**An Analysis of the poem “Two’s Company” (Prescribed for the O/L English Literature New Syllabus) by Raymond Wilson**

Raymond Wilson is a famous American author and journalist. He was a professor of history in his university in Kansas and has won many awards and honors for his writing and university teaching.

The poem satirizes people who are 100 percent sure that there are no such things as ghosts. The persona in the poem is such a person. The humor comes from the contrast between what ‘he’ says at the bginning and what he says and does later.

Our ‘hero’ has decided to spend the night in a haunted house just to prove to his friends that there are no such things as ghosts. But as night falls, strange things happen which frighten him. The way he tries to convince himself that there are no ghosts, while at the same time taking care to protect himself is very funny:

Come, come, it’s merely nerves, he’s certain

(But just the same he draws the curtain.)

There are many instances of this which show that as night falls he gets more and more frightened; so much so, that he hides himself inside a cupboard:

To seek the safest place to hide-

(The cupboard’s strong – he creeps inside.)

Even then he tells himself that there is nothing to fear. But to his great shock, the ghost who was also ‘living’ inside the cupboard, speaks politely in his ear, introducing itself. The ghost’s polite tone evokes humor:

….How do you do?

I am a ghost. Pray who are you?

This certainly contributes to the humor as normally we do not expect such politeness from a ghost.

The poet creates a frightening atmosphere that increases the tension and the fear in the mind of the persona in the poem.

and left him just as dusk was falling  
 with a hunchback moon and screech owls calling. —

… But what is that?  Outside it seemed  
as if chains rattled, someone screamed!

The comedy of the situation arises from the rising fear of the self-assured protaganist who doesn’t believe in ghosts and his final encounter with the ghost whom he finds in the same cupboard he wanted to hide himself. The surprise also adds to the humor. The sub-title of the poem which says ‘The sad story of a man who didn’t believe in shosts’ is also humorous as it turns out to be a comedy in the end.

The use of the rhyming couplets give a quick movement to the poem in tune with the dramatic situation presented by the poet. It also highlights the comic quality of the poem. This poem also reminds me of another humours poem about ghosts called ‘Colonel Frazerkerly’ where the protagonist really outsmarts the ghost.