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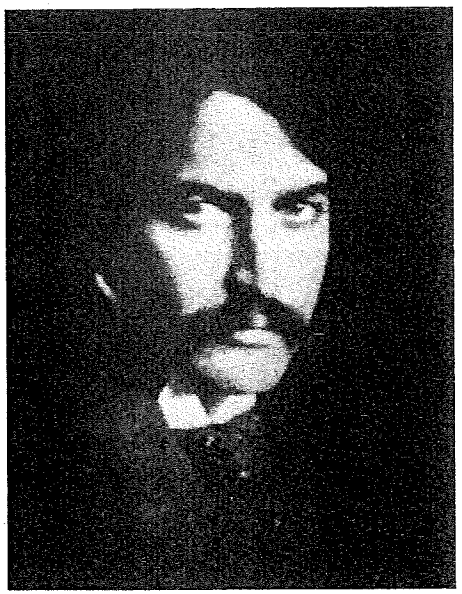

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

Department of English
Virginia Tech

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Paul Sorrentino, Editor
Stephen Crane Studies
Department of English
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0112
Stephen Crane Society website:
http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/crane/scs.htm

Telephone: 540-231-8650
Fax: 540-231-5692
Email: psorrent@vt.edu

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Stephen Crane in the Time of Shock and Awe: Teaching *The Red Badge of Courage* During the Iraq War

Michael Schaefer
University of Central Arkansas

When I put *The Red Badge of Courage* on the syllabus for my graduate and advanced undergraduate course in American Romanticism and Realism in the Spring semester of 2003, I had my two usual teaching objectives in mind. First, I wanted the class to engage with the various literary-critical controversies the novel has generated: the question of whether or not Crane intends for the reader to endorse Henry Fleming's view that he has become a fully mature man as a result of his first combat experiences; the related textual dispute over which version of the novel constitutes Crane's "true" intentions—the Appleton, the Bowers, or the Binder; the literary-historical problem of whether to categorize the novel as a work of Realism, Naturalism, or Impressionism or to regard it as *sui generis*; and the biographical-artistic puzzle of how Crane managed to create so accurate a picture of war when at that point in his life he had no firsthand experience of it. Second, as a practitioner of the educational philosophy articulated by Robert Coles in *Teaching and the Moral Imagination* and Parker Palmer in *The Courage to Teach*, I wanted the students to move beyond these matters of academic debate to the idea that the ultimate value of a work of literature lies in its applicability to life outside the classroom. To make them aware of this principle, I put a quotation from an essay by Chinua Achebe at the beginning of the course syllabus:

> Literature, whether handed down by word of mouth or in print, gives us a second handle on reality; enabling us to encounter, in the safe, manageable dimensions of make-believe the very same threats to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life; and at the same time providing through the self-discovery which it imparts a veritable weapon for coping with these threats whether they are found within [our] problematic and incoherent selves or in the world around us. (170)

However, when I composed this syllabus, during November 2002, I had no way of foreseeing that the two weeks I allotted for class discussion of *The Red Badge*, March 17-28, would turn out to be the last week before the invasion of Iraq and the first full week of that war. At that point, dealing with this novel's relationship to reality did not strike

Contributors' Notes

Michael Schaefer is a Professor of English at the University of Central Arkansas. He has published a number of books and articles on the literature of the American Civil War and is currently at work on a study of the literary reactions of veterans of that war to having killed other men in battle.

John Fagg's paper is a version of the opening chapter of his doctoral thesis "On the Cusp of an Idea: Stephen Crane, George Bellows and Modernism," which he recently completed at the School of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham.

Shunji Kuga, Professor at Keio University, Japan, is preparing to publish a book on Harold Frederic in Japanese.

George Monteiro, the author of *Stephen Crane's Blue Badge of Courage* (2000), is preparing the Crane volume for the Cambridge University Press American Critical Archives series.

me as particularly safe or manageable. The general campus atmosphere at the University of Central Arkansas was highly emotionally charged regarding the war, which was to be expected in a state with many ties to the armed services, and several of the most outspoken leaders of the campus antiwar movement happened to be members of the class along with a number of more quietly pro-war students, many of whom had relatives and friends among the troops being deployed. In that environment, I felt that my usual practice of explicitly asking students to make connections between their reading and current events might evoke harangues about the rightness or wrongness of the Iraq war that would bear little relationship to either *The Red Badge* or thoughtful consideration of the cases for and against the war and thus be counter-productive if the goal was to move from Crane's text to self-discovery. Therefore, I decided to keep our discussion focused as much as possible on the book itself and trust that Crane's artistic power and the students' intelligence would promote self-discovery at an unspoken level.

Carrying out this strategy proved challenging, since on two issues that surfaced at the outset of discussion, Crane's attitude toward war itself and his depiction of Henry Fleming as a kind of Everyman, students expressed strongly divergent opinions that clearly had roots in their feelings about Iraq. Regarding the first issue, the most outspoken critic was Jennifer, a graduate student and campus antiwar leader who found fault with Crane for what she considered his moral failure to have Henry or anyone else in the book confront the fundamental immorality of killing other human beings; I had the impression that she felt people would be better served at this moment in history by reading an expressly antiwar book such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* rather than one that seemed to accept war as a given of the human condition. The chief opponent of this view was Steven, an undergraduate who took the view that Crane was right about the inevitability of wars and did well to focus on what he considered the more fruitful issue of how men conduct themselves in combat. Although neither Steven nor anyone else overtly linked this response to current events, a certain tension in the classroom gave me the sense that the connection was there, that some students found Jennifer's pacifist view naïve specifically because of the Bush administration's rhetoric, which they accepted, concerning the threat that Iraq's putative weapons of mass destruction posed to the United States.

One of the reasons this linkage did not surface in class was my movement to shut it off by quickly turning the discussion to the subject Steven argued was more important than the rightness or wrongness of

war, Crane's depiction of how men behave under fire. Russell, another graduate student antiwar leader, argued that Henry's failure to consider the morality of war was not a failing on Crane's part but rather just realism; he expressed the opinion that soldiers are generally insensitive to this subject and Crane is cognizant of that fact. He also advanced the view that Crane is entirely ironic when he has Henry assess himself as a proven man at the end of the novel, given that Henry seems less to have confronted his earlier cowardice and other flaws than simply to have ignored them as a result of courage on the second day of battle that has more to do with adrenaline and other involuntary factors than with conscious intent. Angela, an undergraduate whom I knew to have several friends deployed in the Iraq invasion force, took exception to this analysis, not on the grounds that Russell was necessarily wrong about Henry but on the basis that Russell and Crane were both mistaken in regarding Henry as a figure representative of all soldiers. Her contention was that, while Henry's type does exist, most soldiers in fact behave in morally aware and well-considered fashion. When as part of this debate I brought up General A. C. McClurg's contemporary assessment of Crane's portrait of Henry as disrespectful to the American fighting man,[1] she readily agreed with it, although she emphatically disavowed McClurg's concomitant call for censorship of the novel, and she and several other students who supported her view were considerably mollified when I asked the class to consider that as a possible counterbalance to Henry Crane also gives the reader Wilson, the "loud soldier" who unlike Henry seems to learn to behave with modesty and compassion as well as bravery.

When our two weeks of discussion of *The Red Badge* wound down and we moved on to Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, I felt both relieved and bothered. I was grateful that the class had never devolved into shouting matches about Iraq, but I had no real way of knowing if my oblique approach to the book's relevance to our own lives had achieved the result I had hoped for. The students had learned much about the academic conflicts surrounding the book and had exchanged their own opinions in a civil manner, but I was not sure whether reading and discussion had actually led anyone to examine his or her opinions about current events more deeply—whether self-discovery had indeed occurred. To resolve that doubt, I decided in Fall 2003 to interview the students from this class about their experience with *The Red Badge* in time of war, asking whether they had found the approach we had taken in class useful and whether the book had played any role in their thinking about Iraq. Their responses offered a number of

The novel tells the story of a hayseed from New Jersey, who as a teenager becomes an actor through the efforts of an actress wife already established in the theatre at the time of their marriage. Five years his senior, she soon leaves him for another man. Eventually more interested in production (including scene design), this young man goes his own way, becoming a manager-producer-theatre owner. Years later he once again comes in contact with his former wife. This time she connives to get him to put on a mediocre play as a vehicle for her current husband. Something of what Beer knew about Cora Taylor (Stewart) but did not put in his book on Crane found its way into his novel. It is not much of a stretch to see in this manipulative wife—Cora Boyle—traces of the temper and look of Crane's common-law wife.

Note

[1]Stanley Wertheim and Paul Sorrentino, "Thomas Beer: The Clay Feet of Stephen Crane Biography," *American Literary Realism* (Spring 1990), 22: 2-16; and John Clendenning, "Thomas Beer's *Stephen Crane*: The Eye of His Imagination," *Prose Studies* (May 1991), 14: 68-80.

Helen Trent

George Monteiro
Brown University

It has been established that much of what Thomas Beer put into his 1923 biography of Stephen Crane is spurious. Stanley Wertheim, Paul Sorrentino, and John Clendenning have proven that Beer dreamt up characters and identities, fabricated documentary evidence, and imagined key incidents out of airy nothing.[1]

Among Beer's inventions, none had greater impact on Crane studies than the redoubtable figure of "Helen Trent," presented by Beer as Crane's first great love. She plays a significant role in Crane scholarship in major books by John Berryman, Edwin H. Cady, Robert Wooster Stallman, and James B. Colvert. Since the revelations of the 1990s, however, "Helen Trent" has dropped out of Crane scholarship.

Now that we know about Beer's deceptions, it might pique the curiosity of some to consider the possibility that his choice of the name "Helen Trent" for Crane's first great unrequited love had an identifiable source. The name "Helen Trent" appears in Bayard Veiller's play *The Thirteenth Chair*, which ran for 328 performances during the 1916-17 Broadway season. The story at the time was that the Helen Trent character was added at the last minute when Veiller decided to call his whodunit *The Thirteenth Chair* and realized that he needed to bring in one more minor character to fill that final chair. Veiller made Helen Trent the writer of private letters that she schemes to recover—information that temporarily throws both police and audience off the scent of the real murderer. The Helen Trent of the play seems to have contributed little more than her name to Beer's biography of Crane.

That Beer borrowed from the theatre of his day is hardly surprising. That he knew the ins-and-outs of the New York theatre scene is apparent from his first novel, published in 1922. *The Fair Reward* is described in an advertisement his publisher Knopf placed in the *New York Times* on 12 February 1922:

> A story of the American stage from the Frohmans' presentation of "The Prisoner of Zenda" at the old Plymouth up to the recent production of "The Jest." Anna Held, James Huneker, Clyde Fitch, Mr. Frohman, and many others appear in this first novel by a distinguished young American writer whose work in the magazines has already made him popular. (48)

surprises, but they also made clear that my trust in them and in Crane was well founded.

Perhaps what most surprised me, although I probably should have been aware of it all along, was the discovery that most of the students' attitudes had been more complex than I had assumed from their comments in class. Jennifer told me that despite her strong opposition to the Iraq war she had intended much of her critique of *The Red Badge* to apply only to the book and was bothered that other students in the class seemed to her unwilling to make that separation in responding to what she had to say. Similarly, Russell said that he had been surprised and even hurt that some members of the class appeared to construe his negative view of Henry to mean that he was somehow "against" them and their friends and relatives in the military; he noted that he, too, had friends serving in Iraq for whom he was concerned—partly, he emphasized, precisely because he feared they might not survive if they behaved with what he considered Henry's foolhardiness during his second day of battle. If Jennifer and Russell felt implicitly attacked for their views about the war, a similar feeling surfaced in my discussions with students on the other side of the issue. Christina, an undergraduate who remained quiet in class regarding *The Red Badge*, described herself as not rabidly pro-war but firmly convinced that the invasion of Iraq was necessary, and she explained that she had not spoken up because she felt that her view was a minority one. She feared, she said, that anything she offered about the book would have been misinterpreted by the antiwar majority as necessarily proceeding from her pro-war bias. Steven told me that he felt less besieged than Christina, but he said that his comments about the inevitability of war had not constituted as definitive an endorsement of the Iraq invasion as they had seemed; he had gone back and forth internally on that particular conflict, he explained, and was still doing so at the time of the interview. Much like Steven, Angela said that she accepts the necessity of some wars but was not wholly in favor of the Iraq war; she confirmed my suspicion that she had been quick to respond in seemingly pro-Iraq-war ways to criticism of Henry mainly because of her concern for friends who were deployed, including several who had been pulled out of the university just weeks before when their reserve units had been called up.

All these students assured me that, given these levels of tension due to the timing of our discussion, the decision to concentrate as much as possible on the book itself had been a good one. Angela told me that her response to others' views of Henry would likely have been much more angry and vehement had the class been asked overtly to

relate Henry to the soldiers serving in Iraq. Christina said that, despite the unavoidable emotional charge created by the Iraq war and her own fears about being attacked if she spoke up, she felt the discussion had actually been largely free of unproductive rancor thanks to its being confined to the book. Russell concurred with these assessments but offered a more complex analysis. His view was that the class focus on the novel had in fact *stimulated* many students' thinking about events in Iraq rather than shutting it off. He said that his conversations with other class members at the time of the course had made him realize that, whereas he, Jennifer, Angela, Steven, and some others had come into the class with strong opinions regarding the Iraq war, many students had remained ignorant of or indifferent to that controversy until the implicit but undeniable connections between the events of *The Red Badge* and the situation in Iraq demanded their attention. This new-found engagement would have led to polarization, Russell continued, had discussion not stayed focused on the book; he felt that this approach gave people the time and impetus to explore their responses to the Iraq war in the safety of their private thoughts rather than being forced to take less well-considered stands under the pressure of direct discussion.

My interview with Rebecca, an older student in the class who had returned to college for a degree in English after a long career in nursing, revealed that, at least in her case, Russell's appraisal was accurate and, still more reassuring to me, self-discovery had taken place. Although she grew up during the Vietnam War era, she said, she had not been personally touched by the controversy over that conflict and had remained essentially indifferent regarding American military involvements since then, including the current one. She attributed this detachment at least partly to the fact that she has no sons and thus no direct maternal fears to be evoked by the threat or actuality of war. Nevertheless, Rebecca said she found herself responding with empathy and self-questioning when she encountered the scenes in *The Red Badge* in which Henry's mother attempts to dissuade her son from enlisting and then weeps and prays when he ignores her and departs. "The mother knows so much that Henry doesn't know," she told me. "I'm not sure young men today are quite as naïve as Henry, but I imagine I'd feel the same way—I'm sure lots of mothers *do* feel the same way about their sons in Iraq. I don't think this war was justified, but what I find myself mostly feeling is sympathy, not outrage."

To my further relief, I learned that this kind of new introspection was not limited to students who had come into the class with no opinion about the Iraq war; even those with firm views reported them-

Mother." *PLL* 32:3 (1996): 277-90.
Robertson, Michael. "The Cultural Work of *Active Service*." *American Literary Realism* 28:2 (1996): 1-10.
Shaw, Mary Neff. "Henry Fleming's Heroics in *The Red Badge of Courage*: A Satiric Search For a 'Kinder, Gentler' Heroism." *Studies in the Novel* 22:4 (1990): 418-28.
Warren, John H. *Thirty Years' Battle With Crime*. Poughkeepsie, New York: A. J. White, 1875.
Wertheim, Stanley. "Stephen Crane's 'A Detail.'" *Markham Review* 5 (1975): 14-15.

[5] Pizer, 280.
[6] Benedict Giamo, *On the Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1989), p. 153.
[7] Agnes Jackson, "Stephen Crane's Imagery of Conflict in *George's Mother*," *Arizona Quarterly* 25 (1969), 318.
[8] See Lawrence Hussman, "The Fate of the Fallen Woman in *Maggie* and *Sister Carrie*," in *The Image of the Prostitute in Modern Literature* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1984), pp. 91-100.
[9] Laura Hapke, "The Alternate Fallen Woman in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*," *Markham Review* 12 (1983), 41.
[10] Hapke, 43.
[11] See Stanley Wertheim, "Stephen Crane's 'A Detail,'" *Markham Review* 5 (1975), 14
[12] James Colvert, "Stephen Crane and Postmodern Theory," *American Literary Realism* 28: 1 (1995), 18.
[13] John H. Warren, *Thirty Years' Battle With Crime* (Poughkeepsie, New York: A. J. White, 1875), p. 79.
[14] See Michael Robertson, "The Cultural Work of *Active Service*," *American Literary Realism* 28:2 (1996), 7-8.

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Pizer, Donald. "From a Home to the World: Stephen Crane's *George's*

selves pondering their positions more deeply. As in Rebecca's case, Henry's mother proved a source of self-discovery for Jennifer. She told me that in many respects our class discussion did not change her thinking: she remained bothered that Crane fails to confront the morality of war and that the Appleton text is largely accepted as definitive, since in her view its reduction of the irony of Crane's conclusion, compared to the Binder version, enables a reading of the book as an unambiguous tale of a passage to true manhood. If Americans were to let go of this vision that real manhood consists of aggressive martial prowess, she said, perhaps they would be less readily amenable to wars such as the one in Iraq and would be less likely to denigrate antiwar activism as "a girl thing." Where *The Red Badge* had given her new insight was in her efforts to cope with her frustration over this attitude and her perceived inability to make any inroads against it. "Once the [Iraq] war actually started," she said, "I realized that I was in exactly the same situation as Henry's mother when Henry leaves: all either of us can do now is cry and pray. That didn't exactly make me feel better, but it did make me see that I'm not the first woman to feel this way and I certainly won't be the last."

Steven reported that the question of Henry's manhood had provoked an equal level of introspection for him, though in a very different direction. He was less ready than Jennifer to read the conclusion of the Appleton text as an endorsement of Henry's positive self-assessment, and he found himself turning this doubt inward. "Our questions about Henry made me wonder what it really does mean to be a man and about how I'd behave in war," he said, "and naturally Iraq was the war I projected myself into. I still feel torn about this—I mean, at the times when I think the war was right, I have qualms about the fact that I didn't serve, and I sometimes wonder if my doubts about the war at other times just come from my own not wanting to go, not wanting to 'be a man about it.'"

Christina and Angela both re-emphasized their disagreement with reading Henry as typical of all soldiers but indicated that their views had acquired further dimensions as a result of discussing his story. Christina told me that her close friendships with many people in the military have convinced her that most soldiers take the moral responsibility of killing very seriously, but she acknowledged that she had not really thought this matter through until her encounter with *The Red Badge*. "I could put the faces of a lot of people I know on Henry," she explained, "and doing that made me ponder his situation and theirs in ways that hadn't occurred to me, since I hadn't really thought about

them actually being in war before the book and the war overlapped." Angela restated her appreciation that our discussion had included looking at Wilson as a more positive model of a soldier than Henry. She also said that she now felt the members of the class who had been most critical of Henry had failed to consider that he was a very young man in an extremely trying situation, and she attributed this failure partly to their opposition to the Iraq war, although she acknowledged that Crane's ironic tone seems to encourage such harsh judgment. Still, she concluded, "whether it's the author's fault or the reader's, I think seeing soldiers as completely indifferent to the enemy's humanity robs the soldiers of their *own* humanity, and I'm very uncomfortable with people doing that to family members and friends of mine."

Despite his differences with Angela on many points, Russell told me that robbing soldiers of their humanity was the issue that also resonated most strongly in his continued thinking about our discussion. He still regarded Henry's moral naivety as an accurate depiction of most soldiers' state of mind, he said, and he expressed continuing anger that the situation of war in general puts an undue emphasis on glory and that Henry seems never to grow out of measuring himself by that yardstick. However, he continued, reading and discussing *The Red Badge* in time of war made him aware that his opinions carried more than theoretical, academic weight, since he, too, found himself putting the faces of friends on Henry. "I realized my comments needed to be more respectful of people who were going off to Iraq," he explained. "I disagreed with them, but regardless of what I felt about Henry—or maybe *because* of what I felt about Henry—I didn't want to make them feel they were going in vain. I knew I couldn't change their thinking, and I wanted them to have some relative peace of mind." Russell summed up by saying that he felt this experience of deepened compassion had not been limited just to him; expanding on his earlier analysis of the dynamics of our class, he opined that the students on both sides of the Iraq war question had been largely temperate because discussing *The Red Badge* had made them all more respectful of one another's humanity.

If Russell is correct on this last point, then I feel that my approach was successful. The hubristic part of me would have liked to hear students describe complete reversals of opinion and major life changes as a result of their encounters with *The Red Badge* in my class, but the experienced and sensible part of me knows that this is not how reading and discussing novels usually work, especially with regard to deeply held opinions. I remind myself of William Dean Howells's dictum on this subject: the novel "shall not be the bread, but the grain

woman and her child at the departure of a Spanish captain. Crane's description of the scene is anything but straightforward; "Under the *comic* matting sun shelter was a woman, holding in her arms a boy about four years old . . ." (my emphasis, 9:200). The tone of the scene is, in short, mixed—a serious situation is set against the "comic" background, and the woman is not wholly exempt from Crane's irony. She seems to be typically domestic, and as is often the case with such women, she is ill-informed about the outside world. As both the American and Cuban witnesses of the scene rightly remark, the woman is ignorant of the consequences of the Spanish-American war, which confronts her with "the end of successful love" (200). All she can do is to "yowl" and "wail" (200) to the Spanish captain as his ship departs. As has been pointed out, Crane evidently knew other types of women. Nora in *Active Service*, for example, would surely be more independent from men and less subjugated to fate if she were faced with the situation as in "How They Leave Cuba." Nonetheless, Crane concludes that the agony of the woman in "How They Leave Cuba" is "human agony and human agony is not pleasant" (201). He seems to say here that the agony and consequent loss of mental equilibrium commands a universal sympathy, as is the case with Maggie, Mrs. Kelcey and the tiny old lady in "A Detail." Indeed, Crane's alternating focus, now sympathetic and now ironical, produces a jarring immediacy which even the reader can share; at the same time, he conveys to us the pathos of those women condemned, over a hundred years ago, to face the feral viciousness of the metropolis with no protection but their ineffectual domestic code.

Notes

[1] Fredson Bowers, "The Text: History and Analysis, " in *Tales, Sketches and Reports* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1973), vol. 8 of *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 10 vols. (1969-76), p. 841. All the quotations hereafter will be from this edition. Volume (if different from the former quotation) and page references will appear parenthetically in the text.

[2] Philip D. Beidler, "Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*: Henry Fleming's Courage in Its Contexts," *CLIO* 20: 3 (1991), 243.

[3] Concerning Henry's mother's disbelief in the war, see Mary Neff Shaw, "Henry Fleming's Heroics in *The Red Badge of Courage*: A Satiric Search For A 'Kinder, Gentler' Heroism," *Studies in the Novel* 22:4 (1990), 422.

[4] Donald Pizer, "From a Home to the World: Stephen Crane's *George's Mother*," *PLL* 32:3 (1996), 278.

their credentials as proper urban citizens by their solemn (but naive) faith in the importance of the various engagements which they rush to make and to keep. Given Crane's irony towards the modern city and its inhabitants, one can reasonably expect a corresponding sympathy with its outcasts. Crane, as in the case of Maggie, here sympathizes with his three characters without shutting his eyes to their faults.

Crane's compassion towards the prostitutes may remind the reader of a famous episode in the author's life: his heroic protection of prostitutes against the police recorded in his own "Adventures of a Novelist." In the article Crane emphasizes one piece of common sense: prostitutes have ordinary feelings just as other people have. Unlike Nell in *Maggie*, they cannot always be tough and merciless. Crane knows that Dora Clark, whom the police tried to arrest, was, "in all probability, a courtesan" (658) or "a common prostitute"(660). But he stresses that at the time of the attempted arrest, she was not "soliciting those two men" (658) who were accidentally walking by. Crane tries to remind the reader of the truth that business does not exclude humanity. In other words, although prostitutes occasionally attract their customers by trickery, at other times they are good-natured enough to "recognize some acquaintance of the past" and become "deep in conversation" (656). "A Detail" can thus be interpreted as the dramatization of the point on which Crane insists in "Adventures of a Novelist." The juxtaposition of irony and sympathy seen in "A Detail" is the result of Crane's efforts to see prostitutes precisely as they were.

V

In "The Cultural Work of *Active Service*" Michael Robertson considers Nora in *Active Service* as a new type of woman of the 1890s; she is "liberated" and "financially independent."[14] Crane also reports in his sketch "New York's Bicycle Speedway" about the fashionable girl of the age: "the girl in bloomers" (372). Moreover, as is well known, his common-law wife Cora was a female war-correspondent in the Greco-Turkish War and became a collaborator with Crane, as in the case of "The Squire's Madness." Crane seems to realize the mediocrity and powerlessness of domesticated women when they are placed in the context of these "new women." Therein lies the reason for his irony concerning their domesticity. Nevertheless, it can hardly be denied that Crane understands the agony and pathos of these domesticated females, an understanding which is best summarized in one of his war dispatches from Cuba: "How They Leave Cuba. "

In the piece, Crane renders the poignant sorrow of a Cuban

of wheat which must sprout and grow in the reader's soul, and be harvested in his experience, and in the mills of the gods ground slowly perhaps many years before it shall duly nourish him" (241). It would appear that this process has begun in some students, and that is enough for me, as I hope it would be for Crane himself. Only a few months after *The Red Badge* was published, Crane told his Appleton editor, Ripley Hitchcock, "I don't think The Red Badge to be any great shakes but then the very theme of it gives it an intensity that the writer cant [sic] reach every day" (*Correspondence* 191). He might be pleased to know that over one hundred years later the intensity is still there.

Note

[1] McClurg was the owner of *The Dial*, a literary magazine published in Chicago. He reviewed Crane's novel in the issue for April 16, 1896, under the heading "The Red Badge of Hysteria." The erstwhile Union general found little to admire, asserting that "[t]he hero of the book, if such he can be called, was an ignorant and stupid country lad without a spark of patriotic feeling, or even of soldierly ambition. . . . He is throughout an idiot or a maniac and betrays no trace of the reasoning being. No thrill of patriotic devotion to cause or country ever moves his breast, and not even an emotion of manly courage. . . . Nowhere are seen the quiet, manly, self-respecting, and patriotic men, influenced by the highest sense of duty, who in reality fought our battles. . . . [R]espect for our own people should have prevented its issue in this country" (227).

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Arcane Subjects/Urbane Tones: Stephen Crane's Sullivan County Sketches[1]

John Fagg
School of American and Canadian Studies
University of Nottingham

That Stephen Crane's description of the Sullivan County Sketches as "little grotesque tales of the woods which I wrote when I was clever"[2] has become a somewhat clichéd introduction to these texts obscures the significance of the word "clever" here. William Taylor's analysis of the term suggests that Crane's use of "clever" represents an astute piece of literary self-analysis:

> Cleverness was a key concept at the turn of the century, near kin to what would soon be referred to as 'sophistication.' In a traditional hierarchy of kinds of intelligence, cleverness probably ranked well down the list below wisdom, and even below wit. . . . It was clearly one badge of 'the new urbanity.' City people were clever, for example, and knowing. Cleverness was especially thought to be the property of the College Man.[3]

Taylor is primarily concerned with the development of those urbane tones that would come to be typified by the magazine *Smart Set*. While Crane could be described as a "College Man," the Sullivan County Sketches, with their focus on the folklore and rustic traditions of a mountainous and heavily wooded region of New York State, would appear to have little in common with these subsequent journalistic practices. However, the juxtaposition of arcane subject matter with a detached, urbane authorial voice is central to the retellings of Sullivan County yarns and histories—including "The Last Panther," "Not Much of a Hero" and "The Way in Sullivan County"—published in the *New York Tribune* in 1892.[4]

In these pieces Crane depicts rural lore and life for a primarily urban audience. To establish a context for late-nineteenth-century rural-urban exchanges and to provide a contrast to Crane's approach, I will begin with a brief discussion of the series of sketches of life in the Adirondack Mountains that Charles Dudley Warner produced for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1878. I will then suggest some of the ways that Crane differs from Warner as he seeks to establish a "clever" voice and to distance himself from his subject matter.

of that factory. Maggie's life thereafter can stand as a case study for that period; in New York in the latter half of the nineteenth century, "cases of voluntary prostitution were rare."[13] One might think that most ordinary prostitutes, quite unlike their icon, the invincible Nell, unwillingly chose their current profession in the face of financial distress. The young prostitutes in "A Detail" certainly know that the old lady, with her age and meager manual skills of "sewing" and "mending," is very unlikely to obtain any decent work; the lady's skill is no doubt outdated in the times of the sewing machine. It seems hardly surprising, then, that the young girls in "A Detail," who have presumably experienced the same financial hardship as the old lady now suffers, should have compassion for her.

However, their fleeting communication consists only of a superficial gesture of comfort from the girls, and is made possible only by the old lady's unawareness of their identity. In a sense the girls play with her ignorance. If the lady knows their profession, she would certainly be upset and disgusted. Up to this moment the elderly housewife seems to have been sufficiently fortunate not to face directly the alternatives once put by Jimmie to Maggie: "Yeh've edder got t' go t' hell er go t' work" (1: 24). And now her old age exempts her from doing so. Her ignorance of worldly affairs prevents her from inferring the girls' profession from their professional costume. Instead she interprets their superficial gesture of comfort as genuine. The tiny old lady's abrupt question about her work to the strangers in the busy street, followed by her absurd responses to them, makes the reader wonder whether she may have passed beyond the sphere of innocence and approached that of insanity. Here in "A Detail," then, we find another domesticated lady facing distress and standing on the brink of mental derangement.

At the end of the sketch, the lady is "suddenly engulfed" by "the crowd, the innumerable wagons, intermingling and changing with uproar and riot" (8: 112-13), thus betraying her powerlessness in this metropolis. And "as for the two girls they go to the curb and watch this aged figure" (112), presumably with mixed feelings of irony toward the dotard, and sympathy as the fellow outcasts from urban society. Crane's sarcasm toward these outcasts is unquestionable, as is seen in his exaggerated description of the costume of the prostitutes and of the old woman's puzzlement with the crowded streets. But at the same time Crane is equally satiric towards the "authentic" citizens of the metropolis; his evocation of their bustling haste, cited above, continues as follows: "they are speeding to keep such *tremendously important* engagements" (my emphasis, 112). The city-dwellers prove

them as ordinary young ladies who enjoy the consumer culture of urban life. But the next sentence reveals their identity: "they wear gowns with enormous sleeves that make them look like full-ridged ships with all sails set" (111-12). Considering that Sixth Avenue was at that time the main street of the Tenderloin, the amusement area of Manhattan, these girls with their exaggeratedly glamorous and extravagant costume are undoubtedly streetwalkers looking for customers.[11] Thus the representative of the domestic ethos and a pair of its most dangerous enemies unknowingly meet, and the two "non-speeding" parties begin to talk. "Excuse me but can you tell me where I can get any work?" (112) Naturally, the prostitutes are "astonished" (112) to be suddenly asked by the aged lady about work. Do they wonder, if only for an instant, whether this lady is referring to their profession or even begging to join it? Or are they so cynical as to feel inclined to answer back that she can find work like theirs in that very street?

But unlike the naive old lady, the two young girls are too worldly to reveal their thoughts. "The young women do then exchange a smile." Next, as they maintain their silence, the old lady hastily adds, "Do you know any place where they would like me to come?" (112) Then, one of the girls replies to her that "'I don't think I know anyone'" (112). Does her answer, with her meaningful smile, betray the tough prostitutes' sense of superiority over the distraught housewife? But Crane adds that the "smile" of the young women soon brings them to "the verge of personal grief" (112). Noticing the obvious disappointment of the lady with their answer, one of the girls "hastily continues: 'But if you will give me your address, I may find some one and if I do, I will surely let you know of it'" (112). Is this insincere promise made by the girls a further psychological attack on the frail figure? Or do they sympathize with the confused old lady and try to give her temporary comfort?

There seems little need to choose either interpretation. Nor is it necessary to take the trouble to ask help from postmodernist theory, which considers "unity" as "illusions" and claims to "find dissonance . . . as most interesting and instructive."[12] One might instead simply regard as fairly natural and human such a mixture of sarcasm and sympathy as is seen in the attitude of the prostitutes towards the aged lady. One might even judge the scene as all the more convincing because of this very coexistence of different motives. The reader will meanwhile remember that poor Maggie had no choice but to work "in the hot, stuffy room" of "the collar and cuff establishments" (1: 34), and that she could not endure for long the "whirl of noises and odors" (34)

In the fifth instalment of his series, Warner provides a "character study" of a local guide known as "Old Mountain Phelps." This individual had been widely celebrated by other writers and artists visiting the region—including Winslow Homer who depicted him in the painting *The Two Guides* (c. 1875)—and so Warner's Phelps was, in part, built on existing representations. Warner informs his readers "one does not think of Old Phelps so much as a lover of nature—to use the sentimental slang of the period—as a part of nature itself." This claim is borne out in a subsequent physical description:

> a sturdy figure, with long body and short legs, clad in a woolen shirt and butternut-colored trousers repaired to the point of picturesqueness; his head surmounted by a limp, light-brown felt hat, frayed away at the top, so that his yellowish hair grew out of it like some nameless fern out of a pot.[5]

Here, Phelps is ascribed the quality of being picturesque that might normally be attributed to the landscape and, through simile, closely identified with the natural world. Like Homer's canvas, Warner's study is sympathetic and establishes Phelps as a wise, reassuring presence.

Richard Plunz argues that such depictions of Phelps contributed to a particular kind of late-nineteenth-century cultural work:

> Warner tailors the concept of the 'primitive' to his urban audience. For example he distinguishes Phelps' primitivism from the 'primeval,' instead seeing him as a 'survivor,' or one of those who are 'left here and there in our era.' This reading of Phelps fulfilled a populist need to recapture the quickly vanishing pre-urban and pre-industrial past.[6]

Plunz's reading of Warner forms part of a wider argument about the way that the dramatic growth of New York City in the second half of the nineteenth century created a newly urbanised public and, thus, a market for nostalgic and idealised images of rural life. For Warner and other visitors to the Adirondacks, Phelps represented a bridge between the "civilised" city and the arcane, but potentially more "pure," rural environment. To achieve this sense of rural-urban connection, Warner draws attention both to Phelps's musings on the sublime qualities of the mountains and his homespun wisdom and to his admiration of the newspaper editor Horace Greeley—a figure associated with city life and with contemporary politics and commerce.

Crane shares Warner's fascination with the arcane nature of his

subject matter, referring to "the old gnarled and weather-beaten inhabitants of the pines and boulders of Sullivan County" (199) and stressing the sense of both an oral story-telling tradition and a community dominated by various forms of hunting. However, he does not present a nostalgic, idealised image of country life, and instead displays an ambivalent and at times critical attitude towards Sullivan County and its residents. This distinction is clarified by a direct comparison between Crane's account of a Sullivan County guide and Warner's depiction of Phelps. In "The Octopush," Crane describes an "individual" who in his "enormous straw hat" shares Phelps's outlandish appearance (230). The similarities end here, though, as Crane's guide turns out to be an incompetent, deceitful drunk who abandons his charges. If Warner's purpose is to create a dialogue with the rustic and the arcane, Crane's is to institute a sharp division between the city dweller and an alien and impenetrable Sullivan County. This purpose is stated most directly in "The Way in Sullivan County," which begins with the claim that "A country famous for its hunting and its hunters is naturally prolific of liars" and goes on to describe the sport that these "expert liars" have with "the unoffending city man" (220).

In a number of the Sketches Crane goes to great lengths to demonstrate that, unlike the "city man," he has not been "taken in." Thus, "The Last Panther" is prefaced with an ironic tribute to the "gentle innocence and guilelessness" of the early settlers who told of terrifying encounters with these animals. Crane's suspicions regarding his source material are made abundantly clear as he retells a series of panther hunting stories. In three consecutive paragraphs, the reader is introduced to first Nelson Crocker, then Cyrus Dodge, then Calvin Bush. The accounts given of these famous hunters' exploits are perfunctory, in Cyrus Dodge's case amounting to only two sentences: "At Long Pond he saw six panthers at once. He ran out into the pond and, standing in water up to his waist, shot four of them" (209). Although Crane spends longer discussing the career of Calvin Bush, the two incidents that he narrates are presented as isolated anecdotes. Both begin with stock phrases—"It is said that once . . ." and "Upon one occasion . . ."—and both end, abruptly, without any attempt to find a moral or meaning to what has happened. There is, moreover, no attempt to expand on the initial description of Bush as a "clear-headed, nervous limbed, muscular hunter" or to suggest progression from one story to the next. In these instances plot and characterisation are stripped down to their most minimal constituents.

Defining the generic repertoire of the literary sketch, Kristie

senses his conflicting irony towards her.

Neither Maggie nor Nell exhibits any inner change throughout the novel. They are, as it were, static characters. As a result, the novel does not offer the reader any psychological interplay between an innocent and a tough mind. This leaves the reader dissatisfied because the terms in which Maggie is presented contradict our common sense; she seems very unlikely to have enjoyed even temporary success as a prostitute. The very act of attracting customers must have involved a certain amount of degradation, hence yielding some psychological common ground even between the two contrasting prostitutes. Yet at the same time we can readily believe that Maggie probably maintains some of her old innocence and moral resources to the end.

Maggie's exaggerated tone and scattered perspectives obliterate any such common ground. It might therefore seems entirely hopeless to seek any psychological link between two such characters as Mrs. Kelcey in *George's Mother* and the streetwalker Maggie—between those who share the hope of a happy home and those who have suffered the fate of losing one. However, in the tiny vignette "A Detail," Crane investigates such an apparently unlikely but actually reasonable link between an old housewife and a young prostitute.

IV

Mrs. Kelcey, "the little old woman" in *George's Mother*, is at first brave enough to shout back at the enraged man with her "war-chant." By contrast, "the tiny old lady" in "A Detail" from the outset "evidently loses courage" (8:111) to address passers-by. The tiny old lady seems to be quite a stranger in crowded Manhattan, having presumably come from the country. She is "alarmed at the sound made by her feet upon the stone pavements" and feels almost helpless against "the torrent" of people (111). Her confidence in "sewing" and "all the mending" for "good many men" (112) suggests that she is a believer in the domestic code of a housewife. But her ethical code seems no longer able to sustain her financially, leading her to seek work in the busy streets. The powerlessness of her old domestic code against financial distress manifests itself in her countenance: "the wrinkles show no trace of experience, knowledge," and her "glances" betray "ignorance" (112). Naively enough, she decides to ask about her work to some loitering young girls. The reason is simple: whereas the "other people have made the tiny old woman much afraid because, obviously, they are speeding . . . " (112), these girls are lounging, gazing in at a shop window. Given that "they are well-dressed girls"(111), the reader may initially interpret

reader cannot know who died first, Maggie or Mrs. Kelcey. But Mrs. Kelcey would doubtlessly have been appalled if she had known that Maggie had become a prostitute—as such, she was another serious enemy of Mrs. Kelcey's puritanical morals, yet an undeniable fact of life in the inner city. However, it emerges that Maggie has something in common with Mrs. Kelcey. Unknown to her neighbors (even to Mrs. Kelcey), Maggie actually shares the "codes of the feminine home," as is suggested in her fruitless efforts to make her miserable tenement more decent: "She spent some of her week's pay in the purchase of flowered cretonne for a lambrequin. She made it with infinite care and hung it to the slightly-careening mantel, over the stove, in the kitchen" (28). After being betrayed by Pete, Maggie can hardly live with the shattered illusion of a happy family life. She begins to lose her mental balance, as is implied in her remark which surprised a passer-by: "She stopped once and asked aloud a question of herself: 'Who?'"(67)

In *Maggie* the details of the heroine's moral degradation are missing. Crane, by this very imprecision concerning the heroine's psychological change, suggests that her purity remained untarnished, a point which for some readers has strained credibility. Lawrence Hussman concludes that Maggie is a melodramatic (therefore improbable) stereotype born out of the idea of an innocent prostitute.[8] On the other hand, Laura Hapke, turning her attention from the implausible heroine to the more plausible Nell, notes that "as the alternate fallen woman, Nell is central to Crane's vision of the urban prostitute."[9] Hapke seems to say that the convincing portrait of tough Nell proves Crane's knowledge about the realities of prostitution. But Hapke at the same time acknowledges that "[being] self-sufficient, cruel, and ruthless, [Nell] is that *rare* figure in American literature, the thoroughly unrepentant prostitute"(my emphasis).[10] This remark unwittingly admits that in the novella there seems to be no "moderate" or realistic type of streetwalker; the reader sees only the extremely pathetic Maggie on the one hand and the improbably invincible Nell on the other. Maggie is good-natured and diffident throughout the novel, whereas Nell is always strong, calculating and triumphant. No lover seems to have forsaken Nell, thereby forcing her to the streets, and she runs no risk of encountering Maggie's fate of tragic death. Nell easily achieves what Maggie can only ineffectually dream of: to fascinate Pete by charm. Nell's wheedling voice, for example, is the instrument with which she plays upon Pete for her own satisfaction. Her merciless attempt to entice Pete from Maggie highlights the latter's docile, pitiable but fundamentally imbecile character. Behind Crane's protectiveness towards Maggie, the reader

Hamilton refers to a "fragmented or overly selective representation of events."[7] As Crane makes no attempt to supply a linear narrative or a complete history in "The Last Panther," he draws attention to the act of selection and to his own position as author. By imposing sketch-like brevity onto the characteristically rambling practices of the hunting yarn, Crane dismisses the details, digressions and suspenseful renderings of daring feats that form the basis of the genre's appeal. The cynical, ironic narration subsumes the snippets of rural lore so that the author's judgement of the information relayed, rather than the information itself, becomes the dominant meaning of the sketch.

A similar process is apparent in "Not Much of a Hero." This sketch addresses the legacy of Tom Quick, who was the son of one of the Delaware Valley's first white settlers and who gained fame and notoriety as an "Indian Killer." While a number of conflicting accounts of this figure exist, they share the common claim that, during the eighteenth-century French and Indian Wars, an Indian named Muskwink killed Quick's father setting him on a course of revenge.[8] Crane invokes a variety of perspectives, including the Port Jervis playwright who portrayed Quick as a "monomaniac upon the subject of Indians," "the graphic and brilliant pens of the talented novelists of the dime and five-cent school" who lionise him as "a gory-handed avenger" and the works of various unnamed local historians (212). Where the playwright concludes that Quick could not be portrayed in a heroic manner, in dime novels Crane finds an unabashed celebration of Quick as a hero.

"Indian Killers" such as Quick, Colonel Nathan Slaughter and Crack Skull Bob appeared in a sub-genre of dime novels that Robert Berkhofer and John Cawelti identify as bastardisations of the novels of James Fenimore Cooper.[9] Crane foreshadows Twain's "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences" (1895) by drawing attention to the implausibility of tales in which Indians "persist in offering themselves as targets with much abandon." By juxtaposing their tone of exploit and adventure with his own stark image of "going westward to massacre the devoted red man," he questions the morality of celebrating frontier violence. As in "The Last Panther," Crane signals this critical distance from his source materials in his retellings of the Tom Quick stories.

Crane's various narrative interventions insist that these stories are bracketed or embedded discourse and that they should not be attributed directly to the narrator. This effect is most obviously produced by Crane's habit of consistently placing the name "Tom" in scare quotes: "a life of 'Tom' Quick"; "but 'Tom' loved the woods"; "some savages shot 'Tom's' father from ambush." It is as if he wishes

to hold "Tom" at arm's length in order to avoid any taint of familiarity that might adhere to the use of a first name or abbreviated name. Similarly, a story in which Quick tricks and kills a group of Indians who intend to capture him is introduced with the recognition that it "smacks somewhat of the impossible" and concludes with observation that "no one in the history of the county has ever discovered that kind of an Indian except 'Tom' Quick in this alleged adventure" (214). Elsewhere, the references to Indians as being "innocently and guilelessly" compliant with Tom's demands and as "imbecile redskins" come not from the discourse of the embedded story, or from Crane's authorial perspective, but rather reflect the prejudiced, stereotyping mindset that would grant credence to such a tale. Crane also expresses his moral objection to romanticised violence through the ironic deployment of the phrases "paragon of virtue," "avenger of an advanced type" and "very high and exalted manner." This strain in the sketch culminates with the irony-laden assertion that "The aesthetic people, the lovers of the beautiful, the poetic dreamers, have always claimed that Quick during his lifetime killed one hundred Indians" (212).

As an apparent alternative to this aestheticisation of frontier violence, Crane calls upon the "unsentimental" local historians who "stoutly assert that [Quick] only killed fifteen [Indians] at the most" (212). The sense that these historians might provide a more reliable account of Quick is immediately undermined by the inclusion of the word "only" here. This suggests that, from the historian's point of view, either killing fifteen Indians is a disappointing or insufficient achievement or that such a number might be typical or excusable for a frontiersman like Quick. The notion that the "stout" historians are complicit in the romanticisation of Tom Quick is furthered in the following lines. Crane argues that, as local historians have revelled in detailing the "manner" in which Quick committed his crimes, they have continued to glorify him. This critique of the local historians of Sullivan County would appear to be supported by reference to Philip Smith's *Legends of the Shawangunk (Show-gum) and its Environ* (1887) and James Eldridge Quinlan's *Tom Quick, the Indian Slayer and the Pioneers of Minisink and Wawarsink* (1851).[10] These are, in all probability, the authors from whom Crane takes his source material and at whom he directs the accusation of aestheticisation.

There is certainly a degree of folk-heroism about Smith's depiction of Quick as a frontiersman who cunningly and repeatedly escapes from and tricks his foes. For example, Smith recounts an occasion when Tom was walking in the woods without a gun and met an Indian car-

son's addiction threatens her sanity. As she struggles "with some implacable power whose fingers were in her brain," her "voice peals forth in a scream" (177). She begins to speak nonsensical words to "some people in the room" (177). At first she seems to be terrified by the visit of "they" or "yeh, " but finally orders this invisible visitor to "go away" (177). "They" or "yeh" is, of course, her illusion, but this is at the same time emblematic of the reality of her situation—the reality of Bowery life, smelling of violence and alcohol. Her last order shows her recovering her old "indomitable courage" (120) in an attempt to protect her son from the horrible and sordid life of the slum, but she recovers her courage pathetically, at the cost of her sanity.

The mother has changed with her changing son; and ironically, together with his once beloved mother, he too loses his mental stability: "Kelcey began to stare at the wall-paper. The pattern was clusters of brown-roses. He felt them like hideous crabs crawling upon his brain" (178). Agnes Jackson interprets the "hideous crabs" as the drunken hallucination of the mentally unstable.[7] Something unusual is happening simultaneously in the brains of both the mother and the son. One might thus return to the same question as that in "The Squire's Madness": who surrenders to madness, George, his mother, or both? If the last is the answer, who is the more seriously deranged? Mrs. Kelcey regards the son's repeated curses of diligent work and refusal to go for prayers as a "horrifying mental state" (160). On the other hand, at his mother's deathbed George sees "maniacal glances" (176) in her expression, and "proceeds with caution lest this mystic being upon the bed should clutch at him" (176).

This mutual understanding or misunderstanding of the other's potential loss of sanity without noticing one's own mental collapse borders upon farce. But at the same time it evokes pathos in the reader's mind because of one crucial fact: the mother and/or son lose(s) mental equilibrium as the result of experience of the defiling and treacherous life in the modern city. With their anachronistic chivalry, fastidiousness and naiveté, their defeat is easily predictable; while this excludes tragedy, it makes them extremely pitiful figures.

III

George's Mother and *Maggie* share the same background of the Bowery. As is well known, the protagonists Maggie and George both live in the same apartment building and occasionally see each other. It would be quite reasonable, then, to assume that Maggie and Mrs. Kelcey, who lived with her son, may also have seen each other. The

representation . . . of the feminine in its domestic and maternal roles," as Donald Pizer remarks.[4] Nevertheless she loses all her family except George and is forced to face the tough realities of the down-and-out district in New York. She dies in mental derangement amid the confusion of "an endless roar, the eternal trample of the marching city . . . mingled with vague cries"(1: 178).

Mrs. Kelcey introduces into her shabby slum apartment her "codes of the feminine home"[5] from Handyville, "the rural landscape of an American past."[6] She engages in a farcical "battle"(120) to maintain her rooms in good condition and reiterates orders to her beloved son to hang up his coat neatly. This attitude discloses her obsession with marking a sharp distinction between the idyllic order of her sacred home and the surrounding pollution and disorder of the slums. She is brave enough to defy the man with "a red mottled face" (120) who by flinging a bottle reveals his irritation against her quavering singing of a hymn; in response she deliberately raises her voice to the point of a "war-chant" (120). But shortly after this successful act of defiance, she unknowingly recognizes the threatening power of what the "red mottled face" and the "bottle" symbolize. "The little old woman looked at the brewery. It vaguely interested her . . ." (120): her "vague interest" in the brewery changes into serious concern as George begins to drink heavily and loses himself in carnivalesque irresponsibility. The mother and son had once shared the chivalric dream, the dream which they had kept from the "rural past." But over time their respective dreams take drastically different forms: while the mother believes that her dear son is "going to become a white and looming king among men" (135), he becomes a petty warrior in the streets, picking fights over beer. Because of his addiction to alcohol George is degraded from a diligent son into a feckless rebel against work, consequently making Mrs. Kelcey the mother of a contemptuous hoodlum and stripping her of her vision of a sacred family and a modest home.

Mrs. Kelcey's initial unrelenting militancy in the cause of temperance easily collapses when confronted by the hard truth of the unusual strength of her son's drinking habit. She hastily retracts to the son her "heaviest sentence—'it can't be that yeh've got t' drinkin.'" (160) Furthermore, "once when the little old woman was going out to buy something for her son's supper, she discovered him standing at the side-door of the saloon engaged intimately with Fidsey and the others. She slunk away . . . " (165).

The narrative progress of the story builds up to the scene of Mrs. Kelcey at her deathbed, where the sense of humiliation over her

rying a rifle: "'Brother Indian,' said Tom, 'would you like to see Tom Quick?'" Smith then recounts the way that Quick led the man to the edge of a cliff all the while promising to lead him to "Tom Quick." Once at the very edge, Tom shouted, "'Shoot me! shoot me, would you!' and with those words he hurled the Indian over the precipice, where he was dashed to pieces among the rocks."[11] In this incident Tom is unarmed and uses his guile to get the better of someone who is eager to kill him. Similarly, the titles given to the various episodes Smith relays seem to cast Quick in a sympathetic light. "Tom Quick's Indian Exploits" casts each of the brutal murders recounted as "An act or deed; a feat . . . an achievement displaying a brilliant degree of bravery or skill." The idea that Quick was involved in "exploits" places Smith's history within the realm of the "boys-own adventure" as do titles like "Tom Quick and the Indian Muskwink" and "Tom Quick and the Buck with Seven Skins," which, through their generic construction, suggest a series of adventures with Tom Quick at their centre. Other titles, including "Indian Stratagem to Slay Tom Quick" and "The Savages Plan Tom Quick's Capture," position Quick in dangerous circumstances and as the victim of aggression. Finally, depictions of Native Americans as "Savages" and "Bucks" dehumanise Quick's victims making it easier to see him in heroic terms. The content of these histories would, then, seem to support the suggestion made by Crane that the local historians were as implicated in the romanticisation of Tom Quick as the dime novelists. However, the relationship between Smith's and Quinlan's narratives and Crane's retelling of them is complicated by the striking similarities between the versions of Quick's history that appear in "Not Much of a Hero" and those given in the earlier texts.

Quinlan, Smith and Crane all relate an episode in which Quick shoots an Indian who has been invited to stay the night in a cabin belonging to a man named Jim or John Showers. A close analysis of the three versions of the story demonstrates both the extent to which Crane took his material directly from these sources and the ways in which he establishes a distanced perspective in his retellings. In addition to the almost exact coincidence in the ordering of events in the three versions, a number of sentences confirm the close relationship among the texts. While the opening phrase—"On one occasion . . ."—that Smith and Crane share may be attributed to the generic stock of this type of anecdotal history, more idiosyncratic coincidences strongly support a direct intertextual link: Quinlan's "some five or six hunters met at his [Showers's] house" relates to Smith's "three or four other white hunters had sought the shelter of Showers's bark roof" and Crane's "a

number of other white hunters sought shelter for the night in the log cabin of a man named Showers"; Quinlan's "an Indian came in, and asked permission to remain all night" is altered to "a savage entered and asked to stay all night" by Smith and to "An Indian arrived later and asked permission to stay all night" by Crane.[12] All three describe Quick's gunshot as "an explosion."

Quinlan's version contains the most detail and bears the strongest connection to ideas of exploit and adventure as it emphasises Quick's guile in waiting for his companions to fall asleep and his skill in moving "noiselessly" to get his gun. It also offers the gory detail of "bespattered" brains and a hint of Tom's backwoods capabilities as he "disappeared" into the woods. While Smith excludes the gore, he includes other kinds of detail that serve to spin out the yarn: "After spending the evening pleasantly, chatting around the ample fireplace, the party wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down upon the floor."[13] This fireside scene, and especially the designation of the men as a "party," creates a sense of backwoods camaraderie. This may, to some extent, ameliorate Tom Quick's crime, suggesting that the offence lies more in the violation of the code of neighbourliness than in the act of cold-blooded murder. Even those details in Smith's account that do not overtly romanticise Quick can, then, be seen, at the very least, to normalise him. In contrast to Smith and Quinlan, Crane minimises the content in his account thus removing all the details of Quick's actions, reducing the significance placed on the event and increasing the sense that it is an absurd and unprovoked attack.

The differences in approach that I have identified here are not limited to this episode, and Crane's biography of Quick is consistently more stark and less detailed than either Smith's or Quinlan's. In *Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism*, Eric Solomon compares Crane's treatment of earlier generic forms to the modernist poetry of T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound: "As they aimed to "desuetize" poetry, Crane in his fiction stripped bare the bones of the traditional genres, anatomized the skeletons, and then presented what seemed a defense of realism."[14] "Desuetize" here means to put out of use, to show to be obsolete. Crane's rejection of the trappings—the gory or glorifying elements—of the Tom Quick stories along with the yarn-like elements of the hunting stories he retells exemplifies Solomon's analysis.

Crane's stylistic practices can be understood within the context of late-nineteenth-century rural-urban exchange. In the case of "The Last Panther" and "Hunting Wild Hogs" Crane moves from a local oral story-telling situation in which teller and audience are

"Feminine Domesticity and the Feral City: Stephen Crane's *George's Mother*, *Maggie*, and 'A Detail'"

Shunji Kuga
Keio University, Japan

I

Immediately before his death Stephen Crane began the short piece "The Squire's Madness." Due to his failing health, he left this story to be finished by Cora, his common-law wife. The work is not wholly Crane's, yet at least the plot is: "Crane evidently dictated instructions for the conclusion of the story . . . '—wife thinks husband mad—makes him think he is mad—he goes with her to a doctor to see if it's true & Dr says wife is mad. ' "[1] Is the wife, however, truly insane? The part written by Crane informs the reader that the husband, Squire Linton, secludes himself in his study to write nonsensical verses and that his eccentric behavior surprises the local villagers. The reader thus hesitates to take the conclusion at face value. It is not the wife but the husband who seems mad. But again, the reader cannot be fully convinced; Crane (not Cora) left the sentence that "as for the squire's lady, [the villagers] described her as being not much different from the master"(8: 190). Do they both, then, equally suffer from a mental disease? In any case, in accordance with Crane's instructions, the fact remains that judgments concerning mental conditions sharply differ between the countryside in Essex, the home of the Lintons, and the big city where (we can safely assume) they consulted the psychotherapist (Cora specifies the place as London). The story has a humorous tone which seemingly leaves little room for serious analysis. Yet it is important to note that Mrs. Linton is but one (and the final) example of a female character in Crane's works whom we find losing, or almost losing her mental equilibrium in a metropolis.

II

Crane's works often include women who feel comfortable in the country and base their lives there around the home, exactly as the squire's devoted wife does. These family-oriented women occasionally reveal their ignorance or dislike of the outside world. Henry's mother in *The Red Badge of Courage*, for example, commits herself to "domestic belief,"[2] has little interest in the ongoing war, and therefore looks "with some contempt upon the quality of his [Henry's] war-ardor"(2: 5).[3] Similarly, Mrs. Kelcey in *George's Mother*, is "an almost expressionistic

The aim of the thesis is not to cast Crane and Bellows as modernists. Instead, I establish a nuanced conception of their position "on the cusp" that takes into account both residual and emergent strains in their work and that emphasises the relationship between cultural production and social change. The thesis contributes to an understanding of both figures, establishing new contexts for their work and providing a detailed analysis of their formal practice. At the same time, my close analysis of Crane and Bellows illuminates a particular moment in the emergence of American modernism and suggests a number of approaches to the act of periodisation.

familiar with traditions of exaggeration and stretching in hunting yarns to a high-circulation newspaper with an unstable, unknowable urban readership. To adapt his material, Crane intervenes to signal and comment on the truth-status of the narrative to those unfamiliar with these customs. To replace the humour derived from the practices of exaggeration and digression, Crane then establishes an ironic distance from the material, enabling narrator and reader to mock its implausibility. On this reading, the Sullivan County Sketches are both an attempt to bridge between rural and urban milieus and part of a fundamental shift between pre-modern and modern story-telling situations.

[1] An earlier version of this paper was read at the American Literature Association Conference in San Francisco in 2004. Dr. Fagg's attendance at this conference was made possible through generous funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Board (UK) and the University of Nottingham Graduate School.

[2] Stanley Wertheim and Paul Sorrentino, eds., *The Correspondence of Stephen Crane*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), p. 111.

[3] William Taylor, *In Pursuit of Gotham: Culture and Commerce in New York* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992), p. 144.

[4] Stephen Crane, *Tales, Sketches, and Reports* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1973), vol. 8 of *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 10 vols. (1969-76). All further references to this volume will appear in parentheses in the text.

[5] Charles Dudley Warner, "The Adirondacks Verified V: A Character Study," *Atlantic Monthly* XLI (May 1878): 637.

[6] Richard Plunz, "City: Culture: Nature: The New York Wilderness and the Urban Sublime," *The Urban Lifeworld*, eds. Peter Madsen and Richard Plunz (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 57.

[7] Kristie Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Genre* (Athens: Ohio UP, 1998), p. 153.

[8] The only recent extended analysis of Tom Quick begins with the following acknowledgement: "In common with other important themes in the past of the upper Delaware Valley, the story of Tom Quick is a difficult mixture of fact and legend – but in this case legend so outweighs ascertainable fact that it is doubtful how much of the Tom Quick material should be termed history." Vernon Leslie, *The Tom Quick Legends* (Middletown, N.Y.: T. Emmett Henderson, 1977), p. x.

[9] See Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian* (New York: Vintage

1979), p. 94, and John Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976) pp. 209-15.

[10] James Eldridge Quinlan, *The Original Life and Adventures of Tom Quick, the Indian Slayer as published at Monticello in 1851* (Deposit, N.Y.: The Deposit Journal, 1894) and Philip H. Smith *Legends of the Shawangunk (Shon-Gum) and its environs, including historical sketches, biographical notices, and thrilling border incidents and adventures relating to those portions of the counties of Orange, Ulster and Sullivan lying in the Shawangunk region. Illustrated by numerous engravings and pen sketches by the author* (Pawling, N.Y.: Smith & Company, 1887).

[11] Smith, pp. 116-17.

[12] Quinlan, p. 57, and Smith, p. 118.

[13] Smith, p. 118.

[14] Eric Solomon, *Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967), p. 13.

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Addendum

Dr. Fagg received his PhD this year at the School of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham. His joint supervisors were Professors Peter Messent and Douglas Tallack. The following is an abstract of Dr. Fagg's recently completed dissertation:

"On the Cusp of an Idea: Stephen Crane, George Bellows and Modernism"

My dissertation explores the period connotations of formal elements in the work of Stephen Crane (1871-1900) and George Bellows (1882-1925). The first two chapters focus on instances of ellipsis in Crane's Sullivan County Sketches and the role of anecdote in Bellows's city painting. I consider the way that both Crane and Bellows draw on, adapt and seek to disentangle themselves from earlier modes of writing and painting, while also demonstrating that mismatches between form and subject matter give rise to a nascent modernism. In the chapters that follow, on frames in Crane's city sketches and the schematic design of Bellows's canvases, I pursue these hints at formal innovation and argue that while subsequent modernisms were marked by extremity, Crane's and Bellows's experimentation is limited and indecisive. In chapter five I identify aphorisms in Crane's "London Impressions" and "The Open Boat" as anomalous forms that suggest inconsistency and that destabilise attempts to periodise these works. Finally, I argue that, produced in a moment prior to the institutionalisation of the modernist differentiation between high and low art, Bellows's magazine illustrations and related paintings from around 1913 are, in various ways, clichéd.