

Blooms classic critical reviews

Literature



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Pitcher, Edward W. “ The Physiognomical Meaning of Poe’s ‘ The Tell-Tale Heart’”. Studies in Short Fiction.

The body has been dismembered, but the narrator hears the heartbeat. The evil eye killed, but the heartbeats. Separation of heart and mind personifies insanity. (Pitcher 232) Poe dramatically compares the narrator’s thoughts and feelings with the old man’s literal separation of the two. The old man, eye, and the narrator, I, maybe the same person; and the story represents the inner turmoil ending with severing the head from heart. (Pitcher 232)

A pitcher is cited in many literary pieces. He is reliable.

Pritchard, Hollie. “ Poe’s ‘ The Tell-Tale Heart’”.

Pritchard, from a somewhat feminist point of view, interprets the monologue as sexual in nature just before the murder. She points to the narrator’s love/hate relationship with the victim characterizing the behavior as a sadist. Pritchard relates the narrator’s mental state to that of Poe’s dark imagination. This connection is controversial in these articles, and this author’s view is a valuable counter to others. The source is valuable, and the journal is peer-reviewed and reliable.

Poe, Edgar Allan. “ The Tell-Tale Heart”. Edgar Allan Poe Selected Tales. Ed. David Van Leer.

Great Britain: Oxford Press.

A caretaker finds he is cursed by an evil eye belonging to a beloved old man. The eye “ vexes” him. (Poe 193) The caretaker/narrator kills the old man in order to “ silence” the eye. The caretaker keeps hearing the beating of the heart, driving him to confession.

Poe is the primary source, and therefore, reliable.

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Reilly, John E. "The Lesser Death-Watch and The Tell-Tale Heart," revised from *The American*

Transcendental Quarterly, II (2nd Quarter),

The reader is left to decipher whether the narrators hearing acuity is a delusion or is the sound a hallucination. (Reilly 1969) During the murder, they each screamed once. The narrator hears the heartbeat muffled by the bed but rationalizes the neighbors can't hear it. The neighbors could hear screams, but not heartbeats. Knowing this, the reader cannot disengage from the monologue. The reader is trapped like the narrator. Poe uses these devices brilliantly to place the audience in the insane mind of a killer.

Well cited article, reliable.

Tucker, B. D. "'The Tell-Tale Heart' and the 'Evil Eye'". *The Southern Literary Journal*.

An overview of Poe's fascination with the "evil eye" across his stories and specifically in "The Tell-Tale Heart". Other Southern writers and literature are examined regarding the eye. The narrator, of whom the reader knows nothing (sex, age, relationship to the old man) admits to loving the old man, but hating his eye.

Tucker is also well cited, and the Southern Journal is a reliable source.

Zimmerman, Brett. "Frantic Forensic Oratory: Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart'". *Style Journal*.

Northern Illinois University Press. (2001)

Narration is broken down as forensic oratory, a defense rather than a confession. The narrator provides a logical appeal for an illogical act. The monologue uses and introduction, a concession as part of his ethical appeal, a narration of events, he confirms and refutes details, separating thought

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from feeling. The framework is classic logic.

Zimmerman has many articles and a book on Poe. He is very frequently cited, reliable.