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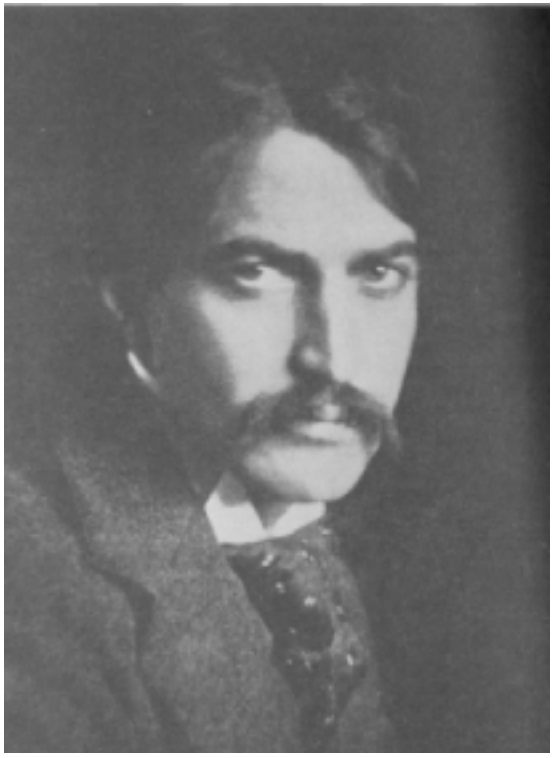

Stephen Crane Society

Stephen Crane Studies

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Violence, Secularity and Immanent Transcendence in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

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In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor describes how the spiritual landscape of the nineteenth century was reconfigured as alternatives that attempted to capture experiences of transcendence exploded during this period. Taylor identifies violence as one of the central ways through which an increasing number of individuals sought to escape what they perceived to be a banal and metaphysically thin terrain of secular modernity. In Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Henry Fleming attempts to offset the anxieties of confronting the disenchantments of a secular world by means of violence. The haunting refrain that appears in the novel—"secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions" (5)—provides the backdrop to Fleming's search for significance through the violence of the war.

Fleming's relationship to violence displays his negotiation of secularity. The youth's attempts to confront the nothingness beyond death participate in a cultural narrative of secular maturity, a narrative that elevates one's ability to grapple resolutely with the metaphysical impasse associated with suffering and death shorn of any transcendent purpose.[1] Simultaneously, the protagonist expresses an acute desire to feel more intensely alive as he confronts death within a naturalistic framework. The novel captures scenes of heightened emotion interlaced with vivid religious imagery, scenes that belie the youth's longing for sublimity, one that would allow him to experience a fuller, richer life within a horizon of fading transcendence. Troubled by the prospect of leading an insignificant life, Fleming attempts to transcend the mundane and the ordinary by means of violence. The red badge of courage he fortuitously incurs after being hit by a butt of a rifle enables him to plunge into war with fury and rage. Underwriting this violent rage is a profound sorrow and despair borne of his enclosure within an immanent order that fails to provide a meaningful *telos* for his life.

Critical debate on *The Red Badge* has centered on Crane's use of irony. Keith Gandal, for example, describes how Crane's "controlled" emotions are "hammered into a cold, steely irony" in the novel (520). One rarely glimpses the author's "vulnerable soul," writes the critic, or hears his "cry of anguish or suffocation" (520). John Curran, Jr., moreover, proposes that the setting of the novel, the Battle of Chancellorsville, effectively highlights the text's intended irony. Curran observes, "Even as Crane's soldiers wonder whether they have won or lost, they exist in the midst of the North's most stunning defeat"; the author "makes a poignant statement about the Civil War by figuring both 'epistemological uncertainty' and precise historical detail into his novel, and by using these two effects . . . for the purpose of irony" (170). Crane not only underscores the irony in *The Red Badge* by connecting epistemic uncertainty and historical precision; he also expresses an "ironic mourning" for lost transcendence, a grief that exists beneath the "cold, steely irony" controlling the emotional surface of the novel.

"Ironic mourning" is a mode that critic Vincent Pecora identifies in the modern novels of Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, and J. M. Coetzee. In his important study of the novel's relationship to secularity, Pecora argues that the godless world depicted in the fictions of these three writers, a world in which characters are unable to free themselves from an overriding sense of shame, guilt and futility, belies a profound religious revelation that appears by way of ironic mourning. According to Pecora, such a mourning operates as a "spiritually distorted return of [religion]," expressing a longing for a lost redemption that cannot be obtained within a secular order (11). Pecora explains, "[T]he underlying idea that the novel's manifest secularism was at the same time a mode of ironic mourning, even melancholia, for a narrative of . . . wholeness it could not recover never really disappears from either the novel or our accounts of the novel's secularity" (5). One hears echoes of this ironic mourning in *The Red Badge*. Accompanying Crane's unmitigated vision of secularity is a poignant yearning for a narrative of wholeness, for a lost transcendence that cannot be recovered within secularity. It is precisely the despair over this lost transcendence that leads Fleming toward rage and violence, through which he attempts to capture a sense of fullness.

Robert Shulman argues that the depiction of violence in *The Red Badge* reflects the author's reaction against a chaotically violent culture of the post-Civil War period (2). Given Crane's "vagabond spirit" that found war a "tonic" against commonplace existence (Gandal 514, 512), it is more plausible to read the violence in the novel as his reaction against an increasingly secular postwar culture lacking in spiritual vitality. Crane registers the frustrations and longings of inhabiting such a world. A poem included in *War Is Kind* describes the suffocating environment in which even religion has adopted the clichés and empty rituals of its surrounding culture. The poem's speaker mourns as he observes the once luminous faith now flickering into meaningless signs. He asks in outraged contempt, "You define me God with these trinkets?"

> Can my misery meal on an ordered walking
> Of surpliced numskulls?
> And a fanfare of light?
> Or even upon the measured pulpitings
> Of the familiar false and true?
> Is this God?
> Where, then, is hell?
> Show me some bastard mushroom
> Sprung from a pollution of blood,
> It is better.
>
> "Where is God?" (*Complete Poems* 85)

Gandal proposes that it is by looking at Crane's poetry that one can conduct a proper "spiritual autopsy" of the author; his prose, on the other hand, "aims . . . for a macho style" by hiding and converting pain into irony (518-19). While Crane the poet more overtly explores his crisis of faith, the novelist also conveys the angst of confronting a spiritually diminished world.

In *The Red Badge*, Henry Fleming remains acutely aware of a universe shorn of tragic depth, one in which "secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions" (5). Through the voice of his protagonist, Crane expresses the inadequacies of both Victorian Christianity and secular ideology to offset the banal

existence lived within the empty, homogeneous time ushered in by secular modernity. Historian James Turner demonstrates how nineteenth-century Christianity's emphasis on moralistic faith betrays marks of its adaptation to secular ideology and its inability to provide a sufficient counter-narrative to secularity. "Victorians," notes Turner, "typically expected God to be kind, generous, and fair" (142). Comfortable neither in a world of traditional faith divested of spiritual potency nor in a secular order dominated by instrumental rationality, Henry longs for a type of neo-pagan glory in the "marches, sieges, and, conflicts" of the war (5). "His busy mind," the novel tells us, "had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds" (5). This longing for battle glory comes out of his enclosure within an immanent frame that undercuts possibilities for transcendence. Fleming's desire to participate in war conveys his protest against an order that has increasingly delegitimized visceral, ecstatic, and sublime encounters that can be achieved through violence.[2] Fleming's dilemma, in effect, mirrors the exasperations felt by the speaker in the above poem, who repudiates "the familiar false and true" preached on "measured pulpitings" and who searches for the numinous power once accorded to God in "some bastard mushroom/ Sprung from a pollution of blood." For the novel's protagonist, this search leads him toward "the blood-swollen" god of war (23).

If Fleming joins the army in order to recover a sense of lost transcendence, ironically, it is war that reveals to him the disquieting tension of being enclosed in absolute non-transcendence. Earlier in the novel, when he is wracked by self-doubt and wonders whether he would muster enough courage to withstand an impending battle, he sees death as a possible relief from his anxieties. He reflects, "it would be better to get killed directly and end his troubles. . . . He would die; he would go to some place where he would be understood. . . . He must look to the grave for comprehension" (25). Here, Fleming retains an idea of the afterlife, albeit a rather vague one: by dying, he would arrive at a place where he would be understood despite his fears. Such a notion of death contrasts starkly with the death he would encounter later, one evacuated of any final meaning or consolation. When he flees from a battle and confronts a dead soldier lying in the midst of nature's "chapel," he encounters a

sight that renders him "horror-stricken" (43):

> He was being looked at by a dead man. . . . The corpse was dressed in a uniform that once had been blue, but was now faded to a melancholy shade of green. The eyes, staring at the youth, had changed to the dull hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish. The mouth was open. Its red had changed to an appalling yellow. Over the gray skin of the face ran little ants. One was trundling some sort of a bundle along the upper lip. (43)

In this scene, Crane yokes the language of religion—the chapel is identified as a place diffused with "a religious half-light" (43)—and naturalistic descriptions of the corpse—the dull eyes of the dead man are like the "hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish." The incongruity of the two images not only captures the novel's intended irony; it also expresses a deep sorrow for what has been lost in a secular age: that is, the spiritual meaning and consolation once attached to death, and the utter foreclosure of such meaning. Fleming sees a crucified body of a Union solider in the midst of the chapel but with no signs of a resurrected life. As the youth "star[es] into the liquid-looking eyes of the corpse" and as "[t]he dead man and the living man exchanged a long look" (43), the youth comes face to face with the horror of nothingness inscribed in the corpse.

Fleming's anxiety—his "shriek as he confront[s] the thing" (43)—is evoked by the death he witnesses, and more specifically, by his inability to exceed a naturalistic understanding of this phenomenon. This inability, in turn, connects to a growing culture of disbelief resulting from the Civil War. Drew Gilpin Faust's *This Republic of Suffering* narrates how the United States "embarked on a new relationship with death" as a result of the carnage it witnessed during the war (xv). Faust notes that the devastating images of the war became engraved in the collective conscience of Americans not only because of its scale, but also because it was visually brought home to them through the medium of photography. The dead bodies scattered across the battlefield of Antietam, for example, became highly visible for Americans to witness as the photographs of Mathew Brady circulated around the country.[3] In turn, those who survived the

war had to confront the meaning of their survival in the "face of other's annihilation" (xv). Faust writes, "The presence and fear of death touched Civil War Americans' most fundamental sense of who they were, for in its threat of termination and transformation, death inevitably inspired self-scrutiny and self-definition" (xv). It is precisely this "self-scrutiny and self-definition" that Fleming undertakes as he confronts the dead soldier. The sight of physical decomposition evokes a metaphysical crisis in him as he stares into the inescapable fact of death emptied of transcendence.

Faust describes how the carnage of the Civil War led an increasing number of Americans to relinquish the traditional Christian belief that endowed death with religious meaning. "Every death involved 'the great change' captured in the language and discourse of nineteenth century Christianity," explains Faust, "the shift from this life to whatever might come next": "The traditional notion that corporeal resurrection and restoration would accompany the Day of Judgment seemed increasingly implausible to many Americans who had seen the maiming and disfigurement inflicted by this war" (xvi). Likewise for Fleming, resurrection and restoration seemed especially incongruous before the decomposing body of the Union soldier. The youth remains haunted by an image of non-transcendent and non-teleological death. As he witnesses Jim Conklin dying later on, he eagerly searches for death's meaning: "[A]ghast and filled with wonder at the [dying] tall soldier, [Fleming] began quaveringly to question him. 'Where yeh goin', Jim? What you thinking about? Where are you going? Tell me, won't you, Jim?" (51). Before the ceremony of death, Fleming's desperate appeals remain unanswered; he can only watch spellbound the "ritelike . . . movements of the doomed soldier," whose death resembled that of "devotee of a mad religion" (51).

Crane underscores the sorrow and despair of his protagonist's loss by repeatedly evoking a language of religion and thereby highlighting the discrepancy between promises of faith and its failure to deliver. Human history can no longer be ratified by a transcendent hope in future redemption. As Fleming watches the solemn ceremony of his dying friend, beyond the horizon "[t]he red sun was pasted in the sky like a wafer" (52). The image offers a tantalizing memory of belief that had once guided the erstwhile faithful but now appears to provide no

direction. The sun bleeds its crimson hue across the sky like a wafer, recalling the sacrificial blood of Christ. The memory of faith lodged in the scene conveys both the affliction and longing of those who can recollect the knowledge of the Eucharist, but to whom its vivifying power remains lost, an unbelief signaled by the jarring description of the red sun as inertly pasted in the sky. The transcendent light of the sun is simultaneously reduced to a lifeless patch of color pasted onto the flattened canvas of the sky. In the poem "I Stood Musing," Crane writes of a similar anguish felt by those who yearn for faith but are unable to believe. The poem's speaker stands "musing a black world," apprehending "No radiance in the far sky, /Ineffable, divine; /No vision painted upon a pall; /And always my eyes ached for the light" (*Complete Poems* 53). So, too, Fleming longs to behold in the eyes of his dying friend an illumination that can respond sufficiently to his quest for meaning. He is granted no such enlightenment, however, and remains musing a darkened world, directionless and without purpose. The "bewildered" and "glazed vacancy" in the youth's eyes (86), through which he at times surveys the madness of the battle, indicates his inability to order time in any meaningful way, as he foresees the past, present and future collapsing into a cycle that tends toward no particular goal.[4] Such a vision is reminiscent of "the vacant horizon" that recurs in Crane's poetry, a horizon that stretches endlessly over a spiritually empty desert, or over a "dead grey" sea impassive and "superlative in vacancy."[5]

The youth's failure to receive an adequate response to the questions he poses to the dying Conklin finds its parallel in the horror-stricken encounter he has earlier within nature's chapel. Both scenes expose the shock of coming face-to-face with absolute non-transcendence, the terror of witnessing human existence in its final, reductive form: life shrunk to nothingness, a corpse that refuses to be incorporated into any eschatological vision of the afterlife. Fleming's imploring questions to Conklin, in effect, echo throughout the narrative. During his first encounter with death, the youth sees a decaying body of a Confederate soldier who "lay upon his back staring at the sky." He tries to decipher in this chance meeting an answer that can endow meaning to his existence. The youth had a "vague desire to walk around the body and stare," for within him stirred "the impulse of the living to try to read in the dead

eyes the answer to the Question" (22). Fleming expresses an ardent desire to know how he should live in the face of death, but he hears only an awkward silence. The unresponsiveness drives him to intensify his search for answers, a quest that becomes all the more urgent and consuming as he watches the solemn ceremony of Conklin's death.

The blankness Henry sees in the eyes of the dying and the dead appears so frightful because it reinforces the emptiness he finds within himself: the youth comes to discover that in war "he knew nothing of himself" (9). The insignificance he detects in himself is mirrored in the deaths he witnesses, the self's final dissolution into nothingness reflecting the troubled fears he has about his own identity. Fleming conveys the profound fear that he is "an unknown quantity," and thereby "resolved to remain close upon his guard lest those qualities of which he knew nothing should everlastingly disgrace himself" (10). He searches in the eyes of the dead a means by which he can dispel the forces that threaten to engulf and annihilate the self. As Howard Horsford perceptively observes, "the underlying conception that haunts . . . Crane's thinking" is a vision of a "world as sheer energy whose entropy postulates its end" (112). The threat of annihilation asserts itself not only in the specter of physical death looming before him in battle but also in the shame, guilt and disgrace lurking within, a psychological and social death that hangs over him like a sword of Damocles. Finding no clear answers to the Question he seeks from the war dead, and no viable outlet for his guilt and shame, Fleming mourns impotently in his pain. He experiences the "tumult of agony and despair" raging in his brain when he is forced to confront his psychic impasse, his inability to re-rout the shame and torment that overwhelm him (41).[6] If Crane's "depiction of human behavior" is "at once radically absurd yet occasion for pathos" (Horsford 111, 127),[7] his sympathy is most evident as he describes the youth's desperate, and ultimately, fruitless search for answers. Like Crane, Fleming thirsts and hungers for meaning without the fulfillment of his longing.[8]

Attending to these moments of pathos can point to Crane's own conflicted attitude toward faith and, more specifically, toward the devout Methodism of his family. While the author rejected the dogmatism of this faith, he remained haunted by a godless world he was left to occupy, "never resolv[ing] his own spiritual angst" (Sorrentino 29), an

irresolution that finds its way into his Civil War novel. If in his poems Crane reveals a world abandoned by God[9]—a spiritual desert in which human beings eat their own bitter hearts—in *The Red Badge*, he also betrays a similar preoccupation with what it means to inhabit a god-forsaken universe. The unrelenting cry for meaning Fleming utters before Conklin as the latter enacts his ceremony of death governs the novel as a whole and points to Crane's own spiritual pursuits after rejecting the narrow limits of his family's Methodism. One hears in Fleming's desperate plea for answers—"'Where yeh goin', Jim? What you thinking about? Where are you going?—clues to the author's own persistent quest for answers that led him to retain until his death a copy of a Methodist tract written by his great-uncle Jesse Peck: What Must I Do To be Saved? As Paul Sorrentino notes, while "Crane rejected the teachings in [this text] . . . the book became . . . a vade mecum that he kept throughout his life as he searched for an earthly and spiritual home" (29). Crane's art illumines the experience of the prodigal son who has forgotten his way home and who, in his wrecked, solitary state, passionately yearns for the loving embrace of the father.

Scholars have explored the extent to which the Methodism of Crane's family shaped the author's artistic vision.[10] Jamin Rowan, for example, describes how Crane transferred the sentiments of sympathy encouraged in Methodist camp meetings into the urban centers he observed and into the world of his fiction, a sympathy that complicates the irony evident in his work. If Crane "carried within him a structure of feeling and the corresponding narrative forms that reflected the heart of his father's framework of faith" (Rowan 142), the writer also sustained a life-long quarrel with the theological questions that had preoccupied his family. Questions of salvation and eschatology—What must one do to be saved? How should one live before the certainty of death? How is one assured of a final spiritual homecoming?—these questions Crane explores with a similar religious passion that had enlivened the devout members of his family. Crane never fully discarded the Methodism of his youth, "a religious inheritance he could neither fully embrace nor repudiate cleanly" (Monteiro 91). Like Herman Melville before him who "[could] neither believe, nor [was] comfortable in his unbelief" (Melville 628),[11] and who produced in Moby-Dick a compelling

portrait of what it means to inhabit this liminal space between faith and unbelief, so Crane who "neither fully embrace[d] nor repudiate[d]" the Christianity of his family conveys in *The Red Badge* a vision of how it feels to be stranded in a spiritual limbo.

The Battle of Chancellorsville, which ends in a spectacular defeat of the Northern army, represents Fleming's metaphysical defeat after his rendezvous with the dead Union soldier and Jim Conklin. The loss of the battle serves as the backdrop to the main character's existential loss, compounding the depth of his grief and sorrow. The rendezvous results in a radical uncertainty, for the youth receives no clear answers to the urgent question he poses to his dying friend. If there is irony in Crane's description of his protagonist's meeting with death, there is also deep sadness and mourning for what has been lost, a loss so vast that it defies Henry's ability to narrate it in any sensible way. After witnessing Conklin's death, "The youth desired to screech out his grief. He was stabbed, but his tongue lay dead in the tomb of his mouth" (53). Fleming thereafter engages in a meaningless cycle of advancement and retreat, experiencing time as an empty continuum stretching back and extending forward with no identifiable *telos*. Human history has been reduced to a sheer happening, refusing to be ordered or narrativized. Crane highlights Fleming's predicament. In the midst of a battle,

> It seemed to the youth that he saw everything. Each blade of the green grass was bold and clear. He thought that he was aware of every change in the thin, transparent vapor that floated idly. . . . And the men of the regiment, with their starting eyes and sweating faces, running madly, or falling, as if thrown headlong, to queer, heaped up corpses—all were comprehended. His mind took a mechanical but firm impression, so that afterward everything was pictured and explained to him, save why he himself was there. (93)

The soldier cannot articulate the significance of his presence in the war, for history appears before him as an accumulation of events participating in a continuously iterating narrative

evacuated of transcendent meaning.

It is the very enclosure of life within immanence that impels Fleming to feel a haunting sense that there might be something more beyond this world.[12] Such a predicament leads him to plunge into the violence of the war in order to recapture a lost transcendence. Underlying the youth's frenzied charge into battle is his longing to offset the despair and grief he experiences earlier in the novel. Throughout the battle scenes in the latter half of *The Red Badge*, Crane describes ways in which Fleming's rage and hate become the engine that propels him to rush into battle and to fight unreflectively: "There was the delirium that encounters despair and death, and is heedless and blind to the odds. . . . It was a temporary but sublime absence of selfishness. . . . [T]he youth wondered, afterward, what reasons he could have had for being there" (92). Fleming cannot provide a clear rationale for why he fights with such intense passion. What he experiences is visceral, "a delirium" borne of despair, an ecstatic emotion that allows him to feel the "sublime absence of selfishness." The youth does not reflect on the significance of the battle but merely engages the senses. Such an encounter produces a momentary loss of thought, producing a heightened somatic experience. If Henry's "tongue lay dead in the tomb of his mouth" after his rendezvous with death, then in battle his senses awaken to such an extent that he "burst[s] out in a barbaric cry of rage and pain" (53, 107). He makes "a blind and despairing rush" into the unknown, feeling "the daring spirit of a savage mad-religion," and fights "like a pagan who defends his religion" (110, 86). Fleming is transported by the sublime experience of the war, and as he faces danger and death, he temporarily leaves behind the anxieties he has experienced earlier.

After the battle, we see a shift in the youth's perspective toward death. "He had been to touch the great death," the narrator explains, "and found that after all, it was but the great death. He was a man" (116). Critics have read this shift ironically. I propose that it reflects more precisely the novel's "ironic mourning" for lost transcendence: unable to locate a meaningful *telos* in the deaths he has witnessed, Fleming desires to rest his psychic weariness under the comforting illusion of becoming a man. Because the youth wagers his "salvation" in a miraculous self-transformation promised by the god of war

(24), he assents to the belief that "after all," death is "but the great death." However unsettling this belief may be to Fleming, his salvation hinges on a perception of himself as a changed man who can maturely accept death's inexorable terms. He resigns himself to the finality of non-transcendent death and embraces his secular identity more fully in this moment. This resignation, however, fails to resolve the sadness and distress that reside within him. Beneath the irony exists a deep pathos Crane feels for his protagonist, who, through the "blind and despairing rush" into violence, attempts to erase the disquieting tension of confronting an identity stripped of transcendent meaning, whose "barbaric cry of rage and pain" expresses an inarticulate grief of loss and unfulfilled longing. Henry yearns to know who he is and where he is going but fails spectacularly at locating an adequate answer. The text repeatedly calls attention to his epistemological failures: in the aftermath of the battle, even during a somber moment of reflection, he is unable to perceive "what reasons he could have had for being [in battle]," a failure that is emblematic of his inability to identify a larger purpose for his existence in the face of death's meaninglessness (92).

Crane's use of religious imagery enabled him to depict how Fleming navigates the pressures of secularity. The youth occupies an existential landscape scattered with broken remains of religious artifacts, fragments that intone a message of absence: the lack of a rich spiritual identity that can no longer be retrieved. Underneath the passionate rage with which he fights the war lies a deep sorrow, pain generated by an inability to locate the precise reason for his being. However eagerly he tries to discern its meaning in the ceremony of Jim Conklin's death, the youth's failure to detect a larger, transcendent purpose for his existence drives him toward a search for significance in the war's violence. Fleming endeavors to reenchant his world through the heightened, sublime emotion he encounters in battle. This attempt at reenchantment belies an ironic mourning, a mourning that would become increasingly vocal in the modern novels of the twentieth century, one that ultimately would evoke "a spiritually distorted return of [religion]" (Pecora 11).

Notes

1. Taylor traces the evolution of this narrative of "adulthood," which emphasizes "above all" an ability "to face the loss of meaning in things, [and] . . . to find or project meaning in face of a universe which is without sense" (588).

2. The novel's refrain, which identifies how both secular and religious institutions have limited possibilities for transcendence, anticipates the arguments in Taylor's *A Secular Age*: "[T]he idea of human flourishing according to the modern moral order has no place for violence and rage, but only for pacific mutual benefit. Indeed, the disciplines of this civilizing order have involved repressing and marginalizing this violence, and above all, denying it any numinous power" (649).

3. Bill Brown observes that the novel "works to disinter the photographic body" of those who died in the war; it "recirculates private photographic fascination in the effort to publicize the sensory shock of modernity" (149, 155).

3. As Donald Pizer notes, "[S]ignificance is attached to the movement itself rather than to movement in relation to a goal or direction. One of the symbolic structures of [the novel] . . . is therefore of a flow and counterflow of men, a largely meaningless and directionless repetition despite Henry's attribution of deep personal meaning to one of its minor phases, a moment of flow which he mistakes for a moment of significant climax" (87). Crane not only highlights the irony in Henry's misrecognition of "a moment of flow" for "a moment of significant climax," but also conveys sympathy for his protagonist's dilemma as he describes the "pain" and "despair" that accompany Henry's rush into battle, an anguish that captures the youth's inability to offset the trauma and disorientation he confronts in war (Crane 92).

4. See the poems "I Walked in a Desert" and "To the Maiden."

5. The novel questions the effectiveness of Fleming's confession of guilt. Horsford points out the inadequate nature of the youth's self-forgiveness when he writes, "It is well, no doubt, to learn to forgive oneself for irremediable errors, but self-forgiveness does not mean simple repression. Where is the acknowledgement of his desertions in a way that would really count for Fleming?" (126).

6. Horsford concludes, however, that what predominates the author's characterization of Fleming is "wry irony" (127).

7. Christine Brook-Rose highlights the intricate ways in which the distance and proximity between Crane and Fleming are marked throughout the novel. She writes, "The author's viewpoint . . . is clearly outside the youth's and defines him at every turn. Self-revealing as is the youth's [reflection], it is always controlled and sometimes doubled by the author's irony" (144).

8. Daniel Hoffman examines the influence of Methodism on Crane's poetry. Hoffman challenges the notion that "a youth growing up with a crowd of distinguished clergymen in his own family could defy God a dozen times in verse and be done with the theme" (48). See *The Poetry of Stephen Crane* for a discussion of Crane's shifting belief in God.

9. For discussions on Crane's relationship to Methodism, see Hoffman's *Poetry of Stephen Crane*; Jamin Rowan's "Stephen Crane and Methodism's Realism"; George Monteiro's "Stephen Crane and the Antinomies of Christian Charity"; Leverette Smith's "Stephen Crane's Calvinism"; Robert Shulman's "*The Red Badge* and Social Violence"; John Blair's "The Posture of a Bohemian in the Poetry of Stephen Crane"; and Keith Gandal's "A Spiritual Autopsy of Stephen Crane."

10. Nathaniel Hawthorne made this observation about Melville's spiritual condition in 1856.

12. Taylor characterizes this search for fullness as a "malaise" that is particular to modernity, a condition that results from the disenchantments of secularity (302). See his chapter, "The Malaises of Modernity," pp. 299-321.

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Fragmented Spectatorship and Artistic Beholding in *The Red Badge of Courage*

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The word "behold" appears just once in *The Red Badge of Courage*, at the end of chapter 3: "Awakening from his trance of observation [the youth] turned and beheld the loud soldier" (28). The novel's preferred terms for the act of beholding include observing, looking, gazing, seeing, and spectatorship (variants of which occur six times). But "beholding," I will show, gets us to the crucial aesthetic issue of encountering art, as that issue has been provocatively discussed by critics Michael Fried and Walter Benn Michaels. Following their lead, I treat spectatorship in the novel as an allegory for artistic beholding—beholding an object, and more specifically, an art object. In reading the novel's scenes of spectatorship allegorically—as scenes of artistic beholding—I am following the lead of Michael Fried in particular, whose well-known analysis of Crane's "literary impressionism" treats many scenes in Crane's oeuvre as figures for the "scene of writing" (1987, 117-18). My concern with *The Red Badge of Courage* in particular is to treat its instances of fragmented spectatorship as scenes of beholding and thus as scenes of art's production and consumption more broadly.[1] My argument will be not only that we can and should read this fragmented spectatorship allegorically, as having implications for beholding artworks, but also that in doing so we get additional evidence, beyond that advanced by John Fagg in his 2009 study *On the Cusp: Stephen Crane, George Bellows, and Modernism*, for seeing Crane as a transitional figure to modernism, with its fundamental interest in, and anxiety about, how art objects are beheld. The overall argument, then, is that *The Red Badge of Courage* can and should be read as a heretofore-disguised aesthetic treatise exploring the nature and implications of artistic beholding.

In a footnote to his 2015 book *The Beauty of a Social Problem* Walter Benn Michaels summarizes how Michael Fried has recast our view of *The Red Badge of Courage*: "thinking of himself as trying above all to represent Civil War battles . . .

he [Crane] was really making visible . . . writing, not fighting" (189n2). Michaels's phrase "writing, not fighting" gets to the core claim of Fried's argument about Crane, an argument first set out twice in the 1980s and reprised just last year in Fried's *What Was Literary Impressionism*? (14-16). In all of these locations Fried claims that Crane presents us with scenes of writing disguised as scenes of something else, like—in *The Red Badge of Courage*—fighting; we can see through the disguise if we interpret various thematic features as figurations of the writing scene itself and its process. When we do so (i.e., read for scenes of writing), Fried argues, we see not what Crane was conjuring in his imagination (fighting) but rather what he was beholding as he was marking out those imagined scenes, the smooth flow of ink across a decreasingly blank white page (writing). In this recasting ("writing, not fighting") we get not Crane's imagination but his immediate line of sight as paramount: Crane becomes not a visionary or "seer" but a viewer or "see-er," a beholder, himself, of words—indeed, ink marks—on a page.

What I want to argue is that Fried's insistence on what Michaels calls "writing, not fighting"—the insistence on what Crane beholds rather than what Crane imagines—has implications for the fragmentation that we see in spectatorship in the novel. By spectatorship's fragmentation I mean the novel's multiple points of view, its many acts of viewing, and its frequent references to vision. Examples of this perspectival fragmentation include Henry Fleming's own vacillations between self-aggrandizement and self-contempt, the narrator's practice of referring to Henry and his fellow soldiers by epithets (e.g., "the youth" and "the tattered man") rather than the proper names employed by the soldiers themselves, the related practice of distinguishing the sophisticated language of the narrative's exposition (including the narrator's rendering of Henry's inner thoughts) from the casual dialect and slang of the soldiers' dialogue among themselves, the gap between Henry's knowledge of his flight from battle and his concealment of that flight from his comrades (and the associated irony that his "red badge of courage" is indeed no such thing), and finally the contrast between scenes where Henry has become so immersed in battle as to have lost all perspective on its dangers and scenes

in which Henry views events from a seemingly disinterested distance, a view similar to that of his commanders.

To me, this fragmentation of spectatorship suggests that Crane isn't just thinking about what he himself beholds ("writing, not fighting"), as Fried argues, but that he's thinking about beholding more generally. On the one hand, such a claim isn't new; it's what critics have in mind when they call Crane an impressionist, which critics have been doing for over a century now, perhaps most notably in James Nagel's *Stephen Crane and Literary Impressionism* (1980) and, perhaps most recently, last year in Fried's *What Was Literary Impressionism*? (2018). On the other hand, my argument is different from the impressionist claim because what I'm suggesting that Crane is beholding, and wants us to behold, is art—or rather, the coming into being of art objects, of representation. This is indeed the larger implication of Fried's scenes of writing: when we think about the writing Crane was beholding (and not the fighting he was imagining), we encounter, Fried argues (along with Michaels), a question about writing's ontology: is it writing, or is it just ink marks on a page? Crane writes so slowly and deliberately that he beholds the one become the other; he beholds himself carry out the project of making ink become representation, which is the project central to the scene of writing.

This idea of a project at the scene of writing turns out to be crucial for Michaels, since in his thinking, as we shall see, it relates to the threshold conditions for representation being representation at all, and thus for art being art. For Michaels, representation's emergence out of mere matter occasions a terminological distinction that he, crucially, gets from Fried—from Fried's much earlier writings (from the 1960s) about much later works (also from the 1960s). This is the distinction in the title of Fried's 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood." In that essay's terms, "art" is representation—where the project to become more than mere matter has been undertaken and has succeeded (think of Crane's writing becoming about fighting); by contrast, objecthood is the mere matter that doesn't pursue the project of becoming representation (here think of Crane's writing continuing to be just ink on a page). What Crane is beholding, then, when he slowly and methodically writes about fighting is, in these terms, objecthood becoming art. There is, crucially, a drama to this, a narrative arc that gets acted out with every word

Crane writes. This narrative arc is what Fried has in mind in his psychoanalytic account of what Crane must repress: Crane is repressing the narrative arc's potential to reverse itself, with writing erupting from the page as mere matter, art devolving into mere objecthood.

This terminological distinction between art and objecthood gets more complicated, however, because there is another distinction at play on top of this, for Fried as well as for Michaels, a distinction that doesn't easily or neatly map onto the first distinction between art and objecthood. This is the distinction between absorption and theatricality, which is the title of another of Fried's works, this time a book from 1980. Absorption and theatricality are probably best understood, as Jennifer Ashton has recently suggested (226), in terms of a distinction made familiar to literary critics by John Stuart Mill in his 1833 essay "What is Poetry?" There, Mill famously observes, eloquence is *heard*; poetry is *over*heard. Poetry's lyric speakers, because of their absorption in themselves, don't seem to be trying to solicit our attention, so they are absorbed, not theatrical; whereas eloquence, because it does seem to be soliciting our attention rather than being absorbed in itself alone, is intrinsically theatrical. In other words, there can't be poetic theatricality, because poetic speech is oriented inward, not outward; likewise, there can't be eloquent absorption because eloquence is theatrically soliciting our attention.

Now, for Michaels, it turns out that neither art nor objecthood has a lock on either absorption (Mill's poetry) or theatricality (Mill's eloquence). To clarify how these terms intersect, then, let's consider how they might help us characterize what Crane beholds in the scene of writing. (See Figure 1 at the end of this article.) Crane's writing as mere mark, or object, could be theatrical (since he's trying to impress people with his neat penmanship, with his writing's objecthood; see quadrant four in Figure 1). Or, his writing as mere mark could be seen as absorptive (because its project is to make us look through the penmanship or writing itself to see fighting, which means the penmanship isn't soliciting our attention, isn't theatrical, but is rather suppressing its objecthood to enable representation, to enable fighting to come forth from the writing; see quadrant three in Figure 1). Similarly, Crane's writing as representation, as a depiction of fighting, could be understood as absorptive

(because it is like a modern art object for Fried: Henry Fleming is oblivious to us as he ponders his potential for fight or flight; see quadrant one in Figure 1). Or, finally, Crane's writing as representation, as a depiction of fighting, could be understood as theatrical (because Crane wants to make us see, wants to have an effect on us, like the impressionist does—making fighting vivid for readers; see quadrant two in Figure 1).

Now, the question becomes whether and to what extent does this proliferation of terminology and distinctions help illuminate Crane's novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*. My contention is that it does; Crane, I contend, is navigating among these various positions in the many instances of fragmented spectatorship—or what I'm calling "beholding"—within the novel. If this is correct, then he is experimenting with the various coordinates that are of importance to Fried and Michaels, making him a transitional figure into more recent debates about modernism.

To explore this further in *The Red Badge of Courage*, let us consider the famous scene in chapter seven when Henry Fleming, wandering in the woods, approaches a "chapel" space made of "arching boughs": "Near the threshold he stopped, horror-stricken at the sight of a thing. He was being looked at by a dead man" (49). This is a passage Fried mentions as a scene of writing because the ants crawling across the dead soldier's upturned face figure writing, but for us this exchange of beholding is an opportunity to apply Fried's art-historical terminology in a different way. In the allegorical mode of reading that I've been exploring, the "dead man" becomes a representation framed by the "chapel" and its "threshold," and Henry is its beholder. Now, on the one hand, the corpse is "a thing," so it is a mere object, and it thus corresponds to the term "objecthood" of Fried's art/objecthood distinction. On the other hand, the corpse refers indexically to the Union soldier who once inhabited this body and uniform, so it is a representation of that Union soldier; this explains the youth's "horror-stricken" response to it in particular (a response not elicited, for instance, by the tree—a mere object—against which the corpse is seated). This gives us two ways of thinking about the corpse, as mere thing or as indexical representation, and these two options should be sorted, I contend, between the objecthood quadrants (for the thing) and the art quadrants (for

the Union soldier indexed by the corpse).

But more than just a corpse, we have here a corpse that is itself engaged in "looking": Henry "was being looked at by a dead man. . . . The eyes [were] staring at the youth" (49). The question then arises, is this staring theatrical or absorptive? Direct eye contact typically constitutes theatricality, and that kind of direct engagement is part of the horror of it for Henry. But the eye contact can't be intended by this "thing" or corpse, so it is not in fact soliciting Henry's attention and is therefore fully absorbed—as if asleep and about to awaken. It is possible, then, to see this situation of Henry being stared at by the dead soldier as either theatricality or absorption. What results from this analysis is that this "chapel" scene's featured act of beholding can be assigned to any one of the four available quadrants in Figure 1.

But another part of my point is that the scene also narrows our choices among these quadrants. This narrowing becomes apparent in Henry's fearful reaction to the corpse:

> The youth gave a shriek as he confronted the thing. He was for moments turned to stone before it. He remained staring into the liquid-looking eyes. The dead man and the living man exchanged a long look. Then the youth cautiously put one hand behind him and brought it against a tree. Leaning upon this he retreated, step by step, with his face still toward the thing. He feared that if he turned his back the body might spring up and stealthily pursue him. . . . At last he burst the bonds which had fastened him to the spot and fled, unheeding the underbrush. (50)

Now, how does Henry's response shed light on how to assign the act of beholding the dead Union soldier to a quadrant? I think his response puts his beholding in quadrant two (in the upper right): Henry sees the corpse as a theatrical representation, and it is his impression that we get, so we have here a thematization of impressionism. But this isn't the whole story, because spectatorship or beholding in this novel is, as I have said, fragmented, so there's another line of sight

on this scenario, the narrator's and, by extension, our own. The narrator gives us a closing vision that Henry doesn't see; here are the final sentences of the chapter: "The trees about the portal of the chapel moved soughingly in the soft wind. A sad silence was upon the little guarding edifice." This notion of a "guarding edifice" seems to place the "chapel" in the category less of a theatrical frame and more of an absorbed tomb, nature's version of a mausoleum. This way of putting things—in terms of indifference to beholders, of absorption rather than theatricality—shifts us from quadrant two, impressionism, to quadrant one, modernism. What can we conclude from this shift from impressionism to modernism? I suggest that while Henry is an impressionist observer, solicited by the object, we are modernist ones, ignored by the object. The novel is thus envisioning (if I may put it that way) both an impressionist standpoint and a modernist one, and this juxtaposition makes it a transitional text from impressionism to modernism.

Let us examine this point further by considering another example from the novel, this time the injury that Henry presents (or rather, misrepresents) as a combat wound. Recall that Henry is struck on the head by a rifle butt swung desperately at him by a retreating Union soldier, so Henry isn't actually injured by enemy fire. Once he returns to his regiment, however, he leads his fellow soldiers to believe that the injury to his head was caused by a bullet grazing him, and as a result, this injury becomes his "red badge of courage." This is, of course, a misrepresentation on Henry's part: the injury is an index of a rifle butt swung by a Union soldier rather than an index of a bullet fired by a Confederate soldier. While this could be seen as another instance of Fried's scene of writing, with the rifle butt as a pen writing on Henry's body, my point is that the injury is seen by Henry's comrades, so it becomes, like the corpse in the "chapel," an object of beholding. Again applying our quadrant analysis, we can see how the bump is either a mere "thing" of flesh and blood or an indexical representation of the thing that caused the injury (the rifle butt, not the bullet). So again we have a division along the axis of mere objecthood and art. Along the axis of absorption and theatricality we likewise have a choice to make: on the one hand, Henry is soliciting and receiving attention to his injury insofar as it is interpreted by his comrades as a battle wound; this makes it theatrical: "I got shot.

In th' head," Henry says to Wilson (79). On the other hand, the person responsible for this mark, the retreating Union soldier who hit Henry with his rifle butt, while he wanted to have an impact—literally—on Henry's head, had no intention of having an impact on anyone else, so as an index of that rifle butt, Henry's wound is not theatrical but, rather, absorptive: it is, to borrow Mill's terms, overheard, like poetry, rather than heard, like eloquence. While the blow to the head spoke eloquently to Henry, and was thus theatrical, it was not intended to produce a wound that would, in turn, speak to anyone else; thus it is absorptive.

Now, in treating Henry's wound as unintended and thus absorptive, I am leaning heavily on Michaels's account of photography and, in particular, his account of the role of the photographer in answering the question whether photography is absorptive or theatrical. In *The Beauty of a Social Problem* Michaels, writing about Roland Barthes's view of photographs, states that for Barthes "the indexicality of the photograph—its status as a trace of what was there—is identified with the critique of the photographer's intentionality—his inability to control what the photograph shows" (14). In the case of the photograph, that control belongs instead to a "photochemical/electronic marking process" of light striking a reactive surface; in the case of Henry's wound, similarly, the control belongs not to the Union soldier who struck Henry but to the physiology of the circulatory system pumping Henry's blood, which itself causes bleeding and swelling. A mere accident, like a falling tree branch, could cause the same physiological result, without intention. In both cases, then—the case of Barthes's photographer and the Union soldier who struck Henry—responsibility for the marks produced can be assigned elsewhere. This, Michaels argues of the photograph, allows it to be seen as not intended and thus not theatrical, but rather absorptive, and it is this same absorptive status that I'm attributing to Henry's wound. The wound is thus both theatrical—insofar as Henry uses it to impress his comrades—and absorptive—in that—as we readers know—its production as representation wasn't the intention of the Union soldier who struck Henry.

Here again, then, as was the case of the corpse in the "chapel," we see all four quadrants represented, and this again supports the conclusion that impressionism and modernism

are co-present here, thus bolstering the claim I'm making about Crane as a transitional figure into modernism. But wait. One might challenge this conclusion in the following way: in producing this absorptive account of Henry's "red badge," I, following Michaels on Barthes on photography, reduced it to physiological effects of the circulatory system, which is the same, in fact, as the account I gave of it as mere objecthood (rather than art): "the bump," I said, "is . . . a mere 'thing' of flesh and blood." How can the red badge be assigned to two different quadrants—both quadrant one and quadrant four—on the same grounds: that it is a mere thing of flesh and blood? Doesn't this make these two quadrants effectively collapse upon each other? Indeed, this question could be extended to the previous example of the dead soldier in the "chapel": isn't the modernist absorption that we see—and that Henry doesn't—due to the fact that the corpse is just a "thing," something not in fact laid to rest in a human-made "chapel" (as the figurative language suggests) but instead just found where the soldier happened to die? What's the difference, in other words, between the lack of intention that signals absorption and the lack of intention of mere objecthood—of a mere corpse or a mere wound?

This, it turns out, is precisely the question that Michaels is trying to raise in his account of Barthes on photography in *The Beauty of a Social Problem,* and it is this coincidence between the red badge in Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and the photograph in Michaels's *The Beauty of a Social Problem* that I ultimately wish to underscore here. As Michaels writes, the relationship between absorption and theatricality becomes, for Barthes, "dialectical: [Barthes] turns the antitheatrical into pure theatricality; [he] turns what Fried called absorption into what was supposed to be its opposite, literalism [i.e. objecthood]" (16). This collapse of categories applies not only, Michaels argues, to absorption and theatricality but also to art and objecthood: "The real point of [Barthes's analysis] is thus that it turns the photograph from a representation—something made by someone to produce certain effects—into an object—something that may produce any number of effects or none at all, depending on the beholder" (17). For instance, one soldier may be horrified by the wound, another sympathetic, another nauseated, etc. Henry, in turn, recasts this object as

a representation—as a bullet graze, and others interpret it as such, so it turns back into a (mis)representation, but the larger point still applies here: it's not that the red badge of courage (or, for that matter, the dead Union soldier in the "chapel") can correspond to any one of the four quadrants, making the novel transitional; it's that the red badge and the dead Union soldier raise questions about the very integrity of those four quadrants as distinct quadrants and thus raise questions about the ontology of art more broadly, questions that Michaels, in particular, identifies as the challenge raised to modernism by postmodernism.[2]

There is more to be said about the details of Michaels's account, but my overall point in linking Henry's wound to Michaels's discussion of the postmodern and photography has been to suggest that Henry's red badge of courage—and by extension, the novel that bears that title—is participating in the kind of interrogation of artistic beholding that recent writers like Michaels, following Fried, have attributed to much later examinations of the ontology of art. Thus Henry's wound, and the novel named for it, warrants attention as a site of thoughtful analysis of artistic production and consumption. The novel is not just about writing, rather than fighting; it is about—because it challenges us to think critically about—the very conditions of possibility of artistic beholding.

Notes

1. While Fried identifies several "scenes of writing" early in *The Red Badge of Courage*, he stops short of attributing a concern with them to the novel in its entirety: "*The Red Badge* as a whole cannot be understood as an allegory of Crane's enterprise; it makes no sense to try to discern in Fleming's experiences in his first battle an overarching figure for a literary practice or indeed for a conflict of practices" (1987, 127).

2. It should be noted that Michaels's own discussion of Henry Fleming's wound in "Promises of American Life" links it to a Realist (rather than Modernist or Postmodernist) program that Michaels calls "the Realist production of visibility" (346).

Figure 1.

	ABSORPTION (Mill: "Poetry is *over*heard")	THEATRICALITY (Mill: "Eloquence is *heard*")
ART	Representation aspiring to the "supreme fiction" of autonomy from beholders (Fried: Modernism) 1	Representation aspiring to have an experiential impact on beholders (Impressionism) 2
OBJECTHOOD	↑* ↗* "Project" to "repress" (hand)writing's materiality in order to make legible ➔* representation out of mere matter 3	"What neat handwriting you have!" or "Cool font!" (Fried: Literalism; Michaels: Postmodernism) 4

* This quadrant's content is always unstable insofar as its "project" either succeeds (in which case it enters quadrant one or two) or fails (in which case it enters quadrant four).

Figure 1.

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"'Barbed-wire Entanglements': A Reappraisal of Stephen Crane's *Active Service*"

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In 1899, Stephen Crane was living in England and writing what he believed would be his "most successful" novel yet, *Active Service*, before reversing his appraisal upon its completion (Sorrentino 332). Indeed, in this same year some of his best work had been published to critical acclaim, including *The Monster and Other Stories* and his second book of poetry, *War Is Kind*. Upon publication, *Active Service*, in contrast, was widely and vehemently panned, an appraisal that lingers into the present. "Coarse, dull, and charmless," Willa Cather called it in 1900. Over a century later, biographer Linda Davis maintains that the work "is devoid of irony, singular prose, and literary value," whereas Paul Sorrentino characterizes it as a novel with "contrived plotting," "stock characterization," and "marred by clichés" (332). Owing to its reputation as a god-awful work, not even excerpts of it can be found in the Library of America's bulky collection of Crane's poetry and prose. Coming to the novel as a print historian, informed by new approaches in media studies, I seek not so much to challenge critical orthodoxy but rather to view *Active Service* from a different lens and in a different light. The novel, read as an isolated text, is admittedly loosely plotted, uneven, and often trite. But, as Michael Robertson has also done, read in the context of Crane's life and American journalism of the time, the book clearly warrants wider readership and greater appreciation. But even Robertson in his reading puts the aesthetic question "is it any good?" hastily aside. Far too hastily, I submit, for the work, in my view, also gains in interest and complexity if read with an appreciation of the rich ironic stance we have come to expect in Crane's most innovative and inventive works, while also considering it in relation to the author's own "active" life and boundless fascination with the mediated nature of perception.

Biographically, the book draws from Crane's first experience of the battlefield during the month-long Greco-Turkish war of 1897. It also reenacts his life-long battle with the bourgeois public sphere, especially in connection to his

complicated—and thoroughly entangled—affairs of the heart. This list includes his relationships with the conventional mid-western belle Nellie Crouse, the unhappily married Lily Brandon Munroe, and Cora Taylor, the owner of the Jacksonville bawdy house (Hotel de Dreme). Also sullying Crane's reputation in genteel circles was his widely publicized defense of the prostitute Dora Clark while covering the Tenderloin district for Hearst's *New York Journal*. In the novel, protagonist Rufus Coleman resembles Crane owing to his association with the actress Nora Black and a reputation for gambling and drink. Coleman, however, seeks redemption. His aim is to win the hand of Marjory Wainwright, against the wishes of her father (an eminent professor) and, when Mr. Wainwright changes his mind towards the end of the novel, her prim mother. These multiple changes of hearts, feelings, and perspectives serve as the central drama of the novel. They are laid out across an elaborate canvas that, as becomes apparent, parodies the conventional Victorian love story, the swash-buckling adventure tale, and the endless stream of war accounts then in favor in works such as Richard Harding Davis' *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897) and Edwin Caskoden's (pseudonym for Charles Major) *When Knighthood Was in Flower* (1898).

Historically considered, the name Rufus Coleman is an amalgam of Richard Harding Davis and James Creelman, correspondents who made themselves famous covering the Cuban insurrection and the Spanish-American war that followed. *Active Service* lampoons the antics of these excessively "active" men and others such as Karl Decker, who famously was hired by Hearst to rescue the 18-year-old Cuban beauty Evangelina Cisneros from a Havana prison cell in 1897. Hearst also hired Creelman during the Spanish-American war, exploiting his antics to sell papers in which the correspondent often became the story. In a featured article in the July 4, 1898 issue of the *Journal*, for example, a reporter discovers a wounded Creelman, grasping a Spanish flag in his bloodied hand. As the reporter writes: "When I left the fort to hunt for Creelman I found him, bloody and bandaged, lying on his back on the blanket on the ground. His first words to me were that he was afraid he could not write much of a story, as he was pretty well dazed but if I would write for him, he would dictate the best he could." An account of Creelman's "heroic" capture of Fort

Caney follows. In *Active Service*, Crane not only questions the heroism of such manufactured storytelling, but parodies such sensational reportage without mercy.

Crane's novel is also a critical examination of yellow journalism from an insider's perspective. Coleman, for example, works as Sunday editor of the *New York Eclipse*, an obvious pun on Charles Anderson Dana's *New York Sun* but more likely a swipe at the more populist *New York Journal* owned by William Randolph Hearst and the *New York World* owned by Joseph Pulitzer, both of which Crane intermittently worked for on varied assignments. The reader follows Coleman alongside the dark, sensationalist dealings of the *Eclipse*, most egregiously exhibited (as was the case with the *Journal* and the *World*) in its lurid, full-color Sunday edition. From the windows of his top floor offices, Crane writes how Coleman could look down at "the walls of a terrible chasm in the darkness of which could be seen vague struggling figures." Like others on the staff, he "felt a sense of exultation as if from this peak he was surveying the world-wide war of the elements and life" (20). This distanced perspective parallels the type of articles printed in the *Eclipse*. A particularly egregious example is the story of a one-eyed baby accompanied by a photo, captured by a photographer who had caught the family by surprise one day. Coleman's own distanced feelings are on display when considering the image for inclusion. "'Yes, that's all right,' he said slowly. There seemed to be no affectionate relation between him and this picture. Evidently, he was weighing its value as a morsel to be flung to a ravenous public, whose wolf-like appetite could only satisfy itself upon mental entrails, abominations" (26).

Like its real-life counterparts, mutilated bodies, graphic violence, suicides, crime sprees, daring feats and mad-cap stunts constitute ideal fare for the Sunday edition of the *Eclipse*. Crane's satire of the darkness and amorality of publishing at the turn of the century is unrelenting. Open moral condemnation of the jaundiced journalism of the period is first expressed by Mr. Wainwright. Unwilling to let his daughter marry "a witless knave" who edits "this outrage upon [mankind's] sensibilities," the professor whisks Marjory off with his wife and students for an archeological expedition to Turkey and Greece. This abrupt plot device sets up another critique of the cheap tactics of yellow journalism: when Rufus finds an excuse to remain

close to Marjory as a war correspondent for the pending Greco-Turkish conflict.

At first, Sturgeon/Hearst (the primitive fish who has not evolved for thousands of years) has other ideas. He wants Coleman to be part of a battalion of men to invade Cuba under the flag of the *Eclipse*. "Rufus, you're just the man I wanted to see. I've got a scheme. A great scheme," Sturgeon roars upon first seeing his ace reporter. Coleman, however, wins his case to go to Greece, determined to head off the very next day.

Though not initially planning to catch up with Marjory, he finds he must do so when a cable arrives in Athens with urgent orders. It reads: "Find Wainwright party at all hazards; much talk here; success means red fire by ton. *Eclipse*." The request resembles that of James Gordon Bennett, Jr., owner of the *New York Herald*, who in 1871 directed Henry Stanley to search and find Dr. Livingstone whose expedition team had been missing for over 7 years. Livingstone had been in search of the source of the Congo River in Africa, and Stanley's discovery of the doctor ("Doctor Livingstone, I presume?") was a media sensation. This stunt and accompanying media storm, to an extent, gets re-enacted in *Active Service*. As Rufus is made to understand, finding the family "was certainly a big affair. . . . It was the romance of the Wainwright party in its simplicity that to the American world was arousing great sensation" (105-6).

The disjointed narrative, stock characterization, and clichéd bits of adventure and romance of *Active Service* make at times a preposterous read but at the same time it's clear that Crane does this in the service of clarifying just how stock-in-trade the values and expectations of readers during this time really were. While the newspapers preferred sensational fare over the hard facts of war and lurid displays over analysis of society's woes—and novels presented puffed-up tales of heroic men nobly winning the hearts of pure, helpless women—Crane attempts in *Active Service* a critical counter narrative to expose easy truths and society's self-delusions.

The mocking of Rough Rider-esque masculinity runs through the novel, but so does Crane's interrogation of acceptable and unacceptable female gender norms. We see this most clearly in the female reporter Nora Black, who by reporting the war for the *New York Daylight* in competition with Coleman and using her sexual allures to ensnare the men

around her, stands in stark defiance of traditional Victorian womanhood. Nora Black is clearly a thin veil for Cora Taylor, who was contracted by Hearst to accompany Crane to also cover the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, writing under the byline "Imogene Carter." Ostensibly on a mission of knight errancy, Coleman thrills to find himself in "War and love—war and Marjory—were in conjunction—both in Greece—and he could tilt with one lance at both gods" (137). As it turns out, his greatest obstacle in fulfilling his romantic quest is Nora herself who, like a man, not only aggressively pursues Rufus but also regularly reminds him of the startling fact that, as her paper's stunt woman, "I draw a bigger salary" (213). Nora Black is at once an emasculating threat as well as the dark woman who sullies Coleman by her mere association with him.

Often recognized as "the consummate ironist," Crane may in fact be at his most ironic in this work. Using the sensationalist press and a little-known war as a backdrop, Crane obliterates readerly expectations, moral certainties, and traditional norms. Employing ruthless irony, he also dismisses modern media's claims to objectivity and legitimate news gathering. But perhaps most impressive of all is how his work brilliantly exposes the disjunction between perceptions of reality and reality itself across multiple realms of human experience.

For Crane, reality is both dynamic and unstable, and as keenly tied to action as it is to perception. This is captured when the hero, in search of the missing party, attaches himself to a Greek cavalry detachment. At this point in the novel, Coleman's search for the missing party is nothing more than a romantic quest and the war but a quaint backdrop. As Crane writes, "The column jangled musically over the sod, passing between two hills on one of which a Greek light battery was posted. . . . Across this narrow stream was Turkey. . . . It seemed to be a great plain with sparse collections of foliage marking it, whereas the Greek side presented in the main a vista of high, gaunt rocks. . . . If Coleman had known anything of war, he would have known, from appearance, that there was nothing in the immediate vicinity to cause heart-jumping, but as a matter of truth he was deeply moved and wondered what was hidden, what was veiled, by those trees" (97). Continuing on, Coleman "felt a tremendous virility" and began to take "satisfaction in his sentimental journey. It was a shining affair. He was on active

service, an active service of the heart" (120).

This distanced perspective of war, recalling the canonesque views from the *Eclipse* offices, suddenly changes when Coleman's troop is attacked and makes a desperate retreat in the middle of the night. Blindly "squirming . . . like a worm through black mud," the correspondent "was no longer a hero going to rescue his love. He was a slave making a gasping attempt to escape from the most incredible tyranny of circumstances" (127). This change of perspective, in which the chaos of war is directly upon the hero, however, has no lasting effect or lesson; for just as suddenly, Coleman accidently bumps into the Wainwright party, transforming the theater of war into a comedy act. From that moment on, the fearful worm becomes the gallant protector who leads the party out of danger and, in so doing, wins approval of both Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright, who in a truce with Coleman, surrender their daughter into holy matrimony.

What are we to make of these sudden perception and plot shifts? For that matter, what is the truth behind Coleman's acts of heroism. Is he a hero at all? Is he the "most brilliant journalist in New York" as Mrs. Wainwright has heard him to be known, or is he someone with "no particular ability" at all as her husband surmises? The same uncertainties can be directed to the book itself.

I proffer that a clue to Crane's baffling literary intentions can be found in the sole depiction of death in the novel. On his march to war, Coleman comes across some medics about to bury a dead Turk. "Moved by a strong, mysterious impulse, he went forward to look at the poor little clay-colored body. At that moment a snake ran out from a tuft of grass at his feet and wriggled wildly over the sod." In earlier writings, Crane would have left the symbolic reading of such an encounter to the reader. Instead, the author leaves his book to address the matter on his own terms. "This incident, this paragraph, had seemed a strange introduction to war. The snake, the dead man, the entire sketch, made him shudder of itself, but more than anything he felt an uncanny symbolism. . . . And now he interwove his memory of Marjory with a dead man and with a snake. . . . They crossed, intersected, tangled. . . . He academically reflected upon the mysteries of the human mind, this homeless machine which lives here and then there and often lives in

two or three opposing places at the same instant. He decided that the incident of the snake and the dead man had no more meaning than the greater number of the things which happen to us in our daily lives" (92).

For Crane, in this thinly veiled autobiographical novel, fiction and reality are one. His book is—to borrow from Michael Fried—his upturned body, writhing, rioting, writing. All one. Dead just months after *Active Service* is published, Crane speaks directly to his own unsettling experiences in love and war, in which all that can be truly ascertained is web after web of barbed-wire entanglements and the dreadful tyranny of unforeseen circumstances. Crane's form of realism is to issue this sole truth. While the battles of literary realism in the 1890s were about conferring the objectivity of truth, Crane's parodic style in *Active Service* suggests the indeterminacy of all our moral, preordained positions and the illusion of meaning itself.

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Stephen Crane's Reports from the West and Mexico: Examining the Edges of the Modern, Commercial World

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Stephen Crane began planning a trip to the West when he lost his job writing about the New Jersey shore for the *New York Tribune*. Crane's report on a parade by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics had offended both the marchers and the Tribune's owner, Whitelaw Reid, the Vice-Presidential running mate to Benjamin Harrison. Crane was too candid in defining the influence of social class upon the behavior of the marchers and the spectators. The New York Tribune's reviews and commentaries were to express hostility toward Crane and his works throughout his literary career.

Crane wrote a proposal to the American Press Association for a tour of the West and Mexico on August 25, the day after the *Tribune* published a letter attacking his article on the Junior United Mechanics' march (*Correspondence* 45. See Katz x). The proposal, however, did not succeed in providing him with an opportunity to make the trip.

By January 1895, Crane had arranged with Irving Bacheller to travel to the West and Mexico and to send his first report from Nebraska, where farmers were enduring a brutally harsh winter after losing their harvest in 1894 to a severe drought. Datelined "Feb. 22, Eddyville, Dawson County, Nebraska," Crane's first article from the West was published widely during the next two days (Bowers 1013).

Crane had spent two weeks in Nebraska, gathering information about the drought and experiencing the power of the blizzard on a 45-mile ride to Eddyville, Nebraska in which the cold

> turned the driver a dark shade, until he resembled some kind of purple Indian from Brazil, and the team became completely coated with snow and ice. They became dull and stupid in the storm. Under the driver's flogging, they barely stirred, holding their heads dejectedly, with an expression of unutterable patient weariness. (Bowers 417)

In addition to this depiction of the sufferings of the driver and the animals, Crane also responded to the reports of people who have been witnesses of the catastrophic events. Crane interviewed Nebraska's Governor Holcomb and Mr. L. P. Ludden, secretary and general manager of the commission, which coordinated the delivery of aid to the stricken farmers. Ludden struggled, Crane says, against a "certain minority which began to make war upon the commission . . . in order to seduce the commission into giving them supplies they did not need" (Bowers 413). Ludden also struggled with "intrigues and scufflings" that were part of the political turmoil in Lincoln over aid to the drought and blizzard-stricken farmers (Bowers 415). Ludden is one of those abused and threatened benefactors, like Dr. Trescott in "The Monster," who are attacked by selfish and resentful people while attempting to assist others who are in desperate need.

Crane's task was to call attention to the sufferings of the farmers and to encourage those outside of the stricken region to send aid, while at the same time reassuring investors that there was a limited need for help and the officials in the state government could guarantee that aid would be distributed wisely and successfully.

"Nebraska's Bitter Fight for Life" shows Crane achieving a high level of success in this demanding journalistic task. Crane's article includes vivid instances of dialogue with several of the suffering farmers. Asked, "how did you get along" after failing to get aid after the blizzard, one of the farmers answers, "Don't git along, stranger. Who the hell told you that I did get along?" (Bowers 418) This is a typical instance of Crane's appreciation of the idiomatic directness and brave humor of those struggling against catastrophic forces. Crane had prepared himself to depict this struggle when he wrote a New York City sketch "The Men in the Storm"(Bowers 315-22). Crane's sketch of the resilience of those waiting in line for soup during a New York snowstorm had anticipated his depiction of the suffering farmers. A wealthy man, without sympathy, who observes the men waiting for soup is comparable to the business leaders in Nebraska who fear that reporting the desperate need of the farmers will discourage Eastern speculators from investing.

Crane's focus upon the influence of Eastern commercial values in this crisis expresses his desire to clarify the history of the "sweeping march of the West," which, he says, has not been "chronicled in any particularly true manner" (Bowers 475). The effects of the drought are blurred by the greed of those who would prefer to suppress the farmers' sufferings because they might discourage commercial investors. Michael Robertson states that Crane's article on the forces in conflict in Nebraska treats . . . concerns central to his writing and can stand among his greatest short works" (117). Robertson appreciates Crane's depiction of natural forces and the patterns of power and consciousness within society. These are issues in Crane's writings on the experience of war as well as in these depictions of life in the West and Mexico.

Crane's article "Seen at Hot Springs" (dateline March 2) records his attentive testing of the disconcerting waters of this Arkansas' health spa. First, Crane discovers that even the conventional theory of the seasons—in which Spring is the time of exuberant spirits—does not fit this place, where the people have come from all localities (Bowers 420). This city is, Crane says, a place free from "localism and the bigotry of classes" (Bowers 422). This is a place of comfort where the blizzards of Nebraska in February are merely the subject of gossip. One of the travelers in Hot Springs is the representative of a hat firm in Ogallala, Nebraska. The salesman reports an urban legend that was provoked by the recent blizzard: "In New Orleans, the hackmen raised their fare to ten dollars, he had heard." Disguised in the persona of a youthful stranger with "the blonde and innocent hair," the reporter is said to have "agreed with these remarks." The reader is left with some uncertainty about the truthfulness of the legend or the salesman. Perhaps this uncertainty results from an earlier observation in Crane's article. The young traveler notes or senses "a certain fervor, a certain intenseness" which is "invisible, soundless. And yet it is to be discovered" in Hot Springs (Bowers 423).

When the youthful narrator and his new acquaintance enter a bar, the hat salesman is invited to shake dice for a dollar to pay for their drinks. After "about four minutes," the man from Ogallala has won fifty dollars. He offers half of his winnings to his "blonde and innocent" acquaintance and suggests that they go out on the town and celebrate his good

fortune. The youth declines the gift of the winnings, explaining first, "I don't need it" and then, more desperately, explains that he wants "to write a letter to his mother" (Bowers 424-25).

If this young man does represent Crane, he is lying about his obligations to his mother, who had died while he was attending Syracuse University. If the blonde young man does represent Crane, his plea to escape also denies his financial need (Katz xv-xvi). All we know for certain is that the youth is wary of sharing the hat salesman's friendship and his perhaps crooked winnings in the barroom game of chance.

Crane says that the main street of Hot Springs "typifies the United States," for all of the sections of the country are embodied in the architectural elements of the city (Bowers 421). And the variety of the sizes and the degrees of luxury in the hotels indicate "that pocketbooks differentiate as do the distances to the stars" (Bowers 421). The sketch depicts a city where money is easy, and yet the "fervor" of the city is threatening,and unpredictable. Crane notes several times that the main street is built covering a stream that is entombed" and forgotten. Nature itself appears to be a victim of modern, exploitive development in Hot Springs. Crane compares the city's fervor to that of Long Branch, New Jersey, when "the Monmouth Park Racing Association and Phil Daley vied with one another in making Long Branch a beloved and celebrated city," appreciated, it seems, for the money and excitement of gambling (Bowers 423).

Crane's two reports from the City of New Orleans do not refer to American identity being determined by the greed of developers or the impulses and schemes of gamblers. New Orleans is representative of what Crane describes as a town where "the foreign element is injected very strongly. . . . There begins then a great diversity and . . . the differences are profound" (Bowers 475).

In most of his reports from the West and Mexico, Crane identifies similarities between the cities of the East and the West. He wants to escape from "othering" the West as exotic rather than acknowledging the "great and elemental facts" of the similarities in "the fundamental part," which is "the composition" of American life (Bowers 475). Even in his reports from Mexico, Crane discovers that experience in this foreign environment is useful in awakening his understanding of the

United States.

But in New Orleans Crane encounters a strong "foreign element" in which cultural "diversity is overwhelming." One of his two reports, "Grand Opera in New Orleans" (March 23), identifies the historical success, the aesthetic achievements, and the economic democracy achieved by this opera company. His article describing "The Fete of Mardi Gras" (February 16) reports on the exoticism of the costumes, the floats, and the performers. Both works present the distinctive aesthetic forms of New Orleans as cultural achievements useful for examining the qualities of American democracy. In the carnival liberations of Mardi Gras, for example, Crane finds enchantments by the ancient images of Gods and kings which raise uncertainties about the people's democratic commitments (Bowers 461-62).

In his report on "Grand Opera in New Orleans," however, Crane identifies praiseworthy cultural achievements in the low prices of opera tickets, and in the emotional intensity achieved by the major performers and even by the singers in the chorus. The French company's presentation of opera responds to a human need for the experience of art of great beauty and power, which, Crane says, is not available elsewhere in America (Bowers 426).

In New York City, he playfully observes, one must sell a building site or a yacht to pay for an opera ticket (Bowers 427). In New Orleans one can pay as little as ten cents. This is the only time that Crane's reports on the West and Mexico question the economic practices or structures that restrict access to the arts elsewhere in the United States. Crane concludes that the Opera in New Orleans is "an institution of a century," and it is "given at cheap prices," is "patronized by all classes," and provides the experiences of great art. (Bowers 428). Do similar economic barriers also inhibit American attempts at free "expression" in journalism? Crane's firing after writing a satire about the Junior Order of United American Mechanics in their parade at Asbury Park indicates that possibility.

Joseph Katz identifies a number of irregularities in the distribution of articles—like Crane's—that were published by subscribing newspapers. The newspaper owners and publishers did as they pleased with what they *bought*: they ignored release dates, changed titles, datelines, and texts, inserted internal subheadings . . . and often omitted the syndicate's copyright

notice. The result of all this is a bibliographical and textual complexity that has made this area of Crane studies imperfect *not only textually and bibliographically, but also biographically and critically* (Katz 97, my emphasis).

Katz identifies important disruptions imposed by the publishers. Certainly, the order of the presentation of Crane's Western sketches in the University of Virginia edition reflects such a blurring of the chronology and even the geographic route of Crane's journey. Whether such textual uncertainties and the incomplete data continue to disrupt Crane scholarship, there must have been an awareness in the journalists themselves of their vulnerability to the publishers' domination of their works, their ideas, and their earnings.

Crane's report "Galveston, Texas, in 1895," for example, was not published until it appeared after his death in England in the Westminster Gazette in 1900 (Bowers 474). In this sketch Crane addresses the "romantic" tendency to focus upon "radical differences between Eastern and Western life." This, Crane states, "has kept the sweeping march of the West from being chronicled in any particularly true manner" (Bowers 474-75). Crane clarifies the historical inaccuracy imposed by the popular emphasis upon trivial distinctions between East and West, but the series of articles did not include this segment. Galveston, he notes, has always been "substantial and undeviating in its amount of business" (Bowers 477). A large segment of this article focuses upon a slowly moving Federal project to build a major port for Southern products to be sent through the city. After noting this concern with economic development in Galveston, Crane observes that "[t]he city does not represent Texas. It is unmistakably American" (Bowers 478).

Even in San Antonio, "a city which seemed to symbolize . . . the poetry of life in Texas," Crane discovers a "city with a totally modern aspect":

> The principal streets are lanes between rows of handsome business blocks, and upon them proceeds with important uproar the terrible and almighty trolley car. The prevailing type of citizen . . . competes in a city that is commercially in earnest. And the victorious derby hat of the

> North spreads its wings in the holy place of legends.

As a result of the commercial assault, there has been "a trampling into shapeless dust" of the Spanish architectural monuments by "the march of this terrible century" (Bowers 468-69). Among the forces of destruction, Crane includes "Relic hunters" who have "dragged down little saints from their niches" (Bowers 470). At Fort Sam Houston, the "Officer's Row resembles a collection of Newport cottages" (Bowers 473). This is not the adobe frontier.

In the first of the Mexico sketches, "City of Mexico, July 14," Crane identifies some of the gritty components of Sam Houston's America which the travelers are leaving:

> The train rolled out of the Americanisms of Sam Houston—the coal and lumber yards, the lines of freight cars, the innumerable tracks and black cinder paths. (Bowers 446)

Crane's concerns are identified by two travelers who are headed for Mexico City; one he identifies as a capitalist from Chicago, and the other as an archaeologist from Boston. As they are traveling through the mesquite bush outside of San Antonio, the archaeologist provides a final glimpse of American civilization:

> In the doorway [of a little ranch house] a woman stood leaning her head against the post of it and regarding the train listlessly. Pale, worn and dejected in her old and soiled gown, she was of a type to be seen north, east, south, west. "That'll be one of our best glimpses of American civilization," observed the archaeologist. (Bowers 447)

The capitalist does not comment on this image of a representative victim of America. He simply recalls meeting his first Mexican. The Mexican had delivered questions lickety-split, all concerning business opportunities in San Antonio: "Yes gude place for beesness—uh?" (Bowers 447). Neither of the travelers speaks Spanish, so each of them encounters the

unfamiliar civilization without fully understanding what the Mexicans are saying and without the skill to ask them questions.

Once, Crane says, the archaeologist "espied a grey and solemn ruin of a chapel," and "he at once recited to the capitalist the entire history of Cortez and the Aztecs" (Bowers 454). This reference to the history of European conquest is not developed. Later, the intrusion of the modern and the discovery of an American cultural ideal occur upon encountering the conductor at breakfast:

> The conductor, tall, strong, as clear-headed and clear-eyed as thoroughly a type of the American railroad man, as if he were in charge of the Pennsylvania limited, sat at the head of the table and harangued the attendant peon.
> (Bowers 455)

Just as Crane had observed the presence of urban architecture, trolley cars, and derby hats in the cities of the West, so he notes the extension of the presence of the railroad "type" into Mexico and suggests his usefulness in directing the work of the Mexican "peon."

Crane's second Mexico City sketch has a passage on street vendors who fill their songbirds with shot to make them less flighty, more docile, more saleable (Bowers 442-43). This is, perhaps, an allusion to the famous frog that is similarly weighted in Mark Twain's story of the West, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog."

Crane's last sketch from his experiences in Mexico, "The Mexican Lower Classes," was "left in manuscript when Crane" returned from Mexico. It develops and extends his commentary on travel writing. Crane states, "the most worthless literature in the world" is "that which is written by the men of one nation concerning the men of another" (Bowers 436). The traveler, according to Crane, observes the occupations of the foreigners, and he experiences contempt. Their activities seem unnecessary or "futile" (Bowers 435). Crane says the traveler encounters "many little gestures, tones, tranquilities, rages for which his blood, adjusted to another temperature, can possess no interpreting power."

Failures of understanding result from the traveler's

interpretations of unfamiliar dress, behavior, and expression. Crane concludes that the traveler must "see all he can" of the forms and colors of unfamiliar lives, but the traveler should "not sit in literary judgment of this or that manner of the people." Instead of judging the behavior of the impoverished Indians of Mexico, Crane becomes able to see the poor of America with a new understanding of their "numbers, their wickedness, their might." He states that the poor in America "are becoming more and more capable of defining their condition," and he concludes, "It is very distressing to observe this growing appreciation of the situation" (Bowers 436). Joseph Katz describes this as "[t]he most credible" of Crane's statements of his beliefs and "a revolutionary manifesto for the social millennium" (xxiii). This sketch was not printed during Crane's lifetime, and it may exemplify Crane's crossing of the boundaries of permissible journalistic expression.

"The Mexican Lower Classes" arrives at an understanding of the poor of America derived from Crane's encounter with the colors and forms of the impoverished Indians of Mexico. As a traveler, Crane learns how to interpret his perceptions and projections, and he comes to see his own world with more understanding. The development of the West and Mexico is driven by modern commercial values, and it can be understood if travelers can see the objects in front of their eyes and can remember the elements of the society that has shaped their consciousness. Crane also believed that travelers could benefit from observations that look beyond romantic conventions.

Crane's writings from the West and Mexico have been discussed as reflections of his personal need for money, and there are instances of Crane's need for cash when he was in Nebraska and in Texas. But Crane's travel articles are more important for revealing his appreciation of the power of commercialism and in the development of the American West and the neglect of such social values as preservation of architectural and natural resources, respect for human welfare, and tolerance of artistic expression in society. Crane places himself in opposition to the romantic renderings of the West in which depictions of exotic differences from the East blinds Americans to the cultural domination of the West by commercial and economic values.

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The Fabulous Lew Boyd, a Craneation

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The people of Sullivan County are wonderful yarn-spinners and they have some great additions to their list of tales. Doubtless for years to come those that know the story will tell to admiring listeners how "Lew" Boyd chased a wounded wild hog for 200 miles.

Stephen Crane, "Hunting Wild Hogs," *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 28, 1892, p. 17

Apparently, only two historical personae became named, central characters in Stephen Crane's fictions: Billie Higgins in "The Open Boat" and Lew Boyd in "Hunting Wild Hogs." But real people were sometimes referred to—William H. Crane and Boyd's nephew Charles Stearns in "Hogs," and Cora, Crane's common-law wife, in *Whilomville*—and often alluded to. Paul Sorrentino, Crane's most recent biographer, identified the Grace Fanhall in *The Third Violet*, for example, with the Grace Hall familiar to Crane's artist friends in New York, the same who, when married to Clarence Hemingway, gave birth to Ernest. Thomas Beer, Crane's first biographer, cited the 1892 notoriety of barnstorming firebrand preacher Earl J. Stimson (cf. "The Pace of Youth," 1895). Crane's Hawker character in *The Third Violet* reflects his artist friend C. K. Linson, and George Kelcey's long-suffering mother in *George's Mother* was probably derived from Mary Helen Peck Crane, his own mother. As well, a black man whose face was partially blown off by an explosion at a July 4 celebration in Port Jervis, conflated with the victim of a socially divisive lynching across the street from William's house there, inspired Henry Johnson of *The Monster*. And a historical Port Jervis trainman, Patrick Scully, who worked Erie's New York Division and rode that line with Crane for seven years, from 1891 to 1897, shared with Crane's little-god proprietor of "The Blue Hotel" not only his name but several personal and behavioral characteristics.[1]

In his fruitful, metamorphic narrative conjugations with reality, Crane seems not to have confronted a functional history-

story, fact-fiction "out of bounds" between neither his people-characters nor their situations-narratives; he embraced them, rather, in bountiful fictive consummations. Michael Robertson cited as "fact-fiction discourse" this genre destabilization, a blurring overlap of journalism and quasi-realist narrative practiced especially by Crane but already nascent in the work of his contemporaries and soon common among his followers. Crane's so-called folklore sketches from Sullivan County, published journalistically, even bore datelines recent to their publication, as if they were informational. Epitomizing fact-fiction miscegenation, "The Open Boat" germinated as news of a personal incident before Crane massaged it to fruition as a poetic literary masterpiece: confronting lethally cold, slanting seas and "flatly indifferent" Nature famously engendered among its survivors a twin yield—the redemptive, humanistic "comradeship" that for Correspondent (Crane) is "the best experience of his life" and an interpretive epiphany regarding "the voice of the sea." Lew Boyd, the hero of "Hunting Wild Hogs," was similarly transformed by Crane, borne across the threshold of obliterating local history into an aesthetic albeit expedient *faux*-klore.[2]

Because such a brazen newspaper confabulation as "Hogs" is an issue of Crane's artifice, some analyses might apostrophize its hero, distinguishing by inverted commas the literary from the literal—its character 'Lew Boyd' [sic] from the historical Lewis C. Boyd, but Crane's hyperbole sufficiently precludes confusion. And because fiction's unchanging internal logic is anyway more reliably sustained by its "facts" (and "errors," if such they can be called) than problematical history is by its arch-huntsman, Lew Boyd will eternally and unambiguously transcend his otherwise unremarkable namesake; likewise William Higgins, an ordinary oiler drowned at sea.

A long-lived man of few printable words, the actual Lewis C. Boyd (1848-1929) was contemporary with William Crane (1854-1926) in the generation preceding Stephen's. Boyd and William knew each other well, hunted together and posed for hunting-trip photographs, one of which became famous (See Figure 1 at the end of this article). In Boyd's role as full-time resident Hartwood tracker, hunter, trapper, guide, woodsman, dam-builder, stonecutter, mason, axman, farmer, ox-driver,

land-clearer, stump-puller, constructor, salaried camp factotum and "famous bear-hunter," he was as indispensable a mainstay as William through Hartwood's several legal manifestations. Having organized the original Hartwood Park Association in 1889, for commercial reasons William in 1892 established the Hartwood Club and became its first president, its early subscribers several Crane and Townley family members and associates from the Crane-home turf Lyons Farms area of Elizabeth and Newark (whence "Lyons Avenue" there). Brother Edmund also maintained a homestead at Hartwood, where Stephen repeatedly bunked. In essence, Hartwood's history orbits two families, the Cranes-Townleys and Boyds, the latter at Hartwood since 1836. Boyds came with the land, Cranes with plans and capital. The two clans and cultures eventually intermarried.

Lew had been on the property for half a century before the Cranes knew it existed, was hired by William as a hand even before its formal Association. His father, Charles C. Boyd, and an uncle (likely James R. Boyd, in the 1850 census at Forestburgh, Hartwood's municipality), both contractors on the Delaware and Hudson Canal above Port Jervis, had in the mid-1830s scratched Hartwood out of 3500 acres of Sullivan County's steep bluestone and big pine tree forest. (POI: some of its renowned old-growth, inaccessible to loggers, yet stands.) Including leased land, Hartwood was flexibly expanded by turn of century to about 7500 acres. Boyds were useful there: Lew's niece Emma Boyd worked for the Club in 1894 doing "domestic duties," another niece, Martha Boyd, was employed in 1905, and Barbara Boyd, a granddaughter of J. Mortimer Townley, was in 1987 president of Hartwood's syndicate. In 1930 "a present Boyd house" was noted at Hartwood, and in the late 1960s Lew's daughter Sadie reverted the Boyd property. When the Hartwood clubhouse burned in 1924, Lew Boyd, 76 years old, responded and rendered "good service."

Hartwood-living as personified by Lew's eremitic permanence and dependability (plus convenience) must have seemed a remote, picaresque idyll to Stephen, who in 1896 wrote of being "dejected" at the thought of leaving "the blessed, quiet hills of Hartwood"; near the end of his life, Stephen expressed a desire to retire there. Lew Boyd, born at Hartwood, was in place every time Stephen Crane visited or stayed—whether on

retreat, to recover his health or to write in peace—and he died there. He is buried at Rio Cemetery, within walking distance of Hartwood on the Rio Road, on which he had lived.[3]

Except for their love of the wilderness, their notorious swearing and their youngest-of-the-litter status, in almost every other respect Stephen Crane and Lew Boyd were opposites, probably attractively so. One first-hand account describes Boyd as a man "completely independent of character, [who] knew the country and game trails better than anyone else"; another says "His presence was almost essential to early hunting operations as few others could find their way through the thick brush of those days." He was a large-scale woodsman, "gaunt, rugged and powerful and admirably adapted to the necessities of the wilderness" who presumably possessed physically demanding sawyering and tanning skills necessary to his family's Hartwood sawmill and tannery. In Crane's "Hogs" sketch, "He is a six-foot-four-inch man, with broad shoulders, a good eye, and legs that have no superior for travel in a rough country." By contrast, ailing and urban Crane was at most of only average stature. In the bear-hunt photo of 1893 Boyd sitting appears almost twice the size of diminutive William Crane, squatting, who bears a remarkable resemblance to Stephen. Except for parochial Boyd's burial at Rio (pronounced Rye-o), no evidence shows that he ever left the club, to have reached either Port Jervis or Pennsylvania across the Delaware River from Sullivan County, whereas fluxuous "Stevie" freely ranged the western world. Boyd was as multitalented and skilled a *Macher*-doer as Stephen was self-admittedly narrowly focused. Willa Cather recalled Crane saying, "What I can't do, I can't do at all, and I can't acquire it. I only have one trump."[4]

Perhaps Lew's greatest attraction for Stephen was the available, circumscribed way his life was localized in the same kind of microcosmic isolations that characterize Crane's fictions, those closed and complete worlds of chthonic human spirits with their consistent *ethoi* and, thank Crane, unforgettable picaresques. Robertson agrees, categorizing Boyd's tall "Hogs" tale with the heroicizing genre containing two other sublunary icons, hunters Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, also expediently amplified after history, also culturally restricted, highly localized.[5]

In that dimension, Lew Boyd's mock-epic, seven-day,

200-mile chase of a wounded boar in "Hunting Wild Hogs" depends on feral pigs being exaggerated by Crane into the nemesistic demons of America's forests. Legendarily, wild hogs were "very fleet of foot," dangerous and difficult to kill, "the most wily and cunning of animals," Crane wrote; they shunned neither water nor snow nor rocky terrain, were as nimble as mountain goats and made to seem as terrible as *panteras montanes*. And physically implacable: "They will not stop for obstructions that would make a bear turn out." Through hundreds of generations surviving in unforgiving, swampy woodlands, they redeveloped specistic pre-domestication tusks, "about eight inches in length," Crane estimated. They provided his bombastic touchstone: "Children going to school were frightened home by wild hogs. Men coming home late at night saw wild hogs. It became a sort of fashion to see wild hogs and turn around and come back." In the sketch, "An old German told . . . frightful tales of the animal's powers in battle . . . how horses and men went down before the terrible tusk of the boar," how the hogs by mud-wallowing in soft clay that baked in the sun made themselves "impervious to bullets." But "wild game and lying are inextricably entwined," Crane's narrator concedes: in blood-sport genre "Insignificant facts . . . have been known to become of positively appalling importance"; "hunting stories are narratives deliberately crafted to delight and frighten listeners."[6] A modern example of overblown hog-lore even avails itself in the first season of *Game of Thrones* (2011), when King Robert Baratheon, probably drugged by his wife Cersei Lannister (the insinuation stemming from her rumored poisoning of Jon Arryn in order to position her brother Jaime as the king's Hand), is mortally gored during a hunt for boar; "I was killed by a pig," he laments, making a not-so-oblique reference to murderous Cersei, the series' unquestioned villainess.

With theatrical ferocity in "Hunting Wild Hogs," and introduced even before protagonist Boyd, these fearsome, now feral monsters afforded Crane an overstated source of fear; with extravagant heroism, like a cartoonish local Herakles, *ad hoc* Boyd, abandoned by fellow hunters and "doomed to certain death from cold, exposure or fatigue," counterbalanced that fear and chased his boar over the course of a week and 200 miles in deep snow—a hilariously outrageous distance, New York City

being less than 100 miles from Hartwood. The ur-ancient hunt figuration was here in no danger of renewal as an allegory of human strength and skill confronting and finally overcoming fearsome natural forces or supernatural chimeras, for Lew, "possessed [of] an unconscious and continuous efficiency in picturesque profanity—seldom equalled and perhaps never surpassed," was profane—in both senses of the word. As is the tall tale itself: profanity is here the distinction demarking bathos from mythos.

Inconceivable is St. George swearing at his Dragon or Prometheus cursing the eagle daily eating his liver. Conversely, demented Quaker Ahab's "Damn ye, Whale" is sacrilegious, a profane condemnation (*com + damnare*) artistically contrasted by Melville with Ishmael's innocence, Queequeg's mysticism, unpolluted Nature, and the nobility of Moby Dick's species, Cetus. And certainly at their last roundup in San Antonio good soldiers Boone and Bowie spat "new and unspellable blasphemies" at their adversary, Santa Anna. Crane controlled this linguistic indicator perfectly, sudden swearing for his downward-spiraling Swede who "cursed frightfully" at after-dinner cards in "The Blue Hotel," for example, advanced as a differentiating signifier, one of several ominous signs that, along with "the bugles of the tempest pealing," herald his exit. In the context of profanity, rough Boyd's sketch emerges an exaggerated cause-for-swearing joke, a wide-eyed small-boy fable, a hyperinflated lark, like "The Octopush" (its action, ignited by a drunken guide's damnation, "you kin all go . . . to blazersh," is resolved after stranded outsiders consonantly swear "mighty oaths . . ., crimson oaths . . ., great lurid oaths" at him).

Flaunting rhetorical muscle, Crane amazingly retrofitted this vulgarizing, jocularizing process three months after "Hunting Wild Hogs," deflating in May, 1892 Pike County's legendary "Avenger," Tom Quick Jr., whom Crane called an Indian-killing "monomaniac" and, worse, "simply a murderer," civilization's vilest, perhaps oldest epithet.[7]

As if awaiting his bride, ersatz-epic-scale Lew Boyd was ready at Hartwood when Stephen Crane, engaging and reformulating reality as if there were no tomorrow, arrived. What almost predictably happened next, as Orion rehearses it every night, seems made in classical heaven, and except for

the vernacular comedy, at several structuralist points in critical history Lew Boyd might have been called an archetype, his hunt epic—as Antonio's in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Ike McCaslin's in Faulkner's *The Bear.* But Crane, having just turned twenty years old, was endeavoring in the early 1890s to establish a sustainable career writing for urban newspapers and in his *Sketches* was satisfying *pro tempore* the tastes of readers and editors, not writing for posterity. His Boyd thus remains proudly parochial, limned fondly, comically-worshipfully in a country fable wrought vividly to amuse city dwellers and earn a few profane dollars.

Notes

1. "cousin" Charles Stearns: Gregory J. Lalire, *The Hartwood Club History 1893-2007* (Forestburgh: Justine Evans and Jill Lampe, 2007), p. 44; Sorrentino: *Stephen Crane: A Life of Fire* (Belknap/Harvard, 2014), pp. 9, 137; Beer: *The Mauve Decade* (New York: Knopf, 1926), p. 128; Pat Scully: Anthony Splendora, "Crane, The Train, and Pat Scully," *Stephen Crane Studies* 21:1-2 (Spring-Fall 2012): 19-25. In his biography, p. 400, n. 22, Sorrentino mentions that John Clendenning first suggested to him that Grace Fanhall might have been based on Grace Hall. See Clendenning's "Crane and Hemingway: A Possible Biographical Connection," *Stephen Crane Studies* 5.2 (Fall 1996): 2-6.

2. Michael Robertson, *Stephen Crane, Journalism, and the Making of Modern American Literature* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), pp. 5, 89; in n.3, (p. 219) Robertson acknowledges Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985).

3. Martha Boyd, p. 57 and Barbara Boyd in 1987, p. 36, in Gregory J. Lalire, *Hartwood Club History*; "niece" Emma Boyd in Campbell, *Traditions of Hartwood* (Winter Park: The Orange Press, 1930), p. 66; Barbara Boyd was daughter to Marion Townley Loudon, herself a daughter of J. Mortimer Townley, in Lalire, *Hartwood History*, p. 15 et seq.; "good service": Campbell, *Traditions*, p. 77; "convenience": Boyd seems to have performed a straw man purchase, buying 421 acres in March 1891, when William and wife Cornelia were making "important acquisitions," and "A few days later" deeding it the Association, ibid., p. 20; "blessed, quiet hills": Crane to Crouse, Jan. 12, 1896 in *Stephen Crane's Love Letters to Nellie Crouse*, ed. Edwin H. Cady and Lester G. Wells (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1954), p. 36.

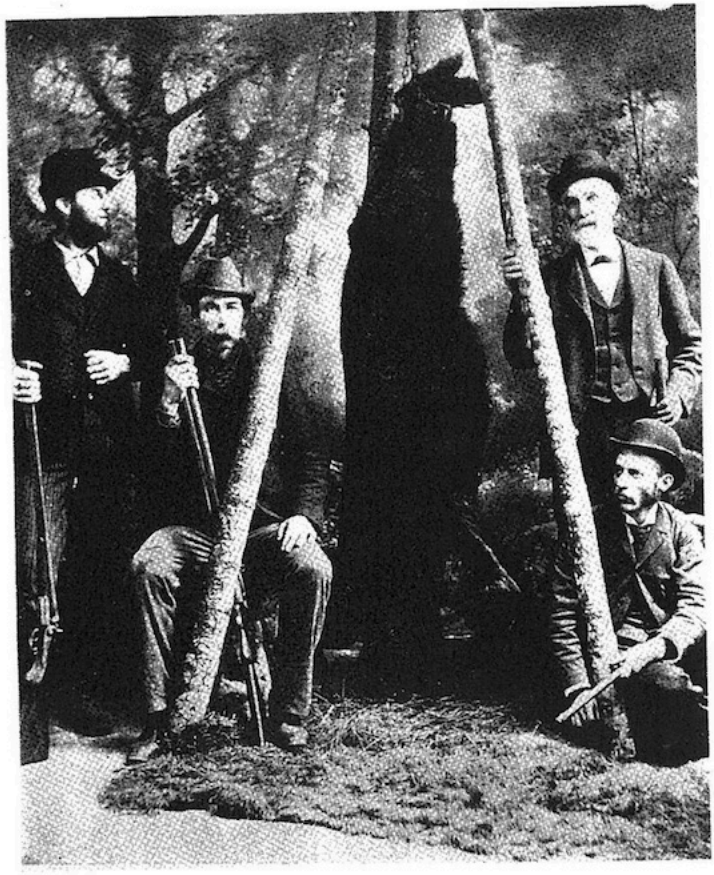
4. Firsthand accounts: "independent of character": Lalire, *Hartwood Club History*, p. 55; "presence": E. J. Dimock, "Old Settlers at Hartwood," cited ibid; "gaunt . . .": Campbell, *Traditions of Hartwood*, p. 56; sketch: "Hunting Wild Hogs" *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 28, 1892, p. 17, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1892-02-28/ed-1/seq-17/, 05/16/2015, collected by Melvin Schoberlin, *The Sullivan County Sketches of Stephen Crane* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1949),

though "Sullivan County Sketches" was coined by Cora Taylor Crane in *Last Words* (1902); "can't do at all': Willa Cather, "When I Knew Stephen Crane," The Library of America, June 23, 1900, at http://storyoftheweek.loa.org/2011/08/when-i-knew-stephen-crane.html.

5. Robertson, *Stephen Crane, Journalism* . . . p. 66.

6. touchstone: "Hogs," p. 17; lying: Robertson, *Stephen Crane, Journalism* . . ., p. 66.

7. "new and unspellable blasphemies": Cowboy in "The Blue Hotel," Ch. VI, Swede's swearing: Ch.V, and "bugles of the tempest pealing" Ch. VIII: *Great Short Works of Stephen Crane*, Intro. James B. Colvert (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) pp. 325-54. On Swede's and other such differentiations, cf. Anthony Splendora, "*Dead Tilt*: Playing for Keeps at 'The Blue Hotel,' the Prize and the Price," *Janus Head*, 14.2 (2015), pp. 35-57. "The Octopush": S*tephen Crane: Prose and Poetry* (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp. 494-97 (originally published by *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1892, but pages missing at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov as of 06/05/2015); Tom Quick, Jr.: "Not Much of a Hero," *New-York Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1892, p. 15, at http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1892-05-01/ed-1/seq-15/, 05/20/2015. N.B.: Quick's monument is of pure cast zinc, not stone, as Crane misstates in "Not Much of a Hero," but Crane's prescience was vindicated in 1997, when the monument, recently vandalized by protestors, was for offending social sensibilities removed permanently from public view. Erected in 1889 but almost immediately red-flagged by Crane, it is now sequestered in a Milford Borough garage.



Miles Sturdevant
Lew Boyd

As in 1893

Wm. H. Crane
Charles Wells

"Bear Hunt"

The Stephen Crane Awards in Badenweiler

Wolfgang Hochbruck
Albert Ludwigs University Freiburg

When Stephen Crane succumbed to tuberculosis on June 5, 1900, in the Black Forest spa town of Badenweiler, the world took little notice, nor was there any indication that his brief presence in the German Southwest, close to the French and Swiss borders, would be long remembered. The Consul in the short-lived U.S. consular offices in Freiburg, E. Theophilus Liefeld, took charge of the matter—Crane was embalmed by a Freiburg-based company, and shipped home to his native New Jersey. It was all very matter of fact. Spas usually prefer their guests to leave on their own feet.

It was not until the second Crane revival in the 1950s that the then mayor of Badenweiler, Friedrich-Karl von Siebold, alerted by a research inquiry from the U.S., started to do some research of his own. As a result, the first commemorative ceremony in honor of Crane took place in 1956, and the town archives started collecting material and correspondence related to Crane. Over the following decades, many eminent Crane scholars from Robert Wooster Stallman to Paul Sorrentino at some point visited Badenweiler. Siebold's successor Dr. Rudolf Bauert presided over Stephen Crane memorial days in 1980 and 1990, and as part of the celebrations on the occasion of the centennial of Crane's untimely demise, a memorial marker was unveiled in the square outside the house where he died. The inscription reads:

Stephen Crane

(Nov. 1,1871 in Newark, New Jersey, USA; † June 5, 1900, Badenweiler)*

His expressiveness and authenticity made Crane the founder of Naturalism in American literature. As a writer, poet and journalist, he prepared the way for the American literary Modern by combining fiction and objectivity. His courageous commitment as a war correspondent and as a writer was the reason for his illness. He passed away too early. Crane's last residence, Badstraße

In 2006, the head of the North American Studies section of the English Department at ALU Freiburg, Wolfgang

Hochbruck, approached the director of the Badenweiler literature museum "Chechov Salon", Heinz Setzer, with plans for a more permanent commitment to the memory of Stephen Crane. The result of their negotiations was approved by the mayor, Karl-Eugen Engler, whose continued interest in the literary legacies of Badenweiler's guests and sometime inhabitants proved an invaluable asset throughout the 28 years that he held office.

The cooperation between a university institute and a municipality was, and continues to be, an entirely novel format. Already that November, the English Department started a series of bi-annual lectures dedicated to Stephen Crane, which ensures that there is an outreach project in the even years. The lectures in 2006, 2008, 2012 and 2018 were presented by Wolfgang Hochbruck. In 2010, the retired protestant minister of Badenweiler, the Rev. Rolf Langendörfer, gave insights into the relation between Crane and the most prominent and important German pneumologist of the 19th century, Albert Fraenkel. Fraenkel's renown had brought Stephen and Cora Crane to Badenweiler, hoping that the famous physician might be able to cure the moribund writer. In 2014, Holger Kersten, professor of American Literature at Magdeburg, and also a member of the Stephen Crane Society, talked about Crane's New York texts, and in 2016, Rolf-Dieter Kluge, president of the Chechov Society and honorary spa guest of Badenweiler, drew comparisons between Crane and Anton Chechov as two prominent modernist writers.

2006 "Happy Birthday, Stephen Crane!" (W. Hochbruck)

2008 "Stephen Crane's Last Novel: The O'Ruddy" (W. Hochbruck)

2010 "Stephen Crane and Dr. Albert Fraenkel" (Rolf Langendörfer)

2012 "Fear and Heroism: Stephen Crane and the American Civil War" (W.H.)

2014 "The Light of Art in the Shadows of the Nether World: Stephen Crane's Texts about New

York City"
(Holger Kersten, Magdeburg)

2016 "Stephen Crane and Anton Chechov"
(Rolf-Dieter Kluge, Tübingen)

2018 "Stephen Crane and the Theatre"
(W. Hochbruck)

[All lectures were presented in German; title translations W. H.]

In the odd years, the town of Badenweiler and the English Department jointly award the "Stephen-Crane-Research Prize for North-American Literature and Cultural Studies." The prize is awarded for academic excellence in writing a bachelor or master thesis or a Ph.D. dissertation. Committee members are, besides Wolfgang Hochbruck as the Stephen Crane Society representative, and Heinz Setzer as the director of the Badenweiler Literary Museum, the resident American Studies professors at the University, and the director of the Freiburg Carl Schurz Haus, the successor of the local Amerika-Haus (1952-1994). The endowment of the award is not exactly spectacular, but there is a certain quaintness about it: A moderate, three-digit purse from the English Department—and from the town a weekend in a Badenweiler Hotel for two persons, including a visit to the spa. With its 4,500 inhabitants, Badenweiler may lack the glamour of Baden-Baden 100 miles to the North, which attracted authors like Mark Twain and Henry James, but it at least equals if not surpasses the bigger spa city in terms of its relaxing atmosphere and recreational value. The Roman bath ruins, second largest in size North of the Alps, indicate that already 2000 years ago the place was attractive for health-seekers.

Stephen Crane probably never saw the ruins—the route from the narrow-gauge train station to the house in Badstraße where he and Cora took lodgings veers off sharply to the left before reaching the town centre with the bath and the church. But he had not come for sightseeing either—he was hoping to be cured. Saved, at least. Unfortunately for him, he became one of the two important early modern writers who did not leave

Badenweiler alive, the other one being Anton Chechov.

By comparison, Chechov's legacy far outweighs Crane's in Badenweiler—the literary salon was dedicated to his name, there were and are several monuments in prominent places, and at any time of the year the visitor taking a stroll along the "coffee-mill," a circular walk around the castle hill, might happen upon Russian extended families paying a tribute at the main Chechov monument, often reciting passages from his plays or stories.

But as far as scholarly awards go, there is only the one dedicated to the 28-year-old writer from Newark who had got himself infected with TBC in the tenement quarters of New York, and who had worked as a war correspondent in Greece and Cuba, unscathed by bullets or shrapnel, only to spend what little physical strength he had left to get to the Black Forest and the famous Dr. Albert Fraenkel.

There is yet another feature that makes the Stephen Crane award attractive: besides the main bi-annual awards, there are also non-endowed nominee awards for the runners-up, of which there are usually several. While most of the theses receiving awards and nominee awards particularly during the first decade of the award's existence were in the field of North American Literary Studies, more recently theses from other fields of North American Studies have also been nominated, as can be seen from the list below:

Stephen Crane Awards (in chronological order):

2007 Johannes Justus Fehrle, Master Thesis, Literary Studies: "The Postmodern Canadian Western"

2009 Marek Gryglewicz, Bachelor Thesis, English and American Literature: "The Stephen Crane Archive in Badenweiler"

Nominee awards: Carolyn Blank, Friederike Reussner, Anne Schäfer, Sebastian Schulz

2011 Aynur Erdogan, Master Thesis, Literary Studies: "'Adventure of a Young English Officer Among the

Abenakee Savages': A Case Study of Short Prose Fiction in Late-Eighteenth Century Magazine Culture"
Nominee awards: Anne Brandstätter, Maximilian Alders

2013 Svenja Hohenstein, Master Thesis, British and North American Cultural Studies: "Girl Heroes in Contemporary American Culture"

Nominee awards: Carolin Peschel, Samira S. Strauß, Thomas Büttner, Elmar Ernst Offenwanger, Eckart Winski

2015 Philipp Scherzer, Master Thesis, History: "Das Amerikabild der SS-Wochenzeitung Das Schwarze Korps, 1935-1939"

Nominee awards: Diana Schanz, Daniel Hefflebower, Simon Schneider

2017 Harry Schüler, Ph.D. thesis, Anthropology: "Oneida Roulette: Landrückforderungen der Oneida im Staat von New York—Rechtliche, wirtschaftliche und soziale Komponenten im inter- und intra-ethnischen Beziehungsgeflecht"

Nominee awards: Christina Gels, Julia Ruff, Alexander Hübner

2019 Tara Akbari, Master Thesis, British and North American Cultural Studies: "Reflecting on Absence: A Study of the National September 11 Memorial"

Nominee award: Damaris Stein

Even if the endowment of the Stephen Crane Prize does not make the awardee rich, the prize itself does carry weight: all of the awardees went on eventually to writing Ph.D. theses, either having obtained positions in the academic system, or else supported by scholarships. Even some of the students receiving nominee awards reported that it helped them land jobs. The

awardees themselves represent the diversity of the Freiburg University student body, both in terms of their national, ethnic, and gender diversity, and even concerning their age, ranging from an immigrants' daughter in her mid-twenties to a former policeman in his late fifties.

All awardees are expected to include Crane somehow in their thanksgiving address, and they have dutifully done so even if their subjects were only related tangentially, or not at all, to Crane's times and topics. The only award-winning thesis directly pertaining to Stephen Crane so far has been Marek Gryglewicz's 2009 bachelor thesis about the Badenweiler archival holdings. He combed through the Badenweiler town archives more thoroughly than any one had done before, reconstructing and retrieving some items that had been believed lost, like the original first communication between R. W. Stallman and Mayor Siebold, and Crane's death certificate. While it does not hold any particular surprises for Crane scholars, the Stephen Crane archive in Badenweiler is the only repository of material related to Crane on the European continent, and it continues to grow.

Depending on the development of the Covid-19 crisis, the 2020 Crane lecture, tentatively titled "Crane's Europe," might have to be presented virtually, and without the support by Badenweiler's small spa orchestra that have faithfully accompanied every lecture and every award ceremony since 2006. But it will take place. For 2021, the English Dept. is planning a symposium for once not commemorating Crane's death, but the sesquicentennial of his birth in 1871.

Crane's Badenweiler notes, taken by Cora, end with "This is no nice thing." Obviously, his feverish vision was not referring to the commemorative efforts that would be made in his name, more than a century later, in the Black Forest village where he died.

Stephen Crane Award 2019

(L-R: Karl-Eugen Engler, Mayor of Badenweiler; Tara Akbari, 2019 prize winner; Damaris Stein, nominee award; Wolfgang Hochbruck, Head of the English Department, Albert Ludwigs University, Freiburg; Heinz Setzer, Director, Badenweiler Literary Museum.)

***The Wings of Atalanta: Essays Written along the Color Line.* By Mark Richardson. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2019. x +329 pp. Cloth $59.00.**

Donald Vanouse
State University of New York, Oswego

Mark Richardson's earlier scholarly publications were studies in Robert Frost. In addition to co-editing *The Letters of Robert Frost*, he published a critical study defining the "ordeal" of Robert Frost's formal and intellectual struggles with American modernist poetry.

In *The Wings of Atalanta: Essays Written along the Color Line* Richardson discusses six writers who worked during some of the most harsh periods of racial inequality and oppression in America. He begins with the Pre-Civil War years of Frederick Douglass' childhood as a slave.

The political Reconstruction of the defeated South ended scarcely a decade after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Richardson notes that violations of civil and political rights intensified in the long period of unpunished murders of black men such as Medgar Evers and boys such as Emmett Till (See: multiple citations: *Atalanta*, pp. 5, 76, and 240); the blocking of voting rights, rejections of calls for equality in education, and abusive real-estate practices such as "redlining" which disrupted attempts to gain fair housing and to achieve community control over wealth. The dust jacket of Robinson's book includes a grim banner on a flagpole over a New York City street: "A MAN WAS LYNCHED YESTERDAY." The banner seems to express our current events. Richardson's subtitle refers to his book as a collection of "Essays Written along the Color Line," but the definition of the term does not appear to be consistent throughout the book.

Richardson discusses racially motivated abuses in chapters on Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Stephen Crane, Charles Chesnutt, Richard Wright, and Jack Kerouac. Richardson's first chapter, for example, includes items from the autobiography of Frederick Douglass that record his personal resistance to oppression, and his friends' evasions of racist laws by providing him with books and even by providing instruction

which helped Douglass to understand the elements of freedom.

The title of Richardson's book is taken from W. E. B. Du Bois' essay "Of The Wings of Atalanta" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Du Bois interprets the classical narrative of the runner, *Atalanta*, as an example of the resistance of the human spirit to the temptations of the material world. The myth of Atalanta also expresses Du Bois' desire for an educational structure which would provide intellectual discipline and empowerment to former slaves, enabling them to participate in a democracy of labor which would replace their enslavement by capitalism in plantation culture.

My remaining remarks will be addressed to Richardson's third chapter, where he devotes more than 50 pages to discussing the writings of Stephen Crane.

The inclusion of Stephen Crane in this historical survey promised the opening of Richardson's text to Ralph Ellison's bold appreciation of Crane's writings about the Civil War and the patterns of injustice growing more visible in America during the 1890s. Ellison's essay introducing a selection of Crane's works was reprinted in *Shadow and Act* (1953, 1964).

But the six references to Ralph Ellison in the "Index" of Richardson's book, included no citation to Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, nor to any of his other stories about the Civil War, nor to his writings about wars in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Nor to Ellison's response to Crane's The Monster. Ellison observes that between Twain and Faulkner "no artist of Crane's caliber looked so steadily at the wholeness of American life and discovered such far reaching symbolic equivalents for its unceasing state of Civil War" (*Shadow* 76).

Richardson opens his comments on Stephen Crane by noting, "I aim here to trace the happy go lucky moods of Stephen Crane's fiction" (*Atalanta* 110). He does not look closely at Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, particularly the renderings of Jim Conklin's awesome "dance of death," the blow to Henry's head by his comrade's rifle stock, nor the scenes of corpses encountered on the battlefield. Richardson appears not to have read Crane's "The Veteran," a depiction of Henry Fleming's death while attempting to rescue horses trapped in a burning barn, nor does he indicate reading Crane' s Decoration Day essay calling for "The Gratitude of the Nation" to acknowledge "the men who fought in the great war for freedom and union"

(*Works*, VIII, 588). Crane claims these Civil War veterans for the American people who will, he says, gain strength from the soldiers' achievements:

> They are ours these boys in blue, their deeds and their privations, their wondrous patience and endurance, their grim and abiding faith and fortitude are ours. Let us expend our lungs then while they can hear . . . these veterans whose feet are still sore from their marches, in whose old grey hairs there still lingers the scent of victory. (*Works*, VIII, 589)

Crane concludes, "Let the last words they hear from us be words of gratitude and affection" (*Works*, VIII, 588). There is little that could be described as "happy go lucky" in this appreciation of the veterans. Richardson asks, at one point, "what is Crane's investment?" in a conversation between pickets from the two armies. He answers his own question: "it is the amused "investment" of an onlooker who sees little sense in the whole display—whether on the grunts' part or the officers'" (*Atalanta* 121). This may be an example of what Richardson finds to be "happy go lucky" in Crane, but the term "grunts" used in reference to the Union soldiers is not Crane's. The term may reveal Richardson's contempt for the soldiers Crane depicts in the Union army. Richardson uses the term "grunt" earlier when he comments on "the little guy's . . . dignity," but he adds, "about which Crane doesn't seem much to care" (*Atalanta* 115). Such intrusive comments concerning the author occur fequently in this essay.

It may be that Richardson became confused by statements which he encountered in the retired Union General Alexander McClurg's early review of *The Red Badge of Courage*. McClurg was disappointed by Henry Fleming and his fellow soldiers for their lack of historical seriousness. He also had been offended by British scoffing at the American soldiers, and he recalls *Blackwood's Magazine* debunking "the gibbering mob, the swift footed warriors of Bull Run . . . the legitimate offspring of the Great Republic" (*Atalanta* 114). McClurg's review of *the Red Badge* was a defense of the Union soldiers.

More likely as a source of Richardson's confusion concerning Crane's attitudes and values is Thomas Beer 's often-questioned early biography, *Stephen Crane: A Study In American Letters* (1923). Richardson himself states that Beer's biography "is still among the most provocative responses" to Crane:

> despite its many (likely mischievous) inaccuracies about the details of Crane's life, and despite the many embellishments that have led some to dismiss it as an interesting fabrication. (*Atalanta* 140)

A biographer "dismiss[ed}" for writing an "interesting fabrication" might introduce distortions of the truth to tickle his audience with "provocative" interpretations of the events and behavior of his subject. This is particularly likely in Richardson's book, which aspires to reveal Crane's position on theories of Civil War history and on the social structures promoting class and race prejudice.

Perhaps I can clarify one such instance of distortion concerning the moment when Henry Fleming gains his "red badge of courage" after being struck on the head by the rifle stock of a fleeing soldier. Richardson says,"ignominiously wounded, Henry—who gets his red badge of a wound when a fellow soldier pistol whips him to make him shut his "pie hole" (*Atalanta*, 139). Richardson adds "ignominiously" to insist that this wound shames Henry; Richardson also substitutes "pistol whips," a mode of "gangster punishment," for the blow with the rifle. The blow is then further distorted into a targeting of Henry's "pie hole"; Henry's skull becomes his mouth; his questions become crude or vulgar spoutings from the "pie hole." Henry's wound, which later is seen as a bloody crown with heroic associations, shrinks to an ignominious wounding expressive of the infantile oral stage. Richardson says that Crane's literary naturalism "diminishes men," but Richardson's own renaming of Henry's wound proceeds merely to a coarse debunking of the soldier's piehole (*Atalanta* 122).

Richardson's enjoyment of Beer's "mischievous" biography leads him to include an exchange of letters between Crane and a correspondent, Catherine Harris, concerning those whom Richardson refers to as "the miserable denizens of the

Bowery" (*Atalanta* 125). Richardson quotes a long passage from one of the "letters," which Beer seems to have composed to bear false witness against Crane:

> In a story of mine called "An Experiment in Misery," I tried to make plain that the root of Bowery life is a sort of cowardice. Perhaps I mean a lack of ambition or to willingly be knocked flat and accept the licking. The missions for children are another thing and if you will have Mr. Rockefeller give me a hundred street cars and some money, I will load all the babes off to some pink world where cows might lick the poor kids' noses and they will never see their families any more. (*Atalanta* 125)

This letter causes me to wonder why Crane would have dressed in rags and stayed in a Bowery flophouse for a couple of pennies a night if he had understood so well the sources of cowardice in the poor. Richardson seems to believe that this is one of the fabrications necessary to accept from Beer if one wishes to enjoy the hunger and the homelessness and the diseases of the poor. Paul Sorrentino's essay "The Legacy of Thomas Beer in the Study of Stephen Crane and American Literary History" provides a valuable report on the disruptive effects of Beer's unreliable scholarship.

Richardson does not draw upon the most useful evaluations of Crane's writings, and he includes Thomas Beer, whose comments on Crane's life and works are unreliable.

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In Memoriam:

Stanley Wertheim

Sadly, Stanley Wertheim passed away in April 2020; he was eighty-nine, having been born in 1930 in Warburg, Germany. He received his PhD from NYU, and his work on *The Red Badge of Courage* won the university's annual Andiron Award for the best dissertation. In 1992 he became the first President of the Stephen Crane Society and retired as a Professor of English from William Paterson University in 2000.

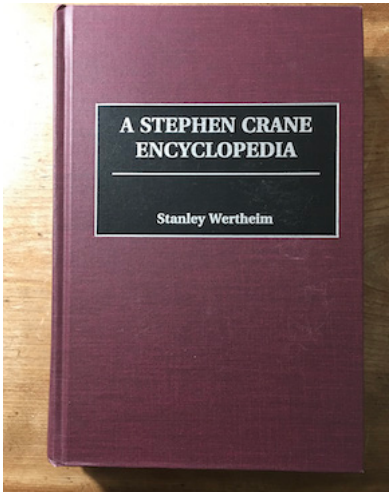
Stanley had a long, distinguished career as a scholar of American literature. He and I published *The Correspondence of Stephen Crane* and *The Crane Log: A Documentary Life of Stephen Crane 1871-1900*. His *Stephen Crane Encyclopedia* is indispensable for Crane scholarship. Donald Pizer has said of the *Encyclopedia*: "The book consists of mini-articles—all, remarkably, by Wertheim, and therefore thorough, accurate, and even-tempered—on almost every phase of Crane's life and work. The entry on *The Red Badge*, for example, is a model of its kind in its fair-minded report of the history and the varied approaches to the work." Stan was also a master of scholarly articles about Crane (and others), several of which appeared in this journal. One of his most famous and influential pieces grew out of a paper he delivered at the Crane conference held at Virginia Tech in 1989, in which he demonstrated that Thomas Beer fabricated letters he quoted from in his biography of Crane and invented details about his subject. We subsequently published "Thomas Beer: The Clay Feet of Stephen Crane Biography" in *American Literary Realism*.

Besides being a pre-eminent scholar, Stanley was an avid collector. His Crane collection consisted of first editions, letters, photographs, and other documents, but he also collected such other authors as Hemingway, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot. In later years he collected Netsukes and decorative canes.

I have fond memories of numerous phone calls with Stanley and getting together each year at the American Literature Association Conference. Long-time Crane scholars will know of my enormous debt to him. Whenever I wrote anything about Crane for possible publication, I would send the manuscript to Stan, and he would always make valuable suggestions. In

appreciation for his help with my career, I dedicated *Stephen Crane Remembered* to him. His many friends and colleagues will deeply miss him.

Paul Sorrentino



Announcement

The following press release announces a posthumous honor for Stephen Crane.

New Jersey Hall of Fame Announces Its Incoming Class of Inductees

NEWARK (August 5, 2020)—The New Jersey Hall of Fame (NJHOF) has announced who the inductees are for the incoming Class of 2019-2020—a who's who of some of the Garden State's best and brightest. The 12th annual induction ceremony will be a 1-hour virtual pre-recorded ceremony that will take place on Sunday, October 18, 2020, and will be broadcast on several television, radio and prominent social media platforms throughout New Jersey. The Class of 2019-2020's Unsung Hero will be announced in early October. "These Garden State heroes perfectly represent what makes our state great," says Jon F. Hanson, chairman of the NJHOF. "It's our privilege to honor these inductees for their outstanding contributions to our state."

The New Jersey Hall of Fame Class of 2019-2020 is (with occupation, name, N.J. town): [Among the inductees is "Stephen Crane, Newark, Author of *The Red Badge of Courage*." The other thirty recipients include comedian Ernie Kovacs, NY Giants quarterback Eli Manning, and Nobel-Prize winning economist Milton Friedman.

ABOUT THE NJHOF: The Foundation for New Jersey Hall of Fame is a non-profit organization honoring citizens who have made invaluable contributions to society, the State of New Jersey and the world beyond. Since 2008, the NJHOF has hosted 10 ceremonies for over 140 notable individuals and groups in recognition of their induction into the Hall of Fame. The NJHOF endeavors to present schoolchildren with significant and impactful role models to show that they can, and should, strive for excellence. The NJHOF is thankful for the support of its many sponsors, without which none of our endeavors would be possible. For more information, go to www.njhalloffame.org.

Contributors' Notes

Wolfgang Hochbruck is Professor of North American Philology and Cultural Studies at Albert Ludwigs University in Freiburg, Germany, close to Badenweiler, where Stephen Crane died in 1900. He assumed responsibility for the local legacy and memory of Crane after being appointed professor in 2003. He is a navy veteran and a lieutenant in his local fire department.

John (Jack) D. Kerkering is an Associate Professor in the English Department at Loyola University Chicago, where he teaches courses in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century U. S. literature. His books are T*he Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge UP, 2003) and *Racial Rhapsody: The Aesthetics of Contemporary U. S. Identity* (Routledge, 2018). He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Politics*, which will be published in 2022.

Mark Noonan is Professor of English at New York City College of Technology and past President of The Research Society for American Periodicals. In 2015 and 2020, he served as Director of the NEH Summer Institute: "City of Print: New York and the Periodical Press from the Antebellum Era to the Digital Age." He is co-author of *Brooklyn Tides: The Fall and Rise of a Global Borough* (Columbia UP, 2018) and *Reading the Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine: American Literature and Culture, 1870-1893* (Kent State UP, 2010).

Haein Park is an Associate Professor of English at Biola University. She teaches courses in early and modern American literature, critical theory, and environmental literature. Her research focuses on religion in American literature.

Anthony Splendora, a retired teacher of Writing and Mathematics, is an independent researcher and writer. He has published in journals and in the popular press. A sample of his online work is available at http://independent.Academia.edu/AnthonySplendora.

Donald Vanouse is a past president of the Stephen Crane Society. He is an Emeritus Professor of English at the State University of New York, Oswego, and he is continuing to study Crane's writings as modes of understanding the Other in his fiction and poetry and in his journalism.