

# The narrative technique of poe's horror stories



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

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Allan Poe writes "The Black Cat" (695) and "The Tell Tale Heart" (691) in a narrative voice. In writing the stories he uses the narrator to tell about what happened and the acts that were involved when he did what he did. When telling the stories in first person as Poe did, it is hard to determine the real from the false in this type of narrative, as it was with Poe too. He told his stories from the mind of a madman, per se.

He tells both stories from the mind of a mentally ill person or from a diseased mind as in "The Tell-Tale Heart". The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. (The Tell Tale Heart, 692) He talks about his disease, referring to his alcoholism being a mental disease. He proves many times throughout the story that he is a mad man. He talks about killing the old man because his eye reminded him of a bird, just the craziness of the human psyche. Poe has a way of showing and defining the human psyche in a demonic fashion.

And yet at the same time act like he is not mad and that is what any normal person would do if they are bothered by something or someone. And he shows realism in doing these acts because of how he shows the human emotion in "The Tell Tale Heart": "Yet for some minutes longer, I refrained and kept still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. (The Tell Tale Heart, 693) When he was describing the guilt he had after killing the man. He thought it was his heart beating when in fact; it was his own heart pounding and pounding.

These events support the idea that he is mad and confirms the fact that we do not know the reliability of the story at all. Edgar Allan Poe chose to tell his stories the way he did so that he would give the impression that he was not trustworthy. This works towards his efforts and would not be the same if told in present tense. Knowing this helps with the message of the story the author is trying to get across as in "The Black Cat", "For the most wild, yet most homely narrative, which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. (The Black Cat, 695) Here at the beginning of the story he leaves you wondering about the credibility of the details and curious if you can trust his story. Edgar Allan Poe wants us to experience the mystery and the climax and surprise that he presents in telling the story. He will start the story with what seems to be a hint of honesty. In "The Black Cat", he tells you about his childhood, "From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. (695) Then he immediately tells you of his alcoholism in "The Tell Tale Heart". Poe does not suggest that any of this would label him as a mad man. He is all too proud of himself on how he was able to come up with the plot in "The Tell Tale Heart" when he stated, "You should have seen how wisely I proceeded with what caution, with what foresight, with what dissimulation I went to work!" Poe uses the narration to build up the suspense of the stories and how his human nature was pushed to the limits with the old man's eye and with the black cat and the return of the black cat.

He builds up the suspense and then leaves you a bit feeling sorry for him and trying to understand why he did what he did. Then he goes on to act like he

has no feeling whatsoever about the killings. The he is almost justified, I mean, wouldn't you be if you were him? And then human again as he narrates the apparent guilt he felt over the acts as being the key that ultimately got him caught. His mind played tricks on him and he didn't notice it. [http://www. sparknotes. com/lit/poestories/section8. rhtml](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/poestories/section8.rhtml) MLA Citation " The Narrative Technique Of Edgar Allan Poe". Anti Essays. 28 Feb. 2013