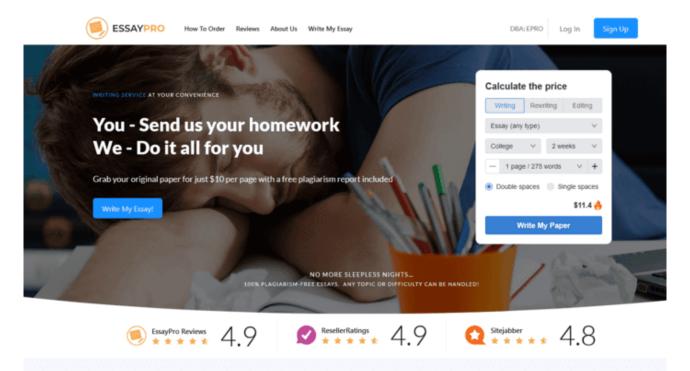
Stephen Crane and The Civil War



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Stephen Crane and The Civil War

While merely speculative, some biographers claim that Crane began The Red Badge of Courage in response to a challenge made by an acquaintance urging him to write a war novel that exceeded the quality of Emile Zola's Le débâcle. Crane, shortly thereafter, undertook the task and researched various articles in Century magazine on battles and leaders in the Civil War. In several personal letters he writes of the process he underwent in producing the narrative and discusses his opinions and feelings in reference to the quality of his work. While he generally concedes to the positive opinions surrounding its reviews, he makes a conscious effort to refute the notion that The Red Badge of Courage is his best piece of literature. Rather, he admits that the novel reflects an era in his life in which his art as a writer was inevitably bettered by environmental conditions and personal circumstances. He thus becomes like Henry the soldier, learning and developing from various experiences. His writing reflects the changes he underwent and the maturation of his work throughout this poorer time in his life.

Crane authored The Red Badge of Courage during a time of great financial need. It was first sent to the editor McClure, who kept the manuscript for nearly six months. While

Crane was given the impression that something would eventually be done in terms of its <u>publication</u>, he eventually resorted to giving the narrative to another agency, Bacheller's. The work was to be released by this company in January after being submitted in mid-November, but was actually published a month earlier in a shortened serial form. It first appeared in the Philadelphia Press December 3-8 and was ...

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