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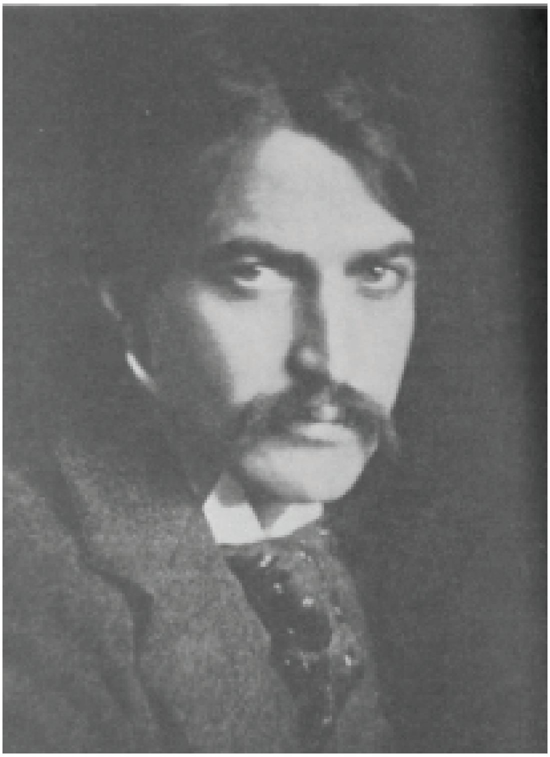

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

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Keeping War at a Distance: Good Deaths, Postmortem Imagery, and Unresolved Grief in *The Red Badge of Courage*

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Speaking to the paradox of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) being recognized as the classic American Civil War novel while saying very little about that war, Amy Kaplan has written that "Crane divorces the Civil War from its historical context by conspicuously avoiding the political, military, and geographical coordinates of the 1860s" (78). As an account disinvested of the war's overarching aim of emancipation, Crane's novel does nevertheless reflect its own cultural milieu in representing what historian David W. Blight has termed the reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory. Rooted in the processes of honoring the war's dead during the war and into the postbellum period, the reconciliationist vision is marked by its impetus to celebrate and memorialize white reunion vis-à-vis selective remembrance by veterans and civilians. In emphasizing what Unionists and Confederates shared in their proximity to war and death—such as "the pleasing pathos of soldiers' mutual valor"—the reconciliationist vision is easily detectable in the novel's privileging of the bravery of white soldiers while eliding the war's racial causes and incomplete emancipatory effects (Blight 13). The extent to which *The Red Badge of Courage* ignores the Civil War as an ideological conflict between northerners and southerners furtively suggests that there was no conflict. That such a paradoxical interpretation "has been substituted for the history of the war" is illustrative not only of the impact of the ideologies of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, but can also be traced to ways in which grief, denial, and death figured in nineteenth-century American culture (Nolan 12).

Many scholars have recognized Crane's peculiar proficiency in conveying authorial legitimacy on the topic of war when he experientially possessed none. But protagonist Henry Fleming's forays into battle predominantly convey denial of war over acceptance, so that Crane's ability to convincingly write on war owes to his ability to speculatively write on death. Interestingly, Crane's knack for capturing the grievous experience of combat plays off of domestic customs of mourning that underscored civilian lives before and after the war. Recent scholarship including Drew Gilpin Faust's *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2008) and Mark S. Schantz's *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (2008) have drawn attention to myriad links between antebellum ideologies of dying properly and the extent to which the magnitude of death produced by the Civil War necessitated revisions to such practices. Demonstrating the idea that soldiers were compelled to "die well" so that their loved ones could mourn well, Faust and Schantz's works yield added perspective to *The Red Badge of Courage* which, this essay argues, mourns participating in combat as much as—and likely more so than—dying in combat. Positing Crane's novel as a latter-day, performative version of grieving the war's individual effects not only serves to situate his work more closely to the era he sought to depict, but also exposes Crane's participation in the trend—perceptible in social customs, photography, and literature—of eliciting specific responses to the war's consequences from the ways in which they were rendered.

This essay begins by contextualizing Civil War death and mourning in relation to antebellum ideologies of dying. Next considered is a brief genealogy of nineteenth-century postmortem photography that serves to demonstrate the nation's familiarity, fascination, and terror with death. Following this, Fleming's outright denials of war are treated at length in arguing that Crane's protagonist very clearly mirrors the Civil War nation's proclivity to accept death and war in symbolically reconciliatory ways. In other words, Fleming's cyclical encounters with grief in the novel are revealed as both reminiscent and reflective of America's own issues of coping with the consequences of war. This viewpoint directly yields the essay's final consideration which indicates that *The Red Badge of Courage* does not merely emblematize the reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory, but that such memory of the war was largely facilitated by those cultural factors—Good Deaths, postmortem and war photography, and grieving—addressed in this paper's three sections.

Battling Grief: America's Culture of (Good) Death in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

In situating Crane's work more closely to the culture and era he sought to depict, it is worthwhile to first consider the culturally significant practice of Good Deaths existing prior to and modified during the Civil War. Good Deaths were integral to the mid-nineteenth century American experience and stressed ars moriendi, the "art of dying." Of theological significance in preparing men and women for the afterlife, a Good Death emphasized the importance of dying in the company of kin, securing the confirmation of religious belief, and extracting the holy implication of one's last words. Drew Gilpin Faust suggests that by the 1860s "many elements of the Good Death had been . . . separated from their explicitly theological roots and had become as much a part of respectable middle-class behavior and expectation in North and South as they were the product or emblem of any particular religious affiliation" (7). The calamity and suddenness of death in war bore further transformations to the Good Death. In improvising the meaning of death away from one's family and friends, soldiers' lives in their final letters home were qualitatively measured in having died bravely, manfully, and patriotically.

Whether in domestic spaces or arenas of combat, the major characteristic of a Good Death was the same: performativity. Entered into theatres of war, civilians-turned-soldiers were compelled to improvise performances or aid in carrying out renditions of Good Deaths when seemingly grave circumstances necessitated doing so. Crane demonstrates cognizance of this fact during the scene in which the "loud soldier," Wilson, presents

Fleming with his belongings amidst dread of dying in his first battle. Wilson says, "'I'm a gone coon this first time and—and I w-want you to take these here things—to—my—folks.' He ended in a quavering sob of pity for himself. He handed the youth a little packet done up in a yellow envelope" (27). Wilson's envelope likely contained items that could aid in signifying a Good Death away from home, thereby providing a token of closure on the home front. Personal keepsakes, locks of hairs, and letters communicating soldiers' prearranged words and thoughts were only the most common mementos to be included in such parcels.

The fact that Wilson anticipates and readily accepts his death upholds a theme of fatalism in the first half of Crane's novel and also provides a view of the degree to which his preparations for death give the affair an element of performativity. For Fleming, the packet—and the theatrical fashion by which he is forced to assume responsibility of its delivery—serves as a future bargaining chip to be held over the cowardly head of Wilson, a transaction illustrative of Fleming's lack of familiarity with the sentimental etiquette of camp life. Like Wilson, Fleming has a set role to play in complying with the wishes of his endangered comrade. Inculcated to construct, make preparations for, and respect fellow soldiers' rights to Good Deaths, the function and fetishization of parcels like that of Wilson suggest that Civil War soldiers were predisposed to dramatically acquiescing to death.

Picturing Death:
Postmortem and War Photography's Resonances in Crane's War

Though people living before and during the Civil War were accustomed to death in ways that would be difficult for modern Americans to comprehend, this is not to say that they were especially accepting of death. As anthropologist Jay Ruby has observed, "postmortem photography was socially acceptable and publicly acknowledged in nineteenth-century America" with such images serving as "a normal part of the inventory of many families—displayed in wall frames and albums along with other family pictures" (110). Beginning in the antebellum period, photographs of the dead – most often infants and young children—were arranged as serene scenes that featured the dead not so much dead as "asleep." As Lucy Frank has noted, "these carefully arranged pictures offered comfort by reinforcing the sacredness of family love and reaffirming the notion that the strength of affective ties could exceed death" (169). Unlike such sentimental tableaus, though, war photographs of swollen and sullied corpses resisted assimilation into any sentimental framework. If postmortem photographs attempted to refuse death's reality in some way, photographs of the war's carnage forced viewers to come to terms with death on unprecedented terms.

Mark S. Schantz has written that Civil War photography was something of an amalgam of visual representations in vogue prior to its inception. On one hand, major photographers of the Civil War like Alexander Gardner and Mathew Brady were keen to mimic the work of nineteenth-century landscape painters with their visions of the "pastoral" in American life (Schantz 187). On the other hand, exhibitions such as Brady's 1862 "The Dead at Antietam" captivated and disturbed the public in its deviation from the pastoral tradition's focus on panoramic landscapes. While much has been written on the manipulation of these images and repositioning of corpses (which were sometimes live soldiers or photographers' assistants), the "doctoring" of these visualizations is rather immaterial when considering the reactions they elicited (Kaufman 114).

Public crowds were as enthralled as they were dismayed with artistic exhibitions of the Civil War's destruction. In a useful cataloguing of such a phenomenon, a *New York Times* write-up on Brady's exhibit attempted to evaluate the effects that "The Dead at Antietam" had on viewers: "if [Brady] has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it" (5). The author of the *Times* article conjectured that Brady's work served to bring the war home to viewers. Perhaps more significant was the way in which crowds were said to respond to their newfound close proximity to the war's dead: "there is a terrible fascination [that] draws one near these pictures, and makes him loth [sic] to leave them" (5). As should be evident, the cultural fascination with Civil War death was two-pronged in that images of the dead were, in the first instance, repellent by virtue of their grotesqueness. Yet on second consideration, photographs of the Civil War dead invited scrutiny and a mesmerizing sense of intrigue.

An early scene in *The Red Badge of Courage* tips its hat to the repugnant yet strangely alluring qualities that the dead have on observers. When Fleming's company marches past an anonymous dead soldier, the ranks are said to have "opened covertly to avoid the corpse. The invulnerable dead man forced a way for himself" (22). Soon after, and in a passage quite similar to the *Times* article's observation that crowds "ben[t] down to look in the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men's eyes," Crane writes that the youth "vaguely desired to walk around and around the body and stare; the impulse of the living to try to read in dead eyes the answer to the Question" (22). Thus, while representations of death in *The Red Badge of Courage* are somewhat scant for a novel about war, those that are included entail considerable engagement with Civil War-era views of photography.

To cite an additional example, the death of Fleming's unspoken mentor in the novel, Jim, broadly mirrors death in Civil War photography in the fact that the "tall soldier" categorically resists assimilation into a sentimental framework of dying. Seemingly, such unassimilability is carried out by Jim's own volition. Crane writes, "There was something rite-like in these movements of the doomed soldier. . . . At last, they saw [Jim] stop and stand motionless. Hastening up, they perceived that his face wore an expression telling that he had at last found the place for which he had struggled" (55). In having Jim reject the tenets of a Good Death in battle—e.g., he selects a secluded spot to die, shuns the company of comrades, and annihilates the opportunity that his last words would be heard or recorded—Crane disallows the chance of there being any particular method to the madness of Jim's death. Conveying death's unpredictability and impreciseness, Crane's depiction of Jim's death would have been read as culturally offensive not only because the soldier died anonymously, but also as owing to the "doomed soldier's" effort to willingly evade knowability in death. Unlike the earlier dead soldier the youth had "vaguely desired to walk around and around," Jim attempts to remove his dead body from the sight of others, thereby becoming unknowable and unseeable.

Read through the contexts of postmortem and war photography, Jim's aim in becoming either anonymous or unnoticeable in death signals his intent to reject assimilation into frameworks where the "meaning" of the dead is ceded to their viewability by the living. But such an objective fails to realize the emergence of a new framework—of which Crane's novel itself is a prime example—for ascribing meaning to the Civil War dead via memory and memorialization. In a recent article on the anonymity of Civil War dead, Ian Finseth posits that realist texts like Crane's "formulate a crucial paradox: they show the Civil War dead to possess a fundamentally unknowable identity, agency, or experience, while simultaneously functioning as tokens in a larger symbolic and cultural economy" (546). Just as the dead who became unknown or unknowable were horrifying to loved ones who yearned closure, their anonymity also yielded unrivaled potential for reconciliation. Reappropriated as soldiers who died for and belonged to the nation, the universalizing agent of anonymity laid the foundations for sectional reconciliation as well as the reconciliationist view of Civil War memory. As such, accepting deaths of "missing" soldiers was—as in the case of Good Deaths, sentimental literature, and postmortem photography—largely forestalled. Instead, the promise of national commemoration became a substitute for closure in the bereavement of unknown soldiers' families, thereby leaving both national and familial cycles of grief in ambiguous states of resolution and resolvability.

Denying Battle:
Unresolved Grief in *The Red Badge of Courage*

Over a century after the American Civil War, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross put forth a hypothesis on the five stages of grief in her seminal work *On Death and Dying* (1969). Entailing that grieving individuals experience denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance when confronted with death, Kübler-Ross's study on processing grief provides a useful lens for assessing the complexities of Fleming's reactions to the prospect of dying in or outside of battle. What Fleming mourns in battle—or struggles to mourn—is not simply restricted to the deaths of fellow soldiers, but far more frequently includes both the prospect of his own death and his sheer participation in war. Interrogating the incongruities between Fleming's expectations and realities affords productive spaces for revealing how his grief, or failure to grieve, operates in the novel, as well as how the novel's depictions of shirking parallels irresolute national agendas aimed toward reconciliation.

The opening chapter of *The Red Badge of Courage* is marked by manifestations of denial that include the war's peculiar failure to resemble "war," the imperceptibility of an enemy, and soldiers' considerations of refusing participation by desertion. To cite an example of the war's refusal to live up to itself, Fleming's early flashback of notifying his mother of his plans to leave the safety of home fails to cohere with what he had visualized. Having privately "primed himself for a beautiful scene . . . her words destroyed his plans" (5). Possessed with the promise of adventure in war, Fleming's mother's lackluster reaction to his enlistment also foreshadows much of the war's mundane qualities that he encounters in camp life. On the novel's opening page, in fact, a nameless private expresses chagrin at the dreary unremarkability of war, saying "'I don't believe the darned old army's ever going to move. We're set. I've got ready to move eight times in the last two weeks, and we ain't moved yet'" (1-2). For Fleming personally, the monotony of "sit[ting] still and try[ing] to keep warm" shatters his "belief that real war was a series of death struggles with small time in between for sleep and meals" (6).

While early encounters with war fail to assimilate to Fleming's expectations, he soon finds that his enemies in war are equally dissimilar to his preconceptions. Crane writes that the youth, "on guard duty one night, conversed across the stream with one of [the enemies]. He was a slightly ragged man, who spat skillfully between his shoes and possessed a great fund of bland and infantile assurance. The youth liked him personally" (7). In this scene, the extent to which the war is defamiliarized in Crane's text—that is, in its avoidance of the war's politics and objectives—is punctuated by Fleming's failure to identify his enemy as an enemy. In perceiving the opponent "across the stream" as someone whom he liked "personally," the youth demonstrates an effort at bargaining the reality of his situation.

While both the war and the enemy's failures to resemble themselves can be read as denials of one variety or another, the most ominous act of denial that could transpire during the Civil War was to shirk or desert duty. Much of the driving action in Crane's novel stems from Fleming's fear that he will do so. Nevertheless, he attempts to justify shirking when, early in the novel, he solicits the view of his more experienced comrade, Jim, on desertion, and is relieved to extract the following confession: "'If a whole lot of boys started and run, why, I s'pose I'd start and run. And if I once started to run, I'd run like the devil, and no mistake. But if everybody was a-standing and a-fighting, why, I'd stand and fight. By jiminey, I would. I'll bet on it'" (10). Fleming's reassurance in learning that a comparably proven soldier would desert sets his mind at ease, and the youth inevitably comes to exhibit three distinct ways in which he deserts or otherwise becomes withdrawn from the war effort: out of fear, for reflection, and for survival.

The moments in which Fleming's fear drives him to psychologically or physically remove himself from battle are demonstrated when his threshold for maintaining either commitment or bravery in battle is compromised. These scenes usually precede actual combat—such as in marching to locations where fighting is to take place—but can also manifest during lulls in camp life. Most often, however, the imminent threat of combat catalyzes such retreats into being. During a pre-combat retreat out of fear, for example, Crane describes Fleming's self-alienation when his regiment is marching to the site where a skirmish is rumored to materialize: "The youth took no part in [discussions with fellow soldiers]. As he walked along in careless line he was engaged with his own eternal debate. He could not hinder himself from dwelling upon it. . . . He wished, without reserve, that he was at home again" (14, 16). Demonstrating a trend in which soldiers struggled to simultaneously manage civilian and combat personas, Fleming is forced to subdue his yearning for domestic sanctuary. Psychologically segregating himself from the rest of his company, Fleming betrays an anticipatory dread of battle that establishes provisional shelter from battle before combat actually commences.

While pre-combat retreats out of fear are characteristically internalized, expressions of fear amidst combat are more likely to be verbally and physically articulated. Only when such expressions of the denial of war are made perceptible to fellow soldiers do they bear any direct consequence. For example, a deserter in Fleming's company described as having "fled screaming at the first volley of his comrades" is soon after reprimanded by his commanding officer. Crane continues, "Behind the lines [the deserter and the lieutenant] were acting a little isolated scene. The man was blubbering and staring with sheeplike eyes at the lieutenant, who had seized him by the collar and was pummeling him" (34). Interpellated by dread to such an extremity, retreats that spatially distance men from combat itself warrant responses from external entities more assuredly than pre-combat retreats.

Whereas retreating from combat out of fear can be characterized as a reaction that, in turn, yields equal and opposing reactions, retreating into reflection is less likely to bear such results because of its generally inconspicuous quality. Also, though reflecting on war can be threatening to the mindset of the individual soldier, it presents far less of a threat to the cohesion of the larger regiment. Often taking place in isolation or privacy, retreating into reflection never occurs during the action of battles but in lulls before and after fighting. In the opening pages of the novel, the mere prospect of battle forces Fleming to reflect as he withdraws from the company of comrades "to be alone with some new thoughts that had lately come to him" (2). In this rendering of self-seclusion, the desire of the individual is to forestall the metamorphosis of the self to be produced in experiencing combat. As such, these reflections are the most feeble and futile manifestations of retreating because being transformed by war is, by definition, experiential. As Crane points out, Fleming is demonstrably aware of this fact:

> He felt that in this crisis his laws of life were useless. Whatever he had learned of himself was [in war] of no avail. He was an unknown quantity. He saw that he would again be obliged to experiment as he had in early youth. He must accumulate information of himself, and meanwhile he resolved to remain close upon his guard lest those qualities of which he knew nothing should everlastingly disgrace him. (8)

Aware that he must discover personal qualities yet unknown, Fleming is consigned to postpone self-evaluation until he has concrete experiences to assess. Until then, the only option he is afforded is to judge himself as an abstract, but nevertheless fearful, entity.

Owing to the undeterminable quality of the self prior to involvement in combat, post-combat retreats for reflection are the most sought-after experiences for the obvious reason that being able to reflect on oneself after battle indicates that one has survived. Variously throughout *The Red Badge of Courage*, Fleming's post-combat attitude is described as self-congratulating and celebratory, but also as uncanny. After an early skirmish, for example, Fleming is said to have come "gradually back to a position from which he could regard himself. For moments he had been scrutinizing his person in a dazed way as if he had never before seen himself" (37). Recognizable yet somehow dissimilar to his former self, Fleming's close encounter with death in battle signals both expected and unexpected alterations. Later, his post-combat moments of reflection are more sycophantic in nature: following one brief clash, Crane says that Fleming "felt that he had earned opportunities for contemplative repose"; and in the aftermath of the youth's demonstration of valor in protecting the flag of his regiment, “there was a considerable joy in musing upon his performances during the charge. He had had very little time previously in which to appreciate himself, so that there was now much” (91, 111). In locating the difference between pre- and post-combat pauses for reflection, it becomes clear that the nature of war itself takes on as much an aura of having been transformed as the transformations it augurs for individuals. In other words, retreating for reflection before having experienced combat casts war as a mysterious and potentially life-ending event. Possessing the ability to reflect on one’s self and actions in the aftermath of combat, on the other hand, coincides with the subdued element of peril in combat and the tendency of the individual to recast war as life-affirming. The resulting paradox is that soldiers accept the reality of death in war only insomuch as they have personally denied death’s reality.

Similar to instances in which characters in *The Red Badge* retreat either out of fear or for reflection, physically retreating from battle to ensure one’s survival can be marked by self-interest. However, retreating to ensure one’s own survival is ironically the only mode of withdrawing oneself from combat that holds the potential to intervene in protecting the lives of fellow soldiers. Illustrating this, when Fleming’s regiment comes upon a scene of another company’s frantic retreat from fighting, these men attempt to communicate danger verbally as much as their flight communicates danger spatially: “out of this haze they could see running men. Some shouted information and gestured as they hurried” (27). For Fleming’s part, Crane attributes interventionist qualities to him during moments of imminent danger: “he thought that he must break from the ranks and harangue his comrades. They must not all be killed like pigs” (23). In seeking to save others with “information” and “harangues,” soldiers are very clearly making the effort to abolish the perpetuation of war. As the youth discovers, though, the desire to do so is pure fantasy, and becomes pathologized in his psyche’s various renditions of dying heroically.

The youth’s consequence in either envying the valor of other soldiers or grieving the loss of his comrade, Jim, is the same:

Fleming fantasizes about his own death. At one point, Crane tells readers that the youth "wondered what those men had eaten that they could be in such haste to force their way to grim chances of death. As he watched his envy grew until he thought that he wished to change lives with one of them. . . . He thought of the magnificent pathos of his dead body" (62). In outlining Fleming's monomaniacal concern with dying heroically, Crane highlights the performativity of combat and dying in the Civil War. Seeking to assume the guise of bravery that he perceives in proven soldiers, Fleming's ambitions in battle revolve around visualizing rather than experiencing. In fetishizing esteem for dying, Fleming conveys depression in "wish[ing] he was dead" as well as anger: "It was clear to [Fleming] that his final and absolute revenge was to be achieved by his dead body lying" (65, 118). Like the war-inexperienced Crane, Fleming was forced to imagine what valor looked like in the Civil War, and his forays into heroism are often contingent on what he can and cannot accept in war. In continuing the foremost trend of Good Deaths and photographs of the dead, then, the youth serves as a literary culmination of the notion that coming to terms with grave circumstances in the nineteenth century—in and outside of war—mostly had to do with the extent to which such circumstances could be rendered and visualized so as to make them appear more acceptable.

Accepting War?:
Crane and the Reconciliationist Vision of the Civil War

David W. Blight has written that the reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory derived from "the process of dealing with the dead from so many battlefields, prisons, and hospitals and developed in many ways earlier than the history of Reconstruction has allowed us to believe" (2). This essay has taken its cue from such a directive in suggesting that examining the ways in which antebellum and Civil War populations dealt with or were otherwise exposed to death provides a useful frame for considering the role of the reconciliationist vision of Civil War memory in *The Red Badge of Courage*. Read in relation to major facets of nineteenth-century American culture such as Good Deaths and postmortem photography, the degree to which Crane's novel can be said to promote acceptance of war on reconciliationist terms becomes complicated. To be clear, the novel's disengagement with the failure of the Civil War's emancipationist vision is often treated with regard to the selective remembrance of the men who fought. As M. Keith Harris has suggested, veterans who "drew from the past to validate the present . . . left sectionalism behind" (265). This essay raises the possibility that, in addition to the selective remembrance of veterans, cultural ideologies and artistic exhibitions of death in *The Red Badge of Courage* served to obscure the war's failed emancipatory aims. If an anomalous representation did not cohere with a designated framework such as the Good Death or postmortem photography, then the framework was slightly altered or the anomaly was rejected. The underlying framework of *The Red Badge of Courage* is the reconciliationist vision and the foremost rejected anomalies include emancipation and sectional hostilities.

While Crane's novel does not conspicuously preach the reconciliationist vision, kinship among white soldiers can certainly be located in the second-to-last chapter's descriptions of three Confederate prisoners of war. In due course, these individuals are characterized by the ways in which they respond to the calamity of detention: "one of the prisoners was nursing a superficial wound. . . . he looked up from it often to curse with an astonishing utter abandon. . . . Another . . . took his plight with great calmness and apparent good nature [and the] third captive sat with morose countenance. He preserved a stoical and cold attitude" (122-23). In the brief sketches of these captured enemy combatants, there are clear similarities to ways in which the youth had previously been described. Thus, Fleming's opponents are notable for their likenesses to the youth who, for his part, had nursed his own superficial wound—telling Wilson "'Yes, it hurts—hurts a good deal'"—and preserved a gloomy façade elsewhere in the novel—"He was despondent and sullen, and threw shifting glances about him" (74, 14). Therefore, while reconciliation is not carried out in a heavy-handed fashion, *The Red Badge of Courage*'s conclusion nevertheless paves the road to reconciliation in featuring Confederates with attributes familiar to Fleming's. As such, the identities of Union and Confederate soldiers in the novel are not rendered as antagonistic to one another but come to be homogenized as men who fought in the Civil War. In illuminating the similarities between soldiers from opposing sides in war, the ideological discords of the conflict are obscured as the identity of the Civil War soldier is universalized. Importantly, though, the novel's parting thought that the youth "had been to touch the great death" and found that "He was a man" can be read as either symptomatic or critical of such universalism. Either Crane is content to showcase the youth's entrance into manhood as the overarching purpose of the war or he is reappropriating the framework of the Civil War to suit the tastes of his readership. This essay leans toward the latter interpretation in positing that *The Red Badge of Courage* perpetuates but also critiques a nineteenth-century American trend of dismissing grievous realities in favor of distorted half-truths.

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The Monster and Medical Ethics: Dr. Trescott, the Doctors of Whilomville, and the Hippocratic Oath

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Before we take up Crane's last and arguably his most mature moral reflection, as well as his most stylistically ambitious narrative, a few comments about the Hippocratic Oath.[1] When I use fifth-century BC oath of Hippocrates to frame class discussions about *The Monster*, students are immediately struck by its prohibitions against what is now called physician-assisted suicide as well as against abortion. In the original version: "I will give no deadly medicines to anyone if asked, nor suggest any counsel; and in like manner I will not give a woman a pessary to produce an abortion" and in the modern version, "I will neither prescribe nor administer a lethal dose of medicine to any patient even if asked nor counsel any such thing nor perform the utmost respect for every human life from fertilization to natural death and reject abortion that deliberately takes a unique human life." In difficult cases, notably and precisely the sort made dramatically vivid in Crane's compelling novella, *The Monster*, the initial clauses of Hippocratic oath may present a physician with inherently conflicting obligations. In the original version of the oath, a physician swears allegiance to two imperatives: "I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous." In the modern version, the horns of the dilemma are more concisely and starkly stated: "I will follow that method of treatment which . . . I consider for the benefit of my patient and abstain from whatever is harmful."

Accordingly my essay revisits Crane's novella in search of answers to several intriguing ethical questions dealing with intentions and results. Or as Crane so aptly describes the dilemma, how are we to deal with the possibility that acts of "questionable charity" might also be "blunders of virtue" (423)?[2] More specifically, I explore whether Trescott (and also the other Whilomville doctors) did Henry a favor by saving his "life." I also examine the extent to which guilt and gratitude (or a mixture of both) animate Trescott's sense of obligation to Henry and motivate his initial urgent care and then his long-term support of him. In a word, Crane's narrative powerfully dramatizes how the Hippocratic Oath may well require choosing between the imperatives of preserving a life and "doing no harm."

Henry's rescue of Jimmie is a muscular and reflex act of heroism. And when Trescott arrives at his house in flames, acting as a father (and not as a physician), his actions are likewise involuntary and instinctual, first to save Jimmie and then, when he is told that Henry is still in the burning building, he again responds reflexively. Several onlookers had to bodily restrain Trescott from reentering the conflagration; meanwhile a young brakeman on the railway "had [already] gone into the laboratory and brought forth a thing which he laid on the grass" (408). The remaining two-thirds of the novella deal with Trescott *qua* doctor who must carefully consider and ultimately confront all the consequence of the rescue of Johnson.

The narrator explains that the immediate response of the medical community of Whilomville is that no less than six of the town's ten doctors descend upon Judge Hagenthorpe's home to care for Trescott, Jimmie and Johnson. The next morning Trescott begins his fateful journey of care for Johnson. Although Jimmie's mother took him to his grandparents in Connecticut, "the doctor had remained to take care of his patients, but as a matter of truth he spent most of his time at Judge Hagenthorpe's house where lay Henry Johnson. Here he slept and ate almost every meal in the long nights and days of his vigil" (413).

Were Trescott's "heroic" efforts to keep Johnson alive misguided? Judge Hagenthorpe is the first to wonder out loud: "'No one wants to advance such ideas, but somehow I think that poor fellow ought to die'" (413). Soon many others in Whilomville question whether Trescott did and is doing the right thing. Can a close reading of the text disclose how Trescott understands his decisions and how he would explain his actions?

It is important to note that Hagenthorpe does not question Trescott's sincerity: "no man can observe you as I have observed you and not know that it was a matter of conscience with you" (413). Since Hagenthorpe is keenly aware that even a simon-pure intention guarantees neither a positive result nor a defensible moral decision, he concentrates on the long-term consequences of Trescott's efforts:

> "He will be your creation, you understand. He is purely your creation. Nature had evidently given him up. He is dead. You are restoring him to life. You are making him, and he will be a monster, and with no mind." (414)

Answering Hagenthorpe, Trescott's apologia are tortured and heart-felt, even as they are predictable and expected: "'he saved my boy's life. . . . what am I to do? . . . He gave himself for—for Jimmie, what am I to do' " (414). Crane skillfully dramatizes the realizations of Trescott and Hagenthorpe that they are grappling with terribly difficult matters. Their "conversations" consist of short, incomplete, half-thoughts and awkward silences, interrupted by brief and repetitive, non-sequiturs. The judge ends their exchange repeating his earlier admission: "it is hard for a man to know what to do" (415).

The next group of second-guessers about Trescott's extraordinary nursing of Henry back to life are the regular patrons of Reifsnyder's barbershop. Brainbridge, a railway engineer, broaches the subject: "'Oh, he should have let him die'" (422). Reifsnyder is aghast: "'Let him die,' he demanded. 'How vas that? How can you let a man die'" (424). Next joining in "a man hitherto silent" adds, "'If I had been the doctor, I would have done the same thing'" (422). So the consensus is that Trescott had correctly and honorably adhered to the first imperative of the Hippocratic Oath: "I will follow that method of treatment which according to my ability and judgment I consider for the benefit of my patient." However, the long-term consequences are now beginning to accrue, in part, because Henry has no face: "They say he is the most terrible thing in the world" (422). Crane has herein framed a very vexing quandary. Has Trescott done Henry a favor; were his (Henry's) best interests served by bringing him back from death? Though the barbershop critics agree with the third commentator, that "'It was the only thing he could do,'" (423) do Trescott's actions accord with the Hippocratic Oath's second imperative, "Do no harm"?

Martha Goodwin is Crane's next mouthpiece in his examination of medical and personal ethics. In keeping with her reputation for freely offering "adamantine opinions" (432) on a very wide range of international, national and local issues, Martha opines sweeping comments on what Trescott should or should not have done and what he should now do. In this case, however, instead of her usual rigid and intolerant self, she surprises both Whilomvilleites and Crane's readers. Abandoning her normal and predictably reflex of being an obnoxious eristic—"in regard to social misdemeanors, she who was simply the mausoleum of dead passion was probably the most savage critic in town" (433)—she sides with Trescott. Actually Martha's allegiance to Trescott's point of view should not be a complete surprise. Note that the narrator comments that her character is confusing, conflicted and unpredictable. And while she is both "weak" and "innocent," ironically she can also be a "pig-headed creature, who alone would defy the universe if she thought the universe merited this proceeding" (434). (More of pig-headedness later.)

Henry had stampeded the nineteen children at Theresa Page's party; especially tormented was Sadie Winters—she was so traumatized at the sight of Henry she had to be escorted home by Mr. Page. The gossip around town insists that Sadie is so sick she hasn't been going to school. Martha, the contrary, rises to dispute the rumor, noting that she had seen her going to school. When Carrie and Kate retaliate with "everybody says" (443), Martha stands her ground: "'I'd like to know what you call 'the whole town.' Do you call these silly people who are scared of Henry Johnson, 'the whole town'?" (443). The Kate/ Carrie chorus declares that everybody in Whilomville is terrified by Henry's looks. Martha vows, "I'd try not to be afraid" (443), thereby placing herself on the side of the minority who hold that Trescott did the right thing. In fact, on the matter of Jack Winter's threatening Trescott, standing on his porch "yelping . . . like a little dog" (441), Martha boasts, "'If I'd been Doctor Trescott . . . I'd have knocked that miserable Jake Winter's head off'" (442). But even Martha's brave expression of support for Trescott leaves so much unsaid, not the least of which is an explanation / explication / defense that Trescott might offer on his own behalf.

Earlier it was noted that Trescott's apologia were halting, fragmentary and unfinished responses to Hagenthorpe's expressions of doubt about the wisdom of Trescott's rescue of Henry. Tantalizing development occurs later on in Chapter XXI. Gradually when Jimmie was no longer afraid of *The Monster*, he assumed the role of "the owner and exhibitor of one of the world's marvels, while his audience remained at a distance—awed and entranced, fearful and envious" (435). Returning home from a house call, Trescott interrupts Jimmie and his friends' game-of-dare to touch Johnson. Trescott's initial response to Jimmie's childish and unthinking treatment of his heroic rescuer is cool and dispassionate—he merely asks Jimmie's friends "to please go home" (439).[3] He actually even waits until the next morning to confront Jimmie, asking Grace to have him stop by his office before he goes to school.

When he asks Jimmie what he and his friends were doing, Jimmie explains their game of dare. Finally Trescott, genuinely moved,

> groaned deeply. His continence was so clouded in sorrow that the lad, bewildered by the mystery of it, burst suddenly forth in dismal lamentations. "There, there. Don't cry, Jim," said Trescott, going round the desk. (440)

Putting Jimmie on his knee, Trescott begins, "'Only I want to explain to you—"' (440). Unfortunately readers eager to hear Trescott's explanation are not privy to what he tells Jimmie.

The next-to-last chapter of *The Monster* describes Trescott's summit conference with the delegation of Whilomville's "four very active and influential citizens" (445). Herein readers have a final opportunity to discern Trescott's insights about the motivations that prompted his immediate and long-term care for Johnson. Spokesperson John Twelve leads off: "'Well, doctor,' he said with a short laugh. 'I suppose we might as well admit at once that we've come to interfere in something which is none of our business.' 'Why, what is it?' asked Trescott" (445). Twelve presses on: "'It's about what nobody talks of—much,' said Twelve. 'It's about Johnson'" (445).

However it becomes clear that the Twelve delegation's concern is not really about Johnson but about Trescott: "'you are doing yourself a great deal of harm. You have changed from being the leading doctor in town to about the last one'" (445). The key phrase is "doing harm." It is crucial to note that while the delegation worries about harm to Trescott, for the remainder of the discussion Dr. Trescott, mindful of the second imperative of the Hippocratic Oath, "I will abstain from whatever is harmful or mischievous," bends the conversation toward his responsibility, as a doctor, to his patient.

The Twelve delegation offers several solutions: "get Johnson a place somewhere off up in the valley," move him to "a little no good farm beyond Clarence Mountain," or send him off to a "public institution" (446). Trescott waves off every suggestion. When asked why he refuses so adamantly, Trescott reverts to the pattern noted twice already—he begins a sentence but then breaks it off. Readers' hopes for clarification remain unanswered. For example, to the retort that there are a lot of fools in this world and that you can teach them anything, Trescott comments, "'I am not trying to teach them anything.' Trescott smiled wearily: 'I—It is a matter of—well—" (446). Or when Twelve accuses him of pigheadness like Martha, Trescott simply ignores the barb.

Was it gratitude that moved Trescott, or was it guilt about his part in the tragedy—recall that the fire broke out in his laboratory? In the end, readers' curiosity about Trescott's motives is unrequited. What is clear, however, is Trescott's resolve to do no more harm to Johnson. Trescott's bringing Johnson back to health also means that he has bequeathed to him a life of severely compromised quality and years of merely existing. One wonders about the extent of Johnson's degree of self-awareness and whether he is in pain. For example, had Johnson not been mentally incapacitated, could he tell Trescott and the active and influential members of Whilomville whether he deems his own life a valuable one? Would Henry agree that Trescott acted in his (Henry's) best interest? Had he done Henry a favor prolonging his life? Recall what the sage of the Reifsnider barbershop, Bainbridge, had conjectured: "'I wonder what the doctor says to himself?' he observed. 'He may be sorry he made him live'" (423).

In the end, Whilomville's chief of police offers the clearest insight into Trescott's heartfelt compassion. He also provides a compelling estimate of Johnson's condition. When he goes to the jail to get Johnson, who had been jugged for his own safety after Johnson had demolished the Page children's party, his career through Watermelon Alley spawned "a big crowd [which] chased him, firing rocks" (431) Trescott asks Sam, "'Was he hurt any? Did anybody hurt him with a stone'" (431)? The police chief offers this clear-headed assessment of the life that Johnson "enjoys": "'Guess there isn't much of him to hurt anymore, is there? Guess he's been hurt up to the limit'" (430). Sam then suggests "'If I were you, I'd come to the jail pretty late at night, because there is likely to be a crowd around the door, I'd bring a—er—mask, or some kind of veil, anyhow'" (432). Is the purpose of the mask/veil to protect Henry? Or is it to prevent the crowd from the discomfort of having to look at "the most terrible thing in the world" (422)? Or is it a tacit acknowledgment that Henry is no longer a person, that without a face he has been reduced to a thing, now he is merely an "it"?

Is Trescott a good doctor, a principled martyr or a quixotic fool? The Twelve delegation opts for "fool," the townspersons, "martyr," and Trescott is comfortable with "good doctor." For example, as already noted, when asked about getting "'Johnson a place somewhere off up the valley,'" he responds, "'No one can attend to him as I do myself'" (446). But is that really the case? The John Twelve delegation does not agree with Trescott. Overall their suggestions to Trescott were sound, their arguments, however, were faulty—they should have made direct appeal to moral considerations: (1) Trescott's care (despite what he says) is no longer medically necessary, no longer requiring his special attention and sacrifice. (2) It is not clear that Trescott's handling of Johnson's nonmedical needs is better than a public institution. Johnson lives alone above the carriage house, and because his brain has been affected, can never be an integral part of the Trescott family. (3) Finally there are moral deficiencies in Trescott's arrangements for Johnson. Beyond the moral duties involved in his neglect of his medical practice and his disruption of his family life, the noble doctor has been unable to prevent even his own son's thoughtless, ungrateful treatment of Johnson.[4]

From a moral point of view, Trescott's rescue of Jimmie and his attempted rescue of Johnson are correct, as is the emergency medical care that six of the ten Whilomville doctors gave to Henry, Jimmie and Trescott. However, taking custody of Johnson is problematic and eventually becomes harmful for Trescott. The upshot then is that the John Twelve delegation's understanding of the "do no harm" maxim is sound. Clearly, when applied to Trescott *qua* father, husband and citizen of Whilomville, he is harming himself. Trescott, of course, would insist that that maxim of the Hippocratic Oath applies to patients, not doctors. Therefore even if Trescott had inadvertently and unintentionally caused Henry harm in keeping him alive, *qua* doctor, his obligation remains to ensure that his patient is not *further harmed*.

After the Dora Clark affair, Crane offered a similar argument in his commentary on an inconvenient and ill-timed moral obligation:

> There is such a thing as a moral obligation arriving inopportunely. The inopportune arrival of a moral obligation can bring just as much personal humiliation as can a sudden impulse to steal or any of the other mental suggestions which we account calamitous.[5]

In conclusion, Crane's *The Monster* offers readers a wonderfully nuanced and challenging moral parable, made especially vivid by the memorable character of a physician. What best describes Dr. Ned Trescott? I am reminded of two of the names that turn-of-the-last-century "heroic" polar explorers, famously Sir Ernest Shackleton, gave their ships. *Endurance* admirably captures Trescott; perhaps *Resolute* is even better.

Notes

1. The text of the Hippocratic Oath is widely available on line. The text included here with both the original and modern versions can be found at wdyt.org/2009/07/20/hippocratic-oath-modern-and-original-versions/

2. Quotations from *The Monster* are from S*tephen Crane: Prose and Poetry* (New York: Library of America, 1984), ed. J. C. Levenson. Page numbers are included in the text of my essay.

3. Note the contrasting tenor of Trescott's response to Jimmie in the opening scene in *The Monster*. Jimmie, playing train with his wagon, runs over a peony—a neat double foreshadowing of both Trescott and Johnson; Jimmie tries to resuscitate a broken flower, a peony (from Paiōn, the physician of the gods) "but the spine of it was hurt and it would only hang limply" (391). After a half-dozen tries to point to what he has done, Trescott finally sees the problem. He then asks "Jimmie, how did this happen?" and he disciplines him, "I guess you had not better play train any more to-day" (392).

4. For more on these moral considerations, see the final section, "Good Doctor Trescott or Ned Trescott, Martyr or Fool?" of chapter four, "Ethics: Tolerance, Compassion and Duty" on Crane's ethics in my *The Pluralistic Philosophy of Stephen Crane* (Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1993), pp. 97-104.

5. J. C. Levenson's Introduction to *The Monster, Tales of Whilomville.* The Works of Stephen Crane, Vol 7. Ed Fredson Bowers. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1969, p. xviii.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Infantryman: Examining *The Thin Red Line*'s Complex Relationship with *The Red Badge of Courage*

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In *Into Eternity: The Life of James Jones, American Writer,* Frank MacShane argues that:

> the novel with which [Jones's 1962 work] *The Thin Red Line* must be compared is Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, which for years was considered the best combat novel in American literature. Jones knew and admired Crane's novel for its realism and unromantic attitude toward warfare . . . but Jones wanted to go further than Crane; he wanted to portray the whole range of relationships among the soldiers themselves. (200-01)

Though both books are often praised for their "psychologically sound . . .[scenes] revealing the intense mad feelings that killing can produce in otherwise normal people" (MacShane 201), the relationship between the two works is complicated by a college essay Jones wrote attacking *The Red Badge of Courage* on the basis of its psychological accuracy. Citing his then-recent experience under fire at Pearl Harbor, Jones ends his essay with the declaration "that Crane was wrong in supposing a man's imagination is able to function in the excitement and clear-cut confusion of actual combat" (393). Though much of the adult Jones's work depicts military or ex-military characters whose lives have been affected by their service in the Second World War, most of Jones's war novels take place before or after the battles have been fought; it is only in *The Thin Red Line* that he chooses to focus his attention on combat itself. When comparing *The Thin Red Line* to *The Red Badge of Courage* with his earlier criticisms of Crane's book in mind, it becomes evident that Jones wrote *The Thin Red Line* in part to redress what he still perceived as a significant psychological inaccuracy present in *The Red Badge of Courage*. However, a closer look at a number of the techniques used in *The Thin Red Line* shows Jones's inability to fully escape the influence of Crane's novel, even as he attempted to criticize it.

Jones wrote his critical essay on *The Red Badge of Courage*, dated October 12, 1942, for an English 262 class he was taking while serving with F Company, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, at Schofield Barracks. The timing of this essay is particularly noteworthy because it informs both his critique of Crane's psychological accuracy and the changes his own viewpoint would undergo between writing the book report on *The Red Badge of Courage* and writing *The Thin Red Line* nearly twenty years later. Jones's baptism under fire came December 7, 1941, during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Following the attacks, Jones and the rest of F Company built and manned defensive positions on the south shore cliffs of Oahu to defend against a possible Japanese land invasion. After it became clear that no invasion was forthcoming, his unit was sent back to Schofield Barracks in September of 1942 "for reorganization and further training" (MacShane 47) before deploying to Guadalcanal. During this period Jones obtained permission to enroll in two English courses at the nearby University of Hawaii. He received this favor in large part because his immediate superior, Captain William Blatt, had recognized Jones's intelligence and encouraged his literary ambitions since taking over command of F Company. Jones took courses in English and Creative Writing when his duties allowed and wrote the essay during this period. His fledgling education was disrupted when the 25th Division set sail for Guadalcanal on December 6, 1942. Jones would spend two months on Guadalcanal, during which time he participated in the assault on a hill nicknamed "the Galloping Horse," suffered a slight head wound from mortar shrapnel, and was eventually evacuated to New Zealand for a pre-existing medical condition.[1]

It is important to properly frame Jones's book report within the timeline of his own war experience because his criticisms of Crane's accuracy arose primarily from "comparing [his] experience with that of Henry Fleming" (Jones 391). In his essay, Jones acknowledges that at that point he had "been under fire only once—December 7th." After equating his combat experience to Fleming's combat experience, his greatest point of contention was that "it didn't work that way with me or with anyone I've talked to" (Jones 391-92). But while Jones bases his criticism of Crane's accuracy on the fact that Henry Fleming's infantry experiences didn't match his own experiences in combat, when he wrote the essay Jones had yet to experience real infantry fighting. Being strafed by fighter planes and enduring Confederate infantry charges may both be traumatic experiences, but that does not make them directly comparable. When trying to determine how many of the criticisms in his "Book Report" survived to be reflected in *The Thin Red Line*, one must keep in mind how much Jones's understanding of combat would continue to evolve after writing the essay.

The basic thrust of Jones's youthful criticism is that Crane errs by having Henry break after his first skirmish instead of before it. Private Jones found it "hard . . . to believe that these men, having weathered one charge and, consequently, become elated with the winey taste of victory, would suddenly lose all faith in their ability to stop the enemy." He argues that if anything, "it would work the other way round, that, having repulsed them once, the regiment would more surely believe itself capable of stopping them again." Jones contends that "Crane uses . . . the psychology of the instinct to follow" by having Henry break after seeing the soldier beside him run, but feels "inclined to think that each man that felt the impulse to flee would look around at the men near him and seeing them still fighting, would decide to remain." Jones then identifies what he considers perhaps the greatest psychological inaccuracy on Crane's part:

> all this is supposing that while in the heat of combat men still possess the power to think along the many tangents of imagination . . . it has been my experience . . . that one does not have time to use one's imagination while fighting. What thinking is done—outside of necessary tactical and mechanical thinking—is done somewhat abstractedly. (389)

Based on his experience at Pearl Harbor, which he compares to his experiences boxing and playing football, Jones argues that in the confusion of combat there is no time for a soldier's imagination to torment him with frightening images of all the terrible fates that might befall him. He contends that between the pumping adrenaline and the focus on immediate survival, such "feelings drop from you like a shroud, and you are free" (390) to function without fear. Jones argues forcefully that the most likely time for a soldier to run away is before combat begins, when his imagination has sufficient time to stoke his fears. He writes "that if Henry Fleming was to run, he should have done so before the actual battle started. . . . [A]pparently Crane thought that during the brief respite between the charges when there was little physical action required, a man's brain returned to its normal style of thinking complete with imagination. I disagree" (391). He then relates an incident that took place during the attack on Pearl Harbor as proof for his theory. In the middle of the attack Jones had joined other soldiers on the roof of their barracks to fire B.A.R.s[2] at attacking Japanese planes. While on the roof Jones felt no fear because his mind had been completely focused on the task at hand. In comparing his experience with Crane's protagonist, he concludes that:

> Our respites [in between waves of Japanese planes] were quite similar to Henry Fleming's, but our reactions were entirely different. Crane elaborated on the fact that the youth and his comrades believed their enemies to be fearless monsters to come back after having been beaten off. They imagined them to be irresistible and ran because in their fear they thought it useless to oppose them. Their case was not nearly as bad as ours. They were fighting men with guns; we were fighting planes. . . . [I]f Crane's hypothesis is to be believed, our imaginations would have certainly led us to toss our guns aside and make tracks for the protection of the inside of the barracks. The fact that we didn't shows,

> to me, that Crane was wrong in supposing a man's imagination is able to function in the excitement and clear-cut confusion of actual combat. (Jones 391)

Certain elements of Jones's 1962 combat novel *The Thin Red Line* do indeed reprove Crane's treatment of imagination in combat. But the Jones who wrote *The Thin Red Line* was not the same green soldier who critiqued *The Red Badge of Courage* for his English 262 composition course. Though the mature Jones still found fault with some of the psychology in *The Red Badge of Courage*, his own take on the combat novel displays a remarkable indebtedness to Crane's novel, particularly in its use of Crane's impressionistic writing style.

Like *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Thin Red Line* is essentially a bildungsroman that tracks the progressive initiation of its protagonist into the ways of combat. Though Crane's novel features only one protagonist, multiple critics[3] have argued that "the 'main' character of *The Thin Red Line* is really Charlie Company" (Giles 123) as a collective whole, and it is difficult to disagree with that assessment. James R. Giles notes a number of similarities between *The Thin Red Line* and *The Red Badge of Courage*,[4] especially regarding Jones's depictions of individual soldiers. Though the younger Jones may have criticized Crane's understanding of a combat soldier's psychology, the elder Jones borrows liberally from Crane's impressionistic writing techniques in his characterizations of the men of C-for-Charlie Company. *The Red Badge of Courage* is renowned for Crane's use of brief heroic epithets as a means of emphasizing the relative anonymity of the individual soldier once he has become absorbed into the larger group entity of the platoon, the company, the regiment, etc. Crane commonly refers to Henry Fleming as "the youth" (Crane 202), Jim Conklin as "the tall soldier" (Crane 205) and Wilson as "the loud soldier" (Crane 206). Other soldiers Henry encounters never receive names but are simply called "a rather fat soldier" (Crane 205), "the tattered man" (Crane 249), "a shaggy man" (Crane 289), and so on. The heroic epithets result in the soldiers changing from unique men into "part[s] . . . welded into a common personality"

(Crane 222). As Henry "grow[s] to regard himself merely as part of a vast blue demonstration" (Crane 196), the reader gradually begins to relate to the soldiers more as representations of a greater whole rather than as distinct individuals.

Jones accomplishes the same effect by appropriating and slightly modifying Crane's technique in order to make it similarly difficult to tell the members of C-for-Charlie apart. Like Crane, Jones avoids extensive physical descriptions of his characters, giving only brief generalizations when he bothers to provide any description at all. For example, the only physical details given about Captain Stein are that he has "large, mild, brown eyes" and glasses (9), Don Doll is described as "a quiet, freshfaced youth with considerable naivete" (6), Bob Witt is "small" and "thin" (104), and the remaining characters receive similarly succinct descriptions . Rather than avoiding the use of given names in-text as Crane does with his heroic epithets, Jones achieves the same result by making the given names of the men in C-for-Charlie as indistinguishable from each other as possible. Jones lists eighty-four named characters in the "Company Roster" that opens the book. Of those eighty-four characters, only ten have last names that extend beyond a single syllable and not one boasts a name that ranges as long as three syllables. Jones further blurs the mass of single-syllable names among C-for-Charlie by frequently choosing last names that double as commonplace objects. Just among its more prominent characters, *The Thin Red Line* features Bead, Bell, Band, Cash, Doll, Dale, Queen, Storm, Stein, and Fife. Other names listed on the roster include Fox, Field, Grove, Thorne, Wick, Land, Park, Ash, Catch, Catt, Crown, Spine, and Train. Without more extensive physical descriptions to aid recognition, Jones's readers can be forgiven if they struggle to remember what distinguishes Doll from Dale, or Bell from Bead and Band. Though it is not impossible to tell the men of C-for-Charlie apart,[5] it can be difficult for a first (or second or third) time reader to keep track of so many characters with similar-sounding names. Jones adapts Crane's impressionistic use of description so that C-for-Charlie Company as a group becomes the novel's protagonist much more than any individual character. In a letter to his Scribner's editor Burroughs Mitchell, dated December 2, 1959, Jones details his decision to shift an incident in which a defecating soldier kills a Japanese soldier in hand to hand combat from Fife to Bead after a "friend . . . who read the manuscript made the complimentary comment that Fife is emerging as a fine major character." He made the change because he did not "want" (Hendrick 288) his novel to have any "fine major character[s]." As Steven Carter writes, "Jones permitted no star performers in *The Thin Red Line*" (99) that might distract from the ensemble, not even a Henry Fleming analogue.

The relative anonymity of the individual characters in *The Thin Red Line* echoes another technique that Jones borrows from *The Red Badge of Courage*. Jones makes frequent use of mechanical imagery to emphasize the dehumanizing aspect of modern warfare, a popular trope in war literature that can be traced directly back to Crane's description of Henry Fleming as just a small cog in the "mighty blue machine" (255) of the Federal Army. In his seminal memoir/philosophical treatise, *The Warriors*, J. Glenn Gray writes that one of the few potential benefits to being one of those cogs is that soldiers can "forget about death by losing their individuality, or they can function like cells in a military organism, doing what is expected of them because it has become automatic." Gray finds it "astonishing how much of the business of warfare can still be carried on by men who act as automatons, behaving almost as mechanically as the machines they operate" (102). Even if this might make them militarily effective, Jones remained adamant in his opinion that few soldiers are happy functioning like "cells in a military organism." Robert Leckie ties this sensation to the "corrosive . . . feeling of expendability" (99), or as Crane would phrase it in "The Open Boat," the realization "that nature does not regard [a man] as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him" (377). Though C-for-Charlie lands on Guadalcanal with very few draftees amongst its ranks, its professional soldiers had all enlisted into a peacetime Army. Few of them had expected they would ever have to actually fight in a war, and fewer still landed on Guadalcanal prepared for war's realities. Like Henry

Fleming, if much of C-for-Charlie had once enlisted voluntarily, most of its members do not enter combat willingly and have no wish to sacrifice their lives for hazily defined strategic purposes that they can barely grasp. By the latter stages of the campaign, C-for-Charlie takes up a quote from Sergeant Skinny Culn as its rallying cry. "Whatever They say, I'm not a cog in a machine. . . . [I]t said for everybody what they all felt fiercely and needed to believe. They took it to themselves, and applied it to their own particular situation, and they believed it. They were not cogs in a machine, whatever anybody said" (Jones 408). Only one soldier recognizes the problem with the collective rallying cry against the depersonalization of modern warfare. John Bell, the most introspective member of the Company, reacts to C-for-Charlie's new mantra with a thought too disturbing for any of its other members to face head-on: "Not cogs in a machine? What did they think they were then?" (Jones 412). It is fitting that Jones chooses Bell, the former engineering officer, to summarize the "discrepancy" between the mechanical nature of modern warfare and the very human, reluctant soldiers who must fight begrudgingly in it: "Some men would survive, but no one individual man could survive. It was a discrepancy in methods of counting. The whole thing was too vast, too complicated, too technological for any one individual man to count in it. Only collections of men counted, only communities of men, only numbers of men" (Jones 238). Though Bell and Fleming both serve their functions as small cogs in great military machines, Jones remains careful to show that Bell (along with the rest of C-for-Charlie) does not achieve nearly the same level of peace with this situation as Fleming does by the end of Crane's novel.

Despite their similarities, *The Thin Red Line* breaks most noticeably from *The Red Badge of Courage* in its treatment of fear, the same area that Jones took issue with as a young soldier still contemplating his survival at Pearl Harbor. Daniel Weiss writes that "the overall motif in *The Red Badge of Courage* is Henry Fleming's obsessive need to purge himself of fear. The novel is in psychological terms a study of anxiety-defense mechanisms working under pressure to establish some tolerable adaptation to a dangerous reality" (67). The same description could be accurately applied to *The Thin Red Line*. But if Jones and Crane agree that the stresses of combat produce a terror so powerful that soldiers must devote an extraordinary amount of mental energy to purging themselves of that fear, they disagree in their depictions of the role that the human social instinct plays in adapting to that fear. The younger, unblooded Jones had criticized what he saw as Crane's misuse of "the psychology of the instinct to follow." While Henry had only run after seeing another soldier run, the younger Jones (who had still yet to see ground combat) had been "inclined to think that each man that felt the impulse to flee would look around at the men near him and seeing them still fighting, would decide to remain." After seeing infantry combat on Guadalcanal, the elder Jones still held to the assessment he made in his student essay twenty years earlier. *The Thin Red Line* devotes a great deal of attention to examining the inertia exerted on a soldier's decision-making by that "instinct to follow." Or, as Paul Fussell puts it in *Wartime,* "the way ground combat works" is that "men will attack only if young, athletic, credulous, and sustained by some equivalent of the buddy system—that is, fear of shame" (4). By the novel's end, each member of C-for-Charlie has asked himself the same question at one point or another during his combat experience: "is it really worth it to die, to be dead, just to prove to everybody that you're not a coward?" (Jones 70). Invariably, the answer they all come up with is "apparently, it is." Fife sums up the collective attitude towards fear while being bombarded with mortar fire during an assault up the hill nicknamed the Elephant's head: "It was almost funny, how even lying [t]here terrified and half-expecting to be dead at any moment, his bureaucratic fear of reprimand, of public embarrassment, was stronger than his physical fear of dying. Well, at least as strong" (Jones 258).

Though its treatment of fear shows that the elder Jones never changed his opinion from the young soldier who felt that "Crane was wrong in supposing a man's imagination is able to function in the excitement and clear-cut confusion of actual combat" (Jones 391), *The Thin Red Line* owes a distinct debt to *The Red Badge of*

Courage in both its techniques and its characterizations. The mature James Jones who wrote *The Thin Red Line* clearly found more value in Crane's literary merits than the green infantryman who was primarily interested in seeing how Crane's depiction of fear matched his own very recent initiation into combat. If Jones did indeed "wan[t] to go further than Crane" (201) in crafting a realistic, unsentimental portrait of the average soldier's experience in combat, it seems apparent that he felt able to do so only by metaphorically standing on Crane's shoulders. The fact that Jones felt compelled to adapt Crane's techniques even as he criticized Crane's psychology is a telling sign of the high regard Jones held for his predecessor. Though Jones (and most authors) would likely cringe at having the literary opinions in his undergraduate essay pored over and compared to his adult work, his book report nevertheless provides a fascinating insight into his own evolution as a writer, and the complex relationship between two of the most highly regarded war novels of the modern age.

Notes

1. Jones's ankle was prone to dislocate thanks to an injury he suffered trying out for F Company's football team. When it dislocated in front of his first sergeant, Jones was directed to seek medical attention. Jones felt guilty about being evacuated for a non-combat injury, and agreed to the evacuation only after being encouraged to do so by his friends.

2. Browning Automatic Rifles.

3. Though Norman Mailer did not phrase it in precisely those terms, his remark in "Some Children of the Goddess" that Jones's intent in *The Thin Red Line* "is not to create character but the feel of combat, the psychology of men" (112) was influential in steering critical thought towards the notion of C-for-Charlie collectively acting as the novel's protagonist. Besides Mailer and James R. Giles, Steven Carter, Maxwell Geisman, Edmond L. Volpe, and Lewis Gannett have also endorsed this view.

4. See James Jones, p. 123.

5. In fact, Steven Carter praises Jones's ability to "achiev[e] this sense of the collective character of the company" while "never forg[etting] that it was composed of individuals" (98).

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Theorizing War:
Stephen Crane's War Poems

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Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* made him famous as a modernist writer, but in addition to this brilliant novel and other prose works on war, Crane wrote more than a dozen poems on the topic of war. Although his prose fiction on war most often depicts isolated individuals confronting dangerous and disorienting events of the battlefield, Crane's poems often present theoretical proposals or speculations concerning the causes or the meaning of war. Even after he observed battles during the Greco-Turkish and the Spanish-American Wars, Crane's poems continued to provide vast interrogations of the psychological and historical understandings of war. Christopher Benfey has suggested that in combining "deep imagery with social criticism" in their responses to the Vietnam War such poets as Robert Bly, James Wright, and W. S. Merwin have helped to make Stephen Crane's poetry more accessible to contemporary readers (*Stephen Crane: Complete Poetry* xxvii). This seems particularly true of Crane's poems on war.

Crane's *Red Badge* includes few instances of social criticism. Crane's novel was rebuked by General A. C. McClurg, however, for centering his narrative upon the perceptions and the emotions of an ordinary, sometimes fearful, recruit (McClurg 110). In addition to reporting Henry Fleming's own doubts and anxieties, Crane also incorporates Henry's observations of the behavior of his fellow soldiers. One wounded soldier whom Henry observes "was marching with an air imitative of some sublime drum major. Upon his features was an unholy mixture of merriment and agony. As he marched he sang a bit of doggerel in a high and quavering voice":

“Sing a song ‘a vic’try
A pocketful ‘a bullets,
Five an’ twenty dead men
Baked in a—pie” (*Red Badge* 44).

This “unholy mixture of merriment and agony” reveals the soldier’s anguish and wit and, also, perhaps, raises questions about the psychological effects of battlefield experiences. This “found poem” does not represent the war poems written in Crane’s own voice. Crane’s poems on war, from those in *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (1895) through the last poem found in his saddlebags, show development from tightly focused dream-images in the early poems to sustained observations of vast historical sweep in “When a people reach the top of a hill” and “The Battle Hymn” (*CP* 136, 143). Two of Crane’s last poems are sardonic observations on historical aspects of war: “There exists the eternal fact of conflict”(140) and “On the brown trail” (141). These works indicate that, by the end of the Spanish-American War, Crane was becoming more politically engaged as an artist by observing the violence of an imperialist war.

Poems in *The Black Riders and Other Lines* are stunning in their lack of a framing, familiarizing context. They are, in Rosemary Jackson's use of the term, "fantastic” encounters beyond the edges of ordinary reality (26). Copeland and Day intensified Crane’s alienation effects by omitting titles for individual poems and printing each poem entirely in capitals. In a few, brief passages quoted below, I have cited Copeland and Day’s typography to acknowledge this effect:

BLACK RIDERS CAME FROM THE SEA,
THERE WAS CLASH AND CLANG OF SPEAR AND SHIELD,
AND CLASH AND CLASH OF HOOF AND HEEL,
WILD SHOUTS AND THE WAVE OF HAIR
IN THE RUSH UPON THE WIND:
THUS THE RIDE OF SIN. (*The Black Riders* 1)

Benfey has observed that the poems in the first edition look like telegrams "from the battle front" (*CP* xv). The images of medieval weapons and horsemen, and the harsh alliterative repetitions ("CLASH AND CLANG" and "CLASH AND CLASH") confront the reader with fierce yet enigmatic dangers. The concluding line, "THUS THE RIDE OF SIN," leaves uncertain whether it is our own or some marauding others whose "sin" erupts violently from the sea. David Halliburton discusses this uncertainty in the reader's relationship to the "sin" which is revealed in this charge of horsemen from the sea, and he suggests that such "emergences" are typical of *The Black Riders* (270-72). This eruption seems to be a kind of demonic obverse of the birth of Venus from the sea. There is a greater dimension of moral or spiritual chaos as well as physical terror in the second to the last of the *Black Riders* LXVII. The poem begins with the declaration of a great loss:

> GOD LAY DEAD IN HEAVEN
> . . .
> THEN FROM THE FAR CAVERNS OF DEAD SINS
> CAME MONSTERS, LIVID WITH DESIRE,
> THEY FOUGHT,
> WRANGLED OVER THE WORLD,
> A MORSEL. (*The Black Riders* 74)

The statement "god lay dead in heaven" suggests Crane's vision of his clergyman father lying dead—during Stephen's eighth year—in the parlor of the rectory. Chaotic struggle results from this immeasurable loss, a collapse of moral authority, and of divine power and presence. This collapse of a spiritual center in the universe enables formless monsters--not merely "sins"—to emerge from deeper in the unknown, "from . . . caverns/of dead sins" to swarm "livid with desire" across the world.

Such monsters appear to remove human volition and responsibility from the chaotic tumult of war in the world. There is no place to stand and no source of strength to confront the monsters. There is only a gesture of compassion in which "a woman's arms tried to shield/The head of a sleeping man/ From the jaws of the final beast." This poem depicts an anguish at the emergence of super-human monsters which drench the earth in blackened blood, and they present a nightmare of a conflict without end.

"ONCE THERE CAME A MAN" introduces human agency by depicting a leader who asks, "RANGE ME ALL MEN OF THE WORLD IN ROWS." The "TERRIFIC CLAMOR" and "BLOODY SCUFFLE" which follow are said to "HAVE ENDURED FOR AGES." It is uncertain whether the leader's request should be seen as callous arrogance, naïve righteousness, or some sort of capriciousness. Or is this demand another glimpse of the monsters making eternal tumult? At the end of "ONCE THERE CAME A MAN," the leader who sought to place all men in rows goes to his grave "weeping," but we are unsure whether he weeps at the endless bloodshed or at the failure to impose his plan upon mankind (*The Black Riders* 5).

The political scientist John Stroessinger has argued that all of the wars of aggression in the 20th century ended in such failure for the leaders who initiated the aggression (*Why Nations Go to War* 209-10). Crane's theorizing in *Black Riders* seems to reflect an unexpected, empirical truth. There is no interpretive conclusion provided in Crane's poem XIV, beginning "THERE WAS A CRIMSON CLASH OF WAR." The images in the poem, "WOMEN WEPT" and "BABES RAN, WONDERING," identify the sufferings of war, but when a stranger asks, "WHY IS THIS?"

> THERE WAS SUCH INTRICATE CLAMOR OF TONGUES
> THAT STILL THE REASON WAS NOT. (*The Black Riders* 15)

Such insistance upon the incomprehensible characterizes the responses to war found in these poems. Even in the conclusion to *Black Riders* XV, "TELL BRAVE DEEDS OF WAR," the narrator mutters, "I THINK THERE WERE BRAVER DEEDS" (*The Black*

Riders 16). But he identifies no instances of such bravery. Was the collapse of Reconstruction so dismal that, as Ralph Ellison suggests, Crane could imagine no post Civil War heroism, only the lonely struggle of an individual to protect his values and his identity:

> Dr. Trescott's loyalty to his oath as a physician and to the man who has saved his son's life costs him his practice, his friends and ultimately his social identity. In short, "The Monster" places us in an atmosphere like that of post-Civil War America and there is no question as to the Negro's part in it, nor to the fact that the issues go much deeper than the question of race. (*Shadow and Act* 75)

The title of Crane's second volume of poetry, *War Is Kind*, suggests that the entire volume might be read as an attempt to define the human involvements with war, but I will limit this discussion to poems which are explicit in addressing the topic of war. The celebrated title poem depicts an intertwining of military glamour with the griefs of those who suffer after their fathers, lovers and sons are killed in battle. In its stanzaic patterns and rhyme, this is one of Crane's most accomplished poems. John Berryman, Daniel Hoffman, David Halliburton and Christopher Benfey have praised its use of assonance and alliteration and its variety of rhetorical styles. The poem includes, among other devices, bombastic rhetoric ("Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom"), vivid depictions of death (". . . your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,/Raged at his breast, gulped and died"), and the subdued anguish of the "Mother whose heart hung humble as a button/On the bright splendid shroud of [her] son" (*CP* 45). The refrain of the poem, "Do not weep/War is Kind," is addressed to those with emotional bonds to the soldiers killed in battle: a lover, a child, and a mother. The word "kind" has been defined as ironic: the events of war are brutal and cruel, and Crane really means that war is "unkind." Shira Wolosky, in her book *Poetry and Public*

Discourse in America, asks "does he also mean of human kind? (209). Crane, who explored the richness of the reference of the title abstractions, "Courage" and "Heroism" and "Monster" in three of his best known prose works, seems likely to have noticed the reflexive self-flattery in the popular use of the word "kind." In the *OED*, only one-fifth of the adjectival entries defines the word as [of persons]: "Naturally well disposed; having a gentle, sympathetic or benevolent disposition" (699). The four earlier adjectival definitions identify instances of "kind" which focus on attributes which are simply held "in accordance with nature." The two-and-a-half pages of OED definitions of "kind" as a "substantive" (noun) refer to such issues as "derived from birth," "origin," and "kinship." The word "kind" has a rich history of linguistic associations with the deep structures connecting human beings (and other organisms) to their genetic and historical identities. Franklin H. Giddings, a sociologist at Columbia University, noted in 1896 that "the consciousness of kind" was the basis of all social organization" (Hofstadter 157, emphasis added).

Crane's refrain seems to assert that war is a part of our "social organization" as human beings. It is not comforting to make such an assertion about our "kind" to those in grief or mourning, but I believe that Crane's refrain asserts the complexity and the contradictions in the relationship between war and human nature. War is an aspect of our "kind," Crane states, and it seems to include our attraction to glory and self-destruction as well as the anguish of those who mourn the deaths in battle of those they love. In *Democracy and Empire* Giddings asserts that "we have now the principle by which to explain the wonderful phenomenon of the democratic empire" (11). One instance is "the wasting of barbarian peoples before the advance of civilization." Another instance is that "The minority which . . . suffers the pains of progress is [of] . . . the most unprogressive elements" (78). Crane's poem does not distinguish between the value of civilized and barbarian peoples.

In *War Is Kind* Crane asserts that, for "our kind," war—praised as manly, competitive aggression by such political figures as Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge—includes celebratory joy and rapture at conquest, and grief and woe at the deaths suffered in the battlefield. Perhaps, in addition, Crane's poem suggests that, by providing a glimpse of this knot in the nature of our kind, his argument might enable us to achieve a liberating awareness of our predicament. In *War Is Kind* Crane moves beyond bewilderment at the incomprehensible facts of war which he expressed throughout his poems on the subject of war in *The Black Riders*.

A later poem in *War Is Kind*, "Fast Rode the Knight" (*CP* 85) addresses the issue of sexual desire as an element in the sacrificial violence of war. "To save my lady," the knight charges into battle: "men of steel flickered and gleamed/Like a riot of silver lights." The opening stanza ends with the "gold of the knight's good banner" gleaming on the castle wall. The concluding stanza depicts a horse, a "Blowing, staggering, bloody thing/. . . . Dead at foot of castle wall." The knight and his lady are not present at the end of the poem. The horse, an image of the desires of the flesh, is a broken, dead thing.

The "Intrigue" series which concludes *War Is Kind* includes numerous intertwinings of sexual desire with masochistic submission or sadistic aggression. In one poem (*CP* 113) the lover seeks the glamor of military decorations. He implores God to give him "medals" and "honors" to become "worthy of—/—The love I bear [her]" (*CP* 111). This love is so abstract that it can only be expressed in the alienated glamor of war decorations. William Dean Howells's "Editha" discusses a parallel distortion of a woman's desire during the emotional turmoil of the jingoistic build-up to the Spanish-American War ("Editha" 533-47) .

In another verse paragraph of "Intrigue," desire becomes transformed into sexual aggression or terrorism:

> . . . I wish to be an ogre
> And hale and haul my beloved to a castle
> And there use the happy cruel one cruelly
> And make her mourn with my mourning. (*CP* 113)

This poem suggests that the romance of a knight's attack upon the castle includes narcissistic displacements and dominations unacknowledged in his ostensible quest "to save his lady." Desire and rage become visible as intertwined components of the emotional structures of our "kind." Even Crane's choice of the term "Intrigue" as the title for this series of poems suggests his concern with the correlations between deviousness, aggression, and elements of sexual desire.

Several of Crane's “Uncollected Poems” on war are depictions of vast panoramas of human suffering. In "The Blue Battalions," "There exists the eternal fact of conflict," "On the brown trail," and "The Battle Hymn," Crane discusses military conflicts as vast historical actions.

Daniel Hoffman omits *War Is Kind* from his discussion of Crane’s war poems, but he praises "The Blue Battalions" for its expression of a spiritual achievement. Hoffman declares that “Nowhere else does Crane so strikingly envisage the triumph of man over the fated misery of life” (165). Hoffman’s statement has a celebratory grandeur and glamour that is not typical of Crane’s responses to war. Marston LaFrance finds the root of Hoffman’s misreading in one of his assumptions about Crane. LaFrance observes that for Hoffman, “Crane, like Arnold, was 'after all' a Christian," but LaFrance insists that if one does not share Hoffman's assumptions, "one's reading will not agree"(LaFrance 130). "The Blue Battalions" was written in 1897, and the poem is filled with the “unexplained, incomprehensible conflicts” found in Crane’s poems in *The Black Riders*.

“The Blue Battalions” is a more disturbing and conflict-filled commentary than Hoffman's reading acknowledges. The blue battalions are both “God-led” and demonic. Crane even employs imagery which directly parallels the threatening tumult of the “Black riders. ” “The clang of swords is thy wisdom,” Crane says, linking the divine and the “blue” tumult. Crane also provides other particulars which subvert the spiritual authority of the battalions: "Mistakes and virtues will be trampled deep / A church and a thief shall fall together,” he says at the beginning of the second stanza. There is little evidence for the “triumph” of man over the “fated misery of life.” At the end there is only the chant, "God lead them high. God lead them far," but the poem offers little certainty.

The last of Crane’s war poems come from the period after he had encountered war in Cuba. In these poems, Crane is not a detached and distant observer of conflict as he is in "The Blue Battalions." In "There exists the eternal fact of conflict,” Crane proposes a theory defining the historical emergence of patriotism. In opening with "the eternal fact of conflict" (*CP* 140), Crane acknowledges a Darwinian world of competition for survival. His second step in what appears to be an evolutionary process is the emergence of a "sense of locality." And then, Crane states that “we” become patriots. At this point, his imagery becomes contradictory:

> The godly vice of patriotism makes us slaves,
> And—let us surrender to this falsity
> Let us be patriots

The term "godly vice" suggests the energy and brutality of the "blue battalions." The call to "surrender to this falsity” indicates that we could hold onto “truth.” This poem, written in 1897, then shifts to describing the "practical men" who become patriots:

> They cry aloud to be led to war
> Ah—
> They have been poltroons on a thousand fields
> And the sacked sad city of New York is their record.
> (*CP* 140)

Crane, after being punished by the police for testifying in the Dora Clark case, had learned the temptations toward cowardice in New York City. Those who become patriots are linked to their locality through a “thousand” acts of cowardice. War is carried forward, then, by cowards who “play at being free,” but they “are too well-dressed to protest infamy.” They do not risk soiling the polite costumes of their social identities. Perhaps we glimpse what Crane means if we recall that Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. was “shunned by his classmates,” the other cadets at West Point, who never ate a meal or shared a dormitory room with him during his four-year career as a black cadet (Wikipedia). Such cowardly failures to “protest infamy” in racist, careerist young men may have weakened the American military performance in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

In the last two of his poems from the war in Cuba, Crane expresses a deep sensitivity to the peasants who are in the path of the Blue Battalions. "On the brown trail"(*CP* 85) expresses the anguish of those who receive gifts from the foreign army. They are bewildered and "weep,” and state that the "gifts form into a yoke." The poem ends with the peasants seeing they are supposed "to vanish/Grateful because of full mouths." The peasants represent those barbarians who are destroyed in the march of a powerful foreign version of progress in Franklin Giddings’s discussion of Imperialism and Democracy.

The last lines of the poem are spoken by a peasant. They do not endorse the “blue” battalions’ imperialist adventure. And Crane allows the peasants to reject American historical exceptionalism:

And ye—ye bigoted men of a moment
—Wait—
Await your turn. (*CP* 141)

The imperialist armies are merely the powerful expression of the moment, but they also will vanish from history. Crane seems to have wished to advise his contemporaries that the Blue Battalions were themselves only a transient moment of cultural energy "when a people reach the top of a hill."

"The Battle Hymn" is a poem of 39 lines that was discovered in Crane's saddle bags from Cuba after his death. This poem might be seen as Crane’s parallel to Mark Twain’s “War Prayer,” the essay Twain wrote after the invasion of China. Like Twain’s “War Prayer” and Crane’s “The Blue Battalions," “The Battle

Hymn" also includes ironic invocations to God. One of them, Crane invites God to observe the victorious army:

> Bend and see a people, O, God
> A people applauded, acclaimed,
> By him of the raw, red shoulders
> The manacle-marked, the thin victim. (*CP* 143)

Crane depicts the abused victim of imperialism lying in the smoking cane field." There is a varying refrain placed in parentheses three times in the poem following a description of the effectiveness of the imperial army:

> We shall sweep and swarm through jungle and pool,
> Then let the savage one bend his high chin
> To see on his breast, the sullen glow of the death-medals
> For we know and we say our gift,
> His prize is death, deep doom.
> (He shall be white amid the smoking cane.) (*CP* 143)

At the end of this poem, Crane returns to the image of a red badge awarded to a soldier, but this badge is even more ironic than Henry Fleming's head wound. This red badge is awarded to the "savage one" as the "gift" of a death wound to the breast. "The Battle Hymn" is a grotesque revision of Julia Ward Howe's endorsement of the Civil War, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Crane's early poems on war seem to reflect the American bewilderment at the vast losses and the unsatisfying resolution of the Civil War. These poems present the demonic and the incomprehensible elements of war. *War Is Kind* achieves an acknowledgment that that the grief and glamour of war reflect contradictions in human nature. But Crane's poems moved closer to the individual victims of war after his experiences in Greece and Cuba and Puerto Rico. These poems engage issues which Crane was not able to address so directly in his prose fiction.

In our time of asymmetrical wars, jihads directed at civilian targets, racial cleansings, invasions to protect access to raw materials, and armies made of mercenaries and contractors and secret prisons and translations of “torture” into “enhanced interrogation,” it may be that the complexity of our experiences of war is too vast for Crane’s theorizing and historical modeling. Nevertheless, Crane’s struggle to comprehend the contradictions of his time may help us to glimpse the road we have taken toward our current difficulties in naming and understanding the experiences of war.

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Narrative Construct and *George's Mother*: Temperance Rhetoric Repurposed by the Novel

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In an 1894 letter, Stephen Crane declared the work that became *George's Mother* as "my best thing." Critics would not agree. "The pious mother and the wayward son are not new types in slum stories, and Mr. Crane is not at all original in the delineation of them" (81), the New York Tribune declared in an 1896 review.[1] Critical assessments since have focused on the well-worn temperance theme at the story's center, and *George's Mother* is understood to borrow on reform fiction's formal antitheses to model the "tragic distance between Mrs. Crane and her son."[2] In these interpretations, Mrs. Kelcey's religious participation sets the stage for the story's described psychological and emotional estrangements deepened by her son's growing, resentful alcoholism. John Berryman's laconic references to *George's Mother* in his 1950 biography are typical; he describes the story as "a pious devoted dreary woman driven gradually to despair and death as her son takes to drink . . ." (65). Sholom Kahn states baldly that the text is "implicitly, a temperance novel" (73) albeit a "greatly superior" one sharpened by "biting ironies."

More recent socio-cultural assessments have been less dismissive of the characters' representative natures, while they continue to dilate on the text's thematic oppositions. In "From a Home to the World: Stephen Crane's *George's Mother*," for example, Donald Pizer examines gender differences to locate the story's meaning in "rival codes of the feminine home and the masculine world, with the first several chapters introducing the pattern of alternatives" (280). Mrs. Kelcey values "cleanliness, order, hard work, and temperance" (278), whereas George's drunken fraternizing symbolizes a "spiritual stasis . . . an emptiness of value and belief" (284). Pizer points out that Crane's use of irony clarifies to the reader George's inability to find a home in the masculine world, much less the feminine one.

I would like to expand on Pizer's point that the constraints of George's ideologically determined choices are ultimately fruitless. The text does not argue for or against the reform ideology it represents, but points out the described argument's limitations. The narrative of *George's Mother* challenges the reader's dependence upon an assumed drunk-versus-teetotaler opposition as a means for understanding the story's message, and points the reader in another direction in the quest for meaning. To make my argument, I will first present a history of critical work that yokes the meaning of *George's Mother* to assumptions concerning Crane's relationship with his own temperance-minded mother and his supposed resistance to her reformist sensibilities. After discussing the shaky basis of these biographically rooted assumptions, I will then present an analysis of the narrative's formal elements to point out that Crane's novel challenges the reader to transcend the eponymous characters' narrow viewpoints. The narrative of *George's Mother* ultimately does not engage in its characters' represented temperance-centric argument, but instead points out the illusions of reform's ideological constructs and moral assumptions.

Interpretations of Crane's *George's Mother* traditionally root the characters' antagonistic relationship in Crane's personal history. Writes Brenda Murphy, "*George's Mother* is not Crane's most virulent attack on the fanatic Methodism he had seen in his youth, but it is, in the end, perhaps the most affecting" (93). How much of an "attack" the novel represents, however, may be more assumption than fact. Certainly, Mary Peck Crane was no traditional stay-at-home mother. Her work with the WCTU often took her away from the domestic hearth. As pointed out in a 1922 article by Carl F. Price in *The Christian Advocate*, Mary Peck Crane was "a writer of many subjects, [and] was much in demand as a public speaker, especially by the Methodist women's societies" (867). Price notes that her reform-minded advocacy drew much public criticism: ". . . so unconventional were her housekeeping habits that when she came under that scrutiny which the ladies of the congregation sometimes delight in lavishing upon a minister's wife, she suffered much open criticism and was finally informed that she ought to stay home and take care of her large family, instead of making so many speeches." Whether Stephen shared this opinion has never been established, and while critics have long speculated on the biographical bases of Crane's fictional characters, the representative nature of Mrs. Kelcey's "dreary" fanaticism remains more conjecture than fact.[3]

The biographical basis for Crane's endorsement of George's resentments was firmly established by Thomas Beer's 1923 biography, *Stephen Crane: A Study in American Letters*. This biography figured as a primary text for Crane research until its exposure as a dubious resource in the early 1990s. Beer describes Mary Peck Crane's work with the WCTU as "the Methodist holy show . . ." (49), and he attributes to Crane the critical statement that "it hurt [my mother] that any of us should be slipping from Grace and giving up eternal damnation or salvation or those things. You could argue just as well with a wave . . ." (49-50). Beer further establishes Crane's opposition to his mother's religious fervor by quoting Crane's description of a drunken incident at age fourteen: "I felt ecstatic and then I was an Emperor. . . . I had been sulky all morning and now I was perfectly willing to go to a prayer meeting and Mother was tickled to death. And, mind you, all because this nefarious Florentine gave me a red drink out of a bottle" (50). Later in the biography, Beer again suggests Crane's opinion of Mary's reformist participation when he recounts that Stephen declined to meet Frances Willard, the national leader of the WCTU, because "he thought Miss Willard a fool" (58). Beer also purports that Crane informed a "Miss Catherine Harris" that he felt Frances Willard "is one of those wonderful people who can tell right from wrong for everybody. . . . Perhaps it never struck her that people differ from her. I have loved myself passionately now and then but Miss Willard's affair with Miss Willard should be stopped by the police" (205).

However, Stanley Wertheim and Paul Sorrentino point out that the Beer biography evidences "a pattern of fabrication . . . evident from the very onset" (3). In "Stephen Crane: The Clay Feet of the Beer Biography," Wertheim and Sorrentino note that much of Beer's source material cannot be found, and should be considered suspect at best if not wholly made up. Wertheim and Sorrentino's correction of the documentary record in *The Crane Log* pointedly excludes Beer's accounts of Crane's statements concerning childhood memories of his mother's religious fervor. *The Crane Log* also invalidates an oft-quoted letter to Miss Harris (from November 1896); this missing document is the only proof of Harris's existence outside of Beer's biographical commentary.[4] George Monteiro points out that Beer's knowledge of the personal relationship between Frances Willard and Mary Peck Crane most likely "prompted Thomas Beer to invent" a prejudiced opinion which he attributed to Crane himself.[5] Beer's biography is now considered a fictionalized work, but its influence remains, despite the fact that "a good number, probably most, of the letters, anecdotes, and characterizations in Beer's biography are either spurious or severely scrambled" (Wertheim and Sorrentino, "The Clay Feet of Stephen Crane Beer Biography" 11).

Another source describing Crane's early enthusiasm for alcohol in direct opposition to his mother's temperance work comes from his childhood friend, Post Wheeler. In his 1955 memoir, *Dome of Many-Colored Glass*, Wheeler writes an apocryphal story of Stephen's encounter with alcohol. In this account, Wheeler relates that the two childhood friends, ages six and eight, ran through the fairgrounds at a Revolutionary War memorial celebration. Their mothers had come to listen to the temperance speeches, and the boys quickly escaped them, racing off toward the more secular festivities. There, "Stevie" shocked Post by buying and drinking a beer. Wheeler recounts having asked the young Crane "'how'd you dast do it?' . . . 'Pshaw!' said Stevie. 'Beer ain't nothing at all.' Then he added, defensively but emphatically, 'How was I going to know what it tasted like less'n I tasted it? How are you going to know about things at all less'n you do 'em?'" (22).

Critical assessments of *George's Mother* have subsequently carried into Crane scholarship a sense of Crane's resistance to his mother's public activism, supported by the fictional representations of a mother and son in crisis. Even critics who take into account the dubiousness of Beer's source material concede to its interpretive gist. For instance, Christopher Benfey declared that Crane's strong critiques of his mother's Methodist undertakings "may be Beer's invention as well, but it seems possible that he did get wind of some such story as this . . ." (93). But which came first, the biographical accounts or Crane's fiction?

In the remainder of this paper I will argue that *George's Mother* is more than a carrier of "some such" stories, or, as William Dean Howells put it, "the study of a situation merely."[6] *George's Mother* purposefully offered its characters as well-known types to readers familiar with temperance fiction's narrative traditions: the destructive, most often male alcoholic, and the long-suffering, usually female temperance advocate who patiently waits for either her loved one's reform or her own martyred suffering and even death at his hands.[7] Crane's text does not construct this opposition simply to immerse the reader in the characters' expected roles and play out the plot to its expected denouement. Instead, the novel's narrative shifts the reader's viewpoint through and away from the confined scope of Mrs. Kelcey's familiar reform stance and her son's sullen alcoholism, first pointing out that their dreams are not so different as they may seem at first glance, and then raising the specter of a far more insidious threat unfolding beyond the characters' limited focus.

The story itself is simple. George and his mother struggle with poverty in the slums of New York. Mrs. Kelcey leaves their shared apartment primarily to attend religious prayer meetings while George goes to a job he hates. At home, Mrs. Kelcey keeps house for George, in whom she believes fiercely despite the growing evidence that he is not merely resistant to her requests to join her at the church, but actively participating in immoral activities. George is far more interested in getting drunk and hanging out in bars and on the street with progressively degraded companions. He resists his mother's requests to join her at church, and he loses his job because he is hung-over and belligerent. The story has less plot and more atmosphere; its textual tension concerns the differing world views illustrated by shifting perspective between the two main characters. The story ends when Mother dies, and George is left on his own.

George is eager to experience all the pleasures his church-going mother warns him against, especially those found in the tavern. Crane's narrative technique focalizes the reader's attention to immerse him or her completely as the focus shifts from George's to Mrs. Kelcey's alternating perspectives and back. The switch-off in character focalization[8] clarifies that each character actually imagines his and her situation through similar imagery, even as they represent opposite sides in traditional temperance reform logic, a logic that pits the good water-drinker against the corrupt drunk. But in their imaginations, both characters are transformed into actors playing out romantic tales replete with warriors, heroes and dragons. While each character envisions the dragon's role in terms that suit his or her particular perspective, both seek to cast George in the role of hero. In Mrs. Kelcey's experience, the apartment is dominated by a "stove that lurked in the gloom, red-eyed, like a dragon." Mrs. Kelcey wages a "battle . . . in full swing. Terrific blows were given and received. There arose the clattering uproar of a new fight. The little intent warrior never hesitated nor faltered. She fought with a strong and relentless will" (80). George is Mrs. Kelcey's worthy, sober object, and she the gallant "warrior" serving him. Her son's hung-over surliness is explained away by this same language; Mrs. Kelcey imagines him plagued by "wondrous influences swooping like green dragons at him. . . . She longed to discover them, that she might go bravely to the rescue of her heroic son" (91). In reimagining the source of George's bad temper as a mythical beast instead of drink, Mrs. Kelcey is able to avoid confronting the true nature of George's sullenness.

In contrast to his mother's battle at home, George stages a battle at the tavern, using similar imagery in a quest for a different objective. George's dragon explicitly represents alcohol, but George does not fight it as his mother does. "Drink and its surroundings were the eyes of a superb green dragon to him. He followed a fascinating glitter, and the glitter required no explanation" (112). The "glitter" is a false conviviality George sees as social acceptance. Alcohol is not what George ultimately wants; it is mere means to a social end. The narrative describes that George was "born with an abhorrence" for beer, but he "had steadily battled" against this repugnance in order to join his fellow drinkers in the rough tavern society. The bar boys accept George's swaggering pose in a way his mother never will; he is not interested in drunkenness so much as he desires social acceptance and a feeling of importance that neither his home nor his work life offers him. Drink's dragon offers George an appealing self-image he lacks in reality.

Both characters' imaginative constructs allow them to avoid dealing with the real issues of grinding poverty and George's discontented, growing alcoholism. Mrs. Kelcey eventually convinces a reluctant George to attend a prayer meeting with her. While he gives in because he sees "something grand in relenting," he soon regrets his decision. In the scene in Mrs. Kelcey's church, George's perspective underscores his feelings of helplessness and shame. He struggles to reclaim some sense of agency in what he perceives as a hostile environment. This is Mrs. Kelcey's world; "she had acquired such a new air that he would have been afraid to address her" (110). She does not speak through this scene; to George, she seems unapproachable, wrapped in the atmosphere of this "awesome place." Given that George's own fantasies of heroism are stoked at the tavern, on his mother's religious battleground he can only be an object of reform, or, as he imagines, the enemy. The tight focalization through George's perspective as the pair enters Mrs. Kelcey's church points to George's estrangement from his mother's world, a world defined by such militant rhetoric as the WCTU's "White Ribbon Army." As George enters the church, he perceives that

"The multitudinous pairs of eyes that turned toward him were implacable in their cool valuations. . . . one could feel there the presence of the army of the unknown, possessors of the great eternal truths. . . . The leader of the meeting seemed to be the only one who saw him. He stared gravely, solemnly, regretfully. . . . Kelcey hated the man." Not only does he hate this religious figure, he angrily desires to "assassinate" his mother. This characterization expresses George's wish to reclaim the agency of his alcoholic fantasy; he casts his mother as a political figure to be assassinated and himself the alcohol dragon's champion.

However, lest the reader fully acquiesce to the story's plotline pitting the drunken son against his reformist mother, the above-described scene is proceeded by another that widens the reader's perspective, one that ignores both main characters altogether. Just before the narrative accompanies George into his mother's church, it shifts to reveal to the reader a scene unfolding far beyond George's limited perspective. A stand-alone paragraph describes the church as a small detail of the larger landscape. The point of view is that of the unknown narrator; the Kelceys are wholly absent here. "In a dark street the little chapel sat humbly between two towering apartment-houses. A red street-lamp stood in front. It threw a marvelous reflection upon the wet pavements. It was like the death-stain of a spirit. . . . A roar of wheels and a clangor of bells came from this point, interwoven into a sound emblematic of the life of the city. It seemed somehow to affront this solemn and austere little edifice. It suggested an approaching barbaric invasion. The little church, pierced, would die with a fine, illimitable scorn for its slayers" (110). In the coming battle described here, the activity within the church does not signify; only the building's doomed "edifice" is visible. George and his mother are non-existent in this paragraph's viewpoint. The previously recounted hopes and dreams of the poor give way under the barbaric city's relentless approach. The Kelceys' romanticized outlooks, alike in kind but so different in character, remain focused on the battle within, while the real danger of the ruthless "invasion" and of the city's dehumanizing clangor threatens to overrun the very structure sheltering their embattled relationship.

The reader is given only a glimpse of this looming threat before the narrative snaps back to focalizing the story through the main characters' narrow perspectives. The ending of the story, however, is constructed by the impersonal viewpoint. As the plot moves toward a generic temperance conclusion, with Mrs. Kelcey dying in the midst of George's neglectful alcoholic resentments, the narrative opens up to again reveal the previously glimpsed larger reality, and George's continuing incomprehension. Mrs. Kelcey dies, seeing "something sinister" coming for her. She "turned to her son in a wild babbling appeal. . . . there began within her a struggle to reach him with her mind . . ." (128). George can only watch helplessly. "He became so that he could not hear the chatter from the bed. . . ." This sentence is the last to describe George's engagement with his surroundings. Like the scene in which the little church is viewed from outside George's perspective, the rest of the death scene unfolds to reveal an urban environment divorced from any reference to George. Outside his window, the city moves on. "An endless roar, the eternal trample of the marching city, came mingled with vague cries." And just outside the apartment door, a final conversation unfolds between a faceless, nameless pair who echo all of the main characters' argumentative exchanges:

> "Johnnie!"
> "Wot!"
> "You come right here t' me! I want yehs t' go t' d' store fer me!"
> "Ah, ma, send Sally!"
> "No, I will not! You come right here!"
> "All right, in a minnet!"
> "Johnnie!"
> "In a minnet, I tell yeh!"
> "Johnnie—"

The last word belongs to neither George nor his mother, but is instead an emptied-out echo representing their clashing perspectives. Stripped of the imaginative imagery that George and Mrs. Kelcey bring to their struggles, such arguments are laid bare in this final exchange as nothing more than petty, frustrating squabbles. George's and his mother's strategies for dealing with their problems are revealed as useless escape mechanisms which simply reflect poverty's indignities. Mrs. Kelcey dies, never knowing that her need to reimagine her son's sullenness hides the very alcoholism her reform ideals abhor. And when stripped of his imagined agency, George has nothing to offer; he falls silent; the city, and the story, move on without him.

George's Mother was published to mixed reviews, most commenting in some way on the reform-based argument between mother and son. Many of the more positive critiques praised the book as a fine lesson "the young should read,"[9] a story with "no particular plot" because it "is usually understood."[10] The negative reviews included complaints that Crane "offers no solution; he does not even state the problem."[11] Searching for meaning in generic temperance fiction plots, however, is as fruitless as the critics complained. Instead, the structure of *George's Mother* highlights the frustrated situation of impoverished characters who struggle to claim a place for themselves. *George's Mother* employs temperance-type rhetoric not to engage in the ideological exchange, but in service to a textual design that emphasizes the illusory nature of an imaginary heroics seized on perhaps understandably, if not sympathetically, by unheroic characters.

Notes

1. “Recent Fiction by English and American Authors,” July 1, 1896.

2. Thomas Gullason notes in *Stephen Crane’s Literary Family: A Garland of Writings* that *George’s Mother* primarily focuses on the “dramatic gloss of the tragic distance between Mrs. Crane and her son” (144).

3. In *Stephen Crane: A Garland of Writings*, Thomas Gullason points to the complicated nature of the relationship between Mary Peck Crane to the fictional Mrs. Kelcey. Mary Peck Crane, Gullason points out, “was no fanatic but a practical, hardworking, effective organizer and campaigner,” and Crane thus “painted only a partial portrait” of his mother in *George’s Mother*, “one that has been accepted for decades as her full portrait. [In *George’s Mother*] she epitomized the desperate religious zealot, unable to save her son from his life as a wastrel and alcoholic” (144). Paul Sorrentino, in *Stephen Crane: A Life of Fire* describes the plot of *George’s Mother* as an “unmistakably autobiographical” breach between a “‘wild son’ who rejects the straight and narrow religious path of his mother” (141). However, writes Sorrentino, Crane’s fictional characters can be understood more as composite than outright representation: “George is not a projection of Stephen alone; another ‘wild son’ was Townley, whose alcoholism exacerbated his physical and mental problems.”

4. The only reference to Frances Willard in *The Crane Log* is an entry noting that she “was a guest in the Crane home,” from the *Asbury Park Tribune* July 4, 1888 (43).

5. See George Monteiro’s *Stephen Crane’s Blue Badge of Courage*, p. 9, n. 4. Monteiro specifically singles out the remarks to Ms. Harris concerning Frances Willard’s self-admiration to invalidate.

6. Howells’s remarks concerning the relevance of Crane’s work were published in *New York World* as “New York Low Life in Fiction,” on July 26, 1896.

7. Temperance fiction generally structured itself on the co-dependent binaries of sober/drunken, saved/fallen, etc. This can be seen in the works of T. S. Arthur, the most popular writer of temperance fiction. In his novel *Danger, or, Wounded in the House of a Friend*, a typical speech is that of the fictional Reverend who states that religious citizens must "clasp hands in a common Christian brotherhood, and give themselves to the work of saving the lost and lifting up the fallen" (269). Scott C. Martin notes that positive roles imagined for women in "the battle against drink" became familiar fictional archetypes: "pitiful though sympathetic victims of male drunkenness whose suffering goaded the indifferent into action; and moral exemplars whose goodness and righteousness encouraged the temperance and reformed the inebriate" (39).

8. I will use the term "focalize" or "focalization" as defined by Mieke Bal. She refers to focalization as a specific formal narrative technique concerning "the relationships between the elements presented and the vision through which they are presented" (142), or, in more plain language, a "point of view or narrative perspective" (143). Focalization is a narrative technique channeling the reader's attention through a specific character's point of view. See Bal's *Narratology*, Second Edition, Part 2.7: "Focalization."

9. "New Books and New Editions," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 6, 1896.

10. "*George's Mother* Gives a View of New York's Slums." *New York Commercial Advertiser*, June 13, 1896.

11. "Two Books by Stephen Crane," *Critic*, June 13, 1896.

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Donald Pizer. *Writer in Motion: The Major Fiction of Stephen Crane: Collected Critical Essays*. New York: AMS Press, 2013. 153 pages. $76.50.

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This book is recommended reading for all those interested in literature, literary naturalism, American fiction, and Stephen Crane. Its author has long labored in the vineyards of scholarship in these areas. The author of now standard book-length studies of writers such as Dreiser and Norris, Pizer here gathers a handful of pieces published as early as 1965 and as recently as 2009. *Writer in Motion* is made up of 13 pieces of varying length organized under three major headings: "*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*" (five pieces), "*George's Mother*" (one piece), and "*The Red Badge of Courage*." The last of these is itself divided into three sections—"The Textual Issue" (two pieces), "*The Red Badge of Courage* in the Context of 1890s Naturalism" (two pieces), and, again, "The Red Badge of Courage" (three pieces). With an exception or two—notably, an investigation into the possibility of identifying the historical unit on which Crane based Henry Fleming's fictional unit—these essays work out a scholarly definition of late-nineteenth-century naturalism and Crane's individual and overall place in that tradition.

Taken together, as Pizer tells us, they constitute the book about Crane he planned to undertake but found he did not need to write. In looking over what he had published on the subject over the decades, he discovered that what he might now say he had already said in these essays and introductions dispersed in various publications over the course of his long career as a teacher-scholar. He would not, he adds, try to re-work these essays into a volume that might be less original than this reprinting of pieces in a rightful order. I, for one, applaud his decision, as well as his explanation for his decision to make this collection his "book on Stephen Crane. First, it reminds us that Pizer was "there" in Crane studies early on, and secondly, it enables us to see just how he has remained steadfast to his "truths" about Crane and how to understand his great achievement. Some of these are occasional pieces: an introduction to an edition of the 1893 *Maggie*, a confrontation with Henry Binder's arguments for a "new" *Red Badge of Courage* based on surviving manuscripts, the question of Henry Fleming's unit in the war. Still others locate and define Crane's relationship to the literary naturalism of his time, something that, in my opinion, he could not as an aspiring writer ignore or totally accept. If there is anything missing in Pizer's published writings on Crane, it is a consideration of his poetry. (For that one can go to Daniel G. Hoffman's study of a half a century ago.)

But on the subject of America's version of literary naturalism and Crane's unique place in the discussion, there is no better place to start than with Pizer's *Writer in Motion*. One need not always agree with this scholar, but that he has argued his case forthrightly and intelligently it is hard to deny. Donald Pizer's work mattered and, it pleases me to say, it continues to matter. All this is so, and we are happy to have these pieces collected in one place, but, personally, I kind of wish he had taken a crack at that now-unwritten book. In thinking this, I'm sure that I am not alone.

Contributors' Notes

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Patrick K. Dooley, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus, at St. Bonaventure University, is currently tracking down the illustrated (in magazines) stories of Crane. So far he has located thirty-seven illustrators who furnished one hundred fifteen images for forty-eight of Crane's works. He plans to publish his findings.

Dan Graham received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Connecticut in 2018, where he was the recipient of the Aetna Graduate Teaching Award in First-Year Writing as well as the Milton Stern Dissertation Award for his nineteenth-century American Studies project, "Spectral Speculations: The Political Economy of American Spiritualism, 1848-1905." Dan teaches courses in composition, American and immigrant literature, and short fiction at MCPHS University and Emmanuel College in Boston, MA, and also serves as a council member of the New England American Studies Association.

George Monteiro, Professor Emeritus of English at Brown University, has published widely in the field of American Literature. His work on Crane has appeared frequently in *Stephen Crane Studies.*

Matthew Ross completed his doctorate in English at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, with an emphasis in American fiction since the Civil War. His writing has previously appeared in *Southern Cultures*, the *Journal of American Culture*, *Warscapes*, and *Eclectica*. He currently teaches at Santa Monica College in Los Angeles.

Donald Vanouse is an Emeritus Professor of English and American Studies at SUNY Oswego. He continues to present conference papers on Stephen Crane's poetry and prose as well as continuing to edit his earlier essays on Crane's responses to social, political, and racial issues. He also has been considering Crane's relation to the recently contested Civil War monuments. Vanouse also has continued to write papers on literature and psychology, most recently discussing Oliver Sacks's autobiographical writings and his life-long therapy with a psychoanalyst.