

Good morning, I'm Valentina, Valentina Fiore, I'm almost 21 years old and I come from Foggia. I decided to attend scientific high school because my goal is to attend university and become a nurse after graduation.

Well. Today I would like to talk to you about Edgar Allan Poe and one of his numerous short stories; "The Tell-Tale Heart".

POE is one of the most important authors of the Victorian era and precisely of the literary current called "Gothic literature".

The Gothic novel, in vogue in England since the mid-eighteenth century, born in the context of English pre-romanticism and in contrast with the ideals of balance and beauty of neoclassicism: the irrational, the monstrous and the fantastic prevail.

The term "Gothic" has three meanings; Medieval (especially in terms of setting and architectural style), Barbarian and unruly, Mysterious, scary, and supernatural.

Gothic setting evokes an atmosphere of horror and fear. It includes ancient settings like isolated castles, mysterious abbeys and convents with hidden passages, dungeons and secret rooms. They usual set is full of wind, especially howling and blowing out lights; rain, thunder and lightning, doors grating on rusty hinges; clinking chains; lights in abandoned rooms; doors suddenly slamming shut; ruins of buildings; barking of distant dogs/wolves. sighs, moans, howls; characters trapped in a room; footsteps approaching; crazed laughter... These literary topoi (means recurring places and scenarios) are usually encountered in the Gothic novel.

Now, Edgar Allan POE was born in Boston (U.S.A.) in 1809.

His father abandoned the family when Edgar was two years old, and his mother died a few later. Edgar went to live with the Allan family, but they never officially adopted him. He was a good student of the University of Virginia. He had to gamble to make money. Edgar won a literary contest and he worked as a writer for a magazine. Was very successful, but he never earned enough money. He married his cousin Virginia Clemm who was very ill and she died ten years later. Poe became an alcoholic. He still wrote several story and poems and also invented the first detective stories.

His horror stories, are often full of precise, physical details and reasoning. He analyzes the mentality of madmen with the care of a psychologist or of a detective.

In "The tell-tale heart", one of Poe's best known short stories, an unnamed first-person narrator, despite insisting that he is sane, suffers from a nervousness disease that causes "over-acuteness of the senses". The old man, with whom the narrator lives, has a clouded, pale, blue "vulture-like" eye, which distresses and manipulates the narrator so much that he plot to murder him. The narrator is insistent that this careful precision in committing the murder proves that he cannot possibly be insane. For seven nights, the narrator opens the door of the old man's room to shine a sliver of light onto the old man face but he never open that damn eye. The eighth night the old man open his eye because a noise, so the narrator drags man to the floor and pulled over him the heavy bed then dismembers the body, conceals the pieces under the floorboards and conceal of all signs of the crime. The neighbor hearded a scream in the night and called the police, who went to old man's house. The narrator invites the police to look around. The policemen were pretty calms and they were talking, when the murderer hears a sound. He thought that it was in his head, was the beating of the old man's heart and that also the police hears it that is why, at the end, he will confess his murder. In this story the sense of guilt is very important infact the murderer starts hearing a heart-beating that does not exist, because he was obsessed. Old man's eye represented his conscience. During the story the narrator/murderer appears calm and very clever, but at the end, when he confess his crime, he shows all of his disease.