

Essay on ‘The Listeners’

FA Activity

English Literature

‘The Listeners’ is a poem based around the gothic genre; this poem is about a Traveller and a horse’s journey through a forest.

In this poem, the poet has used many different words and phrases to depict different types of sounds. The words are champed, hoofed, etc. This is not only the case in this poem but gothic poems in general. Some of the points and terms mentioned in this poem that represent and depict sound are onomatopoeia, alliteration, the rhyme scheme, refrain, etc. Some of the examples and evidence of my mentioned points are “And his horse in the silence champed the grasses”, “But only a host of phantom listeners”, “And the sound of iron on stone”, “Of the forest’s ferny floor”, the constant repetition of “Is there anybody there?”, the rhyme scheme of the poem which was ABAC, the silence in the forest, etc. The actual and detailed reason of why poets and even authors use these types of descriptive words like the ones I have mentioned is because these words give a more gothic feeling to the poem/story and they also give the reader an even more suspenseful feeling as these words build up the action very well until the climax. Many kinds of research and analysis show that most people whilst reading a poem or a story create a constant movie in their mind which is built with the information given in the storyline. This movie is the actual reason why the reader is surprised when something surprising happens. The aspect of sounds embedded in the story makes the movie in their mind even better and a better movie is a more interesting movie. That is why a poem like ‘The Listeners’ keeps the reader interested and cheerful.

This poem can be based in past, present, or the future period because there is some evidence in the poem which relates it to these periods. I think that this poem should be in the past, this is my point and some of the evidence supporting the same are: From the line “And a bird flew up out of the turret”, I can observe that there was a turret on top of the house and in present days, we can’t find turrets on top of houses and I am expecting the same in the future situation as well but there were turrets in houses which are in the past, in present days, we have many modes of transportation like cars, trains, etc. but in the past, we used to use horses and carts to travel and there were a lot of mentions of the Traveler’s horse in this poem signifying it to be in the past, there was a line in this poem saying “To that voice from the world of men”, this line says that women in the poems time were considered unequal, in the present situation, the world is equal but in the past, it wasn’t the same, that means that this poem should be based in the past. To further prove my point, the language and grammar used in this poem don’t give a futuristic and modern feeling but it gives a feeling of the historical and gothic times. One more point I have observed is that the poet's name is not a usual name that you will find but is a very unique name that I believe people in the ancient times used to have.

The theme of a story plot is very important and is one of the main aspects of being an author/poet. This poem 'The Listeners' has 2 main themes/points of focus in its plot which are 'Isolation' and 'nature'. Some of the evidence linking the plot of the story to Isolation is: the constant use of the words lone, silence, and stillness, etc., the setting of the plot is also signifying loneliness and isolation from the world since they are standing in a desolate forest, the story suggests that the traveler and his horse are isolated from the outside world and have come to explore this abandoned shack. Some of the evidence linking the plot of the story to Nature are: the setting is related to the natural world since they are in a forest, the poem has used almost no words related to technology and we could say that this poet has not taken a techno-centric approach to write this poem, the poem kept using adjectives related to nature to describe other components, for example, the leafy sky, moonlit door, phantom listeners, etc. I think that these themes suit the plot of the story because the loneliness of the traveler and his horse being in a complete still environment tells that they are isolated from the world and them being inside a forest and using all the different types of language and terms tells that they are in a fully natural environment.