



The Spectre and the Empire: Reading B. M. Croker's Ghost Stories

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Abstract

B. M. Croker's successfully incorporated the gothic, the horror, the spectre, identity and the empire in her two short stories, "To Let" and "The Dâk Bungalow at Dakor" among many others. She utilised her experiences in India to highlight the troubled relationship between the coloniser and the colonised while focusing on the two worlds from her own perspective of an unaccommodated woman in a colonial scene. The horror of the ghost thus functions on different historical, political, social and psychological levels in her fiction exploring and exposing the relationship of the empire with the natives. Moreover, Croker's female narrator also opens up a series of questions regarding gender, identity, foreignness and trauma. The introduction of a foreign ghost in a native setting further complicates the relationships which Croker works on in her narration. Set against the backdrop of a socio-historical parameter, her stories, thus become interesting documentations of the functioning principles of the empire and the spectral dimension in the Indian context. This paper proposes to address these intersections and arrive at a deeper understanding of the horror story in the colonial context.

Keywords: Horror, Spectrality, Foreignness, Trauma, Empire.