

**The Victorian Gothic Short Story**  
**Prof. Divya A**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**

**Lecture- 06**  
**Rudyard Kipling “My Own True Ghost Story”**

Hello and welcome to this lecture on Rudyard Kipling’s “My Own True Ghost Story”. I will begin this lecture by giving you a bit of information about Kipling, whose reputation is quite complex because of his association with British imperialism.

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Rudyard Kipling



- Born in Mumbai, 1865.
- Youngest recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1907.
- George Orwell, 1942: “jingo imperialist”

“morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting”



Kipling was born in Mumbai in 1865 and he is the youngest recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1907. And, in terms of his reputation as I said it is a bit complex because I have an example of such a criticism here, George Orwell in 1942 called him a “jingo imperialist”. Because, Kipling did write works that were indirectly and unconsciously supportive of the British Empire and, Orwell here calls him morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting.

And, I have a few other pieces of criticism about Kipling, which tries to bring in other perspectives about him. And, the information that I am going to share with you right now is from The Guardian. And, here I have a professor (Refer Time: 01:43) from the University of Kent, Janet Montefiore, who was the editor of Kipling’s Journal, who says

that Kipling is of course a racist, of course he was an imperialist, but that is not all he was and it seems to me a pity to say so.

So, she argues that, Montefiore argues that Kipling was a magical storyteller, and that his perspective was part of history. So, she says you do not want to pretend that it all didn't happen. And, Amit Chowdhury is also another critic of Kipling and who was a Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia, East Anglia and he says that Kipling is a compelling and very very gifted writer who had clearly racist prejudices.

So, we have two different perspectives emerge about Rudyard Kipling-- one is that he is a fantastic magical storyteller very powerful storyteller and the other is that he had racist prejudices. So, we will see both these elements come through in the story My Own True Ghost Story.

So, Amit Chowdhury goes on to say what in a lesser writer would have been predictable is in him very unpredictable and alive. There are great blind spots in Kipling and the blind spots are all the more curious and regrettable, because they occur in a writer who was extraordinarily observant and acute in his observation. So, Kipling is extremely observant, he is a fantastic genius when it comes to observing the life around him.

But then he also did have his blind spots according to Amit Chowdhury. So, we need to keep these differing perspectives about him, in our minds when we read My Own True Ghost Story.

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### My Own True Ghost Story

- The Week's News on 25 February 1888
- Volume 5 of the Indian Railway Library - The Phantom Rickshaw and other Eerie Tales



*Gothic  
Supernatural  
in tone*



This particular story appeared on 25th February 1888. So, late 19th story, short story and it also appeared in the 5th volume of the Indian Railway Library and in the collection titled Phantom 'Rickshaw and other Eerie Tales. So, the word phantom and eerie should tell you that these are Gothic in tone or Supernatural in tone. And, if you look at the illustrations it will tell you that it is depicting a brick house which is kind of crumbling and which is suggestive of the central setting of this particular story which is a Dak Bungalow.

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### Walter Besant and Kipling

- Sir Walter Besant (1836-1901) was one of the most prolific and widely-read novelists, popular historians and social critics of the late Victorian era.
- three-volume novels were *Dorothy Forster* (1884) and *Armored of Lyonesse* (1890).
- Besant's novel *All in a Garden Fair* (1882) inspired **Rudyard Kipling** to leave India and make a career as a writer.



Now, I have some information about Walter Besant in this slide here and the reason I have it here for you is that the story, My Own True Ghost Story by Kipling begins with a reference to Walter Besant and Walter Besant is a very famous writer who lived in the Victorian Period. And, 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 18 and 19.

And, Besant's novel All in a Garden Fair published in 1882 inspired Kipling to leave India and make a career as a writer. So, Besant is a figure who is inspirational for Kipling and he is interesting in that regard for us.

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My own true ghost story

- You may treat anything, from a Viceroy to a Vernacular Paper, with levity; but you must behave reverently toward a ghost, and particularly an Indian one.

light hearted manner

Viceroy

Vernacular - native local paper

VS

ghost

insubstantial

Very powerful

treated with dignity?



Now, to get into the story it begins in a very offhand manner with a reference to Besant, who apparently treats his spiritual stuff flippantly and then at the end of that light-hearted paragraph, we have this particular statement. And, the narrator, this narrator tells us that you may treat anything from a viceroy to a vernacular paper with levity. But, you must behave reverently toward a ghost and particularly an Indian one.

Look at the way the ideas are structured in this particular statement we have a reference to a viceroy. And, I have an image of a viceroy here for you Lord Lansdowne and he was the viceroy at that period when Kipling's story came out. And, he says that you can treat all these aspects such as a viceroy or a vernacular paper, vernacular meaning native, with levity, in a light hearted manner, but you must behave reverently towards a ghost. Look

at the way in which these two items are juxtaposed. One is a viceroy, a powerful figure very very powerful figure in the British administration of India. And, the other is a vernacular paper a local paper, which probably talked about politics, history, culture, society, and other sorts of information.

So, these are heavy ponderous ideas and people and on the other side we have this insubstantial thing called the ghost. But apparently it is this insubstantial thing which is very powerful, more powerful, than these two the paper and the viceroy, and an Indian one, an Indian ghost should be especially treated with dignity. Should be treated with dignity why, why should we treat an Indian ghost with dignity as against other ghosts, say a British one. That is a question that needs to be thought about, because Kipling does not give us the answer for that question.

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Different kinds of Indian ghosts

There are, in this land, ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses, and hide in trees near the roadside till a traveler passes. Then they drop upon his 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; But to answer their call is death in this world and the next. Their feet are turned backward that all sober men may recognize them. There are ghosts of little children who have been thrown into wells. These haunt well-curbs and the fringes of jungles, and wail under the stars, or catch women by the wrist and beg to be taken up and carried.

Swollen

For men  
For women  
For children

Dysfunctional Cross-section of the Indian Society.



Now, in this paragraph he describes the different kinds of ghosts that populate the Indian landscape. It is a very interesting rundown of the category of ghosts and I am interested in this paragraph, because this section covers every kind of ghosts that were there, when Kipling wrote about it in this short story.

He says or his narrator says ‘There are in this land ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses and hide in trees near the roadside till a traveller passes. Then they drop upon his 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. But to answer their call is death in this world and the next. Their feet are turned backward that all sober men may recognize them. There are ghosts of little children who have been thrown into wells. These haunt well-curbs and the fringes of jungles, and wail under the stars, wail under the stars, or catch women by the wrist and beg to be taken up and carried.'

In this section you see that magical quality of Kipling that these critics Janet Montefiore and Amit Chowdhury were talking about. You also see, the very observant Kipling who is full of details in his narrative for the benefit of the reader. So, that awe that we usually associate with Kipling's narrative is also reflected in this particular passage from the story.

Now, let us take this passage very carefully and see what the various categories of ghosts are. Let me find out the first one, ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses. Pobby is swollen, swollen corpses and what do this kind of ghosts do, they hide near the roadside, waiting for a traveller to pass by and then they jump upon him and they hang on to his neck and remain. So, they do not let go of him, they stick to him. So, that is one category.

The second category is more terrible. These are women who died in childbirth-- the maternity cases. And, these women wander alongside pathways and they hide near crops or they call seductively for the passersby. So, look at the word seductively. I wonder why that word is used and that is a very disturbing term as well. Women who die in childbirth and the ghosts try to seductively tempt men who pass by. Are they trying to complete the process which was aborted for them in childbirth? So, that is an interesting question that can be probed. And, the other question is that do all women who died in childbirth obsess about this kind of fulfillment is another question, and is there an association of Indian women being very seductive in this particular context.

So, all these questions proliferate when you think about it. And, what do they do, they call seductively to these men and the narrator very helpfully points out that their feet are turned backward not in the usual forward position, but they are turned backward and all sober men may look at their feet and recognize them. So, there are cues to identify ghosts and be wary of them and to stay away from them.

Then we have another category. So first we saw the fat men, who parasitically stick to travelers, the ghosts of fat men, and then we have women who died in childbirth calling seductively to the potential victims. And, then thirdly we have child ghosts, children who were thrown into wells. Why on earth would we do that? So, again there is a puzzle there. So, these children who were thrown into wells and died horribly would come back to haunt the well curbs-- the spaces near the wells-- and the fringes of jungle. So, they haunt all these places and they wait under the stars for women, whom they can grab by their wrists and beg them to be taken up and carried. So, it is a very very pathetic situation that is being described in association with children as ghosts.

So, we have a cross section of the Indian society depicted through the image of ghosts. And, this is a cross section of the Indian society which is not very positive. I would call it dysfunctional. Dysfunctional representation of India is what we get through this categorization of the different kinds of ghosts-- to call men as fat and cold, and women as dying in childbirth and then coming back to tempt other men, and then children as being, thrown killed violently.

So, this is not a picture of India that is representative of the truth and we get that in this particular section which is very very interesting and disturbing.

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Ghosts and the English

- These and the corpse-ghosts, however, are only vernacular articles and do not attack Sahibs. 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 people.

English ghosts all powerful in the hierarchy of ghosts

Not the Englishman's prejudice

English Ghosts

Indian Ghosts

Contradictory messages



Now, these and the corpse ghosts, however, are only vernacular articles and do not attack Sahibs. Very helpful point once again, probably to the English reader to reassure him or

her saying that these ghosts are Indian ghosts, who attack only vernacular Indian people and not the sahibs, the Englishmen.

So, the Englishmen are safe from Indian ghosts. If that is the case, why did the narrator at the beginning of the story tell the reader that an Indian ghost had to be treated with a lot of dignity, with a lot of reverence? So, we seem to have contradictory messages about Indian ghosts in the story. Why is there such a confusion, why is there such a contradiction? Again it is a question that has no answer and which we might probe.

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. So, the native ghost is powerless to attack an English man. He reinforces that point, the narrator is at pains to reinforce that fact-- reassure 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. So, the English ghosts are all powerful in this hierarchy, of course, and there again you see that prejudice of Kipling which has become infamous.

So, even though this is a story about ghosts and in a story about ghosts all that we get in terms of the information is about ghosts, the hierarchy and the discrimination that we see in the normal society is replicated in this landscape of ghosts too. So, that is what becomes problematic. So, that imbalance of power that we see in the regular domain in the normal ordinary everyday walk of life is replicated, mirrored, brought back into this world too, and once again we have at the top of the pyramid an English ghost, scaring, being powerful over everybody else.

So, that idea is what is interesting and is something that we need to keep in mind.

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## Dāk bungalow

- A **dak bungalow**, **dak-house** or **dāk-bungalow** was a government building in **British India** under **Company Rule** and the **Raj**.
- **dāk-bungalows** rest-houses for travellers maintained by the Government of India and placed some 10–15 miles apart on principal thoroughfares. (*dākis* Hindi for 'post'. *Bangalā* were Bengal fashion-houses.

*Gothic setting*



Now, in the story we have as we have in other gothic stories a bungalow as the setting. A dak bungalow. What is a dak bungalow? A dak bungalow or dak house was a government building, in British India under Company Rule and the Raj.

So, it is a government house to be used by administrative officials. In fact, they are rest houses for travellers, maintained by the government of India and placed some 10 to 15 miles apart on principal thoroughfares. On the major highways you find them every now and then. So, dak in Hindi means post, bangala were Bengal-fashion houses. So, they were supposed to be very comfortable rest houses for administrative officials in the British government.

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### Dak bungalow, Simla District, 1868



So, I have here the dak bungalow in Simla district. This is from 1868, it is a big setup as you can see.

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### Phantom armies

- The older Provinces simply bristle with haunted houses, and march phantom armies along their main thoroughfares.

*Madras  
Bihar etc  
Punjab*

*ghostly armies*

*Indian  
English  
Ghosts*

*Ghosts*

*Bengal*



Now, the author what he does is give us a list of English ghosts too and that is again a list of various people who have died in accidents and he mentions all these ghosts as occupying or haunting dak bungalows in various regions. So, just as we have a description of the set of Indian ghosts we have a companion piece that describes the the English ghosts too.

And, at the end of that paragraph we have this statement. 'The older provinces simply bristle with haunted houses, and march phantom armies along their main thoroughfares.' I thought this statement was very significant, what are the older provinces; the older provinces are Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay.

So, the older provinces are especially overrun with haunted houses and march phantom armies, that is very interesting-- ghostly armies-- through the main thoroughfares. So, what is this statement about? Perhaps it is indicating all those battles that the English soldiers had with the native kings and chieftains.

So, these are phantom armies. The ghosts of those soldiers who died or who participated in all these battles between the company forces and the armies of the local kings and chieftains. So, perhaps it is a reference to that. This is the setup of the story. It begins with a description of Indian ghosts, and then we have the English ghosts, and then we have we have a dak bungalow. So, that setting is brought into the picture after this premise.

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The bungalows and the khansamahs

- These bungalows are objectionable places to put up in. They are generally very old, always dirty, while the khansamah is as ancient as the bungalow. He either chatters senilely or falls into the long trances of age. In both moods he is useless. If you get angry with him, he refers to some Sahib dead and buried these thirty years, and says that when he was in that Sahib's service not a khansamah in the Province could touch him. Then he jabbars and mows and trembles and fidgets among the dishes, and you repent of your irritation.

*stay*

*Ghosts of the past*

*Bungalow = khansamah / Senility*



Now, the dak bungalows have this very important character called the Khansamah. Who is the khansamah? The khansamah in a word is the steward. These bungalows, these dak bungalows are objectionable places to put up in; to put up in means to stay. They are generally very old, always dirty, while the khansamah is as ancient as the bungalow. He either chatters senilely, or falls into the long trances of age. In both moods he is useless.

If you get angry with him, he refers to some Sahib dead and buried these thirty years, and says that when he was in that Sahib's service not a khansamah in the Province could touch him. Then he jabbars and mows and trembles and fidgets among the dishes, and you repent of your irritation.

So, we suddenly are introduced to a bungalow, bungalows, dak bungalows in general and the khansamah. A khansamah as I said is an ancient retainer and these stewards (Refer Time: 24:15) are usually very old. And, the narrator says that these are objectionable places, you object to the condition, these are offensive places in the sense that they are not very well kept up or maintained, and both the house and this steward, they are always old, always dirty and both are as ancient as the other.

So, there is a kind of a collapse of the personality of the bungalow and the khansamah; one seems to mirror the other. So, he either chatters senilely-- this is a very important characteristic that we need to keep in mind—he is senile, has perhaps lost his rationality, rational senses, and he falls into long trances, thinks back to the past and talks about it, and if he goes back to this nostalgic condition he is useless according to the narrator.

So, the bungalow becomes identifiable with the khansamah. It is an interesting equation I would argue, because the characteristics of the khansamah, become identifiable with the characteristics of the bungalow. And, both are in a dilapidated state in this particular moment of time in India in this particular story. And, the senility that is mentioned there, in this passage is very evocative, in the sense that we are reminded of other senile old people, in this course we have read (Refer Time: 26:13) H. G. Wells's *The Red Room* and if you remember that story we had three old people, who are caretakers, or pensioners of a big castle, Lorraine castle. The word senile is also used in conjunction with those three people they are also old, they also rambled and the narrator of that story also has his doubts about their sanity. Likewise in this particular story Kipling also has doubts about the sanity of the khansamahs, who are the caretakers of these dak bungalows of the government.

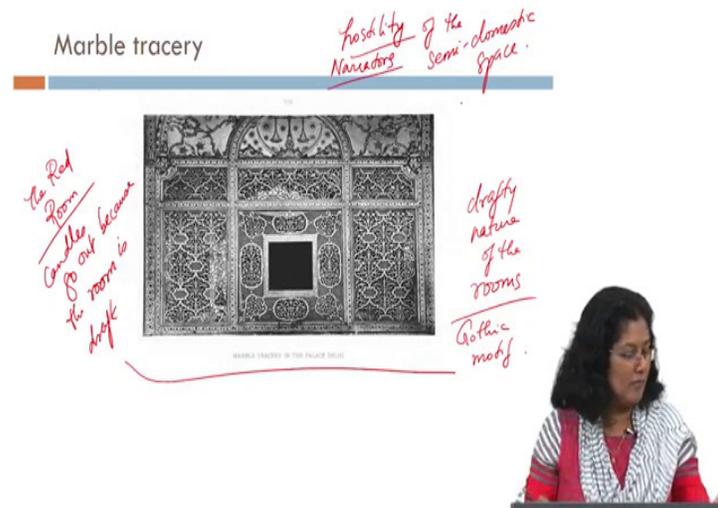
And, he says that if these people become nostalgic they are absolutely useless because they constantly talk about the glories of the past. And, this is an important thematic in this particular story, because the glories of the past are the glories of dead and gone sahibs, the Englishmen who were administrators in the past.

So, the glories are the glories of such Englishmen and these Englishmen are representative of the British Empire. So, what Kipling does very carefully in the story is not make the English people glorify the British Empire, instead he makes these khansamahs glorify them, that is one interpretation. And, if you want to do a subaltern reading of this figure of the khansamah, you can argue that these khansamahs are not entirely loyal to the British government. They too subvert the British government in their own way and therefore, these subalterns are problematic figures who try to deconstruct the empire in every minor way possible. So, that is another kind of interpretation that you can do in terms of the role of the subalterns.

Now to come back to this passage, the narrator says that if you get angry with him he then refers to some sahib and kind of argues that if that sahib was alive then, he wouldn't be disturbed in this fashion. So, here the khansamah is trying to get protection for him in the present, by associating himself with this past figure; a British figure from the past. And, then the narrator says that it is hopeless, it is pointless to talk to these khansamahs and you just have to give up on them and you kind of become repentant of your own irritation with them, because there is nothing that can be done with these old men, who have somehow lost touch with reality.

So, this is a very complex passage that you can do a close reading of and try to figure out what the function of the khansamah is in this particular story? A, he is just a caretaker literally, B he is a figure who is glorifying the empire in an indirect way and Kipling makes the khansamahs do that, and C the khansamahs themselves become problematic figures as you read the story. Because, they also try to subvert the status quo (Refer Time: 30:05) in their own way, in their own minor ways.

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Now, this is what is called marble tracery. A decorative set of windows that allow air to come in, and some of these dak bungalows have such marble tracery. And, in this particular story we find Kipling or the narrator bewailing against the role of marble tracery, because they do not keep the cold out. In fact, they make these places very drafty.

And once again drafty nature of the rooms is a Gothic motif, because if you remember The Red Room, the candles go out, because the room is drafty, making the place kind of inconducive for the benefit of the narrator, making the place hostile for the inhabitants. So, the common element is the hostility. The hostility of the setting I would call this a semi-domestic space for the narrators, because they are not regular inhabitants of such spaces. They just pass through.

So, they are kind of pseudo domestic spaces for these inhabitants slash narrators and such spaces become hostile, and we might want to wonder about the hostility of the bungalows. Why is such a gothic space hostile towards the inhabitants, towards the two narrators?

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### Lunatic ghosts

□ It was my good-luck to meet all sorts of men, from sober traveling missionaries and deserters flying from British Regiments, to drunken loafers who threw whiskey bottles at all who passed; and my still greater good-fortune just to escape a maternity case. Seeing that a fair proportion of the tragedy of our lives out here acted itself in dak-bungalows, I wondered that I had met no ghosts. A ghost that would voluntarily hang about a dak-bungalow would be mad of course; but so many men have died mad in dak-bungalows that there must be a fair percentage of lunatic ghosts.

madness  
↳ Gothic trope



Now, the narrator further goes on to explain his experiences with various kinds of figures during his profession as a British official and he says that, it was my good luck to meet all sorts of men from sober traveling missionaries and deserters flying from British Regiments, to drunken loafers who threw whiskey bottles at all who passed; and my still greater good-fortune just to escape a maternity case.

Seeing that a fair proportion of the tragedy of our lives out here acted itself in dak-bungalows, I wondered that I had met no ghost. A ghost that would voluntarily hang about a dak-bungalow would be mad of course; but so, many men have died mad in dak-bungalows that there must be a fair percentage of lunatic ghosts.

This passage is interesting because it tells us of a different view of British men who have lived through the Indian government. So, he says that there is a range of English people passing through the Indian landscape. The sober traveling missionaries; missionaries who do not get drunk. So, that is one kind of Englishmen or British men who passed through the Indian landscape and then there are deserters flying from British Regiments. So, people who do not want to work in the British army and who just get up and run away. So, that is another category of English men who have passed through the Indian landscape. And, then there are drunken loafers, Englishmen who just get drunk and who kind of attack people who pass by.

So, these are the different kinds of English men that we are introduced to in this story. And, that is very interesting we do not just see the powerful British administrator, who is occupying a very high position in the empire. We see a cross section of English society too. Even here, in this ethnic group there is a variety and not all of them are extremely powerful or extremely disciplined.

So, he says that the deserters flying from British Regiments can also be met with during one's travels. And, this information also tells us that Kipling was very well aware of the various classes of Englishmen. And, and if you read his biography you will come to know that he was very friendly with the British soldiers who did not occupy the higher ranks in the army. He was very friendly with them and got to know a lot about their lifestyles too.

And, he says that a greater percentage of our lives were acted out in the dak bungalows. It is a very symbolic notion and it indicates that all the lives of these Englishmen are spent traveling. And, these bungalows are the safe havens or the rest houses that witness a lot of the tragedies and the comedies of the lives of these English people. And, he says that lots of people just go mad and that is the reason why there are a fair percentage of lunatic ghosts.

So, the idea of madness is again a gothic trope, if you remember from the earlier lectures on the Victorian gothic and the classic gothic as well. So, lunacy, senility, dak bungalows are all part of the narrative of gothic literature.

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Katmal dak-bungalow

□ Katmal dak-bungalow was old and rotten and unrepaired. The floor was of worn brick, the walls were filthy, and the windows were nearly black with grime. It stood on a bypath largely used by native Sub-Deputy Assistants of all kinds, from Finance to Forests; but real Sahibs were rare. The khansamah, who was nearly bent double with old age, said so.

*bedrooms*

*symptomatic of all dak bungalows.*

*Englishmen*



Now, we have come to this Katmal dak-bungalow, which is the bungalow which is at the heart of this story, My Own True Ghost Story. What is the nature of this particular dak bungalow? Katmal dak-bungalow was old and rotten and unrepaired. Again it is very symptomatic of all dak bungalows. The floor was of worn brick, the walls were filthy, and the windows were nearly black with grime. It is extremely dirty. It stood on a bypath largely used by native Sub-Deputy Assistants of all kinds from Finance to Forests; but real Sahibs were rare. The khansamah, who is nearly bent doubled with old age says so. So, this is a very interesting dak bungalow this is especially badly kept up, it is especially rotten and the reason is that this is largely used by native sub deputy assistants.

So, the majority of the administrators who pass by, the officials who pass by, or pass through this bungalow are natives, not English men. Who says that? It is the khansamah. The khansamah is a caretaker of this place, who was nearly bent double with old age--extremely old man as well. So, just as the bungalow the retainer was also very old.

As you can see, there is a mirroring of the characteristics of the steward with the dak bungalow, and it reminds me of the mirroring of the characteristics of The Red Room with the characteristics of the old people, both of them are old, dark and pessimistic.

So, the people and the space are on the same thematic ideological plane. The real sahibs were rare. Who are the real sahibs? The real sahibs are the Englishmen, the Englishmen

were rare. So, and this is largely used by native sub deputy assistants and that makes this setting very very complex.

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## Khansamah

- The day shut in and the khansamah went to get me food. He did not go through the pretence of calling it "khana"--man's victuals. He said "ratub," and that means, among other things, "grub"--dog's rations. There was no insult in his choice of the term. He had forgotten the other word, I suppose.

*Khansamah  
↳ Representative  
of the Indian  
population*

*English  
narrator*

*Senile  
(insane?)  
uncivilized  
↳ like dogs?*



So, this English narrator-- we need to remember we have an English narrator—is occupying this Katmal dak bungalow. And, there is another reference which we need to remember about katmal. It's usually associated with bed bugs. Something that is not very conducive to a good night's rest in this bungalow.

The day shut in and the khansamah went to get me food. He did not go through the pretense of calling it "khana" man's victuals. He said "ratub", and that means, among other things, "grub" dog's rations. There was no insult in his choice of the term he had forgotten the other word, I suppose.

So, again a complex set of ideas being communicated through the figure of the khansamah. This English narrator goes to this katmal dak bungalow and the khansamah goes to get him food. And, instead of calling the food khana, and khana meaning in Hindi food, he calls it ratub and ratub means grub-- something a dog would eat. The narrator says that he is not trying to insult me, perhaps he has forgotten the proper name for food.

So, what do we understand from this viewpoint of the English narrator; one, the khansamah is senile, insane, two, the khansamh is uncivilized like, dogs perhaps. So, we

kind of see how the Indian populace is described in this particular narrative. We need to remember that the khansamah is the only major Indian figure in the story. So, the khansamah becomes representative of the Indian population in the story. And, if he becomes representative of the Indian population then we need to worry about the way in which he is described through his choice of words, through his language, through his state.

So, the narrator has a very interesting relationship with this khansamah he has a very interesting way of describing him-- look at the last line-- he has forgotten the other word, I suppose. There is no harm in his choice of words of calling the food grub; perhaps he has forgotten. So, perhaps he is innocently barbaric, that seems to be the subtext to this statement.

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Dak-bungalow

While he was cutting up the dead bodies of animals, I settled myself down, after exploring the dak-bungalow. There were three rooms, beside my own, which was a corner kennel, each giving into the other through dingy white doors fastened with long iron bars.

*metaphor of dog's grub*

*Dog-fed-khansamah  
Sarcasm towards ancient retainer*



While he was cutting up the dead bodies of animals, I settled myself down, after exploring the dak-bungalow. There were three rooms, beside my own, which was a corner kennel, each giving into the other through dingy white doors fastened with long iron bars.

So, you can see in the statement that the metaphor of dog grub is continued here. So, the narrator imagines that the khansamah is cutting up the dead bodies of animals, as if he is going to feed an animal and not an Englishman. So, that metaphor is carried through in

this next statement and while this khansamah is doing such a “barbaric” action, this very enlightened narrator settles himself, after exploring the dak-bungalow.

I am sure if you have read *The Red Room* you will remember that, like that narrator, this English narrator too explores the dak-bungalow to make sure that everything is alright. So, that scientific attitude for a thorough gathering of information is perhaps also seen in this narrator. And, he has taken account of the number of rooms that are there in this bungalow besides his own and look at the way in which he called his room a corner kennel.

So, he continues that metaphor of the dog. He imagines himself as a dog, who is going to be fed by the khansamah. So, there is a lot of sarcasm here, sarcasm towards the ancient Indian retainer, who has been looking after such British officials in their journeys across the length and breadth of this country. So, the English narrator has assessed his situation and he realizes that each room gives into another room and every door is fastened with long iron bars and the doors are white in colour. So, this is the setting in which he finds himself.

Thank you for watching, I will continue in the next session.