



# The Types and Meaning of Paradox Found in the Poems of Rudyard Kipling's

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

types of paradox, meaning of paradox, poem, Rudyard Kipling



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## ABSTRACT

When writing a piece of art work called poetry, the poets often utilize figurative language to express their ideas and feelings. Figurative language will beautify the poetry of which the readers will put their interests. Typically, figurative language in a poem includes paradox to emphasize the poem's meaning. This research focuses on types and meaning of paradox in the Rudyard Kipling's selected poem. The study uses a descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the figure of speech in Rudyard Kipling's selected poems. The research found 17 (seventeen) of paradoxes consist of 7 (seven) rhetorical paradox, 7 (seven) social paradox, 2 (two) logical paradox and 1 (one) philosophy of science paradox. The rhetorical and social paradoxes are the most current paradoxes in Kipling's poem, according to the research on paradox in the poem. The notion of each phrase to which they belong, as well as the meaning of the paradox, are used to define the interpretations of paradox. In Kipling's poem, paradox was

exploited to make lines more colourful, inventive, and meaningful. These are there to bring clarity, colour, and persuasion to the novel.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature tied closely with human expressions, ideas, and opinions about certain topics, literature. Lombardi (2020) believes that literature is a term that is used to describe both written and spoken stuff. It is derived from the Latin word "writing created with letters," which means "writing created with letters" in literature. Literature usually refers to creative works of the imagination, such as poetry, theater, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, and music. Furthermore, literature is defined as a collection of written works that can be categorized using a number of methods, including language, national origin, historical time, genre, and topic matter (Rexroth, 2019). Literature serves a variety of purposes. These functions include: (1) the ability to communicate knowledge; (2) the ability to entertain readers; (3) the ability to mold aesthetic taste; and (4) the ability to bring pleasure.

Poetry, as previously established, is a form of literature. Poetry, according to Nemerov (2019), is a genre of writing that is chosen and presented for its meaning, sound, and rhythm through language. It conjures up a refined understanding of experience or a specific emotional response. In poetry, words are combined to create sounds, pictures, and concepts that are often abstract unless readers specifically represent them. Poetry is the earliest form of literature, dating back to before the invention of writing. Poem is the name given to a piece of poetry. A poet can produce a poem using a variety of methods. One of them is through the use of metaphorical language. A figurative language is one that makes use of figures of speech (a way of saying one thing and another meaning). Figurative language is said to be separated into two kinds. These are the direct and indirect meaning types. Figurative language comes in a variety of forms. Simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, hyperbole, allusion, idiom, imagery, symbolism, and paradox are examples of these categories. According to Turner (n.d.), figurative language works to express a difficult-to-understand concept, connect one idea to a second idea, relate two ideas with the intent of influencing readers to see a relationship even if one does not exist, evoke readers' emotion, and help readers create mental images of a relationship that does not exist.

As previously said, paradox is one of the metaphorical languages that poets frequently employ. Green (2020) defines paradox as a statement, argument, or condition that appears irrational, senseless, or self-contradictory at first glance but is later found to be logical or correct, or at the very least contain an element of fact. It also includes ironies and inconsistencies, as well as attempts to reconcile seemingly opposing emotions. Paradox, according to Nordquist (2020), is a style of discourse in which a statement appears to contradict itself in order to be treated as a paradoxical remark. A paradox can have either

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positive or negative meanings, and it can be employed in writing or speech. In an otherwise self-contradictory argument or phrase, Paradox tries to elicit reader participation in order to reveal an underlying logic. It challenges readers to think about concepts in fresh and unconventional ways. Paradox can be used to present ideas in a work that incorporates readers.

Many poets make use of paradox in their work. Rudyard Kipling is a well-known poet. He is a journalist, short story writer, poet, and novelist from England. He authored several well-known poems, but the writer chose his best-known works to study their figurative language, particularly paradox. "If," "The White Man's Burden," "Big Steamers," "The Five Nations: The Service Man," "The Sons of Martha," "Cold Iron," "A Song in Storm," "A Death-Bed," "Snarleyow," and "The Sweepers" are among the poetry. The writer selects Rudyard Kipling's poetry for a variety of reasons. The following are the reasons: (1) No researchers have examined Rudyard Kipling's selected poems in depth, particularly the 10 poems; (2) all poems are masterpieces of his work; (3) Rudyard Kipling is a well-known poet who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907.

The poems examined in this study include some of Rudyard Kipling's most well-known classics. At the age of 41 in 1907, Kipling became the first English-language writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, as well as the youngest at the time. His father ordered him to relocate to England to finish his studies when he was just six years old. He then opted to return to India, where he began his career as a journalist. "If," one of his most renowned poems, is dedicated to his son. The poems examined in this study include some of Rudyard Kipling's most well-known classics. At the age of 41 in 1907, Kipling became the first English-language writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, as well as the youngest at the time. His father ordered him to relocate to England to finish his studies when he was just six years old. He then opted to return to India, where he began his career as a journalist. "If," one of his most renowned poems, is dedicated to his son.

## 2. METHODS

The descriptive qualitative research method was used in this study. The qualitative descriptive method is used to address an issue by objectively gathering, classifying, and evaluating data. The data comes from Rudyard Kipling's selected poetry entitled "If," "The White Man's Burden," "Big Steamers," "The Five Nations: The Service Man," "The Sons of Martha," "Cold Iron," "A Song in Storm," "A Death-Bed," "Snarleyow," and "The Sweepers. The information centered on the contradiction phrases present in the poetry. The data collected through several steps, namely: collecting the poems, classifying the Poems based on the Paradox Expression, then analyzing the Paradox Expression. Lastly, when the data were gathered, the analysis conducted using theories applied in this study.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### RESULT

This paper focuses on analysis on the data, which are already collected. The data analyzed in this research types and the contradiction meaning of paradox found in Rudyard Kipling's ten selected poems.

**Table 1. Tabulation of Percentage Value Types of Paradox**

No.	Types of Paradox	Number of Cases	Percentages
1	Rhetorical Paradox	7	41,18%
2	Social Paradox	7	41,18%
3	Logical Paradox	2	11,76%
4	Philosophy Paradox	1	5,88%
	Total	17	100%

According to [Table 1](#), the most common types of paradox found in Rudyard Kipling's selected poetry are rhetorical and logical paradoxes.

### DISCUSSION

The discussion will be based on the sorts of paradox and the meaning of paradox, which will be based on the study's problem. The poems "If," "The White Man's Burden," "Big Steamers," "The Five Nations: The Service Man," "The Sons of Martha," "Cold Iron," "A Song in Storm," "A Death-Bed," "Snarleyow," and "The Sweepers" were mostly employed in the thesis.

## Rhetorical Paradox

A paradox is a stereotype that offers an opposition between two established theses in rhetorical analysis. (Poole and Van de Ven 1989, p. 563; italics in original) Frequently, the goal is to "shock" the reader (see Poole and 27 Van de Ven 1989).

Data 1 ("The Sweepers" by Rudyard Kipling)

*Dusk off the Foreland -- the last light going  
And the traffic crowding through  
**And five damned trawlers with their syreens blowing**  
Heading the whole review!  
**"Sweep completed in the fairway**  
**"No more mines remain**  
**"Sent back Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormc\*ck, and Golden Gain."***

The account of ships clearing mines in the water caused by World War I is told in this poem. The author is in charge of the ship and reports on a number of places that have been cleared for completion. **'Boom after boom, and the golf-hut shaking and the jackdaws wild with fright!'** is a lyric from the poem. And the jackdaws were terrified! The description of how they cleared the several mines that were still operational during the execution demonstrates the numerous risks inherent in such perilous activity. 'Sweep completed on the fairway,' says the last line, indicating that they are fully finished with their work. **'Sweep completed in the fairway "No more mines remain "Sent back Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormc \* ck, and Golden Gain."** were sent back with the message that there are no more mines.

The attitude of the commander, who appears to despise his work and grumbles a lot when giving commands, is clearly defined as a rhetorical paradox in the poem. But, in reality, he is tenacious in his work, reporting every portion that is clear or where mines remain. In the line **'And five damned trawlers with their syreens blowing'** he is seen cursing the ship, but in the end all the work is done well, despite the midway hurdle, **'Boom after boom, and the golf-hut shaking'**. Grumbling and doing a good job may seem like diametrically opposed attributes, but they can both be possessed by a person due to their nature. Furthermore, they still have tasks and perform well. Finally, the paradox in this poem represents a person who gives the idea that he simply blames the work and the troubles he is having, but who, in the end, is capable of doing a good job.

## Social Paradox

A social paradox exists when two opposing states exist, such as effectiveness and creativity, collaboration and competitiveness, or new and old (Eisenhardt 2000, p. 703). A paradox is a concept that entails two contradictory concepts or statements that, while paradoxical, are equally sufficient to represent a more enforcing, highlighting, life-related, or suggestive insight into truths than either element could gather on its own.

Data 2 ("If" by Rudyard Kipling)

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
**If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,**  
*But make allowance for their doubting too;**

There are various literary devices used in this poem, but the most noticeable is repetition. Each sentence begins with the word "if," indicating that the son should respond appropriately to any happy or terrible events that occur or may occur in his life. The poem appears to have long and unending words, yet it is concluded with a short but powerful message that leaves a "smack" on its readers. Overall, "If" describes a father's instruction to his son in order to instill in him a manly leadership spirit and the ability to serve as a role model for others. Kipling begins the poem by persuading the son to trust in himself. That many people will start to judge him with one eye at the time of his weakest, but the son still has to believe in his abilities and skills.

The paradox occurs in the line **'trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting too'**. This is referred to as a social contradiction. Because the poem's contradiction involves two attributes that are diametrically opposed. 'Believe in yourself...' and '...but allow for their skepticism...' are two opposing traits. When everyone begins to doubt you, never give up and allow them room to do so. It essentially means that the son does not need to be faultless in order to demonstrate to others that he is a

human as well. The statement '...but allow for their doubting...' indicates that the son can be a wonderful person, but that being too good is also not good. In all you do, maintain a sense of moderation and balance.

### Logical Paradox

Paradox has a more limited and specific meaning in logic. "Two conflicting or even contradictory conceptions to which we are led by seemingly solid arguments" is how a logical paradox is defined (Van Heigenoort 1972, p. 45). Each notion is unarguable in and of itself, yet when combined, they appear to be erroneous or dissimilar." (Italics in original; Poole and Van de Ven 1989, p. 563).

Data 3 ("*Big Steamers*" by Rudyard Kipling)

**"Then I'll pray for fine weather for all you Big Steamers,  
For little blue billows and breezes so soft."  
"Oh, billows and breezes don't bother Big Steamers,  
For we're iron below and steel-rigging aloft."**

This poem is a humorous poem for children who are constantly curious about the "big steamers" which are actually ships used for trading. In the first two lines, the poem begins with the child's question to the big steamer where the child seems to get an answer that can be seen in the third and fourth lines. The theme of this poem is very simple, as is the writing. It illustrates that it is really a child who recites this poem. The emphasis of the word "big" was deliberately done by Kipling to describe children who were previously accustomed to seeing ships with smaller sizes, which usually only transported people or goods around the coast. As soon as the children notice a large ship coming, they begin to wonder what purpose the ships have and what they are carrying. The line '**But if anything happened**' expressed logical paradox because it is explaining that the child is worried if something unpleasant happens to the ship, more so with the child's understanding that such work is quite dangerous. The line continues with '**Then I'll pray for fine weather... steel-rigging aloft**' which classified into logical paradox because that even though the children are concerned, they still admire the beautiful, quaint ship.

### Philosophy of Science Paradox

"A paradox is an understanding among local analysing observers that a specific duality of real actions is unpredictable," according to a culturally imposed observe-relative narrative analysis. (p. 187 in Johnston and Selsky 2006).

Data 17 ("*The Sons of Martha*" by Rudyard Kipling)

***And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessed—they know the Angels are on their side.  
They know in them is the Grace confessed, and for them are the Mercies multiplied.***

This poem tells the story of Martha and Maria, two sisters who bring their own impact on their sons. Maria inherited a lot of wealth as well as titles, which were passed on to her sons. On the other hand, Martha once made a mistake that made all her happiness taken by God, and this shall be passed on to her sons as well. Because of the mistake that Martha had made, her sons had to endure and be treated like slaves by their cousins. This poem seems to teach people that now many people feel that the law of cause and effect will not happen to them, that their actions will not affect what they will get later. Mary's sons felt that they should not do their job and were negligent. They thought Martha's sons would do everything for them. That all the work will be done without them having to bother as they will continue to have their honour and be rewarded. The paradox in this poem is illustrated by how Martha's sons do all the work of their cousins and their cousins live in the hope that blessings and gifts only fall to them. Based on this poem, it is analyzed as philosophical paradox. This can be seen from the line '**And the Sons of Mary smile and feel blessed—they know the Angels are on their side**'. Martha's sons continue to work hard at their job, desperate and can only agree with slavery. Living in distress while their cousins live in peace because they think that it is their inheritance. The laws of nature are what you plant, that's what you reap. There are no way Mary's sons can produce something if they do not do anything. Just because they are someone of a high rank, it does not keep them from taking on their own responsibilities. The poem seems to describe how the laws of nature do not apply, that Mary's sons will always get blessings because of the good offspring of their mother. On the other hand, Martha's sons work really hard at the job of their cousin, yet they sure don't get anything. This is the opposite as well. As explained above, natural laws apply. They are made as if they will get nothing for what they do and will always be like that forever. Through the last line, it lays a surprise. God bestowed His grace on Martha's sons. It is what they deserve, no matter what bad luck befalls their mother. No matter their cousin lives in luxury and power, it is the people who work hard who will be rewarded. Through this

poem, the paradox inserted once, which is also the essence of the poem itself, which bears the main message that the author, Kipling wanted to convey.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This thesis looked at the contradictions in Rudyard Kipling's poetry, focusing on rhetorical paradox, social paradox, logical paradox, and philosophy of science paradox. The paradoxes examined in this study contain 17 paradoxes drawn from ten poems. Rhetorical and social paradoxes are the most common types of paradox in Kipling's poetry, accounting for 41.18 percent, followed by logical paradoxes (11.76%), and finally philosophical and scientific paradoxes (5.88 percent). Because his poems are about social life, Rudyard Kipling regularly used rhetorical and social contradiction, and he made his poems rich in paradox, especially rhetorical paradox, through his word choices. The goals is to guide us throughout our lives in order to help us become better people. Everything stems from poems for the formation of a good human character.

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