Comparison Of Rockinghorse Essay, Research Paper

A Comparison and Contrast of D. H. Lawrence s The Rocking Horse Winner and Graham Greene s The Destructors

The similarities and differences in D. H. Lawrence s The Rocking-Horse Winner and Graham Greene s The Destructors (reprinted in Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. Arp, Literature: Structure, Sound, an Sense, 6th ed. [Fort Worth: Harcourt, 1993] 291-303 and 49- 60) are easy for the reader to see. The settings of these two stories are different but two characters, mother in The Rocking-Horse Winner, and Trevor, in The Destructors, are very similar in that they are both evil characters.

The Rocking-Horse Winner is set in a pleasant house, with a garden (291) where a family consisting of mother, father, a boy and two girls live. They have servants and beautiful surroundings and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighborhood but the mother felt they had no luck (291). It becomes obvious early in the story that the house was haunted by a voice that could be heard all the time saying the words there must be more money (292). The boy, Paul, even hears the voice in the springs of his rocking horse. The mother of the beautiful haunted house constantly wants more money. Paul discovers that when he rides his rocking horse hard he mysteriously learns the winner at the horse races. Using this mysterious knowledge Paul earns a lot of money through gambling. Paul gives it anonymously to his mother in hopes that the money would stop the whispering but the voices in the house now screamed in a sort of ecstasy: There must be more money now more than ever (299). One day in order to get the name of the next winner, Malabar (302), Paul fell critically ill. Bassett, the gardener, who had been betting for Paul at the races, bet heavy on Malabar and wins eighty thousand pounds. Paul dies and Oscar, Paul s uncle, tells mother Hester, you re eighty-odd thousand to the good and a poor devil of a son to the bad (303). In contrast the setting of The Destructors is in London shortly after the Second World War, it was the eve of August Bank holiday (49). The Wormsley Common Gang met every morning in an impromptu car-park, the site of the last bomb of the first blitz (49). The objective of the gang is to destroy Old Misery s house near the car park. The house was on one side of the car-park (50) and it literally lent, for it had suffered from the blast of the bomb (50). The house was supported on the sides by wooden struts. The author, Greene, further describes the house as stuck up like a jagged tooth and carried on the further relics of its neighbor, a dado, the remains of a fireplace (50). It had once been a fine home with a staircase two hundred years old like a corkscrew (51) built by a well-known architect, Wren (50), but Old Misery had not kept the house up and lived alone in the crumpled house, doing for himself (50).

In looking for similarities in the two short stories, two characters stood out as evil. Greene introduces Trevor in The Destructors as The new recruit (49). Trevor had been with the gang for several months but was the last recruit added. Trevor has a brooding silence (49) that all the gang can easily recognize. He is called simply T by the gang members and is so respected that he does not even receive any ignoble ceremony of initiation. (49). Trevor visits Old Misery and reports this to the gang. The gang is astonished that he did this and didn t even steal anything. While inside the house Trevor discovers a way to pull it down (52) and destroy it, then convinces the gang to help him. While Old Misery is away celebrating the August Bank Holiday, the gang demolishes the interior of the house. They found Old Misery s money and burnt the bills one by one. (55). Trevor destroys Old Misery s life savings as well as his house.

The mother, in The Rocking-Horse Winner is also an evil character. Her love turned to dust (291) because the husband could not provide enough money to satisfy her. She does not love her children anymore and is consumed with the love of money and her heart is hard. And so the house came to be haunted by unspoken phrase: There must be more money (292). She relates to her son, Paul, that they don t have enough money because they have no luck. To satisfy his mother Paul seeks luck so he can give his mother what she wants, money. In the end the mother sacrifices her son for filthy lucre (293), as she calls it.

The settings of the two stories provide a dramatic contrast. The setting in The Destructors is an old, neglected and bombed-out house in a desolate neighborhood. However the setting in The Rocking Horse Winner was a lovely pleasant but haunted house in a good neighborhood. The character Trevor, in The Destructors, and mother, in The Rocking-Horse Winner, are comparatively the same type of evil characters. Their compulsive behavior consumes their lives and effect the lives of those around them.