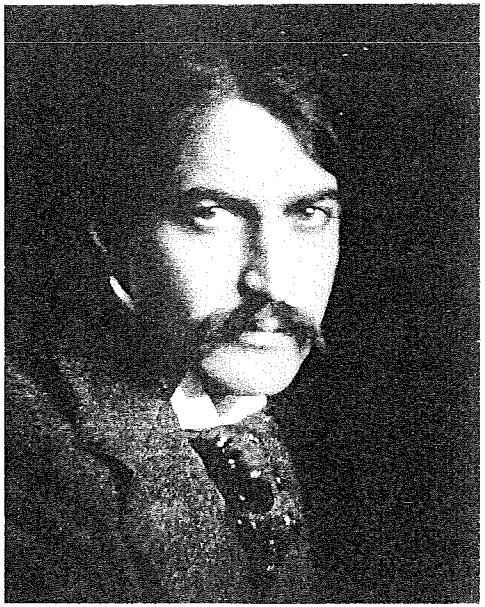
Stephen Crane Studies

Volume 1, Number 1
Spring 1992



Stephen Crane Society

STEPHEN CRANE STUDIES

Department of English
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Stephen Crane Studies is a journal of notes, queries, and reviews pertaining to the study of Stephen Crane; it is published semiannually, in the Spring and Fall, by the Department of English, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Manuscripts should follow *The MLA Style Manual*. Annual subscriptions are $10 for individuals and $20 for institutions; foreign subscriptions are $12 and $22. Checks should be made payable to the "Stephen Crane Society." Address all correspondence regarding subscriptions and manuscript submission to

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ISSN 1061-6136

[1] Quoted in the text are both the conference papers and retrospective letters to the author by John Clendenning (25 November 1990), Elaine Marshall (27 November 1990), and Chester Wolford (22 October 1990). Citations are listed in the text as "P" for the conference papers and "L" for the letters; all documents are on file with the author.

[2] Chester Wolford, rev. of *The Color of the Sky: A Study of Stephen Crane*, by David Halliburton, *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 1036-37.

[3] Chester Wolford, *The Anger of Stephen Crane: Fiction and the Epic Tradition* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1983) 68.

Preface

Times have changed since 1936 when Cyril Clemens wrote in the first issue of the *Mark Twain Quarterly* that "so far as we are aware this is the first periodical named after a great American author." Since then, a number of other American authors have been honored with their own societies and journals. The Stephen Crane Society and its publication, *Stephen Crane Studies*, are part of this tradition. These latest efforts, however, are not the first to commemorate the life and work of the most controversial American author during the late nineteenth century. In the 1920s and 30s Max J. Herzberg was the driving force behind the Stephen Crane Association in Newark, N.J., and in the early 1950s James Vitelli helped start a Crane Society at Lafayette College. From 1966 to 1970 Joseph Katz published the *Stephen Crane Newsletter*, and in 1980 the New Jersey Historical Commission sponsored a one-day conference on Crane during an officially declared "Stephen Crane Month." In the mid-1980s I envisioned a weekend conference devoted to Crane, the formation of a Crane society, and a publication that would print notes, queries, bibliographies, and book reviews about him. The conference took place in 1988 at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; in 1990 the Society held its first meeting in San Diego at the American Literature Association Conference; and this is the first issue of a journal that will, I hope, stimulate discussion and research about Crane.

Paul Sorrentino

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Stephen Crane and Postmodern Criticism

James B. Colvert
University of Georgia

Over the past twenty years or so a complex of revolutionary philosophical, literary, and linguistic ideas referred to variously as "postmodern," "post-structuralist," and "deconstructionist" has sharply questioned, or negated altogether, values traditionally celebrated in Crane's work—imaginative power, innovative styles, unique vision. The new theorists characteristically regard such qualities as mere romantic-modernist illusions, fanciful inventions grounded on fallacious assumptions about the nature of language and reality. In a recent survey of the current literary situation, Alvin Kernan summarizes some of the radical premises of this new thought:

> . . . traditional romantic and modernist literary values have been completely reversed. The author, whose creative imagination had been said to be the source of literature, was declared dead or the mere assembler of various bits of language and culture into writings that were no longer works of art but simply cultural collages or "texts." . . . The literary canon has been analyzed and disintegrated, while literary history itself has been discarded as a diachronic illusion, to be replaced by a synchronic paradigm. What were once the masterpieces of literature . . . are now devoid of meaning, or, what comes to the same thing, filled with an infinity of meanings, their language indeterminate, contradictory, without foundation, their organizational structures, grammar, logic, and rhetoric, verbal sleights of hand. (Kernan 2)

So far, such ideas, despite their long-standing challenge to critical orthodoxy, have hardly touched Crane scholarship. Most current writings are grounded on critical principles prevalent in the early fifties, when formalist critics like R. W. Stallman were rescuing Crane from relative obscurity and preparing the way for his recognition as a major American writer. Of the nearly 150 articles and books on his work published since 1979, only three could be fairly described as unequivocally postmodern. A few, including several of the most imaginative, ingeniously adapt some of the new ideas to old methods

Essential to Marshall's reading is her distinction between human surfaces and traditionally recognized human interiors that associate with such words as "mind," "self," and "character" (P, 7). "The Monster," according to Marshall, is a world of surfaces only. Henry, with "no mind," has only surface, but he is not alone. The "seed event" from which the story grows is Jimmie Trescott's desire to "efface" himself and thus lose "self" for destroying his father's peony (P, 2); and even before his disfigurement Henry undergoes an attention-riveting transformation by changing from his work clothes to his lavender suit. Confronting mere surfaces, one can perform only "moral acts" disjoined from moral "agency" (P, 6). Henry, as pure exterior, provokes at least Trescott to such moral acts while—ironically— being himself mindlessly excluded from the general moral provocation. Marshall leaves tantalizingly unspoken how exactly such a moral act might reflect on relations between people unlike Henry who do have minds.

Professor Marshall's paper inspired the most extensive question-answer period. William Crisman asked about Henry Johnson's eerie disappearance from the Whilomville stories, especially "The Knife," in which Henry's death is casually reported. John Clendenning, agreeing with Elaine Marshall's reading, responded that the "The Monster" constituted a unique moment in Crane's insight into moral and communal matters. The appearance of Peter Washington to replace Henry Johnson in the collected Whilomville tales represents a retreat from the austere moral enactment in "The Monster." Professor Marshall responds that although "The Monster" demonstrates this enactment "more thoroughly," "The Knife" extends it "to the arena of ordinary human affairs" through the "effacing" of identities Alek performs in his lie to Si Bryant (L, 3).

The final word of the panelists on Crane and "the Group" seems to be a harsh one, at best harshly optimistic in a Nietszchean sense. For Professor Wolford, momentary, immemorable freedom from such an integration is the ideal to begin with; for Professor Marshall, paradigm moral development occurs in the extreme case of effacement, when words like "mind" and "self" have lost significance.

Stephen Crane (sometimes to the point of quoting himself), that especially *The Red Badge of Courage* produces "an impressionistic vision of the individual man unencumbered by epic."[3] Far from adopting a "communitarian" viewpoint from which to decry social injustice or advocate social integration, Crane is attempting "a denial of the epic view of history" "past all Christian doctrine, beyond the emotional slither of patriotism and breast-beating bombast." The paradigm occurrence of this state is Henry Fleming's forgetting both heroic delusions and guilt to concentrate on "some blades of grass and the grooved bark of a few trees. He is, for an instant, free as few have ever been free; he is loosed from the illusions of history" (P, 7).

Wolford's subtlest point concerns Crane's tone in presenting this ahistorical, non-epic moment. The treatment is ironic because of Crane's "belief that man cannot really learn from experience, even when he can reach a momentarily illusionless view of reality through that experience" (P, 8). Wolford, however, divorces himself from the many critics who find "total irony" in Fleming's situation; even though the experience of freedom is fleeting to the point of being immemorable and (hence) uninstructing and incommunicable, the experience itself retains value; "there is enough epical stuff...to make [such moments] cautiously positive" (L, 1).

Wolford suggests extending this reading to "The Open Boat" in that the "group" of four finally is dumped individually into the sea, and they also "forget" what they have learned. "The idea they can then 'be interpreters' is absurd" (P, 10). Where the "cautiously positive" part of this experience lies—analogous to Fleming's moment of total freedom from history—remains unstated.

Professor Marshall's "The Self Effaced: Seeing beyond the Moral Unknown in Stephen Crane's 'The Monster'" takes a determined stand on the continuing debate over the rightness of Dr. Trescott's saving Henry Johnson. Contrary to critics who see maintaining Henry as selfish, anti-social and (ultimately) unethical self-martyrdom on Trescott's part, Marshall sees Henry's presence as a "source of...moral evolution" for Whilomville (L, 3). In so doing, she carefully distinguishes the "moral" from the "ethical," a distinction that "shares something with W. James." The "moral," Marshall's preference, emphasizes the "good within action" as opposed to the "logically consistent" code of ethics (L, 4); in the story, Judge Hagenthorpe represents the less preferred "logical code of ethics," whereas Trescott is "more morally open to life" and "morally creative" (P, 3) by performing a good act without "logical...underpinnings" (P, 6).

and disciplines, but most are still exclusively grounded on the fundamental assumptions of romantic-modernist criticism: that language connects us, however problematically, to realities outside ourselves; that history can be recovered more or less accurately and interpreted meaningfully; that such matters as style, genre, and compositional structures differentiate literary texts from other kinds; and that the study of expressive forms in literature engages a distinctive and significant kind of knowledge. Such convictions still maintain a tenacious hold on Crane scholars despite radical post-structuralist arguments that they are philosophically unsound, flawed by untenable suppositions about language and its power to define and communicate reality.

Two experimental applications of the new theory to Crane's work illustrate better than any general analysis could why most scholars have found it unproductive in practical criticism. Charles Swann's early deconstructionist critique is a particularly clear example. Crane's work, Swann argues in a novel variation on the familiar theme of his precocity, uncannily anticipated post-structuralist nihilism:

> Any impression of continuity of [meaning or order in the world], provided, for example, by what appear to be symbols or metaphors, is deceptive. The world that Crane sees is one without sense, in which any impression of order or control comes from the imposition of a fictional pattern—but in which that fiction is itself illusory and should be perceived as such. Behind the apparently stable order imposed on experience by deceptive image and metaphor lies the chaos of extreme experience, where even images are forced to melt into each other or contradict each other. (100)

Fully conscious from *Maggie* on "that all fictions may be false, that all language may be fiction, and that all the artist can report is: Nothing" (121), Crane turned words to another use: the victimization of his reader. By clever manipulation of language to magnify its essential incoherence and inherent ambiguity, by deft use of linguistic "confidence tricks," he contrived to beguile his naive readers into interpreting his senseless texts in accordance with their own deluded notions of ordered reality. In making the reader, not his characters, the real target of his irony, he "allowed, almost encouraged [him], to be a fool, and to be happy in, and unconscious of, his foolishness" (102). Such, it appears, is the interpretive consequences of lifting unmediated deconstructionist premises out of the order of pure philosophical

abstraction, where they are exempt from accountability to living experience, and forcing them into the order of practical criticism.

Like Swann's, Michael Fried's essay on Crane in his *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane*, also exemplifies the difficulty of assimilating some post-structuralist thinking directly into the evolving critical dialogue. Fried aims to show that Eakins's painting *The Gross Clinic* and much of Crane's fiction, both of which focus characteristically on themes of violence, pain, and disfigurement, are comparable "allegories of writing," that is, figurations of their creators' unconscious obsessions with the literal act of inscribing, with brush or pen, words and images on canvas or sheets of paper. This is evident in Crane, Fried says, in the constant recurrence of a "distinctive cluster of motifs" associated with the writing hand—pens and inks, the grasping of pens, markings on paper, columns of print, pages of books, etc.

One major element in the allegory is the upturned face, often disfigured or "de-faced" but always altered or touched in some way or other, like that of the ashen-faced corpse Henry encounters in a memorable scene early in *Red Badge*. The whitish face, gazing blindly upward, suggests a sheet of blank writing paper, which, Fried notes, is normally comparable in size and shape to the human face it allegorizes. The corpse's tawny beard, rising in the gentle wind "as if a hand were stroking it," suggests the intimate relation between the writing hand and the medium it inscribes. These equations are confirmed, according to Fried, by the wording in the allusions to the soles of the dead soldier's shoes, which "had been worn to the thinness of writing paper, and to the explicit reference to the youth's impulse to "read" the inscrutable face (93-94).

Variants of the allegory may be found in "The Monster," where images of writing and scarring abound: Henry Johnson's upturned face is the surface (parchment or paper) on which the stream of burning chemicals, flowing from the overturned bottle (of ink) on the "old-fashioned" (writing) desk, engraves its terrible message of disfigurement and suffering. To prove that he is not "making too much of an incidental detail," Fried calls attention to Crane's choice of the words "rioting" and "writhing" (variants of "writing," of course) in describing the flow of the searing stream of chemicals (96).

There is much more of this sort of equation-making in his analyses of "The Upturned Face," "Death and the Child," "When a Man Falls," "An Experiment in Misery," and "The Veteran." In these and other texts, he finds images of disfiguring inscriptions: a grinding

Stephen Crane and the Group: A Retrospective of the Crane Session at the American Literature Association Conference, 1990

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The American Literature Association held its first annual conference in San Diego between May 31 and June 3, 1990. The Stephen Crane Society was represented by a panel on June 1. Co-ordinated by Professor William Crisman of Penn State, Altoona Campus, the panel comprised papers by professors John Clendenning of California State University, Northridge, Elaine Marshall of Barton College, and Chester Wolford of Penn State Erie, the Behrend College, whose paper contributes the title to this retrospective. The panel's theme was Stephen Crane as the conscious or unconscious member of—or dropout from—a society. The report that follows derives from the papers presented, from the question period following the papers, and from correspondence with the papers' authors after the conference.[1]

Professor Clendenning's paper, "Stephen, Henry, John: Berryman's Crane," argues that Berryman's critical biography, *Stephen Crane* (1950), is a palimpsest in which the author's self-portrait has been imperfectly erased. In studying Berryman's transferential relationship to Crane, Clendenning emphasizes the biographer's subjectivity, particularly in the portrait of Crane that emerges in "The Color of This Soul." Following Beer and influenced by Freud, Berryman located the source of Crane's scenes of terror in the Oedipus Complex. However, a study of Berryman's life and personal crises shows that Crane reflected the biographer's neurotic fears and obsessions. To illustrate this point, Clendenning projected a chart from the Berryman archives, *PRIMAL SCENE*, which documents the conflation of the two lives. Clendenning maintains that transference reactions are inescapable and indispensable in the dynamics of biography: they may occlude objective representation, but they also facilitate insight.

Professor Wolford's "Stephen Crane and the Group," as he admits privately, is a reaction against David Halliburton's *The Color of the Sky*, which Wolford feels stresses "social injustice" without realizing that in Crane "social injustice derives from...cosmic injustice"; thus Halliburton makes "inordinately political that which is not."[2] Wolford's reaction to this overly narrow view follows the lines of his *The Anger of*

Notes

[1] James B. Pinker became Crane's English agent in November 1898. Paul Revere Reynolds remained Crane's American agent until July 1899, after which Pinker assumed control of his affairs on both sides of the Atlantic.

[2] "His home killed him," Harriman opined. "The chill, damp, and draughts of the old house were terrible, believe me" (*Critic* 37 [July 1900]: 15).

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procession of cable cars (horizontal imagery suggesting the linearity of writing), scar-like abrasions made by pedestrians' shoes on muddy sidewalks, hand-like night shadows that seem to grasp pen-like lamp posts. In "The Upturned Face" the "chalk-blue" face of the corpse compels us, Fried thinks, "to read the text as representing, and in a sense enacting, the writing of 'The Upturned Face,' which as a general proposition about a literary work is today pretty much standard fare" (99).

Fried makes no reference to Roland Barthes, but in both motive and method his freewheeling approach resembles the Barthian concept of "exploding" and "depropriating" the literary work. Barthes urges readers to reject the text as "frozen form" and to reconstitute it for oneself as "a licentious play of signifiers." Such readings, Barthes says, will help to dispel the illusion that inherently volatile, culturally local texts report a stable, permanent reality (93). Similarly, Fried's "exploding" and "depropriating" aim to show that marginalizing interpretive conventions based on such reductive critical concepts as genre and realism overwhelm the original, creative idiosyncrasies of artists like Eakins and Crane. The trouble with this, as Raymond Carney notes, is that Fried simply makes Crane's text a "site for a series of self-dramatizing imaginative associations and flights of fancy" that "ultimately directs our attention more to the performance of the critic than to that of the artist he explicates" (468). His method is a kind of verbal sleight of hand by which he "is almost always comparing his own terms and observations with each other, not comparing or relating actual aspects of the works in questions" (Carney 471). Which is to say that in describing Crane's texts, he chooses terms to fit a "pattern" (his, not Crane's) that seems to confirm whatever sense he may choose to find in them.

The point here is not merely that Fried's analysis is logically invalid but that it demonstrates, like Swann's heavy-handed deconstruction, the consequences of applying unbridled theory to the analysis of particular literary works. Clear as it may be that the old critical methods cannot address some of the questions about Crane that recent theory has taught us to ask, it also seems clear that some recent theory is not yet fully available to scholarly practice. It still resides, so to speak, in a kind of hermetically sealed isolation, sufficient only to itself, but alien (at least in its more radical modes) to the world of living experience. It is this latter world, "where things are done and made and sold," as Kernan puts it, that "looks at language from a practical rather than a strictly logical viewpoint." What, he asks, "privileges the

casuistries of the philosopher over the evidence of all our lives to decide what is real and true?"—as we must always do, even when we read texts (187, 188).

The examples of Fried and Swann are dramatic reminders that the task facing Crane scholarship (and literary scholarship in general) is to find constructive ways of bringing the best of theory and practice together. As Emory Elliott observes in his discussion of the guiding critical principles of the new *Columbia History of the Literature of the United States* (1988), principles strongly influenced, as he explains, by post-structuralist theory, many scholars of American literature are already pursuing this task. "While at first it did seem," he writes, "that the new theories were discouraging to criticism and especially destructive to historical interpretations of literature and society," some thinkers, after seriously considering these problems, "have proposed a more pragmatic resolution to these paralyzing dilemmas: we must admit our limitations but also recognize the human psychological need and continuing desire to understand human nature, experience, and works of the creative imagination" (xvii).

There are other signs that traditional literary values that radical theory once denied are again on the critical agenda, perhaps better from having been tested and rethought in the perspectives of the new critiques. Efforts to define literature as a distinctive kind of writing no longer seem as naive to radical-minded critics as they once did. The author is no longer quite dead, as theory once claimed. And it appears once again that there may be something after all in texts besides political ideology. In her 1990 Presidential Address to the MLA, Catherine Stimpson, an articulate advocate of new critical thinking, quotes with approval Richard Poirier's definition of literature as a "'troping,' the turning of a word in and by other words 'like the twisting or coiling of a strand or thread within and through the other strands that make up a piece of rope . . . [which] is in itself an act of power over meanings already in place" (408). If we were permitted to add "and awaiting reification by the integrating imagination," the proposition would not be too far (though far enough) from the New Critical conception of literature as writing invested with the special powers of special language shaped by the creative imagination. Stimpson also notes, quoting Peter Demetz, "that some of our most scrupulous voices remind us to remember the 'question of the formal arrangement in which language materials appear,' to remember the 'aesthetic—not beauty but . . . the secular attention to an inalienable element of sensuality and its jouissance" (408). Such talk of word craft, imaginative power, and

is identical with that of the manuscript leaves "Plans for New Novel" and "Plans for Story" (NNC), notes for a proposed Revolutionary War novel that Crane either dictated to Cora or that she copied from an earlier draft. Crane in this period a few months before his death wrote in a frail hand, usually with an ink that now appears as purple. His cross slashes in the capital "H" are nearly horizontal and the "n" is in most instances considerably more rounded. Cora's distinctive spacing of letters within words, evident even before her handwriting began to resemble Crane's, is also unmistakable in the inscription, with spaces between the "e" and "d" in "Brede" and between the "P" and "l" and "a" and "c" in "Place," precisely as in a letter she wrote to Clara Frewen, wife of the owner of Brede Place, on 4 June 1898 (Photocopy, CtU).

A curiosity of this volume is that the leaves containing the James story, "The Great Condition" (pp. 7-38), have been excised. Macdonnell's quite possible conjecture is that the excision was done by Cora, who resented James's treatment of her following Crane's death and the possible application of the story to herself. "The Great Condition" concerns a woman who is reputed to have a "past": "'something or other in her life; some awkward passage, some beastly episode or accident. . . . some chapter in the book difficult to read aloud—some unlucky page she'd like to tear out'" (14). Exemplifying a familiar Jamesian motif, the conclusion of the story is that the great secret Mrs. Damerel is hiding is that, unlike Cora, she has no great secret to hide. Nevertheless, Cora may have taken offense and removed the offending pages, just as the passage from the story suggested. James sent a check for fifty pounds to Cora on the day Crane died, and two days later wrote to her expressing his sympathy forcefully: "What a brutal, needless extinction—what an unmitigated unredeemed catastrophe! I think of him with such a sense of possibilities and powers!" (*Correspondence* 659). When Cora sent him a copy of the posthumous *Wounds in the Rain*, James again affirmed his conviction that Crane had great literary potential. But he ignored her subsequent pleas for financial aid, writing to James Pinker on 29 August 1900 that he had "so vivid, or so dark, a view of her, that I think I can assure you I am not in further danger" (*Henry James: Letters* 162-63). When Cora returned to England in the fall of 1907, James pointedly snubbed her. Cora may well have expressed her anger by removing James's story from the copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Review* that he presented to Crane and that Crane in turn presented to her, but in her papers she preserved another James inscription to Crane and James's letters to Crane and to herself.

TO KARL E. HARRIMAN
Inscribed in a copy of *War Is Kind*. Collection of Stanley and Mary Wertheim.

To Carl E. Harriman
From Stephen Crane
Brede Place
June 24, 1899

The final inscription appears on the front free endpaper of a copy of Lady Randolph Churchill's quarterly miscellany, the *Anglo-Saxon Review* 1 (June 1899). Tipped into the inside front cover is a two-page letter from Lady Churchill advising Crane of the editorial necessity of abridging his fictionalized "War Memories," which appeared in the December 1899 issue of the *Review*. The inscription reads:

The book was given by Henry James to Stephen Crane.
and by him to
Mr^{s} Stephen Crane
Brede Place
Sussex
England.
March. 1900

According to the description of bookseller Kevin Macdonnell (Macdonnell Rare Books, Supplement to Catalogue Four, December 1990), there is written "in Stephen Crane's hand: 'Stephen Crane/Brede Place/Sussex/England/March, 1900.' Above this inscription Crane added the note: 'The book was given by Henry James to Stephen Crane.' Between these two inscriptions Crane's wife, Cora, added in her own hands some words altering the inscription" to give it its present form. As is well known to students of Crane manuscripts, Cora had a remarkable variety of handwritings, and at this time it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between her hand and Stephen's. Having made a careful personal examination of this inscription, however, I am convinced that it is entirely in the hand of Cora Crane. It is written in a continuous manner, showing no sign of two hands being involved, utlizing her characteristic black ink in bold strokes with a diagonal slash across the capital "H" of "Henry" and the lower case "n" letter sharply peaked and indistinguishable from "u" throughout. The handwriting

"inalienable" elements does not argue, of course, for a return to the sealed aestheticism of the old formalism. But it does renounce, obviously, the bleak post-structuralist negations Kernan notes in the summary quoted above.

Although most Crane critics, as I have indicated, still work under the authority of the older criticism, a few have adapted ideas from radical theory to traditional scholarly methods with real success. An early example is Donald Pease's illuminating discussion of the historical implications of Crane's conscious suppression of social and political ideology in *Red Badge* and of the critics' unconscious motives in the traditional reading of "a coherent line of character development into the arbitrary incidents in Henry's life" (157). More recently, John Feaster's excellent study of "The Blue Hotel," scheduled for publication in a future issue of *American Literary Realism*, argues cogently that standard interpretations, limited by older critical outlooks, are insensitive to the story's cultural and ideological implications. The important issues in "The Blue Hotel," he writes, "are not cosmic but cultural, and as such are definable with reference to the complex social and economic factors, and accompanying ideology, that shaped the evolving frontier culture . . . of which Crane had exact 'historical' experience." Judiciously conceived in the spirit of the new historicism, Feaster's essay reveals much about the workings of Crane's imagination in the context of contemporary values and beliefs.

Several excellent essays on *Red Badge* in a collection edited by Lee Clark Mitchell also draw constructively on the new thought. Especially notable are Andrew Delbanco's argument that Crane's sense of political and social disarray is closely related to the discontinuities, instabilities, and reversals characteristic of some of his styles and narrative methods (73), Christine Brooke-Rose's deconstructionist challenge to long-established interpretations of the function of irony in *Red Badge*, and Mitchell's persuasive observations in his Introduction on the issue of "self" in Crane's life and work and on *Red Badge* as a "writerly" text.

Most of the themes developed in these critiques are familiar enough—the significance of Crane's irony, of his radical rejection of conventional narrative forms, of his highly charged metaphorical and visual styles, of his significance in late nineteenth-century political and intellectual history—but these old subjects, touched by the spirit of the new thought, are revealed in new lights. They demonstrate that contemporary theory, brought responsibly and imaginatively to bear on the old issues, may revitalize our understanding of Crane and his work.

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May 24th '99

Sirs:—

I am afraid I will not be able to provide you with a story of 4000 words for a leading weekly. To me my American business is so much larger than my English business that every-thing depends on the words of my American agent who fixes the date of publication.

Just now also I am dealing with the English market through Mr. Pinker.[1]

Yours faithfully
S. Crane

In mid-June 1899 Crane was visited by Karl Edwin Harriman, a young editorial columnist on the *Detroit Free Press* who was introduced to Crane by Robert Barr. Harriman spent several weeks as a guest at Brede place. Apparently he was one of the "Indians" who descended upon the Cranes and overstayed their welcome, driving Crane, upon occasion, to seek refuge in Brown's Hotel on Dover Street in London, where he could work in peace. Harriman wrote several highly fanciful reminiscences of his summer with the Cranes (*Literary Review* 85-87; *Critic* 14-16; *The New Hope* 7-9, 19-21). In the latest of these he tells an elaborate story that has become established in the apocrypha of Crane biography (Gilkes 201; Stallman 460-62). Arriving at Brede station on 19 June, on the same train that carried William Howe Crane's daughter Helen, who was on an extended visit to Brede Place and later would be taken by the Cranes to a private school in Lausanne, Harriman insists that Helen was accompanied by Stephen's brother, Wilbur F. Crane, whom he mistakenly identifies as Helen's father (*The New Hope* 8). Wilbur also had a daughter named Helen. None of Crane's brothers ever visited him in England, and Helen was actually accompanied by A. H. Peck, his wife, and their daughter. The Pecks were neighbors of William Howe Crane in Port Jervis and claimed a distant relationship, which William doubted (*Correspondence* 482). Nevertheless, Harriman goes on to describe detailed incidents and conversations between Wilbur and Stephen and Cora. Harriman, along with Ford Madox Ford, is also responsible for the legend that Crane's tuberculosis was caused by the deleterious environment of Brede Place.[2]

The inscription in Harriman's copy of *War Is Kind* is unique in that there is no other known inscribed copy of the book.

of the *Detroit Free Press*, to which he contributed under the name Luke Sharpe. In 1881 Barr went to London, where, with Jerome K. Jerome he founded a monthly magazine, *The Idler*, in 1892. The first English publication of *The O'Ruddy* was as a serial in *The Idler* from January to July 1904. Crane inscribed a photograph, which appears in the initial issue of *The Idler* carrying *The O'Ruddy*, to Barr in the early days of their friendship. The photograph was first reproduced by Joseph Katz as the frontispiece to his publication of Frederic M. Lawrence's *My Stephen Crane* (Newark, New Jersey: Newark Public Library, 1980), but the photocopy reproduction is so poor that the inscription is obliterated, except for the date.

TO ROBERT BARR
Inscribed on a cabinet photograph of Crane in war correspondent's uniform, reproduced in *The Idler* 24 (January 1904): n.p.

To Robert Barr
From his supporter.
S. C.
Aug 26, 1897

The second new Crane letter, to an English literary agency, is a response to their request for a marketable short story. In the 1890s popular-circulation magazines tended to pay authors by the word, a practice that encouraged the production of hackwork. Crane received higher rates from American magazines than from their English counterparts, and, consequently, he preferred to publish in them. *Harper's Monthly* paid five cents per word for the Whilomville stories it published during 1899, and Lippincott's paid a lucrative 5 1/2 cents per word for the "Great Battles of the World" series, although it is doubtful that this rate was maintained for the entire run of these articles. For quality stories like "The Open Boat" and "The Blue Hotel," Crane received considerably less from American magazines, but none of them gave as little remuneration as the 1.2 cents per word which *Black and White* paid for British serial rights to "The Clan of No-Name" (Stronks 343-47).

TO AN ENGLISH LITERARY AGENCY
Letterhead: "Telegrams—Crane, Brede Hill./Station—Rye./Brede Place,/Brede,/Northiam,/Sussex." TLS, Sale 1542, Swann Galleries.

The Mule-drivers' Charge in *The Red Badge Of Courage*

George Monteiro
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My point is simply that in imagining the 304th's mad charge against an entrenched enemy to bring his novel to a climax, Crane was reaching back to a familiar, but for him surprising, literary source: Tennyson's poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854). So immediately and universally popular was Tennyson's ballad that the poet was asked to send copies of his poem to the Crimea for distribution to the British troops in the field, a request with which he was pleased to comply.[1] No wonder the poem soon became a staple of grade school textbooks, readers, and collections for recitation. It is "The Charge of the Light Brigade," it will be recalled, that the terrified Jimmie Trescott fails to recite in the Whilomville story "Making an Orator."[2]

In Chapter 6 of *The Red Badge of Courage* Henry Fleming, fleeing from battle, looks down at some moving troops:

> He saw a brigade going to the relief of its pestered fellows. He scrambled upon a wee hill and watched it sweeping finely, keeping formation in difficult places. The blue of the line was crusted with steel-color and the brilliant flags projected. Officers were shouting. This sight, also, filled him with wonder. The brigade was hurrying briskly to be gulped into the infernal mouth of the war-god. What manner of men were they, anyhow? Ah, it was some wondrous breed. Or else they didn't comprehend—the fools. (43)[3]

Henry walks away, but later he overhears officers talking about how the "force" in "the fix" had somehow held, that the brigade, to his surprise surely, had not been "gulped into the mouth of the war- god." What Henry cannot know at the moment is that the next "foolish" charge he learns about (Chapter 18) will involve his own unit. The 304th will make it.

Chapter 18 begins with the momentary lull in the fighting, during which, as Henry Fleming and his companions soon become aware, emerge disconcerting sounds from a wounded man. Turning to him, they discover that he is a fellow soldier, Jimmie Rogers, who has been shot through the body. They will go no nearer to him. "When their eyes first encountered him there was a sudden halt as if they feared to

go near" (99). He may be dying. "He was thrashing about in the grass, twisting his shuddering body into many strange postures" (99). Writhing in agony, he appears to be replicating the movements of Jim Conklin, the tall soldier, who "was invaded by a creeping strangeness that slowly enveloped him": "For a moment, the tremor of his legs caused him to dance a sort of hideous horn-pipe. His arms beat wildly about his head in expression of imp-like enthusiasm" (58). Confronted by the wounded Jimmie Rogers, however, the "youth's friend"—Wilson—suddenly has a notion, one that will take him and the youth away from this scene of agony and dying. His notion, based on what the narrator calls "a geographical illusion concerning a stream" (99), is to go off to look for water. They search hurriedly for the stream, but do not find it and immediately begin to retrace their steps.[4] Their quest has led them to high ground. There they can see over their fellow soldiers now moving about slowly. "Looking over their own troops, they saw mixed masses slowly getting into regular form" (100). In their vicinity pass "a jangling general and his staff" (100). When the officers are "directly in front" of the two young soldiers, another officer rides up to report to the general. Unnoticed, Henry and his companion then become privy to some startling information. The general orders a charge. Can the reporting officer "spare" any troops? No—"but there's th' 304th"—Henry's unit. "They fight like a lot 'a mule-drivers," the officer answers, "I can spare them best of any." The general tells him to get them ready; and then adds, "I don't believe many of your mule-drivers will get back" (101).

The two privates are astounded. "New eyes were given" to Henry. "And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant" (101). When they arrive at camp their lieutenant berates them for returning empty-handed, but soon waxes enthusiastically at the news that the unit has been ordered to charge. "'Charge?' said the lieutenant. 'Charge? Well, b'Gawd! Now, this is real fightin'.' Over his soiled countenance there went a boastful smile. 'Charge? Well, b'Gawd!'"(101-02). Skeptics question Wilson and Fleming intensely, but their story holds up and the regiment then "seemed to draw itself up and heave a deep breath. None of the men's faces were mirrors of large thoughts. The soldiers were bended and stooped like sprinters before a signal" (102). Significantly, the two inadvertent messengers do not reveal the rest of their information. To themselves they keep the general's prediction that not many of the mule-drivers will survive their suicidal charge. Their shared secret—"an inner knowledge"—emboldens them (103). They turn, with the others, to await the order to charge.

New Stephen Crane Letters and Inscriptions

Stanley Wertheim
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Since the publication of *The Correspondence of Stephen Crane* (1988), two new Crane letters and three inscriptions, two in books and one on a photograph, have emerged, each of them having some biographical significance. The letters and two of the inscriptions are reproduced below in diplomatic transcripts, as in the *Correspondence*, with line divisions preserved for inscriptions. The first letter is to an autograph collector. Crane rarely accommodated those who sought his autograph, but the few known exceptions, as in the present instance, received autograph sentiments intended to be witty (*Correspondence* 276, 276n). This letter is the earliest specifically dated written communication from Crane after he settled in England. Having reported the Graeco-Turkish War, Crane left Athens in the third week of May 1897. He took a ship to Marseilles and a train to Paris, where he spent some two weeks before crossing to England. After a few days in a boarding house, where he was joined by Cora and her constant companion, Mrs. Charlotte Ruedy, he and Cora set up housekeeping at Ravensbrook, Oxted, Surrey, as Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Crane.

TO AN UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENT
Letterhead: "Telegrams—/Crane, Oxted./Ravensbrook,/Oxted,/Surrey." ALS, Catalogue 5, Profiles in History, Beverly Hills, California.

June 18, 1897.
I cannot understand that a sentence from me would be of interest to anybody and in the matter of signing my name I conceal my desire to write some kind of gorgeous and over-topping epigram.

Sincerely yours
Stephen Crane

Perched on a slope above Oxted in Woldingham was the home of the novelist Robert Barr (1850-1912), a residence appropriately named Hillhead. In the summer of 1897, Barr and Crane formed an enduring friendship, which led finally to Barr's completion of *The O'Ruddy* after Crane's death. Born in Scotland, Barr came to Canada at a young age and was educated in Toronto. He joined the editorial staff

Gullason, Thomas Arthur. "Tennyson's Influence on Stephen Crane." *Notes and Queries*, n.s., 5 (April 1958): 164-65.

Monteiro, George. "With Proper Words (or Without them) The Soldier Dies: Stephen Crane's Making An Orator." *Cithara* 9 (May 1970): 64-72.

Shannon, Edgar and Christopher Ricks. "'The Charge of the Light Brigade': The Creation of a Poem." *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1985): 1-44.

Tennyson, Alfred. *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, Volume II: 1851-1870. Ed. Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987), pp. 117-18n, 132-33.

_____. "The Charge of the Light Brigade." *The Poems of Tennyson*. Ed. Christopher Ricks (London & Harlow: Longmans, 1969). 1034-36.

When these expendable "mule-drivers" do charge, however, the result is not a disaster but a success, especially for Henry and Wilson.

There are several ways in which Crane's handling of the charge of the 304th can be likened to (and contrasted with) Tennyson's immediate memorializing of the historical charge of the British brigade in the Crimea against the standing and secure Russians and Cossacks. Tennyson's inspiration for his ode to military virtue and unquestioning duty came in newspaper accounts of the ill-fated charge at Balaclava on 25 October 1854. In the *London Times* he read that the order for the Charge had been ill-advised. "Even accident would have made it more tolerable," wrote the *Times* on 13 November 1854, "but it was a mere mistake—evidently a mistake, and perceived to be such when it was too late to correct it."[5] The next day the *Times* called the Charge "a noble but disastrous deed—a fatal display of courage which all must admire while they lament"—"a spectacle so strange, so terrific, so disastrous, and yet so grand."[6] It is important to remember that although the Charge accomplished nothing of military value and casualties were high, there was an appreciable number of survivors who were able to ride back safely out of their sortie into the "valley of Death."

Under orders the "six hundred" members of the light brigade rode into "the valley of Death" because "some one had blunder'd." They did so, not because they did not know that a blunder had been committed or because they trusted unquestioningly the sagacity of their officers or even in the protection of their God, but because they knew their duty. "Their's not to make reply,/ Their's not to reason why,/ Their's but to do and die." As the *Times* had put it, "The British soldier will do his duty, even to certain death, and is not paralyzed by feeling that he is the victim of some hideous blunder."[7]

The message that in "Making an Orator" young Jimmie Trescott will never hear because he cannot learn to recite the poem is that "in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' the word 'duty,' unuttered, becomes not what the poem says but what it breathes."[8] But with prompting he does stumble through the poem's first five lines, just enough to present the essentials of the Charge at Balaclava, along with the information that Tennyson has transformed allegorically the immediate geography of the skirmish into a Biblical place.

> Half a league, half a league,
> Half a league onward,
> All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade! [9]

In naming this place "the valley of Death" (following the *Times* of 13 November),[10] Tennyson obviously intends to invoke the almost identical phrase (and its context) in the Twenty-third Psalm:

> The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
> he leadeth me beside the still waters....
> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
> I will fear no evil . . . .

Interestingly enough, the Twenty-third Psalm, hovering as it does over the charges of the 304th in Chapters 18-23, also surfaces in some of the imagery Crane employs in Henry's reverie in the book's final chapter. The images of water and pastures borrowed from the Psalmist, countering those thoughts of "the valley of the shadow of death" that have plagued the young recruit's consciousness throughout, not only appear ironically in Wilson's and Fleming's unsuccessful search through the countryside for the "supposed" waters but also in Henry's mind after he has decided that he is now "a man," having "touch[ed] the great death," and having "found that, after all, it was but the great death" (135). Resting in "soft and eternal peace," and acting as if death has no dominion over him, Henry, Crane writes wryly, "turned now with a lover's thirst, to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks" (135). His "sultry night-mare" over, he has emerged from the valley of death and is again safe—for the moment, anyway.[11]

Notes

[1] *Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, pp. 117-18n, 132-33.

[2] "Making an Orator," in *Tales of Whilomville*, pp. 158-63. Crane's story is analyzed in Monteiro. That the poem "War Is Kind" "undoes" the patriotism of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" is argued by Gullason.

[3] *The Red Badge of Courage*, pp. 1-135. Page references within the text are to this edition.

[4] This incident anticipates Crane's story "The Mystery of Heroism."

[5] Quoted in Shannon and Ricks, p. 29.

[6] Quoted in Shannon and Ricks, p. 32.

[7] Quoted in Shannon and Ricks, p. 30.

[8] Shannon and Ricks, p. 30.

[9] "The Charge of the Light Brigade," *Poems of Tennyson*, p. 1034. An early version of the poem named the officer who ordered the Charge: "'Forward, the Light Brigade!/ Take the guns,' Nolan said." (1035) Oddly enough, elsewhere Crane writes about a soldier also named Nolan—a private—in the Puerto Rican—Cuban campaign stories, "Regulars Get No Glory" and "The Price of the Harness."

[10] Quoted in Shannon and Ricks, p. 20.

[11] Crane also echoes the Twenty-third Psalm in the poem ["Blue Battalions"]—"swift as they charge through a shadow"—*Poems and Literary Remains*, p. 82.

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Crane, Stephen. "Making an Orator," in *Tales of Whilomville*, Volume VII of *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers, with an introduction by J. C. Levenson (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1969). 158-63.

_____. *Poems and Literary Remains*, Volume X of *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers, with an introduction by James B. Colvert (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1975). 82.

_____. *The Red Badge of Courage*, Volume II of *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers, with an introduction by J. C. Levenson (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1975). 1-135.