

# A Narrative Discourse Analysis of Poe's Short Story "The Tell-Tale Heart": Implications for Language Teaching

Morad Alsahafi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of European Languages and Literature, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Morad Alsahafi, Faculty of Arts, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia.

Received: October 30, 2019

Accepted: November 30, 2019

Online Published: December 4, 2019

doi: 10.5539/elt.v13n1p1

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p1>

## Abstract

This paper employs narrative discourse analysis to analyze Edgar Allen Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" by using two narrative analysis frameworks that focus on the macrostructure (Stein, 1982) and microstructure (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) aspects of the story. The analysis covers the story's purpose, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical cohesion. Findings show that the writer follows a series of structural moves and uses a variety of narrative strategies (e.g. high level of involvement and a wide range of lexical and grammatical cohesive ties) which contribute to the creation of a well-formed text that has effectively achieved its purpose and made its intended effect. This paper argues that there are many ways in which this macro- and microstructure analysis of the story may be exploited in the English language classroom. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the analysis and offers some suggestions and engaging activities for language teaching purposes.

**Keywords:** discourse analysis, genre, lexicogrammatical cohesion, narrative, language teaching

## 1. Introduction

*TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad?*

"The Tell-Tale Heart", a tale of horror, is one of Edgar Allen Poe's famous short stories that has been long admired as an excellent example of how a short story can produce an effect on the reader. Poe (1809-1849) was a prolific American writer. He published some seventy tales (Silverman, 1993). He is considered among the famous writers of psychological thrillers and horror fiction genres. This paper attempts to analyze the narrative aspects of this story. However, it should be noted that the paper can by no means fully address all aspects of narrative analysis. In particular, it aims to examine how different parts of this story become so united and meaningfully connected so as to keep the reader in suspense. The paper argues that there are many ways in which the macro- and microstructure analysis of the story may be exploited in the English language classroom. Thus, the aim of this paper is twofold:

- 1) It attempts to analyze the macro- and microstructure aspects of Poe's short story: "The Tell-Tale Heart."
- 2) It discusses the many ways in which this analysis of the story may be exploited in the English language classroom and offers suggestions and engaging activities for language teaching purposes.

The paper comprises three main sections: macrostructure analysis of the story (genre and schematic structure), microstructure analysis of the story (lexicogrammatical cohesion), and implications of the analysis for language classroom.

## 2. Macrostructural Analysis: Genre Schemata

Literary texts of the target language have been extensively used in the language learning classroom (Angelianawati, 2019; Erkaya, 2005; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Lazar, 1993; Pardede, 2011; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). According to Lazar (1993, p. 17), "literature provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language." Researchers have discussed several benefits of using literary texts in the language classroom in terms of enhancing students' language skills and vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Collie and Slater (1991), for example, pointed out that using literature in the language classroom provides a variety of benefits, including valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enhancement and personal involvement. Likewise, Erkaya (2005) discussed the effectiveness of using short stories and pinpointed a number of linguistic, motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking benefits. Rahman and Arju (2013)

examined the use of short stories in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom and concluded that the use of short stories enhances students' linguistic and grammatical skills, intercultural understanding, creativity and critical thinking. Berrarbi and Bahous (2018), investigated the use of short stories in university level EFL classroom and listed a number of advantages such as enhancing students' reading motivation, cultural awareness and discussion skills.

Researchers in the field of discourse analysis (e.g., Bhatia, 1993; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Paltridge, 1996; Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998) highlighted the usefulness of the notion of genre and text type and their implications in the language learning classroom. According to Swales (1990, p. 58),

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert member of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

According to Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997), genre represents "a classificatory concept, referring to a class of communicative events, the participants in which share a certain set of conventions defined in term of formal, functional and contextual properties" (p. 33). These definitions imply that a genre is a discourse type which is determined not only by its form and content, but also by its social context. Paltridge (2000) summarizes the typical patterns and structures of genres (text-types). These genres include recount, instruction, argument, discussion, narrative, anecdote, report, explanation and discussion. However, it should be noted that the schematic structures for these genres are neither clear-cut criteria, nor static patterns. Therefore, they should be viewed as continuum of "dynamic compilations of textual and contextual divisions" (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997, p. 34). In literary studies the term 'genre' has been used to differentiate between various types of literary texts, i.e. to indicate whether a particular text is a poem, a short story or a play (Johnstone, 2002). The following section focuses on the narrative genre: its purpose and schematic structure.

### 2.1 The Narrative Mode

A narrative can be defined as "a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events, typically involving, as the experiencing agonist, humans ..., from whose experience we human can learn" (Toolan, 1988, p. 8). According to Ochs (1997), narratives represent "cultural tools *par excellence* for understanding unusual and unexpected conduct" (p. 193).

#### 2.1.1 Purpose

The general purpose of the narrative genre is to tell a story (Paltridge, 2000). However, each narrative type has its own purpose which differs from another type. For example, the purpose of a comic story might be to tell a story in order to amuse the addressee while the purpose of a horror narrative might be to tell a story in order to shock and create horror. Likewise, other story genres such as action, romance, thriller, adventure, ... etc, have different purposes. The typical structural features of narratives are discussed in the next section.

#### 2.1.2 Schematic Structure (Plot)

Why do readers conceive a particular text as being a narrative (not for example a poem or a play)? How are stories different from other discourse types? To answer such questions, it is essential to examine how smaller parts of a story are arranged and developed to form the bigger text 'the whole story'. Discourse analysts and literary critics have tried to analyze the common elements that comprise narratives. For example, Labov (1972), Stein (1982) and Paltridge (2000) have proposed three influential schematic models of the prototypical structure of a story. These three schemes include quite similar constituents (moves) (see Table 1). As can be seen from the table, different terms are sometimes employed to describe the same move.

Table 1. Three models of narrative schematic structure

Labov (1972)	Stein's (1982)	Paltridge's (2000)
Abstract	Setting	orientation
orientation	initiating event	complication
complicating action	response/reaction	resolution
evaluation	attempt	comment
resolution	consequences	coda
coda	reaction	

## 2.2 "The Tell-Tale Heart" (see Appendix A)

### 2.2.1 Purpose

This story, like many of Poe's tales, is a horror and sensational tale. It is addressed to all those interested in reading literary texts in general, and particularly to those readers who enjoy reading scary stories and thrillers. Two main purposes can be identified for "The Tell-Tale Heart":

- 1) to tell a scary tale
- 2) to create suspense and surprise

To achieve these purposes, the writer employs another type of genre, namely argument. Indeed, the story's narrator's purpose from telling his own tale is to persuade his readers of his sanity. In my schematic analysis, I will concentrate only on the narrative genre in order to allow for more space for an in-depth analysis of the grammatical and lexical cohesion (Section 3).

### 2.2.2 Macrostructural Description

To begin with, I should admit that it is quite difficult to describe this story as a series of moves because of the nature of its purpose. However, based on the above discussion of narrative schematic structure, I shall attempt to assign the certain moves used by the writer. It should be noted though that my task should be regarded as "pattern seeking, rather than pattern imposing" (Hart, 1986, cited in Bhatia, 1993, p. 40). Using Stein's model, six moves are identified in the story:

#### 1. *Setting* (Paragraph 1 / sentences 1-7)

*(1) TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad? (2) The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. (3) Above all was the sense of hearing acute. (4) I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. (5) I heard many things in hell. (6) How then am I mad? (7) Hearken! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story.*

Paragraph 1 (sentences 1-7) represents the first move made by the writer. It should be noted that our understanding of the concept of setting should not be limited to the issue of time and place but also to include other important dimensions such as the physical, social and temporal physiological approaches of the characters (Ochs, 1997). The unnamed first-person narrator who also plays the role of the protagonist in the story is introduced. The first word "TRUE" is a concession which implies that a kind of conversation has already started even before our arrival on the scene. In the word "TRUE", as in many other words throughout the story, capitalization is used outside of the normal convention as an "emphatic device" (Lakoff, 1982). A high degree of closeness and involvement is established between the teller 'I' and the addressee (the reader) 'you'. Our protagonist suffers from a kind of mental disease. Thus, he will tell us "the whole story" of which we know nothing in order to convince us that he is sane. Ironically, the more he tells, the surer we become of his insanity. The writer creates suspense by starting the tale with such an extraordinary opening, by choosing an unreliable first-person narrator who is struggling to prove his sanity, and by promising to tell "the whole story." Now, we are quite prepared for the upcoming, unexpected events in terms of the protagonist's actions and feelings.

#### 2. *Initiating event* (sentences 8-17)

*(8) It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but, once conceived, it haunted me day and night. (9) Object there was none. (10) Passion there was none. (11) I loved the old man. (12) He had never wronged me. (13) He had never given me insult. (14) For his gold I had no desire. (15) I think it was his eye! (16) Yes, it was this! (17) One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture -- a pale blue eye with a film over it.*

After introducing the protagonist who has promised to tell "the whole story", the reader's attention is immediately turned to the role of motive even before introducing the antagonist (the victim).

*(9) Object there was none. (10) Passion there was none. (14) For his gold I had no desire.*

These are three instances of left-dislocation head structure. By using such a structure, our 'nervous' protagonist achieves two goals. First, he creates suspense. Second, he admits a lack of normal motivation. The second major character (the antagonist) is introduced at this point of the story.

*(11) I loved the old man. (12) He had never wronged me.*

So, what might be the cause? What initiated the event (the murderer)?! We are eager to know. Here comes the answer after some deliberate delay:

(15) *I think it was his eye! (16) Yes, it was this!*

This point takes us to the next move, i.e. the protagonist's response to what he describes as the "EVIL EYE" (a pale blue eye with a film over it).

3. *The protagonist's response or reaction to the event* (sentence 18)

Having introduced the two major characters ('I' the narrator/protagonist and 'he' the old man/antagonist), and the initiating event or the motive for the upcoming crime, i.e. the old man's unordinary eye, the writer then goes on to introduce the protagonist's reaction.

(18) *Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold, and so by degrees, very gradually, I made up my mind **to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever** [my emphasis].*

The decision is strikingly announced. The protagonist decides "to take the life of the old man." This move is very essential because it introduces the shocking plot of the protagonist and at the same time creates suspense. Furthermore, it gives rise to the next dramatic move (attempt).

4. *Attempt*: a set of overt actions in the service of the protagonist's goal initiated by events or motivating states. (sentences 19-90).

This move's opening is as follows:

19) *Now this is the point. (20) You fancy me mad. (21) Madmen know nothing. (22) But you should have seen me. (23) You should have seen how wisely I proceeded -- with what caution -- with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work! (24) I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him.*

Yes, this is the point. Readers are kept in suspense. They are also strongly involved by the narrator through repeated uses of first- and second- person pronouns to intensify readers' involvement and thus to maximize the scary effect of the tale. Consider, for example, the following chain of pronouns in sentences 20-32:

(20) *You...me, (22) you...me, (23) You...I...I, (24) I...I, (25) I, (26) I...my...I...I...my, (27) you...I (28) I...I, (29) me...my...I, (30) Ha! (you)?, (31) my...I...I, (32) I...I...me*

Another involvement feature that has been effectively employed is the use of aggravated signals such as 'very' in the following examples:

(28) *I moved it slowly, very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep.*

This move marks the beginning of the story of the motiveless and shocking murder. This tale is not whodunit. We know who the killer is. Therefore, suspense and horror are not created by delayed of the true perpetrator. Instead, they are created as the reader hastens to find out how the dreadful murder has been committed. Thus, the focus is on the crime and also on the psychology of the killer. Like the writer, the killer has a planned framework. The story tells a chain of eight attempts. Each unsuccessful attempt generates a new attempt "for seven long nights, every night just at midnight."

In fact, two narrative relations can be identified at this point of the story: the temporal and casual relations. Attempts are temporally related in the sense that each attempt is followed by another one. In addition, each attempt gives rise 'motivates' the next one. Although the first seven attempts are unsuccessful, the goal is finally and perfectly achieved in the eighth night. Now, it's very clear that the protagonist has both an internal and external conflicts. Internally, he is nervous; externally he has a task to complete. The largest part of the story is devoted to this move (sentences 19-90) (see the Appendix). In the third paragraph (sentences 19-34), the writer deliberately provides a detailed step by step account of his first attempt. Indeed, horrible pictures are being painted in the reader's mind as s/he eagerly continues the reading process. Consider the effect of the following sentence on the reader:

(29) *It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed.*

The climax of the story occurs when the protagonist starts his account of the eighth and crucial night. Sentences (35-90) are all devoted to this aim. The protagonist provides thorough description of planning. Poe is very famous for his use of dashes. Indeed, dashes add to the mysterious atmosphere already established. It might also reflect the mental state of the "nervous" narrator. Consider the following example:

(62) *So I opened it -- you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily -- until at length a single dim ray like the thread of the spider shot out from the crevice and fell upon the vulture eye.*

The move reaches an end when the job is finally done. This scene marks the beginning of the next move.

*(86) In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. (87) I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done.*

#### 5. Consequence(s) of the attempt (sentences 91-107)

Two main consequences can be identified. First, the protagonist achieves his goal by killing the old man (sentences 91-102). Second, three police officers come to investigate what appears to be a premeditated crime (sentences 102-107).

*(104) ...there entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police.*

Here come three police officers to investigate what is claimed to be a perfect crime (as argued by the nervous murderer). Now the killer starts to face the consequences of his deed. A neighbor has reported a suspicious sound to the police office.

*(107) A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.*

This move represents the beginning of the stage of falling actions (a stage which usually follows the climax). Is it a perfect crime? Will the murderer be discovered? The killer has already eliminated any clues that may guide to the murder.

*(100) I then replaced the boards so cleverly so cunningly, that no human eye -- not even his -- could have detected anything wrong. (101) There was nothing to wash out -- no stain of any kind -- no blood-spot whatever. (102) I had been too wary for that.*

So, what is the protagonist's reaction to the presence of the policemen? The answer to this important question is given at the end of the story. This takes us to the last move in the story.

#### 6. The protagonist's reaction to the consequences (sentences 108-146).

The protagonist calmly shows the police officers around.

*(117) In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.*

Then, he begins to hear a beating heart. Whose heart beating is being heard? The police cannot hear it. The sound increases. The protagonist starts to suffer.

*(133) O God! what COULD I do? (134) I foamed -- I raved -- I swore! (135) I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. (136) It grew louder -- louder -- louder!... (144) I felt that I must scream or die! -- and now -- again -- hark! louder! louder! louder! LOUDER! --*

At length, the murderer shrieks,

*(146) I admit the deed! -- tear up the planks! -- here, here! -- it is the beating of his hideous heart!"*

To sum up, these constituents appear as a sequence of events which as a whole represent one big event developed coherently throughout the story. Indeed, the story has achieved its purpose because the writer employs a variety of narrative strategies, as discussed above, to create surprise, suspense and horror throughout his tale. Up to this point, the structural constituents of the story that successfully contribute to its effect have been identified and discussed. The following section examines the microstructural aspects of the story.

### 3. Microstructural Analysis: Lexicogrammatical Cohesion

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that "cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (p.4). According to Paltridge (2000, p. 131), cohesion refers to "the grammatical and/or lexical relationships among different elements of a text." Thus, cohesive ties can be classified into two main categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes four main types: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. On the other hand, lexical cohesion can be classified into two main categories: reiteration (repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, antonymy) and collocation.

#### 3.1 Grammatical Cohesion

As stated above, grammatical cohesion is realized through reference, conjunction, ellipsis and substitution. Now,

I shall analyze the text (the first three paragraphs of the story/sentences 1-34) by identifying the cohesive devices that contribute to its cohesion. My analysis will cover two main types of grammatical cohesion: (1) referential cohesion and (2) conjunctive cohesion.

The Text:

(1)TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad? (2)The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. (3)Above all was the sense of hearing acute.(4) I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. (5) I heard many things in hell. (6) How then am I mad? (7) Hearken! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story.

(8) It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but, once conceived, it haunted me day and night. (9) Object there was none. (10) Passion there was none. (11) I loved the old man. (12)He had never wronged me. (13) He had never given me insult. (14) For his gold I had no desire. (15) I think it was his eye! (16) Yes, it was this! (17) One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture -- a pale blue eye with a film over it. (18) Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold, and so by degrees, very gradually, I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.

(19) Now this is the point.(20) You fancy me mad.(21) Madmen know nothing.(22) But you should have seen me.(23) You should have seen how wisely I proceeded -- with what caution -- with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work!(24) I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him.(25) And every night about midnight I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh, so gently!(26) And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern all closed, closed so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head.(27) Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in!(28) I moved it slowly, very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep.(29) It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed.(30) Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this?(31) And then when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously -- oh, so cautiously -- cautiously (for the hinges creaked), I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye.(32) And this I did for seven long nights, every night just at midnight, but I found the eye always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work, for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye.(33) And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night.(34) So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

### 3.1.1 References

To begin with, there are three main kinds of reference: endophora, exophora and homophora (see Figure 1). Endophora reference includes two categories: anaphora (backward) reference and cataphora (forward) reference. Exophoric (outward) reference refers outside the text. Homophoric reference (cross-textual) is retrieved by reference to our general cultural knowledge. These cohesive devices are grammatically realized by personal pronouns, demonstratives and comparatives (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

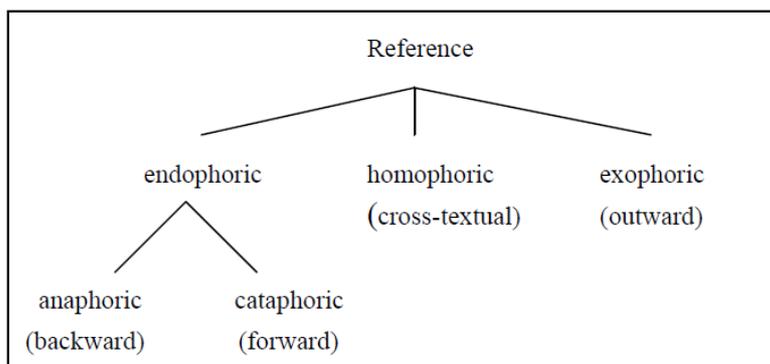


Figure 1. Types of referential devices (Halliday & Hassan, 1976)

#### *Endophoric anaphora*

Anaphoric reference refers backward. Let us now identify instances of anaphoric reference, and the word(s) they refer back to in order to show how such cohesive ties contribute to the overall cohesion of the text. It should be noted that all these instances occur across sentence boundaries.

- The following anaphoric references are identified in the text all of which refer back to *I* (the narrator) in sentence (1):

*My* in sentences (2,18,26,29,30),

*I* in (4,5,6, 7,11,14,15,18,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,31,32,33,34),

*me* in (8,12,13,18,20,22,32),

*myself* (18)

- The following anaphoric references refer back to *the old man* in sentence (11):

*he* (12,13,29,33,34)

*his* (14,15,17,29,32)

*the* in *the old man* (24)

*him* (24,29,34)

- The following anaphoric references refer back to *his eye* (the old man's eye) (15):

*it* (17, 18)

*the* in *the eye* (18)

*the* in *the vulture eye* (31)

*the* in *the eye* (32).

- The following references refer back to *you* (the addressee/ the reader) in sentence (1):

*you* in sentences (7, 22, 23,27,34)

- Some other instances of anaphoric reference have also been identified:

*all* (3) refers back to *the senses* (2)

*it* (27,28) refers back to *my head* (26).

It should be noted that all the above-mentioned reference items function for the inter-sentence cohesion of the text because they occur across sentence boundaries and therefore, they play a crucial role in creating cohesion by connecting the different parts of the text.

#### *Endophoric cataphora*

The second type of endophoric reference 'cataphora' is generally less common than anaphoric reference. It refers forward. Few cases of cataphoric reference have been identified in the text including:

*the* in *the point* (19) refers to *You fancy me mad* (20)

*the* in *the idea* refers forward to "*I made my mind to take the life of the old man*" (18)

#### *Exophora*

Exophoric reference points to something outside the text. For example, *I* (1), *you* (1), and *the* in *the old man* (11) can only be exophoric, referring to the narrator (the protagonist), the addressee (the reader), and the old man (the antagonist). Indeed, the whole story is based on these three exophoric references.

As shown through the analysis of anaphoric references, there are 32 anaphoric references, referring back to the exophoric reference '*I*' (1), 14 anaphoric references, referring back to the exophoric reference '*the old man*' (11), and 5 anaphoric references, referring back to '*you*' (1). This clearly shows that referential cohesion helps tying different sentences of the text together meaningfully.

#### *Homophora*

The last type of referential cohesion is homophoric reference which refers to "items the identity of which can be retrieved by reference to cultural knowledge in general" (Paltridge, 2000, p.133). Three homophoric ties have been identified in the text:

*the* in *the disease* (2)

*the* in *the latch of his door* (25)

*the* in *the hinges creaked* (31).

Here, it is assumed that the identity of these things (disease, latch and hinge) represents part of readers' shared

cultural knowledge. To sum up, the writer uses different devices of referential cohesion (anaphora, cataphora, exophora and homophora) to connect different parts of the text so that it appears as a well-connected, meaningful unit capable of achieving its purpose.

### 3.1.2 Conjunction

The word conjunction is used to "describe the cohesive tie between clauses or sections of text in such a way as to demonstrate a meaningful relationship between them" (Bloor & Bloor, 1995, p. 98). Conjunctive devices differ from other cohesive devices in the sense that they "explicitly draw attention to the type of relationship between one sentence or clause and another" (Cook, 1989, p. 21). Four types of conjunctions have been identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976): additive (e.g., and, in addition), adversative (e.g., but, whereas), casual (e.g., because, so that), and temporal (e.g., before, finally). Martin (1992) categorizes conjunctions as additive, comparative, temporal, consequential, internal, external, paratactic, and hypotactic. Let us now attempt to identify and analyze the conjunctive devices that contribute to the cohesion of the text. It is Martin's classifications that I will use in my analysis because they are more frequently used in current work on cohesion analysis (Paltridge, 2000).

*but* (1): comparative/paratactic/external

*then* (6): temporal/ paratactic /internal

*and* (7): additive/ paratactic /external

*but* (8): comparative /paratactic/external

*whenever* (18): temporal/paratactic/external

*and* (18): additive/hypotactic/external

*now* (19): temporal/paratactic/internal

*but* (22): comparative /paratactic/internal

*and* (25): additive/paratactic/external

*and* (26): additive/paratactic/external

*when* (26): temporal/hypotactic/external

*so that* (26): consequential/hypotactic/external

*and* (26): additive/paratactic/external

*so that* (28): consequential/hypotactic/external

*and* (31): additive/paratactic/external

*and* (32): additive/paratactic/external

*but* (32): comparative /paratactic/internal

*and* (33): additive/paratactic/external

*when* (33): temporal/hypotactic/external

*so* (34): consequential/hypotactic/external

Most of the conjunctive ties listed above are inter-sentential in the sense that they connect different sentences together and help in creating meaningful chain of related sentences. This, in turn, leads to the creation of a coherent text. Clearly, the use of such connectives contributes to the creation of suspense which in turns leads to reader's high involvement. For example, repeated use of 'and' and 'but' creates a conversational tone which helps to unfold the events one by one and get the reader involved in witnessing the whole event.

### 3.2 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion "is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 274). This kind of cohesion is captured at the lexical level (Cha, 1985). Its two main components are reiteration and collocation. As a cohesive component, lexical cohesion plays an important role through the many connections it makes in the text. Indeed, different types of lexical relationship help generating chains of connected lexical items in the text. The main types of lexical cohesion are repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. After this brief introduction to lexical cohesion, I shall start analysing the lexical relations in the text in order to show how these cohesive devices contribute to the overall cohesion of the text.

### 3.2.1 Repetition

Bloor and Bloor (1995) describe this type of lexical cohesion as having the strongest cohesive effect. The words that have been directly repeated in different sentences of the text are given below:

*eye* has been repeated in sentences (15,17,18,31,32)

*mad(man)* (1,6,20,21,30)

*night(s)* (8,25,32,33,34)

*the old man* (11,18,24,28)

*head* (26,29,31)

*see* (27,29,34)

*never* (12,13 34)

*hole* (7,24,29)

*sense(s)* (2,3)

*say* (1,8)

*thing(s)* (4,5)

*heard* (4,5)

*none* (9,10)

*day* (8,33)

*made* (18,26)

*opening* (26,29)

*seen* (22,23)

*closed* (26,32)

*vulture* (17,31)

*fell upon* (18,31)

*work* (23,32)

*lantern* (26,31)

*impossible* (8,32)

*thrust* (26,27)

In addition, some other words are repeated within the same sentence in order to strengthen the intra-sentential relationships and to create suspense. Following are examples of repetition within the same sentence:

*nervous*: repeated twice in (1)

*eye*: twice (17)

*what*: three times (23)

*closed*: twice (26)

*head*: twice (26)

*slowly*: twice (28)

*undid*: twice (31)

*cautiously*: three times (31)

Clearly, the repetition of these words has a direct effect on the reader. By using such a technique, the writer, in my opinion, has achieved his purpose from telling such a scary tale. Consider the following example:

(31) *And then when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously -- oh, so cautiously -- cautiously (for the hinges creaked), I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye.*

This example is a reminder of the importance, already emphasized, of the role of lexical cohesion. In this sentence, as in many others, the writer uses repetition as a major means for creating his powerful descriptive language of scary scenes and moments throughout the tale. Indeed, the writer relies very much on the power of

descriptive language to paint scary pictures in the reader's mind. Besides direct repetition, the text also contains many examples of derivational and inflectional relations. A variety of morphological affixes (prefixes, infixes and suffixes) are used. Our realization of such instances is listed below:

*will* (1) – *would* (30)

*senses* (2) – *sense* (3)

*hearing* (3) – *heard* (4,5) – *Hearken* (7)

*take* (18) – *took* (29)

*seen* (22,23) – *see* (27,29,34)

*caution* (23) – *cautiously* (31)

*opened* (25) – *opening* (29)

*sleep* (28) – *slept* (34)

*undid* (31) – *do, did* (32)

As illustrated above, these related words occur across sentence boundaries and thus help connecting the text.

### 3.2.2 Synonymy

In this section, I will identify the synonyms and near synonyms that serve as types of lexical ties for the text.

*rid off* (18) – *take the life* (18) – *killed* (24)

*calmly* (7) – *gently* (25) – *cunningly* (27) – *slowly* (28) – *cautiously* (31)

*observe* (7) – *conceived* (8) – *seen* (22) – *see* (29)

*room* (31) – *chamber* (33)

*brain* (8) – *mind* (18)

*light* (26) – *lantern* (31)

*know* (21) – *foresight* (23)

### 3.2.3 Antonymy

Another lexical feature which contributes to the unity of the text is antonymy (opposites). The following instances of antonyms have been identified:

*sharpened* (2) – *dulled* (3)

*heaven* (4) – *hell* (5)

*day* (8) – *night* (8,25,32,33,34)

*open, opening* (25) – *closed* (26)

*mad* (1,19) – *wise* (30)

*loved* (11) – *vexed* (32)

*did* (23) – *undid* (23)

*dark* (26) – *light* (27)

### 3.2.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy is "a relation of inclusion" (Saeed, 2003, p. 68). In this text, we can identify the following example of hyponymy (Figure 2):

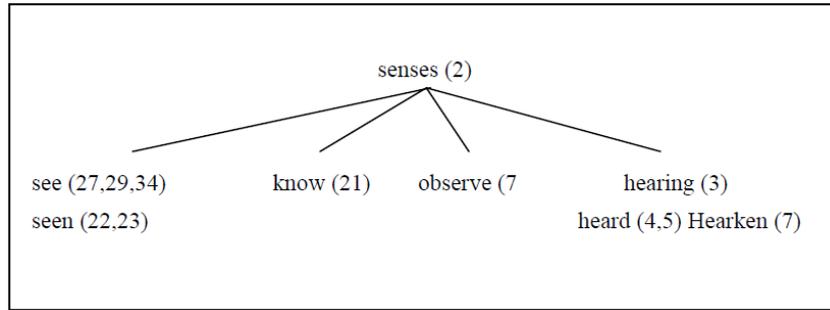


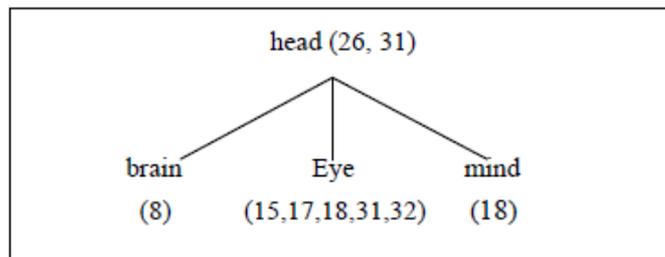
Figure 2. An example of hyponymy

In this example, the word 'senses' is the more general term (the superordinate) while the other words are hypernyms.

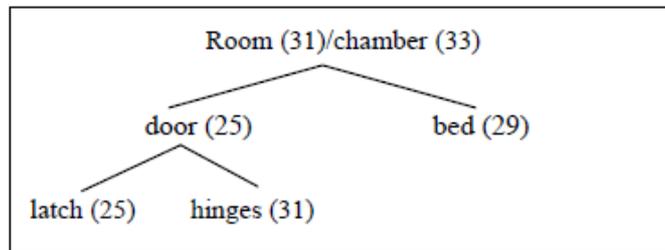
3.2.5 Meronymy

Meronymy refers to a part-whole relationship between words. Such a relation can be illustrated as follows: X is a part of Y (or) Y has X. Three examples of meronymic hierarchies identified in the text are shown below in A, B and C (Figure 3).

(A)



(B)



(C)

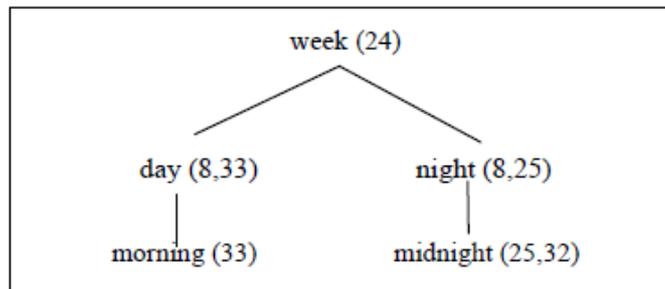


Figure 3. Three examples of meronymic hierarchies

3.2.6 Collocational Ties

Collocation refers to the syntagmatic relations between words. The following are examples of word collocations

from the text:

*disturb---sleep*

*give--- insult,*

*sharpened--- senses,*

*hinges--- creaked,*

*vulture---eye.*

In short, the text contains a wide range of cohesive devices that occur across sentence boundaries and thus contribute to the grammatical and lexical cohesion of the text.

#### 4. Conclusion and Implications

This paper provided a narrative discourse analysis of Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" at both the macro and micro level. From the above analysis it can be seen that the writer follows a number of moves and uses a wide range grammatical and lexical ties which contribute to the creation of a coherent text; a text that can effectively achieve its purpose and make its intended effect on the reader. To create suspense, the writer uses different narrative strategies including, but not limited to, high level of involvement, a wide range of cohesive ties, the use of dashes and capitalization, a tight plot and a highly unreliable narrator. These strategies have led to the creation of "The Tell-Tale Heart"; a tale of horror that has been long admired as an excellent example of how short stories can produce an effect on the reader. The following section discusses the implications of the discursive analysis of the story for English teaching and learning. It concludes with some suggested activities for the language classroom.

##### 4.1 Implications for language leaching

There are many ways in which the above analysis of the story can be exploited in the language learning classroom. Different activities targeting different language skills can be designed in order to create learning opportunities for students. Based on the story's analysis, both top-down and bottom-up activities will be suggested (see Figure 4).

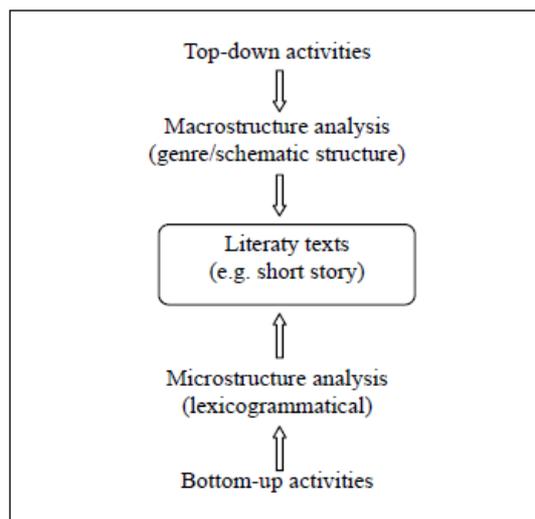


Figure 4. Classroom top-down and bottom-up activities (adapted from Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000)

##### 4.1.1 Macrostructure Analysis: The Implications

Based on the generic analysis of the story, some teaching implications and activities can be suggested. For example, students may be asked to read the story and then identify the different constituents of the plot. More than one model of narrative schematic structure can be applied to ensure that students have gained a holistic understanding of the text. Then, students may be instructed to identify and discuss the story's main theme, purpose, climax, major and minor characters and narrative strategy used by the writer. They may also discuss how the interaction between these various narrative elements contribute to the overall effect of the tale. In addition, they may be asked to retell the story and to write a summary of it. Certainly, such top-down activities provide students with a variety of interesting learning opportunities to develop their listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary knowledge skills.

## TASK 1

Read the story and then discuss these questions:

- 1). Is the title informative about the story? If so, how?
- 2). Spoken and written communication involve different kinds of strategies. Discuss the strategies used by Poe in this story? Does the story present itself as a written or spoken discourse? Planned or spontaneous production? Why? Give reasons and examples from the text.
- 3). How could you identify the structural constituents of the plot?
- 4). Is the story's plot tight or loose? Why?
- 5). What is the main theme of the story?
- 6). Describe the major characters of the story.
- 7). From what point of view is this story told?
- 8). To what extent does the employed narrative strategy contribute to the effect of the story?
- 9). Would it make any difference if the story was told from a third person point of view (omniscient narrator)?
- 10). Do you believe and trust the narrator of the story? Why?
- 11). What strategies are used by Poe to create such a scary tale?

## 4.1.2 Microstructure Analysis: The Implications

In the third section of the paper, the first three paragraphs of the story were analyzed at the micro-level by identifying the lexicogrammatical ties that occur across sentence boundaries and contribute to the overall cohesion of the text. Such a bottom-up approach to discourse analysis has been described by Cook (1989) as "a very fruitful way of trying to understand what language is and how it works" (p. 79). Cook has also emphasized the importance of creating classroom tasks which develop not only students' understanding of cohesive devices, but also their use. Such tasks may aim at raising students' awareness of coherence and cohesion in writing. As shown above, the story enjoys a high density of cohesive ties and thus has great potential for application in the language learning classroom. Following are some activities for teaching purposes (These are based on my cohesive analysis of the first three paragraphs of the story/sentences 1-34).

## TASK 2

(Past narration grammar points)

1. Write the correct form of each verb in parentheses. Use past simple or past participle verb forms.
2. What are the grammatical functions of the word(s) in bold (e.g., subject, direct object, indirect object, oblique object...etc.)?
3. Find one example of: (a) an adverbial clause of time, (b) a non-finite clause.

*I ..... (love) **the old man**. (12) **He** had never ..... (wrong) me. (13) He had never .....(give) **me insult**. (14) For his gold **I** ..... (have) no desire. (15) I think it ..... (be) his eye! (16) Yes, it ..... (be) **this!** (17) One of his eyes ..... (resemble) that of a vulture -- a pale blue eye with a film over **it**. (18) Whenever **it** ..... (fall) upon me my blood ..... (run) cold, and so by degrees, very gradually, I ..... (make) up **my mind** to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.*

## TASK 3

Consider the opening sentence of the story:

*(1) TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad?*

1. What tenses are used in this sentence?
2. Is this a regular structure? Why?
3. What does such a grammatical structure imply about the psychological state of the protagonist?

## TASK 4

Look at these sentences and then answer the questions:

*(9) Object there was none. (10) Passion there was none. (14) For his gold I had no desire.*

1. What links are there between these three sentences?

2. Would it make any difference if these sentences were rewritten as:

*There was no any object. There was no passion. I had no desire for his gold.*

And if so, would this affect the influence on the reader?

#### TASK 5

Read the following passage below. Then, identify the referring expressions and the thing(s) they refer to.

*(11) I loved the old man. (12) He had never wronged me. (13) He had never given me insult. (14) For his gold I had no desire. (15) I think it was his eye! (16) Yes, it was this! (17) One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture -- a pale blue eye with a film over it. (18) Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold, and so by degrees, very gradually, I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.*

#### TASK 6

Look at the passage below. Then, identify and categorize any instances of lexical ties (e.g., repetition, synonymy, antonymy, ... etc.)

*(30) Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this?(31) And then when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously -- oh, so cautiously -- cautiously (for the hinges creaked), I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye.(32) And this I did for seven long nights, every night just at midnight, but I found the eye always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work, for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye.(33) And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night.(34) So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed , to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.*

#### References

- Angelianawati, L. (2019). Using drama in EFL classroom. *Journal of English Teaching*, 5(2), 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v5i2.1066>
- Berrarbi, A., & Bahous, A. (2018). Introducing short stories in EFL classroom to explore culturally diverse issues. *Arab World English Journal for Translation and Literary Studies*, 2(2), 103-116. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol2no2.7>
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman.
- Bloor, T., & Bloor, M. (1995). *The functional analysis of English: A Hallidayan approach*. London: Arnold.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cha, J. S. (1985). *Linguistic cohesion in texts: Theory and description*. Seoul: Deahan Textbook Printing Co., Ltd.
- Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Erkaya, O. R. (2005). Benefits of using short stories in EFL context. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8, 1-13.
- Georgakopoulou, A., & Goutsos, D. (1997). *Discourse analysis: An introduction*. Cornwall: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gonzalez, D. (1998). A whole language project. *English teaching forum*, 36, 14-20.
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Johnstone, B. (2002). *Discourse analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kay, H., & Dudley-Evan, T. (1998). Genre: What teachers think. *ELT Journal*, 52, 308-314. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/52.4.308>
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lakoff, R.T. (1982). Some of my favourite writers and literature: The mingling of oral and literate strategies in written communication. In Tannen, D. (ed) *Spoken and written language: Exploring orality and literacy*. New Jersey: Albex.
- Lao, C. Y., & Krashen, S. (2000). The impact of popular literature study on literacy development in EFL: More evidence for the power of reading. *System*, 28, 261-270. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(00\)00011-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(00)00011-7)

- Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733048>
- Martin, J. R. (1992). *English text: System and structure*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.59>
- Ochs, E. (1997). Narrative. In T., Van Dijk, (ed). *Discourse as structure and process*. London: Sage Publication.
- O’Gara, P. (2008). To be or have not been: Learning language tenses through drama. *Issues in Educational Research*, 18(2), 156-166.
- Paltridge, B. (1996). Genre, text type, and the language learning classroom. *ELT Journal*, 50, 237-243. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/50.3.237>
- Paltridge, B. (2000). *Making sense of discourse analysis*. NSW: Gerd Stabler.
- Pardede, P. (2011). Using short stories to teach language skills. *Journal of English Teaching*, 1(1), 15-27. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v1i1.49>
- Parkinson, B. & Thomas, H. R. (2000). *Teaching literature in a second language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh: University Press.
- Rahman, S., & Arju, S. (2013). Exploiting Short Stories in the EFL Classroom. *Stamford Journal of English*, 4, 124-141. <https://doi.org/10.3329/sje.v4i0.13493>
- Saeed, J. I. (2003). *Semantics*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Silverman, K. (1993). *New essays on Poe's major tales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stein, N. L. (1982). The definition of a story. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 6, 487-5-7. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(82\)90022-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(82)90022-4)
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis (English in academic and research settings)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Toolan, M. (1988). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. London: Routledge.

#### **Appendix A The Analysis of the "The Tell-Tale Heart" internal structure (plot) based on Stein’s (1982) influential model**

[1] *setting: introducing the narrator who also plays the role of the protagonist*

(1) TRUE! nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad? (2) The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. (3) Above all was the sense of hearing acute. (4) I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. (5) I heard many things in hell. (6) How then am I mad? (7) Hearken! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story.

[2] *initiating event: some type of change in the protagonist's environment*

(8) It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but, once conceived, it haunted me day and night. (9) Object there was none. (10) Passion there was none. (11) I loved the old man. (12) He had never wronged me. (13) He had never given me insult. (14) For his gold I had no desire. (15) I think it was his eye! (16) Yes, it was this! (17) One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture -- a pale blue eye with a film over it.

[3] *the protagonist's response or reaction to the event.*

(18) Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold, and so by degrees, very gradually, I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.

[4] *attempt: a set of overt actions in the service of the protagonist's goal*

(19) Now this is the point. (20) You fancy me mad. (21) Madmen know nothing. (22) But you should have seen me. (23) You should have seen how wisely I proceeded -- with what caution -- with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work! (24) I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. (25) And every night about midnight I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh, so gently! (26) And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern all closed, closed so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. (27) Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! (28) I moved it slowly, very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. (29) It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. (30) Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this? (31) And then when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern

cautiously -- oh, so cautiously -- cautiously (for the hinges creaked), I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye.(32) And this I did for seven long nights, every night just at midnight, but I found the eye always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work, for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye. (33) And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night.(34) So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

(35) Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. (36) A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. (37) Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers, of my sagacity. (38) I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. (39) To think that there I was opening the door little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. (40)I fairly chuckled at the idea, and perhaps he heard me, for he moved on the bed suddenly as if startled.(41) Now you may think that I drew back -- but no. (42) His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

(43)I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out, "Who's there?"

(44)I kept quite still and said nothing. (45) For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime, I did not hear him lie down. (46) He was still sitting up in the bed, listening; just as I have done night after night hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

(47) Presently, I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. (48) It was not a groan of pain or of grief -- oh, no! (49) It was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. (50) I knew the sound well. (51) Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. (52) I say I knew it well. (53) I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him although I chuckled at heart. (54)I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise when he had turned in the bed. (55) His fears had been ever since growing upon him. (56) He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not.(57) He had been saying to himself, "It is nothing but the wind in the chimney, it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or, "It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp."(58) Yes he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions; but he had found all in vain. ALL IN VAIN, because Death in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him and enveloped the victim. (59) And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel, although (60) he neither saw nor heard, to feel the presence of my head within the room.

(61) When I had waited a long time very patiently without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little -- a very, very little crevice in the lantern. (62) So I opened it -- you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily -- until at length a single dim ray like the thread of the spider shot out from the crevice and fell upon the vulture eye.

(63) It was open, wide, wide open, and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. (64) I saw it with perfect distinctness -- all a dull blue with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones, but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person, for I had directed the ray as if by instinct precisely upon the damned spot.

(65) And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses? (66) Now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. (67) I knew that sound well too. (68) It was the beating of the old man's heart. (69) It increased my fury as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

(70) But even yet I refrained and kept still. (71) I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. (72) I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. (73) Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. (74) It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder, every instant. (75) The old man's terror must have been extreme! (76) It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! -- do you mark me well? (77) I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. (78) And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. (79) Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. (80) But the beating grew louder, louder! (81) I thought the heart must burst. (82) And now a new anxiety seized me -- the sound would be heard by a neighbour! (83) The old man's hour had come! (84) With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. (85) He shrieked once -- once only. (86) In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. (87) I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. (88) But for many minutes the heart beat on with a muffled sound. (89) This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. (90) At length it ceased.

*[5] consequences of the attempt: killing of the old man & arrival of the police officers*

(91) The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. (92) Yes, he was stone, stone dead. (93) I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. (94) There was no pulsation. (95) He was stone dead. (96) His eye would trouble me no more.

(97) If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. (98) The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence.

(99) I took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. (100) I then replaced the boards so cleverly so cunningly, that no human eye -- not even his -- could have detected anything wrong. (101) There was nothing to wash out -- no stain of any kind -- no blood-spot whatever. (102) I had been too wary for that.

(103) When I had made an end of these labours, it was four o'clock -- still dark as midnight. (104) As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. (105) I went down to open it with a light heart, -- for what had I now to fear? (106) There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. (107) A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

*[6] the protagonist's reaction to the consequences*

(108) I smiled, -- for what had I to fear? (109) I bade the gentlemen welcome. (110) The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. (112) The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. (113) I took my visitors all over the house. (114) I bade them search -- search well. (115) I led them, at length, to his chamber. (116) I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. (117) In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

(118) The officers were satisfied. (119) My MANNER had convinced them. (120) I was singularly at ease. (121) They sat and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. (122) But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. (123) My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears; but still they sat, and still chatted. (124) The ringing became more distinct : I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness -- until, at length, I found that the noise was NOT within my ears.

(125) No doubt I now grew VERY pale; but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. (126) Yet the sound increased -- and what could I do? (127) It was A LOW, DULL, QUICK SOUND -- MUCH SUCH A SOUND AS A WATCH MAKES WHEN ENVELOPED IN COTTON. (128) I gasped for breath, and yet the officers heard it not. (129) I talked more quickly, more vehemently but the noise steadily increased. (130) I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. (131) Why WOULD they not be gone? (132) I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men, but the noise steadily increased. (133) O God! what COULD I do? (134) I foamed -- I raved -- I swore! (135) I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. (136) It grew louder -- louder -- louder! (137) And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. (138) Was it possible they heard not? (139) Almighty God! -- no, no? (140) They heard! -- they suspected! -- they KNEW! -- they were making a mockery of my horror! -- this I thought, and this I think. (141) But anything was better than this agony! (142) Anything was more tolerable than this derision! (143) I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! (144) I felt that I must scream or die! -- and now -- again -- hark! louder! louder! louder! LOUDER! --

(145) "Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! (146) I admit the deed! -- tear up the planks! -- here, here! -- it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

The End

**Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).