

Poe tell tale heart

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



Gothic literature. It creates an atmosphere of mystery and suspense, engaging the reader with the story with use of supernatural events not seen in the regular world. In "The Tell Tale Heart" written by Edgar Allen Poe, an unreliable narrator is portraying an insane, delusional, tyrannical male that exerts his power over the weak, and fragile. This story displays many gothic conventions such as an atmosphere of mystery and suspense, by manipulating the setting. Edgar Allen Poe successfully incorporated these gothic conventions to create tension and horror. Poe's story begins with an anonymous man, seemingly calm and collected, professing that he will be sane throughout the story. The narrator addresses the future murder, "For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture -a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold. " The rising action of the story begins with how he would conduct himself like usual but every night at midnight he would stealthily open up the old man's door and observe. The climax is finally reached after a week of composure; the narrator carefully moves into the room and kills the old man and thus rid of the eye forever. The falling action follows when he disassembles the dead body. After this horrifying deed, he hides the parts under the floorboards, " I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye -not even his -could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out -no stain of any kind -no blood-spot whatever. " A feeling of remorse hits him when questioned by the police, and his paranoia and insecurity kicks in. His apparent insanity makes him hear the beating of a dead man heart, which concludes the story. Poe's use of gothic conventions fabricates immense horror and tension from the

exposition to conclusion for readers in "The Tell Tale Heart". The plot of the story builds up tension and horror by varying speeds with the narrator's overwrought emotion. Edgar Allen Poe eloquently creates horror and tension through many different techniques. From the first two paragraphs of the short story, Poe builds up tension by introducing himself as calm but in the next paragraph he address his murder. This hypocrisy gets the reader confused, not knowing what's going to happen next. The speed gradually increases from beginning to end, "I talked more quickly -more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased." It creates tension because the rising action speeds up until the climax is reached. What makes the story slow at the beginning is because the narrator is explaining his plan. But when the climax is reached the narrator's expression and actions causes the reader to know his excitement and increasing speed in speech. The story is told from an unknown location. The story the narrator tells us is in a gloomy, creepy and mysterious mansion. Poe conveys the feeling of isolation and follows through with the gothic conventions, "Room was black as pitch with thick darkness". By saying pitch black, Poe is referring to the sticky black substance and it conveys the sense of claustrophobia and a dark atmosphere where the murder is going to take place. "Shutters were closed fastened with fear of robber." This quote foreshadows the fact that the old man is trapped in the house. The moment before the old man's death, he senses there is an intruder but ironically, the shutters that were supposed to safe him from outside dangers, sealed him inside with an apparently insane man. The story is pieced together perfectly, guiding the reader throughout the story. Characterization is key in developing the tension and the style and

language reinforces it. The narrator is apparently insane and cannot be trusted because it is told in first person. The narrator tries to gain assurance from the reader but as he becomes increasingly mad, making us question the validity of the story. Also the narrator presents himself as omniscient saying, " I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him". It is impossible for one man to know what another man is thinking, thus the narrator has no credibility. "" Villains!" I shrieked, " dissemble no more! I admit the deed! -tear up the planks! here, here! -It is the beating of his hideous heart! " This is effective because it demonstrates the narrator's anxiousness and insanity of hearing something supernatural, the beating of a dead man's heart. Another character is the old man, and according to the narrator he is referred to as the " Evil Eye" or " Vulture Eye" and because of the narrator's hatred towards it, death is foreshadowed. That is the only thing about the old man's character. The police are the only other characters. They play an important role of causing the narrator to admit his hideous murder of the " vulture eye". The police never suspected the narrator of anything, acting normal and calm. As the readers, we know that the narrator is a murderer but the police do not. Based on the narrator's instability tension is created, making the reader not know what is happening next. These three characters, the old man and the narrator, the narrator and the police create tension. It is evident that the old man was horrified, " The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! -do you mark me well I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. ". It is evident that the old man is terrorized by the tyrannical male image of the narrator. On the other hand the narrator fears the police and confesses. Edgar Allen Poe's use of language is ties this

whole story together. He uses many similes and metaphors. This simile, "black as pitch" is used to emphasize the dark nature of the atmosphere. The use of metaphors also add to the atmosphere, " My blood ran cold" is an perfect example because it instantly gives the reader the picture of blood freezing, but it also displays the narrator's sudden fear when he sees the man's evil eye. It paints a vivid picture in our heads and helps with the understanding of the story. Personification of the old man's eye or at the old man's expense is a symbol in this story. He personifies death to create the feeling that the old man cannot escape his death at the hands of the narrator. " All in vain; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim". Poe occasionally uses alliteration to emphasize important points such as the old man's "hideous heart". It makes the reader remember it and adds flow to sentences. It provides a more vivid presentation of the emotion that the narrator is experiencing. The use of hyphens speeds up the pace, however there is a jerky feeling. When hyphens are used it is because of the narrator's intense emotion, " They heard! -they suspected! —they knew! -they were making a mockery of my horror!-this I thought, and this I think. " All of these literary devices add to the tension and horror os the story. Edgar Allen Poe's " Tell Tale Heart" keeps readers engaged throughout the story with the literary elements of tension and suspense. Through his use of plot, setting, characterization, and language, " The Tell Tale Heart" is permeated with tension and horror throughout. This is one of the classics of the Gothic genre and to this day, it is used to portray tension and horror. Word Count: 1286