

The telltale heart

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Analysis of the point of view in "The Telltale Heart" Introduction Edgar Allan Poe scripted "The Tell-tale Heart" from the point of view of the first person, since we find that the narrator is an actor in the story, in fact, the chief protagonist. The story reflects the point of view of the young man who is living with an old man. Throughout this narrative, using a first person, the narrator tries to convince the reader that he is not insane or mad; indeed, he feels that it takes a lot of skill and cunning, to commit a murder. The story starts in a location that remains undisclosed to the reader, which one can assume to be possibly a prison or even a mental home. To defend his stand, he narrates a story that he believes will prove his innocence and that his mind is not unhinged. This story is set in a house where the narrator lived with an old man, and the entire plot takes place over a period of eight days.

Discussion Summary: In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator using the first person form of narrative describes in detail, how he killed the old man, with whom he was living. The old man screamed as he was murdered, and hearing the cry a neighbor alerted the police. When the police arrived, the narrator took them around the house, finally coming into the old man's bedroom, where he after murdering the old man he had buried him under the tiled floor planks, beneath the bed. As he was speaking to the police, he suddenly heard a sound that he confuses as the loud heart beat of the old man. This sound of the so-called heartbeat forced the narrator to breakdown and he confessed to the murder. In the story, the reader finds that, the only plausible reason that the narrator gives for murdering the old man is that the latter had an 'eagle eye', signifying a misty light blue eyes. Each time the narrator looked into those 'eagle eyes' he felt a murderous

rage. Every night, for many days, he entered the old man's bedroom wanting to murder; but refrained from doing so, because while the old man slept, his eyes were closed. Without seeing the blue eyes, the narrator did not feel the insane rage, and so desisted from killing the old man. Finally, one night as the narrator entered the room he found the old man awake, and seeing the misty blue eyes, he feels overpowered with rage, and kills him. After the murder, he quickly takes the body and hides it under the tiles, beneath the bed. When the police arrived, after being alerted by the neighbors, the narrator lied to the police and said that it was he who had screamed after seeing a nightmare. He allowed the police to search the entire house and even offered them a seat, which was right above the murdered man's body. At this point, the narrator, thinking that he had heard the sound of the old man's heartbeat, suddenly tore open the tiles to reveal the body to the police. Analysis: Since this is a first-person narration here the reader must be wary of the so called 'unreliable narrator,' the participant in the action whose perception may be distorted; when this is the case, the fun for the reader is to sort out what is really happening from what the narrator says or thinks is happening. Here in this story, this is the case where the narrator is a mad man, though he perceives differently and sets about to convince the reader that he is not insane. So, though the narrator claims that he is not insane, the reader through his own analysis realizes that the narrator in this story is unreliable and is either mistaken and under a delusion, or is lying about his sanity. As for example, in one place the narrator states that he can hear "all things in the heaven and in the earth"; here the reader can automatically assume that the protagonist cum narrator is indeed mad, since

it is impossible for any sane person to I hear “ all things in the heaven and in the earth.” As he lies to the police while telling them it was his shriek which the neighbors heard, here one can contend that even normal people lie.

However, it is not in a normal person to kill another man simply because he does not like his eyes, while most sane people also do not carefully plan murders, then lie to the police, and finally without any plausible reason, confess, screaming “ Here, here! - it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

Conclusion The Tell-Tale Heart," a short story by Edgar Allan Poe is an unreliable narrative in first person by an unnamed narrator who maintains that he is sane, even after committing a murder for no reason whatsoever. The story being from the point of view of a first person is unreliable, thus leaving the reader to analyze the entire story and decide whether the narrator is mad or not. References Poe, A. (1998). The Tell-Tale Heart. New York: Books of Wonder.