

What have i found
interesting in my
studies of crime
stories



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One of the aspects I have found stimulating whilst reading 'The Tell tale Heart' was how the criminal was presented the story. The criminal in 'The Tell Tale Heart' is very erratic and is convinced that he is normal, but of course, he is mad. The fast pace created by hyphens and short sentences in the first paragraph gives an instant insight into how the criminals mind works. As I said before, he is mad but is convinced that he is not. We do not see the violent side of the man at the beginning but we see an erratic, possibly impulsive man.

Many people say that criminals are often the clever ones, much like 'Verbal' from the film 'The Usual Suspects'. Throughout the story we can see his thoughts and his plans presented to us which shows that he has thought out his plan which seem to be very sketchy and 'rough'. The use of exclamation marks and questions broaden the scope into the character, building his personality and the way in which we perceive him to be at the beginning to set the story and advance very quickly to the crime. The criminal in 'The tell tale heart' likes to talk, too much, it is not usual to have the criminal as the anti-hero/ narrator in most crime stories.

The atmosphere surrounding the character is dark, at the peak of the hour as he describes what he does "every night, just at twelve". There is no adherent pattern shown in the examples I have studied of how a criminal is presented to us. In 'The landlady' the criminal is (or seems to be) very innocent and lonely which later, as the story progresses turns into being eccentric and very unusual and would fool any reader into thinking that she was an innocent old woman at the beginning of the story. It is written in such a way that she and the young man who has come to stay are both focal

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points of the reader's attention due to the unusual nature of this particular criminal. The lady is very polite and courteous towards the man not hinting at all that she may be a murderer, words such as "thank you", "my dear" and various other courteous phrases are unusually present throughout the story sometimes giving the impression that she may be 'too nice'.

On the other-hand though, in the film 'The Usual Suspect' there are many different criminals on which the film focuses on at a particular point, extensively or not, they all come from different backgrounds and have different personalities. These include not so clever people, the typical British man with a strong accent, and disabled, clever and Hispanic people. However the film focuses on and is narrated by a man nicknamed 'Verbal' who is, as we find out the mastermind behind all the various crimes committed throughout the film. He, however is disabled and therefore may surprise the viewer who near the end may begin to find out that it is him.

It is because his character is tailored and developed in such a way that in the end it is hard for us to perceive him as being the criminal mastermind. He is portrayed at the beginning as the handicapped, dumb in the sense that he does not stand out and so is less significant to us, but this image gradually changes. The story is told from his perspective as he recalls events, he is the narrator and in real time/ present day he is being interrogated by a detective but these scenes only get persistent later on the film as we see the story develop near the beginning. Verbal is very calm and controlled in the interrogation and he is very good at displacement activity avoiding the subject in question and is therefore not as dumb as we think he may be. He turns more and more ruthless and violent near the end of the film, we see a <https://assignbuster.com/what-have-i-found-interesting-in-my-studies-of-crime-stories/>

more aggressive Verbal (his nickname) as his true persona is revealed to us, finding out that he is Keyser Soze and altogether we now get the impression that he is very insecure, unstable and unpredictable. For example when asked in the interrogation room why he didn't help Keaton he doesn't reply and is visibly uneasy, perhaps showing signs of guilt, later on he begins to cry.

In *The Lord of The Flies* the 'criminals' (if all of them are classed as that) are presented in very much the same way as in 'The usual suspects' where they all have different and unique personalities and are all from different backgrounds. The difference however is the way in which these children behave and change. I will concentrate on one of the main characters; Jack who I think shows the biggest tendencies towards being a criminal. At the beginning the children are lost and do not know what to do. These later turns into a bitter competition for supremacy and overall authority over the new inhabitants and the island between the two most influential characters, Jack and Ralph.

From the beginning of the story we see Jack portrayed to us as being ruthless and violent, having an unusual fetish for knives- " he snatched his knife out of the sheath and slammed it into the tree trunk" showing immense anger and a short temper at a very young age. Jack also had a desire from the beginning to be in control, later on forming his own clan to rival Ralph's. He is very pompous, aggressive and loud therefore the other children are scared of him and do not argue. This is symbolised when no one minds when Jack talks without using the conch, which symbolised and represented order.

I find it interesting that Golding has used what had seemed to be innocent children from all walks of life and instead developing some of them to be monstrous, unforgiving and ruthless people, turning the concept of 'innocent children' away and replacing it with a more sinister theme. For example we see in the story that Jack has his fetish for knives, something that may not have been known to anyone if he weren't placed in that situation. The structures of the plots vary very much in every story I have studied. In 'The Tell Tale Heart' the story is narrated by the criminal, this is also the case in 'The usual suspects', therefore giving us a more interesting insight into the story.

In 'The Tell Tale Heart' the criminal is very clever at the beginning and we can see that he is a very quick thinker as his thoughts are laid out for us to see and fast paced. There is a slow build up of the story, although it is very short in length, towards the murder. The criminal is antagonised and annoyed by the old mans eye which shows his possible mental instability and that he may be mad if a mans eye could annoy him. The eye intimidates him and he desperately wants to get rid of the eye. In turn killing the man. At the beginning of the story more of the time is spent reading about the actual character himself describing the man and the eye and rambling on carelessly.

This shortly changes into his night-by-night description of what has happened up to the killing. He hides the body- " I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings" after he has concealed the body police arrive at the door, not knowing what has just happened. He then slowly begins to be intimidated by the intrusion <https://assignbuster.com/what-have-i-found-interesting-in-my-studies-of-crime-stories/>

and loses his nerves. He gets very erratic and unpredictable in his behaviour ultimately resulting in him giving himself up to the police. The other examples I have studied end up with not the criminal being caught, but the criminal either avoiding being caught or not ending up being punished.

In the 'Landlady' the Criminal is 'terribly nice' woman that does not follow the stereotypical image of a typical criminal. The story is slowly developed from when the young man walks into her hostel and slowly unfolds as it progresses. The lady seems very friendly and talks and entertains the visitor. As the story develops the young man reads her logbook where two names (the only two names) seem very familiar to him. He remembers the fact that one of them was perhaps killed but the lady immediately changes the subject- "' Christopher Mullohand..

.asn't that the name of the Eton schoolboy who was on a walking tour through the West Country and then all of a sudden... ", " Milk" she said'.

As the man is close too figuring out who this man is she instantly changes the subject and is very good at using displacement activity much like when Verbal was being interrogated in 'The Usual Suspects'. The story then quickly moves on to the discovery of when the man finds out she stuffs animals. Throughout the story she is not unnerved or intimidated by his presence or inquisition. She befriends him and near the end, after all that we have found out about the lady we realise that she is not as innocent as she seems to be ending in a climatic but not very dramatic ending where the man, it seems, has decided to stay. In 'The Usual Suspects' the film switches from present to past from 'Verbal' (Roger Kint) being interviewed to him

recalling events in his mind of what has happened up until the present. The story is very complex and has many sum plots and turns.

'The Usual Suspects' begins in the present day. " Verbal has been arrested for being in the location of a massive explosion on a Hungarian boat. A police detective wants to get the truth out of Verbal, but he has already posted bail. In about two hours, he will be a free man.

The detective has Verbal brought into his office where he asks him to retell the story. From this point the story is told from Verbals point of view and events are recalled through him to us. There are flashbacks between present and past and the narration is by Verbal building up to an eventual climax/ twist at the end of the story where the recalled events catch up with present day. The focal point of the plot is to find out whom Keyser Soze is, a criminal mastermind who strikes fear in everyone. The plot in this film, instead of working in 'real time' works on switching between the past and present instead. This is more interesting as I mentioned before as it gives more depth to the storyline and provides two 'simultaneous' climaxes at the end where the sub-plot is working with the main plot.

In The Lord of The Flies the plot develops very slowly as it is a novel unlike the other stories I have studied. Significant elements and parts of the story are all organised into relevant chapters. The story begins when a group of young children are stranded on an isolated island after crash landing in an evacuation plane. The story slowly develops into their want to be rescued and survive and also the unknown terrors and events that face them. This want for being rescued later deteriorates though as hidden sides to the

children are revealed to us. There are many main characters in which the story focuses on in detail at one point or another and all have their part to play in the development of the story and structure.

The story progresses as the children live out their days on the island and try to cope with lack of authority and leadership ultimately being left to do what they want. The story mounts up on the intensity near the end where all hope is lost for Ralph and total anarchy breaks out and quickly moves onto the point where the naval officer finds the children screaming and shouting, seemingly playing, left to their own devices. Ironically this is not the case, much like the twist at the end of ' the Usual suspects' where Verbal is turns out to be Keyser Soze, unknowingly to the world. The language in the different examples I have studied varies and is often used to show the pace and speed in which things are happening in. In ' The Tell Tale Heart' hyphens are use a lot throughout the story to show the speed at which the criminal is talking, almost as if he is breathless. They represent the pace, excitement and anger of the man.

A lot of exclamation marks are used and repetition to emphasize a point. " True! - Nervous-very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? " Is the opening sentence to the story. This I think represents most of what I have described above and immediately gives the impression to the reader that he is excited and/or mad. The story then goes on continually using hyphens to set the pace and show how quickly his attention can change.

In 'The Landlady' the use of language is less erratic but instead the pace is slower and more subtle. What I noticed whilst reading the story was the use of italics when the landlady talked to the man. These are used to stress a point for example- "We have all to ourselves". Certain words in some of the text were in italic hinting a want because they all had seemed to represent something that she wanted or thought was right or good/ possessive. Similes are used to add to the weird atmosphere. There is no particular pattern or method used to show pace unlike in 'The Tell Tale Heart' where hyphens and exclamation marks are used very often.

Instead the story progresses at a rate in which the reader chooses to go on. Instead we are presented with more conversational language rather than one single narrator. This is also the case in 'The usual suspects' where most of the film is narrated by Verbal, he narrates the film and recalls the events as he remembers them but as he recalls these events we get cut-off from the narrator and instead the film becomes like a normal film where all the characters speak. However unlike the stories there are many styles of language presented to us by different characters in the film making it very 'cosmopolitan'. There is a vast array of language styles. These range from the 'thuggish' slang language used by the Hispanic man to the typical well spoken English accent and the typical American accent, not forgetting the stuttering of Verbal.

This gives all something unique in which they are instantly recognised by. However it is hard to describe all the language styles in a film as there are so many during the duration but most is colloquial style, conversational

language between the various different characters and narrative. Musical
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silence, when there is no talking but instead a quiet score played in the background can also represent language to reflect to us the mood of the even/ situation i. e. - after a death or tragedy has occurred music may be quietly played.

Camera styles, views and angles may also can also be represented under this section because the way in which a situation or person is shown (especially if from another persons eyes) can instantly convey to the viewer an image or impression that the director/ makers may have wanted. The same pattern is followed in *The Lord of the Flies* where a lot of the language is also conversational between the character but in the novel many styles are also similarly represented, italics are used when a point is stressed, exclamation marks, commas and hyphens to show the fast pace are all present throughout the story in certain parts. Certain characters however follow different speech patterns, for example, when Jack talks there are more exclamation marks and commas used but when Simon or Piggy talk the pace is slower, Long sentences are the norm and they do not bother to make themselves present. Golding also seems to use a lot of pathetic fallacy to reflect the mood of a situation with that of the surroundings/ weather.

The motive of the murder varies from each story I have studied and tends to add attraction to the story, as it is a crucial part in the characters development and how the story flows. In 'The Tell Tale Heart' the mad man is fuelled by his hatred for the old mans eye, the entity that he despises the most, instantly giving us the impression that he is, truly mad. Wild hysteria surrounds his relationship with the man and the eye, in no way can we see that he hates the old man whom happens to be in his lodgings but the mans

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eye is the crucial factor in the motivation for the murder. We juxtaposition of two opposite views and emotions, " I loved the old man.

He had never wronged me. For his gold I had no desire" yet he goes on to say how the eye antagonises him, " I think it was his eye! Yes it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture" It is in this and various other comparisons like this that we see his insane hatred for the eye and how the two opposite views clash together and meld ultimately resulting in the old man being murdered and the mad man losing sanity. This however, a random display of insane evil desire differs in the other stories/ example I have studied as they are more intricate and thoroughly developed. Two examples of this are ' The Usual suspects' and The Lord of the Flies both are somewhat similar in the sense that they are both fairly long but more significantly develop during the course of the story rather than having a short-quick sequence of events.

What I mean to say that is there is room for many more sub-plots and ideas to develop throughout the story. For example in The Lord of the Flies the theme develops from that of a ' safe playground' to that of an evil and unforgiving island. There is not really a motive in this novel but Golding instead chooses to highlight the hunger for supremacy. Perhaps what is described as ' Mankind's essential illness'.

The need to be in control is perhaps what they're fault is. The children left in isolation had nothing to turn to and instead turned to a tribal like nature battling for domination that could have been the motivation for several separated incidents The same concept revolves around ' The Usual Suspects'

where many things happen during the course of the story, diverting our attention to these and perhaps developing them to link in with the main plot. Instead of having one focal crime in the film we have many different acts of violence and criminal acts committed throughout the film that all link up to one big master plot that was devised by Keyser Soze. To conclude this essay I believe that the reason why people are attracted to crime literature and theatre is because of the variety, diversity and great depth and detail in which many entertainment materials such as books can offer. What I found interesting is the way in which they are all similar, bound together by one main concept, but offer a completely different story and that the list is literally endless.

What can be done with the theme 'crime' is virtually infinite. I have only studied a few examples that may have their similarities but equally have their own attributes, value and strength. Many of the examples provide gripping material in which to follow. Simple technical features such as the way the language is presented can make every difference as we have seen in 'The Tell Tale Heart' where the story would not have the same attraction had it not been written in the style in which it is. In The Lord of the Flies, a classic novel that many people have studied or read can prove very satisfying to read yet 'The landlady', a short story that probably takes a fraction of the time it would to read a novel still can entertain and surprise the masses with its peculiar twist at the end.

Thus my conclusion and this essay comes to an end, with the questions in my introduction satisfied I can say that the reason in which we find crime entertaining is for all the reasons above.

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