

STEPHEN CRANE'S SOCIAL OUTLOOK AS
REVEALED IN HIS WRITINGS

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STEPHEN CRANE'S SOCIAL OUTLOOK
AS REVEALED IN HIS WRITINGS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to determine the social outlook of Stephen Crane through an examination of his writings. The Introduction defines the term "Social Outlook" and discusses the milieu in which Crane lived and wrote, and its influence upon his work.

The next eleven sections examine Crane's poems and stories in order to uncover as many facets as possible of his social thought. In the Conclusion, the information thus obtained is fitted together into a comprehensive creed.

Crane's poetry reveals an antipathy toward orthodox religion and its vengeful God. It shows that Crane himself conceived God to be an aloof being who derives a cruel pleasure from contemplating the world which he created, but does not interfere with it in any way. Man is characterized as basically irrational and evil, yet capable at times of courageous behavior and often desirous of knowing ultimate truth--a desire impossible of fulfillment. The universe is pictured as totally indifferent to man, and each individual appears completely isolated from all others.

The Fellowship of Courage develops many of the ideas presented in Crane's poetry. In particular, it stresses that man's actions are largely motivated by the desire to appear well before others and to gain a secure position within the social hierarchy. Crane indicates that man can best achieve these goals when the group is threatened by great danger. At such times each individual feels linked to his companions by strong bonds of friendship and solidarity, gains an accurate knowledge of his own capacities and limitations, and comes to realize that seemingly impossible tasks can often be accomplished through

cooperative effort.

The Sullivan County Sketches portray man as egotistical, extremely romantic, cowardly, and only partially able to control his own destiny. They also reflect Crane's disdain for superstition.

Maggie and George's Mother tell of the failure of two individuals who attempt to attain status in the social group. Maggie's failure is caused by her ignorance of any life other than that of a slum dweller, while George's stems from the lack of suitable ways for him to prove himself.

"An Experiment in Misery" and "The Men in the Storm" criticize victims of social injustice for not fighting back against society. The stories indicate that such persons possess the power to compel society to redress their grievances, but are unable to cooperate with one another to the extent necessary to employ it successfully.

"The Open Boat" and "A Man and...Some Others" restate Crane's belief in the efficacy of courage. They make the point that cooperation and courageous behavior during a period of crisis enhance, but do not guarantee, any particular individual's chances of surviving it.

"Twelve O'Clock" and "The Blue Hotel" illustrate the indifference of the universe and show how a series of insignificant events can lead to serious or even fatal final consequences. The latter story also shows how failure to understand the true nature of society can lead to isolation and death.

Minor Stories With Social Themes have as their themes the indifference of the universe, man's callous disregard of the sufferings

and misfortunes of his fellows, and the power of forces making for social conformity. One, "A Self-Made Man", satirizes the rags-to-riches American success story and indicates that chance, rather than merit, determines an individual's destiny.

The Monster and The Whilomville Stories deal with society's hostility toward and persecution of those persons who differ from the majority. Both stories reveal that Crane regarded Negroes as lazy, easily frightened, fond of loud garments and fancy language, but also capable of behaving heroically at times. In The Whilomville Stories Crane depicts children as possessing essentially the same traits as adults, hence makes the point that human traits are hereditary, rather than acquired.

Crane's social outlook, as stated in the Conclusion of this dissertation, is basically naturalistic. Its chief weakness is that it places too much emphasis upon man's faults, while largely overlooking his very considerable virtues.

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INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to determine the social outlook of Stephen Crane through an examination of his poems and stories. At the outset, however, it will be necessary to define the term "social outlook" in order to gauge properly the scope of the task. For the present purposes, it may be thought of as any systematic, integrated set of beliefs concerning man's relationship to the universe and to other men.

Perhaps man can never know the exact nature of his relationship to the universe; however, in any period of history, his opinion about this relationship will play an important role in determining the nature of society. If he believes in a benevolent universe, his condition will be essentially happy. His world may not be Utopian, but generally speaking, he will have faith that things happen for the best and humanity may be regarded as progressing from a lower to a higher state of being, both materially and spiritually. If man is convinced that the universe is indifferent, his view of life alters radically. He will then be frustrated rather than happy. Events will occur without any discernible pattern and the future, both of individuals and of the race as a whole, will be impossible to predict. Finally, if man regards the universe as hostile, unhappiness and mental, moral, and physical retrogression, rather than uncertainty, will probably characterize human society.

Man's relationships to other men are of two kinds: the overt relationships obtaining in the everyday world, and the mental attitudes that he has toward his fellows. The overt relationships are those which come most readily to mind whenever one thinks of a social outlook. Yet

any creed which concerned itself exclusively with them would present an inadequate picture of society. Mental attitudes likewise play an important role in determining the nature of society, and must also be taken into account. If, for example, people are not particularly concerned with what others think about them, they are more likely to be individualistic, to do what they please within reasonable limits and let others do likewise. If, however, they are not so individualistic, if they feel a strong desire for the approval of others, society will tend to exhibit a rigid, inflexible pattern and look with suspicion, fear and enmity upon anyone who is different. The individual under such conditions will rationalize any unorthodox behavior of which he might be guilty, and within his own mind, justify it to society.

The social outlook of the thinking portion of any society is in large part determined by the state of its political, religious, and philosophical institutions.¹ During those periods characterized by a high degree of institutional stability, society tends to display an optimistic outlook. When, however, traditional values are under attack, a confused, pessimistic outlook is likely to result. The time in which Crane was born certainly belongs in the latter category. In industry, in the physical and biological sciences—even in such unlikely fields as comparative philology—new inventions and discoveries were, with unprecedented rapidity, altering man's intellectual outlook profoundly and irrevocably.

¹The section on intellectual backgrounds is based on material in the following sources: Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought, N.Y., Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1952, pp. 139-58, 103-18, 248-50; Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought, N.Y., Harpers, 1943, pp. 531-631. This material has been supplemented as indicated in the footnotes.

One of the factors influencing the intellectual make-up of the period was the emergence of the Machine Age. Up until the time of the Civil War, America's economy had been primarily agricultural. To be sure, the nation had its industries, some of which dated from the founding of the Republic, but they were relatively unimportant. The Civil War helped to change the entire picture and to speed the completion of the Industrial Revolution. Not only was one of the chief forces of American agrarianism--the South and its plantation system--decisively defeated on the field of battle, but industry, at once challenged and stimulated by the necessity of equipping an army of hundreds of thousands, expanded tremendously. This expansion continued after the end of hostilities. Within a dozen years following Appomattox, the value of American capital was more than doubled. America, through utilisation of the Bessemer process, was rapidly changing from a nation of wood to one of steel. The steel, meat packing, and petroleum industries developed especially rapidly, but nearly every other type of enterprise was also stimulated.

This vast industrial expansion had the effect of enormously speeding up the growth of cities. Lured by the belief that the city offered better jobs and more opportunities for advancement, a large number of farm men and women abandoned the land. Immigration also helped swell the urban population. Driven from the Old World by famine, religious persecution, and political and social upheaval, thousands of Europeans sought a new life in America. With each passing year the number arriving increased, until in 1874, 460,000 entered the country. As a result of this rapid influx of persons, cities began to have

difficulty providing adequate housing for them. Slums quickly sprang up in which vice, crime, disease, and corruption flourished.

Concurrent with the growth of industrial enterprise, America's attitude toward money-making underwent a subtle change. In earlier days, Calvinists regarded business affairs almost as a second religion, believing that if business flourished, it might be taken as a sign of divine election. These early entrepreneurs stressed honesty and lack of greed in their business dealings. As the nineteenth century advanced, however, this creed was transformed into a philosophy of cutthroat competition and lust for power. In such a moral atmosphere the whole American system of values underwent a drastic change. A new Horatio Alger individualism, which emphasized the material rewards to be reaped through the exercise of such virtues as honesty and industriousness replaced the earlier Emersonian individualism, which had stressed the development of the self.

During this period of rapid industrial growth, momentous developments were also occurring in Biblical scholarship and in several of the sciences. In Europe, comparative philologists and scholars subjected the texts of the Bible to a rigorous examination. Their work showed that the Bible, far from being the product of divine knowledge, was actually a compilation of a great variety of writings, produced over a period of more than one thousand years. At the same time, anthropologists demonstrated that accounts of such events as floods, virgin births, and crucifixions were common in the religious writings of many groups other than the Hebrews. Such discoveries appeared to refute decisively the claim that Christianity was special and divinely inspired, and, as

a result, many persons came to look upon the Bible as a source of ethical guidance and wisdom, rather than as the direct word of God.

In astronomy and physics, discoveries no less important from the standpoint of their religious ramifications were also being made. By demonstrating that star clusters and nebulae, instead of being stable entities, are constantly undergoing change, the astronomers Herschel and Struve refuted the Biblical claim to a fixed and final creation of the universe, and substituted in its place an evolutionary viewpoint. Similarly, newly formulated laws of the conservation of matter and energy, which declared that both matter and energy are indestructible and do not change except in accordance with fixed laws, ran directly counter to the Christian-mystical belief in the superiority of mind over matter.

Whatever may have been the effect of the Higher criticism, astronomy, or physics upon traditional religion, however, it was as nothing compared to that of Darwinism. Darwin's theory, first presented in his Origin of Species (1859), is briefly as follows: Organisms tend to produce an excess of offspring, some of which vary slightly from their parents. The process of natural selection tends to favor the survival of those individuals whose peculiarities render them best adapted to their environment. Through the continued operation of these factors, new species not only have been and may still be produced, but organisms of widely differing groups may have arisen from common ancestors. By assembling overwhelming evidence against the idea of fixed species, Darwin destroyed one of the foundation stones of Christianity, the belief that God created man in His image. If Darwin's theories were true, then man had, over eons of time, developed from simple animal origins, rather than

fallen from an elevated state, as the Bible held. Finally, the Biblical account of an all-wise Deity creating man by a single act proved untenable in the light of the new evidence that overproduction, variation, competition, and survival through adaptation, controlled his development. The theory had tremendous repercussions upon the popular consciousness. It was

as though, suddenly, God had died, leaving man with neither divine protection nor method of salvation. The map of his universe had been torn to bits, the familiar bulwarks of his security shattered. In a world of increasing complexity and confusion, man no longer had any Force to pray to, and his traditional morality, based upon precepts of humility and justice, was of small use in a world in which survival was accorded only to the strong and predatory. Even worse, immortality, through the hope of which man was encouraged to bear the misfortunes of this world, was snatched from his grasp....It was small wonder then that many men--and particularly literary men--became cynical and pessimistic under the shattering impact of Darwinism.¹

Considering the tremendous implications of Darwinism, it is not surprising that it had a profound effect in many areas of thought. The first adaptation of Darwinism to philosophy was the work of Herbert Spencer. He distinguished three types of evolution--inorganic, organic, and mental--and attempted to show that the development of consciousness, human institutions and ethical values were as much a part of evolution as the development of complex organisms from simpler ones. Spencer, though assuming the ultimate goal of the evolutionary process to be a Utopian human society, displayed little patience with any attempt to ameliorate human conditions. He argued that such action tends to keep alive socially unfit types, which must be eliminated if nature is to advance, and that man can best promote progress by standing back and letting the impersonal laws of nature work themselves out.

¹R.W.Horton, and H.W.Edwards, op.cit., p.158.

John Fiske carried the philosophy of Spencer one step further in asserting that evolution implied the existence of a God whose unfolding plan revealed His essential benevolence. In thus declaring the unfolding cosmos to be the expression of a benevolent deity, Fiske in a sense succeeded in reconciling theology and evolution, but at the price of replacing the earlier, more personal God with a far nobler but at the same time infinitely more remote Deity.

During the period in which Fiske was carrying out his work of integration, certain other groups had seized upon the teachings of Darwin, as expounded by Spencer, and were applying them to economics and politics. Prominent among these Social Darwinists were industrialists, who saw in the doctrines of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest not only justification for the dog-eat-dog code of ethics which governed business enterprise but a strong argument against social and economic reform. Similarly, politicians with a desire to see the United States embark on a program of imperialistic expansion could argue that domination and exploitation of the weaker nations and races by the stronger was in keeping with the precepts of Darwinism. Social Darwinism had at least two glaring weaknesses. In the first place, the basic premise upon which it rested—that heredity alone determined the individual's success or failure—was completely unverified because no scientific techniques existed for measuring accurately the relative importance of environment and heredity. Furthermore the Social Darwinists failed to take into account the high degree of social cooperation prevailing in many animal societies, notably those of the ant and the bee, but including many higher forms of life

as well. The fact that struggle for survival takes place by and large between different species of animals rather than between individuals of the same species tends to destroy the major premise of Social Darwinism.

Social Christianity, in nearly every respect the complete anti-thesis of Social Darwinism, also exerted a considerable influence in the period under discussion. The movement was an outgrowth of the effort made by certain early Unitarians to combat the evils arising from the unequal distribution of wealth. Notable among these early reformers were Theodore Parker and William Ellery Channing, who denounced the prevailing order of their time as one in which fraud, oppression, vicious business ethics, and contempt for the rights of others combined to impoverish the working man.

In the period of wild speculation and industrial growth which followed the Civil War, the situation of the laborer worsened still more. Following a wave of violent strikes and other labor disturbances, many churches and religious leaders suddenly became aware of the great disparity between the social ideals of Christianity and those of the new industrial colossus.

The attempts which were made to ameliorate social conditions assumed two different forms; the more conservative approach sought to improve the working classes, while at the same time retaining a capitalistic economic organization. The Christian Socialists, on the other hand, felt that more radical means were needed to solve the problems of the new industrial society. Central to the thinking of this group was the doctrine that man's political, social, and industrial relations should be based upon the concept of the Golden Rule. An economic system operating upon a philosophy of dog-eat-dog, and

justifying its exploitation of the masses of laborers by an appeal to the philosophy of Spencer, was held to be completely contrary to God's order. In a system such as Socialism, on the other hand, which advocated common ownership of the means of production and distribution of the fruits of industry according to need, was seen an ideal means of bringing about the kingdom of God on earth.

Side by side with Christian Socialism another movement flourished which, though also dedicated to the bringing about of a Socialistic State, was based upon scientific attitudes and methodology, rather than upon religious precepts. Marxian Socialism may be said to have gotten its start with the publication, in 1848, of The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This revolutionary pamphlet bitterly indicted the capitalistic system as it existed, and outlined a future which envisioned the complete overthrow of the existing social order and the abolition of human exploitation. According to Marx and Engels, the prevailing mode of production controls completely the character of any period, even including its art, literature, and social customs. Thus the handmill produces the feudal baron, and the spinning jenny the capitalist exploiter. However, each dominant class also carries the seeds of its own destruction in the form of a subservient group which, when the time is ripe, overthrows its masters and rules until it in turn is deposed. Marx felt that capitalism had nearly run its course. The condition of the proletariat, as a result of exploitation by capitalists, had reached a point where it could get no worse. The time was ripe for them to revolt, overthrow their oppressors, and establish a socialistic economy. This Marx urged them to do. Once the workers

controlled the means of production, exploitation would no longer exist, and the state, hitherto chiefly an instrument with which the dominant group coerced others, would wither away, the end result being a Utopian society.

As a result of the altered relationship of man to man and man to society and God which was brought about by new discoveries and developments in industry and the sciences, a change in viewpoint also occurred in the world of literature. The earlier idealistic concept of the individual as a free, morally responsible agent waned, to be replaced eventually by the naturalistic outlook.

Naturalistic writings exhibited certain very marked characteristics.¹ Quite often they dealt with subjects which, in earlier periods were, by and large, taboo. The attitude displayed toward the subject matter was one of objective detachment, the author expressing no opinions concerning either characters or acts (except perhaps indirectly, through such devices as irony or innuendo). Man himself was regarded as lacking dignity and strength, devoid of free will and ethical responsibility, and at the mercy of vast, indifferent forces which he could not begin to comprehend.

The influence of naturalism upon French writers was especially marked.² Balzac, as early as 1842, declared that men, like animals, are molded and shaped by their environment. In his Human Comedy he employed this thesis in painting a vast, comprehensive picture of French society during the first half of the nineteenth century. Flaubert also

¹ See Charles C. Walcutt, "Harold Frederic and American Naturalism", AL, XI, 11-22 (March 1939) for an excellent discussion of naturalism and its distinguishing features.

² This discussion of French writers is based upon Kathleen T. Butler, A History of French Literature, N.Y., Dutton, 1923, pp. 133-40; 240-47; 251-54.

adopted a scientific outlook, and in Madame Bovary attempted a completely objective novel from which his own personality and observations were rigidly excluded.

It was in Zola, however, that the naturalistic outlook reached its epitome. Strongly influenced both by the Darwinians and Marx, he declared heredity to be the key to an understanding of life, and thought of the novel as a sort of laboratory in which the author studied the reactions of his characters in relation to their heredity and environment. His great novel-cycle, Les Rouen-Macquart, is an attempt to portray, somewhat after the fashion of Balzac's Human Comedy, the decay of the bourgeoisie and the rise to power of the proletariat during the period of the Second Empire. Zola's choice of a decadent, middle-class family as his subject and the unrelieved pessimism which permeated the series reflect his firm conviction that man is an animal, enslaved by his appetites.

Russia, too, numbered many writers who were adherents to or influenced by the new way of thinking.¹ Turgenev declared his aim to be the dispassionate portrayal of life and presented his characters, their relations and emotions, without direct comment or psychological analysis, letting his readers draw their own conclusions concerning them. He felt that to nature, merciless and aloof, the existence of man is no more important than that of a flea, and portrayed humanity as imprisoned within a circle of fatality—driven through the universe by force and blind chance, and possessing no free will.

¹This discussion of Russian writers is based upon Marc Slonim, The Epic of Russian Literature, N.Y., Oxford, 1950, pp. 250-346.

Although neither Dostoyevsky nor Tolstoy can properly be labeled naturalistic, the work of both writers exhibits characteristics typical of that school. Thus Dostoyevsky frequently chose to write about prostitutes, criminals, and other "low" persons. A very early work, Poor Folks, depicts its characters as helpless victims of their environment, while The Gambler makes the point that everything—beauty, wealth, social standing—is bestowed on man irrationally, through chance, rather than rationally, through merit and award.

Similarly, Tolstoy's War and Peace reflects a naturalistic disbelief in the ability of the individual to shape or understand the significance of events as they occur; Pierre Bezuhov sees the Battle of Borodino only as a series of disconnected and meaningless episodes, and the fighting itself develops a pattern almost exactly opposite of that predicted by the military strategists.

In America, a somewhat more optimistic outlook on life and the prudishness which Puritanism had fostered combined to prevent naturalism from gaining the ready acceptance it had found in Europe.¹ Even so, however, by 1895, the year in which Stephen Crane's Maggie first appeared, a number of Americans had produced works which reflected in varying degrees the naturalistic outlook. In his novel, The Story of a Country Town (1885), E.W. Howe ignored the heretofore stressed idyllic aspects of small-town life, concentrating instead upon its harshness, aridity, and narrowness. Similarly, Harold Frederic's first novel, Seth's Brother's Wife (1887), presents a deglamourized view of

¹This discussion of naturalism in America is based upon Robert Spiller et al, Literary History of the United States, N.Y., MacMillan, pp.882, 1016-18, 1069.

rural life, while his later work, The Lawton Girl(1890), treats sex in an unsentimental and unconventional manner.

Among the many writers who drew upon the Civil War for material, two deserve special mention. John W. DeForest's Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty(1867), unlike its romantic contemporaries, depicted the conflict as a bloody struggle carried on amidst mud, filth, and sickness. It did not gloss over the fact that even the bravest soldier felt at times the pangs of fear and anguish, nor did it shirk at describing the horrors of the battlefield and the field hospital. The novel was further distinguished in that one of its chief characters, Mrs. Larue, an adherent of Maisie's philosophy, was the first profligate woman in American fiction to escape retribution for her misdeeds.

Ambrose Bierce's collection of Civil War stories, Tales of Soldiers and Civilians, emphasized the impact of war upon the individual rather than the broad aspects of conflict, and contrasted vividly the popular conception of war as a glorious adventure and the ugliness and brutality which, in fact, characterize it.

Of all the writers who preceded Crane, Hamlin Garland was the most completely naturalistic. While a youth teaching in Boston, he read Spencer, Darwin, and Henry George, and embraced many of their ideas. These ideas were reflected in Main-Travelled Roads(1891) and Prairie Folk(1893), which graphically portrayed the grimness and hardship of pioneer life, a life which Garland had himself experienced before escaping to the East. With the publication of Crumbling Idols(1894), Garland became the spokesman for the new school of writers. He declared that unpleasant as well as pleasant subjects were proper materials for

the writer, asked that fiction make a clean break with tradition and imitation, and demanded that it attempt to discover the underlying meaning of truth as well as depict reality faithfully. By making these views public, Garland undoubtedly helped pave the way for such later, more thoroughgoing naturalists as Frank Norris, Jack London, and Theodore Dreiser.

Numerous critical comments upon Crane's writing bear evidence that his attitudes toward and belief concerning the functions of and relations among man, deity, universe, and society were to a great extent shaped by the milieu in which he lived and wrote. Hartwick, for example, says:

Crane's fiction plainly reflects the naturalistic concept of man as a helpless animal driven by instinct and imprisoned in a web of forces entirely deaf to the hopes and purposes of humanity. Nowhere do we find this more clearly indicated than in "The Open Boat", his story of four shipwrecked men trying to beach their dinghy upon a rocky strip of the Florida coast...The Red Badge of Courage embodies the same theme. Its tumbling clouds of smoke and gunfire blew Henry Fleming, the youthful private, up and down the battlefield, first in blind panic and then in wild bravery, like some wild beast, divorced from intelligence and free will.... In succeeding encounters with the enemy he proves himself a man of maniacal valor, and reaches the conclusion that the chief thing is to resign himself to his fate, to participate in Darwin's "survival of the fittest"...in a word, to become a Stoic.¹

Miss Winifred Lynskey comments upon the "unreasonable" as well as the "naturalistic" elements in The Red Badge of Courage. She makes the point that Crane treated war as irrational and subhuman, that he regarded men, guns, and conflicts as akin to savage beasts. A Confederate charge is likened to an onslaught of dragons, and armies are said

¹Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction, N.Y., American Book Co., 1954, pp. 25-7.

to be at each other panther fashion. Thus, she says "every figure in the book supports the atmosphere of unreason." Henry, she states, forms his naturalistic code upon returning to his company after fleeing from combat. He decides to leave things to chance, and when he does he becomes a hero. She concludes by saying that in Crane's world only a foolish man scolds about the ways of a universe whose rewards and punishments fall by chance upon the just and the unjust.¹

Gibson remarks upon the naturalistic elements in Maggie, but also states that elements that were not strictly naturalistic began to make their appearance in The Red Badge of Courage.

The Red Badge of Courage centers on Henry Fleming's slowly discarding "the brass and bombast of his earlier gospels," his preconceptions about the nature of war and the behavior of men at war. After intense misgivings and flight, he learns something of his weaknesses and his capabilities. He thus manages to come to terms with his small segment of a world at war, and achieves a measure of maturity....The naturalism of The Red Badge of Courage is thus qualified by Fleming's growth toward manhood and his return to the human condition of the lover. The ending of the novel, however, falls one degree short of complete verisimilitude, because the preceding episodes of greatest intensity have been too purely naturalistic; that is, they show men struggling to no effect in the grip of circumstances and instinct.²

Crane's attitudes toward social institutions have also been the subject of much discussion. Victor Elconin points out that Crane was a social nonconformist even in his very early youth when he was writing the social news of the three towns of Asbury Park, Avon-by-the-Sea, and Ocean Grove, for his brother Townley, a reporter for the New York Tribune.

¹Winifred Lynskey, "Crane's Red Badge of Courage." Explicator, VIII (Dec., 1949).

²William M. Gibson, Stephen Crane: Selected Prose and Poetry, N.Y.: Rinehart, 1950, Int., ix-x.

In several articles, he poked fun at the business men, painters, biology students, and other summer people who came to these resorts to rest or work. Elconin quotes several examples of these satirical dispatches, of which the following one, commenting upon a group of ministers who were holding a convention in Ocean Grove, can be taken as typical.

The somber-hued gentlemen who congregate at this place in summer are arriving in solemn procession, with black valises in their hands and rebukes to frivolity in their eyes. They greet each other with quiet enthusiasm and immediately set about holding meetings.¹

About Crane's early newspaper writings on Asbury Park Elconin makes the following remarks:

They reveal Crane as the social nonconformist from the very beginning of his writing career. In Maggie he had commented sardonically upon the practice of missions in administering to the souls of impatient, unregenerate sinners who had come only for the soup. He brought the same satirical bias to bear upon the people whose activities he reported for the Tribune. He had grown up in the pious climate of Asbury Park, Ocean Grove, and Port Jervis, but he had not found it agreeable. He was suspicious of "good" works and "good" people. He was always in rebellion against what he regarded as the social tyranny of complacent, intrenched respectability, and he chose to confront it with unabashed impertinence.²

Years before Elconin's article was written others had also called attention to the social nonconformism of Crane. Carl Van Doren said that

For him [Crane] the orthodox, the respectable, the classical did not exist, or at any rate had no binding authority. He imagined the world as a ship which some god had fashioned carefully and then had heedlessly allowed to escape his jurisdiction....The state of mankind in such a world could not seem to Crane entirely glorious. Its orthodoxies and respectabilities were, he felt, only so much cotton in which it liked to pack itself.³

¹Victor A. Elconin, AL, XX, 275-289 (Nov. 1948).

²Ibid., p. 288.

³Carl Van Doren, "Stephen Crane", Am. Merc., 1:11-14 (Jan., 1924).

Harvey Wickham, writing a few years later, made essentially the same comments as Van Doren.

Crane's defiance of a society which is regulated quite otherwise [than justly] seems a small affair now. He did, indeed advise his old man with the white beard to go and seek for justice in a more kindly land, but most of his thunderbolts were hurled at a God of straw blustering across the sky, which fact has caused, I think, his really profound radicalism to be overlooked. He did not believe that smug pretense was of divine origin, and he had, besides, a sneaking fondness for the underdog as such. We, his contemporaries, did not know this.¹

So far as the writer can discover, only one critic has attempted a detailed explanation of the mental processes by which Crane's characters attempt to justify their reprehensible actions to themselves, and hence to society.

This critic writes:

There is in man perpetual inward struggle. His reason, his conscience, can make no pact with his feelings, his instincts. Nature teaches a man to order himself from motives of self-interest; his moral sense knows the value of self-abnegation. The psychologist in Crane watches with the detachment of the scientist the interplay of the cogs in man's intricate metaphysical apparatus. The Censor is the happy omnibus term modern psychology applies to that faculty, part moral, part intellectual, which if man gives it ear will rightly guide his actions. Men from the urge of their feelings perpetually do the things that their Censor condemns. As perpetually they try to justify themselves at the bar of their reason. They call upon their intellect to weave for them some ingenious sophistry that shall make them feel less contemptible in their moral eye. It is in the pathetic attempts of men to thus vindicate themselves that Crane found a ready-made maneuvering ground whereon he could deploy his ironic gift.²

¹Harvey Wickham, "Stephen Crane in College," Am. Merc. VII: 294-5 (Mar., 1926).

²Petronius Applejoy, "Stephen Crane in News in 1940," Catholic World, CLI, 590-91 (Aug., 1940).

From the foregoing quotations, it is clear that the critics and writers upon Crane have shown some interest in the various aspects of his social outlook. However, only one article¹ has been written which is devoted exclusively to a consideration of Crane as a social critic. This article will be discussed later in connection with a specific work by Crane.

So far as is known, Crane himself never took the trouble to draw together the various threads of his social thought into a unified, comprehensive creed. Over and above the social content of his stories and poems, only a few scattered comments are found in his letters. At least one excerpt from these letters should be quoted because it throws light on his attitudes toward orthodox religion.

I used to like church and prayer meetings when I was a kid. But that cooled off and when I was thirteen or about that, my brother Will told me not to believe in Hell after my uncle had been boring me about the lake of fire and the rest of the sideshows....²

The comments made by the various literary critics are interesting and valuable, but taken by themselves they can hardly be said to constitute a social outlook. To begin with, they are based upon an examination of only a handful of Crane's writings, hence may be subject to modification in the light of a more comprehensive study of his works. Also, the conclusions, even if accurate, are sketchy and in need of development. Finally, a number of aspects of Crane's thought—for example his attitudes toward certain specific groups of people and his views concerning the nature of truth—have not been taken into account at all.

¹Russel B. Nye, "Stephen Crane as Social Critic", Modern Quarterly, 48-54 (Summer, 1940).

²Robert Wooster Stallman, Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p.692.

The major portion of this thesis is devoted to a systematic examination of Crane's poems and stories with a view to uncovering as many facets as possible of his social thought.

In general, the works are considered in the order in which they first appeared in print. However, two, The Black Riders and The Red Badge of Courage, are given priority over earlier writings, and a number of minor stories, published between 1894 and 1898, are for convenience grouped together. The preferential treatment accorded The Black Riders and The Red Badge of Courage may be reasonably justified since, although neither was published until 1895, both were written almost contemporaneously with Maggie, "The Men in the Storm", and "An Experiment in Misery", and were preceded only by The Sullivan County Sketches. This arrangement has the advantage that the writings most important from the standpoint of Crane's social outlook are studied first, and that his Bowery tales fall into a group by themselves.

After the examination of Crane's works has been completed, an attempt will be made to fit together the various pieces of information thus obtained into a comprehensive social creed. A brief evaluation of this outlook will complete the dissertation.

THE POETRY

There are two reasons why any attempt to determine Crane's social outlook must include an examination of his poetry, particularly the early work The Black Riders (1895). In the first place poetry is, by its very nature, peculiarly fitted as a vehicle for the expression of ideas or concepts. Prose is diffuse—an author may use anywhere from the half dozen pages of a short story to the several hundred of a novel to express a single concept. The poet, by concentrating his imagery and details so as to pack the maximum of meaning in the minimum of words, can often achieve a similar result in a poem of comparatively few lines.

But over and above poetry's special ability to express complex ideas in a few words, there is a better reason for considering Crane's verse. Commenting on The Red Badge of Courage, Crane wrote the following in a letter to John Nathan Hillard.

Personally, I like my little book of poems "The Black Riders" better than I do The Red Badge of Courage. The reason is, I suppose, that the former is the more ambitious effort. In it I aim to give my ideas of life as a whole, so far as I know it, and the latter is a mere episode, or rather an amplification.¹

The importance which Crane attached to his poetry is further reflected in the letter he wrote Copeland and Day, the company preparing to publish The Black Riders, when he learned it was their intention to eliminate several poems from the forthcoming book.

We disagree on a multitude of points. In the first place, I should absolutely refuse to have my poems printed without many of those which you just as absolutely mark "no".

¹Robert Stallman, ed., Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p. 673. This book contains all of Crane's published letters, hence I have used it for all references to his correspondence.

It seems to me that you cut all the ethical sense out of the book. All the anarchy perhaps. It is the anarchy which I particularly insist upon....The ones which refer to God, I believe you condemn altogether. I am obliged to have them in when my book is printed.¹

Besides showing the high regard in which Crane held his poetry, this letter is interesting because it indicates the themes in his poetry to which he attached special importance. It is impossible to tell from the letter alone what type of anarchy Crane was dealing with or precisely what his notions were regarding God, but it is evident that both were unorthodox and likely to offend readers of the book.

Crane won his point with the publishers, and his poetry was published intact. However, the reaction in some quarters was what the publishers feared it would be. For example, the Atlantic Monthly had the following to say:

The spirit of the lines is generally rebellious and modern in the extreme, occasionally blasphemous to a degree which even cleverness will not reconcile to a liberal taste.... But it is too much to think that the writer always takes himself seriously.²

I shall now examine in detail a number of Crane's poems with a view to determining the social ideas expressed in them.

I The Black Riders

Three little birds in a row
Sat musing.
A man passed near that place.
Then did the little birds nudge each other.
They said, "He thinks he can sing."
They threw back their heads to laugh.
With quaint countenances
They regarded him.

¹Stallman, op. cit., p. 602.

²[The Black Riders] The Atlantic Monthly, LYXVII, pp.271-2,(Feb.,1896).

They were very curious
Those three little birds in a row.¹

Thus it appears that man is not so wise or wonderful as he thinks he is. The three little birds probably symbolize God, a Trinitarian God in this case, who is amused at the puny arrogance of human beings.

In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.
I said "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter, bitter," he answered
"But I like it
Because it is bitter
And because it is my heart."²

This poem has a definite Calvinistic strain. The bitter heart represents man's sinfulness, and the description of the creature as "naked, bestial," lends further emphasis to the Calvinistic interpretation. However, there is defiance of the Calvinist point of view in the last two lines of the poem. The Calvinist would say that man should be contrite, should even be willing to be damned for the Glory of God. The creature, however, is far from being contrite. He lives and gathers strength by feeding upon himself, and glories in his own nature. He recognizes the evil in himself to be sure, but is willing to accept himself for what he is and be responsible for himself.

¹Wilson Follett, ed., The Work of Stephen Crane, N.Y. Knopf, 1925, 12 volumes, vol. VI, p.54. (This is the standard edition of Crane's works and the one I have used for reference to all of his writings except the Sullivan County Sketches and the correspondence. Hereinafter referred to as works.)

²Ibid., p.35.

Yes, I have a thousand tongues,
 And nine and ninety-nine lie,
 Though I strive to use the one,
 It will make no melody at my will,
 But is dead in my mouth.¹

Truth, says Crane, is something that the tongue cannot utter. Man is either incapable of knowing what truth is or, in the rare instances when he does perceive it, it is too insubstantial, too fragile, and breaks down when he tries to express it vocally. Trying to put the truth into words is thus something like trying to paint a sunset using colored clay.

Once there came a man
 Who said,
 "Range me all men of the world in rows."
 And instantly
 There was terrific clamour among the people
 Against being ranged in rows.
 There was loud quarrel, world wide.
 It endured for ages:
 And blood was shed
 By those who would not stand in rows,
 And by those who pined to stand in rows.
 Eventually the man went to death, weeping.
 And those who stayed in bloody scuffle
 Knew not the great simplicity.²

Here Crane points up the inanity of human discords. The leaders of men propose their little, unimportant schemes, and the people take them seriously, dividing into opposing camps, waging war on one another, and wreaking destruction all out of proportion to the worth of the thing proposed. The last line of the poem suggests that the truth of human existence is in the final analysis simple, that if man could but grasp "this sorry scheme of things entire," he would see the ridiculousness of most of his quarrels and contentions, and abandon them.

¹ Crane, Works, p.36.

²Ibid., p.37.

God fashioned the ship of the world carefully
 With the infinite skill of an All-Master
 Made he the hull and the sails
 Held ~~the~~ the rudder
 Ready for adjustment.
 Erect stood he, scanning his work proudly.
 Then--at fateful time a Wrong called
 And God turned heeding.
 Lo, the ship at this opportunity slipped slyly,
 Making cunning noiseless travel down the ways
 So that, for ever rudderless, it went upon the seas
 Going ridiculous voyages,
 Making quaint progress,
 Turning as with serious purpose
 Before stupid winds.
 And there were many in the sky
 Who laughed at this thing.¹

Crane's belief in the aimlessness and futility of human existence is given excellent expression in this poem. It assumes that God did a careful job in constructing the world and man, only to be thwarted when He allowed Wrong to divert His attention from His handiwork. The last point is interesting, since it may be interpreted as indicating the existence of Evil in the universe as an independent force. This concept of Evil is not one which Crane presents in any of his other works, so far as I can tell. Elsewhere he seems to express the belief that evil is inherent in the individual rather than a separate entity. The essential weakness, aloofness, and even cruelty of Crane's God are shown in His allowing the ship to get away from Him, making no effort to recover it, and being inclined to laugh at the predicament of its passengers.

Mystic shadow, bending near me,
 Who art thou?
 Whence came ye?
 And--tell me--is it fair
 Or is the truth bitter as eaten fire?

¹Crane, Works, p. 58.

Tell me!
 Fear not that I should quiver
 For I dare---I dare.
 Then, tell me.¹

This poem illustrates one of man's most characteristic traits--his desire to know truth regardless of the cost. It also points up a quality which I would say is more characteristic of Crane than of man as a whole--his pessimism, his suspicion that truth, if revealed, would be as "bitter as eaten fire." To be sure, he gives passing attention to the idea that perhaps Truth may be sweet, but his reassurances that he will not quiver, that he dares hear the truth, point to a deep conviction of its terribleness.

I stood upon a high place
 And saw, below, many devils
 Running, leaping
 And carousing in sin.
 One looked up, grinning,
 And said "Comrade, Brother!"²

Here we have presented the notion that men and devils are essentially alike, that evil is an integral part of man's make-up. Such an attitude runs counter to the one expressed in the poem beginning "God fashioned the ship of the world carefully," and as we shall see in some of the following sections, is akin to the view of evil found in his stories.³

Should the wide world roll away,
 Leaving black terror,
 Limitless night,
 Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
 Would be to me essential,
 If thou and thy white arms were there,
 And the fall to doom a long way.⁴

¹Crane, Works, p.59.

²Ibid., p.41.

³Stallman (op.cit., p.570) states that this poem epitomizes Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown." Both the poem and Hawthorne's tale suggest that the bond of comradeship among men is the bond of sin.

⁴Ibid., p. 42.

These lines reveal clearly the poet's belief in the strength of love. Love gives a person the fortitude to face the horrors of the universe, a fortitude which would otherwise be entirely lacking. This theme is present in at least one other poem, but is not met with in the prose writings.

"And the sins of the father shall be visited upon the heads of the children, even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Well, then, I hate thee, unrighteous picture;
Picked image, I hate thee;
So strike with thy vengeance
The heads of those little men
Who come blindly.
It will be a brave thing.¹

Crane here renounces the God of the calvinists, a God who punishes the children for their fathers' sins, a God who damned all mankind for the sin of Adam. In rejecting this God, Crane declares that such a creature is not fit to be worshipped, that he would rather face its wrath than owe it allegiance. His belief that any infinitely strong being who would strike down such mites as men is essentially a coward is admirably expressed in the ironic last line of the poem, "It will be a brave thing."

If there is a witness to my little life
To my tiny throes and struggles,
He sees a fool;
And it is not fine for gods to menace fools.²

Here Crane says plainly what he before said through irony; it is not godlike or brave for an infinitely powerful being to strike down weak, helpless men.

¹Crane Works, p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 46.

There was crimson clash of war.
 Lands turned bleak and bare;
 Women wept;
 Babies ran, wondering.
 There came one who understood not these things.
 He said, "Why is this?"
 Whereupon a million strove to answer him.
 There was such an intricate clatter of tongues
 That still the reason was not.¹

The above lines reflect Crane's belief that blindness and irrationality characterize much of humanity's activity. Although he uses war for his example, he might have used the mad scramble for wealth, the drive for power, or many other activities with equal appropriateness. Whatever the activity, those engaged in it can give as many reasons-- Or rationalisations--for participation as there are people, but none of the reasons is valid. Taken in the aggregate, they add up to just one thing-- irrationality.

There were many who went in huddled procession
 They knew not whither;
 But, at any rate, success or calamity
 Would attend all in equality.
 There was one who sought a new road.
 He went into direful thickets,
 And ultimately he died thus, alone;
 But they said he had courage.²

The real hero is the person who is willing to cut himself off from conventional ideas, attitudes, and prejudices; to blaze a new mental path through virgin forests of ideas; to persevere in his chosen direction until the time of his death. Crane believes that the mass of people will ultimately recognize the bravery of the trail blazer and give him the credit that he very properly deserves. He does not tell us in this poem what the masses think of the hero while he is alive and actively

¹Crane, Works, p. 47.

²Ibid., p.49.

pursuing his own personal goals, nor is this kind of hero the subject of any of his stories; therefore we do not know with finality what Crane thought his lot while alive might be. However, we can be fairly certain Crane believed it would be difficult. This may be deduced from such a story as The Monster, in which a person who is different from his fellow townsmen incurs their hatred and is persecuted by them.

Something remains to be said about the first two lines of the poem. Since the people in "huddled procession" do not know where they are going, it seems that they would have little to lose—except the company of their fellows—by striking out for themselves the same as the hero does. However, such is their timidity that even many of those with superior mental equipment are afraid to leave the pack.

A god in wrath
Was beating a man;
He cuffed him loudly
With thundrous blows
That rang and rolled over the earth.
All the people came running
The man screamed and struggled,
And bit madly at the feet of the god.
The people cried
"Ah, what a wicked man!"
And—
"Ah, what a redoubtable god!"¹

This poem, which one critic² says shows "The cruel injustice of omnipotence torturing weakness", complements the one beginning "Well, then, I hate thee, unrighteous picture." In the former, Crane blasts the calvinist God; in the latter, he exposes the stupidity of a people who would side with this God in His cowardly attack upon helpless human beings, rather than sympathize with their sufferings. He thus rejects

¹Crane, Works, p.51.

²Amy Lowell, in Crane, Works, VI, int, p. xxi.

the Calvinists, as well as their God.

A learned man came to me once,
He said, "I know the way--come,"
And I was overjoyed at this.
Together we hastened.
Soon, too soon, were we
Where my eyes were useless,
And I knew not the ways of my feet.
I clung to the hand of my friend.
But at last he cried, "I am lost."¹

One of the thoughts expressed here is that learning provides no assurance that its possessor can attain to ultimate Truth. We follow the learned person hopefully, but he is at last forced to admit that he is as unable to attain the goal he seeks as his most unlearned follower. The poem also implies that each individual should try to achieve his goals independently, rather than follow someone else's lead.

Once I saw mountains angry,
And ranged in battle-front
Against them stood a little man;
Ay, he was no bigger than my finger.
I laughed and spoke to one near me,
"Will he prevail?"
"Surely", replied this other;
"His grandfather beat them many times."
Then did I see much virtue in grandfathers--
At least, for the little man
Who stood against the mountains.²

This poem says that sometimes people win out against seemingly overwhelming odds. Such a doctrine is apparently in conflict with the ideas presented in some of the previous poems--for example, it might at first glance seem that the men adrift in God's "ship of the world" are condemned to a terrible fate. A little reflection, however, shows that this is not so. These men are adrift in an indifferent universe; hence, it follows that the possibility of a stroke of good fortune exists for them.

¹Crane, Works, p. 52.

²Ibid., p.54.

So of course does the possibility of calamity, but calamity would be a certainty only if the universe were malevolent, and to Crane it is not.

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"you can never--"

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.¹

Crane's belief in the futility of attempting to understand ultimate Truth is again clearly expressed in this poem. The horizon, which symbolises Truth, always remains the same distance from the pursuer, no matter how hard he tries to catch up with it. Besides, showing the hopelessness of the search for ultimate Truth, the poem shows man's refusal to believe that his quest is futile.² He brushes aside any attempts to enlighten him, and goes madly on his way.

"Truth," said a Traveller,
"Is a rock, a mighty Fortress;
Often have I been to it,
Even to its highest tower,
From whence the world looks black."

"Truth," said a Traveller,
"Is a breath, a wind,
A shadow, a phantom;
Long have I pursued it,
But never have I touched
The hem of its garment."

And I believed the second Traveller;
For truth was to me
A breath, a wind,
A shadow, a phantom,
And never had I touched
The hem of its garment.³

¹Crane Works, p. 56.

²Amy Lowell (Crane, Works, VI, int, p. xxii) has interpreted the poem somewhat differently. She feels that it reflects a belief in the purposelessness of human activity—an interpretation which can certainly be justified on the basis of what Crane has expressed in others of his poems.

³Ibid., p. 60.

Two concepts of truth have been presented—truth as absolute and truth as relative. The first traveler has found something to believe in: a religion, a philosophy, or perhaps an economic system. He is the learned man of three poems back, before he has been forced to say "I am lost." The second man knows that truth can never be attained; he is the man pursuing the horizon, suddenly made wise.

Two or three angels
 Came near the earth
 They saw a fat church.
 Little black streams of people
 Came and went in continually.
 And the angels were puzzled
 To know why the people went thus,
 And why they stayed so long within.¹

And

What?
 You define me God with these trinkets?
 Can my misery meal on an ordered walking
 of surpliced numskulls?
 And a fanfare of lights?
 Or even upon the measured pulpittings
 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?²

The above two poems reflect Crane's contempt for organized religion. He rejects the trappings and pageantry of the church because he feels that they are not an integral part of religion, and brands as stupid the churchmen who take such summeries seriously. Although Crane does show somewhat more respect for the actual preaching—it contains "the familiar true" as well as "the familiar false"—he feels

¹Crane, Works, p.64.

²Ibid., p.112.

that it, too, falls far short of giving any adequate notion of the real nature of God. Perhaps his most succinct comment on religious spectacle and churchmen is contained in the following three lines from a longer poem.

You tell me this is God?
I tell you this is a printed list,
A burning candle, and an ass.¹

A man saw a ball of gold in the sky:
He climbed for it,
And eventually he achieved it—
It was clay.

Now this is the strange part:
When the man went to the earth
And looked again,
Lo, there was the ball of gold.
Now this is the strange part:
It was a ball of gold
Ay, by the heavens, it was a ball of gold.²

Crane in the above poem presents a concept which has been developed at length by Schopenhauer. In brief, the concept states that man derives a great deal of satisfaction out of pursuing various goals, but should he attain them, his triumph would be a hollow one, since he would no longer have anything left to work for. I think it highly probable that the golden ball in the sky represents ultimate Truth, and Crane is trying to say that even if man could know this Truth, he would still be

I met a seer.
He held in his hands
The book of Wisdom.
"Sir," I addressed him,
"Let me read."
"Child—" he began.
"Sir," I said,

¹Crane Works, p.118.

²Ibid, p.67.

"Think not that I am a child,
 For already I know much
 Of that which you hold.
 Ay, much."

He smiled.
 Then he opened the book
 And held it before me.—
 Strange that I should have grown so suddenly
 Blind.¹

Once more we have an expression of Crane's belief that man can never know ultimate Truth. Many persons think they know a great deal, or even all of it, but when they come face to face with the real thing, they realize that Truth is incomprehensible to them.

I walked in a desert.
 And I cried,
 "Ah, God, take me from this place!"
 A voice said, "It is no desert,"
 I cried, "Well, but—
 The sand, the heat, the vacant horizon."
 A voice said, "It is no desert."²

This particular poem must be analyzed in the light of the outlook expressed in certain other verses by Crane. When examined within that frame of reference it can only be regarded as another statement of Crane's belief in the impossibility of knowing ultimate Truth. The "desert," which represents Truth, appears bleak and barren to man only because man is incapable of seeing it in its true light. It is also possible to interpret this poem as saying that man's outlook and God's are entirely different, that what appears to be cruelty on God's part may in fact from His standpoint be actual kindness. Since, however, such an interpretation amounts in effect to a defence of those very qualities of Deity which Crane so roundly condemned in his numerous anti-calvinist poems, it must be considered unlikely.

¹Crane, Works, p.68.

²Ibid, p.75.

Upon the road of my life,
 Passed me many fair creatures,
 Clothed all in white and radiant.
 To one, finally, I made speech:
 "Who art thou?"
 But she, like the others,
 Kept cowed her face,
 And answered in haste, anxiously,
 "I am good deed, forsooth;
 You have often seen me."
 "Not uncowed," I made reply.
 And with rash and strong hand,
 Though she resisted
 I drew away the veil
 And gazed at the features of vanity.
 She, shamefaced, went on;
 And after I had mused a time,
 I said of myself,
 "Fool!" I

This probably is the most gloomy and cynical of all Crane's poems. The others are pessimistic enough, depicting as they do a blind humanity groping its way through a universe it can never understand, and watched over by an indifferent God. However, even in such a universe good deeds can exist, and it is possible to regard mankind as a doomed, helpless band whose members none the less help one another out of an honest desire to ease the burden of their fellow sufferers. Possible, that is, unless one believes that good deeds are motivated by self-interest, as Crane here says they are. Then even that possibility is blasted.

Friend, your white beard sweeps the ground.
 Why do you stand expectant?
 Do you hope to see it
 In one of your withered days?
 With your old eyes
 Do you hope to see
 The triumphal march of justice?

Do not wait, friend!
 Take your white beard
 And your old eyes
 To more tender lands.¹

The universe is not a place where justice reigns, nor can it be assumed that justice will eventually triumph over injustice and evil. Crane has earlier stated his conviction that life is pointless and meaningless in a universe of chance, and this poem merely says that it will never be otherwise.

II WAR IS KIND²

The wayfarer,
 Perceiving the pathways to truth,
 Was struck with astonishment.
 It was thickly grown with weeds.
 "Ha," he said,
 "I see that none has passed here
 In a long time."
 Later he saw that each weed
 Was a singular knife.
 "Well," he mumbled at last,
 "Doubtless there are other roads."³

Here is another expression of Crane's belief in the extreme difficulty, if not the downright impossibility, of attaining ultimate Truth. This poem ties in with the one beginning "There were many who went in huddled procession," in that it stresses the difficulties of one who breaks away from the throng and goes off alone on the quest for Truth. The first poem had something to say about the unthinking masses who go through life in "huddled procession," following familiar paths and shunning the unknown. The second points out another type of person—the man who realizes that truth is probably the most difficult of all

¹Crane, Works, p. 99.

²The remaining poems in this section are from War is Kind, published in 1899.

³Ibid., p. 122.

commodities to obtain, but who lacks the courage to try for it and rationalizes his cowardice by telling himself that there are other roads which he will perhaps try. The poem illustrates a tendency found in many--perhaps most--people, one Crane was well aware of and dealt with in great detail in such stories as The Red Badge of Courage and George's Mother. This is the tendency of individuals to rationalize their behavior, to find noble--or at least reasonable--explanations for cowardly acts, and to exalt themselves in their own minds by every possible device.

A man said to the universe:
 "Sir, I exist!"
 "However," replied the universe,
 "The fact has not created in me
 A sense of obligation."¹

Crane never expressed better his belief in the impersonality of the universe and its indifference to man. In the poem beginning "God fashioned the ship of the world carefully," he gives an explanation of how God abandoned man, but one finds nowhere in it the bluntness and finality of the above little work. It is perfect.

The trees in the garden rained flowers.
 Children ran there joyously.
 They gathered the flowers
 Each to himself.
 Now there were some
 Who gathered great heaps--
 Having opportunity and skill--
 Until, behold, only chance blossoms
 Remained for the feeble.
 Then a little spindling tutor
 Ran importantly to the father, crying:
 "Pray, come hither!
 See this unjust thing in your garden!"
 But when the father had surveyed,
 He admonished the tutor:
 "Not so, small sage!

¹Crane, Works., p.151.

This thing is just.
 For, look you,
 Are not they who possess the flowers
 Stronger, bolder, shrewder
 Than they who have none?
 Why should the strong—the beautiful strong—
 Why should they not have the flowers?"
 Upon reflection, the tutor bowed to the ground
 "My lord," he said,
 "The stars are displaced
 By this towering wisdom."¹

In this poem, Crane explicitly criticizes the laissez-faire school of economics. The group of children gathering petals re-enact in microcosm the dog-eat-dog struggles which characterized late nineteenth-century business enterprise, while the father is representative of the philosophers who supplied logical justification for the state of affairs. Crane reveals his own contempt for this economic doctrine through the use of ironic hyperbole, the tutor's exaggerated praise conveying the poet's feelings much more effectively than any direct statement.²

¹Crane, Works, pp.156-57.

²An incident during the summer of 1892, at which time Crane was helping his brother Townley write New Jersey resort news for the New York Tribune, reveals that Crane's dislike of laissez-faire capitalism was already well-developed. On August 20 of that year, the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, an organization of working men whose aims were "to restrict immigration...to promote Americans in business and shield them from the depressing effects of foreign competition," held an American Day parade in Asbury Park. To Stephen, in his brother's absence, fell the task of reporting the proceedings. The resulting dispatch is, from the standpoint of irony and social criticism, easily the equal of anything Crane ever wrote. In commenting upon the marchers, Crane characterized them as "awkward" and "ungainly," while yet honest, dignified and "possessed of principles." His harshest remarks he directed at the Asbury Park dweller who, he said, far too often allowed money to blind him to the fact that other people also have rights. As a result of the uproar which this article caused, Crane was discharged by the Tribune, and a promising journalistic career ended abruptly. When Hamlin Garland, to whom Crane later described the episode, asked what he meant by writing such a piece, Crane replied: "I was so hot at the sight of those poor misshapen fools shouting for monopoly that I gave no thought to its effect on my own master. I don't know that it would have made much difference if I had. I wanted to say those things anyway." (For a complete account of this episode—including a reprint of the offending article—and its aftermath, see Melvin Schoberlin, The Sullivan County Sketches of Stephen Crane Syracuse Univ. Press, 1949, pp.8-11. The Crane quotation is from Garland's Roadside Meetings, N.Y., Macmillan, 1951, pp.190-91.)

Numerous writers have been named as influencing Crane's poetry. To Hamlin Garland,¹ who had seen Crane's poetry in manuscript, the lines "carried the sting and the compression of Emily Dickinson's verse and the savage philosophy of Olive Schreiner." Amy Lowell² admitted that Crane's irony and use of suggestion derived from Emily Dickinson, but felt that his images, cadences, and parallel structure were based upon the writings of the Old Testament, which, since Crane was the son of a Methodist preacher, "cannot have failed of being ground into his consciousness." Robert Wooster Stallman,³ while recognizing the validity of the claims put forth for the above writers and writings, feels that other influences also operated upon Crane. He states that "some of Crane's poems echo Whitman in phrase...but in form they identify themselves with Bierce."

The poems of Crane fall into two groups--those giving his views on religion and those dealing with such problems as the nature of man and of truth in their more secular aspects.

The religious poems show clearly Crane's antipathy toward orthodox religion. Special targets of his hatred are the cruel Gods who delight in meting out punishment to man for displaying the very weaknesses with which they themselves have endowed him, and the religions which are centered in pageant and elaborate ritual, to the exclusion of more meaningful elements. In poem after poem Crane pours forth his withering scorn of such deities and institutions, as well as on the churchmen and

¹Garland, op.cit., pp. 193-4.
³Stallman, op.cit., pp. 568-9.

²op. cit., pp. xviii-xvii.

churchgoers who make possible their continued existence.

Although Crane rejected the Calvinists' concept of God, he seems to have shared, at least in part, their unflattering opinion of man. He portrays man not as a wise and noble being or even as a reasoning animal, but rather as a creature with a large measure of evil inherent in his makeup. This evil is responsible for the strife and warfare, the cruelty and brutality which characterize human relations, while man's penchant for rationalisation rather than logical thought prevents him from seeing the folly of his behavior.

Along with these faults, however, man, according to Crane, exhibits certain desirable qualities. The first of these is a sort of courage which manifests itself in periods of great crisis and enables man to face up to and triumph over the perils threatening him.

Man's other redeeming characteristic⁸⁷ is his desire to know Truth, no matter how unpleasant or terrible it might be. While this desire undoubtedly exists to a certain extent in everyone, it is much stronger in some individuals than in others. The majority of mankind is seemingly content to plod through life giving only an occasional thought to the problem of Truth. Others, whose desire is stronger, lack courage to assume the burdens which the active pursuit of Truth imposes upon them and seek to satisfy their desire by embracing a ready-made system of values. A few brave souls, however, undaunted by the difficulties of the task facing them, are willing to make the attempt. In doing so they undertake a quest that is foredoomed to failure, since Truth is a shifting, elusive thing which man could not recognize even if he came

face to face with it. The best man can do is to strive to attain the unattainable, and his only reward is the satisfaction which comes from having tried.

Crane's poems, with the exception of those few which deal with the problems of love, war, or economic systems, are almost exclusively concerned with man's relationship to God and the universe, a relationship characterized by loneliness and isolation. Adrift in a naturalistic universe whose true nature he can never comprehend and looked upon by God with amused tolerance or veiled contempt, each individual seems to exist as a separate entity, completely set apart from everything else. Beyond indicating that man's activities are characterized by irrationality and his good deeds motivated by vanity Crane says nothing about the relationships obtaining in the everyday world. Indeed, he does not even suggest that meaningful, social relationships among men are possible. To ascertain Crane's views concerning the relationships existing among men as well as to see how he develops the ideas presented in his poetry, it is necessary to make a detailed study of his prose writings.

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

A careful analysis of The Red Badge of Courage¹ is essential to any consideration of Crane's social outlook, since it restates and develops many of the ideas which Crane first presented in his poetry. The belief in the efficacy of courage, the notion that man lives in a naturalistic universe in which things happen apparently without reason, and the concept that it is impossible for men to know Truth, are some of the poetic themes which reappear in expanded form in this work.

The story opens when a soldier who has been washing a shirt in the brook comes flying back to his comrades, "swelled with a tale" of impending movement.

"We're goin' t'move t'morra--sure," he said pompously to a group in the company street. "We're goin' way up the river, cut across, an' come around in behind 'em."..."It's a lie! that's all it is--a thunderin' lie!" said another private loudly. His smooth face was flushed and his hands were thrust sulkily into his trousers pockets. He took the matter as an affront to him. "I don't believe the derned old army's ever going to move. We're set. I've got ready to move eight times in the last two weeks, and we ain't moved yet."²

Thus, at the very beginning of the story, Crane's belief that the individual is incapable of predicting the course of coming events manifests itself. Neither of these two men knows what is going to happen; all they can do is guess, on the basis of rumor or personal bias, and then loudly defend their positions.

Henry Fleming, who has been listening to the various arguments, retires to his tent to think.

¹Crane, Works, I., 21-200.

²Ibid., pp 21-2.

He had, of course, dreamed of battles all of his life—of vague and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire. In visions he had seen himself in many struggles. He had imagined peoples secure in the shadow of his eagle-eyed prowess. But awake he had regarded battles as crimson blotches on the pages of the past. He had put them as things of the bygone with his thought-images of heavy crowns and high castles. There was a portion of the world's history which he had regarded as the time of wars, but it, he thought, had been long over the horizon and had disappeared forever.¹

To the youth who had despaired of ever having a chance to show his mettle, the war was a heaven-sent opportunity. Henry read newspaper accounts of battles and sieges, and pictured himself in the middle of it all, performing valiant deeds and winning the plaudits of an admiring public. For a time his mother was able to dissuade him from joining up, but finally, after hearing, one night, the church bells "as some enthusiast jerked the rope frantically to tell the twisted news of a great battle" he made up his mind for good. The next day he enlisted in a local company forming in the nearby town. However, when he told his mother the news, he got a far different reception than he had anticipated.

He had privately primed himself for a beautiful scene. He had prepared certain sentences which he thought could be used with touching effect. But her words destroyed his plans. She had doggedly peeled potatoes and addressed him as follows: "You watch out, Henry, an' take good care of yerself. Don't go a-thinkin' you can lick the hull rebel army at the start because yeh can't. Yeh jest one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, and ye've got to keep quiet an' do what they tell yeh. I know how you are, Henry."²

She further told Henry that she had knitted him eight pairs of socks and put all his best shirts in his pack. She warned him about evil companions and liquor, and admonished him never to do any shirking on her account. Then she bade him goodbye.

¹Crane, Works, p. 24.

²Ibid., p. 28.

[Henry] had, of course, been impatient under this ordeal of speech. It had not been quite what he had expected, and he had borne it with an air of irritation. He departed feeling vague relief.

Still, when he had looked back from the gate, he had seen his mother kneeling among the potato parings. Her brown face upraised, was stained with tears, and her spare form was quivering. He bowed his head and went on, feeling suddenly ashamed of his purposes.¹

Henry's attitude toward war is that of an arch romantic. He is so imbued with thoughts of its heroic aspects that he has completely overlooked the boredom, filth, misery, pain, and death which are also part of it. Such an attitude, although perhaps present in a rather extreme form in Henry, is not completely lacking in others of a more realistic bent. The desire to perform heroic deeds is, in the final analysis, only one manifestation of a very basic human need—the need to appear well in the eyes of both oneself and others. It is a need which can be fulfilled in many ways. Had Henry's mother behaved as he expected her to she would have satisfied this need by showing him that he was important in her eyes, that he possessed the power to sway another's emotions. If on the other hand she had addressed him in high-sounding phrases, charging him to return with his shield or upon it, she would also have boosted his ego, since her words would then have served to fortify his conviction of his own bravery. As it is, her matter-of-fact tone of voice and the hint, contained in her words "I know how you are, Henry", that she is aware of his exaggerated notion of his own abilities, provides no food whatever for Henry's vanity. The final ego-deflating prick comes when he turns to see his mother weeping quietly by herself; he suddenly realizes how cheap it is to attempt to glorify oneself at

¹Crane, Works, pp. 27-28.

the expense of others, and is overcome by shame.

Henry's notion of war as an almost uninterrupted series of opportunities to distinguish himself by performing brave deeds gets a rude shock after his arrival in training camp. For month after month there is nothing but drill and monotony, and once again he finds himself believing that the time of great wars is gone forever.

As the rumors of impending movement and battle fly about the camp, Henry begins for the first time to have doubts about his bravery.

A little panic fear grew in his mind. As his imagination went forward to a fight, he saw hideous possibilities. He contemplated the lurking menaces of the future, and failed in an effort to see himself standing stoutly in the middle of them. ✓ He recalled his visions of broken-bladed glory, but in the shadow of the impending tumult he suspected them to be impossible pictures.¹

In this troubled state of mind, Henry tries to sound out his comrades' opinion as to the probable behavior of the regiment when it goes into action. He asks his friend Jim Conklin. Jim's reply is rather indefinite. He first says that perhaps a few may run when they go into combat for the first time; then he goes on to say that the whole group might run, then again they might stay and "fight like fun." He concludes by observing that no one can bet on anything. Henry then asks how Jim thinks that he himself will do, and Jim replies that if the others run he probably will, but if they stay and fight he will do likewise. Henry feels somewhat reassured at Jim's words, since they indicate that others also have reservations concerning their reactions to combat.

The next day the army does not move and Henry returns to speculating about how he will react to combat.

¹Crane, Works, p.51.

For days he made ceaseless calculations, but they are all wondrously unsatisfactory. He found that he could establish nothing. He finally concluded that the only way to prove himself was to go into the blaze and then figuratively to watch his legs to discover their merits and faults.¹

Henry is now a very different person from the boy who burned with desire to go to war. Far from being certain that he will perform valiantly, he has concluded that it is impossible for him to predict his behavior, that he will have to wait and see what happens. This is Henry's first inkling that the world is one of blind chance and that to try to predict the future is useless. The notion does not assume a clear-cut form in his mind at this time, nor does it last, but some glimmerings of its presence can readily be discerned.

Henry, still attempting to find out if his companions are troubled with the same doubts as he is, continues in his efforts to sound them out with "seductive sentences," but no one rises to the bait. He is afraid to ask anyone point blank because of the danger of exposing himself to ridicule. Here is seen another manifestation of the desire to appear well in the eyes of others. As long as Henry keeps his fears to himself, the others can only guess at his state of mind, just as he can only guess at theirs. Once someone else knows about his fear, however, Henry has lost his position of equality; and should the other person choose to violate his confidence, he might lose face with the entire company.

One morning before dawn the regiment is called out and begins to march. Their destination is unknown, but this does not deter the men from beginning the same futile arguments about where they are going and the battle strategy to be employed against their enemy. The farther the

¹Crane, Works, p.35.

regiment marches, the more acute become Henry's doubts and fears, and he begins to feel sorry for himself and to wish that he were back home again. At the end of the day he falls asleep, "exhausted and ill from the monotony of suffering."

After marching several days, the regiment pitches camp in the midst of a pine forest, where it remains for a while. One gray dawn, however, Henry is awakened by a kick in the leg and finds himself running down a forest road toward sounds of firing.

He was bewildered. As he ran with his comrades he strenuously tried to think but all he knew was that if he fell down those coming behind would tread upon him....The youth perceived that the time had come. He was about to be measured. For a moment he felt in the face of his great trial like a babe, and the flesh over his heart seemed very thin. He seized time to look about calculatingly. But he instantly saw that it would be impossible for him to escape from the regiment. It enclosed him. And there were iron bars of tradition and law on four sides. He was in a moving box.

As he perceived this fact it occurred to him that he had never wished to come to the war. He had not enlisted of his own free will. He had been dragged by the merciless government. And now they were taking him out to be slaughtered.¹

This quotation provides an excellent example of Henry's powers of rationalization. Henry, of course, was not forced into the army, as he tries to make himself believe, but on the contrary enlisted in spite of all the dissuading arguments his mother could muster up. Thus, the act of enlisting was largely if not entirely voluntary, and he alone is responsible for his present plight. But Henry can not admit this fact, even for a moment. To do so would be too great a blow to his self-esteem. Therefore, he must and does rationalize so as to remove from himself any blame for being where he is.

¹Crane, Works, pp.48-49.

As Henry gets closer and closer to the firing line, he becomes more and more scared. He begins to imagine that his generals are stupid, and that the men are going to be led into a gigantic trap where they will all be slaughtered. He is on the verge of haranguing the men, warning them of their peril, but he reflects that they will only jeer at him, and the words he is about to utter stick in his throat. He then tries to lag behind, but his lieutenant begins to beat at him with a sword telling him to get up into the ranks and quit skulking. Henry speeds up, hating the lieutenant, "who had no appreciation of fine minds."

For the first time Henry attempts to rationalize conduct which his conscience tells him is wrong. He is better than the others, too fine to be sacrificed; therefore, malingering is not cowardice, as it is in the case of the others, but a perfectly justifiable attempt to preserve a superior intellect for the world.

Just before the regiment faces its first onslaught from the enemy, Henry feels a hand upon his shoulder.

He turned and beheld the loud soldier.

"It's my first and last battle, old boy," said the latter with intense gloom. He was quite pale and his girlish lip was trembling.

"Eh?" murmured the youth in great astonishment.

"It's my first and last battle, old boy....I'm a gone coon this first time, and--and I w--want you take these here things--to--my--folks." He ended in a quavering sob of pity for himself. He handed the youth a little packet done up in a yellow envelope.

"Why what the devil--" began the youth again.

But the other gave him a glance as from the depths of a tomb, and raised his limp hand in a prophetic manner and turned away.¹

It might be well at this point to jump ahead a considerable period of time in the narrative in order to see the outcome of the loud soldier's predictions.

¹Crane, Works, p.58.

"Fleming."

"What?"

The friend put his hand up to his mouth and coughed again. He fidgeted in his jacket.

"Well," he gulped at last, "I guess yeh might as well give me back them letters." Dark prickling blood had flushed into his cheeks and brow.

"All right, Wilson," said the youth. He loosened two buttons of his coat, thrust in his hand, and brought forth the packet. As ¹ he extended it to his friend the latter's face was turned from him.

In giving the packet of letters to Henry, Wilson has made the mistake that Henry earlier avoided. He has revealed his doubts and fears to someone else. As a consequence, Henry now feels as superior to Wilson as the latter could have to Henry, had Henry confessed his doubts about how he would behave in combat.²

The two passages illustrate once more Crane's belief that it is impossible to predict the future. No one could have been surer of his coming demise than was the loud soldier, yet he was as wrong as the men who at the beginning of the story insisted that the regiment was about to move.

Henry conducts himself very well in his first encounter with the enemy, which comes right after the loud soldier has made his gloomy thoughts known.

He got the one glance at the foe-swarming field in front of him and instantly ceased to debate the question of his piece being loaded....He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was part—a regiment, an army,

¹Crane, Works, p.137.

²Max J. Herzberg, (The Red Badge of Courage, N.Y., Appleton, 1925, Int., pp.xix-xx) points out that the episode in which Wilson turns over his possessions to Henry appeared in comic adaptation twice within a year of the publication of The Red Badge of Courage.

a cause, a country--was in a crisis....There was a consciousness always of the presence of his comrades about him; he felt the subtle battle-brotherhood, more potent than the cause for which they were fighting....[There] came a red rage. He developed the acute exasperation of a pestered animal, a well-meaning cow harried by dogs. He had a mad feeling against his rifle, which could only be used against one life at a time. He wished to rush forward and strangle with his fingers. He craved a power that would enable him to make a world-sweeping gesture and push all back. His impotency appeared to him, and made his rage into that of a driven beast.¹

At this point a new element has entered into the story--the feeling of cooperation and kinship that Henry has toward his companions. Up until now, his feelings have been entirely selfish. First, he wishes to perform deeds of glory in order to win adulation of others; then, as the battle draws near, he begins to fear for his own safety. With the coming of battle, however, his selfish feelings are swept away by recognition of the common danger facing everyone, and this new-found feeling of comradeship spurs him on to give an excellent account of himself. The situation of a group of men confronted by a great danger is one which deserves some comment, since it occurs in a number of Crane's stories, most notably "The Open Boat". Here, also, Crane argues that man, through cooperation and by courageously facing up to the slings and arrows of fortune, can achieve a measure of triumph over the universe.

After the first skirmish, Henry's egotism knows almost no bounds. Formerly he could only imagine himself behaving courageously on the field of battle. Now he has actually done so:

He went into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction. He had the most delightful sensations of his life. Standing as if apart from himself, he viewed that last scene. He perceived that the man who had fought this was magnificent....He smiled in self-gratification.²

¹Crane, Works, p.64.

²Ibid, p.71.

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However, his self-admiration session is short-lived. Cries of "Here they come ag'in" ring out, and Henry faces his second ordeal. But now the situation is not the same as it was before the first onslaught. Henry and his companions are staggering from exhaustion, yet the enemy, in spite of having been through as much as Henry's regiment, is mounting another attack. Henry now begins to look upon his foes as some sort of supermen, and this attitude coupled with the great fatigue he now feels, proves too much for him. As the enemy comes closer and closer, men on both sides of Henry begin to run, communicating terror to him. With a scream he throws down his rifle and also bolts toward the rear.

During his flight, he notices several units going calmly about their business. A battery of cannon duels with an enemy battery on distant hills and a brigade sweeps finely to the relief of some beleaguered unit on the firing line. In his state of fear, Henry pities them as "mechanical idiots" and "machine-like fools"¹ and wonders if they are some special breed of men or just do not comprehend the certain destruction that is about to fall upon them.

After running a great distance, Henry finds himself near a general of a division. As he watches the general, the latter suddenly begins to bound with excitement in his saddle. "They've held 'im!

¹Henry's attitude toward these soldiers is strikingly similar to that which Thoreau expressed in "Civil Disobedience." In this essay Thoreau said:

"...you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder monkeys and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, eye against their common sense and conscience.... The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies.... In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones."

"They've held 'im!" he screams.

The enemy are not supermen after all. Henry is stunned. Up until this point he has not felt the necessity of justifying his flight, but now that the foe has been turned back, the whole situation is changed. Rationalization is necessary, and Henry is equal to the occasion.

He had fled, he told himself, because annihilation approached. He had done a good part in saving himself, who was a little piece of the army. He had considered the time, he said, to be one in which it was the duty of every little piece to rescue itself if possible. Later the officers could fit the little pieces together again and make a battle front. If none of the little pieces were wise enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then, where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to very correct and commendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things....

Thoughts of his comrades came to him. The brittle blue line had withstood the blows and won. He grew bitter over it. It seemed that the blind ignorance and stupidity of those little pieces had betrayed him. He had been overturned and crushed by their lack of sense in holding the position, when intelligent deliberation would have convinced them that it was impossible. He, the enlightened man who looks afar in the dark, had fled because of his superior perception and knowledge. He felt a great anger against his comrades. He knew it could be proved that they had been fools.¹

In this superb piece of rationalizing Henry has proven cowardice to be wisdom and bravery stupidity. By doing so, he has once again established, in his own mind, his superiority over his companions. He realizes, however, that his companions will be too "stupid" to realize the wisdom of his conduct, and will jeer at him when he reappears in their midst. Besides providing an excellent example of rationalization, this episode illustrates still again Crane's belief in the futility of attempting to predict the outcome of any event. Henry has completely misjudged the prowess both of the enemy and his companions.

¹Crane, Works, pp.80-81.

As Henry gets farther from the front line he finds himself in a woods where everything seems calm and peaceful. He thinks that here one sees the world as it was intended to be, that Nature is "a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy."

He tosses a pine cone at a squirrel and it scampers away. He is gladdened by the squirrel's reaction. Here, it seems to him, is proof that running is the natural and correct thing to do when danger threatens. Henry thus justifies his conduct in still another way. However, as he goes deeper into the woods he comes across evidence that nature is not beneficent but, rather, "red in tooth and claw." He sees a small animal, possibly an otter, dive into a pool and come out with a fish, and later he comes across a dead Union soldier being consumed by ants. At this horrible sight Henry shrieks and is petrified with fright for a few moments. Then he begins to back slowly away, and, finally, getting control of himself, flees. In the meantime the sound of battle has intensified and Henry turns back toward the fighting.

He saw that it was an ironical thing for him to be running thus toward that which he had been at such pains to avoid. But, he said, in substance, to himself that if the moon and earth were about to clash, many persons would doubtless plan to get upon the roofs to witness the collision....Reflecting, he saw a sort of humor in the point of view of himself and his fellows during the late encounter. They had taken themselves very seriously and had imagined that they were deciding war. Individuals must have supposed that they were cutting the letters of their names into everlasting tablets of brass,...while, as to fact, the affair would appear in print under a meek and immaterial title. But he saw that it was good; else he said, in battle everyone would surely run save forlorn hopes and their ilk.¹

¹Crane, Works, p.85-6.

Henry's attitude has changed profoundly. He now looks upon the war neither as an opportunity to reap a harvest of personal glory nor as a vast conspiracy against him. His flight in the face of a presumably invincible enemy and his subsequent discovery that the enemy is not unbeatable after all have brought home to him the folly of trying to guess the outcome of anything in advance. Finally, his experiences in the woods have shown him that struggle and death are a part of nature. He is beginning to see war for what it is: something far too big for him to escape or to influence to any great extent. For the first time he has an inkling of the unimportance of the individual with respect to the universe as a whole.

A little while later, he comes across a procession of wounded moving to the rear and falls in with it. The men are talking about the fight they have just been in and bragging about the part played by their regiment. Suddenly one of the wounded men—a "tattered man"—turns to Henry.

"Where yeh hit, ol' boy," he asked in a brotherly tone....
 "Why," began the youth, "I—I—that is—why I—"
 He turned away suddenly and slid through the crowd. His brow was heavily flushed and his fingers were picking nervously at one of his buttons. He bent his head and fastened his eyes studiously upon the button as if it were a little problem.¹

For the first time since he ran away Henry feels genuinely ashamed of his cowardice and wishes that "he too had a wound, a red badge of courage."

It is at this point that Henry receives a terrible shock; at his

¹Crane, Works, p.91.

side walks a tall "spectral soldier" with the mark of death on his face. Something familiar in the way the soldier gestures makes Henry turn and take a closer look at the man. Suddenly he screams "Gawd! Jim Conklin!" It is indeed Jim, horribly wounded.

In the next few minutes, Jim tells his friend a little about the battle and of his fear that Henry had been killed. Suddenly, he starts with fright, confessing a terrible fear of collapsing in the road and being run over by an artillery wagon. He begs Henry to take care of him, and Henry, choked by sobs, promises. A few minutes later, they are warned that a battery of guns is headed their way. Henry assisted by the tattered man, attempts to lead Jim off the road, but Jim breaks away from them and begins to run. The youth tries to stop him, but Jim only yells "Leave me be". Staggering into a roadside field he halts, makes a few convulsive movements, and falls to the ground dead.¹

¹Robert W. Stallman, ("Stephen Crane: A Revaluation," (in Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, ed., John W. Aldridge, N.Y., Ronald Press, 1952, pp. 255-69)) has interpreted Jim Conklin in terms of religious symbolism. Henry Fleming, by fleeing from battle, has dishonored his regiment and inflicted a wound on his conscience which cannot be healed until he sheds his early vainglorious illusions and "puts on new garments of humility and loving kindness for his fellow men." It is through the death of Jim Conklin that Henry's regeneration is brought about. Stallman believes that Conklin was intended by Crane to symbolize Jesus Christ, and points to Conklin's wounded side, his torn body and bloody hands, and even his initials—J.C.—to support the argument. Conklin's death thus symbolizes the sacrificial death celebrated in Communion, and Henry, who figuratively partakes of the sacramental blood and body of Christ, experiences a spiritual rebirth. Stallman's explanation of Conklin's function is not only ingenious but also valid to a certain degree. It is impossible, for example, to doubt that Jim Conklin plays an important role—perhaps even the most important—in Henry's regeneration. However, to invest Conklin's death with religious significance, as Stallman does, is to ignore certain very important aspects of Crane's thought. The examination of Crane's poetry has made abundantly clear his hostility toward religions in which elaborate ritual figures prominently. Further, Crane, the son of a Methodist minister, could scarcely have escaped being aware

The episode with the wounded men has wrought a further profound change in Henry. Not only has the tattered man's question roused in him for the first time a sense of shame totally unconnected with any thoughts of what others might think of him, but the death of Jim has filled him with rage against the enemy and the entire war. Bidding farewell to the tattered man, he starts once again back toward the fighting.

As Henry gets closer and closer to the battle, he sees a column of infantry heading into the fray.

As the youth looked at them the black weight of his woe returned to him. He felt that he was regarding a procession of chosen beings. The separation was as great to him as if they had marched with weapons of flame and banners of sunlight. He could never be like them. He could have wept in his longings.¹

Henry's reaction to this regiment provides one more illustration of how radically his attitude has changed. When, earlier, he had encountered a similar group during his flight from battle he had cursed them for being fools. Now he sees them as heroes, men who have not lost their honor.

As he watches the regiment, the old romantic notions of himself as a hero come flooding back upon him. He sees himself leading sweeping charges against the enemy and finally dying gloriously before the admiring eyes of his comrades.

that much of this ritual was directly connected with the celebration of the sacrament of communion. This being so, it seems extremely unlikely that he would choose a doctrine which was responsible for so much he detested in orthodox religion as a basis for the symbolism of The Red Badge of Courage.

¹Crane, Works, p.105.

Abruptly, however, doubts assail him.

He had no rifle; he could not fight with his hands, said he resentfully to his plan. Well, rifles could be had for the picking. They were extraordinarily profuse.

Also, he continued, it would be a miracle if he found his regiment. Well, he could fight with any regiment....He would truly be a worm if any of his companions should see him returning thus, the marks of his flight upon him. There was reply that the intent fighters did not care for what happened rearward, saying that no hostile bayonets appeared there.... But then he said that his tireless fate would bring forth, when the strife lulled for a moment, a man to ask of him an explanation. In imagination he felt the scrutiny of his companions as he painfully laboured through some lies.

Eventually, his courage expended itself upon these objections. The debates drained him of his fire.¹

He wanders around a while longer, alternately cursing his cowardice and attempting to justify it by the same mental gymnastics he had used when he fled the battle. He is sincere in his desire to rejoin his regiment, but in spite of the experiences he has undergone since running away, there is still enough of the old Henry left so that the thought of facing the jibes and sneers of the others holds him back.

While he is attempting to think up a plausible explanation for his behavior to present to his mates when he returns, chance takes the problem out of his hands. A group of wildly fleeing men bursts from a patch of woods and heads toward him. As they rush by, Henry grabs one to ask him what is happening. But the soldier, insane with fear, will not be detained even for a moment. Screaming "Let me go," he raises his rifle, crashes it against Henry's head, and once more takes up his mad flight. The blow fells Henry to the ground and almost knocks him unconscious. Stunned, he makes several unsuccessful attempts to rise

¹Crane, Works, pp.106-7.

before finally staggering to his feet and stumbling off into the gathering dusk. Some time later, he is picked up by another soldier, who conducts him back to his regiment.

Henry's encounter with the retreating soldiers and subsequent return to his regiment illustrate how blind chance will sometimes step in to resolve problems or situations in a most unexpected manner. Henry need no longer wrack his brain for a way to get back to the regiment and at the same time give a believable account of himself. The blow on the head has obviated that necessity; no one will think to question the actions of a man who has been wounded. And no one does. His friend, Wilson is very solicitous, bandaging his head and seeing to it that he is well bedded down for the night. At no time does he or anyone else hint that they know of anything dishonorable in Henry's behavior.

The next morning, Henry notices that a big change has taken place in his friend.

He seemed no more to be continually regarding the proportions of his personal prowess. He was not furious at small words that pricked his conceits. He was no more a loud young soldier. There was about him now a fine reliance. He showed a great belief in his purposes and his abilities. And this inward confidence evidently enabled him to be indifferent to little words of other men aimed at him.¹

Wilson has been weighed in the balance of war and not found wanting. Previously his boasting has been his own way of boosting his ego and trying to win the respect of others. Now he has proven his capabilities by actions, not words, and all the sham and bluster have become unnecessary.

¹Cfane, Works, pp.129-30.

Henry, however, is still untested. It is true that his experiences during flight have robbed war of most of the glamour it once held for him and have shown him how insignificant he is in the whole scheme of battle, but he has yet to prove himself in actual combat. Besides there still remains in his breast the guilty knowledge of his flight the day before. Under these circumstances, Henry still lacks much of the self-confidence that Wilson has acquired. Thus when Wilson finally musters up courage to ask Henry to return his letters, Henry feels a very pleasant glow of superiority over the thought that he has never to blush for his acts (completely forgetting, of course, the shame he had felt when the tattered soldier asked where he was hit.)

And when, just before the start of the second day of fighting, rumors start to fly that disaster is about to fall upon the regiment, Henry begins to criticise the leadership of the generals and asks loudly if the men hadn't done all that men could do.

He is going on in great denunciatory fashion when suddenly one of the men says "Maybe yeh think yeh fit the hull battle yesterday, Fleming."

These chance words throw a cold chill over Henry. At first he believes that the soldier who spoke had seen him run the previous day, but soon abandons the notion. Even so, his flight has once more been brought forcefully to his mind, and he lapses into silence.

However, he still feels some genuine resentment against supposedly stupid officers who would lead their men into impossible situations, and, when the enemy attacks, this resentment turns into blind rage. He begins shooting like a demon and continues to do so until long after the enemy has retreated, coming back to reality only when he hears the derisive

voice of one of his companions saying, "Yeh infernal fool, don't yeh know enough t' quit when there ain't ar'ything t' shoot at?" The men stare at him in admiration, and his lieutenant brags that if he had ten thousand men like Henry he could win the war in less than a week.

These incidents made the youth ponder. It was revealed to him that he had been a barbarian, a beast. He had fought like a pagan who defends his religion. Regarding it, he saw that it was fine, wild, and in some ways, easy. He had overcome obstacles which he had admitted to be mountains. They had fallen like paper peaks, and he was now what he called a hero. And he had not been aware of the process. He had slept, and, awakening, found himself a knight.¹

There is a fine element of irony in this passage. Henry, the youth who has longed to be a hero, actually is one, but instead of becoming so by deliberately performing his deeds with a full awareness of what he was doing, he has achieved his goal while in a state of obliviousness in which his actions were largely automatic. Thus it might be said that he has become a hero by chance.

From this point on, Henry is never in danger of running. Like his friend, Wilson, he now has a true understanding of his abilities and limitations.

During the remainder of the story Henry further distinguishes himself. He takes over the colors when the color-bearer is shot, and leads his comrades in two charges, the last of which dislodges the enemy from a strong position behind a fence.

At the end of his first major battle, Henry is a completely different person from the boy who went into the army eager for glory.

He found that he could look back upon the brass and bombast of his earlier Gospels and see them truly. He was gleeful when he discovered that he now despised them. . . .

¹Crane, Works, p. 150.

He felt a quiet manhood, non-assertive but of sturdy and strong blood. He knew that he would no more quail before his guides, wherever they would point. He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man.¹

The story ends on the same note with which it began. As the soldiers march off down the road they argue about whether they have won or lost the battle. Once again the prediction is made that the regiment is going to "come in behind" the enemy, and once again it meets with jeers. People, it seems, will never cease to speculate upon coming events, no matter how often their predictions shatter on the hard rocks of reality, or how seldom they can be verified with certainty.

The question of the sources for The Red Badge of Courage is very complicated. Among European writing, Stendhal's La Chartreuse de Parma, Tolstoy's War and Peace and Sevastopol, and Zola's La Debacle² have frequently been mentioned. Of the many American novels having the Civil War as their subject, John W. DeForest's Miss Ravenel's Conversion³ and Col. William F. Hinman's Corporal Si Klegg and His Pard⁴ have been suggested as influences. It is known that Crane had read both of the Tolstoy novels,⁵ but he denied vigorously any knowledge of Stendhal's work, and there is no positive evidence that he ever read either of the American novels.

¹Crane, Works, p. 199. Winifred Lynskey ("Crane's The Red Badge of Courage," Explicator VIII (Dec., 1949)) remarks that Henry is a man only because his comrades are unaware of his sins. Such a judgement appears unduly harsh, however, since, while damning Henry for his initial cowardice, it fails to give him any credit whatever for his brave conduct after rejoining his regiment.

²Thomas Beer (Stephen Crane, N.Y., Knopf, 1932, pp. 97-8) states that Crane wrote his novel on the dare of a friend to do better than La Debacle and Stallman (Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p. 181) shares this view.

³Stallman, op. cit., pp. 177-8.

⁴T. H. Webster, "William F. Hinman's Corporal Si Klegg and Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage" AL XI, 285-93 (Nov. 1939).

⁵Thomas Beer, (op. cit., pp. 54-5) says that in 1890 Crane, then a student at Lafayette College, declared Tolstoy was the world's greatest novelist.

It is quite probable that the major inspiration for Crane's novel was not a work of fiction at all. Pollett¹ has declared that Crane had an ex-soldier relative in Port Jervis who told him war stories, while Beer² says that he read magazine accounts of the various battles and campaigns, and complained that no one had written anything worthwhile about the conflict. Also, Pratt³ points out that Crane, while a student at Claverick college, undoubtedly listened to the reminiscences of the Reverend General John B. VanPetten, a retired army chaplain who taught elocution at the school, and whose regiment had undergone experiences similar to those of Henry Fleming's. With such a wealth of native material at Crane's disposal, it seems unlikely that any European writing could have influenced him to more than a minor degree.

Perhaps the most important feature of the novel is the excellent view it gives of the workings of the human mind. The picture presented is not a pretty one. Most of Henry's thinking is motivated by selfishness. At first, he wishes to win glory in order that people will admire him. Then as the crucial test approaches, he becomes afraid, not of what might happen to his cause and his country, but of what might happen to him. After he has run away, he tries to rationalize his behavior to make it seem that he was smart in running and the others fools for staying behind to face certain death. But try as he will, he cannot erase the sense of guilt which he has acquired as a result of his conduct.

¹Wilson Pollett, "The Second Twenty-Eight Years", Bookman LXVIII, 532-7 (Jan., 1929).

²Thomas Beer, op.cit., pp. 96-7.

³Lynden V. Pratt, "The Possible Source of The Red Badge of Courage" AL, II: 1-10 (Mar., 1939).

This guilty feeling breaks through the ingenious barrier of "logic" which Henry has erected against it when the wounded man asks where he is hit, and becomes even more pronounced when he sees Jim Conklin die. By the time he is back with his regiment again, he has a much more realistic conception both of himself and of the nature of war. To a certain degree his old romantic desire for glory still remains with him, but it is not as deeply ingrained as previously, and disappears completely in the heat of battle.

The element of chance plays a very important part in the story. After Henry leaves the wounded men, he wishes to return to the regiment, but is afraid to face the derision of his comrades. While trying to think of a way out of his dilemma, he has his problem solved for him by the fleeing soldier who strikes him in the head, thus providing the wound which will convince his comrades of his bravery. By a further lucky chance he meets a soldier who knows where his regiment is and conducts him back to it. Chance has thus accomplished what rational thinking could not.

Crane makes the further point in The Red Badge of Courage that if an individual who is in a difficult situation or faced with an obstacle which seems insurmountable will only face the peril bravely, he stands a much better chance of overcoming it successfully. Henry does well in his first skirmish because he does not think of the enemy as being superman and because he has identified himself with his companions. With the second skirmish Henry's attitude toward the enemy has changed. He regards them as invincible, is unable to face them without panic, and flees. By the time he returns to his regiment, his attitude has again changed. He

now realizes that they are but men like himself, and is able to stand up to their onslaughts without panicking.

It is interesting to compare the social ideas of The Red Badge of Courage with those expressed in Crane's poetry. No completely new themes appear in the novel, but some which were only touched upon in the poetry have been dealt with at length, and all have been developed and matured by the addition of new elements.

For example, in his poetry, Crane says only that good deeds are merely vanity in disguise. In The Red Badge of Courage he develops this concept by showing that almost all of man's activities are motivated by his desire to appear well before others, and that man will rationalize even cowardly, despicable acts so as to make them appear virtuous.

Similarly, Crane expands the concept that individuals who are in seemingly hopeless situations can often extricate themselves by acting courageously. The little man who prevailed against the mountain stood alone; Henry Fleming, however, faces his crises surrounded by companions with whom he feels a subtle "battle-brotherhood", and in addition he is bolstered by a new sense of duty toward his country. Thus Crane links the ideas of comradeship and identity with something greater than the individual to his concept of courage.

The idea that man is adrift in naturalistic universe appears in expanded form in the novel. The poetry does not suggest that man has any degree of free will; indeed, the implication is rather strong that the opposite is so. Henry Fleming, however, is depicted as a person whose reaction in similar situations varies considerably, largely as a result of his own thinking. It is the sense of comradeship he feels toward his

companions which enables him to behave well in his first engagement and his belief in the invincibility of the enemy which causes him to run in the second. His newly-found knowledge of both his own and the enemy's capabilities and limitations, as well as his renewed sense of comradeship with the others, results in his heroic behavior after he has rejoined his regiment. The fact that the variation in Henry's behavior is in large part due to his differing attitudes is evidence of Crane's belief that man enjoys some freedom of choice even in conditions where it would normally be thought not to exist.

The most prominent concept in the poetry—that it is impossible for man to know truth—comes in for a fair share of attention in the novel as well. However, instead of concerning himself with abstract Truth, as he had in the former, Crane in the latter, makes the point that no one is capable of predicting with certainty the course of coming events or even of knowing the truth of ordinary events as they occur. The story opens with the soldiers unable to agree on whether the regiment is to break camp or remain where it is. When, a few days later, the regiment is sent into battle, the men advance without knowing for sure whether they are launching a frontal assault, attacking the enemy from the rear, or carrying out a flanking operation. When the battle is finally over, they do not know whether they have won or lost. They can only continue to guess at the future as vigorously—and presumably as futilely—as before.

Whereas the poems are almost exclusively concerned with man's relationship to God and the universe, the novel devotes a major share of its attention to relationships among individuals. In Crane's poems, men seem to exist as isolated individuals. The little man stands alone against the mountain; "the naked, bestial" creature squats alone upon the desert

and eats of his own heart; the seeker after truth pursues his quest in solitude. And all of these individuals go their ways in a naturalistic universe which they cannot understand and which is completely indifferent to them.

The problem of man's relationship to the universe (symbolized as war) also appears in the novel. Here, as in the poems, man is completely unable to achieve any real understanding of the nature of the universe. At the end of the novel Henry has no clearer picture of the true nature of war than he had in the beginning. But even though he has failed to achieve a meaningful relationship to the universe, he can in no sense be considered isolated (as the men in Crane's poems are) since he has succeeded in identifying himself with his companions. The desire and attempt of isolated individuals to achieve and maintain a meaningful relationship to society and to win the respect and admiration of their fellows is one of the major themes in Crane's writings.

In The Red Badge of Courage the problem of isolation is bound up with still another theme, that of initiation. At the beginning of the novel, the relationship which Henry wishes to have exist between himself and his companions is primarily egocentric. He would be the hero, and have his companions exist only to admire and praise him.

The relationship which Henry actually achieves with his fellow soldiers is almost the exact opposite of the one he has previously imagined. Not only does he see himself as only a small part of something much greater than any one individual, but also finds himself sneering at his old desire for glory. In recognizing and accepting his new position

with respect to the group and his changed attitudes toward heroism, Henry has discarded a whole set of old beliefs and become initiated into a group of new ones.

The themes of isolation and initiation—especially the first—appear in other works of Crane. In George's Mother the two themes are again linked with one another, in a story of a boy who has a desire as keen as Henry's to find his niche in society and be admired by others but whose environment does not provide acceptable ways for him to achieve his ambition. He finally succeeds in becoming a member of the most respected gang in his neighborhood, but the new sense of values he acquires in the process changes him from a rather decent individual into a no-good loafer who helps bring about his mother's death. Maggie is the story of a girl who is isolated by virtue of her complete ignorance of any sort of life other than that of a slum dweller. Tracing Maggie's fall, Crane shows how this ignorance brings disaster upon her when she attempts to find a better life for herself.

In other stories, for example The Monster and the Whilomville Stories, Crane examines other aspects of the relationship of man to society, while in "The Blue Hotel" he explores further the themes of isolation and initiation. In subsequent sections of this dissertation, these stories and their implications will be discussed at greater length.

THE SULLIVAN COUNTY SKETCHES

Crane's Sullivan County Sketches are, with the exception of certain juvenile writings,¹ the earliest of his literary works. All of the seven sketches published during his lifetime saw print in 1892, five in the New York Tribune, one in Cosmopolitan Magazine, and one in the University Herald, a publication of Delta Upsilon, Crane's fraternity at Syracuse University.² Early as they are, however, they reveal a Crane who had already begun to formulate ideas concerning the nature of man which appear in expanded form in his later and more important work. The individuals depicted in the Sketches are not noble in any sense. Quite the opposite. "The little man," who is the central character of the stories (the other are the "pudgy man, the "tall man", the "quiet man") is egotistical to an almost unbelievable degree, a romantic with an insatiable desire for glory, and more than a little of a coward.

In "Four Men in a Cave"³ it is the little man's desire for glory that makes him want to explore the cave. He says to his companions that "We can tell a great tale when we get back to the city if we investigate this thing", and they are persuaded.

¹Examples of such early writings include a sketch of the explorer Stanley (Claverick College Vidette, Feb. 1890; reprinted Res. Stud. State Coll., Wash., VII, 55-58 (1939)) and a short story, "The King's Favor" (Syracuse University Herald 19:128-31, (May, 1891); reprinted Syracuse Argot, III: 1, 8, (Mar., 1935)).

²Melvin Schoberlin, The Sullivan County Sketches of Stephen Crane, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1949, p. 5. (Since the above volume contains all ten of Crane's Sullivan County Sketches, I have used it in writing this section, rather than the Follett edition, which contains only three of them.)

³Ibid., pp. 25-31.

They enter the cave and begin to crawl forward. The little man soon becomes frightened and wishes to leave, but his companions force him to continue. They lose their step while descending a steep slope and tumble to the bottom. Looking up they find themselves in a stone chamber lit by candles and a smouldering fire. In the middle of the room, in front of a "great, gray stone, cut square like an altar" stands an old man with a long gray beard. He advances toward them, holding out a deck of cards. "It's your ante," he says. The little man, trembling, begins to play poker with the hermit. Finally, he loses all his money and can not continue the game. When the hermit hears this, he flies into a rage. Screaming and cursing the little man, he points his finger at a hitherto unnoticed crack in the cave wall and roars "Go!" When the terrified quartet reach their camp again, their guide explains that the cave is inhabited by a man who has lost all he owned gambling and gone crazy as a consequence.

In this story the little man appears to be the prototype of humanity, with its desire for glory and its inability to control its own destiny. The four companions enter the cave of their own volition, but once inside, events are entirely beyond their control. They fall into the hermit's chamber and are not able to leave until he shows them a second exit and drives them out.

In "The Octopush,"¹ the four companions go to a little stump-filled lake to fish for pickerel. They hire a guide who rows them out to the stumps; then each man picks one to sit on and begins to fish.

¹Schoberlin, op.cit., pp.55-57.

About sundown they quit and call to the guide to come get them, but are stupified to hear him reply in drunken accents: "You felleash-hic-kin-all-hic-go-to blazersh."

Night comes and the men remain on the stumps, while their drunken guide berates them with oaths. The little man tries to cajole the guide into taking them to shore. He praises the guide's excellent qualities, reminds him of their own desperate plight, and appeals to his humanity. Curses are the only answer. Night wears on. Suddenly the guide gets an attack of delirium tremens. He screams, jumps into his boat, and rows over to the little man's stump. "Stump turned into an octopush. I was a settin' on his mouth...his [legs] all commenced move, dern octopush!" moaned the drunken individual. The little man kicked him.²

The little man's desire for glory did not get the four companions into this scrape, but chance, which decreed that the drunken guide should mistake his stump for an "octopush" did get them out of it after the pleadings of the little man had completely failed. This story is reminiscent of the episode in "The Red Badge of Courage" in which a chance blow on the head provided Henry Fleming with a means of "honorably" rejoining his regiment after reason had failed to do so.³ Viewed in the light of Crane's later work, "The Octopush"—indeed, all of the Sullivan County

¹Scheberlin, op.cit., pp.33-37.

²Ibid., p.37.

John Barryman, Stephen Crane, N.Y., Sloane, 1950, pp.33-40, believe that "Four Men in a Cave" and "The Octopush" represent fantasies on "Crane's father and the child's sense of abandonment (impoverishment) at his resented death." In the first story, the abandonment is figurative; the farmer, although never actually leaving his wife, failed her by turning to gambling and losing his farm. In the second, the abandonment is literal, the four companions are left stranded in the lake by their guide.

Sketches—indicate that Crane was interested in the problem of chance and its operations from the very beginning of his writing career.

"A Ghoul's Accountant"¹ opens with the four companions lying asleep around the remains of a campfire. The snapping of a twig heralds the approach of somebody or something, and a moment later a man with "fiercely red" skin and "infinitely black" whiskers sneaks into the camp. He pauses for a moment, then shakes the little man awake. "Come," says the red man, brandishing a pickered spear in the little man's face. He conducts the little man through the forest to a decrepit house and they go in. Inside is a wild gray man. The gray man and the red man regard their captive silently. Finally the red man says: "Stranger,... how much is thirty-three bushels of pertaters at sixty-four an' a half a bushel?" The little man finally stammers forth an answer. Upon hearing it, the gray man is "delivered of a frightful roar." Springing forward, he kicks the little man out of the house.

This story is the most naturalistic of those thus far studied. In the two previous tales, the little man can be said to have had a hand in shaping his own destiny since he voluntarily entered the cave and allowed the guide to row him to the stumps from which he fished. In "A Ghoul's Accountant", however, he has absolutely nothing to say about what happens to him, but is at the mercy of chance from the moment he awakens to find himself staring into the wild eyes of the red man.

"The Black Bog"² gives us another example of the supreme egotism of the little man, an egotism which in reality hides a quivering, terrible fear of the unknown. The little man and his companions have come into the

¹Schoberlin, op.cit., pp.39-42. ²Ibid., pp.43-49.

woods, presumably to fish or hunt, and are caught in a sudden downpour. Forced to take shelter, they ask to be admitted to a little cabin they come across. The occupant lets them in but he has some rather chilling information for them.

"My ol' uncle, Jim Crocker, he's sick ter death," said the slate-colored man. "Think he'll die?" asked the pudgy man, gently....

"He won't die! He's an' ol' man, but he won't die, yit! The black dog hain't been around yit!"

"The black dog?" asked the little man, feebly. He struggled with himself for a moment. "What's the black dog?" he asked at last. He's a sperrit," said the slate-colored man in a voice of somber hue.... "He haunts these parts, he does, an' when people are goin' to die, he comes and sets and howls."

"Ho," said the little man. He looked out the window and saw night making a million shadows. The little man moved his legs nervously.¹

The little man uneasily says he doesn't believe in such things and is immediately challenged by the pudgy man. They quarrel, and the little man dares the pudgy one to "bring on your phantom."

The dying old man in the attic calls for food and the group takes a bowl of beef and water up to him. Suddenly, the howl of a dog petrifies them with fear. "God!" gasps the little man. He rushes to the window and begins to throw things in the direction of the sounds. But the howls continue until the cup of beef strikes the ground. Then they cease. The others look and see the dog (really a starving, abandoned neighborhood dog) eating the beef. On his bed the old man lies dead.

The little man has at the same time both won and lost his argument. The dog is not a phantom, but on the other hand the slate-colored man's prophecy has come true, because the old man is dead. Furthermore, the extreme fear displayed by the little man is enough to create more than a suspicion that he was lying when he said he didn't believe in

¹Schoberlin, op.cit., p.45.

phantoms. Thus, the little man has been both supported and confounded by destiny, and this can be taken as another example of Fate's indifference to man and his problems.

In "Killing his Bear"¹ the little man for once directs his own destiny. In the woods, he carefully selects the spot at which to await the bear, his dog chases one toward him, he takes good aim, shoots, and puts the bullet exactly where he wants it to go. It would seem that some things do work out according to plan.

The very last part of this story is important because it gives a significant glimpse of Crane's ability to see beneath the surface of emotion and grasp the reality—often a very unpleasant reality—of it. The section in question deals with the little man's actions upon reaching the body of the bear. "The little man yelled and sprang forward, waving his hat as if he were leading the cheering of thousands. Upon his face was the smile of the successful lover."²

The last sentence is the really significant one. It shows that Crane was not deluded by the common belief that love is nothing but tenderness. He recognized that one of its elements is the desire to dominate, that often the lover's sole reason for seeking amorous conquest is the feeling of power he gains with each victory. This same ability to grasp the reality of a situation or a series of acts, or an emotion appears full-blown in Crane's later work, notably in his analyses of the motives which impel an individual to behave in a particular manner. To be sure, the analysis of the nature of an emotion is not quite the same

¹Schoberlin, op.cit., pp.51-54.

²Ibid., p.54.

as showing the reasons for acting in a certain manner, but both do show an awareness that even supposedly simple things are often more complicated than they seem.

"An Explosion of Seven Babies"¹ presents still another instance in which the little man walks into a situation not of his own making and is buffeted by chance.

He is in the woods, and stops to ask directions of a woman—Crane calls her a brown giantess—who is hoeing potatoes in her garden while her seven children wail and rub their stomachs. No sooner does he begin to speak than the giantess turns on him screaming "beast", "villain," and, shouting that her babies have eaten "that dum fly-paper," she begins to toss him about like a sack of wheat. Meanwhile the pudgy man arrives on the scene and climbs the wall surrounding the garden to watch, but falls off into the garden. The giantess turns on him, and the little man makes a dash for the wall. Both he and the pudgy man escape. However, the little man finally does get some satisfaction for the ordeal he has gone through. As the two tired companions enter camp they hear a voice, and find their campmates listening to a "short stranger" who is talking enthusiastically. The stranger turns to them:

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have here a wonder of the age, which I wish to present to your intelligent notice. Smithers' Eternal Fly Annihilating Paper is...."

The little man frothed at the mouth and cursed. Before his companions could intervene he sprang forward and kicked the short man in the stomach.²

There is irony in the scene in which the little man kicks the fly-paper salesman because, by doing so, he assumes the role played by

¹Schoberlin, *op.cit.*, pp.55-60. *Ibid.*, pp.60.

the brown giantess when she attacked him. Previously he was the victim of chance, now he is the instrument by which the salesman also becomes the victim of chance.

We have here still another example of a man being pushed around by forces which he did not deliberately set in motion and over which he has no control. The little man was buffeted about merely because the brown giantess was angry and saw in him an object upon which to vent her wrath. She did not actually mistake him for the fly-paper salesman (even though the salesman was also a short man), because if she had, she would never have abandoned him to attack his companion when the latter arrived on the scene.

"A Tent in Agony,"¹ begins with the four companions in the woods and out of food. The little man volunteers to stay and watch the camp while the others go for provisions. As the three leave, they voice the parting maledictions: "There's only one of you--the devil make a twin."

That night, a bear walks into camp and starts to chase the little man. He darts into the tent and the bear plunges in right after him. It grabs his coat tails, but he manages to shed the garment as he escapes through the rear of the tent. The bear rolls over on its back, tossing the coat about and playing with it. Meanwhile, the little man climbs a tree and watches the tent tremblingly. Suddenly it shivers and falls over. The bear has knocked against the centerpole and brought the whole thing down about its ears. Crazy with fear, the bear charges blindly, dragging the tent along with it.

¹Schoberlin, op.cit., pp.61-64.

At this moment, the other three men return and are petrified by the sight of their tent plunging toward them. As it passes by, they rush madly for the top of the hill on which their camp is located. Breathlessly, they ask the little man what has happened, and he blithely replies "There's only one of me--and the devil made a twin."

In this story, the little man displays a fine ability to make an unfortunate situation or occurrence work to his own advantage. Although he has just been terrified nearly out of his wits by the bear, he sees an excellent chance to mystify his friends, and grasps it. The little man's skill in "saving face" is missing in Crane's other, later characters, who must rely on rationalization to regain lost prestige once they have been made to appear ridiculous.

The first comment that may be made about the Sullivan County Sketches as a group is that they depict a universe which is neither completely naturalistic nor completely controlled by man. In one story, "Killing his Bear," the little man seems to dominate from start to finish the situation in which he finds himself. In other stories the exact opposite appears to be true. Thus in "A Ghoul's Accountant" and "An Explosion of Seven Babies," the events are entirely beyond the control of the little man. A final group of stories present situations in which the little man is only partially responsible for what happens to him.¹ "Four Men in a Cave" is this type of story.

¹Schoberlin (op.cit.,int., pp. 17-18) inclines toward a more naturalistic interpretation of these stories. He says: "In only two of the stories 'The Cry of a Huckleberry Pudding' and 'Killing His Bear' does he [the little man] have a part in directing his destiny. Chance...in the remaining stories determines the fate of the little man and his companions. He, with them, escapes from the recluse in 'Four Men in a

In these stories, Crane seems to be saying, allegorically, that man enjoys a certain amount of free will but that at the same time he is to some degree a pawn of chance. This is essentially the same conclusion that Crane reaches in The Red Badge of Courage, in which man is depicted as a creature buffeted by forces too great for him to understand, yet at the same time having some freedom of choice, hence some ability to order his own destiny.

Finally, the Sullivan County Sketches show a side of Crane that does not come out in his other work--his disbelief in the supernatural. At least three of the stories just considered--"Four Men in a Cave," "A Ghoul's Accountant", and "The Black Dog",--have touches of the supernatural about them, but in each the supernatural element is explained rationally.¹ Thus, the hermit turns out to be a harmless madman, the red man is a mathematically inept farmer, and the spectral dog, a starving neighborhood mongrel. Such disdain for superstition is to be expected in a writer who styled himself a realist.

Cave' only because, lacking further funds with which to bet he is unable to call the hermit's hand at poker. The escape in 'The Octopus' is effected through the individual's attack of delirium tremens. As the ghoul's accountant, he is doomed no matter what figure he stammers. The black dog and death collaborate to sustain and confound his contention....The little man, then, is as insignificant as the gambler in 'The Blue Hotel!'"

¹Schoberlin (op.cit., int., p. 16) states that "The Black Dog" shows definitely the influence of Ambrose Bierce, whose Tales of Soldiers and Civilians Crane "knew and admired." However, he feels that the Sketches were chiefly inspired by the tall tales and Western humor of Bill Nye, Petroleum V. Nasby, Artemus Ward, and other such local colorists, as well as by Twain's Roughing It and Life on the Mississippi. Berryman (op. cit., p. 47), while acknowledging the influence of Twain and Kipling, says of the Sketches that "Poe is their master."

MAGGIE

Maggie is a study of a girl trapped by her environment.¹ With a vague, glimmering notion that a world of beauty and love exists somewhere, she makes a desperate attempt to find and enter it, but her own ignorance, plus the hardness and cruelty that slum life has bred into the people around her, make it inevitable that her attempt end in tragedy.

As a small girl, Maggie is differentiated from the other children of Rum Alley by her aversion to fighting. Almost at the very beginning of the story she berates her brother for fighting with the children of the neighboring Devil's Row.

"Youse allus fightin', Jimmie, an' yeh knows it puts mudder out when yehs come home half dead, an' its like we'll all get a poundin'." She began to weep.²

Jimmie answers his sister's rebuke by hitting her in the mouth. Besides showing that Maggie is not like the other children, this episode is significant in that it gives the reader some idea of the character

¹Crane, Works., X., pp.137-218. Crane makes it very clear, in three almost identical inscriptions in copies of Maggie given to Dr. Lucius L. Button, Hamlin Garland, and the Reverend Thomas Dixon, that he is dealing with the effects of environment on individuals. The inscription to Dr. Button states:

"It is inevitable that you will be greatly shocked by the book, but continue, please, with all possible courage, to the end. For it tries to show that environment is a tremendous thing and frequently shapes lives regardless. If one proves that theory, one makes room in heaven for all sorts of souls, notably an occasional street girl, who are not confidently expected to be there by many excellent people." (Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p.594.).

Others were shocked also. For example, one reviewer had the following to say:

"We should class Mr. Crane as another promising young writer of the animalistic school. His types are mainly human beings of the order which makes us regret the power of literature to portray them....Maggie it is impossible to weep over. We can only feel that it is a pity that the gutter is so dirty and turn in another direction." (Nation, 63:15, July 2, 1896.)

²Ibid. p. 142.

of Maggie's mother and brother, some notion of the nature of her home life. Somewhat farther on in the novel, Crane states explicitly that Maggie is not at all like the other products of her environment.

The girl, Maggie, blossomed in a mud-puddle. She grew to be a most rare and wonderful production of a tenement district, a pretty girl. None of the dirt of Rum Alley seemed to be in her veins. The philosopher, upstairs, downstairs and on the same floor puzzled over it. When a child, playing and fighting with gamins in the street, dirt disgusted her. Attired in tatters and grime, she went unseen.¹

At the same time, her brother Jimmie is growing up to be a very different sort of person.

The inexperienced fibres of the boy's eyes were hardened at an early age. He became a young man of leather. He lived some red years without labouring. During that time his sneer became chronic. He studied human nature in the gutter and found it no worse than he had reason to believe it. He never conceived a respect for the world because he had begun with no idols that it had smashed.²

Jimmie later becomes a truck driver and continues on the path he has hewn out, becoming more and more convinced that the world is out to get him and more and more inclined to vent his spite in brawls and battles. Yet for all his hardness and cynicism, for all that he and Maggie are almost exact opposites, Jimmie also has dormant within him some sense of the existence of a world of beauty and loveliness, some residuum of aesthetic feeling that makes him say, one evening, "Deh moon looks like hell, don't it?" To be sure, Jimmie's aesthetic sense is much feebler than Maggie's. Unlike her, he never aspires to a better life, but is content to seek his own brand of fame and prestige within the framework of slum society.

¹ Crane, Works, p.142.

²Ibid., p.151.

One night Jimmie brings home Pete, a boyhood friend who has become a bartender. To Maggie, Pete is a gorgeous thing. His finery, cheap and tawdry as it is, seems to her the epitome of fashion and good taste. Her starved aesthetic sense seizes upon his flashy garments, transforming them into shining armor and their wearer into a knight. She

perceived that here was the ideal man. Her dim thoughts were often searching for far-away lands where the little hills sing together in the morning. Under the trees of her dream garden there had always walked a lover.¹

Pete, who has been boasting to Jimmie of his prowess in fighting and ejecting drunks from his bar, notes Maggie watching him with rapt attention and becomes more boastful. Maggie in turn notices the effect that she has on Pete's boasting and her attitude becomes still more worshipful. Having now identified herself with someone she regards as superior, she basks in the satisfaction of having been accepted by him. When Pete, a little later, asks her to go to a vaudeville show with him she accepts.

The place to which Pete takes Maggie is as cheap and flashy as his clothes.

An orchestra of yellow-silk women and bald-headed men, on an elevated stage near the center of a great, green-hued hall, played a popular waltz....Clouds of tobacco smoke rolled and wavered high in the air above the dull glint of the chandeliers.²

A little later

A girl in a pink dress with short skirts galloped upon the stage. She smiled upon the throng...and began to walk to and fro, making profuse gesticulations and singing, in brazen tones, a song the words of which were inaudible....When she vanished there were long rollings of applause....A ventriloquist followed the dancer. He held two fantastic dolls on his knees. He made them sing mournful ditties and say funny things about geography and Ireland.³

¹ Crane, Works, p.159. ²Ibid., p.163-4.

³Ibid., pp.165-8.

To Maggie, however, the place seemed like a fairyland.

Her cheeks were blushing with excitement and her eyes were glistening. She drew deep breaths of pleasure. No thoughts of the collar-and-cuff factory came to her.¹

However cheap Pete and the places he takes Maggie may be, they have the effect of rousing in her a knowledge of her own shortcomings, particularly in the matter of clothing, and a sense of the irudgery of her work. She observes with interest the well-dressed women she meets on the street and becomes aware of the power that good clothes give a woman. She begins to appreciate the value of her youthful appearance and to detest the sweat shop which day by day deprives her of it. As time goes on, Pete, racking his brains for amusement, takes her to the Museum of Arts and opens still another world to her. (Pete, himself, however, is moved only to scorn by the objects displayed in the museum.) In the evenings, they go quite often to see plays—sorry things, featuring a struggling hero, poor but honest; a beautiful heroine, pure as the driven snow (and very probably just as cold!) a rich, evil man out to bend the heroine to his sinister designs; and the various and sundry other villains. These latter do all they can to thwart our hero, but in spite of every conceivable obstacle he defeats them, becomes wealthy, and wins the fair lady.

Crane makes no secret of his opinion of such plays. His descriptions of them abound in mockery. For example, he says of the hero of one of them:

The latter spent most of his time out at soak in pale-green snow-storms, busy with a nickel-plated revolver rescuing aged strangers from villains.²

¹Crane, Works, pp.167-168. ²Ibid., p. 171.

Still, it appears he is willing to concede that even such plays have their values. The hero, poor and downtrodden in the beginning, who eventually defeats his enemies and becomes wealthy and influential, stimulates Maggie to thought.

She wondered if the culture and refinement she had seen imitated, perhaps grotesquely, by the heroine on the stage, could be acquired by a girl who lived in a tenement house and worked in a shirt factory.¹

Fatuous and unreal as these plays were, if they aroused in Maggie the belief or even the half-incredulous hope that she might better her lot, they performed one of the functions of a real literature. Along with this, one must include the qualifying statement that plays such as Maggie saw can perform this function only with people whose knowledge of the world and of society is extremely limited; in other words, people who, for the most part, are of the very lowest social levels. Their effect upon the individual reared in, say, a lower-middle-class environment would be much less, since the middle-class person would be stimulated more directly by agencies which gave a more accurate picture of the world of wealth and fashion.

It might be protested here that the goals which Maggie was stimulated to think about--wealth and "refinement"--do not actually constitute a broadening of the mind at all, that the person with money, the man who knows all the niceties of social behavior, may still be vulgar. Such an argument is valid, but only when applied to persons on a higher social level than Maggie. To people of her class, living a life which is practically bestial, even the acquisition of polite manners would represent an advance, since along with them would

¹Crane, Works, pp. 172-3.

necessarily come the knowledge that other modes of living are possible.

Maggie's affair with Pete continues to the inevitable end.

After a particularly violent brawl between Jimmie and his mother, Maggie goes out with Pete, who seduces her. One can understand what her emotions must have been on this particular evening. The theatre, the museum, and the attentions of Pete had opened the door to another world, and given her a glimpse, however dim and distorted, of a life unknown in Hum Alley. The contrast between that life and the one she actually led must have been particularly devastating the night she stood and viewed once again the shambles of her dwelling. When Pete came and was especially solicitous to her, it can easily be seen why Maggie would more than ever before feel that he was her knight in shining armor, and why she might yield to him.

When Jimmie and his mother learn that Pete has "ruined" Maggie, they are enraged; the mother hurls curses upon her absent daughter.¹

Crane carefully examines the rigid code of "morals" which these people have. Although the mother has been immoral in a very real sense, neglecting her children and brutalizing them by constant drunkenness and brawling, and although Jimmie is not above suggesting that Maggie go "on d'toif" as an alternative to working, both are outraged when they hear of her "ruination." Jimmie enlists the aid of a friend and they attempt

¹Arthur H. Quinn (American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey, N.Y., Appleton, 1936., p. 535) has pointed out that Maggie's mother as a type is not consistent, citing as evidence the contrast between the grimly ironic hypocrisy after Maggie's suicide and her absurd surprise when she hears of her daughter's seduction. He further declares that the characters in Maggie were born in Crane's mind as abstractions rather than individuals, hence that they are not concerned with realism in its highest form.

to beat up Pete in the bar where he works. In the ensuing fight the bar is completely wrecked, but the police stop the fracas before Jimmie and his friend can carry out their intentions.

Meanwhile, Maggie's relationship to Pete has undergone a subtle change. She no longer regards him as a knight errant, but rather looks upon him much as a dog does upon his master.

From her eyes had been plucked all look of self-reliance. She leaned with a dependent air toward her companion. She was timid as if fearing his anger or displeasure. She seemed to beseech tenderness of him.¹

However, Maggie's dependence upon Pete fails to soften his heart. He meets an old girl friend, Nell, in a bar and goes with her, summarily deserting Maggie. Maggie, with no place to go, returns home, but under the torrent of abuse poured upon her by her mother leaves again.

Crane's irony takes over the novel at this point. Although Jimmie is outraged by Pete's actions, he himself has served several girls in precisely the same way. In fact, just before returning home to find Maggie back, he is accosted by one of them.

"Oh, Jimmie, I've been lookin' all over for yehs--" she began. Jimmie made an impatient gesture and quickened his pace. "Ah, don't bodder me!" he said, with the savageness of a man whose life is pestered. "But, Jimmie", she said, "Yehs told me yehs--" Jimmie turned upon her fiercely as if resolved to make a last stand for comfort and peace. "Say, Hattie, don't follow me from one end of deh city to deh odder. Let up, will yehs? Give me a minute 's res', will yehs? Yehs makes me sick, allus taggin' me. See? Ain' yehs got no sense? Do yehs want people to get on to me? Go chase yerself." The woman stopped close and laid her fingers on his arm. "But, look a here---." Jimmie snarled, "Oh, go teh blazes!"²

Crane also shows Pete and Jimmie to be essentially alike by a scene strongly paralleling the one above, in which Pete treats Maggie almost exactly the way Jimmie treated Hattie.

¹Crane, Works, p. 188.

²Ibid., P. 101.

Maggie, rejected by family and lover, becomes a prostitute and finally drowns herself. And then comes the final scene—a masterpiece of irony. Jimmie comes home and tells his mother, "Mag's dead." The old woman begins to weep, and moans that she "kin remember when her two feet was no bigger den yer thumb and she weared worsted boots."¹ The harpy neighbors gather to console her for the loss of her child. One of them, "whose vocabulary was derived from mission churches," sobs:

Yer peer misguided chil' is gone now, Mary, an' let us hope it's fer deh bes'. Yeh'll fergive her now, Mary, won't yehs, dear, all her disobed'ence? All her t'ankless behavior to her mudder an' her badness? She's gone where her ter'ble sins will be jedged.²

The irony of the scene reaches its highest pitch when the mother's voice rises and she shrieks, "Oh, yes, I'll fergive her, I'll fergive her!" What could better express Crane's contempt for Maggie's family and his conviction that they, not she, were in need of being forgiven for the drunkenness and bestiality which drove Maggie to do what she did?

The tragic inevitability of Maggie's end is a direct consequence of the environment in which she was reared. Cheap, illiterate, and gaudy as she was, she did have potentialities of development, which in more favorable circumstances might have helped her to achieve the better life she desired. Unfortunately, a favorable environment was the very thing that Maggie lacked. From the very beginning, here was a world of filthy streets, dank, ill-smelling tenements, and dismal sweat-shops—a world whose denizens lived like beasts in a jungle. She never knew love and tenderness, only the blows and curses of a drunken, brawling father and

¹Crane, Works, p.216.

²Ibid., p.217.

mother. Finally, she was completely cut off from literature, art and music, which might have opened new worlds of experience to her. Reared under such conditions, Maggie remained completely ignorant of and isolated from any other life than that of a slum dweller, the potentialities within her became stifled, and her downfall assured.

It is, of course, also entirely possible that Maggie might have come to grief even had she been reared in the most favorable of environments. As has been seen, Crane felt that man not only lives in an indifferent, naturalistic universe, but that he is also incapable of knowing truth. This being so, even a broad knowledge of the world does not guarantee its possessor immunity from disaster. At best, it merely increases the number of intelligent responses which an individual can make in a particular situation.

The theme of initiation, as well as that of isolation, is clearly present in Maggie. At the beginning of the story, Maggie is surrounded by evil; yet it is the only life she knows, nor can she recognize evil. The drinking and brawling of her father and mother, the filth and poverty on every side, she must perforce accept as part of the way of life. To be sure, Maggie does not accept her environment without reservations; the very fact that she vaguely aspires to a better life shows that she disapproves of it in some measure. However, she is at first unaware of its malignancy.

Little by little, Maggie begins to see slum life for what it really is. Her attempts to brighten up the hovel in which she lives, her new-found hatred of her sweat-shop employer, her growing awareness

of and desire to enter a world of wealth and refinement similar to that which she saw depicted on the stage, all these glimmerings testify to a growing realization of the limitations, if not the evil, of her surroundings. Throughout this period, Maggie's attitude toward Pete remains unchanged--she still looks upon him as her ideal. It is only after Pete has seduced and deserted her that she realizes the nature of her environment, the evil that permeates everyone and everything in her world. Ironically enough, it is Maggie's growing sense of evil of the life around her that leads her, by stimulating her attempts to escape it, to become its victim. After Pete leaves her, Maggie's isolation is complete. Not only is the better life to which she aspired more unattainable than ever, but she suffers rejection even by her own alum world. It is in a spirit of complete despair at the hopelessness of her position that she becomes a prostitute and later commits suicide.

The critics are unanimous in labeling Maggie a naturalistic work. Berryman¹ states that "not Maggie's fate alone but the fates of the others as well are inevitable, given their misconceptions of each other, themselves, and their world," while Cargill² calls the story "the first piece of undisguised naturalism produced in this country."

Zola's L'Assommoir is the work almost invariably mentioned by literary critics as having influenced Crane in the writing of Maggie. Stallman³ says that Crane either invented his plot or took it from L'Assommoir but admits it is not certain whether or not Crane read Zola's novel. Berryman⁴ is somewhat more definite, declaring that Crane

¹John Berryman, Stephen Crane, N.Y., Sloane, 1950, p.59.

²Oscar Cargill, Intellectual America: Ideas on the March, N.Y., Macmillan, 1941, p.85.

³Stallman, op.cit., p.6.

⁴Berryman, op.cit., pp.62-3.

probably read the French work and was influenced by it, while Cargill¹ is most certain of all, stating flatly that "there is no doubt whatever that Crane's inspiration...was Zola's L'Assommoir."

Whatever part literary influences may have played in the writing of Maggie, it is certain that the book owes a great deal to the direct observations of its author. By the summer of 1891, Crane was visiting New York at every possible opportunity, touring the Bowery and observing with a keen eye the mode of life of its denizens. One night he shocked his girl--a Helen Trent whom he had met in Asbury Park--by showing up at her house with a black eye, suffered in a Bowery saloon brawl. To Helen's entreaties that he not go there again, Crane replied that the Bowery was the most interesting part of New York, and that he intended someday to write a book about it which would show how its inhabitants lived and what they thought. The next summer, following the Asbury Park fiasco, he moved to New York, where, early in 1893, he published Maggie.²

It is interesting to compare Crane's treatment of Maggie with the sentimental manner in which many nineteenth century writers--O. Henry, Dickens, and Harte for example--handle similar characters.³ Of these three, perhaps the most suitable for purposes of comparison is O. Henry, since he, like Crane, spent a great deal of time in the slums of New

¹Cargill, loc.cit.

²Berryman, op.cit., p.28-9.

³It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Crane was the only writer of this period who treated slum women in a realistic manner. Arthur Morrison's approach in his collection of short stories, Tales of Mean Streets, is also realistic, and one of the stories, "Lisérunt," is strangely reminiscent of Maggie, since it too depicts a slum girl who is ultimately forced to become a prostitute.

York, observing shop girls, prostitutes, gangsters, and derelicts against the background which produced them, and using his observations as the raw material for fiction. Yet in spite of the identical material with which the two writers worked, their end products could hardly be more dissimilar. In contrast to the naturalistic writings of Crane, O. Henry paints a romantic world of cynics and rascals who, notwithstanding their other shortcomings, are models of decorum in their relationships with women; a world in which

An unconventional way of life could be reconciled with great respect for convention, in which the golden hearts of ne'er-do-wells and rogues were exposed for all to see, in which romance was present [and] the hand of fate could be manipulated to achieve pleasant comedy and a miraculous succession of happy endings.¹

Probably the closest parallel to Maggie that can be found in Dickens is Little Emily, the niece of Peggotty, in David Copperfield. Like Maggie, Emily is a "flower that blossomed in a mudpuddle," and like Maggie she is seduced and deserted. Here, however, all similarity between the two situations ceases. Emily's reaction to her seduction is typically Victorian. She indulges in an orgy of breast-beating, so much so that

the reader sometimes feels that Emily's self-abasement and remorse are intensified to a sentimental luxuriance, and that there is too much of the assumption that she is irretrievably stained forever, and that her life can be nothing but one long and hopeless penance.²

This attitude continues after she has been forgiven by Peggotty and it is obvious that she will suffer no permanent aftermath of her affair with Steerforth.

¹Granville Hicks, "A Sleight-of-Hand Master," New York Times Book Review, December 27, 1953, p.5.

²Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, N.Y., Simon & Schuster, 1952, p.697.

Maggie really loses much more, as a result of her seduction, than does Little Em'ly. Not only is Maggie estranged from her slum acquaintances, but she sees dashed even the vague hopes that she has of bettering herself. Yet in the midst of hopelessness, with but one career left open to her, Maggie does not indulge in bouts of self-pity. She accepts her fate stoically and eventually goes to her death the same way.

Crane handles Maggie's death as realistically as he does her seduction. Although it is obvious that he pities and sympathizes with her, he makes no effort to exalt her character, as Harte sentimentalizes his prostitutes in such stories as "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." Even in death Maggie remains cheap, illiterate, and gaudy. It is precisely because she does remain so, because she is so obviously a victim of her environment in every way--physically, spiritually, and aesthetically--that she is much more an object of genuine pity¹ than either the wailing Em'ly of Dickens or the "sainted" Mother Shipton and Duchess of Harte.

¹ A much more uncharitable attitude toward Maggie, and one which, so far as I can tell, is not shared by any other critic, is that expressed by Frederick J. Hoffman, who says:

There is a quality of indecision [in Maggie] regarding the conditions described; the first inference is that they are inevitable and irremediable; the second that the characters are in themselves so weak and morally passive that they deserve what happens to them. The world of Maggie is a social wasteland created, not by men who exploit it, but by those who live in it and who are incapable of living anywhere else. (The Modern Novel in America, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1951, p.51)

"AN EXPERIMENT IN MISERY"
AND
"THE MEN IN THE STORM"

Like Maggie and George's Mother, these stories deal with life in the slums. However, there is one difference—the characters in "An Experiment in Misery" and "The Men in the Storm" are vagabonds, men without work or prospects, hopelessly dependent on charity for food and a bed, while those in the first two stories are at least employed, though living in the slums.

Crane had a definite purpose in writing about such wanderers.

In a letter to a Miss Catherine Harris he says:

I do not think that much can be done with the Bowery as long as the... (blurred)... are in their present state of conceit. Anyone who thinks himself superior to the rest of us because he has no job and no pride and no clean clothes is as badly conceited as Lillian Russell. In a story of mine called "An Experiment in Misery" I tried to make plain that the root of Bowery life is sort of cowardice. Perhaps I mean a lack of ambition or to be willingly knocked down and accept the licking...¹

"An Experiment in Misery"² depicts a night in the lives of two of these vagabonds.³ The younger of the two is met first, wandering about in search of a place to spend the night. A sign on a saloon, which says "Free Hot Soup Tonight," lures him, he enters, orders a beer, and is given a bowl of soup in which are "little floating suggestions of chicken."

¹Robert Wooster Stallman, Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, pp.55-56.

²Crane, Works, XI, pp. 21-34.

³R. G. Vosburgh, ("The Darkest Hour in the Life of Stephen Crane," Criterion, 1: 26-7 (Feb., 1901)) says that Crane and a friend spent two days and a night as Bowery tramps in order to get material for this story.

Upon leaving the saloon, he is accosted by an older vagabond who asks him for two cents for a bed. The youth agrees, providing the older man will show him where he plans to spend the night. The older man conducts him to a "rooming house"—really a flophouse—and they go in. Crane describes vividly the smells which hit the youth with almost physical force.

from the dark and secret places of the building there came to his nostrils strange and unspeakable odors, that assailed him like malignant diseases with wings. They seemed to be from human bodies closely packed in dens, the exhalations from a hundred pairs of reeking lips; the fumes from a thousand bygone debauches; the expression of a thousand present miseries.¹

The proprietor of the establishment conducts them to a cot-jammed room, full of men who lay "in deathlike silence a-heaving and snoring with tremendous effect, like stabbed fish." One of these snoring, muttering men especially interests Crane; he sees in him all the suffering and misery of the outcast forgotten by the rest of humanity.

...these were not merely the shrieks of a vision pierced man; they were an utterance of the meaning of the room and its occupants. It was to him [the youth] the protest of the wretch who feels the imperturbable granite wheels, and who then cries with an impersonal eloquence...giving voice to the wail of a whole section, a class, a people.²

The next morning the two men leave the rooming house together. They walk until they come to a cheap restaurant, where the youth offers to buy the older man his breakfast. They dine on coffee and rolls and then go to the park, where they sit aimlessly on benches. Here again Crane protests bitterly against a nation which could ignore the misery of its needy citizens.

¹Crane, Works, p.28.

²Ibid., p.28.

The people of the streets...walked in their good clothes as upon important missions, giving no gaze to the two wanderers seated upon the benches. They expressed to the young man his infinite distance from all that he valued. Social position, comfort, the pleasures of living were unconquerable kingdoms. He felt a sudden awe. And in the background a multitude of buildings, of pitiless hue and sternly high, were to him emblematic of a nation forcing its regal head into the clouds throwing no downward glances; in the sublimity of its aspirations ignoring the wretches who may flounder at its feet....He confessed himself an outcast, and his eyes from under the lowered brim of his hat began to glance guiltily, wearing the criminal expression that comes with certain convictions.¹

Along with criticizing an indifferent society, Crane in the foregoing passage makes the same point which his letter to Miss Harris stresses—that the Bowery dweller is often largely responsible for his plight because of his own cowardice. For unfortunately it is a fact that quite often the individual whom society "looks down upon" adopts society's opinion of himself. In English novels as recent as the nineteenth century characters are often encountered—usually servants or tenant farmers—who not only feel that they are inferior to the local gentry but resent any suggestion that they might better their position as being contrary to divine injunction. God after all placed them in the position they occupy, and who are they to try to alter God's work?² Such an attitude can perhaps be excused in an English tenant farmer on the grounds that custom had established it so strongly that he couldn't be expected to believe otherwise. However, no such considerations apply to the Bowery dweller. Often he accepts society's opinion of him only because he lacks the courage to risk society's displeasure by rejecting its opinions, by fighting back against the injustice which society inflicts upon him.

¹Crane, Works, p.34.

²Thus Mrs. Poyser, the wife of a tenant farmer in George Eliot's Adam Bede says (ch.52.), "I know there's them as is born t'own the land, and them as is born to sweat on't...and I know it's christened folks' duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood 'ull hear it."

In "The Men in the Storm"¹ Crane examines another facet of Bowery life, the every-man-for-himself naturalistic jungle law under which most of the denizens appear to operate. The story is about a group of outcasts who are waiting for a charitable institution to open for the night, where for five cents they can get a bed, a meal, and shelter from the snowstorm which beats down on their heads.² In "An Experiment in Misery" a certain amount of assistance is given one unfortunate by another, but here there is no cooperation at all. Each man is obsessed only by a selfish desire to get inside regardless of what happens to the others.

The group begins to gather slowly, just about dusk. Two types of person are represented. One class is composed of laborers who, for reasons beyond their control, are temporarily out of work. They are "strong, healthy, clear-skinned fellows" who do not go about bemoaning their sad fate, but rather wear a "sudden and singular meekness" and who look as if they were "trying to perceive where they had failed, what they lacked, to be thus vanquished..."³ The other men in the group are Boweryites, who have come because the institution is even cheaper than the ten cent flophouses they are used to frequenting.

At first everyone is orderly, but soon a rumor starts that the men in the forepart of the crowd are jammed so tightly against the door that those inside will be unable to open it.

¹Crane, Works, pp. 37-45.

²Stallman (op.cit., pp.11-12) says that this story is filled with "social calculation," that the derelicts standing in front of the charitable house symbolize the downtrodden of humanity waiting for "the open door"--for a social change.

³Ibid., p.40.

Then a dull roar of rage came from the men on the outskirts; but all the time they strained and pushed until it appeared to be impossible for those that they cried out against to do anything but be crushed into a pulp....Men in the outskirts of the crowd occasionally yelled when a boot-heel of one of the trampling feet crushed on their freezing extremities. "Git off me feet, yeh clumsy tarrier!" "Say, don't stand on me feet! Walk on th' ground!"...And another, a man of infinite valour, once twisted his head so as to half face those who were pushing behind him. "Quit yer shovin', yeh"---and he delivered a volley of the most powerful and singular invective, straight into the faces of the men behind.¹

Soon, however, the group finds a diversion.

In the brilliantly lighted--[window of a dry-goods shop across the way] appeared the figure of a man. He was rather stout and very well clothed. His beard was fashioned charmingly after that of the Prince of Wales. He stood in an attitude of reflection. He slowly stroked his moustache with a certain grandeur of manner, and looked down at the snow-encrusted mob.... One of the mob changed to turn his head and perceived the figure in the window. "Hello, look-it, 'is whiskers," he said genially. Many of the men turned then, and a shout went up. They called to him in all strange keys. They addressed him in every manner, from familiar and cordial greetings to carefully worded advice concerning changes in his person appearance. The man presently fled and the mob chuckled ferociously, like ogres who had just devoured something.²

As time passes without the doors opening, tempers grow shorter and shorter.

The men, in keen pain from the blasts, began almost to fight. With the pitiless whirl of snow upon them the battle for shelter was going to be strong....A policeman arrived and went into the midst of them, scolding and berating, occasionally threatening,, but using no force but that of his hands and shoulders against these men who were only struggling to get in out of the storm.^{3,4}

¹Crane, *Works*, pp.41-2.

²*Ibid.*, p.43.

³*Ibid.*, p.44.

⁴According to Stallman, (*op.cit.*, p.12) the snow which falls upon the heads of the men is symbolical of the social strife that also beats upon them.

When the doors are finally opened, the men pour in. Those in front, who have formerly been yelling for the others to get off their feet, now don't mind at all being pushed, since the press of people assures that they shall get inside. Once inside, their misery is forgotten.

If in "An Experiment in Misery" Crane criticizes the Bowery dweller for acquiescing in society's opinion of him, for refusing to fight back against its injustices, in "The Men in the Storm" he displays no great hope that they will be able to cooperate in fighting back. The way the men trample and curse and in general hinder one another from reaching their common goal makes it appear unlikely that they will ever be able to present a united front to their enemies.

If they could stand together, however, they might achieve a success greater than they imagined. The scene in which the mob puts the clothing store owner to flight shows that these men have a great deal more power than they suspect. But they remain ignorant of its true extent. They turn on this representative of the "Haves" only in order to provide themselves with a little humor to while away the slow-passing time, and then forget the episode. Once they are inside they forget the miseries which they endured on the outside, and this fact also doesn't speak well for the possibility of their taking collective action. It is the persons who carry the memory of misery and oppression about with them who eventually band together to try to do something about it, not those who forget their distress the moment it is temporarily lifted.

In doubting the possibility of any real cooperation among these down-and-outers, Crane is of course not implying that cooperation among individuals is impossible under any circumstances. The Red Badge of Courage shows that under certain conditions individuals are capable of cooperating to the extent of submerging their own personalities in a common cause. However, such cooperation, such identification of the self with something greater, is possible only under very extreme circumstances. Henry Fleming and his companions feel a sense of comradeship and oneness only when they are in battle and in imminent danger of losing their lives. Before going into combat each individual is too busy impressing his comrades or dreaming of future glory to be really cooperative.

Bad as the situation of the men who are seeking shelter from the storm is, it cannot be said that they face imminent death. Most of them are assured at least a bed and a meal, and the unlucky ones, if worst comes to worst, can always get a free bowl of soup in a saloon and overnight shelter in jail. If, however, conditions worsened, if, for example, the charitable institutions suspended operations, the saloons stopped serving free lunches, and the jails refused to give vagrants overnight shelter, then they would be faced with a situation as critical in its own way as that faced by Henry Fleming. Under such circumstances they might not content themselves with jeering at well-fed merchants, but might instead band together and seize what food, clothing, and shelter they needed. Unless conditions become truly desperate, however, there is little chance that these down-and-outers will take such positive action.

GEORGE'S MOTHER

George's Mother¹ is a story of a young man's downfall. When the theme is stated in this bald manner, one might suppose it to be another melodrama; and, actually it does have many melodramatic features. However, Crane's story does something which the old melodrama never did at all, or at best did very crudely. It delves into George's mind, showing how it operates and why he does what he does, adding psychological interest to what otherwise might be another routine plot of boy--succumbs--to--temptation. In this respect it resembles The Red Badge of Courage, whose protagonist, Henry Fleming, constantly tries to rationalize his actions, to justify them to himself and hence to society.

When George first appears, he is a sturdy young workman whose "shoulders had a self-reliant poise, and the hang of his arms and the raised veins of his hands showed him to be a man who worked with his muscles." He meets Jones, an old acquaintance from his home town, who invites him to have a drink. During the reunion, George shows himself to be a rather temperate individual who has to be urged to take a second drink. He is also considerate of his mother's feelings, as evidenced by the fact that he soon breaks away, saying he must hurry home, since he is "late as blazes." Before leaving, however, he half accepts an invitation to a party that evening.

George's mother, in turn, shows her love and concern for her son in the way she keeps looking at the clock and worrying about his failure to appear on schedule.

¹Crane, Works, X, pp. 19-90.

"I wonder why he don't come," she continually repeated. There was a small curious note of despair in her voice. As she sat thinking and staring at the clock the expressions of her face changed swiftly. All manner of emotions flickered in her eyes and about her lips. She was evidently perceiving in her imagination the journey of a loved person. She dreamed for him mishaps and obstacles. Something tremendous and irritating was hindering him from coming home.¹

In the scene following George's arrival home, it is evident that although he treats his mother rather curtly, he is still genuinely fond of her. His fondness is shown plainly in his attempts to talk himself out of going to prayer meeting with her. Instead of refusing point blank, he vacillates, asking "But what th' blazes would I do at prayer-meetin'?" Finally, when he must actually refuse, he tries to soften the blow for his mother by arguing that his disinclination to go would prevent him from reaping any benefits from the meeting. Even so, such is his regard for his mother that he feels completely miserable until the sound of her footsteps dies away. In this scene there is a nice example of rationalization resembling Henry Fleming's similar self-justifications. As Henry attempted to explain his actions to his comrades (within his own mind), so George tries to salve his conscience by justifying his refusal to go to church.

At the party which George attends that evening he makes a hit with Jones' friend Bleecker and in turn Bleecker impresses him favorably. From the first moment of their meeting, George feels that he is in the company of an important and somehow better person than he. Bleecker's polished language helps create that impression; to George's bumpkinish "How d'yeh do?" at their introduction, Bleecker says, in a

¹Crane, Works, p.27.

sauve, urbane manner: "Mr. Kelsey, I'm happy to meet you sir: have a drink." A few minutes later, Bleecker says, "Never been here before I believe, have you, Mr. Kelsey?" and George, in Crane's words, "felt around for a high-bred reply." "Er--no--I've never had that--er--pleasure," he stammers.

Bleecker soon becomes aware that George regards him as an important person. "He grew warm. Obviously the youth was one whose powers of perception were developed. Directly, then he launched forth into a tale of bygone days, when the world was better." Kelsey for his part

was proud that the prominent character of the place talked at him, glancing into his eyes for appreciation of fine parts.... He admired Bleecker immensely. He developed a brotherly feeling for the others, who were all gentle-spoken. He began to feel that he was passing the happiest evening of his life. His companions were so jovial and good-natured and everything they did was marked by such courtesy.¹

George is now in somewhat the same position as was Maggie when she first met Pete. His ego has received a boost by the attention of a man he feels to be superior to himself while at the same time Bleecker's ego has been inflated by the deference which George shows toward him. It would not be too much to say that this newly-acquired feeling of importance is more than anything else responsible for the way he embraces his new companions. George, then, is not merely a weak youth led astray by evil companions; he is a very human person who through Bleecker acquires a new sense of his own importance and as a result is more firmly wedded to the group that makes him feel so than he otherwise ever could have been.

¹Crane, Works, p. 32.

The group also has another powerful attraction for George. It provides him with the only outlet he has for getting off his chest the cares and frustrations of daily living. The others in the group are similarly furnished an outlet for their frustrations. Helped along by liquor

each man explained in his way that he was totally out of place in the before-mentioned world. They were possessed of various virtues which were unappreciated by those with whom they were commonly obliged to mingle; they were fitted for a tree-shaded land where everything was peace. Now that five of them had congregated it gave them happiness to speak their innermost thoughts without fear of being misunderstood.¹

It is no wonder that George becomes passionately attached to a group which offers so much.

The next morning the inevitable reaction sets in. George is suffering from a hangover, and this, coupled with the fact that he is once again an unimportant man with a routine job requiring him to work long hours, evokes a profane outburst. His mother is shocked and they quarrel. However, they soon make up and for a while everything seems all right.

It might be asked why George's mother failed to instill in him a feeling of importance, a feeling that he was appreciated for his good qualities. She held, to be sure, a high opinion of her son.

She rejoiced at qualities in him that indicated that he was going to be a white and looming king among men. For these she made pictures in which he appeared as a benign personage blessed by the filled hands of the poor, one whose brain could hold massive thoughts and awe certain men about whom she had read. She was feted as the mother of this enormous man. These

¹Crane, Works, p.35.

dreams were her solace. She spoke of them to no one, because she knew that, worded, they would be ridiculous, but she dwelt with them and they shed a radiance of gold upon her long days, her sorry labor.¹

Although the mother thought of her child as quite a special person, she was well aware that if he got to believing that his mind formed "a dazzling constellation," he would sit idly by, basking in his own greatness, and never achieve that which he was capable of achieving by dint of hard work. She was therefore always on guard to slap down any signs of vanity that she might see in her son. Thus George, who might otherwise have found encouragement and a sense of importance through his mother, came to resent the way she suppressed his youthful vanity and concluded that she didn't understand him.

George also dreamed of his future glory.

He had many dreams of the distant future when he would be a man with a cloak of coldness concealing his gentleness and his faults, of whom the men, and more particularly the women, would think with reverence....And then he would have power and he would enjoy having his bounty and his wrath alike fall swiftly upon those below. They would be awed. And above all he would mystify them....An indefinite woman was in all of Kelsey's dreams. As a matter of fact, it was not he whom he pictured as wedding her. It was a vision of himself greater, finer, more terrible....In scenes which he took mainly from pictures, this vision conducted a courtship, strutting, posing and lying through a drama which was magnificent from glow of purple. In it he was icy, self-possessed; but she the dream-girl, was consumed by wild, torrential passion.²

It is apparent that both George's mother and George himself have definitely romantic ideas concerning his future. Both see him as a knight in shining armour who will wed the lovely Princess and live happily ever after.

¹Crane, Works, pp. 42-43.

²Ibid., pp.43-44.

About the time that George is most nearly enraptured by the vision of his dream-girl, he meets Maggie Johnson—she of Maggie, Girl of the Streets—on the steps of the tenement and falls madly in love with her. He is afraid to speak, but contrives to encounter her as much as possible and places her in all his grandiose dreams. He receives a terrible blow when a young, handsomely-dressed man—perhaps Pete—calls upon Maggie and takes her out for the evening. This catastrophe, coupled with his belief that his mother doesn't understand him, serves to drive him closer to Jones and Bleeker. While in the grim mood engendered by Maggie's "stepping out" on him, he accepts an invitation to a party that Bleeker is to give the next day.

At the party, George gets terribly drunk, and his friends are forced to restrain him by putting him in a corner and piling furniture on top of him. His already bruised ego receives a new blow—his friends have now turned against him; they too are unable to recognize his sterling qualities, his obvious superiority. If they had they would never have done this thing to him.

He awakes the next morning with a hangover and thinks futile thoughts.

As he lay pondering, his bodily condition created in him a bitter philosophy, and he perceived all the futility of a red existence. He saw his life problems confronting him like granite giants, and he was no more erect to meet them....He was aghast at the prospect of the old routine. It was impossible....Turning toward the other way, he saw that the gold portals of vice no longer enticed him. He could not hear the strains of alluring music. The beckoning sirens of drink had been killed by the pain in his head.¹

¹Crane, Works, pp. 58-59.

Feeling cut off from his companions, as well as from his mother and the girl of his dreams, George yields to his mother's entreaties that he go to prayer-meeting. But if he somehow hoped to find through the meeting the sense of belonging that he had found and then lost in Jones' group, he was due for bitter disappointment. The people who came to the little church do nothing to inflate George's sense of his own importance, consequently he is not attracted to them. They are merely objects to be studied disinterestedly.

One by one people arose and told little tales of their religious faith. Some were tearful, and others calm, emotionless, and convincing. Kelsey listened closely for a time. These people filled him with a great curiosity. He was not familiar with their types.¹

Soon after the visit to the prayer-meeting, George returns to his old cronies. After all, it was they who had first recognized his superiority in spite of the fact that they later piled furniture on him. As for the effect of drinking, he has neatly solved that problem in his own mind.

The thing was not so terrible. His headache had caused him to exaggerate. A drink was not the blight which he had once remorsefully named it. On the contrary, it was a mere unpleasant incident. He resolved, however, to be more cautious.²

George is now pretty well in with the saloon-frequenting, drinking crowd, but he has further aspirations. He longs to make the acquaintance of a group of young toughs who hang around saloons, cadging drinks and beating up on foreigners and prosperous-looking persons. This group's

¹Crane, Works, pp. 67-68. Robert Hooster Stallman (Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p. 20) believes that the conflict between George and his mother is symbolized in Crane's picture of city and church. Just as the church, which according to Crane, "sat humbly between two towering apartment-houses" is overwhelmed by the city, so does George in the end defeat and destroy his mother.

²Ibid., pp. 68-9.

position in Bowery Society is analogous to that of the "400" in New York high society. They are the ideals of slum society, just as the "smart set" are the ideals of middle-class people who aspire to social prominence. No daughter of Mrs. O'Grady ever copied the dress, speech, and manners of the debutante daughter of the Colonel's lady more slavishly than these Bowery social climbers aped their ideals. Crane is quite specific in stating George's reasons for wishing to be taken in by this gang. "Kelsey longed for their acquaintance and friendship, for with it came social safety and ease; they were respected so universally."

George's desire to become a member of this gang—like his day-dreaming—is thus motivated by the wish to be admired and looked up to by others. He has of course, already found a position in the social hierarchy and his ego has been fed richly by Bleecker's flattering attention, but the association has provided him no opportunity for distinguishing himself in the eyes of his fellows. The activities of the new gang, however, would provide such opportunity in abundance.

George is finally accepted into the gang after helping Fidsay Corcoran, one of its members, who is receiving a beating at the hands of one of his intended victims. George's mother soon finds out about his new acquaintances, but when she attempts to admonish him for keeping company with them he turns on her in fury. He soon loses his job for failing to go to work regularly, and his mother collapses with grief.

The day after losing his job, George is with the gang when news comes that his mother is ill. He races home, and in an agony of

remorse tells her how scared he was when he found out she was sick and how he intends to get a job and make up for his past actions. However, he soon forgets his promises and returns to his old life. By now Bleecker's gang has pretty much turned against him, since he is out of work and always trying to borrow money from them.

Kelsey is notified of his mother's second attack while he is being bedeviled into a fight with Blue Billie, one of the gang's members, by the rest of the group. He leaves for home, followed by their jeers and curses. His mother is raving when he enters the apartment. He is stunned and in this state can hear only the ticking of the alarm clock. The little old lady dies as a mother in another flat screams at her own son.

George's Mother is not simply the story of a young man led astray by evil companions. It is, rather, the story of a young man's struggles to find a place in the social hierarchy, to win the respect and admiration of his fellows. George's desires, as well as those of his mother, are reflected in daydreams strongly reminiscent of those of Henry Fleming before the realities of war were brought home to him.¹ In each instance, the dreamer's ego, his sense of his own importance, is enhanced. Thus George's mother basks in the reflected glory of her son,

¹The comments of Edward Garnett upon George's Mother reveal a curious failure to recognize Crane's preoccupation with the workings of the human mind. Of the novel Garnett says:
 "In method it is a masterpiece. It is a story dealing simply with an old lady and her son, who live together in a New York tenement block. An ordinary artist would seek to delve into the mind of the old woman, to follow its workings....A great artist would so recreate her life that its joys and griefs became significant of the joys and griefs of motherhood on earth. Mr. Crane does neither. He simply reproduces the surface of the individual life in so marvelous a way that the manner in which the old woman washes up the

while George himself feels godlike in rewarding and punishing those beneath him and in driving his girl frantic with love. Such daydreaming, Crane appears to be saying, is characteristic of persons who have failed to achieve a satisfactory relationship to society. Once the individual has found his place in the social framework and proven his mettle, the necessity for such daydreaming no longer exists and it ceases. Thus Henry Fleming can, after his first battle, look back with contempt upon his earlier romantic longings for glory. Unlike Henry, George Kelsey has no opportunity to prove himself in an acceptable manner. He does achieve a relationship to society by becoming a member of Bleeker's gang, and through it acquires a new sense of his own importance. The only way, however, he can demonstrate to the world by actual deeds that he is worthy of its admiration is by joining Corcoran's gang and participating in its activities.

In the final analysis, then, the basic reason for George's downfall is the failure of his slum environment to provide a suitable group with which he can identify himself or socially acceptable ways for him to prove his merit to the world.

Another point needs to be cleared up. That there is a great deal of drinking throughout the story might lead some readers to conclude that George was ruined through liquor. To make of George's Mother a temperance tract, however, is something far from Crane's

crochery for example, gives us the essentials....The rare thing about Mr. Crane's art is that he keeps closer to the surface than any living writer, and...to a great extent makes the surface betray the depths." (Friday Nights, N.Y., Knopf, 1922, p.206.)

mind¹ as the following quotation makes clear.

Kelsey sometimes wondered whether he liked beer. He had been obliged to cultivate a talent for imbibing it. He was born with an abhorrence which he had steadily battled until ...he could drink from ten to twenty glasses of beer without the act of swallowing causing him to shiver. He understood that drink was essential to joy, to the coveted position of a man of the world and of the street.²

In other words, liquor was merely something that George had to endure in order to succeed in finding the all-important niche in society.

¹On the other hand, it cannot be assumed that Crane was uninfluenced by the literature of Prohibitionism. As the son of a Methodist minister and a mother active in the temperance movement, he was almost certainly exposed to many pamphlets and books depicting the horrible consequences of drinking, and there is a distinct possibility that in writing George's Mother he seized upon their basic plot, adapting it to his own needs. This contention cannot, of course, be verified, but it does provide a reasonable explanation for the melodramatic elements of the novel.

²Crane, Works, p.68.

"THE OPEN BOAT" AND
"A MAN AND—SOME OTHERS"

"The Open Boat"¹ is the story of four Americans who spend thirty hours at sea in a lifeboat after escaping a sinking ship. The four slowly work their way toward the shore of Florida, but when they approach the beach they find the surf too high for them to land, so they turn north and start to follow the beach, hoping to find a place where they can make shore. At one point, they think they are going to be rescued; a man apparently sees them and starts to wave his coat, but no help appears. The men spend all night in the boat, but when morning comes they decide to make a run for the beach. As they approach the shore, the boat is upset by surf, as they knew it would be. Three of the group—the captain, the cook, and the correspondent—make the beach safely, but the oiler is killed.²

¹Crane, *Works*, XII, pp. 29-61.

²There can be no question concerning Crane's inspiration for this story. It is based upon a personal experience which he underwent while serving as a reporter for the *Bachelor News Syndicate*. The episode began in November, 1896, when the syndicate sent him to Jacksonville, Florida, from whence he was to proceed to Cuba to report upon an insurrection then in progress. After a few weeks in Jacksonville—during which time he met the woman who was to become his wife—he got news of a ship, the *Commodore*, which was soon to sail for Cuba with a cargo of guns, ammunition, and volunteers, and signed aboard as a common seaman. From the very first, the voyage was ill-fated. Twice within the first twenty-four hours, the ship ran aground. Finally, early in the morning of January 2, 1897, it sprang a leak and soon had to be abandoned. Stephen Crane found himself in a lifeboat along with the ship's captain, the cook, an oiler, and a sailor (who does not appear in the story.) From this point on, the experiences of Crane and his companions paralleled those of the four men in "The Open Boat", even to the capsizing of the boat in the Florida surf and the death of the oiler. (see John Berryman, *Stephen Crane*, N.Y., Sloane, 1950, pp. 153-65; Robert Wooster Stallman, *Stephen Crane: An Omnibus*, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, pp. 448-76. The latter is a reprinting of several newspaper accounts of the sinking of the *Commodore*, including one written by Crane.)

Crane's narrative is, however, more than simply one of shipwreck and rescue. It expresses more explicitly than any other of Crane's stories his belief that the universe is absolutely indifferent to man and his fate. Of it Stallman says:

"The Open Boat" is a direct transcript of personal experience but it is personal experience transformed into an impersonal and symbolic representation of life: the plight of man tossed upon an indifferent sea.¹

There are several passages in this story which explain Crane's naturalistic conception of the universe and man's relation to it. The first one occurs at the point where the men are about to make their first—and unsuccessful—run for the beach. They have just exchanged addresses (so that if some of them are drowned the others can notify their relatives) and they are reflecting—perhaps, as Crane says, something like this:

If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd.—But no; she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work.²

This same train of thought runs through the minds of the men several times as the hours pass³, to be displaced by even more disturbing reflections.

During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard....Other

¹Stallman, "Stephen Crane: A Reevaluation," in Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, ed. John W. Aldridge, N.Y., Ronald, 1952, p.247.

²Crane, Works, p.41.

³Ibid., pp.47, 51.

III

people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—when it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not main the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at temples, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples.¹

Crane even provides a symbol for the naturalistic universe—the lighthouse the men are seeking.

This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent.²

However, if nature is indifferent to the plight of the men, the men are not indifferent to one another's condition. Faced with blindly irrational nature and impending death they seem to feel stronger than ever the bonds of humanity that held them together as men. Gentleness and consideration for the others is present in each of them. When a rower becomes tired and asks someone else to take over, the answer is always "Sure", never a snarl. When the correspondent, who is steering the boat, allows a crest of water to come over the sides and waken the men who are sleeping, he apologizes profusely and the others accept the apology graciously.³

Previously, the correspondent had never felt any emotion when he read or heard about the deaths of strangers, but now he begins to feel a kinship with even a dying soldier in an old burlesque poem.

In his childhood the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he never regarded that fact as important. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying

¹Crane, Works, p.51.

²Ibid., pp. 55-6.

³Ibid., P. 49.

in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter of sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil's point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. The correspondent, plying the oars...was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.¹

Danger has thus awakened in the men a feeling of compassion toward one another that never existed before. This solicitude is reflected in a brave act of the captain after their boat has been overturned and the men are floundering around in the surf. A stranger appears and dashes into the water to help them. "He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded toward the captain; but the captain waved him away and sent him to the correspondent."² The captain, tired as he must have been, is willing to forego assistance, in order that one of his companions might be aided.

This is not basically a pessimistic story. True, it pictures a naturalistic universe indifferent to man's struggles, hopes, and fears, but it does not counsel despair. On the contrary it teaches that there is hope in cooperation,³ that if men but band together in their struggle against the Great Indifference, they can achieve a measure of salvation for themselves.

"A Man and--Some Others"⁴ has somewhat the same basic theme as "The Open Boat"—that people who act with courage can sometimes win out over seemingly impossible odds. The story is simple. Bill, a sheepherder, is warned by Mexicans to get off the range or be killed. He refuses and, with a new-found friend, meets their onslaught. Bill had

¹Crane, Works, pp. 52-3.

²Ibid., p. 61.

³Robert W. Stallman ("Stephen Crane: A Re-Evaluation" op.cit., p. 262) says of "The Open Boat" that it "embodies the same theme as The Red Badge of Courage—the theme that through suffering, through immersion of experience, men become united, they undergo a change of heart, they come into spiritual insight and regeneration....That the men are saved is symbolic of their spiritual salvation."

⁴op. cit., pp. 65-85.

originally been a mine-owner in the state of Wyoming. He was wealthy, influential, and "possessed unlimited credit in the saloons." One night, however, the fates "exploded the toy balloon with which they had amused Bill." He got into a card game and lost everything he owned. He then became a cowboy, but this career was terminated when he killed his foreman because the latter called him a liar. After this, Bill became a brakeman on the Union Pacific Railroad, where he gained a formidable reputation as a scourge of hoboes. However, fate, or chance, once more stepped in, closing this career for him.

In a famous battle fought in Nebraska in 1879, he would have achieved a lasting distinction if it had not been for a deserter from the United States Army. He was at the head of a heroic and sweeping charge which really broke the power of the hoboes in that country for three months; he had already worsted three tramps with his own coupling stick, when a stone thrown by the ex-third-baseman of F troop's nine laid him flat on the prairie, and later enforced a stay in the hospital in Omaha.¹

Bill's final job was that of bouncer in a Bowery saloon. Once again, he achieved a formidable reputation; formidable, that is, until the night he decided to throw three sailors out of the saloon. He succeeded, but made the mistake of starting outdoors with his night-stick to see that the trio did not try to re-enter. Meanwhile, the sailors had seized a battering ram and rushed the front door of the saloon.

Strange and still are the laws of fate. Bill, with his kingly frown and his long night-stick, appeared at precisely that moment in the doorway. He stood like a statue of victory; his pride was at its zenith; and in the same second this atrocious piece of scantling punched him in the bulwarks of his stomach and he vanished like a mist. Opinions differed as to where the end of the scantling landed him, but it was ultimately clear that it landed him in southwestern Texas, where he became a sheepherder.²

¹Crane, Works, pp. 68-9.

²Ibid., pp. 70-1.

Thus fate has struck Bill three blows, each when he was, so to speak, at the zenith of the career he was pursuing at the time, reduced him from a man of wealth to a poor sheep-herder, and, not content with the damage already done, is preparing to injure him still further.

Shortly after Bill has been warned to get off the range or be killed, he hears the sound of approaching hoofbeats. As the rider draws near, Bill recognizes him as an American, even though he is decked out in the most flamboyant of Mexican cowboy costumes. The stranger asks Bill if he can camp with him that night and Bill explains what the situation is, stressing the great danger the stranger will face if he remains. However, the stranger decides to stay anyway.

That night the Mexicans sneak up on Bill's camp. They see a dark bulk wrapped in blankets, lying near the fire. Two of them raise shotguns, aim them at the blankets, and fire. Suddenly a demoniac laugh rings out. Bill and the stranger have been hiding in the bushes all along, and the Mexicans have shot a decoy. While the Mexicans stand frozen with fear, Bill fires. One of them cries out and falls, and the others flee.

The next morning the stranger sees for the first time the body of the man Bill has shot, and suddenly becomes frightened.

Bill...swore until he happened to note the absence of the stranger. A moment later he saw him leading his horse from the bushes. In silence and sullenly the young man went about saddling the animal. Bill said, "Well, goin' to pull out?" The stranger's hands fumbled uncertainly at the throat latch.... At last he cried, "Oh, I know the whole thing was all square enough—couldn't be squarer—but—somehow or other that man there takes the heart out of me....He seems to be all the time calling me a—he makes me feel like a murderer."...Bill considered for a time, then he diffidently, "Mister, you're a eddycated man, ain't you?"

....The young man, perplexed, evidently had a question upon his lips, when there was a roar of guns, bright flashes, then in the air such hooting and whistling as would come from a swift flock of steam-boilers. The stranger's horse gave a mighty, convulsive spring, snorting wildly in its sudden anguish, fell upon its knees, scrambled afoot again, and was away in the uncanny death-run known to men who have seen the finish of brave horses. "This comes from discussin' things" cried Bill, angrily.¹

From this point on, the action is fast and furious. The Mexicans charge the camp, guns blazing, in a desperate attempt to kill the two Americans. The attack is a failure. Bill is mortally wounded but he and the stranger, to whom "the fight, and his part in it, had... only the quality of a picture half drawn," kill enough of the attackers so that the rest flee for good. The stranger watches the Mexicans until they are out of sight, then covers Bill's body with a blanket, steps into the brush, and disappears.

This story and "The Open Boat" resemble each other in that both attempt to depict the indifference of the universe. Of the four men in the boat, the oiler apparently has the best chance for survival. The cook is handicapped by being fat, the captain is injured, and the correspondent has had no experience in handling small boats. The final outcome, however, is far different from what one could logically expect. The oiler is killed, presumably by being hit a chance blow in the head by the boat, while the others survive.

Likewise, in "A Man and—Some Others", Bill is the logical one to survive the fight with the Mexicans if anyone does. He is a hardened killer, whereas the young stranger is not only an inexperienced gunfighter but also squeamish at the sight of blood. Yet Bill dies and the stranger

¹Crane, Works, pp. 79-80.

lives. The fact that the stranger survived and Bill did not indicates that in this story, as well as in "The Open Boat", the universe depicted is indifferent.

The theme of the two stories discussed in this section is also met with in The Red Badge of Courage—that individuals who find themselves in seemingly hopeless situations can, by banding together and facing their common danger bravely, often triumph over it. From the very beginning of "The Open Boat" the shipwrecked quartet are faced with the absolute necessity of cooperating with one another. If any one of the group were to become panicky or refuse to do his share toward keeping the boat afloat the result almost certainly would be complete disaster. In this desperate situation, the spirit of cooperation and solicitude is completely genuine—not one of the four men cooperates grudgingly. Furthermore, the grandiose dreams which characterize the untested Henry Fleming and George Kelsey are conspicuously absent here. As the hours pass, no one imagines himself heroically saving his three companions. The captain, to be sure, displays a great deal of bravery when he waves his would-be rescuer over to the correspondent, but in doing this he is acting spontaneously, not with an eye to any future praise he might receive as a result of his action.

The situation faced by Bill is, at first, somewhat different than that confronting the shipwrecked quartet. Even after the abortive first attack by the Mexicans, the young stranger is under no compulsion to stay with Bill, since he still has his horse and can presumably leave at any time. Indeed, by attempting to leave, the young stranger reveals clearly not only that he lacks courage to face the Mexicans, but also

that he has not identified himself with Bill and his cause. Once his horse has been killed, however, and his one avenue of escape thus cut off, he suddenly regains courage. When the Mexicans make their final attack, the stranger, in spite of his fear of bloodshed, fights as ferociously as Bill.

The question might be asked: How is it possible to say that "A Man and—Some Others" shows how people who act with courage can sometimes win out over seemingly impossible odds when Bill, the story's chief character, is killed? One can best answer this question by pointing out that Crane never felt that the person who acted courageously would always come out ahead. The oiler in "The Open Boat" behaved as bravely as his companions, but he died and they were saved. The situation of Bill and the stranger was serious enough so that both should have been killed. The fact that even one of them survived the battle is evidence of the efficacy of courage.

"TWELVE O'CLOCK" AND "THE BLUE HOTEL"

The theme common to both "Twelve O'Clock" and "The Blue Hotel" appears in a number of Crane's works--the indifference of the universe to man. Here, however, the theme is examined from a somewhat different viewpoint. In the stories discussed previously, Crane pointed up this indifference by reference to a number of happenings which, taken in their entirety, left the protagonist in much the same position as he held before they occurred. Thus, at the end of The Red Badge of Courage Henry Fleming is as unable to comprehend the true nature of the war as he was when the novel opened. Similarly, the bewildered men of the poems and the Sullivan County Sketches remained bewildered. "Twelve O'Clock" and "The Blue Hotel", however, illustrate how a series of events, each insignificant in itself (and none of which had to occur) can, through a sort of "chain reaction", lead to serious or even fatal consequences.

In "Twelve O'Clock"¹ the chain of events is set in operation when a cowboy, Jake, enters the hotel of a Western town to order dinner for himself and his companions. While he is making arrangements, a cuckoo clock on the wall clucks out the hour of eleven. The cowboy is stupefied with astonishment at the sight of the cuckooing bird and rushes out to tell his friends about the strange contraption. Some of them do not believe his story, and those who do know about cuckoo clocks pretend not to believe it, in order to antagonize Jake. Jake becomes so enraged by their remarks that he invites them over to the hotel to see for themselves. They all go over but get there between eleven and twelve o'clock when, of course, the bird is inside the clock. Once

¹Crane, Works, XII, pp. 105-14.

again his companions start to deride poor Jake, but about this time Big Watson, a cowboy from another ranch, drunk and spoiling for a fight, comes in and asks what all the "goddamn monkeying" is about. Jake, wild with fury, snarls "None a' your damn business, Watson!" Watson half-draws his guns but at this point the hotel owner, with drawn guns, orders them all into the street. This is a fatal mistake. Watson, quick on the trigger, draws and kills the owner before the latter can fire. As Watson shoots, Jake hits him over the head with a gun barrel. The citizens of the town come running to quell the disturbance, but the cowboys have had all the fight taken out of them. Just as they point out Watson as the murderer of the hotel owner, the bird pops out of the clock and starts to cuckoo for twelve o'clock.

The basic story in "The Blue Hotel"¹ is that of a Swede from the East who goes west, becomes involved in a misunderstanding because of his mistaken ideas about the West, and because of it is eventually killed. At the first appearance of the Swede, in the station of the little Nebraska town where the action takes place, it is clear that something is the matter with him. Later, in the front room of the hotel, the Swede also acts peculiarly.

He seemed to be occupied in making furtive estimates of each man in the room. One might have thought that he had the sense of silly suspicion which comes with guilt. He resembled a badly frightened man.

Later, at dinner, he spoke a little, addressing his conversation entirely to Scully [the hotel proprietor]. He volunteered that he had come from New York, where for ten years he had worked as a tailor....Finally, with a laugh and a wink he said that some of these Western communities were very dangerous; and after his statement he straightened his legs under the table, tilted

¹Crane, Works, pp. 98-132.

his head, and laughed again, loudly. It was plain that the demonstration had no meaning to the others. They looked at him wondering and in silence.¹

This passage pretty well sums up the state of the Swede's mind, and his reasons for being in such condition. He is an Easterner who has heard or read wild tales about the West and believed them. When he actually finds himself in that dangerous territory (what his reasons for coming are we never hear, but they must have been compelling in order to make him leave the "safe" East) he is overcome with fright and attempts to cover it up by making jocular references to the dangerous nature of the place. However, his nervousness is so great that it turns his attempted humor into a ghastly travesty.

Later in the evening the Swede is persuaded to sit in on a card game with Scully's son Johnnie, a cowboy, and another man from the East. In accepting this invitation he continues to act with trepidation.

He strode toward the men nervously, as if he expected to be assaulted. Finally seated, he gazed from face to face and laughed shrilly. This laugh was so strange that the Easterner looked up quickly, the cowboy sat intent with his mouth open, and Johnnie paused, holding the cards with still fingers.²

Finally a crisis is precipitated when the Swede suddenly addresses Johnnie.

"I suppose there have been a good many men killed in this room." The jaws of the other dropped and they looked at him. "What in hell are you talking about?" said Johnnie. The Swede laughed again his blatant laugh full of courage and defiance. "Oh, you know what I mean all right," he answered. "I'm a liar if I do!" Johnnie protested....The Swede winked at him...."Oh, maybe you think I have been to nowheres. Maybe you think I'm a tenderfoot?"....The cowboy, who had been gazing steadily at the Swede, then spoke: "What's wrong with you, Mister?" Apparently it seemed to the Swede that he was formidably menaced. He shivered and turned white near the corners of his mouth...[He] sprang up with the celerity of a

¹Crane, Works, pp. 95-96.

²Ibid., p. 97.

man escaping from a snake on the floor. "I don't want to fight!" he shouted. "I don't want to fight!"¹

At this point, Scully enters the room and is completely taken aback at the sight of the terrified man. He accuses his son and the others of deviling the Swede, and is unsatisfied with their protestations that they "didn't do nothin'." The Swede has gone upstairs to pack, preparatory to leaving, and Scully follows. He tries to persuade the Swede that the town is quiet and orderly, and that nobody is trying to kill anybody. He mentions as proof of the town's peaceable nature its four churches, its brick school house, and the "illictric" street cars that the town is going to install in the next year. He attempts to convince the Swede of his own placid disposition by showing him the picture of his little dead daughter who had the "purtiest hair you ever saw," and another of his son Michael, a lawyer in Lincoln.

Scully's arguments are, of course, shot through with fallacies of logic. The civic virtues of part of the population of a town and the tenderhearted nature of one of its inhabitants do not automatically guarantee the absence of a large segment of population addicted to violence. At best they tend only to decrease the chances of violence occurring in the town. However, Scully finally succeeds in convincing the Swede that his fears are ridiculous. When they go downstairs, the Swede is a changed man. From a cringing coward he has been transformed into a loud, arrogant boaster.

Johnnie deeply resents the "freshness" of the Swede and tries to get Scully to throw him out, but Scully indignantly refuses. The

¹Crane, *Works*, pp. 97-99.

Swede completely dominates the supper table. His voice drowns out all the others and he gazes "brutally disdainful" into every face. After supper the Swede proposes—almost demands—another game of cards and the others assent. The game proceeds for a while very calmly, but suddenly everyone in the room is petrified into immobility when a voice rings out, "You are cheatin'!" The Swede has hurled the accusation at Johnnie. Under such circumstances, the only honorable thing Johnnie can do is challenge the Swede to a fight. The entire party goes outdoors and the two principals start swinging. The cowboy loudly cheers Johnnie on with shouts of "Kill him!", but in spite of his encouragement the Swede's greater weight finally enables him to batter Johnnie to the ground. The group returns to the hotel and the Swede goes upstairs to pack before leaving. He soon reappears, valise in hand.

"Well," he cried insolently at Scully, "I s'pose you'll tell me how much I owe you?" The old man remained stolid. "You don't owe me nothin'!"..."Huh," said the Swede, "Huh! Don't owe 'im nothin'!"..."You don't owe me nothin'," repeated Scully in the same imperturbable way. "Huh," said the Swede, "I guess you're right. I guess if it was any way at all you'd owe me somethin'. That's what I guess." He turned to the cowboy. "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" he mimicked....The Swede opened the door and passed into the storm, giving a derisive glance backward at the still group.¹

He then proceeds to a saloon and orders whiskey. In reply to the bartender's query, "How did you hurt your face?" he boasts of how he whipped Johnnie Scully. He asks a group of men playing cards at a table to come and have a drink with him. The group—composed of two business men, the District Attorney, and a professional gambler—refuses. The Swede, by now secure in the belief that he has nothing to fear from Westerners,

¹Crane, Works, pp. 122-3

flies into a rage. Walking over to the table he lays his hand on the gambler.

"How about this?" he asked wrathfully, "I asked you to drink with me". The gambler simply twisted his head and spoke over his shoulder. "My friend, I don't know you"...."What! you won't drink with me, you little dude? I'll make you then! I'll make you!" The Swede had grasped the gambler frenziedly by the throat, and was dragging him from his chair....There was a great tumult, and then was seen a long blade in the hand of the gambler. It shot forward, and a human body, this citadel of virtue, wisdom, power, was pierced as easily as if it had been a melon. The Swede fell with a cry of supreme astonishment. The prominent merchants and district attorney must have at once tumbled out of the place backward. The bartender found himself hanging limply to the arm of a chair and gazing into the eyes of a murderer. "Henry," said the latter...."You tell 'em where to find me, I'll be home waiting for 'em." Then he vanished. A moment afterward the bartender was in the street dinning through the storm for help and, moreover, companionship. The corpse of the Swede, alone in the saloon, had its eyes fixed upon a dreadful legend that dwelt atop the cash-machine: "This registers the amount of your purchase".¹

Months later, the cowboy and the Easterner are discussing the trial of the gambler, who has received a three year prison sentence for the killing. In the course of the conversation, the Easterner makes a startling disclosure—Johnnie had indeed been cheating in his game with the Swede. The cowboy refuses to believe him.

"Johnnie," said the cowboy blankly. There was a moment of silence, and then he said robustly, "Why, no. The game was only for fun." "Fun or not," said the Easterner, "Johnnie was cheating. I saw him. I know it. I saw him. And I refused to stand up and be a man. I let the Swede fight it out alone. And you—you were simply puffing around the place and wanting to fight. And then old Scully himself. We are all in it....Every sin is the result of a collaboration. We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede....You, I, Johnnie, old Scully; and that fool of an unfortunate gambler come merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and gets all the punishment."²

¹Crane, Works, pp. 129-30

²Ibid., pp. 131-32. Walter Sutton ("Pity and Fear in the 'Blue Hotel,'" Amer. Quar., IV, 73-8 (Spring, 1952)) comments interestingly

In this last quotation, the Easterner is quite obviously serving as a mouthpiece through which Crane expresses what for him is truth: that the universe is naturalistic and ruled by blind chance, that the fate of any man is determined by a series of acts and occurrences, nearly every one in itself trivial, and not one of which was predestined to take place.¹

upon the relationship of the Easterner to the Swede. He feels that whereas the Swede represents a primitive sense of the loneliness and terror of life, the Easterner represents a more enlightened version of this fear, involving a "comprehension of man's relation to nature and a capacity for sympathy with his fellows." In support of this contention, Sutton points out the fear which prevented the Easterner from stepping forward and corroborating the Swede's assertion that Johnnie had indeed cheated at cards was no simple emotion, as was that of the Swede. On the contrary, the Easterner, even through his fear, was capable of regarding the preparations for the fight as a "tragedy greater than the tragedy of action," and he was the only person present who felt pity at the pain being inflicted by the contestants and wished to stop the fight. Taken together, Sutton says, the Swede and the Easterner may be regarded as a "projection of the double vision of the writer (who both participates in experience and maintains a dramatic detachment from it which permits comprehension and sympathy) which distinguishes Crane's work as the expression of a tragic point of view operating within the frame of reference of literary naturalism."

John Berryman, (Stephen Crane, N.Y., Sloane, 1950, pp. 212-14) senses an even more complex relationship involving the Swede, Johnnie, and the gambler. According to Berryman, the Swede symbolizes the self-destructive elements in Crane's personality while Johnnie represents the reasonable, decent Crane. The gambler's role is more complex. He is an "inverted Crane mask," a character who, though normally leading an irregular life, nevertheless, at least according to rumor, had a wife and children and led an exemplary home life. Crane created this image, according to Berryman, as a defense against the beliefs of his family that he was leading an irregular life. Both the "normal" Crane and the "irregular but square" Crane are defeated however; only the Crane who desires to destroy himself achieves his goal.

Robert Wooster Stallman, (Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p. 482) takes issue with Berryman's contention that the Swede symbolizes a facet of Crane. He feels that the Swede is "Crane's diametric opposite," and in support of his view points out that whereas Crane did nothing to shape his own fate, the Swede "distrusts life and runs to meet and shape his destiny."

¹In allowing the Easterner to comment upon the significance of what occurred, Crane violated one of his guiding literary precepts, which

The motto on the cash register makes it clear that the Swede was not doomed inevitably to die at the hands of the gambler. If he had been, then the phrase "This registers the amount of your purchase" would be meaningless, or, worse, misleading, and better left out of the story. Likewise the cuckooing of the clock at the end of "Twelve O'Clock" expresses ironically Crane's belief that the cowboys are fools and completely responsible for the situation in which they find themselves.¹

he had earlier commented upon as follows in a letter to John Nathan Hilliard:

"I have been very careful not to let any theories or pet ideas of my own creep into my work. Preaching is fatal in art and literature. I try to give my readers a slice out of life; and if there is any moral or lesson in it, I do not try to point it out. I let the reader find it out for himself. As Emerson said, 'There should be a long logic beneath the story, but it should be kept carefully out of sight.'" (Stallman, op cit., pp. 672-4)

It should, however, be pointed out that the instances in which Crane failed to observe his own credo are very rare; his other stories are, almost without exception, notable for their lack of comment upon characters and incidents.

¹Several possible influences upon this story have been noted: Thomas Beer, (Stephen Crane, N.Y., Knopf, 1923, pp. 113-14) states that Crane, while touring the West in early 1895, had seen at a lonely junction a hotel "of a dreadful blue" that fascinated him. About that same time, he also attempted to break up a fight in a Lincoln, Nebraska, saloon only to be cursed by the spectators for offending a local custom. It seemed that the two participants fought each other every night! Berryman (op.cit.) believes that chapter 31 of Mark Twain's Roughing It may also have played a part in shaping "The Blue Hotel". In this chapter, the would-be miners, who are isolated by a flood, are irritated by a little Swede and a bully who terrifies the landlord.

These two stories differ greatly from each other in the complexity of their irony. That found in "Twelve O'Clock" is the relatively simple kind in which fate deals a blow to the individual least likely to receive it or least deserving of it, while passing up more likely candidates. In this particular instance it is the hotel owner, the rational man who is trying to keep law and order, who is killed, while Jake and Big Watson, the apostles of irrationality, violence, and disorder, escape relatively unharmed. The irony of "The Blue Hotel" has none of this straightforwardness. Here the victim got into his difficulties in the first place because he was afraid he would be killed, and then was unable to get out of them because he was convinced that he wouldn't be. Since a combination of two diametrically opposed attitudes of mind led to the Swede's downfall, the irony of "The Blue Hotel" may be said to be a reverse or double irony. Taken together, the two stories illustrate the wondrous and complex ways in which the irrationality of the universe works, and how the jokes of blind chance may be either simple or involved.

"The Blue Hotel" is a more important story than "Twelve O'Clock" since it treats the theme of isolation as well as that of the indifference of the universe. From the very beginning, the Swede is isolated from the other characters, and, because of this isolation, has completely erroneous ideas concerning the nature of the society in which he finds himself. Furthermore, he is never able to escape this isolation. The one time he seemingly has a chance to do so is after Scully has convinced him that his fears of being killed are groundless.

At this point, the Swede might have achieved rapport with the other men, and along with it a truer understanding of society and his place within it. The one thing that prevents him from doing so is his battered ego. Like everyone else, the Swede desires to be admired and respected by his fellows. However, he feels that he has made a complete fool of himself by his earlier behavior, and now seeks to make up for his cowardice by acting the bully. The knowledge that he is not about to be killed makes this change in attitude easy for him. In compensating for his former cowardice, however, the Swede succeeds only in further alienating himself from the others and in arousing feelings of resentment in them. Johnnie's cheating at cards is at least in part a reaction against the Swede's arrogant behavior, as is the cowboy's belligerence and the Easterner's silence. After his fight with Johnnie, the Swede's isolation is complete, although, ironically enough, he now feels that he understands his fellow men thoroughly. Not until the Swede seizes the gambler and attempts to drag him to the bar does he realize how badly mistaken he is.

"The Blue Hotel" reflects Crane's concern with the problem of the individual and his relationship to society—a problem which he explores from many angles in his writings. In The Red Badge of Courage and "The Open Boat," Crane shows how individuals faced with a common danger are able to achieve a meaningful relationship with one another. On the other hand, Maggie, The Monster, and "The Auction" illustrate how ignorance, physical deformity, and ridicule can prevent such a relationship from being achieved or can destroy it after it has

been established. In "The Blue Hotel", extreme fear and overweening egotism combine to keep the Swede in isolation. Had either been less strong, there is every possibility that the Swede might have been accepted by the society in which he found himself. Under the circumstance, he would soon have learned the rules which governed that society and conducted himself accordingly. As it was, the extreme behavior displayed by the Swede throughout the story marked him as too "different" from the others to be accepted by them and virtually guaranteed that his introduction to their code of morals would be a violent one and his departure equally so.

MINOR STORIES WITH SOCIAL THEMES

This section discusses a few of Crane's minor stories which have social themes or which illustrate his notions of how society operates. Taken by themselves these stories are not important enough to enable one to draw any final conclusions concerning Crane's social theories and beliefs. Viewed in relation to his more important works, however, they show that his concern with social themes permeates even his minor writings. Further, some illustrate certain aspects of his social beliefs that are not touched upon elsewhere in his writings. These stories probably derive from Crane's experiences as a reporter, since they have a journalistic touch, almost like feature stories.

"The Pace of Youth"¹ is the story of a merry-go-round owner who tries to stop a romance from blossoming between his daughter, who sells tickets for the ride, and the young man in charge of the rings for which the children grab. The owner, Stimson, a little man with a fiery temper, warns Frank not to "make eyes" at Lizzie, and threatens to fire him if he continues to do so. Although thus thwarted from displaying signs of affection for each other in the father's presence, the two contrive to meet on the beach in the evenings. Finally they run away. Stimson discovers their flight and pursues them in his carriage. He nearly catches them, but finally their buggy pulls away and he is forced to give up the chase.

On the surface, this story's theme might seem to be "love will find a way." However, there is also evidence that in "The Pace

¹Crane, Works, XI, pp. 61-75.

of Youth", as in The Red Badge of Courage and "The Blue Hotel", Crane is concerned with the relationship of man and the universe. As Stimson sees the buggy bearing Frank and his daughter disappear into the distance, he "sank back with the astonishment of a man who has been defied by the universe....At last he made a gesture. It meant that at any rate he was not responsible."¹ Stimson's actions are those of a person suddenly aware that the universe is indifferent, that it does not care a particle for his desires nor put itself out in the least to see that his wishes are obeyed.

"An Eloquence of Grief"² and "A Street Scene in New York"³ point out that the grief of a person struck by misfortune affects others only temporarily, and quite often serves only to provide a little excitement to relieve the monotony of everyday life.

The first story takes place in a courtroom. A young girl has been charged with stealing some clothing from her employers. After hearing the employee's testimony, the Judge says he will have to hold the girl for trial. As she is being led from the courtroom she suddenly begins to scream, "I am innocent! Oh, I am innocent!" The scream has an electrifying effect on the courtroom.

...[it] described such a profound depth of woe, it was so graphic of grief, that it slit with a dagger's sweep the curtain of commonplace and disclosed the gloom-shrouded spectre that sat in the young girl's heart so plainly, in so universal a tone of the mind, that a man heard expressed some far off midnight terror of his own mind.⁴

¹Crane, Works, p.73.
³Ibid., pp. 189-94.

²Ibid., pp. 91-93.
⁴Ibid., p.93.

However, the crowd soon forgets its sympathy for the young girl. The next prisoner, an aged, drunken derelict, tries to tell the judge he has never been drunk before. A court official hides a smile, and the crowd, forgetting the tragedy of a moment before, settles back to enjoy a bit of comic relief.

The young Italian boy whom tragedy strikes in "A Street Scene in New York" receives as little sympathy as the girl in the previous story. He is talking to an older man—presumably his father—when suddenly the man moans and falls to the pavement. A crowd immediately gathers and presses forward until the prostrate man is practically hidden. "Those in the foremost rank bended down eagerly, anxious to see everything. Others behind them crowded savagely like starving men fighting for bread."¹ Arguments break out in the crowd, with people snarling at one another not to push. Finally a few people try to help the prostrate man. A tall German tells the crowd to stand back, then he and another man loosen the victim's collar and rub his wrists in an attempt to revive him. A policeman appears, but this symbol of law and order is no better than the rest of the crowd, since he immediately assumes that the stricken man is drunk. "What's the matter? (he said)...Come, git up out a' that! Git out a' here!" At this point, the crowd yells that the man has "got a fit". A doctor arrives, and the policeman goes to call an ambulance. It arrives, picks up its cargo, and departs with a great clanging of bells.

¹Crane, Works, p. 190.

The crowd

stood and gazed until it was out of sight. Some resumed their way with an air of relief. Others still continued to stare after the vanished ambulance and its burden as if they had been cheated, as if the curtain had been rung down on a tragedy that was but half complete; and this impenetrable blanket intervening between a sufferer and their curiosity seemed to make them feel an injustice.¹

This story and "An Eloquence of Grief" complement each other. Both deal with the same situation—a group of people who gather to gratify a sense of morbid curiosity, a curiosity which is untrammelled by any feelings of sympathy toward the victim whose sufferings provide the spectacle. It is true that in both stories the crowd shows a little pity, but only a little and that soon lost. The cry of the young girl pierces the hearts of those in the courtroom, the policeman's attitude toward the "drunk" man stirs the crowd of bystanders to the point of explanation if not protest, but basically the spectators show little more sympathy than a flock of buzzards circling a dying calf.

Crane was not, of course, the first one to note that many persons seem to possess a desire to hurt others or to see others hurt. The Marquis de Sade pointed out this fact in the late eighteenth century, and since his time a great number of psychologists have commented upon the "sadistic" element in man. There is an explanation for the existence of this "cruel streak" in man, which, while possibly unsatisfactory from the psychologist's point of view, fits in very well with the picture of human nature which Crane paints in so many stories. As has been shown, one of man's prime desires is to appear well before others. In order for him to do so there must of necessity

¹Crane, Works, p.94.

be persons to whom he can feel comfortably superior, for whatever reasons he can conjure up. Thus the courtroom spectators who witness the anguish of the young girl and the men who crowd around the stricken Italian exalt themselves in their own eyes because they have escaped the fate of the two victims. It goes without saying that such feelings of superiority have no basis in fact. The spectators' attitudes toward the two victims are no more justified than were Henry Fleming's feelings of superiority because he had "wisely" fled from battle while his companions had "foolishly" remained behind to face certain death. Such is man's desire to feel "above" others, however, that he mentally transmutes the misfortunes of others into his own virtues, in much the same way that he rationalizes his cowardly, despicable actions so that they appear virtuous.

Another point should also be mentioned. In both of these stories it is the crowd en masse, rather than the individual as such, that has no pity, that likes the thrill of contemplating a victim. As long as the individual considers himself as an individual, his desire to exalt himself in his own eyes is not sufficient to completely suppress his feelings of compassion. Once part of a group, however, he must strive to maintain his standing with respect to the others or find himself in the same position as the victim. In such a situation, pity becomes impossible.

"The Auction"¹ is the story of a sailor, Ferguson, who marries, fails to make a living, and is finally forced to sell his

¹Crane, Works, pp. 77-81.

household goods at auction. Among the effects is a parrot, a souvenir of his sea-faring days. Ferguson's wife breaks down and cries when the first piece of furniture, a bureau, sells for only four dollars, but is willing to remain in the auction room. When the parrot is put up for sale, however, it starts to sing a sea chantey, and completely disrupts the auction proceedings. At this point, Ferguson and his wife, thoroughly humiliated, leave the auction room. When they are outside, the wife sobs, "Tt--it--m-made us a laughing-stock in front of all that crowd". In this story, Crane shows the fear people have of being ridiculed in the presence of others. They can often stand the difficulties which accompany financial disaster, but flee the shame which comes with being made to appear ridiculous.

"The Auction" may be said to be in the same class as the Whilomville Stories in that all lay stress on the importance of social conformity, of not being singled out for special attention by appearing ridiculous. Indeed, the Whilomville Stories almost constitute a treatise on the power of ridicule. The children in them try desperately to conform, to be "one of the gang" in every way, but, either unintentionally or due to events beyond their control, they are always violating the group's mores and being made the object of ridicule as a result. This will be seen more clearly when these stories are taken up in detail.

"A Self-Made Man"¹ is a satirical retelling of the American

¹Crane, Works, pp. 253-60.

success story. The tale begins with Tom, "a young man of ability," strolling down Broadway and looking for work in a rather desultory fashion. Although he is reduced to the point of mending the holes in his shoes with playing cards and borrowing money from his landlady for tobacco, Tom's self-assurance is unimpaired.

...he puffed tenderly at a cigarette and walked as if he owned stock. He imitated success so successfully that if it wasn't for the constant reminder...in his shoe, he would have gone into a store and bought something.¹

On his walk, Tom meets an old man who asks if he knows how to read. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, the old man produces a letter and requests Tom to read it for him. The letter is from the old man's lawyer, who announces that he has succeeded in selling several parcels of worthless land to credulous buyers, and has sent his client a draft for the money. The lawyer also states that he has received no acknowledgement of receipt of the draft, and requests one. Upon hearing this, the old man cries out that his son, George, has cheated him by pocketing the drafts and saying nothing. Tom then suggests that he pose as a lawyer and "put the screws on George," and the old man agrees. Tom succeeds in making George return the money he has taken, and the old man, in gratitude, makes him a partner in his land schemes.

So it came to pass that Tom grew to be Thomas G. Somebody.... His fame has spread through the land as a man who carved his way to fortune with no help but his undaunted pluck, his tireless energy, and his sterling integrity. Newspapers apply to him now, and he writes long signed articles to struggling young men, in which he gives the best possible advice as to how to become wealthy...²

¹Crane, Works., p.253.

²Ibid., p. 259.

Clearly the novels of Horatio Alger provided Crane with his inspiration for this story. All of the stock Alger characters can be found in "A Self-Made Man"—the poor, struggling youth; the rich older man who befriends him; and the weak, wastrel youth who serves as foil for the hero. Crane has, however, altered the personalities of the first two considerably. The poor youth is far from being a typical clean-living, honest, and modest Alger hero. He smokes, is self-assured to the point of conceit, and does not stick at misrepresentation in order to advance himself. Likewise, the old man's methods of amassing wealth stamp him as being a far-from-ideal person. All in all, the two "heroes" of this little tale are morally no better than the villain, George. By thus picking a liar and a swindler for his heroes, Crane expressed his conviction that "undaunted pluck, tireless energy, and sterling integrity" are not necessary adjuncts to worldly success; that it is possible for an individual to be at the same time a business leader and a thoroughly dishonest person.

In this story, it is the completely fortuitous meeting between Tom and George's father, rather than a difference in the characters of the two youths, which is responsible for their differing fortunes. Had this meeting not occurred, George might well have continued to successfully cheat his father, might eventually have become "George G. Somebody" while Tom almost certainly would have remained obscure. By permitting a chance encounter to result in George's downfall and Tom's success, Crane expresses his conviction that in the world of business and finance, as in other phases of human activity, blind naturalistic chance, rather than any personal attributes, is largely

responsible for shaping the destiny of individuals.

The final story to be discussed in this section is "An Ominous Baby."¹ It is the story of a poor urchin who wanders into a rich neighborhood. He encounters a child playing in front of his home with a crimson and gold fire engine, and is entranced by the toy. He asks the child to let him play with it, but is refused. He asks again and is refused again. Then he becomes angry and attempts to wrest the toy from its owner. After a short struggle he succeeds and runs off, disappearing down a side street with his prize.

The story has excited a great deal of comment. One writer says:

Here Crane goes down to the roots of man's emotional makeup. He economizes his words. So natural are his foreshortened pictures that they seem almost to draw themselves. And looking at them you awake to the startling truth that the instincts of the infant epitomize the instincts of the community; that the primitive forces blown to flame in the multitude by cunning politicians are no more than an agglomeration of the primitive forces dormant in the hibernating infant.²

While another seems to see in it a call for the poor to seize what they need from the rich.

In the story, we are given a situation involving two children, the one poor, the other rich and pampered. The child of wealth has a toy which the other desires; therefore the poor child takes it by force and runs away. How shall we interpret the act of this ominous child? Is Crane here merely placing in simple terms an argument for a more equal distribution of wealth and property? Or is he advocating or anticipating a class revolt? Some such interpretation is fairly clear—at least, he comes perilously close to an almost anarchistic solution for the problem of economic inequality.³

¹Crane, Works, pp. 105-8.

²"Petronius Applejoy," "Stephen Crane is News in 1940," Catholic World, CLI, 290 (Aug., 1940).

³Russel B. Nye, "Stephen Crane as Social Critic," Mod. Quar. XI, 48-54 (Summer, 1940). (Since no copies of the published article were available, I have used a rough draft lent to me by Dr. Nye.)

But is man capable of bettering his condition even if he wanted to, living as he does in a universe of blind naturalistic forces, which so often upset his best-laid plans? Nye thinks that he is.

Crane did not let a naturalistic view of the universe lead him into an amoral social philosophy of survival of the fittest, of life as a state of war on the human social level. To him, life was not "red in tooth and claw..." The apparent cleavage in Crane's philosophy can be best explained as follows: The forces of naturalistic destiny are blind, impersonal and cannot be conquered...but the forces of society, those which lead to the social evils seen in Maggie and other of his stories, are man-made forces and thus can be controlled by man, who set them in motion. The world of nature we can only face with stoicism; the world of society, however, can be reshaped—progress is possible on the human and social level.¹

It can be granted that Crane's heroes not only can, but sometimes do, actually shape their own destinies. For example, Henry Fleming, in The Red Badge of Courage, was himself responsible for the change of heart which made him over from a coward into a man who could carry his regimental colors forward in a charge, and the four men in "The Open Boat" were able to survive their ordeal with only one casualty by keeping cool and thinking intelligently about their situation. However, as was pointed out in the section dealing with "An Experiment in Misery" and "The Men in the Storm," it is only when the ships are down, when men are faced with great danger, that they are able to act heroically.

Slum dwellers—the poor and hungry and dispossessed—may be uncomfortable or even miserable, but they are not in imminent danger of losing their lives; hence it is highly unlikely that they would rise to the heights of bravery required to wrest away the possessions of the rich in the face of the police and the army. Also, they are

¹Nye, op.cit.

too prone to fight and quarrel among themselves for some morsel of advantage over their fellow sufferers, and to forget their plight the moment conditions improve even temporarily. Only if conditions worsened to the point where these unfortunates were on the verge of actual starvation could they be expected to take the decisive action which Nye sees advocated in "An Ominous Baby."

THE MONSTER

The Monster¹ is an excellent illustration of Crane's belief that society will tolerate any person who has found his place, or made a place for himself, in its structure, but will turn with suspicion, fear, and hatred on anyone who is different and try to destroy him—especially if the difference is grotesque or if it is connected with events which are regarded by society as unpleasant or repulsive.

The story concerns Henry Johnson, a Negro who works for Dr. Trescott as stable boy. When the doctor's house catches on fire one evening, Henry, knowing Trescott's son Jimmie is inside, rushes in to save him. Finding Jimmie unconscious, he succeeds in carrying him into a part of the house from which the boy is rescued by others. Then Henry collapses. While he is unconscious the fire burns his face off, and the shock of the accident causes him to lose his mind. The townspeople, horrified by the faceless monster who lives in their midst, turn against him and his keeper, Dr. Trescott.

Prior to the fire, Henry is well known and well liked by the townsmen. The feeling of the stable-boy and the doctor's son toward each other, an unusually close relationship, is thus described by Crane:

He [Johnson] grinned fraternally when he saw Jimmie coming. These two were pals....Whenever Jimmie became the victim of an eclipse he went to the stable to solace himself with Henry's crimes. Henry, with the elasticity of his race, could usually provide a sin to put himself on a footing with the disgraced one. Perhaps he would remember that he had forgotten to put the hitching-strap in the back of the buggy on some recent occasion and had been rearimanded by the doctor. Then these two would commune softly and without words concerning their moon, holding themselves sympathetically as people who had committed similar treasons. On the other hand, Henry would sometimes

¹Crane, *Works*, III, 25-102.

choose to absolutely repudiate this idea, and when Jimmie appeared in his shame would bully him most virtuously, preaching with assurance the precepts of the Doctor's creed and pointing out to Jimmie all his abominations....Whenever Henry dwelt for a time in sackcloth Jimmie did not patronize him at all. This was a justice of his age, his condition. He did not know.¹

The impression that Henry makes upon the white townsfolk when he is strolling uptown to his girl's house is not unfriendly. The whites are inclined to smile upon his rather loud clothing, and his Negro acquaintances are frankly admiring:

"Hello, Henry! Going to walk for a cake tonight?"
 "Ain't he smooth?"
 "Why, you've got that cake right in your pocket, Henry!"
 "Throw out your chest a little more."²

Henry, Crane makes clear, has achieved status in the community. It is true that the whites are inclined to be patronizing toward the good-natured stable boy, but even so he is recognized as occupying a definite place in the society of Willowville. Henry's position in the colored community is much more conspicuous and honorable. He is regarded as a bit of a fashion plate, a man of substance whom the other colored men envy and try to emulate. His favored social position is shown in his welcome at the home of his girl friend, Bella Farragut.

The duty of receiving Mr. Johnson fell upon Mrs. Farragut because Bella, in another room, was scrambling into her best gown. The fat old woman met him with a great ivory smile, sweeping back with the door, and bowing low.
 "Walk in, Mr. Johnson, walk in. How is you dis evenin', Misteh Johnson—how is you?" Henry's face showed like a reflection as he bowed and bowed, bending almost from his head to his ankles. "Good evenin', Mis' Fag'ut; good

¹Crane, *Works*, pp. 27-29.

²*Ibid.*, p. 52.

evenin'. How is you dis evenin'? Is all you folks well, Mis' Fag'ut?" After a great deal of kotow, they were planted in two chairs opposite each other in the living room. Here they exchanged the most tremendous civilities until Miss Bella swept into the room, when there was more kotow on all sides and a smiling show of teeth that was like an illumination....They bowed and smiled...until a late hour, and if they had been the occupants of the most gorgeous salon in the world, they could not have been more like three monkeys. After Henry had gone, Bella, who encouraged herself in the appropriation of phrases, said, "Oh, Ma, isn't he divine?"¹

That evening, after Henry leaves, he saves Jimmie from the flames, and because of his heroic behavior becomes overnight a man whom the public admires. The morning paper carries a full account of the affair as narrated by a bystander who had seen Henry's performance, although it errs by stating that Henry has died as a result of his injuries. While the older people remember with chagrin all the things they might have done for Henry, the young folks make him a sort of saint, and, whenever an argument arises, each participant tries to confound his opponent by quoting something Henry said in support of his position. Lastly, Bella Farragut proudly and tearfully announces that she had been engaged to him. Henry's position in the society of Whiloville, white and black, is secure. But Henry, ironically, is not dead. He is a faceless, mindless monster. Henry lives at the home of Alek Williams, one of his old friends, and Dr. Trescott pays his board and room. Alek's wife and children are terrified and Alek tries to obtain more money from the doctor for keeping Henry. In this attempt of Henry's former friend to turn Henry's misery to his own profit we see the first indication of the change in Whiloville's attitude toward the hero-monster, whose place in its social structure is no longer certain or secure.

¹Crane, Works, pp. 34-5.

So far, the town as a whole has not been hostile to Henry, who keeps to himself, since few of the townsfolk have seen the faceless horror of his appearance. But everything is changed when he escapes from Alek Williams' house to wander in Whilomville. He peers in a window at the home of Theresa Page, where a children's party is in progress, and frightens one of the guests, Sadie Winters, into hysterics. Later, he appears in Watermelon Alley, at the home of Bella Farra-

gut.

There was an instant's pause, and then occurred something that resembled the effect of an upheaval of the earth's surface. The old woman hurled herself backward with a dreadful cry. Young Sim had perched gracefully on a railing. At the sight of the monster he simply fell over it to the ground. He made no sound, his eyes stuck out, his nerveless hands tried to grapple the rail to prevent a tumble, and then he vanished. Bella, blubbering, and with her hair suddenly and mysteriously disheveled, was crawling on her hands and knees fearsomely up the steps.

Standing before this wreck of a family gathering the monster continued to bow. It even raised a deprecatory claw. "Don' make no botheration 'bout me, Miss Fa'gut," it said, politely. "No, 'deed. I jes drap in ter ax if yer well this evenin', Miss Fa'gut...."

The girl cast a miserable glance behind her. She was still crawling away....She groveled in a corner of the room as the creature took a chair....In a last outburst of despair, the girl, shuddering and wailing, threw herself face downward on the floor, while the monster sat on the edge of the chair gabbling courteous invitations and holding the old hat daintily to his stomach.¹

A group of enraged townsmen pursue Henry, hurling rocks at him, and he is finally captured and thrown in jail. Dr. Trescott then takes him into his own home. Meanwhile Jake Winters, the father of the little girl Henry has frightened, tries to get Dr. Trescott arrested for harboring a dangerous lunatic and failing to do so, walks through the town berating the doctor to whoever will listen. Even Jimmie Trescott is not immune to the changed attitude of the townsmen. To be sure he does not display any hostility toward Henry, but, like Alek Williams, is willing

¹Crane, Works, pp. 77-8.

to use him to further his own private ends. In Jimmie's case the gain is not financial, but one of prettice. He demonstrates his extreme bravery to the neighborhood boys by walking up to Henry and touching him. The other children are put on the spot by Jimmie's performance but finally a few of them muster up enough courage to do likewise. The game is broken up by Dr. Trescott, who afterwards lectures Jimmie and tries to impress upon him why he should not use Henry in this way.

Meanwhile, the behavior of the townspeople is beginning to resemble that of a mob. They have, since the first rock-throwing evening, taken no overt action against Henry, but mutterings against both him and his keeper are beginning to be heard on every side. In such a strained atmosphere, everyone appears to have lost the power to think independently or to defy majority opinion. Everyone, that is, except one person, Martha Goodwin, who defies the rest of the town. Her conversation with some other townswomen will illustrate the extent to which the others have relinquished the right to think for themselves, the extent to which the mob spirit has taken hold of the town.

"I don't see why you say that, Martha" replied Carrie, with considerable boldness, gaining support and sympathy from Kate's smile. "I don't see how anyone can be blamed for getting angry when their little girl gets almost scared to death and gets sick from it, and all that. Besides, everybody says—"Oh, I don't care what everybody says," said Martha, "well, you can't go against the whole town," answered Carrie in sudden angry defiance.

"No, Martha, you can't go against the whole town," piped Kate, following her leader rapidly.

"The whole town," cried Martha. "I'd like to know what you call the 'whole town'. Do you call these silly people who are afraid of Henry Johnson the 'whole town'?"

"Why, Martha," said Carrie in a reasoning tone, "you talk as if you wouldn't be scared of him".

"No more would I," retorted Martha....

"But Martha, everybody says...."

"Everybody says what?"

"Everybody that's seen him says that they were frightened almost to death. 'Tisn't only women but it's men too. It's awful."¹

¹Crane, Works, pp. 95-96. Almost without exception, critics have regarded Martha Goodwin as a character whom Crane created in order to vent an intense hatred which he felt toward malicious, female gossips. The comments of Wilson Pollett (Crane, Works, III, Int. pp. xvi-xvii) are typical. He says that Martha is "drawn with a fury out of all proportion to any part she is given to play" and that Crane in portraying her "was writing not so much to serve the exigencies of his story as to glut a rage"...That Crane did indeed have an antipathy toward such women is beyond doubt. A letter by him, written about December, 1894, from Port Jarvis, contains the following remarks:

"There is a feminine mule up here who has aroused all the bloodthirst in me and I don't know where it will end. She has no more brain than a pig and all she does is sit in her kitchen and grunt. But every when (sic) she grunts something dies howling. It may be a girl's reputation or a political party or the Baptist church but it stops in its tracks and dies....Now, my friends, there is a big joke in all this. This lady in her righteousness is just the grave of a stale lust and every boy in town knows it. She accepted ruin at the hands of a farmer when we were all 10 or 11. But she is a nice woman.... No man has power to contradict her. We are all cowards anyhow." (Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, pp. 605-6)

During the summer of 1894, Crane wrote a paper for Elbert Hubbard's Philistine in which he attempted to explain why the gossip wields her great power. Hubbard lost this paper before it could be published, but fortunately summarized its contents in a letter which has survived. According to Crane, the evil stems from the fact that American boys are educated by female schoolteachers who teach them to cringe. This fear becomes so ingrained in the males that even after reaching adulthood they are unable to argue with any woman. Crane's remedy for the situation is simple--more male teachers. (See Thomas Beer, Stephen Crane, N.Y., Knopf, 1923, pp. 111-12).

Regardless of how strongly Crane disliked gossips it is doubtful if he intended Martha to represent such a person. A careful examination of the scene in which she appears shows clearly that, far from being despicable, she is actually an admirable woman who, like Dr. Trescott, has the courage of her convictions and is not afraid to defend them even in the face of open hostility. As Arthur Hobson Quinn (American Fiction, N.Y., Appleton-Century, 1936, P. 536) says, Martha is the character through whom "Crane conveys the acid comment of an uncompromising individualist upon the brutal instinct of the small-town mind."

Finally, the town is so aroused that a number of Dr. Trescott's friends call upon him to urge that he give up keeping Henry in Whilowville before he is completely ruined. These friends are not hostile toward the Doctor, but seem to have a genuine concern for his welfare. Dr. Trescott, however, still refuses to give up Henry.

The story ends "not with a bang but a whimper." Dr. Trescott comes home one day to find his wife in tears. She tells him that her women friends, whom she generally entertains at a tea party on Wednesday afternoon, have stayed away this time, pleading various excuses. Of the fifteen women invited, only one showed up, and fourteen empty teacups stand as a mute symbol of the alienation of the Doctor's family from the rest of the community.

The whole course of Henry's disfigurement and subsequent treatment by the people of Whilowville is heavily tinged with irony. In the beginning, Henry is a good natured, almost comic, stereotype. As a result of his rescue attempt, however, Henry becomes overnight a hero, and, had he died, his niche in Whilowville would have been secure forever. But Henry does not die; he lives to become reviled. Thus, ironically, the greatest participative force that humanity knows, life, has isolated Henry from society, whereas death, the greatest isolative force that humanity knows, would have given him a place. Dr. Trescott's role in the story also displays elements of irony. The doctor, naturally enough, feels he owes Henry a debt, and attempts to repay it by caring for him. In adopting this attitude he is doing the rational, humane, and human thing. Yet, ironically, by acting humanely,

he isolates himself from humanity, and the only way he can regain his position is by doing the inhumane thing, by refusing to take any further responsibility for Henry.¹

Special importance attaches to The Monster because it is the only story in which Crane attempts to show how the power of good deeds to stimulate society's admiration compares with the power of the grotesque or different to arouse society's hostility. Henry Johnson's action in rushing into Dr. Trescott's burning house to rescue Jimmie is every bit as heroic as the wildest deed which Henry Fleming performs in his imagination, and the immediate reaction of the people of Whilomville is fully as satisfying as the reaction which Fleming imagines displayed toward himself. Far from being admired, however, Henry Johnson, because of his hideous burns, soon loses the social position he once held in Whilomville. By means of parallel scenes, Crane very effectively shows the contrast between the townspeople's attitude toward Henry before and after the fire. For example, the scene showing Henry's welcome at Bella's home when he goes calling upon her is set against the episode depicting his reception there after he has escaped from Alek; while the townspeople who at first toss raillery at him, later throw

¹John Berryman (Stephen Crane, N.Y., Sloane, 1950, pp. 192-3) believes that the theme of The Monster is one of rescue and punishment, and reflects Crane's own experience of defending a chorus girl falsely accused by the New York police of soliciting. As a result of this incident (which will be discussed in more detail later in the dissertation) Crane incurred the enmity of the police, who made conditions so difficult for him that he finally left New York. In like manner Henry Johnson, after his attempt to rescue Jimmie, is rejected by the people of Whilomville; while Dr. Trescott and his family are ostracized for rescuing Henry. According to Berryman, Dr. Trescott functions as a father-image. By representing Dr. Trescott as protecting Henry from the hostile townsfolk, Crane symbolically has his father approve of his behavior toward the chorus girl.

recks. The fact that the attitudes of the townspeople could so quickly and radically change clearly indicates that man's fear of the grotesque or different is much stronger than his admiration for heroism.

Another point also needs to be considered. The people who reject Henry are not particularly evil or malicious. They are common, ordinary people, and as individuals are perfectly capable of feeling pity or compassion. Acting as a group, however, they are irrational, cruel, and absolutely unfeeling. What is the reason for this difference in individual and group behavior? In the discussion of the two minor stories "An Eloquence of Grief" and "A Street Scene in New York" the point was made that the individual's desire to exalt himself in his own eyes and in those of others was responsible for the unfeeling attitudes of the crowd. These factors may also play a role in Whiloville's treatment of Henry, but the fact that hostility is displayed toward him, but not toward the girl or the stricken Italian of the minor stories, suggests that a new element has entered the picture. Because of Henry's hideous appearance and his mindlessness, the crowd may feel, perhaps subconsciously, that he is a threat to the very structure of society. Since Dr. Trescott is protecting Henry, he is also a threat. Viewed in this light, society's harsh treatment of those who are different becomes somewhat more understandable.

The great emphasis which Crane places upon the changed attitudes of the townsmen toward Henry and his lack of emphasis upon the physical appearance of the burned man—the simple statement "He had no face" is as close as Crane comes to describing Henry—shows that he was not at all

interested in narrating a simple horror story! To be sure, horror is present, but it is always kept subordinate to Crane's real purpose--the delineation of society's hostility to the unusual, the grotesque, the different.

¹To Crane's contemporaries, however, The Monster was a horror story pure and simple. Thomas Beer (op.cit., p. 134) reports that when Crane's agent offered the story to The Century it was refused, the editor stating that "We couldn't publish that thing with half the expectant mothers in America on our list!" Beer further remarks that even Harold Frederic found the story offensive and advised Crane to throw it away. Critical reception of the story was generally unfavorable. For example The Critic (LXVI, 132 (Feb., 1900)) describes it as "an unpleasant story" and states that although it has humor in the telling, it is humor of a rather grim sort.

Modern critics regard The Monster somewhat differently. Beer (op. cit., p. 132) calls it "a study of popular stupidity." Wilson Follett (Crane, Works, III, Int., p. x) says that it should be taken as a "piece of irony, a sort of Late Victorian anticipation of Main Street", a work that looks forward to the writings of Edith Wharton rather than backward to Poe.

WHILOMVILLE STORIES

The Whilomville Stories¹(1899), Crane's stories about children, belong to a large class of writings, several of which have maintained a high degree of popularity from the time of their publication to the present day. Such works as Louisa M. Alcott's Little Women (1868) and Little Men (1871), Thomas Bailey Aldrich's The Story of a Bad Boy, (1869) Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer(1876) and Huckleberry Finn(1885), Harriet Mulford Stone's Five Little Peppers and How They Grew(1880), Frances Hodgson Burnett's Little Lord Fauntleroy(1886), and Booth Tarkington's Penrod stories, to name only a few, are still in print, some in several editions. The Whilomville Stories have not fared so well. They are even more completely forgotten than such a work as Peck's Bad Boy(1885), which at least survives as a phrase; only the literary student reads them. It is most unfortunate that Crane's stories of children should be so completely neglected because, with the exception of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and—to a lesser degree—the Penrod stories, they are the only stories of the above group which show more than a superficial understanding of children. Such an author as Aldrich holds open a door and invites the reader to observe the antics of his creations, but all the while he smiles and winks condescendingly, much as he might at a basketful of frolicking kittens.

How different are Crane's stories! In them he presents no ideal, prettified children's world. His boys and girls, drawn by a man whose cold, appraising eye missed no childish trait and who was not afraid to put down on paper what he saw, are to a great extent

¹Crane, Works, V.

little savages. Completely devoid of pity, they delight in persecuting one another on the slightest pretext. They band together in gangs, but there is little real loyalty among the members, for they are almost as likely to turn upon one of their own group with taunts and jibes as they are on an outsider. Should one of the group get into trouble, the others will shamelessly abandon him if, by doing so, they can save their own skins. Finally, their activities are dominated by a set of rules or taboos, often silly, meaningless or irrational, which they must obey on pain of ostracism by the group.¹

"The Angel Child"² provides an excellent example of the irrational behavior of Crane's children. Cora, Jimmie Trescott's cousin, has come with her parents to spend a summer vacation in Whilomville. Her birthday falls during the visit, and she asks her father for some money. A very "quiet, slow, and misty" person, he absent-mindedly hands her a five dollar bill. Within a few minutes, Cora and her friends are ensconced in a candy shop where they stuff to the bursting point.

When the bill is paid, over two dollars is left, and they start casting about for new ways of spending it. It is little Cora who finally comes up with a wonderful idea. "Come on", she cried, 'I know what let's do.' Now behold she had discovered the red and white pole in front of the shop of one William Nellitje, a barber by trade." Within a very short time

¹William Lyon Phelps (Crane, Works, V, int. pp. xii-xiii) says that the children of the Whilomville Stories exhibit together the "herd mind in its most unlovely aspect, a compound of cruelty and cowardice..." and feels that Crane in depicting these children displayed "under the mirth and nonsense, a terrible hatred of mass opinion, a fervent faith in the individual's right to live."

²Crane, Works, 19-30.

the whole group—with the exception of one child who refuses to let the barber touch him—is shorn.

The axe falls when the children go home. Cora's mother is far from being the pleased woman Cora thought she would be when she saw the barber's handiwork.

The wretched mother took one sight, emitted one yell and fell into a chair. Mrs. Trescott dropped a large lady's journal and made a nerveless mechanical clutch at it. The painter gripped the arms of his chair and leaned forward, staring until his eyes were like two little clock faces. Dr. Trescott did not move or speak.¹

The reaction of the mothers of the other children who had taken part in the episode is pretty much the same—tears and lamentations.

To a certain degree "The Angel Child" resembles "The Blue Hotel" and "Twelve O'Clock" since, like these more serious stories, it illustrates how a series of apparently harmless acts can sometimes lead to the most strange and unexpected consequences. Here, the chain of events is set into motion when Cora's father hands her the five dollar bill. In doing so, the father was motivated by no such ulterior purpose as moved Crane on an occasion when he gave fifty cents to two small boys with long flowing "Lord Fauntleroy" curls and told them to go get haircuts.² Nevertheless, the outcome could scarcely have been more catastrophic from a domestic point of view than if the whole affair had been planned from the beginning.

In "The Angel Child" as in The Monster and "Twelve O'Clock", rationality comes into conflict with the forces of irrationality and blind social conformity, and is badly defeated. The rational child,

¹Crane, Works, p.26.

²See John Nicholas Beggel, "The Fauntleroy Plague," Bookman, LXV, 133-137 (April, 1927) for a more complete discussion of this episode.

who refuses to follow the example of his friends and have his hair cut, becomes the butt of their taunts and jibes. The whole haircutting incident reflects the unwillingness of most individuals to defy the conventions of their group, no matter how ridiculous these conventions might be. Indeed, on the basis of this story one might assert that the majority of individuals are unable to comprehend the true nature of even the most ridiculous elements of the social code governing them. Crane seems to be analyzing, half-seriously and in miniature, the origins of social conformity as apparent in a child's world. If these children had only stopped to think, they would have realized how their parents would react to the hair cuts. They did not, however, stop to think; their leader spoke, and with but one single exception they obeyed.

The problem of isolation does not assume the same importance in Crane's stories of children that it does in "The Blue Hotel" or The Monster. To be sure, the rational child, by refusing to have his hair cut, isolates himself from his companions. This aspect of the story, however, is only incidental to its more important purpose—depicting the operation of irrational but immensely powerful forces which make for social conformity.

"The Knife"¹ is the story of a man who, confronted by an apparently hopeless situation, manages to extricate himself. Peter Washington, Dr. Trescott's Negro stable boy,² goes to visit Alek Williams³ and on the way stops to talk with Si Bryant, a white farmer who grows

¹Crane, Works, pp. 105-119.

²Who has succeeded Henry Johnson after the latter was burned in his attempt to rescue Jimmie Trescott.

³This is the same Alek who cared for Henry after the fire.

wonderful watermelons. The two proceed to act out a little skit which they have performed many times previously.

"Take your eyes off them there melons, you rascal," said Si placidly. The Negro's face widened in a grin of delight. "Well, Mist' Bryant, I raikon I ain't on'y make m'se'f cover-tous er—lookin' at dem yere mellums, sure 'nough. Dey sutainly is grand."

"That's all right," responded Si, with affected bitterness of spirit. "That's all right, just don't you admire 'em too much, that' all."

Peter chuckled and chuckled. "Ma Lode! Mist' Bryant, y-y-you don' think I'm gwine come prowlin' in dish yer gawden?"

"No, I know you hain't," said Si, with solemnity. "Because, if you did, I'd shoot you so full of holes you couldn't tell yourself from a sponge."...The effete joke in regard to an American Negro's fondness for watermelons was still an admirable pleasantry to them, and this was not the first time they had engaged in badinage over it.¹

Peter's visit with Alek lasts several hours, and toward its end the conversation turns to Bryant's watermelons. "They talked about them until, when Peter started for home that night...they held a certain dominant position in his mind." His thoughts being what they are, it is not surprising that Peter should make a try for a melon. About to cut one from the vine, he is overwhelmed with horror at the sight of a black form heading his way. A second later, he is looking into the terror-stricken face of Alek Williams. Suddenly Peter gets a tremendous idea. He will save himself from disgrace by pretending to have been guarding the melons. Seizing Alek he starts for Si Bryant's house, but at that moment one of Alek's dogs appears and attacks him. Alek drives the beast away, and Peter, in gratitude, releases the old man.

¹Crane, Works, pp.105-6.

The next morning Si informs Alek that he has found a knife in his watermelon patch, and, by adroit maneuvering, manages to trap Alek into admitting he knows who owns it. Pressed to reveal the man's identity, Alek seems unable to escape the necessity of betraying Peter. Suddenly, however, he has an inspiration.

"Mist' Bryant, dish yer knife b'longs ter Sam Jackson!" Bryant was startled into indignation. "Who in hell is Same Jackson?" he growled. "He's a nigger," said Alek impressively, "and he works in a lumber-yard up yere in Hoswego."¹

The story thus is that of a man who manages to get himself out of an apparently hopeless situation. Alek does so by lying, by inventing an owner for the knife Peter had lost, and making him live far enough away so that Si can not question him. "Lynx Hunting"² is another story in which a person has to resort to a lie to escape from a difficult situation. In this story, Jimmie Trescott accidentally hits Henry Fleming's³ cow while trying to shoot a bird on a fence. Fleming catches him and asks why he did it. Jimmie, who with his friends had earlier been talking about lynx hunting, blurts out, "I thought she was a lynx." There are of course differences in the answers given by Alex and Jimmie. Alex's answer is more ingenious than Jimmie's, and Jimmie's is completely preposterous in a way that Alek's is not: after all, the knife could have been dropped by a Sam Jackson, but that Jimmie could have mistaken a cow for a lynx is manifestly ridiculous. The two tales are alike, however, in that both protagonists turn the tables on fate at the last moment, and by so doing, demonstrate once again that the universe is

¹Crane, Works, p.119.

²Ibid., Pp. 33-40.

³The protagonist of the Red Badge of Courage, grown older and now a successful farmer.

indifferent rather than hostile toward man. Had the universe been malignant, the outcome of both stories would have been very different—Jimmie would have gotten a whipping and heaven only knows what might have happened to Alek.

The actual episode of the watermelon stealing in "The Knife" illustrates the importance of social prestige. Both Alek and Peter are men of consequence in the Negro community. Alek is deacon in his church while Peter is the local Beau Brummel. Both have to talk themselves into making a try for the melons, and both are conscious, as they stare into each other's horror-filled eyes, that their social prestige is threatened. Peter saves face by pretending to be protecting Bryant's melons, but Alek can only protest feebly that he wasn't planning to steal one, only to "feel" it. Peter thus preserves his reputation in the eyes of Alek, but Alek knows that he is condemned in Peter's.

"Shame",¹ like The Monster and some of Crane's poems, illustrates the great importance of social conformity. Jimmie Prescott has been invited on a picnic, to which he takes two salmon sandwiches in a tin pail. When he arrives at the lake shore where the picnic is being held, one of his friends asks him:

"What you got in the pail, Jim?"
 Jimmie answered somewhat uneasily, "Got m'lunch in it."
 Instantly that brat of a Minnie Phelps simply tore down
 the sky with her shouts of derision. "Got his lunch in it!
 In a pail!" She ran screaming to mother. "Oh Mamma!
 Jimmie Prescott's got his picnic in a pail"....In a moment
 [Jimmie] had been made a social leper. All old intimacies

¹Crane, Works, pp.75-86.

had been flung into the lake, so to speak....At safe distances the boys shouted scornfully: "Huh! Got his picnic in a pail!"¹

Jimmie has been ostracized because he is "different," even though his "difference" is the very trivial one of having transported his lunch to the picnic in a container unlike those used by the other children.

One of the adults at the affair, a young lady, takes pity on Jimmie, makes friends with him, and acts as his companion for the afternoon, so Jimmie's day can hardly be called a complete loss, although he undoubtedly would have been happier playing with the other children. A comparison of this story with The Monster reveals that society makes no distinction between trivial and serious offences in penalizing the individual who is different. Whether the offense consists of carrying lunch to a picnic in a pail instead of a basket, or of defying community opinion and giving shelter to a deformed monster, its punishment is the same—complete ostracism of the offender.

The behavior of both Dr. Trescott and Jimmie under such circumstances is worth some comment. The Doctor, of course, feels a moral obligation to care for Henry, to the extent of refusing an offer made by several of his friends to provide a country home for his charge. Even Jimmie mutters that "I can have my lunch in a pail if I want to." The interesting thing, however, is that although both Trescotts feel the justice of their positions, neither seems disposed to rebel at the injustice of a system that makes outcasts of them. The notion of

¹Crane, Works, p. 78.

publicly defending his position before the community apparently never enters the Doctor's head, and as for Jimmie, he soon begins to feel that

if he crept up modestly and was very gentle and very nice to the little girls, they would allow him peace. Of course it had been dreadful to come with a pail to such a grand picnic, but they might forgive him.¹

In other words, such is the tyranny of public opinion that not even its victims seriously question the right of the group to pillory, however unjustly, the individual; it is so powerful that it can often make even its most innocent victims feel a sense of guilt.

Several sources for the Whilomville Stories have been suggested. Edith R. Jones, who as a girl paid Crane an extended visit at Brede Place, in England, says² Crane told her that most of the tales were founded upon incidents from the childhood of Cora Crane. Edna Crane Silbury, Crane's niece, states³ that a number of the stories are based upon events in the life of young Stephen. For example, she says that Stephen once tried to shoot a cow with a toy gun his brother William Crane gave him and that Dr. Trescott was modeled after William. Another brother, Edmund, sheared Stephen's curls and thereby incurred the wrath of his mother. This incident probably inspired Crane to furnish haircut money to the two little "Lord Fauntleroy's" as well as to write "The Angel Child." Stallman⁴, believes that the works of Mark Twain

¹Crane, Works, p. 80.

²"Stephen Crane at Brede," Atlantic Monthly, 194; 57-61 (July, 1954).

³"Stephen Crane, My Uncle, As I Knew Him," Literary Digest Interantional Book Review, 4:248-50 (Mar., 1926) (as quoted in Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane, An Omnibus, N.Y., Knopf, 1952, p. 535.)

⁴Stallman, op.cit., pp. 534-5.

strongly influenced the writing of the Whilowville Stories. The theme of deception in "The Knife," he declares, hearkens back to Huckleberry Finn where Huck learns all about social guile. Another story, "The Carriage Lamps," not discussed in this section, has a rescue scene paralleling the episode in Huckleberry Finn in which Huck and Tom Sawyer rescue Jim. It can probably safely be asserted that all the above influences played a role in the writing of the Whilowville Stories, that the stories are an amalgam of personal experiences and literary example.

In the Whilowville Stories Crane expresses his conviction that the disagreeable characteristics of adults are present fullblown in children, if anything more prominently than in adults, since adults sometimes manage to conceal them partially beneath a veneer of civilization. Cruelty, selfishness, and cowardice, he says, are not traits that the individual acquires from society during the process of growing up, but are as much inherited as the color of the hair or the shape of the head. Such a belief does not necessarily carry the implication that man is completely base. As we have seen, individuals are capable of behaving unselfishly, or even heroically, under certain circumstances. However, such behavior is exhibited only in times of great stress or danger. Normally, the average adult is much more nearly akin to the children of Whilowville than to the Henry Fleming who carried his regimental colors into battle, and no mere change of environment will automatically produce a nobler breed of men.

Like their parents, the children of Whilowville live in a naturalistic universe which is as indifferent to their problems as it

is to the struggles and aspiration of adults. For these children, as for their parents, things often go wrong, in spite of the best intentions of everyone. Once in a while, on the other hand, fate is unexpectedly kind, delivering an individual out of a situation which is apparently hopeless. Indifference, it would seem, knows no age barriers, and children must take their knocks along with adults.

CONCLUSION

An examination of the socially-orientated stories of Stephen Crane shows that Crane was keenly interested in the nature of man, his relationship to God, to the universe, and to other men; and that he had definite opinions concerning this nature and this relationship. So far as is known, Crane never codified these views into one concise, integrated social philosophy. Rather, he presented them one or two at a time—here a poem might comment upon the nature of God, there a short story might point up man's indifference to the sufferings of his fellows.

Crane viewed God in somewhat the same way as did the eighteenth century Deists. Like their God, his was also a Celestial Watchmaker who set the universe in motion, then sat back and watched its operation without interfering in any way with the perfection of its machinery. Here, however, the resemblance ceased. The God of the Deists was not weak, but all-powerful; not capricious, but logical; not cruel but beneficent. Crane's God, on the other hand, is all of these, showing His weakness by allowing the world to escape Him, His cruelty by being amused at the way man is buffeted here and there, His capriciousness by sudden reversals of fortune.

Man's concept of the Deity in Crane's view does human intelligence little credit. Far too often, man conceives and worships a cruel God who punishes him unmercifully for transgressions he is not aware

of having committed, or even for those committed by his remote ancestors, while he declares himself willing to be damned for the glory of this God. Man's unrealistic conception of God and religion is further borne out by his attitude toward ritual. He considers the vestments, the candles, the gestures to be of central importance, and seldom stops to reflect that at best they have but symbolic value, and are not at all intrinsically important.

Despite man's often-cherished belief that he is a creature set apart and somehow special, Crane saw the universe in which he lived as completely indifferent to humanity's struggles and aspirations. Because the universe is indifferent rather than hostile, man enjoys a limited amount of freedom. At times, as in "Killing his Bear", he can control perfectly, from start to finish, situations in which he becomes involved. On other occasions he appears to be nothing more than a hopeless pawn of chance. Most of the time, however, events are partially under and partially beyond his control. As a result he not only is unable to predict the course of coming events, but, like Henry Fleming, often cannot grasp the real significance of events even as they occur. His position with respect to abstract Truth is no better. Since the universe is not only indifferent to man but also changeable and fickle, blowing the "ship of the world" hither and thither before "stupid winds," it follows that ultimate Truth is at best a shifting, gossamer thing which man can never hope to understand or grasp.

But in spite of the impossibility of ever knowing ultimate Truth, Crane points out that individuals exist whose unquenchable thirst

for knowledge leads them to break away from the masses who go "in huddled procession" and make the attempt. Not everyone, unfortunately, has this desire. The average person plods through life thinking and behaving exactly like the majority of his fellows, making no attempt to break the chains forged on him by unreasoning custom. Still others would like to seek Truth but recognize the difficulty of the quest and are afraid to begin. Only a few have the courage to undertake the task, and these invariably die alone, short of their goal. Yet they are not to be despised or ridiculed. The desire to know Truth is found only in man, hence the individual who dies seeking it is much more representative of all that is uniquely human in man than either the dullard or the coward.

One of man's strongest and most persistent desires, Crane believes, is to achieve and maintain a meaningful relationship to society, to win the respect and admiration of his fellows. So egotistical is he, however, that too often both his concept of a meaningful relationship and the methods he uses to attain it leave much to be desired. Far from picturing himself as a member of a cooperating, interdependent group, the individual, like Henry Fleming and George Kelsey, is likely to imagine himself a sort of superman performing fabulous deeds of heroism, basking in the admiring glances of his companions, rewarding and punishing his inferiors with godlike detachment. In order to impress his friends, he resorts to braggadocio, boasting of his prowess in fighting, in making love, in nearly every sort of human activity. So strong indeed is man's desire for approval that he

will rationalize even his cowardly, mean actions so as to make them appear virtuous, thus mentally justifying himself before society. It is not always possible for the individual to achieve his social goals. Sometimes, like George Kelsey, he is unfortunate enough to live in an environment which does not provide a suitable group with which he can identify himself or socially acceptable ways for him to prove his merits to the world. In other instances a narrow, restricted, and debased environment, such as the one in which Maggie was reared, denies to the individual a knowledge of any other sort of life than the one he leads and dooms his attempt to make a better, more satisfactory life for himself. Finally, misconceptions concerning the nature of society can not only prevent the individual from achieving a meaningful relationship with the group but may even have disastrous consequences for him. This type of misunderstanding led to the death of the Swede in "The Blue Hotel".

The individual can best achieve a meaningful relationship to society and prove himself to his friends during those periods when the group is threatened by a common danger—a type of situation illustrated in The Red Badge of Courage and "The Open Boat". However, the relationship which actually materializes bears almost no resemblance to the one which the individual has previously pictured in his imagination. All selfish desire for glory, as well as all fear for his own safety, is swept away, to be replaced by feelings of cooperation and kinship. Far from looking upon his companions as persons who exist merely to be awed by and to applaud his own heroic deeds, he now feels for the first

time the bonds of humanity that link the group together as men. During such periods, the individual's own personality becomes subordinated to a common cause. He regards himself as only a small part of something much greater and more important which is in danger of being destroyed, and he willingly expends himself to the limit to prevent this from happening. Although the individual may behave heroically during a crisis, he does so as a matter of course, or even unconsciously. Not only does he no longer desire to be a hero, but he is also quite likely, in much the same manner as Henry Fleming, to regard his "earlier Gospels" with undisguised contempt. From such crises the individual gains, along with a meaningful relationship to society, a true knowledge both of his capabilities and limitations. Most important of all, he comes to realize that there is hope in cooperation, that if men but work together, they can win a measure of salvation for themselves even when the odds seem hopelessly against them.

Ordinarily, men display little tendency to cooperate with one another. Indeed, man's behavior toward his fellow beings is by and large characterized by cruelty and stupidity. For example, people will divide into opposing camps and wage bloody war over the most trifling differences, and when asked why they do so they are unable to give a rational or consistent answer. They will attack those who differ from the majority, regardless of how insignificant the difference may be, and also anyone rash enough to come to the defense of those attacked. The fact that individuals singled out for attack often cannot help being different and, in fact, may ardently wish to be like the others, doesn't in the least deter the persecutors, who continue to do their

worst. Further, human beings seem possessed of a sadistic element which makes them want to see others hurt and permits them to display a callous indifference to the sufferings and misfortunes of their fellow-men—a sadism illustrated by the stories "A Street Scene in New York" and "An Eloquence of Grief".

To quite an extent man's cruel and stupid behavior toward his fellows is motivated by a desire to protect the social group or to maintain social prestige. When an individual is different, especially if the difference is grotesque or repulsive, the group may feel that he poses a threat to its very existence. Under such circumstances, society has only two choices. It can attempt to alter the individual so as to eliminate the difference or, if this is impossible, it can destroy or drive him away. The harsh treatment afforded the burned Henry Johnson in The Monster stems in part from society's desire to rid itself of a person, who, it fears, menaces it. Man's callous indifference to the sufferings of his fellows is motivated by a desire to appear well before others, rather than by any wish to preserve the social organism. In order for the individual to appear thus, there must be others to whom he can feel superior, for whatever reasons he can conjure up. The victim of misfortune is ideal for purposes of comparison. Thus, as those who witness the sufferings of the stricken Italian in "A Street Scene in New York" crowd about, they mentally exalt themselves for having escaped the same fate, transmuting the misfortune of the victim into their own virtues, in somewhat the same manner that they rationalize despicable deeds so that they appear virtuous.

Interestingly, it is the group, acting as a group, which displays no pity toward the sufferer. So long as each person considers himself as an individual, he is capable of feeling compassion. Once part of a group, however, he must strive to maintain his standing with respect to the others. In such a situation, pity becomes impossible.

The reaction of the individual who has been rejected by the group for nonconformity is worthy of comment. While he may feel that he is the victim of injustice, in no case does he seem disposed to rebel against the system which has made him an outcast. Indeed, like Jimmie Trescott, he may even develop vague feelings of guilt, though innocent of any actual wrongdoing.

Similarly, victims of economic injustice seem more inclined to accept society's harsh opinion and treatment of them than to fight back. Although the collective power of individuals such as those depicted in "The Men in the Storm" would probably be sufficient to compel society to redress their grievances, they remain ignorant of its true extent. Further, the down-and-outers seem unable to cooperate with one another to the extent that would be necessary if they were to take action to better themselves.

When Crane's writings are studied as a group, it becomes apparent that his attitude toward the individual was not wholly consistent. In stories like "Twelve O'Clock" and The Monster, isolated individuals such as the hotel owner and Dr. Trescott represent the forces of rationality and humanity, and the group those of irrationality, violence and disorder. On the other hand, in The Red Badge of Courage and "The Open

Boat" the individual becomes the prototype of humanity not by being isolated from the group but rather by identifying himself with it to the extent that his own personality is submerged.

In attempting to account for Crane's mixed feelings in this respect, some attention must be given to the situation which confronts society in each instance. The first group of stories deals with situations in which society is not threatened by immediate catastrophe. True, the people of Whilomville may subconsciously feel that Henry Johnson somehow constitutes a social menace, but there the danger is neither clear-cut nor immediate. Under such circumstances any rational, humane traits that society possesses stems from the presence within it of individuals like Dr. Trescott and Martha Goodwin, who dare to think for themselves, to oppose the stupidity and irrationality which characterize the great mass of people. Once society is faced with imminent destruction however, the entire picture changes. The group, rather than the individual, then assumes primary importance, since if it is destroyed, society necessarily perishes also. In such critical situations, therefore, it is the person who subordinates his personality to the cause of the group, rather than the individualist, who best serves humanity.

It is not surprising that there should be a great deal of irony manifested in Crane's writings. The one condition essential to irony is that a state of affairs exist or a series of events occur contrary to what is believed to exist or expected to happen and, since man is unable to know either ultimate Truth or the truth of ordinary happenings,

he will almost inevitably find himself in ironic situations. Besides such irony of situation, however, there is also an irony implicit in man's overweening sense of his own importance as contrasted to his actual place in the scheme of things. This type of irony is not so apparent as, say, that displayed in the last scene of Maggie, but it is much more persistent, disappearing only when the individual, as the result of a great social crisis, comes to realize the truth about himself—that he is only a very small, unimportant part of something much greater.

Crane felt that no particular group had a monopoly on either man's virtues or his vices. Soldier, Boweryite, cowboy—all possess the same basic nature, with only minor differences between groups. It is true that the soldier may display courage more frequently than, say, the cowboy, but this is because of the exigencies of his occupation, rather than because he is fundamentally braver.

Although for the most part Crane's characters, regardless of what group they belong to, are basically alike, two groups—his prostitutes and Negroes—have characteristics which set them somewhat apart and therefore deserve special comment. Crane's attitude toward prostitutes was essentially sympathetic, and is reflected not only in his writings but also in his personal relationships with women of this profession and others not considered quite "respectable" by the ordinary run of folks. Early in 1896, for example, a disreputable Mrs. Bowen whom Crane had met earlier, accosted him in a New York restaurant and asked to borrow fifty dollars. Crane lent her the

the money and later gave her other small sums upon her plea that she needed it to reform. Eventually Mrs. Bowen, becoming bolder, attempted ~~ed~~ to blackmail Crane, and he decided to have a showdown with her. Calling at her apartment, he attempted to remonstrate with her, but she, infuriated, threw a knife which narrowly missed him, then fainted. Later she tried to sue for support but the case was refused.

In September of that same year, Crane became involved in another incident, this time with more serious results. One evening, he was escorting three chorus girls home when a plainclothesman arrested one of them—a Dom Clark—for soliciting. Crane appeared in court the next day and testified in her behalf. Subsequently, it was revealed that she had been arrested once before when, according to her, a policeman had insulted her and she had spurned him. The police were thus apparently out to get her. Not only did Crane testify in behalf of Dora; he also wrote a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, New York Police Commissioner, protesting the actions of the police—a letter which led Roosevelt to harangue the force for their treatment of women. After this, Crane was a marked man; The police did everything they could to blacken his reputation, and perhaps their actions account at least in part for the fact that after 1897 Crane was never in New York for a long period of time.¹ Climaxing Crane's series of encounters with "unconventional" women was his meeting with, and subsequent marriage to, Cora Taylor. Crane first met Cora late in 1896 in Jacksonville, Florida, to which city he had been sent by the Bachelor Newspaper Syndicate to report the insurrection which was then brewing in Cuba.

¹John Berryman, Stephen Crane, N.Y., Sloane, 1952, pp.172-83. discusses these two incidents in greater detail.

Cora at this time was proprietor of the Hotel de Dream, one of the city's fancier houses of joy, and it was in this establishment that the meeting probably occurred.¹

Cora quickly fell in love with Crane, and when, in the spring of 1897, he went to Greece as a war correspondent for the New York Journal, she quickly followed him. Here, they were probably married.² Later, she accompanied him to England where—with the exception of the period when he served as a war correspondent in Cuba—they remained together until Crane's death. Afterwards, Cora returned to Jacksonville and her old profession.

Perhaps the simplest explanation for Crane's fascination for prostitutes and girls in "fringe" professions is that he had some romantic notion that their lives were glamorous and exciting. Maggie does not support this contention, but certain other of his heroines do. Both Florinda O'Connor, the artist's model of The Third Violet, and Imogene Carter of Active Service³ are more dashing and glamorous than their more conventional foils. In the final analysis, it is not astonishing that a man who spent so much of his life among "unconventional men" such as Bowery bums, Mexican expatriates, and filibusters, and who was by nature a nonconformist and rebel himself, should be attracted by unconventional women.

¹Branch Cabell and A.J.Hanna, "Cora Comes Back," The Johns (Rivers of America" Series) N.Y., Farrar and Rinehart, 1943, pp.275-86.

²No record of a ceremony being performed has ever been found, and it is quite possible that theirs was a common-law relationship.

³Two minor novels by Crane which are not dealt with in this dissertation.

Crane's keen powers of observation appear to have failed him when he attempted to portray Negroes. His Negroes are straight out of a minstrel show—they have a weakness for flashy clothes, water-melons, and "high-falutin'" language; and they are servile before whites. Here is his description of the Whilomville Negro colony, in "The Knife."

The scattered colony of Negroes which bovered near Whilomville was of interesting origin, being the result of some contrabands who had drifted as far north as Whilomville during the great Civil War....The town reaped little in labour from these curious suburbs. There were a few men who came in regularly to work in gardens, to drive teams, to care for horses, and there were a few women who came to cook or to wash. These latter had usually drunken husbands. In the main, the colony loafed in high spirits and the illustrious minority gained no direct honour from their fellows unless they spent their earnings on rainment, in which case they were naturally treated with distinction....About twice a year the lady philanthropists of Whilomville went up against them and came away poorer in goods but rich in complaisance. After one of these attacks the colony would preserve a comic air of rectitude for two days, and then relapse again to the genial irresponsibility of a crew of monkeys.¹

In fairness to Crane it must be said that his Negroes do possess some redeeming qualities; they are courageous, as witness Henry Johnson's attempted rescue of Jimmie Trescott in The Monster, and they often stick by and protest their friends—even false friends—as Alek Williams protected Peter Washington. All in all, however, his Negroes are completely unreal and do no credit to a man whose keen understanding of people is so apparent when he deals with Whites.

Crane's children are in a sense also a group somewhat apart. They display no special characteristics but do serve to show that the traits of adults exist full-blown in children, hence can be considered hereditary, rather than acquired. By depicting in his Whilomville Stories how

¹Crane, Works, V, pp. 106-7.

children behave in their little groups, Crane is also depicting the operation of adult society.

Crane's social outlook is not something which developed gradually. Nearly every theme that he was to discuss later in his novels and short stories can be found in his first commercially published book,¹ The Black Riders, which appeared early in 1895 and was written at least two years earlier. Further, a study of The Sullivan County Sketches shows that as early as 1891 Crane believed the universe to be indifferent to man, and man a boasting braggart. Crane apparently formed his views very early, and never significantly altered them.

An analysis of Crane's writings reveals clearly that his social outlook had its roots in the prevailing naturalism of the late nineteenth century. Like Zola and other adherents of this school, Crane did not hesitate to employ, when they served his purpose, themes and subjects which earlier writers had avoided or handled sentimentally. With but few exceptions, he maintained an air of objective detachment toward his work, excluding his own theories and observations and permitting his readers to draw their own conclusions regarding characters and actions. Crane's opinion of man was also typically naturalistic--by and large his characters are lacking in dignity and stature, and are at the mercy of forces which they cannot hope to comprehend.

All these naturalistic elements are present in Maggie. Its sordid theme of seduction and abandonment is handled dispassionately, and no attempt made to sentimentalize its protagonist or her background.

¹Maggie first appeared in 1893, but was privately printed and practically no copies were sold.

Maggie herself is ultimately destroyed by an environment which she cannot escape. Much of Crane's poetry and such stories as "The Blue Hotel", "The Whilomville Stories", and The Monster are also largely naturalistic, each dealing with one or more of man's foibles and weaknesses. Crane's naturalism is somewhat more diluted in The Red Badge of Courage and "The Open Boat" since each makes the point that periods of great crisis serve to stimulate feelings of cooperation and kinship among individuals, which enable them to survive the peril. Even so, however, Henry Fleming and the shipwrecked sailors are still to a great extent hopeless pawns of chance.

Crane's belief that man's makeup includes a large complement of undesirable traits has been supported by many events of the recent past. One has only to read a description of a Nazi concentration camp or see pictures of its victims to realize that man's capacity for committing horrible deeds remains unimpaired in spite of the material improvements of the last half century. Indeed, the atrocities of World War II furnished the coup de grace to a school of thought which contended that the evils of man were rooted in his environment, that if man's environment was improved by the applications of scientific discoveries and the dissemination of knowledge through education, his basic nature could be expected to likewise improve.¹ The end result of this process would be a perfect man in a perfect society. World War II, however, proved conclusively that such a view was far too optimistic, that man's

¹Ironically enough, one of the leading exponents of Environmentalism, H. G. Wells, had been a close friend of Crane's during the latter's London days. The wide divergence of their views on the nature of evil in man suggests that their intellectual influence upon each other was less than profound.

perversities were far too deeply rooted to be done away with thus easily.

But even with the image of Buchenwald before one's eyes, it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape the conviction that Crane, in his writings, judged his fellow-men too harshly. Although individuals often act in a cowardly, cruel, and petty manner, it is equally true that they can also exhibit bravery, kindness, and a spirit of cooperation. Also, it is evident that man need not be confronted with a life-or-death situation in order to display these good qualities. The person who risks his life to save that of a stranger trapped in a burning building or drowning does not do so because of any peril to himself, nor does he gain anything except perhaps the satisfaction that he acted well. Furthermore this satisfaction is not merely disguised vanity. A person might buy a vagrant a meal in order to give his own ego a boost but is hardly likely to deliberately risk his life in order to do so. However strongly one may wish to appear well to himself, his desire to remain alive is even stronger. In the final analysis, I believe that such an act of bravery represents the triumph of something genuinely good in man's nature over the selfish desire to keep his own skin whole.

In real life, people seem to show a higher capacity to work with one another for their common good than Crane believed possible. The rise of powerful workmen's unions, the growth of cooperatives and many other events testify that the spirit of cooperation is very much alive in men. To be sure, selfishness plays a certain role in these events, but at least it is group selfishness, a desire to improve the welfare of the group as a whole, not an every-man-for

himself individualistic selfishness.

Finally, the abolition of cruel sports, such as bear-baiting and cock-fighting, and our relatively recent concern for the welfare of animals, children, the aged, and the unemployed show that man can be kinder and can display a greater sense of social responsibility than Crane indicated.

In brief, the chief fault of Crane's social theory is that it puts too much emphasis upon man's faults and does not pay enough attention to his virtues. Crane is somewhat like a doctor who sees so many sick and injured people that he forgets all about the hundreds of healthy persons who pass his office every day.

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• **Stress** is a response to a stimulus (stressor) that is perceived as a threat or challenge. It is a state of physiological and psychological arousal.

• **Stressors** are the external factors that trigger the stress response. They can be physical (e.g., noise, pain, temperature) or psychological (e.g., pressure, conflict, loss).

• **Stress Response** involves the activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, leading to the release of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.

• **Acute Stress** is a short-term response to a specific stressor, often leading to heightened alertness and energy.

• **Chronic Stress** is a long-term response to persistent stressors, which can lead to negative health outcomes.

• **Stress Management** involves techniques to reduce the impact of stressors and promote relaxation, such as deep breathing, meditation, and exercise.

• **Stressors** can be categorized into physical, psychological, and social stressors.

• **Stressors** can be acute or chronic, depending on the duration and intensity of the stimulus.

• **Stressors** can be managed through various techniques, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques, and lifestyle changes.

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NOTE

The following abbreviations have been used in this bibliography and the footnotes:

AL = American Literature

AN&Q = American Notes and Queries

Expl. = Explicator

LTLS = London Times Literary Supplement

N&Q = Notes and Queries

SRL = Saturday Review of Literature

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