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A Performance Reading: Exploration of Language and Sign of the Tibetan Lama in Kipling's Kim

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Abstract

This paper explores how the language and sign of the Tibetan lama play a performative role in creating the meaning in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901). His language and symbols become meaningful when it comes to the interaction among people. Then, his language vibrates theatrically that he has been far away from the wheel of life (birth, death, and rebirth) after finding the river of arrows. His artistic and creative language of his performs the dynamic meaning. Furthermore, he becomes connected with the people with his dingy woolen stuff, the bowl unsolicited gift, and the belt with wooden beads and they construct the concept of meaning. His language and symbols produce the idea and people grasp it. Then, the researcher uses Dwight Conquargood's concept of performative art to analyze the lama's language and symbols which play the performative role in creating the meaning. Thus, his language and signs give the metaphysical concept of meaning and they generate systematic constructive performance in his life.

Keywords: Illusion, Language, Performance, River of the arrow, Symbol, Wheel of life

Introduction

Rudyard Kipling has brought up the combination of the spiritual and materialistic classification: condemnation and commendation in *Kim* (1901). Materialistic behavior shows power and authority, but spiritualistic thought discards sophisticated property because the property generates lust, anger, and ignorance. Therefore, it becomes a human error when they remain around worldly

power. Then, the spiritual lama performs different exertions to resist the materialistic characteristics that human beings follow in their daily life. His language and symbols appear to be an absolute performative instrument to reveal the truth. Then, they generate constructive meaning through interaction with people. He moves searching for the river of arrows to wash away the taint of his sin. Kim gets influenced by the lama's innovative language when he makes a conversation with the curator in a museum in Lahore. He explains about the overshooting place by the arrow, and it has broken out as the river where Gautam Buddha has benefitted to wash away his sin. Then, the lama discards the rotation of life or the wheel of life which is the source of handling nourishment, disagreement, and amalgamation which binds human beings with power and crime. Then, he persuades others in the same way with effective language. Similarly, he uses dingy woolen stuff, a bowl for unsolicited gifts, a belt with wooden beads, and an iron pen case. The things that he uses display the symbolic meaning to understand about him. So, his creative language and symbols generate energetic meaning and they produce constructive performance in his life.

Literature Review

Different critics have analyzed Kipling's *Kim* through different perceptions as Bart Moore-Gilbert's *The Way of post-colonialism*, Deanna K. Kreisler's *Victorian Discourse of Psychology*, Yog Raj Paudel's *Buddhist Middle Path doctrine*, Janice Leoshko's *The richness of Buddhist details*, Alisha Walter's *paradoxical account of Kim*, Ramesh Prasad Adhikari's *quest of Nirvana and supreme state of bliss of Lama*, Ahmad Abu Bakar's *contradictory appreciation* and Roisin McCloskey's *charismatic nature of Kim*, etc. Moore-Gilbert has studied Kipling's *Kim* through the way of post-colonialism. Kipling has mentioned the individual cultural formation with "the model of conflictual binary opposition between colonial and postcolonial culture" (39). Walter explains the paradoxical account of Kim or Kimball O Hara. He is the son of Irish parents, but he speaks Hindi perfectly. So, Kim represents both "white" and "burned black as any native" that "Kim's whiteness becomes cultural and less of a strictly social phenomenon" (332). He has the mixed-race subject and Kipling creates "a broader idea of hybridized nationality" (339). Functioning in India, Kim creates a representative of endangered whiteness because he is "the White on one hand and the Black on the other" (340). He involves himself in the cultural meeting which occurs in the colonial sense. He becomes "fellow agent and fellow master of multiple tongues and multiple distinctions" (336). He resists creating solid

pronouncements about 'the permanence of racial characteristics' (338). Kim has a dark colonial body and non-white subjectivities and it constructs for the lack of clear "agency in the colonial context" (338). Presenting both black and white is Kipling's idea which Kim shows the reflection of the nation by presenting both black and white in the novel. Kim is white and black. Therefore, his recognition is English, but he has a mixed-race subject.

Baker explains that Kipling generates a lot of contradictory appreciation in Kim. He sets the world of reality and that of imagination. He has mentioned "off and absolute division between white and non-white" (85). The novelist explores "the problems of living in a hybrid situation" (100) but the lama desires to be free from worldly things. Kim was born like any native, but he is not very black. He is a white boy "with white blood and is certainly white" (93). He usually uses Hindi language, but he favors English because he thinks that "[T]he white culture, the white language, and the white blood are so superior" (91). Thus, Kipling creates the just opposite situation in the novel.

Kreisel analyzes that Kipling deals with the Victorian discourse of psychology and it is connected with Buddhism. He has "captured several aspects of Buddhism that were also of central concern to nineteenth-century psychology" (228). Buddhism traces the unusual state of consciousness, and it is "not supernatural but rather strictly psychological" (232). It is faithfully "analyzed and classified" (232). It has "the power of resisting pain, death, etc... of transforming one's body into different personalities" (234). Kim can resist the controlled trances because he has learned compounding tables in a British school, and he has "studied Lurgan Sahib's wandering hands means" (240). Kim's capacity to come into a state of trance is eventually represented "as a source of strength – of discipline, focus, and flexibility – no weakness" (237). His physical strength becomes bold with the "treatment of will, intention, and discipline" (245). So, many features of Buddhism are respectfully mentioned in the novel. Paudel explains the Buddhist Middle Path doctrine in the novel. He further describes, "The Buddhist first enunciates The Middle Path in Dhammacakkappavattana- sutta and teaches people to avoid two extremes: self-indulgence and self-mortification in daily life to free themselves from attachment and suffering (59). Then, people know the worth and sense of non-attachment to things and they reveal neither extreme joy nor any pain in life.

However, McCloskey spells out that Kim is a charismatic character because his representation becomes "highly appealing to the readers" (75). He plays the

Great Game in support of English authority. Then, he mounts the radical possibility of "dominant forms of authority in highly appealing form" (85). He gratifies the English recognition of colonial power from his childhood. He works as the charismatic protagonist with colonial authority. He remains "no longer a child but a man" (82). When the lama starts his journey with Kim, he finds Kim's sufficient energy every time. He has the right shape relevant to the formulation of the pathfinder. Therefore, Kim has a charming personality throughout the novel.

Leoshko explains about the richness of Buddhism. Kim is a boy of Irish parents, and he was born in India. He meets the lama, a Tibetan Buddhist teacher, at Lahore Museum. The lama represents a fundamental idea of Buddhism which is based on "the notion that we live not one but endless lives, each existence conditioned by what we have done in the past" (57). Buddhism significantly entered into Indian history at the end of the nineteenth century and the notable feature of Lama is "how he is now one on the ultimate quest and his struggles on his path" (58) contribute as the incentive for as it happened. The description of the parts of a Wheel-of-Life representation brings a sense of the perceptual nature of such public impression – "a large part of what gives them significance is conveyed in Kim" (71). It regards the human principality that the Wheel itself is "eating, drinking, trading, marrying, and quarreling – all warmly alive" (71). Kim's origin comes from an ordinary situation, but he gets great achievement in his life under the guidance of the lama as "[T]he lama wakes Kim to tell him about his coming rewards" (59). Thus, Kipling mainly focuses on the Wheel of Life and the concept of origin.

Ramesh Prasad Adhikari has studied the quest for Nirvana and the supreme blessing of the lama in *Kim*. He has compared Kim's quest to fulfill his worldly ambition and the lama's quest is for the detachment of the worldly attachments. An energetic and playful Kim grows up in the streets of India. He meets a strolling Tibetan lama who is exploring a sacred river. Kim starts his journey with him, and he gets the "opportunity to describe the many people and culture that made up India" (40). The lama persists deep in meditation, and he does not accept "the spectacle of life surrounding him" (45). He becomes detached from worldly things. He fights against the emotions of pride and desire. The lama embraces the viewpoint of "honesty and openness" (46) but the school of thought of Kim remains "deception, manipulation and lies" (46). Therefore, the lama becomes successful in attaining Enlightenment, but the quest of Kim becomes limited.

K.C. Belliappa is concerned that *Kim* is mainly concerned with the quest of two individuals: Kim is searching for a great Red Bull on the grass field and the lama for the river of arrow for making himself free from the Wheel of Life (birth, death, and rebirth). Kim follows materialistic things but the lama for spiritual life. The lama remains far away from the human's selfishness and illusion of materialistic life but Kim works as a spy and his events are related to political achievement and human selfishness as Belliappa opines, "If only someone could take from Kim the material that he has taken away the foreign agent, the Great Game might play itself for aught, he... cared" (154). Kim is related to materialistic things, but Eva Roa White explains that it is a trauma because Kipling has experienced separation from his motherland. He is sent to England for his education, and he constructs his imagery of India as well as his inner escapes by retrieving those shared memories one by one to go home. He is torn between two countries (England and India). As a result, he is a hybrid who belongs to two conflicting worlds. In, "Search for Identity: Inner Diaspora and Psychic Healing in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*" the author appraises that the "physical distancing" from the homeland, inflected by outward details, is reviewed in the "emotional realm or the grief expression of the author" (131). So, Kipling used different characters: English men, Russian men indigenous people, and the Tibetan lama for composing the real history of India in the British colonial period. It is the reconnection with the motherland and also entails the reconciliation between East and West. He explains that Kipling deals with his emotional attachment to the motherland and he further comments: "Though he was born to British parents, Kipling had an intimate relationship with India which was separate from his relationship with his biological family" (16). He is caught by two cultures, and he cannot control who he is as his identity. His struggle maintains to fuse his British and Indian sights and carries both east and west within him as "Kim's crossbreeding and "unstable identity" is found from the beginning" (17). Kim changes his appearance as an Iris or an English boy or a Hindu or a Mohammad and he describes himself as oriental and as Eurasian. In the later part of the novel, he grasps the British identity and abandons his Indian wedge. He continuously moves from Hindu identity to English identity. He thinks that he is Sahib and the son of Sahib, but he follows the way of the lama. So, he is constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth that he is the root of doublings as Indian and British. There is a space between, and the identity is at once plural and partial.

However, Belliappa expresses that the part of politics and the great game suggests protesting the British Empire in India from dangers of both internal and external from neighboring countries. He explains that Kipling has used spiritual and materialistic characters, and their work is the combination of all elements; the black or white and spiritual or materialistic which go together that "...he belongs to the world of action and rejects lama's world of renunciation, Kipling strongly attached of the lama more than anyone else" (152). On the other hand, the lama does not seem satisfied with Kim's great game, but he does not remain far away from Kim.

Departure

McCloskey and Walter emphasized the charismatic nature of Kim. He who has the paradoxical account of behavior, supports the British Empire while living in India. Leoshko, Adhikari, and Paudel have examined the novel through the perception of Buddhism that the lama discards worldly power. Moore-Gilbert has raised the subject of post-colonialism. They have scrutinized that there is a concentrated fact of imperial Indian history, and it consolidates the literary presentation of political, cultural, and psychological agendas in the novel. Similarly, they are concerned with the quest of individualism that Kim searches for a great red bull in the green field for worldly power, but the lama makes his journey to find the river of the arrow to be free from the wheel of life. The characters follow two ways: the spiritual and materialistic world. However, the researcher has examined how the Tibetan lama's language and sign play the performative agentive role and they produce effective meaning in the novel. Thus, his language and symbols display appropriate declarations, and they fabricate the productive performance in his life in the paper.

Methodology

The lama's language and symbolic things produce a creative and energetic meaning. He desires to be far away from the wheel of life by finding the river of arrows because he hates the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Similarly, he uses different unnatural things such as dingy woolen stuff, bowls for unsolicited gifts, and a belt with wooden beads which communicate with others by generating meaning and people grasp the idea from them. Dwight Conguergood explains that performance as an optic, people understand the cultural meaning as he adds, people "attain the extra-linguistic human action and embodied events and they construct them as the text to be read" (147). The culture is an example of text and

others read it as an interesting mode of inquiry. The critic further adds, "The culture is the text metaphor" (150). Similarly, people gain knowledge verbally or nonverbally because "the vast realm of human knowledge and meaningful actions are unlettered" (147). The symbols interpret their cultural meaning. Therefore, the researcher has used Conquargood's idea "the concept of performative art" to analyze the paper. The spiritual language and signs expose the meaning as a text, and they sustain the vigorous meaning in human life. Thus, the language and symbols which the lama uses, help to understand him.

Textual Analysis

When the orators become interactive by using the performative language, the listeners acquire it. Then, effective languages guide the audience properly as J. L. Austin describes people operate the language to construct the meaning. It constructs an essential correlation between speaker and listener and the listener intelligibly acknowledges the significance of the speech of the orator. Effective language generates fine understanding between them, and they participate in it. So, the orators invoke participant's thoughts, and the participants intend to conduct themselves (15). The speakers create the situation, and they deliver the idea while communicating with the participant. They calculate their notion to conduct the tenderness to influence the listener. The lama comes to India and makes his journey to Lahore to visit the museum where many Buddha's images and antiques are kept. He becomes engaged in a very informative conversation with the curator of the museum. Kim listens to the lama who overshoots the place that Gautam Buddha has marked on the earth, and it has broken out the stream as a river. Then, Buddha benefits from being free from worldly pleasure by speckling all his sins. The curator explains the documents that connect the holy locations of Buddhism. The curator exhibits enormous charts, spotted and traced with yellow. He points to the places: Kapilvastu (the birthplace of Buddha), Mahabodhi (the place of his enlightenment), and Kushinager (the place of his death). The lama bows his head over the sheet for a while to free himself from the cycle of life as the author conveys, "He grinned with the easiest achievement" (11). The lama discloses his inner satisfaction through his facial expression. Thus, his facial language plays a vital role in affecting the curator.

The performance of language becomes more powerful than the physical activities that people do in their lives. People become ready to follow the way of the orator when the speakers talk effectively, and they can give a clear way to the listener. The spiritual language does not compose the common meaning, but it

provides the energetic denotation. Thus, the spiritual people reveal the vigorous sense in their language and their speech becomes more powerful than their work as Kay Junge opines, "Performance seems to be a more ubiquitous phenomenon than action" (289). Performance presents everything more clearly than the work that they carry out. The lama refuses "the wheel of life" (birth, death, and rebirth). He thinks that people acquire suffering because of the subjugation of earthly happiness, but he wishes to be free from it. Kim is influenced by the lama's language, and he desires to know which religion the lama belongs to but the lama replies, "I worshiped none, chela" (14). Kim receives the new god without sensation. He desires to follow the lama and becomes ready to beg for food from him and he says, "Give me the bowl, I know the people of this city- all who are charitable. Give and I will bring it back filled" (15). Kim is allured by the lama who shares the theme and what his future focus is. Kim becomes ready to head substance to the lama and he becomes the assistant forever. So, the lama's performance through the language becomes constructive and Kim accompanies him.

The language of the lama mounts theatrically and it plays the performative efficacious capacity after finding the river of arrow. Dwight Conguergood explains that people understand the meaning clearly through inspired and innovative language. The theatrical model of understanding is culture and knowledge, and it comes with a detailed explanation. It is unsteady rather than riveted as he further opines:

The interpretation of art and culture; critical reflection; thinking about, through, and with performance; performance as a lens that illuminated the constructed, creative, contingent, collaborative dimensions of human communication; knowledge that comes from contemplation and comparison, concentrated attention and contextualization as a way of knowing (152).

People obtain understanding through performative language, and it is powerfully enhanced by the formulated, visionary, and collective proportions of human communication. The lama esteems Lamaism which is an important religious combination within the wider orbit of Buddhism. He explains that the crux of Buddhism is the entire truth of the universal liberating position on the faith in the amalgamation of uniformity and oneness of all things. Death is transmigration shifting from one stage to another and it conducts the endless chain of birth, death, and rebirth. Kipling summarizes the lama that his soul has been free from the

"wheel of life": death and rebirth in *Kim*. He gets salvation. The lama speaks out very loudly that he is not Teshoo lama, and that he will be no one in the future. He has passed away from human life and is far away from worldly things. He has been beyond the illusion of time, space, and things. He realizes that he is free from love, anxiety, lust, and ignorance. He feels the water at his feet. He feels hampered in the time, but he pushes the world (love, anger, union) aside and becomes free from sin (265-266). The lama perceives that he has been untied from the cycle of life- the miserable birth, death, and rebirth. He does not persist as the Teshoo lama because he has got the reclamation. He has become a contrasting human being with an appreciable soul. He has been detached from the illusion of worldly love and connection. He has been unconfined from the time, space, and commodity of the world. He has been far away from tenderness and greediness. So, the lama's language vibrates to influence others after getting salvation.

The lama narrates the symbolic and allegorical meaning of the "wheel of life" and it guides people to misery and pain. He senses that he has come to the hill out of the individual egocentric wish because he has swerved from the rotation of life, but he gets spiritual and physical insult by a Russian agent there. Bernhard Giessen explains that performance is not interconnected with the individual viewpoint, it conveys the interpretation symbolically through the social cannon and everyone appreciates the artistic denotation. He verifies that "symbolic art" is lodged in the intimate illustrative word of a collective communal- every organ of the "representative community" is enabled to know its dialect, description is clear and simple, the emotional effect is transparent...thus, the representative artwork extensive role out and "highly accepted" within specific society (317). The symbolic language is connected with society and people understand its meaning and how the originators use it for assuming the sense. The lama brings up the symbolic phrase the "wheel of life" that people have dreams of dreams. When they come to the human world, they appear busy managing their life. He gets distracted by glimpsing the wheel itself: devouring, shallowing, marrying, and fighting, the desirable as main reckon, the bond slave to the hog and the serpent as the lama defines:

I wrote pictures of the Wheel of Life. Three days of a picture. I was busied on it or it may be I shut my eyes a little....In the cleanest, severest outline he had traced the Great Wheel with its six spokes, whose center is the conjoined Hog, Snake, and Dove (Ignorance, Anger, and Lust) and whose

compartments are all the Heaven and Hell, and all the chances of human life (179).

A spoke is one beam rod from the center of a wheel, and it connects the hub with the round traction surface, and it is connected with the crossbar. Human existence is associated with love, hate, lust, anger, and ignorance which the lama discards. It is interconnected with the rhythm of birth, death, and rebirth. He never welcomes the procedure of heaven and hell but he impulses the path of salvation. He abandons the chain of power, authority, crime, and financial devotion. He advises that when people impulse power and money, they fail to recall spiritual fidelity. The desire to mount to heaven generates rebirth. Human desires and worldly attachments guide them to misery and pain. So, the lama's wheel of life symbolizes the misery and difficulties in human life. It is part of irritation, stupidity, and dirt. Therefore, when people desire to be removed from absurdity and irrationality, they construct the comprehensible trash to salvation.

The lama uses different things and people grasp the interpretation of them. The sign acts as the instrument of communication or the concept of meaning. The signs and symbols transmit and interact with the audience, and they are the segment of operating active language as Tanya Goodman explains people use different signs and symbols to present different meanings in the different ceremonies. He further adds that the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" is almost an almighty ritual performance in South Africa. Almost any age caste class or race group is requested to attain the disagreeable situation and biased tenderness and the fracture of them are attempted to be detached by operating distinct trademarks such as single candle, religious gown, and rainbow color in the performance. A "candle" was set fire to a "solitary piece" and the notice accounting is "the truth reconciliation" for their country or truthfulness: the street to reunite swung behind the set of administrators who took a set at the colorless cloth-covered table (173). The burning single candle signals the unification of the nation (no prejudice or affection) and the truth reconciliation for everyone. The slogan on the banner declares impartiality for everyone that they have failed to remember the past acidity and they are being united for the future. The lama belongs to a Buddhist monk, and he fetches unsolicited gift bowls, and belts and hangs a string of wooden iron pen case and dingy stuff. Kipling asserts, that the lama "is nearly six feet high, dressed in fold upon fold of dingy stuff, horse blanketing and not one-fold of it could Kim refer to any known trade or profession. At his belt hung a long open-work iron pen case and a wooden rosary

such as holy men wear”(5). The lama puts on flattened, old, and gloomy woolen clothes with an unflavored smell. It means that he threatens worldly power and authority and disagrees with the illusion of love, anxiety, and lust by wearing the typical kinds of clothes. Furthermore, he puts on a wooden bead with a hole through it on his belt with the Tibetan iron pen case. It is executed in open work with foliate scrollwork at the end in the form of bulbous lotus blossoms. The wooden bead has holes throughout it but there are no spokes in it. It is unassociated with the wheel of life. Then, it challenges ignorance, anger, and lust and verbalizes freedom from worldly pleasure. It is a miniature decorative piece, and it has been used for generating a miscellaneous collection of things for the decorative gown. Similarly, the lama handles a bowl for an unsolicited gift which indicates that he does not ask for anything for him, but he accepts voluntarily given things. He consumes the things that he finds voluntarily in the town. All the things that the lama makes use of, state and present the meaning to understand him. So, the things offer the meaning and people grasp the proposition of the lama's things.

Conclusion

The lama uses stereotypical language and things in the novel, and they give a clear message to the readers. He belongs to a Buddhist monk and denies the "wheel of life" because it incorporates love, anger, lust, and ignorance in the worldly life. Then, he makes his journey to find the "river of arrow" which guides human beings to their salvation by keeping them far away from materialistic power, authority, and property. He thinks that birth, death, and rebirth are associated with the wheel of life, and it is the dreams of dreams. He believes in the crux of Buddhism which is unconditionally genuineness in the universe. Death and rebirth are the transmigration for transfiguring from one to another stage. It conducts the endless chain of life. Then, he proceeds far away from the illusion of time, space, and things through meditation; He obtains salvation at last. Similarly, the signs and symbols such as the dingy woolen stuff, the bowl for unsolicited gifts, and the wooden bead on his belt transmit and interact with the audience and they speak as the words. The wooden bead with a hole in his belt challenges ignorance, anger, and lust. His ragged woolen clothes disagree with worldly pleasure. His bowl for unsolicited gifts clarifies that he does not demand anything, but he accepts voluntarily given things. Thus, the lama's language and symbols are relevant and dynamic to grant the appropriate meaning to the readers.

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