

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Filozofická fakulta

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Jan Kratochvíla

Utopia of the Mind: The Depiction of Tibet in Early Twentieth Century
English Literature

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedl jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne:

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1. Introduction

The year 2019 marks the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising that was suppressed in 1959 by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) leaving thousands of casualties and as a result, the 14th Dalai Lama was forced to flee from Tibet into India where he has stayed in exile ever since while establishing an exile government there. As it stands today, Tibet (or the Tibetan Autonomous Region) is an integral part of the People's Republic of China.

Throughout the 20th century, the United Nations passed several resolutions following the invasion of the PLA in 1951 that avoided any reference to the political nature of the issue but rather expressing concerns over the violation of human rights. Even later, the issue still attracted attention of the media and got support on the international scene, the UN as well with another resolution appealing on China to respect fundamental human rights, but as it happens all that support and concern by the international community did not come to fruition as “their concerns clashed with other material interest of the great powers in form of trade, market and investment opportunities in China.”¹

The Chinese government claims in their white paper from 2015 that Tibet was in fact never independent and that it has been an integral part of China since antiquity although in their 2004 paper they claimed it was since the thirteenth century. They consider the 14th Dalai Lama an enemy and maintain that the proposals of the middle way and those of peaceful demonstrations are “lies fabricated by himself and the Dalai clique”². The invasion of 1951 is vindicated on the pretext that Tibet was a society of feudal serfdom under a theocratic rule in which cruel punishments were implemented. However, “after the peaceful liberation in 1951 Tibet undergone profound changes, including democratic reform, reform and opening up, and has achieved remarkable social and economic progress.”³

¹ Choedon, Yeshe, “The Tibet Issue at the United Nations,” [tibetanreview.net](http://www.tibetanreview.net).
<http://www.tibetanreview.net/the-tibet-issue-at-the-united-nations/> (accessed March 20, 2019).

² British Broadcasting Corporation, “The Tibet issue: China's view,” [BBC.com](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16747814).
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16747814> (accessed March 20, 2019).

³ British Broadcasting Corporation, “The Tibet issue: China's view.”

The issue of today's Tibet and its affairs remains a very complicated one and doubtless is of interest to many people, however, this thesis focuses on how English authors depicted Tibet in early twentieth century literature. This thesis will compare two novels, the first one being *Kim* written by Rudyard Kipling, the second *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton. Both of the novels were written in the twentieth century with more than thirty years apart. Both novels carry messages and themes that are representative of the time and events surrounding their writing and release.

The novel *Kim*, set in India, is about an orphan boy of Irish descent who travels with a Tibetan lama who seeks to achieve enlightenment. *Lost Horizon*, on the other hand, features a utopian society, a priesthood in a Buddhist monastery found high in the mountains isolated from the rest of the world. Both novels achieved wide success even though Kipling's book was to be subjected to much criticism later. Both were adapted to film with *Lost Horizon* translated to the big screen during author's life in 1937. The purpose of this thesis is to show how Tibet is depicted in English fiction in the early twentieth century with respect to three themes that indicate how the authors depicted Tibet at that time, and to see how the myth of Tibet is perpetuated.

First, for better understanding of Tibet itself during the twentieth century, the events that occurred around the time of publication of the novels, that is 1901 for *Kim* and 1933 for *Lost Horizon*, and the overall role that Britain played in this period, historical background of Tibet is provided and then an insight into the creation of an image of Tibet is provided that took on considerably during the British invasion of Tibet. After that, the two selected novels will be analysed while introducing each novel first and providing brief information about the authors as well. The analysis will be done with respect to three themes that depict religion and landscape, the natives and lastly the Westerners. In addition, the cultural impact will be discussed focusing on how the novels perpetuated the myth about Tibet and what their influence was on the already existing image of Tibet.

2. Historical Background of Tibet and Western Involvement

The beginning of Tibetan and British relations and their interest in the country goes back to the eighteenth century when the East India Company was unsuccessful in establishing trade negotiations with China. As a result, they made attempts to reach there through Tibet by sending a mission led by George Bogle⁴. The mission was not met with success, nevertheless it remains an “era of cross-cultural exchange”⁵ as Bogle established contact with the Panchen Lama due to his “personal curiosity and open-mindedness” that “reflected the European enlightenment then still at its height.”⁶

The beginning of the twentieth century, on the other hand, is marked by the increasing tension between Tibet and British India. At this point, British India has changed significantly as opposed to the days of Warren Hastings⁷ and George Bogle. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther contrast it in their chapter with an image of “assertive colonialism” in the 19th century where British officers “developed fantasies of filling the imperial treasury” as they expected to find riches and natural resources on the roof of the world.⁸

The tension originated in the expansive politics of Britain throughout the 19th century, exposure of Indian spies referred to as Pundits and the rivalry between the British and Russian Empires in Central Asia known as the Great Game. When the spies informed the British of Russian presence in Tibet a trade mission, later escorted by the military, was despatched known as the Younghusband expedition (1903-1904). The British government was initially reluctant to send this expedition because of their reputation in the wake of the Boer War and instead of military campaigns they sought to make allegiances. This was to be the first time the Tibetans fought with an army of the West. They were defeated as they were not prepared for modern warfare. The culmination of events was signing a treaty in

⁴ George Bogle, in 1774 he was the first modern non-religious Westerner to enter Tibet.

⁵ Sam Van Schaik, *Tibet: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 160.

⁶ Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther, “Imagining Tibet: Between Shangri-la and Feudal Oppression,” in *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*, ed. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 404.

⁷ Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal who selected Bogle for this mission to Tibet.

⁸ Dodin and Räther, “Imagining Tibet,” 404-405.

1904 in which the British were dealing with Tibet as a separate and independent state while the Chinese authority in Tibet is not mentioned at all.⁹

In later years, the Tibetan and British relations were friendlier. Evading the forces of the Manchu dynasty that were invading Tibet, the thirteenth Dalai Lama set out to India into exile. There, he befriended Charles Bell¹⁰. The thirteenth Dalai Lama saw the importance of modernising Tibet, a fact he realized while in exile in India where he was confronted with a more advanced society. His attempts at modernization, were, however, met with opposition from the conservative great monasteries. He wanted to bring modern education to the country. Initially, Tibetan boys were sent to English schools, an later, a school was set up in Tibet to the displeasure of the monasteries which feared that “the schools might undercut the traditional role of monasteries as the educators of the young.”¹¹

The thirteenth Dalai Lama realized the threat coming from the Republic of China and their nationalistic policy to unite all five races of China. It was imperative to find powerful allies if Tibet’s independence was to be secured, thus, he appealed for British protection. Finally, a meeting between the representatives of British Empire, China and Tibet was held at Simla in 1914. The two sides agreed, in the end, on the border between China and Tibet and on the division of Tibet into an Outer and Inner territory. The agreement was, however, not ratified by the Chinese because they considered the minimal role attributed to China in Tibet’s internal affairs unacceptable.

The year 1933 marks the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama thrusting Tibet into dark times without a strong leader which meant that “[Lhasa] politics returned to the bad old ways of the 19th century, with different factions constantly arguing against each other”¹² a contrast with the West where a new threat is looming over Europe as the rule of a strong leader is initiated in Germany.

⁹ Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), 217.

¹⁰ Charles Bell, a representative of the British government in India, Political Officer in Sikkim and a Tibetologist.

¹¹ Van Schaik, *Tibet: A History*, 203.

¹² Van Schaik, *Tibet: A History*, 205.

2.1 Creating an Image of Tibet

The Younghusband expedition to Tibet presented the Europeans with a unique opportunity to conduct research there. Alex McKay in his book contends that the ‘Tibet cadre,’¹³ as he refers to them, effectively became interpreters of Tibet to the outside world, shaping their knowledge of the land.¹⁴ Tibet was attractive not only to the British government but also to the public. This interest was initially satisfied by written records made by the officers and journalists from the expedition. However, in the context of the Anglo-Tibetan conflict they, understandably, sought to justify the mission. It was later followed by “a more sympathetic approach”¹⁵ representative of the new era of Anglo-Tibetan relations signified most notably by Charles Bell¹⁶ befriending the thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The historical image of Tibet that the British were constructing is that of a strong, united, and clearly defined entity, serving both Britain and Tibet’s interests.¹⁷ An image of a buffer-state between British India and China. However, the cadre’s written accounts were confronted with the popularity of travel books in the 1920s. This commercial element made a case for catering to desires of the reading public resulting in the cadre officers’ books containing the desired amount of “colourful and thrilling images.”¹⁸ In the end they made no attempts to destroy this exotic representation, they rather implicitly encouraged in their writings the mystical image of Tibet using “metaphors and symbols of remote space, isolation and timelessness to maintain the implicit sense that Tibet was exotic.”¹⁹

¹³ Tibet cadre, cadre of officials of the British Indian Political Department who served in Tibet.

¹⁴ McKay, “‘We want a united Tibet’,” in *The History of Tibet: Volume III: The Modern Period: 1895-1959: The Encounter with Modernity*, ed. Alex McKay (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 646.

¹⁵ McKay, “‘We want a united Tibet’,” 649.

¹⁶ Charles Bell, a representative of the British government in India, Political Officer in Sikkim and a Tibetologist.

¹⁷ McKay, “‘We want a united Tibet,’” 648.

¹⁸ McKay, “‘We want a united Tibet,’” 654.

¹⁹ McKay, “‘We want a united Tibet,’” 654-655.

3. Fictional Depictions of Tibet in Early Twentieth Century English Literature

3.1 Kim

3.1.1 Introduction

Rudyard Kipling was born December 30, 1865 in Bombay. He spent his childhood in India until the age of six, when he was sent to England to live with the Holloway family, which constituted a traumatic change after his happy days in India, as he was subjected to ill-treatment from his puritanical aunt and her son. Kipling returned to India in 1882 and he started working as a journalist in Lahore. Journalism is what provided him with a detailed knowledge of the life in India that is clearly reflected in his depicting native life in *Kim*.²⁰

The novel *Kim* follows the journey of a boy of Irish descent, Kim, who becomes a *chela* to a Tibetan lama in his quest to find the River of the Arrow and the enlightenment there awaiting. In amidst of the search he is taken away from the priest and enrolled into a school to become a ‘scribe’ for the government, in other words to partake in the Great Game as an agent for the government.

3.1.2 The Depiction of Landscape and Religion

The novel does not take place directly in Tibet, therefore will not provide much information with respect to landscape. Nevertheless, the author still uses references throughout the novel to Tibet that give an exotic feel to the country. Such instance comes early in the book with the emergence of the figure of the lama that makes Kim and the other children wonder about his origin. The lama reveals that he came “from the Hills where [...] the air and water are fresh and cool.”²¹ This is later expanded upon as the lama remarks that he is “a hillman from hills thou’lt never see,”²² and together with the mention that the lama comes “from behind the snows – from a very far place,”²³ these references then seem to paint a picture of Tibet as an exotic country, beyond reach, “as a place far removed from the lives of those in

²⁰ Leonée Ormond, *Kim by Rudyard Kipling* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), 2-3.

²¹ Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (London: Penguin Group, 2012), 5.

²² Kipling, *Kim*, 6.

²³ Kipling, *Kim*, 73.

India.”²⁴ There is even a reference to wealth: “There is much wealth, as men count it, in Bhotiyal,”²⁵ uttered by the lama himself that in and of itself constitutes a well established feature connected to Tibet since the beginning of British and Tibetan relations in the eighteenth century where “the Panchen lama had sent gold to Warren Hastings in 1775,” thus “stimulating British interest” and even later “mid-century reports consistently mentioned the great quantities of gold rumoured to be found in Tibet.”²⁶ This reference then suggests that Kipling was aware of the way Tibet was portrayed, aware of the image of Tibet as a place containing wealth and he put this element in his novel to paint a more exotic country.

The novel, however does take place in the mountains, close to Tibet, in one of the later chapters, when the character of the lama together with Kim, go into the hills to search for the River of the Arrow. The author pays attention to the changing of colour in the environment, as the mountains “flared windy-red above stark blue” when it was dawn, and during the day “lay like molten silver” until at evening they “put on their jewels again.”²⁷ When looking at the travel writings that are discussed by Bishop, it seems that Kipling’s depiction of the mountains reflects the accounts of the Victorian period of the second half of the nineteenth century. Bishop contends that the period saw the emergence of wilderness aesthetic of subtle appreciation of colours and light, with the travellers attracted by the changing of colours constituting an attention to detail contrasting the monotonous landscape.²⁸

What is more, the reader may notice that the mountains are depicted in the novel in a way that suggests an image of otherworldly place, as if entering “a world within a world,”

²⁴ Dibyesh Anand, *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 51.

²⁵ Kipling, *Kim*, 230.

²⁶ Peter Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 133.

²⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 249.

²⁸ Peter Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 113-114.

a place of immense distances where “after days of travel” the mountains “ever so slightly – changed outline.”²⁹ This seems to reflect the travel writings that are featured in Bishop’s book. According to his study, when the travellers were on the border with Tibet, they felt as if stepping into a different world, they “felt transported into regions [...] of unknown, not of this world.”³⁰ The landscape that is portrayed in the novel then seems to reflect the travel writings that are featured in Bishop which then suggests an influence of the travel writings on the part of the author, as they are said to be “well established genre by the close of the [nineteenth] century.”³¹

Apart from landscape, Kipling’s novel also portrays religion. There are many religions portrayed in the book from Hinduism, Islam, to Christianity, with an appearance of one priest standing for the Church of England and the other for Roman Catholic. It is Buddhism, however, which takes centre stage in the story as it is connected to the character of the Tibetan lama. The reader will notice that Kipling uses such terminology in the text that specifically refers to Buddhist faith. “I go free myself from the Wheel of Things [...]”³² says the lama at one point. Further, the lama draws a picture depicting the Wheel of Life, that serves as a tool for teaching others about the faith: “In cleanest, severest outline he had traced the Great Wheel with its six spokes, whose central is the conjoined Hog, Snake, and Dove (Ignorance, Anger, and Lust), and whose compartments are all the Heavens and Hells, and all the chances of human life.”³³ The Wheel of Life constitutes in Buddhist iconography the symbolic representation of the cycle of existence, the birth and rebirth where the three poisons represented by ignorance, anger and lust “sustain and aggregate each other in a continuous vicious circle.”³⁴ Kipling also refers to the Middle Way: “We be the followers of the Middle Way, living in peace in our lamasseries [...]”³⁵ This represents one of the philosophical schools of Buddhism whose central notion is that

²⁹ Kipling, *Kim*, 253.

³⁰ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 150-151.

³¹ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 138.

³² Kipling, *Kim*, 10.

³³ Kipling, *Kim*, 208.

³⁴ William Edelglass, “Joanna Macy: The Ecological Self,” in *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings*, ed. William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 434.

³⁵ Kipling, *Kim*, 6.

“all phenomena are inherently void.”³⁶ Thus, Kipling’s use of these terms that are distinct references to Buddhism suggests his knowledge of the faith.

What is more, the reader may notice that there are some negative aspects attributed to Buddhism in the text. Upon visiting the museum at the beginning, the lama speaks to the curator of his quest:

For five – seven – eighteen – forty years it was in my mind that the Old Law was not well followed; being overlaid, as thou knowest, with devildom, charms, and idolatry. Even as the child outside said but now. Ay, even as the child said, with *but-parasti*.³⁷

The reader may also notice that later in the story such negative associations of Buddhism when Kim and the lama are in the hills and the religion of the people there is described as “an almost obliterated Buddhism, overlaid with a nature-worship [...]”³⁸ James H. Thrall contends that Kipling presents Buddhism such that resembles the scholarly opinions that prevailed in the nineteenth century that proposed the now contested theory of degradation with respect to the ritual practices encountered by the British colonialists.³⁹ Furthermore, he points out that such depiction then contrasts Kipling’s “respectful deference” to the Buddhism that the reader will find in the author’s own poems that are used as “epigraphs” for some of the chapters in the novel.⁴⁰

3.1.3 The Depiction of Natives

In this subchapter the character of the lama will be the focus as he is the representative of Tibetans in this novel on a spiritual quest in India. The reader may find that the inclusion of the character of the lama constitutes a choice that is, in the context of the setting, unusual. Thrall provides his opinion on the matter by saying that “it was perhaps more important to

³⁶ Tulku Thondup, *Buddhist Civilization in Tibet*, (USA: Maha Siddha Nyingmapa Center, 1982), 75-76.

³⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 10.

³⁸ Kipling, *Kim*, 250.

³⁹ James H. Thrall, “Immersing the Chela: Religion and Empire in Rudyard Kipling’s “Kim”,” *Religion & Literature* 36, no. 3 (2004): 49-50, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40059967>.

⁴⁰ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 49.

separate the lama from the more familiar (at least to Kipling and his informed readers) religious practices of India.”⁴¹ The lama does represent a novelty to Kim, after all, when he appears in the city, and is described as “such a man as Kim, who thought he knew all castes, had never seen.”⁴²

What is more, the reader may find, that the text offers a reading of the lama that suggests a reference to historical events. Kipling chose to regard the Tibetan as a Teshoo lama in the novel, a term “borrowed [...] from the earlier British accounts of limited interaction with Tibetans at the end of the nineteenth century.”⁴³ This figure was also known as the Panchen lama, representing the second most influential figure in Tibet. As much of a coincidence as the decision may be, it does, however, prod the reader to entertain the idea of a deliberate reference to historical events of Tibet. The reference may constitute an appeal on the reader to consider the period of the early days of British and Tibetan relations in the eighteenth century that represents the beginning of British interest in Tibet. This interest was sparked by a letter and gifts from the Panchen Lama sent to Warren Hastings in an attempt to temper the expansion of British power in the Himalayan area.⁴⁴ It is possible that Kipling invites the reader to the times marked by curiosity on the part of the British that is paralleled then with Kim’s own curiosity about the lama that appears in the novel. Moreover, the characteristics of the letter according to Peter Bishop showed “good sense, humility and simplicity of heart,”⁴⁵ which further suggests a similarity to the lama in the book. Incidentally, Laurie Hovell McMillin draws the same historical reading and elaborates in her book on this similarity with historical figures in depth.⁴⁶

The reader may notice, however, that throughout the novel, there are several instances where the narrator gives to the character of the lama the child-like attribute. The lama is said to have a “clumsy and childish print,”⁴⁷ and upon Kim’s invitation gives him

⁴¹ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 50.

⁴² Kipling, *Kim*, 4.

⁴³ Anand, *Geopolitical Exotica*, 140.

⁴⁴ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 28.

⁴⁵ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 29.

⁴⁶ Laurie Hovell McMillin, *English in Tibet, Tibet in English: Self-Presentation in Tibet and the Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 79.

⁴⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 7.

his own begging bowl “simply as a child”⁴⁸ so that he would fill it. Dibyesh Anand proposes in her book that there is a “dominant representational strategy operating within the text” that is known as “infantilization”⁴⁹ with respect to the child-like attributes given to the lama. Through this strategy, Anand claims, “the Other,” that is the character of the lama, is “rendered incapable of making decisions for itself” thus justifying the “guardianship of the adult rational Westerner.”⁵⁰ The reader will notice that there is a difference in their competence in the practical world. Initially, it seems that Kim is following the lama as a disciple, however, the situations make for an inverted image and “the lama Kim sets out to follow is a man to look after than to look up to.”⁵¹ A scene of them at a train station illustrates this as the lama says: “This is the work of devils!” as he recoils “from the hollow echoing darkness,” and then the narrator claims that the lama was “not so well used to trains as he had pretended,”⁵² and furthermore, the ticket vendor tries to sell wrong ticket to the two of them with Kim noticing and later stating: “They would have flung thee out of Mian Mir but for me.”⁵³

The reader will notice that the lama at some point becomes aware of worldly matters. The simple image of the lama is then disrupted by his ability to negotiate with Mr Bennet and Father Victor about the matter of Kim’s education, in spite of him insisting on the Middle Way, the lama shows ability to negotiate within colonial framework.⁵⁴ The roles are then reversed when Kim is meant to be sent to school by the priests of the regiment with the lama acting as a guardian and insisting on paying for the education of the boy as he “sees at once the importance of sending Kim to the best school available.”⁵⁵

Leonée Ormond, on the other hand, underscores the conflict between action and passivity presented in the character of the lama, whose Buddhist faith implicates him to suppress worldly desires and to withdraw himself completely from the matters of this

⁴⁸ Kipling, *Kim*, 14.

⁴⁹ Anand, *Geopolitical Exotica*, 51.

⁵⁰ Anand, *Geopolitical Exotica*, 33.

⁵¹ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 52.

⁵² Kipling, *Kim*, 28.

⁵³ Kipling, *Kim*, 29.

⁵⁴ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 53.

⁵⁵ Ormond, *Kim by Rudyard Kipling*, 58.

world.⁵⁶ The lama, after all, is often in instances such as when he talks about casting horoscopes and nativities with the family priest, pointing at the sky while the “children of the house tugged unrebuked at his rosary,” and when talking of his journey through the mountains “he clean forgot the Rule which forbids looking at women.”⁵⁷ Here I am indebted to Ormond as he points in his reading to the following passages with respect to their significance as relating to the figure of the lama.⁵⁸ It is these moments where the lama allows a small child to play with his rosary and sings them a song, remarking then: “It is good to be kind to babes,” and as the deed surprises Kim the lama admits that “no man is all perfect,”⁵⁹ that constitute his humanity that contrast the moments when he is “deep in meditation” while on the “smiling river of life” that was the Grand Trunk Road as they “walked miles upon miles in silence.”⁶⁰ By showing the reader the moments when he “stumbles along the Way”⁶¹ it in fact makes the character more relatable and as a result, it constitutes a rather romanticized version of a lama.

The travel writings of the mid nineteenth century discussed in Bishop’s book show that the travellers’ depiction of the lamas suggests a rather mixed attitude: “fat and jolly, pious and compassionate, lazy and indolent [...]”⁶² Compared with Kipling’s novel, the portrayal of the lama suggests a respectful portrayal stressing his humanity, as was shown in the text, and his wisdom as being likened to “a scholar removed from vanity [...] as an old man, wise and temperate, illumining knowledge with brilliant insight.”⁶³ The portrayal of the lama in the novel, however, does seem to reflect, to a certain degree, in Bishop’s study the travellers’ perception of the lamas as being “backward in world affairs.”⁶⁴ Even here, however, Kipling’s portrayal of the lama ultimately constitutes a subversion with respect to the unworldliness that is depicted in the travel writings at the close of the nineteenth century that are featured in Bishop and mentioned previously.

⁵⁶ Ormond, *Kim by Rudyard Kipling*, 32.

⁵⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 42.

⁵⁸ Ormond, *Kim by Rudyard Kipling*, 33.

⁵⁹ Kipling, *Kim*, 60.

⁶⁰ Kipling, *Kim*, 66.

⁶¹ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 52.

⁶² Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 128.

⁶³ Kipling, *Kim*, 230.

⁶⁴ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 149.

3.1.4 The Depiction of Westerners

The focus of this subchapter will be mainly on the character of Kim, the protagonist of the story, known as the 'Little Friend of all the World,' who interacts with the character of the lama the most. Then, the Roman Catholic chaplain, father Victor and the Church of England clergyman, Mr Bennet, will be mentioned together with the character of the Curator of the museum.

The reader will notice that one of the Westerners who come across the character of the lama are the Roman Catholic chaplain, father Victor and the Church of England clergyman, Mr Bennet who are a part of the British regiment called the Mavericks. The reader is as Thrall puts it "drawn to Victor and repelled by Bennett most by their different understandings of the nature of the lama and his attachment to Kim."⁶⁵ The reader will further notice the scornful attitude of Bennett towards the lama: "Bennett looked at him with a triple-ringed uninterest of a creed that lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title of 'heathen'."⁶⁶ On the other hand, father Victor's perception is marked by sensibility as he "heard the pain in every sentence," as reacting to the lama's painful confession "stepped aside from the Way."⁶⁷

Furthermore, there is the character of the Curator of the Lahore museum, to whom the lama speaks of his lamasery of Such-zen. In response, the Englishman provides him with photographs that show that very place. Peter Bishop draws attention to what the photographs constitute for the West, quoting: "But photographs also gave Westerners a vicarious sense of power over Tibet. Even if they could not go to the country at will, nor occupy it, nor control it, at least they had possession of its image. [...] In a kind of primitive sense, to own the image was to gain power over the subject or at least to possess something of its soul."⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Thrall, "Immersing the Chela," 58.

⁶⁶ Kipling, *Kim*, 95.

⁶⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 100.

⁶⁸ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 189.

The main point of interest for this subchapter, however, constitutes the character Kim in relation to the character of the lama. The reader may notice, that upon meeting the lama, there is a clear difference in the perception of the lama that separates Kim from his companions, the Hindu and the Muslim, as their reaction is marked by superstition, calling him “a *but-parast* [idolater].”⁶⁹ Kim, on the other hand, is “blissfully free from the proscriptions they apply in rejecting the lama.”⁷⁰ Kim accompanies the Tibetan lama “out of curiosity and an adventuresome spirit”⁷¹ while having his own designs, “to look for the Red Bull on a green field who shall help me.”⁷² He seeks to leave the place and the lama presents a perfect opportunity. Kim represents the image of a non-judgemental figure who moves about India’s various castes and races, who unlike him are “all condemning and judging one another,” and he is attracted by “all forms of humanity” and further is “offering universal friendship with no apparent awareness that it is anything unusual.”⁷³

The two characters seem to constitute opposites in a way, where one, the lama, seeks to escape the Wheel of Life, while the other, Kim, makes very little effort to escape it indeed:

The lama as usual, was deep in meditation, but Kim's bright eyes were open wide. This broad, smiling river of life, he considered, was a vast improvement on the cramped and crowded Lahore streets. There were new people and new sights at every stride - castes he knew and castes that were altogether out of his experience.⁷⁴

As the text indicates then, Kim is “happily immersed in that materiality.”⁷⁵ On the Grand Trunk Road, Kim is enthralled with life that is happening around him, he is anxious to see all that the road has to offer, the versatile life of India. What is more, upon meeting with the lama before being enrolled in the school, Kim admits that he forgot about the quest: “Ah!

⁶⁹ Kipling, *Kim*, 6.

⁷⁰ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 54.

⁷¹ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 53.

⁷² Kipling, *Kim*, 18.

⁷³ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 54.

⁷⁴ Kipling, *Kim*, 66.

⁷⁵ Thrall, “Immersing the Chela,” 62.

Thy River,' said Kim. 'I had forgotten the River.'"⁷⁶ What is more, the reader will notice that the next scene of Kim departing for the school then constitutes Kim declaring his need for the lama as he is hopeful that "it was a little to see me that thou didst come," admitting to being "all alone in this land" and pleading the lama to "not altogether go away."⁷⁷ Thrall points to the fact that Kim's "true allegiance to the lama is filial rather than spiritual," therefore it is "love" that keeps him by his side, not "a search for ultimate truth."⁷⁸

What is more, towards the end of the story, when the lama falls into the brook that constitutes the long sought River of the Arrow, he is oblivious to what exactly it entails: "He tried to think of the lama – to wonder why he had tumbled into a brook – but the bigness of the world, seen between the forecourt gates, swept linked thought aside."⁷⁹ Kim's inability to realize this fact then further points to his immerse in the material world. The reader will notice then, that the closing pages of the book seem to further point to the "dichotomies"⁸⁰ that exist between the two characters, where the lama narrates the turn of events surrounding his enlightenment:

'Upon the second night - so great was my reward - the wise Soul loosed itself from the silly Body and went free. This I have never before attained, though I have stood on the threshold of it. Consider, for it is a marvel!'

'A marvel indeed. Two days and two nights without food! Where was the Sahiba?' said Kim under his breath.⁸¹

The reader may notice that the way Kim responds suggests that his concern is "entirely with the physical realm,"⁸² he is not taken aback by the lama's spiritual achievement at all, he is rather concerned for the lama's well-being. As Thrall contends, "their perspectives on the next life could not be different,"⁸³ and it seems that Kim remains invested in the

⁷⁶ Kipling, *Kim*, 131.

⁷⁷ Kipling, *Kim*, 132.

⁷⁸ Thrall, "Immersing the Chela," 53.

⁷⁹ Kipling, *Kim*, 305.

⁸⁰ Thrall, "Immersing the Chela," 46.

⁸¹ Kipling, *Kim*, 311.

⁸² Thrall, "Immersing the Chela," 45.

⁸³ Thrall, "Immersing the Chela," 46.

material world. Furthermore, the novel does not provide a clear answer, however, as to whether the disciple Kim submits to being “cleansed from sin”⁸⁴ with his teacher by stepping into the river. Thus, it presents difficulty to predict what the future role of Kim would be. Nevertheless, Kim’s character in the novel seems to be attracted to the figure of the lama as he constitutes a father figure to him, he is not attracted to the spirituality, to the religion.

3.2 Lost Horizon

3.2.1 Introduction

James Hilton was born on September 9th, 1900 in Leigh, Lancashire, England, but he grew up in London as his father found a job there as a teacher.

Hilton is best known for his 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*, awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1934 and adapted for the silver screen in 1937. Hilton served as a consultant on the film’s script after being invited to Hollywood in 1935, a place that “was emerging as the greatest mythmaker of all time, due to its global reach.”⁸⁵ Even though several of his books were adapted to movies in the UK, he recognized the potential of Hollywood to experiment with new formats like talking movies and radio plays and chose to stay there, “in America’s own Shangri-La.”⁸⁶

What is more, James Hilton may have written a novel that is set in Tibet, he, however, had never been there. At one point he considered making the pilgrimage when the filming on the movie has wrapped but by then, he felt that “the thrill had gone.”⁸⁷ He was convinced that he did not need to see the place in order to write stories about it, explaining that “imagination will get you further than knowledge of first-hand experience.”⁸⁸ Hilton was, however, still influenced when shaping the story, it did not “spring full-blown from

⁸⁴ Kipling, *Kim*, 308.

⁸⁵ Michael Buckley, *Shangri-La: A Practical Guide to the Himalayan Dream* (Chalfont St Peter: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd, 2008), 24.

⁸⁶ Buckley, *Shangri-La*, 23.

⁸⁷ Michael McRae, *The Siege of Shangri-La: The Quest for Tibet’s Sacred Hidden Paradise* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 83.

⁸⁸ McRae, *The Siege of Shangri-La*, 83.

his muses,” as Michael McRae puts it, the author was most influenced by a travelogue, *Recollections of a Journey Through Tartary, Thibet and China, 1844–5–6*, written by a French missionary Abbé Evariste-Regis Huc, that told of a sacred hidden land called Shambhala.⁸⁹

Lost Horizon follows the journey of four Westerners as their airplane is hijacked and they crash in the mountains somewhere in Tibet, where they are taken to a Buddhist monastery called Shangri-La. The title of the book represents many things, for one in relation to the protagonist it is the re-discovering of life’s purpose throughout the vicissitudes of life and removing oneself from the disillusionment.

3.2.2 The Depiction of Landscape and Religion

The story is set in a lamasery of Shangri-La located somewhere in Tibet and overlooks the Valley of the Blue Moon. The reader will notice from early stages of the story that there is a tendency to evoke a sense of isolation. One such instance, for example comes in the scene where the plane is passing by the mountain-range the range is depicted as “distant,” “inaccessible,” “unhumanised” and “utterly majestic and remote.”⁹⁰ The very setting, the Valley of the Blue Moon, in its description, contains this feeling of isolation:

The floor of the valley, hazily distant, welcomed the eye with greenness; sheltered from winds, and surveyed rather than dominated by the lamasery, it looked to Conway a delightfully favoured place, though if it were inhabited its community must be completely isolated by the lofty and sheerly unscalable ranges on the further side.⁹¹

James Hilton sets the place Shangri-La in isolation, somewhere in the mountains, for a reason. Peter Bishop contends that “the myth of Tibet could no longer be trusted to Tibet,”

⁸⁹ McRae, *The Siege of Shangri-La*, 83.

⁹⁰ Hilton, *Lost Horizon* (London: Vintage, 2015), 37.

⁹¹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 60.

at that time and instead it needed to be “transferred” to a place that was “timeless and formless” to ensure that it would not be “threatened.”⁹²

The reader will also notice that the landscape that is portrayed in the novel seems to be unspoiled by the West, unconquered. What perfectly exemplifies this notion is the very mountain that is towering over the valley which is called Karakal, and it is said to be over twenty-eight thousand feet high. The reader may notice Conway’s attraction for the mountain that is suggested in this passage from the novel:

He was also interested in the mountain beyond the valley; it was a sensational peak by any standards, and he was surprised that some traveller had not made much of it in the kind of book that a journey in Tibet invariably elicits.⁹³

The travel writings found in Peter Bishop’s book indicate that close to the twentieth century, the Himalayas were now associated with Tibet, not the other way around, thus, Bishop contends that the notion that there is “a summit higher than Everest,” constitutes “an unconscious way of symbolizing Tibet’s supreme imaginative power.”⁹⁴

The reader will notice that the mountain is referenced several times throughout the novel with respect to the character of Conway and the very thought of the mountain seems to elicit a kind of emotion in him: “a certain pathos touched him remotely at the thought of Karakal’s piled immensity.”⁹⁵ According to Lawrence Normand, this goes back to the “early twentieth-century” where Europeans found in mountains and mountaineering “a spiritual significance” in the wake of World War I that exhausted Europe, and “Everest” came to represent the “combination of mountain, spirituality and Buddhism.”⁹⁶ In

⁹² Peter Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 217.

⁹³ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 53.

⁹⁴ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 185.

⁹⁵ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 83.

⁹⁶ Lawrence Normand, “Shangri La and Buddhism in James Hilton’s *Lost Horizon* and W H Auden and Christopher Isherwood’s *The Ascent of F6*,” in *Encountering Buddhism in Twentieth-Century British and American Literature*, ed. Lawrence Normand and Alison Winch (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 39.

comparison with Normand's comments, it seems to be the case that *Lost Horizon* conveys such a notion as well.

Besides the landscape, the novel also describes the religion that exists in the society which is not strictly speaking only Buddhist. Normand uses in his essay the term "quasi Buddhist" to describe the religion of Shangri-La that is "an amalgam of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian wisdom" and also "a dash of Christianity."⁹⁷

What is more, the reader may notice that there are several instances in the book where the air in this altitude, that is described "clean as from another planet," seems to have an effect on the characters. What is more, Conway seems to be affected in a unique way:

One had to breathe consciously and deliberately, which, though disconcerting at first, induced after a time an almost ecstatic tranquillity of mind. The whole body moved in a single rhythm of breathing, walking and thinking; the lungs, no longer discreet and automatic, were disciplined to harmony with mind and limb.⁹⁸

Normand contends that the way Conway experiences this change of altitude might be called "a Buddhist way," being in a "state of mindfulness and subjective integration," and that in fact it "suggests an attainment of Buddhist meditative practice."⁹⁹

The protagonist Conway has many meetings with the High Lama of the monastery who recognizes in him a spiritual wisdom. Normand contends that this spiritual quality that Conway possess has "a distinct Buddhist tinge," and actually is the product not of "Conway's oriental studies" but of the things that he went through as a soldier in World War I.¹⁰⁰ The High Lama admits that this is the first time that he encountered in one of their visitors this "odd quality" that is in Conway, that may not be "cynicism" or "bitterness" but rather "passionlessness."¹⁰¹ Here, according to Normand it seems to that "the third Noble Truth of Buddhism" is echoed, which is that "freedom or awakening comes from the

⁹⁷ Normand, "Shangri La and Buddhism," 42.

⁹⁸ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 54.

⁹⁹ Normand, "Shangri La and Buddhism," 42.

¹⁰⁰ Normand, "Shangri La and Buddhism," 42.

¹⁰¹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 140.

cessation of demanding desire.”¹⁰² Conway himself thinks that maybe “the exhaustion of the passions is the beginning of wisdom”¹⁰³ which might implicitly point to the presence of Buddhism. Normand contends that there are “signs” throughout the novel that the reader can interpret as “a fuzzy but distinct Buddhist spirituality associated with Tibet.”¹⁰⁴ The reader will find that this is represented, on one hand, by the examples of the lamas in the monastery who “devote themselves [...] to contemplation and to the pursuit of wisdom”¹⁰⁵ and on the other, by the High Lama, who “spends almost his entire life in clairvoyant meditation.”¹⁰⁶

Thus, the image of religion that the novel presents suggests ideas about Buddhism that may be “vague” but still “positive” and further shaping the thoughts and feelings of the reader about this religion.¹⁰⁷

3.2.3 The Depiction of Natives

The novel portrays on the one hand the inhabitants indigenous to the region, Tibetans, those that live in the valley below the monastery, and on the other, the lamas that occupy the Buddhist monastery of Shangri-La. The reader will notice that the former remains in the background, while the latter is given more prominence.

When looking at the society as a whole, the reader will notice allusions towards a utopian society. It is stated in the novel that “the way the valley population is governed [...] appeared [...] to be a rather loose and elastic autocracy, operated from the lamasery with a benevolence that was almost casual.”¹⁰⁸ This functioning of the society is explained by the existence of a principle upon which the society is built and it constitutes what the lamas believe in. As the character Chang, one of the monks in the monastery, reveals that their “prevalent belief is in moderation,” the principle seems to be permeating all aspects of life,

¹⁰² Normand, “Shangri La and Buddhism,” 43.

¹⁰³ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 160.

¹⁰⁴ Normand, “Shangri La and Buddhism,” 43.

¹⁰⁵ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 85.

¹⁰⁶ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 155.

¹⁰⁷ Normand, “Shangri La and Buddhism,” 51.

¹⁰⁸ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 100-101.

as they “inculcate the virtue of avoiding excess of all kinds,” and in return, the principle is said to bring “a considerable degree of happiness.”¹⁰⁹ Chang further describes their level of governing:

We rule with moderate strictness, and in return we are satisfied with moderate obedience. And I think I can claim that our people are moderately sober, moderately chaste, and moderately honest.¹¹⁰

Moreover, throughout the novel, the reader will notice further allusions towards a utopian society, with the protagonist puzzled as to the fact that “there appeared to be neither soldiers nor police,” and Chang explaining that “crime was very rare, partly because everyone enjoyed a sufficiency of everything he could reasonably desire.”¹¹¹ The image of the society as portrayed in the novel gives an impression of a perfectly balanced one where everyone is content to a certain degree. In the travel writings that are discussed in Bishop’s book, the travellers at the turn of the twentieth century often criticized the system as “lamas, in their role as ecclesiastic or political administrators, were disliked,” as “their position seemed dictatorial, almost totalitarian, in its fusion of blatant power with absolute ideological and spiritual control” going as far as calling it an “unlimited tyranny.”¹¹² The reader will notice then that Hilton’s depiction of the society’s system essentially subverts this notion that was “consistent” in those travel accounts and thus presents it as something of a fantasy, where all live happily.

The inhabitants of the valley, who probably represent the Tibetans, are for the most part, as was stated before, in the background. When the Westerners are allowed to inspect the valley, the inhabitants are described as “a successful blend of Chinese and Tibetan” who “smiled and laughed as they passed the chaired strangers” and are said to be “good-humoured and mildly inquisitive.”¹¹³ The way Hilton depicts this community is similar to some of the travel accounts depicting the hill people in the “Buddhist Himalayas” in the

¹⁰⁹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 66.

¹¹⁰ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 66.

¹¹¹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 101.

¹¹² Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 167.

¹¹³ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 95.

twentieth century following World War One as “a happy people, always ready to laugh and joke.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, in Alex McKay’s study, he proposes that following the Younghusband expedition to Tibet, “the common people were described as extraordinarily friendly...always cheery,” which as McKay writes has then “been confirmed by more recent travellers” who depict them as “kind, gentle, honest, open and cheerful” thus concluding that “an image may be both true and political.”¹¹⁵ Thus Hilton’s description of the natives may be rather superficial but nonetheless it seems to be rather accurate.

The reader will notice that the inhabitants of Shangri-La are composed of a number of nationalities, including European, that all live under the roof of this monastery. As was mentioned in the previous subchapter, the lamas devote themselves to contemplation and the pursuit of wisdom. Many of them are said to be “engaged in writing manuscript books of various kinds” from “valuable researches into pure mathematics” to “history of European civilization” while others preferred to spend their time developing “a new theory about Wuthering Heights.”¹¹⁶ Dibyesh Anand contends that Hilton’s Shangri-La is often “associated with Tibet,” further stating, however, that “there is little that is Tibetan about the place,” besides the “probable geographical location.”¹¹⁷ Anand further points to the fact that even the character of Conway himself is under the impression that “the atmosphere [...] was Chinese rather than specifically Tibetan.”¹¹⁸ Dodin and R  ther elaborate on this issue, claiming that “Tibetan-themed fictional literature” that was produced since the “late nineteenth century” has in fact “rarely made use of genuine Tibetan material,” instead being used as an “exotic backdrop for the Western heroes.”¹¹⁹

Furthermore, the notion of many nationalities that occupy the monastery working together seems to relate to a post-war sentiment of “peaceful coexistence”¹²⁰ as Tom Neuhaus puts it. Neuhaus comments on the varied nature of the monastery with respect to its members that it is portrayed as a “transnational space par excellence” as all of the

¹¹⁴ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 210.

¹¹⁵ McKay, “We want a united Tibet,” 657.

¹¹⁶ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 170.

¹¹⁷ Anand, *Geopolitical Exotica*, 40.

¹¹⁸ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 63.

¹¹⁹ Dodin and R  ther, “Imagining Tibet,” 407.

¹²⁰ Tom Neuhaus, *Tibet in the Western Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 134.

nationalities – Luxembourgish, Britons, Americans, Russians, Chinese and other – “all coexist peacefully there, away from the destruction caused by war, nationalism and conflict in the outside world.”¹²¹ The pacifist agenda that seems to be present in Hilton’s book in part “originated from his being raised as a pacifist and anti-militarist by his father,”¹²² claims Neuhaus. The reader may also notice that presence of that many nationalities occupying the monastery, the existence of a library that contains “the world’s best literature” apart from other writings such as “Chinese and other Eastern scripts”¹²³ suggests that Hilton sees this place as a “safe-haven”¹²⁴ that was supposed to “preserve the wisdom and beauty of civilization”¹²⁵ from the impending doom of another world war. The war is alluded to in the book, when the High Lama speaks of a storm: “It will be such a one, my son, as the world has not seen before.”¹²⁶

3.2.4 The Depiction of Westerners

The group of Westerners, referred to as ‘exiles’ in the book, that are kidnapped and taken to Shangri-La, consists of three British citizens, Conway, Mallinson and Miss Brinklow, and the American, Barnard. Except for Mallinson, they are all provided with something that makes them want to stay in Shangri-La.

The character of Conway seems to enjoy his stay in Shangri-La as the place stirred in him a response that was a “charming fascination,”¹²⁷ and he shows “curiosity about the motive of this unique establishment.”¹²⁸ His attitude to Shangri-La contrasts the more reproachful stance of Mallinson, who represents the sceptical Westerner, the outsider who wants to desperately leave the monastery and will not allow himself to be swept under the

¹²¹ Neuhaus, *Tibet in the Western Imagination*, 134.

¹²² Neuhaus, *Tibet in the Western Imagination*, 134.

¹²³ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 84.

¹²⁴ Neuhaus, *Tibet in the Western Imagination*, 133.

¹²⁵ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 211.

¹²⁶ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 177.

¹²⁷ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 73.

¹²⁸ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 66.

lure of what Shangri-La. He senses evil intent behind Shangri-La and considers it “hellish.”¹²⁹

The reader may notice that Hilton makes references to the struggle after the First World War. Conway attributes his lack of passion to war when he tells the High Lama “you can label me 1914-1918” and then further explains his state of mind:

I used up most of my passions and energies during these years I’ve mentioned and though I don’t talk much about it, the chief thing I’ve asked from the world since then is to leave me alone.¹³⁰

Conway is one of the Lost Generation who bears the ramifications of that conflict as all he is left with is “a sense of almighty boredom and fretfulness”¹³¹ making an impression of someone just wandering about the world with lost purpose. It is through vicissitudes of life being burdened by the devastation of the past that lends him the ability to “encounter Shangri-La’s Eastern religion (fantasised as it is).”¹³² Bishop points to a the fact that the travellers “were avidly searching for something in Tibet” after World War One which was initially “confined to a personal meaning, to a spiritual quest” or sometimes they were searching for “ideas that could help the West find its way again” but later with the approach of the next war, “Tibet seemed to offer hope” that it would solve problems “for the whole world,” and he sees this “encapsulated” in James Hilton’s novel through the character of Conway.¹³³ What is more, the reader may notice that his character is also meant to serve as a reference to history. Conway, HM Consul, is a British diplomat, who is said to have an “open mind”¹³⁴ and as was stated before, he is fascinated by the place and even curious, he is open-minded towards Orient, which then may prod the reader to draw a parallel to history of Tibet in connection to George Bogle, who was also a British diplomat and found himself in Tibet representing the beginning of British and Tibetan relations. The choice may be coincidental on the part of the author, however, the possibility remains that

¹²⁹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 184.

¹³⁰ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 140.

¹³¹ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 159.

¹³² Normand, “Shangri La and Buddhism,” 43.

¹³³ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 180.

¹³⁴ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 27.

he was aware of the historical events as related to Tibet and Britain, and his inclusion of such a character then constitutes a reference to the early days of the relations between the two countries, that were marked by curiosity.

What is more, Miss Brinklow is a representative of the Christian missionary who is said to feel “a call to evangelise the heathen Tibetan”¹³⁵ and to do this she is studying Tibetan language so as to understand the culture. She clashes with Chang on a religious level, when she claims to “believe in the true religion,” to which Chang responds whether it is necessary “to hold that because one religion is true, all others are bound to be false,” which she considers “rather obvious.”¹³⁶ What is more, the reader may find that the inclusion of her character in the narrative constitutes a reference to history. As Dodin and Räther contend, that in the nineteenth century, “missionaries of this age had little objectivity [...] and they showed limited interest in the regional culture and religion” and to this rule “the Moravian missionaries” presented a “rare and remarkable exceptions.”¹³⁷ Due to the fact that she decides to learn the language first to help her in her attempt to convert the Tibetans, it shows her patient attitude that is reflective of some of the missionary work in the past in relation to Tibet.

The American, Barnard, just like Conway and Miss Brinklow, finds solace at coming to this place albeit for a very different reason. As he is a wanted criminal, Shangri-La effectively serves as a hideout. The High Lama tells Conway:

Miss Brinklow wishes to convert us, and Mr Barnard would also like to convert us – into a limited liability company. Harmless projects – they will pass the time quite pleasantly for them.¹³⁸

This may suggest that the character brings into the narrative the capitalist side, recognizing the potential of the gold mines located in the valley. The fascination with gold with respect to Tibet has a longer history as it seems. Bishop contends that in the middle of the

¹³⁵ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 110.

¹³⁶ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 66.

¹³⁷ Dodin and Räther, “Imagining Tibet,” 393.

¹³⁸ Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 174.

nineteenth century in the Western accounts, “gold had become a small but important symbol in European fantasies,”¹³⁹ and in fact “right into the twentieth century it was still thought to be plentiful.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, Barnard’s interest in gold then suggests a similarity and a reference to the interest of the Western travellers.

¹³⁹ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 132.

¹⁴⁰ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 180.

4. Cultural Impact

4.1 Kipling's lama

The character of the lama in Kipling's book who comes from a far-away place, admits an Irish boy named Kim to be his *chela* to aid him in his quest to find the River of the Arrow before essentially becoming a father figure to him, who is portrayed as an erudite man, wise in the spiritual matters but not worldly, showing kindness, humanity despite his Buddhist faith that makes him suppress worldly desires must have left a mark on the imagination of people.

In fact, given that the lama from Kipling's book found a home in the British imagination, travellers were often saddened by the fact that they did not find such qualities among the Tibetan lamas they encountered.¹⁴¹ Still, some of them expressed hope that Kipling's lama may exist, while others considered such men to be rare.¹⁴²

Francis Younghusband, who was born among the Himalayas, who is said to bear many of Kim's qualities, as he was "always longing, always restless,"¹⁴³ was the figure who led the expedition to Tibet in 1903-04. While there, he did "keep an eye open for any signs of Kim's lama," and ultimately found such a man who was "full of kindness" and "at that moment more nearly approached Kipling's lama in *Kim* than any other Tibetan I met."¹⁴⁴

Kipling then, wittingly or not, seems to have created a character who had an influence on the travellers' perception of other Tibetan monks and, in fact, made them even look for such qualities the character of the Teshoo lama possessed in the very monks that they met.

¹⁴¹ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 183.

¹⁴² Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 183.

¹⁴³ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 183.

¹⁴⁴ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 183.

4.2 Hilton's Shangri-La

James Hilton portrays in his novel a place that is governed by the principle of moderation, depicted as a lifeboat that contains civilizations, painted a picture of many cultures living together. It represented the utopia that the Westerners were looking for, a place that seemed to offer hope in times of post-war devastation and disillusionment.

James Hilton's novel was marked with success as becoming a best-seller both in Britain and in the United States, and as such represented "one of the great mythologizings about Tibet."¹⁴⁵ *Lost Horizon* was the work of fiction which introduced a new word into the English language, that of 'Shangri-La'. Even here, the travellers who were on their way to Tibet, made references to the book, feeling as if they were "in the land of the Lost Horizon," and that it "often seemed as though we were dreaming – acting our parts of characters in James Hilton's novel, on our way to Shangri-La."¹⁴⁶

As was stated before, Hilton's novel was adapted to film, directed by Frank Capra. It was favourably successful upon release and was even awarded two Academy Awards. The film does make some changes to the book, besides changing some character's names and replacing established characters, the most important change was the depiction of the lamasery that was now presented to the viewer, whereas in the book, the readers had to envision it by themselves. Hilton's narrative was marked by a pacifist agenda and essentially represented an escapist fantasy which seemed to meet the demands of the period leading to another world crisis.

¹⁴⁵ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 211.

¹⁴⁶ Bishop, *Myth of Shangri-La*, 211.

5. Conclusion

The focus of this bachelor's thesis was to analyse two novels of English literature, on the one hand it was the novel *Kim*, written by Rudyard Kipling, on the other *Lost Horizon*, written by James Hilton. The aim of the thesis was to explore how the novels depict Tibet and to show how the myth of Tibet is perpetuated.

The first chapter of the thesis provided the historical background for the main body of the work and an insight into the events of the twentieth century as relating to Tibet and its status. It showed that Britain had influence on Tibet, was entangled in shaping its modern history but also in the perception of a modern Tibetan state and sought to create an image of Tibet that would serve both their and Tibet's interests.

The second chapter which stands for the main part of the thesis dealt with two novels regarding their depiction of Tibet with respect to three themes that are the depiction of landscape and religion, natives and lastly Westerners. The first part of the main body focused on the novel *Kim*. First, a subchapter was given that provided brief introduction the author and the novel. An analysis of the novel of *Kim* followed. It was demonstrated that the way Kipling depicts the mountains reflects the travel writings of the nineteenth century and that despite the fact that his novel is not set in Tibet, he still refers to it in a way that paints an exotic image of the land. As for religion, he uses specific Buddhist terminology and essentially portrays Buddhism in a negative light while showing deference to it in his poems. Moreover, it was shown that the depiction of the lama constitutes a reference to history, that it defies the negative portrayal of the travel accounts, is marked by colonial attitude and represents a romanticized version. It was also shown that Kim is not drawn to the spirituality of the lama and more to the material world. The second and the last part of the main body analysed the novel *Lost Horizon*, while providing brief introduction to both the novel and the author. It was shown that Hilton's novel depicts landscape that is in isolation that relates to the myth of Tibet. The religion there is not only Buddhism but an amalgam of many religions, and compared with *Kim*, the religion is portrayed implicitly and is generally positive. Just like *Kim*, Hilton's depiction of the natives subverts the negative portrayal of the travel accounts in some ways, here it is the depiction of the system

in connection to the lamas, and resembles them in others, as was shown that the regular Tibetans portrayed in the novel reflect the depiction from history. In Hilton's novel the protagonist Conway is attracted by the spiritual, drawn to it, unlike Kim in Kipling's novel, and it was shown that some of the other characters are used as a reference to something that is connected to Tibet, that is gold and Christian missionaries.

The task of the third and last chapter, was to provide information on the influence of both Kipling's and Hilton's novel as relating to the already existing image of Tibet. It was shown that Kipling's portrayal of the lama influenced the travellers in the following years and that they even searched for such a lama in Tibet. Hilton's book introduced to the English language a new word, Shangri-La, and further the travellers referred to the book in their own accounts while in Tibet.

Both *Kim* and *Lost Horizon* are influential works of fiction that contain elements that appealed to the human mind of the twentieth century as it provided them with something to look for in Tibet. Thus, both provided images of Tibet that allowed for the myth to continue and be perpetuated. Tibet represented a place where the Westerner could project their longings, their hopes and dreams.

6. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou dvou románů v anglické literatuře, prvním z nichž je *Kim*, napsaný Rudyardem Kiplingem, druhým je potom *Ztracený horizont*, napsaný Jamesem Hiltonem. Jako cíl si tato práce stanovila zjistit, jak je v těchto románech vyobrazen Tibet a do jaké míry je v nich zachován mýtus, který se k Tibetu pojí.

První část práce přibližuje počátek tibetsko-britských vztahů, které sahají do druhé poloviny osmnáctého století a pojí se osobami v britském impériu, které vykazovali otevřenost vůči nové kultuře. Protikladem k této situaci je potom situace na počátku století dvacátého, které je protkáno napětím mezi Tibetem a Británií zejména v důsledku expanzivní politiky Velké Británie a rivality mezi britským a ruským impériem, která se vztahovala na vliv ve střední Asii a týkala se tedy i Tibetu samotného. Toto napětí v konečném důsledku vyústilo v invazi britských vojsk na území Tibetu, která je známá jako Younghusbandova expedice, jejíž součástí byl i tibetský kádr, jehož členové se stali zprostředkovateli Tibetu pro okolní svět. Bylo zde možné vidět snahy Britů o vytvoření jakéhosi obrazu Tibetu jako silného jednotného státu, který měl sloužit ve prospěch oběma stranám, a který byl však narušen příchodem populárních publikací cestovatelů ve dvacátých letech dvacátého století. Následkem čehož jejich publikace obsahovaly množství přibarvených prvků, které zemi vyobrazovaly jako exotickou. Jak je tedy vidět, Británie měla na Tibet vliv a sehrála v období moderních dějin v souvislosti s Tibetem důležitou roli.

Hlavní část bakalářské práce je rozdělena do dvou kapitol, z nichž každá se věnuje románu, který je předmětem analýzy. Samotnou analýzu předchází podkapitola, ve které je stručně uveden samotný autor a jeho dílo. Poté následuje analýza daného románu se zaměřením na vyobrazení Tibetu a je provedena s ohledem na tři společná témata, kterými jsou vyobrazení krajiny a náboženství, druhým je vyobrazení původních obyvatel a poslední téma ukazuje, jak jsou vyobrazeni obyvatelé západu. První kapitola se zaměřuje na román Rudyarda Kiplinga *Kim*. Při zkoumání vyobrazení krajiny bylo zjištěno, že ačkoliv se Kiplingův román v Tibetu neodehrává, lze v něm najít takové prvky, které dodávají Tibetu exotický nádech. Dále bylo zjištěno, že vyobrazení hor v románu se podobá

záznamům cestovatelů z druhé poloviny devatenáctého století, kteří se zaměřovali na detaily, například na změny barvy a světla v horách. Cestopisy byly ke konci století již známým žánrem, a tak se nabízí, že autor o nich měl povědomí. Co se týká náboženství, Kipling ve svém románu používá termíny, které se specificky pojí s buddhistickou vírou. Zároveň ve svém románu představuje jednak negativní vyobrazení tohoto náboženství odpovídající názorům, které převládaly v devatenáctém století a jednak takové, které se pojí k vlastním básním autora nacházejících se v románu, které jsou k buddhismu uctivé.

Způsob, jakým Kipling vyobrazuje postavu lámy nasvědčuje odklonu od negativního vyobrazení, které se objevovalo ve spisech cestovatelů v polovině devatenáctého století. Na druhou stranu byla nalezena podobnost s cestopisy z konce století, kde je na lámy pohlíženo jako na osoby zaostalé v záležitostech pozemských. I od tohoto vyobrazení se však autor v určitých situacích nakonec odklání, a postava lámy uvědomělost v těchto záležitostech tedy vykazuje. Dále bylo zjištěno, že vyobrazení lámy je poznamenáno koloniálním přístupem prostřednictvím procesu infantilizace, a že je postava zároveň vyobrazená více lidsky, a tím pádem se pak přibližuje více k čtenáři.

Co se týká vyobrazení obyvatel západu byla analýza omezena výhradně na postavu Kima ve vztahu k postavě lámy. Bylo zjištěno, že Kim jako učedník tibetského lámy jej nenásleduje kvůli víře, ale spíše kvůli tomu, že postava lámy pro Kima představuje otcovskou figuru a že z tohoto hlediska tedy postavy představují k sobě protiklady.

Druhá kapitola hlavní části zkoumá dílo Jamese Hiltona Ztracený horizont. Bylo zjištěno, že hora, která se v románu nachází a konkuruje svojí výškou Everestu, má symbolizovat imaginativní moc Tibetu. Budhistické náboženství v knize představuje jakousi směs různých náboženství, a v porovnání s Kimem, je samotné náboženství v knize vystiženo spíše implicitně, jedná se například o vlastnost hlavní postavy, kterou je nevášnivost, která má v budhismu představovat třetí ušlechtilou pravdu, tedy upuštění od žádostivosti.

Při zkoumání druhého tématu bylo zjištěno, že vyobrazení samotné společnosti představuje odklon od záznamů cestovatelů. Hilton představuje společnost založenou na principu umírněnosti, umírněná je zde i samotná vláda lámů v klášteře v souvislosti

s obyvateli údolí. V cestopisech na přelomu dvacátého století byl systém, ve které figurovali lámové v roli církevních či politických hodnostářů negativně, jejich pozice se zdála despoticke. Co se týká vyobrazení samotných Tibetánů v románu, jejich popis odpovídá takovému, které lze najít v historických vyobrazeních například již dříve zmíněného tibetského kádru, vyobrazení, která byla potvrzena pozdějšími cestovateli. Samotní obyvatelé kláštera potom sestávají z mnoha národností, i evropských, což má znázorňovat poválečnou myšlenku mírové koexistence.

Hiltonův román oproti Kiplingovu poskytuje více materiálu k analýze tohoto tématu. Postava Conwaye patří ke ztracené generaci a jako taková má připomínat poválečné cestovatele, kteří v Tibetu hledali něco, co by západu pomohlo najít cestu a naději. Postava má zároveň představovat odkaz k historii, tedy k začátkům tibetsko-britských vztahů v osmnáctém století. Jak postava slečny Brinklow, misionářky, tak postava Barnarda nabízí odkaz do minulosti. V případě Barnarda je to fascinace zlatem, která připomíná fascinaci, kterou byli posedlí západní cestovatelé a původ má tato fascinace v polovině devatenáctého století. Postava misionářky má patrně odkazovat na minulé události spjaté s misionářskou činností v Tibetu.

Poslední část se zaměřuje na to, jaký měla díla vliv na již existující obraz o Tibetu. Z Kiplingova románu to byla přirozeně postava tibetského lámy, který se dostal do podvědomí cestovatelů, a kteří se potom takového lámu v Tibetu snažili najít. Ztracený horizont uvedl do angličtiny nové slovo, Shangri-La, Hiltonův román se dostal do podvědomí cestovatelů a zmiňovali se o této knize ve svých záznamech.

Oba romány, které byly předmětem analýzy, lze tedy pokládat za vlivná literární díla, která v sobě nesou takové prvky zamlouvající se lidské mysli ve dvacátém století ve spojitosti s Tibetem. Autoři poskytli takový obrázek o Tibetu, který měl za následek pokračování tohoto mýtu o Tibetu jako místa, které představuje pro západní civilizaci možnost projektovat své tužby, naděje a sny.

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8. Annotation

Name: Jan Kratochvíla

Faculty: Faculty of Arts, Palacký University in Olomouc

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of the Bachelor thesis: Utopia of the Mind: The Depiction of Tibet in Early Twentieth Century English Literature

Supervisor: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

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8.1 Abstract:

This bachelor thesis focuses on the analysis of two novels of English literature, *Kim* and *Lost Horizon*, that aims to explore how the novels depict Tibet and to show how the myth of Tibet is perpetuated. The analysis is provided with respect to three themes that are then compared. In the last part, the thesis mentions their influence on the already existing image of Tibet.

9. Anotace

Jméno: Jan Kratochvíla

Fakulta: Filozofická fakulta

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název bakalářské práce: Utopie lidské mysli: Vyobrazení Tibetu v anglické literatuře na začátku 20. století

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9.1 Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na analýzu dvou románů anglické literatury, Kim a Ztracený horizont, s cílem zjistit, jakým způsobem vyobrazují Tibet a do jaké míry je v nich zachován mýtus o Tibetu. Analýza je provedena s ohledem na tři témata, která jsou poté porovnána tak, jak je autoři vyobrazují. Na závěr je zmíněn vliv děl na již existující obraz o Tibetu.