

'the tell tale heart,
'the sea raiders', 'the
goblins who stole a
sexton' and 'th...



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In 'The Tell Tale Heart', Edgar Allan Poe uses emotive vocabulary to build up a feeling of tension and excitement. His clever use of repetition builds up the feeling of madness and obsession that is experienced by the story's central character; phrases such as 'steadily, steadily' 1 and 'stealthily, stealthily' 2. The distinct lack of direct speech in the story paves the way for description, and Poe uses this to great effect.

This use of strong emotive vocabulary expresses the nature of the narrator extremely well; his description of the old man's 'vulture eye' 3 clearly demonstrates that the narrator is not entirely sane. For some reason unbeknownst to the reader, the narrator develops a hate of the old man that stems from his 'evil eye' 4, and his twisted logic leads him to decide to kill the old man, 'and thus rid myself of the eye for ever' 5. This therefore puts the reader on edge and makes him feel tense; the sheer fact that the narrator is so determined to prove that he is not insane immediately raises eyebrows, for a completely sane man does not go around trying to prove so. His unstable mental state is once again demonstrated when the narrator describes how he approached the murder of the old man; he is proud of his meticulous preparation, the long hours spent inching his head into the old man's bedroom, and argues with the reader that a man lacking sanity would not be so careful when planning such a crime. The reader soon realizes that the fear of the vulture eye has consumed the narrator, who has now become a victim to the madness that he had hoped to elude, heightening the tension in the story greatly.

Poe then builds on the foundations he has set early in the story, and the eerie tension increases about a third of the way in. He describes the

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narrator's nightly visits to the old man's chambers, in which he, once again, uses repetition to exemplify the narrator's obsessive insanity; 'cautiously, oh, so cautiously' 6. This leads us to expect something is about to happen, or that the narrator is about to do something shocking; the narrator himself is acting cautiously, so he is obviously wary of what he may find on the other side of the door. The narrator 'took an hour to place my whole head within the opening' 7, another obvious quote that shows the reader that the narrator is definitely not sane.

Again, the narrator is pleased with his careful planning: 'would a madman have been so wise as this?' 8 The narrator is always asking questions to the reader, therefore letting the reader use their imagination to fill in the gaps that are left cleverly by Poe, and this method can often be far more effective than having everything right before the reader; this way, the reader creates his own tension, because he is forced to use his imagination and can therefore imagine things that are not put into the story. The narrator then describes the old man's eye, and says 'it haunted me' 9; we are not given a reason for this, and therefore it is as if the narrator deems it natural, and that the reader would also dislike the old man's eye if he saw it. The clear reference to Shakespeare's Macbeth, when the rays of light from his lantern rest upon 'the damned spot' 10 has a strong effect on the reader, as this phrase is from the very tense scene where Lady Macbeth is trying to wash the imaginary blood furiously from her hands. Another similarity with Macbeth from this story is the narrator's aural hallucinations, which can be compared to when Macbeth murders Duncan; a knocking sound, perhaps of Duncan's heartbeat can apparently be heard by Macbeth, even after he is

dead. The fact that the narrator appears to feel no remorse or guilt about what he has done makes the story very chilling, tense and mysterious. When the narrator tells the reader about how he disposed of the body, he tells it in such a matter of fact way; ' First of all I dismembered the corpse.

Poe's use of the psychopath as the main character creates the strong atmosphere that he wanted, as psychopaths are always associated with mystery and horror. This is used to great effect by Poe to play with the emotions of the reader, slowly building up the tension to a shocking climax. The narrator's aural hallucinations send shivers down the reader's spine, for what sane man believes he can hear a dead man's heartbeat? He is so sure that the noise he can hear is not inside his head, ' I found that the noise was not within my ears' 12, and he strongly believes that the noise he can hear is the beating of the old mans heart. The fact that he believes the policemen are mocking him when they cannot hear the heartbeat too sets off a feeling of irrational despair and panic within him that finally climaxes with the heartbeat becoming so loud that the narrator finally cracks.

This is obviously one of the tensest parts of the story, in which the reader becomes totally immersed in the growing tension. Poe uses first person narration for a number of ways in this story; if it were told in third person, for example, the narrator's insanity and obsessiveness would not be nearly as well expressed. In first person, it is as if the reader is inside the mind of the narrator, so we can actually hear what he is thinking. However, as he narrates it to us we get the impression that he might only be telling us what he wants us to hear, and that there is a clever mind at work.

We can get an insight into the narrator's mind, and the fact that he believes he is innocent wouldn't have been nearly as well put across had this story been in third person. This therefore means that all tension would have been lost had the story been narrated in third person, and therefore would have been not nearly as effective. This method of writing varies greatly to that of H. G. Wells' short story, 'The Sea Raiders', an early science fiction novel detailing the appearance of a group of man eating cephalopods off the coast of England.

Unlike Poe, Wells relies on a mixture of objective and subjective vocabulary to turn an entirely fictional story into a seemingly factual account. The first and last third of this story have an entirely objective feel to them, whilst the main 'drama' of the story only occurs in the middle third. This contrasts greatly to Poe's story, which is dramatic from the very first line. The opening paragraph immediately strikes the reader as uncannily scientific, as the paragraph gives names, dates and geographical locations that could all be genuine. The Latin usage of the name, 'Haploteuthis ferox' shows once again an analytical and precise manner about which the cephalopods are described, and as Latin names are only given to creatures that are actually in existence, the reader is immediately uncertain as to whether this is fact or fiction. It comes across to the reader that the opening paragraph could have been plucked from a scientific journal in the way it is written.

This is completely adverse to Poe's story, in which, although plausible, the reader is more or less aware straight away that it is not intended to be taken as a fictional account. Wells decided to narrate this story in third person, presumably to maintain the neutral, objective standpoint, which again

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contrasts with Poe who decided to use first person, to increase the feeling of tension. Because the opening few pages are so seemingly accurate and factual, a mysterious atmosphere is created; the reader is made to wonder whether this story is true or not, and therefore the reader is unsure of what is fact and what is fiction. The whole point of science fiction novels are to make the reader wonder whether the story could have been true, whether it could have happened, and this early example is no exception. On the other hand, if Wells' intentions were to create a dramatic story which was not intended to have a hint of fact about it, this factual style would not have been a good choice at all. This concise and factual style continues well into the first page and a half, with Wells describing how so little is known about these mysterious creatures; his objective manner once again leads the reader to believe the story could have a hint of truth in it.

In no department of zoological science' 13, ' a cachalot was killed of Terceira' 14 are written in such a matter of fact and prosaic way that the least the reader can do is consider their credibility. Wells' clever use of scientific terminology would also fool a less widely read reader; some may think he is telling the truth after all, if he can use the scientific terms. This is the opposite of ' The Tell Tale Heart' where Poe only uses emotive vocabulary, with very few objective sentences at all. Another of Well's unique methods to make his account more mysterious is to pretend that he doesn't know all the facts; this leads the reader to believe Wells himself might not have dreamed the story up after all.

Indeed, if a writer makes up a story, he will surely know all the facts, for he can make up any facts he likes to fill in the gaps. But by Wells saying, for instance, ' possibly it was the stress of hunger migration...

' 15, or ' but it will be, perhaps, better to avoid necessarily inconclusive discussion... ' 16, indicates that he may be just as much in the dark about the cephalopods as the reader is.

This can, perhaps, be compared loosely to ' The Tell Tale Heart', as the narrator himself is not even completely aware what made him kill the old man. Wells also says that it is only by chance that these creatures were discovered in the first place, again giving the reader the sense that Wells isn't aware of all the facts. By using this tactic, the reader becomes unsure, as they don't know where they stand; the reader is constantly asking himself whether this is fact or fiction, and therefore this creates a quite tense atmosphere. However, the main drama and atmosphere of the story occurs only in the middle third, as the first and last third are written in a very objective way.

Part two is where the story begins to move away from the objective and factual style and into the realms of a more typical science fiction novel; emotive vocabulary, with short, snappy sentences intended to create tension and drama. The reader can, however, sense that the story is becoming more dramatic and tense earlier than part two; at the bottom of the third page, Mr Fison ' realised the horrible nature of his discovery. It came upon him with some suddenness' 17. This shows that already Wells is trying to make the

reader become more on edge and tense, as the reader can sense a growing feeling of tension that will continue to build throughout part two.

Wells describes the previously scientifically named cephalopods now as 'horrible beasts' 18, and uses subjective words such as 'grotesque' 19, 'evil' 20, 'revolting' 21, 'creeping' 22 and 'threatening' 23. All of these words contribute to the escalating sense of impending doom and tension that Wells creates well in this middle third of the story. Part two continues to build the tension, with short snappy sentences that make the reader read faster and therefore makes the story more exciting. Wells often refers to the creatures as 'monsters' 24 or 'beasts' 25 that are always 'dark' 26 or 'evil' 27; this in itself adds a feeling of tension, and is also very effective because the cephalopods are always described as being just out of sight and in the shadows, as if the reader does not know from where they might spring next. The cephalopods are also given a human-like personification; their eyes 'glaring straight and resolute' 28. This makes the reader feel very tense, because it makes him feel as if he is not in control, and that there is an evil, human-like intelligence about the cephalopods.

When the men come face to face with the cephalopods, one of the sailors exclaims, 'Ugly swine!' 29 and later in the story, Mr Fison shouts 'for God's sake!' 30. This is obviously very strong dramatic vocabulary which makes the whole situation seem very tense and on edge. Part two can easily be compared to the main part of 'The Tell Tale Heart', with both stories using emotive vocabulary and short sentences to create a strong dramatic atmosphere. The Goblins who Stole a Sexton' by Charles Dickens is a very

different story to the previous two, with a moralistic storyline that is obviously an early prototype for ' A Christmas Carol'.

The story itself is found in the Dickens novel, ' The Pickwick Papers'. Dickens makes this story tense and mysterious in a number of ways; as this story has a meaning behind it, the tension that is created by the goblins makes the reader think about himself - because the goblins are so terrifying, if the reader is at all like Gabriel Grub, then he should change immediately or the goblins shall visit him too. Also, the setting of the graveyard easily creates a feeling of tension, as there is always a negative association with the supernatural. However, the use of the supernatural to create tension is unique to this story only.

The beginning of Dickens' story details the central character, Gabriel Grub, whose alliterative name is also allegorical; it could be said that this in itself creates a little tension, as the word ' Grub' creates a negative impression. Grub is key to the story, and his attitude towards children and Christmas allows for tension in the story; he is described as an ' ill conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow' 31. It is not the jolly children and the general good feelings of Christmas that keep Grub happy - the happiness, is, in fact, like ' gall and wormwood to the heart' 32 - but what keeps him happy is the ' thought of measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough' 33 - this creates tension for the reader; how can this man find comfort in potential killers of children? Grub's evil is once more exemplified when, after encountering a happy young boy in the graveyard, Grub ' rapped him over the head with his lantern five or six times, to teach him to modulate his voice' 34; this makes the reader feel quite appalled and on edge at the pure malevolence of Grub.

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This same feeling can be replicated when reading 'The Tell Tale Heart', as the reader feels some disgust towards the central character after feeling no remorse about killing the old man.

The initial very tense moments of the story comes after two pages, when Grub gives his rather twisted rendition of a Christmas song. Dickens uses tension well in this scene; a voice comes from the darkness, repeating Grub's words. This has an effect on the reader quite heavily; could it have been a ghost in the graveyard, or something more sinister? The voice of the goblin made Grub's ' blood run cold' 35, another statement that is intended to heighten tension. The use of intimidation by the goblins also increases the tension, and increases the feeling that something is about to happen, putting the reader on edge.

The goblins can mysteriously control the lights in the church, and they can flash them on and off; they can also control the organ, and as they speak the eerie organ begins to play. Both of these combined have a huge effect on both Grub and the reader, who both feel as though they have no control over what is going on; this therefore creates a strong atmosphere of tension.

However, the most tension is created about midway through the story, with Dickens describing how the goblins teach Grub a lesson. Having descended through the earth, the goblins make Grub drink a scalding goblet of pure fire, and they stand and watch as ' he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes.

.. ' 36; this makes the reader feel very uncomfortable and on edge. The goblins continue to torture Grub by violently kicking him and beating him,

which makes the reader become very tense and apprehensive; the goblin ' lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and flourishing it above his head a little, to insure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub' 37.

Although delivered in a comical way, the reader can sense that below the humorous fashion in which the story is written, there is perhaps a darker side to the story as well.

This hidden dark side to a story is comparable to ' The Sea Raiders', in which the cephalopods also appear to have a dark hidden intelligence about them that is concealed from the reader. The sentimental and traditional nature of this story does little to contribute to the overall feeling of tension; the way in which the first scene that the goblins show to Grub is described virtually erases the mounting tension and seems to slow the story down. However, between scenes, the intermittent abuse of Grub by the goblins helps to keep the levels of tension going throughout the middle section of this story. This sentimental style is unlike any other of the stories previously described and is unique to Dickens, amongst these stories. The tension dies out towards the end of the story, and is replaced by a sense of mystery, as Grub returns a completely reformed man and yet the locals would not accept his reformation, ' his repentance scoffed at' 38.

Dickens leaves the reader with a sense of uncertainty, because from the locals' reactions, the reader becomes all of a sudden unsure whether Grub really was abducted by goblins or whether he was just in a drunken stupor. This is supported by the many theories that were put forward by the locals, all of which were entirely imagined and heavily dramatised. The reader is left uncertain of what really happened to Gabriel Grub, and can therefore <https://assignbuster.com/the-tell-tale-heart-the-sea-raiders-the-goblins-who-stole-a-sexton-and-the-yellow-face-essay/>

imagine what he likes; this can often be a far better method for creating an atmosphere, as the reader's mind would be inclined to imagine far more tense and mysterious scenarios than could have been portrayed by the author. 'The Yellow Face' by Arthur Conan Doyle is completely different to the last three, as a detective story is a very unique genre and the style in which it is written is also very unique. Despite this fact, the writer still manages to create a strong atmosphere of mystery and tension, using some conventional methods and some exclusive to Conan Doyle. An obvious way in which Conan Doyle creates tension in this story is the use of the mysterious face at the window, '.

.. as I looked I suddenly became aware of a face that was watching me out of one of the upper windows. I don't know what there was about that face, Mr Holmes, but it seemed to send a chill right down my back. ' 39This creates a lot of tension for the reader because of the sheer thought that a sickly yellow face is watching from the window, just watching and waiting. The true identity of the yellow face is not revealed to the reader before the very end of the story, and so every time this image is used it has the same impact on him.

This image is so effective because the reader becomes very uncomfortable at the thought of the 'yellow, livid' 40 face at the window that is seemingly always there, just watching passers by; it creates a very eerie atmosphere. This obsession with the face experienced by the main character in the story is comparable to the narrator's obsession with the old man's eye in 'The Tell Tale Heart'; both end up consumed by them and end up in no control of their

actions, fuelled by their obsessions. Conan Doyle also uses the image of an empty house to create an atmosphere of tension for the reader, '..

. a kettle was singing on the fire... a large black cat was coiled up in a basket.

.. the furniture and pictures were of the most common and vulgar description... ' 41This creates the impression that there is a seemingly deserted house, but with the kettle still boiling, and the cat curled up.

This makes the reader feel very tense, because it is obvious that something very mysterious is going on, and this makes the reader ask himself questions; why is the house empty? What is going on? This makes the reader far more inclined to have their imagination run away with them and to imagine what is going on for themselves. Like many of the other authors, Conan Doyle uses very strong, dramatic vocabulary to excite the reader and make situations very tense. To build the tension up before the final confrontation, Conan Doyle uses very emotive vocabulary: ' incontrollable emotion' 42, ' convulsive strength' 43, ' frenzy of entreaty' 44 are all intended to heighten the tension of the story and to make the reader feel more on edge. The fact that the wife of the main character issues him with an ultimatum, ' If you force your way into that cottage, all is over between us' 45 increases tension, because the reader does not know why the wife feels so strongly about the privacy of the cottage, and so immediately makes the reader wonder what she has to hide. The frequent use of emotive vocabulary is comparable to ' The Tell Tale Heart', in which largely the same methods are used to heighten tension, and are both very effective. Another

way that Conan Doyle sustains the tension is for Holmes' initial hypothesis to be incorrect; this way, the reader is still kept in the dark until the very end of the story, and therefore is kept guessing and turns this book into a real 'page turner'.

By not knowing the final outcome until the very last minute, the reader is unaware of what surprises may lie just around the corner, making the reader very uneasy indeed, whilst also ensuring the story remains exciting and unpredictable. This method of concealing the ending to the reader is often used in many stories, and Edgar Allan Poe used it in 'The Tell Tale Heart' to great effect, using mounting tension to spring the final twist upon the reader at the very last moment, very much what Conan Doyle has accomplished with 'The Yellow Face'. Conan Doyle has used the genre of a detective story to create a sense of mystery very well. Most of his Sherlock Holmes stories follow a very formulaic pattern, one that begins with a confused client coming to Holmes, having experienced something baffling and unusual.

This will always create a sense of mystery, because immediately the reader begins to wonder why something so unusual has happened, and what conspiracy might be taking place. Conan Doyle also asks rhetorical questions, 'What on this earth could my wife be doing out on the country road at three in the morning?' 46. This heightens the sense of mystery in the story, as the reader does indeed ask himself why the main character's wife would be out at night; there is no good reason for it, so there must be something concealed from both reader and husband. Another method of keeping the sense of mystery and tension is to not really give the reader any concrete information, so all the reader has are little snippets of information <https://assignbuster.com/the-tell-tale-heart-the-sea-raiders-the-goblins-who-stole-a-sexton-and-the-yellow-face-essay/>

that he must then piece together himself. For example, Conan Doyle sometimes answers some questions with more questions, not giving the reader a proper answer, “..

. this is where you went during the night? ‘... ‘ What do you mean? ‘ ” 47 The hostile reaction received by the main character after visiting the cottage only adds to the sense of tension and mystery, for why would a seemingly innocent new neighbour act in such a way? The fact that the husband was awoken in the middle of the night, when he was ‘ usually an extremely sound sleeper’ 48 puts the reader on edge, for there must be a good reason to have been awoken. The quote ‘ Half in my dreams.

.. 49 is comparable to Gabriel Grub in ‘ The Goblins who Stole a Sexton’, as he too was half in his dreams as he was taught a lesson or two by the goblins. Each of these four stories are characteristic of the period in which they were written, the nineteenth century. For example, in ‘ The Yellow Face’, Arthur Conan Doyle expresses the views at the time about both marriage and race. The fact that it is considered taboo to be married more than once clearly dates this story, and as we can see from Conan Doyle’s novel, it would have been something to be kept secret if one were to be married more than once.

I am sure that this, if found out, would have been a hot topic of conversation amongst the neighbourhood and, most likely, the offender would have been frowned upon among society. In 1857 the Divorce Act was passed, and, as is well known, set up by law a different moral standard for men and women. As women’s suffrage author Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote, ‘ Under this Act, a

man can obtain the dissolution of the marriage if he can prove one act of infidelity on the part of his wife; but a woman cannot get her marriage dissolved unless she can prove that her husband has been guilty both of infidelity and cruelty'.⁰ This clearly demonstrates the inequality between men and women that existed in society at that time, and is supported by 'The Yellow Face'; Effie was in a much worse situation than her second husband would have been if he had been married twice, for Effie would have been treated much more unfairly and harshly had she been found out.

Interracial marriage was also widely frowned upon: '... in America during the 19th century, interracial marriage was illegal in most states, and by the 1960s, at least 41 states had enacted anti-miscegenation statutes.'

⁵¹Although in America, this quote can be compared to the views that would have been circulating around England as well: that black and white people should not be married.

This view is exemplified in 'The Yellow Face', as the white Effie strives for so long to conceal her black child from her white second husband, knowing what the consequences would be if she were to be found out. Another thing that is characteristic of the nineteenth century in 'The Yellow Face' is the fact that quite rare diseases nowadays were commonplace in the nineteenth century, '...

the yellow fever broke out badly in the place...⁵². Today, in the twenty-first century, one would not expect a bout of yellow fever to break out in America, and yet, when this story was written, it would not have been unusual.

The use of cocaine as a recreational drug by Sherlock Holmes obviously is characteristic of the time in which it was written: ' Save for the occasional use of cocaine he had no vices... ' 53 Nowadays you would not dream of admitting to your readers that your central character occasionally took drugs for pleasure, especially if this central character had the hero status that Holmes had been elevated to in the nineteenth century. The obvious factor that dates ' The Goblins who Stole a Sexton' by Charles Dickens is the sentimental and traditional style in which it is written.

Dickens himself used to put sentimentality into his stories, with ' Dombey and Son' and ' The Old Curiosity Shop' being no exceptions; both include rather drawn out and soppy described child deaths. The Victorians themselves used to be very fond of sentimentality, much unlike the twenty-first century; if one were to read one of Dickens' sentimental passages, the modern day person would cringe at the sheer overemotional feel about it - The roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from the eye...

and they knew that he was an Angel looking down upon them... from a bright and happy heaven' 54 The fact that the villagers in, ' The Goblins who Stole a Sexton' are very superstitious of what happened to Grub is characteristic of the time in which it was written; in the nineteenth century belief in ghosts or supernatural beings would not have been unusual, while nowadays beliefs in such things are often scoffed at and ridiculed. In this story, the villagers actually believe Grub to have been abducted by the goblins; in today's day and age, if one were to believe such a story he would be considered to be a little mentally unstable. Dickens' use of archaic vocabulary is characteristic of the nineteenth century; words like, ' somerset' 55, meaning somersault, '<https://assignbuster.com/the-tell-tale-heart-the-sea-raiders-the-goblins-who-stole-a-sexton-and-the-yellow-face-essay/>

urchin' 56, meaning child, and ' bumper' 57, meaning goblet, are a few example of words which are not used nowadays, but were used in Dickens' time in the nineteenth century.

Dickens' perception of fashion is characteristic of the nineteenth century; '... s if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street. ' 58 demonstrates the fact that at that time, Wellington boots were considered to be the height of fashion, a ' must have'.

Obviously, this belief has changed and Wellingtons are now considered to be of practical use, not a fashion item. Another thing that dates Dickens' story are the supposed deadly illnesses in which Grub finds comfort in; '... as he thought of measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough..

. ' 59. Today, these are not fatal at all, but in the nineteenth century, as Grub demonstrates, these could potentially have been killers, as antibiotics had not yet been discovered. ' The Sea Raiders' by H. G.

Wells is characteristic of the nineteenth century because, as a very early science fiction novel, the views and ideas about science fiction writing, as we can see from this story, were only just beginning to be discussed and tested. For example, Wells' use of a mixture of objective and subjective vocabulary is quite unlike most science fiction novels, which are much more dramatic and use very emotive vocabulary. Wells decided upon a mixture of subjective and objective vocabulary, something which is unusual and perhaps indicates that Wells was trying to see how this mixture of vocabulary worked, and whether it went down well with the reader or not.

Therefore the reader can deduce that he was experimenting with different
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styles in a quite new genre of writing. Another factor in this story that shows that it is characteristic of the nineteenth century is that at the time that Wells wrote the Sea Raiders, there was a lot of concern about Martians; did they exist? Would they harm us? Wells utilises this fear well in this story to, in some ways, compare the intelligent cephalopods to Martians; both came unwanted, and both were menaces that would easily kill human beings.

Therefore we can see the influence that this fear had upon Wells during the nineteenth century when he wrote this story, using the horror of the Martians for his man-eating cephalopods. Obviously, Wells uses vocabulary in this novel that is not used today; words such as, ' forthwith' 60 meaning at once, ' cogent' 61 meaning effective, and the name ' Egbert' 62. Edgar Allen Poe's ' The Tell Tale Heart' expresses the views at the time about the psychology of the insane, and explores elements of guilt and horror. In America during the time at which this short story was written, care for the mentally ill was almost non-existent. Dorothea Dix was around that time the leading campaigner for the better treatment of the insane.

As she once said, ' Some may say these things (insanity - ES) cannot be remedied, these furious maniacs are not to be raised from these base conditions (prisons - ES). I know they are... I could give many examples. One such is a young woman who was for years ' a raging maniac' chained in a cage and whipped to control her acts and words.

She was helped by a husband and wife who agreed to take care of her in their home and slowly she recovered her senses. ' 63 These changing views on the insane and mentally unstable were considered to be quite fanatical

and ridiculous at the time, and this has clearly influenced the attitudes expressed in Poe's short story; here, the madman is shown as darkly intelligent but strangely evil, whilst all around Poe views about the insane were rapidly changing. Psychology was advancing daily, and with it so was the understanding of what went on inside the head; people were beginning to no longer see insane people as terrifying killers that were to be locked up, rather as sick people that needed curing. This is exemplified in Poe's story because, although guilty, the narrator is blissfully unaware of any crime he could have committed and therefore it is shown that he did not intend to savagely kill the old man.