

Compare atmosphere  
is created in the  
signalman



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These two stories are both pre-1914 tales, which have all been set in the Victorian age. In these stories we see the coming of the railways in the Dickens story, and we start to see the scientific theory overtake mystery and how Victorian people start to think-rational thought had come about. The red room creates scientific thought by having a room in a very dark castle in an isolated part of the country with only three "old and wrinkly" people who all agree that the castle is "haunted" but they all do not know by whom and a man which is young what represents the new aged people who think and believe that this ghost is a load of "cobblers".

In both stories the author creates loneliness. But the loneliness is slightly different in the stories. In "The Red Room" loneliness is illustrated by the fact the man is on his own without companions in the red room. When the candles go out in the middle of the story, the man is scared and screaming then eventually dashes for the "Moonlit corridor. This showed his loneliness. "With my head bowed and my arms over my face, made a run for the door".

The signalman shows loneliness by the fact that he is solitary and is lacking friends or companions. He is isolated and the area he lives in is far away and in a "solitary" and "dismal" is two words that are used in The Signalman to describe the immediate setting of the story, this arouses the reader's attention to this unnatural world. These two books are both written by 19th century writers who all had rational thought and did not believe in "ghosts and ghouls" and believe in rational thought with The Red Room being written by H. G. Wells whom also wrote The War of the Worlds, which is a book about life on other planets.

At the start of Well's Red Room we see the scene being set and it is, one of tension with an "old" man having a "withered" arm. This is done so the reader gets a sense of evil, immorality and mystery by making the reader question, how did he get a withered arm? This also creates unease for the reader. Thus is also evident in The Signalman with the rather unusual appearance of the gentleman who comes out of nowhere and with no purpose. This is also followed by the signalman's reaction being one of "fixed attention" to seeing this gentleman and only later on do we see why, because he lately has seen ghosts trying to warn him from the exact same spot.

Both writers create a suitable mystery backdrop for the events that will occur in the stories because of this. The stories however do not rely only on these character descriptions; the way in which the physical environments are described is also very important. This is seen in The Signalman with the entrance to the long dark tunnel being "extremely deep" and "unusually precipitous". This then tells us how it is "another world" or a "dark and gloomy dungeon" as the writer so rightly calls it.

In consequence, this is also done in The Red Room by the way the writer; has described the atmosphere outside the room with "shambling" on the steps outside and doors "creaked". But it is not just the outside of the room that contributes to the atmosphere, it is also set with the way the people are acting inside with people's eyes being "bright and inflamed" and all being very old. This creates a sense of mystery because they have never lived anywhere else and they know all "secrets" of the house. We also feel a sense of coldness in the house by the old people being "huddled" around

the fire. This suggests that the house is also “ possessed” as the man with the withered arm likes to call it. But it is not just the tension that the writer has created; he also has stated the age the two stories are set in.

This is seen by the ways the writers have described the new inventions of the nineteenth century and the coming of the railway system and how an unknown object has created such mystery and terror. We see this by the man in *The Signalman* wanting to find out how it all works, and to look at the marvels of the nineteenth century. By doing this, he becomes friendly with the signalman, who, later on, tells this man that he believes in the supernatural, this is quite hard to find because the railways are a modern invention that inspires rational thought, whereas the signalman still believes in old thought yet works in the forefront of the industrial revolution. In these two stories, we see a lot of contrasting to evil, with the setting for *The Signalman* being in a “ long deep strip” this creates a sense of leaving the “ natural and material world” as the writer, Dickens, has made you, the reader believe. In *The Red Room* we see the description of the outside being given to one of the doors to another room, this makes the house sound like it is an “ outer surface” in the “ cold darkness of the moors” this is done by the “ echoing of the stair”. In these two stories, we see old objects bringing a sense of unity between people yet they are all having different views.

This was done to create suspense and to bring the people in the house together. These objects are “ open fires” and “ flickering candles”. These are seen in *The Red Room* the fire brings the man salvation and hope in the room because all of the lights are going out by a supernatural being, until all the lights go out apart from, “ The fire! ” The man also then uses the fire to

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return light to this room and the safety of seeing everything, where as in The Signalman we see the two men use the fire to relax and to have a nice talk and this is because it gives a sense of safety by " sitting down by the fire". These two stories also have the same type of ending, by a death happening of some one who believes in rational thought and I believe that this has been done to show the way forward in the time it was written and to show that rational thought is old. The Signalman first sees this in the Signalman by him dying on the railway as he had been predicted by the ghost's gestures trying to warn him danger.

" I put this arm before my eyes not to see" and by " all gestures being repeated". The man who goes in believing " it was a farce" comes out seeing that this Red Room is true and believes that a " power of great darkness" is in the room and that it is a " black fear". In these stories, we also see the place where this is all happening in The Red Room being in the middle of nowhere and by not having any help if something bad happens. This is seen in the red room being in a castle with the young duke being on his own and the old people being near the warmth of the open " fire" , also see that the passageway to the red room " subterranean" plus " cold and dark" . This is also seen in The Signalman with the man having to cross " great fields" to get to this stretch of the railway line.

We also see by the signalman's reaction to seeing this man that he is not use to seeing people and he mistakes it for a " ghost's warning". We also see that the signalman does not get many visitors by the way he has books for reading lying around on how to do " simple fractions" so he an do a bit of light reading. This also tells the reader that he is an educated man but not

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his full potential and that he could have got out of his social class but he hasn't. However, he chose not to and this creates a sense of mystery to us, the reader, making us wonder why he has not left even with these horrible ghosts what are haunting him and many accidents happen where he has to work. I think both of the stories stir up tension in different ways, they also generate atmosphere successfully.

The language draws the reader within and the language sets the scene very well. Charles Dickens use twists to create anxiety and H. G Wells' method is rapid and in my opinion more valuable to the readers enjoyment.