

Wells create a sense of fear and horror in the reader of 'the tell-tale heart' an...



In this essay I am going to explore how E. A. Poe and H. G. Wells create a sense of fear and horror in the reader of their books ' The Tell-tale Heart' and ' The Red Room' by pointing out things like the historical context, analysing the words which are used, discussing the setting, plot, characters and the ending. Both of these stories are Victorian ghost stories.

To begin with, ghost stories had a different importance in society at the time when the stories were written. It would have been very scary because they would have been reading by candle light and did not have the luxury of just flicking on a light switch, but nowadays we have scary films like ' Scream' and can just turn on lights if we get scared. Also the majority of people these days do not believe in ghosts or the super-natural because of science.

I thought that neither of these stories was more effective at creating a sense of fear and horror.

The title of the story may also come as a shock to some people. ' The Tell-tale Heart' sounds like a romantic story where someone can't, doesn't want to or isn't showing their love for someone else. Whereas ' The Red Room' sounds like a blood filled room which makes the reader automatically have an idea as to what they are or are about to read.

' The Tell-tale Heart' was definitely more effective at creating a sense of fear and horror on this occasion.

Both of the stories settings are created by using descriptions and are quite a few different types of techniques. Right from the beginning in ' The Red Room' the author creates a particular mood, atmosphere and tension. Some

of the things that the young man said about the place and people there were visual images like "...the man with the withered arm...", "...a second man entered, more bent, more wrinkled, more aged ..." and "...his lower lip, half averted, hung pale and pink from his decaying yellow teeth."

These examples increase the tension of the story because they put a horrible picture in the reader's mind.

In ' The Tell-tale Heart', H. G. Wells starts off the story quickly with short sentences with lots of commas and hyphens. He also uses visual images but not as many. He uses senses like touch but mainly sound, like where it says '...cough and splutter...' The character in the book also asks the reader lots of questions like ' You fancy me mad...' and '...am I mad?'. It seems as if the character is trying to prove to the reader and to himself that he is not mad.

I thought that both the stories had an equal effect of creating a sense of fear and horror in the reader.

The plot in the ' The Red Room' at the beginning is not very tense and has a gradual build-up of tension. This effect gives the reader time to absorb the atmosphere. If you could show the tension on a graph, it would be a positive correlation between the tension of the story and the time/length.

Whereas ' The Tell-tale Heart' has a very tense beginning, then the tension dies down a bit, but around half way through the story it starts to gradually rise. There is a gradual build-up to climax throughout the story.

I think that 'The Red Room' is better at creating a sense of fear and horror in the reader in this paragraph.

In 'The Red Room', the main character is very sure of himself and does not think that he is afraid of ghosts. He thinks he is better than the people that live there and he thinks that they are just silly old people who believe in ghosts as he does not.

The quote "...it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me." And "Eight-and-twenty years... ..I have lived, and never a ghost have I seen yet" proves that he does not think he is scared of ghosts.

Right from the beginning of 'The Tell-tale Heart' it is obvious that the narrator is nervous, mad and is the total opposite of calm. After the first two paragraphs he eases up a little but as the story goes on he gets more and more tense until the very end when he gets found out and kills the man. During the story he has a problem with another man's eye, the reader never finds out why but it is probably just the simple fact that he is mad.

'The Tell-tale Heart' definitely does a better job of creating a sense of fear and horror in the reader than 'The Red Room'.

At the end of 'The Red Room' it is all very calm and quiet which is completely different to the end of 'The Tell-tale Heart' which ends full of tension with the use of short sentences. Both of the stories would have been very scary when they first came out but I didn't find them very scary at all, but the story did definitely create a sense of fear and horror.