Phenomenology of Space and Time in Rudyard Kipling's Kim: Understanding Identity in the Chronotope

Daniel S. Parker
Georgia State University

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PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPACE AND TIME IN RUDYARD KIPLING’S KIM:
UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY IN THE CHRONOTOPE

by

DANIEL SCOTT PARKER

Under the Direction of LeeAnne Richardson

ABSTRACT
This thesis intends to investigate the ways in which the changing perceptions of landscape during the nineteenth century play out in Kipling’s treatment of Kim’s phenomenological and epistemological questions of identity by examining the indelible influence of space—geopolitical, narrative, and imaginative—on Kim’s identity. By interrogating the extent to which maps encode certain ideological assumptions, I will assess the problematic issues of Kim’s multi-faceted identity through an exploration of both geographical and narrative landscapes and the various chronotopes—Bakhtin’s term for coexisting frameworks of time and space—that ultimately provide a new reading of identity-formation in Kim.

INDEX WORDS: Rudyard Kipling, Kim, Chronotope, Cartography, Identity-formation, Postcolonialism, Modernism, History, Diachronicity, Synchronicity
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DANIEL SCOTT PARKER

Committee Chair: LeeAnne Richardson
Committee: Michael Galchinsky
Ian Almond

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If that fellow was dropped in the middle of the Sahara, he’d sit, be God, and make a map of it.

* * *

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.

* * *

He infers this: if existence in all its moments is all of itself, Zoe is the place of indivisible existence.

But why, then, does the city exist? What line separates the inside from the outside, the rumble of wheels from the howl of wolves?

* * *

Could there have been someone else like me, not one thing not another,
barely able to choose.

* * *

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.
Reviled racist, beloved children’s author, staunch jingoist: a century after some say he had hit the high mark of his artistic career with *Kim* (1901), social and literary critics alike are still bickering over the contradictory life and works of Rudyard Kipling. Unsurprisingly, Kipling and his work remain volatile topics for political, cultural, and theoretical contestation. The mode for any essay on Kipling begins *de rigueur* with a repudiation of Kipling’s moral bearings and an inventory of both the vitriol and praise volleyed by critics over the last several decades. The critical authority of Orwell, Auden, Eliot, Wilson, Said, Rushdie—the *fixés* for Kipling criticism—typically inaugurate any new criticism of Kipling’s voluminous oeuvre. That Kipling criticism is ongoing, despite charges of racism, anti-Semitism, or chauvinism, perpetuates the question of Kipling’s relevance to philological study. Although I propose with this essay an epistemological and phenomenological approach to Kipling’s rendering of *Kim* for the sake of humanistic and literary contribution, I will return to the well-hashed critical arguments for the purpose of adumbrating Kim’s phenomenological experience.

Despite the torrents of criticism largely unflinching in its condemnation of Kipling as the apostle of Empire, to borrow David Gilmour’s locution, there have been occasional critical forays aimed at re-establishing Kipling as a prominent figure in the history of British literature. However, the almost universal argument against Kipling as an artist is his inability to “dramatise any fundamental conflict,” as Edmund Wilson wrote in his seminal scholarship. This was an issue Wilson took specifically with *Kim*: “Where both sides are sympathetically presented, the battle”—here Wilson means legitimate conflict—“is not allowed to occur” (32). Wilson is not claiming that the inexorable presence of the British in India was an altogether peaceful one. What he means, I think, is that Kipling’s representation of British India is one that does not deal
adequately with the otherwise inherent conflict of imperial oppression. Kipling’s depiction of India and Empire is rather one that regards the two as mutually constitutive, and so for Kipling the question of British presence in India is ultimately an epistemological question of India itself. Half a century after Wilson’s claims, these same issues remain prevalent—both the *ad hominem* critiques and whether Kipling was unable or chose not to render unequivocal conflict. Ultimately, the critiques of Kipling all seem to arrive at a similar question: Does Kipling have any relevance to the humanities today?

One way to begin addressing the question is to consider *Kim*. In “Artist and Empire: Kipling and *Kim*” (2003), Clara Claiborne Park provides a comprehensive critical history of Kipling in general and *Kim* in particular. She dexterously navigates the reader through the critical commonplaces with surprising alacrity, rarely seeming formulaic when rehearsing the criticisms of Wilson and Orwell et al. Park gives a reading of Harry Rickett’s biographical *Life* in conjunction with Gilmour’s *Recessional*, comparing Rickett’s decidedly “warmer agenda”—a “fine combination of biographical accuracy with imaginative warmth” (542)—of trying to understand Kipling “both as an artist and as a human being” with Gilmour’s “less intimate and less literary” project, which is not, Park asserts, bent toward biography but on those unsettling aspects of Kipling’s life that biographers have found too disheartening or simply too cantankerous to handle directly (541). Park points out Gilmour’s efforts to disabuse readers from the frequent misappropriations of some of Kipling’s trademark passages and notes that Gilmour’s too-lenient take on Kipling stops short of including *Kim*, about which Gilmour reluctantly claims, “does not quite answer the charge of racism” (qtd. in Park 451). Mark Kincaid-Weekes, however, gives a bit more credence to the achievement of *Kim*, having posited...
it as "the answer to nine-tenths of the charges levelled against Kipling and the refutation of most of the generalisations about him" (233).

In “Rudyard Kipling, India and Edward Said” (2010), Ibn Warraq attempts to exonerate Kipling from the familiar charges of racism laid by Said, relying primarily on passages excerpted from Kim. My purpose is not to exhume the debate of whether or not Kipling was racist; it is merely to suggest that there remains more to be gained from a close consideration of Kim that is relevant to contemporary literary study. After all, as Orwell writes, Kipling “is generally talking about things that are of urgent interest” (80). Although I will address Wilson’s et al problem with Kipling’s (re)presentation of India as one that does not bear legitimate conflict, this project more specifically concerns the processes by which Kim develops a sense of his own identity. With the more recent turn in humanities studies toward to the geospatial in the vein of Edward Soja, I intend to approach Kim’s identity formation through a phenomenological interrogation of space.

Since Kim takes place in British India during the height of the British Imperial conquest, I will begin by examining the inexorable influence of modernization on imperial epistemology, which, to a large degree, became grounded in an understanding of geography. Chapter One will look specifically at the cartographical efforts of the India Survey and how advances in mapmaking influenced imperial epistemology. Through questioning the extent to which maps encoded the ideological assumptions of the nineteenth century, I will assess the fragmented nature of Kim’s identity through an exploration of both geographical and narrative landscapes, beginning with an assessment of the century’s headlong plunge into modernization and this transformation’s subsequent epistemological ramifications. Chapter Two will focus primarily on the processes of Kim’s identity formation through a postcolonial lens regarding the imperial impulse to totalize racial, cultural, and personal distinctions as part of the colonial experience. In
Chapter Three I will apply recent literary theories, which, according to Jessica Berman, have “moved the spatiality of texts to the forefront, asking us to consider place or location along with history or genealogy as crucial to textual study” in order to interrogate Kim’s identity formation through a geocultural perspective (281). Chapter Four will analyze Kipling’s rendering of the novel’s narrative dimensions, regarding specifically how he translates the physical landscape of India—the Himalayas, the Grand Trunk Road, the plains and the hills—into narrative space. As I investigate phenomenological effects of the landscape on Kim, I will treat Wilson’s critique of Kipling’s inability to depict legitimate conflict between India and Empire.

In Chapter Five I will delineate the coexisting spatial and temporal spheres—termed by Bakhtin as the chronotope—as well as the aesthetics of modernist geography to argue that Kim’s identity relies on both the diachronic and synchronic temporalities of the novel. Although Bakhtin employs the chronotope to distinguish various novelistic genres, my reading of Kim in the chronotope instead intends to posit the novel as one that does not clearly adhere to any specific generic category. I examine closely the scene in which Kim breaks the clay water jar in order to deal with the novel’s insistence on the concurrent diachronic and synchronic timescapes and how the spatial and temporal implications both inform Kim’s identity formation as well as resonate within the humanistic and political grounds of literary studies that remain “of urgent interest.”

Young Kimball O’Hara, a thirteen year-old orphan boy of Irish heritage, is first seen straddling triumphantly the verdigris patina Zam-zammah outside the art museum in Lahore. Kim, whose Caucasian skin had been “burned black as any native,” and whose mother-tongue was not English but Hindustani, is perched victoriously atop the great bronze cannon after having kicked a native boy off the trunnions in a playful scuffle (Kim 3). One learns
immediately that the barefoot and scantily-clad Kim, reminiscent of the lithe and tawny Mowgli of Kipling’s *Jungle Books*, is raised as a local Punjabi boy by a poor half-caste native woman who runs an opium den in Lahore. The death of Kim’s father, a sergeant in the Indian army, has left Kim with nothing but three documents attesting to his Irish lineage. Kim keeps the papers in a leather amulet worn around his neck, and they eventually lead to his entering the British military service. Kim is raised privy to the local customs and languages of every caste and creed in India and operates with adroit mechanical thinking, a combination that renders him an ideal candidate for espionage in the British Service. Due to his knack for disguises and insatiable lust for adventure, Kim imagines his life as wild as those of the Arabian Nights while leading recondite night missions over the rooftops of Lahore. The Service employs him for the purpose of running messages between, amongst other native operatives, the Afghan horse-dealer Mahbub Ali and Colonel Creighton of the Service, requiring his missions to remain secretive as both the British and the Russians are vying for geographical sovereignty.

Such interplays of Empire between the British and the natives serve as the primary impetus for plot progression. Kim’s surreptitious dealings with the service maintain a placid surface of imperial presence as international geopolitical contestations between Britain and Russia become imminent. As Park has noted, the larger extent of criticism on *Kim* has explored primarily the imperial implications of the novel, suggesting the characterization of Kim as the ideal agent of the British Empire: with his unique ability for disguise and transferability between spatial, cultural, and racial boundaries, Kim is predisposed for success in “The Great Game”—the struggle for political supremacy of Central Asia between the British and Russian Empires. Kim’s malleability of character, I will explain, is predicated by his fractured understanding of identity. Such a problematic and multi-faceted rendering of selfhood provides within the more
recent discourses of postcoloniality a major point of contention. Though Kim’s is not \textit{per se} a postcolonial identity, I hope to cogently represent the space Kim inhabits as both colonially ambivalent and modernist, as perhaps the epigraphs above might tenuously suggest. The equivocal and contradictory nature of Kim’s colonial identity affords a postcolonial reading of the novel in that the ambivalences Kipling portrayed in the colonial identity, conscious or not, would go on to inform current postcolonial discourses.

Park, likewise having realized the need for a postcolonial reading of \textit{Kim}, utilizes the counterpointing criticisms of Ricketts and Gilmour to arrive at her main project: to delineate “today’s” contemporary Norton Critical Edition of Kim, edited by Zohreh T. Sullivan, as one geared toward a particularly postcolonial perspective when situated within the greater corpus of Kipling criticism (553). Park observes that Sullivan sacrifices the erstwhile prevailing voices of Kipling criticism, most significantly Eliot, Auden, Orwell, Chaudhuri, and Wilson, replacing them with those primarily of the Indian subcontinent. Ten of the essays, Park points out, had not even appeared until after 1986. “But the big names are available elsewhere,” Park reassures; “This is a postcolonial Kim” (553). One further point of Park’s essay that bears importance on this study is her noting that the novel’s “lack of closure’ is Rickett’s defining quality of modernism[.] elicit[ing] conflicting answers” (556). The somewhat enigmatic but unquestionably anticlimactic ending to \textit{Kim} suggests either as Said proposes that for Kipling there in fact \textit{was no conflict}, or that \textit{Kim}’s irresolvable ending presaged the inconclusivity that arrived concurrently with the burgeoning stylistic tropes of modernism.

Both Sullivan and Phillip Wegner present similar arguments concerning Kipling’s reluctance, and perhaps incapability, to disembroil the novel’s ambivalences toward The Great Game. Sullivan writes that “[t]he major problems and contradictions in the novel are informed
and shaped by Kipling’s divided sense of self, its multiple loyalties to the power of empire during a time of intensified authority, and his love for a lost India that blurred distinctions between the ruler and the ruled” (*Narratives of Empire* 148). Such “blurred distinctions” go well beyond the imperial relationships of ruler and ruled and extend to the dialectics of inside/outside, Self/Other, and Home/home, the latter being a common distinction amongst Anglo-Indians at the turn of the century. As Kipling works through the ambivalences and affections he has for India and Empire, his divided self becomes manifest through Kim’s own fractured identity. I intend to argue not that Kim’s identity is troubled by an irreconcilability—I take that for granted—but that such an irreconcilability affords Kim his unique, doubly modern and problematic colonial identity when regarded in postcolonial and modernist geospatial lenses.

Even in the first few pages of the novel, Kim is both collectively and independently, white, native, English, and Irish, all of which prove crucial in Kim’s geographical and epistemological quests. When a Tibetan Lama wanders into Lahore on a quest to find a legendary sacred river sprung from Buddha’s arrow, Kim joins him on the journey and becomes his *chela*, or disciple. The novel maps the unlikely couple’s peregrinations across the expansive plains, through the Himalayas, and along the Grand Trunk Road, the Lama in search of his river and Kim seeking to fulfill the prophesy of his father: that Kim would one day find a Red Bull on a Green Field amidst nine hundred (English) devils. One night during his journey with the Lama, Kim ventures out to explore his new terrain and happens upon an encampment of Irish soldiers. He realizes that his late father’s enigmatic prophesy is fulfilled when he sees that the flag of the Mavericks, the regiment to which his father belonged, displays a red bull on a background of Irish green. Kim is discovered by Colonel Creighton, who discerns from the contents of Kim’s amulet that Kim is not in fact a seemly native child but the white son of an Irish soldier.
Creighton recognizes immediately in Kim’s ability for disguise and discretion the potential for the boy’s role in the Great Game. The lama, initially devastated to lose his “Little Friend of All the World”—one of the affectionate sobriquets the natives have given Kim, one which was given to Kipling himself (Ricketts 13)—understands that Kim cannot escape his “English” heritage and commits to pay for Kim’s schooling at the illustrious Xavier, a school for young Sahibs. At Xavier Kim becomes equipped for the life of a double agent employed for the surreptitious cartographical surveys mandated by the British Empire. The Service has great need for Kim’s ability to move throughout India unobserved, as the machinations of Empire produce a probable cause for war. During his holidays from school, Kim again disguises himself as a native and escapes the hampered life of the Sahib to return to the bucolic wanderings with the lama. The dénouement of the novel comes a bit abruptly: after a somewhat anticlimactic melee with a pair of Russian and French spies, the lama soon discovers his river, and Kim—supposedly—returns to The Great Game.

That Kim does not explicitly denounce Empire has continued to rattle critics, whether from Kipling’s veneration of the imperial project or the fact that he did not realize the nature of its antagonism to an otherwise native Indian hegemony. It is for this reason, along with the influence of the changing epistemological perceptions of landscape during the nineteenth century, that Kim’s identity is necessarily rendered with a multiplicity of selfhoods. Over all, I intend to interrogate the phenomenological and epistemological questions of identity that Kim himself contemplates—“Who is Kim – Kim – Kim?”—by examining the indelible influence of space—geopolitical, narrative, and imaginative—on Kim’s identity (Kim 156). To inform the project, I will rely heavily on the contemporary theoretical trends of postcolonial discourses, as well as Bahktin’s theory of the chronotope to argue that Kim’s identity exists necessarily in a
state of flux and must be constantly renegotiated, that is, critically re-examined through
dialogic processes.

Thus, the second part of the thesis will involve re-situating some of the frequently
analyzed passages of the novel within the coexisting diachronic and synchronic orientations of
time and space. By examining Kim’s characteristically fragmented identity in conjunction with
such cumbersome and precarious notions of space and time, I maintain that the study will not
only serve to elucidate the problematic nature of colonial identity formation, but it will ground
the otherwise abstract understandings of space and time through realizing both their historical
and theoretical applications.

The relevance of the ongoing political and religious struggles in the near East
notwithstanding, I believe this study proves significant to contemporary literary studies by
presenting first how identity formation is keenly influenced by one’s space, and second, how
Kipling necessarily anticipates modernist aesthetics of identity. In closing, what I hope to
achieve in the end is a picture of how the contrapuntal effects of modernism and colonialism
(and by dialogical extension, postcolonialism) contribute to the processes both of Kim’s identity
formation and our understanding of it, with the ultimate conclusion that Kim inhabits a space that
that is simultaneously modernist and (post)colonial. Clearly Kim cannot be a postcolonial novel,
nor Kipling a postcolonial writer, and the labeling as such tends to be problematic. In “The
Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term ‘Post-colonialism,’” Anne McClintock engages the
problematic notions of paradox articulated in postcolonial temporality that seem relevant here:

The ‘post-colonial scene’ occurs in an entranced suspension of history, as if the
definitive historical events have preceded us, and are not now in the making. If
the theory promises a decentering of history in hybridity, syncreticism, multi-
dimensional time, and so forth, the *singularity* of the term effects a re-centering of global history around the single rubric of European time. Colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance.

McClintock’s assessment means to reveal the counter-intuitive and poststructuralist underpinnings of postcolonial discourse: that while it seeks to recover individual historical pasts, it does so through the homogenizing tendencies of the celebrated tropes of postcolonial theory. What results is the assimilation of all histories within an undeniably Eurocentric paradigm. That colonialism returns *de facto* in the very moment it is eliminated suggests also that postcolonialism begins at the very first moment of the colonial encounter. It is on these grounds that I suggest a postcolonial reading of *Kim*. Ultimately, I intend to examine the character Kim through the methodologies of postcolonial discourse and, subsequently, theories of modernist geography in order to more fully seek the relevance of *Kim* to current literary studies.
PART ONE:

MODERN PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND MAPPING: AN IDEOLOGY

At the time of Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*, the Western world was experiencing dizzying advances in scientific and technological achievement, and the rhetoric of Empire became one of knowledge. Nineteenth-century Europe saw the inscrutable concepts of time and space collapse into quantifiable data that could be transmitted, graphed, and mapped, thus “[paring] the Empire down to file-cabinet size” (Richards 4). According to Thomas Richards, various new disciplines of geography, biology, and thermodynamics all took as their imperium the world as a whole, and worked out paradigms of knowledge which seemed to solve the problem of imperial control at a distance. In geography the map masters distance, in geology the fossil record masters time, in thermodynamics the experiment masters movement. (6)

The realization of the railroad, for instance, afforded widespread urbanization movements in the Western world. Such momentous changes necessitated a new way of understanding the vicissitudes of modern progress, which in turn called for a new means of classifying knowledge. The purview of knowledge was expanding, in a sense, from the visible and tangible imperial metropole to the unseen stretches of empire, affording the possibility of *knowing* a completely distant place through factual data, thereby rattling the phenomenological understanding of the perceived world. As Richards notes, with the continuous advancement in technology and modern implementations like the railroad, the steamship, the telegraph, and the telephone, the compression of space and time allowed the British empire access to the otherwise spatially and culturally distant corners of the globe, thus altering the previous modes of epistemology: things that were before perceived sequentially began to be understood
simultaneously (5-6). This kind of immediate or simultaneous understanding the “invisible” peripheral world of empire from inside the imperial center relied heavily on an epistemology of fact and the transmission of data. The ideology of imperial epistemology—understanding knowledge as it was received, transmitted, and catalogued—became, to a large extent, grounded in an understanding of geography. By the last decade of the century, cartographical efforts had produced detailed and accurate maps of the entire world. Mapping of the globe meant for the British Empire new forms of power through factual, quantifiable data: the epistemology of fact became the primary means of political and, to an extent, cultural hegemony, and it had unfathomable consequences for both national and individual identity formation.

Mapping, then, as a means of apprehending otherwise invisible landscapes in a systematic totality, changed not only the nation’s imperial grasp but also the shape and dimension of language and narrative perception. *Kim* takes place during the height of the India Survey, a cartographical operation mandated by the British Empire. I suggest that an investigation of the way in which the changing perceptions of landscape during the nineteenth century that will serve to elucidate how the indelible influence of space affects Kim’s own politics of identity formation.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Western powers already held a third of the world under colonial rule; by 1914 a staggering eighty-five percent of the earth’s surface was marked with the stamp of Western domination. Scholars have charted this expansion as a rate of acquiring 240,000 square miles each year (qtd. in *Culture and Imperialism* 8). Imperial expansion, writes Said, “accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, it classified them, it verified them” (222). As the shadow of empire spread over the globe, accumulations of maps—trigonometrical, topographical, political—filled the annals of Britain’s
cataloguing of its colonial jurisdiction, largely due to Britain’s imperial efforts. “The survey,” writes Richards, “used base measurements, geodetic triangulation, telegraph determination, route surveying, tacheometry, photography, and ferrotype reproduction to generate a map of India in the detailed scale of one inch to one mile” (14).

The Survey of India was one of Britain’s tactical maneuvers to occupy and control land during “The Great Game,” the colloquial name for the international geopolitical contestation for land in Central Asia during the nineteenth century, primarily between the British and Russian Empires as Russia’s occupation posed a threat to Britain’s control of India, “the jewel in the crown” of the British Empire. The Great Game provided for Kipling a historical backdrop to many of his stories, most notably “The Man Who Would Be King” and Kim, in which The Game not only provides historical points of reference but an arena of phenomenological investigation that I will discuss with more precision in Chapter Four.

The Survey began in 1767 and was intended to chart the geographical features, serviceable trade routes, and implementation of the Grand Trunk Road, “reducing,” writes Ian Baucom, “the surface of India to a comprehensive and rigorously accurate chart. . . . The mapping of India,” he continues, “was a vital element in the English attempt to control the empire less by occupying it than by knowing it, classifying it, and rendering it visible” (351). Through means of documentation and categorization of fact, Britain was able to extend its imperial reach because, as Thomas Richards suggests, the ideology of knowledge as fact is power (4).

The empire increased its hold on colonial control through the Survey by scrutinizing and recording the geographical and cultural textures of India, distances and spaces, its hills and valleys; all was recorded and transmitted back to the heart of the enterprise at the metropole.
This kind of archival collection and classification of knowledge, according to Richards, "would require the fashion of a vast and mobile zone of knowledge under a specialized kind of nomadic supervision, under a Western personage capable of combining the functions of soldier, ambassador, surveyor, scholar, and spy" (22). Such a specialized nomadic supervision was engineered by Captain Thomas Montgomerie of the Royal Engineers, under whose directive was the fabrication of rosaries constructed with an even-hundred beads instead of the conventional 108 for simplified metric mapping. Montgomerie’s project was “a data pilgrimage utilizing a rapid deployment force of monks—appropriated and reorganized by older systems of transfer, transit, and transmission. The result was a combined regression and progression of basic technology oriented toward what can be termed a state nomadology” (Richards 19).” Such a system, Richards suggests, requires the ultramodernization of the primitive, and in this case, of Kim (20). Kim is chosen by the Survey because he “displays almost no resistance to the nomadic flow of the road” but instead rather tends to assume the role of the nomad himself (24). Who better to be trained with the skills of surveyor and spy than the native-raised son of an Irish soldier with a penchant for adventure and exploration? Colonel Creighton “ordered [Kim] to make a map of that wild, walled city; and since Mohammedan horse-boys and pipe-tenders are not expected to drag Survey-chains round the capital of an independent native state, Kim was forced to pace all his distances by means of a bead rosary” (Kim 143-44).

Clearly Kipling was aware of Montgomerie’s endeavors to map British India, and the character Huree Babu takes part in a similar project: Kipling writes that “[t]o keep count of thousands of paces, Hurree Chunder’s experience had shown him nothing more valuable than a rosary of eighty-one or a hundred and eight beads, for ‘it was divisible and subdivisible into many multiples and sub-multiples’” (138). Not only was the rosary a means for the men of the
Survey to map and chart the geography of India, thus securing Britain’s imperial grip, but for others such as the lama, the rosary became a means to enter a more transcendental state—to escape the geopolitical realities of the earth. Similarly for Kim, the nature of his geographical exploration proves repeatedly to be a dichotomous one of both body and spirit. While his searchings with the lama are under the pretext of spiritual transcendence from the body, Kim’s motivations are often strictly corporeal: “Kim yearned for the caress of soft mud squashing up between the toes, as his mouth watered for mutton stewed with butter and cabbages, for rice speckled with strong-scented cardamons, for the saffron-tinted rice, garlic and onions, and the forbidden greasy sweetmeats of the bazars” (Kim 107). As I discuss in Chapter Four, the physical landscape of India hosts for Kim a constant contest of the earthly and spiritual.

Kim’s involvement with the landscape goes beyond a mere cataloguing of the physical geography and becomes for him a means to investigate his own troubling questions of identity. Kim’s predisposition for cartography can be seen when he begins his own phenomenological exploration during his peregrinations with the lama. Later at the illustrious Xavier school, Kim exhibits “a great aptitude for mathematical studies as well as map-making and carried away a prize . . . for proficiency therein,” and goes on to join the endeavor of charting the otherwise vast and unknown geography of India (139). But even before Xavier, Kim possesses a natural desire for exploration and discovery that he exercises with great joy during his travels with the lama. Having crossed over into territory unfamiliar to him, Kim ventures out to familiarize himself with his new surroundings: “There was no purpose in his wanderings, except that the build of the huts near by seemed new, and he wished to investigate” (69). Creighton then discovers the boy and proceeds to enlist him in the process of becoming a Sahib. There several notable points of interest here. First, as Kim continues his mapping of India, he implicitly questions the issue of
identity as linguistic, national, or racial, etc., so that one must ask whether being “native” or British is by categorical distinction and whether these distinctions are by birth or by nurturing. “‘A nation?’” asks James Joyce’s Irish flaneur Leopold Bloom, “‘A nation is the same people living in the same place’” (Ulysses 331). Bloom’s response here appears more transcendental than something as tangible as a birth certificate, but there is also in his answer the unquestionable importance of geography and place. Two of Joyce’s great heroes, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, were also both greatly preoccupied with the troubling issues of race and nationality. The first epigraph of the thesis is a comment by John Joyce on his son James’ predilections for map-making, so one must wonder to what extent is the relationship between a cartographical impulse and an establishment of national, cultural, or self-identity.

Secondly, Kim’s experience in spatial and geographical investigation is not to find the river with the lama but to seek the fulfillment of the prophesy left by his late father. It is his wandering under this pretense that he falls upon the Mavericks’ camp, setting in motion the agenda by which he becomes a Sahib. Several chapters later, Kim will consider the notion of kismet, or fate, as the impetus behind his being a Sahib. The implicit connection here between fate and cartographical exploration is one of vantage point: with cartography, like fate, every moment, divergence, and convergence can be read at once in its entirety; the end is already taken into account in the beginning, so to speak. The process of cartography—that is, being able to see and comprehend a place’s entirety at a single glance—necessarily alters the perception of a place from knowing it as a series of first-hand singularities to knowing it as a more totalistic entity.

Kipling presents several passages with a similar synchronic and cartographical approach in his depictions of the land:
All India spread out to left and right. It was beautiful to behold the many-yoked grain and cotton wagons crawling over the country roads: one could hear their axles, complaining a mile away, coming nearer, till with shouts and yells and bad words they climbed up the steep incline and plunged on to the hard main road, carter reviling carter. It was equally beautiful to watch the people, little clumps of red and blue and pink and white and saffron, turning aside to go to their own villages, dispersing and growing small by twos and threes across the level plain. Kim felt these things, though he could not give tongue to his feelings and so contented himself with buying peeled sugar-cane and spitting the pith generously about his path. (56)

As with maps, the narrative space of the passage is widely expansive: sounds in the distances are heard clearly and spaces are visually perceived in painterly, map-like “little clumps” of color. One can see simultaneously the whole vast spread of India and yet hear the crank of axles and see the pith of Kim’s chewed up sugar cane fall to the ground. Later, while out on a surveying mission, Hurree Babu scans the landscape with a pair of binoculars, a then-modern implement in the service of espionage: “[He] had seen all he wanted to see when he sat on the threshing-floor of Ziglaur, twenty miles away as the eagle flies, and forty by road—that is to say, two small dots which one day were just below the snow-line, and the next had moved downward perhaps six inches on the hillside” (197). From Hurree’s vantage point, he apprehends the landscape in cartographical terms: dots to represent two towns forty miles apart; a mountain minimized to a measurement of inches. The depictions Kipling provides of India contain virtual catalogues through an all-encompassing lens that would today be described as cinematic, and the depictions are clearly evident of the cartographical consciousness engendered by modernization.
The changing perceptions of landscape at the turn of nineteenth century not only rendered visible the distant and otherwise unknown spaces of the colonial periphery but caused, for the individual like Kim, the sense of disorientation and identity conflict reflected in the burgeoning aesthetics of modernist literature. Michael Valdez Moses argues that

the paradigmatic Conradian scene of the imperial encounter is one of disorientation, one in which the Western mind, far from subjugating the pliable native environment to the scientific and epistemological categories of its omnipotent and omniscient European intelligence, finds itself at a loss, overthrown, confused, panicked, frustrated, and turned back upon itself. This Conradian scene typically culminates not in an act of Western epistemological mastery and political domination but one of uncertainty and alienation, radical skepticism, and intense critical self-examination. (45)

Kipling provides discrete moments of Kim’s disorientation, the first of which when “[h]e considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam” (Kim 101). A second instance occurs when Kim moves across the landscape and feels “his legs bent like bad pipe-stems, and the flood and rush of the sunlit air dazzled him” (234). Although Kim does not register as a modernist work in the formal sense, such moments of Kim’s disorientation, fragmentation, and displacement gesture towards modernist stylistic tropes that register the changing epistemology of place and space that were concomitant with the new advances in cartographical documentation. The effects of cartography attendant with empire and modernization create, I will argue, simultaneously an inward, centripetal motion from the margin to the center, on the one hand, and an outward, centrifugal motion from the metropole to the
periphery, on the other, producing a more fragmented understanding of identity and the multiple-consciousness associated with Kim.
PART TWO:
THE (POST)COLONIAL SITUATION

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said provides a definition of imperialism as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” (9). The validity of Said’s comment notwithstanding, a problem with such a unidirectional influence tends to emerge as the distinctions of center and periphery, of inside and outside become less discrete. Both metropole and colony begin to acquire and project characteristics of each other due to the exchange of civil, political, and cultural memes concomitant with the push toward globalization (9). The notions and semantics of place and home for a metropolitan identity become called into question as they begin to have meaning less *sui generis* of the metropole but instead more from the its oppositional identification regarding its imperial outposts. When outside and inside become less distinguishable, boundaries more subjective, the task of charting the anthropological evolution of culture becomes increasingly difficult: the locus understood as *here* becomes inevitably blurred with *(t)here*.

This kind of global systemization causes the simultaneous compression and expansion of the globe, resulting in a disturbance of the established modes of epistemological thought. “In conditions of modernity,” writes Anthony Giddens, “place becomes increasingly *phantasmagoric*: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale is not simply that which is present of the scene; the ‘visible form’ of the locale conceals the distanciated relations which determine its nature” (18-19, original emphasis). As a result, the dialectics of inside/outside, center/periphery, metropole/colony, become increasingly blurred through the exploits of “transfer, transit, and transmission” (Richards 19).
Despite Kim’s desire to return to the bucolic wanderings with the lama during his holiday from school, both his and the babu’s cartographical efforts for the service “give way to colonization through the mediated instrumentality of information,” or what Richards calls “the operations of a postmodern world” (23). For Empire, the acquisition of information became the possession of geography, which in turn became the possession of economies. Thus, the documentation of India’s landscape as well as other colonial territories led to much of the empire’s economic capital being based on the possession of the colonial extremities, despite such transmitted “visibility” of the distant colonies. As Fredric Jameson states in his essay “Modernism and Imperialism,” “colonialism means that a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country . . . Such spatial disjunction has as its immediate consequence,” he continues, “the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole” (“Modernism and Imperialism” 50-51).10 The phenomenon of the system is that it operates as a singular yet aggregate entity that is nonetheless troubled by its own totalizing impulses. Richards writes that “[i]n Kim the crystallized image of the comprehensive knowledge upon which English hegemony rests is the museum, . . . [b]ut the Lahore Museum must not be mistaken for its metropole, the British Museum,” he warns, as it “contains only local knowledge pertaining to a limited zone of empire” (29). The fact that the Lahore Museum is not the British museum but almost the British Museum produces a tension in the dialectics of local and global. As a result, British identity became increasingly dependant on the nation’s ability to simultaneously localize and globalize its cultural vernacular (Baucom 26). The modernization of the primitive produced a new and local knowledge on a global scale, begging for the Englishman—and Indian, for that matter—the question of identity formation. Through the
implementation of the kinds of data pilgrimages intended to achieve a vernacular both global and local, the babu, an Anglicized native and Spenserian scholar, utilizes the imperial instrumentality to assume a Britishness perhaps more British than the British themselves: “‘I am good enough Herbert Spencerian, I trust, to meet little thing like death,’” says Hurree, soon followed by “‘[t]here is no hurry for Hurree—that is an Europe pun, ha! ha!’” (Kim 187, 188). Clearly Kipling reveals a kind of colonial ambivalence to have the native Anglophile scholar speak in broken English. The employment of natives such as the babu, however, in the acquisition and systemization of information contributed to Empire’s globalizing tendencies. Ironically, the globalizing imperatives of imperialism produced a localistic discourse, forcing the question of Englishness to an epistemological crisis. One need ask to what extent the identification of Britishness was informed by the peripheral colonies.

In Out of Place, Baucom examines the effects of recreating quintessentially British constructs—Gothic architecture, the cricket field, the country house—in colonized spaces as imperialist attempts to translate a British past into a colonial present (19). British soldiers stationed in the East commonly begin to reconstruct the institutions with which they identified a sense of Englishness. One case is Kipling’s story “At the End of the Passage,” in which four soldiers meet every Sunday for tea and dinner. Although the premise of the text is expressly designed to recreate an ambiance of Britishness, the language of the story is saturated with the inexorable presence of India itself:

From time to time clouds of tawny dust rose from the ground without wind or warning, flung themselves tablecloth-wise among the tops of the parched trees, and came down again. Then a-whirling dust-devil would scutter across the plain for a couple of miles, break, and fall outward. ... a cluster of huts made of mud,
condemned rails, and canvas, and the one squat four-roomed bungalow that belonged to the assistant engineer in charge of a section of the Gaudhari State line then under construction.

(328)

Here Kipling has created a narrative of one-hundred four degree weather, dust storms, cholera, and fatigue “a-whirling” ‘round the assistant engineer named Hummil who is positioned directly at the center of the narrative. Not only is Hummil the static still-point of the otherwise dynamic passage, but the condition of being “under construction” could just as easily qualify him as it does the Gaudhari State line. If one were to take such a reading, it becomes more significant then that the venue for Hummil’s “construction” is a re-created British satellite that is nonetheless permeated by place: Hummil and his company are more influenced by the geography of India than they are their own reconstruction of “home.”

I suggest one must consider the two readings simultaneously, as the constructed boundary and the constructed Englishman are equally pertinent. The state line exists as a somewhat peculiar distinction concomitant with disciplines of geography and is itself often an arbitrary or imagined construct instead of a more tangibly realized demarcation. Furthermore, the lens for the passage is one of a synchronic or cartographic nature, as Hummil’s charge is a mere “section” within the total geographic description. In the story, four soldiers strive desperately to establish a distinct separation of spheres by reinstating the structure of Britishness through Sunday dinners and tea, and even the old piano contributes to a sense of British formality. The piano, a symbol of British imperialism as the reappropriation of spolia in its use of ivory as a treasure of conquest “was indeed hopelessly out of order”—as were the four displaced soldiers. However dissonant the music was, “Mottram managed to bring the rebellious notes into a sort of agreement, and
there rose from the ragged keyboard something that might once have been the ghost of a popular music-hall song” (333). There is an ontological lacuna between the meaning of the piano and its purpose, as it is not only out of place in dusty, sun-scorched India, but it is out of tune. I suggest that one can read in that lapse Homi Bhabha’s “phantasmic space.” In this passage the simultaneous tendencies of globalization and localization of the British presence in India are mutually constitutive and thus problematize notions of discrete national, cultural, and epistemological boundaries.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha interrogates the framework of identity construction, Du Bois’s notion of “double-consciousness,” and the margin of hybridity in terms of cultural dualities of the colonizer-self and the colonized-other. Within the binary opposition of self and other exists an “analytic of desire,” that often manifests itself through mimicry. Bhabha notes three underlying conditions in understanding the process of identification in the analytic of desire fostered by the opposition. “To exist,” he says, “is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus.” He furthers his claim suggesting that “it is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated: the phantasmic space of possession that no one subject can singly or fixedly occupy, and therefore permits the dream of the inversion of roles” (63). The liminal aporia, or, “in-between,” is the site wherein the distinction between the self and the other begin to be blurred. Particularly troubling for Kim are these distinctions due to his fragmented and elastic sense of identity. In her essay “On Complex Communication,” María Lugones probes this Kristevian notion of questionable parameters and claims that, to exist in a state of liminality—one without hardened, clearly defined parameters, one must “engage in a poiesis, a self-construction” (77). With the issues of hybridity engendered by the British employment of natives, Kim’s epistemological space becomes fractured as schisms and formed,
and Kim is forced to occupy a space that is more transcendental than the papers he keeps in his amulet attest.

In order to occupy such a liminal, phantasmic space, a point of reference is necessary as a means to define a sense of orientation, or “the action or process of ascertaining the one’s position relative to the points of the compass, or other specified points; awareness of one’s bearings or relative position” (1.c). This is the case both for Kim, specifically, and the British, generally, due to being caught between notions of Home/home. To know one’s space, one’s dimension, is to be aware of an otherness, and by that otherness, begin to understand a multi-dimensional sense of one’s own characteristics. The nineteenth-century notions of the Orient provided the predominant points of reference for the construction of British identity. Many of the self-ascribed British appropriations of character in the nineteenth century, those professed tenets of “Englishness”—structure, achievement, progress—were created by the binary opposition to those of the cryptic and mystifying East. All aspects, cultures, and identities of the East were flagrantly conflated to the reductive “Oriental.” Perhaps the opposition is best expressed in the words of Edmund Wilson: “the contrast between the East, with its mysticism and its sensuality, its extremes of saintliness and roguery, and the English, with their superior organization, their confidence in modern method, their instinct to brush away like cobwebs the native myths and beliefs” (30). Kim, however, embodies both the Western and Eastern minds simultaneously and is capable of moving between them as the situation necessitates. This kind of shuffling of identities is more clearly understood through Bhabha’s second condition of identity formation: *splitting*.

The self/other opposition, Bhabha contends, is a tension of “demand and desire” therefore creating “a space of splitting” (63). He continues by stating that the place of identification occurs
not independently in the self (colonizer) or the Other (colonized), but rather in that “disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness” (63, emphasis mine). That liminal gap produces a sort of Derridean aporia, in which the concepts of self/other become rather equivocal as they lose their sense of distinction. “These ‘in-between’ spaces,” writes Bhabha, “provide the terrain for elaboration strategies of selfhood” (2). The splitting of selves could also be interpreted as a sense of double-consciousness. Coined by Du Bois in his 1897 essay “Strivings of the Negro People,” the term refers to conceiving an idea of one’s self as seen through another’s eyes, having “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” contained within one physical body (194).12

Though Kim often appears native, he is first seen astride the Zam-Zammah, illustrating the British sense of imperial domination. Kim is fully Indian in that he thinks in Hindustani, stutters when trying to speak English, and eats and drinks in the native way; he even squats “as only the natives can,” yet he is fully English: “‘I hate all snakes,’ said Kim. No native training can quench the white man’s horror of the Serpent’” (87, 40). The obvious paradox that arises suggests that Kim, by definition, is not in fact native, yet he is capable of thoughts and actions that are exclusive to the natives. Further problematizing Kim’s paradoxical identity is that he often shed his British hat and trousers and “found it easier to slip into Hindu or Mohammedan garb when engaged on certain businesses” (5). One presumes that these “businesses” were Kim’s early dealings with the Service, so one must consider how Kim’s assumption of native characteristics at times reinforces the ambivalences of the colonial identity. Although Kim sought these errands to escape the confines of British instruction and instead to interact with the natives as he felt most comfortable, it remains that these errands were ultimately in the service of
Empire. It is of interest here to look at the epigraph with which Kipling begins the eighth chapter of the novel:

Something I owe to the soil that grew –
More to the life that fed –
But most to Allah Who gave me two
Separate sides to my head.

I would go without shirts or shoes,
Friends, tobacco, or bread
Sooner than for an instant lose
Either side of my head. (111)¹³

Hurree babu tells Kim, however, “‘you cannot occupy two places in space simultaneously. That is axiomatic’” (209, *sic*). Although Kipling delineates two discrete English and Indian sides to the head in the poetic epigraph, he actually calls into question the manifold meanings of “native” in a letter to his cousin Margaret Burne-Jones:

When you write ‘native’ what do you mean? The Mahommedan who hates the Hindu; the Hindu who hates the Mahommedan; the Sikh who loathes both; or the semi-anglicized product of our Indian colleges who is hated and despised by Sikh, Hindu, and Mahommedan. Do you mean the Punjabi who will have nothing to do with the Bengali; the Mahrattha to whom the Punjabi’s tongue is as incomprehensible as Russian to me; the Paree who controls the whole trade of Bombay and ranges himself on all questions as an Englishman; the Sindee who is an outsider; the Bhil or the Gond who is an aborigine; the Rajput who despises
everything on God’s earth but himself; the Delhi traders who control trade to
the value of millions; the Afghan who is only kept from looting these same
merchants by dread of English interference. Which one of all the thousand
conflicting tongues, races, nationalities and peoples between the Khaibar Pass and
Ceylon do you mean? There is no such thing as the natives of India. (“Letters”
266)

Kipling is aware of the Western totalizing impulse to reduce such a myriad peoples with varying
political, religious, and cultural beliefs to a single entity of “native.” Kim occupies not only the
two mindsets of the Englishman and “native(s)” but he engages a space that is composed of a
multiple-consciousness as he shuffles his English, Irish, Hindu, and Mohammedan identities.
Kim possesses an uncanny ability to disguise himself amongst both the natives and the Sahibs.
As Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, “Kipling carefully differentiates the relations and
backgrounds of each boy (the Muslim, the Hindu, the Irish) but is just as careful to show us that
none of these identities, though they may hinder the other boys, is a hindrance to Kim. He can
pass from one dialect, one set of values and beliefs, to the other” (158). Zorah T. Sullivan writes
that the narrative of *Kim* itself, “at once a spy thriller, a picaresque adventure story, a maturation
story, and a quest romance,” is affected by such generic variegation of tropes, so that like Kim,
the novel does not fit within specific generic boundaries but rather oscillates between and within
them (*Narratives* 148).

Kipling, too, sensed in himself a fractured identity and often discussed his “Daemon,”
which he depicted in several of his cartoons. Margaret Peeler Feeley quotes Kipling’s remarks
from his autobiography *Something of Myself*: “My Daemon was with me in the *Jungle Books*,
*Kim*, and both Puck books, and good care I took to walk delicately, lest he should
When your daemon is in charge, do not try to think consciously. Drift, wait, and obey” (qte. in Feeley 269). Kipling’s Daemon represents a fragmented or dual consciousness of which Kipling was fully aware in his writings. Many of his “inspiration” self-caricatures feature him surrounded by one or multiple specteral spirits that could be identified for Kipling as the Hegelian zeitgeist, the ethos or spirit of a particular place. Another depicts a portrait of Kipling with the top half of his head removed and a minute Indian figure ascending from within his head. In Kipling’s case, his “Daemon” would represent the spirit of India. This multiplicity and splitting of consciousness inevitably leads in the way of contradiction, another trope of Kipling’s work.

Kipling’s first published story was “The Gate of the Hundred Sorrows,” first published in 1884 in the Civil and Military Gazette. The story gives a dual-narrative monologue, opened by the narrator disclaiming, “This is no work of mine. My friend, Gabral Misquitta, the half-caste, spoke it all, between moonset and morning, six weeks before he died; and I took it down from his mouth as he answered my questions” (236). “To begin with,” writes Sullivan, “we have split narration opposing the narrator who has survived and the narratee who has not” (Narratives 54). Though the tale is supposedly an exact rendition, it is open to re-negotiation via discrepancy and alteration. Sullivan provides further textual commentary suggesting that “the reader will enter the world of Kipling’s stories through this story that is no story, through a gate that is no gate but a house of a hundred sorrows” (56). The dualities here form a dichotomy of a particular thingness and its opposite. This theme is cohesive throughout Kipling’s oeuvre and especially prevalent in Kim: “There is a white boy by the barracks waiting under a tree who is not a white boy” (87). Moses, in his reading of Heart of Darkness, suggests that “the imperial encounter with a
radically alien place often leads to linguistic paradox and to a representational aporia: “the earth seemed unearthly”’” (62).  

The same dialectic of a thing and its opposite is not foreign to the discourses of identity construction, as characterizations in nineteenth-century England were largely rendered through binary oppositions, particularly those of West/East and the colonizer/colonized. When the colonizer looks upon the colonized and notices those traits of mimetic subjugation, the familiar has suddenly become strange, and the result produces a rather uncanny effect. A significantly more complex case (if the two can even be distinctly separated) is that of the displaced colonizer in which the colonizer himself perhaps may have absorbed particular tendencies or characteristics of the subject and has unconsciously ascribed them to himself as his own, then recognizing in the subject those very qualities which he has assumed. Again, Bhabha’s insights on a discussion of cultural displacement: “the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting” (13). The uncanny is not an infrequent attendant to the works of Kipling. In “At the End of the Passage,” the character Hummil, plagued by dislocation and overwork, sees standing in the verandah “a figure of himself. He had met a similar apparition once before, when he was suffering from overwork and the strain of the hot weather” (341). The tension caught between the hot Indian weather and excessive British work ethic creates another liminal splitting-place where the uncanny is possible. Sullivan addresses a similar doubling caught between the “English loafer—Mac-Somebody I think” in “The Gate of the Hundred Sorrows” and McIntosh Jellaludin in “To Be Filed for Reference.” In the latter, Kipling mentions a manuscript referred to as “Mother Maturin,” the same name by which Kipling called his projected novel that most critics take to be the inchoate beginnings of Kim.
In his essay “The Uncanny” (“Das Unheimliche,” 1919) Freud states that the uncanny is frightening because it leads back to that which is known and familiar (qtd. in Cixous, et al 620). He suggests initially that one may be tempted to conclude that the uncanny is frightening precisely because it represents something that is not familiar, but he follows to argue just the opposite by examining the etymology of the German heimlich (homely/domestic) and its putative antonym unheimlich. The former signifies a sense of intimacy and familiarity, presenting the domestic sphere as a place “free of ghostly influences,” yet a place hidden or withheld (624). One discovers a discrete ambiguity in the meanings of the two words as one “uncannily” fills the other’s space and embodies those attendant implications, thus the distinctions of the two words are blurred, and meaning becomes transferable.

Kim is very much a liminal figure in that his slips easily between light and dark, between the fissures of cultural institutions, and moves about with remarkably ungoverned freedom. Said notes “Kipling’s geographical and spatial governance of Kim rather than the temporal one,” as Kim moves within both the temporal framework of the narrative and the spatial sphere of, to borrow Bakhtin’s title, the dialogic imagination (160). In looking at the temporal and spatial constructions of the nineteenth-century short-story, Mary Rohrberger draws attention to Nathanial Hawthorne’s keen awareness of “the notion of distance, both psychic and physical,” which would be well applied to Kipling as well:

he was aware of the need for framing his stories to help the reader get from the world of mundane fact to the world of universals; he was aware of particular devices that would help position readers to take the proper point of view (his actual words) so they might receive his signals, which were—are—mainly the
multiple perspective, the allegorical framework of the myth, the historical past, and patterns of images creating metaphors, symbolic identifications. (4)

Multiple perspective and allegory, when paired with the historical past, produce the spatio-temporal matrix in which Kim’s identity is ultimately conceived. Through the conceptual understanding of the other, as well as embracing his own multiplicity, Kim does achieve a sense of identity, albeit a fractured one that yet remains under question: “I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?” His soul repeated it again and again” (234).
PART THREE:
IDENTITY OF THE GEOMODERN

Since the 1980s with the work of Soja and other cultural geographers, critical work in the humanities has taken a “spatial turn” in its approach to dealing with cultural phenomena (Ganser, et al 1). Similarly, Jessica Berman notes in the trends of recent literary theoretical study the “priority of space over the often vexed relationships between modernism and history” in which spatiality becomes vanguard to textual study (281). Kim demands a spatial reading because it is premised on space, both geographical phenomenological. Not only does the landscape dictate the Aristotelian progression of the narrative, but the same geographical space provides for Kim an arena for identity formation. In Geomodernisms, a collection of essays investigating the mapping of national and racial identities as well as seeking to understand how the interpretation of modernism is largely dependent on perspectives of space, various scholars consider the centering perspective of modernism. Editors Doyle and Winkiel contend that “the past is pushed to the periphery, [and] the modern becomes the center,” and that “[M]odernisms make themselves and are made from the outside in” (2, 3, original emphasis). I posit Kim’s position as a modernist one, and that the process by which he perceives his identity is derived from a similar epistemological means: Kim’s identity formation is one of a “centering perspective” that begins at a more fragmented periphery and works inwardly toward a common center. Although for Kim, his uniquely colonial yet modernist positionality proves to be one caught in the constant transition between center and margin, colonizer and colonized.

The notion of transition reiterates the local-global dialectic of inside/outside, and Kim’s place in and between them as he contemplates, “what is Kim?” (234). This kind of aesthetic of self-awareness “expresses a geocultural consciousness—a sense of speaking from outside or
inside or both at once, of orienting toward and away from the metropole, of existing somewhere between belonging and dispersion” (Doyle and Winkiel 4). While at times Kim operates as young white Sahib, he is inclined to his native upbringing at others, so Kim’s continual interrogation of self stems from disparate points in the constellation that composes his identity. Phillip Wegner, in “Life as He Would Have It’: The Invention of India in Kipling’s *Kim,*” posits that the Heidegerian *Sein,* “the stable center of identity that defines the self,” is uniquely absent in Kim’s character (148). Kim’s case, however, is not one in which his designation of self is afforded by a “stable center” of being but rather the composite fragments that collectively constitute his identity. Although the following well-loved passage of the novel is typically recalled for the stately and tangible India Kipling (re)creates, I suggest it is fundamental to understanding the nature of Kim’s epistemological pursuits:

The diamond-bright dawn woke men and crows and bullocks together. Kim sat up and yawned, shook himself, and thrilled with delight. This was seeing the world in real truth; this was life as he would have it – bustling and shouting, the buckling of belts, and beating of bullocks and creaking of wheels, lighting of fires and cooking of food, and new sights at every turn of the approving eye. The morning mist swept off in a whorl of silver, the parrots shot away to some distant river in shrieking green hosts: all the well-wheels within ear-shot went to work. India was awake, and Kim was in the middle of it, more awake and more excited than anyone, chewing on a twig that he would presently use as a toothbrush; for he borrowed right- and left-handedly from all the customs of the country he knew and loved. (65)
It is important first to note first how Kipling attempts a kind of geographical and cultural mapping throughout the narrative space of the novel by employing a language not dissimilar from regarding a map. One is reminded of the passage in which “all India [was] spread out to left and right” (56). The perspective here is one from an inside informed by a sense of boundaries. The passage begins at the periphery, diamond-bright, as the sun is just appearing at the horizon so that the physical space of the description is contained within the panoramic eye line. The eye then sweeps over the tangible landscape, turning and finally working its way toward Kim positioned at the center. Said, by comparing the Great Game to the novel itself, employs a similar language that proves apposite here: “[t]o be able to see all India from the vantage of controlled observation: this is one great satisfaction. . . . It is as if by holding Kim at the center of the novel … Kipling can have and enjoy India in a way that even imperialism never dreamed of” (155, original emphasis).

A second reading of the passage assists in understanding the rather unwieldy multiplicity of Kim’s position. Kipling opens with the distant margin of the horizon and, with a somewhat helical movement, draws around the landscape and more concrete goings on to which Kim alone is privy, bringing the description to a controlled core where Kim is situated directly in the center of it all. Figure 1 [d] by represents a simple centripetal spiral. Concerning the graphs, Huntley writes that “[t]he Fractal Matrix reveals that all of creation, with its accompanying fractal levels, emerges from vortices . . . .These are centripetal spirals” (Huntley). With the same centripetal-like motion, it is as though Kipling sets in motion a landscape of India that brings us eventually to a crystallized image of Kim, “awake and more excited than anyone.”

A secondary passage reiterates this rhetoric of movement over the landscape, also finally arriving at a poised Kim taking in all of India:
But it was all pure delight—the wandering road, climbing, dipping, and sweeping about the growing spurs the flush of the morning laid along the distant snows; the branched cacti, tier upon tier on the stony hillsides; the voices of a thousand water-channels; the chatter of the monkeys; the solemn deodars, climbing on after another with down-drooped branches; the vista of the Plains rolled out far beneath them; the incessant twanging of the tonga-horns and the wild rush of the led horses when a tonga swung round a curve . . . . all of these things lifted Kim’s heart to song within him. (123-24)

In these sumptuous descriptions of India, Kipling could not have taken us any further from the realities of the Great Game, yet, for Kim, “[t]his was seeing the world in real truth” (65). “The figure of India produced in Kipling’s narrative,” writes Wegner, “is thus always-already structurally incomplete—that is, until we restore the absent presence of the imperial metropole to which it is inseparably bound” (137-38). Wegner means that in Kipling’s rendering of India, Empire has become either a sort of benign mannequin as space holder or the cheery and ironic Hurree Babu. Kipling has produced a picture in which antagonism between India and Empire is portrayed as nothing more than ambivalence. As Richards writes, although everything that transpires in Kim is under “the Sign of War” (Kim 70), it is a Cold War, a war without heat because it is a war without friction, a peacetime war” (30-31). Although there is great credence to Wegner’s reading, I suggest that the subtext of the narrative gestures not to the always-already absence of Empire, but the always-already presence of imperial and diachronic History. Imperial history, though superficially in accord with Kipling’s imagined India, haunts the crystallized image like a specter. The line of text that follows Kim’s moment of song must not be glossed over. “‘But, when the singing and dancing is done,’ said Mahbub Ali, ‘comes the Colonel
Sahib’s, and that is not so sweet’” (124). Despite this moment of revelry, that when all of India is functioning as a whole and Kim’s heart is brought to song, the Great Game returns immediately, thus shattering his moment of full experience. In Fig.1 (c), an outside force has penetrated the otherwise unidirectional flow of motion (as in Figures 1 [d] and 1 [e]), thus splintering the motion into two opposing directions (Huntley). Here one is reminded of Gayatri Spivak’s terse maxim that “[e]mpire messes with identity” (qtd. in Baucom 14). Baucom interprets Spivak’s pithy claim to mean that “colonialism disrupts, distorts, and deforms the identities of the colonized” (14). Baucom goes on to parse how the 1981 Nationality Act of England operates under the premise that it is empire’s prerogative to disturb or “disrupt the cultural identity of a colonizing nation” (14). The arrival of the Colonel Sahib, metonym of Empire, portends the reality of war, thus truncating Kim’s life of song. Here I would like to recall the second epigraph printed above, which is borrowed from T.S. Eliot’s *Burnt Norton*. Human kind, he writes, can only endure so much historical reality.

As in the above passage from *Kim* that calls for close textual interrogation, it would be ingenuous to ignore the final significance of the diamond-bright dawn passage: that Kim was in fact borrowing from a place he knew and loved. We are able to see a picture of Kim perspicuously defined against the land, the history, and the future of “new sights at every turn,” (*Kim* 65) yet in the core of the purview one can see the montage that is Kim’s “poiesis of self-construction” as he borrows left and right from a culture whose space is, but history is not, his own (Lugones 77). It remains for Kim that India is not his natural home. At home as he is in the midst of the “roaring whirl of India,” he is not in fact Indian but only perhaps almost-Indian through his identification with the natural landscape (101). “What might it mean to be naturally Indian?” asks Ariela Freedman. She is speaking in reference to postcolonial artist Raghubir
Singh, though the question is just as pertinent for Kim. “To assert identity here is to claim to transcend it” (Freedman 117). By no means does Kim desire to transcend identity but quite the opposite: he actively pursues it, questioning again and again who, and by extension, what, he is. In his well-known cultural essay “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking,” A.K. Ramanujan delves into the polyvocality of the Indian consciousness, addressing specifically the cultural changes after periods of modernization. As Doyle and Winkiel succinctly express in their introduction, the modernist’s experience is one of “encounter and dispersion, place and exile, global connection and local alienation” (2). At the moment all of India comes to life (Kipling will later employ the metaphor of a cog-wheel), Kim finds himself most aware, most present. Yet, Kim remains alienated and later confesses on separate occasions, “‘I am all alone in this land. . . . In all of India is no one so alone as I! . . . I am Kim—Kim—Kim—alone—one person—in the middle of it all” (104, 156, 188). The syntax of Kim’s realization—like Kipling’s realization of Kim—is one that is fragmented, a profound yet simple articulation broken up into six discrete parts.

Through a sort of centripetal effect, these artifacts and actions of Indian life begin to form a mosaic that gestures toward an image of Kim, alive and awake, and in the middle of it all. A functional metaphor for this centripetal tendency would be the starting of a whirlpool in an above-ground physical structure. Let the structure be represented by Time—or the Great Game—as nothing exists outside of it, and the water by Space, possessing a certain homogeneity of essence. As the whirlpool begins, everything within the water that is not part of the water itself—sand, tobacco leaves, discarded sugar cane pith—will draw together in the center of the pool and form as a new nucleus. In this sense, the characteristics of the nucleus are created from the outside in, and not from an already intrinsic center of stability (See Fig. 1 [f]). As Bhabha
writes in *The Location of Culture*, “it is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*” (7). Applying the metaphor to the politics of British identity formation in the metropole problematizes the issue by the implicit assertion that British national identity is formed purely by the margin. I do not intend to argue that the metropolitan identity is one that has no intrinsic center, but that Kim’s identity, neither center nor margin (yet both) is one whose center and margin are mutually constitutive.

Although British identity may not solely rely on the margin for its intrinsic core, the imperial situation regarding the center/periphery dialectic discussed earlier, does force the politics of identity formation to a particular crisis: while on the one hand Britain is imposing or restructuring facets of Western cultural memes on the “Orient,” its own ontological positions are at the same time being influenced by the east, on the other. Figure 2 reiterates the previous dialectic of inside/outside and reinforces how both center and periphery co-dependant are mutually constitutive:

> The inside-out [\(\backslash\)] outside-in of all creation forms is due to the gradual unfolding-refolding principle of Nature. This process is controlled by spiral pairs which are motivated by still centering shafts of magnetic Light. Opposed pairs of spirals gradually expand centrifugally to planes meeting at static equators to complete the unfolding half of a cycle. They then contract as the opposite of what they were to complete the other half . . . [until] both are projected through each other.¹⁶

(Russell)

But in the above passage and with the metaphor of the whirlpool, as Kim’s phenomenological perceptions of space begin, the universal movement, displacement, and spiraling motion represent the composite identity embodied by Kim. “But what a spiral man’s
being represents!” writes Bachelard. “And what a number of invertible dynamisms there are in this spiral! One no longer knows right away whether one is running toward the center or escaping” (214) Figure 3 represents three complex spirals with seemingly coexisting inward and outward directional tendencies. About such spirals, Russell writes that

The spiral is an uncompleted sphere just as crystal forms are uncompleted cubes. Spirals and crystals have individuality which they lose by voidance in the oneness of spheres and cubes. Individuality is given bodies for the purpose of manifesting separateness and multiplicity. Individuality, separateness and multiplicity are then voided in oneness. Individuality in every creating thing is a moment to moment record of its unfoldment and refoldment. It is the fruit of cosmic desire for creative expression. It begins when the cycle begins, ends with its ending, and repeats itself in each cycle until the entire cycle of any expressed idea is voided in its completion. (Russell).

Like Bachelard’s claim, the determination of beginning or ending, or whether a direction is explicitly moving toward or away from the center, is a difficult one. To further illustrate his point, Bachelard goes on to quote from Les Témoins invisibles by Jean Tardieu:

Pour avancer je tourne sur moi-même

Cyclone par l’immobile habité.

(In order to advance I walk the treadmill of myself

Cyclone inhabited by immobility.)

Mais au-dedans, plus de frontières!

(But within, no more boundaries!) (214)
The paradox presented in Tardieu’s verse is that to progress, to move forward, one must naturally regress, or return to a point of starting, as though on a treadmill. Similarly, in Kim’s case this spiral is not a representation of a uni-directional process that concludes with the formation of Kim’s identity. Even in the narrative movement centering clearly on Kim, there persists a concurrent outward motion—parrots shoot off into the distance, wagon wheels creak to and fro, morning mist dissipates—so that these motions are complicated by a continuous progression and regression, inwards and outwards, causing Kim to constantly re-figure his position in the Game. On three separate occasions Kim self-consciously considers his own identity and what constitutes it.

“Being,” continues Bachelard, “is not bordered by nothingness: one is never sure of finding it, or of finding it solid, when one approaches a center of being. And if we want to determine man’s being, we are never sure of being closer to ourselves if we ‘withdraw’ into ourselves, if we move toward the center of the spiral” (215, original emphasis) (See Fig. 1 [a]). Similarly, the effects of Empire and displacement create simultaneously an inward centering motion from the margin to the nucleus, as well as an outward, expanding motion from the center—the metropole, or in Kim’s case, the sein—to the periphery, fragmenting his epistemology and the multiple-consciousness that continues to trouble him. In effect, there are for Kim two concurrent forces at work: the centrifugal urging concomitant with Empire that, effectually splintering Kim’s “stable center” of being, forces him outwardly to the margin, fracturing into somewhat the discrete identities of English, Irish, Hindu, or Mahommedan in lieu of an otherwise altogether whole; and inversely, a centripetal tendency that pulls Kim’s pieces back inside to a nominal self. Although Fig. 5 deals explicitly with gravity and light waves, it most aptly represents the simultaneous inward and outward flow I have attempted to express.
Ontologically speaking, Kim must necessarily be something, that is, a signified, because when one says “Kim,” there are resonances of meaning, however variable they might be. What designates this something, however, can be a hundred Kims, further problematized by dialogic processes which call for the constant renegotiation of Kim. Such an ontological dilemma does not exist merely outside the text, for, “il n’y pas hors-texte,” but within the narrative itself. “‘From beside the cannon didst thou come,’” the lama says to Kim, “‘—bearing two faces—and two garbs.’” “‘There was but one of me,’” Kim corrects: “‘Think again and thou wilt remember. A boy—a Hindu boy—by the great green cannon’” (32). Here Kim identifies himself solely as a Hindu boy. Taking into consideration the above passage, one must ask whether Kim truly believed he was a young Hindu child or whether he perceived himself so, at that particular moment, because he believed that was how he was perceived by the lama.

But while Kim is depicted here, albeit momentarily, as the center, he remains in a continuous state of flux. He displays throughout the novel his unique ability for disguise and transferability between cultural, racial, and, most importantly here, spatial boundaries of inside and outside. He slips between centers and margins, between stationed tents and moving train cars, between the plains and the hills. These movements between boundaries are Kim’s attempts at reconciling the two disparate Eastern and Western sides of his head, maintaining both his penchant for exploration, conquest, and systemization and his “native” desire, like the lama, to escape the geographical confines of the worldly. Before Kim is taught to think like a young Sahib—although this begs the question of Kim’s predisposition for success in the Great Game—he is under the watch of a young soldier and inquires about leaving the bounds of the camp for the bazaar, asking how near he can go. “Kim did not know what bounds meant, but he wished to be polite—for the present. ‘’Ow near? ’Ow far, you mean?” the young soldier corrected him
In Kim’s phenomenological understanding of space, he does not differentiate near from far, inside from outside. Later in the novel he is instructed by Mahbub Ali that “it is not to be thought that this running out and in is any way good,” as Kim fled from the British during his holidays to join the lama in his quest for the sacred river (112).

Clearly for Kim the distinctions of inside and outside are no longer discrete oppositions. “[I]nside and outside,” writes Bachelard “can no longer be taken in their simple reciprocity; consequently . . . we shall come to realize that the dialectics of inside and outside multiply with countless diversified nuances,” (216). The irreconcilability of Kim’s transition between his native, English, and Irish selves is what continues to rattle critics. I contend that such an irreconcilability affords Kim his unique modernist and problematic colonial identity. Caught perpetually in between the opposing centrifugal and centripetal forces of Empire, between the dispersion and retrieval of information, Kim remains perpetually in a state of “transfer, transit, and transmission” (Richards 19).

Kim’s transferability, then, is antagonistic to his cartographical instincts: while on the one hand he seeks to delimit, demarcate, and define physical space by margins and boundaries, he insists on not only going out of bounds: “[h]e did not care for any of the bazaars which were in bounds” (Kim 92). On the other hand he insists on dissolving boundaries altogether. Maps, writes Baucom, “adore boundaries, and the argument of the boundary is the argument of territorial fixity. Indeed, the promise of the survey is to fix India not only as a governed territory in space but as a permanent possession in time. The wanderings, displacements, and spatial uncertainties of nomadism seem, then, to articulate a direct threat to the spatial and temporal permanencies of cartography” (94, emphasis mine).
However useful this malleability in Kim for British advancement in The Great Game, the multiplicity experienced by Kim can be rather disorienting. In this constant renegotiation of self, “there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the ‘beyond: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-dela* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth,” writes Bhabha (2). Here the words themselves offer an intimation of parameter and definition, but the meanings therein possess a more ambiguous, more transferable sense of constitution. Thus, Kim’s identity is problematized by the inside/outside dialectic that affords him such a transferability. Berman writes that, “when restrictive models of identity encounter new notions of center and periphery, new emphasis on human-landscape relations over the *long durée*, and new possibilities of narrative mapping, little, including race, remains fully determined” (296). Figure 4 reproduces a similar spiral as the previous ones, but here it is contained within discrete, multi-dimensional parameters, in Kim’s case, Time, or the Great Game. Though a center and its peripheries are clearly delimited, the spiral remains ongoing, never quite fully determined. Berman’s assertion elucidates the dilemma of Kim’s claiming to be a Hindu boy at one particular moment in the text and not truly a native Indian at another. Therefore through the co-existing centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, characterized by the tensions of *fort/da*, inside/outside, being/dispersion, and their continual *corso e ricorso*, one must necessarily renegotiate the positionality of Kim’s identity.
As I suggested in my introduction, the most common criticism of *Kim*, the *ad hominim* arguments notwithstanding, generally avers that Kipling was ultimately unable to dramatize any true and fundamental conflict between the East and the West. The charge is perhaps best summarized by Edmund Wilson’s famous critique, in which he writes that Kipling could not represent the contest between the East, with its mysticism and sensuality, its extremes of saintliness and roguery, and the English, with their superior organization, their confidence in modern method, their instinct to brush away like cobwebs the native myths and beliefs. We have been shown two entirely different worlds existing side by side, with neither really understanding the other, and we have watched the oscillation of Kim, as he passes to and fro between them. But the parallel lines never meet; the alternating attractions felt by Kim never give rise to a genuine struggle.

(123-24)

The lineage of claims by Wilson or Annan, et al suggests that perhaps Kipling did not dramatize real conflict because he did not actually face one. First it is important to note that for Kipling there did not exist any true antagonism between metropole and periphery because the two were mutually informative. They were two sides of the same historical coin, and it would be too reductive to label them as discrete contrasts. One must ask whether it was possible for Kipling to conceive of Empire without India, or of India without the inexorable presence of the British. Regarding *Kim*, Wilson argues that the realms of empire and India are better thought of as
parallel lines because they are never in fact forced to cross. Perhaps a more appropriate metaphor than parallel lines, however, would be to consider these worlds like the two faces of Janus: while one looks to the east, the other faces the west, and the two may never face each other. With this in mind, I argue that Kim’s conflict of identity arises not from the moment of contact between the co-existing realms, but rather from his engagement of the interstitial spaces between them. I will go on to argue that the space Kim inhabits in one that looks simultaneously back to the past and forward to the future, therefore positing Kim’s identity as both colonially ambivalent and distinctly modernist.

To better understand the nature of the co-existing worlds in Kim, I first want to demonstrate how Kim operates within them. Franco Moretti, in *Graphs, Maps, and Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*, suggests that “literature moves forwards and sideways at once; often, more sideways than forwards. Like Shklovsky’s great metaphor for art, the knight’s move at chess” (91). The knight, also, is the only piece permitted to move on a secondary plane of the game; where other pieces may move freely only in a linear fashion and across unoccupied spaces, the knight can move across (i.e., jump) already occupied game squares where other pieces must either capture or be captured upon crossing. Similarly, Kim is endowed with the unique ability to move forwards, backwards, and sideways across the landscape, slipping in and out of his multiplicity of selves within the greater scheme of historical context imposed by the Great Game of Empire. So it comes to us as no surprise, then, that Mahbub commonly refers to Kim as a horse or pony in reference to his role in the Great Game: “‘I have a some young stuff coming on made by Heaven for the delicate and difficult polo-game. He has no equal’” (93).

Early in the novel, Kim’s predilection for unobserved and unpolicied movement across India is evident. As Richards notes,
everybody in *Kim* plays the Great Game, a political metaphor that Kipling takes from Arthur Conolly’s *Journey to the North of India* (1838). A chess player, Conolly used the metaphor as a tool to explain Russian diplomatic maneuvers within a superpower economy and over a particular terrain, India. (27)

In terms of cartography, the chess board aptly represents the vantage point that the British possessed over the Indian landscape, that is, having the capacity to view its geography in its entirety as opposed to a series of singularities over space. But although the metaphor holds up in theory, the reality of the Game in India happened in a manner that looked *across* the game board/landscape instead of down onto it as a whole picture. These two approaches to spatiality, that is, the synchronic perspective of an entirety and the approach of linear progression, may both be aptly applied to the novel, for Kim also moves within two planes. Wegner contends that within the novel,

narrative space is doubled, so that the adventures of young Kimball O’Hara take place simultaneously in two different settings. The first of these setting-frames is constituted by the immediate, phenomenological space that Kim occupies—the ‘exotic landscape’ of India . . . . this first level of ‘reality’ is always-already contained within a larger, second context. Kipling refers to this latter frame as ‘The Great Game’—a figure that we can now read as the sign manifest in the local Indian political context of the absent presence of the global empire’s massive structure.

(136)

What Wegner means is that Kim’s actions resonate within the concentric literary and historical frameworks of the novel. Once Kim has entered the Game, the lama tells him “‘[t]hou hast
loosed an Act upon the world, and as a stone thrown into a pool so spread the consequences
thou canst not tell how far” (176). Here Kipling makes the Act something proper, as though it is a
specific and isolated historical event, yet the lama’s declaration suggests it is much more than
that. The Act is instead a moment that continues to render consequences and reverberations
throughout the concentric frameworks of both the novel and history. The novelistic sphere can be
read in Kipling’s rich and stately display of narrative as it creates a sensual and tangible India
that serves as Wegner’s frame of immediacy:

By this time the sun was driving broad golden spokes through the lower branches
of the mango-trees; the parakeets and doves were coming home in their hundreds;
the chattering, grey-backed Seven Sisters, talking over the day’s adventures,
walked back and forth in twos and threes almost under the feet of the travelers;
and shufflings and scufflings in the branches showed that the bats were ready to
go out on the night-picket. Swiftly the light gathered itself together, painted for an
instant the faces and the cart-wheels, and the bullocks’ horns as red as blood.
Then the night fell, changing the touch of the air, drawing a low, even haze, like a
gossamer veil of blue, across the face of the country, and bringing out, keen and
distinct, the smell of wood-smoke and cattle and the good scent of wheaten cakes
cooked on ashes. (57)

Kipling presents a lush and exotic depiction of all of India happening as a whole with a profound
mechanicity, much like the gears of a clock, as the sun spokes through the trees and rolls over
landscape. What is conspicuously absent from Kipling’s adroit description, however, much like
the passage of “pure delight,” is any imperial presence. Instead we find an intimacy with all the
land and its inhabitants whose presence seems completely natural and unaffected by British
occupation and the Great Game. What I hope to cogently represent here is the idea that the two spheres (setting frames—or Wilson’s “parallel lines”) Kipling gives us in *Kim* are never forced to a crisis because they exist within different dimensions and thus require two different approaches to temporality. Although I will expound on this proposition in the subsequent chapter of the thesis, I intend now to focus on the phenomenological affects of the two setting frames.

While the narrative presents the story of Kim and his phenomenological dealings with local spatiality and synchronicity, on the one hand, the second sphere of the more substantive and historical bearing encompasses the incidents of the narrative that are ineluctably linked to the diachronic framework of the political context. Even as Kim moves throughout the sphere of Kipling’s idealized Indian landscape, there are contrary phenomenological significances to various locales. When Kim ventures into the hills with the lama, the change in venue is translated categorically onto Kim’s sentient being: “The hills sweated the *ghi* and sugar suet off his bones; the dry air, taken sobbingly at the head of cruel passes, firmed and built out his upper ribs; and the tilted levels put new hard muscles into calf and thigh” (194). Whereas the lama goes to the hills in order to escape the illusions of the body, the hills affect Kim in a substantive fashion. One reads a more familiar example near the end of the novel as Kim falls gravely ill while wandering the hills and drifts into a deep slumber. Kim awakes to a sense of disorientation, feeling that “his soul was out of gear with its surroundings—a cog-wheel unconnected with any machinery” (234). Only when he asserts his identity—“I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?”—does his head clear and Kim again feels synchronized with the physical landscape in Kipling’s well-known passage:

> with an almost audible click he felt the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without. Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid
into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to be tilled, and men and women to be talked to. They were all real and true—solidly planted upon the feet—perfectly comprehensible—clay of his clay, neither more nor less (234).

Only once Kim is reconciled to the land does he feel again his sense of being and what it means to be “only one person in the middle of it all.” The wheels of his being synchronized again with the outside world, he sprints off to feel the grass between his toes and fingers, reunited with his familiar plains. The irony is that while the hills represent for the lama a space of clearing and spiritual transcendence, a freedom from the wheel of life, they provide for Kim a venue for his dealings with the Service. The conflict of space is ultimately the geography of Western mechanicity and instrumentality versus the geography of faith and spirit, although such strict classifications occlude the reality of Kim’s position, that he operates in and between both realms.

Sullivan notes that, “although the two meanings of the hills appear to contradict each other, in effect, the first tends to idealize and legitimize the second. The spiritual geography of the hills lends its luster to the political geography of the imperialist intent” (“What Happens in the End of Kim?” 444). While the lama fingers the beads of his rosary chanting om mani padme hum, Hurree and Kim use the beads as surveillance officers for cataloguing distances. The dual realms of the landscape are presaged early in the novel when the lama asks the Keeper of Images at the Lahore Museum about the sacred river: “Then he was shown a mighty map, spotted and traced with yellow. The brown finger followed the curator’s pencil from point to point. Here was Kapilavastu, here the Middle Kingdom, and here Mahabodi, the Mecca of Buddhism; and here was Kusinagara, sad place of the Holy One’s death” (10-11). Using the instrument of the map, the Keeper of Images knows the location of every place and points them out to the lama, yet he
does not know where, or whether, the *spiritual* landmark of the river exists. Kipling reiterates the split spheres of spiritual and physical geography when the lama confesses, “‘I am bound by the illusion of Time and Space. How far came we today in the flesh?’” (225). Kim answers, half a *koss*, or about three quarters of a mile, to which the lama replies, “‘Half a koss. Ha! I went ten thousand thousand in the spirit’” (225). Clearly the lama distinguishes between the spatiality of the physical world and spiritual world. Although Wegner defines the two spheres or “setting-frames” as distinct entities, one considering the text in light of a time-space nexus can see how the two, at times, dissolve their distinctions as inside becomes outside, past becomes present, and future is always-already shedding new light on previous perceptions of identity.
PART FIVE:

THE (DE)CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY: RENEGOTIATING *Kim* IN THE CHRONOTOPE

Although this project has dealt primarily with the geographical and phenomenological issues of space in *Kim*, there remain various attendant concerns of temporality that must be necessarily addressed. What does it mean, we should ask, for a place to be understood “simultaneously”? How can Empire possess a place’s past and future through geographical control? In what ways are the synchronistic tendencies of modernism and Empire both mutually informative yet drastically different? In this section I propose to move beyond the inspection of identity rendered through a geocultural examination and the binary oppositions of self and other, and I aim interrogate more acutely Kim’s phenomenological and epistemological questions of identity. In order to do so, I will begin by addressing the undeniable issues of temporality that preoccupy the novel.

Mikhail Bakhtin famously discusses various time-space frameworks in his “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” in which he delineates several distinctive temporal and spatial structures for the purpose of distinguishing novelistic genres. Although particular characteristics of the various chronotopes discussed by Bakhtin are applicable to *Kim*, I employ *chronotope* to mean simply the relationship between time and space in the novel, primarily because the novel is not one that falls cleanly into any one particular generic category. Like the fractured nature of Kim’s identity, the disjunctions of the novel posit it as one that does not adhere to any fixed genre, and the failure to recognize the novel’s fractured generic form perpetuates the criticisms of Wilson et al that the novel’s failures lie in its lack of fundamental conflict. It is the novel’s insistence on generic variation and various representations of
temporality, however, that requires a chronotopic reading of the novel in order to understand both the effects of modernist spatiality on generic form the epistemological ramifications for Kim.

In her essay “Origins, Development, Substance, and Design of the Short Story,” Mary Rohrberger compares diachronic and synchronic imperatives of the genre; while the former is based on a chronological series of cause and effect relationships, the latter designates a more transcendental, all-encompassing ontological schematic of being. For the sake of elucidation, Rohrberger offers other names for these two paradigms, respectively: “mimetic and lyric, anecdotal and epiphanic, linear and spatial” (5). The distinction between the pairs is chiefly a sense of causality; the first group—the “temporal” or “diachronic” is characterized by a sense of contiguity; the second—that of the “spatial,” or “synchronic” schematic—may be distinguished by a unity of pattern or meaning as opposed to a contingency on causal association. Rohrberger furthers her description of synchronicity by quoting Paul Davies, who views it as “an inseparable web of vibrating energy patterns in which no one component has reality independently of the entirety; and included in the entirety is the observer” (qtd. in Rohrberger 5).

In her comparison of spatial and temporal tendencies, Rohrberger parallels the concept of time-as-coexistence to Bergson’s theories of durée: “Duration is characterized by variety, even contraries,” she writes, “as it contains the whole past and present of the person experiencing it—unity and multiplicity” (8). The Bergsonian notion of durée—or, the English duration—is most clearly described as a synchronic time-as-coexistence that is both a unity and a multiplicity, in which a present state of consciousness is not separate from any previous ones and is better understood as a multiplicitous whole. To comprehend simultaneously a spatial entirety through
cartography necessarily alters the perception of a place from a series of singularities to a single whole. The synchronous effect of modernization, and more specifically Empire, is read in the penultimate pages of the novel: “I saw all Hind, from Ceylon in the sea to the Hills, and my own Painted Rocks at Such-zen; I saw every camp and village, to the least, where we have ever rested. I saw them at one time and in one place; for they were within the Soul. By this I knew the Soul had passed beyond the illusion of Time and Space and of Things” (Kim 239). The lama’s geographical vantage of the hills permits him a generous panorama, but the vista here is one of duration that stretches over time as well as space. “In Kim,” writes Said, “you have the impression that time is on your side because the geography is yours to move about in more or less freely,” although just the opposite may be true as well, that Kipling has rendered a control of space through a freedom of movement in time (159). In this sense, geographical control lends to the possession of place, that is, according to Paul Carter, a space with history (xxiv).

One could argue that the manifestations of Empire and colonization engendered the historical and literary tropes that are now used in defining modernism, presenting modernist aesthetics as contrary to the sensibilities of colonized spaces. This evaluation reinforces notions of the chronotope in that it assumes both the diachronic sense of historic causality and the synchronic suggestion of dialogic reinterpretation. As Ganser, et al point out, “[t]he chronotope operates on two important levels: first, as the means by which a text represents history; and second, as the relation between images of time and space in the text, out of which any representation of history must be constructed” (2). In short, the venue of the chronotope is the site for the construction of history. Ariela Freedman writes that one of the postcolonial objectives in Raghubir Singh’s “continued understanding of modernism as an aesthetic that allows him to occupy both the past and the future, to reinvent Indian culture in a new vernacular and retain its
vitality for another generation” (115). Modernism is the contest over the control of Time: whoever controls the past and the future controls “capital H” History. The paradox is that the antagonism of the mutually informative phenomena of modernism and Empire is one of contestation for the control of history. Whereas modernism, on the one hand, allowed for, propitiated, and paved the way for Empire, it provides for the postcolonial subject a means for destabilizing History into various articulations of many histories.

According to Berman, “[g]eography over the longue durée thus gives rise to a Vidalian unity of terrestrial phenomena where landscapes and their morphologies are interconnected and mapping serves less as a means of defining borders or as a vehicle for the geopolitics of empire than as a representation of ongoing relationships” (294). The cartographical efforts of the Service, however, were indeed set on the definition of boundaries. But while Kim took measures to translate the geography of India into a fully comprehensible survey, his ontological process was one of a phenomenological mapping of his ongoing formation and negotiation of selfhood(s). Berman insists that with modernist texts, “mapping becomes a dynamic process that generates movement in time and space. The bidirectional human-landscape relationship described by the geographers becomes a multitudinous array of intersecting vectors that undermine the determinative power of any one set of borders or identities” (295-296). As Kim’s epistemological quest merges with his phenomenological investigation of the landscape, it is no surprise then that he functions around and between the various cultural and spatial boundaries and myriad identities. By Vidalian unity, I might add, Berman means one in which the degrees to which humans affect the physical landscape and how the physical landscape affects humans are arguably congruent. Vidal sees the environment as heterogenous and composite with mutual exchange, a functioning whole that is characteristic of the mosaic (285). As Ricketts
acknowledges, the mosaic analogy carries beyond Kipling’s rendering of Kim into his other works. He writes that in *Soldiers Three*, “Rud was not trying for the sequential movement of the novella but for something closer to a narrative collage, in which each separate tale added to an overall picture” (113). For Kipling much of the meaning and consequence of his writing was largely engendered by dialogic resonances, not unlike Rohrberger’s theoretical descriptions of the epiphanic or spatial. In Said’s words, “[p]ast and present inform each other, each implies the other and, in the totally ideal sense intended by Eliot, each co-exists with the other.” Said writes that Eliot’s tradition, although “it respects temporal succession, [it] is not wholly commanded by it” (4). My intent is to demonstrate that *Kim* operates within the rubrics of a *chronotope* in which both successive and synchronic temporalities render concentric reverberations within the text as well as beyond it.

Bhabha offers a dialogical voice to illuminate this idea of the *chronotope*: “we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (2). The tensions between these dialectics are generated from Kipling’s frameworiking of the text. Take for example how Kipling utilizes epigraphs to designate the text as text, his use of the same characters outside of the text in other stories. The novel’s epigraphs produce a meta-awareness of the novel, setting it in novelistic time, yet various characters (e.g., Hurree, Lispeth, Strickland) exist beyond the text in other stories, so they are in a sense outside of (textual) time. But the delineation between text and beyond-text, as with Kim’s distinction of selves, are porous. Not only are certain characters afforded further significance by their resonances outside the text, but Kipling’s epigraphs—clearly existing outside of novelistic time—lend meaning within the text, most clearly expressed with the previously cited epigraph to Chapter Eight, in which Kim’s
fragmented selfhood is plainly reduced to two sides of his head. A second illustration comes in the passage from Kipling’s poem “Buddha at Kamakura” that initiates the novel:

O ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when ‘the heathen’ pray
To Buddha at Kamakura! (3)

The first thing to be said about the stanza is that within even before the novel text has actually even begun, one can read two concentric temporalities, that of the teleologically-geared narrow way to Judgment Day and the cyclical iteration of Buddhism. Secondly, one must go on to read the first two words of the novel, although I quote the sentence in its entirety: “He sat, in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zam-Zammah on her brick platform opposite the old Ajaib-Gher—the Wonder House, as the natives call the Lahore Museum” (3). *He sat*, separated from the rest of the sentence by the comma, becomes a kind of isolated event distinct from the remainder of the sentence. Immediately following the verse from “Buddha at Kamakura,” “*He sat*” resonates with the same physical iconography of Buddha himself. One may recall a similar syntactical posturing in the first epigraph of this thesis, regarding the subjunctive and isolated sitting of James Joyce in the Sahara as he might make a map of it. The image of a squatting spiritual deity is recalled near the end of the text when Kipling presents this time the lama as “the cross-legged figure, outlined jet-black against the lemon-coloured drift of light. So does the stone Bodhisat sit who looks down upon the patent self-registering turnstiles of the Lahore Museum” (238). Rohrberger goes on to claim that, “[e]mbedded with images forming patterns, metaphoric designs, allusions that resonate, linking small actions or objects in the extensional world with cosmic wholes, short story surfaces occasionally parallel but usually diverge from their
substructures, creating tensions, contradictions, ironies, ambiguities, paradox, flux” (8-9). The tensions in *Kim* are wrought not only through the dialectics of inside/outside or dia-/synchronicity, but most clearly through Kipling’s attempts at imagining a harmonious India under the rubrics of Empire that ultimately does not stand up.

The synchronic and spatial paradigms of the short-story theories are applicable to *Kim* because The Game is spatial: according to Said “service [in the Great Game] is more enjoyable when thought of less like a story—linear, continuous, temporal—and more like a playing field—many-dimensional, discontinuous, spatial” (*CI* 138). The synchronic is not concerned with causality or a succession of events but with conceptual relationships that, when viewed as a whole, produce what Maaera Shreiber calls in a study of Jewish aesthetic production a “more transcendent, less historically determined frame of knowing” (273). Terry Eagleton refers to this transcendental assumption of identity in reference to postcolonial identity formation as the “subjunctive mood” (25). In terms of identity construction, the fabric of such a transcendental framework is rendered in Kim’s case by his ability for a multiplicity of self-consciousnesses as he chooses his identity as need be. Evidence for Kim’s conscious choosing of identity can be read in his self-nomination as a Hindu boy to the priest. Yet Kipling refuses to grant Kim a particular Indian-ness when Kim fully awake and tuned-in to India but realizes he is only a borrower. His multiple-consciousness provides the framework for the external reference essential for self-identification. Social constructionist theories suggest that history is a requisite condition for identity construction, an idea that implies an irrevocable beginning and an ineluctable end. Kim, while his identity functions primarily as the epiphanic result of movement across space, his physical journey is largely one of a diachronic impetus.
Unlike the short story, the traditional form of the novel relies on a diachronic structure for the unfolding of events, to arrive at something, to follow a plot. It is through a mode of linearity that Kim becomes introduced to the life of a Sahib, an occasion without which there would be no novel. Kim addresses the diachronic issues of succession and consequence and questions of whether his life is one predetermined.

‘I go from one place to another as it might be a kick-ball. It is my Kismet. No man can escape his Kismet…and I am a Sahib.’ He looked at his boots 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.

(101)

Even Kim in his Englishness faces the notion of kismet, or destiny, as a past and a future that are inextricably linked. However shaped is Kim’s identity by a diachronic past, it is the present, or synchronic presence of the chronotope, in which Kim’s identity is formed as he moves from the plains to the hills and back again.

Like the notions of fate or destiny, the road, and by extension, the train of the Grand Trunk Road, often provides a representation of diachronicity. Kim’s peregrinations allow for his chance encounters that play so large a role in novelistic exposition. The old Ressaldar Sahib says to the Teshoo lama about the train that ‘All castes and kinds of men move here. Look! Brahmins and chumars, bankers and tinkers, barbers and bunnias, pilgrims and potters—all the world going and coming. It is to me as a river from which I am withdrawn like a log after a flood’ (Kim 51). “Encounters in a novel usually take place ‘on the road,’” writes Bakhtin, discussing the “adventure-time” chronotope. “On the road (‘the high road’), the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people—representatives of all social classes, estates, religions,
nationalities, ages—intersect at one spatial and temporal point,” so it is no surprise then that Kim commingles with castes and all races while he is on the train (243). The irony of chance or random encounter, suggests Bakhtin, is that "[s]hould something happen a minute earlier or a minute later, that is, should there be no chance simultaneity or chance disjunctions in time, there would be no plot at all" (92). Bakhtin’s claim not only reiterates the coexistence of the linear and spatial, the diachronic and synchronic, but it emphasizes a hermeneutical co-dependency of the two.

The road exists as a space for chance, yet for Kim, going on the road led to the fulfillment of his kismet. The paradox present here is that the road-as-undetermined possibility, as a space for the free interchange of opportunity, contends with the road-as-destiny and diachronic contiguity.

In the same manner that Kim crosses boundaries, the train affords a venue for transmission through and between borders and margins. “And truly the Grand Trunk Road is a wonderful spectacle. It runs straight, bearing without crowding India’s traffic for fifteen hundred miles—such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world” (Kim 51). Kipling adroitly imposes the metaphor of the train as a river to suggest a homogeneity of space experienced through the modern implant of the railroad instead of, say, a building, in which space is compartmentalized. With the river, whose symbology carries much stronger Buddhist resonances, no one part is distinguishable from any other part except by cartographical rendering; water moves freely and uncontested in and within itself. Similarly, Kim is able to move on the train, car by car, like moving through units of time that are simultaneously moving across space. The train serves as a thread stitched across the space-time of the novel that, when pulled taut, spaces are drawn together so that any one space once distant from any other space is now adjacent to it if not made part of it altogether. One sees how the diachronic and synchronic
spheres merge, distinct yet coinciding, as Kim traverses the landscape. “‘It is less than three days since we took road together,’” Kim says to the lama, “‘and it is as though it were a hundred years’” (63).

The coexisting diachronic and synchronic dispositions of the novel are at times distinct and at others inseparable, and this coexistence provides the rubrics for reading the passage of the novel key to viewing Kim’s identity in the terms set forth by the thesis. Of duration, Bergson explains that “concepts generally go together in couples and represent two contraries that cannot be reconciled logically. Nor can duration be understood through images; but ‘many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized’” (qtd. in Rohrberger 8). Kipling’s representation of Kim, and India, for that matter, are such that they are composed of varied and diverse borrowed images from which one might intuit the intangible nature of Kim or the imagined India Kipling sets out to preserve. “‘Seized by intuition,’” Rohrberger goes on to quote Bergson, “‘we pass easily in many cases to the two contrary concepts; and in that way thesis and antithesis can be seen to spring from reality. We grasp at the same time how it is that the two are opposed and how they are reconciled,’” (qtd. in Rohrberger 8). As Wegner, Sullivan, Orel, et al have so clearly delineated, the oppositions of the novel are clear, but what remains at a lack is a sense of reconciliation. The familiar scene of the broken clay jar provides the pivotal understanding for both Kim’s identity and the ontological implications of temporality I am attempting to adumbrate, therefore I quote it at length:

[Lurgan Sahib] moved to the end of the veranda to refill the heavy, porous clay water-jug from the filter.

‘Do you want drink?’
Kim nodded. Lurgan Sahib, fifteen feet off, laid one hand on the jar.

Net instant, it stood at Kim’s elbow, full to within half an inch of the brim—the white cloth only showing, by a small wrinkle, where it had slid into place.

‘Wah!’ said Kim in most utter amazement. ‘That is magic.’ Lurgan Sahib’s smile showed that the compliment had gone home.

‘Throw it back.’

‘It will break.’

‘I say, throw it back.’

Kim pitched it at random. It fell short and crashed into fifty pieces, while the water dripped through the rough veranda boarding.

‘I said it would break.’

‘All one. Look at it. Look at the largest piece.’

That lay with a sparkle of water in its curve, as it were a star on the floor.

Kim looked intently. Lurgan Sahib laid one hand gently on the nape of his neck, stroked it twice or thrice, and whispered: ‘Look! It shall come to life again, piece by piece. First the big piece shall join itself to two others on the right and the left—on the right and the left. Look!’

To save his life, Kim could not have turned his head. The light touch held him as in a vice, and his blood tingled pleasantly through him. There was one large piece of the jar where there had been three, and above them the shadowy outline of the entire vessel. He could see the veranda through it, but it was thickening and darkening with each beat of his pulse. Yet the jar—how slowly the
thoughts came! — the jar had been smashed before his eyes. Another wave of
prickling fire raced down his neck, as Lurgan Sahib moved his hand.

‘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—yess, 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 veranda showed, all ribbed, the white house-wall
below—and thrice twelve was thirty-six!

‘Look! Is it coming into shape?’ asked Lurgan Sahib.

‘But it is smashed—smashed,’ he gasped—Lurgan Sahib had been
muttering softly for the last half-minute. Kim wrenched his head aside. ‘Look!
Dekho! It is there as it was there.’

‘It is there as it was there,’ said Lurgan, watching Kim closely while the
boy rubbed his neck. (129-131)

By sleight of hand, Lurgan Sahib repositions a clay jar across the room to be directly in front of
Kim. At the Sahib’s request, Kim throws the clay jar back to him, only to see it crash on the
floor. By a method of hypnosis, Lurgan Sahib makes the jar appear to reconstruct itself. In his anxiety of seeing the jar being reconstructed, Kim retreats to his English multiplication tables for stability and suddenly sees the jar again in its physical reality. Kim must break away from a single-minded concentration and separate his English multiplication tables in order to pull himself out of the image, to escape the transcendental meditative pull towards a unified whole by reverting to the factual, linear, occidental mind. This scene is typically read to define Kim’s ability for dual-consciousness as he seeks strength interchangeably in one mind or the other and is able to see more fully and clearly. Kim’s ability to see through kaleidoscopic vision is suggested earlier in the book as he comes upon the Mavericks’ camp and “stared with all his eyes” (70).

But more importantly, the scene reinforces the coexistence of the synchronic and diachronic spheres. A reading of this perspective allows for the clay jar to serve as a metaphor for Kim’s own consciousness, to be simultaneously shattered and whole: to be English, British, Irish, Indian, Hindu, Mohammedan, and to be Kim. The jar shatters in the linear, causal sense that, when Kim threw it back to Lurgan Sahib, it falls and crashes on the floor. Yet one could see the jar as remaining conceptually whole through its ontological sense of meaning; when the jar becomes shattered, it no longer remains a jar, but merely fragments. At stake is whether Kim, when fragmented into parts—Irish—English—Hindu—spy—chela—is devoid of any ontological sense. The purpose here to has been to show Kim’s positionality as one that is not what might called pluperfect or completed but one existing in the flux of progression and regression, inside and outside, and the call for constant renegotiation of dialogism. Lurgan attempts a native, mystic form of hypnosis, and Kim begins to see the jar reassemble itself or, resemble itself, retrieving the ontological properties of a jar as defined by and against those things outside of it,
e.g., not the jar. Yet the jar in its shattered form represents Kim’s fragmented and pixilated self, thus, signifying Kim as concurrently multitudinous and unified. Richards notes that “Lurgan Sahib teaches [Kim] a miniature version of the Great Game, the Jewel Game, in which Kim must learn to see fragments as part of a possible whole, a whole nevertheless ‘so large that one sees but little at a time’” (28). This notion in itself reinforces the concentric nature of the novel. By contrast to the approach granted by linearity, the lama’s perspective upon achieving freedom from the wheel is one in which he “looked down upon all the world, which was as [he] had seen it before—one in time, one in place” (Kim 239). The lama’s view necessitates that only once truly freed from the wheel, outside of the realities Great Game, can one achieve a vision of the inseparable wholeness. The vision here is congruent with the lama’s previous one in which he saw all Hind “in one time and in one place” and knew that his soul had “passed beyond the illusion of Time and Space and of Things.” Said writes that

The lama’s encyclopedic vision of freedom strikingly resembles Colonel Creighton’s Indian Survey, in which every camp and village is duly noted. The difference is that the positivistic inventory of places and peoples within the scope of the British dominion becomes, in the lama’s generous inclusiveness, a redemptive and, for Kim’s sake, therapeutic vision. Everything is now held together. At its center resides Kim, the boy whose errant spirit has regrasped things ‘with an almost audible click. (142-43).

But in the end, Kim cannot maintain both the lama’s spiritual freedom and the worldly pursuits of the Great Game. Wegner, McClure, et al suggest that Kim was Kipling’s attempt to create a reconciled, unified and harmonious India—that all the Indians one encounters in the novel seem to be satisfied, if not pleased, with the indelible presence of the British Raj. “Kipling thus
produces a Utopian figure of India—an India where conflict, disorder, and finally historical change have been eliminated” (McClure 143). Kipling tries to imagine an India that exists outside of religious fundamentalism and an Empire that exists without the oppression of other cultures. “Every novelistic hero, Lukacs says, attempts to restore the lost world of his or her imagination, which in the late-nineteenth-century novel of disillusionment is an unrealizable dream” (qtd. in CI 156-57). Kipling, like Lurgan, tries to restore the jar of colonial India back into itself, uninterrupted by historical consequence. Kim is Kipling’s holding the pieces together with Kim in the middle. But in the end Kim does not renounce Empire; he does not quit the Great Game. Ultimately, the center does not hold, for the center cannot hold, and Kipling’s illusion—that of a wholly unified India existing without the antagonism of Empire—falls apart.
CONCLUSION

I have attempted to present the case that, by the end of the novel, Kim has become the metaphorical jar; that he has become a sublimation of all discursive strategies of imperialism, the fragmentation, paradoxes, and insupportable tensions, caught in the dialectics of modernism and Empire. Figure 1 [f] is a graphical representation of these dialectics as a renegotiation of identity after the inexorable influence of Empire, as I attempted to express with Figure 1 [c]. In the same manner that Lurgan, the “healer of pearls,” attempts to restore the illusion of non-history—that the jar’s falling on the floor does not ultimately result in its broken state—Kipling possesses a similar impulse for healing. Perhaps this is why Wilson suggests that Kipling is unable to dramatize true conflict, that he did not ultimately see the brokenness of the British-Indian state.

“The lama’s search and Kim’s illness at the end of the novel are resolved together,” writes Said. “Readers of Kipling’s other tales will be familiar with what the critic J.M.S. Tompkins has rightly called ‘the theme of healing’” (140). At one juncture Lurgan says to Kim, “‘[t]here is no one but me can doctor a sick pearl and re-blue turquoises’” (Kim 129). The scene assumes greater significance in its positioning just before the crucial moment when Lurgan and Kim discuss the shattered water jar, intimating an impulse to cure the always-already broken. The formidable irony is that any epistemological notion of India necessarily relies on British colonization. That is not to claim that India did not exist before empire, but that any ontological understanding of the term is depends on its being by and large a consequence of empire. It seems, then, that for Kipling, India could not exist without Empire, nor Empire without India, and the only way to write Kim was to reconcile this dilemma within a chronotopic paradigm.

“Kipling’s mind plays over reconciliation, healing, and wholeness in the conclusion,” continues Said, “and his means are geographical: the British repossessing India, in order once again to
enjoy its spaciousness, to be at home in it again, and again” (160, emphasis mine). As I suggested in Chapter Four, the relationship between Kipling’s treatment of Kim’s illness and his geographical healing is unequivocal: that only once Kim is resolved with the landscape does he once again feel “the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without” (234).

Similarly, any philosophical or political implications in *Kim*—and for Kim, too—rely on the premises of space and time. The contest for identification at the nexus of the imperialist and the (post)colonial encounter is a contest of space. Again, I refer to the insights of Edward Said:

> When you can no longer assume that Britannia will rule the waves forever, you have to reconceive reality as something that can be held together by you the artist, in history rather than in geography. Spatiality becomes, ironically, the characteristic of an aesthetic rather than of political domination, as more and more regions—from India to Africa to the Caribbean—challenge the classical empires and their cultures. (189-90)

Although Said is writing in reference to modernist tropes geared toward dealing with the “delusions and discoveries”—as Said borrows Benita Parry’s locution—of the marginalized European encounter, his assessment carries alongside it the relevance of postcolonial concerns, namely how space becomes a jurisdiction by which the postcolonial individual is able to re/conceive a history of one’s own, outside of the assimilating tendencies of imperialist History. The question of Kim’s negotiability of selfhood, as he re/claims various aspects of his identity on the grounds of his phenomenological apprehension of space, arises from the aesthetic representations of spatiality. For the British service these same spaces host the propositions of imperial ideology so as to achieve political hegemony by way of geographical control. Said’s comment, moreover, reiterates the concomitant issues of postcoloniality one must now question
of the text, with the assertion that the political struggle of India (and of all post-colonized nations) is expressly a chronotopic one.

In *Kim*, Kipling has projected an impossible depiction of India in which he takes for granted that the ideologies of Empire and Indian nationalism were not in opposition but rather one in the same. Wegner writes that “Kipling’s figure of contemporary India does not materialize full blown from some realm of unbridled authorial fancy. Rather, his narration of imperial India is shaped and *constrained* by the historical enclosures from which it emerges” (131, original emphasis). Kipling’s figure of India does not materialize because the *real* India is not impervious to historical consequence. Thus *Kim*, due to his affinity for myriad-mindedness, does not see the jar restored to a state beyond diachronic con-sequence, and things fall apart. Thinking of *Kim* in the terms set forth by this project, it becomes clear why Chinua Achebe took the title of his ideologically shattering book from Yeats’ modernist apocalyptic poem. Interestingly enough, Wegner makes a glancing comparison in his critique yet stops short of the implications of the comparison. “*Kim* would seem to fail precisely where a work like Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* succeeds,” writes Wegner. “For in addition to being the products of two different continents, and separated as they are by more than five decades and the monumental events of decolonization, Kipling and Achebe’s texts emerge from opposite poles on the spectrum of imperial power, that of occupier and occupied” (130-31). I would suggest that the moment of crisis—when the two directions of occupier and occupied meet—is the moment of identity formation for *Kim*, who inhabits the interstitial space between both occupier and occupied.

Jameson outlines one dilemma of the imperial encounter as one in which the colonial subject is epistemologically unequipped “to register the peculiar transformation of First World or metropolitan life which accompany the imperial relationship,” which problematizes the aim of
the colonial objective. “What we seek, therefore, is a kind of exceptional situation, one of
overlap and coexistence between these two incommensurable realities which are those of the lord
and of the bondsman altogether, those of the metropolis and of the colony simultaneously” (60).
Jameson’s call is for an individual who can operate in both spheres of occupier and occupied for
the means of working through the framework of what Eagleton calls the “double optic” in order
to achieve a new sense of national identity. Jameson’s special case seems to be the flipside to
Richards’ ultramodern primitive, a personage who inhabits a space within and between the
oppositional politics of colonizer and colonized. “But at least one such peculiar space exists, in
the historical contingency of our global system: it is Ireland” (60). Jameson goes on:

If the thesis is correct, then, we may expect to find, in some abstractly possible
Irish modernism, a form which on the one hand unites Forster’s sense of the
providential yet seemingly accidental encounters of characters with Woolf’s
aesthetic closure, but which on the other hand projects those onto a radically
different kind of space, a space no longer central, as in English life, but marked as
marginal and ec-centric after the fashion of the colonized areas of the imperial
system. (60)

Admittedly, the application of Jameson’s critique here is somewhat out of context, as he is of
course referring to Ulysses. But Kim, I argue, fulfills the prescription for such a case. Not only is
Kim’s experience guided by the providential parallel of kismet as well as the seemingly chance
encounters on the road, but as I hope I have made clear, Kim assumes his identity in an ec-
centric fashion from the outside in. His liminal nature affords him the perspective both of the
English surveyor and the local native. Up until this point the blatant lacuna in this discussion of
Kim’s identity has been his Irishness. Kim’s malleability of character and transferability through
and across boundaries is predicated by the fact that he is not British; he is not native; he is Irish, the curious (post)colonial case, as Ireland’s colonial relationship with England posits a particularly problematic instance within the discourse of postcoloniality. The necessity of Kim’s being Irish for the sake of Ireland’s unique colonial relationship, however, is rather commonplace. What I want to emphasize is how the space that Kim inhabits is the nexus of the postcolonial and the quintessential modernist, and that perhaps Joyce’s modernism could not have been conceived without Kim.

There is much debate over the end of the novel, both whether and why Kim abandons the spiritual search with the lama and returns to the service of Empire. Again, Sullivan provides useful commentary: “[a] luminous freeze-frame on which to end a novel, the scene leaves Kim and the reader hanging in mid-air, as all that has been solid (in terms of constructing an idealized community in which Kim is a small part of a larger Indian whole) melts into the air of visionary illusion and prayer” (“What Happens” 449). The novel’s final “freeze-frame” in which Kim returns to the Game is further elucidated by a glance to the final pages of Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, about which Michael Levenson writes, “the notion of a soul ‘folding back upon itself’ gives us another way to regard [Stephen’s] promise [to ‘encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience’]” (48). Levenson is referring, of course, to Stephen’s famous penultimate journal entry: “Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (*Portrait* 224). “[A] leading pattern in the novel,” contends Levenson, “is the series, which depends not on movement toward an end but on the recurrence of identities and similarities” (39, original emphasis). The subtextual implication of Levenson’s claims is that despite the teleological aim of Stephen’s ostensible preparation for flight, for disavowing his past in order to
create for the *first* time the “conscience of [his] race,” his reality is in fact a mere repetition: that “Stephen’s bright promise is no more than ‘new secondhand clothes’” (48). That Stephen sticks around for yet another diary entry after his proposed departure has not eluded other critics and yields cogency to the interpretation that the novel’s conclusion is not in fact one of successful flight.

Likewise, for Kim there is no true epiphany. There is no renouncement of Empire. Like Stephen, who is ultimately unable to leave Dublin for good, Kim cannot escape the Wheel. Regarding the end of the novel, Sullivan suggests that Kim’s inner struggle of self-identification returns to a point of origin: “Kim is born again after his illness, but he is reborn to a cry that returns from the past: ‘I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?’ [234]” (“What Happens” 443).

Once Stephen has begun school at Clongowes and is daunted, not to say disoriented, by the thought of learning all the place names in America, he retreats to the inside of his lesson book. He turned to the flyleaf of the geography and read what he had written there: himself, his name and where he was.

*Stephen Dedalus*

*Class of Elements*

*Clongowes Wood College*

*Sallins*

*County Kildare*

*Ireland*

*Europe*

*The World*
Having situated himself as the point of origin, Stephen’s imagination forms a gradual expansion of successively larger, concentric categorizations to the immeasurable stretch of “The Universe.” He then proceeds to “read the flyleaf from the bottom to the top till he came to his own name. That was he: and he read down the page again” (13). Often overlooked is the fact that Stephen’s epistemological exploration occurs in his geography book. Stephen, like Kim, is in a perpetual state of return to consider his own identity. A prodigious amount of attention is given to the formulaic shape or schematics of Portrait that must necessarily fall outside the purview of this thesis, but I insist that for the shape of both Stephen’s and Kim’s identity formation, the metaphor of the whirlpool still holds true to the point. In Ulysses, Stephen thinks, “[a] life fate awaits him and the two rages commingle in a whirlpool” (196) Figure 1 [a] represents the expansive yet recurrent motions of Stephen’s imagination of flight as well as the concurrent centripetal and centrifugal motions of center and margin that define Kim’s identity formation (Huntley). Similarly, one may recall the “unfolding-refolding principle of Nature” depicted in Figure 3 (Russell).

One final glancing comparison between Kim and Stephen lies in the search for paternity. Sullivan further notes that “[Kim’s] inner quest, the search for an identity (‘Who is Kim—Kim—Kim?’ [101, 121, 156, 234]), suggests the possibility of self-discovery and integration of his many selves. . . . But this search collides with his outer quest, the journey and the insistent pursuit for definition in a search for a father (the Red Bull on a Green Field) who will free him from some of the anxieties and problems involved in such a search” (“What Happens” 442). Paternity, what Stephen calls a “legal fiction,” preoccupies both Stephen and Kim throughout
their respective ambulatory experiences, and a diagnostic measure, I believe, of Ireland’s colonial relationship with England.

But to stop there is not enough. What, then, are the consequences of reading *Kim* though the conjoined lenses of modernism and postcoloniality? First I would suggest the need for a more discrete reading of Joyce and other modernist works such as Eliot’s *Burnt Norton* in dialogue with *Kim*, regarding specifically the aesthetic and political conditions predicated by modernization and Ireland’s problematic colonial relationship with England. Furthermore, after a reading of *Kim* in this venue, how do we approach the resonant preoccupations of postcoloniality? What does one do with the issues of *theoria* versus praxis and the ongoing social concerns of globalization—to maintain personal, racial, cultural, and national hegemonies while yet remaining actively engaged within the global sphere? How must one now approach the urge in both literary style and content towards the modern epistemological basis for identity formation? Perhaps our duty has become, as Leela Ghandi expresses in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998), to strive to re-negotiate the competing historiographies within a space that fosters “ideologies of difference,” and interrogates the epistemologies of national and global cultures. Perhaps such a space is possible in Heidegger’s notion of *lichtung*, which seems particularly apposite to the theoretical discourses of postcoloniality. This elucidating space-clearing, rather than dissolving the space or schism between subjective understanding and its Manichean opposite, actually creates a space for the *theoria* of postcoloniality. Gandhi writes of *lichtung* that it “enables the most restrictive human consciousness to experience the simultaneity of the familiar and the uncanny, the established and the emergent, home and not-home, the humane and, equally, the barbaric” (54). *Lichtung*, as part of the postcolonial discourse, represents an identity not, as Gandhi suggests, antagonistic to the Cartesian subjective identity,
but one beyond it: an identity self-implicit of “the presence of its Other,” a space that negotiates both the subjective self and its seemingly antithetical opposite (54). In order to achieve such a space, we must realize that a hyper-colonial understanding of self, national, and global consciousness is a way not to forget colonial histories, but to transcend them, thus allowing for a global community in which the fractured histories, memories, and literatures of all cultures—both those that share the experience of colonialism and those that do not—can each exist as a contrapuntal voice in the collective whole.

As Freedman suggests, one vein of postcolonial politics seeks to produce hybridized, self-conscious intellectuals with a capacity for the aesthetic of “borrowing” (116). The need is for these intellectuals to open a space or lichtung for the ends of achieving a global community. Ghosh has commented in an interview that “one of the greatest things that Rushdie did was that he opened up a kind of political space where it was possible for Indian writers to exist” (qtd. in Freedman 125). Kim exposes Kipling’s troubling ambivalence to hybridity as he writes about Hurree that “[h]e has lost his own country and has not acquired any other” and represents “the monstrous hybridism of East and West” (Kim 200, 199). On the other side of the same coin, however, he has given us Kim, the epitome of hybridity, trenchant-tongued and graceful boy adventurer, mediator between the spiritual and worldly, with a heart as vast as the Indian plains. When the Teshoo lama speaks to Kim of the woman at Kulu, who is bound “upon the Wheel and wholly given over to the shows of this life,” he asks Kim, “Who shall say she does not acquire merit?” ‘Not I, Holy One,’” Kim replies. “In my mind—behind my eyes—I have tried to picture such an one altogether freed from the Wheel—desiring nothing, causing nothing—a nun, as it were. . . . I cannot make the picture” (191). Kim, who is able “to make pictures in [his] eye till a suitable time comes to set them upon paper,” cannot envision the possibility of complete
freedom from the inexorable desires and realities of the earth (Kim 101). Even the lama, having achieved freedom from the Wheel, returns to exclaim that “‘the River of the Arrow is here,’” suggesting that the quest for spiritual freedom is indelibly bound to the earth (240, emphasis mine). The implication for the postcolonial objective is clear: that although identity, both individual and national, may involve subjective methods of assumption and invention, freedom from the incubus of history must take place in the flesh. Perhaps while Heidegger’s lichtung allows for the theoretical solution to postcolonial identity, it lacks the physical, sentient being, one who actually experiences “the familiar and the uncanny, the established and the emergent, home and not-home, the humane and, equally, the barbaric.” Perhaps Kim, though imagined by Kipling as the instrument of Empire, nonetheless represents a space where a lichtung is possible.

By the end of the novel, Kim has become the same as the jar: a sublimation of all sympathies and contradictions, all the while still acknowledging the insupportable tension of such a position. This shows both the relevancy of postcolonial issues to maintain a personal, racial, cultural hegemony while yet maintaining an active engagement within the global sphere. Kim is expressly an imperialist novel, but what is important and often overlooked is that Kim as the idea of the jar suggests a venue for overcoming the diachronicity of History, that is, the possibility for reclaiming a postcolonial history and hegemony not bound to the ideology and context of Empire. With the plausible case for postcolonial and modernist readings of Kim and the rather recent geoculturalist turn in literary assessment, I suggest that there is more to be gained from further re-readings of Kim and the renegotiation of his identity within the history, and future, of literature.
McClure continues, “This imaginative ordering is accomplished by two linked strategies: for want of better terms, I call these mapping and cataloguing. The imperatives of the mapping strategy determine the primary diachronic or narrative movement of Kipling’s text” (143).
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Figure 1. Flows of Motion
Figure 2. Dialectics of Inside/Outside
Figure 3. Multi-directional Spirals
Figure 4. Illustration of a Chronotope
Figure 5. Simultaneous Centrifugal/Centripetal Motions