

Chapter – II

The Red Badge of Courage:

Crane's "*The Red Badge of Courage*" is his masterpiece written near about thirty years after the civil war. He has got literary background as both of his parents were writers. They were religious writers but Crane came out from the religious frame. In 1893 he first wrote the naturalistic work "*Maggie: A Girl of the streets*" As he grew he used his imagination power, conscience and wrote his master piece "*The Red Badge of Courage*" an episode on civil war. It shows authors artistic power, perceptions and his approach to the society and literature. The book became popular in England than in America and won many compliments from critics and readers. With the publication of his novel he emerged as one of the literary impressionists in American literary world.

Crane has neither viewed nor experienced the civil war. Through he was totally unaware from the actual incidents of Civil war, he wrote impressively about war. It seems that he must borrow the subject and incidents from other literature and interviews with veterans or it was his own creation. Many critics have their opinions about this book some of those are mentioned here. "*The Red Badge of Courage*" is a typical war fiction in American literature. The novel is rich by all aspects. Eric Solomon in a definition of the war novel said,

“The contribution of Crane to the genre of war fiction was two fold. First, he defined in his novel the form that deals with war and its effect upon sensitive

individual who is intricately involved; he uses war as a fictional test of mind and spirit in a situation of great tension. Also he constructed a book that still stands as the technical master-piece in the field.” 2

“*The Red Badge of Courage*” is a psychological novel. In it Crane skillfully narrates the psychological tumult in Henry’s mind and he succeeds to show the effect of war on sensitive youth. He distinguishes between the illusion of ‘Greek heroism’; ‘Homeric battle’ and the real warfare. Crane creates the impression in the novel because of his imagery, metaphor and realistic descriptions. He uses here brief descriptions, short conversations. Most part of the novel deals with narrative. Crane uses third person narrative style. Narrative style helps the novel to understand imaginative power of author. In “*Harvests of change: American Literature*” (1865 – 1914) Jay Martin wrote

“Crane uses several other devices of narrative, imagery, and verbal structure to make this partial world vivid frequently in his narrative he freely renders and reports the thought or speech of his characters without actually, guaranteeing that his rendition is accurate.” 4

Crane in the story, places his young cheering soldier in a regiment which does nothing than waiting, the days passed. The youth feels boring in the regiment. His thinking about the courage and fight is changed. The atmosphere in the story is realistic It provides natural back ground of the war

In the very first chapter, the cold foggy morning is mentioned. The nature plays an important role in the development of novel. A tall soldier, Jim Conklin washes his shirt and brings a rumour that the regiment will move next day. In chapter VII the picture of evening is mentioned. In chapter XII Henry gets 'The Badge of Courage' Crane shows the change in Henry's psychology. Henry rejoins the army. Crane shows gradual development in his attitude. Joseph Conrad in his war book "*A preface to Stephen Crane's the Red Badge of Courage*" wrote that

“‘The *Red Badge of Courage*’ is a masterpiece because of the marvelous impressionistic description of action on that wood land battlefield and the imaged style of the analysis of the emotions in the inward moral struggle going on in the breast of one individual the young soldier of the book, the protagonist of the melodrama presented to us in an effortless succession of graphic and coloured phrases”. 3

Crane, no doubt is an innovative writer who mingled various themes in the story. Main themes of the book are self recognition, Manhood, Maturity, Courage, Humanity, contrast between illusion and reality of war and realism. There are many other minor themes spiritual growth, self – preservation and honour. Crane has interwoven these all subjects in the personality and actions of the youth. A well known critic George Wyndham, in '*A remarkable book*' in new review, 1898 mentioned.

“Mr. Crane is a great artist, with something new to say, and consequently, with a new way of saying it. His theme indeed, is an old one, but old themes re – handled a new in the light of novel experience are the stuff out of which masterpieces are made and in “*The Red Badge of Courage*” Mr. Crane has surely contrived a master piece.” (172 – 73)

Many authors have written about war but Crane took old subject and gave a new treatment to the subject and made it sublime.

Henry after abandoning both men of his regiment meets a ‘Badge of Courage’ and returns to the regiment. All his friends are unaware of actual incident and are under impression of heroism but he himself knows about his cowardice. Actually he proves self interest but when fire opens he doesn’t show any regret or shame following lines shows it.

“His self pride was now restored. In the shade of its flourishing growth he stood with braced and self – confident legs, and since nothing would now he discovered he did not shrink from encounter with the eyes of judges, and allowed no thoughts of his own to keep him from an attitude of mindfulness the had performed his mistakes in the dark. So he was still a man” (107)

There are many different views on the ending of the novel many critics raised the question about the ending Edwin Cady asks many question to show Cranes style and form of novel.

“Does the novel end well? Does it end or just disappear? Is there a climax? Is the ending of the novel satisfactory, in short, in emphasis and substance?” 5

Many critics accepted that the novel ends well with climax. In last chapter Henry fights bravely to take revenge by proving him self that he is not belong to ‘mud diggers’ and ‘mule drivers’. He proves it with his ability. Now he is different from inexperienced soldiers. He realizes that man is mortal and the death is inevitable. Thus the novel ends with declaration of Henry’s development in to man of honour and courage.

In American history, Civil war is the most prominent incident. Many critics, authors and poets have written about the civil war and abolition of Slavery in America. There was a clash between north and south on the issue of abolition of slavery. The writers were excited to catch the important scenes, occasions from the civil war. The war was about to fulfillment of dream of freedom. Crane also heard or read about some incidents, occasions related to war and depicted them through the inexperienced but enthusiastic and amateur soldier. He made Henry, a village farm boy, a hero of the story. It is his style to write something on real incidents so he lived on such places and spent some time there to

observe the life style of people. At the time of "*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*" he preferred to live in slum area and became successful to depict the realistic picture of Maggie.

He spent some time as foreign correspondent for newspapers at Greece, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. He interviewed some veterans and experienced soldiers. On that experience and with the help of his imaginative power he wrote the present novel which, initially didn't get warm welcome in America but it became popular in England and then in America.

He neither fought in the war nor witnessed the battle. He could write it with the help of his imagination power and conscience. His language, scene, situations, incidents are no doubt realistic. For the novel, he selected the civil war as a background and newly recruited soldier who is not confident about his own performance in the war as a hero. But Henry Fleming, the hero was greatly fascinated by the war stories, "Greek heroism" and "Homeric battle". He presented the psychological change of raw recruited person. He presented Henry's ideas of honour, courage and war. He used apt and suitable words to describe the army life and to describe the battlefield.

The present novel is about how does a cheery youth who is newly recruited in the Army behave during war? How does he run away from the battle field? How does he again meet the army after get wounded? How does he realize his cowardice finally? How does he return into brave, victorious soldier? Novel focuses on those incidents, actions and characters that help him to become a courageous soldier. At the end of the story we came to know the ideas of glory, courage and victory.

Like the "*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*" and "*The Monster*" "*The Red Badge of courage*" is in third person narration. It seems that the writer creates the atmosphere of war. Crane deals with different types of themes. He tries to put them into his novels like Self Recognition; Manhood, Humanity and Maturity; Contrast between the illusion of battle and the reality of warfare and Realism.

Self Recognition:

Crane's "*The Red Badge of courage*" explores extreme environment of a typical sensitive individual. Crane didn't write the novel about the entire war and about all soldiers but he wrote it only about Henry Fleming, his actions and all events related to him. He stated that how do actions in the war affect on the newly recruited soldiers? How does the new soldier face many problems? What are the effects of war and war like situation on the newly recruited soldier's mind? How can they over come on situation? To know the answers of all question related to the effects of war on the soldiers, on their health, on their family, and performance we must read the character of Henry Fleming of "*The Red Badge of Courage*".

In the novel, we first meet Henry in the very first chapter. He hears the rumour from a tall soldier, Jim Conklin that the regiment will move on next day. The tumult in his mind starts as he is bored from waiting since last some days.

We come to know that actually he is a cheery youth who is well fascinated by the glory and valor of battle so he enlists himself in the Union (Northern) Army against his mother's will. She

refused to share in war, but finally she assures him that she will carry on whether or not he returns. Henry sets off for war to Washington. On the way, he is a hero. As the days pass he realizes the monotonous life of soldiers. He thought that his regiment will lose the battle so he thinks to flee from the battlefield. When Jim returns to the tent Henry asks him.

“Did you ever think you might run yourself, Jim?” he asked”. (12)

The reply of tall soldier forces him to think about his courage. Jim replies that he would fight if men surrounding him fought. He would run if they ran. Only Henry was not confident to fight bravely.

As the story proceeds Henry learns from small things. He records daily life of soldiers and compare it with his own life. He now slowly come out of the illusion of “Greek heroism”, “Homeric battle” and starts to live the life of soldier still he is a self-centered man. By the answer of Jim he feels shameful. He realizes his cowardice. He goes on deep thinking about his courage honour and confidence.

When he asks Wilson about flee from the battle. He replies “Run?—Of course not!” Henry feels pity on himself. In the beginning, for some days his regiment is reserve when his regiment meets battle first he fights bravely. The opposite regiment goes back and then attacks, now this time he thinks his regiment will be defeated. So he flees from battle field. First time he could fight bravely as he lost his individuality. He plunges into the woods where he feels comfortable in the company of nature. In the wood,

he meets a wounded soldier Jim Conklin. He also meets with tattered soldier. He could have saved both of them but he abandons them to die of their wounds. He feels shameful and guilty. He is alone in the woods. He realizes that he is the most selfish man. He reminds that his regiment never lost and opposite regiment never won in the past. So he decides to return to the army. On his way, he clutches a fleeing man who hit on his head by the butt of rifle and he is wounded. Thus he gets a 'Badge of Courage'. He rejoins his regiment.

Henry, after reaching his regiment becomes a courageous fellow because he didn't tell reality. He prepares for the battle. Henry fights bravely when the war opens with Gray regiment. By seeing his bravery the lieutenant said to the youth.

“By heavens if I had ten thousand wild cats like you I could tear th' stomach outa this war in less'n a week!” (120).

By these words Henry's chest gets puffed. He is really brave now. Henry is the member of 304th regiment. Henry and Wilson notice that opposite regiment is to attack on them and he further hears the words of their officers' that 304th regiment is of “Mule drivers”, “Mug diggers”. Henry gets a chance to take revenge by proving himself in the war. So he takes the flag to march. They fight like a valiant. He doesn't care to bullets and thinks that man is mortal and death inevitable. He fights till the regiment runs away. All officers please him. He is proud on himself.

Henry Fleming undergoes subtle change and emerges as a more experienced, more mature and more confident soldier.

Initially he was raw soldier, inexperienced and self-centered man. When he gets a 'Badge of Courage' he gets psychological wounded. The 'Badge' is directly to his mind. His thinking gets changed automatically. He becomes aware of his role and duties as a soldier.

Carne showed the transformation of raw, ignorant and ruthless soldier into dutiful, responsible, experienced, and mature person. Henry could change himself when he realized how he was wrong with the tattered soldier and Jim Conklin. He realized his cowardice when he ran away from battlefield. He recognized himself, his own power, ability and returned to the regiment. He could distinguish between the illusion and reality of war. He could understand the meaning of courage. Thus a raw farm boy is transformed into a great hero.

Contrast between the illusion of battle and the reality of warfare.

Henry Fleming is the protagonist of the novel who recruits as a cheery member of union Army during the Civil war which took place in between 1860 to 1865. In those days, it was craze among the youths of country to think and discuss about the war and enlist their names in the Army. The protagonist, Henry Fleming also had some heroic ideas about the glorious war incidents. To fulfill his glorious dreams of warfare, Henry Fleming enlists his name in the Union army against his mother's wishes. He is drawn to the glory of military conflict. Henry's understanding of courage is traditional and romantic. He thinks that like a war hero of ancient

Greece, he will return from battle either with his shield or on it. The novel focuses on Henry's concern about dying without recognition versus achieving public glory. His ideas of glory fall short of the Homeric heroes whom he praises. He lacks their requisite sense of duty. He does not consider proving himself worthy of public recognitions important as the recognition itself. He considers himself as a hero. In chapter-I Crane wrote about Henry's views related to the war.

“They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them. He had read of marches, subjects, conflicts and he had longed to see it all. His busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extra regent in color, lurid with breathless deeds.” (4).

Henry, like other youths also thinks that war is a glorious incident. He thinks that he would fight like a Greek Heroes about whom he has heard, read in the books. He is under an illusion that. He would lead the army and would become victorious in it. But it is his delusion; his hopes came to an end when he realizes the monotonous life of a soldier. His ideas of war and courage are changed as the time passes. He comes to know that the wars of great Greek Heroes are changed. The instruments, policy, strategy, style of marching are changed. He becomes aware when he experiences the reality. In the story, whenever he fights he realizes the troubles, danger of war than he read.

In the last chapter, somewhat, his ideas of war becomes true but it is only the result of the war. Generally, all youths attract to the war and courage. Henry also attracts to the war and courage.

Henry tries to prove all his concepts in the war but he is unable to do it as he runs away. When he introspects himself he returns back and fights like a lion in the battle. We understand that there is much contrast between illusion of battle and the reality of warfare.

Manhood, Humanity and Maturity:

Henry struggles to preserve the Manhood throughout the novel. Henry is fond of manhood so that he enlists himself in the army. He is eager to prove himself like a Greek Warrior. When he enlisted his name he feels grateful to be participating in the war. Henry thinks that his experience and courage will earn him praise of all people. He will be a hero, a real man. His early concepts of manhood are romantic. Wilson stands for him as a symbol of manhood. Wilson in the novel is described as brave soldier. He tells him that he will not run from the battlefield. On next occasion he gives the envelope to the Henry to deliver to his family if he dies in battle. Henry becomes a responsible man as he rejoins his army so his every action is very important in the battle. Henry learns the manhood from the Jim Conklin and Wilson. Jim dies and Wilson frees himself from any responsibilities as he handles the envelope to Henry. Henry shows his manhood mostly in the second half of the novel.

Humanity is a part of war, the wounded soldiers require kindness. They are served in different ways. In the story, Henry is tenderly served by Wilson and others. He takes his care as if he is a nurse but Henry doesn't show his humanity towards the tattered soldier and Jim Conklin. He leaves them to die and goes on, but when he is hit by the fleeing man with bullet of rifle in his head later

he is served in the regiment. He feels guilty that it is only physical injury but Henry gets wounded on couple of occasions. He feels shame on his deeds when he hears commander that the 304th regiment is nothing but “Mule drivers” and “Mud diggers”. Henry feels very sad. He becomes very angry. The words directly hurt the Henry. Thus he is injured by both instrument and by heart.

“Mule drivers – hell t’ Pay-don’t believe many
will get back” 6

The officers have no humanity to their Soldiers and they are expecting victory. Humanity is just a medicine that works on mind as well as heart and feelings. The loud soldier and Jim both have humanity. Both are more kind than Henry. In the first half of the story Henry behaves like selfish man, but at last he realizes his mistake and he learns from them. He doesn’t tell anyone the words used by his officers to the regiment and shows his presence of mind.

Through out the novel it is narrated that there is psychological development of characters especially Henry Fleming. Psychology of Henry is changed from ignorant to the experience, mature man. Both Henry and Wilson fight like a mature person. From nature Henry learns more. His ideas about the war and companions are automatically changed. Both get public recognition.

A mature person understands about humanity and Manhood. He can use it in his deeds. Both Henry and Wilson use the Manhood and humanity in the war and get changed themselves into experienced, knowledgeable, kind, mature person. Manhood is

meaningless without humanity and maturity. Humanity is generosity of a mature warrior. So without manhood, humanity and maturity no one develop himself psychologically or physically.

NATURALISM:

Naturalism has a very long history and it found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement. Originally, 'Naturalism' was used in ancient philosophy to denote Materialism. The term 'Naturalism' was imported from the fine arts into literary criticism by Zola in the preface to the second edition of *Therese Raquin* (1867). Naturalism came onto the literary scene already loaded with meanings derived from philosophy, the sciences and fine arts

In the U.S.A. Naturalism was even more closely linked to social and economic changes than in Europe. The Civil War ended in 1865 with the victory of the North over the South for the abolition of slavery. American Naturalism grew in direct response to there native social and economical problems. American Naturalism owes more to local factors than to outside influences. There was no single outside dominant influence in the U.S.A. literature. So writes including Hamlin Garland (1860-1940), Stephen Crane (1871-1900) and Frank Norris (1870-1902) tried to express Naturalism in their literature.

Stephen Crane is one of the naturalist writers of late 19th century. Crane's naturalism is quite different from others. It is classic example of naturalism. Crane was not the first writer who wrote about the civil war. There were many other writers like Joseph Kirkland, William De Forest, and Ambrose Bierce who

wrote but didn't get success like Crane. Crane is the only first writer who realistically wrote the novel related to the war incidents. His motif in the novel is to show the development of hero through war from innocence to the maturity. He uses simple plot, cosmic irony, realism, colour imagery to enrich his novel. He creates single world unique atmosphere where war is the back ground. He synthesizes parody with reality. He uses sensory indicators to introduce his characters. He places the battle at unknown place only in the wood along side the river. He doesn't mention the name of place in the novel.

The most part of the novel is realistic. Every scene and situation is described minutely in the novel. Very beginning of the novel presents geographical picture along side the river.

“The cold passed relation from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting as the landscape changed from brown to green, the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors. It casts its eyes upon the roads, which were growing from along throats of liquid mud to proper through fares. A river amber tinted in the shadow of its banks, purled at the army's feet; and at night... Of distant hills.” (1)

In the cold foggy morning army awakes on the bank of river. The hills, roads and landscape pictures in the story indicate that the background to the story is natural. Later Henry's psychological development takes place in nature. Crane is selective about his

characters and mentions them by pet names than their original name. It lays a special impact on his readers. He narrates characters in the form of sensory indicators. Well-known critic A.G. Sedwig In his review of "*The Red Badge of Courage*" in the nation in 1896 describes.

"Cranes presentation of characters as animalism', is provocative, as is the suggestion that in using "types" Crane presented characters form within a narrow range" .7

Crane is innovative writer so he leaves the impression on his readers forever by painting his characters. Crane uses here realistic characters in the novel. He seems the real characters are like Henry who grows, develops himself, who recognizes himself and realizes own ability in the company of nature and other characters. In the novel only once Henry Fleming is mentioned, all the time he is mentioned as 'The youth'. On the most occasions we come to know about protagonist by minor characters' comments that is 'the tall soldier', Jim Conklin and 'the loud private', Wilson. Crane uses describing words and creates complexity in the novel. The officers are also mentioned by their rank not by their name. It creates special effects on the reader one of the reviewer in the national observer complaint that

" None of the characters have any names –or if they have them are permitted to use there-and are designated through out by descriptive titles such as

“the youth”, “the tall soldier” “The tattered man”, “the loud one” “the lieutenant”, “the friend”. This is a trick which we find particularly aggravating and meaningless”. 8

The literary style that Crane presents is said, by some, to be confusing especially due to his naming a certain person and then neglecting to call that person by their name later in the story. Cranes hero is weak in qualities initially he learns from his minor characters and develops himself. He learns courage and confidence from Jim Conklin and maturity and humanity from Wilson. Crane narrates the effect of war on each character and then undergoes dramatic change but only Henry succeeds to present himself as a real hero of the story.

Crane uses brief description of incidents; he presents the naturalistic views and realistic situation in the novel. Plot of the novel contains twenty-four chapters. The novel is divided in two sections. In the first section, we come to know that the Henry is confused because of the nature of war. His ideas of Greek heroism and illusion of war are totally different. His flight from battlefield and the ‘Badge of Courage’ which he gets is the main action of first part and in second part he reunites with his army, he leads the regiment and get transformed is the most important thing.

Crane uses very stylish language. He used symbols, Metaphor, imagery, irony in the novel. Colour imagery is frequently used in the story ‘The Red Badge’, Henry’s Red Rage’, ‘Red Sickness’ and many others. Most images are used to show Henry’s psychological progress, his ignorance and fear. Crane uses most famous image in Chapter IX

“The Red Sun was parted in the
sky like a wafer”.⁹

Here the red sun is compared with red wafer of wax used to seal an envelope. The novel starts with metaphor and ends with metaphor. The novel is literary exercise in language. The novel is realistic. Crane uses here the photographic reality through the description. The reader seems it is indeed a war novel Ernest Hemmingway in 1942 said.

“There was no real literature of our Civil war, expecting the forgotten “Miss Ravenall’s conversion” by J.W. Peforest., until Stephen Crane wrote “*The Red Badge of Courage*” ¹⁰.

Crane’s “*The Red Badge of courage*” has its source in the interviews with many veterans of the civil war. He studied more about the civil war. He chatted with soldiers and depicted the real memories of war in the novel. He borrowed the originality form his readings of the Bible, Tolstoy, and Poe, Twain, Kipling and others.

Well known critic Amy Kaplan, in “*The spectacle of war in cranes revision of History*” in new essays on “*The Red Badge of courage*” Cambridge University press, 1986 Said about the sources for “*The Red Badge of courage*”.

“Cranes source for the Red Badge of courage, the popular battles and leaders of the civil war,

epitomized this creed. To instruct a new generation in the meaning of the war in 1884' the editors of the Century magazine invited veterans from both The union and confederate armies to record in detail their memories of major battles with the purpose of facilitating mutual respect, "the strongest bond of united people" (183)

Along with Crane many other writers were writing about the civil war but Crane's efforts to make the novel realistic are amazing. He did to whatever was necessary to collect the raw material and then composed the novel. He conclude the novel not in the tone of heroism but in introspective tone.

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