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Introduction

History is colonialism's main tool for dominating its subjects in a complex process of othering and oppressive annexation of the non-European world (Ashcroft et al 355). As the historian Oswald Spengler puts it, Europe in the form of a number of global cities "absorbed into themselves the whole of world history" (Spengler 32). For this reason, a brief look at world history is in place to show the coming of age of the concepts of "Self" and "Other" as we know them today.

Europe's way to hegemony started at the end of the 15th century with Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World. The immediately following Treaty of Tordesillas, dividing the newly discovered territories between today's Portugal and Spain along a demarcation line (the Eastern part belonging to Portugal, and the Western one to Spain) marks the beginning of "a genuine European claim to hegemony" (Stucthtey 1). This is a remarkable event, as European global ambitions were for the first time put on paper, its colonial possessions being regarded as its divine right – politically, economically, culturally – and eventually even as its obligation to a civilizing mission of the world which would find an end in the four centuries later independence of India in 1947 (ibid.).

Indeed, in the period between 1815 and 1914 European expansion reached an unprecedented niveau: from approximately 35% of the world being directly controlled to approximately 85%, with Asia and Africa being the main targets, and Britain and France the biggest empires (Magdoff 893-4).

For all this to be morally possible, European powers needed a justification. Starting the late 18th century, they claimed to be following a civilizing plan in their colonies, which came to be known as "civilizing mission". Out of a feeling of superiority of its societies, Europe believed it was its duty to bring civilization to the rest of the world (Fischer-Tine & Mann 4).

By definition, the civilizing mission presupposes the superiority of one group which needs to be based on more than "brute force" (Alam 1). In the beginning, this superiority was often attributed to race, i.e. biological features,

and until the 19th century this represented the favorite method to justify European supremacy. Generally, this supremacy was associated with “divine choice, genes, climate, institutions, and attributes of the mind” (Alam 1). Alam notes that it has been constructed along two strands of thought. First, European thinkers invested their people with two specific features which, if not exclusive in, prevailed with Europeans: individualism and rationalism. He explains:

[t]he first produces the striving for freedom, courage, heroism, sainthood, ambition, industry, diligence, enterprise and great works of art; the second produces values that support a higher social order, superior governance, bureaucracies, economic growth, cathedrals, harmonies, and rational thought, including philosophy, sciences and mathematics. (2)

Second, European thinkers devoted themselves to dehumanizing, vilifying and brutalizing the Other. Non-Europeans were thus claimed to be missing individuality and reason. Lacking individuality, they in fact lacked all those positive characteristics which are at the base of European culture and politics. In turn, the Other is determined by negatives:

he is a shirker, his wants are limited, he is not driven to excel, his work is sloppy, he is not inventive, he cannot be trusted, he has no self-worth, he does not value freedom, he is cowardly, he lacks generosity, and he will not risk his life for his freedom. (Alam 2)

Lacking the power of reason, the Other is

pedantic in his thought processes and unable to produce metaphysical works; his religion rarely rises above the merely superstitious; he works with simple tools, which he never seeks to improve; he lacks forethought and, therefore, cannot undertake great projects or create complex institutions; he lives under despotisms, which fail to protect property rights, and, therefore, trap his economy at primitive levels of productivity. (Alam 2)

After these two categories – European and non-European – are established, the greater group has three choices: to refrain from any action upon the weaker group, to exterminate it, or to better it. The third one, namely the civilizing mission, was chosen. By the 19th century, the civilizing mission was state of the art in European consciousness and scholarship. An illustrative example are Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels themselves, who in *The Communist Manifesto* describe Asians as “barbarians”, “semi-barbarians”, or “nations of peasants”, while the Europeans are regarded as “civilized” (qtd. in

Alam 4). However, beyond the philanthropic character, the civilizing mission was nothing but a legitimization of colonialism (Fischer-Tine & Mann 4).

The Foucaultian idea that knowledge is directly connected to power is by now state of the art. In this sense, colonialism radically changed existing forms of human knowledge. The 15th and 16th century travels to the newly discovered territories, and later their colonization, reshaped our knowledge about these places, the writings of this period, as well as the ordering of information, being decisive in the production of two categories of people as binarily opposed: the colonizers and the colonized. The concepts of civilization and savagery were constructed on the basis of the implacable difference between black and white, Self and Other, respectively (Loomba 53).

The medieval European “wild man”, as Loomba puts it, who lived in the woods at the margins of civilization, was naked, hairy and thuggish, had no morals but only excessive physicality was the source of a series of “cultural anxieties” (53). Although outside society, this figure was a permanent threat to it. These myths were combined with other images of strangers from Africa, Middle East or India, which were present in Europe even before the beginnings of colonialism, but strongly contributed to the construction of the Other in colonial discourse (ibid. 53-54).

In the construction, maintenance and dissemination of such images, literature plays a crucial role. As Loomba explains, “if [...] language and ‘signs’ are the sites where different ideologies intersect and clash with one another, then literary texts, being complex clusters of languages and signs, can be identified as extremely fecund sites for such ideological interactions” (63). Also, literary texts are even more active in this process, as they are necessarily part of institutions such as the education system, whose role is pivotal in the production of authority on the part of the colonizers, both at home and in the colonies (ibid.). Nevertheless, within colonial societies, literature not only functions as a mirror for hegemonic discourses, but also includes their tensions. It “absorbs, appropriates and inscribes aspects of the ‘other’ culture, creating new genres, ideas and identities in the process” (63).

Most importantly with regard to my study, literary texts are a medium of challenging and subverting dominant ideologies and forms of representation.

As both writers which I will discuss in this paper belong to the scheme of what Edward Said called “Orientalism” (giving the title to his 1978 book), an account of his theory is in place. It is interesting to observe how both Conrad and Kipling are using this discourse, and at the same time manage to step out of it. At the time of Conrad’s and Kipling’s novels, discussions about imperialist ethics were in full bloom. One of the most debated aspects was the status of the colonized indigenous people, and although they were differently defined by sociologists, colonial actors or missionaries, it was broadly agreed, as already mentioned, that the West “held all peoples of other races to be morally, intellectually and socially inferior to white Europeans, and saw their ostensible inferiority as a justification for domination” (McClure 1985:154). Said claims that simultaneously with the formation of colonies of the British and French, there was a unitary image of the colonized peoples being formed. He defines Orientalism as follows: “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’” (1985:2). Thus, the colonized came to be described in literature as well as in scholarly texts as being “inferior, irrational, depraved, childlike” (Sardar & Van Loon 107). This understanding of the colonized was realized on a background of domination and repression, it is therefore a result of power relations. As Said puts it, “Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (1985:3), a body of knowledge which deals with the Orient by describing it, by forming authoritarian views about it, by teaching it, by governing it. Above all, Orientalism is a tool for creating a clear distinction between Self and Other. First, the constructed Orient helped Europe define itself as its counterpart image, and by establishing itself in opposition to the Orient, European culture developed a stronger sense of identity. However, all these considerations show more about the Western culture’s fantasies than about the true peoples and cultures of the East (1985: 2-3). In this sense, Conrad and Kipling are both creators of knowledge about the colonized, but in *Heart of Darkness* and *Kim*, respectively, they both realize the arbitrariness of the above Orientalist

distinctions and work towards their dissolution for drawing a different picture of the colonized.

Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling are two authors who reproduced the experience of imperialism as the primary topic of their work with no equal. Although they differ in writing styles, “they brought to a basically insular and provincial British audience the color, glamour, and romance of the British overseas enterprise” (Said 1994: 160). However, they are both still highly controversial for critics, who hesitate to include them in the cannon and “[domesticate them] along with peers like Dickens and Hardy” (McClure 1985:154). In this paper, I will argue that in their novels *Heart of Darkness* and *Kim*, Conrad and Kipling overcome the prejudices of their time in their portrayal of the colonized Other. While I acknowledge that, in both novels, the imperial framework still stands, I will point to the aspects which try to push this framework’s limits to the extreme, the two writers almost being able to break with the usual binary opposition Self vs. Other by blurring the concepts’ boundaries. In my analysis, I am not laying claim that the two authors are enlightened in a modern sense, but they are displaying a certain sympathy towards their novels’ Others, a sympathy which works to build structural analogies between the reader and these characters, ultimately leading to their identification. Therefore, the two authors’ Others are Others to a certain extent, but their Self is being brought into the forefront. Both writers are ambivalent in their portrayal of the colonized, but I think if one wants to overcome existing, fixed images of peoples, ambivalence is a start. At least we are arriving to the point where one starts to doubt the fixity of colonial roles. In discussing Conrad’s and Kipling’s positions towards the colonial Other, I will necessarily also tackle their attitudes towards imperialism in these two novels. Joseph Conrad goes so far as to imagine a world without colonialism at times, while Kipling, a convinced imperialist, portrays equality among people and interracial harmony, even if under the umbrella of the British empire.

The two novels will be discussed separately. With both, I will look at the way colonial stereotypes are both confirmed and subverted; at the way the authors play with the concepts of Self and Other, Conrad using Marlow’s

strain of consciousness about his discoveries of the Africans' humanity, and Kipling using his main character as hybrid; at the authors' attitudes towards imperialism and racism as they are displayed in the novels and other related works; at the language employed and what it says about the representation of the Other; and finally, with Kipling, I will analyze a first manuscript of *Kim* to show how he revised it specifically to make it more "race-neutral". Eventually, my aim is to show that both novels represent the beginning of a different way of thinking about the world order at the turn of the century.

1. The "Other" in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

1.1 Joseph Conrad: life in empire

Like Kipling, Joseph Conrad grew up surrounded by the darkneses of imperialism. Not only in Eastern Europe, but around the world, he witnessed the effects of imperial forces and observed the psychology of empire in people. Through his experiences, Conrad cultivated his own vision of imperialism, which he ultimately embodied in his fiction. A look at his life will shed light on the development and implementation of this vision (McClure 1981:82).

Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski was born in 1857 as a native in the colonized Ukraine (part of the Russian empire at the time of his birth, but under Polish administration for four hundred years until 1793). His parents were part of the Polish nationalist movement and thus participated in a series of rebellions for independence from Russia. His father organized a rebellion in 1861 in Warsaw, but was arrested and sent to prison for seven months, after which he and his wife were tried and sent to exile in another part of Russia, together with their son. Because of the diseases and fatalities of exile, Conrad's parents died soon after, Conrad becoming an orphan with eleven (ibid. 83).

Like Kipling, then, Conrad grew up in exile and was orphaned at a young age. However, unlike Kipling, who directly experienced the animosity of strangers starting with the age of five, Conrad still had his parents and

mentors to protect him from the evils of the contemporary society. Kipling, McClure argues, had to

develop a pattern of deception and ruthless aggression to deal with his immediate environment, [...] to suppress tremendous fears and hatreds, [to store] them up to be released later in the form of aggression [...], to avoid introspection and expression. (84-85)

On the other hand, Conrad's family shared these feelings instead of suppressing them. He might have acquired "the doubts and desires that dispose men towards authoritarianism, but not the self-blindness and rage" (ibid. 85). This, in McClure's opinion, made him a man with a vision much deeper and wider than Kipling's.

Further, even though both writers suffered because of imperialism, Kipling was educated to treat this suffering as a necessity for the maintenance of security and justice in society, while Conrad conceived this suffering as an effect of an unfair and arbitrary world order. Conrad's was blamed on the invasion of a foreign power in an integral society; Kipling's was defined in terms of inherent human immorality and the urge of ruling over savages (ibid.).

At the age of sixteen, Conrad left Poland for the sea, and his experiences of imperialism went on for the next two decades. In a period which we now call the heyday of imperialist expansion, he travelled to all the important areas of conquest (Latin America, Far East, Africa), "and everywhere, up rivers in Borneo and the Congo, at forgotten settlements in the Caribbean, and around hotel tables in numerous imperial cities, he exchanged goods and tales with scores of imperial adventurers" (ibid. 88). A range of critics have demonstrated that Conrad's characters and settings are largely based on the people and places he encountered in his journeys (cf. Baines 1960; Gordan 1940; Sherry 1966;1971), having plenty of time to analyse the psychologies connected to imperialism. In this sense, and because of being a member of a colonized group, Conrad offers in his fiction a perspective which was never achieved by contemporary English writers, not even by Kipling who, as we will see later in this paper, vigorously tried: "a view from the other side of the compound wall" (McClure 1981:92).

Burke calls Conrad's art a "disintegrating" one in that "it converts each simplicity into a complexity", "ruins the possibility of ready hierarchies" and therefore "works corrosively upon [...] expansionist hierarchies" (qtd. in McClure 1985:154). Also, in his work, Conrad constantly scrutinizes the two basic assumptions of Western racism: first, the idea that certain characteristic features can be assigned to a whole population, and second, that there exists a hierarchy of races, with the white race at the highest end (ibid.). McClure explains:

In novel after novel Conrad breaks down the crude dichotomies (white/black, civilized/savage, benevolent/bloodthirsty, mature/childish, hardworking/lazy) of racist discourses, ruins the ready racial hierarchies they underwrite, and so undermines the expansionistic certainties of imperialism. (ibid. 155)

For example, in the preface to his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (1895), Conrad emphasizes that Westerners have a wrong picture of the natives in their colonies, that their "verdict of contemptuous dislike" for them "has nothing to do with justice" (ix-x). In the light of these considerations, in what follows I will show that *Heart of Darkness* is the epitome of Conrad's disintegrating art, one in which Western racism is constantly questioned and colonial injustices divulged. But before that, a few words on the book are in place.

Heart of Darkness was written in 1899, and is mainly based on Conrad's four-month stay in Belgian Congo. Having been active in the British navy for sixteen years, it was his childhood dream to go to Africa and he made it happen in 1890 when he travelled to Congo as the commander of a steamboat. The novel is a record of his experiences there, which in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are described as having been "traumatic" for him ("[h]e suffered psychological, spiritual, even metaphysical shock in the Congo"), Conrad himself declaring that "before the Congo [he] was a mere animal" (qtd. in *Encyclopedia Britannica*). The novella is a statement about the crude realities of imperialism, capturing Conrad's experiences through the character of Kurtz and especially through that of Marlow, to draw a picture of what it was like for the natives to live under the rule of King Leopold II. Conrad's voice is Marlow, a British sailor who tells the story of his journey to the Congo to his fellow seamen. Marlow's narrative is rather blurred, omitting

factual details, but it appears that it was Conrad's intention to keep a certain mystery about the story. Fact is that the meaning of the novel is open for debate, the task of making sense of it remaining on the part of the reader (Watts 45-48). As I will attempt to demonstrate in this chapter, the novel is an "attempt of a liberal enlightened mind to understand what is beyond its comprehension" (Harris 89).

1.2 Representations of the "Other" in *Heart of Darkness*

1.2.1 Beyond mere words: stereotypes under the magnifying glass

Conrad has been severely attacked by critics, especially by Chinua Achebe, for his portrayal of Africans in *Heart of Darkness*. Indeed, in describing the natives, Marlow mainly uses vocabulary which we would nowadays regard as derogatory. Africans are often labelled as "savages", "niggers", or "rudimentary souls", while their nature is described as "grotesque", "ugly", "fiendish", "satanic" or "horrid". Also, the novel is full of comparisons of Africans to animals: ants, hyenas, horses, bees (Hawkins 2006:366). The representation of Africans can therefore barely be praised. However, if one looks at it into more detail, it soon becomes clear that there is much more to it than these apparent negative aspects. The Other of *Heart of Darkness* is best captured in the following passage of the book:

We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and excessive toil. But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of these ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories.

The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there — there you

could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were, — No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you — you so remote from the night of first ages — could comprehend. (*HoD*, 43-4)

This is, as Achebe puts it, Conrad's "Africa in the mass" (339). While the portrayal of Africans and their land is in conformity with the late 19th century Western philosophy about the Other i.e. the stereotype of the "savage", "wild", "primitive", "uncivilized" Other, on a closer look, one can notice that the underlying purpose of these representations is to scrutinize the mundane opposition between Self and Other, Civilized and Savage, Superior and Inferior, and to bring the arbitrariness of this otherness into the foreground (Fothergill 449). In the above passage, we are given otherness at its best, both threatening and fascinating, through an amalgamation of scenery and characters, which dismantles the borders between, as Fothergill puts it, "'primitive' and natural world" (450). The African human body is described as a bundle of limbs, lacking individuality, while African speech is nothing more than "incomprehensible frenzy". The native is here incorporated into the "natural", a place without history, to which human-like features are attached: the ability to look, and the possibility of having indeterminable purposes in a situation when the "historical, social human being is all but erased" (Fothergill 450). The "pre-historic" human transcends the boundaries between fixed categories like human/inhuman/animal, sane/insane in a manner which both appals and delights Marlow. Further, the thought of their humanity is a thought which blatantly deranges both Marlow's and Conrad's audiences, whose superiority is called into question. The fear that underneath European civilized comportment there lye fervent, aggressive urges was something too recent at the time to be easily laid off. So in order to thematize it, Conrad had to use a stereotypical image of the African as their anxiety objectified. As Fothergill concludes, "radical critique and a racist reactionary force combine

in this stereotypical representation of the African Other, which simultaneously confirms while undercutting the European cultural myth of the Black as a contemporary ancestor” (451).

A further example of a stereotypical representation of the Other which turns out to be employed for the purpose of subverting the stereotype is Marlow’s description of the chain gang:

A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. [...] these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from over the sea. (*HoD*, 18)

Here, Conrad plays upon the politics of linguistic representation (Fothergill 453). Formulations like “could not be called enemies”, “were called criminals” foreground the action of calling itself, and therefore point to the entity which has the power to “call”. Name calling in power relations also gives one the possibility to justify their behavior accordingly. Enemies do not deserve punishment by nature; criminals do. Schnauder interprets this as “the linguistic hypocrisy of the colonialists [...] implying that there is some sort of justice involved in the proceedings” and regards it as ironic (214). In the end, it all goes down to who looks or who represents (*ibid.*). Marlow illustrates this claim when, as he walks close to the chain gang, he finds himself being gazed at:

They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Behind this raw matter one of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work, strolled despondently, carrying a rifle by its middle. He had a uniform jacket with one button off, and seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white, rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings.

Instead of going up, I turned and descended to the left. My idea was to let that chain-gang get out of sight before I climbed the hill. (*HoD*, 18-9)

Here, while narrating, Marlow tries to bring in the perspective of the Other. True, he is not able to fully walk in the natives' shoes, and by them not giving him a glance, Marlow retains his position of master towards them. But the smirk of the African guard, and the affirmation that all white men look the same, both work towards subverting Western generalizations of the Black Other. When he becomes aware of his role as partner in crime to the horrors he sees, Marlow needs to move away from the sphere of the chain-gang. While still depicting a way of looking at the Other, Conrad manages to break the stereotype in the moment in which he places Marlow in the position of being looked at. Here, realizing his deeds, he is embarrassed, and no longer wants to be under the magnifying glass. Moving away, he ends up in the grove, where he only receives more proof of the outcomes of European good intentions: dying members of the chain-gang. What Conrad is "radically, consciously, showing us [is that] the Other has come to close for comfort" (Fothergill 454).

Another striking example of deviation from colonial stereotypes is to be found in the following passage:

I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity. Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear – or some kind of primitive honour? No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is; and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. (*HoD*, 51)

What Marlow is suggesting here is that, contrary to the most typical stereotype of the Other that they cannot restrain themselves, the Africans are admirable in doing it. Also, it seems that for example, while Africans have the capacity of restraint, the pilgrims' seems to be limited, Kurtz is lacking it completely, and even Marlow had a hard time "resist[ing] the lure of the wilderness" (Schnauder 233). As Schnauder asserts, this is even more extraordinary if we think that in Conrad's other two works, *Lord Jim* and "Falk", we have examples of Europeans who cannot withhold cannibalism when confronted with starvation. Schnauder is sure that "[g]iven these

analogies, Marlow does not just undermine the opposition savage/civilized but reverses it” (ibid.).

A similar example has to do with the Congolese’s peacefulness. Reminiscing the attack on the steamboat, Marlow recounts:

What we afterwards alluded to as an attack was really an attempt to repulse. The action was very far from being aggressive – it was not even defensive, in the usual sense: it was undertaken under the stress of desperation, and in its essence was purely protective. (*HoD*, 44)

What Marlow is saying is that, as opposed to the pilgrims, the Africans seem to only fight when they do so for the purposes of protecting, and in no way out of pleasure for “pure aggression”; the African’s reaction to invasion is therefore “a legitimate and restrained” one (McClure 1981:138). As McClure asserts, earlier in the story Marlow notes about himself that he “had also to resist and to attack sometimes – that’s only one way of resisting” (*HoD*, 16). Therefore, he not only points to the fact that here Africans are the better ones, but also equals his violence to their violence and does so much as justify theirs, in trying to understand it (ibid.).

1.2.2 The play of Self and Other: contiguity and contingency

Marlow, as an European representative, has a classical relationship to the Other, namely most of the time he watches it from a distance, without real contact or engagement with it. Reciprocity is missing, a fact resulting in seeing the Other as an enigma: mystic, horrifying but fascinating, attractive and disgusting. In this regard, Armstrong writes:

What all of these emotions share is the one-sidedness of their response to alterity, an absence of to-and-fro engagement with it. This lack of reciprocity manifests itself as curiosity, desire, fear, wonder, loathing, or frustration – all one-way attitudes which do not reduce the Other’s distance but only confirm and compound its status as alien, whether marvelous or terrible. (431)

However, he is aware of his status, as he actually criticizes such superficial approaches to alterity. Marlow’s interpretation of the African humanity is a crucial passage in understanding his attitudes towards otherness. He realizes the similarities between himself and the Other, but fails to create the

reciprocity which would enable him a better understanding by attaching this similarity to the Self's past. However, it is because he notices this resemblance that his reaction is a defensive one. As long as the Other bears some resemblance to the Self, the former's differences are indeed a threat to the Self. Armstrong explains: "Marlow feels shame because an unexpected similarity undermines his sense of self, and his resulting anxiety and embarrassment prevent him from regarding a surprising kinship as a sign of equal dignity" (435). While his reaction is only normal for his time, it is surprising that he does acknowledge this similarity, a fact which was rather rare in Conrad's time.

Further, Marlow in fact recognizes a certain equality in the world of the Other by tracking down its power to alienate his own world's philosophies. As JanMohamed claims, "genuine and thorough comprehension of Otherness is possible only if the self can somehow negate or at least severely bracket the values, assumptions, and ideology of his culture" (65). Being in the Other's land, Marlow realizes how arbitrary and how unnatural his conventions are, and this is crucial when one attempts to understand another culture: that their own is a matter of contingency and circumstance, and not deterministically superior. Thus, even if the Africans seem peculiar at first, resembling "grotesque masks", Marlow acknowledges that "they were a great comfort to look at", as "they wanted no excuse for being there" (*HoD*, 16). In Armstrong's words, "[t]heir naturalness exposes the artificiality of European practices which cannot be universally valid if transplantation robs them of authority" (435).

A similar defamiliarization of the Self's culture occurs when Marlow is picturing the way in which the cannibal-crew sees the white passengers: "just then I perceived – in a new light, as it were, how unwholesome the pilgrims looked, and I hoped, yes I positively hoped, that my aspect was not so – what shall I say? – so – unappetizing" (*HoD*, 51). Here again there is a reversal of roles, and suddenly perspectives are switched. The complacent European superiority is challenged, and new possibilities of awareness arise (Armstrong 436).

After recognizing the unnaturalness of one's culture's practices, it becomes obvious that the Other's culture ones are no less unnatural, and this in turn means that all worlds are equal, as they are all contingent, which is condition enough for reciprocity. Marlow's revelations in Africa are "a tonic blow to the pride of Europeans whose sense of natural privilege he thinks is a lie and a sham" (Armstrong 436). This is enough innovation for me. As Armstrong puts it, this allows Marlow to "approach others across cultural barriers with a sympathy and imagination remarkable for his time" (437). In another illustrative passage Marlow tells us: "I looked at them as you would look on any human being with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the text of an inexorable physical necessity" (*HoD*, 51). Here again, Africans are explicitly equated with any other human being, having impulses, motives, capacities and weaknesses.

1.2.3 The West-South dialogue: attempts at reciprocity

An interesting example of Marlow's descriptions of the natives is the figure of the fireman. He is described as follows:

He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed; and what he knew was this – that should the water in that transparent thing disappear, the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry through the greatness of his thirst, and take a terrible vengeance. (*HoD*, 45)

According to Armstrong, we sense here a strange mixture of admiration, respect and ridicule in Marlow's tone (437). The fireman is, as it is further claimed, an embodiment of the "anomalies" which appear when cultures combine. Although Armstrong's terminology is too rough for me, his following point is a valuable one. In this encounter of East and West, it is difficult to pin down which is weirder: the witchcraft of the boiler or the superstitious nature of the African, which in turn are successful in "negotiating his responsibilities" (438). Interesting facts push into the foreground here: Westerners use faith as an incentive for work, a fact which decreases their claims to rationality, and superstition is efficient in "mastering the world" (*ibid.*). Armstrong sums up:

“The figure of the fireman is a hybrid, heteroglot innovation which creates new possibilities of being not contained in either culture alone but made available as an unexpected consequence of their resources mixing and combining” (ibid.). Still, Armstrong resents Conrad for the fact that the irony is still in Marlow’s hands, and the fireman himself does not get the chance to laugh at the joke himself in a “mutual sense of cultural absurdity” (438), which is quite a lot to ask from a late 19th century writer. Later, however, the critic acknowledges that his kind of dialogue is impossible because Marlow is, let us not forget, the cannibal’s master and an agent of imperialism. Taking into consideration his political position, Marlow is still notably close to a cross-cultural dialogue. Armstrong explains: “Although he occupies a position of authority, his alienation from the local powers and his expectation that his days in Africa are numbered give him an ambiguous position as both an insider and an outsider to the colonial structure” (439). Marlow does then indeed display a certain level of openness to otherness.

With his African helmsman Marlow admits to have developed a “kind of partnership”, which he describes:

He steered for me – I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created, of which I only became aware when it was suddenly broken. And the intimate profundity of that look he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory – like a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment. (*HoD*, 62)

First, it is notable that, in this quote, there is no “sense [...] that Marlow regards the African as his inferior”, in human terms (Schnauder 232). Second, because of the nature of their professional boss-subordinate relationship, Marlow was hindered in detecting earlier that the African is a human being just like him, worthy of mutual appreciation and concern, and does so only when it was too late for dialogue. The scene is indeed dialogical to the extent that, once again, we notice a reversal of roles: the African gazes back at Marlow, if only just short, as the gaze is ended by his death. However, the possibility of reciprocity is opened (Armstrong 439).

1.2.4 African sign systems - not such an incomprehensible frenzy

We need to keep in mind, however, that for the expected reciprocity to be possible, not only political action is required, which should create appropriate circumstances for equality, but also, for actual dialogue to take place, a common language is in place, or, as Armstrong rightly argues, “at least respect for each other’s capacities as language-users” (440). Although on a first glimpse Marlow seems to be denying African’s linguistic capacity (e.g. their speech as “strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language [...] like the responses of some satanic litany” (*HoD*, 83-4), if one looks closer, it becomes obvious that he actually assigns their sign system the same virtues as European ones: “a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild – and perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country” (*HoD*, 23). When he hears them screaming on the shore, Marlow immediately assigns meaning to their cries: “an irresistible impression of sorrow, [...] unrestrained grief, [...] a great human passion let loose” (*HoD*, 53). Obviously, Marlow suggests that there sounds are meaning-carriers, and he would be able to understand them if he only knew their language, like any other one. In another instance, Marlow tries to scare the Africans away with a whistle, assuming that they will understand the meaning of the whistle i.e. danger, so common ground is assumed. The possibility of dialogue is again opened here, even if not fulfilled. I strongly agree with Armstrong, whose conclusion deserves ad litteram quoting: “Although the conditions of imperialistic domination of Africa might have made reciprocity between Europeans and Africans inconceivable, this novella is remarkable for its time (and perhaps for ours) because it makes such dialogue *thinkable*” (440f., my emphasis).

The example of the drumming is a highly complex one. By hinting at the fact that Africans have their own solid culture, Conrad is defying his audience’s conviction that they have not only an obligation but also a divine right to occupy and govern other peoples. This derives from Marlow’s realization in the Congo that there are no predetermined moral and intellectual differences between colonizer and colonized, which is remarkable

as this fact is indeed the very justification for colonialism (Caminero-Santangelo 93). Further, as Marlow notices a native wearing a “bit of white worsted” around his neck, he hints at the idea that Africans are able to manipulate the meaning of European cloth to fit their own symbolic framework. He wonders: “Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge – an ornament – a charm – a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it?” (*HoD*, 20). Homi Bhabha offers a highly interesting reading of this fact. He claims that this scene is an example of his concept of the hybrid which uses Western symbols in different ways than they are expected to be used in the West, following the destabilization of the symbol’s meaning and the power of the colonizer over its meaning. He states: “Marlow interrogates the odd, inappropriate, ‘colonial’ transformation of a textile into an uncertain textual sign, possibly a fetish” (105). However, as Caminero-Santangelo admits, Marlow does not bring home the impact of the hybrid object, but at least he is able to see the potential of Africans to transform the symbolic meaning of Western objects (94). This moment is also one of those in which Marlow tries to engage in a dialogue with the Other, even if a very restricted, non-verbal one. A better example of such a moment is Marlow’s description of the African guard’s reaction to him: “seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his weapon on to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured” (*HoD*, 18). Again, one can easily notice that Marlow is attempting to understand the guard’s hesitations, speculating that white men appear to Africans very alike. He is actually imagining how it is to look at a white person when one is not white (Schnauder 217). This is a remarkable insight.

Facing the grove of death, Marlow’s reaction is truly striking. After he understands what is going on, his instinct is one of compassion:

Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which dies out slowly. [...] I found nothing else to do but to offer him one of my good Swede’s ships’s biscuits I had in my pocket. The fingers

closed slowly on it and held – there was no other movement and no other glance. (*HoD*, 20)

As Schnauder assesses, this gesture is one of brotherliness and pity, separating Marlow from all the other whites in the story who are not able to reach out to the Other because of their sense of superiority. Schnauder analyses this act from a psychological perspective and concludes that “in such moments [of compassion] the barrier between the ego and the non-ego is broken down and we share the sufferings of a fellow human being in a way in which we normally only feel our suffering” (216). It seems that Marlow is empathic in a very sincere way, one that is not “patronizing or sentimental” (*ibid.*).

1.2.5 Constraints of the era: the unbreakable colonial texture

It is also fair to acknowledge at this point that, even if Marlow turns out to be admirably liberal towards the Africans, he does stick to colonial notions of alterity, which serve as tools for the legitimization of colonialism, and are also a crucial feature of his “authoritative identity” (Caminero-Santangelo 94). Marlow often states that he does not understand the natives and their demeanors, and this inability to understand is pictured as deriving from the natives’ “primal condition” (*ibid.*). They are “prehistoric” and come “from the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone” (37), and this is what hinders Marlow’s comprehension. Also, when he acknowledges the Africans’ humanity, it appears to be only because they share with all humans “a lowest common denominator” (Caminero-Santangelo 94), namely their beastly, visceral nature. Therefore, indeed despite of his qualms, Marlow sticks to colonial conceptions of otherness. But, as Caminero-Santangelo claims, this is a way for him to preserve his authoritative colonial identity. In the novel, he is indeed a part of the authorities, and being so, he never fully engages in interaction with the Africans outside these predetermined positions of master and servant. He is most of the time an observer of natives, and maintains the power to describe them and to attribute meaning to their conduct, as the classical colonizer does. Caminero-Santangelo explains:

In this construction of African and European identities, Africa becomes the embodiment of that within the European self which must be contained in order for that self both to remain European – once one has left the confines of Europe – and to do the work of “civilizing” which legitimates colonial authority. (95)

In my opinion, he does so in order to keep a colonial framework upright, but, as I argued above, he tries to subtly break with it every time he gets the chance. In fact, as Hansson beautifully puts it, *Heart of Darkness*

seems to present the characteristic postcolonial story of ‘the Other’ and ‘the periphery’ told from within the sanctuary of the dominant colonizing ideology of the West [...] At the same time, though, all its ambiguities and inconsistencies work in another direction. It soon becomes clear [...] that *Heart of Darkness* is not just the ordinary story of ‘us’ and ‘them’. (4)

I could not agree more. While Conrad writes in the context at hand, it is remarkable how he manages in 1899 to blur the boundaries between Self and Other, and find a way to almost clash them.

Also, Conrad manages to challenge the imperial idea that colonizers already know their colonized, and they are the ones who are entitled to represent them. No matter how hard Marlow tries to understand Africa, it is still difficult to “adopt an allegedly neutral position of viewing the Other ‘just as it is’” (Fothergill 454). But still, of great importance is the fact that at least he raises awareness that the Other is not, as the colonists want it to be, “the negative image of ourselves” (ibid.).

1.3 Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*

1.3.1 Historical considerations

Schnauder insists that, even if in the novel there are no explicit ties to its historical background, we need to read it as belonging to a particular historical context. Indeed, when it was first published, *Heart of Darkness* was part of a canvass to uncover King Leopold II’s unorthodox exploitation of the Congo. Schnauder explains: “*Heart of Darkness* was understood to address a specific contemporary political situation and Marlow’s stance towards

imperialist excesses was perceived to be unambiguously critical” (181). The Congo in the novel is Leopold II’s privately owned Congo Free State. In the scramble for Africa, the Belgian king was long interested in the region as a colony. In 1876 he organized a geographical conference on Central Africa in Brussels with the purpose of bringing civilization to the region. He took this opportunity to establish the International Association for the Exploration and Civilizing of Africa, which reminds us of Kurtz’s “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs” (83 in the book). Henry Morton Stanley became the King’s representative in the Congo, establishing at his command stations on the river and sealing agreements with the native leaders with the purpose of allocating African territory and labor force in the King’s name. Leopold subsequently manipulated his way in being recognized internationally as ruler of Congo. At the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) all the other European powers accorded Leopold personal ownership and exclusive sovereignty over the new Congo Free State in exchange for his keeping it as neutral, open to trade, and free of slavery (Schnauder 182). Although Leopold’s policies were explicitly humanitarian, the colony soon turned into a site for labor exploitation. The main products extracted along the river were ivory and rubber. Armed guards were hired to recruit workers for the plantations, and the ones who withstand were whipped or mutilated (Khapoya 116). The stations soon became “prisons and collecting points [...] that the natives were forced to gather in the jungle while their wives and families were held hostage” (Schnauder 183). As Freund puts it, “[n]owhere in Africa was the regime of force so raw and dramatic as in the Congo Free State of Leopold II. King though he was, Leopold ran the Free state like a capitalist of the robber-baron era” (115-6), while Fothergill sees the Congo as being “founded on the blood of a vast force of slave labour” (qtd. in Schnauder 183). Fact is that the indigenous population of the Congo was halved, the deaths ranging from three to six million (cf. de Blij 340, Schnauder 183). When Conrad took his voyage to Africa, there was no information about such atrocities available, and it was only about ten years later In 1903 that Roger Casement wrote an official report for the British which constituted proof for the slavery and atrocities in the Congo. In fact, Casement met Conrad in Africa,

read his book and was in touch with him with regard to his report. In a letter to Casement, Conrad encouraged him to “make any use [he] like[s] of what [Conrad] writes to [him]” (qtd. in Schnauder 183). However, Conrad’s critique is not solely dedicated to the Belgian King and his kingdom, but to imperialism in general. Schnauder points out that “[i]t is not for nothing that in the course of his journey Marlow notices the direct or indirect involvement of European nations” – Fresleven is Danish, Marlow’s ship is French, the captain of the steamer is Swedish, Kurtz is English and the Harlequin is Russian (Schnauder 186).

1.3.2 Conrad’s ambivalence

Heart of Darkness has triggered very different interpretations in terms of its position towards imperialism across time. Robert F. Lee is among the only critics which saw the novel as pro-imperialist. He claims: “One of the major directions of Conrad’s colonial fiction is a recognition of and an accord with the conception of Anglo-Saxon superiority in administering the lives of the Oriental and other dependent peoples” (10). However, this is, as we will see, a rather absurd, oversimplified interpretation. Even so, Chinua Achebe, one of the fiercest critics of the novel, seems to be to a certain extent in line with this argument, as he calls Conrad “a bloody racist” (343) as his novel “projects an image of Africa as ‘the other world’, the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization” (338). Most critics claim that the novel is anti-imperialist, but they often disagree in terms of point of view (Conrad/ Marlow), forms of imperialism, and on the extent to which it was even possible for anybody to write an anti-imperialist text at that time. Caminero-Santangelo claims that the novel is far from providing a clear alternative to the imperial world order, and explains that

[p]roduced by a European author at a time when European imperial powers controlled most of Africa and colonial assumptions about Africa were widely held, Conrad’s novel cannot envision a legitimate alternative way of representing and organizing the world that would completely undermine the categories and definitions of colonial discourse. (91)

Therefore, even if the novel is indeed “progressive” in this respect, it maintains a certain ambivalence, as it cannot fully reject imperialism (Caminero-Santangelo 91).

Caminero-Santangelo evaluates Conrad’s perspective on colonialism as “highly critical and insightful for the time” (92), while Singh describes the book as “one of the most powerful indictments of colonialism ever written (268). Although Marlow is most of the time overtly imperialistic, the skepticism Conrad assigns him is the author’s most powerful instrument of his critique (Caminero-Santangelo 92).

1.3.3 Efficiency and “the idea”: Belgian imperialism

At the beginning of the novel, comparing British imperialism with the one of the Romans, Marlow states:

What saves us [the British] is *efficiency* – the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps [the Romans] were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. [...] The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is *the idea* only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before and offer sacrifice to. (*HoD* 7, emphasis added).

It seems then that, as Hawkins claims, Conrad bases his critique of imperialism on two concepts: efficiency and the “idea”. This is not because he believed in them, but he chose them because they represented the criteria by which Belgian imperialistic practices in the Congo were judged by the British, they were therefore suitable in appealing to his audience. Efficiency presumably refers to the concept of social Darwinism which justified imperialism in that it is because of “this quality of social efficiency that nations and peoples are being continually [...] pitted against each other in the complex rivalry of life” (Kidd 1894 qtd. in Hawkins 1979:288). The “idea”

refers to the civilizing mission i.e. the practice of improving the natives of the occupied lands (ibid.).

It is important to note at this point that Congo as a colony was a special case. While all the other colonies were supported by the mother land in the development of systems of administration, transport and communication, Congo did not have these resources as it belonged not to a mother country, but to a single man. Leopold II is notorious for the way he ruled Congo as his own kingdom, Conrad describing his rule as “the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience” (1926: 17). Therefore, Hawkins claims that Conrad’s critique of imperialism mainly concerns Belgium i.e. Leopold II. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence suggesting certain *inefficiency* on Leopold’s part. The most illustrative examples are the construction of the railway system and the shortcomings of the currency system (Hawkins 1979:290).

Upon arrival at the first station, Marlow notices a deserted railway truck lying upside down, a boiler rolling around on the ground, rusty rails and similar pieces of “decaying machinery” (Hawkins 1979:290). Marlow observes: “They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way or anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on” (*HoD*, 18). Later he describes the workings of imperialism on that land as radiating “a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly” the insidiousness of which he would only “find out several months later and a thousand miles later”(19). Indeed, the railway construction was heavily flawed. Suffice it to say that initially, the construction was estimated to be ready in four years and cost twenty-five million francs, and it was in fact done in eight years costing sixty million francs. A telling fact is that the railway line had to cross the Palaballa Mountain (525 meters high), as the northern part was blocked by a river, and the southern one was the border with Portuguese Angola (a line arbitrarily drawn by the powers sitting in Berlin five years earlier). Thus, the construction indeed needed plenty of “objectless blasting” (Hawkins 1979: 291).

Unlike other colonies, Congo lacked a stable standard currency, as Leopold was not interested in creating a market there, but only in the

inhabitants' labor exploitation. Thus, at that time there were about seven different currencies in the Congo, including the odd brass wires (eighteen to fifty-two centimeters). Conrad noticed this, and has Marlow describing the payment of the workers as follows: "every week three pieces of brass wire, each about nine inches long, and the theory was they were to buy their provisions with that currency in river-side villages. You can see how that worked" (*HoD*, 50). Even if a preposterous detail, it constitutes an important example of inefficiency (Hawkins 1979: 291-2).

With regard to the idea, Conrad criticizes Leopold mainly for his use of forced labor in the Congo, which is in direct opposition with the well-being of the residents. In 1880, a railway militia was indeed established to sequester workers from the surroundings, which was only a preview to the actual introduction of a Force Publique, which ultimately imposed forced labor in the whole country (Hawkins 1979:272). Indeed, in the story, Marlow observes the chain-gang of Africans are supervised by a guard, while later, he notices that the residents were going underground to evade recruitment. Marlow is disgusted by these images, and when he notices a random hole in the ground, he utters: "It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do" (*HoD*, 19), his tone obviously showing irony and disgust.

With this assessment of imperialism along criteria like efficiency and the "idea" (proimperialist ones indeed, but broadly accepted), Conrad appealed to his audience in blaming Leopold II without referring to British imperialism, as forced labour and a lack of currency were not the case in British colonies. Whether he indeed opposed imperialism generally is a more complicated matter to decide on, since, as Hawkins explains, Conrad expressed different opinions at various times about distinct colonies (1979:293).

1.3.4 Imperialism as desolator of culture

However, it is possible to generalize that Conrad was against imperialism generally, one reason being that conquest of foreign lands

ultimately results in a violation of their cultures. We need to be reminded all over again that in that time, anti-imperialist positions were rather rare, and, as already mentioned, Conrad had also a personal reason to have one: he was also part of a “conquered people” and was therefore (time appropriately) sympathetic to the Africans. Still, his “objection to imperialism on the grounds that it disrupted indigenous cultures was unusual in an era that failed to see the worth of those cultures” (Hawkins 1979:294). Although having been criticized for giving a superficial portrayal of Africa, the novel delivers a generally respectful attitude towards African life. When talking about them, he uses derogatory terms like “niggers” and “savages” but, as I have argued above, this is only because this was common parlance in his time. Otherwise, he sees their “pure, uncomplicated savagery” as “a positive relief, being something that has a right to exist – obviously – in the sunshine” (*HoD*, 73). He sees the humanity in them and the similarity of their language to the European one, as well as tries to help them when he operates the whistle to warn them about the pilgrims. Also, he thinks much of the cannibals on board (“they were men one could work with”, *HoD*, 47) and admires their ability to help themselves not eat the whites on the steamer, a feature that highlights their moral conduct. Similarly, he sees in the Africans “a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement”. As Hawkins elsewhere argues, in a work which questions moral behavior, the Africans seems to be “one of the few signs of hope” (2006:372). As opposed to the Europeans, they are “true” and “wanted no excuse for being there”. When Marlow says of his fireman that “to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind legs” (*HoD*, 37), he does not appear to be condemning the Africans for their barbarism, but rather the imperialists who instructed them. As Hawkins rightly observes, when Marlow calls the guard “one of the reclaimed” (*HoD*, 16) and the fireman “an improved specimen” for which the “training had done” (*HoD*, 37), “his emphasis is on the failure and subversiveness of the civilizing mission that presumed Africans had to be redeems” (Hawkins 1979:296). Thus, Conrad feels that rather than improving the people of the occupied territories, colonialism is an attack on their nature and culture.

In line with this argument is also Janice Ho, who claims that Conrad criticizes imperialism not only on the basis of moral behavior, but also on grounds of geographical exploration, or, as she puts it, not only because “it was sheer robbery, but also because it led to the eradication of the world’s unknown spaces” (4). European exploration and expansion ever since the 15th century led to a view of the world as tremendously huge, but by the end of the 19th century, this changed radically: because of technological advances in cartography, transportation and telecommunication, the world was felt to be shrinking. Ho suggests that one should read Conrad against this background, as his novels “reveal a tension in the way they seek to evade but also unavoidably register the realities of a shrinking world” (2). The following passage shows Conrad’s understanding of this phenomenon:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on earth and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was one of these places I remember. Well, I haven’t been there an shall not try now. The glamour’s off. [...] But there was one yet – the biggest – the most blank, so to speak – that I had a hankering after.

True, by this time it [Africa] was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. (*HoD*, 8-9)

The romanticism of travelling which Conrad suggests seems to only work if that what is unknown about a destination is kept so. If the exoticism of a destination is disturbed by “rivers and lakes and names”, then its mysticism is destroyed. As Ho claims, Conrad resents this, and this resentment is represented by his portrayal of colonialism in Africa as “a fantastic, unreal invasion” (Ho 8). Examples here are again the French ship firing into the continent

In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech – and nothing happened. Nothing would happen. There was a touch of

insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight.
(*HoD*, 16)

or the construction of the railway, which I have already discussed. These activities are presented as highly inefficient, even preposterous, in order to uncover the sanctimony of the white man's burden, a project employed to bring civilization to the uncivilized while the only thing we see in the novel is its corruption and absurdity. As Schnauder puts it, the effect of this description "rests on the disparity between cause and effect, purpose and achievement" (211). According to Ho, this goes hand in hand with Conrad's sentiment that the European people do not belong in Africa, but they should keep distance in order for the lands to keep their purity and authenticity. After the firing from the French ship, "nothing happens", a fact suggesting that Europe's attempts at betterment are not only the opposite of what they claim to be, but also very often meaningless. This hollowness of the civilizing mission in Conrad has to do with his "desire that [...] the African landscape remain virgin territory" (Ho 8).

1.3.5 Civilizing mission in *Heart of Darkness*

In a poem published in 1899, Rudyard Kipling gives a name to the civilizing mission: "The White Man's Burden". Kipling argues in this poem that, through colonization, the European nations better the existence of their conquered people (i.e. "new-caught, sullen peoples,/Half devil and half child") in a sort of an altruistic manner, releasing them from their primitivism. European peoples were therefore seen as grown-up and implicitly more advanced while the others were regarded as child-like and therefore primitive. This claim, which was at the core of imperialist ideology, comes from Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. In 1871, in his work *The Descent of Man*, he writes: "There can hardly be a doubt that we are descended from barbarians. The astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Fuegians on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me, for the reflection at once rushed into my mind – such were the ancestors" (qtd. in Hawkins 2006: 368). Alfred

Russel Wallace, who, independent of Darwin's theory but in concordance to it, wrote:

the better and higher specimens of our race would therefore increase and spread, the lower and brutal would give way and successively die out, and that rapid advancement of mental organization would occur, which has raised the very lowest races of man so far above the brutes [...] and, in conjunction with scarcely perceptible modifications of form, has developed the wonderful intellect of the Germanic races. (qtd. in Hawkins 2006:369).

At the turn of the century, this idea of human evolution was established as state of the art.

In his novel, Conrad employs this view. At the beginning, Marlow talks about his voyage upriver as “traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world”, and about the Africans as “the prehistoric man”. But Conrad uses it to subvert imperialism, rather than to promote it. Throughout the novel there are a series of examples, some of which have been discussed at length in this paper, pointing to the fact that Europeans do not fulfill their role as civilizers which they claim. The only bettered models (e.g. the fireman) are, as Hawkins recognizes, parodies. Hawkins puts it best:

[W]e just see exploitation and violence [...] in such memorable scenes as the French ship firing blindly into the continent, the beating of the African assumed to have started the fire at the Central Station, the carriers found dead in harness on the caravan trail, the man with a bullet-hole in his forehead as a part of road “upkeep”, the “pilgrims” shooting from their steamer, the crew not being given food, the chain-gang building the railway, and the contract labourers languishing in the “grove of death”. (2006:369).

Conrad's disdain with the horrors of European colonialism is obvious. He is blamed for not displaying hints of non-European resistance or for not pointing at an alternative to colonialism (cf. Said Culture and Imperialism, Harris The Frontier), but even these critics acknowledge his brilliant critique of Europe's ways. Conrad might have indeed neglected the above solely because his focus was on a portrayal of the Europeans, not on drawing a picture of Africa: “Despite what writers like Chinua Achebe say about the denigration of Africans in *Heart of Darkness*, Africans are an incidental part, and not the main objects of representation, in the novella” (JanMohamed 1986:90).

1.3.6 From racism to genocide

As Hawkins points out, racism at the time of Conrad was “endemic” (2006:373). It was so much common practice that a word for it was not needed and it indeed did not exist (cf. Firchow 234). Conrad was sensitive to the topic because of his own background. Although he takes certain racist standpoints, he did attack white racism in much of his work, especially his Malayan novels, where he clearly expresses only resentment towards white people who feel superior strictly because of their skin colour. While Achebe called him “a bloody racist”, Hawkins feels that it must be differentiated between levels and forms of racism, claiming that Conrad “certainly did not share the most extreme racism of his time” (2006:374). However, Achebe goes so far as to compare Conrad with Nazi Germany, accusing him of creating “art that promotes genocide” (qtd. in Hawkins 2006:374). The evolutionary theory of the 19th century, transported to the social realm, inevitably ends with genocide. Darwin and Wallace, who I have mentioned earlier, both foresaw that the better races will ultimately exterminate the lower ones, and that was a law of nature. Now, in *Heart of Darkness*, it is Kurtz who voices “Exterminate all the brutes!”, but it is questionable whether Conrad really did alert against genocide. Hawkins explains that in the Congo there were indeed between two and ten million Africans killed during Leopold II’s rule, but not through an extra policy of annihilation, rather than through the horrors of forced labour.

Indeed, when Marlow first sees the “grove of death”, he has a sort of a revelation. Schnauder puts it as follows: “What Marlow understands for the first time in this special moment when he views the empire machine from the outside is the ultimate consequence of imperialism: genocide” (215). This idea is not explicitly further developed, but Marlow’s words indeed point to it:

Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. [...] They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, - nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of

time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air – and nearly as thin. (*HoD*, 19-20)

Again, Conrad is clear here in showing the horrible face of colonialism: the “work” is still happening in the background, activities which exploited these men only to throw them away when they are no good anymore. Schnauder comments: “Far from ‘reclaiming’ the Africans, the Europeans are, in fact, contributing to their degradation, ruin and even extermination” (215).

Conrad did in a way foresee where this would eventually lead. In an essay called “Poland Revisited” (1915), he claimed that the Germans had “a consciousness of superiority freeing their hands from all moral bonds, anxious to take up, if I may express myself so, the ‘perfect man’s burden’” (147). Hawkins rightly gives credit to Conrad as “the lasting political legacy of *Heart of Darkness*, more than any confirmation of racism, has been its alarm over atrocity. Its title has entered our lexicon as code for extreme human rights abuses”, whether by whites or non-Whites or any other combination (2006:375). Durakovic, who wrote a poem book about the Yugoslavian wars and ethnic cleansing entitled *Heart of Darkness* is grateful to Conrad for “realiz[ing] long before others that darkness had a heart, and the heart had darkness” (109). Hawkins concludes: “Far from condoning genocide, Conrad clearly saw humanity’s horrific capacity and gave it a name” (2006:375).

1.4 Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* with regard to its treatment of the Other and the book’s attitudes to imperialism. It seems that in his book, Conrad employed the stereotypes of imperial ideology only in order to subvert them and show their arbitrariness. Through the descriptions of the Africans and the ‘discovery’ of their humanity, Marlow managed to create a bridge between the Self and the Other, a bridge which was a striking novelty at the time, rather disturbing to a contemporary British audience. By playing upon the concept of the gaze in postcolonial studies, Conrad also attempted to reverse the roles of the subject who watches and

the object who is being looked at. Roles are reversed also when Marlow tries to do the looking from the Other's shoes, to observe the West through African eyes. With the example of the fireman, we also have an attempt to reciprocity in the dialogue between West and East, even if only in a primitive form. Marlow also realizes that their sign systems are working the same as European ones, and goes so far as to display a sense of brotherhood in the grove of death. Despite its criticism, *Heart of Darkness* manages, through Marlow's insights, to ultimately draw a picture of Africans as fully blown human beings, an image which was almost unthinkable in its time.

Strongly related to the representation of the Other is of course Conrad's attitude to imperialism and its othering practices. In *Heart of Darkness*, on a closer scrutiny, it becomes obvious that Conrad is criticizing imperial practices. First, he criticized Belgian imperialism specifically, for its inefficiency and for its violation of the civilizing mission (especially the use of forced labour). As one reads on, it is clear that Europe constantly fails in its purpose of bettering the 'uncivilized'. But eventually one notices that Conrad's critique aims at European imperialism in general, as he feels that conquest of foreign lands results in a violation of their cultures, and not in their improvement. What Conrad aimed at is to unmask the colonizer of his benevolence and expose the violence and absurdity behind colonial enterprises (Daniels 65). As Sarvan has argued, "Conrad [...] was not entirely immune to the infection of the beliefs and attitudes of his age, but he was ahead of most in trying to break free" (10).

2. The "Other" in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*

2.1 Rudyard Kipling – man and author

Rudyard Kipling was born in 1865 in Bombay, India. He lived there until 1871, six years which Cody describes as having been "idyllic", when his family returned to England. As McClure explains, Kipling spent his childhood amid the Indian empire elite, a group constituted mainly of officers of the British Raj. These people were educated specifically to become servants of

the Raj, this education presupposing a number of “traumatic abandonments – early exile from home, bitter impotence during the first years at public school, and exile again, this time to the outposts of Empire” as standard preparation for imperial service, while the teachings were not about “open-mindedness and generosity, but [about] authoritarian rigidity, respect for power, and love of domination (McClure 1981:9). After a period of six months, Kipling’s parents returned to India, while six-year-old Rudyard and his three-year-old sister were put in a foster home in Southsea, and left there without any explanations. In his autobiography, *Something of Myself* (1937) Kipling recalls the six years spent in this foster home as having been “calculated torture” (qtd. in McClure 1981:11). Besides the feelings of abandonment, he was often harassed and mistreated, the experiences there leaving him with “deep psychological scars and a sense of betrayal” (Cody).

After leaving Southsea, he was sent off to a public school, which was no improvement for him, but the mere continuation of bullying and torment. McClure explains: “The public schools of England provided each new student with a formal introduction to the condition of ‘desolation, abandonment, and realized worthlessness’ that Kipling wrote of experiencing in his youth” (1981:14-5). The education here aimed again at preparing the students for imperial service. The strict agenda was supposed to create appropriate characters for the ultimate abandonment: exile to a foreign land. Since his parents did not afford to send Rudyard to university, he went back to India to work for a newspaper in Lahore where his parents lived. But this return “home” was also not a happy event, as in the meantime Kipling got to know England’s art and had also fallen in love there. So his leaving was again a sacrifice. Not only that India was not anymore the quaint land of his childhood, but his life as a journalist there was everything but happy (cf. McClure 16). Kipling was to spend there almost seven years, during which he had two nervous breakdowns, mainly because overwork and the indigenous diseases like fever or dysentery (McClure 1981: 16-17). The reason I am discussing these events in detail is because all these disillusionments ultimately made Kipling to the author we know. McClure summarizes best:

[E]ach experience prepared the victim to assume an authoritarian stance: to obey orders, grapple himself to a powerful group, channel

his aggression outward against weaker parties. With the reiteration of these crises, many young men must have come to see dominance and submission as the only categories of human relations, and to interpret all appeals to traditional ethics and ideas of equality as attempts at deception. (1981:17-8)

It is only natural, then, that Kipling became the author we know nowadays. He defended imperial ethics, and believed in military force in the establishment of order. His most famous poem "The White Man's Burden" became the anthem of the civilizing mission, Kipling overtly expressing in it his belief in Western superiority, racially and culturally. In *Stalky and Co.* (1899) he talks about his school experiences which we now know were not the happiest, but in the book he defends the school's philosophy of loyalty and duty towards the group, suggesting that this is the competence needed in men who are to preserve the empire (Lopez 1). In the light of these considerations, Kipling's novel *Kim*, written in 1901 is a striking appearance. The novel was written at a time when the relationship between Britain and India was changing. By then, the two had developed together, and their people, as Said puts it, "had a common interdependent history, even though opposition, animosity and sympathy either kept them apart or sometimes brought them together" (1994:163). In *Kim*, one can sense Kipling's ambivalence with regard to India, not being able to decide for his beloved country or for his belief in empire. His allegiance to India pushes into the forefront, as it is obvious that he renders its description with love and admiration for her and its people (Medrea 372).

There are certain works of Kipling showing his attitudes towards race which are interesting to note in connection to his novel *Kim*. In his collection "Debits and Credits" (1926), we find the poem "We and They", which is very illustrative of Kipling's thinking about the Other. Consider the last stanza:

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We
And every one else is They:
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They! (qtd. in Warraq).

This poem was written much later than *Kim*, but this attitude is exactly what we are shown in the novel: tolerance towards the Other (Warraq). In a description of his unpublished novel *Mother Maturin*, Kipling talks about the natives:

the proper way to handle 'em is not by looking on 'em “as excitable masses of barbarism” (I speak for the Punjab only) or the “down trodden millions of Ind groaning under the heel of an alien and unsympathetic despotism”, but as men with a language of their own which it is your business to understand; and proverbs which it is your business to quote (this is a land of proverbs) and byewords and allusions which it is your business to master; and feelings which it is your business to enter into and sympathise with. (qtd. in Raine 15-16)

As I will argue later in this paper, this passage shows that Kipling understood the equality of the Indian people, and in *Kim* he emphasized this equality with every occasion. Kipling was a complex personality. In the light of these examples, and all the more of *Kim*, to charge him with racism is an over simplification. As I will show in what follows, *Kim* is, “in its wisdom and humanity the living contradiction of nine-tenths of the charges ever leveled against its author” (Kinead-Weekes 197).

2.2 *Kim*: the novel as celebration of difference

While decorating Kipling with the title of „champion of colonialism and British superiority“, JanMohamed acknowledges that in *Kim* his examination of racial boundaries and syncretism is fascinating, as his portrayal of cultural alterity is “determined by strong emotional ties that collide with his intellectual prejudice and colonialist sympathies” (77-78). Throughout *Kim*, the reader follows what JanMohamed calls “a positive, detailed, and nonstereotypic portrait of the colonized that is unique in colonialist literature”, leading the critic to call the book a “celebration of difference” (78). Thus, Kipling created a kind, sympathetic character, of whom the reader becomes soon very fond, in the way Kim himself is fond of India. I strongly agree with JanMohamed, since, as he further explains, Kim’s life and self is “decentered” and therefore based on difference: he continuously takes on different identities, passing either as white or becoming the Other as he pleases, and finding great

pleasure in this diversity of his world. He is, first and foremost, an orphan, and has therefore no fixed connection of social or political nature. He is extremely tenacious and witty, being able to do anything and become anyone. As JanMohamed rightly puts it, “[t]his ability to forgo a permanent fixed self, which is essential if one is going to understand and appreciate a racial or cultural alterity, is turned into a positive principle in *Kim*” (ibid.). It seems that Kipling wishes to achieve a deeper insight: not to know and observe the Other from outside, but to get into their skin: Kim has the ability to turn into many different types of human being and see the world through all these different eyes (Kinkead-Weekes 217).

Like the Grand Trunk Road, which is described as "a wonderful spectacle" that "runs straight, bearing without crowding India's traffic for fifteen hundred miles – such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world" (51), the novel presents a multiplicity of peoples and happenings, the “low life” of India, in JanMohamed’s words (78). But Kipling does this with a positive, kind humor which accustoms this world without dismissing it as Other on moral grounds, and without the separative colonial humor. Therefore, the racial boundaries are blurred and even overcome in *Kim* more rigorously than in any other colonial novel (78). Kinkead-Weekes describes the novel as a “whole kaleidoscope of race, caste, custom, and creed, all seen with a warm affection that is almost unique in Kipling” (216). Indeed, for such a perspective one needs to shed any sense of superiority, socially, religiously and racially, and be tolerant to any position. This is exactly what Kim, the Little Friend of all the World, does: he travels through India’s kaleidoscope without judging it, being open to any kind of humanity, making friends with everybody without even hinting that something is abnormal about it (217).

2.3 Kim, the hybrid boy

This is not to say that the issue of racial difference is not present throughout the narrative. At the beginning of the novel, Kim is established as being white, despite all doubt:

Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar; Kim was white – a poor white of the very poorest. (*Kim*, 3)

However, it seems that he is only genetically white:

The half-caste woman who looked after him (she smoked opium, and pretended to keep a second-hand furniture shop by the square where the cheap cabs wait) told the missionaries that she was Kim's mother's sister; but his mother had been nurse-maid in a Colonel's family and had married Kimball O'Hara, a young colour-sergeant of the Mavericks, an Irish regiment. He afterwards took a post on the Sind, Punjab, and Delhi Railway, and his Regiment went home without him. The wife died of cholera in Ferozepore, and O'Hara fell to drink and loafing up and down the line with the keen-eyed three-year-old baby. (ibid. 3-4)

Kim was raised as a native boy. His appearance, behavior, and thinking are Indian, he almost exclusively speaks Hindustani and fears the English more than other native children do. However, even though he insists he is Indian, the narrator takes care of refuting this claim on any occasion, always reminding us that Kim is white (JanMohamed 79). The other characters do the same, the sentence "Once a sahib, always a sahib" (*Kim*, 77) being a sort of a refrain in the text. This is because, as the critic further explains, in colonialist thinking, culture is inherited genetically, like skin color. Anyhow, whenever he is reminded that he is white, Kim feels uneasy, and emphasizes that if he is parted from his people (who he considers to be "this great and beautiful land", ibid. 115), he will die (JanMohamed 79). This conflict between Kim and his narrator goes on for the rest of the novel.

Hybridity is a central concept in postcolonial studies, mostly associated with Homi Bhabha, referring to the unique form of identity in a colonized territory. Bhabha posits that "a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity" (Meredith 2). Although Randall uses this theory to analyse Kim with the aim of showing that Kipling's rogue is instrumentalized in his imperialist ethnography, the critic states that Kim is a person in-between colonizer and colonized, having no

fixed identity, and at the same time being identified with both. Randall further acknowledges that

European by birth, he is called upon to represent imperial authority. Yet he is very much subject to that authority – as is his counterpart, the “colonial native”, whom the discourse of colonialism insistently represents as a “child”. (87)

In connection to India, Kim stands as an insider as well as an outsider, “as the principal agent but also as the spectacular, highly engaging, preferred object of the cross-cultural gaze” (Randall 89). This duality of Kim leads one to conclude that he not only informs imperialist ethnography, but also challenges it: “situated on both sides of imperialism’s power divide, Kim is an ambivalent figure, a site where imperial power is deployed, but also, at least potentially, a *site of resistance*” (90, my emphasis). Therefore, Kim as a character, is by nature a tool for cultural reconciliation. By incorporating both sides of the West-East division, Kim manages to dissolve it.

2.3.1 Kim’s allegiance: East or West?

Another conflict in the book is over the “recovery of the paternal function” and therefore one of “cultural allegiance” (JanMohamed 79). Kim is an orphan, and throughout the novel he forms allegiances to different Indian and European adult males. The relationship between him and Mahbub Ali is openly formal, as that of father and son, while the Lama functions as a “spiritual father” to Kim. Huree Babu behaves as his older brother, and the Sahiba functions as his mother. All these relationships are on an emotional level. On the other hand, Kim’s relationship to Colonel Creighton and to Lurgan Sahib is a rather cold one, primarily based on reason. JanMohamed explains:

While the Indians keep reminding him that he is white, the Englishmen tell him not to alienate himself from the Indians. Thus the struggle over the inheritance is resolved through a bifurcation of the paternal function: on the one hand, Kim’s *personal* and *emotional* allegiance to the Indians, and, on the other, his *impersonal* and *rational* relation to the Englishmen. (80, emphasis in the text)

This denouement takes us back into colonialist discourse, according to which Europeans are rational and clever, and the Orientals are sentimental and sultry. However, it is not that Orientals are presented here as irrational – on the contrary, they are intelligent. But Kim's connection to them is not based on this virtue, but on the stereotypical Oriental ones (JanMohamed 80). While this fact tends to fall back into classical imperialist discourse, which was impossible to completely break with, I think this is just another piece of evidence for Kim's hybridity: because he embodies both East and West, he is able to connect to figures from both sides, and to eventually reconcile them. Indeed, no character comes in conflict as long as Kim is around. Everybody shares the task of taking care of Kim's destiny and this eventually binds them; it is the primary thing they all have in common.

2.4 Kipling's India

In Kipling's novel, as opposed to Conrad's, all descriptions of the Other land are overtly positive. Kipling writes about India as he has it "in his blood", with great fondness and knowledge, "alive to every subtle variation in tone, speech and dress of her diverse people" (Warraq):

The hot and crowded bazars blazed with light as they made their way through the press of all the races in Upper India, and the lama mooned through it like a man in a dream. [...] Half pushed, half towed, he arrived at the high gate of the Kashmir Serai: that huge open square over against the railway station, surrounded with arched cloisters, where the camel and horse caravans put up on their return from Central Asia. Here were all manner of Northern folk, tending tethered ponies and kneeling camels; loading and unloading bales and bundles; drawing water for the evening meal at the creaking well-windlasses; piling grass before the shrieking, wild-eyed stallions; cuffing the surly caravan dogs; paying off camel-drivers; taking on new grooms; swearing, shouting, arguing, and chaffering in the packed square. The cloisters, reached by three or four masonry steps, made a haven of refuge around this turbulent sea. Most of them were rented to traders, as we rent the arches of a viaduct; the space between pillar and pillar being bricked or boarded off into rooms, which were guarded by heavy wooden doors and cumbrous native padlocks. Locked doors showed that the owner was away, and a few rude — sometimes very rude — chalk or paint scratches told where he had gone. Thus: 'Lutuf Ullah is gone to Kurdistan.' Below, in coarse verse: 'O Allah, who sufferest lice

to live on the coat of a Kabuli, why hast thou allowed this louse Lutuf to live so long?' (*Kim*, 18).

On different occasions we read about what a beautiful land India is: "A fair land - a most beautiful land is this of Hind" (ibid. 124), "this great and beautiful land" (ibid. 115), "all the rich Punjab lay out in the splendor of the keen sun" (ibid. 29-30). India's variety is always portrayed as positive, suggesting a certain harmony despite of its many different facets.

2.4.1 Timeless India as Orientalist practice? Charges and refutation

However, a crucial point of criticism about Kipling's India is the fact that he portrayed it as a "timeless, unchanging, and 'essential locale'" (Said 1994:162). According to Said, this is because Kipling regarded India as essential on purpose, as it was a territory occupied by the British empire for three hundred years, and was just starting its attempts for resistance which would eventually lead to its independence. The scholar further claims that one has to necessarily keep in mind when discussing *Kim* that its author is writing "from the perspective of a massive colonial system whose economy, functioning, and history had acquired the status of a virtual fact of nature" (1994:162). Back then, as mentioned earlier in this paper, there was a clear distinction between West and East, white and black, Self and Other, in a Darwinian sense. Randall shows how it is typical of Western Orientalists to represent India as a "place of longstanding cultural stasis", with Kipling among them (83). In an analysis of the novel as ethnography, Randall accuses Kipling, Said-style, of the imperialist practice of the (here) British owning knowledge about India, and gives as an example the Lama's meeting with the curator of the Lahore museum, where "Indian culture is presented as a British possession" (80). The following quote is of importance here: "In the entrance-hall stood the larger figures of the Greco-Buddhist sculptures done, savants know how long since, by forgotten workmen whose hands were feeling, and not unskillfully, for the mysteriously transmitted Grecian touch" (8). This is, in Randall's opinion, a presentation of "'derivative' Oriental masterpieces, which strive to recapture an earlier, more masterful, Western

artistry” (81), while he also points at the way in which “savants know” as much as it can be known of the mystic East. But his greatest concern is that in the Lahore museum, India’s epochs are displayed in

spatial contiguity, compartmentalized in such a way that a “time” or a “period” constitutes not a distant and distinct past but rather another (supplementary, adjacent, equally “present”) manifestation of an eternal, essentially unchanging “India”. (83-84)

It is claimed that the sculptures show another face of India, but do so in the same way that the contemporary artifacts in another hall do, and both simply add to the “transhistorical reading of ‘India’” (Randall 84). The novel reads as follows: “All India is full of holy men stammering gospels in strange tongues; [...] dreamers, babblers, and visionaries: as it has been from the beginning and will continue to the end” (*Kim*, 32). This image of India as timeless permits an interpretation of it as text, a mounting of signifiers in a predefined sequence. This, Randall says, “excludes the possibility of innovation change” (*ibid.*). However, Warranq identifies several passages in the book where Kipling’s India does not seem to be that unchanging as his critics claimed. For example, in *Kim* we have “a large manufacturing city, and the crowded tram-car”, which are by their nature signs of progress. In chapter four, Kipling writes:

Nowadays, well-educated natives are of opinion that when their womenfolk travel – and they visit a good deal – it is better to take them quickly by rail in a properly screened compartment; and that custom is spreading. But there are always those of the old rock who hold by the use of their forefathers. (*Kim*, 58)

This passage indeed shows change – it shows how it used to be, and how it is now. Most explicitly is progress expressed in chapter one: “The Curator smiled at the mixture of old-world piety and *modern progress* that is the note of India today” (*ibid.* 13).

Besides, interestingly enough, as an Indian writer, Chaudhuri praises exactly the timelessness of Kipling’s India that Randall was so intrigued by. He claims that precisely “the greatness of *Kim*” is constituted by

the product of Kipling’s vision of a much bigger India, a vision whose profundity we Indians would be hard put to it to match even in an Indian language, not to speak of English. He had arrived at a true and

moving sense of that India which is almost *timeless*, and had come to love it. (49, my emphasis)

Chaudhuri is indeed very fond of Kipling's portrayal of India, and goes so far to say that "we Indians shall never cease to be grateful to Kipling for having shown the many faces of our country in all their beauty, power and truth" (50), an outstanding statement.

2.4.2 Religion – local colour or independent theme?

If we think in terms of the colonial binary oppositions, the following holds truth: rational (secularized) Us vs. religious (traditional) Them. With the representation of Buddhism through the Lama, Said claims that Kipling is not so much interested in religion, but uses it more for its portrayal of India in matters of "local color" or "exotic detail" (1994: 167). However, the Indian critic Warraq claims that this is just a misunderstanding of the entire novel and uses a quote from Trilling to defend his argument:

[the novel] suggested not only a multitude of different ways of life but even different modes of thought. Thus, whatever one might come to feel personally about religion's factual reality, not as piety, which was the apparent extent of its existence in the West, but as something at the very root of life" (qtd. in Warraq).

Leoshko is in line with this argument, claiming that Buddhism in *Kim* is "far more than exotic window dressing" (27). Scott writes that on a closer look, Kim exhibits an elaborate, methodical depiction of Buddhism, directed through the character of the Teshoo lama (47). Indeed, Kipling had a thorough knowledge of Buddhism. Through the lama, Kipling brings us a tandem of Buddhist elements and values, functioning, in Kwon's beautiful words, as the "counter-hegemonic side-effects of the other knowledge, configuring the Buddhist subtext" of the story (20). Examples of Buddhist doctrines are the rejection of the caste system, the "Four Holy Places", Buddhism as the "Middle Way", the "wheel of rebirth", the Dharma teachings, the "Pali Canon", and the crucial role of meditation or breathing exercises. Besides, the reader encounters a series of Tibetan Buddhist features like the mentioning of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa, the lama's clicking of the rosary

beads during his walking meditation, the “Old Law” and the “Reformed Law”, the mentioning of Tibetan devil dance masks, the Lama’s recital of the mantra *Om mane padme hum* (“Hail the Jewel in the Lotus”), or the holiness of drawing (Scott 49). All these elements are rendered with remarkable sympathy, and never dismissed as superficial exotic details. Allen goes so far as to say that the novel actually ends with Kim remaining a loyal disciple of the Buddhist Lama, proposing that the “book that [began] as a political allegory about the defense of British India, and, by implication, of Western values, has become the vehicle for a very different Law, that of the Buddhist *Dharma*” (362).

Chaudhuri also identified religion along with the life of the people in the setting of mountains and plains, as one of the main characters in *Kim* (cf. Chaudhuri 51). He praises *Kim* as being “the finest novel in the English language with an Indian theme, but also one of the greatest of English novels in spite of the theme” (47). It is then safe to say that religion is an independent theme in *Kim*, showing the other side of Western existential philosophies, and therefore representing an outstanding Other perspective.

2.4.3 Language as hybrid – the voice of the narrator

A look at how the narrator deals with language in *Kim* unveils interesting assumptions about Kipling’s view of the colonial Other. The narrator employs from the beginning a certain “we” which does not refer to the natives, but has a language in common with them: “the old Ajaib-Gher – the Wonder House, as the natives call the Lahore Museum” (*Kim*, 3). As Randall explains, the narrator here shows his knowledge of the vernacular, but distancing himself from it, showing how the group he belongs to would call the museum. Then, presenting “the big blue and white Jadoo-Gher – the Magic House, as we name the Masonic Lodge” (ibid. 4). The “we” here certainly does not refer to the natives, as “we” know for sure that the Masonic Lodge is the Masonic Lodge. Randall proposes that this group is “the acclimatized ‘Anglo-Indian’ community [...] a partially hybridized group whose characteristic habits and attitudes have been inflected by experience of India”

(91-92). It is indeed remarkable though that he used first the Indian name for the Masonic Lodge – a sign that he would prefer it for such an “un-Indian thing” (Randall 91).

The novel uses words from a variety of languages – English, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Pushtu – and none of them are presented as having ultimate authority. The predominant one is English, not because it is preferred, but for practical purposes, and often in a broken variant with flawed translations. Randall rightly recognizes that the narrative pushes the heteroglossia of India in the foreground, a fact that “must undermine the early, too-easy rendering of the readily negotiable binary of ‘we’ and ‘they’, of Anglo-Indians and colonized, subordinate ‘natives’” (92). The language is hybrid, and the narrator definitely reveals his preference of indigenous vocabulary.

Consider the following passage of the novel: “a troop of long-haired, strong-scented Sansis with baskets of lizards and other unclean food on their backs” (*Kim*, 55). As Randall observes, following the colonial stereotype, it would be clear that all Sansis are “strong-scented”, while the British would consider lizards as food rather disgusting and revolting, not “unclean” – “a term that would sound quite pentateuchal and archaic to the modern, metropolitan, English ear” (94). It seems that the narrator here again identifies with an in-between group, rather than with the English. This identification is even more visible when the narrator actually criticized the English: “the careless, open-spoken English folk” (*Kim*, 126), or “the dull fat eyes of [...] Sahibs” (ibid. 101), the portrait of the English is obviously as a foreign, unsympathetic group. Another example here is the following quote: “a genuine imported Sahib from England would have made a great to-do over this tale” (ibid. 129) which tends to praise the in-between character of Anglo-Indians. This aspect also has to do with stereotyping in *Kim*, which I will discuss in the next section.

2.5 Stereotypes: sympathy added

The stereotype is, as Bhabha and JanMohamed assessed, the main mechanism of domination within colonialism (cf. Williams 411). It is therefore

somewhat exaggerated to claim, as JanMohamed, that Kim is a non-stereotypical portrait of India. Throughout the novel, one can find a handful of “typical” Oriental values. We are told that Kim can “lie like an Oriental” (*Kim*, 54), and that Orientals never tell the truth to foreigners, as opposed to the English, the “open-spoken [...] folk” (ibid. 126): “The English do eternally tell the truth” (ibid. 119). Williams offers an account of the stereotypization of the Indians in *Kim*:

Indians lack a proper sense of time: ‘All hours of the twenty four are alike to Orientals’ [...]; of motion: ‘Swiftly – as Orientals understand speed’; of order: ‘the happy Asiatic disorder’; of sound: ‘he had all the Oriental’s indifference to mere noise’ – no doubt because they make so much of it; of organization: ‘so he abandoned the project and fell back, Oriental fashion, on time and chance’. (416)

Indeed, these generalizations locate Kipling in the contemporary Western perceptions of the Easterners, but as in Conrad, this is only normal for the time in which he wrote. Most importantly, he adds this sympathy he has been praised for in *Kim*. Also, like Conrad, he tends to stereotypize the whites as well: “Never speak to a white man till he is fed” (*Kim*, 72), says Kim; and the narrator describes the lama as “having nothing of the white man’s impatience, but a great faith” (ibid. 69). Consider the following words of Mahbub Ali: “When first I dealt with Sahibs [...] I did not know how greatly they were fools, and this made me wroth. [...] Now I see, however, [...] that it is with them as with all men – in certain matters they are wise, and in others most foolish” (ibid. 121). Here, Englishmen are initially negatively portrayed, but then Mahbub realizes that, as with all men, it depends on the person. Kipling here is telling us that Englishmen are not much better; they are like any other men. This is highly remarkable for a writer such as him and deserves being given credit for. To me, it seems that Kipling is portraying the different ethnicities in terms of cultural color for literary purposes, and does so with all of them, showing positive and negative sides of all of them, not only of Orientals. For him, as a convinced imperialist and strong advocate of the British empire, this is a fantastic novelty.

2.5.1 Racial hierarchy rejected

While having a great deal in common, Conrad and Kipling's works also differ in some respects. McClure describes the main differences: "Conrad's fiction is aesthetically ambitious, psychologically oriented, politically skeptical; Kipling's is more conventional, less interested in innerness, and basically affirmative in its treatment of imperial rule" (1985:162). Kipling's work in fact generally works to celebrate the existing order, not to subvert it, and this is mainly the imperialistic order. Largely, when criticizing the harshest Western views of Indians, Kipling does so by reference to more pretentious racist positions that still work to keep Western superiority and divine right upright. In *Kim*, however, "he celebrates a set of certainties which have nothing to do with race, certainties which in fact are directly antagonistic to all doctrines of racial superiority" (ibid. 163). McClure claims that a look at his earlier short fiction demonstrates the change in Kim. He analyses "The Head of the District" (1890), "His chance in Life" (1887), and "The enlightenment of Pagett, M.P." (1890), all dealing with India. All these stories are full of racist prejudices, Oriental stereotypes, and rejections of claims of equality between peoples. Also, the good Indians in them are normally servants of the British rule, typical subject peoples. Some of these are to be found in a softer manifestation in *Kim* as well. But, as McClure puts it, "there is none of the insistence on racial difference and English superiority that we find in so many of the stories. Indeed, in this single work Kipling presses as hard against racist modes of perception and representation as Conrad ever does" (ibid. 165). In this sense, the Church of England clergyman who regards the lama as having a "triple ringed uninterest of the creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title of 'heathen'" (*Kim*, 77) is ridiculed, as well as the British soldier who refers to all the Indians as "niggers" (ibid. 95) and has no knowledge whatsoever of the Indian languages. Also interesting is the fact that while Kipling used to portray Bengalis as cowards now describes a Bengali as being so courageous that people who "mock at his race" would be surprised (ibid. 223). McClure and Williams both assert how most characters in the book work towards a break-through with their racial prejudices: the

Sahiba, Huree Babu, the Woman of Shamlegh, and even Mahbub Ali (cf. McClure 166, Williams 413). Kinkead-Weekes points out that although Mahbub's first words are always "God's curse on all unbelievers", the Pathan transcends this and "move[s] towards the Lama's tolerance, [stops] himself from using his instinctive curse on the 'other'" (*Kim*, 225). Kim seems to be the one who activates this surmounting, but is also part of it, liberating himself of his own prejudices and feeling of superiority. The novel tends to reject racial hierarchy on the whole: "what is taken for granted in [Kipling's] earlier fiction is taken down in *Kim*" (McClure 166).

2.5.2 Not a chip off the old block: Hurree Chunder Mookerjee

Although Said charges Kipling with portraying Hurree Babu as the "grimacing stereotype of the ontologically funny native, trying to be like 'us'" (1994:180), a wider look at the character of the Babu reveals a different interpretation. In fact, Anglicised Indians are the type of character that Kipling mostly ridiculed, and, as Khair puts it, "particularly detested by Kipling, and many Englishmen like him". However, McBratney explains that this "British laughter masked a deep-seated anxiety about Bengali political ambitions, for the English-educated Indian threatened to collapse the psychological, cultural, and political differences between Briton and Indian upon which the British founded their prestige" (130). He is a Bengali and a chain-man in the Great Game. Although somewhat stereotypical, especially in terms of his speech, which Kipling so often highlights (e.g. "dooce" for "deuce", suggesting a non-English accent), I would argue that Babu is a clear example of the subversion of stereotypes in *Kim*. Brantlinger acknowledges that, even if he seems to be the usual English-educated Indian, he is at the same time a refutation of this construction. Hurree Babu overcomes the stereotype particularly by being a successful spy for the Raj. Despite his self-stereotyping ("I am unfortunately Asiatic, which is serious detriment in some respects. And *all*-so I am a Bengali – a fearful man", *Kim*, 187), he is a relentless wanderer and a courageous, clever spy. Therefore, while initially confirming the stereotype, Kipling cancels it (McBratney 130).

In some ways, Hurree matches the stereotype of the Bengali. As McBratney points out, he is an adept of Herbert Spencer, but is very superstitious, and he longs to publish articles in English journals but his English is, as mentioned, the “flowery singsong of the babu” (131). His self-stereotyping works to reverberate the clichés attributed to him on his white fellows, while his actual deeds are in sharp contrast with these clichés. When Kim points out that they should not be speaking English with one another, he says “That is all raight. I am only Babu showing off my English to you. All we Babus talk English to show off” (*Kim*, 155), which, again, because he says it himself, shows that he is aware of this, and the power of attributing features is in his hands, while this line is at the same time a mockery of the English. His best game is played with the Russian spies, who get him drunk to see how

[he] became thickly treasonous and spoke in terms of sweeping indecency of a Government which had forced upon him a white man’s education and neglected to supply him with a white man’s salary. He babbled tales of oppression and wrong till the tears ran down his cheeks for the miseries of his land. Then he staggered off, singing love-songs of Lower Bengal, and collapsed upon a wet tree-trunk. Never was so unfortunate a product of English rule in India more unhappily thrust upon aliens. (*Kim*, 198)

The Russians are tricked, saying that he stands for “little India in transition – the monstrous hybridism of East and West” (*Kim*, 199) but the reader is supposed to understand Hurree’s play. Through his performance, Hurree mocks the stereotype of the soppy, egoistic and malicious babu and therefore blanks its stigma (McBratney 131). Throughout the novel, Hurree is disturbing to an English audience. His hybridity is not “monstrous”, but indeed undermining. He displays Bhabha’s “sly civility” (93-101), a powerful tool for Indians to overthrow British imperial power. He is, like Kim, an ambivalent figure of colonial discourse, and is a good example of using the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house. McBratney concludes: “Only in Kim [...] was Kipling able to allow an Indian, much less a Bengali, to assume the white man’s superior self-transfigurative powers. Hurree is that rarity in Kipling: a character who at moments escapes his author’s ideological presuppositions” (132).

2.6 The Lama as anti-self

The character of the lama is a clear sign of Kipling's shifting attitudes towards imperialism. He is the second main character in the novel, and one for which Kipling deserves our admiration. The lama is a Tibetan Buddhist abbot who came to India to find the Holy River which leapt from Buddha's arrow. He is Kim's spiritual father figure, master and guardian (Regmi). His relationship to Kim is a symbiotic one, each being on a quest: the lama for his River, and Kim for his identity: "the Wheel and the Way" (Warraq). Travelling together throughout India's varieties, Kim is fascinated by the host of people and places they encounter, but the lama "remains fixedly detached from any interest in humanity or the machinations of human life" (Regmi). He is most of the time meditating, and his interaction with the other characters mostly involves his preaching of the Buddhist ways, which, in a nutshell, are the idea that all souls are equal, captive in the cycle of life, the only way out of it being complete distancing from worldly things. However, the pilgrim often declares his affection towards his disciple, who is also very fond of his master as well (Regmi). His love for Kim and the boy's joys on the way are affecting his withdrawal, but he enjoys it, and these little slips from his meditations only bring "[raise] him in our eyes as man" (Kinkead-Weekes 221).

Throughout the novel, the lama stands for the equality of people. This is in direct contrast to the Indian caste system, of which Kipling was well aware. For this reason, it is remarkable that the author chose to create a character that points to the boundaries of such hierarchical organizations, and constantly pleads for unity and fraternity of people (*What examples*). Consider the following passage: "To those who follow the Way there is neither black nor white, Hind nor Bhotiyal. We be all souls seeking to escape (*Kim*, 187)".

Another passage reads "There is no pride among such as follow the Middle Way" (*Kim*, 39). For the lama, a caste system does not come into question. As Kinkead-Weekes asserts, even a poisonous snake is regarded by the lama as a "fellow-creature on the Wheel of Life", without being afraid or disgusted by it (219). The novel further reads: "The coiled thing hissed and opened its hood. 'May thy release come soon, brother!' the Lama continued

placidly" (*Kim*, 40). The character of the lama suggests that humanity should focus on the aspects they have in common, and not on their differences, suggesting that unity and brotherhood are the most important facets of human nature (*What examples*).

The lama is also a means of Kipling to show the white man's prejudices. For example, the reader is resenting Bennett who looks at the Lama "with the triple-ringed uninterest of the creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title of 'heathen' (*Kim*, 77)" and at his search as "gross blasphemy" (ibid. 78). Kinkead-Weekes points out that here, "Kipling's anger is [...] unmistakably *anti-racist*" (221, original emphasis). Further, Bennett completely changes attitude towards Kim as soon as he finds out he is white. He has the feeling that only white men know how to proceed with the white boy, and does not seem to know that "yellow men", as Kinkead-Weekes puts it, are also perfectly suitable tutors, and that they actually have feelings. Father Victor, while more human and more understanding towards the relationship of Kim to the lama, also holds the belief that only white men can educate the boy. However, to us "it is perfectly clear [...] that the Lama represents a higher human order than the two priests, let alone the regiment, and clear that even Father Victor has no idea what he wants to educate the boy to be" (ibid.). Although Kipling's earlier work is fundamentally different with regard to racial beliefs, at this moment it seems that Kipling considers racial reasoning obnoxious, and this happens thanks to the lama. In this respect, Kinkead-Weekes concludes:

[Kim] is the product of a peculiar tension between different ways of seeing: the affectionate fascination with the kaleidoscope of external reality for its own sake; the negative capability getting under the skin of attitudes different from one another and one's own; and finally, a product of this last, but at its most intense and creative, the triumphant achievement of an anti-self so powerful that it became a touchstone for everything else – the creation of the Lama. (234)

Indeed this achievement of Kipling implied a vision of a character so remote from himself as possible, but this character is unfolded in such a carefully detailed and loving way that makes Kim the "[most] inclusive, complex, humanized and mature" of all of Kipling's works (ibid.).

2.7 From manuscript to publication: Kipling's imperial vision in metamorphosis

Margaret Peller Felley wrote an excellent article in which she analyses an unknown manuscript of *Kim*, a working draft of Kipling's work of art, entitled "Kim O' the Rishti". Her discoveries after comparing this manuscript to the published version are highly relevant to my claims in this paper; I will therefore dedicate a few pages to her findings.

Kipling sporadically wrote *Kim* over a period of sixteen years, time in which, it seems, his visions changed radically. The most important changes from the manuscript to the published version show without doubt that he overcame his racism: he replaced his usual racist commentary for sensible remarks, he abolished Indian stereotypes and construed Indians with full characters, he diminished the omnipresent superiority of English characters, adjusted episodes to bring in egalitarian discourse and eliminated racist from others. Felley feels that all these adjustments downplay the novel's imperial element – the Great Game – and put emphasis on Eastern spiritual aspects like the search for transcendence (266-267). The manuscript contains explicit racist rhetoric, while the published *Kim* puts emphasis on tolerance and fraternity (ibid. 270).

Firstly, Kipling modified the description of his main character. In the manuscript, Kim is "a poor white of the very poorest and this means more in India than any other land", while in the book as we have it Kipling deleted the last clause. Similarly, in the original version Mahbub Ali's father was killed by the British in war, but in the published novel Kipling cuts this detail to avoid reminding the reader about the tensions between the two cultures. Also, Kipling had Kim originally being typically white, "scarcely [being able to] hunker as easily as Asiatics", while Kim as we know him is a specialist in this respect, and a classical example of assimilation of culture: "English food, language, clothes, and haste bore and repel him" (Feeley 272).

Most importantly, Kipling changed drastically the character of the lama, in an attempt to move attention on British superiority to equality of people. In the manuscript, the lama, as representative of the Orient, is childish, inept,

and ingratiating. He is portrayed as a benighted Tibetan who comes to Lahore from the hills, and his primary interest is the English museum curator than the actual Buddhist artifacts in it. Stammering in exaggerated modesty, he asks:

“Is there a-a-priest of this wonder house – a certain keeper of images? It was told me beyond the Garga-Cho in Suchzen over against the Painted Rocks that such a priest who is a fountain of knowledge sits in the Wonder House in Suchzen which is in Hind”. He repeated the last words as though making sure of an address. “There is no priest but here is a Sahib with a white beard,” said Kim.

When he meets the curator he “drop[s] to his knees” in humility. In the revised version the lama is the Abbot of a lamasery and a scholar, who’s first interest are the Ghandara sculptures, after which he takes time to talk to the curator, whom he walked past before, about Buddhist art, and this conversation is depicted as between colleagues of the same league. Also, in the draft, the lama tells the curator that he came walking to Lahore, and when the curator asks if he heard of trains, he answers: “Men of the hills told us tales. I do not think these things are; for it is manifest that on smooth ground none can go more swiftly than a horse” (qtd. in Feeley 273). In the published version, the lama of course knows everything about trains. Also, in the finished version, the two priests exchange gifts as equals: the curator gives the lama his glasses, while the lama offers him a precious pen-case. In the draft, only the curator (the benevolent Sahib) does the giving. He offers money to the naïve lama, which he refuses, but is then tricked to take a money order:

Without thinking the Curator brought out some loose silver saying: “It is for the journey. They give little for nothing in Hind”.

“The law forbids,” said the lama, Buddhist priests are not allowed to take money; though the rule is often broken.

“Never in my days have I ... [illegible].”

“Nay, but it is a long road. Thou dost not know – an old man. If sickness came - “

“That is all one. The law forbids,” he replied with a simplicity that helped the Curator to this next step. “Then I will write a word on a paper which may be profitable? If thou shouldst use the fire carriage, ask for the place where the carriages depart. Show this at the wicket gate, or to any policeman and men will give thee a small paper” –

“With words written?”

“With words written that shall take thee by the fire carriage in a greater distance in a day than thou canst go in a month afoot.”

“I will take that,” said the lama, “as a sign of friendship between priest and priest.” His skinny hand closed on a written order to the station

master to supply bearer with a third class ticket to any destination he might name. (qtd. in Feeley 273).

Departing from the Wonder House, the lama “clings” to Kim “like a frightened child” (ibid.). When they enter the train, he, who in the published novel is somewhat excited, is going mad in the original draft: “‘How do I know this thing will not fly with me elsewhere? Ai! Behold! A dragon comes crawling upon its belly! An evil spirit!’ The lama flung up his hands.” (ibid. 274). He claims he is not entering the “belly of a devil”, and Kipling describes him as horrified as “the world moved – swirled back field by field, cottage by cottage as though pushed by demons”. All these episodes were eliminated for the final version. Therefore, in the manuscript Kipling shapes the lama as a simple-minded person, who is stunned by civilization and annoyingly humble towards white people, who are presented as superior to him. On the other hand, in the published version the lama is, as Feeley puts it, “an aesthetic and moral achievement: Kipling’s first sustained portrait of a non-European as a dignified, capable, and highly learned person” (274). Indeed, as Said himself acknowledges, we believe in Kipling’s respect for his character, as the lama indeed disposes of nearly everyone’s attention and appreciation, keeps his word of paying for Kim’s education, meets him punctually every time where they arranged, and everyone listens to him with reverence and dedication (1994:168). In the revised version, Kipling added the following passage, which not only creates the lama as an admirable character, but also stresses the spiritual rather than the worldly aspect of the story:

This was not Ceylon, nor Buddh Gaya, nor Bombay, nor some grass-tangled ruins that he seemed to have stumbled upon two years ago. He spoke of those places as a scholar removed from vanity, as a Seeker walking in humility, as an old man, wise and temperate, illuminating knowledge with brilliant insight. Bit by bit, disconnectedly, each tale called up by some wayside thing, he spoke of all his wanderings up and down Hind, till Kim, who had loved him without reason, now loved him for fifty good reasons. So they enjoyed themselves in high felicity, abstaining, as the Rule demands, from evil words, covetous desires; not over-eating, not lying on high beds, nor wearing rich clothes. Their stomach told them the time, and the people brought them their food, as the saying is. (*Kim*, 179)

Also, the English characters have been thoroughly revised. In the manuscript, Father Victor and reverend Bennett are “fully drawn characters” described with “heavy-handed banter in Irish brogue” (Feeley 277). In the published novel, they are presented in antithesis with Kim and the lama, being strangers in a strange land they do not really understand, a portrayal which makes them disturbing to the reader. Their command of Hindi or Urdu is rather poor, and their behavior is mostly ignorant and insensitive. For example, Bennett suspects Kim of stealing and ill-treats him, but suddenly changes his attitude the moment he finds out he is white. Then, the two men start discussing the boy’s welfare. In the manuscript, the clerics possess the authority to decide what happens to Kim, completely dismissing the lama’s arguments, and continuously mocking him. Consider the passage:

Grey [Bennett in the published version] looked at him with an ethnologist’s interest. “A Buddhist! Well of all the mad mixtures”. “He’s not goin’ on with that heathen anyway” said Father Victor in an undertone.

[...]

“Listen. We take this boy to be the son of a –” Grey hesitated – “Sahib who was since many years in this regiment. How and why he came to go with thee is perhaps a matter for the police”.

“What has he to do with the police?” He came – he was sent to me when I was faint and bewildered in Lahore city. He was sent to help me –

[...]

“Listen, then, he will not say anything to the police. But this boy is, without doubt, the son of a Sahib, a white man. Is it understood?”

[...]

“Ye can’t allow the boy to go on an’ be lost,” he muttered. (qtd. in Feeley 278-279)

However, in the manuscript, the mocked ones are rather the Englishmen. In a long discussion (cf. *Kim* 73-82) about the boy’s future, they are the “overwhelmed” (ibid. 79) ones who do not know what to do with him. The lama, efficient as he is, is the one who opts for the best (English) school for Kim and also offers to pay for it. Naturally, the Englishmen are not very happy to accept money from the “faquir” (ibid. 77). Therefore, Bennett and Father Victor are reduced to their “functional core” in the published version, only

working to “speed the narrative and dramatize – through their denial of them – such ideas as tolerance, brotherhood, and equality” (Feeley 279).

Another amendment which shows Kipling’s changing attitudes towards established prejudices concerns Kim’s train encounter with E23, another secret agent who is threatened with death because he seduced a woman from a king’s harem. When the agent’s chaser enters the train, he is “grey with terror” at the sight of this diabolic “negro”. In a long discussion, Kim and E23 harass the Black man, calling him “hubshee” (black) and “nigger”, Kim ultimately making him leave the train by threatening him with a pistol, while even the lama “admitted that since the offender was a Negro, he has been mercifully dealt with” (qtd. in Feeley 280). The published version omits this scene, substituting it for one in which Kim helps the agent by curing his wounds, giving him opium to stop his pain and disguising him so that he can pass unknown. The proof for Kim’s manhood also shifts from brute force to the ability to heal in order to “preserve life” (ibid.).

All these changes point to Kipling’s change of attitude with regard to imperialism. The reduced roles of the white characters serve as negative symbols of imperialist practices, while the development of the lama as full character as opposed to the initial stereotype, as well as the deletion of the “negro” scene are a call for equality. Thus, Kipling’s attempt to overcome existing prejudices and stereotypes is unquestionable (cf. ibid. 280-281).

2.8 Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed Kipling’s portrayal of the Other in his novel *Kim*. I have shown that, despite his reputation as a convinced imperialist who strongly believes in the supremacy of the British, in *Kim*, Kipling’s love for India and his sympathy for its people gains terrain. Kipling moved away from his usual portraits of Indians as subordinate, child-like and humble, and created new, full, complex characters which are not easily categorized as stereotypes. As McClure puts it, one finds in *Kim* “powerfully persuasive representations of the colonized peoples, representations that identify them neither as innocents nor as demons, but as human beings,

complex and difficult, to be approached with sympathy, respect, and caution” (1985:155). Kipling’s main character is presented as hybrid, harmoniously combining features of both East and West. Huree Babu is the witty Oriental, a striking novelty for Kipling, which through his tenacity and wit manages to subvert the usual stereotype of his kind. The treatment of religion in the novel is also a novelty, as Kipling gives Buddhism the status of sovereign theme, and does not use it, as some have claimed, for purposes of drawing an exotic portrait of India. I have showed that Kipling possessed remarkable knowledge about Buddhism and treats it most seriously throughout the novel, especially through the character of the Teshoo Lama. The Oriental stereotypes used in the novel are part of the inescapable imperial framework, but Kipling decorates them with a sense of kind sympathy which lower their strength. In addition, we find in *Kim* also plenty of Western stereotypes, which for me is a leveling: if the sahibs are also stereotypized, then the act of stereotyping loses in strength and seriousness. It seems that Kipling employs stereotypes for entertaining, literary purposes. I have also pointed to the fact that racial superiority is rejected in *Kim*, the boy coming in contact with all sorts of people of all castes and races, none of them being presented as better or worse, while there is also no sign that this is something abnormal. It appears that Kipling pictures an interracial harmony which some have regarded as being utopian, in the sense that Kipling cleansed the novel of all conflict and history (cf. Said 1994, Williams 2002), but while critics consider this a weakness, I think this is a positive aspect. Even if he imagines that the type of interracial collaboration and camaraderie displayed in *Kim* could grow under the umbrella of British domination, as McClure explains, by putting this aspect aside, he manages to look outside the frame of his time and present a vision of interracial harmony which is still to be achieved. Thus, “*Kim* may well be a more effective antidote to racial antipathies than any of Conrad’s works, which by their great gloominess tend to corrode at once any belief in racist modes of vision and any hope that they may be abolished” (McClure 1985: 166). Of course at the turn of the 20th century this harmony was far from manageable, not even thinkable, and I can only praise Kipling for imagining it

A most original creation of Kipling, Teshoo Lama is a highly complex character who stands for equality and through which Kipling is highlighting Western prejudices in order to show their absurdity. This being said, we have to keep in mind that Kipling was far from liberal, and *Kim* was rather the exception than the rule in his work. By discussing the first draft of the novel, I have shown that initially, *Kim* tended to be just another typical work of Kipling. But somewhere along the way, the author changed his mind and actively eliminated all the colonial prejudices from it, creating this wonderful, harmonious thesaurus of people, places and languages.

Conclusion

One of the consequences of imperialism is the coming of age of a fixed difference between the West and the rest. The colonial powers, in their struggle for colonies as new markets and additional territories, have worked towards the creation of two separate categories which have come to be known as Self vs. Other (Us vs. Them), the Self standing for the dominant group (European West) and the Other for the colonized groups (South/East). Further, the West has been established as being modern, rational, civilized, while its Other as primitive, lacking reason and savage. Consequently, the West felt it is its task to bring the Other to its level. However, this task, known the civilizing mission, was just a justification for Europeans to occupy foreign lands with a clear conscience: they are albeit doing a good deed by bringing their developed institutions and modern principles to these traditional societies. However, the indigenous people, even if they were supposed to be “improved” by the Europeans, they remained inferior by nature in the minds of the colonists, and this is how they were being thought of.

In this paper I have discussed these issues as they are presented in British literature at the turn of the 20th century, the golden age of imperialism. I chose to analyze Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, two books written roughly at the same time about two different target-places of colonialism: Africa and India, respectively. Both authors have both “first-hand experience of the conditions of life they identify as shaping the

colonialist's character and consciousness" (McClure 1981:8). My aim was to show that these two authors, both belonging to the hegemony, provided us with the first representations of the Other as complex human beings, suggesting that imperial ideology was wrong and the categories and stereotypes are not determined, but arbitrary. At the time Conrad and Kipling were writing, imperialism was flourishing and its ideologies were state of the art. One can claim that a world without empires could not have been conceived of at that time. Empires are based on colonization, colonization is excused by means of the civilizing paradigm, so it was convenient for everyone to think of the natives through this paradigm's lenses. It is therefore remarkable that in the heyday of imperialism Conrad and Kipling thought outside the box with regard to the status of these people.

Conrad has been to the Congo himself and could therefore observe the place and its inhabitants in proximity. Being also born and raised in a colonized territory, he recognized rapidly the atrocities that were taking place in the region. He chose to render them through Marlow, who narrates his impressions about the works in the Congo and about the Africans in a very detailed way, telling us constantly how images or events make him feel and giving us his personal opinions about the imperialistic practices taking place there. But he does so using the colonial framework i.e. language and imagery which is in line with the categories and principles of the civilizing mission. On a closer look, however we find that Marlow is in fact constantly criticizing this discourse. In this paper, I have shown how he uses stereotypes only to subvert them and show their absurdity, how he tries to understand, communicate with, and even help the exploited Africans, therefore creating a space for (unfledged) reciprocity between Self and Other, and unveiling the similarities in nature, language and humanity of the Africans. Imperialism as practice is subtly criticized through pointing at the flaws of the West in their benevolent mission: he portrays Belgian practices as inefficient and shows that their imperial work is actually based on slavery. All this was very unusual in the 1900s, and I praised Conrad for his accomplishments, while at the same time acknowledging that he did not completely break with colonial prejudices. However, he did see the Other's potential, and by the end of the

novel we notice that Marlow got to know the Other together with us; he arrived there as a colonizer and developed this vision on the spot; he did not go to Congo with the purpose of discovering the indigenous population's humanity – just like his. But he did.

Kipling, on the other hand, “not only wrote about India, but was of it” (Said 1994: 160). He then automatically had a certain allegiance to the place, and in *Kim* we see this sentimental aspect. India is rendered as a beautiful place, one being able to sense the love in the narrator's voice. Even so, Kipling was a convinced imperialist, and therefore in love of an India under British dominance. This political aspect aside, it is most remarkable in *Kim* that Kipling lets go of his prejudices and paints a portrait of India's people as being fully-fledged personalities, witty and tenacious, equal human beings. Moreover, Kipling emphasizes this equality between people as he creates different kinds of characters, good and bad Orientals, good and bad sahibs, showing that all humans have both sides. The character of the lama is also used to exploit this equality theme. With his teachings as a Tibetan Buddhist, Kipling shows us the futility of Western racial prejudices and hierarchy systems.

The difference between Kipling and Conrad is mainly that Conrad criticized imperialism in the sense that direct rule leads to the destruction of the initial cultures and the denigration of their people, so he was anti-imperialism and wanted these cultures to be left alone to flourish. Kipling, on the other hand, while acknowledging the richness of the Indian culture, still saw it as better off under British domination. In this sense, his portrayal of imperialism is a utopian one, leaving out conflicts which would have made *Kim* not such a rosy account of Indian life at the end of the 19th century. However, both have in common this reconnaissance with regard to their attitudes towards the colonized peoples. While Conrad tried to record the features of Africans which identify them with the white man and which at times make them even more human, Kipling suggests an equality and brotherhood among different peoples which seems completely natural, at a time when it was everything but natural. Throughout the novel, one never has

the feeling that Kipling is trying to prove something; the harmony is self-evident.

Conrad and Kipling were both children of their time, but in many ways they are far ahead of it in their ways of thought about humans. Taking into consideration that Darwin's evolutionary theory has just been transposed to people in 1871 (*The Descent of Man*), what Kipling and Conrad saw about two decades later is remarkable. From scientific racism to full acknowledgement of the African's equality in nature, and to a portrait of interracial harmony, there is a long way. But these two authors took the shortcut. As McClure pointed out, "the colonial struggles that Kipling and Conrad portray may now appear, at least from a Eurocentric perspective and in the light of the demise of colonialism, to be of secondary importance." (McClure 1981:2). But the "little things" I mentioned above were crucial in the beginning of another way of thinking about the practices of colonialism and its influence on the target group.

As to what the mentioned structural analogies concerns, personally, while reading, I tried to walk in Marlow's shoes and image that I witness together with him the happenings around. Marlow was just discovering the Congo and its natives, so how could he have done more than he did? It was impossible to invent other words to describe what he sees, so he used the usual vocabulary, as well as it was impossible to change sides, so he did his best from his. But his insights are everything but racist, and, as I have showed, remarkably valuable in shaping a portrait of the Other as a fully-blown human being. The immediacy of Marlow's experiences makes the reader feel with him, and personally I felt for the Africans in the story, recognizing their humanity, speech, impulses, and sorrows – like mine. With *Kim*, I laughed when reading about the typical Oriental (probably because of my somewhat Eastern background) and understood his superstitions and cultural values, but never had the feeling he is ridiculed. As I have claimed in this paper, these stereotypes are rendered with a clearly recognizable sympathy. I also understood what Kipling means with the Western stereotypes (reason taken to the extreme, but no feeling for subtleties), and this combination led me to assert that Kipling only employs them to show that

all men are constructed in the same way. For these reasons, I am convinced that the two authors had a vision way beyond their immediate context in what concerns the social world order of their novels. This paper has shown the methods by which Kipling and Conrad incorporated their vision in their novels.

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German Abstract**Herzen der Finsternis: Das „Andere“ in britischer Kolonialliteratur**

Meine Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Darstellung des „Anderen“ in der britischen Kolonialliteratur um die Jahrhundertwende. Bekannt als Höhepunkt des Imperialismus, gab es in dieser Periode eine klare Spaltung zwischen Kolonisten und Kolonisierten. Die Autorität/Macht des Westens über den Osten bzw. Süden war nicht nur ökonomisch und politisch, sondern auch diskursiv. In Wissenschaft und Literatur, wird der Kolonisierte als untergeordnet, primitiv und kindisch dargestellt. Weiters wurde er als hilfsbedürftig wahrgenommen, worauf sich die primäre Rechtfertigung der Kolonisten stützte.

Mein Ziel war es zu zeigen, dass es in Joseph Conrads *Herz der Finsternis* und Rudyard Kiplings *Kim* die ersten Versuche gibt, dieses Bild zu verändern. Beiden Autoren gelingt es, eine komparativ positive Darstellung des „Anderen“ zu schaffen, indem sie die Vorurteile ihrer Zeit überwinden.

Conrad tut es mit Hilfe von Marlow, einem Seeman, der in den Congo segelt und die Chance hat, die Einheimischen aus der Nähe zu beobachten. Durch diesen nahen Kontakt, beginnt Marlow zu realisieren, dass in den Afrikanern die gleiche Menschlichkeit zu finden ist wie bei seinen Landsleuten; sie haben dieselben Impulse und Sprachsysteme, und sind gelegentlich sogar noch menschlicher als die gewalttätigen Kolonisten. Obwohl er Teil der dominanten Gruppe ist, versucht Marlow ständig die Einheimischen zu verstehen, zeitweise mit ihnen zu kommunizieren, und ihnen sogar zu helfen. Er schafft somit eine Art West-Süd Dialog, der damals sehr selten zu finden war, und der eher störend für das zeitgenössische Publikum war. Letzendlich gelingt es Conrad ein Bild von den Afrikanern als voll entfaltete menschliche Wesen zu zeichnen, dass für seine Zeit fast undenkbar war. Auch was den Imperialismus betrifft zeigt Conrad eine bemerkenswerte Stellung, wobei er die zivilisatorische Mission und die westliche Expansion subtil aber scharf kritisiert. Obwohl Conrad nicht völlig aufgeklärt war (was nicht zu erwarten wäre) und daher die Sprache und

Stereotypen seiner Zeit benutzt, hat er einen klaren Vorsprung in seinem Versuch, sich vom kolonialen Diskurs zu distanzieren.

Was Kiplings *Kim* anbelangt, scheint er seinem Ruf als überzeugter Imperialist, der an die Superiorität des weißen Mannes glaubt, zu trotzen, indem er in diesem Buch seiner Liebe für Indien und der Sympathie seiner Einwohnern Vorrang gibt. Kipling nimmt Abstand von seinen üblichen Darstellungen von Indianern als untergeordnet, kindlich und bescheiden und schafft neue, vollständige, komplexe Figuren, die man nur schwierig als Stereotypen bezeichnen kann. McClure nennt diese Darstellungen „überzeugende Repräsentationen von Kolonisierten, die sie weder als Unschuldige noch als Bösewichter identifizieren, sondern einfach als menschliche Wesen, komplex und diffizil, mit Sympathie, Respekt und Sorgfalt zu behandeln“ (1985:155). Die Orientale Stereotypen die im Buch vorkommen sind Teil des unvermeidlichen imperialen Gefüges, aber Kipling sorgt dafür, diese mit Sympathie wiederzugeben, die ihre Macht verringert. Ausserdem verwendet Kipling auch zahlreiche westliche Stereotypen, was ein Zeichen dafür ist, dass Kipling das Stereotyp zu literarische Unterhaltungszwecken benutzt. Weiters zeigt uns Kipling eine interethnische Harmonie, die zu der Zeit nicht nur unmöglich, sondern gar undenkbar war. Das führt Kritiken dazu, zu behaupten, dass er im Vergleich zu Conrad ein stärkeres Antidot zu ethnischen Antipathien anbietet. Eine Neuerscheinung in Kipling's Werk ist Teshoo Lama, der Repräsentant von Gleichheit, durch den Kipling es nicht nur schafft, die Vorurteile des Westens zu verspotten, sondern auch dem Buddhismus den Status eines souveränen Themas zu geben. Nach einer Diskussion des ersten Manuskripts von *Kim* wurde klar, dass *Kim* anfangs ein gewöhnliches Buch von Kipling sein sollte. Im Zuge der Bearbeitung bzw. Fertigstellung wurden systematisch alle rassistische Vorurteile aktiv beseitigt. Das Resultat war dieses harmonisches Porträt von Menschen, Orten und Sprachen, welches nicht nur für Kipling sondern für die Jahrhundertwende an sich sehr ungewöhnlich war.

Infolgedessen stehen *Herz der Finsternis* und *Kim* für die Anfänge eines neues Denkmusters über die Kolonisierten als gleichberechtigte menschliche Wesen, und beinhalten die ersten Hinweisen für den

willkürlichen Charakter der zivilisatorischen Mission. Die Kluft zwischen „Selbst“ und „Andere“ ist verringert worden, indem gezeigt wurde, dass jedes „Andere“ ein „Selbst“ in sich trägt.

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