

Edgar Allan Poe's Dementia Essay

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Edgar Allan Poe's Dementia

Several aspects of Edgar Allan Poe's life are well known because of his popularity in American literature. Commonly known facts include, but are not limited to knowing that Poe greatly influenced the horror genre of writing, published many famous poems, and that he is credited with creating detective-fiction. One aspect of his life, however, is not as common. Poe suffered from a cognitive disorder presently known as dementia, which, in Poe's case, worsened throughout his life. This had a negative effect on many aspects of Poe's health, but his condition did help contribute to the stories and poems he created. [Edgar Allan Poe](#)'s progressive dementia influenced his gothic [mind](#), which he set and used as a starting point for his many literary works.

Dementia is a disease that affects the brain's function of thinking and behavior, and in some cases language and judgment. The disease was proven to interfere with the ability to control emotions and behavior, which explains Poe's self-destructive mind that led to his attempt of suicide preceding his wife, Virginia's, death.(NINDS 1) Poe's dementia was progressive, meaning that his condition worsened throughout his life. A combination of Poe's drinking habits and a manic depression could have contributed to this. The slight

differences in Poe's writing demonstrate the progression of mental decline. For example, his writing progresses from his early writing's appreciation of tragic mysteries of life to an almost pure obsession of death.(Merriman 1)

It is said that, after the death of Virginia, Poe turned to the use of alcohol more frequently and his behavior became more erratic. Drinking large amounts of alcohol increases the risk fa...

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