

# A comparison of red room and farthing hous essay



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Having read and analysed two short stories which both deal with the unnatural, I now intend to compare them in detail. The Red Room is a short story from the nineteenth century, which is about a man who visits a haunted house to prove that there is no ghost or anything of such a nature inhabiting the house, and therefore proving that ghosts do not exist at all. Farthing house is a story written after the nineteenth century, about a woman who also visits a house.

However, it is that of her aunty, and upon staying there, she also encounters a ghost. In order to compare the two stories, I will examine the following factors: \* Characters \* Plot \* Settings \* Style \* Language

The first indication that represents the differences in the stories is the titles. Although both stories are similar in content, the titles represent very different genres. 'The Red Room', through the use of the word 'red' immediately indicates that the genre will be horror, as the colour red simultaneously signifies blood, fear, and death. This is exemplified by the fact that the story is not called the green or blue room, as this would immediately change the feeling of the book.

Red could have been specially used to signify horror and danger and in this story could also indicate that something bad happens or has happened in the room. Also, the title holds an air of mystery, as readers wish to discover what is significant about 'the red room'. The story title 'Farthing House' on the other hand gives a dissimilar indication of the genre of the story. Unlike 'The Red Room', the title 'Farthing house' sounds less menacing and to an extent friendlier.

The title suggests that farthing house is a cosy hospitable environment. Both stories have a main character, and as both stories are written in the first person narrative, initially the reader is not told the gender of the main character. However as the stories progress, the way in which the characters tell the stories allows the reader to make a clear assumption of the character's gender. In 'The Red Room', the story begins with the main character saying 'I can assure you, that it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me'. This indicates that the gender of this character could be male, as he talks so arrogantly. A stereotypical female would not speak in this manner, especially not in the time when the book was written.

We can also assume that the character is most probably male, because before the nineteenth century when the story was written, the chances of an upper class woman going alone to a house to investigate any manner of supernatural activity were very low. It was not a norm in those times, whereas it could be now. In Farthing House we are also not told the gender of the character. However we learn that the main character in this story is female as she is writing a letter to her unborn child. Also we suppose that the main character is female, by the way in which she thinks. She considers the feelings of her aunty, and expresses her feelings of worry for her, which a man would not so readily do.

Also, the story starts with her saying that she has never told anyone the story and that she was 'vulnerable', which suggests her gender. Moreover, if the main character in this story were a man, then he would have probably told the story to a friend to boast and show his macho ness. For example it would be expected that the arrogant man in The Red Room would go back to <https://assignbuster.com/a-comparison-of-red-room-and-farthing-hous-essay/>

his house and boast about how he had gone on the hunt for a ghost. In *The Red Room* the main character describes the occupants of the house in a way, which clearly indicates his views of blue-collar/working class people.

He refers to the elderly as 'old people', and a disabled person as 'the man with the withered arm', showing that he has no respect for people who aren't of a high class such as himself. This is different in *Farthing House*, as in this story the woman is more expressive of her feelings, saying in regards of her aunty, 'I had always loved her.' She also uses more description than the man in *The Red Room*, when she talks about the 'colours of the setting sun', and the 'smell of the burning leaves' in her garden. Females tend to describe things in more detail, which is shown here clearly.

The two stories also include a range of different characters. In *The Red Room*, the other characters are the three 'old' people who live in the house, and the actual ghost. However in *Farthing house*, the only characters apart from the main character, Mrs Flower, are the matron, Aunt Addy and the actual ghost. The number of characters used also indicates something, as in *The Red Room* there are three characters, and three is an unlucky number, and further shows the nature of the story. The plots in both stories are very similar, in that they are both centred on the unnatural.

In both the *Red Room* and *Farthing House*, there are characters that visit houses, which they have never visited before. However, they visit the houses for different purposes and with different intentions in mind. The man in 'The Red Room' visits the house knowing there is supposed paranormal activity within it, and his intentions are of proving that ghosts do not actually exist in

the red room and that it is the 'old' people's imaginations. Whereas in Farthing House Mrs Flower is not aware that there could be another presence in the house besides her and the other residents of the house. She goes to Farthing House with the sole intention of visiting her aunt.

When they both reach the houses, different people meet them. The man by three 'old' people who warn him against going to look for the ghost: This night of all nights', and 'it's your own choosing.' These words indicate that the people are aware that there is strange goings on in the room, and they may also have called the man. They also seem to be welcoming him to the room. Perhaps even with the intention of him looking the fool, not them.

A matron, who is evidently considerably more friendly and welcoming than the people who greet the man in the Red Room, meets the woman in Farthing house. They both come to stay in the 'haunted' parts of the establishments where they are staying. In 'The Red Room', the man intends to visit and stay for as long as it takes in the 'red room'. Whereas in 'Farthing House', the woman only stays in 'Cedar Room', which is the haunted room, as the room she is supposed to stay in is being redecorated.

The room is only used out of necessity not because it is a nice room. The rooms are both big, and spacious. One thing, which they do have in common, is that they are both abandoned rooms, which implies that unpleasant things happen in the rooms. They both encounter ghosts, but in different ways. In Red Room, the man goes on the hunt for a specific ghost, knowing of its presence already, whereas in Farthing House, the woman is not aware of the ghost.

In 'The Red Room' the man is hunting for the ghost, and in 'Farthing House', the ghost appears without any provoking from the woman. It is said that ghosts can choose people they want to show themselves to, which would explain why the ghost showed herself to Mrs Flower. I think this is why the ghost revealed herself to Mrs Flower, because they are both pregnant, so there was in some sense a connection between the two. Perhaps the ghost felt that Mrs Flower could empathise with her, because she was in the same situation. Also Mrs Flower says that she felt she should follow the ghost as she 'felt that she (the ghost) needed me in some way', which illustrates my point. The settings are similar for both stories, in that they both are centred on an establishment.

However they are both very different. In 'The Red Room', it is 'draughty' and 'chilly'. Whereas in 'Farthing House', the house is described as being 'warm and comfortable'. On the other hand when she first steps on the doorstep of Farthing House she does say that she experiences feelings of perhaps 'apprehension' and then a 'chilly feeling' when the ghost appears in her room. In 'The Red Room', the man does not leave the establishment, which houses the 'red room'. Whereas in 'Farthing House', Mrs Flower leaves the house eventually and visits the local church and graveyard, where she stumbles across the grave of the woman who is now a ghost.

In both stories there are characters who appear to have unfinished business to take care of before they can rest in peace. In 'The Red Room', there is the young duke and in 'Farthing House', the young mother who is missing her baby, and by the end of the story appears to find it again. The styles of the stories reflect the times in which they were written. The Red Room' was

written in the nineteenth century, which is reflected in the long descriptive passages, which are used to describe the details of the ornate ornaments and other structures in the room. In 'Farthing House', the style is quite modern as the story was written within the last decade.

The language of both stories is quite different. Although, they are both written in the first person to make the stories more feasible. This has the effect of making the stories more realistic. The main difference is that 'The Red Room', is written with long descriptive passages: There were candles in the sockets of the sconces and whatever dust had gathered on the carpets or upon the polished flooring was distributed so evenly as to be invisible in the moonlight.

'The above quote is an example of a long winded sentence, describing the room. In 'Farthing House', however, there is less emphasis on detail, on more emphasis on describing people's feelings. Subsequently this makes 'Farthing House' easier to read and understand. In conclusion, 'The Red Room', and 'Farthing House' are closely linked in subject matter, although written centuries apart.