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LIFE DURING WARTIME—AND AFTER

SOME THOUGHTS ON STEPHEN CRANE'S
SPITZBERGEN TALES



Given its psychological acuity and stylistic intensity, it is entirely fitting that, a century after its original publication, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* continues to occupy a central place in the canon of war literature. However, an unfortunate side effect of the attention paid to this novel is that it has largely obscured the rest of Crane's war fiction; his considerable body of stories set during the American Civil War, the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, the Spanish-American War, and a conflict of his own devising remain unknown to readers in general and even to most literary critics, being chiefly the province of Crane specialists. Most of these specialists agree that this is not a tragic state of affairs, since much of this work is demonstrably inferior to *Red Badge*, but the best of these stories may well surpass the novel in terms of insight and stylistic effectiveness. This group includes the Civil War story "An Episode of War" (the one most frequently anthologized), the Greco-Turkish War story "Death and the Child," and, preeminently, a set of interrelated stories about the fictional Twelfth Regiment of the army of Spitzbergen, arguably Crane's most mature exploration of the consciousness of men in battle.

Written in 1899, the last full year of Crane's life,¹ these Spitzbergen tales are Crane's final meditations on war. On that basis alone they invite comparison with *Red Badge* as Crane's first such work, but a number of similarities between novel and stories make comparative analysis not merely inviting but almost inevitable. Like *Red Badge*, the Spitzbergen tales focus on a single regiment undergoing its initiation into the realities of battle and on the philosophical and psychological struggles of one young man within that regiment—in this case, a lieutenant named

Timothy Lean. So clearly developed are the stages of both the regiment's and Lean's initiation from one story to the next, in fact, that a number of eminent Crane scholars, including Milne Holton,² Eric Solomon,³ and Chester L. Wolford, argue that the stories comprise a "composite novel,"⁴ a designation that makes their similarity to *Red Badge* even more marked.

A further link to *Red Badge* is that, like this novel and unlike most of the rest of Crane's war fiction, the Spitzbergen tales focus only on this initiation. The stories in Crane's Civil War and Spanish-American War volumes, *The Little Regiment* and *Wounds in the Rain*, take place within a larger historical, social, and psychological context; rather than concentrating solely on the battlefield, they touch on the issues that impel men to go to war in the first place and that broadly affect their attitudes toward conflict, such as patriotism, politics, patronage, family loyalties, and romance. With the Spitzbergen cycle, as Solomon notes, Crane turns away from these concerns and returns to "the approach that produced *The Red Badge of Courage*," attending only to the moment of combat, showing "the Spitzbergen army set apart from history or society. The sole field of endeavor is the battlefield; everything else is extraneous."⁵

With these resemblances in mind, the arguable superiority of the Spitzbergen tales to *Red Badge* in several areas is readily discernible. Perhaps the most immediately striking of these is that of style. *Red Badge* is often celebrated for its arresting figurative language, the most famous example of which is the description of the red sun "pasted in the sky like a wafer" at the moment of Jim Conklin's death.⁶ However, a number of critics, beginning early on with H.G. Wells, point out that many of Crane's figures are essentially decorative rather than functional, are employed more for shock value than thematic development; Wells particularly criticizes Crane's use of "chromatic splashes that at times deafen and confuse" and "images that astonish rather than enlighten" (qtd. in Gullason 130).⁷ In the Spitzbergen tales, on the other hand, as Charles Swann notes, Crane's style is taut, tense, pared down;⁸ Holton characterizes it as Crane's "purified style" of combat description, marked by darkened imagery and "bare and functional" language.⁹ Whereas in *Red Badge* Crane devotes a whole paragraph to the horror Henry Fleming feels in his first encounter with a corpse, describing the dead man's

uniform as having turned to "a melancholy shade of green," his eyes as having taken on "the dull hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish," and his open mouth as having changed from red to "an appalling yellow" (47), he creates an equal effect in the final Spitzbergen tale, "The Upturned Face," with the single onomatopoeia "plop,"¹⁰ used to describe the sound of a shovelful of earth striking the face of a dead man during burial. In context, this simple sound, as James Nagel says, becomes "essentially an objective correlative for a powerfully realized emotion, one symbolically indicating the undesirable presence and fact of death."¹¹

Concurrent with this greater maturity of style, and perhaps still more significant, is Crane's advancement in the Spitzbergen tales in terms of insight into the nature of battle and its effects on a sensitive individual. At the end of *Red Badge*, Henry Fleming has clearly learned something about himself and about war: he feels "a quiet man-hood, non-assertive but of sturdy and strong blood," because he has "been to touch the great death and found that, after all, it was but the great death" (136). Critics debate endlessly over Crane's attitude here, over whether he intends these remarks straightforwardly or ironically, whether he intends Henry to be understood as indeed a man now or still a self-deluded youth,¹² but regardless of one's view of this matter it can be argued more certainly that Timothy Lean reaches a comparable level of understanding by the end of the very first Spitzbergen tale and that in the succeeding three he attains insights well beyond Henry's grasp and, presumably, beyond Crane's own at the time he wrote *Red Badge*.¹³

In this first story, "The Kicking Twelfth,"¹⁴ the regiment, like the one in *Red Badge*, has not yet been under fire; thus, it is collectively uncertain about how it will behave in combat, with this uncertainty concentrated in the neophyte Lean. The anxiety is dispelled when the regiment is ordered into the battle line and mounts two successful assaults upon an enemy position. Despite heavy losses, the remnants of the regiment, including Lean, are exhilarated by this outcome. The survivors, aware that their attacks have won the battle, regard themselves as proven men; they now have "a record" and smile "patronizingly" at the artillery and cavalry forces that follow up on their success by harrying the retreating enemy. They have "no more concern with

the battle” and find these “subsequent proceedings” of further bloodshed and death “only amusing” (296), a state of mind that, in its concern strictly with their own condition in the present moment, clearly recalls Henry’s belief at the end of *Red Badge* that he will suffer no more in battle, which is made clear in his feeling that he has made a permanent passage “from hot-ploughshares to prospects of clover tranquility . . . as if hot-ploughshares were not” (135). As for Lean in particular, although he did not initially flee and thus has not undergone the full round of self-examination and putative redemption that Henry has, his condition is also comparable to that youth’s. Just as Henry basks in the praise of his commanding officer, who has observed that he and his friend Wilson “deserve t’ be major-generals” for their displays of courage (120), Lean is commended by his colonel, who, after the second assault, says, “Lean, you young whelp, you—you’re a good boy” (296). Significantly, Crane ends “The Kicking Twelfth” at this point. Whereas the final outcome of Henry’s response to such praise is “images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks; [and] an existence of soft and eternal peace” (135), Lean simply stands mute, with smudged face and torn breeches as non-tranquil reminders of his just-concluded ordeal (296). Given this lack of access to Lean’s thoughts, the reader cannot be sure of his feelings regarding his newly proven manhood, cannot know whether or not he shares Henry’s overly optimistic view of the future, but it seems clear from this abrupt ending that Crane himself recognizes and wishes the reader to recognize that, metaphorically as well as literally, one battle is not the whole war.

This point is driven sharply home in the second story, “The Shrapnel of Their Friends,” for its events reveal to the regiment and to Lean that war, manhood, and the praise of commanding officers are not, after all, simple matters of bravely facing enemy fire and being justly recognized. This story begins immediately after the attacks recounted in “Kicking Twelfth,” with the troops resting on the ground they have won and still exhilarated by their achievement. The men smile “easily and indulgently” at other units,¹⁵ while Lean, now behaving distinctly like the post-combat Henry Fleming, swells with pride, for the regiment’s decimation has had the personally gratifying effect of elevating him to the command of a company whose captain was

killed. Only fifty-three of this unit's original eighty-six men remain, but Lean is not bothered by that sad fact, for he regards this battlefield promotion as the first step in his own progress to the rank of general. "I have here a snug little body of men with which I can do something," he exults, and he feels "the usual fierce fire to make them the best company in the regiment" (302).

Such exhilaration fades the next morning, when the regiment is once again ordered into an assault. The men charge with the veterans' assurance they earned in the previous battle, but this time before they reach the enemy position they are mistakenly shelled by a battery of their own artillery. They are willing to face enemy fire, but this friendly barrage is too much for them; as soon as the troops realize that the shells are coming from their own line, the regiment "shudder[s] to the very centre of its heart—and [arises] like one man—and [flees]." Outraged, the general who yesterday lavished praise on these men stands in the path of their flight and, misunderstanding what has happened, shouts, "Are you afraid of the guns you almost took yesterday? Go back there, you white-livered cowards! You swine! You dogs!" (305). When he learns that the regiment is fleeing not the enemy's guns but its own, the general's manner changes only partially; he ceases his imprecations, but he does not atone for this injustice, for, as the narrator observes, "[w]hen you are a commanding officer, you do not adopt the custom of apologizing for the wrongs done to your subordinates. You ride away" (306). And ride away is exactly what the general does, leaving the regiment's colonel to sputter, "Did you hear what he called us?" (306) and the rest of the men, including Timothy Lean, to ponder this new initiation into "less orderly, less safe, less reasonable"¹⁶ dimensions of war.

If this tale injects an unexpected dimension of absurdity into Lean's experience of battle, one beyond Henry Fleming's ken, the third story, "And If He Wills, We Must Die," adds a tragic cast to that dimension. This story focuses on one particular sixteen-man detachment, led by a sergeant named Morton, that is ordered to establish a forward post in a house more than a half-mile beyond the Spitzbergen army's secured line. Morton is furious at this assignment; he rages to his corporal that at least two other sergeants in the regiment should have come up first for this dangerous duty, that he is overworked and abused, and that

he will quit the dog's life of a soldier at the first opportunity (307).¹⁷ Nevertheless, he immediately leads his men out, squelching their grumbles and reproving laggardly behavior, a response that makes clear that Morton's tirade is merely the venting of a good veteran soldier—a genuine veteran who, unlike the soldiers in "The Shrapnel of Their Friends," is accustomed to and accepts the disorderly, unsafe, and unreasonable conditions of war.

The extent of this acceptance is the theme of the rest of the story. Almost as soon as the detachment reaches the house, they are attacked by a much larger enemy force, and although there is no evident tactical value to this position, Morton is determined to hold it simply because he has no specific orders not to do so.¹⁸ This determination, along with the quiet, generous courage that underlies it, inspires the other men as well. When a private tells Morton, "I can't stand this. . . . I think we should run away," he replies simply, "You are afraid," in a soft tone and "with the kindly eyes of a good shepherd." In response, the private gives the sergeant "a gaze full of admiration, reproach, and despair" and returns to his post, to die bravely a moment later (311). When a wounded man begins to sob, Morton is less compassionate but no less clear about the proper course. "Can't you shut up?" he shouts. "Fight! That's the thing to do! Fight!" (312). At this moment, Morton is himself shot, and he expends his last breath encouraging those left alive to fight to the last man.

In the hands of a mordant veteran such as Ambrose Bierce, as Solomon points out, this scene of self-sacrifice for no higher principle than obedience to orders would drip with irony.¹⁹ However, Crane's handling of it seems totally straightforward, for the final paragraph of the story is a tribute uttered by the commander of the attacking enemy force. When he and his men finally enter the house and confront the sixteen corpses, this officer, appalled by "the scene of blood and death," exclaims, "God! I should have estimated them as at least one hundred strong" (312). Here is a further step into the absurdity of war: sixteen good soldiers have died pointless deaths precisely because they are good soldiers. As Solomon says, the reader is meant to see the sergeant not as a deluded fool who gives his life and those of his men for no purpose but rather as "a perfect soldier who

obeys his impossible orders in the best tradition of the service. . . . The sergeant is a good soldier, the orders are clear, the men must die. This is the way war is.”²⁰ And although Timothy Lean does not appear in this story, Holton argues that in its graphic depiction of the wounding and deaths of specific individuals—an element lacking in the prior two stories—it is implicitly another step in his initiation, an introduction not only to the indissoluble fusion of heroism and absurdity at the heart of war but also to its “ugly side,” to “the reality of violent and painful death” (268).

In the final story, “The Upturned Face,” Lean reappears to confront this reality directly. This time, Crane’s “relentlessly closing” focus, to use Holton’s phrase,²¹ encompasses just five men: Lean, the regimental adjutant, two privates from Lean’s company, and a dead man, identified only as “old Bill,” a friend of Lean’s and the adjutant’s (297). Whereas Lean dreamed in “The Shrapnel of Their Friends” of doing something extraordinary with his new command, now, only a short time later, he has learned of the more mundane actuality of war, for at the start of “The Upturned Face” his company is ingloriously dug in on a hilltop, pinned down by unseen enemy sharpshooters. And an even more unsettling reality literally stares at him—the immediate fact of death evinced in the “chalk-blue” face and “gleaming eyes” of his dead friend (297). It is at this point that Lean’s advancement beyond Henry’s mindset at the end of *Red Badge* becomes most apparent. As noted earlier, Henry regards himself as having “been to touch the great death and found that, after all, it was but the great death” (136). In literal fact, however, this is not the case. Confronted once with a corpse—in the woods—and twice with dying men—his friend Jim Conklin and the “tattered soldier” whom he encounters during his flight from the battlefield—Henry flees, emotionally if not also physically, every time; and he is only able to maintain his sense of his own “quiet man-hood” at the conclusion of the book by choosing willfully to ignore such behavior, as when, recollecting his abandonment of the tattered soldier, he “muster[s] force to put the sin at a distance” (135). Faced with a similar situation, Lean, on the other hand, tells the adjutant that despite the danger from the enemy’s fire their only proper course is to bury their friend (297).

If this willingness to do honor to a comrade regardless of danger to himself indicates that Lean has overcome his fears of physical harm, has recognized "the mutability which one shares with the dead," as Holton says,²² he has not yet fully accepted this mutability. This failure becomes clear in Lean's and the adjutant's reluctance to go through Bill's pockets and remove his personal effects, presumably for return to his family, and then to move the corpse into its grave, which the privates have dug. To face enemy fire is one thing, but to touch the corpse of a friend is quite another; "[w]hat they cannot accept," Gibson explains, "is the clear and present existential necessity of realizing the finality of death, a problem to these men, who have seen many dead bodies, because the corpse is of an intimate friend whom they must bury with their own hands" (104).

The remainder of the story documents the process by which Lean reaches such an acceptance. By an effort of will, he empties Bill's pockets, and then he and the adjutant tumble the corpse into the grave, being careful to touch only clothing, not flesh. The next order of business, the adjutant says, is the funeral service. Lean argues that customarily it is not read until the grave is covered, but the adjutant, once again revealing his lack of full acknowledgment of what has happened to his friend, pleads, . . . "let us say something while . . . while he can hear us" (298). Lean is willing, but a problem arises: neither man recalls the service. They stumble through the first two lines and then conclude abruptly with "O, God, have mercy—" (299). Both know this is not the end, but it is all they remember; it is "better than nothing," the adjutant says, and the enemy sharpshooters' fire, as the narrator observes, is "both accurate and continuous" (299).

In fact, Crane's point here is Lean's discovery that, in a moral and philosophical sense, this truncated ritual is indeed better than nothing. He realizes, as Wolford says, that this ritual, conducted haltingly and hastily under fire, "performs as a kindness" and is "a way of creating order out of chaos, a way of giving comfort and meaning, even as it creates horror and, in this case danger. . . . Death remains horrible—ritual does not lessen its horror," Wolford concludes, "but ritual enables one to face it" (79-81). Similarly, George W. Johnson argues that in their efforts to adhere to "some notion of ultimate propriety," in their effort in the burial ritual to "phrase a metaphor of man's relationship to

the cosmos,”²³ Lean and the adjutant provide a final illustration of Crane’s belief that the human condition is entrapment between “an unknowable world and incongruous ceremonies,”²⁴ a condition in which those ceremonies, despite their ultimate meaninglessness, enable their practitioners to “accept incongruities which would otherwise overwhelm [their] imagination.”²⁵

However, one step still remains in Lean’s process of acceptance. Having honored Bill in the funeral ritual, his friends must now subject him to a seemingly absurd contravention of that ceremony: they must cover him with dirt. Reluctantly, one of the privates begins this task by looking at the “chalk-blue face” and then dumping his shovelful of earth on the corpse’s feet. The adjutant, relieved like the others that the first dirt was not flung in Bill’s face literally and thus metaphorically, clumsily attempts to defuse the indignity by acknowledging that the living have no happy alternative here. “Well, of course,” he babbles, “a man we’ve messed with all these years . . . impossible . . . you can’t, you know, leave your intimate friends rotting on the field.” Then, reaching the breaking point, he shouts at the private, “Go on, for God’s sake, and shovel, you” (300). At that moment, however, the private is wounded, and Lean, reaching the limits of his own endurance, orders both privates to take cover and finishes the burial himself. He works “frantically like a man digging himself out of danger” until he has covered all but the face, at which point he finds himself momentarily paralyzed. He turns to the adjutant and demands, “Good God. . . . Why didn’t you turn him somehow when you put him in?” The adjutant, the narrator says, understands, and beseeches Lean to “Go on, man.” Lean understands as well; he swings the final shovelful of dirt, and it covers the face, landing with a “plop” that ends the story (300) and leaves the reader with a like understanding of what has happened to Lean. Having recognized burial as a ritual that, in Holton’s formulation, serves as “a means of dealing with chaos, a means of asserting order,” and as a ritual that “requires confrontation even as it makes such confrontation bearable,” Lean, when he takes over the actual task of interment himself and thus confronts the face, “has earned the right, finally, to cover over the reality of death and to turn away” (271).

Holton regards this mindset as Crane’s own as well at this late stage of his life. Other critics likewise read this story, and the

Spitzbergen cycle as a whole, as Crane's valediction, his final confrontation with and acceptance of the essential absurdity of mortality.²⁶ This view seems entirely plausible, since at the time Crane finished these stories he knew that he had only months to live.²⁷ However, how this "composite novel" might have been altered in meaning had Crane lived to complete "The Fire-Tribe and the White-Face," a fifth Spitzbergen tale that he began during his last few months, is open to speculation.²⁸ This story is set after the war recounted in the previous four is over; the Spitzbergen forces have triumphed and now function as an occupation force in the enemy's capitol. Lean has been promoted to captain and permanent command of his company, but he is unhappy with those conditions because at the moment they make him more a policeman than a soldier, and "padding the streets and brow-beating the people," as he describes his duties (164), do not suit him. Clearly, he has overcome his distress at having to bury his friend under fire; he is pleased when his colonel posts his company to a wilderness district with orders to subdue its inhabitants, a tribe of fire-worshippers, since this command seems to him likely to entail a good deal of combat. However, the colonel warns him that he should fight only if necessary; his mission is not to kill but to govern, to "dominate a tribe of embittered and war-like savages"—in essence, to keep the peace.

The rest of this fragment details the difficulty of this mission, and in so doing suggests that, however absurd war may be, as chronicled in the four completed stories, peace is equally absurd and considerably more complex. War required Lean only to shoot at the enemy and, by way of imposing order, to acknowledge the reality of death. Imposing order during peacetime, he quickly discovers, is more complicated, requiring that he learn to distinguish between acts of hostility and acts of other sorts on the part of his former foes when each side views the other through a thick veil of mistrust engendered by the differences between their languages, cultures, and motivations. In his first encounter with the tribe, he fails egregiously. As the company enters the fire-worshippers' territory a warrior stares down from a mountaintop; when his men grow nervous at this presence, and one of his interpreters fans their fears by asserting that the figure is the tribe's god, Lean orders the warrior shot. Almost immediately, he recognizes that this action belies his claims to be

coming in peace; he realizes that he has committed "a truculent initial blunder . . . immeasurable in its power of destruction" (169).

Lean manages to redeem himself shortly thereafter, however. When a second warrior hurls himself at the company's advance guard and falls wounded under their guns, Lean orders that he not be killed, hoping that his restoring the man to the tribe will demonstrate his pacific intentions. But such intentions prove difficult to convey through interpreters, and Lean's first parley with the tribe's leaders seems destined to turn into a pitched battle, until one of the two interpreters tells the chieftains that Lean has brought money for them. Suddenly, their pugnacious spirit vanishes, and the interpreters explain the reason to Lean, who is incredulous. "No, no, these people wouldn't sell their honor for a few tin dollars," he says. "They are warriors and gentlemen. You have misunderstood. Ask again" (182). But the interpreters *have* understood, and the potential battle breaks down into a haggling session, with the chieftains demanding four dollars for each warrior rather than the three that one interpreter offers, and the other interpreter telling Lean that *he* can make the deal for two dollars apiece.

At this point, Lean's initiation into absurdity takes still another step. He himself, the narrator explains, understands "only one standard of conduct in the world" (185), the standard of stoically courageous acceptance of battle and death to which he adhered in "The Upturned Face." Now, however, he sees "that there [is] not only in the world a code of conduct but that there [are] codes of conduct" (183). In this case his response to his new knowledge is rejection; he despises the fire-tribe for what he regards as greed unbecoming to warriors. They are "men of no character," he decides, and he refuses to consider the interpreters' explanations that "[t]hese people are different. . . . They do not think in the same way. They have a way for themselves" (185).

Whether Crane intended for Lean ultimately to accept this newest absurdity, intended for him ultimately to negotiate the confusing and perhaps disappointing complexities of life after wartime, cannot be known, since the story breaks off here. But even as it stands, it indicates the vitality of Crane's imagination to the very end of his life. If in the four finished stories he moves

well beyond *Red Badge*, well beyond Henry Fleming's limited understanding of war and "the great death," in "The Fire-Tribe" he seems ready to move beyond Henry's equally limited understanding of life after wartime, whenever that may come, as "an existence of soft and eternal peace." "The Red Badge is all right," Crane told Joseph Conrad after he had observed war for himself (*Correspondence* I, 283). One hundred years later, *The Red Badge of Courage* is indeed all right, but perhaps we should not allow that truth to overshadow the power of the more tight-lipped tales of the Twelfth Spitzbergen. ☞

NOTES

1. Fredson Bowers, "Textual Introduction," *Tales of War*, Volume VI of The University of Virginia Edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970), clxxii.
2. Milne Holton, *Cylinder of Vision: The Fiction and Journalistic Writings of Stephen Crane*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 268.
3. Eric Solomon, "Stephen Crane's War Stories," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 3 (1961): 67-80.
4. Chester L. Wolford, *Stephen Crane: A Study of the Short Fiction* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 77
5. Solomon, 78.
6. Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*, Volume II of The University of Virginia Edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), 58. Subsequent references to this text are parenthetical.
7. See also pp. xxviii-xxix of James B. Colvert's introduction to *Tales of War* and Thomas A. Gullason's "The Significance of *Wounds in the Rain*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 5 (1959): 235-42.
8. Charles Swann, "Stephen Crane and a Problem of Interpretation," *Literature and History* 7 (1981): 101.
9. Holton, 266-67.
10. Stephen Crane, "The Upturned Face," *Tales of War*, Volume VI of The University of Virginia Edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane*, Fredson Bowers, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), 300.
11. James Nagel, "Stephen Crane's Stories of War: A Study of Art and Theme," *North Dakota Quarterly* 43 (1975): 17-18.

12. For just a sample of this debate, see Robert C. Albrecht, "Content and Style in *The Red Badge of Courage*" (*College English* 27 [1966]: 487-92); Clinton S. Burhans, "Judging Henry Judging: Point of View in *The Red Badge of Courage*" (*Ball State University Forum* 15.2 [1974]: 38-48); William B. Dillingham, "Insensibility in *The Red Badge of Courage* (*College English* 25 [1963]:194-98); John Fraser, "Crime and Forgiveness: 'The Red Badge' in 'Time of War'" (*Criticism* 9 [1967]: 243-56); pp. 90-91 of Donald B. Gibson, *The Fiction of Stephen Crane* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968); Leland Krauth, "Heroes and Heroics: Stephen Crane's Moral Imperative" (*South Dakota Review* 11 [Summer 1973]: 86-93); J.C. Levenson, "Introduction," *The Red Badge of Courage* (Volume II of The University of Virginia Edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane*); Kirk M. Reynolds, "*The Red Badge of Courage*: Private Henry's Mind as Sole Point of View" (*South Atlantic Quarterly* 52 [1987]: 59-69); Charles Swann, "Stephen Crane and a Problem of Interpretation" (*Literature and History* 7 [1981]: 91-123); William Wasserstrom, "Hydraulics and Heroics: William James and Stephen Crane" (*Prospects* 4 [1979]: 215-35).

13. This circumstance is most likely a function of changes in Crane's personal knowledge between 1895 and 1899. At the time of *Red Badge*, as almost every reader knows, Crane had never heard a shot fired in anger, never been near a battlefield—a fact that, as many contemporary critics noted, made his realistic depiction of combat seem almost miraculous. By the time he wrote the Spitzbergen tales, he had witnessed a pitched battle between Greeks and Turks and a great number of combats between Spaniards and Americans, some large and some small, but all notable for their ferocity. What he discovered in this experience was that he had indeed painted an accurate picture in his novel, but also, apparently, that war contained many more dimensions than he had dreamt of in Henry Fleming's philosophy.

14. Stephen Crane, "The Kicking Twelfth," *Tales of War*, 296. Subsequent references to this text are parenthetical. In his textual note on these stories for the University Press of Virginia edition of Crane's collected works, Fredson Bowers offers persuasive evidence that Crane intended them to be read in the order in which he composed them—"The Kicking Twelfth," first; "The Shrapnel of Their Friends," second; " 'And If He Wills, We Must Die,' " third; and "The Upturned Face," last (clxxii-clxxx).

15. Stephen Crane, "The Shrapnel of their Friends," *Tales of War*, 301. Subsequent references to this text are parenthetical.

16. Holton, 268.

17. Stephen Crane, " 'And If He Wills, We Must Die,' " *Tales of War*, 307.

18. Crane's clear implication is that this lack of specific orders is another of the absurd tragedies of war, since he follows Morton's complaint about not receiving updated orders with a terse observation from the narrator that seems to explain the fate of those orders: "[a] mile back on the road, a galloper of the Hussars lay dead beside his dead horse" (312).
19. Solomon, 79.
20. Solomon, 79.
21. Holton, 267.
22. Holton, 269.
23. George W. Johnson, "Stephen Crane's Metaphor of Decorum," *PMLA* 78 (1963): 252.
24. Johnson, 251.
25. Johnson, 253.
26. See in particular Johnson, 250-56.
27. In a letter written in August of 1899, ten months before his death, Crane tells an unidentified friend to "have the kindness to keep your mouth shut about my health in front of Mrs. Crane"—his common-law wife, Cora. "It is all up with me but I will not have her scared" (*Correspondence* II, 504).
28. Crane also began a play on this subject, *The Fire-Tribe and the Pale-Face*, which focuses on the tribe rather than on Lean. It can be found on 160-64 of *Poems and Literary Remains*, Volume X of The University of Virginia edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane*.