *Departmental Ditties*, in 1886. Two years later, in 1888, he wrote a collection of short-stories called *Plain Tales from the Hills*; and six paper-covered volumes of short stories between 1887 and 1889: *Soldiers Three*, *The Phantom Rickshaw* and *Wee Willie Winkie*. The latter work included *Baa Baa*, *Black Sheep*, written in 1888, in which he described his life. In 1889 he was already considered a brilliant prose writer of his time.

Kipling published *The Jungle Book* in 1894, which became famous around the world. The book is considered a classic for children, it even has an animated film adaptation produced by Walt Disney Productions in 1967, which made the story more known. Apart from this adaptation, Walt Disney Pictures also did another remake of the film in 2016 with the same title *The Jungle Book*. Kipling wrote a sequel of this novel, *The Second Jungle Book*, in 1895.

This same year, Kipling wrote 'If', which became one of his most famous poems, and was published in 1910 in a volume of some of his short stories and poems called *Rewards and Fairies*.

Kim was published in 1901 and it was his last book set in India. In 1902, a year after its publication, Kipling published a collection of stories called *Just So Stories for Little Children*; those stories were completely aimed at children, and he wrote them after her daughter's death. During the First World War, the author wrote some propaganda books, and he published a collection of his poems in 1933.

Rudyard Kipling received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907, becoming the first English-speaker person to receive the Prize until then, "in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author" (Nobel Prize, 1907). He had only 41 years, so he became the youngest person to receive this prize. He was nominated by Charles Oman, an Oxford University professor and he also received the Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Literature in 1926.

Kipling had a particular style of writing. He talked about different important topics related to India and some people were passing through. Some of these topics included patriotism, where he shows his love for India and England, the countries where he had lived and shows his love for them in some short stories or novels; equality in writings like *The Mother-Lodge*; capitalism; and he also included some autobiographical aspects because in some stories he represented his experience during his life; he wrote about India representing it as he knew the country, "If Kipling's India has essential and unchanging qualities, this was because he deliberately saw India that way" (Said, 1993, p.134).

The author is known because he wrote fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. His writings included humor, imagination, and some others such as 'If' included themes of human spirit and ethics. There are not many women shown in his writings some critics consider Kipling a misogynist because women in his writings are not often realized.

5. *Kim*

5.1. Summary

The plot of the novel is about an orphan boy named Kimball O'Hara, also called Kim. His father was an Irish soldier, and his mother used to take care of the colonel's children. One day, a Tibetan lama arrives where Kim lives and says he is looking for the famous and legendary River of the Arrow. This river is mainly known because Buddha threw an arrow, and where it landed, the river appeared; the lama wanted to visit it because it is said that if someone bathes there, they will be Enlightened. Kim listens to the conversation between the lama and a man of the Wonder House, also called the Lahore Museum, and when the lama gets out of the museum, the boy tells him that he will go with him to look for the river. While they are looking for the river, Mahbub Ali, a friend of Kim, asks him to hand a note to an Englishman in Umballa, which is near where they are going. The kid has another reason to go with the lama and is that his father told him that if he found a Red Bull on a green field, his luck would completely change.

Kim gives the Englishman a note that Mahbub has given him. It is important because it was written that some people were planning to break away from the British Indian government. When they return their way to the River of the Arrow, they see a pair of guys and find out that what Kim's father meant by talking to him is that the Red Bull was a flag, and that flag is part of the Irish Mavericks, his regiment in the army.

People see him and talk about him to the lama and is in that moment when the lama finds out that Kim is a British boy, even though he does not seem it, he decides to pay for Kim's education. The little boy does not want to stay there and writes to Mahbub, telling him that he wants to go away, but instead, Mahbub talks about Kim to Colonel Creighton, the man who received the message previously mentioned. The Colonel is

impressed by Kim and wants him to be part of the British Indian Secret Service because he had hidden part of his origins all his life, and he thinks that he will be a great secret agent.

When he has 17 years, he wanted to continue living as he did when he was a kid, and the colonel gives him six months to travel around India and learn how life in the country is. Meanwhile, the lama has been looking for the River of the Arrow and has finally decided that he will not be able to find it without the help of his *chela* Kim.

They meet again and go to the North with Babu, but he leaves them with two Russian boys who hit them in the middle of their way. The lama gets pounded by the Russian guy, and he desires the death of those guys, which causes a crisis of faith in him because he has never felt this way before. They go to the house of a Kulu woman, whom they met earlier, and there they get to rest. While Kim is sleeping, Babu looks for him to bring the secret papers to the colonel so that Kim can finish his mission. The lama had a vision, and he finally finds the River of the Arrow. He understands where he belongs, what he has to do, and understands his relationship with Kim, who is like a grandchild.

5.2. Analysis

The analysis of the book has been divided into two parts: on the one hand, the main characters, and on the other hand, some main topics are mentioned, as well as how they are portrayed in the novel.

5.2.1. Characters

This section of the project will talk about the main characters of the novel, Kim and the Lama, how they are and how differently they behave compared to each other, and how their characters develop during the book.

5.2.1.1. Kim

Kim is an orphan boy and the most important character in this novel. Everybody knows him as ‘Little Friend of all the World’. He is independent and likes going on his own. In the fifth chapter of the novel, he explains that he has been told several times to go to a *madrissah* (a school) or to keep in the regiment, but he has always avoided it. When he is sent to school, he does not like it because he is not able to feel as free as he would want to. Kim has a lot of experience in life due to the conditions he has lived until the moment because he has grown up without parents and knows that people are not as good and kind as they seem. When he sees the lama for the first time, he already reacts as surprised: “There is a new priest in the city– a man such as I have never seen” (Kipling, 2008, chapter I). But, as Kim gets to know the lama, he becomes more fascinated by his behavior and starts travelling with him: “He follows the lama wherever he goes in his wish to be freed ‘the delusions of the Body’ (Said, 1993, p. 139). He says he has not met anyone like the lama before, and in the end, he ends up being fond of him: “But he *is* a holy man’ [...] ‘In truth, and in talk and in act, holy. He is not like the others. I have never seen such an one. We be not fortune-tellers, or jugglers, or beggars” (Kipling, 2008, chapter III).

The kid realizes he will not be as free as before. He is always being controlled and decides to send a message to his friend Mahbub Ali to explain to him what has happened until the moment, and he asks Mahbub for help because he does not know how to escape from his current situation. Kim admits his recent lack of freedom when the writer that he had visited asks him how he will know if he is not going to run away before paying the assignment: “I must not go beyond this tree” (Kipling, 2008, chapter VI). Sending the letter to Mahbub Ali, Kim demonstrates that he is not as independent as before because he needs help to escape from the situation. The boy not only cares about him, but now he cares about the lama as well, wondering if he will be fine alone.

Kim is the focus of attention because he told what he heard, which is that they would have to go fighting, and nobody believed him because he is only a kid. The next day happens what he told them, and they think that he is odd: “Are there many more like you in India? [...] or are you by way o’being a *lusus naturae*¹?” (Kipling, 2008, chapter VI). In this case, Kim surprised Father Victor by predicting what will happen next, and Father Victor asks him if there are many people like him or not where he lived; Father Victor is unaware of the Indian society, and he does not know anything. Everyone knows Kim and the lama because they are known for all the deeds they have achieved and the things they have done during all their journey.

The boy’s freedom is quite contradictory. Kim feels he does what he wants because he has always done it, but the truth is that everyone decides for him. For example, when Bennett asks him if he wants to become a soldier and refuses, the man tells him that he will do what his superiors tell him. Another case is when the lama agrees to pay for his studies ignoring what the kid wants, which is to accompany him on his journey. One more example of this kind of emancipation is when he can do what he wants for six months, but he is being controlled, maintained, and protected by others. Said also comments on a scene in the novel in which some characters are deciding the kid’s future: “As Kim sleeps, the lama and Mahbub discuss the boy’s fate; both men know he is healed, and so what remains in the disposition of his life” (Said, 1993, p. 142).

Kim is becoming dependent on the lama because he admits that he has no other friends apart from him and Mahbub Ali. He is scared because he has no idea what will happen to him in the future, and since he joins the Secret Service, he begins to be more insecure and does not trust anybody. While he is in the middle of the mission of the Secret

¹ Deformed person or thing; freak.

Service he does not tell anything to the lama because he already knows him and knows that the man will be completely against this action.

Related to this new dependency is the fact that at one point in the novel, he notices that he is alone and that no one could know if something will happen to him: “Now am I alone—all alone [...] In all India is no one so alone as I! If I die to-day, who shall bring the news—and to whom?” (Kipling, 2008, chapter XI). This is something that, at the beginning of the novel, he would have never thought he would say so; it is the first time he expresses his feelings and his concerns about what would happen to him and his life if something terrible occurs to him. He has been used being accustomed to being supported for years and has received help from the school or Mahbub Ali, among others:

“But is my own fault,” he concluded. ‘With Mahbub, I ate Mahbub’s bread, or Lurgan Sahib’s. At St Xavier’s, three meals a day. Here I must jolly well look out for myself’ (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter XI).

This new dependency causes him several problems, such as the lack of food and becoming thinner; he has become pallor and slim because of hunger.

The boy knows how to cheat somebody and lie to people because he has done it all his life. Due to it, he catches people when he knows someone is cheating on him: “I am not a child. Talk Hindi and let us get to the yolk of the egg. Thou art here—speaking not one word of truth in ten. Why art thou here? Give a straight answer.” (Kipling, 2008, chapter XII).

Kim also shows his affection for the lama at the end of the novel because when the lama is sick and weak, he is worried but does not know how to help him: “after the fateful confrontation with the Russian agents who stir up insurrection against Britain, Kim helps (and is helped by) the lama” (Said, 1993, p. 139).

5.2.1.2. Lama

Another important character of the novel is the lama, who is accompanied by Kim throughout the book and establishes a good relationship with the little boy. He is a Tibetan Buddhist that comes from the North. He is the only person from Tibet in the novel, so he represents the whole region.

Compared to Kim, the lama has always traveled with someone else and is accompanied by another person. At the novel's beginning, he is more dependent on other people. Before having Kim as a *chela*, he had another person that did the things for him:

“There was with me when I left the hills a *chela* (disciple) who begged for me as the Rule demands, but halting in Kulu awhile a fever took him and he died. I have now no *chela*, but I will take the alms-bowl and thus enable the charitable to acquire merit” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter I).

Said also says that the lama needs Kim by his side: “we must not forget that the lama depends on Kim for support and guidance [...] the lama, while a wise and good man, needs Kim’s youth, his guidance, his wits [...]” (Said, 1993, p. 139).

He is a good person who does not have evil, the man blesses everyone he meets, and if he does not, he feels worse. He does not think there are distinctions between races and that meeting his *chela* results from good karma in their earlier lives. The lama has a naive point of view because of his spiritual commitment.

The lama has affection for his *chela* because he has accompanied him through a long journey, but he does not realize the respect and love he feels towards Kim until the boy has to leave him alone and attend school. That is the moment when he realizes that he will not be accompanied anymore: “Now I am sorrowful because thou art taken away and my River is far from me” (Kipling, 2008, chapter V).

The older man decides that he will pay for Kim's education: "the lama commands attention and esteem from nearly everyone. He honors his word to get the money for Kim's education" (Said, 1993, p.139). When he meets Kim again, he explains that he left the Kulu woman because she was a nuisance. When the lama separates from the kid, he becomes more independent than before because he survives without anyone's help and chooses by deciding to leave and go to Benares. However, he is still dependent on the child because he admits he knows nothing about the people's customs and will send letters to the boy. He has problems surviving alone because, even though he has been used to going by train and traveling alone, Kipling describes him as "a little thinner and a shade yellower" (Kipling, 2008, chapter IX). This may be because he is not used to going without a *chela* and may have difficulty begging for alms.

The lama is a paternal figure for Kim; he appreciates the kid and worries about him, that is why he has been visiting the school where Kim is, but because of that, the young boy has been beaten up more than once. During the kid's time in school, he has always helped him financially to pay for his studies. For this cause, Kim wants to return and be with him again because he has won his affection, and also because he worries about his education and wants him to finish it.

The time he has been lonely has affected him personally. He has become a more impatient person, and sometimes he will be annoyed more easily. The lama admits it when they visit the Kulu woman and tell the boy that he left her: "She is virtuous, but an inordinate talker" (Kipling, 2008, chapter XII). He probably left her alone for a long time because he did not have more patience to stand her.

The novel confirms that he is the only Tibetan person represented because they say it is hard and strange to find someone like him: "Red Lamas are not so common in

Hind that one loses track” (Kipling, 2008, chapter X). He is called Red Lama in this fragment, but he is also called ‘old Red Hat’ because of his origins and appearance.

The lama feels worried or annoyed because Kim has cheated on him. Nevertheless, he still wants to be accompanied by him, and he even starts cheating on some people like the Kulu woman so that he can be calm and undisturbed; he begins to be more selfish than before. The lama has been influenced by the kid during the time they spent together.

He has an internal crisis that makes the lama think that he has a moral weakness because when they get hit by the Russians, a hint of a desire for revenge is visible in him, as he admits he even wanted to shoot them at one point in the situation.

Kim has grown up and gotten older, but the lama too. He does not have the same energy compared to when he was younger. However, when they are arriving at the Himalayas he makes an effort and acts as if he has more energy and courage than he had years before. He probably does it because he does not want that Kim gets worried about him, who was also having problems. After all, he was not used to being at such a high altitude.

The older man is afraid that the kid has wanted to leave him at a point in their journey, and until Kim denies it, he does not feel relieved. When they finally find the River, the lama wonders what will happen to Kim when he leaves the world, again showing the love and affection he feels for him because he is worried about Kim’s future.

The characters are completely different, while physically one of them is a young boy, and the other one is an older man. Their personalities, as can be seen, are also completely different: the boy is independent and likes to get into mischief, and the man has been always accompanied by someone to be able to survive and has been a holy man

all his life. As time passes, the characters begin to change their personalities, both with the influence of each other and also because of the circumstances in which they are. The lama begins to be an impatient person while the kid is going to be a responsible, mature, and better person.

It seems that they do not have anything in common, but this is not true. What they have in common are the feelings that they have for each other. Kim considers the lama part of his family and vice versa. The times they had spent separated and alone, they have been thinking about the other and wondering how they would be and how their lives would be. The man always visited the school to see if he could meet Kim or to support him, and Kim worried about the lama because he knew he was old and he has never been alone before. But their concerns for each other did not occur only when they were separated, but also when they were together, an example is when the lama gets hit by the Russian Agents:

“‘Did they wound thee, *chela?*’ called the lama above him.

‘No. And thou?’” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter XIII).

This shows that their relationship is not only about being partners in their journey, as someone could think. The truth is that they have been developing feelings for each other during the novel until being the most important person of the other character, to the point of picking up each other’s habits, but maintaining their peculiar personalities and behavior.

5.2.2. Main Topics

The novel can be complex because it has many different topics that could be discussed as the loyalty that Kim and the lama feel for each other, youth, or the duty that Kim has to do when he has to attend school. In the analysis, the topics that will be discussed are the

duality of the identity of the orphan boy, racism, the discrimination that Oriental people suffer, the figure of women and misogyny, and religion, which also plays an essential role in the novel.

5.2.2.1. Duality of the Identity

Kim's duality of identity is reflected in the boy as he is the son of an Irish soldier, but all his life has been behaving as native-like. He feels he is native, but when the Englishmen find him, the kid is also considered English, so they do not punish him, yet he still thinks as always. When the Englishmen tell him that he must go to school and they force him to spend some nights with them and to leave the lama, but he tells the lama that he will run away: "Remember, I can change swiftly. It will be as it was when I first spoke to thee under Zam-Zammah the great gun—" (Kipling, 2008, chapter V). After this, the lama tells him that since he has known him, he has acted in different ways, and he wonders what would be the next:

"As a boy in the dress of white men—when I first went to the Wonder House. And a second time thou wast a Hindu. What shall the third incarnation be?" He chuckled drearily. 'Ah, *chela*, thou hast done a wrong to an old man because my heart went out to thee" (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter V).

Later, when the lama leaves and Kim has to stay in the school, he receives new clothes from the Englishmen so that he seems more like a non-native person; these clothes also make him challenging to run in case he wants to run away. At first, the British want to hide the boy's true origins until they question him.

People changed the way of seeing the child because of his origins. The lama is a clear example; when he discovers that Kim is the son of a soldier decides that the boy

must go to school to receive the education he considers the child deserves. At first, they want to hide the true origins of the boy.

At the moment Kim is leaving with the Colonel, he begins to question his identity and has a dilemma; he asks himself who he is and wonders if he is a Sahib or not; this is something he has never had to ask himself before:

“and I am a Sahib [...] No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim? He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all roaring whirl of India, going southward to the knew not what fate” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter VII).

Even though he has been in school for a long time, he still behaves like an Oriental person. Kim still denies being a Sahib and wants to go back to his origins and the life he had before going to school, but later we can notice that he begins to think in English too instead of thinking only in Hindi, as he used to do before.

Sometimes, he forgets about his Indian origins because there is a point in the novel in which he thinks about beating up a Hindu kid and he does not dislike going to school, something he would not have thought could happen when they told him he had to attend there.

When the kid wants to talk to someone and does not want anybody to understand them, he returns to his origins and prefers talking in his native language. This fact can also be considered racist because they speak their language, so British people cannot understand them because they do not know it.

The fact that he has to disguise himself to do different tasks during his travels increases his dilemma about his existence and origins.

5.2.2.2. Racism

Kim presents people of different social classes and from different ethnic groups, which have many differences among them.

The novel has a racist connotation because there is an evident preference for the Occidental people compared to the apparent discrimination against Oriental people. This discrimination can be seen in different moments of the novel. One of them is when Kim meets the Reverend Arthur Bennett and Father Victor. At first, they think he is a thief and a beggar, and Bennett has intentions of chastising him, but when he hears that Kim knows how to speak English, he is confused and asks Father Victor for advice about what he should do with the young boy. Later, when they find out that Kim's father was an Irish soldier, they change their attitude completely; they take care of him and want to get to know him:

“Bennett interrupted. ‘It is possible I have done the boy an injustice. He is certainly white, though evidently neglected. I am sure I must have bruised him. I do not think spirits—’

Get him a glass of sherry, then, and let him squat on the cot. Now, Kim,’ continued Father Victor, ‘no one is going to hurt you. Drink that down and tell us about yourself. The truth, if you’ve no objection” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter V).

The characters of Bennett and Victor do not want that Kim goes with the lama, and both want him to go to the school. They say they will take care of the boy, and Father Victor says that “the regiment will take care of you and make you as good a man as your—as good a man as can be” (Kipling, 2008, chapter V). He means that they do not consider a non-British person a good man and are about to name Kim's father, but he realizes this, and he quickly rectifies himself by speaking in general terms.

The 14-year-old boy who is in charge of watching over Kim is also a clear example of a racist character. The boy underestimates Kim because he is from India and has never been to England; he disrespects Kim when he has the opportunity: “What a ignorant little beggar you are. You was brought up in the gutter, wasn’t you?” (Kipling, 2008, chapter VI). He also uses the term ‘niggers’ to refer to black people, which is degrading. In school, Kim refuses to talk about his life experiences because the boys look down on people who ‘go native altogether.’²

The policemen, because all of them were men since women were not permitted to be police officers because they had to stay at home, taking care of their houses and worrying about their children, are also a symbol of extortion towards the Indians because they all suffer and are afraid of the police.

In the novel, Kipling pointed out that British children would not be able to survive and experience what other children had experienced, for example, when “jogging off alone through a hundred miles of jungle, where there was always the delightful chance of being delayed by tigers” (Kipling, 2008, chapter VII).

Another example of racism could be the stereotype presented that English always tell the truth and non-Europeans do not; for this reason, they are treated as ‘foolish.’

The novel expresses that Russian and black people are not the same kind of people, because they are worried about Russian people since they can kill some characters but, unlike them, they suggest that they do not have to be worried about black people because they consider they will not do anything against them:

“Then what is to fear from them?”

² With this expression Kipling refers to children who are non-European, British children refuse them.

‘By Jove, they are not black people. I can do all sorts of things with black people, of course. They are Russians and highly unscrupulous people. I—I do not want to consort with them without a witness.’

‘Will they kill thee?’ (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter XII).

The Russian agents, one of them from Russia and the other from France, attacked the lama and hit him because they wanted his painting, which they said to represent the birth of a new religion, with the first master and the first disciple represented. Apart from the beating they gave the lama because of the painting, first, they underestimate him because they considered that at that place there was no one Buddhist, it also can be considered racist because they judge people depending on the place they are: “Of some debased kind,’ the other answered. ‘There are no true Buddhists among the Hills” (Kipling, 2008, chapter XIII).

5.2.2.3. Religion

The topic of religion is significant in Kim because the lama bases his personality on religion; he has always been devoted to Buddha. Kipling shows the lama as the only Tibetan person in the novel; therefore, people can assume that all Tibetans are as religious as the character. This character is the maximum religious representation due to his devotion to Buddha during his entire life.

Apart from the lama's religion, the novel also mentions some others as the Muslim or Hindu religion. Every member of each religion looks for something to achieve happiness or his own goal; a good example is, as has been commented before, the lama searching the River of the Arrow. It seems that by finding what everyone is looking for, their lives will be better because they have found what they have been searching during years.

When the lama asks how it would cost to let Kim go to school, he considers this option because he thinks that he has left his Way and has been distracted and engrossed by the way of living that the boy has. In this fragment of the book, he shows his opinion about the guilt he feels for leaving his Way. The man considers he must be punished for it as he thinks he has broken the Law and the promise that he made of finding the River to be able to purify himself and cleanse of his sins:

“I stepped aside from the Way, my *chela*. It was no fault of thine. I delighted in the sight of life, the new people upon the roads, and in thy joy at seeing these things. I was pleased with thee who should have considered my Search and my Search alone. Now I am sorrowful because thou art taken away and my River is far from me. It is the Law which I have broken” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter V).

A priest tells Kim that Bennett has told him to take the kid to a military orphanage to be able to apply to the regiment, and he could enlist. Still, he asks himself if he should take the boy to St Xavier’s to get a better education and have the religion.

British think that if they took Kim to school, they would be able to change his mindset and get the kid into Catholicism; again, a proof that the British considered his religion better than others and that they wanted everybody to become Catholic. When Kim is about to leave and go to school, Father Victor tells him that when someone asks him what his religion is, he must admit that it is Catholicism.

The man has been teaching him the basic notions of Catholicism during his days there, and he warns him that he will become a good white man. This comment can also be considered racist because there is a suggestion that by becoming a ‘white’ man, he will become good too, meaning that other non-white people cannot be ‘good.’ Still, the only

thing that Kim learned in school was religion; he did not know anything else to be able to confront everyday situations.

The author gives more visibility to the Buddhist religion because he portrays the lama. In addition, the character likes explaining stories of the Fâtaka³ to people so that other characters, and readers, can know and learn about this religion and some of its narratives.

Mahbub Ali is another character who is religious, but in a superficial way, which means he used to be more spiritual but then stopped doing the rituals and prayers proper to his religion and started drinking alcohol and getting drunk, which is not well seen from a religious perspective.

Mahbub Ali represents the Muslim religion in the novel. Several references to the Muslim faith are shown during the book, for example, the Koran or the “a big Haj dinner” (Kipling, 2008, chapter X), which is a dinner attended by people who have made or are making the pilgrimage to Mecca.

As has been commented before, the lama likes explaining things or facts related to his religion. He was so excited to be able to explain the story of the painting to the Russian and the French men:

“Hereat, simply as a child engrossed with a new game, the lama threw back his head and began the full-throated invocation of the Doctor of Divinity ere he opens the full doctrine. The strangers leaned on their alpenstocks and listened.” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter XIII).

³ Collection of popular stories about the earlier lives of Buddha.

He was feeling good and realized to explain once more something related to Buddhism without knowing that this event would trigger a series of tragic and unpleasant events for him and his young partner:

“The lama shook his head slowly, and began to fold up the Wheel. The Russian, on his side, saw no more than an unclean old man haggling over a dirty piece of paper. He drew out a handful of rupees, and snatched half-jestingly at the chart, which tore in the lama’s grip. A low murmur of horror went up from the coolies—some of whom were Spiti men and, by their lights, good Buddhists. The lama rose at the insult; his hand went to the heavy iron pencease that is the priest’s weapon and the Babu danced in agony” (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter XIII).

After this scene, instead of worrying about the lama, people who were around them only worried about what would happen to them now that the Russian Agents hurt the lama, who is a holy man. However, the lama says that people will get what they deserve in the future because it is how ‘the Wheel’ works, is to say, life. Even though he says that no one should kill or beat them, he has already thought that he could have hurt them at that moment, which is a bit hypocritical.

5.2.2.4. Women and Misogyny

The novel also presents a misogynist connotation. The female representation is minimum, and most women portrayed are old, widows or prostitutes. They are ridiculed on some occasions, and they do not have much masculine attention.

Said commented in his book that “it is an overwhelmingly male novel, with two wonderfully attractive men at its center [...] (Said, 1993, p.136). He also says that few women are represented compared to all men who appear in the novel, and he suggests that they are degraded and they somehow do not deserve male attention, because he

considers that in the world, “women help things along: they buy you a ticket, they cook, they tend the ill, and ... they molest men” (Said, 1993, p. 137).

For instance, an older woman is presented as selfish, impatient, spiteful, and distrustful of men. She is distrustful because when the kid explains what he is doing with the lama, she thinks he is going with the older man to take advantage of him. Kipling represents her as selfish because she is only interested in what she wants and does not listen to anyone else. In the case of this older woman, she is not ridiculed because some Englishmen tried to tease her, but she has an assertive behavior and defends herself without the help of any other person:

“O mother’, he cried, ‘do they do this in the *zenanas*⁴? Suppose an Englishman came by and saw that thou hadst no nose?’

‘What?’ she shrilled back. ‘Thy own mother has no nose? Why say so, then, on the open road?’ (Cited in Kipling 2008: chapter IV).

Another example of a woman portrayed in a novel appears in chapter VII when Kim visits a woman to dye his hair. The kid talks to her disrespectfully, he insults her suggesting she is a prostitute or a noble lady, and Kim gives orders to her instead of asking her for things: “Not too black, *Naikan*. [...] Make haste and rough-cut my head” (Kipling, 2008, chapter VII).

Rudyard Kipling also represented some women as unsure of themselves and dependent on men: “The father of my daughter’s son is gone away awhile. So we poor women are dumb and useless” (Kipling, 2008, chapter XII). They are only useful to stay at home.

⁴ Part of a dwelling that is reserved for the women of the household.

Even though women are represented as resentful, they still have good temperaments. For example, a woman has affection for the kid, and she welcomes them with open arms. However, she admits that she is still annoyed with the lama for abandoning her: “Had the Holy One come alone, I should have received him otherwise; but with this rogue, who can be too careful?” (Kipling, 2008, chapter XII).

Women are said to be the problem of the plans they have, and as Said said, they molest men: “Most true is it in the Great Game, for it is by means of women that all plans come to ruin” (Kipling, 2008, chapter X), the expression ‘the Great Game’ is used by Kipling to refer to the conflict between Britain and Asia, by using this statement, they are suggesting that women ruin everything that men could plan.

6. Conclusions

Rudyard Kipling is mainly known for his novel *Kim*, in which he represented how people used to live during the period of the British Empire.

Kipling included characters of different cultures who lived in India during those years, and he mentioned and explained some of their customs. However, even though he portrayed the situation in India, he omitted certain events that were happening because, as Said commented in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Kipling considered there was no conflict in the society, and he did not want to show a conflict in his novel.

The author dynamically represented the main characters, that is to say, they evolve during the course of the novel. For example, at the beginning of the novel, Kim is somebody who likes making pranks, but at the end, we can see that he has matured as a person, and he knows that in his youth he had been a child. In the case of the lama, in the beginning, he was a benevolent man, but as the novel passes, he becomes selfish in some specific moments and also more independent because, as Said also agreed, he used to depend on the kid, but at the end, he knows how to be alone.

The identity plays a remarkable role in the novel because it is part of Kim's growth and has helped him to improve individually and to be more conscious about his actions too. As has been commented, racism can be seen on different occasions from part of British characters to Indians, and vice versa. The topic of religion is part of the main topics because a character bases his personality on it, and also the author wanted to mention other religions such as the Muslim. The last topic I analyzed is the aspect of women and misogyny in the novel and the fact that they are represented from the point of view of a man who lived during the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century and, as Said also says, they are not represented by many characters.

To summarize, the novel *Kim* portrays the situation and the conditions in which people from different social classes and ethnic groups lived during the 1900s; and shows a perspective of a white man who has lived in both countries involved in the novel, Great Britain and India.

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