

Edgar allan poe's use  
of excitement as  
demonstrated in his  
narrative the pit  
and ...



The Pit and the Pendulum creates a theme of suspense. Throughout the story, Poe develops an everlasting suspense until the execution. The story builds on the human mind's craving for information. It does this by giving the reader the perspective of the prisoner, who doesn't have any useful knowledge. Furthermore, when the narrator begins to describe his sufferings, he doesn't get finish his thoughts. A quote from the story:

“ The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets in the hope of catching some faint ray of light.”

This little snippet of the story shows that even the narrator feels the suspense of events to happen to him, and when. Toward the middle of the story, while strapped to a wooden board and a sharpened pendulum swings ever so slowly toward him, threatening to cut his heart out. This scene took way longer than expected if a pendulum intended to swing with enough force to kill him, and in the process caused the readers to create themselves a suspense of imminent death. Then with a heart pounding “ ending” to our narrator, he comes up with an ingenious idea, saving himself in the nick of time.

Leaning to the end, the walls start to painstakingly converge toward the pit, all the while pushing our narrator along with it. The readers realize that even though the walls move at a crawl we all know that in the end he will get pushed into his death, we hope in suspense that he can come up with another idea just in time, forcing the reader to keep going in order to know what happens.

At the very end:“ I felt that I tottered upon the brink-I averted my eyes”

The paragraph's ending left us all in suspense of a cliff hanger and left us feeling an urge to find out what happened. Throughout the entirety of the story Poe manipulates every element to create a sense of suspense.