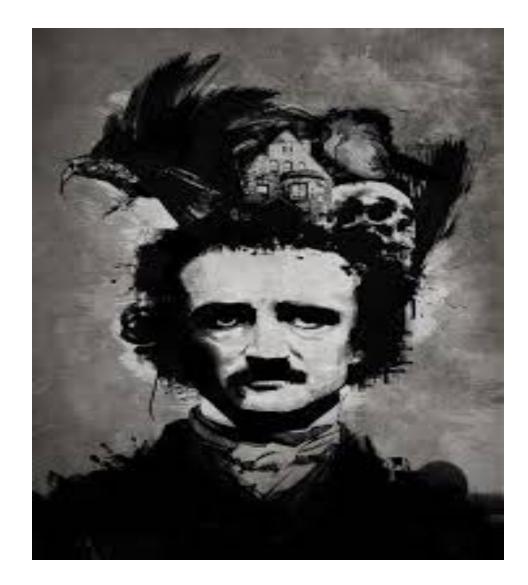


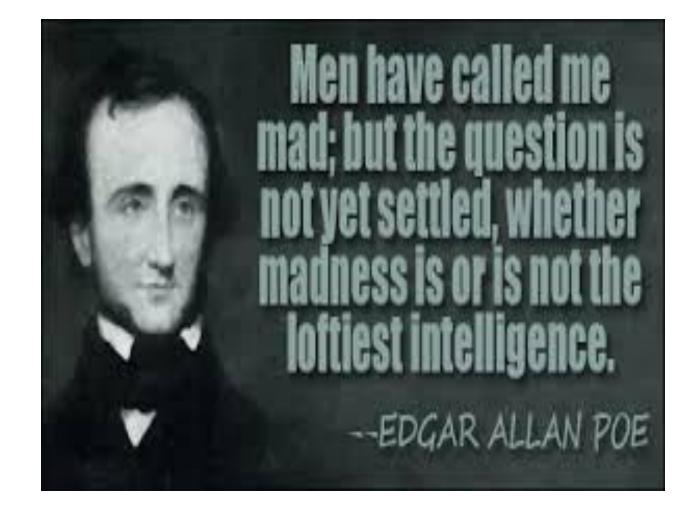


1809 - 1849













"The death of a beautiful woman, is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world."

Edgar Allan Poe

Major works of Poe

Major Works :

Prose fiction

Critical essays

and Poems.

Major works of Poe

Prose Fiction

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym -

appeared in 1840 in the collection of his

stories entitled Tales of the Grotesque

and Arabesque

The most famous of his works:

- M.S. Found in a Bottle
- The Fall of the House of Usher
- Morella
- Berenice
- Ligeia
- William Wilson

The most famous of his works:

- The Murders in the Rue Morgue
- The Mystery of Marie Roget
- The Pit and the Pendulum
- The Tell-Tale Heart
- The Masque of the Red Death

The Gold- Bug

The Cask of Amontillado

Hop Frog

The Black Cat

The Assignation

A Descent into the Maelstrom

The Sphinx

The Man of the Crowd

The System of Doctor Tarr and

Professor Fether





Letter to B-

- Review of Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales
- The Philosophy of Composition
- The Poetic Principle



- Sonnet- To Science , Romance
- To Helen, Israfel
- The City in the Sea, The Sleeper
- Lenore , Sonnet- Silence



- Dream- Land, To one in Paradise
- The Raven, Ulalume
- Annabel Lee, The Lake: To-



- The Valley of Unrest, The Coliseum
- A Valentine , For Annie
- The Happiest Day, The Happiest Hour
- Stanzas, To My Mother



- Miscellaneous Works
- Eureka a scientific –cum

philosophical work

Marginalia

One of the most misunderstood of American

authors – Robert Regan – critic

Target of much adverse criticism

As a critic, Poe has made many enemies – blacken

his name



Poe's parents – Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins

and David Poe -Itinerant

David Poe was not only rash and

impetuous but was also addicted to drinking

 Separated from each other- Edgar was still an infant



Orphaned – Adopted by John Allan, a

merchant

 At the University of Virginia; Gambling and Drinking – followed the life style of rich

Addicted to Gambling and alcohol



• No meaningful relationship between Poe

and John Allan – lot of disparity between

Poe was imaginative, romantic, and

desperately in need of affection

John Allan was thick-skinned, realistic

and practical kind



Disappointment in Love

In Richmond he met a girl called Sarah

Elmira Royster – fallen in love with her –

later she married another man

1836- he married his cousin Virginia – 13

years old- subject of much controversy

• Misfortune struck Poe again and Virginia

fell seriously ill and 1847 she died



Heavy drinking and Craving for female

Companionship – in 1848 he proposed

marriage to a lady –

Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman – widow –

• on learning his drinking habits she

rejected the proposal



At about the same time Poe felt interested

in another woman – Mrs. Nancy

Richmond (the Annie of his poem)

He began to woo a woman called Mrs. Sarah Anna Lewis –

His friendship with non of them involved a sexual relationship

Critics of high caliber – Charles Baudelaire

Stephane Mallarme, Bernard Shaw, William Carlos

Williams –

high estimates of appreciation

Mrs. Whitman, George Graham -



But even they could not altogether dispel the

unfavourable views against him

he was tempted sorely

treated badly

and suffered deeply

T. S. Eliot and Arthur Yvor Winters – could not apprecia

Poe

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This flood of attack was kicked off by Poe's longtime

enemy Rufus Griswold

(Poe appointed him as his literary executor)

He used Poe's death as an occasion-

Wrote an obituary that was actually a series of

attacks, accusing Poe of being immoral, crazy, and

depressive.

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- Poe's whole life was a kind of nightmare
- More dreadful than his stories

• Writings were a reflection of the inner

turmoil that was going on within him all

the time

Remained obsessed with themes such as pain, cruelty, premature burial, and

the corruption of the body in the grave



• As a child- very sensitive and

introspective

• no intimate friends, at the same time there

was a frantic search for female

companionship

Defeat after defeat afflicted him – as a

result - his whole life became a slow

suicide

As a child he was motherless

as an adolescent he was humiliated and

pushed out into a hostile world

as a man he met continual disappointment.



- He took refuge in fantasies
- he turned them into useful purposes –

poems- blessings in disguise

To this day "The Raven" is surrounded by legend and

controversy.

Was Poe a plagiarist?

Did he steal the raven from Dickens's "Barnaby

Rudge"

and his meter and rhyme scheme from Elizabeth

Barrett Browning?

Did he write it alone? With the help of some other

poet?

With the help of random strangers at a bar

There are endless criticisms

So will there ever be complete factual account of

"The Raven"?

Nevermore

Philip Van Doren Stern – Poe wrote of elemental

things – of love and hate, of fear and death, of the

mysteries beyond life, and mutability and brevity of

human existence.

Death as a close companion - to find out the secrets

of the grave



Characters-

Charlatan

Plagiarist

pathological liar

Egomaniac

whimpering child

Braggart

irresponsible drunkard - few American writers had even tried -

one of the first to establish the dark tradition in

American literature

carried on by - Hawthorne, Melville, Bierce, and

Faulkner

"The Raven" - published in the Evening Mirror

[°]The effect was magical

Never before - ever since ----- a single short poem

produced such a great and immediate enthusiasm.

Made him famous than all his other writings put •together

It made him the literary lion of the season;

innumerable parodies

translated into various languages

°created quite a literature of its own

read it in musical manner in public halls

at literary receptions

Poe regarded it as a work of art only and wrote his

essay

to prove that it was merely a mechanical

production made in accordance with certain set

rules.

Inspiration or chance,

played no part in the poem's composition



"The Raven" emerged from a

deliberate and conscious process

that progressed

with the precision and rigid

consequence of a mathematical

problem.

Poe- considered - obsessive and

emotionally wounded poet

But

He preferred to present himself as

controlled, deliberate, and logical

Poe really knows how to create a mood that would

touch the reader

the creepy noises in the room the croak of

the bird



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making you feel like you are experiencing the

story while you read it



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whether "The Philosophy of Composition" is a true

description of the creative process of composing the

poem?

Poe's poem is not so much about a Raven –

it is about the state of mind of a

bereaved lover

-a raven seeking admission to his chamber door in a

stormy midnight--to ask "queries"

he uses **the bird** to ask questions to himself

As a result experience the "frenzied pleasure" of

self-torture which results from the remembrance of

loss

All this emphasis on the inner drama of the

lover

does not mean -

the raven is not structurally important for the

meaning of the poem

the bird is instrumental in providing that

undercurrent of suggestive meaning -

the raven as emblematical... of mournful and

never-ending remembrance



But he adds

"it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza

that the intention of making him emblematical ... is

permitted distinctly to be seen:

'And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor / Shall be lifted--nevermore."

Poe - giving a plausible explanation of his own

poem

main concern - depicts the inner drama and the state of

mind of a lover suffering the loss of the woman he had

loved

-using the Raven as a means to bring this drama to

the surface

What is the whole purpose –

Is It altogether showing the purposelessness and meaninglessness of an absurd universe devoid of values?

If one chooses to read "The Raven" in this manner -

then Poe is a precursor of the apocalyptic vision

characterized in the twentieth century poem

"The Waste Land"

-

Louis D. Rubin Jr. - after observing questions of

the lover –

and that to each of these questionsanswers

"the automatic, senseless, memorized glottal

response of a mindless, dumb organism,"

suggest that in this mechanical, meaningless

repetition there might be

as an implication –

a hint that the man asking questions is perhaps

not really the learned, rational lover

but only a

"somewhat more complex, more highly

developed, but still essentially animal organism."

If this implication can indeed be read in Poe, then he

might be anticipating some very crucial twentieth-

century questions

^oIf so, as Rubin puts it - man is only an animal organism, then what of all the hopes, aspirations, ideals of society, what of all its brave assertions of divine purpose and meaning, its quest for greater knowledge

its belief in a logical and God-ordered universe, its

faith in a society of progress, of men of good will, of

institutions for perfection?

Are these cherished goals too only mirages?

Are the strength and comfort they have afforded men

for thousands of years still available today?

'Nevermore'?

"Poe's fictional works have so persistently attracted

the serious attention of language-related theorists

from Charles Baudelaire in the nineteenth-century to

Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida in the twentieth

few have ever bothered to examine closely Poe's own theory, especially- "The Philosophy of Composition"

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Why

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One reason could be that "The Philosophy" has

traditionally been discredited as but another of the

many hoaxes Poe is supposed to have

perpetrated against an unsuspecting readership

- its overall purpose being less to reveal the true method of the composition of "The Raven" than to further enhance the reputation of the already

famous poem

Yet another reason may have to do with the

prevailing belief that Poe's fictional works carry

even more theoretical implications about

language, as well as about related questions of

desire, than does his own theory.

Does not mean that...



This is not of course to suggest that "The

Philosophy" has been dismissed as a text of little theoretical consequence.



On the contrary, the French symbolist poets

(Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry), as great

admirers of Poe, found in the essay a strong

confirmation for their own aesthetic method

- a method emphasizing a kind of poetic

"suggestiveness" that would range "beyond the

limits of direct speech" (Buranelli 90; see also P.

Quinn 53-65).

Baudelaire was - quick to identify with the essay's

privileging of the poet's hard work and analytical

thinking over anything resembling intuitive

inspiration

Rosemary Lloyd, in her study of Baudelaire's

literary criticism, points out:

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"In Poe, . . . Baudelaire discovers a poet who is

always in control of his inspiration, striving, like the true dandy, to banish spontaneity.... paying

extremely close attention to every point of his poem,

no matter how minor" (77).

"Like the French symbolists, the American New

Critics, later on, were also drawn to Poe's essay.

they recognized an affinity with their own

theoretical views regarding the formal unity and

totality of the literary work, ...

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which is to say, their belief that "the work of art is an integral and self-consuming fact, embodying 'everything necessary for its understanding" (Galloway 41; see also Foust 22-23).

We have a Question

In what specific way does "The Philosophy" relate to the poem "The Raven," besides in the most obvious way of being both a **commentary** on the poetic work as well as a theoretical statement concerning Poe's general conception of the poetic process?

"What story, that is, does "The Philosophy" tell with regard to the relation between its own theory (or theory in general) and the poetic discourse with which it is primarily concerned? "How do the two discourses - the theoretical and the

poetic - become mutually informing?

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"what story does "The Philosophy" seem to tell about the many images or myths of Poe - advanced and cultivated by critics, biographers, and general readers alike - that have come down through the years?

What, for instance, might it tell us about the usual opposing perceptions, or myths, of **Poe as either the** romantic artist par excellence or the ultimate rationalist, scientifically inclined toward creating a mathematical system of poetic effects?...

NEVERMOR

"The Raven" within the Frame of Poe's "Philosophy

"The Philosophy of Composition" becomes Poe's

attempt to manufacture an image of himself -

- serve to counter, if not completely contradict,

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whatever romantic image is suggested by "The Raven."

In direct opposition to the poem's excessively

romantic narrator –

the persona of "The Philosophy" offers up instead a portrait of rational self-control

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Poet as a romantic narrator - with his passionate desire to recover (at least in memory) the lost Lenore, as well as his seeming delight in selftorturing remembrance Taking the reader, "step by step" (364), through a detailed analysis of his poetic process,demonstrating how the poem follows a consistent

pattern of cause and effect

 while also repeatedly emphasizing the combinatory power of language,

Poe thus makes every effort to portray himself as

the most sober and scientific of craftsmen

As he claims, he composes his poetry neither by

"accident" (365) nor "by a species of fine frenzy - an

ecstatic intuition" (364).

Rather his is a procedure so logical and exact that his

poem, upon completion, has all "the precision and

rigid consequence of a mathematical

problem" (364-65

While relating the history of his poem - its genesis as well as the stages of the poet's own thought processes - Poe lays down various rules and principles that are applicable not simply to the poem in question but to all poetic narrative in general

Perhaps most significant among the principles

mentioned is a certain notion of limitation that has

important implications for what Poe conceives of

as a poem's desired effects.

Thus Poe contends that a poem should be brief enough to be read "in a single sitting" - a requirement essential for achieving "totality, or unity, of effect" (366).



While such a limitation suggests how the reader is actually supposed to experience a work of poetry, it likewise calls attention to the sense of unity Poe no doubt desires to have implemented within the work itself.

Fixing as he does both the spatial and temporal coordinates of the poem, Poe attempts to bring the maximum amount of order and control into his poetic world.

Shaped within these boundaries (boundaries that resemble) nothing less than a set of rigid laws), the poem is intended to possess the sort of power and intensity characteristic of such a highly com- pressed form: "Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit - in other words, to the excitement or elevation ... to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity [and all the other limits that Poe

g

imposes] must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the

intended effect ..." (366)

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Such aesthetic views are mirrored precisely in the manner

in which Poe constructs his narrative settings. Addressing

the issue of what constitutes the proper "locale" within a

poetic narrative, he argues that "a close circum- scription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident ..." (371)

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- If such a notion of setting applies directly to "The Raven,"
- with its representation of the closed-off space of the
- scholar's chamber, no less so does it apply to many of
- Poe's other works, as for example the Gothic tales, whose
- settings so often consist of houses, rooms, crypts,
- basements, and pits

These sorts of private, "insulated" spaces are intended to have little if any relationship to the larger society around them; aesthetically sealed, ahistorical, they are worlds "Out of SPACE- out of TIME" (32), as Poe says in his poem "Dreamland.

Thus constituted, these settings may be said to stand in an analogous relationship not only to the poem's own self-enclosed structure but to what is supposed to be the ideal reader's experience of the poem: a perfectly unified experience that would involve reading the poem within the limited time of "a single" sitting" and, pre-sumably, within the limits of a confined space (perhaps a chamber not un-like that of the love-lorn scholar of "The Raven").

process. What Poe had (literally) in mind is of course that

which he tries to represent through the writing of "The

Philosophy," an essay whose intention is in part to capture

the origin of Poe's creative act.

;j

As an attempt to define in detail how the poem came into being, as well as to lay bare the logical foundations of the poem's rhetorical and thematic content, "The Philosophy" thus seems to constitute itself as a limit - each of its statements about tone, setting, subject matter, and what is called the "sole legitimate" province of the poem" (366) serving as but a further limitation (a formal restriction, a law) imposed on the po- etic work

work. Poe's essay, from this standpoint, might be argued to function as a kind of frame to "The Raven," marking the poem's boundaries, setting its limits, enclosing it within Poe's own laws of poetic composition. So cir- cumscribed, the poem would seem, finally, to manifest precisely the sort of wholeness, the sort of totality, that Poe insistently claims for it throughout "The Philosophy."

At what moment did Edgar Allan Poe, whose long and mournful shadow

has been repeatedlyc ast over the popular culture of the twentiethc entury,

begin to shade his way into the music scene?1

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- In November of that
- same year, Poe must still have been on John Lennon's psychedelic mind for
- he invoked him by name on the Magical Mystery Tour in the gnomic,
- nightmarish"I am the Walrus." "Man, you should have seen them,"L ennon
- sings, his voice full outrage and vinegar, "kicking Edgar Allan Poe."

These

- were "concept albums," of course. They were works that aspired to more
- thematic unity than an ordinary LP of assorted tunes, and dared, in those
- days of heady experimentationt, o dream of a cultural landscape in which
- the teenyboppera nd the avant-gardew ould have regular business together;

where Da-Doo Ron-Ron was not so distant from Dada; where lost Lenores

might meet Lucy in the sky with diamonds, and stately ravens croaking

nevermorem ight magically morph into elementaryp enguins singing Hare

Krishna; where you and I and he and she might all meld into one we and, lo

and behold, we are the egg men.

- Perhaps Beatles sometimee ngineer, A lan Parsons, had partakeno f Lennon's
- sensibility in the Abbey Road studios or had all along cultivated his own
- taste for Poe. In 1975, he produced the Art-Rock/ ProgressivRe ock/Geek
- Rock concept album Tales of Mysterya nd Imagination based on tales and
- poetry of the dark master generously larded with layers of keyboard
- synthesizersa nd oratorio

- These are the explicit momentso f Poe's entree
- into the pop music world, and he enters from above, a figure of world
- literarys ignificance or an early avatar of the drug culture. But Poe was
- also there slightly before this grand entrance

- I think he actually slipped
- in under the radar, or shall we say, appeared hidden in plain view in 1965
- by way of Bob Dylan's charming love song "Love Minus Zero/No Limit"
- (the title- the firstt ime in the historyo f song- is a fraction). The estranged
- lover in that song, be it Joan Baez (who has performed" Annabel Lee") or
- a mythica malgam of artisticc ool, doesn't have to say she is faithfubl ecause
- she is true like ice and fire. Aesthetically and emotionally free from the
- d

trap of success, she knows there is no success like failure and failure is no

- success at all. And then, in the end, with the wind howling like a hammer
- and night blowing cold and rainy, Dylan concludes,
- My love she's like some raven
- At my window with a broken wing.
- There, in 1965, Poe appeared on Bleeker Street as it were and then on
- turntables all over America and the world, his raven transformedinto a
- dark and beautiful wounded lover, a subterranean artist free from the
- constrained perfection of banker's nieces to visit the bohemian windows
- of young love.
- d

At that moment in the mid-1960s, Lou Reed, New York rocker with poetic,

punk, pop and avant-garde ambitions was busy worming his way into that

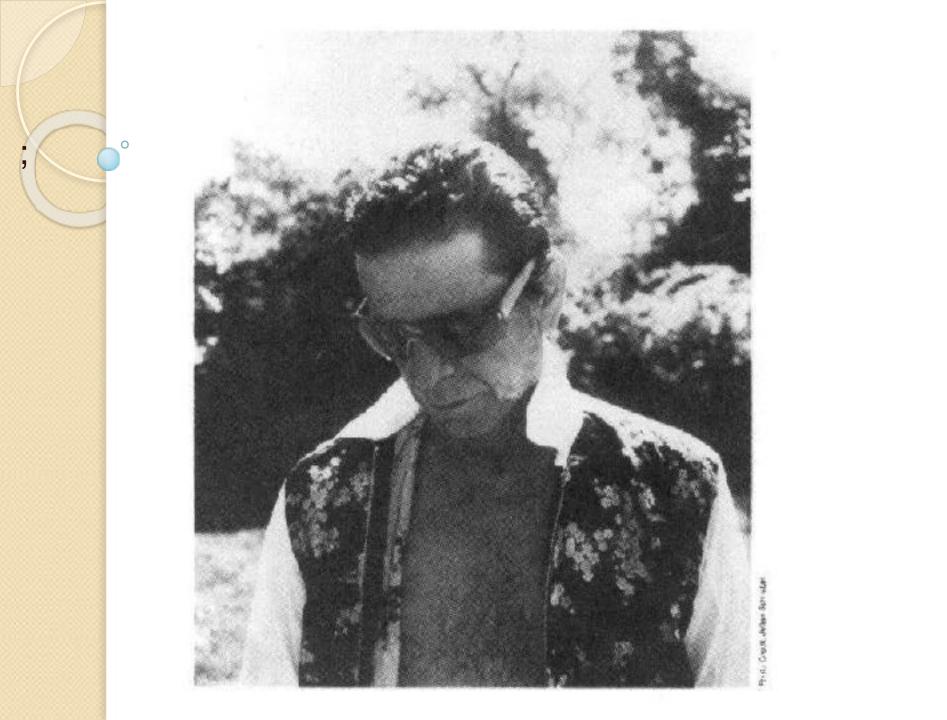
bohemian ethos that Dylan sang about.

The bulk of

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the criticaln oticesp aid to The Raven and its antecedent" POEtry"h ave dwelled on the fundamental incongruity of Reed and all that he represents (e.g. twentieth-centurroyc k,p unk,g lam, sleeze, sex, drugs,d aringe xperimentation, pretentiouse xperimentation)t aking on Poe and all that he represents (e.g. nineteenth-century classic Romantic literature, madness, horror, detectives, black birds, drugs, daring experimentation, pretentiouse xperimentation). Perhaps in response to the mixed reviews the stage productionr eceived, h is label has opted to release two versions of The Raven (I suppose with Poe, everythings hould have a double): the two-hour " grand mal version," as Reed calls it, and a smaller, pared down version (the one upon which this essay is based). Reed himself was at

firsts kepticalo f the project. "I saw it as a can't-wins ituation,"h e told Jon Pareles in the New York Times



I knew people would say "How dare he rewriteP oe?" But I thought,

here's the opportunityo f a lifetime for real fun: to combine the

kind of lyricismt hath e has into a flexible rock format. I really like

my version of it. It's accessible, among other things. And I felt I

was in league with the master. In that kind of psychology, that

interest in the drives and the meaning of obsession and compulsion - in that realm Poe reigns supreme

In other words, he was skeptical for canonical reasons but in short

- order the taboo of tampering with words of the master proved to be
- irresistible. Reed had discovered in Poe a kindred spirit, a psychological
- analog for the preoccupations of his whole career. What could be more
- like Poe? A can't-win situation becomes, under the pressure of psychological affinity, a must-do. The Velvet Underground and the
- youthfulf laneur of the wild side driftsi n the mists of middle age to the
- night's Plutonian shore





