

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Irony of Self-Consciousness in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Deepak Raj Niraula has completed his thesis entitled “Irony of Self-consciousness in *The Red Badge of courage*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 27th June, 2008 to 12th February, 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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This thesis titled "Irony of Self-consciousness in *The Red Badge of Courage*"
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Abstract

This research on the novel *The Red Badge of Courage* indicates how Stephen Crane ironically unravels a man's shallowness in his evaluation of maturity and heroism. The protagonist of the novel Henry Fleming joins the regiment under the belief of displaying the heroic deeds and experiencing the combative ambience. Finally, he resigns himself to the delusion that he has become the heroic personage by escaping from the battlefield. Crane ironically presents the hero's failure to carry out his former decision and his false claim of heroism.

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I. Stephen Crane and His Literary Backgrounds

Born in 1871 in Newark, New Jersey, Stephen Crane was the fourteenth child of Jonathan Townley Crane, a Methodist minister and Mary Helen Peck crane, Who was herself descended from a long line of Methodist clergy. Crane was born with printer's ink in his veins: both his parents were writers and two of his brothers were newspaper reporters. Since his ancestry comprised clergymen and soldiers, his literary works epitomize the hereditary influence of these two professions.

At school, Crane took a course in the Bible, but the homework for that course might be easy for him because of his family's educational background, and his mother was, too, a newspaper reporter on church affairs and lecturer on Temperance and Woman's Rights. Crane's father would edit various church periodicals and he was a writer of rare ability, combining his discourses with a style of rich beauty. As a result, Stephen got from his parents not only a natural tendency for writing but a special panache for casting his ideas, incidents and his style in Biblical form. Accordingly, his *The Red Badge of Courage* is effective in terms of religious symbolism, spiritual allusion and metaphor.

Crane had begun to lay up his literary pillar by writing stories at the age of eight, but when his father died, the life for this large family became a struggle against insecurity and poverty, mostly in the smaller cities of New Jersey. As a consequence, he had begun newspaper reporting at the age of eleven. After five years, he was doing newspaper reporting for his mother's column in *The New York Tribune*, ghostwriting for his elder brother Townley, and sometimes writing up stuff for his brother Wilbur.

Crane's college life became volatile. He had spent some time at Lafayette College but he preferred baseball to mining engineering-- and in theme writing, he got zero. So he transferred in January to Syracuse University, and arrived at the Delta

Upsilon Fraternity, where he lasted just one term. For him, the college life and its strict rules were disdainful. Athletic but also literary and a voracious reader, he used to retreat to the cupola of the chapter house and smoking his prized water pipe, he would read or write sketches. The most important thing that happened to him at the University was his writing a story about a streetwalker. As time changed, in the spring of 1891, Crane left formal education for journalism. And he was hired by Willis Johnson as city correspondent for the *Tribune*.

In this sense, Crane's career was an oscillation between journalism and fiction. Obviously, he was interested in low life and war and these were the forces that continued to the end to give shape to his career. But in 1896, Crane went to Cuba to report on the agitation by Cuban patriots against the Spanish regime. On his way to Cuba, he stopped in Jacksonville, Florida; and he visited a night club called Hotel de Dream, taking up with Cora Taylor, the proprietress of the brothel. Surprisingly, Cora had determined to become the first female war correspondent. She was six years older than Crane but she was known as a lady with authentic golden hair. In this sense, he gave her a copy of *George's Mother*, recently published, that was inscribed "To an Unnamed Sweetheart". On his expedition to Cuba, Crane had a bad experience in a dinghy with the injured captain and three other men. Back in Jacksonville, in waterfront cafes and in the Hotel de Dream, he wrote his masterpiece *The Open Boat*. This is Crane's best piece of work in a story that is a remarkable fusion of his respect for the power of the external world and his intense concern with the mysterious inner world of emotions and fantasies. In the sea storm three survive out of the four people. The bravest of the group is drowned in the waves as they finally reach the shore but the irony of his death is offset by the quiet heroism which all four have displayed

through their ordeal. Crane sees no cosmic order or purpose, but what matters to him are human values of courage and brotherhood.

Under the belief that experience could boost up his literary career, he had spent some time with the bandits in Mexico. For that, he got notoriety and imprisonment. He made enemies of the New York police by defending Dora Clark from their harassment; though she was a known prostitute. Rumour had it that he had a close affinity with her so he had to face the charges of sexual life. Thus his observation at the nightlife of the New York society resulted in the novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1892). In the novel, irony is prevalent and it indicates the contrast of images of a cosmic nature with the lives of the lowly irrational beings. But in terms of *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane wasted his genius because his imagination worked better in a room than on a battlefield. In this novel, he reproduces the pictures of battle long before he had seen and suffered actual warfare. It was natural that Crane should want to see actual warfare after writing about it and four years later as a war correspondent in the Greco-Turkish war he tasted the psychological truth of his imagined picture. As for the creation of *The Red Badge of Courage*, it took some research to evolve the background for his war stories and he had read the civil war periodicals like *Century magazine's Series, Battles and Leaders of the Civil war*, and pored over Winslow Homer's drawings and Matthew Brady's photographs from which he had gained a sense of the details of the Battle of Chancellersville to serve as a model for his tale. It was also reported that Crane might have read Emile Zola's war novel *Debacle*.

Besides these, historical writings and conversation with the war veterans like General Van Patten, his teacher at the Hudson River Institute at Claverack, New York

provided some material. Needless to say, his originality had its ancestry in his reading of the Bible, Bierce, and Kipling, Poe, Twain, Tolstoy and others.

Actually, civil war writings are imaginative reconstruction of events that took place before he was born. But such sources don't fully explain his powerful rendering of the young recruit, Henry Fleming, and his consciousness in *The Red Badge of Courage* or equally powerful passages in *A Mystery of Heroism* (1895) and other works. To wrap up, the civil war seems to have been an unusually provocative stimulus for Crane's imagination, enabling him to envision emotional and psychological struggles in the hallucinatory details.

In the winter of 1892-93, Crane roomed with some young painters and newspaper illustrators at the Art Students' League on Twenty-Third Street, and he used to visit the nearby studio of one of these artist friends, Corwin Linson. One morning when Linson called at Crane's room, he discovered him feverishly writing. He waved Linson to a seat, and soon handed him the first page of a story. For him, short stories were the easiest things to write. After a brief period of working for Townley's newsgathering agency, he made his way into the New York newspaper, where he was unpopular with the other reporters, who thought that his aloofness was an artistic pose. He was by nature set apart anyway because, unlike his fellows, he thought of the real story not as a piece of news which was going to come to him from outside but as fiction which he would produce from within. He was too impatient to wait upon daily happenings to provide him with his materials. His response to them was preparing before they actually occurred.

In fact events were a test of his consciousness, not his instructor. Though not too much impressed by Crane's shabby appearance, Hamlin Garland had realized his literary genius by noting down his poems, which Crane had immediately written

before him on the spot. Then Garland introduced him to Mr. Howells, who recommended him to the Bachelier Syndicate. *The Red Badge of Courage* had been published serially in the *State Journal* that winter along with a lot of other syndicate matters. Fortunate to say, as soon as Garland saw the manuscript of *The Red Badge of Courage*, he sent another publisher with fifteen dollar as compensation to redeem the remainder of the novel.

Surprisingly, time became favorable to Crane and his oeuvre was rewarded. This echoed the acclaim which had begun with the syndicated newspaper appearance of the novel in abridged form, in 1894, and had become a roar after October 1895 when Appleton published it in a book form. Later Crane had to face the mixed-blessing response. A British general, praising the book in the *Illustrated London News* for 1896 revealed it as "quite the finest thing in that line that has ever been done", observing that "the intuitions of the boy who has never seen war are worth far more than the experience of any writer . . . even though he may have been in the thick of the fiercest battle" (qtd.in Stallman 176). He praises the imagination of Crane that is more powerful than the experience of the actual war.

Similarly, praising the craftsmanship of Crane in the novel, Howells realized that Crane had "sprung into life fully armed" (qtd. in Gibson IV). But in America his novel was damned for bearing malice on the military life, in which the American general A. C. McClurg reacted it as "a vicious satire upon American soldiers. The hero is without a spark of soldierly ambition. No thrill of patriotic devotion ever moves his breast. There is no evidence of drill, none of discipline" (qtd. in Stallman 176). Crane was reproached to have produced it without giving a clear picture of the army.

Moreover, *The Red Badge of Courage* was the first non-romantic novel of the civil war to attain widespread popularity. Appearing at a time when the war was still treated primarily as the subject for romance, it changed the trend of the prevailing convention and established a new one. It was boomed by the reviewers as the most realistic war novel that has ever been written. Therefore, Crane won a reputation greater than any other American as a realistic writer on war. Thus, it was his challenge to the culture of the American communities. The folklore built on the romantic memories of the civil war was Shakespeare and the Iliad for the American village, giving its inhabitants a sense of identity and of shared achievement and strengthening their confidence in the future of the American people. Regarding Crane's precocious literary achievement, Edward Garnette has praised him in December 17, 1899: "I cannot remember a parallel in the literary history of fiction. Maupassant, Meredith, Henry James, Mr. Howells and Tolstoy, were all learning their expression at an age where Crane had achieved his and achieved it triumphantly" (qtd.in Gilber 32).

Moreover, Crane had the inborn talent in dealing with the stories so in the novel he gave expression to his precise, picturesque style, to his compact handling of incidents and character. He shows himself gifted in the right word, the right phrase. Crane wasn't only adept at presenting the excellent wordplay, but he was equally well-acquainted with the writing of naturalism, impressionism and realism. He was one of the first naturalists in American literature. In fact, he is the Christopher Marlow of American Naturalism. His naturalism doesn't suffer from the problem of the divided stream because each of his work is so concretely developed that it doesn't have a meaning apart from what happens in it. In his *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1892)*, there is the description of the New York slums; it sounds in summary like a perfect bit

of sordid determinism: a girl is raised in violence and squalor, who is charming but seduced and abandoned by her lover; so her family also rejects her due to her immoral social status; then frustrated and abandoned, she kills herself. In telling this story, Crane combines elements of poverty, ignorance and intolerance in a context of violence and cruelty to depict the struggle with nature and/or life.

Thus, Crane's naturalism is descriptive: he doesn't pretend to set forth a proof like a chemical demonstration, that what happened, must have happened inevitably. He simply shows how a sequence of events takes place free from the wills and judgments of the people involved. Likewise, in Crane's impressionism, it fractures experiences into disordered sensation in a way that shatters the old moral order along with the orderly process of reward and punishment. The frantic impressionism we have seen in *Maggie* is the groundwork of Crane's fiction, yet it varies in each work to give it particularity. In fact, Crane knew the paintings and painters of the impressionist school, and his mastery of the theme springs from the great modern impressionists like Cezanne, Matisse and Van Gogh. So his style was more influenced by the tradition of Poe, Hawthorne and Ambrose Bierce than that of Whitman and Norris. His friend Joseph Conrad once called him as the "impressionistic par excellence" (qtd.in Brooks 1642).

It is remarkable that such diverse writers as Hemingway, Faulkner, Mencken, and Dos passos, Sandberg, Amy Lowell, Dreiser and Willa Cather have either praised or profited from his writing. Additionally Crane believed in truth to his own impressions, feelings and imagination, and he wrote that kind of truth in *The Red Badge of Courage*; he believed equally in the truth of the observed facts. Crane won a reputation greater than any other American as a realistic writer on war.

Stephen Crane has created a fiction in a language of brilliant impressions, in which, in their very brilliance, it displays the presence of a constantly shifting irony. Some end in a minor note like *Maggie* and *George's Mother*, not with a bang but a whimper. So every Crane story worth mentioning is designed upon a single ironic incident, a crucial paradox or irony of opposite. In a synopsis, his stories consist of that moment when the characters confront the inescapable aspect of a situation by which they are trapped, and then, the moment of spiritual collapse occurs in which nothing happens and they are left with a sense of loss, or insignificance or defeat, and futility or disillusionment.

Similarly, Crane's *A Mystery of Heroism* was probably written in Mexico during the summer of 1895 when he was looking for the material to supply the Bachelier Syndicate. Like *The Red Badge*, it is an analysis of disillusionment. The mood of disillusionment is presented in the final symbol of the story. Thus, his ironic method shows the mocked hero with desire to change.

Not only fiction but also poems are also strong enough to suggest the multi-faceted talent of Crane. The most extended example of irony in Crane's poetry is *War Is Kind* (1900). It is not the generally simple irony of the individual plight set against the mechanism of society that makes war. Therefore, war is kind as far as it fulfills something in man's nature--the need for the unexplained glory, the virtue of slaughter, and the excellence of killing. In his *The Black Riders and other Lines* (1895), he reproaches the conventional piety while revealing his preoccupation with questions that parallel the concerns of religion. Experimental in form, unconventional in rhyme and brief with a mysterious nature, his poems in some ways predominated the "vers libre" of the early twentieth century and are similar to the koans of Zen Buddhist religious practice. When they are published, their brevity is comparable to that of

Emily Dickinson's poems, but to a large extent, Crane's emotional range and freedom are limited and so are his themes. While summarizing, irony is the hallmark of most of his poems. Fear and a sense of intense loneliness are the feelings that tend to remain with us from the poems after we have read them.

After all, the relation of Crane's poems to his fiction is close, in both style and subject. Certain metaphorical passages in the stories may easily be printed as poems and likewise the themes of his poems often reappear in his tales. To illustrate, the plot of *The Blue Hotel* is suggested by one of the briefest of the poems in *The Black Riders*. Nevertheless, his poems were spontaneously produced by 'Pure Inspiration.'

Thus, it is necessary to find the many sides of Crane's contradictory nature disclosed in his letters. His love for the outdoor life is shown in the letters written while vacationing at a camp in northern Pennsylvania two months after his return from the west and just after reading the proofs of *The Red Badge of Courage*. And in conflict with his love for the outdoors, he expresses his fondness for sociability and city life in some letters preparing for poker games with his friends, for meetings with members of the Lantern club or for the dinner given in his honor by the philistine society. For Crane, experiencing life went at the same time with writing about it, but his compulsion was to experience it thoroughly. Ironically enough, even in the midst of retreating to the world, he is confronted and threatened by the forces of "engagement versus withdrawal."

Since harsh time befell him, Crane was disappointed with his failure in creative development and disturbed by the public attacks upon him for his Bohemian private life, he left the United States and settled in England, becoming a friend of Conrad, Henry James, H.G. Wells, Ford Maddox Ford and the literary circle around them. Then poverty and debt kept pestering him. Unfortunately, Crane seems to have

first learned he was attacked by tuberculosis when he went to Cuba in 1897. It appears he did little to regain his health. When he became very ill, in April 1900, Cora took him in desperation to a sanitarium in the Black Forest in Germany, where he passed away on June 5. But what killed Crane wasn't his literary neglect; rather, his own will to burn himself out, his Byronic desire to make his body a testing ground for all the sensations of life paved the way to the creation of some of the greatest works in the annals of American literature.

The Red Badge of Courage probes a state of mind under shellfire and bombardments of life. It suggests that man's salvation lies in change and in spiritual growth. It is only by engagement in the flux of experience that man becomes disciplined and develops in character, conscience or soul. Potentialities for change are on rise in battle -- a battle represents life in an intense fluctuation. It is not about the combat of armies; it is about the self-combat of a young soldier who fears and stubbornly resists change and the actual battle is symbolic of this spiritual warfare against change, and the real battle is symbolic of this spiritual warfare against change and growth. Therefore, Henry Fleming recognizes the necessity for change and development but wars against it. When Crane wrote this novel, he was in full revolt from traditional attitudes towards religion and war; that courage yielded him the masterpiece like *The Red Badge of Courage*.

At the same time, Crane believed that the greater the obstacles an artist had to overcome, the harder the conditions we had to meet; as a result, his art would be greater. One critic places the whole source of Crane's irony in Tolstoy. Nevertheless, some critics tell that he learned it from Mark Twain, who influenced him in a number of ways and works. Twain is a true ironist. Not only his irony but also his social outlook, his sympathy with the underprivileged, is similar to Twain.

Literature Review

Egbert S. Oliver mentions: "*The Red Badge of Courage* is psychological in its analysis of the young recruit in his first battle, the individual -- a minute speck -- caught up in the toils of a Great War machine" (2). It indicates that the novel casts an insight into the psychological turmoil of the protagonist.

Similarly, Robert Wooster Stallman relates *The Red Badge of Courage* to the excellence of his technique: "Crane interjects disjointed details, one non-sequitur melting into another. Scenes and objects are felt as blurred; they appear under a haze, vapor, or cloud. Yet everything has relationship and is manipulated into contrapuntal patterns of color and cross-references of meaning" (187). Here Stallman praises Crane's style of playing with words and the changing sequences of the sentences.

James M. Cox reveals the ability of Stephen Crane to make the most horrible event -- war -- more interesting through his prowess: "Grotesque and terrible as war may be, Crane does not write against war; he writes through it. His sentences, flattening perspective in their bold and visible presence, have the strength of line and form that we see in a Cezanne painting" (Bloom 158).

At last Crane shows the lack of proper evaluation in terms of the soldiers like Henry Fleming. The realism behind the fiction is the woeful state of the soldiers' mind. Ironically, we gain an awareness of the condition of real civil war soldiers by going beyond the blindness of Crane's fictitious soldiers. Thus, we are made to seek a cure for our blindness, and we receive an ironically bitter one. It suggests his message that American men went through a wretchedly conducted and pointless war.

Since the text has been analyzed from various perspectives, the approach of irony has not been applied yet. So a new angle is required to carry out a research on this text. Given the very fact, the present researcher carries out the research from the viewpoint of irony.

II. Irony

Generally, irony is meant to be the discrepancy between what is said and what is done or what seems to be the case and what happens later. Additionally irony is "a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency", indicating the reversal of a straightforward meaning by its circumstance to bear a distinct identity (Baldick 130). Moreover, in a broad concept, it is clear that most forms of irony involve the perception or awareness of a discrepancy between words and their meaning, or between actions and their results. But in all these cases there comes "an element of the absurd and the paradoxical" (Cuddon 430). The lucid and concise definition of irony comes in Samuel Johnson's words as "A mode of speech of which the meaning is contrary to the words" (qtd. in Enright 5).

It is a major figure of speech that indicates the author's adoption of laudatory point of view for the purpose of ridicule. Likewise, the objective of irony becomes a "use of language that has an inner meaning for a privileged audience and the outer meaning for the persons addressed or concerned (5)".

It means that irony is turned against certain limitations or defects in the human predicament that are naturally inevitable. The term irony is derived from the Greek word "eiron", who is a dissembler in Greek comedy, assuming the pose of ignorance and foolishness, in which the 'eiron' " more plausibly pretends to be saying or doing one thing while really conveying a quite different message" (Muecke 33). The word 'eironeia' in Greek antiquity was largely associated with Socrates' character, indicating a self-deprecating verbal manner (15). It is Aristotle who refined the notion of the 'eironeia' into a particular rhetorical method to contrast with the *alazonia* or boastfulness. As a result, the notion of naivety and foolishness can be applied to Socrates, which gives rise to the Socratic irony, in which he pretended to be ignorant

and "under the guise of seeking to be taught by others, he taught others" (Enright 9). So both the 'eiron' and Socrates are supposed to share the similar character of minds. Both Cicero and Quintillion defined irony basically as saying one thing and meaning another-- a definition that remained with rhetoricians for fifteen centuries.

Theophrastus called an eiron as evasive and non-committal, hiding his enmities, pretending friendship, misinterpreting his acts and never giving a straight answer.

In the English classical period, irony was associated with mockery and derision. Similarly, towards the early eighteenth century with the introduction of the satiric literature of Swift, Defoe, Fielding and others, irony became related to a certain humorous voice that characterized the entire works of literature. In the nineteenth century in Germany, the term irony was applied to more than verbal phenomenon, now extending to events, dramas and fate itself. In fact, in the romantic period irony represented not a mere clash of speech with meaning and its link to the real situation; rather, it revealed the mental attitude of being -- divine or human-- who sees such things. Thus the evolution of irony from the classical to the Romantic period indicated a shift of emphasis from words as objects to speakers as subjects.

Now, we have the concept of irony enlarged in the Romantic period beyond observable irony (someone being ironic) to include Instrumental irony (things seen or presented as ironic). The observable irony (which encompasses irony of events, character, situation or ideas) can be seen as local or universal. For Friedrich

Schlegel, "the basic metaphysically ironic situation of man is that he is a finite being striving to comprehend an infinite hence incomprehensible reality" (qtd. in Muecke 23). So this is called the observable irony of Nature with man as victim. It is only in observable irony that we find alazon and the alazon. On the other hand, the

instrumental irony is a game for two players. The ironist offers a text in a context to stimulate the reader to reject its expressed literal meaning supporting an unexpressed transliteral meaning of contrasting effects. It indicates that ironist and ironic pretence are the basic features of instrumental irony.

While drawing a line between the observable irony and the instrumental irony, the former is devoid of philosophical vigor while the latter aims at getting maximum plausibility for its ostensible meaning. Thus an accomplished author presenting observable ironies intends to give his alazonic characters maximum conviction. Moreover, the observable irony of man's situation should not be regarded as a hopeless predicament, because it can be countered by an instrumental irony.

At this point now, "Irony is more potent, rigorous and agile" when it chastens, punishes and imparts stability, character and consistency (Enright 4). But we can trace out the difference between satire and irony. In fact, the satirist's attack is grounded in ethical standards, so he is a moralist, while the ironist is governed by relativities. And he doesn't set himself up in the "authoritative preeminence" of the judge (160). The art of irony may be more disturbing because it is an enquiring mode that exploits discrepancies, challenges assumptions and reflects equivocations. Thus it is made confident by itself. On the other hand satire indicates an underlying faith in the potentiality for betterment. But the ironist isn't certain and admits the good and the bad in every alternative. To conclude, both irony and satire derive from and provide a measure of solace for the pessimist.

In this sense, irony means "praising in order to blame and blaming in order to praise" (Muecke 17) so it leads us to search out the ambiguous entity of irony. A sense of irony not only has the ability to see ironic contrasts but also the power to shape them in one's mind in a double way. Accordingly irony isn't only a matter of

observing a true meaning beneath a false one, but of "seeing a double exposure . . . on one plate" (qtd. in Muecke 45). Sometimes we may realize that irony is said to irritate because it denies us our certainties by unmasking the world as an ambiguity. The very essence becomes similar to the view of Mikhail Bakhtin, who evaluates the irony as the "equivocal language of modern times" (qtd.in Hutcheon 44).

So irony does not only appear as a provocative trope but it is naturally, in A.E. Dyson's words, a mode of "constantly changing color and texture, occasionally suffering a sea--change into something rich and strange" (1).

Irony can be evaluated as obligatory, dynamic and dialectical. It has now become possible to generalize it and see the entire world as an ironic stage and all the mankind as merely players. As a result, the game is played when there is not only "peripeteia" or "reversal" in the readers' understanding but also recognition of the ironist and his real intention behind the pretence (Muecke 39).

Irony is a view of life which recognizes that experience is open to multiple interpretations, of which no one is right, and that the coexistence of incongruities is part of the structure of our life. An ironic attitude is more complex and unpredictable than we have expected; it fluctuates with mood and situation. It is more often the witting or unwitting instrument of truth. Sometimes, irony" is deflected and turned upon states of mind which might or might not be alterable" (Dyson 5). To sum up whatever the nature and function of irony, it seems to be the essential nature of irony that it escapes definition and this elusive nature paves a lucid way to so much en and speculation. Therefore, no definition will serve to cover the entire aspects of irony.

Verbal Irony: verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. In other words, this ironic statement indicates the direct expression of one attitude or evaluation with

the opposite intended by the speaker. That is why, the simplest form of high-relief verbal irony is the "anti-phrastic praise for blame" (Muecke 56). The ironist and ironic pretexts are the basic features of the verbal irony. It further clarifies:

It is commonly said that a writer is being ironical when in fact what he is doing is presenting (or creating) something that he has seen as ironic; in other words we also see as verbal irony the verbal presentation of observable irony. This usage can be defended on the ground that such a presentation usually involves similar verbal skills . . . the more skillful the presentation, the clearer the ironical situation 'observed'. (63)

The given quote reveals that verbal irony depends on the verbal skills that imply the writer's intention that is shared by the reader. Now we can differentiate between verbal irony and sarcasm in that sarcasm is indicated as a provocative remark: the seeming praise for "mockery and scoffing" (17). Alternatively, the verbal irony is amiable, inwardly serene and reserved, selected by gentleness and benevolence. But a sarcasm "is not plausible in Events, where the reversal is in time" (42).

Additionally, in 'Irony of Events', the reversal is in time; and the dramatic structure is clear. It has the typical case involving a victim with certain fears, hopes or expectations who (acting on the basis of these) takes steps to avoid a foreseen evil or profit from a foreseen good, but his actions serve only to lock him into a causal chain that leads to his downfall. Thus it is irony of events that "turned back toward a consideration of man as an author, because a general world-irony posed the question of man's ability to comprehend such a world and acts within it" (Seery 165-66).

Structural Irony: structural irony indicates the use of a naïve hero or unreliable narrator, whose view of the world differs widely from the true circumstances recognized by the author and reader. This literary irony thus flatters its' readers'

intelligence at the expense of a character (or a fictional narrator). In this irony, a deluded narrator's obtuseness leads him to an interpretation in which the reader is invited to change and correct. To sum up, a double level of meaning is generated in the structural irony.

Dramatic Irony: Dramatic irony views a situation in which both the author and reader are well-acquainted with the present and future circumstances of a character who does not know it. The character acts in a way that is incompatible to the actual events. The audience later comes to know a difference between the character's perceptions and the results they encounter.

The inevitable reversal of situation or the recognition of reality produces the tragic or comic irony. The dramatic irony is most common in Greek tragedy in the sense that the outcome of the plot is already known to the audience/reader while characters are oblivious of it. Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" is an example of this kind of irony. It is similar to the tragic irony in which sympathy for the victim predominates in a play or a narrative.

Similarly, it becomes more powerful when "the discrepant awareness" exists (Muecke 81). The dramatic irony becomes tragic when a victimized character attempts to rid of the future evil or goodness, in which his actions seem "to lock him into a causal chain that leads inevitably to his downfall" (69). The powerful impact of dramatic irony is elucidated:

The variety and the power of Dramatic Irony depend on other factors as well: whether or not the language spoken by or heard by the victim of the irony has, unknown to him, a double reference to the real situation and the situation as he sees it; whether there are concealed

characters and whether these are victims or observers; and what the relationship is between the characters. (81-82)

The above-mentioned quote reflects that the situations of character depict the reality and the condition they observe it. In this sense, it indicates the significance of the dramatic irony in terms of making a double innuendo between characters and their circumstances. Dramatic irony comes in the shape of a comic irony if it generates humor. Speaking explicitly, it reveals the triumph of a sympathetic victim. So it becomes comic in the sense of a happy ending. When the character's "gloomy expectations are defeated", it makes his situation comic in the general sense (51).

Cosmic Irony: In the cosmic irony, a deity or fate is shown controlling in order to lead the protagonist to illusion with an intention of a mockery or frustration. It also highlights the relationship between the supernatural power and mankind. It is sometimes used to indicate a view of people as the victim of deception of a cruelly mocking fate, as in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Thus it is in the cosmic irony that the character has a blind faith in divinity and destiny, though such conviction culminates in tragic consequences.

Romantic Irony: Romantic irony occurs when the author constructs the illusion of presenting reality to shatter it by a revelation that the author himself (as an artist) creates and controls the characters and their actions. Thus romantic irony views the world as chaotic, unpredictable and inexhaustibly fertile in which the artist is obliged to recognize the limitations of conscious mind. Anne K. Mellor refines the role of the romantic ironist as one:

Who perceives the universe as an infinitely abundant chaos; who sees his own consciousness as simultaneously limited and involved in a process of growing or becoming; who therefore enthusiastically

engages in the difficult but exhilarating balancing between self-creation and self-destruction; and who then articulates this experience in a form that simultaneously creates and decretes itself (qtd. in Enright 13)

The given quote justifies that the romantic ironist's evaluation and judgment is in the process of completion and his vision moves between creation and destruction. As a result the romantic appears in the double entity like infinity versus finiteness, angle versus ape, passion versus reason, power versus impotence, praise versus lament-- and all those ancient dichotomies.

Similarly, in the transition from traditional irony to romantic irony, irony (within the framework of fiction) is changed into an irony of fiction that may appear as the functionality of existence. Therefore, it is a process, "that starts with ambiguity, edges from ambivalence to paradox, and ends in an alienating derangement of the text and of the world" (qtd. in Enright 17).

Romantic irony comes out of the philosophical and aesthetic speculation, the major proponents of which were Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm, Ludwig Tieck and Karl Solger. Romantic irony, according to Schlegel, "contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication" (qtd. in Muecke 24).

In this sense, the artist in the romantic irony will be like God or Nature "immanent in every finite created element", but the readers are aware of his transcendent presence as an ironic attitude towards his creation (25).

Thus the creative surpassing of creativity is actually romantic irony. It raises art to a higher power because it evaluates art as a mode of production that is in the highest sense artificial and natural, in which nature is "dynamic process eternally

creating and eternally going beyond its creation" (Muecke 25).That is why, for Haine, Baudelaire, Nietzsche and even Thomas Mann, irony is principally romantic irony; as a result Hegel had seen irony as "the dialectical progress of history" while Karl Solger had liberated irony from its negative association so that it could be applied to situations and events that seem unpromising but surprisingly unfortunate (Muecke 28). The modernist Thomas Mann views : "Irony aims at both sides, at life as well as at the spirit" (6).

As a consequence, romantic irony is also called a paradoxical irony, which is open in the sense that the reality that closes it is a view of the world as inherently contradictory or open. Thus , "irony is the form of paradox" if it produces the contradictory situations (24). But unlike the romantic irony, the New Critics like I.A.Richards, Cleanth Brooks and Kenneth Burke view that paradoxical irony comes out of the multiple experiences and tendencies that are challenged by others. So for them literature appears as the fact of paradoxes and becomes the admixture of opposite experiences. As a result, I.A. Richards defines irony as" the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses in order to achieve a balanced poise " (Muecke 26). It can be concluded that the ironist who avoids one-sidedness by bringing in the opposite position as mere valid is likely to be regarded as getting a somewhat detached or objective standpoint.

Furthermore, Wayne C. Booth in his "A Rhetoric of Irony"(1975) reduces all kinds of ironies into stable and unstable irony. In the stable irony, the author provides the reader/audience with a position for ironically qualifying and subverting the surface meaning. For Booth, stable irony encompasses four intended, covert, fixed and finite marks that are most often used. The ironic author gives a certainty of meaning. They are" all finite in application, in contrast with those infinite ironies"

(Booth 6). The reconstructed meaning is local and limited. In this sense puns of all kinds are close to stable irony in intending a reconstruction: they are more or less covert and fixed.

Stable irony renders the world and mankind its equivocal and ironic stance. Alternatively, the unstable irony gives no fixed point that is not undercut by further ironies. Speaking lucidly, it reveals the paradoxes and incongruities in our existence and world. Accordingly the pose of non-fixity leads to the introduction of the deconstructive irony in that Lillian R. Furst reminds that irony "may provoke a descent into an agonizing awareness of uncertainty" (qtd. in Enright 17). So for Derrida, Paul De Man and other poststructuralists, irony lies in signification, its negation and deferrals. In other words, irony is a way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning might signify: there is a perpetual deferment of significance.

Given the overall effect of poststructuralist theories of the impossibility of univocal and stable meaning, its "overt production of meaning through deferral and difference has been seen to point to the problematic nature of all language" (Hutcheon 57). So the deconstructive irony opens up a way to observe the multi-faceted interpretations and radical openness in which there is an interaction amid reader, author and text.

Linguistically speaking, irony can be defined as a discrepancy between pragmatic conditions and text linguistic context, the implied meaning of which depends upon the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary effect. It is the ironist who is normally supposed to set up an ironic relation between the said and the unsaid. In establishing a differential relationship between the said and the unsaid, irony seems to invite inference, not only of meaning, but of attitude and judgment. In this sense" it is

what speech-act theory would call a 'perlocutionary ' act, "because it generates certain consequential effects upon the feeling, thoughts, or actions of the audience and speaker (39).

Irony happens as part of a communicative process; it is not a static rhetorical tool to be deployed, but itself exists in the relations between people and utterance, and between intention and interpretation. So irony is like all other communication acts in the sense that it is always culture-specific, depending on the presence of a common memory shared by addressor and addressee. In this sense, irony relies heavily on mutually" shared factual background information" (98). But from the semantic point of view; the irony might challenge any notion of language as having a direct one-to-one referential relation to any single reality outside itself.

Similarly, Beerandra Pandey asserts that " the understanding of an ironic utterance calls for presupposition and involves the making of inferences that will connect what is said to which is mutually shared or what has been said before" (5).

Nevertheless, irony is not, as G.G.Sedgewick points out, always" the pleasure in contrasting appearance with reality", rather, it is considered as a major rhetorical trope for delving into the politics and its consequences (qtd. in Muecke 47). Thus politics is altogether and always of ironic character; it is subversive in nature.

In this sense, Daniel W. Conway and John E.Seery express: "Irony becomes political only when it consumes even the originary authority of the ironist" (76). Irony can be provocative when its politics are conservative and authoritarian. And its politics become oppositional and subversive in which it depends on who is using it and at whose expense it seems to be. It reflects:

The transideological politics of irony at once force a distinction between irony that might function constructively to articulate a new

oppositional position and irony that would work in a more negative and negativizing way. It would be the product of that system that would be negatively ionized, from a point of view exterior to the system. (Hutcheon 16-17).

The quote clarifies that the transideological politics which gets ironized is used in a negative way. Irony now happens as a 'discourse'. Its semantic and syntactic dimensions cannot be considered separately from the social, historical and cultural aspects of its contexts of deployment and attribution. So irony doesn't create any community; the discursive community makes the irony possible in the first place.

Likewise irony is employed to undercut the conservative and radical position. Thus it has a long history of being one of the weapons in the arsenal of the 'culture of resistance'. Irony is, as a result, a powerful tool in the fight against "a dominant authority" (Hutcheon 27). Irony has the power to change that reality, and it points to the complexities of historical and social reality.

The subversive functioning of irony is related to the view that it is a self-critical, self-knowing, and self-reflexive mode that has the potential to challenge the hierarchy of the 'site of discourse'. Now irony occurs in discourse in the dynamic space of text, context and interpreter. Likewise, an ideological critique is the butt of irony. In other words, it is ideology that mediates ironic and /or critical relations in a way language or culture mediates" the conflict of strategies and tactics " (Chambers 124).

Thus the comprehensive range of postmodernist irony gives their perception of a universal technological system that annihilates humanity's awareness. So in the modern and postmodern way, irony indicates a paradoxical position in which all philosophical interpretations can be subverted, whereby one finds meaning in

sentences and in life itself by accepting and making a game out of the world's inherent meaninglessness.

In this sense, as for the value of irony, readers need the reason and rationale to understand its message:

Elegance and urbanity lend themselves to ironic modulation, and ridicule was widely regarded as a test of 'truth'. There is, moreover, in ironic writing that concession from reason to unreason which most truly rational men are prepared to make; a flickering at the edge of reason's candle, where light reaches towards the darkness round about.

(Dyson 220)

The quote clarifies that it is irony that breaks up the darkness of evil thinking through the light of a caution. So irony has ever been called a kind of intellectual tear-gas that affects the nerves, and paralyzes the muscle of everyone in its vicinity-- an acid that will weaken the healthy tissues. Therefore, it is emphasized that " the understanding of any utterance (including an ironic one) demands a repertoire of conscious and unconscious knowledge" (qtd. in Hutcheon 95).

At last, it is the God who is the archetypal ironist par excellence because he is omniscient, omnipotent, transcendent, absolute, infinite and free. Therefore, the archetypal victim of irony is man, seen as trapped and submerged in time and matter, blind, contingent, limited and unfree-- and confidently unaware that this is his predicament; so the present research highlights that the protagonist in the novel is victimized by the illusion of his heroism that marks the irony of his enlivened consciousness.

III. Irony of Self Consciousness in *The Red Badge of Courage*

Stephen Crane in his *The Red Badge of Courage* shows the American civil war through the eyes of the protagonist Henry Fleming, who puts aside his former promises and determination in pursuit of glory and heroism. And, ironically speaking, the private soldier deludes himself by announcing that he has got valor and manhood in his miniature world of imagination while simultaneously running away from the war.

In this sense, the purpose of the research's ironical intention is the unfolding of the doubt in man's ability to mature and a modernistic critique of man's shallowness in his view to evaluate correctly both himself and his experience. Thus it makes an attempt to reveal the ebb and flow of Henry's interior world and casts an ironical remark on his pointless claim to achieve the wisdom and clear rationalization about his nature and the world.

In the novel, Crane pictures the muddled world of the American soldiers who are plagued by uncertainty, purposelessness, inconsistent attitude and shallow thinking. It is Henry Fleming who represents these traits on behalf of his comrades, and his intentional aberration from the military ethics leads him to the illusion of superiority and power. In fact, the consciousness of Henry Fleming is his private thoughts; each event of the war is seen through his viewpoint. Realizing that his ultimate challenge is to create a new self, war is no doubt seen as the medium to achieve that goal. When we observe the way Henry thinks and makes a quick but silly judgment, we perceive that he is entangled in the illusory nature of his thoughts in relation to the field of battle in which he finds himself.

Actually Henry's incapability to make a persistent judgment in terms of his decision is juxtaposed with his emotional fluctuation between execution and passivity.

So unlike the outer civil war, his inner civil war is his violent experience of these emotions at the point of conflict and collusion within himself.

At this situation, the overestimation of his conscience under the pretension of self-preservation becomes opposite to the world he had come to die a soldier's death -- it is an ironical indication of Henry's selfhood. Therefore his over evaluation of his capacity clarifies that he knows little about himself. In this sense, the critic Charles Child Walcott analyzes how Henry's illusion traps him into the cruel world of warfare: "Henry's delusions image only dimly the insanelly grotesque and incongruous world of battle into which he is plunged. There the movement is blind or frantic, the leaders are selfish, the goals are inhuman" (82).

Similarly , Harold Bloom asserts Henry's ascendancy to the self knowledge emanates from his conscience-troubled rationalization, in which "Henry Fleming, as eventually we come to know the young soldier, moves ironically from a dangerous self doubt to what may be an even more dangerous dignity" (3).

Thus it is the complex struggle of the youth to find his manhood. In the novel, we have Henry's own impressions, the movement-stated or implied-of his mind and feelings; then we have the projection of the objective world as the scene of his experience. In this context, Cleanth Brooks, R.W.B. Lewis and Robert Penn Warren reflect on Henry's fluctuating thinking: ". . . in the interplay of overemphasis and underemphasis is a tension between a refusal to face a fact and an overreaction to fact" (1649). It reveals that Henry constructs a false attempt to justify his flight as a way to the mental awakening while he has forgotten his earlier oaths of patriotism and bravery. Similarly, he belittles his fellow soldiers by calling them the pig-headed mental puppets dying in the name of sacrifice and heroism.

Another critic Larzer Ziff comments on his nature, focusing that "pretension is on the rise" while Fleming misunderstands the soldierly courage (199).

To begin with, the title of the novel *The Red Badge of Courage* is itself ironic because Henry Fleming retreats from the domain of real bravery with the self-delusion that he has really achieved the coveted 'red badge of courage' that is incongruent with the outward symbol of Henry's secret disgrace.

Irony is targeted at the beginning of the text, in which the private soldiers in the Union encampment are prone to the rumor that the ghostly shape is challenging their life. It is obvious that there is no point in showing a vague fear for that hype-up when the soldiers are previously committed to defeating such intimidation and charging the enemies. It elucidates: "As the landscape changed from brown to green, the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors" that there is the "sorrowful blackness" around the river (3). It reveals that the Union armies are victimized by the uncertainty and naivety. Similarly it further reflects:

Once a certain tall soldier developed virtues and went resolutely to wash a shirt. He came flying back from a brook waving his garment banner like. He was swelled with a tale he had heard from a reliable friend, who had heard it from a truthful cavalryman . . . He adopted the important air of a herald in red and gold. (3)

The tall soldier believes on the rumor, and at first he becomes reluctant to go there. Moreover, he reaches there and comes back lightheartedly. It means that the warrior like the tall soldier loses his confidence and determination at the petty matters, which is the ironic revelation of the soldier's life. In the same manner, it can be found that the fear and suspicion begin with the major emphasis and ends with the minor

unfolding. Therefore, there is a sharp discrepancy between the actual nature of the act and its light speculation.

In this sense, the word 'courage' (which tells the chief quality of the soldier) contains within it the rage and aggression of the heart and mind, but the army including the tall soldier are lacking in the military traits.

Henry had since long cherished the fondness of "witnessing a Greek like struggle" (5), so he had heard and read of marches, sieges and conflicts that occur in the battlefield. He had desired to observe and experience it by himself. When he joins the regiment, his romantic vision of glorification and heroism become a forlorn purpose since his comrades idle away their precious time, in which "the army had done little but sit still and try to keep warm" (7). Furthermore, he realizes, ironically speaking, the futility of his previous oath and passion as the private soldiers "talked much of smoke, fire and blood, but he could not tell how much might be lies" (8).

Henry's ability to rationalize his future raises questions about the very nature of his individual identity. His consciousness is at a crisis when he falls in confusion whether to show his self or forget those determinations for a unique selfhood: "In his life he had taken certain things for granted, never challenging his belief in ultimate success, and bothering little about means and roads. But here he was confronted with a thing of moment. It had suddenly appeared to him that perhaps in a battle he might run. (9)

The given quote is ironical in that Henry wants a selfhood that is safe from accident and unfavorable circumstances-- a self he controls completely despite his intense desire for heroism. But without subjecting his self to danger, in fact he is unable to become a hero.

Now Henry happens to see a very different scene among his comrades and their unmilitary activities since he had visualized the beautiful scene filled with the

agile and belligerent soldiers. He seems to have "recalled his visions of broken-bladed glory, but in the shadow of the impending tumult he suspected them to be impossible pictures" (9).

It can be realized that these private soldiers seem wonderfully free in their informality, in which they are gripped by vanity, skepticism, and naivety that spring from the boredom of waiting for action. In fact, it is ironic that the very soldiers are ignorant of why they are recruited in the regiment and what they should perform. The following quote elucidates it: "Whole brigades grinned in unison and regiments laughed. The men became so engrossed in this affair that they entirely ceased to remember their own large war." (15)

It substantiates that these soldiers are still doubtful about their mission in war; they become unable to indoctrinate the military oaths while spending time in pointless matters. As the union armies are attacked by the rebel armies, Henry fails to make a consistent decision: he falls in a passive activity rather than execute his former promises. He begins to raise a question regarding his involvement in the charge against the enemies.

At that critical moment, the youth "felt in the face of his great trial like a babe" since it was a time to examine the power of his conscience (20). Later it transpires in his consciousness: "As he perceived this fact it occurred to him that he had never wished to come to the War. He had not enlisted of his free will. He had been dragged by the merciless Government and now they were taking him to be slaughtered." (20)

It is the ironic projection of Henry's mental state in the sense that he easily rejects his former promises and desires when he is supposed to face a trouble. In other words, he falsely comes to the suspicion that someone is responsible for his recruitment in the regiment even though he had disappointed his mother for his

passion for the military life. That is why, here Henry is treated ironically when he blames for the situation for his failure rather than his own defect-- or rather it is his overestimation of his self and surface understanding of the context.

Thus Henry, ironically speaking, tries to prove his retreat from the battlefield as a right decision. In this way he is hesitant to attack the enemies and cowardly runs away from the charge. Now he observed his "salvation" in such a transformation of his self (23). As a result, Henry is victimized by an illusion that his escape from the war ensures his identity as a man of unique heroism unlike "a man of traditional courage" (23).

In this sense like Henry, other soldiers in the regiment are oblivious of the fact that they should fight in the battlefield out of the patriotic zeal. But ironically analyzing, they try to deviate from the military law by escaping from the attack of the rebel army:

They grew in number until it was seen that the whole command was fleeing. The flag suddenly sank down as if dying. Its motion as if it fell was a gesture of despair. Wild wells came down from behind the walls of smoke. A sketch in grey and red dissolved into a moblike body of men who galloped like wild horses. (27)

Most of the soldiers ironically gallop from the battle when they are supposed to face the enemies and sacrifice their life for the country. That is why these runaway soldiers "heeded not the largest and longest of the oaths that were thrown at them from all directions" (28). After his rambling in the woods, Henry misinterprets his escape from the shellfire in which he has managed to become a brave soldier by defending his life while leaving his regiment on the brink of destruction, so for him it indicates: "The supreme trial had been passed. The red, formidable difficulties of war

had been vanquished" (34). This ironic deflection of his self evaluation pervades the novel till concluding part.

It is irony of Henry's self-consciousness that he is obliged to be dissolved into the plurality though he had come to the war to gain a singular identity so that he could fulfill his previous ambition by doing a glorious deed. But Henry "became not a man but a member" who was melted into the common personality (30). Later, he realizes regretfully he is no one but mere a cog in the machine of the regiment, where he should bow down to the command of the person on behalf of the whole army.

The youth may be driven by his coward comrades who were all blind in fending for themselves rather than tackling the predicament, which flashes out the ironical performance of the soldiers:

A man near him who up to this time had been working feverishly at his rifle suddenly stopped and ran with howls. A lad whose face had borne an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of he who dares give his life, was, at an instant smitten abject . . . He, too, threw down his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit. (36)

These soldiers who fled were in a chaotic and purposeless world. They have become an utter failure to execute their soldierly instinct-a conscience the military world expects from each army.

In this sense, Henry is not an exceptional case. His consciousness is ironically sketched when he boasts that his deliberate flight from war paved a safer way to the formation of his new mentality, let alone those previous fantasies about war:

He had fled, he told himself, because annihilation approached. He had done a good part in saving himself, who was a little piece of the army. He had considered the time, he said, to be one in which it was the duty of every little piece to rescue itself if possible . . . if none of the little

pieces were wise enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then, where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to very correct and commendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things. They had been full of strategy. They were the work of a master's leg. (40)

In the given quote, Henry has fled from the battlefield for his defense, which produces an ironic indication in the sense that he strives to transform his cowardice into the glorified action. Analyzing on a deeper level, Henry runs away on the first day of battle because of two psychic compulsions: one is an animal instinct of self-preservation and then another is a social instinct to act like his comrades. He resorts to both instincts for his retreat so that he can justify his action as a right decision. On the contrary, it unfolds the belief that man can adequately interpret the degree of his maturity is a delusion and excessive self-evaluation.

Furthermore, Henry Fleming, it seems, tries to deviate from the Darwinian theory of 'the survival of the fittest' by running away on the spur of the moment from the attack but not fighting out with the predicament, which is the explicit irony of his consciousness. In other words the irony directed against Henry consists in his illogical uses of the theory when he applies it to his flight.

Though he seems to falsely justify that it is the nature that "had given him a sign" for his action, the law was that he should fight (41). He would be safe according to the importance of his strength; so nature does not expect such submission.

It is the fear that alienates Henry from becoming the traditional concept of a 'hero'. But later he realizes that he feels compelled to develop an ethos of fear as his basis for a unique personality at the absence of any moral principle guiding his

behavior. Thus fear becomes a catalyst for the renewal of Henry's "superior perceptions and knowledge", which shows his difference between consciousness and false justification (40).

Surprisingly, Henry makes up his mind to return to his regiment after his prolonged wanderings in the woods; it means that he seems to "run in the direction of the battle" (43). So it is his ironical decision to go back to the place which he had hated extremely after the firing. This reflects Henry's world of mental blindness. In the like manner, Henry ironically sings a song of victory upon his comeback while his regiment gets defeated by the rebel armies:

'Sing a song 'a Vic' try,
 A pocketful 'a bullets,
 Five an' twenty dead men
 Baked in a_ pie' (45).

It clarifies that rather than singing a mournful song for his dead comrades who sacrificed their life for the sake of country, Henry alternatively sings a victorious ditty. He is still making a childish attempt to convince himself of his fake heroism. Ironically he thinks that he has felt the ripple of war mania, hearing "the ring of victory", "the music of the trampling feet, the sharp voices, the clanking arms of the column near him" that propel him to fly on "the red wings of war" (58).

For the moment Henry falls under the illusion that he has reached the sublime consciousness. Moreover it is purely the product of his conscience -- troubled intellect though it seems like his mental awakening. As for the fluctuation of Henry's mind, he now regrets his misdeeds; as a result the discrepancy between his fantasy and reality begins to loom large. In desperation he realizes "that he was not like those others. He

now conceded it to be impossible that he should ever become a hero. He was a craven loon. Those pictures of glory were piteous things" (59).

Henry is again trapped by his pointless and naïve reasoning because he forgets that he has fled from the shellfire in order to become a heroic personage; ironically he thinks that he might as well give up the very passion for pride and bravery. In fact it is an ironic hint that Henry is certainly feeble in his rationalization, so he is going to back up his moral ethics of the military existence, and wants his own regiment to be pulverized physically and morally:

. . . despite his unprecedented suffering, he had never lost his greed for a victory, yet, he said, in a half apologetic manner to his conscience, he could not but know that a defeat for the army this time might mean many favorable things for him. The blows of the enemy would splinter regiments into fragments. Thus many men of courage, he considered would be obliged to desert the colors and scurry like chickens. He would appear as one of them. (59)

From the given quote we can infer that Henry seems to subvert his former promises and the soldierly aim in that ironically speaking how he achieves victory when his union regiment is completely defeated. That is why, such ill-intention makes him a dangerous traitor for his country, not a soldier deserving the victory and the accolade of laurels.

His consciousness is now trapped between despair and regret, in which he realized "that he wished he was dead. He believed that he envied a corpse. Thinking of the slain, he achieved a great contempt for some of them, as if they were guilty for thus becoming lifeless" (61).

It elucidates ironically that a man like Henry wants death while he fears the firing of the enemy and escapes from the encampment pretending to become a survivor. On his way to the regiment, he tells a lie to a tattered soldier that he was severely wounded in the violent fighting. He seems to prove that he has got the real scar of wound on his body by the enemy's gun. But the very patch of wound is formed by the punching of the unknown man:

He thought he must hasten to produce his tale to
protect him from the missiles already at the lips
of his redoubtable comrades . . . he began: 'yes,
yes. I've-I've an awful time. I have been all over.
Way over on th' right. Ter'ble fightin' over there.
I had an awful time. I got separated from Th'
reg'ment. Over on th' right, I got shot. In th' head.
I never see sech fightin'. (67)

From this quote we can infer that Henry diverts his thought toward the false realization to display his shortcoming in his judgment. In order to show his pretended heroism, he behaves as if he had fought the real battle. It is ironical that he deserves the badge of dishonor and treachery rather than the "red badge of courage".

In addition to it, Henry veers between self-illusion and vanity. In this sense he recalls some of his fellow soldiers had escaped with their terrified face, so he shows his loathsome attitude to them. For him they are weak mortals. Ironically analyzing, he takes a great pride of his flight from war, claiming he had escaped "with discretion and dignity" (77).

Remorseful feeling spark off a ripple in his consciousness in that for him "his rifle was an impotent stick . . ." and with it he could not smash "upon the faces of his

enemies" (85). At this moment he wants to display his long-nurtured aspiration for heroism, keeping his past mischievous action at bay; as a result, he appears alone on the battleground and begins ironically firing indiscriminately while there is no presence of the enemy before him. Then, at that intense moment, Henry is taken by surprise by a hoarse and sneering laugh combined with a sentence that resounded in his ears in contempt and amazement: 'yeh infernal fool, don't yeh know enough t' quit when there ain't nothing t' shoot at ?Good Gawd' (86).

Here irony is directed against Henry who was fighting like a dedicated soldier, oblivious of the fact that there was no enemy. His comrades were all busy in observing his freakish act. In fact they had become like the dumb spectators. On the contrary, Henry saw "under the lifted smoke, a deserted ground" (86). When the lieutenant scolds Henry, calling him scornfully one of the "wild cats", he feels very much disillusioned (86). It occurs to him that he had been like an angry beast. He had fought the way the pagan fights in order to protect his religion.

Thus, there is an ironical expression in the sense that all those hesitations and obstacles "had fallen like paper peaks, and he was now what he called a hero. And he had not been aware of the process. He had slept, and awakening, found himself a knight" (87). Henry falls in a hallucination that he has reached the knighthood, where he has hardly killed a single enemy. It reflects the premise that he is of course prone to self-delusion and vanity; but even in the destruction of the first illusion, he embraces the new illusions. He is ironically haunted with the crown of 'heroism' and 'pride' instead of analyzing his past defects.

Now Henry's cowardice recurs in the final warfare between his union soldiers and rebel armies in that he desperately runs away from the attack, leaving his comrades exposed to danger. Thus he deserts the battleground observing "a coherent

trail of bodies" scattered horribly elsewhere (93). It is ironic that rather than attacking the enemies, Henry "ran like a madman to reach the woods before a bullet could discover him. He ducked his head low, like a football player "(95). Henry is still in a misunderstanding that he has become a brave soldier by fending for his life while violating the military rule of duty and war ethics.

Henry makes a naïve attempt to prove his warrior ship and heroism by resorting to a lifeless object like a flag. Actually, his mental state is objectified in this single recurrent object -- or rather; he is always striving to snatch the flag as a token of victory. His ironical exaggeration of the flag goes on:

Within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him. It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. It was a goddess, radiant, that bended its form with an imperious gesture to him . . . with the voice of his hopes. Because no harm could come to it he endowed it with power. (95-96)

Ironically speaking Henry blindly glorifies the very object that can do nothing to save his life in the fighting (as he has run away deserting his gun) even though he confers upon it a charismatic power to protect him from harm. In the last battle the other private soldiers flee from the war because they are misinterpreting it as a means to masculinity. It clarifies: "Since much of their strength and their breath had vanished, they returned to caution. They were become men again" (93). It leaves an ironic message because the coward retreat from the war under the pretension of self-defense does not ensure them manhood and bravery.

Virtually, in the horrible fighting, as the union regiment was on the verge of the utter defeat, it seemed that the soldiers resigned themselves to vulnerability. It was

obvious that "from this consciousness that they had attempted to conquer an unconquerable thing there seemed to arise a feeling that they had been betrayed" (97). As a result, the soldiers display their anxiety about their ability to fight, as they fluctuate between self-deluded assurances of success and dismay at incessant failure. It leads them alarmingly to the fact that they are fighting a losing battle. Thus it raises a moot question toward their soldierly aspiration and the overall performance in the battle. Moreover it indicates an ironic undercutting in their inconsistent view, for they have intentionally paved a way to self-deception at a time they are ignorant of their purpose in war.

Similarly, the fate of various soldiers shows their ironic existence, but in the union regiment, a senior soldier demonstrates his real heroism when he is badly injured by the enemy's bullet. His soldierly patience injects a sense of disgrace to the runaway soldiers:

The orderly sergeant of the youth's company was shot through the cheeks. Its support being injured, his jaw hung afar down, disclosing in the wide cavern of his mouth a pulsing mass of blood and teeth. And with it all he made attempts to cry out. In his endeavor there was a dreadful earnestness. (110)

In the given quote, the man with the most horrible wound described is the one who cannot cry out. The sergeant's real demonstration of courage can be contrasted with the ironical performance of the runaway soldiers like Henry Fleming who pretend to have a big wound and "run faster among . . . comrades, who were giving vent to hoarse and frantic cheers" (112).

Shortly after his final retreat from war, Henry feels a sigh of relief and happiness because his mental state " was undergoing a change" (116). He valorizes

his vainglorious adventures , thinking that he has crossed all those thorny and dangerous ways, and has now arrived at a stage to understand his entity and context. Thus, he begins to analyze his deeds and achievements, ironically blinking the fact that he has lost everything else in the war.

Furthermore, it bears an ironic meaning in terms of Henry's self-evaluation that his enlivened consciousness -- the rationalization that the flight from the battleground ascertains heroism -- dramatically catapults him to the maturity and enlightenment. It crystallizes :

With the conviction came a store of assurance. He feels a quiet manhood, non-assertive but of sturdy and strong blood. He knew that he would no more quail before his guides wherever they should point. He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man. (117-18)

Ironically speaking though Henry joined the regiment in order that he would die a soldier's death for patriotism, he has become a fake hero. It seems that at the last stage, death isn't for him, but for other fellow soldiers. In fact he has achieved a degree of maturity in his selfishness and egotism that give him the illusion of pride and bravery. Analyzing from the viewpoint of fear, Henry has (it makes an ironic hint) come to the war to go through fear, but found it was a great fear, so he wasn't yet a man.

Thus, irony pervades in Henry's discretion in the sense that he finds his world of fantasy very peaceful, but there is a trace of chaos and carnage around him. As a result, he beams with happiness and satisfaction: " Yet the Youth smiled, because he saw that the world was a world for him, though many discovered it to be made of

oaths and walking sticks. He had rid himself of the red sickness of battle. The sultry nightmare was in the past" (118).

It proves that Henry hasn't achieved a lasting knowledge because his invulnerability in war is the combined result of mere luck and fertile imagination, which reveals a final irony of the novel. Additionally it is his pointless reasoning because he boasts that he is beyond all the mankind's miseries, by experiencing " an existence of soft and eternal peace " but on the contrary he is engaged within the human society (118) ; he cannot be exempt from the pain and sufferings of his fellow beings -- a delusion that flashes out the compelling irony of Henry Fleming's self-consciousness.

IV. Conclusion

Stephen Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage* casts insight into the American Civil war that is seen through the eyes of a young soldier who is recruited in the regiment under the romantic notion of valor and manhood. In fact, it is an indictment of a man's superficial reasoning to evaluate himself and his experience.

Even though Henry Fleming has strived to see a Greek like battle, he becomes disillusioned when he observes the soldiers victimized by rumorful world, At the first attack on the regiment by the enemy, much to his fear, Henry retreats from the war. At this moment, his prior aspiration and determination crumble; actually, he is involved in the inner conflict with his conscience about whether to go or not despite the fact that he is supposed to fight with the enemies out of a patriotic zeal.

Therefore, his consciousness is at a crisis when he claims his intentional flight from the battlefield ensure of safer way to bravery and maturity. Thus, Henry seems to transforms his cowardice into the glorified action under the pretension of self-defence. He realizes that he is obliged to develop an ethos of fear as his foundation for a unique personality: So it is the fear, ironically speaking, that alienates Henry from becoming the traditional concept of a "hero". In short, fear becomes a catalyst to the revival of his conscience, which is (it is ironical) a way to maturity. So on his way to the regiment, he ironically seems to claim that he has the real scar of injury on his head by the enemy's gun, though the very patch of the wound is made by the bashing of the unknown man.

Henry Fleming has done the work that does not indicate his heroism. Additionally, it is ironical that his abrupt firing in void springs from his confused mind. As Henry escapes cowardly from the final war, he surprisingly feels a sigh of relief and happiness because he valorizes his deeds by thinking that he has reached the

matured state and the so-called enlightenment. Ironically speaking, he has achieved a degree of maturity in his egotism and cowardice that give him the illusion of pride and heroism.

Henry Fleming at last fails to fulfil his previous ambitions and determinations; rather he falsely claims that he has become a hero by the self-preservation.

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