

How does hg wells convey the experience of fear in the red room

[Literature](#)



The Red Room by H. G. Wells is a short story filled with suspense and fear created by its use of language. This essay will attempt to explore how, using language, H. G. Wells conveys the experience of one man's fear to the reader. In doing this the essay will explore how this one man, the narrator, feels and acts at different points in the story. Including how he deals and experiences his fear. Additionally the essay will examine how his fear eventually defeats and changes him. At the start of the Red Room, the narrator of the story is a quite different man to the one he ends up as.

At the start, he is an arrogant man. He repeats phrases such as " Eight-and-twenty years" use of which also shows how he used language more complex than the normal even for the period the story was written. This itself shows his sense of superiority for the old people. This superiority is reinforced by the scepticism he shows saying, "... it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me". Either this scepticism or his natural dislike for them may have resulted in him lacking humility for the old people. He thinks of them as "... bent... wrinkled... aged" terms not normally used for people to whom respect is given.

He also says that he thinks of old people as " Inhuman in senility". He thinks of them as " trying to enhance the spiritual terrors of their house". This he suspects due to the constant askance of a man who repeats many times, " It is your own choosing". This phrase as well as annoying the narrator starts to build up the fear of readers of the story. The mans scepticism is still shown towards the final part of the beginning of the story when the narrator repeats twice the words, "" If" said I, " you will show me to this haunted room of yours, I will make myself comfortable their"".

<https://assignbuster.com/how-does-hg-wells-convey-the-experience-of-fear-in-the-red-room/>

A sentence that shows scepticism of the room calling it theirs and saying that he has no problem being in it. During the Red Room, the narrator experiences different levels of fear. This manifests itself in different ways steadily increasing in intensity along with their descriptions in language. The first twinge of fear felt by the narrator is the discomfort he feels around the old people. How, " The three of them made me uncomfortable". This however cannot be called true fear instead it could be called an unease that is displayed in the use of the word " uncomfortable".

Another slight increase in his fear is shown when the man enters the corridor to proceed to the Red Room. This is shown by how he says the old people and the " old fashioned furniture" had "... affected me in spite of my efforts to keep myself at a matter of fact phase". He calls these old people " spectral" and " belonging to another age". In proceeding further into the house, the man's fear is shown to develop in several other ways to the reader. This development is also shown to spring from his imagination shown by how he thinks of things as " too stimulating for the imagination".

These things include the personification of a " bronze group" of statues whose shadows " fell with marvellous distinction" and the imagines hearing " a rustling". His imagination also results in him interpreting his environment differently with things becoming " shadowy". An interpretation that could also display a more basic fear of the dark. This more primal fear is shown to exist in him when shadows " chased after" the man as he walked to the room. In the Red Room, the narrator experiences fear and deals with it in

several ways. The most obvious of these is his attempts to rationalize things using scientific language.

He makes a "systematic examination" of the Red Room and even expresses his fear in scientific language, "a state of considerable nervous tension". In the use of scientific language, the man is shown by the author to be steadily losing control and being overwhelmed as his use of it decreases. The narrator is then shown to deal with his fear of the silence in another way. He talks to himself having conversations about the "impossibility of ghosts and haunting" he also "Strings together rhymes" in an attempt to stop his mind from imagining in the silence.

These attempts are also shown by the author to be futile making "Unpleasant echoes" yet another sign of him being overwhelmed. Another attempt to deal with the fear of the dark manifests itself in two ways. First, he lights the fire, excusing it as an attempt to "keep down any disposition to shiver". Next, he finds from the landing outside more candles which when dispersed and lit left "not an inch of the room" with no light shining on it. This allowed him to keep his mind further occupied maintaining the candles.

To further keep, his mind occupied the narrator forms "a kind of barricade" near the fire made up of a chair and table on which he laid his "revolver ready to hand". This is a further form of occupying the mind and a way of gaining a sense of physical protection should some tangible enemy come along. Finally, the fear defeats him by a combination of measures shown in the story. Firstly, it torments him making candle flames vanish "as if the wicks had been nipped between a finger and a thumb".

This makes him increasingly more fearful and increases in pace his movements from having "walked" to having "Dashed" an increase also shown in his speech from having "said" to having "cried". Increases that seem to convey the fear of the narrator whose own fear increases in line with his speed. These increases continue as the shadows approach "like a ragged storm cloud", an unstoppable force of nature. This continues to envelop him as he becomes "almost frantic" being horrified about "the coming darkness" that makes him increasingly animalistic as one of his primal fears takes over him, his "self possession deserted" him.

In saying this, it is shown how the fear defeated him by exploiting one of man's most basic fears, the dark. This made him become increasingly animalistic as he "darted to and fro" and "screamed with all" his might until knocked unconscious by hitting his head in a wild frenzied panic to leave the room. When the narrator regains his consciousness in the morning, he is an instantly changed man. He becomes less assertive asking "Where am I", and more sympathetic to the old people who in turn become more sympathetic to him "speaking as to one who grieves a broken friend".

The young narrator has also changed his views finally believing in ghosts and that the Red Room is indeed inhabited by something that he thinks is "pure fear". A description that an arrogant man would not use lightly which as such has been used by H. G. Wells to be showing how the man has changed his use of words that earlier he would of thought of as ridiculous. However, now he thinks such views wiser and has ceased to be as arrogant. The Red Room

by H. G. Wells is I believe a story of much brilliant use of language to show the fear building up inside a man.

A fear that however I think H. G. Wells wanted to show as one of the man's own making. As such, H. G. Wells uses various techniques of language to increase the perception of fear in the man conveyed to the reader. These techniques include the use of increasing speeds in adjectives and verbs as well as the use of dramatic sentence structure such as shortened sentences. All these things combined make the Red Room in my opinion one of the best stories for expressing fear and its most basic forms to be found in literature.