Abstract. In Michael Ondaatje’s The English Patient, books play an important role. The patient’s copy of Herodotus’s Histories, which is twice as its original thickness with cuttings from other books glued into the text and his own writings in its margins, suggests a contrapuntal reading, to use Edward Said’s terminology. Rudyard Kipling’s novel Kim is read by the two protagonists in the novel, and another character, Kirpal Singh, a young Sikh with the Royal Engineers, was created as a counterpart to Kim. The narrative of Kim echoes in that of Kip and invites readers to focus on the issue of identity and to reread Kim in a new perspective. The peaceful life of the four expatriates in a near ruin in Florence, which Ondaatje calls an Eden, is destroyed by the news of the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For Kip it symbolizes an undeniable striation which divides the world between East and West. It triggered him to question his identity as a sapper of Royal Army. By creating a counterpart to Kipling’s Kim, Ondaatje succeeded in enhancing the issue of identity in the striated world, against which the patient fights all through his life.

Keywords: マイクル・オンダーチェの『イギリス人の患者』、ラディヤード・キプリングの『キム』、対位法的読書、砂漠、原爆