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AN ANALYSIS OF THE GOTHIC MODE IN “*MY OWN TRUE GHOST STORY*” AND
“*THE RED ROOM*”

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Abstract

This paper presents a critical analysis of two literary works by applying the Gothic mode in Victorian Period. It examines the gothic mode as portrayed in the short story of Rudyard Kipling’s *My Own True Ghost Story* and H.G.Wells’s *The Red Room*. The Victorian period is famous for its lengthy novels, but the rise in periodical publication saw a boom in the production of short stories. Many Victorian authors are focused on the theme of gothic elements to write their short stories or novels. They included gothic elements in some of the short stories as their main theme. The gothic short story was an important and flourishing literary genre in the Victorian period. Victorian ghost stories, which dealt with the supernatural, are quite popular. Fairies, ghosts, and witches are largely taken up by authors of their books. Gothic short stories manifest in many famous Victorian authors including Rudyard Kipling and H.G.Wells. They wrote some important short stories on the gothic mode. Rudyard Kipling was an English writer. He is one of the finest short story writers in the English speaking world.

He is best known for his poems and stories set in India during the period of the British imperial rule. He is at his writing best when he presents the ghost tales. *My Own True Ghost Story* draws on Kipling’s personal experience with several billiard playing ghosts in a wayside station. The mode of the story is imperial gothic in nature. The term ‘imperial gothic’ has been coined to describe Kipling’s strange tales of India. The richness and alien qualities of this locale, allied to the unusual occurrences in Kipling’s plots, give the stories an extra unsettling thrill, which only enhances their power to disturb and intrigue the readers. On the other hand, H.G.Wells was also an English writer. Prolific in many genres, he creates a rich universe of short stories. His short stories are quite interesting, as well written and entertaining as his better-known novels. *The Red Room* is a short gothic story written by H.G.Wells. He usually writes science fiction, but he makes this particular story to write a horror or a kind of supernatural story which can be termed as gothic. The story follows an unnamed young man—its narrator—as he undertakes

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to spend a night in the famously haunted 'Red Room' of Lorraine Castle. After a terrifying night, the initially skeptical narrator concedes that the room is haunted, not by a ghost but by 'Fear' itself. These two texts highlight the Victorian Gothic narratives. The present paper analyzes a specialized study of the Victorian Short Story in relation to the Gothic mode. Thus the study also attempts to compare and contrast the texts in different levels.

Keynotes: Kipling, Wells, Gothic mode, Imperial Gothic, the Victorian age, Supernatural

Introduction

Gothic fiction, which is largely known by the subgenre of Gothic horror, is a genre or mode of literature and film that combines fiction and horror, death, and at times romance. Gothic as a form of fiction-making has played a major role in western culture since the late eighteenth century. It is an entirely post-medieval and even post-Renaissance phenomenon. Even though several long-standing literary forms combined in its initial renderings – from ancient prose and verse romances to Shakespearean tragedy and comedy – the first published work to call itself *A Gothic Story* was a counterfeit medieval tale published long after the Middle Ages: Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*.

It was printed under a pseudonym in England in 1764 and reissued in 1765 in a second edition with a new preface which openly advocated a “blend [of] the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern,” the former “all imagination and improbability” and the latter governed by the “rules of probability” connected with “common life.” The vogue that Walpole began was imitated only sporadically over the next few decades, both in prose fiction and theatrical drama. But it exploded in the 1790s throughout the British Isles, on the continent of Europe, and briefly in the new United States, particularly for a female readership, so much so that it remained a popular, if controversial, literary mode throughout what we still call the Romantic period in European literature (the 1790s through the early 1830s), now especially well known as the era of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). This highly unstable genre then scattered its ingredients into various modes, among them aspects of the more realistic Victorian novel.

By the Victorian era, Gothic had ceased to be the dominant genre. As an important and innovative reinterpreter of the American Gothic fiction, Edgar Allan Poe focused less on the traditional elements of gothic stories and more on the psychology of his characters as they often descended into madness. His story *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) explores these 'terror of the soul' while revisiting classic

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Gothic tropes of aristocratic decay, death, and madness. The influence of Byronic Romanticism evident in Poe is also apparent in the work of the Brontë sisters. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) transports the Gothic to the forbidding Yorkshire Moors and features ghostly apparitions and a Byronic hero in the person of the demonic Heathcliff. The Brontës' fiction is seen by some feminist critics as prime examples of Female Gothic, exploring woman's entrapment within domestic space and subjection to patriarchal authority and the transgressive and dangerous attempts to subvert and escape such restriction. Emily's Cathy and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* are both examples of female protagonists in such a role. Elizabeth Gaskell's tales *The Doom of the Griffiths* (1858) *Lois the Witch*, and *The Grey Woman* all employ one of the most common themes of Gothic fiction, the power of ancestral sins to curse future generations, or the fear that they will. Charles Dickens read Gothic novels as a teenager and incorporated their gloomy atmosphere and melodrama into his own works, shifting them to a more modern period and an urban setting. *Bleak House* in particular is credited with seeing the introduction of urban fog to the novel, which would become a frequent characteristic of urban Gothic literature. His most explicitly Gothic work is his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which he did not live to complete and which was

published in unfinished state upon his death in 1870.

However, the Victorian period is famous for its lengthy novels, but the rise in periodical publication saw a boom in the production of short stories. Many Victorian authors are focused on the theme of gothic elements to write their short stories or novels. They included gothic elements in some of the short stories as their main theme. The Victorian Gothic narratives were obsessed with details about death and mourning. These narratives also have suggestions of the supernatural just as the classic Gothic narrative would and there are discussions of the spiritual or references to the spiritual or suggestions of the presence of the spiritual and the occult in Victorian Gothic narratives. Occult relates to magical powers and activities such as those of witchcraft and astrology. The Victorian Gothic had a revival in the 1840s or the Gothic mode had a revival in the 1840s, leading to term that period as the Victorian Gothic.

The gothic short story was an important and flourishing literary genre in the Victorian period. It deals with supernatural events, or events occurring in nature that cannot be easily explained or over which man has no control, and it typically follows a plot of suspense and mystery. Victorian ghost stories, which dealt with the supernatural, are quite

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popular. Fairies, ghosts, and witches are largely taken up by authors of their books. Gothic short stories manifest in many famous Victorian authors including Rudyard Kipling and H.G.Wells. They wrote some important short stories on the gothic mode. Mode is conveyed in a work through the author's handling of diction, setting, and narrative. In the case of Gothic short stories, the mood is one of fear, anxiety, terror, and horror. Both the characters and the readers of Gothic short stories experience these emotions to the fullest extent possible for human beings.

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was an English Journalist, short-story writer, poet, and novelist. He was born in India, which inspired much of his work. He is best known for his poems and stories set in India during the period of the British imperial rule. His works of fiction include *The Jungle Book* (1894), *Kim* (1901), and many short stories, including *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888). Kipling is one of the finest short stories writers in the English speaking world. He is seen as an innovator in the art of the short story. His children's books are classics; one critic noted "*a versatile and luminous narrative gift.*" (Introduction to the Oxford World's Classics) In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, as the first English-language writer to receive the prize.

Kipling's subsequent reputation has changed with the political and social climate of the age. George Orwell in his book *Essay on Kipling* saw Kipling as "*a jingo imperialist,*" who was "*morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting.*" *My Own True Ghost Story* draws on Kipling's personal experience with several billiard playing ghosts in a wayside station. The mode of the story is imperial gothic in nature. The richness and alien qualities of this locale, allied to the unusual occurrences in Kipling's plots, give the stories an extra unsettling thrill, which only enhances their power to disturb and intrigue the readers.

On the other hand, Herbert George Wells was also an English writer. Prolific in many genres, he wrote dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, history, satire, biography and autobiography. His work also included two books on recreational war games. Wells is now best remembered for his science fiction novels and is often called the "*father of science fiction*", along with Jules Verne and the publisher Hugo Gernsback. (*Father of Modern Science Fiction: With Essays on Frank Herbert and Bram Stoke*) During his own lifetime, however, he was most prominent as a forward-looking, even prophetic social critic who devoted his literary talents to the development of a progressive vision on a global scale. His science fiction imagined time travel, alien invasion, invisibility, and biological

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engineering. His most notable science fiction works include *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and the military science fiction *The War in the Air* (1907). Wells was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature four times.

Novels such as *Kipps* and *The History of Mr Polly*, which describe lower-middle-class life, led to the suggestion that he was a worthy successor to Charles Dickens, but Wells described a range of social strata and even attempted, in *Tono-Bungay* (1909), a diagnosis of English society as a whole. His short stories are quite interesting, as well written and entertaining as his better-known novels. *The Red Room* is a gothic-horror short story by him. The story is very popular as it has Gothic horror narrative in the Victorian age. The story follows an unnamed young man—its narrator—as he undertakes to spend a night in the famously haunted *Red Room* of Lorraine Castle. After a terrifying night, the initially skeptical narrator concedes that the room is haunted, not by a ghost but by ‘Fear’ itself.

Analysis of the story *My Own True Ghost Story*

Rudyard Kipling wrote at various intervals during his literary career which dealt with themes of the marvelous, of ghosts, the supernatural and psychic experiences. Almost all of these tales of the

supernatural are narrated within the framework of a created realistic world. *The Phantom 'Rickshaw and Other Tales*, also known as *The Phantom 'Rickshaw & other Eerie Tales*, is a collection of short stories by Kipling. The tale *My Own True Ghost Story* was first published in *The Week's News* on 25 February 1888, and then included the same year in Volume 5 of the *Indian Railway Library - The Phantom 'Rickshaw and other Eerie Tales*. It was collected in *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories* in 1895, and in numerous later editions of that collection.

Kipling opens the story in the same manner that is typical of the other tales of this group first published under the title *The Phantom Rickshaw*. This story deals entirely with ghosts in minute detail as the narrator announces in the very first sentence before he proceeds to inform the reader about the wide variety and practices of Indian ghosts. While others might be superstitious, he is clearly not one to be taken in by all this nonsense: "*No native ghost has yet been authentically reported to have frightened an Englishman; but many English ghosts have scared the life out of both white and black.*" (The Phantom 'Rickshaw 44)

The narrator stays the night in a rather sinister old dāk-bungalow in Katmal, India. During the night he hears the 'unmistakable' sound of a game of billiards

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being played in the non-existent room next door. In the morning the ancient servant tells him that in old times there had been a billiard-room there, and that one night one of the sahibs (engineer) had fallen dead across the table. The narrator is excited to have found what seems to be an authentic ghost story. But then he hears the sound again; it was a little rat running to and fro inside the ceiling cloth, and his imagination had done the rest.

India has always appeared to the West as a land of mysteries, of secret cults, of dark underworlds, and unfathomable riddles. There are many Kipling stories which deal with the eerie, the mysterious and the supernatural in Indian life. Kipling was drawn from time to time to this genre of ghost, supernatural and horror tales. He spent a great deal of early life in India at a time when mysticism was almost a way of life in India. A significant number of stories have an India background which enhances the strangeness of these stories. The richness and the alien qualities of this locale allied to the unusual occurrences in Kipling's plots give the stories an extra unsettling quality which increases their power to disturb and intrigue the readers. *My Own True Ghost Story* is a kind of such story which deals with the supernatural elements in the colonized country like India.

Analysis of the story *The Red Room*

H.G.Wells was perhaps best known as the author of classic works of fiction. But it was in his short stories, written when he was a young man embarking on a literary career, that he first explored the enormous potential of the scientific discoveries of the day. He describes his short stories as '*a miscellany of inventions*,' (The Complete Short Stories) yet his enthusiasm for science was tempered by an awareness of its horrifying destructive powers and the threat it could pose to the human race.

The Red Room is a gothic-horror story by the H.G. Wells, written in 1894 and published two years later in *The Idler magazine in 1896*. An unnamed protagonist chooses to spend the night in an allegedly haunted room, coloured bright red in Lorraine Castle. He intends to disprove the legends surrounding it. Despite vague warnings from the three infirm custodians who reside in the castle, the narrator ascends to 'the Red Room' to begin his night's vigil.

Fear is the central theme of the story. The narrator of the story challenges himself to spend a night in a supposedly haunted room. As the story progresses, the narrator's fear gets stronger until it completely overwhelms his self-control. Fear is clearly the antagonist of the story. At the end, fear is revealed as a dangerous force, akin to an evil spirit, which counts among the greatest enemies of any human being. The story is something of a ghost story and the supernatural is certainly an

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important theme. The narrative of the can be read as a classic good vs. evil story. More accurately, it could be seen as a battle of the forces of light against the powers of darkness.

Gothic mode in *My Own True Ghost Story*

My Own True Ghost Story relates Rudyard Kipling's actual event that took place in a run-down dak-bungalow. He builds the short tale in traditional ghost story fashion, only to give the actual explanation in the end. The sounds of a phantom billiards game in a small room prove to be a rat and a window shutter supported by a servant's lies.

The story begins with reference to Walter Besant. He is a very famous writer who lived in the Victorian Period. He was one of the most prolific and widely read novelists, and he was also an author of three volume novels such as *Dorothy Forster* and *Armored of Lyonesse* published in 1884 and 1890. It goes on to say that while anything from viceroy to a vernacular people may be treated with levity, an Indian ghost needs to be treated with reverence. The statement prioritizes the cultural facet of the colony over and above the social and political reality.

Rudyard Kipling's *My Own True Ghost Story* is written in imperial Gothic form. Kipling's reputation is quite complex

because of his association with British imperialism. The story talks about the gothic figures in imperial locales. The imperial gothic has a bleak and threatening atmosphere, something that is gloomy, something that is scary, frightening, hostile. There are a lot of murders and other assaults that are carried out in imperial gothic fiction and again the classic gothic cue of an obsession or a preoccupation with the occult and the supernatural is also present in imperial gothic fiction.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978 is a landmark publication in this context. He is the one who formulized the category of the Orient as was understood by the western nation. He wrote that in the 18th and 19th century European scholars described the Orient, the east, as in strong opposition or contradiction to the West, which is known as the occident. The Orient is always understood in contrast to the Occident, the western domain and the Orient meant mysterious, barbaric, irrational, seductive and dangerous.

Rudyard Kipling's story *The Phantom Rickshaw* is set in British India and that is also an example of the imperial gothic, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* was set in Egypt and London. All these locations- Egypt India and Africa- these are all colonies of the empire, the British empire, and therefore, all these colonies the Orient as well as the other sports which have been

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colonized by the imperial government of Britain share similar characteristics in terms of the antagonists and in terms of the setting and some of the subject matter that are explored in such fiction.

Joseph Conrad's the *Heart of Darkness*, which was published in 1902, also talks about the idea of degeneration, the lack of civilizational principles, among the English people. This particular novel is a classic novel that attacks European greed and rapacity, the exploitation and cruelty of the English people that were inflicted on the colonial public. This novel depicts Africa is seen as being extremely mysterious. Africa is also associated with savage qualities and again spiritual mystery is also tacked on to all these set of ideas.

The word phantom and eerie is used in the publication title of the short story *The Phantom Rickshaw* and it indicates the stories that are Gothic in tone. Said's terminology are especially interesting in relation to Rudyard Kipling's *My Own True Ghost Story*, because of the ghosts, the Indian ghosts, that appear in this particular short story. "*There are, in this land, ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses, hide in trees near the roadside till a traveler passes. Then they drop upon a traveler's neck and remain. There are also terrible ghosts of women who have died in child-bed. These wander along the pathways at dusk, or hide in the crops near*

a village, and call seductively."(The Phantom 'Rickshaw 43) There are ghosts of little children who have thrown into wells. These haunt the well curbs and the fringes of jungle, and wail under the stars, or catch women by the wrist and beg to be taken up and carried.

The story talks about a cross section of the Indian society depicted through the image of ghosts. Dysfunctional representation of Indian society gets through such categorization of the different kinds of ghosts. Wells says that '*these and the corpse ghosts, however, are only vernacular articles and do not attack Sahibs*'. (The Phantom 'Rickshaw 44) These ghosts are Indian ghosts, who attack only vernacular Indian people and not the sahibs, the Englishmen. No native ghost has yet been authentically reported to have frightened an English man; but many English ghosts have scared the life out of both white and black people. Nearly every other Station owns a ghost. The native ghost is powerless to attack an English man. He reinforces the Englishmen that they need not worry about these vernacular articles. They are vernacular stuff, articles, objects, but many English ghosts have scared the life out of both white and black. The English ghosts of course, are all powerful in this hierarchy.

A dak-bungalow was a government building in British India under Company

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Rule and the Raj. It is a government house to be used by administrative officials. In the dak-bungalows, ghosts are most likely to be found. *'The older provinces simply bristle with haunted houses, and march phantom armies along their main thoroughfares.'* (The Phantom Rickshaw 45) The older provinces are Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay here. The hierarchy sustains through or is replicated in the supernatural. The older provinces are overrun by haunted houses and ghostly armies march through their main thoroughfare. These allude to the history or the past of the empire in the colony. The statement brings the past in contact with the present as is characteristic of the gothic genre. The dak-bungalow's caretakers are the khansamahs.

The narrative of the imperial gothic understands other works in terms of mysticism, degeneracy, irrationality and barbarism. *The Arabian Nights* reinforced this idea of the Orient. Bertha in *Jane Eyre* the dark beauty who haunts the mansion as a madwoman is an example often imperial gothic. Jane receives an inheritance from her uncle who was a wine merchant in Madeira. Thus the colony is a place of fortunes, but it is also a place that poses great risks and threats to British minds, bodies and souls. In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, it is a stolen Indian diamond that wreaks havoc. The priests are represented as dangerous mysterious and superstitious which are taken to be the

characteristics of all Oriental figures. Collins portrays the English as greedy bringing upon themselves the wrath of the Orient. The *Dracula* is another figure who is racially impure and the foreign is always that which is represented as gothic. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* brings forth the possibility of the degeneration of the English race and also brings out the contradictions that underlie the colonial project.

The narrator hears a whir and a click and is absolutely convinced that the sound could be nothing but a game of billiards. The more that he knows of the improbability of such a game in the dak bungalow the more he is convinced of some supernatural activity. The narrative speaks of the fear of something that cannot be seen and the physiological effects of such fear are described, taking the story deeper into gothic territory. He says that a dak-bungalow breeds infinite credulity. The implication is that the British empire has been tainted or influenced by the native territory, making anything credulous. He is afraid that the players, the billiard players in the room next door, might want him for a marker. He knows both that it is an absurd fear and that it is nevertheless a real fear. The next morning when he inquires about the doolies, the khansamah informs him that there were no doolies. The khansamah gives him a story of this bungalow having once been a billiards room.

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A weird kind of power relationship is orchestrated by the khansamah when he says that the railway officials are all dead and gone while he Mangal Khan is still alive. The ghost for the narrator is now an authenticated article and the narrator wants to write to the Society of Psychological Research and paralyze the empire with his news. He hopes to have all the glory and curiosity that is attached with supernatural occurrences; however, he soon realizes that it was just a restless little rat in the ceiling cloth and a loose window sash in the wind that had been making the noise. The discovery of facts does not allow the narrator to encash his own hallmarked true ghost story in the empire. Kadir Baksh tells the narrator that the presence in the bungalow is speckled and disturbed because of the presence of low caste figures who had been let in by the khansamah. This native figure appears to follow a hierarchy that is cultural, supernatural, native and English.

Gothic Mode in *The Red Room*

The Red Room is a story which is in the gothic mode. H. G. Wells usually writes science fiction, but he makes a change in this particular story to write a horror or a kind of a supernatural story which can be termed as gothic. The story contains all the elements of a ghost story; the story is written to illustrate the nature of fear and is

an insight into how it affects the human mind.

An ambiguous story written in first person follows the short account of a man who is unafraid of ghosts and is going to stay the night in the apparently haunted Red Room. ‘*Eight-and-twenty years*’, the narrator says, ‘*I have lived, and never a ghost have I seen as yet.*’ (The Red Room and Other Stories) As he stays in the Red Room he lights all the candles and settles himself in an armchair, but as he is sitting there the candles start to go out, he begins racing with an unknown force trying to put out the candles and he is trying to light them back up, in the confusion he is knocked out and is found in the morning. It is a person's own fear, which has neither light nor sound. There are many conventions of the Gothic Horror genre in the story of the Red Room, one of the conventions in the Red Room is that it is set in an old deserted house.

The story becomes a conflict between the narrator's reason, and a terror that threatens to overwhelm his intellect. Although Gothic stories deal often enough with the psychology of fear, the focus is usually on what causes the fear. Wells's story implies that fear itself is what matters. If there is only fear, then there can be no relief; fear itself is an active, evil power that threatens to destroy human beings. The castle itself, the really desolate, dark,

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almost uninhabited, is a very striking Gothic motif. There are suggestions of ghosts, black strangers lurking in the room that is what the narrator believes closer to the end of the story where he feels that he is being assaulted by all these specters. Fear itself becomes a ghost according to the old man with the shade at the end of the story. The legends that the old earl is perhaps haunting the red room. Wells exploits all these Gothic cues and ideas to attack the basic principles and suggest that there is no ghosts of earl or countess in that room, but there is just fear, an unreason, an unenlightenment in the mind of human beings.

There is a lot of claustrophobia associated with both the Red Room and the Lorraine Castle in H.G Wells's story. The confinement of women is very predominant in *Wuthering Heights* and in this novel, male figures are too, who undergo such confinement or unfortunate death, as is the case with the young duke who tries to test the theory of hauntings of the Red Room and he dies of apoplexy. The narrator suffers injuries because of his stay in the room, Of course, the confinement of women is the predominant motif of Gothic fiction and there are references of such cases even in the Red Room story.

The narrator is waiting for the supernatural to show itself, to come out for a fight. He is kind of barricading himself

and he feels that his examination of the room had done him a little good, a little good not quite a lot, because he still found the remoter darkness of the place. Remoter darkness- there are corners in the room which are still dark and which seems to him to be full of presences, spectral presences, lurking there and its perfect stillness, again the silence, is too stimulating. He cannot bear it because it makes him imagine all sorts of things. The spectral supernatural presence seems to be there in the darkness and it seems to be lurking there like an animal. This kind of idea comes so easily to everyone in silence and solitude.

He does to reassure himself to make sure that there is nothing there in that darkness. He takes up a candle and walks into that shadowy part of the room; he walks into that corner and to that alcove to that niche and he checks for himself that there is nothing tangible there- nothing concrete. Nothing concrete there to scare him. He leaves the candle upon the floor of the alcove and left it in that position. He brings light in the darkness and that light gives him confidence and he goes back. Thus the narrator says at the end of the story, '*Fear itself is in that room, Black Fear...And there it will be...so long as this house of sin endures.*'(The Red Room and Other Stories) The story centers on the struggle of the protagonist to preserve light in a room against the growing darkness, which threatens to extinguish it. The

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darkness and shadows are personified as an evil force, and they are closely tied to fear.

Compare and Contrast

Having covered the analysis of the two stories, it is necessary to look into a short comparison between *The Red Room* by Wells and *My Own True Ghost Story* by Kipling. Both the stories written in the late Victorian period. They are similar in some aspect but they are also different. Starting with similarities, the both stories deal with the same theme of gothic mode. As Victorian ghost stories deal with the supernatural themes, the two stories cover the same characteristics of a ghost story. Both capture a barbarous and bleak atmosphere that is somehow detached from what is considered the normal. The stories takes places in the dak-bungalows and the Lorraine castle.

However, there are also many differences in the ways in which the narratives of the two stories work. In terms of the usage of gothic motives and in the setting that the stories unfold in, the two stories are different. The mode of Kipling's story is imperial in nature and fear is the main motif in Wells's story. Kipling's story begins with reference to Walter Besant. The story talks about the gothic figures in imperial locals. There are various categories of ghosts in the story. Kipling

gives a rundown of the many ghosts that haunt the Indian landscape.

Wells's story starts with the narrator, who is standing by a fire in an unknown room, confidently announcing to a couple of rather creepy elderly people that he is never seen a ghost and is not easily frightened. Kipling's story draws on his personal experiences with several billiard playing ghosts in a wayside station. At the end of the story, the narrator realizes that there are no ghosts, it is just a rat running about in a ceiling cloth. *The RedRoom* is about a man who does not believe in ghosts and women who try to make him believe. Wells tackles the timeless nature of fear. The ambiguity of the narrators ending is the story's enduring legacy. The room is haunted by a supernatural force of pure fear.

Whereas in the Ghost Story, the colony is the site where the power relations between the empire and its subjects are exercised and undermined through gothic possibilities. But in *The Red Room* Wells only exploits gothic cues and ideas to attack the basic principles and suggest that there is no ghost, but there is just fear, an unreason, an unenlightenment in the mind of human beings.

Conclusion

This paper studied a critical analysis of two literary works by applying the Gothic

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mode in the Victorian age. Kipling's literary and ideological reputation is quite complex because of his imperialist associations. Kipling has been called both a jingo imperialist with racist prejudices and a fantastic magical storyteller. The term 'imperial gothic' has been coined to describe Kipling's strange tales of India. Kipling's tale *My Own True Ghost Story* presents a study of fear and present states of human mind under the impact of imperialism and other terrifying experiences. Though Wells uses the trappings of a ghost story, *The Red Room* is much less about ghosts than about human psychology. Wells himself had a pronounced skepticism about anything 'supernatural'. He is not the type of guy to take any Gothic ghost stories seriously. Wells does take one thing very seriously in the story, though: the great power of fear to overwhelm human reason and self-control, no matter how resolute it might be. As the story's famous ending suggests, fear can haunt the human soul without the aid of any ghost. Fear is something that has been around since time immemorial, from the primitive ages to the contemporary. Fear is always around, fear of darkness, fear of death, fear of tragedies and so on and so forth, that timeless nature of fear is explored in this particular Gothic story.

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