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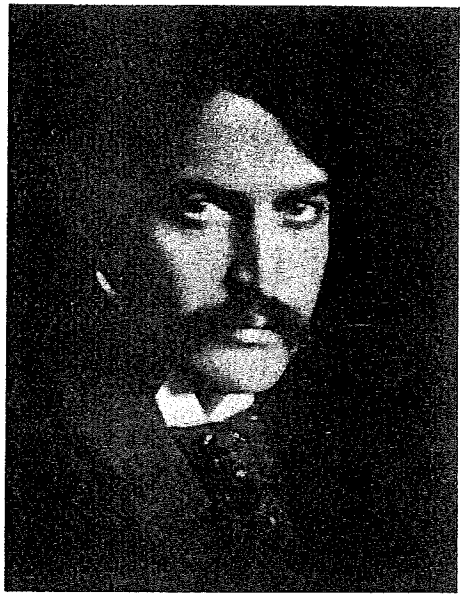

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

Department of English
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Contributors' Notes

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Beginning in August, 2003, John Dudley will be Assistant Professor of English at the University of South Dakota. He is the author of a forthcoming book, *A Man's Game: Masculinity and the Anti-Aesthetics of American Literary Naturalism.*

Donald Vanouse is continuing to examine the representations of the "other" in Stephen Crane's works.

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Note: The three articles in this issue were presented at a panel, "Stephen Crane: South of the Border," at the 2002 American Literature Association Conference in Long Beach, California.

Crane's Sociological Savvy: An Examination of His Mexican Travel Dispatches

Patrick K. Dooley
St. Bonaventure University

In January of 1895 the Bacheller syndicate sent Stephen Crane west to report on the impact of a summer of extreme drought followed by windstorms that led to one of the worst winters on record. While in Kearney, Nebraska Crane reported (from his unheated hotel room!) winds of 60 mph and a temperature of 15 degrees below zero. After Nebraska, Crane traveled to Louisiana and Texas. From Laredo a two-day train ride brought him to Mexico City. Over the next two months Crane not only experienced life in the capitol city, he made several short trips into the surrounding provinces. All told, he wrote a half-dozen remarkably open, tolerant and non-judgmental dispatches recording his impressions of life in a foreign land.

While it is not my purpose to make Crane into a politically correct saint before his time, I find that his sociological maturity and his other-culture sophistication are exceptional. Beyond his journalistic dispatches dealing with Mexican life, which we will soon look at in some detail, Crane's foreign foray inspired two wonderful tales of the Mexican frontier: "One Dash—Horses" and "A Man and Some Others." The second was not published until the February 1897 issue of *Century* (with a full-page illustration by Frederic Remington) even though Crane had written the story shortly after his return to New York City from Mexico. The gap between composition and publication was partly due to *Century* editor Richard Watson Gilder's objection to profane dialogue in the story. Another reader of the manuscript version of the story, Theodore Roosevelt, offered a different objection. Crane's story tells of a confrontation between an American sheepherder, Bill, and several Mexican vaqueros who insist that he move his herd back across the US border. Bill refuses and is killed in ambush. Roosevelt disliked the story, writing to Crane, "Some day I want you to write another story of the frontiersman and the Mexican Greaser in which the frontiersman shall come out on top; it is more normal that way" (*Correspondence* 249). Regrettably that opinion of the "more normal" way was apparently the majority view, judging by the American public's enthusiastic support of the Roosevelt administration's expansionistic, jingoistic and imperialistic foreign policy.

perience which included his encounter with the suppression of thoughtful and critical journalism.

Crane left Cuba on December 24, 1898. The American occupation ended in 1902, but American troops subsequently intervened in Cuba in 1906, 1912, 1917 and 1920 (Swomley 169). The current blockade against trade with Cuba appears to be another expression of America's difficulty in acknowledging the needs and aspirations of the Cuban people. It seems that Crane glimpsed such problems in American perceptions of Cuba while reporting the conflict which we have come to call the Spanish-American War. An article published in 1900 by an anonymous correspondent stated that Crane "had always advocated the Cuban cause" and the natives "worshipped him . . . as one shining example among the American pigs" ("Stephen Crane" 17). It is somewhat surprising to encounter an assertion of such a political role for Crane, but the war in Cuba does seem to have enriched his relationship to historical events.

For we know and we say our gift.
His prize is death, deep doom.
(He shall be white amid the smoking cane) (*Works* 10: 86-87)

One of the parenthetical refrains of the poem reiterates the assertion that the American eagle has become "two faced" (*Works* 10: 86, 11, 27). The poem identifies no apparent imperialist goal or value to explain the duplicitous actions. "On the brown trail" has been dated in 1897 by Fredson Bowers as a result of the English paper of the manuscript (*Works* 10: 233), but internal evidence strongly suggests that the poem also was written in 1898. If so, the poem also appears to express Crane's dismay at the effects of the war upon the rural poor of Cuba :

We weep because we don't understand
But your gifts form a yoke.
The food turns into a yoke (*Works* 10: 85)

Crane's comments on United States experience in the Philippines published in the British press of July 1899 (*Works* 9: 227-28) do not discuss the causes of the war or the intended goals. Crane addresses only the error in judgment by which General Otis decided that he could win the war with 25,000 or 30,000 soldiers. Crane recalls that "when the Cubans were insurgent to Spain, the Spanish Generals announced victories every day for three long years," but they failed to consider the tactics of hit and run warfare used by the insurgents. Crane concludes that now Americans in the Philippines are playing the role of the Spanish in Cuba, and it will continue as long as the General cannot admit that he was wrong and would rather continue "to take towns and leave them again, and—censor the news dispatches" (*Works* 9: 229-31). Although Crane never stopped criticizing the Spanish for imperial blindness and arrogance, and he never explicitly rejected an imperial role for America, he does ask that the government know the battle that it is engaging, equip its soldiers properly, and tell the truth. Perhaps such demands are always so difficult that they imply the impossibility of imperialism.

By the end of his experiences with the Spanish-American War, the war was not a commodity for Stephen Crane. He could comprehend the Spanish others as individuals with lives having human meaning. The Spanish enemies were not "absolutely oppositional, completely homogenous, and ultimately superfluous" (Cheyfitz 109). Crane also had glimpsed serious limitations in American management of military affairs and diplomatic negotiations as well as in acknowledging the aspirations of the Cuban people. It seems that the war, for Crane, became a personally valuable and historically provocative ex-

In contrast, Crane's live-and-let-live posture of nationalistic neutrality is drawn from his fundamental philosophical commitments. I have argued elsewhere that Crane's understanding of the nature of experience leads him to positions of metaphysical pluralism and epistemological contextualism.[1] Both, in turn, dictate a modest ethical imperative that is reluctant to make claims of cultural superiority and is loath to be critical of other life styles.

From his early juvenile pieces to what I believe to be his most subtle social and ethical commentary, "The Monster," the metaphysical pluralism of Crane's writing is propelled by a curiosity and openness to the lives of an astonishing range of experiencers, both human and non-human. Crane remained loyal to his deepest impulse to simply display and then move on, letting stand without judgment his depictions of a wide array of experienced realities. Since I am now preaching a familiar homily to, I hope, a choir of the converted, two brief illustrations should suffice. In "Crane at Velestino" his juxtaposition of the spectators' remove and the soldiers' agony renders the "same" event gorgeous and tragic:

> The roll of musketry was tremendous. From a distance it was like tearing a cloth; nearer, it sounded like rain on a tin roof and close up it was just a long crash after crash. It was a beautiful sound—beautiful, as I had never dreamed. It was more impressive than the roar of Niagara and finer than thunder or avalanche. . . . This is one point of view. Another might be taken from the men who died there.
>
> The slaughter of the Turks was enormous. (L of A 935)[2]

Or in a wonderful short piece, "A Lovely Jag in a Crowded Car," a drunken man enters the cross-town street car and, taking his seat "put his hands on his knees and beamed about him in absolute unalloyed happiness." Because he was "on the best of terms with each single atom in space . . . his excited spirits overflowed to such an extent that he was obliged to sing" (*Tales* 362). His experience of "the pearl-hued joys of life as seen through a pair of strange, oblique, temporary spectacles" (*Tales* 364) was, for him, not only moving but also profound beyond words, so he burst into song.

Logically subsequent to Crane's metaphysical pluralism is his epistemological contextualism. His position on the tentativeness, revisability and partiality of knowledge is, of course, closely linked to his contentions regarding the limitations of language. His commentary on tourist books in "Stephen Crane in Mexico (1)" is only partly ironic: "Strangers upon entering Mexico should at once acquire a guide

book, and if they fail to gain the deepest knowledge of the country and its inhabitants, they may lay it to their own inability to understand the English language in its purest terms" (*Tales* 442).

Then, too, Crane is cognizant of the perennial epistemological problems of inductions: can we gain sufficient insight from a sample to support assertions about the whole, and can past experience provide a reliable guide to the future? On both accounts Crane's theory of knowledge is realistic and pragmatic, content with reliable generalizations that stop far short of making any absolute claims. For instance, from his study of Mexican guidebooks, he gleans four elementary rules for dealing with peddlers:

I. Do not buy anything at all from street venders.
II. When buying from street venders, give the exact sum charged. Do not delude yourself with the idea of getting any change back.
III. When buying from street venders, divide by ten the price demanded for any article, and offer it.
IV. Do not buy anything at all from street venders. (*Tales* 442)

And then before he reiterates his warnings about the deception and trickery of typical scams played by street hustlers in Mexican parks and byways, Crane is careful to frame his tourist-alert with a telling cautionary preface: "it is never just to condemn a class" (*Tales* 442).

Accordingly, then, my overall contention is that given Crane's philosophical stances of metaphysical pluralism and epistemological contextualism, it is no surprise that he is leery to claim for himself any personal competence to understand other cultures or any special insight into the strong and weak point of other lifestyles. I see Crane employing a negative *a fortiori* argument, putting the matter in the form of a logical axiom—if it is the case that we can not be certain in making claims about our own culture using our own language, how much more cautious ought we be about the reliability of our grasp of an alien culture and a foreign language? In "The Mexican Lower Classes" Crane is explicit about this contention: "It perhaps might be said—if any one dared—that the most worthless literature of the world has been that which has been written by the men of one nation concerning the men of another" (L of A 728). Crane goes on to urge that foreign travelers "not sit in literary judgement on this or that manner of the people" (L of A 728). I am not sure what he means by "literary judgment." More important, however, is his admonition about sitting in cultural and ethical judgment. But before we assess Crane's conclusion, we need to

and yet it does nothing (*Works* 9: 222). In his most extreme statement of criticism, he says, "If we could once take and sack Washington the rest of the conflict would be simple" (*Works* 9: 199). Washington itself is defined as the enemy. He also notes that a Cuban serving as an administrator in Havana is comparable to a Tory in the American Revolution (*Works* 9: 216). The insurgent soldiers who fought Spain for three years have been abandoned (IX 210). The people of the countryside are starving. American soldiers are behaving wildly in the streets of Santiago (*Works* 9: 212, 214). In the most astonishing passage of criticism,, Crane addresses a withering attack on American citizens: "You are to blame . . . you are the criminals," he says, for allowing incompetence in the Secretary of War (Works 9: 195-96). This political failure has cost us the blood of our soldiers. By October 21, Hearst's New York *Journal* had cut off Crane's expense account, and he wrote to Reynolds, his American agent, in an attempt to get more money for each dispatch or to syndicate his letters from Havana (*Works* 9: 508). He was not successful. His reports from Havana included glimpses of Cuban social and emotional life in such works as "Courtship in Cuba" and "How They Leave Cuba." "How They Leave Cuba" describes the separation of a departing Spanish soldier from his Cuban wife and child. Crane is quite deeply sympathertic with the woman's grief and loss. After it was published by the *New York Journal* on October 9, it was not, apparently, reprinted by any other American newspaper. Such topics were probably not any more appealing to an American audience than his criticisms of American negotiations with the Spanish. No doubt Americans were more concerned with the developing war in the Philippines.

Crane's dismay concerning the results of the war in Cuba appears in the poem "The Battle Hymn," which was found in his saddlebags after his death. The relatively long poem (39 lines) includes numerous images of violence, and the concluding lines present both soldiers and natives as victims:

For we go, we go in a lunge of a long blue corps
And—to thee we commit our lifeless sons,
The convulsed and furious dead.
(They shall be white amid the smoking cane)
For the seas shall not bar us;
The capped mountains shall not hold us back
We shall sweep and swarm through jungle and pool,
Then let the savage one bend his high chin
To see on his breast the sullen glow of his death-medals

Rico, the townspeople gawk and chatter as spectators at an event that means nothing to them. Giorgio Mariani states that in two of Richard Harding Davis' representations of death in battle—a fictional soldier killed in a medieval romance fiction and an actual soldier killed in a Cuban battle—the deaths are shown as occasions for glorifying the meaningfulness, the nobility, and grandeur of dying in battle (104). In a parallel description of a Private soldier's death in Cuba, however, Crane observes that Nolan was "merely a corpse attired in about forty cents worth of clothes" (*Works* 9: 172-73). There is no celebration of glamor or glory.

In the report of the soldier's funeral in Puerto Rico, Crane does not even show a corpse, and he drains the death of dignity as well as glamor. Entitled "A Soldier's Burial That Made a Native Holiday," the report shows the disruption of a military rite by the noisy tumult of a crowd of Puerto Ricans. The ritual begins with a prayer: "'I am the resurrection and the life—'[but]the Chaplain's words were quite smothered in the ejaculations, inquiries, comments which came over the wall" from the Puerto Ricans (*Works* 9: 175). If there is to be a place in Puerto Rico that will be for ever American, the people of the town do not acknowledge its significance. Crane expresses skepticism about the capacity of "Grand Rapids to judge Ponce," and he notes that in the natives' "applause" for the Americans, "there is a stratum of deceit" (*Works* 9: 177). When Crane writes about experiences in Puerto Rico, he is attentive to the social practices which reveal the uncertain parameters of trust and understanding between the two gr oups. Americans are not beneficiaries of love or r espect or even trust for liberating the people of Puerto Rico from Spain.

After the signing of the armistice with Spain on August 12, Crane entered Havana "like a spy without a passport and 'without permission from anybody'" (Davis 278). The subject matter of his reports suggests that he wanted to observe the results of the war for the Cuban people as well as to record the departure of the Spanish regiments and to glimpse America's success in defining of its international role. In his first report, there is a catalogue of events which indicate a shift in the people of Havana from "scowls" to "toleration" and "then courtesy" (*Works* 9: 188).

Soon, however, Crane reports upon the blurring of American purposes in diplomacy and in the administration of Havana. He notes a "childishness" and a "lack of spine' in the American government's failures to negotiate with the Spanish representatives (XI 199). The American Evacuations Committee, he says, occupies an entire hotel,

take a look at the cautionary evidence he offers against making judgments about the fashions, tastes and occupations of others.

None of us should have the slightest difficulty agreeing with Crane's deflating comments about the fickleness of fashions and fads and the foolishness of staying in step with the latest trends. Crane's fashion report deals with "Hats, Shirts and Spurs in Mexico." Though he pokes fun at the Mexican gentlemen of fashion with their tight, silver-button-edged trousers, spurs the size of "rhinoceros traps" (*Tales* 466) and hats "with the same artistic value as . . . a small tower of bricks" (*Tales* 465) Crane knows that his own outfit must look silly to the Mexicans. Wanting to take exception to the crimson shirt of a smart, "with it" American tourist, he tempers his comments, conceding that,

> It is never wise to deride the fashions of another people, for we ourselves have no idea of what we are coming to. Within two years, New York may be absolutely on fire with crimson shirts—blood red bosoms may flash in the air like lanterns. (*Tales* 467)

Next he turns to preferences in tastes and smells which are, of course, acquired and adaptable. The tourist Crane has no difficulty in finding American-style cocktails, but it is the natives' preference for pulque that fascinates him. With the beverage being very cheap and available, dispensed from near-omnipresent stalls, Crane regularly witnessed its powerful impact. He notes that though "five glasses seem to be sufficient to floor the average citizen of the republic . . . the author of this article is not supposed to be transfixed with admiration because of the above facility of jag. He merely recites facts" (*Tales* 446). Nonetheless the smell and the taste of pulque make Crane wonder why anyone would "ever taste another drop of pulque after having once collided with it" (*Tales* 457). Apparently, neither the smell nor the taste "relate[s] to the Mexicans." Crane continues,

> This relates to the foreigner who brings with him numerous superstitious and racial, fundamental traditions concerning odors. To the foreigner, the very proximity of a glass of pulque is enough to take him up by the hair and throw him violently to the ground. . . .
>
> And it tastes like—it tastes like—some terrible concoction of bad yeast perhaps. Or maybe some calamity of eggs. . . . This, bear in mind, represents the opinion of a stranger. . . . To the Mexican, pulque is a delirium of joy. (*Tales* 457)

Even if tourists ought to give a wide berth to Mexican fashions and drink, one wonders whether a corresponding acquiescence ought to be extended to the poverty of their lives and the apparent pointlessness of their

occupations—mostly sitting on doorsteps and sleeping:

> Above all things, the stranger finds the occupations of foreign peoples to be trivial and inconsequent. The average mind utterly fails to comprehend the new point of view and that such and such a man should be satisfied to carry bundles or mayhap sit and ponder in the sun all his life in this faraway country seem an abnormally stupid thing. The visitor feels scorn. He swells with a knowledge of his geographical experience. "How futile are the lives of these people," he remarks, "and what incredible ignorance that they should not be aware of their futility" (L of A 728)

Visitor Crane, however, does not agree. For him such a value judgment shows "the arrogance of the man who has not yet solved himself and discovered his own actual futility" (L of A 728).

Why do the Mexican lower classes acquiesce to their situation? "Their squalor, their ignorance seemed so absolute that death—no matter what it has in store—would appear as freedom, joy" (L of A 728-29). Though they are silent, "one listens for the first thunder of the rebellion, the moment when this silence shall be broken by a roar of war. . . they have it in their power to become terrible" (L of A 729). To account for their submissiveness, Crane proposes "certain handsome theories" (L of A 729). For instance, it may be the case that the average Mexican peasant "has not enough information to be unhappy over his state. Nobody seeks to provide him with it. He is born, he works, he worships, he dies, all on less money than would buy a thoroughbred Newfoundland dog and who dares to enlighten him" (L of A 729)?

Crane's preferred account for the complaisance of the Mexican lower class hinges on two striking claims: despite their being apparently "poverty-stricken," he wonders what "plums in the world" (L of A 729) are lacking to them. Crane avers, "I would remember that there really was no comfort in the plums after all as far as I had seen them and I would esteem no orations concerning the glitter of plums" (L of A 729). Crane's first contention, then, is that the Mexican lower classes are not materially impoverished after all. Second, he holds that they are no worse off, from a moral point of view, than the affluent elsewhere. In fact, in important ways he finds their lives spiritually superior. "I measure their morality by what evidences of peace and contentment I can detect in the average countenance" (L of A 730). Their peace and contentment, he argues, indicates that they are not suffering any serious injustices. With justice as fairness as his standard, he offers the following negative norm: "If a man is not given a fair opportunity to be virtuous, if his environment chokes his moral aspirations, I say that he has got the one important cause of complaint and rebellion against society" (L of A 730). According to

in battle set Crane, he says, "trembling with a sense of terrible intimacy with [the] war" (VI, 248) . He could not remain a detached observer or spectator. Perhaps McNab's gunshot wound through the lungs also reminded Crane of his own tuberculosis. There seems to have been a parallel experience of intimacy in his response to a red-headed Spanish corpse. The enemy soldier comes to represent the human victim of political power: "His str ong simple countenance was a malignant sneer at the system which was forever killing the credulous peasants in a sort of black night of politics"(*Works* 6: 249). The "red-headed mystery" enables Crane to define the Spanish enemy as a human object of sympathy and respect. In describing the church surgery, Crane depicts a Spanish soldier wearing only a br eech clout as an embodiment of the "thin, pale figure . . . torn down from a cross" (*Works* 6: 254). The enemy becomes analogous to the body of Christ in a *Pietá*. Crane's reflections upon his experiences in Cuba were recorded in *War Memories*, and these passages suggest the insights which enabled him to move beyond jingoistic distortions to a fuller recognition of the human significance of the war..

After he was fired by Pulitzer's *World*, Crane took a job as correspondent for Hearst's *New York Journal*. He sent dispatches on the war in Puerto Rico and on the events and attitudes he could observe in postwar Havana. Crane's angle of vision may have been af fected by his firing by Pulitzer. In these later pieces, military events are more socially embedded, including greater attention to civilians and their responses to the American military presence.

The comic opera of Crane's "capture" of the Puerto Rican town of Juana Diaz indicates a further shift in his point of view. His report is a parody of conquest and the processes of military administration. The townspeople of Juana Diaz show a truculent "straddling" between commitments to Spanish imperialists and to the American liberators (*Works* 9: 178-82). The people don't seem to recognize the benefits of liberation promised by America, and they are uncertain whether the Spanish are truly defeated. According to Richard Harding Davis, the journalists simply divided the people into arbitrary categories of "good fellows" and "suspects" and began to socialize with those they had chosen. When the army arrived, the American Colonel began to strut a bit over his capture of the town, but then he was told that the town had been taken by a group of correspondents (Wertheim and Sorrentino 334). The dignity and the political significance of the American campaign are deflated in this parody of military liberation.

In Crane's report of the burial of an American soldier in Puerto

concluding that they were a "silly, brave force" and in later calling the engagement a "gallant blunder" (*Works* 9: 146) Crane offended Roosevelt's supporters or those who sought to present only competence and heroism in American soldiers. In another article, Crane debunked obsequious journalistic reports which honored the wealthy adventurers of the Rough Riders while failing to acknowledge the heroism and suffering of regular Army soldiers (see *Works* 9: 171). Perhaps Crane's references to the Rough Riders recalled his earlier conflict with Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt over the Dora Clark affair. And perhaps Roosevelt had influential and resentful friends at the *World*.

But Crane's call for fuller acknowledgment of the Private soldier went beyond scoffing at the press and the public for their devotion to the volunteers from the Social Register. Crane concluded his report by suggesting that "maybe someday in a fairer, squarer land"(IX 173) the courage and suffering of the regular soldier will be acknowledged. This reference to a "fairer, squarer land" implies that America is a crooked and unjust place distorted by social class discrimination. This was the last report Crane submitted before he returned to New York and was fired by the *World*.

Don Carlos Seitz, business manager of the *World*, later asserted that Crane had been dismissed because he had impugned the courage of the Seventy-FirstNew York Regiment (Wertheim and Sorrentino 241). But it was Sylvester Scovel, not Crane, who had written such a report. Crane himself noted the "injustice" of sending the men of the Seventy First into battle using the black powder Springfield 1873 rifle, which made them targets even when firing from a thicket (*Works* 9: 169). He concluded by stating that "in war anything is justified save killing your own men through laziness or gross stupidity" (*Works* 9: 170). Crane felt that American leaders were guilty of such laziness and stupidity which caused the deaths of their own volunteers.

There are, then, a number of comments on the Rough Riders, social class, and military management which might have contributed to Crane's firing by Pulitzer's *World*.

It seems likely that Crane's movement beyond jingoism in writings from Cuba was provoked by a meeting with his old friend, Reuben McNab, from Claverack (*Works* 6: 247), by his encounter with the red-headed Spanish corpse (Works 6: 249), and by his glimpse of a church that had become a surgery for Spanish wounded after the battle at El Caney (*Works* 6: 254). These vignettes in *War Memories* suggest moments of transforming recognition. Seeing his old schoolmate wounded

Crane's sociology of material poverty, however, nothing of real importance has been denied to the Mexican lower classes, and according to his criterion of moral opportunity, no significant ethical barriers confront them. Accordingly, neither hand-wringing nor a helping-hand is in order:

> It is for these reasons that I refuse to commit judgment upon these lower classes of Mexico. I even refuse to pity them. It is true at night that many of them sleep in heaps in door-ways, and spend their days squatting upon the pavements. It is true that their clothing is scant and thin. All manner of things of this kind is true but yet their faces have almost always a certain smoothness, a certain lack of pain, a serene faith. I can feel the superiority of their contentment. (L of A 731)

Crane's conclusion appears to over-shout the most enthusiastic partisan of political correctness, for even the most chaste non-interference policy must have some limits!

I wish now briefly to test Crane's contentions against two semi-neutral, trans-cultural standards of judgment. Either of these might justify either a missionary-style effort to convince and convert or, perhaps in extreme cases, would sanction forceful intervention. For example, a criterion that might justify cultural hegemony would be an egregious and/or systemic violation of basic human rights as promulgated in the United Nations Declarations of 1948 and 1966. Of course, much empirical work about conditions in Mexico when Crane visited in 1895 would be needed to support an intervention initiative on humanitarian grounds.

A more abstract and older basis for societal interference is worked out in John Stuart Mill's classic *On Liberty* (1859). Decrying the tendency of governments and individuals paternalistically to intrude into the free space of others, Mill argues:

> That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forebear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. . . . To justify [either compulsion or punishment] . . . the conduct from which it is desired to deter him, must be calculated to produce evil to some one else. (*On Liberty*: 9-10)

Mill then adds two qualifications that seemed obvious to him. His first exception regarding children, that "those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others, must be protected against their own actions as well as

against external injury" (10), is hard to argue with. His second caveat, however, is problematic:

> For the same reason, we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage. . . . Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. (10)

Given Crane's philosophical overview, especially his ethics of cultural tolerance, Mill's easy confidence about the backwardness of primitive societies seems to be little more than a bold assertion that betrays the cultural arrogance and narrow mindedness of a society, like ours, for example, at the turn of the (last) century which claimed political imperialism and territorial expansionism as its manifest destiny . Given Roosevelt's comments about "the normal way" noted above, he surely must have welcomed the paternalistic prerogatives that Mill's political theory offered.

Crane's attitudes about imposing the values and religion of one's culture are diametrically opposed to Roosevelt's. An earlier travelogue dealing, in part, with his visit to the old mission at San Antonio gave Crane an opportunity to make some wonderfully satirical comments about Spanish missionary activities in Old Mexico (now Texas):

> During the interval of peace and the interval of war, toiled the pious monks, erecting missions, digging ditches, making farms and cudgeling their Indians in and out of the church. Sometimes, when the venerable fathers ran short of Indians to convert, the soldiers went on expeditions and returned dragging in a few score. (L of A 713)

Conclusion. To return to Crane's intuitions about non-intervention, suppose a society is observed whose members are in pain and who lack peace, contentment and serenity. In this instance, one supposes that Crane' s epistemological modesty about how well outsiders can ascertain the inner lives and psychological states of those they observe would reassert itself. Moreover, since he grants to other societies a *prima facie* and generous benefit of the doubt, he would be chary of indicting another society of deficiencies. The tuition that purchases such catholic (small "c") tolerance is travel. In "Seen at Hot Springs," he argues that the townspeople have been enlightened by numerous visitors who have journeyed to this famous American spa: "this street thoroughly understands geography, and its experience of men is great. . . . This profound education has destroyed its curiosity and created a sort of a wide sympathy, not tender but, tolerant" (L of A 701-02). Likewise, in "Stephen Crane in Mexico (1)" he notes how long and carefully one must take in any

plunged into vivid and factual reporting. Richard Harding Davis praised Crane as the most effective of the many correspondents both for the breadth of his coverage of events and the power of his writing (Wertheim and Sorrentino 381). Crane participated in operations with the American army and navy and was a close observer of the Battle of San Juan Hill as well as accompanying Cuban insurgent soldiers on a scouting mission. Textual histories in the Virginia Edition list twenty-two dispatches which he published in Pulitzer's enthusiastically pro-war newspaper (IX 321).

Nevertheless, when Crane returned to New York in July, he was fired by the financial manager of the *New York World*, John Norris (Wertheim and Sorrentino 331). Like the earlier firing of Crane in 1892 after the publication of his account of the parade of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics of New Jersey, this event is not clearly understood. There are several possible motives and at least two explanations from the newspaper's managers. Don Carlos Seitz , business manager for the *World*, later said that Crane had "sent only one dispatch of merit" from the war in Cuba (Wertheim and Sorrentino 270-71). Seitz and Henry N. Cary, manager of the *World* field staff in Cuba, seem to have felt personal animosity toward Crane.

One possible motive for their hostility was Crane's retraction of a report on Spanish atrocities. He had sent a dispatch on the first American battle deaths, datelined 15 June, indicating that Spanish had "horribly mutilated" the bodies of dead American soldiers (*Works* 9: 129). Two days later, he sent a correction. He wrote that Army Surgeon Edgar "states positively" that the bullets of the Spanish caused large wounds which had been misinterpreted as the mutilation of corpses (*Works* 9: 131). As further evidence for re-evaluating Spanish battlefield behavior, Crane notes that the body of an American soldier which had been two days behind Spanish lines had not been mutilated though it had been "divested of rifle and accoutrements"(*Works* 9: 131). Although this retraction appeared in the *Boston Globe* and the *Philadelphia Press* (*Works* 9: 485-86), it appears that it was not published by the *New York World*.

Perhaps Crane's retraction undercut the demonizing of the enemy sought by Pulitzer, Seitz, Cary, and the editors of the *World*. Equally significant as a motive for firing Crane, perhaps, is the fact that one of his dispatches had indicated that the Rough Riders had carelessly marched into an ambush. They talked and laughed loudly along the trail, Crane observed, and they failed to detect the "coo" of Cuban wood doves as the signals of enemy snipers (*Works* 9: 143). Perhaps in

Clan of No Name" and "Drama in Cuba," he also includes scoffing portraits of Spanish officers.

Even more vivid fantasies of jingoism appear in a report Crane submitted from the U.S flagship *New York* datelined April 30. After observing a troop of Spanish cavalry directing musket fire at their ship, the sailors on the *New York* respond with four-inch guns set at a "range of 3700 yards." In a passage suggestive of a boys' romance novel, Crane notes that "Captain Chadwick himself aimed the after starboard four inch gun" and sent a shell into the "middle " of the cavalry formation (Works 9: 106). At such a distance—3,700 yards—the Spaniards musket fire offered little threat, and the attack indicates their incompetence or foolishness. In showing the captain's own salvo landing among the Spanish horsemen, however, Crane provides an image of glamorous and effective American military leadership.

Furthermore, following the captain's performance, Crane presents an entirely fictional speculation concerning the Spanish cavalry troops who have, apparently, survived the Captain's carefully directed shelling:

> . . . the Spaniards are probably gathered around some cognac bottles: "Ah, we fifty Spanish soldiers, we fought today a great battleship. Yes, we fifty men—a little band of fifty men—we fought a great ship. More cognac. Just think how easily we can thrash these Americans when fifty men can fight the flagship" (*Works* 9: 107).

According to D.W. Winnicott's definition, the "false self" is the "compliant person who abandon[s] his or her own intrinsic desires and beliefs in order to suit the demands of the other" (Bollas 40). In this depiction of the Spanish soldiers' drunken self-aggrandizement, Crane seems to have abandoned journalistic integrity in order to send Pulitzer's *World* a complete dramatization of a jingoist fantasy: an heroic commander in the foreground, and a cluster of degenerate enemies, drinking and congratulating themselves in the background. Giorgio Mariani defines one of the deleterious effects of war correspondence in the late nineteenth century as the "commodification of war" (105). Crane's "journalistic commodity" containing a glamorous American officer and degenerate Spanish enemies could not only sell newspapers but it also could encourage jingoistic enthusiasm for imperialistic military adventure. Crane may have taken a correspondent's assignment to gather material for his fiction, but he was clearly capable of submitting dispatches puffed up with propaganda.

Later, in his wartime correspondence from Cuba, however, Crane

situation before one "can begin to understand the local point of view" (*Tales* 439).

Crane's abiding wonder at the variety and richness of human and other lives leads him to suppose (except in obvious and intractable situations like war or coal mines or chronic sickness or serious injury) that the mix of good and evil, pain and pleasure, anxiety and contentment is probably evenly distributed over the human race. That is, the differences between persons in one situation and the next are refractory and superficial. In other words, Crane contends that there is little variation due to time and place across the generic human situation:

> It is the fortune of travelers to take note of differences and publish them to their friends. It is the differences that are supposed to be valuable. The travellers seek them bravely, and cudgel their wits to find means to unearth them. But in this search they are confronted continually by the resemblances and the intrusion of commonplace and most obvious similarity. . . . In a word, it is the passion for differences which has prevented a general knowledge of the resemblances. (L of A 706-07)

All in all, then, it seems to me that Crane's attitude toward other cultures is *laissez faire*. He is suspicious of outsiders who show up to help, especially when help has not been sought. Despite his minister father and his more ambitiously proselytizing mother, Crane is leery of the missionary impulse. His wariness is symbolically underscored by the colors he uses to describe churches, colors that make it difficult for these buildings to blend in with and be seen as part of a native culture. In *George's Mother*, though the little mission chapel that George reluctantly agrees to visit with his mother "sat humbly between two towering apartment-houses" and was illuminated by "a red street-lamp [that] threw a marvelous reflection upon the wet pavements, it was like the death-stain of a spirit" (L of A 255). Or in "The Viga Canal," Crane notes "that in the midst of the swarming pulque shops, resorts, and gardens, stood a little white church, stern, unapproving, representing the other fundamental aspiration of humanity, a reproach and a warning" (*Tales* 434). Crane's last phrases are pregnant and significant. If the tendency to judge, correct, reprove and interfere is a "fundamental aspiration of humanity," Crane's wise admonition is to cultivate and heed a corresponding moral imperative: learn to appreciate and leave alone the ways of being human that are unlike our own.[3]

Notes

[1]See the second chapter of my *The Pluralistic Philosophy of Stephen Crane* for a detailed account of Crane's metaphysics and epistemology.

[2]Quotations from Crane's works are taken from the Library of America volume *Stephen Crane: Prose and Poetry* (cited in the text as L of A) or from Volume 8: *Tales, Sketches and Reports* of the University of Virginia edition (cited as *Tales*).

[3]Portions of this essay were presented at the 36th Annual Convention of the Western American Literature Association, Omaha, NE, 19 October 2001 and at the 13th Annual Conference of the American Literature Association, Long Beach, CA, 1 June 2002.

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Stephen Crane in Cuba: From Jingoism to Criticism

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Stephen Crane's writings from the war with Spain reveal a significant shift from jingoism and propaganda to expressions of dismay, criticism and even outrage after the armistice on August 12. After debunking a Spanish ship captain and writing a fraudulently fictional depiction of the Spanish as decadent imperialists, Crane later wrote dispatches including a kaleidoscopic variety of battle events which may have sharpened his thinking about guerilla war and politics. By the end of the war, he discusses the lack of clarity in American goals and identifies a shifting of historical roles for the country. It appears that Crane became entangled in the contradictions between American democratic ideals and the blurring or recasting of American identities in the war itself and in the puzzling process by which the country accepted an imperialist role.

Crane arrived off the coast of Cuba in late April 1898. His first report to the *New York World* is a debunking of the Captain of a Spanish steamship who, Crane says, had been boastful and abusive toward America when he left New York City. Crane observes that the Captain's behavior has changed when he is brought as a captive to Key West by the U.S. Navy. In particular, he notes that the Captain's knees appear to be weak with fear as he crosses from the ship on a pile of palmetto logs. Crane explains or justifies the captain's fear somewhat when he observes that "nobody could help wondering what would happen when the inflamed populace saw two Spaniards" (*Works* 10: 104). Americans were up in arms, and war-fever seems to have made Key West unpredictably dangerous for this possibly cowardly Spanish captain of a commercial ship. Later, in the story "This Majestic Lie," Crane was to note that correspondents in Key West were under pressure from their editors to provide continuous, dramatic reports, and these demands compelled the journalists to report any event that "arrived as a mouse to be cabled north as an elephant" (*Works* 9: 204). The Spanish Captain's wobbly knees seem to have been Crane's attempt to inflate a tiny mouse of fact with a puff of the hot air of jingoistic exaggeration—to satisfy his editors. In a number of subsequent reports, Crane scoffs at cowardice and incompetence with aiming rifles and canons among men in the Spanish army and navy; and in such fictional works as "The

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Crane's Dispatches from Cuba: The Dynamics of Race, Class, and Professionalism in "The Correspondents' War"[1]

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The prevailing legacy of the Spanish-American War in the popular imagination is the image of Teddy Roosevelt and his heroic Rough Riders, bravely storming up San Juan Hill against a hail of enemy fire. This iconic representation of American fortitude and resolve has endured in spite of repeated efforts by historians and the U.S. Army to correct this mythical, and largely fictional, version of the events leading up to the capture of Santiago from Spanish forces. In the end, the story's resilience is a testament to the power of journalism and the popular media to construct a useful narrative—useful to the politicians and to the journalists themselves. Indeed, some historians refer to the brief conflict with Spain as "The Correspondents' War" not only for the power of the "yellow" press in encouraging pro-war fervor before the fighting began but also for the formidable number of war correspondents who held astonishing power over the American reading public.[2]

Notable among the many journalists in Cuba were three men with varying reputations as writers of fiction—Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Richard Harding Davis—each of whom helped shape the popular conception of the war for American readers.[3] A reading of their fiction and non-fiction reveals a reciprocal discourse of sports and manhood which not only bolstered the expansionist policies advocated by Roosevelt and others but also exposed the anxieties of professional authorship during this period. In particular, their work reveals the liminal status of the writer as intermediary between the spectacular action and a sedentary audience. Maintaining characteristics of both spectator and participant, yet never fully occupying either role, the author inhabits a problematic position, one resolved, to some degree, by the role of professional war correspondent. Though all three authors were drawn to reporting on the war, Crane's journalism, in particular, reflects a growing awareness of their tenuous position and the unstable nature of authorship in general. The rhetoric of race and class in the work of these writers illustrates the journalistic distance they established toward their subject, and the importance of the newly emergent realm of spectator sports informs the ideological underpinnings of the

war itself and the discursive strategies adopted by Crane, Norris, and Davis.

An 1897 newspaper sketch by Frank Norris entitled "Among Cliff Dwellers" reveals an attitude toward "the Spanish race" that was typical for the period immediately prior to U.S. intervention in Cuba. The sketch describes the inhabitants of San Francisco's Telegraph Hill as a "queer, extraordinary mingling of peoples" (98) and tells the story of "a very, very old Spaniard, and rather feeble" who spends all his time in this ghetto on the hill. An astonished Norris writes,

> For eight years this old man has never been down into the city. Old age has trapped him on the top of that sheer hill, and lays siege to him there . . .. This old man will never come down but feet first. The world rolls by beneath him, under his eyes and in reach of his ears . . .. He sees it all and hears it all and is yet as out of it, as exiled from it as if marooned on a South Pacific atoll. (99)

For Norris, the old man personifies the feminized role of Spanish-speaking people in the American West. Weak in mind and body, the "Spaniard" is a figure whose time has passed and who has lost his place as colonizer of the Americas to the more virile and powerful Anglo-Saxon. In his novels, Norris consistently presents those racially categorized as Spaniards as ineffectual, incompetent, or insane. His characterizations range from "the hot, degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spaniard" among the field workers in *The Octopus* (978) to the mad ravings of Maria Macapa, the Mexican charwoman in *McTeague*, about whom McTeague's friend Marcus says, "She's a greaser, and she's queer in the head" (276). In his fiction, Norris reinforces the widespread American view of Spaniards as corrupt and out-of-date, expressed by Theodore Roosevelt's statement that "The trouble with Spain is that they are 200 years behind the times. It is impossible to get ahead of Yankees" (qtd. in Samuels and Samuels 22). This presumption helped focus widespread support for U.S. intervention in support of Cuban rebels.

Also published in 1897, Richard Harding Davis's popular novel *Soldiers of Fortune* illustrates the prejudice and preconceptions behind the popular image of the "Yankee" in the Americas. The novel's protagonist, a young American engineer named Robert Clay, works for an American mining company in a fictional South American country. Embroiled in a rebellion against the nation's corrupt regime, the engineer and his Anglo colleagues lead the disorganized and unpredictable rebels to victory, and the experience transforms the heretofore soft

wounded and displaced refugees, Crane excoriates the Spaniards' strategies: "[T]hough the Americans' hands were turned to doing gentleness, it was otherwise with those Spanish miserables, Spain's ignoble pride, the guerillas. They lurked along the roadsides, eager and ready for bloodshed, plunder and unnameable wickedness" (*Virginia Edition* 9:167).

[5] See Samuels and Samuels 152-55.

[6] For a critical exploration of Davis's role in disseminating the exaggerated account of Roosevelt's actions at San Juan, see Samuels and Samuels 289-92.

[7] Quoted in Davis's account of the battle, a U.S. General states, "San Juan was won by the regimental officers and men. We had as little to do as the referee at a prize-fight who calls 'time.' We called 'time' and they did the fighting" (*Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns* 218). Davis and the other correspondents, however, failed to report that it was the regular troops, rather than the volunteers, who delivered the crucial blows to the Spanish forces.

[8] As Stanley Wertheim notes, Crane's own story on the event is not only "prosaic, disjointed, and matter-of-fact" but is also "the most jingoistic of Crane's reports from Cuba" (3).

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confesses—that "the society reporter, invaluable as he may be in times of peace, has no function during the blood and smoke of battle" (*Virginia Edition* 9:173).

Finally, the literary journalists of "The Correspondents' War" exhibited symptoms of an advanced case of "spectatoritis." For Davis and Norris, the prescription for this ailment involved a whole-hearted embrace of Hearst's "journalism that acts." For Crane, however, the problem was not so easily cured. Rather than repress his insecurity about the role of the writer as outsider, Crane exposes it, directly and indirectly, in his dispatches on the war. Crane does not hesitate to show that volunteers such as the Rough Riders, although "in the game honestly and sincerely," are, in the end, amateurs whose escapades have been allowed to overshadow the work of the professional soldiers. As Crane surely realized, the same could be said of celebrated novelists whose success in the literary arena has allowed them to play the glamorous and manly part of war correspondent. For Crane, the writer is always a troubled outsider, caught between the world of action and experience and a reading public hungry for entertainment and enlightenment. It was a role in which he never felt entirely comfortable, but one that he would deftly fulfill throughout his brief career.

Notes

[1] Although this essay revisits texts and issues addressed in my earlier article, "'The Manly Art of Self-Defense': Spectator Sports, American Imperialism, and the Spanish-American War," the argument here is quite different.

[2] For a detailed account of the role of the press in the war, see Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondents' War*.

[3] Of the three, Davis enjoyed the most substantial reputation as a war correspondent. He had not only established a lucrative literary career but was considered the "dean" of the press corps in Cuba. Norris was, as yet, unknown as a writer, and his dispatches from the war would remain unpublished until after his later success as a novelist. The reading public, of course, would have known Crane primarily as the author of *The Red Badge of Courage*.

[4] Among the many charges made about the integrity and tactics of the Spanish troops were complaints about guerilla warfare in Spanish military strategy. The deliberate use of ambush by the Spanish troops was seen as evidence for the lack of honor and courage among the Spaniards. In a report describing the American soldiers' concern for

and ill-defined "Clay," allowing him to fulfill his natural destiny as a soldier and adventurer. Davis's plot combines elements of Horatio Alger's "rags-to-riches" romances and male initiation sagas exemplified by sea fiction such as Kipling's *Captains Courageous* and London's *The Sea-Wolf*. The novel also provides a blueprint for the popular narrative of U.S. involvement in Cuba, as the Anglo-American heroes call upon their instincts and secure the liberty of colonials unable or unwilling to succeed on their own. The Americans' superiority in battle, in fact, follows as a consequence of the childish beliefs of the "natives" themselves:

> The Americans in front of the column were humorously disposed, and inclined to consider the whole affair as a pleasant outing. They had been placed in front, not because they were better shots than the natives, but because every South American thinks that every citizen of the United States is a master either of the rifle or the revolver, and Clay was counting on this superstition. (316)

The American mercenaries learn to disdain the "shuffling steps and slovenly carriage of the half-grown soldiers" who fight on either side of the revolution even as they fight bravely on the side of the rebels.

If these fictional creations helped document and popularize an unsympathetic image of "the Spanish race," American reporters in Cuba found a scenario that conformed perfectly to such expectations. American war correspondence from Cuba consistently reinforces the view that, while Spaniards are the decadent, unqualified colonizers of Cuba, the Cubans themselves are clearly ill-fit for self-rule. In his account of the battle for San Juan, Crane offers criticisms in his appraisal of the Cuban troops that mirror Davis's fictional narrative:

> [The American soldier] is furious . . . because the Cubans apparently consider themselves under no obligation to take part in an engagement; because the Cubans will stay at the rear and collect haversacks, blankets, coats and shelter tents dropped by our troops.
>
> The average Cuban here will not speak to an American unless to beg. He forgets the morning, afternoon or evening salutation unless he is reminded . . . . Then at all times he gibbers. Talk, talk, talk, talk. Heaven knows what it is all about; but certainly four Cubans can talk enough for four regiments. (*Virginia Edition* 9:164)

Unlike the stoic Americans, the Cubans cower and chatter in a distinctly un-masculine way and serve no real purpose in the heat of battle.

Crane's description matches that given by most correspondents of the Cubans, and, in this context, the chauvinism implicit in his racialized portrait of the Cubans remains relatively restrained. In *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*, Louis A. Pèrez suggests some reasons for such criticisms of the effectiveness and valor of the rebels, which differ sharply from Cuban and Spanish accounts of the same battles:

> Some of this, certainly, was due simply to the conduct of Cuban operations beyond the direct field of vision of U.S. observers. Then, too, it may have been impossible for Americans to fully appreciate the cumulative effect of more than three years of war on the Spanish forces. But the situation was more complicated. Nothing had prepared American soldiers for their encounter with Cuban troops, many of whom were men of color, weary and worn, wary of the North American presence; all of this was further compounded by the language differences. These were not the allies the Americans had imagined Cubans to be. (94-95)

The correspondents' view of the Cuban troops, therefore, reflects the unanticipated recognition of their "blackness," rather than an appreciation of their identity as fellow citizens of the "New World" shaking off the shackles of European imperialism. In another revealing episode, Crane describes Sylvester Scovel's conversation with a "barefooted negro private" who has lost his shoes in heat of battle. When asked where he comes from, the man replies, in dialect depicted by Crane, "In New York. I leve dere Mulberry street . . . My name Joe Riley." "There he stood," Crane writes, "bearded, black, a perfect type of West India negro, speaking the soft broad dialect of these islands and—harp of Ireland—his name was Riley. I have heard of a tall Guatemalan savage who somehow accumulated the illustrious name of Duffy, but Riley—" (*Virginia Edition* 9:149-50). Like Norris, Crane describes an exotic "other," but here it is the *reporter's* lack of understanding, rather than the curious subject's ignorance, that Crane emphasizes. This seemingly minor distinction provides insight into the essential differences between Crane's heightened awareness of the problem of authorship and the jingoistic zeal of his journalistic colleagues. While Norris and Davis stress the ignorance and superstition of other races, Crane sees their identity as the source of his *own* confusion. Although Crane's impressions are undeniably shaped and distorted by the racist ideologies of his day, the insidious issue of Anglo-Saxon destiny does not play the central role that it does in the work of Norris and Davis.

other correspondents take in the battle, Kipling remains mindful of the journalists' purpose—to "amuse" the readership back home. Although imperial conquest and "the fine, brutal arrogance of the Anglo-Saxon" might motivate writers such as Norris in their journalistic duties, the selling of newspapers to a public with a voracious appetite for entertainment ultimately pays the bills. The cult of amateurism that surrounded inter-collegiate football corresponds to the distaste expressed by the upper-class correspondent implicated in the professional milieu of the working journalist.

As something of an interloper within the Ivy League milieu surrounding the war's most prestigious volunteers, Crane is more circumspect about the role of journalists as participants. The title of Crane's final dispatch for the *World*, "Regulars Get No Glory," reflects a recurring theme throughout Crane's reporting on the war—the undue attention given to the glamorous Rough Riders at the expense of the common soldier. Crane writes, "The public wants to learn of the gallantry of Reginald Marmaduke Maurice Montmorenci Sturtevant, and for goodness sake how the poor chappy endures that dreadful hard-tack and bacon. Whereas, the name of the regular soldier is probably Michael Nolan, and his life-sized portrait was not in the papers in celebration of his enlistment" (*Virginia Edition* 9:171). Crane's disapproval of the amount of coverage devoted to upper-class volunteers followed a spate of overwrought and melodramatic stories concerning the recent death of Hamilton Fish at Las Guásimas, scion of a prominent New York family, and lampoons the reporters' fawning treatment of a certain colonel with another unusual Dutch surname. Meanwhile, in the volunteers' shadow, "Michael Nolan," no less than the Irish "Negro" Joe Riley, remains enigmatic—his achievements undocumented, his life a mystery. Although Crane takes a jaundiced view of the willingness of correspondents (including himself) to document every feat of the Rough Riders, he never doubts the bravery of the volunteers themselves:

> He is a man and a soldier, although not so good either as a man or soldier as Michael Nolan. But he is in the game honestly and sincerely; he is playing it gallantly; and, if from time to time he is made to look ridiculous, it is not his fault at all. It is the fault of the public. . . . We are as a people a great collection of the most arrant kids about anything concerning war, and if we get a chance to perform absurdly we usually seize it. (*Virginia Edition* 9:173)

Here Crane's use of "we," unlike Norris's, slips into a discussion of the press corps, not the Anglo-Saxon race. Crane further argues—perhaps

charge, which actually took place on smaller, neighboring "Kettle Hill," was accurately depicted as courageous, and even reckless, but in truth it served to provide support for the less-celebrated regular troops' assault on the main peak of San Juan itself.[7] With the publication of misleading, incomplete, or simply invented information about the battle, correspondents such as Davis indirectly established their own position at the center of the war—on the playing field, as it were—instead of the sidelines.[8]

In a pamphlet published after the war entitled *The Surrender of Santiago*, Frank Norris does not sound like a mere bystander but instead revisits the notion of racial destiny to claim a share of the glorious conquest of Cuba:

> The war was not a 'crusade,' we were not fighting for Cubans just then . . . Santiago was ours—was ours, ours, by the sword we had acquired, we, Americans, with no one to help—and the Anglo-Saxon blood of us, the blood of the race that has fought its way out of a swamp in Friesland, conquering and conquering and conquering, on to the westward, the race whose blood instinct is the acquiring of land, went galloping through our veins to the beat of our horses' hoofs.
>
> Every trooper that day looked down from his saddle upon Cuban and Spanish soldier as from a throne. Even though not a soldier, it was impossible not to know their feeling, glorying, arrogant, the fine, brutal arrogance of the Anglo-Saxon, and we rode on there at a gallop through the crowded streets of the fallen city, heads high, sabres clattering, a thousand iron hoofs beating out a long roll—triumphant, arrogant conquerors. (19-20)

Norris, while admitting that his participation in the war was not that of an actual combatant, nonetheless slips easily into first-person plural when discussing the triumph of the American forces in Santiago, and his rhetoric—with a characteristic absence of subtlety—invokes the role of Anglo-Saxon destiny in determining the outcome of the war. The wartime duties of the correspondent represents a theme reflected by Kipling's artist-hero, Dick Heldar, who fights alongside British colonial forces in the Sudan in *The Light That Failed*, a text with immense influence on Norris and his generation: "With the soldiers sweated and toiled the correspondents of the newspapers, and they were almost as ignorant as their companions. But it was above all things necessary that England at breakfast should be amused and thrilled and interested. . ." (19). While underscoring the active role that Dick and the

Ultimately, Crane proves most interested in his own limitations as an observer and reporter, rather than the limitations and shortcomings of the Spanish or Cuban troops. His reporting, like much of his fiction, stresses the problem of epistemology—a theme that Crane places at the center of the human condition and a subject not necessarily addressed in most journalistic writing, which presumably relies upon a relatively stable relationship between the "facts" of a story and the narrative technique of the journalist.

In the fictional stories based on his travels in the American West and Mexico in 1896, Crane reflects the Anglo-American Westerners' intolerant attitudes toward Mexicans. Described as "occasional lurking figures" (*Virginia Edition* 5:33), Mexicans "furnish a kind of ruffian which appears infrequently in the Northern races" (*Virginia Edition* 5:187). In "Above All Things," an unpublished journalistic sketch concerning what he calls the "lower classes of Indians in Mexico," Crane confesses something that resonates through much of the coverage of the Spanish-American War. He writes, "It might perhaps be said—if anyone dared—that the most worthless literature in the world has been that which has been written by the men of one nation concerning the men of another" (*Stephen Crane in the West and Mexico* 74). Crane describes the landscape stretching out before the young adventurer in the story "One Dash—Horses" as "a vast, pointless ocean of black" (*Virginia Edition* 5:13). Likewise, Mexico itself serves as a terrifying void in which Americans struggle to find meaning. In this context, the nature of Crane's stereotypical portrayal of Mexicans serves to highlight the epistemological anxiety in his writing. The alien and exotic nature of the Mexican frontier unites the Americans in a common struggle to comprehend their surroundings and themselves. For Crane, the only meaning operative in his characters' lives has been proscribed by the rituals of American manhood that stem from the "sporting life" of urban bachelor culture at the turn of the century.

The masculine cult surrounding saloons, gambling halls, theaters, and stadiums of the modern American city offered a milieu dominated by the games that young men both played and *watched* from the sidelines or grandstand. The dramatic growth of athletics as entertainment in the 1890s followed the evolution of professional journalism and the changing coverage of sporting events in major newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century. While specialized journals such as the *New York Clipper* and the *Police Gazette* had promoted spectator sports to an earlier generation of readers, the Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers helped establish the "sports page" as a mainstream journalistic

custom. For successful and aspiring authors, sports journalism proved a lucrative and attractive form of professional writing and a proving ground for war correspondence. Hearst first hired Davis, for instance, to cover the 1895 Yale-Princeton Game for the *Journal*, and Norris and Crane published journalism on football. It is certainly no coincidence that all three men were drawn to this kind of writing—it paid well, it offered them a chance to rub elbows with heroic figures, and it gave them the opportunity to explore themes that were also central to their fiction. Furthermore, as a suitably "manly" profession, the role of journalist provided an escape from the effete qualities associated with literary authorship.

As interest in athletics as entertainment spread, so did the alleged malady known as "spectatoritis"—a byproduct of spectator sports which produced, in the words of Boy Scouts of America founder, Ernest Thompson Seton, "flat-chested cigarette smokers with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality" (xi). Defined as a deficiency of manly force, spectatoritis was metaphorically linked with such other "diseases" as neurasthenia and homosexuality. Spectators at a boxing match, for instance, who stood gawking at the sight of almost naked working-class men engaged in mortal combat felt uneasy with the implied feminization of their role. The need to *participate* in an organized athletic spectacle found its most significant consequence in the rise of intercollegiate football, a sport which, unlike boxing, drew from among the upper classes for its participants. While boxing and baseball had become commercial ventures performed by working-class professionals, the most popular football games were those played by undergraduates at the nation's elite colleges. It is significant that the essential character of intercollegiate football depended on the notion of amateurism and a difference from "professional" athletics.

Eager to avoid the perils of spectatoritis, many of the upper-class males known as the "Fifth Avenue Boys" in Roosevelt's Rough Riders had played football together in college. For many observers, their athletic training and aptitude guaranteed the volunteers' fitness as soldiers. In many ways, the well-regulated brutality of football mirrored Roosevelt's ideal of political Progressivism, combining stern, self-assured manliness with a heightened sense of order and "fair play."[4] As troops meet on a battlefield in Davis's *Soldiers of Fortune*, one character observes, "It reminds me of a football match . . . when the teams run on the field" (244). After being shot in the battle, the same character reflects the stoic nonchalance that characterizes young men of his class and athletic experience: "His unconcern was quite sincere; to a

young man who had galloped through two long halves of a football match on a strained tendon, a scratched shoulder was not important, except as an unsought honor" (291). Indeed, Davis's jarring comparison of a sporting event to actual warfare underscores the seriousness attached to athletic prowess and the substantial casualty rates at college football games, at which fatalities were not uncommon. In *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle*, Michael Oriard describes the intense concern over the brutality associated with football that occurred in the "yellow" press only months before the American campaign in Cuba: "The peak of sensationalized football violence came in 1897, most likely provoked by William Randolph Hearst's invasion of the New York newspaper world, when not just Hearst's *Journal* but also the *New York Herald* and the *World* (and especially the *Evening World*) ran season-long exposès of the carnage on football fields" (202-03). Soon enough, the carnage of *real* warfare would displace football on the front pages of these newspapers.

The role of the reporter in presenting the brutality of sports to a newspaper's readership offered a rare opportunity to the writer to share, however vicariously, in the manliness of the participants. Similarly, the role of war correspondent gave those who normally played the role of sedentary artist the chance to answer Hearst's well-known call for a "journalism that acts." Reporters accompanying American forces often carried weapons, relayed messages between commanders, provided valuable intelligence on enemy movements, and generally obscured the distinctions between observer and participant. Richard Harding Davis himself offered the best-known example of this phenomenon at the Battle of Las Guásimas, in which he accompanied Roosevelt himself in securing a ridge after an ambush.[5] In a letter to his family, Davis describes his actions as follows: "I got excited and took a carbine and charged the sugar house, which was what is called the key to the position. If the men had been regulars I would have sat in the rear . . . but I knew every other one of them, had played football, and all that sort of thing, with them, so I thought as an American I ought to help" (*Adventures and Letters* 254-55). For Davis and his colleagues, there is no question which "team" the correspondents represent.

More significant than his soldierly exploits, however, were Davis's journalistic efforts to publicize the now-famous First Volunteer Cavalry's mythical charge up San Juan hill.[6] His account of the battle provided the basis for the legend and the subsequent enhancement of Roosevelt's stature as a man of action. The Rough Riders'