

#3180733 in Books 2009-05-01 2004-04-30Original language:English 8.00 x .6 x 5.251, #File Name:

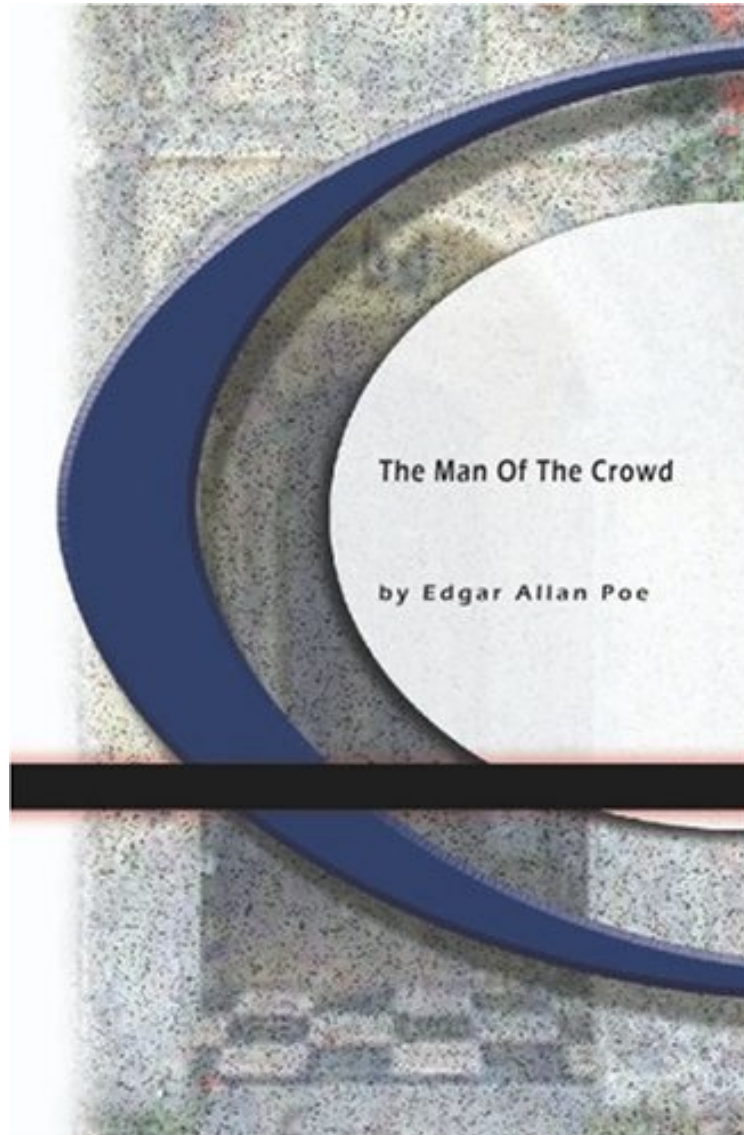
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The Man Of The Crowd

Edgar Allan Poe : The Man Of The Crowd before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised [The Man Of The Crowd](#):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. but pretty interesting! The biography of Poe that takes up ...By NathanOnly a short story, but pretty interesting! The biography of Poe that takes up the other half of the book is average1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Poe's penetrating insights about the world we seeBy Glenn RussellPublished in 1845, 'The Man of the Crowd' by Edgar Allan Poe is a fascinating tale exploring, among other topics, the various ways we can be in the world and experience the people and life around us.For such 19th century

thinkers as Arthur Schopenhauer aesthetic experience is a way to lift us above our everyday concerns, material desires and emotional sufferings to a realm of intellectual contemplation that is most pleasant and freeing. This is, in fact, the narrator's mindset for the first half of the story when he sits in a coffeehouse in a happy mood, free of boredom, with clear-headedness and a sense of exhilaration so that "Merely to breathe was enjoyable." He has been feeling calm and keenly interested in his cigar, his paper and the people in the coffeehouse for some time when he turns his attention to the coffeehouse window and the mass of humanity pounding the pavement outside. Listening to his account, it's as if he is a spectator sitting in his box at the theater, watching the play of everyday urban life where the actors are men and women from London's social classes and cultural strata, top to bottom. The narrator categorizes and describes in colorful detail the appearance of decent business-types, haggard clerks, pick-pockets, gamblers, dandies, military men, peddlers, beggars, invalids, young girls, the elderly, drunkards, porters, coal-heavers, organ-grinders, laborers and monkey-exhibitors. Then, when night descends and the gas-lights turn on, as if in answer to the shifting light, the narrator shifts his focus from overall physical appearances and clothing to an examination of individual faces. We read, ". . . although the rapidity with which the world of light flitted before the window, prevented me from casting more than a glance upon each visage, still it seemed that, in my then peculiar mental state, I could frequently read, even in that brief interval of a glance, the history of long years." Perhaps his 'peculiar mental state' is heightened intuition from his prolonged aesthetic experience, but, whatever it is, as he looks out the coffeehouse window, the narrator thinks he can read an individual's life history by momentarily viewing his or her face. Then, something unexpected happens: the narrator sees an old man between 65 and 70, an old man whose face is so arresting and absorbing and idiosyncratic, the narrator feels compelled to leave his seat at the window and follow him down the street. Will he learn more about this old man with a face that prompts ideas of such things as vast mental power, of triumph, of blood-thirstiness, of excessive terror? The narrator is certainly willing to sacrifice his calm, happy mood and enjoyable breathing to find out. We read, "I felt singularly aroused, startled, fascinated. . . . Then came a craving desire to keep the man in view - to know more of him. Hurriedly putting on an overcoat, and seizing my hat and cane, I made my way into the street . . ." So, it's bye, bye happy, relaxed contemplation; hello, craving desire and psychological fascination. And here we follow the narrator as he experiences an entirely different way of being in the world, a totally different way to experience life and observe people. The mindset he adopts is intriguing, mainly the attitude of a private detective trailing a suspect with a tincture of *fleur*, that is, an explorer and connoisseur of the street. The narrator's excitement and inquisitiveness is heightened; he is willing to race through London streets for hours, even the dangerous and dilapidated East End and even in the rain. We read, "The rain fell fast; the air grew cold . . . Down this, some quarter of a mile long, he rushed with an activity I could not have dreamed of seeing in one so aged, and which put me to much trouble in pursuit." The narrator relays his many observations and judgments about the old man of the crowd as he follows his path for hours and hours, until the rising of the sun the next day. Now, that's headstrong fascination! Ultimately, the narrator doesn't like what he discovers and concludes for such as the old man of the crowd, he can learn no more. What I personally find fascinating is Poe's penetrating insight that our intention and focus and mindset radically alters our perception of the world; how, when we shift from calm philosophical to aroused and desirous, we are, in a very real sense, encountering a different world. What an altered experience the narrator of this tale would have had if, after putting on his hat and coat and running from the coffeehouse, he couldn't locate the old man. What a dissimilar world he would have seen if he reverted to his calm, aesthetic contemplation, randomly and casually strolling London's streets.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An interesting read
 By William W Walley
 A detailed and thought provoking narrative providing a window of observation of people, habits and the time in which it was written.

How is this book unique? Font adjustments biography included Unabridged (100% Original content) Illustrated About The Man of the Crowd by Edgar Allan Poe "The Man of the Crowd" is a story by American writer Edgar Allan Poe about a nameless narrator following a man through a crowded London. Plot Summary: The story is introduced with the epigraph "Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir tre seul" a quote taken from The Characters of Man by Jean de La Bruyere. It translates to This great misfortune, of not being able to be alone. This same quote is used in Poe's earliest tale, "Metzengerstein". After an unnamed illness, the unnamed narrator sits in an unnamed coffee shop in London. Fascinated by the crowd outside the window, he considers how isolated people think they are, despite "the very denseness of the company around". He takes time to categorize the different types of people he sees. As evening falls, the narrator focuses on "a decrepit old man, some sixty-five or seventy years of age", whose face has a peculiar idiosyncrasy, and whose body "was short in stature, very thin, and apparently very feeble" wearing filthy, ragged clothes of a "beautiful texture". The narrator dashes out of the coffee shop to follow the man from afar. The man leads the narrator through bazaars and shops, buying nothing, and into a poorer part of the city, then back into "the heart of the mighty London". This chase lasts through the evening and into the next day. Finally, exhausted, the narrator stands in front of the man, who still does not notice him. The narrator concludes the man is "the type and genius of deep

crime" due to his inscrutability and inability to leave the crowds of London.