



Unraveling the Conflict of Mind and Heart in Literature: A Thematic Study of *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe

Gul Aizaz^{*a}

a. Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

ARTICLE INFO

Received:

September 24, 2025

Revision Received:

October 06, 2025

Accepted:

October 08, 2025

Available Online:

October 10, 2025

Keywords:

contradictions,
emotion, rationality,
qualitative method,
narrative theory.

ABSTRACT

The issue of conflict between rationality and emotion is an exploration of thematic strains in the short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe. The study looks into the methods Poe adopts in building an inner conflict in the narrator between his sensor and the force of an intense inner reassurance through a development of a literary analysis of Edgar Allan Poe and his ideas. The aim of the study is to investigate the depiction of rationality, the analysis of emotional superiority to reason, and the evaluation of the way Poe combines the two to produce psychological horror. The method used for this research is qualitative method as it deeply explains the phenomenon. Creswell (2013) has discussed that the text in qualitative research is perceived to find a pattern, category, and meaning-making. The findings shows that Poe employs the contradictions in the mind of the narrator to demonstrate the fragility of human psyche and to confuse consciousness and insanity. It also shows that Poe masters the art of intertwining the problem of mind and emotion of the narrator with the plot and language of the story.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Argument between reason and passion is an eternal motif of the story to discuss burning human affection uncovered itself in the most attractive form. The playwrights have explored the issue of the internal psychological conflict presenting itself through the actions that lie beyond the boundaries of moral choices. *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe personifies this theme in the nameless protagonist, the murder of an old man lacks a logical reasoning, as the protagonist kills the man out of emotional disgust driven by the vulture-like eye that the man wore. A rational calculation of the crime by the mind does not concur with the breakdown that the narrator finally has due to guilt and delusional pounding of a heartbeat. According to philosopher and literary theorist Martha C. Nussbaum (2001), there is more to emotions than a simple impulse, as emotion is filled with appraisals, attitudes and assessments about the world around us, which in effect means that emotion posing as logic is not an unusual occurrence both in writing and life in general (p. 24).

* Correspondence to: Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
E-mail address: gul_aizaz@yahoo.com (G. Aizaz).



1.2. Poe Psychological Exploration of Rationality and Emotion

The manner of story narration that was used by Edgar Allan Poe in *The Tell-Tale Heart* is a reflection on the complexity of the psychological discord masquerading as the rationality. It is at this point of logic and emotional disturbance that Poe is focused in his stories. The prolific scholar Eric W. Carlson (1996) adds, Poe does not hesitate to collapse the boundary between the sane and insane in order to create a story that at once serves a logical argument against itself (p. 82). Through the journey to hell the narrator takes, Poe exposes the boundaries of reason as it gets skewed by addiction and emotional infatuation therewith, therefore representing the ability of the heart to dominate the mind, even in the guise of the mind having the upper hand.

1.3. The Tell Tale Heart as the literary model of the inner conflict

The Tell-Tale Heart is more than the story of a murderer and his guilt and it is an exemplary in a story of psychological dualism in which the human mind is divided between rationalization and emotional compulsion. The guilt, which is a stronger emotion, overrides the intellect and this is indicated by the narrator being compelled to confess due to the hypothetical beating of the heart of the dead man he was lying next to. As J. Gerald Kennedy (1987) put it, apart from a general anxiety in divided individuality where passion destabilizes presumed integrity of rational mind, Poe fiction shows an abiding interest in wholeness through division (p. 114).

1.4. The Gothic Imagination and the Extreme Emotion

The extremes of human emotions and mental instability are often dramatized in the Gothic genre, and that is the reason, the use of an untrustworthy narrator is often employed in order to illustrate the disconnect between rationality and desire. In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, through first-person narration, Poe attempts to reveal the delusions behind the reasoning of the narrator who was suffering the inner instability of emotions. The murder and the planned and calculated manner in which it is done are delivered coldly and impulsively but the subsequent confession is a result of the awfully heavy burden of emotions. Indeed, the Gothic literature as many literary critics insist is an arena where the repressed breaks through and sanity becomes unbalanced by excess of emotions like fear, guilt and obsession (Punter, 1996, p. 186). Poe very efficiently exploits this Gothic structure to show a character whose mind is eventually submerged in emotional agony, which is evidence of defeat of the logical world-view in the presence of psychological mayhem.

1.5. The Un-trustworthy Voice as an Externalization of the Internal Divisions

The other important point of *The Tell-Tale Heart* as a clash between mind and heart is that Poe has used the persona of the unreliable narrator as an agency that represents the psychology of duality. The persistence of the narrator to state that he is a sane man as he concedes to visions and the sound of a beating heart which is actually dead captures a realm of duality in the consciousness in which the sanity of rationalization is united with delusion. This is indicated by Daniel Hoffman (1972) who says that the narrators of Poe are buried in the nightmare logic, where the mind works within an afflicted emotional system (p. 231). The type of narrative structure employed by Poe is what reinforces this observation as a struggle of rational mind versus irrational heart in the sense of reality versus psychological projections.

1.6. Statement of the Research Problem

Although there is significant literature on the tale of *The Tell – Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, most of them consider the telling of madness, guilt and the unreliable narrators in isolation. Nonetheless, an apparent absence can be traced where the way in which the conflict between rationality of thought and emotional insistence is teased out as a device on a higher level of theme plays a crucial part. Not many recent works critique this tension with a closeted literary-psychological approach and particularly in the theme of duality of theme and internal moral struggle. This paper fills that gap by exploring how Poe dramatizes the mind-heart interaction through a new studying perspective to the literature written about Poe.

1.7. Research Objectives

- To examine the opposition of reason and emotion that Edgar Allan Poe depicts through the character of the narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart*.
- To analyze how Poe employs the narrative strategies to portray the psychological conflict between the mind and the heart.

1.8. Research Questions

1. What is the opposition of reason and emotion that Edgar Allan Poe depicts through the character of the narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart*?
2. What are the techniques of narration used by Poe to show psychological tension of mind and heart?

1.10. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the perception of psychological conflicts in classic Gothic books and namely through one of the associated lenses rationality against emotion. The research through the review of critical questions in *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe can present some ideas about the complications of human consciousness and the ways how the person with internal issues of their morals and emotions can express them through the story. The exploration of this theme is not only important in regard to literary studies but also is valuable in the context of the work of other disciplines and fields (psychology, philosophy, trauma theory). Additionally, the article highlights the particular consideration of the relevance of Poe in modern literary criticism and the perpetual contribution to the scholarly pursuit of such work to the academic knowledge of insanity, guilt and self-conflict in literature.

1.11. Delimitation of the study

The given study has been limited to the short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, and more particularly has its focus on the thematic presentation of the division between rationality and emotional reaction. The other works of Poe as well as other literary writers who discuss the same themes have not been reviewed. More, the study restricts itself to a qualitative and textual study based on the literary theory and does not engage empirical data obtained through psychological or neuroscientific analysis.

2. Literature review

The present literature review examines the thematic polarity of fortune and fate in literatures, particularly the Gothic fiction and the use of narrating modes by Edgar Allan Poe. It investigates academic considerations of the psychological dimension of the characters of Poe, the method of unreliability of narration, and symbolism of guilt and insanity. Through the various critical opinions, the review creates a scholarly grounds of the study of how Poe enacts the internal struggle between intellect and instinct in *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe gives a pertinent eye with which this dichotomy can be seen. Through his narratives, J. Gerald Kennedy (1987) has indicated that in many cases Poe revealed an intense preoccupation with the divided self by recreating tales of the rift between rational consciousness and emotional compulsion (p. 114). Daniel Hoffman (1972) goes further to say that Poe often has his characters inhabit the world of a nightmare formula of logic where reason is run by an illness emotional framework (p. 231). The philosophical approach that proves this literary investigation by Martha C. Nussbaum (2001) is based on the claim that any emotions are also supposed to be intelligent and evaluative, and it is hard to believe that rationality is always more constant or stable (p. 24). This combination of feeling and smartness is the basis of a good deal of Poe psychological terror.

The existence of emotional intensity and psychological instability is also the characteristic feature of the Gothic tradition that Poe firmly belongs to. According to David Punter (1996), Gothic fiction achieves the expression of a kind of literary space to erupt the nature of repressed emotions and disturbs the borderline of reason (p. 186). It can be traced in *The Tell-Tale Heart* in which the fascination of the narrator by the eye of the old man and his subsequent guilty romanticism induce him to confess. Eric W. Carlson (1996) throws more light on this by stating that Poe tends to dissolve the boundary between rationality and madness because he applies this logic as a self-defeating process (p. 82). In her examination on the Gothic, Barbara C. Freeman (1997) goes further to state that, in most cases, Gothic accounts transcribe the victory of the intractable emotion above the portals of the Enlightenment rationalism (p. 39). These are the critical angles, which demonstrate the mode of operating *The Tell-Tale Heart* falls into the genre that favors the emotive, a pattern of behavior over the rational.

This approach of mind-heart conflict in *The Tell-Tale Heart* is reflected in the unreliable narration technique of the piece. The fact that the narrator keeps obsessing on the theme of sanity even when it is obvious that he is delusional point to a mind that is in conflict with its feelings. Moreover, Benjamin F. Fisher (1998) states that Poe employs this mode of narrating to get a feel of inner distortion, whereby the logic of the narrator conceals his irrationality to the point of madness (p. 54). Similarly, Brett Zimmerman (2005) argues that the characters of the narrators in Poe live in a middle-ground between their sanity and emotional extremes, and this makes the characters blur the boundaries to the psychological integrity (p. 63). Although his words are applied to the fantastic as a whole in literature, Tzvetan Todorov (1975) claims that such in-between of the reality

and the delusion is the main idea of the technique of suspense and the emotional dislocation introduced by Poe (p. 32). All these scholars emphasize the manner in which the narrative format in the work of Poe captures a more fundamental emotional imbalance.

In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the human cost of having to live with the weight of guilt proves so powerful that any rational arguments the narrator tries to build about the opposite of a murder are eliminated. This is the moral murkiness in the psychological tales of Poe. John Carlos Rowe (p. 102) remarks how in his fiction, Poe seems to be focusing on the emotional confession masquerading as intellectual exposition, and points to the uncertainty of reason face-to-face with moral dilemma (p. 102). This is supported by Shawn Rosenheim (1995) who says that confession of the narrator in *The Tell-Tale Heart* is not a success of truth because in it the narrator is a failure that collapses under pressure of emotions (p. 142). Also, Joan Dayan (1987) clarifies that, in most of his narrators, Poe develops a scholarly schizophrenia in the sense that the intellectual arguments become empty due to the emotional culpability (p. 51). Such realizations show a way in which Poe employs an emotional guilt as the ultimate power that triumphs over rationality, thus supporting the main idea of the story.

The emotional tension in the literature is frequently a force that is much less than a thematic force, yet is a structural force that twists the narrative stability. There is a breakage in narration and reality, a variance in the structural integrity of the narrative as a result of the inner conflict of the teller in Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart*. According to Susan Sniader Lanser (1981), narrative unreliability and misrepresentation of the story is common in the cases of emotional instability as the inner conflicts can cause the narrating itself to be distorted or untrue (p. 167). Likewise, according to Paul John Eakin (1999), identity in literatures forms not only through the use of memory and logic but equally through emotional cracks (p. 98) which parallels the confession of the narrator to overcome the guilt after his emotional torment and not as a result of rational thinking. Monika Fludernik (1996) regards as well the issue of excess on emotions in the Gothic stories and suggests that in this case, the reader is frequently pressed to doubt the way between rationality and irrationality of the world of this story (p. 215).

There are also profound philosophical underpinnings to the thematic clash between mind and heart which still shapes the literary criticism. This duality reverberates Cartesian dualism, through which the distinction between mind and body helps to establish a paradigm through which emotion is incorporated as the other of rationality. Understanding the early modern thought, Susan James (1997) comments that emotions, historically, were viewed as a hindrance to rationality, though at the same time were also among the constituencies of the rational thought process. (p. 45) This can be backed by Charles Taylor (1989) who states that modern identity is the result of the relationship between authenticity and rational control which is nil in the case of Poe and his obsessive narrator. Robert C. Solomon (2003) adds to the discussion too, arguing very strongly that through the perspective of cognitive structures, emotions are judgments of value which are therefore deeply integrated within the structure of ones thinking (p. 84).

The Tell-Tale Heart by Poe deals with the aestheticization of the insanity, which is also one of the thematic elements through which the author juxtaposes rationality and emotional breakdown. How madness has been turned into a form of narration since the structure of the story is parallel to the irrationality of the narrator and is the concern of the critics. According to Elaine Showalter (1985), the representation of madness in writing, more so by male writers, is mostly coded as a way of disintegration as well as insight into inner truths (p. 12). In his historical treatise of madness, Michel Foucault (1965) shares an identical point of view when he outlines so-called madness as the absolute endpoint of reason, a venation where the normal logic no longer applies (p. 110). The claim of sanity by the narrator in Poe story would be a performative act of exclusion of this boundary thus reflecting how madness works to reveal underlying emotional reality. As also stated by Shoshana Felman (1978), the very form of the narratives by Poe is said to embody theatrical excess as enactment of the crisis of reason where the very language itself is symptomatic of it (p. 11).

Contemporary intellectual works still manage to bring more insight into the relationship between the aspects of emotion and reason in Gothic and psychological novels, which proves that *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Poe remains a valid addition to the contemporary context of literature. According to Emily Alder (2019), the Gothic fiction challenges the Enlightenment rationality when emotional excess and mental instability are performed as forms of storytelling resistance, especially in texts in which madness is used as a counterpoint to rational structures (p. 41). Likewise, similar ideas can be found in the work of Catherine Spooner (2021), who mentions that, because of the modern interpretations of Gothic, emotional distress in Gothic is frequently recast as a representation of the shortcomings of rationality and, by extension, this aspect of emotional disturbance can be attributed to the narrator of the story by Poe, who represents a psychological disorder which cannot be restrained by cognition (p. 88). Beyond the rather narrow focus of analysis, in examining the emotional immersion at the intersection of narrative psychology and literary text, Suzanne Keen (2007) cites the way in which the literary text applies emotional immersion to destabilize readerly confidence in rational authority of the narrator voice, which Poe employs with a great degree of mastery in the break down of the narrator guided by his guilt. Such recent contributions serve to point out *The Tell-Tale Heart* as a crucial text through which one can understand the narrative role of emotional conflict in literature.

3. Research Methodology

The study examines the thematic conflict of rationality and emotion in the story *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe via qualitative research study method. Since the reading is all about a thorough reading and textual analysis of the work of literature, qualitative approaches is the most suitable to untangle the metaphorical, psychological, and story aspects of the story. This research is based on the original text of the literary work, i.e., *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, and some literary articles, academic books, latest research and peer-reviewed researches, and papers that concentrate on the elements of psychological struggle, literature of the devil, and emotional theory in literature. Creswell (2013) has discussed that the text in qualitative research is perceived to find a pattern, category, and meaning-making, which is consistent with the present study as well as the method of interpretation of the thematic concerns of Poe.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Overview

The analysis shows how Edgar Allan Poe uses *The Tell-tale Heart* to bring into dramatic play the extreme struggle between reason and emotion in the psyche of the narrator. In close textual reading, the study examined thematic display of internal struggle, narrative technique and psychological disintegration and every research objective that was answered using direct textual source and scholarly interpretation.

4.2. Paradox of Sanity: Madness in Disguise

Possibly the most striking evidence of the tension between reason and passion is in the narrator arguing over and over about his mental stability whilst at the same time talking of doing things that are very much indicative of severe mental distress. He says he is mad, you fancy. Madmen are ignorant. But you ought to have seen me. You should have witnessed how prudently I went at it—with what care—with what circumspection—with what dissimulation I was at it!" (Poe, 1843, p. 1). The language, itself, is an indication of obsessive rationalization since the narrator uses caution and premeditation as synonyms of being sane. Nevertheless, this rational account is emotionally motivated, as it shows a plaintive urgency to be recognized as non-insane. His emotional over indulgence on the vulture eye of the old man and the lack of consonance of his deeds and how he sees himself indicate a broken mind as emotion predominates over reason. The correlation can be made with the works of Daniel Hoffman, (1972), who noted that in Poe, reason is merely a tool to excuse irrational drives by the narrators who exist inside a nightmare logic (p. 231).

4.3. Rational Excuse and Emotion Obsession

The emotive obsession of the narrator with the eye of the old man motivates the whole plot although the narrator tries to describe his actions as rational. He admits, it was his eye (I think! That is it, it was! His eyes were, one like a vulture, a cold blue eye, obscured with something. I got a feeling of cold blood whenever it fell upon me" (Poe, 1843, p. 1). Here, it comes out that the emotional reaction of visceral unease is the genuine driver behind the homicide. But he clothes the feeling with some quasi-rational description, almost to justify the extermination of the eye itself. In this case, Poe introduces a mind that is bound in a case of irrational hate under a pretext of rationality. This reading can be supported by a scholar, i.e., J. Gerald Kennedy, (1987), who, in his statements, can confirm that this reading of the Poe characters is quoted as follows: the characters of Poe, in many cases, show an inner dualism, where emotional upset takes place because of and interrupting rational behavior (p. 114).

4.4. Confession as Emotional Catharsis, not rational Decision

The final confession of the narrator that is not the product of rational guilt because of the fact he is tortured by emotions. He shouts, I confess the action! Tear away the boards! Here, here! It is the pounding of his hideous heart! (Poe, 1843, p. 3). The sound of the heart in the dead man, as imagined by the narrator, is a symbol of the burden of guilt that becomes almost unbearable to the rational inner defenses of the narrator. It is a hasty emotional confession that scuttles any of his earlier efforts to justify himself logically. The guilt he feels is a consequence of, not of conscience in the moral sense but of an emotional outburst beyond his control and perhaps different parts of the latter half are also of a psychosomatic nature. This can be correlated with the statement by Elaine Showalter (1985) that the emotional collapse of the Gothic fiction is characterized by the idea of going mad as a way of expressive use other than punishment (p. 12). The confession made by the narrator is not the victory of the rational by the repression of the heart as in other gothic stories.

4.5. Unreliable Narration as an Indicator of a Struggle

The unreliable narration helps to externalize the psychological dualism of the narrator made by Poe. How, then, am I insane? The narrator makes a point of making his case to the reader of his sanity: Hearken! And see how healthily—how composedly I can relate the entire story to you (Poe, 1843, p. 1). This is essential because this type of narrative framing shows how the narrator tries to establish a rational veneer to cover the emotional turmoil. The fact that his calmness was forced reveals his internal nervousness. As Susan Lanser (1981) points out, instability of the reader trust is usually created by internal inconsistencies and this makes the reader to become unreliable (p. 167). It is a technique that Poe applies in order to give the readers a chance to feel the conflict in their mind and heart as the realities and not merely as observers. Contradictory manners of the narrator are turned into the reflection of his inner division.

4.6. Rhythmic Repetition as Symbolism of the Mind

There are rhythmic repetitions throughout and syntax that is broken developing a rhythm that reflects the breaking emotional state of the narrator. Such as in the climax, with the repeated exclamations,--It grew louder! Louder! Louder! I believed the heart would break” (Poe, 1843, p. 3) to build up a crescendo that serves as a panic attack or an emotional epicentre. The increasing rhythm is representative of an increasing emotionality that supersedes the inner peace of the narrator. Monika Fludernik (1996) has suggested that literary rhythm and other elements of repetition can create a mimicry of troubled consciousness where form externalizes inner turmoil represented by the theme of disorder (p. 215). The manner with which Poe adopts this style is not limited to style alone, but a sign of the increasing overwhelming hold of emotion over reason in the mind of the narrator. The form of the story itself, therefore, helps in the thematic development of inner conflict.

4.7. Manipulation of time and the delusion of logic

The narrator is maniacal with his description of time events and the actions that he follows, such as the length of time it took to insert his head into the opening to be able to see the boy within his bed and how much time this took the narrator, including, how long it took him to be able to fit the whole of his head into the opening; “It took me an hour to get the whole head in the opening far enough that I could see him as he lay upon his bed” (Poe, 1843, p. 2). This hyperbolic art of attention to time controls and procedure is an appearance of command and reason. But it is ironical that this time accuracy contrasts with the illogical reason of the murder. This is the case assuming that time control, as Gérard Genette (1980) states, in narration usually covers psychological instability, especially when employed obsessively (p. 92). Poe employs this literary device to demonstrate the effort on the part of the narrator to pattern emotion chaos. It is not time and a sequence that is used to show sanity, but rather points to the pathological need this narrator has to be in control of time and events, grown as an effect of the inability to reconcile and feel at balance emotionally.

4.8. Rational Thought Undermined by Guilt as an Emotion

The narrator feels that he is the boss because he has done the perfect crime but his emotional guilt soon erodes his mental walls. He reports, that he imagined there was a ringing heard in his ears, it persisted and grew clearer: I heard it ringing louder—louder—louder! (Poe, 1843, p. 3). The sound that is imagined turns into the indicator of guilt that comes back. When it comes to the emotional sphere, he is not able to get out of the effects of his crime. Sigmund Freud (1919) explained such symptoms as the recurrence of repressed as an expression of repressed which appears in the form of a hallucination or a compulsion (p. 241). Poe combines it with Freudian dynamic in order to demonstrate that emotional conflict develops not only the madness but a desire to get rid of itself being uncontrollable by any means, such as the confession in the end.

4.9. The Heart as the Emotional Conscience Metaphor

The heart is in the middle of the title and ending of the story and represents the emotional conscience that persists further than rational reasons. It is the thrilling of his ghastly heart (Poe, 1843, p. 3) the narrator howls and this word shows that he is still affected by the emotions of the killing he did than the fear of getting caught. Heart turns out to be the symbol of the guilt that cannot be silenced. According to Catherine Spooner (2021), bodily symbols are often used as objects where the internal conflict is expressed in the Gothic literature (p. 88). The heart in this case, makes external the inner struggle of mind and heart. It becomes a poetical and physical embodiment of feeling defeating reason, and causes the narrator to face up to the reality which he is at such pains to avoid.

4.10. Insanity at the Pendulous End of Repressed Feeling

The emotional repressions are described as the natural cause of the madness of the narrator. He denies that he has emotional sources of hatred and guilt which results to his mental breakdown. He is adamant that he understood what the old man

experienced, and he even sympathized with him, though he had the hue of a chuckle in his heart (Poe, 1843, p. 2). This sense of pity and preparing to commit a murder, as a contrasting emotion, demonstrates an example of the incoordination that cannot exist within the mind. In his article *Madness*, Michel Foucault (1965) stated that madness is visible at the fringe of rationality where emotion and irrationality triumph over the systems of control (p. 110). In the story by Poe, it becomes clear that when one is not able to overcome the opposing emotions but instead yet buries them, insanity is a given. The narrator is not merely something evil rather he is a emotionally broken person.

4.11. Sanity as a manner of claiming rational control

The narrator of Poe, time and again demands of his sanity as a manner of claiming rational control yet, he fails miserably due to his erratic temperament. You think me mad, says he. Madmen do not know. But you ought to have seen me. And you ought to have noticed how judiciously I went about it!" (Poe, 1843, p. 203). This boast of being wise is ironic given the explicit cascade of murder and the reason they achieved it as it nerdy overrides and raises the feathers of emotion. The irrational fear of the old man with the vulture eye helps illustrate how the mind is ruled by the heart as the narrator feels an obsessive compulsive need to look at the old man because in some unreasonable way it brings fear. It is the desire to protect his sanity that ironically shows that he has lost it. As Harlan (2020) states, Poe designs characters, who are lost in the hall of mirrors and are not able to understand the difference between the reality and delusion, logic and insanity, which can be watched in the descending of a narrator (p. 81). Emotional obsession of the narrator bridges towards murder in the name of figuratively planned thinking. This notion is so close to the interpretation of Gothic fiction as presented by Martha Stoddard Holmes as genre that explains the use of psychological contradiction (Holmes, 2009).

The auditory imagery, employed by Poe, is actually a strategically used method of describing inner emotional turmoil under the cover of external hearing perceptions. Says the narrator, it was louder and louder and louder! And still the men talked cheerily, and smiled. Could it be that they did not hear? Eternal God!—no, no! They heard—they had guessed—they had known! (Poe, 1843, p. 207). This text makes its action dramatic as the guilt of the narrator the beating of his heart on the body of the corpse magnifies in his imagination due to the play of repetition and exclamation created by Poe. The nerve thing that leads to the dismantling of the sanity of the narrator is not the eye, but the imagined beating of the heart that cannot be hushed by rationality. According to the explanation provided by Jannaccone (2018), the unreliable narration enable the readers to interrogate the shattered consciousness of the speaker, thus being complicit with the downfall of rational existence (p. 112). The auditory hallucination lays out a dramatic act showing the inner conflict within mind (self-justification) and emotion (guilt) in which the former loses out to the former. This is in agreement with David Leverenz on his view of understanding 19th century literature as a platform to demystify the interior monologue in a bid to display fragmentation of rational mind (Leverenz, 2003).

In the situation of confession the narrator bursts forth, as it were, with the cry, I must scream or die!—and now—again—hark! Louder! Louder! Louder! LIEUDERER! (Poe, 1843, p. 207). This outburst of emotional tension makes obsolete the reason. The thoughts which recently dominated his mind and made him create a masterpiece of crime are now blinded by the power of the conscience. It feels so painful that emotional conflict is no longer bearable and it leads to a self-damning act, which is the breakdown of the narrator. He does not reason, has no evidence, nor moral internalization, but a psychological necessity of relieving himself of his sins. Beverly Voloshin (2011) argues that Poe featured many protagonists who suffered involuntary confessions that were indicators of implosion of their emotions as opposed to rational choice (p. 51). It can be connected to the findings of Eric Savoy (2000) who finds that Poe fiction performed a certain type of the emotional melodrama in the ruins of the Enlightenment rationality (p. 157).

4.12. Discussion of the Study

The study shows that Poe masters the art of intertwining the problem of mind and emotion of the narrator with the plot and language of the story. The boast of the narrator about his sanity, partly suggested by the introductory words of the lady, that she had thought him mad, was, as the narrative goes on to show, a boast of self-possession, but not of sanity. Madmen know nothing"- a phrase, that is presented in the context his unreasonable actions and maniacal thoughts, emphasizes the contradiction between reason and feelings (Poe, 1843). The presence of this contradiction is sharpened by the rhythmical, discontinued narration, as well as intensified descriptions of senses and symbolizes the growing power of emotions over reason. Literature and criticism supports this interpretation, which in the view of Poe concerns itself with the psyche of guilt, fear and obsession (Zimmerman, 2005). The research also resonates with the recent investigations that take Gothic literature as a source of the narrative about an inwardly portrayed battle in man (Botting, 2014). In general, the results show that the clash between mind and heart is not only thematic but the core component of the narrative structure of the story.

5. Conclusion

It is concluded that *The Tell-Tale Heart* is an interesting discussion of psychological conflict between sanity and passion. The narrator whom Poe creates is a highly unreliable character and the motives of his actions are obscured by a super obsessive emotional ploy that is justified with logic. The frequent emphasis on the sanity and the absurd reasoning to kill the old man due to his eye is the symbolization of the inability to use logical reasoning under the influence of emotions.

Moreover, the auditory imagery employed by Poe especially the hear-heart imagery used by Poe is a representative of the building sense of emotional guilt that the narrator is faced by in the story thereby appealing over the mental defenses of the narrator. "It is the throbbing of his ugly heart!" is the exclamation point when the affect is overtaking the rationality completely (Poe, 1843). The synthesis of the thematic material with form indicates the fact that Poe is a master of incarnating abstract psychological drama in a very short plot.

The study is also illustrative of the fact that the tale written by Poe is within a bigger literary tradition where the Gothic narrative works as a reflection of an inward psychological conflict. It is also not the conflict of mind and heart that is relevant solely to the breaking of the narrator but also to the broader claims within literary studies regarding the mental instability, guilt, and duality of human consciousness (Howells, 2022; Savoy, 2000). In such a way, *The Tell-Tale Heart* is a topical and strong example of how literature may help us to display the complex nature of human psyche.

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