

## Chapter – IV

### THE MONSTER

Stephen Crane's small novel of thirty thousand words "*The Monster*" is first published in Harper's Magazine in August 1898. It is well known Novelette. It is fine example of a pathetic tale. Crane suggests the effect of horror upon the various observers. Present Novella deals with fear, uncertainty, selfishness, humanity and Hypocrisy. "*The Monster*" is one of the cryptic and ruthless novels of Stephen Crane.

Critics did not give much attention to the Crane's short stories except "*The Open Boat*", "*The Blue Hotel*", "*and The Bride Comes to the Yellow Sky*". They explored these novels deeply and find out number of aspects but they didn't pay much attention to the stories like "*The Monster*". It is rich by number of aspects. It deals with social and most crucial problems. It throws direct light upon the problems in contemporary society. Critics called it as a 'problem play'. The title itself is very significant. When we read the story, we feel that the black man, Henry Johnson is the Monster but it is not true. The people in the town are the real monster. It is classic example of the tragedy of the Negro.

"*The Monster*", Crane's novella deals a vehement question about the slave. It raises the question about the security of servants in their predicament. It throws direct light upon the position of black Negro's in America especially in white community. The role of contemporary white race is skillfully mentioned. The story is

very small in words but it is rich in many aspects. It is satire on contemporary social conventions, living status and many social problems those are depicted through the character and their struggle. Crane is innovative, realistic novelist of late 19th century. He successfully mingles many social, Personal subjects to acquire perfection.

The setting of the story is Whilom Ville town. Typical town mentality is focused through story. Charles Child Walcott in "*American Literary Naturalism, A divided Stream*" wrote.

"It is a small town, where the effects of this conscientious, "blunder of virtue" multiply. Disgust, revulsion, fear, guilt and hostility poison the town." 2

Crane in the story mingles the town mentality with the horror and presents Henry as a Monster. It is a human tendency to follow others without using their conscience. Most people of the town follow the path shown by the old judge who is scared from the fearful black thing of one eye. Henry is the fearful thing. He is harmless but author uses some words 'black thing', 'He had no face', 'it'. Because of these words reader seems it is a horror thing. Edward Wagenknecht said.

"The Monster needs not to be discussed in extense here, but one point should be made: It is no more essentially a horror story than Maggie in study of sex. Four wards give us all we know of Henry Johnson after he had been burned....." 5

The story is the realistic picture of a typical town mentality. Crane uses here the narrative form so that the story will reach to its climax. Cruelty, intolerance, ruthlessness are responsible for the tragedy. W.R. Goodman wrote about the cruel community.

"The Monster, where a Negro while rescuing a boy, suffers facial disfigurement: A horror tale focused within the capricious lens of cruel, intolerant community and shaped with painful realism and trenchant sympathy." 6

Henry Johnson and Dr. Trescott deserve sympathy from the readers. Henry is worthy for the sympathy as he has sacrificed his identity to save doctor's son. Doctor deserves sympathy for his effort to save his benefactor. Martha's is fascinated by the deeds of Henry and doctor. So she is alone citizen of the town who shows her support to both Henry and the Doctor. Edwin H. Cady wrote a critical on the Stephen crane where he mentioned.

"Trescott, however, will neither forget nor cancel his debt of admiration and gratitude" 7

Dr. Trescott, through the whole story faces alone to the society. He becomes wall to protect Henry who saved his son. He has to pay for his behavior against society. He loses his position, credit and neighbours. People put professional boycott on him. The

Doctor is almost ruined because of his brotherhood. Charles Child Walcutt Wrote.

"This tale explores the consequences of an act of brotherhood which is forced by an nature of thing to become involved with pride." 3

Trescott shows his brotherhood to save Henry. He is on his point to keep Henry but author, all of sudden ends the story in Trescott's home. The novella has no particular end. Readers don't get particular message and the solution from the story. So many critics say it is a problem play. As the readers have to find out the solution of unsolved question in town mentality. Thomas A. Gullason Wrote about this.

"The Monster" is a 'problem' story, a cause and effect story, one of the best of its kind in American fiction. The story is skillfully told; it is unified....." 8

One can't imagine that what happened with Henry Johnson and Trescott family finally. What was the next plan of town people? All questions have no answer. The author handed over the discussion to his readers. Crane used here his skill to enable the reader to think on the story and the problem. He enabled people to solve the problem themselves. Charles child Walcutt wrote about this.

"And there the story ends without solutions, the Negro's heroism, followed by the doctor's gratitude and humanity, have evoked as unlovely a series of human responses as one could imagine." 4

Crane is the realist and naturalist author of late 19th century. *'The Monster'* shows some traits of realism. Realistic picture of evening, garden, road scene, is described from the barber shop. Henry's heroic deeds in the fire incident, people's gossip among themselves and the rumours all are narrated realistically. Town mentality is developed by particular characters like the old judge. Description of Henry after, his face is burnt make readers flesh creep. Crane uses symbolism in the story and shows that the society is the real Monster. Some allegorical aspects are also in the story. Malcolm Foster said.

"The Monster" is an allegory of the black man in America in nineteenth century and an angry condemnation of white America Whilom Ville including such weak willed and compromising meliorists such as Trescott." 9

Present novella indicates the ignorance, tolerance, social equality in contemporary society. It has some racial elements. There are classes in that society. The novella shows some psychological aspects and the novella is the mirror of the town Mentality.

"In *Monster*, the ignorance, prejudice, and cruelty of an entire community are sharply focused. The realism is painful; one blushes for Mankind."<sup>15</sup>

Many critics see various aspects in the novel. 'Jonathan Tadushi Naito' writes about the cruel and unusual light. While 'Ranald K. Giles' writes about crane's wonderful gift of realistic description, wonderful imagination, dramatic power and so on. 'Jose Angel Garcia Landa' about racism states that.

"The first reader of a work is the author himself. Stephen crane's pride in his work is the first critical appraisal of "*The Monster*." Once, crane went as far as to say that "*The Monster*" was the best thing he has ever written."<sup>12</sup>

Henry Johnson is the man of hatred after his face is burnt. He is only modal of black servant in white race. Crane uses symbolic narrative style of writing. The language is mostly symbolic. The title itself shows it. No one think Henry as mankind. Everyone is afraid of him. He has to live miserable life. Some critics consider that the Trescott's decision is responsible for the tragedy of both. Both Trescott family and Henry are under the pressure. There is Psychological tense in the story and novel ends in same effect on the reader.

Crane's novella 'The Monster' is a Whilomville story. It is a fictional town of Crane. Crane creates, the society based on his

observation, experience and imagination. He himself had spent his childhood at Port-Jervis from six to eleven years of his age. The setting of the story is based on Whilomville. Though the whole action takes place in a small town, it seems that the whole action takes place at metropolis of America. Crane uses the background to all his stories that he observed and imagined in his childhood. He crafts his characters skillfully in the story. He uses narrative form to the story. Very few occasions the dialogues are used. It is the technique of Crane that made the story popular.

The language of the story is highly stylish which contains too much imagery, symbols, Narration. Crane shows the luxurious life in the evening, two classes in the society, struggle of Negro, and overpower of white community in the novel. People come out in the garden every evening. They spend their evening in the garden, coffee houses and on the road.

The novel has some racial elements. There is relation between racism and modernity. The language is symbolic to show the hatred towards the black community. The horror is created with suitable situation and incidents. There is the atmosphere of gloom, horror, fear and terror in the novel. The story turns round Henry's tragedy.

There are number of unbelievable aspects to this story. The early part of the story is rich by the aspects of modernity and fashion. We come to know that Henry spends more time in the toilet. He pretends that he is not belonging to the black community. He looks like the gentle man. The barber Reifsynder fails to identify Henry when he is in the road.

"Reifsynder turned, in a great excitement, "I  
bait you any money that was not Henry Johnson!  
Henry Johnson! Rats!" (455)

Theresa Page is giving a party to her school mates it shows  
the modernity. In that party Henry comes and a girl is frightened by  
his appearance.

"Hearing a noise behind her at the window one  
little girl turned to face it. Instantly she screamed and  
sprang away covering her face with her hands. "What  
was it? What was it cried everyone in a roar....."  
(488)

The above scene creates horror, fear in the story. Crane uses  
technology in the story; railroad, fire-brigade, laboratory, mowing  
machine. are some technological things in the story. The barber is  
hypnotized by the view on the road. His assistants stop their razors  
and see outside the shop.

"Reifsynder and his assistant instantly poised  
their razors high and turned toward the window" (14)

The second part occupies the tragedy of Henry who looks  
like the monster because of his appearance. The tendency and



thinking of people is the real Monster. Though Henry is fearful thing, he is harmless and innocent man.

The novel evolves the town mentality. Henry Johnson is the victim of town mentality. Old Judge is the calculating peculiar town mentality man who expresses his hatred towards Henry.

"He is purely your creation. Nature has very evidently given him up. He is dead you are restoring him to life." You are making him, and he will be monster and with no mind." (473)

Crane uses here some realistic aspect, in the fire incident. When Henry enters in the building to rescue Jimmie, especially when he comes in the laboratory the description of the room is realistic.

"The room was like a garden in the region where might be burning flowers, Flames of violet crimson, green, blue, orange and purple were blooming every where."(464-65)

Crane handles the serious subject skillfully. He focuses on the drama as well as its effect on Henry of the particular town mentality. He has interwoven the first part to the second part and brought Martha's episode in such way that reader seems it is a problem play.

Through this novel we come to know that the Negroes were only used as slaves. We further understand that the Negroes were used for the purpose by the contemporary Red Indians in U.S.A. The attitude towards Negro was very poor in those days. They were considered as down trodden in that society. Crane observed the society minutely and presented the real picture of Negro. Henry Johnson is the representative of the Negro community. Present novella deals with the thinking of the upper class society towards the black American Negroes. It shows some traits of racism. Through old judge and other people except Dr. Trescott author tries to show the social Hypocrisy. Physician is the only confident character in the story who remains firm on his decision till the end. He performs his duty well. Physician is the only character in the story that has the sense of gratitude and tries to return the favour of the benefactor Henry Johnson. Henry saved his son Jimmie from the fire even though his face is destroyed in a laboratory fire and becomes the social outcast. Physician denied the demand of Judge by saying.

"He saved my boy's life". (473)

Here, it is showed that how the town people force doctor to abandon the black coachman and how the doctor saves and supports the coachman. This shows that the relation between man to man. This novella deals with late 19th century racial Ideology. The title of the novel is symbolic. Crane doesn't depict here Henry as a monster but here society is the Monster. Henry is antiheroic central character in the novella.

Crane, in twenty four chapters and near about thirty, thousand words presented his purpose ironically. He touches many

subjects which help to bind the story united. The main subject of the story is racism then manhood, Humanity, fear and cruelty, Hypocrisy.

### **Racism**

The image of Negro in American literature was scarcely exists before the 20th century. Since 1920 the study of Negro and racism is flourished but after 1940 many American critics started a movement to exclude the racism in literature by writing about the Negroes. In the nineteenth century not more than a handful of essays on the Negro and American literature are to be found. It was assumption that Negro was belonging to a special category therefore judgments in the work of the author depend upon the racial characteristics. From the barbarism to the civilization the subject of Negro is handled by the white race. Many authors describe the Negroes as slaves who are loyal, unfortunate and many times they face tragedies. They have weakness of dependence they belong to the black race. Mostly the realistic picture of such Negroes is depicted by the white race authors.

All Negro qualities are used by the Stephen Crane in late Nineteenth century in his novella "*The Monster*". From Henry Johnson we learn humanity and from the old judge we learn hypocrisy, prejudice and grudge.

Henry Johnson, the black American Negro is innocent, loyal, honest, slave of Dr. Trescott. He saves the owner's son from laboratory fire and he gets defaced. No one except Dr. Trescott

shows sympathy to Johnson. Every one makes his fun and tries to avoid him. Many critics have mentioned "*The Monster*" is the story of black man but very few critics after 1950 tried to show the racial core in the novel. But actually it is the novel of racism.

There is no direct evidence that author showed the core of race in the novel. It is his treatment to the antiheroic central character, Henry Johnson by which readers feel that there are some racial elements in it. The story shows us the situation of black American people in the contemporary society. In the beginning of its publication it is merely read as a horror story. It is realistic show of psychological dignity of Dr. Trescott's problem. Dr. Trescott is the central figure who is presented with heroic qualities. The struggle of Dr. Trescott against the society to solve the present problem is the main action of the story. The well known critic Edith Wyatt sees in the story.

"Chronicle of the cruelty of the people" in the Town, a moral condemnation of "mob-meanness".<sup>13</sup>

Vincent Starrett also places the theme of social morality for most.

"The ignorance, prejudice, and cruelty of an entire community are sharply focused. The realism is painful one blues for mankind".<sup>10</sup>

It is not only social satire against the contemporary upper class. It appeals for the brotherhood between all races. Crane

himself was very young to observe and understand the racism. However he shows the elements of racism in the novel. Ralph Ellison seems

"The divided attitudes of the town on the subject of Henry Johnson symbolically suggestive attitude towards black Americans after the civil war."<sup>14</sup>

No character directly raise the issue but they express their views to show the horror and create fear among the readers as well as the society. Dialogues and narration are helpful to create the gothic elements in the story but actually the motif behind it is to show the hatred towards the black American Negro community. The old judge shows his hatred towards Henry. He was once a judge and he ought to be impartial to the Henry but he expresses his feeling to Dr. Trescott.

"As near as I can understand he will hereafter be a monster, a perfect monster and probably with an affected brain. No man can observe you as I have observed you and not know that it was matter of conscience with you but I am afraid my friend that it is one of the blunders of virtue." (473)

In the early part of the novel Henry is comic figure and he is considered a hero but after the chapter VII he is turned to the monster. People start to express their fear and avoid mixing with Henry. They feel that Henry after the fire scene is free from

manners and may be dangerous for them. Henry is the Monster because he is black man in the white race society. The story wins sympathy of the readers' due to Crane's techniques. Henry is both black hero and pathetic monster in the story. His role is ambiguous. He becomes a hero of only horror and fear whereas Dr. Trescott is the hero of Tragedy. Well-known critic Vasil' evskaia seems the "story '*The Monster*' is a sincere and profound condemnation of racism" E. Solomon sees "an element of racism in the town people's attitude towards the Resurrected Johnson."

In the story we come to know that the people in white community don't say anything direct to Henry Johnson but they force to the Dr. Trescott and Grace Trescott to abandon Henry. It shows the intention of town people towards Henry and perhaps black community is full of with racism.

### **Fear and Cruelty**

It is the fear and Cruelty which leads one to the point of hatred, disgrace, and perhaps it forces to live alone from the fearful things and sometime it imposes boycott on the scared thing. The present novella deals with same thing in which the scared or fearful thing is black American Negro. People in the town are scared from the faceless. Henry Johnson is slave cum servant of a physician. People hate the Negro. They are ready to boycott him. They force doctor to abandon Henry from the town but the doctor denies the demand. All people start to discuss about the Henry's face and every one calls him Monster. Thus Henry becomes the monster.

In the first part of the story Henry is happy-go-lucky man who spends more time in toilet than any other young woman. After the incident Henry turns into the Monster. Henry saves Jimmie Trescott when the house was on fire but gets deadly injured. His whole face is burnt but only eye left. He becomes faceless. People in the town start to hate him.

The old Judge Hogenthorpe who is really scared from defaced Henry Johnson. He decides to drive Henry out of the town. So he first forces to Dr. Trescott then he manages to Aleck Williams. Finally he comes with four town member to Dr. Trescott.

First fearful incident in the story is in the chapter XI when old judge spoke to Dr. Trescott that '*Henry Johnson ought to die.*' It creates fear in the reader's mind. He stands still on his point that Henry is nothing but a monster and he must die.

"No one wants to advance such ideas, but somehow I think that that poor fellow ought to die"  
(473)

In chapter XII we find that Aleck Williams frightened when he saw '*The Monster*' in the buggy Williams yelled suddenly. His wife and children also fear him. Aleck Williams goes near the buggy and sees Henry from close and he cries:

"He gasped for a second, and then yelled the yell of a man stabbed in the heart." (476)

In chapter XVI Theresa page is giving a party to her nineteen school mates including nine girls and ten boys. When the party is on the top of the pleasure all of sudden a girl Sadie Winter sees a dreadful thing and cries loudly with fear. The girl is shuddering. The appearance of Henry leaves such fearful impression on the girl that she fell seriously ill for long time.

"Inside the house the girl who had raised the alarm was still shuddering and weeping" (489)

Mrs. Farraguts also fears from him at Watermellon Alley and her leg is broken. The people on the road chase him and stone him, later; in the chapter XX Jimmie along with his school mates tries to touch him. Every one is feared from him. Willie Dalzel bait Jimmie then Jimmie and one by one all boys try to touch him but harmless Henry doesn't do anything expect a glance at them.

"Hello Henry", he said, in a voice that trembled a trifle. The Monster was crooning a weird line of Negro melody that was scarcely more than a thread of sound, and it paid no heed to the boy." (496)

When we hear the conversation between the police officer and Dr. Trescott we come to know that how the crowd is ruthless and cruel about Henry and how the crowd feared from him.

"First thing he did was to break up a children's party at Page's. Then he went to Watermellon Alley



woo! He stampeded the whole outfit. Men, women, and children running pell-mell, and yelling. They say one old woman broke her leg or something shining over a fence" (491)

In the last chapter, the wife of Dr. Trescott is frightened. She is sobbing when doctor returned. She had a dreadful headache because of burden of all women of the town. All women were very cruel. Behind the cruelty there is a vindictiveness of people in white society. Thus the novel deals with plenty of fearful events and dialogues. It creates the sensation in the story. Author creates successfully a horror atmosphere. Henry's blackness is the most ugliness for white people. In addition to it, his heart rending face make him '*The Monster*' for prejudiced white people except physician. The old judge and Winter both have satanic mind. Both are responsible for the cruelty. Henry's appearance is responsible for fear.

### **Hypocrisy**

Crane wrote his famous novella in 1898 which is full of fear, horror, cruelty hypocrisy and manhood. The title indicates that there is only one character that looks like '*The Monster*' but when we read the novel minutely we come to the conclusion that the black coachman employed by Dr. Trescott is not the monster but white people living in the town are the Monster. They all express

their hatred towards Henry Johnson, actually towards the black men in that society.

The Novella deals with lot of hypocritical elements. Very first thing we come to know is that some learned people in town behave against Henry Johnson. They think that he must die as nature has punished him. They express their views when Henry's face is defaced in the laboratory fire. They become furious and insist on that Henry ought to die. So they put pressure on doctor's family. All his neighbours go against the doctor and some shift themselves away from the doctor. They made Henry a scapegoat of their hypocrisy.

The most hypocritical character is the old judge Hegenthorpe who first offers the shelter to the affected people. Then he pursues relentlessly to the Henry. Generally, all Judges are impartial to their duties. Mr. Hegenthorpe is the old judge who doesn't behave impartially. He is obsessed by the racism. He doesn't express it directly through out the novel. He expresses his intention through the horror. Hegenthorpe is ready to pay Aleck Williams more than Dr. Trescott to abandon Henry, He forms the unity against Trescott in his office with five members on the other hand his wife meets Mrs. Grace Trescott with fifteen women.

The old judge is cunning and calculating fellow. He is incarnation of Satan. He is prejudiced fellow. He is the main who creates the awareness and horror among the society.

"No one wants to advance such ideas, but some how I think that that poor fellow ought to die" (473)

Another hypocrite character is Jake Winter, one of Trescott's neighbours. Trescott used to attend his family always. Winter becomes crazy when his daughter is frightened in the Page's party. He supposes that doctor is responsible for whole incidence that happened with his daughter. When doctor visits to the Winter's home to see the girl, instead of taking his advice and help to cure his daughter, he curses the doctor and excludes him form his home.

"So he followed him to the hall and down the hall to the door and through the door to the path, barking in fiery rage from a respectful distance" (502)

Aleck William is a black Negro who initially accepts the offer of Dr. Trescott to take care of Henry Johnson on the rent of five dollars. When Hegenthorpe puts the proposal of six dollars, he hurriedly accepts it. He is greedy and lazy man, when Judge becomes ready to pay him. William becomes crazy with joy.

"Well, if I Bo'd Henry Johnson fer six dollerhs erweek, I uhns it ! I uhns it!" cried Williams wildly" (481)

The responsible, learned people in the society show their hypocritical attitude and try to get rid of Henry but the doctor supports Henry.

## Manhood and Humanity

Dr. Trescott struggles throughout the story to preserve his manhood and humanity. First he is grateful to Henry Johnson and second he is bound to the white community. He is the man of principle who is firm about his decision and duty. He is in Henry's debt that saves his only boy. Though he loses his position, credit, popularity, he remains firm on his decision. His wife gives moral support to him. Through the cruelty and Hypocrisy of the society the physician preserves his manhood, kindness and humanity.

Henry is the representative of black community on the other hand, the old judge Hegenthorpe, Jake Winter, John Twelve and Hannigan, are the representatives of white prejudiced people. Dr. Trescott and Martha are the representatives of the humanity and sensitivity towards the other. Doctor is the leader of unprejudiced white people who face the opposition of prejudiced white community.

In the late 19th century, there was a fashion to have a black servant in a white community. Though Henry is the slave of Dr. Trescott, he never thinks that he is a black man. But the white community doesn't consider him as equal to the white man. He shows himself as a hero in the fire incident but the people instead of praising him they call him '*The Monster*'. Dr. Trescott is only character in the story who gives moral support to Henry. Henry is loyal to his owner. He has sensitivity of humanity so he enters in the burning house and saves the boy. He is real hero in every sense. But he remains the hero of fire episode only and the hero of whole

story is doctor Trescott. We see love and gratitude of Trescott when he speaks to the old judge.

"Oh, well, I know, Judge, but then-". He turned red, and spoke with new violence:" say, he saved my boy - do you see? He saved my boy." (474)

After running away from Aleck Williams house. Next day Henry found in the custody. Dr. Trescott brings him back to the home. Jimmie along with his schoolmate plays with him but he doesn't do anything. He is harmless man. He is good, loyal, honest and polite man.

The act of Hannigan and the railway brakeman during the fire incident is kind. It shows that there is humanity. The visit of Physician to the Winter's house though he knows about his thinking to him shows humanity. Martha's attitude towards Henry is humanistic. Trescott is co-operative man. His attitude towards Henry and white community is the same but he gives more importance to the Henry. Henry also thinks same as the Doctor.

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