





1871-1900



Stephen Crane

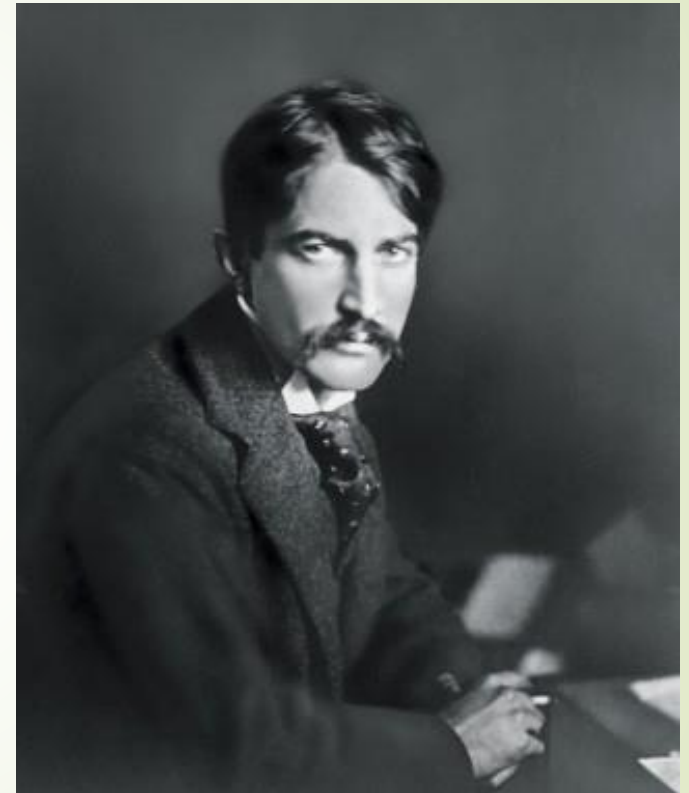
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- ▶ Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey on **November 1, 1871**, the son of a prominent Methodist minister
 - ▶ Although he failed a theme-writing course in college, he began to write articles for newspapers (such as *The Herald Tribune*) at a young age
 - ▶ He never finished college
 - ▶ He was notable for **his bohemian lifestyle** and his **daring journalistic exploits**. He rejected religious and social conventions.
 - ▶ **1896**: in Cuba , short story "The Open Boat" based on a real life experience, the sinking of the ship on which he was travelling
 - ▶ He travelled to Greece as a correspondent
 - ▶ Then he was in Cuba again to cover the Spanish-American War (**1898**)



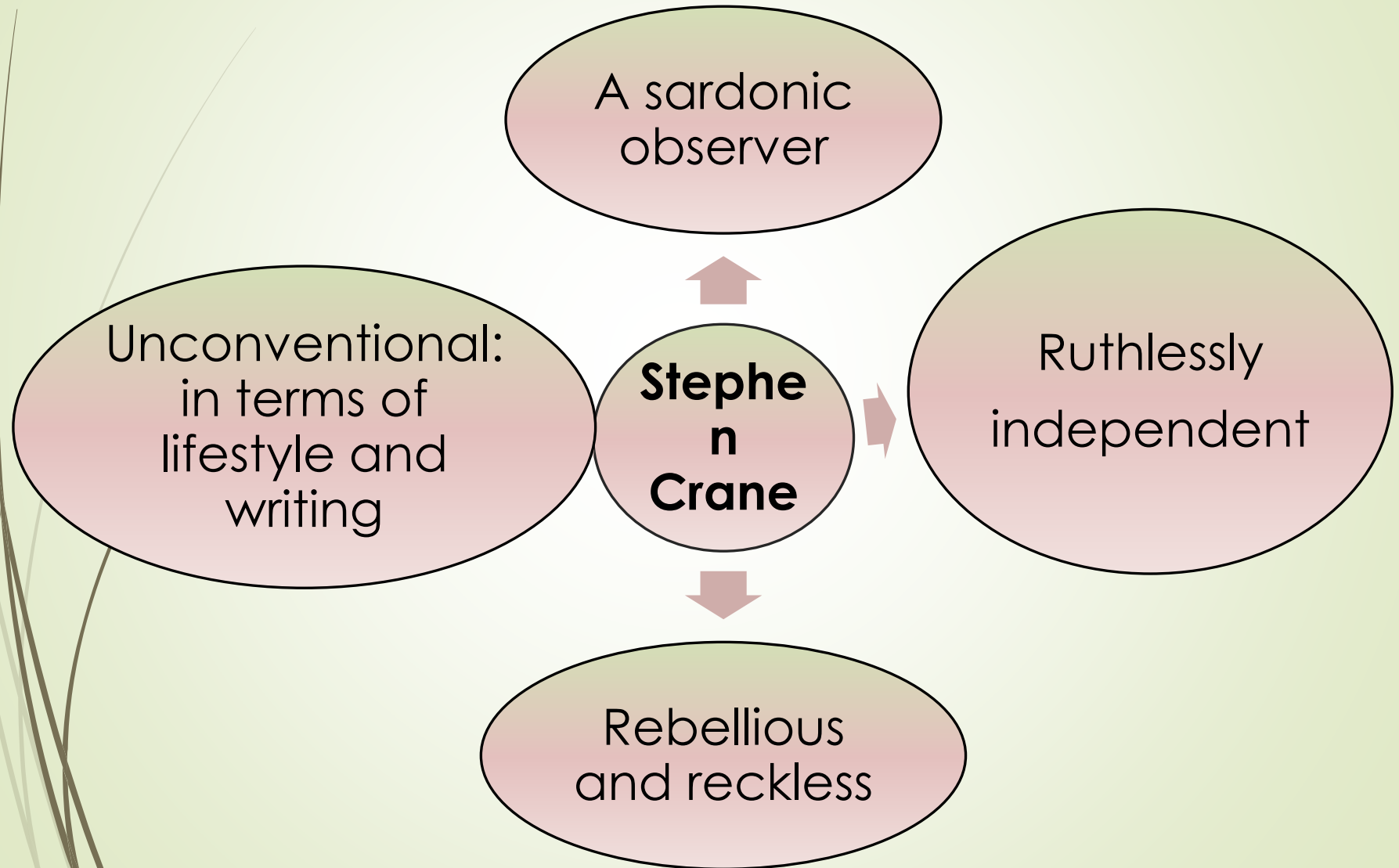
Stephen Crane and Cora Howorth Taylor in 1899

An unconventional relationship: they never married, but lived together for the last three years of Crane's life. Cora was the owner of a bordello/brothel in Jacksonville, Florida

- He settled in England in 1897 and continued to write despite his desperate health conditions
- W. D. Howells, J. Conrad, H.G. Wells immediately recognized Crane as a genius
- He died of tuberculosis in Germany in **1900**



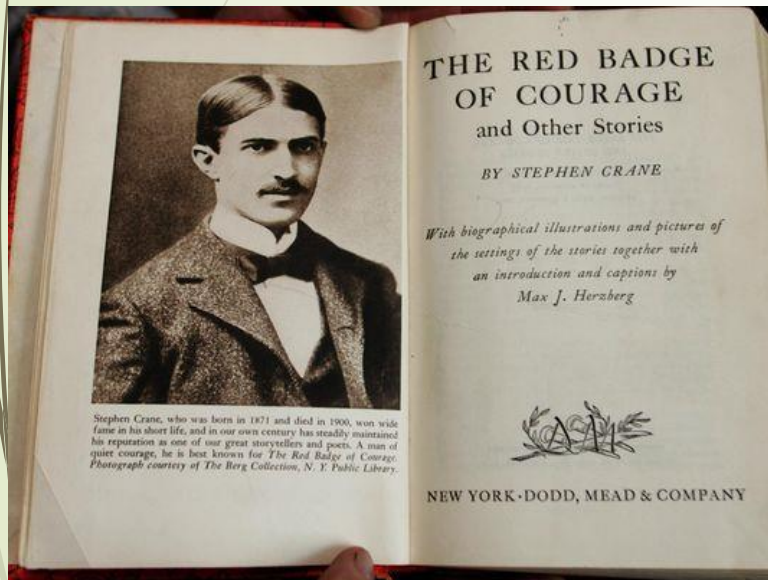
Crane's personality



His major works

- *Maggie: a girl of the Streets* (1893) based on firsthand observations in the slums of New York
- *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)
- *George's Mother* (1896)
- *The Little Regiment and Other Episodes of the American Civil War* (1896)
- *The Open Boat, and Other Tales of Adventure* (1898)
- *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (his 1st collection of poems); *War is Kind* (collection of poems)
- *Active Service* (1899)
- *The O'Ruddy* –unfinished- a humorous novel

The Red **Badge** of Courage: an Episode of the American Civil War



- First published in an abridged version as a serial in the *Philadelphia Press*, December 3-8, 1894.
- The book-length version was published in New York by D. Appleton and Company in **1895**. It was an immediate success
- Crane depicts the –partial- education of 'the Youth', Henry Fleming, young Union Army soldier, in the context of battle

Considered the first **MODERN** novel of war by an American


- It became the model for many 20th century American writers like Hemingway, who wrote about war
- *The Red Badge of Courage* is a **novel of war** and a **psychological novel**.
- In fact, Crane is interested in the psychology of war




The **CIVIL WAR** (1861-1865)

- The battle mentioned in the book is probably the **Battle of Chancellorsville** (Virginia), 30 April/6 May **1863**
- The Confederates led by General Lee won the battle



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- Stephen Crane was a journalist and a writer: the journalistic experience opened him up to a variety of places and people
 - He was also a keen OBSERVER of psychological and social reality
 - Crane explored 'the **physical, emotional** and **intellectual** response of people under extreme pressure'

(The Norton Anthology of Am. Lit.)

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- Crane's early -and keen- sense of death (which appears in *the Red Badge of Courage*) probably came from his own personal experience of suffering caused by the physical inflictions which marked his life (among which lung disease)

The sources

- ▶ Crane's earliest biographer, Thomas Beer, claimed that in preparation for the writing of *Red Badge*, Crane consulted ***Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*** (1884), a collection of memoirs by Union and Confederate officers



"LEAVING FALMOUTH CAMP, SPRING 1863"

Illustration from

Battles and Leaders of the Civil War



- Crane was also influenced by the **visual representations** of the Civil War by American artists, especially photographs by **Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and Timothy H. O' Sullivan**
- This is particularly evident in Crane's 'battle scenes'



Photograph by Alexander Russell
'Dead Confederate soldiers at Marye's
Heights, Chancellorsville'. May 1863



Crane's writing and photography:

'It is this effect of a photographic revelation which startles and fascinates one in *The Red Badge of Courage*.'

(Harold Frederic's review, *The New York Times* 1896)



Photograph by Mathew Brady. "The Dead at Antietam"



"Once the line encountered the body of a **dead soldier. He lay upon his back staring at the sky.** He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown. The youth could see that the soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinness of writing paper, and from a great rent in one the dead foot projected piteously. And it was as if fate had betrayed the soldier. In death it exposed to his enemies that poverty which in life he had perhaps concealed from his friends.

The ranks opened covertly to avoid the corpse. The invulnerable dead man forced a way for himself. The youth looked keenly at the ashen face. The wind raised the tawny beard. It moved as if a hand were stroking it. He vaguely desired to walk around and around the body and stare: the impulse of the living



‘Harvest of Death’ by Timothy H. O’ Sullivan
(July 1863)

The Red Badge of Courage (1951)

- The film: directed by **John Huston** in **1951**
- A World War II veteran, **Audie Murphy** played young Henry Fleming





A poem by Stephen Crane (1871-1900)
from *War Is Kind* (1899)

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



➤ On Stephen Crane:

- Biographical information partially adapted from :
Kazin, Alfred . Introduction to *The Red Badge of Courage*. Bantam Books, 1983.
- Additional readings (**NOT** mandatory):
 - Berryman, John. *Stephen Crane*. New York: Sloane, 1950.
 - La France, Marston. *A Reading of Stephen Crane*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.



On photography and the Civil War

- Jeff Rosenheim, *Photography and the American Civil War* (catalogue of an exhibition held at the MET)
- Link(areview of the exhibition)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/05/arts/design/photography-and-the-american-civil-war-at-the-met.html>
- Link to the USA archives <https://www.archives.gov/research/still-pictures/civil-war>