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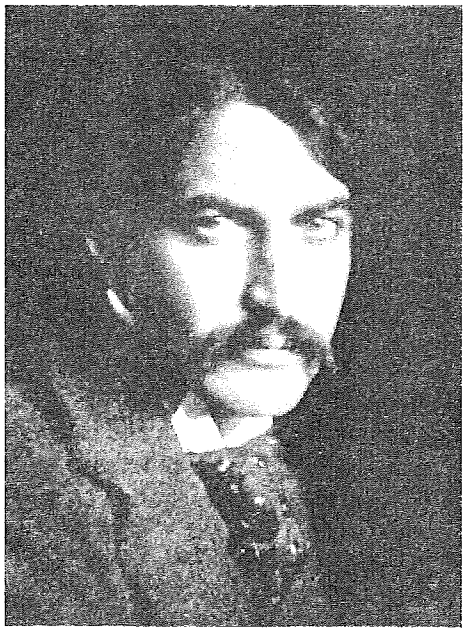

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

Department of English
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Searching for Identity in *The Red Badge of Courage*: Henry Fleming's Battle with Gender

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Henry Fleming, in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, appears to undergo a complex series of transformations from childhood through adulthood that effectively challenge nineteenth-century (and contemporary) assumptions about gender and that consequently disrupt the long-held notion that wars produce "men" out of boys. While many critics have studied Henry's progression from boy to man and have noted the inherent complications of such a transformation,[1] only Jan Van Meter and John Clendenning seem to have accounted for the apparent contradictions that accompany the event. In his psychoanalytic reading of the story, Van Meter identifies the opposition between the male and the female as the tension arising from the homosexual tendencies of Henry and the other soldiers and sees Henry struggling to manage the two oppositional forces. Van Meter writes that the war "is a homosexually destructive attack on the female, culture; an attempt to submerge culture in frantic aggression which affirms and confirms the masculine in opposition to the female" (86). Similarly, Clendenning argues that "[m]en must constantly and continually strive to attain their manhood in opposition to that first, always repressed, female identification" and goes on to cite the theory of psychoanalyst Ralph R. Greenson, which proposes that "masculinity is a dis-identification, a denial of identity; accompanied by a fear of engulfment, envy and a defense against an unconscious wish to retrieve the primal unity with woman" (26). While Van Meter's theory on Henry's "coming of age" has many merits, its focus on the homosexual element ignores other equally important issues of gender that the novel probes. Clendenning's theory, though stronger than Van Meter's in that it more completely acknowledges the unconscious drive toward the feminine, nonetheless focuses on an element of fantasy that evolves as a result of the absent father. This element of fantasy leads Henry, in Clendenning's estimation, to attempt to "free [himself] from grasping maternal relationships, [by] entertain[ing] elaborate romantic dreams of heroic triumph and power" (27). Neither Van Meter's nor Clendenning's theory fully focuses on the role Henry's relationship with his mother plays in his military success. As Henry both re-inscribes and rejects the notion of manhood, he seems not necessarily

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George Monteiro's edition of *Stephen Crane: The Contemporary Reviews*, Volume 17 in the Cambridge University Press series of American Critical Archives, was published in August 2009.

to exhibit homosexual tendencies, but rather he displays the way gender conventions generally fail to account for individual tendencies. In this essay I will explore Henry Fleming's actions and consider how they work to propel the youth through the seemingly dichotomous limits of the feminine and the masculine. By casting a representation of himself as a brave soldier, Fleming is able to gain the admiration and acceptance of the patriarchy while maintaining a secret self that also identifies quite strongly with the maternal, as evidenced primarily by his alignment with the flag. The resulting inclusion of both genders culminates in Fleming's coming of age somewhere outside of or in between the dichotomy. I will show how Henry Fleming exists not as a feminized man or a masculinized woman, but as an individual whose simultaneous embodiment of both genders eventually enables him to achieve the courage necessary to face who he is.

Not surprisingly, issues of masculinity and femininity abound in Crane's Civil War text. Reid Mitchell writes in *Civil War Soldiers* that "Fighting was a man's responsibility--if one did not fight one was less than a man" and goes on to add that "[s]ome men may very well have fought during the Civil War for reasons having less to do with ideology than with masculine identity" (17-18). Henry certainly behaves in accordance with this argument when, like many of his compatriots, he attempts to achieve his socially acceptable, masculine coming of age by entering the war. He quickly learns, however, that the process will not be as simple or as desirable as he initially imagined. During a moment of earnest self-reflection he admits that "as far as war was concerned he knew nothing of himself" (Crane 9), and of course this lack of self-understanding within a military context means that essentially Henry knows nothing of himself as a man. While he "had been taught that a man became another thing in a battle" (Crane 24), his own hesitancy and uncertainty cause him to question whether or not he can even achieve manhood.

Van Meter also clearly articulates the gender distinction by calling war "a masculine, phallic animal god, and a sexual struggle between men in service to that god," (24) and certainly much of Henry's hesitancy comes from his fear of impotency and subsequent emasculation in the face of such phallic power. Repeated references to Henry's real or imagined impotency--he was "momentarily startled by a thought that perhaps his gun was not loaded" (Crane 30); "His impotency appeared to him, and made his rage into that of a driven beast" (Crane 31); and he imagined "that his rifle was an impotent stick" (Crane 84)--depict his most significant recurring fear. Added to

his desperation are the imagined reminders that others in the collective do wield the phallic power that seems to elude him. The other soldiers, for example, know how to use their phallic tools; they "were continually bending in coaxing postures over the guns. They seemed to be patting them on the back and encouraging them with words" and the tools respond positively, remaining "stolid and undaunted," and speaking "with dogged valor" (Crane 38). As the men reinforce and exhibit their masculine potential, their bodies merge with the war tools, heightening the phallic experience. "Their ramrods" for example, "clanged loud with fury as their eager arms pounded the cartridges into the rifle barrels" (Crane 107) which, "once loaded, were jerked to the shoulder and fired without apparent aim into the smoke or at one of the blurred and shifting forms" (Crane 32). The perceived masculinity of the other men reaches its apex when Henry receives a life-altering wound from another solider who, like Henry, flees from battle but who, unlike Henry, has a phallic rifle (Crane 62).[2]

The masculine illusion of war rests in the very fact that the men fighting obtain their phallic authority not from their own bodies, but primarily from the weapons they use. When Henry decides to return to the battleground and join the fighting soldiers, he remembers that "[h]e had no rifle" and makes a point of noting that in this war of machines "he could not fight with his hands" (Crane 58). Even after he recovers a rifle and participates in the battle in earnest, Henry expresses disappointment in the power of his weapon because it "could only be used against one life at a time." This lack of power causes him to wish that he could "rush forward and strangle with his fingers. He craved a power that would enable him to make a world-sweeping gesture and brush all back" (Crane 31). Later he repeats this desire when "[h]is fingers twined nervously about his rifle" and he "wished that it was an engine of annihilating power" (Crane 84). While the empowerment of the gun's phallic authority seems to work for Henry's fellow soldiers, Henry desires a more realistic and literal authority. In other words, when Henry begins to understand the fiction behind the phallic authority[3] (and behind his and every other soldier's masculinity), he longs for a bodily sign that will reinforce his power.

The desire for a masculinizing bodily sign arises from a sense of castration that Henry feels as a result of his father's absence and the prevalence of his mother. We never learn the reason for the father's absence, but we do know that at home Henry has almost exclusively female influences. His mother and the female brindle cow repeatedly

for the owner. Mr. Oliver saw the advertisement and answered it.

It appears that the farm-hand who found the badge had been a Confederate soldier. He could not write and the owner of the farm carried on his correspondence. The farm-hand thought he ought to get a quarter for finding the badge, and Mr. Oliver, overjoyed at recovering his long-lost souvenir, sent him a sum of money considerably larger than he asked for. When the badge reached its owner it was found to be in perfect condition. Mr. Oliver now wears it with a great deal of pride, and every time he meets any of the "boys" who have not heard the story he takes delight in telling it to them.

I do not know how common the practice of striking and awarding of such badges was, but the knowledge that they existed should enhance one's sense of the irony in Henry's having received his "badge" when a fellow-soldier concludes that his injury was suffered honorably, not incurred at the hands of another fleeing soldier.

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"A Badge that was Lost in Battle: It was Found Twenty-six Years Afterward by a Farm Hand Who Thought it was Worth a Quarter." *New York Tribune* 13 August 1891, p. 3.

Real Battles, Actual Badges

George Monteiro
Brown University

The "red badge" in Stephen Crane's novel, mistakenly standing for courage on the part of Henry Fleming's fellow-soldiers, and for hidden, undetected cowardice to readers, is figurative and symbolic. Yet during the Civil War there were other "badges," material ones that were struck, awarded, and worn in the midst of the War.

In "A Badge that was Lost in Battle" (sub-headed "It was Found Twenty-six Years Afterward by a Farm Hand Who Thought it was Worth a Quarter"), a piece in the *New York Tribune* in 1891, at a time when the *Tribune* was printing the young Crane's reports from the Jersey shore, the incipient author may have found something that was of more than passing interest.

> At a G. A. R. meeting in this city recently Thomas Oliver, of Kitching Post, Yonkers, exhibited a badge that has a remarkable history. On one side of the badge is inscribed: "Thomas Oliver, Co. 3, 18 N. Y. Cavalry, New-York City." On the other side appears the following:
>
> Peninsular Campaign.
> Second Bull Run.
> Fredericksburg.
> Chancellorsville.
> Formerly of 37th N. Y. Vol.
>
> A pendant recently added tells briefly the story that makes the badge of unusual interest. On it is inscribed: "Lost 1864, at Alexandria, La.; found 1890."
>
> Thomas Oliver served two years in the 37th New-York Volunteers. He then joined the 18th New-York Cavalry. When he left the volunteers he received this badge to tell of his record. When he joined the cavalry he had the name of his company engraved on the souvenir. During an engagement at Alexandria in 1864 the badge was lost. In the latter part of 1890 a farm-hand ploughing a field at Alexandria found it. A couple of months ago he turned it over to the owner of the farm, who advertised in the New-York Tribune

position Henry in alignment with the feminine, and as Clendenning has argued, serve as the primary force behind Henry's determination to leave the farm and to become a man.[4] As if to reinforce Henry's need to escape, when he shares his plans, "his mother had discouraged him" by looking "with some contempt upon the quality of his war ardor and patriotism" (Crane 5). When Henry finally works up enough gumption to enlist in the army, he returns home to a scene in which "his mother was milking the brindle cow"—an activity she resumes after he tells her of his intentions. However, her response that "'[t]he Lord's will be done, Henry'" suggests that she has accepted Henry's decision as well as her own fate (Crane 6).

Despite Mrs. Fleming's resistance to Henry's plan, she seems aware of his symbolic castration and expresses a need to protect him from revealing it, especially when he leaves the safety of the farm. As he prepares to depart, she reminds him, in yet another of Crane's metaphors, that when his socks "'get holes in 'em, I want yeh to send 'em right-away back to me, so's I kin dern 'em'" (Crane 7). Having taken care to conceal Henry's feminization thus far, she seems to want to continue providing for him in this way even after he enters the masculine war collective.[5] She even goes so far as to warn him that "There's lots of bad men in the army, Henry. The army makes 'em wild, and they like nothing better than the job of leading off a young feller like you," and tellingly adds that he "ain't never been away from home much and has allus had a mother" even though he has not had a father (Crane 7).[6]

In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud writes that "the first sexual impulses of the young are regularly of an incestuous nature and [. . .] such repressed impulses play a role which can hardly be overestimated as the motive of later neuroses" (107). Clearly, Henry must leave the farm not only to escape the site of his castration, but also to avoid acting on his oedipal desire for his mother. Without a father to keep this desire in check, the young boy's relationship with his mother borders on the incestuous. We can see this in the series of events that occur just before Henry joins the army. First, in bed but awake he hears the "clangoring of the church bell as some enthusiast jerked the rope frantically to tell the twisted news of a great battle" followed by the "voice of the people rejoicing in the night," all of which "made him shiver in a prolonged ecstasy of excitement." Henry brings his excitement to his mother's room, where she too lies awake in bed. When he tells her that he intends to enlist, she responds by telling him not to "'be a fool'" and then covers "her face with the quilt," marking "an end to the matter

for that night" (Crane 6). Her response effectively dismisses Henry's intentions and tempers his excitement, but this night-time visit while in the throes of suggested, battle-induced ecstasy clearly establishes Henry's desire. By visiting his mother while she lies in bed and while he experiences his own "ecstasy of excitement," Henry seems to be acting on his oedipal drives. He desires validation from his mother—validation that will lead him into manhood, but that he soon realizes he can only achieve on the battlefield.

Faced with his uncontrollable desire, Henry must join the collective both to become a man and to escape from the maternal and the domestic, or so he thinks. His mother's discouragement of his endeavor as she gave him "with no apparent difficulty [. . .] many hundreds of reasons why he was of vastly more importance on the farm than on the field of battle" (Crane 5) seems to necessitate his need to leave. For Van Meter, this movement away from the home has even greater implications. He writes that "Henry, excluded from the ranks of men by his unwilling isolation on the farm, senses the meaning of what he is missing. The shiver of ecstasy is at least ambiguously sexual, and his position as a son who remains at home with his mother is keeping him from the joys of adulthood (Van Meter 71-72). Henry's journey marks his potential coming of age, and such a coming of age cannot occur on the farm where the stark absence of any male influence forces him to identify almost exclusively with his mother, or so he believes.

The war disappoints Henry, however, most often by failing to reinforce his romantic ideas and by failing to cement the separation he believes he needs. Instead, his participation causes him to revert to his connection with the feminine and more specifically, the maternal. On the first page, for example, rather than presenting a regiment engaged in combat, Crane exposes a languid one whose primary excitement grows out of a circulating rumor: soon the army will move, promising "action." While the rumor awakens excitement among the men, it prompts the extreme trepidation of Henry, who "[a]fter receiving a fill of discussions concerning marches and attacks . . . went to his hut and crawled through an intricate hole that served it as a door" (Crane 4). As a parallel to the womb imagery of this event, once Henry is inside, his thoughts review his break from his mother as evidenced in his enlistment with the army. Van Meter points to the importance of this break, agreeing that "Henry's longing for the feminine, for the womb, is a desire to extinguish the pain and the burden of becoming a man." But he then goes on to

Ninety-three years later, and for nearly the same purchase price as Mrs. Crane's, Tom and Regina Hayes bought the unassuming, ramshackled house with its modest boarding house rooms on Fourth Avenue. With only one other owner in between, the house had remained virtually the same since Mrs. Crane owned it, right down to the ball-and-claw enamel tubs and sandstone floors in the bathrooms and window-paned doors that open off interior corridors. With the help of devoted volunteers and corporate donations, seven rooms on the first floor were restored, becoming the nucleus of the Stephen Crane House Museum. The restoration process also uncovered a period twine baseball located in the soil near the house's foundation.

In 1996, during the city's annual April in Asbury festival, the Hayeses opened the ground floor rooms to the public for the first time. The museum's opening was also marked by an innovative production entitled *The Middle Years* by New Jersey playwright and director Midge Guerrera, then living and working in Asbury Park. Guerrera brought the Crane family to life during their tenure at No. 508 Fourth Avenue, and had the audience move, scene-by-scene, through the rooms as actors recounted their character's lives, sharing their thoughts about living in Asbury Park and having Stephen as a younger brother.

Liquor and liturgy no longer play the prominent, defining roles they once had. The 21st century tug-of-war in Asbury Park has more to do with how and where the public might spend its leisure time, though. Mechanized amusements are nowhere to be found: In 2004, Crane's hippodrome was torn down to make way for a far-reaching oceanfront redevelopment plan. Yet a generous donation by Springsteen afforded Frank D'Alessandro, the new owner of the Crane House, the opportunity to create an intimate presentation hall for lectures, live music, and workshops. Indeed, given that there are no traces left of Stephen Crane in his native Newark, Arbutus Cottage stands alone as the only museum to commemorate his presence in New Jersey.

[1] This essay originally appeared in *Literary Trips: Following the Footsteps of Fame*, a travel anthology published in 2001 in British Columbia. All the contributions were travel destinations tied to well-known writers and their words.

magnificent and famous." Stephen continued his romanticized ideal of Asbury Park: "The electric lights on the beach made a broad band of tremoring light, extending parallel to the sea. . . . In the darkness stretched the vast purple expanse of the ocean, and the deep indigo sky above was peopled with yellow stars. . . ." Stephen's young couple—he, the carousel operator, she the boss's daughter—"walked home by the lakeside way, and out upon the water those gay paper lanterns, flashing, fleeting, and careering, sang to them, sang a chorus of red and violet, and green and gold: a song of mystic bands of the future."

Here he is describing his young lovers as they leave behind her father and the crumbling conservatism of an age past its prime: "That other vehicle, that was youth, with youth's pace; it was swift-flying with the hope of dreams. [Stimson] began to comprehend those two children ahead of him, and he knew a sudden and strange awe, because he understood the power of their young blood, the power to fly strongly into the future and feel and hope again. . . ." Eighty years would pass before another young man of Crane's age and similar passion would write a 20th century love story about youth's freedom flight for the rock-and-roll generation. Equally entranced by the play of light on the water, Bruce Springsteen wrote in "Fourth of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)": "Oh Sandy, the aurora is risin' behind us / The pier lights our carnival life on the water / Runnin' down the beach at night with my boss's daughter / Well he ain't my boss no more Sandy."

A year after *The Red Badge of Courage* was published, and Crane finally received the attention, and adulation he so long wanted, at the age of 24 he returned for one more summer season in his adopted hometown before departing to cover the Spanish-American War in Cuba. The dispatch was vintage Crane, with his typical ridicule and disdain: "From the station Asbury Park presents a front of spruce business blocks, and one could guess himself in one of the spick Western cities. . . . The summer girls flaunt their flaming parasols, and young men in weird clothes walk with the confidence born of a knowledge of the fact that their fathers work. . . . James A. Bradley does not meet all incoming trains. He is as impalpable as Father Knickerbocker. It is well known that he invariably walks under a white cotton umbrella, and that red whiskers of the Islandic lichen pattern grow fretfully upon his chin, and persons answering this description are likely to receive the salaams of the populace."

Nearly four years later, and after the adventures that led to *The Open Boat and Other Stories*, Stephen died of tuberculosis in Germany. He was 28. The year was 1900.

suggest that "It is a desire for annihilation which can be found only in suicide, not in foetal retreat" (Van Meter 75). From the beginning, readers realize that Crane's depiction of the war, complicated by a sense of stagnation and a desire for the domestic, the maternal, and the feminine, communicates the often consciously ignored, internal conflicts and tensions that more realistically represent such an event.

Though the war in many ways reinforces Henry's connection with the feminine and the maternal, it remains an event that necessarily attempts to prompt his break from the mother. Mark Seltzer sees this break as more complicated than simply leaving the farm and its abundant maternal imagery. For Seltzer, "the technologies for the making of men devised in naturalist discourse provide an anti-natural and anti-biological alternative to biological production and reproduction: the mother and the machine are, in the naturalist text, linked but rival principles of creation" (146). Beyond the rejection of the maternal, Henry's need to move away from his mother marks his emergence into the larger social force evident in the nineteenth-century valorization of the machine. As part of the masculine military collective, Henry merges with the machine that produces men in a way that women simply cannot and though Henry eventually returns to the maternal, it is a very different type of maternity from what he experienced on the farm. According to Seltzer, this merging results, at least in part, in the resistance to "female productivity" that reflects "a desire to 'manage' production and reproduction" (Seltzer 147). War enables the managing of reproduction by "birthing" men in battle, first by sparing their lives if they survive battle, and then by bolstering their masculine identity as part of the collective, warring experience.

Seltzer's observation, although highly accurate in many ways, does not fully account for Henry's lapses back to the maternal. Initially Henry does seek the distance that Seltzer describes; even as Henry prepares to leave, he visits his school and "had felt the gulf now between them [his classmates] and had swelled with calm pride" (Crane 7). Later, however, readers learn that Henry's retreat is not so complete. The maternal and the feminine seem to surround him, even as he participates in the phallocentric war. For one, as his mother reminds him before he leaves, he must "'[j]est think as if I was a-watchin' yeh'" (Crane 7). And in a way Henry's actions demonstrate that he is indeed haunted by her or some other female's presence at every turn. This haunting leads Henry to look for acknowledgment from women--first his mother and then from the girls who crowd around during his departure. He takes great satisfaction in the recognition he receives

(or perceives) from the dark-haired girl (Crane 8) and imagines ways in which his military actions will elevate him in their eyes.

At times even Henry's fellow compatriots remind him of the maternal and the feminine that he seemingly seeks to escape. In fact, the first notable "action" in the story revolves around another soldier performing a domestic activity. In a rare moment of "developed virtues," the tall soldier goes to wash his shirt in the brook (Crane 3). The action, presumably the first "virtuous" one so far, ironically leads the regiment out of its inactivity and into (with the exception of Henry) the realm of the masculine. The story the tall soldier hears causes him "to swell," suggesting the beginning of a phallocentric adventure. Henry does not seem to experience the same masculine rousing as his comrades, and instead he tends to see even these highly sexualized soldiers as in some way feminine. When he hears the voice of a soldier who tries to befriend him, he imagines it "as a girl's voice" (Crane 47). Later, as his friend Wilson tends to Henry's wound, he feels that "[u]pon his aching and swelling head the cold cloth was like a tender woman's hand" (Crane 70). Despite his initial desire to escape from the maternal, Henry quickly wishes, "without reserve, that he was at home again" (Crane 16).

Despite Henry's repeated desire for the maternal and the feminine, he realizes that in order to achieve his manhood he must find and challenge the phallic authority. The discovery Henry makes when he finally encounters phallic authority is best described in Jacques Lacan's revision of Freud's Oedipal theory, outlined in "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*." Using *Hamlet* as his example, Lacan shows how Shakespeare's play most significantly differs from Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in that a phallic presence (Claudius) remains even after Hamlet's father has been killed. The continued presence of a phallic authority does not operate as one might expect, just as Henry's own exposure to and experience with the same authority in the military does not always serve to validate his pre-conceived notions of masculinity. Lacan's conclusion that "the body is bound up [*éngagé*] in this matter of the phallus—and how—but the phallus, on the contrary, is bound to nothing: it always slips through your fingers" (52) articulates what Henry's battlefield experiences teach him. Confronted once again with what appears to be highly charged, phallic authority, Henry realizes that a wound received in decidedly emasculated cowardice reinforces the earlier lesson he learned from the impotency of the rifles: the symbols of masculinity are empty, meaningless. After all, how can a wound and an impotent stick

raised clouds of dust on sun-beaten streets."

In the parade were supporters of the Republican nominees for president and vice president, respectively, Benjamin Harrison and Whitelaw Reid. In a dig at both residents and Republican values, Crane ironically pointed out that "such an assemblage of spraddle-legged men of the middle class, whose hands were bent and shoulders stooped from delving and constructing, had never appeared to an Asbury Park summer crowd."

Amazingly, or not, the story sailed past the copy desk and into the *New York Tribune*'s Sunday edition of August 21. Whether this specific article led to the eventual election of Democrat Grover Cleveland as president can still be debated. But what can't is the immediate effect the published column had on Stephen's career. His articles never again appeared in the *Tribune*, so angered was its publisher, Republican vice presidential candidate Whitelaw Reid.

No matter, though. The budding writer was apparently in the throes of a summer infatuation. The object of his affection was Lily Brandon Munroe, a charming woman from Washington, D.C., who, though married, was summering without her husband at the fashionably upscale Lake Avenue Hotel across from Ocean Grove. Mrs. Munroe became the inspiration for a slightly fictitious dispatch Stephen wrote and titled "The Captain" in which a confrontation takes place between well-to-do ladies staying at the resort and a burly fisherman who works double time as a resort fireman.

Love and literary inspiration in Asbury Park came together in another *Tribune* dispatch prior to his firing: "Joys of Seaside Life." The setting was the Hippodrome. More than likely this was the Kingsley Avenue merry-go-round, Asbury Park's first carousel that was housed in a specially designed building open on three sides and owned and operated by Ernest Schnitzler, a German émigré. Designed by Charles I. D. Loof, the noted Coney Island amusements sculptor, the carousel's carved animals were life-like and dramatically decorated.

Stephen used Loof's merry-go-round for a second time as the metaphorical center of a love story he penned in 1893 called "The Pace of Youth." To this day it remains the most romantic, fictionalized love story to be set in Asbury Park. Here are Crane's words: "Within the merry-go-round there was a whirling circle of ornamental lions, giraffes, camels, ponies, goats, glittering with varnish and metal that caught swift reflections from windows high above them. . . . The summer sunlight sprinkled its gold upon the garnet canopies carried by the tireless racers and upon all the devices of decoration that made Stimson's machine

wagons. Alcohol found a more respectable way into polite society via the drugstores, where cherry stomach bitters were nothing more than cheap whiskey.

By 1889 Asbury Park was thriving with more than 200 hotels and boarding houses. Because of its proximity to Ocean Grove, the enclave of the ultra conservative Methodist tent camp meeting association, the residential resort attracted not only more liberal Methodists with wealth, but other, less strident, yet equally well-heeled denominations. Five-and-dime scion F. W. Woolworth summered in Asbury Park. John Philip Sousa brought his band to town. In 1890 the resort city launched a wildly successful baby parade that sent its rival, Atlantic City, into a panic, causing it to retaliate, in the next century, with a virginal beauty pageant named Miss America.

At the official beginning of the Gay '90s, Stephen was enrolled in Syracuse University in upstate New York; in the spring of '91 he played baseball for the varsity team, and then dropped out of academic life for good. He went to Manhattan to try his hand as a newspaper stringer. In his spare time, Crane roamed the Bowery, where he found inhabitants who embodied the tarnished side of the Gilded Age and began making notes for a slim novel that would be published in 1893 as *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

In the summer of 1892 Crane returned to work for Townley in Asbury Park. His dispatches appeared in the *New York Tribune*, chief among them titled "On the Boardwalk," "Summer Dwellers at Asbury Park and Their Doings," and "On the New Jersey Coast."

It was this last filing that brought Crane the most notoriety. One fateful day in August Townley left his younger sibling, then 20, in charge of the office while he apparently attended a funeral in Newark. The news to be covered was an American Day parade sponsored by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics (JOUAM) of New Jersey. With Townley not there to censor him, Crane first lampooned Asbury Park and its residents with his sardonic words: "Asbury Park creates nothing. It does not make; it merely amuses. . . ." He continued with: "The throng along the line of the march was composed of summer gowns, lace parasols, tennis trousers, straw hats and indifferent smiles."

Crane then took aim at JOUAM, a group of laborers known for their isolationism and bigotry against Catholics and Jews: "There were hundreds of the members; they wound through the streets to the music of enough brass bands to make furious discords. It probably was the most awkward, ungainly, uncut and uncarved procession that ever

endow a boy with all of the phallic potential that he needs to join the masculine collective, if not through false authority?

Within the context of the masculine war machine, the only way Henry can effectively survive is to incorporate elements of the feminine into his new-found existence. While the feminine does provide for him to a large extent, it does not provide him with everything that he needs. And, of course, as Van Meter points out, the feminine provides not only nourishment and protection but also death (75). First, Henry retreats to the woods, which, according to Van Meter, figuratively describes a retreat to the womb. Searching for maternal comfort from his wartime anxieties, Henry instead encounters a dead man (Crane 42-3). Importantly, Crane describes the juxtaposition of the two elements, the maternal womb and the dead man in highly sexualized terms. As Henry flees from the "crackling shots" of the artillery, he makes his way through "thick woods" that are "cluttered with vines and bushes" and that oblige him "to force his way." Each time he "separated embraces of trees and vines the disturbed foliages waved their arms and turned their face leaves toward them," but still he searches for "dark and intricate places," primarily because "[t]his landscape gave him assurance." This landscape, he believes, understands him because he sees it and nature as "a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy" (Crane 41-42). In yet another oedipal journey, Henry seems this time to succeed, having penetrated the vast depths of the forest/womb. However, after he "pushed the green doors aside and entered," he encounters a dead man who seems to stare directly into Henry's own eyes. The sight once again recalls the dead father figure, rising to protect the mother from the son's advances. Henry, filled with fear, retreats even more quickly than he entered as he desperately tries to escape from the ever-present censor of his oedipal desires.

Henry's recognition of the impotency of the phallic symbols and his lingering oedipal desires lead him, perhaps ironically, to recognize a need to bring "home" and its accompanying domestic and feminine imagery to the battle field. While he does this to an extent when he identifies the feminine qualities and characteristics of his comrades, he most successfully employs the feminine when he puts down his "impotent stick" and instead takes up the flag. Henry's use of and identification with the flag mark an important link in his development, both as a soldier and as a person. Mitchell reminds us that "the flags tied the soldiers to an element of society they had left behind when they marched to war. The flag, made by the women of

the community, was something to be protected much as they thought their wives and mothers should be protected" (Mitchell, *Civil War* 19). Critics of *The Red Badge* largely concur, although some, such as Van Meter, reverse the relationship. Rather than articulating the need to protect the weak, he suggests that Henry's devotion to the flag turns it "into a protecting leader, and it is the female flag which has been his guidon and his protector during the height of the battle" (Van Meter 82). A closer look at the relationship Henry (as well as some of the other soldiers) maintains with the flag suggests a different reading. The flag stands as an emblem in need of protection but which also potentially offers protection. More importantly, it stands as an emblem of Henry's sexual desires. We learn, for example, that he "felt the old thrill at the sight of the emblems [flags]. They were like beautiful birds strangely undaunted in a storm" (Crane 34), and at one point he "seated himself gloomily on the ground with his flag between his knees" (Crane 100). Recalling the distinct connection between the flag and woman--in this case the mother--it seems clear that Henry directs his sexual desire here, but the imagery also beckons to the phallic. While his recurring concern for the impotency of his gun initially prohibits him from participating in battle, he apparently has no trouble when "[h]e presently wrapped his heart in the cloak of his pride and kept the flag erect" (Crane 97). Oddly enough, this symbol of feminine domesticity empowers Henry at the same time as it adopts its own phallic characteristics. The ensuing portrait of a phallic flag that still remains the symbol of home, of woman, of mother, works for Henry precisely because it reinforces—through its role in the war—the phallic authority of the father while recalling the mother.[7] While previous opportunities existed for Henry to align himself fully with either gender (think of the phallic guns, or the maternal cow and farm), his work as the flag bearer is the only experience that allows him to combine both forces. Carrying the flag enables Henry to normalize himself and importantly, to take control of that normalization. In it, he finds an alternate way to satisfy his needs without appearing to deviate from what is socially acceptable.

As Henry and his young friend Wilson prepare to capture and raise the enemy's banner, we see another example of the combined gender forces. Initially, their efforts seem more about capturing the feminine, with its direct connections to the maternal, than about helping to win the war. The narrator describes the flag as "obedient to [the] appeals" of Henry and his friend to the point that it even "bended its glittering form and swept toward them." When Henry

ning of America's first golden age of affordable travel for the middle class. It started, in part, as veterans brought their families back to such battlegrounds as Gettysburg to point out where they had fought the good fight. Others, eager to match their battle brawn with business success, found opportunities in new communities popping up around the country as the United States began to rebuild its tattered economy after the fraternal war. Waterfront resorts—no lakes too small, no oceanfronts too wide—were ideal for shrewd real estate speculators who tapped the vein of newly made money and aspiring second-home owners. Of the thirty-one founding fathers of commerce in Asbury Park, about half had served in the Civil War. Hotel and boarding house owners offered special rates to veterans and their families. Bradley installed the statue of a soldier of New Jersey's 14th Regiment at the foot of Asbury and Ocean Avenues across from the boardwalk. The founder even posed for a promotional photograph dressed in a Civil War uniform, his right elbow on a barrel, his visage deep in thought.

In the summer of 1888 Stephen Crane was 16, peddling his bicycle on miles of hot sandy roads and gathering the latest names and news on vacationers from Asbury Park south to Avon for his brother Townley's New Jersey Coast News Bureau. These early writing exercises provided critical discipline in training Stephen how to record detail, capture nuance, and even how to find the telling ironies in man's struggle to define himself. The journalism of the 1880 and '90s was not about generalizations, but about reporting what actually happened at any given event. The fiction style that eventually evolved from this form of journalism is called, by turns, impressionism, naturalism, symbolism, romanticism, and realism.

During Stephen's passage to young manhood, Asbury Park's seasonal struggle over the character of men and the morality of women escalated. Bradley had named his resort after the fervid 18th century Methodist circuit rider who launched the crusade against gambling, dancing, cussing, and liquor throughout the colonies. Bradley, himself, went so far as to post moral signs regarding the comportment of young ladies and gentlemen, and banned kissing from the boardwalk. He drafted a clothing code for women's beach attire that included stockings, pants, a heavy blue flannel top with sleeves to the wrist, and canvas shoes. Its detractors called it the Bradley Bag.

But despite Founder Bradley's ban against booze, businessmen found a way around the rule. By day and by night, produce merchants as well as soda and milk bottlers, sold pints of inexpensive whisky and beer hidden among their wares in the backs of their horse-drawn

Women's Christian Temperance Union. On the other side were the twin enemies of liquor and mechanized amusements which encouraged men and women to ride close together on wooden horses or to sit side-by-side on large wooden disks that, when rocked back and forth, caused the riders to clutch each other in an effort to maintain their balance.

For his part, Founder Bradley owned the mile-long boardwalk and banned rides of any kind that would bring the sexes together. He also forbade the sale and serving of alcohol from all the hotels and restaurants in Asbury Park. Bradley went so far as to endorse a one-mile limit on the sale of beer from the borders of his Christian utopia, where he named the streets after high-ranking Methodist clergy and morals crusaders such as Anthony Comstock.

But on the land-locked side of Ocean Avenue, Bradley-the-businessman sold entire blocks of real estate to more flamboyantly entrepreneurial merchants. There, on that west side, painted ponies pranced, new celluloid movies aired in opulently decorated theaters, and mysterious men conjured magic while black-draped women promised to reveal your fortune.

Into this man-made tug-of-war between leisure, liquor, and liturgy came the last child of fervent Methodist reformers, eleven-year-old Stephen Crane. With him came his beloved sister Agnes, a schoolteacher, an older brother Luther, and his widowed mother, Mary Helen Peck Crane. Already in Asbury Park was Townley Crane, a correspondent for the Associated Press, his wife, and another brother, Wilbur, a medical student.

Mrs. Crane was already a fierce temperance crusader and writer with as formidable a public life as that of her late husband, the Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane. Three years after her husband's death in 1880, Mrs. Crane was able to purchase a three-story house at what is today 508 Fourth Avenue. In 1888 she upgraded Arbutus Cottage so there was an extra room for rent on each floor. That summer, one of her boarders was Frances Willard, president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Both mother and daughter joined the First Methodist Episcopal Church around the corner on Grand Avenue. Her sons, on the other hand, were neither church joiners nor goers. Townley was busy supplying New York and Philadelphia papers with social reports of their readers' refreshing sojourns away from the hot cities. Stephen, the youngest of the fourteen Crane children, took up baseball with a passion.

The post-Civil War influences on Asbury Park were everywhere. The end of the war-between-the-states in 1865 marked the begin-

"hurled himself forward," he felt

> a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him. It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. It was a goddess, radiant, that bended its form with an imperious gesture to him. It was a woman, red and white, hating and loving, that called him with the voice of his hopes. (Crane 95)

The flag's feminine characteristics quickly change, however, and in the next sentence Henry "made a spring and a clutch at the pole"—a pole that is in fact, protected by a "dead man, swinging with bended back, [who] seemed to be obstinately tugging, in ludicrous and awful ways, for the possession of the flag" (Crane 95-96). The image of the dead man recalls the missing father, who, had he been alive, would have protected the mother from the boy's incestuous advances, just as the soldier would have prevented the capture of the flag. On the battlefield, Henry, now even more empowered by the presence of his friend, reenacts the oedipal drama he desired at home. With the flag representing the image of his mother, of a woman who speaks in the "voice of his hopes," Henry once again attempts to gain control of what he most desires, and he succeeds.[8] He and Wilson "wrenched the flag furiously from the dead man. . . . Each felt satisfied with the other's possession of it, but each felt bound to declare, by an offer to carry the emblem, his willingness to further risk himself" (Crane 95-96). Henry and Wilson, close to one another in age and in experience, act as two brothers, violently whisking away their mother from the father that their army has just killed.

During Henry's experience with war, he encounters more than just dead fathers; all around him are bodily displays of the literal aftermath of fighting. The wounded men Henry sees, many of whom will not even make it back to camp, physically exhibit proof of their courage and their participation in the highly masculine war. Henry's understanding of the illusion of masculinity occurs most notably at this point because the head wound he receives enables him, with apparent dignity, to rejoin his regiment. Although temporarily plagued by guilt from the knowledge that his "red badge of courage" simply masks his cowardly ways, he eventually realizes that "[h]e had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man" (Crane 76). Critics tend to focus on this moment and to question whether or not Henry does indeed enter manhood. Philip Beidler, for example, asserts that "to Henry himself, after he has returned to his unit with his secret of cowardice masked by the badge of his wounding, the exact

phrasing has marked the status of his moral manhood at nothing less than its exact moral nadir" (237). Certainly the paradox between the bravery his comrades assume the "badge" conveys and the cowardice that readers and Henry know it embodies leads to the inevitable questioning of masculinity, especially as it exists within the context of an event that presumably produced many men.[9] Henry's wounded body in particular exhibits its own masculinizing ineffectiveness.[10] The wound itself and its location[11] represent a hidden castration that ironically enables Henry's public emergence as a man and once again demonstrates the complicated merging of genders in Henry's character. The fact that Henry receives the wound from a fellow Union soldier who skillfully wields a phallic weapon of war and the fact that the site of the wound is the masculine center for reason and rationality signal a powerful challenge from the phallocentric order. Henry's comrades do not perceive the wound as such, however, and instead use it as proof of the young soldier's participation in a masculinizing event that he instead merely witnessed from a distance.

In the end, Henry's success relies primarily on his ability to navigate between the two oppositional forces in his life--the feminine, maternal force of his home and farm, and the masculine force of the Civil War. Van Meter sees this struggle as one that propels the youth to find his own place in society and suggests that "caught between the threat of death from the female and the male, Henry must struggle for his own survival on his own terms" (77). For Van Meter that survival is homosexual. Although an element of military homosexuality is in many ways undeniable in the text, Henry's own distance from even the most willing and approachable companions (Wilson, the friendly soldier, etc.) suggests that he himself is not necessarily homosexual. Instead, Henry seems simply to seek a balance between the two spheres that especially in Victorian times remained distinctly independent. Henry maintains the significance and subjectification of his gender by participating in the masculine drama of war, even while sporting what would otherwise seem to be direct evidence of his emasculation.[12] He learns how to proceed in a socially acceptable manner and then uses that disguise to write a story that provides a startling commentary of the very agency that helped produce it.

Stephen Crane: On the Boardwalk in New Jersey[1]

Helen-Chantal Pike
Asbury Park, New Jersey

With unbridled energy, blue-black waves swell and crash into white foam on the golden sands of Asbury Park, New Jersey. The tangy salt air breezily finds its way down sycamore-lined avenues. En route it tickles both the hemlines of young ladies and the fancies of their summer suitors. On the spare wooden boardwalk, well-dressed couples from America's newly minted middle class stroll with pride, showing off their winter-born babies festooned in lace, lying in white wicker perambulators. From the Kingsley Avenue Merry-Go-Round, the jaunty melodies of a carousel's pipe organ beckon would-be riders for a fantasy trip aboard handsomely carved and majestically painted horses even as one block away, thrill-seekers allow their hearts to jump into their throats as they ride a roller toboggan.

This is not the Asbury Park of rock and roll poet Bruce Springsteen. It isn't the movie-matinee-filled Saturday afternoons of actor Danny DeVito, either. Nor is it the in-between-address of actor Cesar Romero, who played the Joker in the campy *Batman* television series of the 1960s or of syndicated travel writer Lowell Thomas, who wrote *With Lawrence in Arabia* while his father practiced medicine here. And even though Jack Nicholson used to get his haircut at Red Cardilla's barbershop on Asbury Avenue, neither is this the Asbury Park of his youth. It is, however, closer to being the Asbury Park of Bud Abbott, who was born here in 1895, the baby of a bareback rider for Barnum and Bailey's traveling circus show and an orangeade hawker.

This Asbury Park of well-appointed Victorian vacation homes, vividly landscaped gardens, a bustling downtown, and an oceanfront divided between the light and airy boardwalk and the enclosed dark rides of Ocean Avenue's west side was the teenage home of Stephen Crane.

Remembered by scores of high school readers who plowed through his ground-breaking book on the Civil War— *The Red Badge of Courage*—Crane's Asbury Park was one of many therapeutic seaside resorts that witnessed a different kind of battle. This one, believed by some to be waged still today, was for the very souls of red-blooded men and women.

On one side of the moral struggle stood Asbury Park's born-again Methodist founder James A. Bradley, the Salvation Army, and the

Endelman's "The Frankaus of London: A Study in Radical Assimilation, 1837–1967," *Jewish History*, 8, nos. 1–2 (1994): 117–54.

[9] [Julia Frankau], "Arthur" in *Mothers and Children: Hitherto Unpublished Stories by the Late 'Frank Danby.* With a Preface by her Eldest Son, Gilbert Frankau (London: Collins, 1918).

[10] Frank Danby (Mrs. Julia Frankau), "In the Days of My Youth: My First Success," *M.A.P.* (4 September 1909), 305–06. M.A.P. is short for Mainly About People.

[11] *One of Us: A Novel in Verse* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1912).

[12] Memorandum of Agreement and Percy Spalding, typewritten letter to Julia Frankau, 15 February 1912, in the possession of the writer.

[13] In the possession of the writer.

[14] "Books of the Month," *The English Review* (June 1912), 498.

[15] See note 27.

[16] Mrs. Clement Scott, *Old Days in Bohemian London* (London: Hutchinson, [1919]), pp. 66–67.

[17] *Saturday Review*, 10 August 1895.

[18] *The Sphinx's Lawyer* (London: Heinemann, 1906).

[19] Gilbert Frankau, *Self-Portrait: A Novel of His Own Life* (London: Hutchinson, [1940]), p. 99.

[20] The case is reported in *The Times* of 23–25 June 1908. See also Gilbert Frankau, *Self-Portrait*, op. cit., pp. 137–140 and Gilbert Frankau, 'The Almack Club Case,' *The Passing Show*, I, 23 (27 August 1932), 22–24.

[21] The article originally appeared in *Nash's Magazine.* The *New York Times* of 10 November 1912 syndicated it, and it is from there that the text is taken.

[22] Mrs. [Eliza] Aria, *My Sentimental Self* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1922), p. 66.

[23] *Self-Portrait*, op. cit., p. 21.

[24] Pamela Frankau, *I Find Four People* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1935), p. 234.

[25] Edgar Jepson, *Memories of an Edwardian* (London: Martin Secker, 1937), p. 125.

[26] Julia Frankau, *Eighteenth-Century Colour Prints*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1906), pp. v–vi.

[27] Letter to Ada Leverson, Hôtel du Parc, Cannes, [late February or early March], 1912, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California.

[28] "Frank Danby," *The Copper Crash: Founded on Facts* (London: Trischler, 1889).

[1] James Cox in "*The Red Badge of Courage*: The Purity of War," contributes another dimension to our understanding of battle when he observes that "[s[eeing war as the process of civilizing aggression is as essential as seeing the family as the civilizing form for the control and release of sexual energy" (305).

[2] While most of Henry's comrades thoroughly embody the phallic potential that war offers, there are a few who seem as emasculated as he and who need help from the other, more adept soldiers who surround them. A terribly frightened soldier, for example, "tried to reload his gun, but his shaking hands prevented. The lieutenant was obliged to assist him" (Crane 33).

[3] Henry reflects, for example, that "[h]is emotions made him feel strange in the presence of men who talked excitedly of a prospective battle as of a drama they were about to witness, with nothing but eagerness and curiosity apparent in their faces. It was often that he suspected them to be liars" (Crane 13).

[4] Clendenning writes that "Henry's shameful cowardice, his archaic dependence on motherly solicitation, the specter of a primitive female identification—his fear, in short, that he is not a real man and that others know it, turns to furious hatred. Henry now wants to destroy the enemy whom he perceives as somehow to be blamed for his impotence" (31).

[5] Despite Mrs. Fleming's efforts to shield Henry from displaying any visible, and consequently potentially feminizing holes, the imagery reappears after he leaves the farm. His army home contains "an intricate hole that served it as a door," and through which his roommate, the tall soldier, "slid dexterously" (Crane 10).

[6] The warnings from Henry's mother directly contrast with what Reid Mitchell in "A Northern Volunteer" has identified as the popular maternal role. He writes that "[f]athers expected mothers to inculcate their children with patriotic values; the feminine, domestic sphere was the ground for the masculine, public world" (51). Without a husband to enforce this sort of paternal validation, Mrs. Fleming too, seems to have strayed from the norm.

[7] References to the flag throughout the novel often reveal the simultaneous embodiment or juxtaposition of both the masculine and the feminine. We learn, for example, that the enemy troops "came on, stooping and swinging their rifles at all angles" while a "flag, tilted forward, sped near the front" (Crane 30). The "color bearer habitually

oiled the pole" (Crane 20) and later, Henry "discerned forms begin to swell in masses out of a distant wood. He again saw the tilted flag speeding forward" (*RBC* 35). Finally, the tall soldier, in the midst of washing his shirt, "came flying back from a brook waving his garment bannerlike. He was swelled with a tale" (Crane 3).

[8] George Monteiro, in *Stephen Crane's Blue Badge of Courage*, argues that Crane's knowledge of temperance literature, with its descriptions of delirium tremens in particular, directly informed the characterization and action of *RBC*. He finds, for example, that "[t]he temperance reader sheds its influence over Crane's handling of the flag-saving episode, though the emotion involved is not fear or terror but joy, pride, and ecstasy" and further adds that "[t]o gather up an appropriate image for the virtues of the temperance army, one writer for the cause linked its fight to the Civil War, turning to the glories of patriotism and the flag" (96). Though the movement did invoke patriotic, and more specifically, flag-waving imagery in some of its literature, its link to this particular scene does not seem likely. Henry's complicated relationship with women, his mother in particular, and his desire to become a "man" through his involvement with the war, speaks more directly to issues of gender rather than temperance.

[9] Donald Pease, in "Fear, Rage, and the Mistrials of Representation in *The Red Badge of Courage*," writes that Henry's wound is suggestive "not of any particular moral code but of his having been *cut off* from these moral codes" and as such, it "turns every attempt to interpret it as a sign of courage into a vast charade of judgement. Through an identification with this wound, Henry can return to his regiment not as a 'member' reincorporated into the 'body' of men, but as a wound, a mark of what has already been cut off from the body" (172).

[10] John C. Orr, in "A Red Badge Signifying Nothing: Henry Fleming's Corporate Self," remarks that "[w]hat appears to be a sign of courage is quite the opposite, and definitions of manhood are left in flux. To find meaning, Crane forces his readers to discard their received notions of manhood, bravery, and identity and search for meaning beneath the bloody rags binding Henry Fleming's wound" (69).

[11] Orr remarks that Henry's "wound is on his head, the site of reason, rationality, knowledge" (59).

[12] In putting forth this assertion, I disagree with Orr's claim that "[i]n the case of *Red Badge*, the wound signifies courage to its interpreters, but there is no courage in Fleming to be signified. That is what he lacked when he ran from battle. His red badge is, thus, a signifier—an empty signifier—hollow at its core" (Orr 59). The fact that Henry's

have set a watch on Mrs. Eldon and have discovered that Stanton has spent several nights under her roof. If this is revealed in the law courts, Margaret will be denied the divorce she needs to marry Gabriel. Mrs. Roope is painted without pity:

> "You don't know our religion, our creed. We have the true Christian spirit, and desire to help others. The sensual cannot be made the mouthpiece of the spiritual. Sensuality palsies the right hand, and causes the left to let go its divine grasp. That is why I interfere, for your own good as we are enjoined. Uncleanliness must lead to the body's hurt, in so far as it can hurt. But mind and matter being one, what hurts the one will hurt the other . . . sickness is a growth of error, springing from man's ignorance of Christian science."
>
> Eleanor's doctor breaks in, "Oh more rot—rot— rot —rot — *rot*. Shut it!"

In the violence of the final words, we catch Julia Frankau at a moment of rare candour and (considering the modernity of the expletive) with her predictive powers to the fore.

Notes

[1] R. W. Stallman, *Stephen Crane: A Biography* (New York: Braziller, 1968), p. 432.

[2] Lillian Gilkes, *Cora Crane: A Biography of Mrs. Stephen Crane* (London: Neville Spearman, 1962), pp. 166–7.

[3] Letter from Julia Frankau to Cora Crane, Stephen Crane Correspondence, Special Collections, Columbia University Library, New York. The letter signed "Frank Danby Frankau" may have been separated from the rest of the letters which are signed "Julia Frankau," thus causing Gilkes's misattribution.

[4] John St John, *William Heinemann: A Century of Publishing 1890–1990* (London: Heinemann, 1990), p. 67.

[5] *The Times*, 18 March 1916, 11.

[6] 7 July 1899, 435.

[7] "Pan, a Villanee," *Whitehall Review* (30 September 1880), 414.

[8] The essential documentation of the Frankau family is Todd M.

where his name is introduced:

> Far overshadowing my mother's abhorrence for dogs and cats was her abhorrence of music. In my twenties, I took her to a little music hall, long since swept away, at Monte Carlo, where a man demonstrated his skill as a marksman by picking out a tune on a piano with a repeating rifle.
>
> "That," observed she, "is the only time I've seen a musical instrument treated as I'd like to treat all musicians."[23]

Mrs. Aria shared her sister's hatred of music. Her great-niece, Pamela Frankau, reports that, to a remark by Hope Temple that none of the operas should be sung in English, she retorted, "No, darling ... None of the operas should be sung at all."[24]

Morris must have been a good friend indeed because a second violinist was also admitted to Julia's table, presumably at his request. The writer Edgar Jepson recalls he met there the Austrian musician and composer Fritz Kreisler.[25] Julia gives a nod to Morris's love of the violin in her book on eighteenth-century prints, where she reveals herself as familiar with the names of Guarnerius and Amati but not, however, with Stradivarius whom she misspells.[26] Mrs. Aria claims Morris was the inspiration for Julia's *Concert Pitch* (1913), a novel with a musical background. That is very likely. Julia enjoyed tackling challenging themes about which she knew little, especially, it seems, if they were pastimes of her *beaux*. This would explain her handling of the game of cricket as a central theme in *Joseph in Jeopardy* (1912), a passion of Stephen Crane's editor, Sydney Pawling, with whom she was wintering on the Riviera when she got news that the book had been banned for indelicacy by the circulating libraries.[27]

Julia did not care for psychic meddling. This seems an honest opinion, held for many years. She had attacked the science of hypnotism as unnecessary and dangerous in the preface to her sensational yellowback, *The Copper Crash*, where her prophetic powers introduced to the reading public five years before they appeared in George du Maurier's *Trilby* the characters of a girl-singer and a foreign mesmerist;[28] and her antipathy to Christian Science struck deep. Athalie Mills, who in her eyes had as good as done for Harold Frederic, was transported into the character of the blackmailing Christian Scientist, Sarah Roope, in her last novel, *Twilight* (1916). The Roopes (the husband is "an emaciated idler, not over clean; his wife has evidently a bad form of St Vitus's dance" declares Gabriel Stanton, lover of the blackmail victim, Margaret Eldon)

wound enables his ability to appear as a man in public suggests that, in fact, the badge is not "empty." Instead, the wound, as a sign of masculine authority and initiation, signals Henry's entrance into the collective.

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was the sensation of the town, then set up her own establishment in opposition:[20] afterwards writing a magazine article accusing just such clubs as hers of corrupting their young female members. "The men are often sated elderly people," she says, in reminiscence of the "poor ruined gamester" in her novel, *Baccarat* (1904), or "youthful wastrels, and to neither can the moral miasma of a bridge club be injurious." "It is," she goes on, "the young wife and the young mother who are dragged down into this whirlpool of gambling and small talk. Husbands, home, and children are neglected, so irresistible is the fascination of these clubs."[21] This of course is mere posture but nevertheless the sort of capricious behaviour that may require an explanation other than philanthropic of her concern for the Frederic children.

It lies, as like as not, in their illegitimacy. She was not so swollen-headed as to think herself as "brave and beautiful and womanly" as Kate Lyon, but she had herself given birth to an illegitimate child, Ronald, much the same age as the Frederic boy, Barry. This seems to have been a pretty open secret as time went on. Ronald Frankau grew up to become a professional comedian of considerable stature, his specialty the comic song, of which the vulgarity, ever to the fore, was highlighted rather than diminished by Etonian inflexions that contrasted with the unshapelier deliveries of his fellow-entertainers and with his own affiliation to the British Communist party. These ditties were elegantly accompanied at the piano by Monte Crick, later to earn solo fame as the voice of Dan Archer in the wireless serial, *The Archers*.

In the radio programme at the centenary of Ronald's birth (B.B.C. Radio 2, 22 February 1994), his father was named as a stockbroker, Henry Martin Morris. Morris is the dedicatee of Julia's novel, *Full Swing* (1914), which shows he was still in favour twenty years after Ronald was born. "To H. M. M.," Julia writes, "Whose exceptional face and figure I have sometimes borrowed to deck a hero or adorn a villain, but whose fine loyalty and genius for friendship I have always enjoyed without attempting to chronicle." Mrs. Aria, Julia's sister, mistress of Sir Henry Irving, refers delicately in her memoirs to the liaison as a "deep friendship" without giving Morris's name.[22] Gilbert, in his autobiography, *Self-Portrait*, does identify him though he says only that he and his mother were friendly, and gives no direct indication that he was her lover. He does, however, offer a clue. Morris, he says, was a keen amateur violinist, secretary of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society; and he practised his violin "even when our guest in the country." This implicit disapproval of Morris's comportment under the Frankau roof is explained by Gilbert's opening lines to the chapter in *Self-Portrait*

killed in World War I), Ronald (1894–1951, an entertainer), and Joan Aline (1896–1986, lecturer in English at Cambridge and a life fellow of Girton), she seems to have had little time. In one of her disgruntled press interviews after the publication of *An Incompleat Etonian* (1909) she sings only Gilbert's praises, giving no mention of her other children except to say she is embroidering some clothes for her daughter to whom she does not give a name.[10] Although she did not forbid Ronald to take up a stage career, a strong possibility given her distaste—shared by brother James—for the world of theatre, she insisted that he use a pseudonym in performance and was as removed from expectancy of his public success as she was agog for Gilbert's nationwide deification. Once she was resigned to the fact her firstborn was not to be a second Disraeli, she encouraged his writing and, without his knowledge, financed the publication of his first "grown-up" book (there had been a schoolboy pamphlet of verse), a novel in *ottava rima*.[11] The underwriting was done under conditions of great secrecy. On 18 February 1912 she contracted with the publishers, Chatto & Windus, to cover the book's printing, binding, and advertising costs up to the figure of one hundred guineas. Chatto's executive, Percy Spalding, briefed by Sydney Pawling of Heinemann, ensured that his letter confirming the terms of the agreement "has not been passed through our official letter-book."[12] Only on his mother's death did Gilbert discover the truth when he came across the documents in an envelope she had marked, 'My only secret from Gugu.'[13] The book, *One Of Us*, was a great success. His mother would have gained comfort from the notice in the *English Review* which spoke of the book's 'Beaconsfieldian cleverness.'[14]

Outside the family, as well, Julia does not present herself as an especially "concerned" woman. She had done a stint with the Salvation Army in London's East End but had not cared for its motives nor its methods, most especially for the rough musicking which she pilloried in her second novel, *A Babe in Bohemia* (1889). She was unkindly disposed towards the coal workers striking in 1912 and wrote to her friend, Ada Leverson (whose novels she much admired), that if she had her way she would drive the men back to work by force.[15] She was seldom straightforward, though, about her true opinions, a "mystifying contradiction," in the words of the wife of the theatre critic Clement Scott.[16] At one moment she will be denigrating her friend Oscar Wilde for his behaviour,[17] the next writing a novel in his defence.[18]

She was a hardened gambler (her husband remarked "When I die, Julia, put my ashes in the leg of a poker table. Then you'll never be away from me very long")[19] and sued her bridge club in a case which

"An Agnostic Old Gentleman"

Timothy d'Arch Smith
London, England

In 1899, Harold Frederic, novelist and London editor of the *New York Times*, died suddenly leaving his mistress, Kate Lyon, and their three children without means of support. A fund was got up by Cora Crane among literary men such as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, George Gissing, Hall Caine—others besides—whose depth of pocket generally matched a liberalism of spirit in respect of the morals of their dead colleague.[1] It was the idea of Cora to remove the children—Helen, Barry, Heloïse—from their mother and place them with a Catholic family. The money collected by her fund was to pay for their education. Kate was considered too irresponsible to bring them up herself because she was a Christian Scientist, in Cora's opinion a creed to have hastened Frederic's demise. Indeed, this was the opinion of the law of the land. Kate Lyon and another practising Christian Scientist, Athalie Mills, who had been called in to advise upon the mystical rehabilitation of the patient, were charged with manslaughter for having denied a seriously ill man the services of a doctor.

In her biography of Cora Crane, Lillian Gilkes quotes a letter from an "agnostic old gentleman" in passionate agreement with Cora's estimation of Kate's unsatisfactoriness. He was eager "to do more for the children of this love union" than could be measured by the small subscription enclosed:

> . . . I did not seek out my poor friend at the time of the inquest—because of her association with Mrs. Mills, with whom I am personally acquainted—and who I *know* to be a thief and a liar and whom I *believe* to be also a constructive murderer—as I could not trust myself not to say this in public, and *prove* the major part of it—I stayed away. But Kate's errors of judgment and their fatal consequences, cannot blot out in my eyes her brave and beautiful and womanly life with Harold Frederic.[2]

Gilkes is mistaken in her identity of Cora's correspondent, who was neither old nor a gentleman. The letter-writer was not a man at all. Here was Julia Davis Frankau, forty years old (with a preference for thirty-five), wife of cigar-merchant Arthur Frankau, and novel-writer under the pseudonym (muddling Gilkes) of Frank Danby. Her letter

to Cora was signed Frank Danby Frankau.[3]

It is likely she was introduced to the Cranes by Sydney Pawling, the publisher, William Heinemann's right-hand man, and Stephen Crane's editor, for whom he arranged the commission to cover the Greek-Turkish war for the *Westminster Gazette*.[4] Julia, with three books already published in the 1880s, signed up to Heinemann in 1903 for a series of novels estimated by her obituarist on *The Times* to have been "very shrewd and very unpleasant studies of ill-behaved and disagreeable people."[5] She had probably met Frederic and his mistress through Frank Harris to whose *Saturday Review* Frederic had been a contributor. She had reviewed Frederic's novel, *The Market Place*, an anti-semitic work not dispraised by Julia on that account, in her brother James Davis's short-lived magazine, *The Phoenix*.[6]

Julia was of Irish-Jewish descent, seventh of the nine children of Hyman and Isabella Davis. The family moved from Dublin to London, where Mr. Davis, a man of many parts, abandoned a dentistry practice and became a photographer. She was twenty-four when she married Arthur Frankau. Her brother, James, astringent theatre critic on the *Sporting Times* under the name of Stalled Ox ("Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith"—Proverbs 15:17), had encouraged her writing by arranging that her parody of a poem by Oscar Wilde (Julia was the very first of the many Wilde parodists) was inserted in a friend's magazine.[7]

George Moore too was encouraging. He and Julia had struck up an acquaintance perhaps inclusive of whatever dalliance Moore was able to muster but based too on a mutual enthusiasm for realistic fiction. Moore recommended her to his publisher, Henry Vizetelly, with whom he had placed *A Mummer's Wife* in 1884, a novel dedicated to James Davis.

Julia's *Dr. Phillips, a Maida Vale Idyll*, published by Vizetelly in 1887, demonstrated her absolute dissociation from her race and creed, a trait afterwards running through almost the entire Frankau clan.[8] Two further novels followed hard upon the first, then nothing more until a "lapse" —as she calls it in her *Who's Who* entries—into storytelling presaged a period of fecundity that ceased only with her death. A torrent of fiction poured out of Mayfair, from Clarges Street, from the newly built Ritz hotel made a permanent billet for a year or two, from Grosvenor Street, and finally from Hay Hill. Between 1903 and 1916 only two years were unpunctured by a Frank Danby novel, 1905 and 1911, and in the latter one of those she produced under her own name a two-volume life of Emma, Lady Hamilton.

What is revealed in the correspondence as it goes along is Julia's solicitude for the Frederic children and their proper upbringing. Her letter to Cora enlarges on her concern:

> But I should like the opportunity—if Kate as I hear, is leaving England—would she not like me sometimes to see her babies. I am filled with sympathy for them—if they may be brought up outside & away from even the shadow of the hideous superstition that destroyed their father—their education, prospects, future will interest me always.

All this is peculiar because Julia gives little impression of maternal concern despite bearing four children, three boys and a girl. She says as much in a short story published after her death in a collection that, in a strangely perceptive way (quite a few of her novels reveal an almost sibylline awareness of events some time in the future, *Joseph in Jeopardy* [1912], for instance, which predicts the "takeaway" meal) confronts certain problems of motherhood much later to be put under the heading of child welfare:

> She is a cold woman, this mother of Arthur's, intellectually superior to her surroundings, but with an unfortunate distortion of vision that makes her see the vices of her neighbours more clearly than their virtues. She despises most of her fellow-creatures, and hates them for their faults. She has brothers and sisters, easy-going, warm-hearted people. . . . When Arthur first came to her, even maternity seemed powerless to melt the ice that had gathered about her heart. She openly declared her dislike of babies; turned the newcomer out of her bedroom before it was a week old; left it to the mercy of servants while she went abroad to recuperate her health.[9]

In a later letter to Cora, a preference is expressed for the oldest child of the Frederic liaison. What happens to the other two children, provided of course they are safe and well and away from their deluded mother, she does not much care. She writes in her letter of 7 June 1899, "The education of the two little ones does not press."

The correspondence establishes the vein of favouritism for the firstborn that Julia displayed within her own family. Open adoration was reserved for the eldest son, Gilbert (1884–1952), whom she hoped to be Prime Minister but whose destiny it was to become, like herself, a successful novelist. For her other children, Paul Ewart ['Jack'] (1891–1917,