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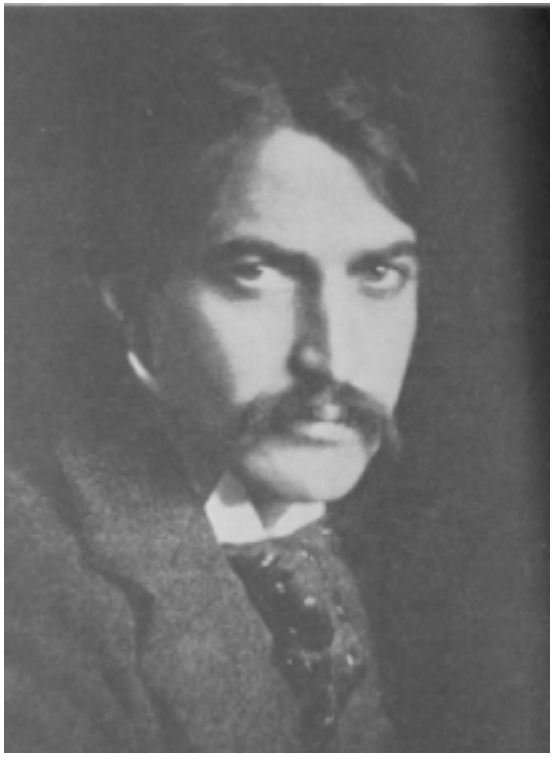

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

Department of English
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"But to all these domesticities the three maintained an absolute dumbness": Domesticity and Damage in Crane's "The Monster"

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Hortense J. Spillers begins her discussion of Uncle Tom's Cabin in "Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse, or, Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed" with an interesting presentation of the phrase often used to describe slavery: "peculiar institution." For Spillers, this terminology creates a strange kind of paradox:

> If we think of "institution" as a specific sum of practices that so configure our sense of "public" and "private" that the rift between them is not so substantial as we might flatter ourselves to think, then antebellum slavery in the United States offers a preeminent paradigm of conflated motives. Its practices, upheld by an elaborate system of codes, subject to conditions of market, sanctioned by the church (in the American plurality), and generating the nation's first community of fugitives, actually sustained no private realm, even though such practices were central to the "home," to the very stuff of domesticity . . . . (542)

Slavery here is a marginal space, a place and status poised between the public and domestic spheres but incapable of fully penetrating into either of them. Slaves were "domestics," aligned with the private sphere of the extended home implicitly; yet they were also public commodities, publicly defined beings whose status, despite close ties with domesticity and private existence, was controlled by social "institutions." Slaves themselves inhabited a dangerous world of in-betweenness, part person and part object, yet always susceptible to pressures public and domestic. Uncle Tom's Cabin is filled with gestures to this liminal space, including chapter headings like "Showing the Feelings of Living Property on Changing Owners" and "In Which Property Gets into an Improper State of Mind"; the title itself ambiguously teeters between "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a conglomeration of person, place, and thing. Slavery, as Spillers correctly notes about the "peculiar institution," is fraught with a liminal doubleness.

The conflicts and inherent difficulties of the strange, liminal space between public and private that Spillers assigns here to the institution of slavery is also on display for another institution—domestic-

ity—in another, much different work of American literature: Stephen Crane's 1898 story "The Monster." Crane's novella is a very different book from Stowe's novel: ironic and darkly humorous, naturalist in its worldview, clearly skeptical of humanity's ability to achieve positive change through "an atmosphere of sympathetic influence," the edict to "feel right" Stowe presents as a desired outcome of reading Uncle Tom's Cabin (Stowe 385). Importantly, Crane also provides a story of the failing of Stowe's primary weapon in her quest for these "right feelings"—domestic influence. Uncle Tom's Cabin uses the liminal space slavery occupies as a way to allow the moral, sentimental domestic sphere to temper the actions of the public sphere in a positive way; in contrast, "The Monster" presents the increasing failure of this strategy and the continuing decline of the "peculiar institution" of domesticity as a source of significant moral influence at the end of the nineteenth century. While race has often become the focal point of scholarship on "The Monster," I wish to extend the debate in a different direction, taking up domesticity as a peculiar institution akin to that paradoxical space defined by Spillers for slavery. This space is the zone of contact between the private sphere and the public realm, and it is the conflict between the two, I would argue, that is at the center of "The Monster."

In "Between Conquest and Care: Masculinity and Community in Stephen Crane's 'The Monster,'" critic William M. Morgan holds that "The Monster" "records Crane's ambivalence toward the strenuous ethos of white masculinity that Theodore Roosevelt championed and came to embody" in the shifting cultural landscape of 1890s America (63). Against this emergent form of active, imperial masculinity Morgan pits "nurturing white masculinity," embodied in the story by Dr. Trescott. While it is perhaps true that the text presents ambivalence toward the "strenuous" masculine ethos at some points, the novella also presents Crane's ambivalence regarding the ability of the feminine, domestic ethos to mediate and/or temper the masculine, public ethos for the positive results assumed by proponents of domestic influence like Stowe or suggested by Morgan's nurturing masculinity. If the "partially maternalized" Dr. Trescott is the figure through which "Crane's novella recuperates a nurturing masculine ethos with links to the tropes of a woman's domesticity," he simultaneously acts as a central figure through which domesticity is criticized (64). "The Monster," rather than a novella depicting the battle between two forms of masculinity, presents the struggle of public masculinity to cope with a private domestic influence that is damaging rather than strengthening and edifying. Feminine influence, instead of empowering the mascu-

line and imbuing it with virtue that directs it to a higher level of moral performance, weakens characters' moral firmness and becomes the source of unresolved conflict in "The Monster." In this way, Crane's novella can be read as a rejoinder to the sentimental fictions earlier in the century, of which Uncle Tom's Cabin is perhaps the best-known example. By demonstrating the failure of domesticity to elicit right action—the assumed outcome of Stowe's right feeling—Crane reveals the dramatic decline and failure of sentimental domestic power heading into the twentieth century.

The loss of domesticity's power has been usefully explored in Ann Douglas's now-classic 1977 study The Feminization of American Culture. Douglas's research traces the decline in actual power of women and clergy to shape lives throughout the nineteenth century, giving way to the rise of the belief in feminine "influence" and the popularity of sentimental fiction. These new directions, however, proved increasingly effete and incapable of producing useful outcomes. "Moreover," Douglas holds,

> the cultural irresponsibility of feminized sentimentalism was revealed by its eventual fate. After the Civil War, no longer backed by any significant segment of the . . . cultural elite, feminine literary sentimentalism became by definition lowbrow; it had begun its downward trek in public esteem to its present degraded position as the staple of the poorer religious press, saccharine greeting-card poetry, and the weakly soulful lyrics of certain popular singers. (87)

In "The Monster," Crane provides his readers with a snapshot of a moment in this "downward trek," a point along the continuum to irrelevance that would relegate domestic sentimentalism to lowbrow and disrespected popular culture expressions; even more, "The Monster" depicts the "cultural irresponsibility" of domestic influence through its damaging effects on public action and the lives of those in the peculiar institution's liminal spaces. As such, Crane's text exists in pointed contrast to the sentimental texts of the midcentury that sought to broker "influence" and provide the increasingly powerless feminine sphere with something resembling a pathway to power.

In addition to Douglas, several other studies explore the important position of domesticity and its literary representations with regard to sociopolitical influence and public life. Two of the more recent, Lora Romero's Home Fronts (1997) and Amy Kaplan's The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture (2002), provide useful extensions

of (and important rejoinders to) Douglas's work. Battling against the notion that domesticity was inherently conservative and served to reinforce the status quo, Romero instead wishes to present domesticity as a lens through which to examine the circulation of cultural power in antebellum fiction: "The aim of Home Fronts . . . is neither to defend domesticity as a form of cultural expression nor to join the call for an expanded canon; rather, the book's goal is to inquire into the theoretical assumptions about power and resistance underlying contemporary debates about dominant and oppositional culture" (4). Kaplan's work focuses on the relationship of the rhetoric of domesticity and the discourses of imperialism, exploring the many ways it paradoxically supported imperial expansion while ostensibly remaining separate and unsullied by such acts. "Domestic discourse," says Kaplan, "both redressed and reenacted the anarchic qualities of empire through its own double movement: to expand female influence beyond the home and the nation, and simultaneously to contract woman's sphere to that of policing domestic boundaries against the threat of foreignness" (28).

These altered views of the potential place of domesticity in public life help to clarify the vision of domestic influence Crane presents in "The Monster." While the image of the domestic sphere has traditionally been one of separation and power limited to indirect influence, Crane instead presents a world where the domestic has a visible, direct influence on public actions; however, instead of being a source of moral edification, as Stowe expected, Crane's domestic and feminine influence as pictured in "The Monster" becomes a source of increasing complication and confusion. Irrational, irresponsible, unsympathetic, domestic influence often hinders, rather than assists, Crane's characters in the quest to "feel right" and act on those feelings in a public way. This in turn feeds back, carrying the damage inflicted by this corrupting influence back into the private sphere, a reflected public harm that travels directly back to its domestic source.

"Crane . . . began with a sense of irony," Sy Kahn asserts in "Stephen Crane and the Giant Voice in the Night," along with "a gift for understatement, an abhorrence of sentimentalism and a view of man that made war one of the important, inevitable metaphors for dramatizing [his] insights" (36). Kahn notes that Crane deploys his arsenal of war descriptions as he constructs the narrative of "The Monster," and it seems fitting that the depiction of the conflicting spheres of American social life ultimately feels like a battle between domesticity and active, public masculinity. American culture itself was undergoing this "battle" in the 1890s, as various pressures were creating "a crisis of cultural au-

thority, which had both public and private dimensions" (Lears 5). The paradigms that organized life in this time were shifting; people were trying to find a new balance in their lives for the traditional roles they were expected to play. Even domesticity, a powerful cultural ideal at its height in the midcentury with sentimental novels and the Victorian "cult of domesticity," was being refigured as its strength faded. As historian T. J. Jackson Lears frames this shift,

> If public authority seemed to be losing legitimacy, private authority seemed on the wane as well. The internalized morality of self-control and autonomous achievement . . . seemed at the end of its tether; the chief source of that morality, the bourgeois family, seemed a hothouse of suffocating repression and insoluble personal conflict. (5-6)

This instability of social organization, particularly in the destabilization of the domestic sphere once "central to the culture" but increasingly removed from importance, is a central concern of "The Monster" (Matthews xiii). The power of domesticity, diminished in its moral capacity and incapable of providing the stability it previously had for an author like Stowe, becomes instead the source of moral confusion and failure in Crane's text. As such, "The Monster" can be read as a stylized representation of the shifting social landscape of the last twenty years of the nineteenth century; central to this depiction is the struggle to deal with the failing strength of domesticity as a morally edifying force in public action.

"The Monster"'s early depictions of Whilomville ostensibly present the reader with a nostalgic sketch of small-town life, a village existence marked by the centrality of familial relations and domesticity. Young people gather in the park for concerts on Saturday night, gossiping and flirting. The barbershop is filled with its traditional assortment of characters, and children dash past the band and taunt policemen in a picturesque reproduction of the quiet lifestyle of former years. It is a surface appearance that hearkens back to the times of domesticity's greatest public influence. Yet these descriptions are prominently cut by reminders of the town's march into urban modernity: the "shimmering blue of the electric arc-lamps," the "shrill electric street-car," and one young man's comparison of the bass horn to "the new engines on the hill pumping water" recall the reader to the changing life of the village (Crane 194, 198). As Jonathan Naito points out, "[Crane's] novella exhibits an unmistakable fascination with electricity and urban spectacle," and the representation Crane provides displays not only the changing

physical nature of the town but its changing cultural ideologies as well (43). Whilomville is transitioning from a family- and domestic-centered village to an urban model of life, mirroring the greater social changes of the time; the village and its citizens are negotiating the balance between the demands of the older, domestic paradigm and the newer public one.

The reader is quickly presented with the dissonance developing between the appearance of the old and the reality of the new. The gathering in the park is not an act of community but rather a performance: "Most of the young men of the town affected to be superior" to this quaint communal activity, coming only because the "girls were sure to attend" (Crane 197). The girls, likewise, are not there to socialize, as "there was no particular social aspect to this gathering" other than a detached viewing of other strolling groups of women (198). The sentimental village model, centered on personal openness and private, domestic character, is competing here with the detached model of public urbanity. The emphasis on the silent "strolling" recalls the image of the urban flâneur, another marker of Whilomville's transitional nature. The band has "some of the mannerisms of the great musicians" and even the theatre is "a varnish and red-plush miniature of one of the famous New York theatres," further revealing the town's continuing mimicry of metropolitan life as it attempts to grow into a city (198, 195). The transition from domestic to public, village to city, has changed the surface of Whilomville so far, and it is penetrating deeper all the time. As Naito sums up, "Crane's decision to name his fictional town 'Whilomville'—a name that literally means 'former-town'—seems less a nostalgic gesture than an attempt to foreground the profound social transformation occurring at this particular intersection of time and place" (43).

Cultural transformation is occurring not just on the public face of the town but in its citizens as well. Several of the novella's characters—most notably Henry Johnson, Dr. Trescott, and Martha Goodwin—live precariously in the strange netherworld of the peculiar institution, trapped between being a public figure and a domestic one. What Crane reveals through these characters is the increasing failure of sentimental domestic influence to generate anything akin to Stowe's "right feeling," the morally corrective or edifying dimension meant to temper the less sympathetic public behaviors. Instead, domestic influence in "The Monster" is itself corrupted and subject to moral infirmity. Ultimately, allegiance to domesticity as the source of personal strength and moral purpose is "punished" in various ways, placing

the characters in both literally and figuratively disfiguring positions, rendering them powerless and unable to exert positive moral influence in the public realm.

Perhaps the most overt example of this corrupted domesticity is Martha Goodwin, the sole woman in "The Monster" who seems to manifest real sympathy for the maimed Henry Johnson. Crane carefully presents Martha's position in the overlapping domestic and public space through a mix of confusing, heterodox concerns:

> Martha made definitions, but she devoted them entirely to the Armenians and Griscom and the Chinese and other subjects. Her dreams, which in early days had been of love, of meadows, and the shade of trees, of the face of a man were now involved otherwise, and they were companioned in the kitchen curiously, Cuba, the hot-water kettle, Armenia, the washing of the dishes, and the whole thing being jumbled. In regard to social misdemeanors, she who was simply the mausoleum of a dead passion was probably the most savage critic in town. This unknown woman, hidden in a kitchen as in a well, was sure to have a considerable effect of the one kind or the other in the life of the town. Every time it moved a yard, she had personally contributed an inch. (232-33)

The images and descriptions surrounding this troublesome woman situate her in a complex position: her world is a "jumble" of intermingled domestic and public concerns, of small-scale, local meddling and international, imperial ideology, clearly demonstrating the domestic-imperial connection Kaplan's text explores. Martha's position is one of contradictions, as "this woman of peace, who ha[s] only seen peace, argue[s] constantly for a creed of illimitable ferocity" completely out of step with her domesticity (232). The reactions of other characters to her are also jumbled and split: her brother-in-law "treat[s] Martha with a kindness that [is] half banter, half deference," and Carrie Dungen "to be sure, afterward, under another sun . . . always laughed at Martha and pretended to deride her ideas, but in the presence of the sovereign she always remain[s] silent or admiring," sitting "respectfully at Martha's feet [to] learn the business of the world" (232). Goodwin is an unmarried woman who takes over many of the duties of her married sister, placing her in a liminal space within the domestic circle; she is a "hidden" figure of some public influence, straddling the boundaries of public and domestic; she is both masculine and feminine, a peace-

ful woman preaching violence, stalking her kitchen "like Napoleon" and expounding on public subjects from her wholly domestic domain (232). The confusion of domestic and public, the unclear boundaries of Martha's knowledge, effects, and position in regard to public action are emphasized by the narrator's irony and sarcasm in describing the space she inhabits, culminating in the statement that her "situation was without definitions" despite being, as the narrator claims, one who makes them (232).

Yet even as Martha is poised to make a meaningful, moral statement of the kind we would expect from a Stowe character like Mrs. Bird, she is undercut rather than empowered by her domestic allegiances. When Carrie reveals the news about Trescott's encounter with Winter, Martha begins to evince what would seem like the moral position: refutation of the foolish mob and tolerance of Henry Johnson. On the verge of making this clear and pointed stand (perhaps the only one clearly articulated in the novella), Martha is sidetracked by a childish argument about Henry's frightening appearance, an encounter mirroring the dares issued by Jimmie Trescott and the neighborhood children as they challenge each other to touch "the monster." All hope for Martha's moral stand is lost when Carrie mentions the Hannigans's plans to move away from the Trescotts, her positive position undermined and destroyed by the domestic gossip in her own kitchen. The potential for edifying female influence quickly devolves into the "degraded position" and "cultural irresponsibility" Douglas posits as the fateful descent of a previously powerful domesticity (87).

The association of the typically masculine sun with Martha (Carrie is "under another sun" when out of her presence) recalls a similar association with another liminal character: Dr. Trescott, the "moon" for Henry and Jimmie. Dr. Trescott, like Martha Goodwin, is a character dwelling in the margins of the public/domestic divide; the feminine symbol of the moon reinforces this liminal position, pointing to the "nurturing masculine ethos" Morgan sees him as representing. The novella carefully presents Trescott's dual existence in the opening sections, as he is placed in control of both the masculine lawn—which he "was shaving"—and the feminine flowers (Crane 190). His response to Jimmie's accident with the peony is tellingly feminine, suggestive more than active or punishing: "'Well, Jimmie,' he said, slowly, 'I guess you had better not play train any more to-day. Do you think you had better?'" (191). The suggestive, maternal passivity of this response is highlighted by Henry, as he asks "Yer pop done wallop yer, didn't he?" revealing the difference between the expected masculine action and Trescott's more feminine approach (193). Along with his mixed

behavior comes a mixed physical environment: his office is in the home, as he "look[s] into the dining room" from the doorway (239), and the laboratory through which Henry runs during the fire is a converted apartment attached to a bedroom via a staircase (204). In fact, after the original house is destroyed, "the doctor's office [is] the first part to be completed" in the new house, a public center to the rest of the domestic surroundings (230).

The doctor's job, of course, already places him in a liminal space, as he is necessarily a public figure whose actions are closely linked to the nurturing and caretaking of the maternal, domestic realm. As Douglas helpfully mentions, women like Elizabeth Blackwell would "argue for [the] right to full participation in the medical profession" for women by virtue of the intrinsic power of "maternal nature" (76); in an especially revealing quote, Blackwell cited "the silent workings of [female] influence" to "mould body and soul" as a form of preventative healthcare by promoting healthier living and habits (qtd. in Romero 32-33). Trescott's role as maternal figure is most obvious in his link to Henry Johnson, as the preservation of Henry's life becomes a second birth of the man given up for dead by the public. Trescott becomes Henry's artificial mother and eventually his primary caregiver, the clear example of Morgan's "nurturing masculine ethos" that straddles the public/domestic divide and the seeming complement to Martha's un-nurturing and confrontational femininity.

Trescott, like Martha, pays a price for his acceptance of influence from the domestic realm, as he becomes a martyr for his mothering of Henry Johnson. Unlike Martha, who is foiled on the verge of her moral stand, Trescott attempts to take his stand but is unable to fully explain or support it. When the topic is discussed, Dr. Trescott can only offer that Johnson "saved his boy," an ambiguous statement of personal duty and indebtedness without a clear moral or ethical connection to his continuing actions; the choice to emphasize private obligation is in contrast to what may be expected from Trescott as a medical man, where his professional duty to preserve life when possible and to relinquish it when necessary is linked to a clearer, publicly understood ethical framework. The doctor's reliance on personal emotion and support from the sentimental and domestic quickly undermines his continuing moral stand. Many of the novella's male characters feel Trescott's sense of obligation to be correct—an echo of Stowe's sentimental injunction to "feel right" in Uncle Tom's Cabin—but they are incapable of fully explaining, agreeing with, or acting on it; instead of having their uncertain moral stances clarified and bolstered by the domestic

sphere, as in sentimental novels, the men are instead weakened by the unsympathetic private complaints and fears of the town's women.

As Michael Warner highlights in his discussion of "The Monster," Trescott's repeated invoking of "He saved my boy's life" and "What am I to do?" (Crane 213) sets up the unanswered problem the novella explores, the "right" thing to do:

> He repeats both of these sentences in order to emphasize both the conjunction and the disjunction between the two. He implies that his behavior is at once requisite and inscrutable, both eminently logical and quite inexplicable. "Conscience" and "virtue" are insufficient to bridge the gap between the sentences, and the whole ethical and legal tradition of locating judgments of morality in the quality of the intention behind the act becomes irrelevant. (Warner 85)

The doctor can only do what he feels is required of him with an ambiguous statement of obligation and confusion, his link to the nurturing ethos and domestic sphere opposing the publicly sanctioned action of unburdening, either through institutionalizing or euthanizing Henry. Tellingly, John Twelve links the maternal Trescott with the matronly Martha Goodwin when he calls the doctor's continuing refusal of public will "infernal pig-headedness" (Crane 245), the final adjective used to describe Martha in her introduction to the reader as a "pigheaded creature, who alone would defy the universe if she thought the universe merited this proceeding" (233). The reckoning against Dr. Trescott's morality comes in the form of specifically domestic retribution, rather than the expected domestic edification: Grace Trescott's Wednesday social visit is seemingly boycotted, the culmination of the growing pettiness and unsympathetic response of the town's private sphere toward Trescott's principled stand. Dr. Trescott mechanically counts the unused teacups at Grace's party, another automatic, unfocused response to pain that parallels to his repetitious verbal responses to the increasingly corrupted public will regarding Henry Johnson.

The character in the most radical of conflicted positions is, of course, the "monster," Henry Johnson. Johnson is, at first, an impeccable example of the separation of the private and public spheres, undergoing a complete transformation from domestic servant to man-about-town, including affectations of speech. As Charles W. Mayer frames this ability, "Henry Johnson is the consummate player of roles, and he plays them with distinction and pride. As hostler he performs skillfully, imitating his 'moon' and master, Dr. Trescott. After work,

Henry becomes a parody of a white gentleman, Whilomville being a perfect backdrop for his 'demonstration' in lavender trousers" (32). Henry's position as a caretaker of importance—the master of the stable currently, after "he had once held office as a sort of second assistant house-maid" (202)—helps to establish him as a main character in the Trescott domestic situation; his relationship with Jimmie, particularly Henry's tendency to both sympathize with the child and to "bully him most virtuously" in parodic acts of edification, presents him in a strangely maternal light (192). As he is in his public guise, where he is a "parody of a white gentleman," in his private guise he is a parody of a mother, washing horses instead of children, providing sympathy and moral instruction, and warning Jimmie not to dirty his clothes. While this humorous representation may tend to efface somewhat Henry's role as a transmitter of domestic influence, his close relationship with Jimmie and the multiple associations with domestic authority work to establish Henry as an important member of the domestic sphere in his role as servant.

Along with his projection as a kind of maternal figure in his role as hostler, Henry is also clearly paralleled to Mrs. Trescott during his heroic rescue of Jimmie from the fire, by both the "reediness" used to describe each character's instability—her arms are "two reeds" (202) and he has "reedy legs" (204)—and Jimmie's cries of "Mam-ma! Mam-ma!" when Henry rescues him from his room (204). Henry's flexibility of roles, "the elasticity of his race," allows him to navigate easily between the two separate spheres, giving him the ability to change from domestic servant to "the biggest dude in town" both internally and externally (192, 196). Only when Henry dashes into the domestic space of the home while in his public guise does his ability to keep the spheres entirely separate become compromised; both of his identities are destroyed as his face is destroyed by chemicals and fire, and he becomes subject to the peculiar institution of domesticity in an entirely new way.

Henry's rebirth from the flames of Trescott's laboratory makes him vulnerable to the pressures of an increasingly unsympathetic and hostile domestic influence, a similar vulnerability to that of both Martha Goodwin and Dr. Trescott. While African Americans were already routinely infantilized by society—Crane notably describes a poor black man as "a vain and simple child" in "Stephen Crane in Minetta Lane"—Henry's traumatic experience has rendered him truly helpless and childlike, forever relegated to care by adults despite being an adult and former caregiver himself (qtd. in Cleman 123). His attempts to return to his previous existence as a prime mover between spheres only

reinforce his loss of access to the public arena, as his escape from Alek Williams's farm leads to an angry mob chasing and attempting to stone him. Henry's freedom of straddling the public and domestic spheres dissipates when his previous life is destroyed and he becomes both a public and a private burden, landing him squarely in the marginal space between the two spheres, a place likewise occupied in different capacities by Martha and Trescott.

That Henry Johnson suffers from his allegiance to the domestic is hardly worth stating; his entire life is destroyed by his heroics in the name of protecting the domestic realm, a domestic realm that is initially hesitant and then virtually unwilling to reciprocate such a sacrifice. Henry's journey into the conflicted spaces of public and domestic within the Trescott house is accompanied by a vivid metaphorical revelation of the potential dangers that await others who allow a corrupted domesticity undue influence over them. The public-yet-private space of Trescott's laboratory has become "a garden in the region where might be burning flowers," a reverse Eden where the feminized pastorality is itself the danger to its would-be protectors (205). Henry's destruction comes at the hands of "a delicate, trembling sapphire shape like a fairy lady," who "with a quiet smile . . . blocked his path and doomed him and Jimmie" (205). The "scintillating and writhing serpent" attacks not Eve but her male substitute in the burning garden: Henry, the effeminate dandy in lavender trousers (205).

Besides the three main characters stuck in the marginal space between spheres, there are a host of others placed in uncomfortable and conflicted positions by damaging domestic influence. Notably, most of the furor and unrest in Whilomville comes in the form of complaints regarding the safety of the women and children whose protection is one of the sacred duties of the masculine ethos: Alek Williams brings his complaint to Judge Hagenthorpe on behalf of his wife and children; Mr. Winter's anger at Dr. Trescott is based on the apparent injury to his daughter's health; the Hannigans are moving away from the Trescotts because of Mrs. Hannigan's disgust with the veiled form of Henry Johnson. When the "four very active and influential" village elders come to Trescott's house, the source of their concerns over Henry is made apparent: "A man who had not spoken before said, solemnly, 'It's the women'" (244, 245).

The continued pressures of a corrupted domestic influence on the public sphere are manifested throughout the text by the inability of the men to adequately explain or address the issues at hand. When faced with the need to verbalize moral concerns, the men are struck with

inarticulateness, unable to find words to convey clearly the meaning necessary: "Guess there isn't much of him [Henry] to hurt anymore," the police chief says; "No, they never touched him. Of course nobody really wanted to hit him, but you know how a crowd gets. It's like—it's like—" (230). The meeting of the town elders and Dr. Trescott reveals the same thing:

> "But I have a little no-good farm up beyond Clarence Mountain that I was going to give to Henry," cried Twelve, aggrieved. "And if you—and if you—if you—through your house burning down, or anything—why, all the boys were prepared to take him right off your hands, and—and—" (245-46)

Carol Hurd Green claims that "the men of Whilomville are doubly impotent, before their own inarticulateness and moral inadequacy in the face of Trescott's virtue, and before the simplistic fury of the women. . . . They take refuge in blaming them" (90), but this is not completely the case. As shown earlier, Trescott himself is incapable of truly articulating himself in his attempts to justify his actions; the other village elders, when left to their own devices, seem to be perfectly willing to leave Trescott and Henry alone. "It's the women," as one man says, that seem to be inciting the greater public outcry against the well-meaning doctor; rather than inspiring moral action, as Mrs. Bird does in her confrontation with her husband over slave law legislation in Uncle Tom's Cabin, domestic influence is undermining it, destroying rather than encouraging articulate and clear behavior.

While "it's the women" is certainly an act of placing blame, it is also statement of the cause behind the meeting with Trescott, the source of pressure to translate into action the ambiguous "feelings" of the private sphere's "fury." Whether or not the men are acting directly as a result of feminine influence or simply using women and children as an excuse for what they perceive as an unsavory business, it is on the behalf of women and children that they force the issue. The derailment of Martha Goodwin's moral stand by the town's gossip, along with actions of women like Mrs. Hannigan, seems to indicate that it is, in fact, "the women" who are generating the negative tide of sentiments against Henry Johnson and Dr. Trescott. As Kaplan says of sentimental novels, "the plots of these novels are propelled in part by the effort to reconstitute the domestic sphere, both by enlarging its domain beyond the narrow definition of familial bloodlines and by purging it of the foreign bodies this expansion incorporates" (44); in "The Monster"'s capacity as a rebuttal to the sentimental novel, we see this very action

carried out quite clearly. The elders come on behalf of a domestic sphere that presents itself as representing the concerns of not just families but the "family" of Whilomville as a whole; this same family is seeking to eliminate the alien Henry Johnson and to ostracize the wayward Trescott. Sympathy is increasingly withheld by the domestic rather than extended, and the image of the endangered family is used to purge the bodies rendered foreign by this withholding.

Unfortunately, most of the novel's suffering also seems to be centered on the domestic sphere and its primary inhabitants, the women, children, and minorities of Whilomville. Alek Williams's children and wife are terrified by the faceless, insane Henry Johnson to the point where they can barely function, unable to eat or sleep, ostracized by other members of the community. "Yeh see, Jedge," Alek reveals, "my ol' 'ooman she cain't 'ceive no lady callahs, nohow," eventually saying even his friends have stopped calling (Crane 217-18). A similar ostracizing occurs at the novella's end, when Grace Trescott's usual Wednesday tea is attended by only Mrs. Twelve; as John Twelve has made clear that he supports Trescott and is only there under pressure of the "large number of people who are very thoughtless fools," it seems entirely possible that his wife has attended Grace's tea only at his behest, inverting the traditional relationship of moral compulsion from the wife to the husband (245). When Henry escapes from Williams's farm, his "fine career while he [is] out" consists almost entirely of unintentionally frightening women and children: Sadie Winter is sent home from the Pages' party in hysterics, "an Irish girl thr[ows] a fit," and the Farraguts are scattered from their home, with Mrs. Farragut injured while escaping over a fence (228, 230). Even Eddie Hannigan's relatively harmless play in the Trescott's backyard near the veiled figure of Henry Johnson draws screams from Mrs. Hannigan "as if she [is] being murdered," with the next mention of her revealing the family's plans to move away from the Trescotts (237). It seems that Henry's presence creates a vicious circle of unrest and failed actions in the domestic sphere, as the women and children become simultaneously the source of domestic pressures on the public realm and the victims of its continuing failure to achieve an acceptable outcome. Crane presents an inversion of the sentimental novel's vision of the power of female influence: the women are portrayed as a source not of moral strength but of weakness, their influence increasingly petty, unsympathetic, and damaging to the community. If, as scholars like Lears, Matthews, and Douglas hold, the power of the domestic sphere to edify and improve public action was dwindling, Crane has provided a worthwhile repre-

sentation of how quickly that transformation could occur.

In discussing "The Open Boat," Robert Shulman posits that "Crane was in part responding to one of the deepest tendencies of his American society, its tendency to isolate individuals, to fragment selves and relations, and to substitute technological, contractual, and bureaucratic ties for those of human compassion and community" (442-43). This assessment fits perfectly with "The Monster" as well, a work concerned with social order and its breakdown in the face of shifting cultural imperatives surrounding the moral place of domestic influence. The changing social values Crane weaves into "The Monster" highlight one of the principal concerns expressed in his fiction, what Michael Warner calls "a problematic of judication" (78). Many critics have noted the difficulty of making moral judgments in "The Monster" and much of Crane's other work, and Warner outlines the mechanics of this difficulty as a part of Crane's aesthetic: "Crane gives the reader a sequence of judgments to make that he will then disallow. He invites us to make distinctions about the surface and the interior . . . not in order to turn around and give us different distinctions about surface and interior, but to frustrate the whole attempt" (81).

This is a very different strategy from that of a writer like Stowe, whose heavy-handed sermonizing makes perfectly clear what she perceives as the text's moral direction; Crane's reader is left unable to determine whose side Crane is really on, that of the crowd, the individual, or somewhere in between. Moral judgments are virtually unavailable in the cloud of irony and ambivalence that marks Crane's fiction, highlighting the same difficulty carefully ignored in a work like Uncle Tom's Cabin: the reader is to "feel right," but what does that mean? More importantly, how does one act on these right feelings in a world more nuanced than that of the typical sentimental novel? The sermon of the sentimental novel, as "The Monster" helps to make clear through a different application of similar principles, is often frustratingly silent in that regard. What Crane presents to the reader, then, is a novella for a new, evolving social and cultural landscape, a text that "frustrate[s] the whole attempt" to operate in the older modes of judgment. Instead of moralizing on the shifting balance of the public and domestic paradigms in the 1890s, Crane simply depicts the transition through the lens of a struggling domestic sphere and its influence on the realm of public masculinity, a rewriting of the sentimental novel of the century's first half.

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"The Brown Battle"

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"The Brown Battle" appears in the Michiganensian, the University of Michigan yearbook, in 1899.

> Out on the blue-gray sodden field, the brown battle was being fought. The yellow and blue heroes were hurling back the maroon warriors. There was a yellow tensity about the air. Back in the deep-banked grand stands waited the thousands,—and waited and cheered.
>
> The waving tumult of flags is silent now. The pallid faces grow gray in the cool, white, November sunshine. There a stumbling, hustling, struggling, running figure has broken loose. The kaleidoscope is shattered. The blue and yellow men are fighting off the maroon ones who follow the fleeting mud-brown figure. The red race is won. Widman the mighty, the fleet of foot, has conquered.
>
> A great gray sigh of relief went up and the volume white-hot cheer arose. A maroon flag fell to the earth; its owner said "Hell" and the yellow and blue girl at his side heard it and rejoiced in her heart. (344)

The title of this short piece appears over a byline "By a Senior Named Stephen Crane" (hence the use of the writer's palette of colors); otherwise, there is no indication of the piece's actual author.

"The Brown Battle" celebrates an actual football game, the University of Michigan's victory over the University of Chicago's "Maroons" on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1898, a victory which gave Michigan its first undefeated season (12-0) and its first championship in the Western Conference. The game was played in Chicago at Marshall Field before a crowd of 12,000. The game featured two touchdowns (one for 65 yards) by Michigan's Charles Widman, the left halfback.[1]

Note

1. "1898 Michigan Wolverines football team," Wikipedia.

Stephen Crane Took the Oars too and Slept Here; Being a Tale of His Unintended Voyage and His Bed and Breakfast Stay in Daytona

John Mann
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Now known as "The World's Most Famous Beach," Daytona, Florida, in 1897 had more than just a casual connection with one-time and quite accidental visitor, Stephen Crane. Sure, Daytona has been a destination for lots of people in the last hundred years. And some tourists even have had a bit of trouble getting here. The car breaks down on an endless stretch of I-95 in one of the Carolinas. You sit on the tarmac in JFK for three hours and then taxi back to the gate. The kids are impossible to entertain on the plane or in the car—all the usual hassles of traveling. However, without exaggeration, it can be said that the passenger manifest of Stephen Crane, Edward Murphy, and Charles Montgomery was, without a doubt, a group of the luckiest travelers ever to finally arrive on Daytona's beautiful shore. On second thought, nobody else, to our knowledge, ever got here the way they did, either.

Of course, readers, we're really talking about Crane's "The Open Boat."

To be precise, there are two sites in the Daytona area—an elegant, red lighthouse, the third tallest in the United States, and a turn-of-the-twentieth-century prominent local family's home—that played a huge part in this Daytona association with Crane and his open boat; and truly, it was one of the most significant events in Crane's life and his writing.

To celebrate that Crane-Daytona connection, Dr. Paul Sorrentino of Virginia Tech along with retired Jacksonville University Professor of English Elizabeth Friedmann presented a series of open-to-the public workshops at those two settings, the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, a National Historic Landmark, and Lilian Place, listed on the National Historic Register, on March 26, 2011. Sorrentino and Friedmann brought a refreshing and profoundly interesting new light to famous American author and literary figure, Stephen Crane, his devoted companion, Cora Crane, and a firsthand recounting of the discovery of the wreck of the Commodore.

We all know that after the Commodore sank on January 2, 1897, some twelve miles out to sea from the then aptly named Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse, Crane and three other men rowed an incredibly small, ten-

foot-long dinghy, which really was not meant to serve as their lifeboat, toward the light and shape of a lighthouse on the horizon. Since 1927 that beacon has been called the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, still lit, and widely acknowledged as the foremost restored light station and lighthouse museum in the United States. When the exhausted Crane and the two others were rescued from the brutally cold and rough winter surf after their thirty-hour ordeal, he recuperated at Lilian Place, the oldest beachside Daytona Beach house, the home of the prominent Lawrence Thompson family.

We all know that the incognito Crane signed onboard the gun-running ship as an able-bodied seaman, something he actually proved to be. We know he was actually employed to write a newspaper account on the exciting, rough-and-tumble experience and exploits of filibustering. In truth, he got a bit more than he had originally bargained for. Crane's newspaper account and report of his misadventures ultimately became his signature short story, "The Open Boat."

Why a Stephen Crane Festival? Allow me to introduce myself and give some background. I am a volunteer docent at the lighthouse, who also does a pretty good first-person interpretation of the Commodore's captain, Edward Murphy, for the present-day lighthouse museum's school and community-outreach programs. I had the view, as did present and past lighthouse staff, that our Crane efforts were sorely in need of expansion and updating. Our deliberations sought a way to be more actively involved with Crane, even beyond our outreach programs and the lighthouse permanent and traveling exhibits on Crane, filibustering, and the great short story. Oh, and let's not forget the splendid array of artifacts brought up from the Commodore's wreck on display.

At the same time, volunteer-managed Lilian Place was exploring, on its own, ways to share its heritage with the community. Newly saved from developers and situated on the beautiful Halifax River, the recently restored house-museum was going through the same "identity crisis" that the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and museum went through some forty years ago. Lilian Place, a stately Italianate Victorian built in 1884 had earlier in the year begun to offer general house tours, programs, and even ghost tours. The lighthouse staff, remembering its own early history after the light station itself was saved by an equally eager group of volunteers from vandalism and possible demolition as "excess Federal Government" property, decided to partner with Lilian Place on a celebratory and enrichment program with "our" mutual Crane as the connection.

Holding an event or commemorative lectures or presentations on the same day at both sites was a natural. The two museums, only eight miles apart, teamed up with the idea of a Stephen Crane Festival. It became the tie that binds. A March weekend date was selected by lighthouse Executive Director Ed Gunn and Lilian Place chair Nancy Long to coincide with Florida Heritage Month.

Various kinds of commemorative events were discarded as too ambitious or too restrictive. One of the many reasons why volunteering at our lighthouse is so rewarding, say most of our lighthouse volunteers, is the encouragement we are all given to bring new ideas to the table as far as events, tours, and museum outreach. I personally volunteer here because I love every aspect of lighthouses, I like to interact with kids and people, and I am encouraged to go "off script and hands-on" with new ideas for programs. The Stephen Crane Day is a good example.

The notion was that the lighthouse and Lilian Place had the real Crane locations to share with people. The solution was to try to bring bona fide Crane notables here to help us learn more and to share that "real Crane" and his work with our communities.

I reached out to Sorrentino by email, asking him if he would suggest a member of the Stephen Crane Society to speak. He graciously agreed to do so himself. Friedmann, a friend and colleague of Sorrentino, and an acquaintance who had attended a Murphy performance of mine and didn't boo me off the stage, was also amiable in her assenting to present.

Two sessions, morning and afternoon, were given by Sorrentino, on the lawn of Lilian Place under tents. Sorrentino, an award-winning college teacher, Guggenheim Fellow, and Professor of English at Virginia Tech is, of course, the author of the eagerly awaited, definitive biography of Crane, to be published by Harvard University Press. He spoke entertainingly and good-naturedly about writing his new biography and the exhaustive and sometimes nerve-wracking, literary investigating he did to track down the real Stephen Crane.

"Sorrentino is in the final weeks of writing what will likely become the definitive Crane biography," wrote Mark Lane, in a column for the Daytona Beach News Journal. Sorrentino said he took on the work innocently enough, figuring that a biography of a guy who died at 28 would be a quick turnaround. That was almost thirty years ago. Over the years, his literary sleuthing would turn up misinformation in much-cited biographies and an unexpected cache of never-published letters. And now that the closing chapters are being written, Sorrentino says, "'I'm struggling to say goodbye to him,'" concluded Lane.

The second set of workshops was conducted concurrently by Friedmann, who has also written extensively on the life of Cora Crane. "While Crane was a rebel in American letters, Cora was a very modern woman, indeed, for turn-of-the-twentieth-century Florida or anywhere. No shrinking Victorian violet, she ran the most discrete and selective 'men's sporting club' for the time, in then wide-open Jacksonville. She was devoted to him until his dying day. Cora also had several fascinating experiences after Crane's death. Never formally married to Crane, her tombstone is engraved CORA CRANE," said Friedmann.

Freidman's earlier curiosity and interest in Crane and the story of the Commodore led her to successfully dive to, identify and "discover" the actual wreck of the Commodore in 1986. She devoted part of her workshops to unfolding the chronicle of her actual dives to the ship with pictures of the wreck site. The other half of Friedmann's workshop gave Cora her due. It was a splendid, in-depth look at Cora, the modern woman, devoted companion, and soul mate.

"It's a shame that this area's one brush with lasting literary fame had to come from a tragedy at sea and a visit from an author (Crane) who had no intention of ending up here and would never come back. Still, we'll take our close brushes with literary greatness where we can find it," said Lane.

The Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, an engineering marvel and the tallest lighthouse in Florida, is a National Historic Landmark and is dedicated to the preservation and education of the historic and social impact the lighthouse had on the development of Florida. Lilian Place is maintained by the Heritage Preservation and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Lilian Place is recognized for its uniqueness as an architectural delight and its importance to the history of Daytona Beach. All proceeds went to the foundations.

Black Frankenstein: The Making of an American Metaphor. By Elizabeth Young. New York: New York UP, 2008. xii + 308 pp. Paper $24.00.

Machine and Metaphor: The Ethics of Language in American Realism. By Jennifer Carol Cook. New York: Routlege, 2007. viii +161 pp. Hardcover $125.00.

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These two books, both focused on metaphor, each contain a chapter on Crane's "The Monster." Elizabeth Young explores the importance of the "Black Frankenstein" metaphor in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American culture, in which "the figure of the monster is consistently intertwined with fantasies and anxieties about masculinity, relations between men, and the male iconography of the American nation." The Frankenstein story, which appears in American "fiction, essays, oratory, film, painting, and other media, and in works by both whites and African Americans. . . . signifies symbolically, on the domestic American scene, as black" (5). Her first chapter covers connections between the Frankenstein story and the Nat Turner slave revolt, referring to the work of Margaret Fuller, Herman Melville, and Frederick Douglass; also under discussion are Henry Louis Stephens and Charles Sumner. The legal dimensions of miscegenation and the language of African-American uplift are also analyzed. Chapters 2 and 3 focus upon the literary works of Crane and Paul Laurence Dunbar. Chapter 4 turns to twentieth-century American Frankenstein versions including the Thomas Edison's 1910 film Frankenstein, D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation (1915), James Whale's iconic films Frankenstein (1931) and Bride of Frankenstein (1935), and Blaxploitation film Blackenstein (1973). At this point some digressions ensue that cause the book to lose its coherence, such as the extended treatments of Dick Gregory and the painter Glen Ligon. However throughout the book the unifying theme is how the "Frankenstein story of monstrous sons and haunted fathers throws U. S. racial formations into high relief" (7).

The discussion of "The Monster" in chapter 2 regards Crane's focus in the story as on metaphor rather than racial justice, and most Crane scholars, few of whom are cited, would agree. However, the chapter also asserts Crane's "political critique" of racism (97), which is eventually undone by Crane's interest in metaphor. The discussion of the real-life William

Henry Johnson, a black man known as a "pinhead" and exhibited under the title, "What Is It?" in freak shows, is intriguing. The discussion of Henry as a dandy provides some good period context. The character Henry Johnson's emergence from the fire without his face is called a "monstrous birth." The overall argument that Crane uses "figurative imagery that calls attention to its status as figuration," so that he is primarily interested in "surfaces," is persuasive, as is the sense in the story that the white townspeople are actually dependent upon "monster metaphors" to explain race (97). An interesting parallel is drawn between the window scenes in the two works, and the metaphors of veils, bandages, and masks are intriguingly compared. Her conclusion is that "Crane's exploration of metaphor . . . often supports but in the end overwhelms his antiracist allegory" (104).

Young occasionally falls victim to ideas that, to say the least, seem a stretch, as when she asserts that the Black Frankenstein tradition helps explain the "interracial male buddy story so central to American culture" (10). The idea that "Shelley's Frankenstein monster . . . is a metaphor for metaphor itself" (12) leads to a confusing and not particularly insightful discussion of metaphor as theory in chapter 2 ("In so doing, the monster functions as a metaphor for metaphor by literalizing the operations of metaphor itself" [72]). Also, calling Shelley's monster "low-browed" (14) seems off the mark. A number of important versions of the Frankenstein story are not even mentioned; I suggest the author turn to the near-comprehensive Frankenstein Omnibus (1994) edited by Peter Haining. Indeed, there is a curious lack of scholarship on Shelley's actual novel, as well as a limited sense of scholarship on its reappearances.

Jennifer Carol Cook's Machine and Metaphor seeks to read American literary realism within the context of technological innovation beginning at the turn of the century. Chapter One treats Twain, chapter Two Crane, chapter Three Charles Chesnutt, chapter Four Edith Wharton, and chapter Five Sherwood Anderson.

Cook has some problems with documentation (such as not citing notes for direct quotes, mentioning sources only by last name), she occasionally reaches too far (as with socio-linguistics), and she strays from her thesis quite often, but especially in her first chapter on Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, but the book offers a solid set of discussions on the presence of technology within the artistic genre of realism.

Her chapter on "The Monster" begins with a discussion of the "collective voice of the town" (45). The citizens of Whilomville speak too uniformly, especially when conforming to racial demarcations.

Cook reads them as machine-like in their responses. Her discussion of the various forms of technology present in the story, "electric lamps and arc lamps, telegraphs, machines, a factory and its accompanying whistle, a new engine pumping water on the hill," is insightful (47). Such technology is paralleled by Crane with the "social reflex at the heart of the story—the unthinking reactions and iterations of Whilomville's 'mob'" (47). She also observes that "Crane's rhetoric challenges the use of clichés in its very repetition of them. . . . He exposes the dangers of a conformist language and advocates the courage it would take to find a voice that could challenge it" (61).

Contributors' Notes

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