

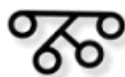
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**Construction of Britishness in Kipling's *Kim* and Ballard's *Empire of the Sun***

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## Construction of Britishness in Kipling's *Kim* and Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*

### 1. Introduction

Great Britain would probably occupy a smaller part in the making of world history if it had not been for its colonies. The term often used when talking about the peak of British imperialism is “the empire on which the sun never sets” – borrowed and paraphrased from the Greek historian Herodotus<sup>1</sup> – denoting such a vast territory that at any point in time at least one part of it was in daylight. The immensity of the British Empire had much, if not everything, to owe to its colonies which were the main source of its financial and trading goods. The influence of colonialism was extensive both on the colonies and on the Empire itself. It spread further than British political rule and was visible in cultural, social, political, literary, and other spheres. To show the influence on the literary sphere, this paper will deal with two novels written eighty years apart by two British authors. Both novels, as it will be shown, deal with the construction of Britishness through their main characters. The novels in question are Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and J. G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*. I chose the topic of the construction of Britishness because I found it interesting how two novels that were written in such different time frames and under different political and social influence, dealt with the question of British colonialism at the beginning and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main criterion for choosing these novels was the protagonist – a young boy living and travelling in the colonial setting. Through their travels and adventures, Kim and Jim, the two protagonists, grow aware of their identity, the burdens it bears and the difficulty in determining it. This paper will show whether or not their encounters and adventures help them discover their true self, and successfully portray Britishness, as well as what the role of the novels was at the time of their publication.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.parstimes.com/history/herodotus/persian\\_wars/polymnia.html](http://www.parstimes.com/history/herodotus/persian_wars/polymnia.html)

The first two chapters of this paper will give a historical background for each of the novels and provide their critical analysis. Each chapter will be divided into two sub-chapters, the first sub-chapter being the historical background and the second the analysis of the novel. The third chapter will situate the two novels in the historical context, showing the motivation of the authors and the political and social circumstances of the time in which the novels were written. The fourth chapter will offer an analysis of the two novels, stating their similarities and differences through arguments on education, adventure novel and the imperial play ethic. The final chapter will give a conclusion to the paper, taking into consideration all the research done in previous chapters. In the conclusion I will point out the result of the comparative analysis of the novels and the critical reading of sources, and try to answer the questions from the beginning – do both protagonists stay true to their British identity, and do the novels serve the imperial ends they were supposed to.

## 2. The British Empire and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*

### 2.1. The British Empire in India

British rule in India slowly began in the 1600s, after the British showed interest in the spice and textile trade. However, the Indian market was already occupied by the Portuguese who arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and fought their way in. As James writes, “the arrival of their heavily-gunned caravels was unwelcomed, but proved unstoppable” (25). The two main opponents to the Portuguese were British and Dutch merchants who established companies in order to set up spice trades. The British company was called East India Company, and the Dutch one was “Compaigne van Verre (Company of Far Distant Lands)” (25). The antagonism between the two companies escalated in 1623 when eighteen British merchants were “tortured to death on Amboina in an exercise of brutality designed to frighten off others” (26). During that period, India was ruled by the Mughal emperors. The Mughal Empire was, according to Catherine B. Asher, “at its height ... one of the largest centralized states that ever existed before modern times, considerably surpassing in wealth its Ottoman and Safavid rivals” (281). Mughal emperors were more inclined towards the British than the Dutch because of their fighting skills demonstrated against the bellicose Portuguese. Owing to that, the Mughals allowed the East India Company to set a number of trading posts along the western and eastern shores. The Company's directors established a guideline according to which the East India Company “had no political or territorial ambitions in a country that was enjoying a period of stability under Mughal government” (James 26). However, after 1757 the British parliament, according to Kapil Raj, issued orders to the Company for a more permanent form of exploitation and government (121), slowly showing its colonizing plans for India.

From a purely commercial enterprise, the East India Company transformed itself into the owner of the strongest military force in India, slowly diminishing in trading power, and

becoming “principally dependent on land taxes collected from the provinces it ruled” (James 123). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British ruled over Nepal, Assam, Bengal, a part of Hindustan and the whole Northern part of the subcontinent, including Ceilon. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of the Company’s growth and infiltration into more parts of India. The expansion of the business meant that more people were required to occupy posts such as “administrators, collectors of revenue, surveyors and residents” (James 131). This was the time of the flourishing of science in India, as well as in other British colonies. As Raj argues, “the late eighteenth century saw the rise ... of a number of field sciences that at once fed on and reinforced colonial order, such as geographical surveying, agriculture, botany, forestry, and anthropology” (120). As opposed to the rise of science, the East India Company fought wars all around the country. The battles and conquests, however lucrative, left the company in enormous debts. James argues that “by 1815 the Company’s debt was £40 million and just over three-quarters of its annual budget was consumed by the expenses of its army, which was now 150,000 strong” (134). Many critical voices were raised in London, asking where this kind of behaviour was leading to. The Company authority expanded over a vast amount of territory but it lacked the skills necessary to rule over it. Delegates were sent to India in order to try and mend the situation, but, according to James, “in a country where highly-paid posts proliferated, and the opportunities for graft were still plentiful, old attitudes died hard” (135). All efforts to refine the British administration in India proved futile since the Company’s rule over the occupied territories allowed them to preserve their own “machinery of government, which had evolved along autocratic lines and sophisticated, well-organised societies with their own deeply-rooted religions and customs” (135). At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British were an “accepted political fact of life” (138), and India served as a base from which they controlled southern Asia and the Indian Ocean. As James argues, “the Indian army gave

Britain the power with which to protect these interests, and enforce its will throughout a region which extended from the Red Sea to the Malay Peninsula” (138).

From 1815 onwards the British made significant changes in India, in both academic and cultural spheres. According to James, it was a period of “steady ascent from the depths of chaos, ignorance and backwardness towards the heights of peace, order and material progress” (219). As David Cannadine argues, British colonialism was about “the domestication of the exotic” (xix). The British took it upon themselves to educate the Indian population by slowly interfering with their customs, religious ceremonies and way of life. As Cohn argues, traditions such as the *darbar* were slowly changed to meet the needs of British officials. *Darbar* was a tradition in which

the person to be ... honoured offered *nazar*, gold coins, and/or *peshkash*, valuables such as elephants, horses, jewels and other precious objects. The amount of gold coins offered or the nature and amount of *peshkash* presented were carefully graded and related to the rank and status of the person making the presentation. (168)

The British translated this to a clear buying of positions and paying for favours. Although the ritual seemed unchanged, the motivation behind it was different. The value of things presented as *nazar* and *peshkash* was not important to Indians. They valued these items through their symbolical importance, and thought of them as specialties that were to be displayed on certain occasions. Under the British interference, the “ritual of incorporation now became a ritual marking subordination, with no mystical bonding between royal figure and the chosen friend” (Cohn 172). According to Marshall, “British administrators ... were not unmindful of the need to adapt to indigenous ways of doing things, but the assumption that British ways were the norm was usually inescapable” (29). Even though the British tried to infiltrate themselves into Indian culture, they still had the need to change it for their benefit. Other than intruding their traditions, the British slowly introduced a new way of education in which English was the language of teaching, and British history the prevalent one in Indian

schools. Their influence was so strong that, according to Cohn, “through the encouragement of the production by Indians of school books, Indians began to write history in the European mode, often borrowing European ideas about the past of India” (183). Furthermore, the British became so incorporated into the Indian culture that “the British rulers were increasingly defining what was Indian” (183).

The situation was seemingly peaceful until 1857 and the first Indian mutiny. The causes of the mutiny were mere rumours about animal fat being used to grease the weapons and powdered bones of pigs and cows being added to flour issued to the, predominantly, Muslim and Hindu soldiers. Despite the fact that these were rumours, it was enough to set in progress a series of actions that would result in a real civil war. As James states, in May 1857, “one cavalry and three infantry regiments spontaneously rebelled, ransacked the European cantonment and murdered several officers and their families” (226). The mutiny slowly spread throughout India, and by the beginning of July, Aligahr, Benares, Jhansi, Gwalior and Indore joined the rebels. James argues that “through ruthless and iron stamina the British were getting the upper hand by early autumn” (229), making the capture of Delhi the turning point of the war. In 1858 the rebellion was almost completely broken, and as a result the East India Company was dissolved in the same year. Finally, Queen Victoria was proclaimed the empress of India, since it was believed by the politicians in the United Kingdom that “with the imperial title, the hierarchic order would be clear cut and unequivocal” (James 185), and in that way it would be easier to rule over India without misunderstandings between the title of the Maharaja (which translates into English as king), and the Queen.

India as a British colony lasted until 1947 when it gained independence. The time frame needed for this paper is up to 1900 since *Kim* was first published that year. The influences of the events that took place in the years before found their way in the novel through various characters it represents. The combination of the colonial rule on the one hand,



and literary and cultural concepts such as orientalism and Britishness on the other, make *Kim* a truly perplexing novel, hiding the true identity of the little protagonist until the very end.

## 2.2. *Kim*

The covers of the 2010 Collins Classics edition of *Kim* give a short summary of the novel:

Set against the backdrop of Britain and Russia's political struggle in central Asia, Kim, the son of a drunken Irish soldier grows up a street-wise orphan in the city of Lahore. Playful and spirited, Kim befriends an aged Tibetan Lama and journeys with him across India, experiencing the exotic culture, religion and people of the subcontinent. On their travels they come across Kim's father's old army regiment and as his adventures take him further into the world of secret agents and political intrigue, Kim is torn between his spiritual self and the expectations of his British compatriots.

The influence of the British culture is visible even in this short description. Kim is in the middle of two identities, the British and Indian one. He grows up on the streets of an Indian town of Lahore, thinking of himself as an Indian boy. He is aware of his father's origins but still denies that he is in any part a *sahib*, which is, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary: "sir, master - used especially among the native inhabitants of colonial India when addressing or speaking of a European of some social or official status".<sup>2</sup> However, when he meets the members of his father's regiment he is recognized as a white boy and undergoes typical British education for children of British citizens in India. This duality of identity is what gets him through all the situations he encounters in the novel. He is perfectly capable of taking on either his Indian or British identity depending on the situation, sometimes resorting more to his British side, which will eventually prevail by the end of the novel, and prove that Kim embodies the notion of Britishness.

According to Cannadine, Britishness is a notion that all British colonies shared; a notion of belonging to the British Empire, through culture, titles, customs, and it helped form an interconnected world between Britain and its colonies:

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.merriam-webster.com>

In these ways, and by these means, the British exported and projected vernacular sociological visions from the metropolis to the periphery, and they imported and analogized them from the empire back to Britain, thereby constructing comforting and familiar resemblance and equivalencies and affinities. (122)

Adding to that, Linda Colley argues that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Britishness was created in a wider context:

Britons defined themselves in terms of their common Protestantism as contrasted with the Catholicism of Continental Europe. They defined themselves against France throughout a succession of major wars with that power. And they defined themselves against the global empire won by way of these wars. They defined themselves, in short, not just through an internal and domestic dialogue but in conscious opposition to the Other beyond their shores. (316)

Kim's role in the novel is the connection between Britishness and the other; it serves as an agent in the construction of Britishness in India. The other is defined by Edward Said in terms of Orientalism, as opposed to Europe:

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. (1-2)

Furthermore, Kim's role is clear to the reader and the characters surrounding him, including the narrator. However, is it clear to him? Does Kim consider himself the link between the Empire and the colony or not? The following paragraphs will show examples of Kim's behaviour and will provide a critical analysis of the duality of his identity.

Firstly, it is important to note that *Kim* is an adventure novel, and as such can be considered, according to Judith A. Plotz, as "a cross-cultural bildungsroman in which the adolescent's long-sought identity is achieved by a purposeful journey" (116). The term "cross-cultural" implies that there is a transition between the two cultures, the British and the

Indian one, and that the transition is more than plainly visible in Kim. Furthermore, Chris Ann Matteo argues that the main characteristic of *Kim* as a bildungsroman is the education that Kim undergoes (164). The education in the novel can be divided, according to Matteo, in two types – the formal one, in St. Xavier’s school, and the informal one, consisting of Kim’s travels and encounters through India. These two types of education serve for the “hero’s investigation of the frontiers of self and other” (164).

As Judith A. Plotz claims, Kim is represented throughout the novel as British: “There are attempts by the narrator and occasional characters to place Kim as definingly white and a sahib” (114). Even though he is capable of changing his identity and switching between Indian and British, he cannot escape the role of the empire that he carries in the novel. David Scott claims that *Kim* is a novel written to serve “the ends of empire” (302). As the novel’s protagonist, Kim also serves those ends, performing the imperial role throughout the novel. Furthermore, as Plotz describes Kim, “he almost moves in and out of his own skin, sometimes as pale as his Irish genes dictate, sometimes as dark as the fierce sun or the dyes of the bazaar can make him” (115). He grows into his British imperial role as the novel develops, transforming his journey with the Lama into a personal development.

From the very beginning of the novel, the narrator sets the scene by introducing Kim:

...Kim was English. 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 bazar; Kim was white – a poor white of the very poorest. (Kipling 1)

The classification of Kim as “a poor white” is the first notion of the imperial mind frame. Cannadine argues that “the British Empire was based solely and completely on a hierarchy of race” (6). The old-fashioned belief that the white race was superior to other races shows how Kim is superior to the people surrounding him, even if he is “of the very poorest” (Kipling 1). Not only does the narrator describe Kim as white, he also places him on a cannon in front of

the Wonder House, the Lahore Museum, and claims that the cannon was a symbol of the Punjab, and Kim, by sitting on it, represents its ruler, the one who is holding it under control, i.e. the British Empire. Furthermore, when Kim is talking to Mahbub Ali, the narrator writes that “Kim could lie like an Oriental” (Kipling 23). The use of comparison is significant in the sense that it distances Kim from the Orientals. He is British but can behave like an Oriental, not the other way around, and Mahbub Ali definitely sees him as white. There is another example of this in Chapter 3, when somebody laughs at Kim’s speech: “Where a native would have lain down, Kim’s white blood set him upon his feet” (46), as well as: “‘I hate all snakes,’ said Kim. No native training can quench the white man’s horror of the Serpent.” (44)

The novel takes place during the period of the Great Game, which was according to Peter Hopkirk, “a shadowy struggle for political ascendancy [in which] the ultimate prize, or so it was feared in London and Calcutta, and fervently hoped by ambitious Russian officers serving in Asia, was British India” (2). As Matteo puts it, “Kipling's novel conceives the Great Game as an intricate system of English surveillance which attempts to avert and anticipate the internal treachery of power-hungry native Rajahs and the external manoeuvres of the invading Russian enemy” (163). Kim gets himself involved in the Great Game and acts as a spy for the British. However, he is not at all interested in the profit his occupation will bring, since “for all his training, he was Irish enough by birth to reckon silver the least part of any game” (Kipling 37). He is only in it for the adventure, travel, “the sheer excitement and the sense of power” (47). It is the game itself that allows Kim to shift from one identity to another. As Matteo argues, “Kim's revel in play affords him fluidity and flexibility of identity which bedazzles his elders” (170). The wish to play the game and have fun allows him to change his personality and his approach to people in different manners, in that way making him flexible between the two identities.

Seeing how the story tries to put Kim in a British role, there are moments in the novel where Kim is uncertain of his identity. One such moment occurs in Chapter 7, when Kim is about to be instructed by Colonel Creighton on how to map the land for the British:

‘But I am to pray to Bibi Miriam, and I am a Sahib’ – he looked at his boot ruefully. ‘No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?’ He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all this roaring whirl of India, going southward to he knew not what fate. (Kipling 120)

There is another instance of Kim’s questioning his own identity in Chapter 11, when he parts ways with Hurre Babu at Lucknow station:

‘Who is Kim – Kim – Kim?’

He squatted in a corner of the clanging waiting-room, rapt from all other thoughts; hands folded in lap, and pupils contracted to pin-points. In a minute – in another half second – he felt he would arrive at the solution of the tremendous puzzle; but here, as always happens, his mind dropped away from those heights with the rush of a wounded bird, and passing his hand before his eyes, he shook his head. (Kipling 190)

Kim does not know where he belongs. He thinks of himself more as Indian than Irish, or white, but the narrator keeps pointing to his ‘white’ personality. After all, Kim is only a child, it is not up to him to ponder on his identity; he does not have enough knowledge to reach the answers that he seeks. It is both the narrator’s and the reader’s task to see Kim as a perfectly assimilated white boy in India.

According to Plotz, the main Western characteristic in Kim is his rational thinking in situations that are all but rational. For example, in the episode where Kim is introduced to Lurgan Sahib, he is shown a broken jar that is apparently coming back into shape all on its own. At that moment, Kim starts thinking about the multiplication table in English to try and keep his mind occupied with something viable while Lurgan is telling him how the jar is putting itself together:

‘Look! It is coming into shape,’ said Lurgan Sahib.

So far Kim had been thinking in Hindi, but a tremor came on him, and with an effort like that of a swimmer before sharks, who hurls himself half out of the water, his mind leaped up from a darkness that was swallowing it and took refuge in – the multiplication-table in English!

‘Look! It is coming into shape,’ whispered Lurgan Sahib.

The jar had been smashed – yes, smashed – not the native word, he would not think of that – but smashed – into fifty pieces, and twice three was six, and thrice three was nine, and four times three was twelve. He clung desperately to the repetition. The shadow-outline of the jar cleared like a mist after rubbing eyes. There were the broken shards; there was the spilt water drying in the sun, and through the cracks of the verandah showed, all ribbed, the white-wall house below – and thrice twelve was thirty-six! (Kipling 156)

Plotz argues that this method is intrinsically Western (121), for when Kim thinks rationally, he closes himself to his Indian identity. He becomes British and loses the sense of recognition, according to Plotz (121), that makes him the “Little Friend of All the World” (Kipling 3); he distances himself away from his surroundings. However unpleasant this feeling is for Kim, who has always been friendly and helpful to everybody, it is his true self, the British part of him that he cannot escape.

As Kim grows older, he becomes more aware of his identity. He has been recruited by Colonel Creighton to act as a spy for the British in the Great Game. He meets Hurree Babu who is an ethnographer for the British as well, and in a conversation the two have, Kim says: “I am a Sahib” (Kipling 226). The confirmation of his British identity has finally been uttered by Kim himself, not the narrator or any of the characters. He is older, a seventeen-year-old boy, and, in that respect, wiser. He comes to terms with his identity, no longer so ardently denying his Irish roots. Hurree sees this trait in Kim and tries to set him straight: “but you cannot occupy two places in space simultaneously. That is axiomatic” (Kipling 255). The two

places that Hurree is referring to may imply the two races that Kim occupies. Hurree has been trying to assimilate himself with the British in order to become a better spy and ethnographer, but has never succeeded in doing so. Kim, who has never tried to attain something like that in his life, seems to do it so naturally that it makes Hurree jealous.

The end of the novel again shows what Plotz said was Western behaviour in Kim (121). When the Lama finally finds his river, he jumps into it and almost drowns. Hurree Babu helps him out of the water, and when Kim hears the story, his reply is: “Allah Kerim! Oh, well that the Babu was by! Was thou very wet?” (Kipling 295). Kim’s rationalization of the situation may serve as the final evidence in the question of his identity. While the old, Indian Kim would probably ask the Lama about the salvation and cleansing of sins, the new, British Kim asks him if he got very wet. The rationality and logic of his question show Kim’s transformation to his British identity. According to Taylor, Kim eventually proves himself as an “imperial servant” (63), but by doing so, he loses a part of his identity, the Indian part, and with it he loses “the ability to take possession of the trove he initially sought because he can no longer appreciate that which falls outside the epistemological space of the sahib” (65). He cannot occupy two identities at once, as he has tried throughout the novel. One identity has to overrule the other, and in the imperial context of the time and the novel, it is the British identity that wins in the end.



### 3. The China-Japan War and Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*

#### 3.1. Shanghai International Settlement and the Second Sino-Japanese War

According to Robert Bickers, Shanghai International Settlement was established in 1834 for foreign residents working and living in China (165). The opportunities for work opened up after the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, by which five Chinese ports were open for international trade and business (Bickers 165). The British who lived in the International Settlement were subject to British law and were allowed to rent the land in the property of the Settlement. They became 'Shanghaianders' and "dominated the patterns of political and social life in the nominally International Settlement" (Bickers 170). Shanghaianders, Bickers argues were "Britons ... narrowly defined by race rather than passport" (178). They were settlers and held a strong British and imperialistic identity along with the local one. It can be argued then that Jim Graham's family from *Empire of the Sun* considers itself a Shanghaiander family: they keep to the British customs and live in the nostalgic realm of the British imperialism, which is most visible in their relationship towards citizens of other nationalities, as will be shown when analysing the novel. Other Shanghaiander traits include a strong sense of Christianity, self-interest, "die-hard conservatism", and their self-image, that was, according to Bickers, "consciously masculine, and violent" (195-196). The Shanghaianders were the dominant group in Shanghai International Settlement until the Second Sino-Japanese war, when the Japanese took over their property and divided them into prison camps.

The Second Sino-Japanese war began in 1937 and lasted to 1945 (Gordon 137). Japan entered the war with China out of market and financial reasons. China was considered "one of the few foreign markets still available" (140) and "to secure it, the Japanese would go to war" (140). Furthermore, according to Bayly and Harper, "the Japanese regarded China in rather the same way that the previous generation of Britons had regarded France, as a cultural

reference point, but a contemptible nation-state (2). The nationalist Japanese thinking was that China was too slow in its progress and that Japan should use its technology and leadership to improve China (2).

*Empire of the Sun* follows the last four years of the war, from 1941 and the attack on Pearl Harbor, to 1945 and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. According to Gordon, the war between China and Japan began on 7 July 1937 when Japanese and Chinese troops clashed at the Marco Polo Bridge outside Peking (146). Even though the Japanese soldiers were considered, according to Edward Drea, “the bravest, and most tenacious in the world” (qtd. in Gordon 147), they lacked the military strategy to lead them to victory at the end of the war. The Japanese were making great progress in the first two years of the war, but in 1939 there came to a halt in their progression. Gordon argues that the Japanese never wanted to conquer all of China, but rather wanted to press Chiang Kai-shek, a Chinese political and military leader, to “accept Japanese control of Manchuria and North China by disrupting the Chinese economy” (157). Until 1944 the Japanese decided to wait and hold a steady position in China hoping for events that would bring the war to an end. Chiang asked Great Britain and the United States for help but they refused to get involved in the conflict. The beginning of the Pacific war in 1941 changed the situation on the Chinese battlefield, when America decided to wage war against Japan. The end of the war came on 6 August 1945 when the Americans bombed the Japanese city of Hiroshima with an atomic bomb. According to Martin J. Sherwin, the atomic bomb was an alternative to the occupation of Japan, where a risk of losing American soldiers would arise (1085). The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of the Sino-Japanese war offered China a new start. As it is seen in *Empire of the Sun*, the protagonist envisions the bomb as a second Sun, a new beginning for an old country.

### 3.2. *Empire of the Sun*

*Empire of the Sun* was written by James Graham Ballard in 1984. Autobiographical in part, the story follows a young British boy, Jamie Graham, called Jim, who lives in Shanghai International Settlement with his parents. As already mentioned, the story takes place during the Second Sino-Japanese war and follows Jamie's experience of it. During the four years of the war he is separated from his parents and taken to Lunghua prison camp. There he manages to make some friends and useful contacts that enable him to survive the war. An excellent summary of *Empire of the Sun* has been provided by the back covers of the 2005 Simon & Schuster Paperbacks edition of the novel: "Ballard's enduring novel of war and deprivation, internment camps and death marches, and starvation and survival is an honest coming-of-age tale set in a world thrown utterly out of joint". The following paragraphs will show how Jim struggles to stay true to his Britishness in a setting where the British authority failed.

From the beginning of the novel the British are portrayed as superior in the Shanghai International Settlement. The roots of such a representation can be drawn from the aforementioned Shanghailanders and their lifestyle. British settlers in Shanghai kept to their traditions, such as playing golf or throwing numerous parties where the elite would mingle and discuss current political and social issues. Growing up in such a surrounding makes Jim aware of his status and of his superior position in relation to other nationalities. For example, according to Kong, his view of the Chinese portrays a classic colonizer-colonized relationship (291-292). When he attends a party at Mr. Maxted's house, he sees Chinese servants who are "as passive and unseeing as the furniture" (Ballard 7). Furthermore, the sight of a dead Chinese beggar on the street does not invoke in him any feeling of remorse, but rather sets him thinking what kind of tracks the Chinese would have on his foot if he had been run over by a different car: "He could see the pattern of the Packard's Firestone tires in the old man's left foot. Leaves and shreds of newspaper covered his head, and already he was becoming part

of the formless rubbish from which he had emerged” (Ballard 23). The comparison of the Chinese with furniture and rubbish portray them as commodified objects which serve for British needs. This kind of view represents the imperialistic way of thinking embedded in Jim. He is proud to be British and a member of high-class society, thus showing a sense of Britishness in its true form. There are similarities here with Kim, who, sitting on the gun of Zam-Zammah, represents the British supremacy over India.

*Empire of the Sun* is a coming-of-age tale, a pattern that has already been seen in *Kim*. It can be argued that the novel is a bildungsroman with, as Matteo claims, “a romantic mythos of an adventure” (164). Jim goes through a process of development, both morally and physically, during the war. However, most of the time he thinks of the war as an adventure, a big game in which he must follow certain rules in order to come out as a winner. Furthermore, when talking about the bildungsroman, it is important to mention the role that education plays in the development of the characters. Education in the novel can, according to Matteo, once again be divided into a formal and informal one, as it has been a case in *Kim*. In *Empire of the Sun* the formal education includes the Cathedral School Jim attends while in the Settlement. Besides attending classes in school, Jim takes Latin lessons from Dr. Ransome later in the novel, thus continuing his formal education even without the formal establishment of the school. The other, informal, part of Jim’s education is what he refers to as “the university of life” (Ballard 144). One of his teachers in the university of life is Basie, an American sailor who takes Jim under his wing. Basie teaches Jim the ways in which he will survive the war, giving him advice such as: “Words are more important, Jim. Put aside a new word every day. You never know when a word might be useful” (Ballard 72). Dennis A. Foster argues that “to succeed is a matter of learning the codes, of submitting not to the apparently transcendent order of the symbolic but to the arbitrariness of power” (528). This is what Basie teaches Jim. He needs to make himself available and helpful to higher instances of

power in order to get something in return and perhaps hold a higher position than the others: “‘I ingratiated myself. I made myself very useful to Mrs. Blackburn.’ ‘That’s it. If you can find a way of helping people, you’ll live off the interest.’” (Ballard 89). Both types of education serve Jim extremely well; the formal one allows him to give new words to Basie, thus keeping him interested in Jim, and the informal one provides him an extra boiled potato during lunch and a better chance at survival.

When talking about the construction of Britishness, it is important to mention location. According to Kong, even though Ballard based the novel on his life, the town he chose could not have been better since it “was the very colonial cosmopolis that would have produced Jim’s multiple identifications” (293). A city caught between “the forces of empire and nation” (293) is a perfect setting for Jim’s troubled identity. Furthermore, Kong argues, the shifts in location cause Jim’s shifts in identity. When he lives in the International Settlement, he identifies himself as British.

First, in the biopolitics of the British empire, he is a subject of the still reigning imperial power, secure not only in his right to live and to occupy Shanghai, but also in his privileged lifestyle in the concession, carrying on with his child’s war games and exasperating his Chinese nannies even as his parents carry on with their British expats’ charmed life of golf games and Christmas parties. (291)

Once he leaves the safety of the Settlement there is a shift in his identity. When he arrives in Lunghua prison camp, he identifies himself with the Japanese, admiring their bravery and stoicism: “Already Jim felt himself apart from the others, who had behaved as passively as the Chinese peasants. Jim realized he was closer to the Japanese” (Ballard 104). While Kim starts his journey with two identities, the British and Indian one, Jim holds only the British identity. However, as the plot progresses, Jim feels that he should take on another identity, the Japanese one, believing that it better suits his needs. Jim slowly starts to drift away from his British roots, being born and raised in Shanghai, and not knowing the land of his origin:

“Where do you come from?”

“Shanghai!”

“You’re proud of it?”

“Of course...” Jim scoffed at the question, shaking his head as if Dr. Ransome were a provincial country healer. “Shanghai is the biggest city in the world. My father says it’s even larger than London.” (Ballard 106)

Portraying Shanghai as a greater city than London in part stems from the fact that the Japanese took over the International Settlement during the war, making the British their prisoners. This causes Jim, according to Dennis Foster, to lose “the faith in [British] authority that had anchored his emotional ties to his family and culture” (527). Furthermore, Foster argues, Jim starts to look up to the Japanese as a new source of authority and model of behaviour (528). Jim is on the verge of dismissing his British identity in his fantasies of flying a Japanese aircraft that bombed Pearl Harbour or destroyed the British ship *The Prince of Wales* (Ballard 108). It takes other characters in the novel to remind him of his true self. For example, in Chapter 28, *An Escape*, Jim is talking to Mr. Maxted, a friend of his parents, about his sudden moment of clarity that they are, in fact, all dead and that their souls have left their bodies long ago. Mr. Maxted is in a poor condition and interrupts Jim in his thoughts saying: “Jim! Remember you’re British” (Ballard 186). Jim feels sad for Mr. Maxted, thinking that he is “so demoralized that all he could do to reassure Jim was to remind him that he was British” (Ballard 187).

Kong argues that Jim’s appropriation of the Japanese identity comes from a “traumatic compensation” (290). He has lost his home, his parents, everything that surrounded him, and he is now looking up to the Japanese as a new family that will take care of him: “In the absence of a government that safeguards his right to live, Lunghua Camp epitomizes for him the perfect biopolitical order. It functions at once as surrogate home, city, and empire, and the Japanese guards turn into his proxy parents and colonial guardians” (290). In his attempts to

be accepted to this new family, Jim tries to get closer to Private Kimura, one of the leading officials in the camp. He gives him English lessons and tries to run errands for him, but nothing seems to change Kimura's opinion of Jim. After this failed attempt, Jim finds another Japanese character to look up to, a young Kamikaze pilot:

For so long he had invested all his hopes in this young pilot, in that futile dream that they would fly away together, leaving Lunghua, Shanghai and the war forever behind them. He had needed the pilot to help him survive the war, this imaginary twin he had invented, a replica of himself whom he watched through the barbed wire. If the Japanese was dead, part of himself had died. (Ballard 270)

Not only does Jim want to fly away with the Kamikaze pilot, but he also wants to become one himself: "I'm going to join the Japanese Air Force.' 'Oh? The Japanese?' The missionary widows tittered, still unsure of Jim's sense of humour" (Ballard 161).

What then makes Jim return to his old identity and reassert his Britishness? It seems that he has become so involved in this dream of becoming Japanese that there is no way back for him. However, according to Plotz, it is the rational way of thinking that was witnessed in *Kim* that serves as an intrinsically Western trait. For example, in Chapter 16, *The Water Ration*, Jim is taken to Lunghua prison camp with a number of other prisoners. The driver makes a stop by the railway to Woosung and Jim starts calculating to kill some time and get his mind of things before they continue their journey:

Jim squatted on the white earth, tracing the tire patterns with a stick. How many times would each tire have to rotate before it wore itself through to the canvas? The problem, one of a host that perpetually bothered Jim, was, in fact, fairly easy to solve. Jim smoothed the white dust and made a start at the arithmetic. He gave a cheer when the first fraction cancelled itself, and then noticed that he was alone in the open sunlight between the truck and the railway embankment. (Ballard 102)

Jim's use of mathematics serves as an escape from reality. He is hot and thirsty and he thinks about arithmetic in order to get his mind off his ill fate. Later on, he will use Latin in the same way: "Conjugating his Latin verbs, the nearest that he could move towards prayer, he fell asleep beside Mr. Maxted and dreamed of runways" (Ballard 204). This takes place in Chapter 30, *The Olympic Stadium*, after the prisoners have been released from Lunghua camp and are lying on the grass in an old Olympic stadium. Here Jim uses Latin to stop himself from thinking about dying, using the verbs as a form of prayer.

Towards the end of the novel, and the end of the war, Jim starts doubting the Japanese supremacy. They are slowly losing the war and are now holding the position the British had in the Settlement at the beginning of their occupation. Jim is walking alone towards Shanghai in order to find his parents once and for all. He comes across a Eurasian who wants to take his golf shoes: "Though exhausted by hunger and by the effort of climbing the strand, Jim was aware that he was once again asserting the ascendancy of the European" (Ballard 219). He sees that the Japanese identity will not work for him anymore and decides to go back to his British one, though he is still uncertain whether he belongs to the British, Japanese or some other nationality: "Unlike the war in China, everyone in Europe clearly knew which side he was on, a problem that Jim had never really solved" (Ballard 228). Jim will forever be troubled by his identity, even when he leaves for England with his mother. The following paragraph from the last chapter, *The Terrible City*, shows the unfinished ending of Jim's journey:

He stepped onto the gangway, conscious that he was probably leaving Shanghai for the last time, setting out for a small, strange country on the other side of the world that he had never visited, but that was nominally "home". Yet only part of his mind would leave Shanghai. The rest would remain there forever, returning on the tide like the coffins launched from the funeral piers at Nantao. (Ballard 279)



#### 4. Situating the novels in the historical context

*Kim* was written and published during the most powerful period of the British Empire. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain held a number of overseas colonies. Earl Russell makes a comment on the expansion of the British Empire in 1870:

There was a time when we might have acted alone as the United Kingdom of England, Scotland or Ireland. That time has passed. We conquered and peopled Canada, we took possession of the whole of Australia, Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand. We have annexed India to the Crown. There is no going back. (qtd. in Marshall 24)

Furthermore, Marshall claims that the British influence spread even outside the colonised territories, saying that, for example, team games and the representative government “were imitated far beyond the empire of rule” (24). In order to show the British supremacy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Marshall also mentions the adoption of the Greenwich meridian as the universal meridian and the time zones based on it as one of the symbols of “the ascendancy of Britain's influence” (24). During this period of growth and change in the layout of the British Empire, there also came a change in the literary world. According to Bradbury, the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century saw the “turn of the novel” (3). The Victorian novel was slowly being replaced by the modern novel, which was, as Bradbury argues, “aspiring to become a far more complex, various, open and self-conscious form” (4). One of the writers that became quite prominent in the genre of the modern novel was Rudyard Kipling, the author of such novels as *The Light that Failed* in 1890, *Stalky & Co.* in 1899, *The Jungle Books* in 1894 and 1895, and the one that this paper focuses on, *Kim* in 1901 (Bradbury 56).

Rudyard Kipling was, and still is, considered one of Britain's top imperial writers. As Bradbury claims, Kipling was “the ‘Imperial Laureate’” (56). He goes on to argue that it might be hard for the modern-day reader to see why Kipling was given such importance. He therefore proposes an explanation:

In our own plain and post-imperial times, it is sometimes hard to see why he was regarded by so many as the most important and representative British writer of the age, but no writer was more closely in touch with the energies that were making the age what it was. On the one hand there was the vast commercial and governmental task of empire, on the other there were oily jobs of the machine age; Kipling wrote about both, celebrating daily things and routine work. (56).

*Kim*, Bradbury argues, is Kipling's best book (56). Whether we agree or disagree with this statement, *Kim* is an important novel for the time it was written in. It is a novel about the British rule in India, written in the form of an adventure novel, seemingly for a younger audience. The novel is filled with references to the British rule in India. Starting from Kim, who is represented at the very beginning of the novel as a metaphor for British rule, sitting at the gun of Zam-Zammah, there are various other characters, both Indian and British, which claim that the British rule is the one that should rule over India. For example, Hurree Babu "loved the British Government – it was the source of all prosperity and honour, and his master at Rampur held the very same opinion" (Kipling 243). As Said argues on the example of Egypt, "they are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (35). The same relation can be applied to the British Empire and India; the British were the only one that could govern it and they knew best how to do it.

Kipling wrote a number of poems that reflect the British rule in India, attacking the people in Britain who do not realise the hardships of ruling over it (Varley 128). He was for the idea that Britain was the only acceptable ruler of India, and his works reflect this idea. According to Varley, his heroes are self-sufficient and independent, and he goes on to ask "might not these traits be desirable in nations as they are in men? And doesn't or shouldn't England possess them?" (131). Kipling's Kim is the hero that acts as the ideal image of the British rule. He is capable, agile and intelligent enough to infiltrate himself into

the Indian culture without disrupting it too much, just as the beginnings of the British colonization have been. In this perspective *Kim* can be viewed as a propagandist novel for British imperialism. Adding to that, Henneman argues that the modern novel, as opposed to the Victorian novel, became less an art form and more a means of propaganda (167). However, whether we view *Kim* as propagandistic or not, it is a novel written on the peak of British imperialism and naturally it reflects the social and political issues of the time. Therefore, it can be concluded that it was written as a reflection of the Empire, highlighting the good sides of it, and understating the bad.

The second novel that is discussed in this paper is *Empire of the Sun*, which is, according to Bradbury, “one of the strongest novels of the Eighties” (426). It was published in 1984, after the period in which Great Britain lost most of its colonies. As Caroline Elkins claims, there have been many events that led to the dissolution of the empire and its loss of power; she mentions the example of 1947 and the independence of India and Pakistan (361). The novel therefore represents a nostalgic view on one of the last settlements outside Britain that still held a certain power of the territory. The Shanghai International Settlement can be considered as a last haven for the imperial nostalgia. The population was mainly British, and the part of it that was not was held under the same imperialistic circumstances as India or other British colonies. In the time when *Empire of the Sun* was published, Britain had already set a number of plans on how to reassert its dominance over the territories it lost. One of its goals was taking back its Asian territory, and the novel openly suggests that the British, represented by Jim, will eventually regain power over their old colonies. The last chapter of the novel, in which Jim is portrayed looking at Shanghai and thinking how a part of him will always remain in that city, can be viewed as a wish not to remain there, but to, in fact, return and take over once again. According to Elkins, “Britain was determined not just to hold the line but to revitalize its empire by re-establishing its moral authority and economic and

strategic interests as a Great Power” (365). Its demise in Asia was caused by the intruding Japanese army. As Bayly and Harper write in their book, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*, “there were few parallels in history to this sudden and dramatic humiliation of an old and complacent supremacy – the British Empire in Asia – by an underrated and even despised enemy” (xxix). Beside the actual imperial authority, the British also lost their moral authority, and this loss is visible in *Empire of the Sun*. I have already mentioned that Jim looks up to the Japanese because the British authority failed. It is the moral authority, and the lack of it, that Elkins writes about and that flows through the novel. The Japanese, Elkins claims, were one of the main reasons of the loss of British colonies in Asia, as well as “the general incompetence and virulent racism of British rule” (364). Furthermore, Elkins goes on to enumerate a number of attempts of re-assertion of the British Empire:

The 1950s witnessed such crises as Suez, prolonged counterinsurgencies in disparate parts of the empire, and forceful interventions in Iran and British Guiana. They also witnessed the renewal of the Empire Settlement Act, the full assertion of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (largely to bolster productivity), and the creation of the Central African Federation, aimed at reinforcing white power to maintain British interests. (366)

Britain certainly did not lack the attempts and plans to regain its old imperial glory. As Bayly and Harper claim, the territory of “British Asia ... encompassed Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports of China; ... possessions east of Singapore: the territories of the ‘White Rajah’ of Sarawak and the British North Borneo Company” (xxxi). They go on and mention Shanghai as the “central episode of the war in China” (xxxi). The British naturally wanted to reclaim these territories after World War II, but all the attempts were in vain. By the 1960s, according to Marshall, the British Empire came to its end. However, the people of the time did not consider it to be the end. As Marshall argues, the British “continued to believe in empire” (105). The empire was “what gave Britain a unique role in the world, and in return Britain had drawn strength from its empire to enable it to survive two great wars that had wrecked so

many of its competitors” (Marshall 105). Unfortunately, the Empire was gone, and Britain was no longer one of the biggest imperialistic forces in the world.

*Empire of the Sun*, therefore, looks back on Britain’s attempts to regain its former power. Through the character of Jim and other British characters in the novel, it sends a message of a strong wish for the renewal of the British Empire. The Britishness that prevails in the patriotic claims of Mr. Maxted and Dr. Ransome, and in the actions and thoughts of Jim, portrays a nostalgic view on the lost imperial glory. According to Philip Tew, the period of the 1970s brought a new sense of Britishness – contemporary Britishness as he calls it (28). He argues that there was a shift in “Britain’s intellectual and geographic culture” (30) which resulted in forming contemporary Britishness. He opposes the old, Kipling’s, Britishness to the new one, claiming that “its adoption were implicitly racist or colonial” (33), and that scholars of the time tried to denounce it as something negative:

For many critics and commentators this very issue of Britishness appears to present an insurmountable problem, as if they require that it remain fixed in an imperial context, as an eternal point of opposition and as a negative point of reference, effectively short-circuiting any debate on the potential for a renewed national, intellectual identity. (33)

However, it is in this older context of Britishness that Ballard wrote his novel. He was driven by the nostalgic idea of the great British Empire, and his novel shows the wish of so many of his fellow citizens to regain the old glory and re-establish their rule in former colonial territories.

## 5. Similarities in the two novels

This chapter will deal with the similarities between *Kim* and *Empire of the Sun* in order to show which devices have been used to portray the Britishness in the novels. These similarities will be discussed in terms of education, the adventure novel and what Bradley Deane calls “imperial play ethic” (692). These concepts will provide a deeper insight into the novels and into the authors’ motivation behind them.

Firstly, education plays an important role in both novels. It is important to mention once again that both novels can be situated in the genre of the adventure novel, with the bildungsroman embedded in it. According to Marianne Hirsch Gottfried, the bildungsroman is defined by the following characteristics, all of which can be found in *Kim* and *Empire of the Sun*: “[it] represents a progression of connected events that lead up to a definite denouement”, “[it] concentrates on actions, thoughts, and reflections equally and attempts to portray a total personality”, and “[it] maintains a peculiar balance between the social and the personal and explores their interaction” (122). According to Matteo, the bildungsroman often has two forms of education in it, the “regimented and vicarious ‘book learning’” and “wisdom gained through action and engagement” (165). Both novels have the two types of education, but the difference between them is the order in which the protagonists receive them. Kim is educated on the street, living a life of an orphan until he is enrolled in a British school where he receives his formal education. Jim, however, starts his education in a catholic school and then acquires street knowledge in Lunghua camp. It may be that this opposite order in the two novels is the key to the different relations towards the protagonists’ identities.

Furthermore, Matteo argues that the education that Kim gets while living on the streets of Lahore is the true education that makes an adventure novel: “[the adventure novels] favor refinement by fire, trial and error, the school-of-hard-knocks, painful experience. And what is the realistic novel ... if not a vicarious adventure, an imaginary confrontation with danger and

violence, a readerly game?” (180). He claims that a character can only grow and develop through trial and error, things that are not learnt in formal schools, but rather out in the real world. In *Empire of the Sun* Jim believes in the “university of life” (Ballard 140), but he still practices formal forms of education in the camp by doing Latin and Maths. It seems that he is not quite ready to accept the knowledge that real life has to offer, and he rather stays close to what he knows to feel secure and safe. However, if we connect formal education to Britishness and informal to the other, then the role of education has served its purpose. Kim embraced his British identity only after he received his formal education in St. Xavier’s school and through the training he underwent to become a spy. Jim’s duality of identities can be linked to the informal education he receives in Lunghua camp, learning how the things he studied in his old school would not help him survive in real life. It is clear to see that the order in which the protagonists received their education is one of the main reasons for their final identity outcome.

Secondly, both novels are adventure novels, a genre also known as imperial romance. According to Jones, “the term ‘imperial romance’ encapsulates a complex group of fictions appearing in Britain between the 1880s and the 1920s, which were devoted to narrating adventure in colonial settings” (406). Even though *Empire of the Sun* was written and published outside this time frame, it shares a number of traits that are typical for the imperial romance. First of all, as Jones argues, there are a number of characteristics that make a novel fit into the imperial romance genre: “As in earlier paradigms, the identity of the protagonist is at stake, he undergoes a “test”, a number of trials and temptations in the encounter with the “other” in exotic and hazardous locations, and ideally (but by no means exclusively) remains secure and attached to the mores of his society on the return” (408). Both Kim and Jim have their identities at stake; they are constantly shifting between the British identity and the “other” that Jones mentions. The situations that both protagonists encounter are, in fact, trials

and temptations that form them as characters, and in the end help them realize their true identity. Jones says that the protagonist ideally stays true to his society, but in *Empire of the Sun* Jim is more an exception than the rule. Kim, on the other hand, remains connected to the British identity, shifting and changing throughout the novel, but eventually, and ideally, returning to it and accepting it as his true self.

Furthermore, Jones argues that *Kim* “offers a paradigm of late nineteenth-century imperial adventure even as it anticipates (however obliquely) twentieth-century concerns about the complexities and problems of identity experienced by the imperial subject” (415). Kim and Jim are imperial subjects, located in a changing background, a dynamic setting that further enhances their identity problem. Other than anticipating the adventure novels in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Kim* “demonstrates many of the traditional generic functions of romance – it is a quest narrative, outlining the conflicts of identity of the hero, the threat of disruption of social order” (Jones 416). Again we can draw a firm parallel between *Kim* and *Empire of the Sun*. Firstly, they are quest narratives – Kim is searching for the holy river with the lama, Jim for his parents. Secondly, both protagonists have identity conflicts, as already mentioned. Thirdly, social order is disturbed – Kim shifts through social classes, making it clear that social order is a vague term; in *Empire of the Sun*, the British lose their authority and the Japanese become the new social establishment. In the terms that Jones mentions, *Kim* could serve as a predecessor to *Empire of the Sun*. The similarity in the genre, characters and the issue of identity puts these two novels side by side, even though they are decades apart.

Finally, the imperial play ethic is the last point on which I would like to focus. The term, according to Deane, designates “the combination of new imperialist politics and the romance of endless boyhood” (692). Novels that emerged during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the adventure novels, all shared the same protagonist – a boy who went on an adventure in some distant land, most often a land ruled by the British Empire.



Deane argues that the need for these kinds of novels arose from the general opinion on the Empire itself:

As conservative strains of imperialism displaced older liberal narratives of progress, civilization, and enlightenment in favor of militarism, expansionism, and a vision of permanent dominion and endless competition, imperialists found in enduring boyishness a natural and suitably anti-developmental model of identity. An empire that had ceased to strive towards idealistic ends no longer required its heroes to grow up, and a non-developmental understanding of global politics welcomed a masculinity resistant to development. (690)

The Empire ceased to strive towards cultural and enlightenment goals and Deane argues that people envisioned that as an “aimless process” rather than progress (691). For that reason, the adventure novel was an ideal form to write about the Empire, transforming that process into a never-ending adventure, with the protagonist representing the wish for exploration and play (Deane 691).

Adding to that, Dean argues that the imperial play ethic consists of four characteristics that can be found in *Kim* and *Empire of the Sun*. Firstly, it is “non-developmental”; Kim and Jim do not fully develop through the novel. They age a couple of years, but still remain boys. The general opinion behind this point is that boys were naturally capable of confronting problems and struggle, and that making them grown-up would be a deviation from their capabilities and therefore they would fail in their adventures. Secondly, Deane argues, the play ethic was situational: “each imperial encounter was a new game to be played by locally generated rules”. Kim and Jim change their behaviour and conduct according to the situation they find themselves in. They can both be kind, complaisant and friendly, but if the situation requires, they can become fierce, ready to fight and stand up for themselves. The third point Deane makes is in accordance to the second one – the imperial play ethic is “self-consciously performative”. A lot of attention was given to appearance which emphasized role-play in the novels. Kim easily changes his identity with the clothes he wears, turning from a poor Indian

boy to a sahib of high class, and Jim's attitude changes with the possession of the golf shoes that seem to give him a higher status in relation to the people around him. The last characteristic that Deane mentions is shame. He argues that the game was regulated by shame the protagonist felt in the gaze of others. Kim is not afraid to fail in his journey because of himself, but because so many people rely on him to succeed. To fail the lama would be the biggest defeat because the lama would be disappointed in him. Jim also operates under the constant gaze of other prisoners, helping people in order to please Basie and Dr. Ransome, feeling horrible when he fails to bring Basie what he asked for. Deane argues that "the dishonor that followed from failure in the eyes of others" was more important than the inward feeling of guilt (692-693).

## 6. Conclusion

The focus of this paper was on the construction of Britishness in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and J. G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun*. The previous chapters provided historical contexts, political backgrounds and cultural influences, as well as the analysis of the two novels, separately and combined. The questions posed in the introduction were if the protagonists managed to stay true to their British identity, and if the novels served their imperial purpose in the given time frame. Various concepts were used in order to analyse the two novels and their protagonists, Kim and Jim, and through these concepts I will offer a conclusion to the paper.

Kim definitely plays the imperial role in the novel. From the beginning to end, he is British, white, a *sahib*. The narrator says so, the other characters say so, only Kim does not feel that way until the very end. He is struggling with a problem inside himself, a problem too big for him to grasp. Just like India, it is not up to him to think about what is best; the British rule is the only rule, both for Kim and for India. His role is to be the mediator between the British Empire and its colony, to serve as a link connecting these two instances, showing how both can live in peace, as long as there is not much questioning of authority. Kim constructs Britishness with great success, influencing the people he meets on his adventures. The novel itself excellently portrays the struggle of Britain, embodied in Kim, to maintain peace and order in India, by infiltrating in its culture and making the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized acceptable to both sides.

Jim, Ballard's protagonist, is a different story. He grows up in an imperial surrounding, raised on British tradition and customs. From the beginning of the novel he holds a superior position in relation to other nationalities in the settlement, portraying his Britishness as extremely strong. When things change during the Japanese occupation, Jim is no longer confident in his identity. The failure of British authority and its armed forces makes him question his original identity and slowly pushes him into adopting the Japanese one.

During his adventures in the camp and the open, Jim shows traces of Britishness, but once again it is the other characters that see it better than him. In the end, he leaves Shanghai with mixed emotions; he is happy to be leaving the war behind, but sad to leave the only home he had ever known. His duality at the end of the novel represents the British duality on the position of its colonies during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In conclusion, both novels reflect the attitude of Britain towards its colonies. Looking at them from the starting point of representing Britishness, it is difficult to determine whether or not one was more successful than the other. The novels were written in two different periods of British history. Where *Kim* could serve as a propagandist novel, describing the British Empire as something good and desirable, *Empire of the Sun* does not have that role. It was written with nostalgia and a critical outlook on the imperialism that held on in some parts of the world after the demise of the British Empire. The construction of Britishness is accomplished in both novels and both protagonists, but the role of the novels differs immensely, and that is what needs to be taken into consideration as well. At the end, both novels represent the British Empire, one from the contemporaneous point of view and the other from a nostalgic one. *Kim*, widely read as it was, served to help both the colonizer and the colonized to accept the process of imperialism, having a strong educational purpose, along with the literary one. *Empire of the Sun* did not need to have such a strong obligation to its reader – rather, it offered a historical outlook on the fall of British Empire, more from a critical point of view than a propagandist one. What is interesting is that both Kipling and Ballard used the same genre, similar protagonists and colonial settings to illustrate different – and almost completely opposite – times in British history .

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