

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

The politics of Irony in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in English

By

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February 2012

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Nabaraj Pande has completed his thesis entitled, “The politics of Irony in Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*” under my supervision. He carried out his research work from September, 2011 to February, 2012. I hereby re-commend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY****Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences****Approval Letter**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “The politics of Irony in Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*” by Nabaraj Pande, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to respected teacher Badri Prasad Acharya, lecturer in English, Central Campus, Kathmandu, for his scholarly guidance and invaluable suggestions. Any attempt to express my gratitude to him in words would be inadequate. Without his constant supervision and scholarly guidance, this research would never have been complete. I would like to express a deep sense of gratitude to him from the core of my heart.

I heartily express my profound gratitude to *Dr. Amma Raj Joshi*, Head of Department of English, Central Campus, Kathmandu, for providing opportunity to write this thesis by approving my proposal and his inspiring support.

Moreover, I would like to remain obliged to my family members for their constant encouragement and continued support for my studies. Similarly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all friends for their invaluable support.

Lastly, I would also like to express my profound gratitude to all who helped me to prepare this thesis.

Nabaraj Pande

## Abstract

*The Red Badge of Courage* is an anti-war novel by American author Stephen Crane (1871-1900). Taking place during the American Civil War, the story is about young private of the Union Army, Henry Fleming, who had great eager to enlist the Union Army and thought to fight bravely in the battle but just opposite of his thinking he flees from the field of battle. Overcome with shame, he longs for a wound-a “red badge of courage”-to counteract his cowardice. When his regiment once again faces the enemy, Henry acts as standard-bearer.

Through *The Red Badge of Courage* Stephen Crane tries to satirize the political leaders and try to give voice to the marginalized people in the society by using the radical irony. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, in the name of race and patriotism the stake holders have taken benefits by evoking the lower class people to involve in the bloody war like Civil war. *The Red Badge of Courage* stands strongly against any kinds of war and satire the war .

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## **I. Introduction to Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* as a Historical Fiction**

Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* is about American Civil War (1861-1865) and its effects upon American Society. When the Civil War was commenced in the name of race and the case of patriotism also came between The Southern and the Northern and unfortunately the people of the same country started a bloody and destructive war to get victory and to dominate the opponent to become supreme and powerful in the nation. Due to bloody war America had to bear the loss of property. Stephen Crane developed an interest in civil war studies and military training. Throughout his one year college experience, he wrote for his brother Townley's news service and began a sketch of his famous first novel, *Maggie : A Girl of the Streets*. In 1891, he quit school to work full times as a Reporter with Townley, and to live in the tenements of New Work, where he gained first hand knowledge of poverty.

Commonly considered Stephen Crane's the greatest accomplishment *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) ranks among the foremost literary achievements of the modern era. The title is somewhat ironic since it seems to refer to a genuine flag or emblem of honor when, in fact, the 'red badge' is nothing more than the blood oozing from a wounded man. Crane contrasts the patriotic notion of military bravery and honor with the mundane and sad inevitability of death and injury that is the reality of war. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane uses a long –sustained irony that lasts from Henry getting his wound to the end of the novel. Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* is an anti- war novel in the context of American Civil War because when the bloody war commenced in the name of race between Northern and Southern Americans then so many people of those locations were terrified and “twenty seven

thousand men were dead but both sides were more or less where they were when it began”(Mitchell 17). In the beginning of the battle the Union Army and The Confederate Army fought blindly in the name of patriotism and earning tag of bravery so they themselves and war affected people got a loss of property and body. But just opposite of the end of the war the hero of the war Henry Fleming himself knew that the war is nothing more than destruction. *The Red Badge of courage* reflects the anguish of Crane’s spiritual and preoccupation with questions of faith. His fiction describes man’s alienation in a God- abandoned world of danger and violence.

In Stephen Crane’s short story, “The Veteran” published a year after *The Red Badge of Courage*, an elderly Henry Fleming reminisces about his first experiences in the battle: “That was Chancellorsville” he remembers. The veteran Henry’ s recollection of his reasons for flight match those of his younger namesake in *The Red Badge of Courage* , and he recalls with sorrow the battle in the Civil War. If such Chancellorsville (May 1-3, 1863) one of the bloodiest struggle of the Civil War. If such Chancellorsville, then we can turn to Crane’s earliest biographer , Thomas Beer, who reveals that in preparation for the writing of *Red Badge* Crane consulted Battles and leaders of the Civil War (1984), “a collection of memoirs by Union and Confederate officers”(Beer 97-98) Though devoid of emotion, these authoritative accounts are full of all the strategical and topographical information Crane needs to employ Chancellorsville as the setting for his novel. The paragraphs below argue that Crane used the literary and pictorial inspirations of Battles and Leaders to provide a specific factual framework for Henry’s experiences in *Red Badge*. Thematically Crane utilized the battle of Chancellorsville in order to mount a critique of the fin de siècle American situation: the beleaguered position of the individual in a mass



society, the harmful illusion of popular notions of heroism, and the abandonment in materialistic gestures of the program of Reconstruction began in the Civil War.

Stephen Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage* portrays Henry Fleming ironically in order to satirize the state's unnecessary valorization of war in the name of patriotism. In Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* it seems that the state holders directly and indirectly encourage the people of the state to participate in the bloody war and they unnecessarily use the power of the state to exploit the people. Henry Fleming, the protagonist of the tale, seems deteriorated due to the overexploitation of the officer. In this fiction the state holders start the cruel war to get the victory by evoking the lower class people in the name of patriotism and to show the bravery by fighting in the war and killing the opponents in huge numbers. So the people of the North and South became the victims in the Civil War to fulfill the state holders' intention and to be the winners and famous in front of the mass.

Published in 1885, *The Red Badge of Courage* relates itself to the American Civil War which lasts from 1861 to 1865. The initial setting is the campsite of a regiment of the Union Army, fighting for the Northern States. The soldiers can see the campfires of the Confederate Army, their enemy, which is fighting for the interests of southern states. Most of the story is told from Henry Fleming's point of view through his thoughts, memories, and perceptions.

The scene opens with an argument about whether the regiment will finally move out after being in camp for several months. As Henry listens to this debate, he remembers his life back home, and his mother telling him how to behave on this first adventure off the farm "Yer jest one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, and yeh've got to keep quiet and do what they tell yeh" (Crane 15). Henry felt proud and daring when he left home to go to war but now he wonders how he will do when

confronted with the reality of battle. He seeks information from the tall soldier, Jim Conklin, who tells him that if everyone stands and fights, he will stay, but everyone runs, he will run, too. This makes Henry feel better since he does not have to pretend to be more confident than his comrades.

When the regiment is ordered to move, Henry marches along, worrying about whether or not he will be brave. He studies his companies for clues to their feelings, but they sing and boast confidently. Henry becomes sullen and brooding, so that a loud soldier, Wilson asks him what is troubling him. Henry cannot answer. As they draw close to the front line Henry feels curiosity about the battle-weary returning soldiers. He begins to fantasize that the officers are leading the soldiers into a trip. Henry is afraid to voice his fears and feels deeply isolated. His regiment marches for days to get in to position, sleeping and marching with no information, until one morning Henry is kicked awake by his commanding officer and hustled into battle.

Henry's regiment is positioned and repositioned without seeing battle, through they are frightened by retreating soldiers, dead bodies and bullets whizzing overhead. Suddenly Henry sees the officers on their horses and the enemy is upon them. He fires his rifle without thinking and suddenly breaks into a sweet sensation that his eye-balls were about to crack like hot stone. He feels a red rage and fights boldly until the enemy is driven back. Henry feels joyful that he has stood up to the first test in battle, but when the enemy returns unexpectedly, Henry loses his nerve. When he sees others running, Henry runs too. He loses all sense of direction and runs blindly in search of safety. As he sees many different battle scenes, ending with the general who declares that the soldiers have held the enemy back. But Henry cannot share in the victory since he runs from the front lines. He feels the nature is indifferent to all these things. It seems now that nature has no ears. Henry is full of conflicting feelings. On the one

hand he feels like a criminal for running away and one the other he feels as through he has been cheated by fate of his glorious career as a brave soldier. He imagine how humiliated he will be if he returns to his regiment, and in a fit of rebellion and despair he sets of through the woods, away from the Union army. He seeks solace in nature which he imagines to be a sympathetic women with a deep aversion to tragedy. As he goes deeper in to the woods, Henry becomes more clam and rationalizes his escape. The deepening forest muffles the sound of cannon. At length he reaches a place where the high arching boughs made a chapel. He softly pushes the green doors aside and enters. Pine needles are gentle brown carpet. There is a religion half light. Near the threshold he stops horror stricken at the sight of thing. He is being looked at by a dead man who is stated with his back against a column like tree. The corpse is dressed in a uniform that once had been blue but is now faded to a melancholy shade of green. The eyes staring at the youth has changed to the dull hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish. The mouth is open. Its red has changed to an appalling yellow. Over the gray skin of the face rane little ants. One is trundling some sort of bundle along the upper lips. The youth gives a shriek as he conforms the thing. He is for moments turned to stone before it. He remains staring in to the liquid looking eyes. The dead man and the living man exchanges a long look.

Henry runs away, imagining that the dead man is pursuing him and is convinced that nature has turned against him. As his wanderings bring him close to the front again he hears a fierce battle going on and guesses that the scrimmage in which he took part earlier was just a prelude to the real battle which is going on now. Henry encounters a line of wounded soldiers leaving the front and falls in with them, fascinated by the soldiers of the fighting. But when the Tattered Soldier asks him kindly where yeh hit ol boy 76. Henry has no answer and runs away. He wishes he

had a red badge of courage a wound that would prove that he had done his share. He runs into his old friend Jim Conklin, who is badly wounded and who dies in field where Henry and the Tattered Soldier lead him so that the artillery will not run over his body. He abandons the tattered Soldier in the same field to die, and wrestles with the shameful secret that he is a deserter.

Henry debates with himself about whether to return to his regiment, but is both terrified of the humiliation of being recognized as a deserter and fearful that he cannot live up to the requirement of a soldier under fire. While he broods over his dilemma a company of retreating soldiers sweep past him and Henry is once again terrified. As he tries to get information from them he grabs a soldier who is also terrified, hits Henry on the head with his rifle. Henry is badly wounded, but manages to stagger on until he encounters a friendly person who walks him back to his regiment. His comrades had assumed that Henry had been killed and now assume he has been wounded in battle and so no explanations for his absence are necessary. In the final section, Henry develops into a seasoned soldier. He is greatly relieved not to be exposed as a deserter and enters into the battle with a sincere desire to be brave. He saves the company flag from being captured by the enemy and he exhorts his fellow soldiers to reenter the battle at a critical moment. For this he is praised by his superior officer and is seen to be a valiant soldier. Henry notices that he has become tranquil about the war and a reassuring presence to the untried men around him. In the final chapter Henry feels a quiet manhood, nonassertive and strong blood. He proceeds into the next round of battle as a golden ray of sun came through the hosts of leaden rain clouds. Commenting on *The Red Badge of Courage*, Sam Gilpin remarks.

*The Red Badge of Courage* is an exceptionally powerful account of war, but it is an even more extraordinary achievement when one considers that it was written by a man who was in his early twenties at the time. Stephen Crane was not only prodigiously young, he had also never been a soldier or experienced a military conflict at first hand a fact that a modern audience may find particularly surprising given that it is such a believable piece of writing. Indeed, many contemporary readers and reviews were so convinced by crane's depiction of war that they believed he must have been a veteran of the very battle that he had described so eloquently. Part of the accuracy of the detail derived from cranes discussion with his brother Williams, who was an expert on the American Civil war but anyone who has read books by military historians will know that facts alone are not enough to bring the subject alive. No, the crucial ingredient that crane added is what can only be described as literary genius. (191)

Since the publication of *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, it has been responded in various ways. Some have looked at the novel from naturalistic view, some others from historicists view and others say it is the real biography of a courageous young soldier. Much of the impact of *Red Badge* arose, then, from its powerful pictures of war, the images that leapt off the page into the mind of the reader. But equally important in Wyndham's review was his illumination of the intersection between the picturesque and ethical aspects of the novel .Given that Henry had enlisted in "hasty pursuit of a Vanishing ambition," Wyndham suggests that Crane's "battle pictures" were used to Dramatize the replacement of Henry's early "tinsel bravado" with his later discovery Of "courage in the bedrock of primeval

antagonism” (113). Henry’s tragic resignation to duty-his commitment to cause larger than himself-is his final acknowledgement that the “justification of any one life in its perfect adjustment to others” ( ). Crane’s account prophesies the regeneration of America at the same time it suggests the insignificance of heroes. Readers of *Red Badge*, Wyndham concluded, should infer from Henry’s experience that “the virtues so instinctual in moments of distress may be Useful also in everyday life” (114) A quarter – century after Crane’s death, Joseph Conrad remembered in *Last Essays* (1926) that the appearance of *Red Badge* had been “one of the most enduring memories of my literary life” (7). Calling Crane “non-comparable” as an artist, Conrad notes soldier: “it was his fate, too, to fall early in the fray” (7).

Today, crane’s critical reputation remains strong, and resurgence of attention to literary realism--New Essays on the Red Badge of The Courage (1986), Amy Kaplan’s *The Social Construction of American Realism* (1988), Giorgio Mariani’s *Spectacular Narratives: Representations of Class and War in The American 1890s* (1992) ...demonstrates the continued certainly of many of the questions expressed by the early reviews of *Red Badge* .Much of this recent criticism grapples with issues first raised in Wyndham and Frederic – the photographic and theatrical aspects of Crane’s prose; his abandonment of narrative conventions.

In pursuit of more “authentic” reality. Mariani, for example, reads *Red Badge* as novel of spectacular descriptions – vivid scenes which would satisfy the embryonic consumer society of the 1890 s desire for thrilling spectacle (Maraani,4).For Amu Kaplan, realism is a “representation of reality struggling against other forms of representation”(Kaplan, 1986, 13). This definition restores to realism its “Dynamic literary qualities” by integrating it with the social

context out of which it developed; *Red Badge* struggles with other representations of the nineteenth century reality – popular war novels, chivalric romances, jingoistic journalism. Thus although much of the early critical scrutiny of *Red Badge* boiled down to biographical speculation and nationalistic cheerleading, we can be grateful to those few reviewers who realized *Red Badge* was doing important cultural work. Their analyses suggest some of the reasons why *Red Badge* became the standard against which all of Crane's subsequent work was measured. So many critics analyzed this novel in their own ways but the present researcher tries to search the politics of irony in this novel.

(126)

British and American reviewers argued quite a bit about who should get credit for the “discovery” of crane. While the novel was no universally praised, almost without exception Crane's critics marveled at the emotional power of his vivid, visual prose. Some critics groused about crane's idiosyncratic grammar he beings one sentence with “Too,” for example while some others who became involve in the dial controversy voiced discontent about what they perceived to be crane's lack of patriotism. English critics tended to take.

*Red Badge* more seriously that their American counterparts, printing out its affinities with works by Tolstoy, Zola, Kipling, and the battle scenes of the Russian realist painter Verestschaging (13). The English critic Sydney Brooks, totally convinced by crane's depiction of combat in *Red Badge*, assumed that Crane had found in the Civil War. If *Red Badge* assumed that crane had found in the civil War. If *red Badge* were altogether a work of the imagination, unbased on personal experience, Brooks asserted, it's realism would be nothing short of a miracle. Crane's

imaginative effort remains marvelous. Perhaps the most perceptive of Crane's English critics was George Wyndham a member of parliament and veteran of the British army. Wyndham was the only one of Private Henry Fleming's accounts Wyndham noted had usually been written from the "band-box" viewpoint and emphasized large scale concerns (troop movement, tactical maneuvers, wing and losses), neglecting the much more limited but in many ways more intense experience of the anonymous foot soldier. (The Real War Walt Whitman had declared in his Civil War memoir *Specimen Days* [1882] will never get in the books what distinguished Crane in his effort to portray modern warfare was his use of what Wyndham called a "new device" that of focusing on the youth and tracing the successive impression made by the picturesque and emotional experience of war on his morbidly sensitive temperament. Wyndham wrote [Crane] stages the drama of war so to speak within the mind of one man and then admits you as to a theatre. Crane's reportage of the procession of flashing image short through the senses into one brain combined the "strength and truth of a monodrama with the directness and color of the best narrative prose" (109-110).

Wyndham concluded that Crane's account authentic, Henry's soul "truly drawn." Much of the impact of *Red Badge of Courage* arose then from its powerful pictures of war the images that leapt off the page into the mind of the reader. But equally important in Wyndham's review was his illumination of the intersection between the picturesque and ethical aspects of the novel. Given that Henry had enlisted in "hasty pursuit of a vanishing ambition," Wyndham suggested that Crane's battle pictures were used to dramatize the replacement of antagonism (113) Henry's tragic resignation to duty his commitment to a cause larger than himself is his final acknowledgment that the justification to other. Crane's account prophesies the regeneration of America at the



same time it suggests the insignificance of heroes. Readers of *Red Badge*, Wyndham concluded, should infer from Henry's experience that the virtues so instinctual in moments of distress may be useful also in everyday life. (114). Part of the accuracy of the detail derived from Crane's discussion with his brother Williams, who was an expert on the American Civil War but anyone who has read books by military historians will know that facts alone are not enough to bring the subject alive. No, the crucial ingredient that Crane added is what can only be described as literary genius (191).

Early American reviewers of *Red Badge* were generally not as incisive as Wyndham. Perhaps most surprisingly, one American critic suggests that in the novel a serio – comic effect ? seems to be intended throughout (Weatherford, 15) William Dean Howells, writing in Harper's Weekly, praises Crane's divinations of motive and experience "but express doubt about whether Crane can be considered a realist writer preferring to call his prose style impressionistic" Novelist Harold Frederic London Editor of the New York Times recognized *Red Badge* as a masterpiece. He wrote that it would likely be one of the deathless books which must be read by everybody who desire to be, or to seem, a connoisseur of modern fiction (116) From our current perspective we can see that Frederic was right: Crane's journalistic description and ironic understatement comprise a stylistic legacy which has descended through Hemingway and early Mailer and done a great deal in shaping American literature as we know it. Like many early reviewers, Frederic expresses admiration for the emotional power of Crane's work, but he was one of the very few who recognized the boldness originality of Crane's technique. *The Red Badge*, Frederic claimed impels the feeling that's the actual truth about a battle has never been guessed before (Weatherford 116) Like Wyndham before him, who had compared the novel to a

monodrama presented in the theatre of war Frederic emphasizes the novel's visual aspects and it' is radical reduction in point of view and narrative scope. "We do not know or seek to know ...anything...except what, starting through the eye of Henry Fleming we are permitted to see" (117) *Red Bridge* was a tremendously effective battle painting the trial of a soldier in war he maintained "seems never to have been painted as well before" (118). Henry's actions appear to be the actions of the readers own minds.

A quarter century after crane's death, Joseph Conrad remembered in *Last Essays* (1926) that "the appearance of *Red Badge* has been one of the most enduring memories of my literary life" Calling Crane non comparable as an artist, Conrad notes sorrowfully that Crane's life bore a marked parallel with that of *Red Badge's* tattered soldier. It was his fate, too to fall early in the fray. Today Crane's critical reputation remains strong and a resurgence of attention to literacy realism *New Essays on the Red Badge of Courage* (1986) Amy Kaplan's *The Social Construction of America Realism* (1988) Giorgio Mariani's *Spectacular Narratives Representations of Class and War in America 1890s* (1992) demonstrates the continued centrality of many of the questions expressed by the early viewers of *Red Badge*. Much of this recent criticism grapples with issues first raised in Wyndham and Frederic the photographic and theatrical aspects of Crane's prose his abandonment of narrative conversation in pursuit of a more "authentic" reality. Mariani, for Example, reads *Red Badge* as a novel of spectacular description vivid scenes which would satisfy the embryonic consumer society of the 1890s desire for thrilling spectacle (Mariani 4). For Amy Kaplan, realism is a representation of reality struggling against other form of representation (Kaplan 13). This definition restores to realism, its dynamic literary qualities by integrating it with the social context out of which it developed: Red

Badge struggles with other representation of late nineteenth century reality, popular war novels chivalric romances jingoistic journalism. Thus, although much of the early critical scrutiny of *Red Badge* boiled down to biographical speculation and nationalistic cheerleading, we can be grateful to those few reviewers who realized *Red Badge* was doing important cultural work. Their analyses suggest some of the reasons why *Red Badge* was doing important cultural work. Their analyses suggest some of the reasons why *Red Badge* became standard against which all of Crane's subsequent work was measured.

Looking at the very title of the novel, Crane includes irony that foreshadows the irony of how Henry Fleming gets his red badge of courage. When Henry sees his fellow soldiers feeling like madman from the enemy, he stops a running soldier to ask him what was happening. The soldier hits him so he can run away and Henry now has a *Red Badge*. But is it a badge of courage, or shame? Critic Carol B. Hafer refers Henry's wound as a red badge of absurdity or shame rather than a badge of courage. How can his wound qualify as courageous? He does not get it in the battle, and furthermore, it is not from an enemy soldier. Crane probably intends this as a punishment for running away. In the very title Crane uses situational irony to show how Henry's wound is technically a badge of courage, but also a badge of shame. But I say that neither the *Red Badge* was absurdity nor shame because when the state holders unnecessarily valorize the politics to achieve their power of goal in the name of patriotism by using the civil and unknown people in the war then the soldier, Henry Fleming, ran away to be safe from the attack of the enemy so *The Red Badge* that he gets was really a result of courage because he got nit in the process of war.

In Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, the researcher tries to analyze the ironic representation of American civilwar. One most fully understands the definition

of irony to fully grasp and comprehend the irony in *The Red Badge of Courage*. Irony originated in Greek comedy called an eiron. Also, it was common for irony to be found in tragedy to show the fate or will of the gods. Furthermore, it represents the moral view, and is a way to portray character flaws by comparing it into reality. The researcher is going to apply Hutcheson's noting of irony to *Red Badge of Courage*. According to Hutcheson, there are two uses of irony: radical and conservative uses.

The researcher uses here the radical irony. Radical irony is different from the other ironies because this irony has the newness in the sense that it raises or gives the voice for those who are back in the society and who are exploited by the power and the power user, radical irony wants the total positive change that helps or enhances the backward group for a long in the society or anywhere else. There is nothing intrinsically subversive about ironic skepticism or about any such self-questioning, "internally dialogized" mode (LaCapra 1985:119); there is no necessary relationship irony and radical politics or even radical formal innovation (Nichols 1981:65). Irony has often been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitudes, (Moser 1984:414), as the history of the satire illustrates so well. And this, the "transideological" (White 38) nature of irony, is the focus of this book: Irony can function tactically in the service of a wide range of political positions, legitimating or undercutting a wide variety of interests. It is this focus that has determined what, in the introduction, I called the "scene" irony in this particular study.

## II. The Politics of Irony in Crane's *Red Badge of Knowledge*

There are many ironists among them Linda Hutcheon is the most powerful ironist who has the concept of the radical irony that the researcher has implemented the concept to make his research successful. The radical irony is fit in Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* because in this fiction also the lower class people or the powerless people are exploited or used to fulfill the desire of the state holders for example the hero of the novel Henry Fleming is badly exploited by the officers of the regiment and he is used and made over ambitious to enlist The Confederate Army to fight against the Southern Army, he has no self benefit but there are lots of benefits for the state holders because they get name and the fame if they get victory over the opponent by using the innocent soldiers and the lower class people. The amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what we expect is Irony. Irony always aims at both sides, at life as well as at the spirit. But this, as we shall see, implies a higher irony, definable as a serene, detached acceptance of the eternal opposition of life and spirit, the ironical (in a more special sense) and the radical 'Only that which has no history can be defined'. '(Nietzsche). For this and other reasons the concept of irony is vague, unstable and multiform. The word 'irony does not now mean only what it meant in earlier centuries, it does not mean in one country all it may mean another, nor in the street it may mean in the study, nor to one scholar what it may mean to another. The different phenomena the word is applied to may seem very tenuously related. The semantic evaluation of the word has been haphazard; historically our concept of irony is the cumulative result of our having, from time to time for the centuries, applied the term sometimes intuitively, sometimes heedlessly, sometimes deliberately, to such phenomena as seemed, perhaps mistakenly, to bear a sufficient resemblance to certain other phenomena to which we

had already been applying the term. So the concept of irony at any onetime may be linked to a ship at anchor when both wind and current, variable and constant forces, are dragging it slowly from its anchorage. It is only very recently that the word has achieved full colloquial status, together with a certain modishness that has led 'How ironical' to oust 'What a coincidence' and even 'How odd' Example "The Irony of the dismissal [of Gooch by Hughes for 99 in the Third Test] was that Hughes was dismissed for 99 in the first Test' (*The Australian*).

The main interest of the researcher is to find out in the research that how politics and politicians evoke the ignorant people to participate in the war and to fulfill their self interest indirectly in the name of patriotism. How the lower level people are exploited by power and the people who are in the power. A very essential element in *The Red Badge of Courage* is its ironic tone. Tone refers to the writer's attitude toward his or her subject matter. Irony involves an awareness of a contradiction between appearance and reality. Irony is evident throughout the novel in Crane's attitude toward both war and courage. His realistic descriptions of battle undercut the traditional view of war as a stage for glorious acts of heroism. Many readers also believe that Crane's attitude toward his main character is ironic. His descriptions of Henry often call into question the accuracy of Henry's perceptions about himself. Thus, what appears to be true to Henry Fleming may not coincide with what the author or reader knows – or thinks – to be true about Fleming.

Because of its ironic tone, its emphasis on the psychological, and its impressionistic style, *The Red Badge of Courage* study guide 1890's. While many war novels have been written since, *The Red Badge* remains one of the most admired in American literature. The setting for *The Red Badge of Courage* is an unnamed battle during the Civil War. However, historians have studied details in the novel relating to

time, weather, the lay of the land, and the movements of the troops during the battle. Using these details as clues, they have deduced that Crane was describing a portion of the battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia, which lasted four days in May of 1863.

Crane not only withholds the name of the battle but also never mentions the Civil war. He devotes relatively little space to the physical setting. Many critics believe that the real setting of this novel is Henry Fleming's mind. *The Red Badge of Courage* takes place during the Civil War and focuses on a young soldier's experiences as he goes from naive idealism to awareness of the horrors of the war. This short novel demonstrates masterful use of point of view and serves as a psychological study of a boy growing into manhood through times duress. Often considered an example of Naturalism, the novel emphasizes the discrepancies between illusion and reality.

For many writers of literature, it is common for authors to help describe characters or relate certain elements in their stories. One of these effective devices is irony, which Stephen Crane uses effectively in his 1895 novel *The Red Badge of Courage*. Crane uses this device to portray the main character Henry Fleming, and to describe the world he encounters in the novel. Additionally, irony is used to help portray Crane's attitude towards life. Ultimately in Crane's war novel, Irony is used to describe Henry's journey from a raw recruit to a seasoned Soldier (Hafer). Stephen Crane uses dramatic, situational, and verbal irony in this novel, from the beginning to the very end of his novel. The title hails from a passage in the novel when Henry, the hero or protagonist of the novel, sees the bloody battle- injured men around him and "Wishes ( ) that, he too, had a wound, a red badge of courage"(9.47). The title is somewhat ironic since it seems to refer to genuine flag emblem of honor when, in fact, the "red badge"

is nothing more than the blood oozing from a wounded man. Crane seems to contrast the patriotic notion of military bravery and honor with the mundane and said inevitability of death and injury that is the reality of the war. The title is paradoxical and intentionally so, specially since the wound the protagonist finally receives is accidentally inflicted by a fellow Union soldier and hardly a mark of courage. It actually becomes a mark of cowardice for Henry since he lies about the wound and pretends to be wounded by the opposing side. “The basic feature of Irony is contrast between a reality and an appearance” ( ). Romantically irony is the only involuntary and yet completely deliberate dissimulation. Everything should be playful and serious, guilelessly open and deeply hidden. It originates in the Union of *savior vivre* and scientific spirit, in the conjunction of a perfectly instinctive and a perfectly conscious philosophy. It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication.

The protagonist of the novel, Henry Fleming, 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 freewill. He had been dragged by the merciless government. And now they were taking him out to be slaughtered. *The Red Badge of Courage* is interpreted as many as being an anti- war novel; What it does do is present the horrors and psychological aspects of the war without glory, but not without heroics and courage. Henry Fleming is in many ways an every – soldiers. He joins the army out of patriotism and to prove his manhood; when the time comes to fight he doubts himself and runs away out of fear. It is at this point Henry comes to crossroad of his young life instead of completely deserting his unite he returns to his regiment and the battle field out of a sense of duty and also out of shame and anger at himself. Once he returns he performs



heroically on the battle field. I feel Crane's purpose in this book is not to make some overblown anti-war treatise like *All Quiet on the Western Front*, but to portray what he believed (and many soldiers who read the book agreed with him) to be the emotions and feelings of a soldier in war and also the true motivation behind courage and heroism. Crane shows through Henry, that heroism and courage in the war is not something that comes naturally to man (or any animal, as shown by the squirrel scene in the forest) or can simply be conjured up out of blind obedience or extreme patriotism. Crane in fact argues the opposite: courage in war (or in and courage in response to violence) is something unnatural, something that must be accomplished by overcoming our own natural fear and flight instincts. Henry is able to perform heroically because of anger, his sense of duty, his feeling of brotherhood toward his regiment and out of something deep inside himself that even Crane (and nobody) could not totally understand. This is a great book about heroism, courage, brotherhood, duty and the psychological aspects of the war. It is not a book that glorifies war, not is it an anti-war treatise. It simply tells a story about war in a world where war exists. Henry Fleming, a protagonist of the novel, who has enlisted in the Union Army seduced by the dreams of military glory before he joined in the army he had thought that if he joins in the army he will fight bravely in the battle field because he has got only news from different kinds of journals, radios, and so on but just opposite of the information he got before joining in the army he got the different taste of the war.

On a cold day, the fictional 304<sup>th</sup> New York regiment awaits battle besides a river. Eighteen year old Henry Fleming, remembering his romantic reasons for enlisting as well as his mother's resulting protests, wonders whether he will remain brave in the face of fear, or turn and run. He is comforted by one of his

friends from home, Jim Conklin, who admits that he would from battle if his fellow soldiers also fled. During the regiment's first battle Confederate Soldiers charge, but are repelled. The enemy quickly regroups and attacks again, this time forcing some of the unprepared Union Soldiers to flee. Fearing the battle is the lost cause, Henry deserts his battalion. Only after he reaches the rear of the army does he over hear a general announcing the Union's victory. Ashamed, Henry escapes in to a nearby forest, where he discovers a decaying body in a peaceful clearing and stumbles upon a group of injured men returning from battle. One member of the group, the "tattered soldier", asks Henry where he is wounded, but the youth dodges the question. Amongst the group is Jim Conklin, who has been shot in the side and is suffering dementia from blood loss. Jim eventually dies from his injury, defiantly resisting aid from his friend, and an enraged and helpless

Henry runs away from the wounded soldiers. He next joins a retreating column that is in disarray. In the ensuing panic, a man accidentally hits Henry on the head with his rifle, wounding him. Exhausted, Henry thirsty and now wounded, Henry decides to return to his regiment regardless of his shame. When he arrives his camp, the other soldiers believe his injury resulted from a grazing battle. The other man care for the youth, dressing his wound. The next morning Henry goes into battle for the third time. His regiment encounters a small group of Confederates, and in the ensuing fight Henry proves to be a capable soldier, comforted by the belief that his previous cowardice had not been noticed, as he "had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man".( 19) Afterward, while looking for a stream from which to obtain water with a friend, he discovers from the commanding officers that his regiment has a lackluster reputation. The

officer speaks casually about sacrificing the 304<sup>th</sup> because they are nothing more than “muledrivers” and “mud diggers”. With no other regiments to spare, the general orders his men forward. In the final battle, Henry acts as the flag-bearer after the assigned man falls. A line of Confederates hidden behind the fence beyond a clearing shoot with impunity at Henry’s regiment, which is ill covered, in the tree-line. Facing certain death if they stay, and disgrace if they retreat, the officers order a charge. Unarmed, Henry leads the men while entirely escaping injury. Most of the Confederates run before the regiment arrives, and four of the remaining men are taken prisoner.

Common themes and issues explored in Crane’s works include: exploitation of stakeholders to the lower class people in the name of patriotism, fallen humanity, effects of colors on the human mind, harsh realities of the war, father/son relationships, betrayal, guilt, repentance, rebellion, religion, and the physical, emotional, and intellectual responses of the people under extreme pressure.

Literary techniques used in Crane’s work include tough-minded irony, allusions towards and fighting, comparisons and contradictions, dramatic personification, intertwined themes of sin and virtue, and a vision of a demand for courage, integrity, grace, and generosity in a tough world. Crane very deliberately uses categorical descriptions to label or name his characters. Henry is always referred to as “the youth”(unless he is directly engaged in dialogue). The other main characters are “The Loud Soldier” “The Tattered Soldier”, We occasionally learn character’s actual names, but they are never referred to as such by the narrator. Crane obviously wanted us to think of these characters as humans, but also as nameless entities caught up in something so large that it obliterated their individuality. These men do have distinct personalities that are distinguished by their mannerisms, actions,

and attitudes, however, many these distinctions are rendered moot in the battle, and specially in the death. War according to Crane, is the great leveler. Human can be themselves, but their unique feelings and thoughts do not matter in the field of injury and death. Every man is equally capable of killing and being killed. The soldiers use realistically idiomatic English that reflects both the time period and the level of education of the general populace. They also call each other hilarious things like “lunkhead” and “Jimhickey” and “Jim – dandy”, and insist on saying “by thunder,” and “by ginger” – which mean who knows what I but are rather enjoyable to read anyway.

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane presents war through the eyes- and thoughts – of one soldier. The narrative’s altered point of view and stylistic innovations enable a heightened sense of realism while setting the work apart from war stories written essentially as tributes or propaganda. One early reviewer declared that reading the novel “impels the feeling that the actual truth about a battle has never been guessed before.” “But conservative General Alexander C. McClurg, in the magazine “The Dial” attacked the work as a “vicious satire upon American soldiers and armies, “with a central characters motivated neither by “thrill of patriotic devotion to cause or country “ nor “an emotion of manly courage” ( ). Through Crane is critical of abstract sloganeering about the manly virtues prized by McClurg, he is from dismissive of or uninterested in those virtues. McClurg regarded the novel as unpatriotic and cowardly. The novel’s more nuanced exploration of such values will be explored by students with a close reading of chapter 23 in comparison with a more traditional tale of combat and a systematic look at McClurg’s accusations. Using their new understanding, students will be asked to select on one of three published endings to *The Red Badge of Courage* suited their understanding of Crane’s exploration of

values in the novel. *The Red Badge of Courage* is a fictional psychological portrait of a young soldier named Henry Fleming, tracing the thread of his emotions and reactions to events that transpire during an unnamed battle of the Civil war. Henry is an average farm boy from upstate New York, who dreams of the glory of battle that has read about in school. He has enlisted in the 304<sup>th</sup> New York regiment, which fights for the Northern (Unionist) forces.

The novel opens with Henry's regiment in camp by a river, where they have been for several months. Rumors of upcoming battle fly among the men but are largely unfounded, and the perpetual anticipation through Henry into a bitter interior fight. He questions if he has the inner strengths and courage to become a good soldier and is unsure whether or not it is in his realm of capability. He knows battle only through school books and soldier's stories, and fears the possible ridicule of his peers, should he be deemed a coward by running from battle. The Northern Army is finally put on the move and marched across the river, where they meet with Southern (Confederate) forces. Henry's regiment is initially put in a reserve position, and he is able to witness battle before actually coming in contact with it. Finally his regiment successfully repels a charge by the enemy, and Henry feels relief and elation at his feeling of success. The enemy charges again, however, and Henry feels, in the belief that his regiment will be overrun. This sends Henry on a long day's journey along the battle lines, in which he bitterly reproaches himself for running, but at the same time tries to justify what he has done. He witnesses the battle, then journeys into the surrounding woods, where he finds a decaying dead man in a clearing. Running away from the body and the back to the battle, Henry takes up with the procession of wounded men trudging to the army's rear for care. There he meets his friend Jim Conklin from his regiment, who has been shot in the side. He cares for Jim with another man, called the

“Tattered Soldier” until Jim dies in a field. The Tattered Soldier’s repeated questions regarding Henry’s supposed injuries anger and embarrass Henry until he leaves the Tattered Soldier alone to die in a field, a fact that later haunts Henry. Leaving the Tattered Soldier, Henry witnesses the charge and subsequent retreat of a Union regiment. The men retreat right through the spots to ask questions about the charge hits Henry in the head with the butt of rifle, injuring him. Having been wounded by his own comrade, Henry is only able to stumble toward the rear. He is later helped back to his depleted regiment by a cheerful soldiers whose face he never sees. Back in camp, Henry meets up with another man from his regiment named Wilson. Henry senses an incredible psychological growth and maturation in Wilson since their first days in the camp, and envies him. The two become great friends.

The next day the battle continues, and Henry’s regiment is placed on the edge of some woods and ordered to defend it. Here Henry achieves the classic valor for which he has sought, he fights so hard and courageously that both his comrades and his command look up to him. Later, while looking for water, both Henry and Wilson overhear a general speaking poorly of their regiment, saying he can spare them for a charge because they fight so poorly. This angers them, and creates in Henry the desire to show up the command. The regiment is sent in to charge for the first time, and amid heavy casualties, along with Wilson, the noncommissioned leader of his regiment. The charge essentially fails at first and Henry’s regiment is forced to retreat. Then however, they are charged by a Confederate Regiment, and Henry’s regiment repulses them, eventually taking their regimental flag. Even though the generals reproach the regiment’s command for failing the in the charge, Wilson and Henry are considered heroes in the classic sense, at least externally.

Henry undergoes countless interior changes throughout his ordeal, which upset the externally visible accolades of courage that the others shower on him. His new found manhood at the end of the battle he is described as a strong, clear headed confidence, a sense of self – assurance that he had never before felt in his endless internal bickering. The internal peace and calm is a far cry from what had first brought him to war – the idealistic Greek – like portrayals of valor and manhood that he had been exposed to only the books. Throughout the whole novel the researcher finds out that the protagonist of the novel gets totally different result after involving in the bloody war than what he has expected before joining war so the reality was the war was the destruction and the cowardice badge that Henry got but his allusion or the expectation was to be courageous and to get name and fame by fighting bravely. It seems great satire upon the US policy and the stake holders because they evoke the youth to participate in the war but the youth who fought bravely in the war could not get except the wound, discouragement, hopelessness and the badge of cowardice.

The serial form of *The Red Badge of Courage* received some good reviews, and the was published as a novel a year and a half later. Reactions to the novel ran the gamut: some reviewers assumed Crane was a veteran who had seen battle himself, while others questioned his patriotism for writing an account of the war so unrelentingly grim. What most critics agreed on, however, was that Crane doing something new and different. An anonymous reviewer wrote of Crane's realistic approach to war:

The description is so vivid as to be almost suffocating. The reader is right down in the midst of it where patriotism is dissolved into its elements ... This is war from a new point of view, and it seems more real then when seen with an eye only for large movements and general effects. (in weatherboard 86) Crane's objective re-

created the actual conditions of war rather than the vague sentiments and platitudes that are so readily found in the ear-lire dime novels. As with *Maggie*, Crane is concerned in *The Red Badge* with how brutal living conditions break down and reshape the individual's identity and will. If in Crane's earlier novel it was tenement and factory life that made up this oppressive environment, in *The Red Badge* it is camp life and the battlefield. Yet Crane's experience in the former environment informs his depiction of the latter. He applies the hardships of urban life, which he has witnessed firsthand, to those of the soldier's life that can only imagine. In fact one of the most striking patterns of imagery running through the novel is explicitly industrial: war, the army, and the individual man are all compared to parts of a machine. Fleming imagines that the enemy soldiers "must be machines of steel" (39). The Union army, of which is a part, is a "mighty blue machine" (66). Later he sees his own men, who stand their ground rather than run, as "machines-like fools!" (41). Battle is "like the grinding of an immense and terrible machine" and Fleming "must go see it produce corpses" (48). Likewise, "the torn bodies expressed the awful machinery in which the men had been entangled" (50). Fleming comments on "the furnace roar of the battle" (61) and after combat finds himself "grimy and dripping like a laborer in a foundry" (35). During a fight, Fleming, like the men around him, loses his individuality and becomes part of a single mechanism: "Directly he was working at his engine like an automatic affair . . . . He became not a man but a member" (32). Again and again, Crane re-creates the dehumanizing effects of war through the vocabulary and imagery of the modern, industrialized city and factory.

In another one of Crane's striking, Fleming thinks of himself not as a soldier but as a laborer. He compares firing his gun to the work of a carpenter. He has a task. He was like a carpenter who has made many boxes, making still another box, only



there was furious haste in his movements. He, in his thoughts, was careering off in other places, even as the carpenter who as he works whistles and thinks of his friend or his enemy, his home or a saloon (33).

This too might be read as a postwar image of labor, for the carpenter in a small town or a rural setting is a jack of all trades. He might build a box one day, frame out a house the next, and put up some cabinets the next. It is industrialized labor that compels a worker to make the same thing again and again; to built box after box, the carpenter of Crane's analogy must be functioning not in a small town setting but in that of an industrialized market. He is less a craftsman that he is an automaton. His thoughts of the saloon –the institution that Riis in particular railed against –further locate his labors in a modern, urban setting. Against this trope of war as a mechanized and industrial environment Crane juxtaposes a pattern of images in which Henry Fleming becomes aware of the indifference of the natural world to his own plight. In one of the novel's most famous passages, Fleming emerges from battle to find that nature itself is unaffected by the trauma he has just witnessed. As he gazed around him the youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun gleaming on the trees and fields. It was surprising that nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment (37). These juxtaposed images of industrialized warfare and indifference nature go to the heart of Crane's philosophical outlook. Man, though once a part of the nature world, has chosen to live in a unnatural environment of his own making. Whether one looks at Maggie's tenement and factory are at Fleming's camp and battlefield, modern men and women have forsaken nature for the industrialized streetscape and the mechanized battlefield. The romantics, writing at the start of the nineteenth century, argued that men and women must return to nature on order to assert their own *human nature*. Crane argues that such a return as

impossible: men and women have been reshaped in the image of their human-made environments and hence are alienated from a natural world that is entirely indifferent to their fate. Naturalism therefore involves seeing men and women as being shaped by two forces: their own human nature as manifested in the unnatural setting of an industrial society.

Ironically Crane's depiction of the Civil war is grounded in images and in a narrative voice that are inherently anachronistic. This is true not only of his mechanized imagery but also his dialogue. The slang that his soldiers use in speaking to each other, for example, is really a patois of the 1890s rather than one of the 1860s. Alfred Habegger notes the paradox of Crane's language:

Anyone who immerses himself or herself in letters or journals from the early 1860s will at once realize (though the point is evident anyway) that Crane was no more concerned to reproduce the exact talk of Civil war combatants than he was to establish battle coordinates. Yet the reviews of the novel tell us that its first readers regarded it as fascinatingly historical. The narrative took them back to the Civil War in way no account succeeded in doing (231-32). Perhaps the "fascinatingly historical" quality of *The Red Badge of Courage* is located in the immediacy and the verisimilitude of Crane's dialogue and description. Despite being grounded in the discourse of the 1890s, his narration and his soldier's talk are realistic and unsentimental in a way that earlier depictions of the war were not. Crane's contemporaries were struck by how real his depiction was and associated that sense of verisimilitude with historical accuracy. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane used his modern sensibility and modern techniques to animate a historical period, making his soldiers convincingly alive. Louis Menand in his preface to study *The Metaphysical Club* sees the Civil War as a watershed event not only for the country's political,

social and economic structures but also for its ideological and intellectual ones: The Civil War swept away the slave civilization of the south, but it also swept away almost the whole intellectual culture of the North along with it. It took nearly half a century for the United States to develop a culture to replace it, to find a set of ideas, and a way of thinking, that would help people cope with the conditions of modern life(x).

Crane's book helps to develop this new intellectual culture, for the ironic, objective, and dispassionate narration of *The Red Badge of Courage* would become a hallmark of modernization. Crane may be writing about a war that ended thirty years before, but he does so in a idiom that looks forward rather than back. There is another great irony in the relationship that Crane establishes between the industrialized city and the war that divided the nation. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, he uses what he knew about life on the lower east side to create a convincing portrait of men at war. Yet the forces of industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century were themselves often violent ones, and Crane may in fact know of war precisely because he lived through the upheavals of the 1880s and 1890s. Robert Shulman catalogs the many faces of industrial violence during this period, underscoring that, while the nation was not at war between 1865 and 1898, it was torn by internecine conflicts. Crane has created an enduring myth that draws on universalities, and puts in perspective the immediate violence of militia and Federal troops of pinker ton strike breaks and corporate warfare, of lynching's and the armed counter- attacks of black men, of the subjugation of the Indians entire industries shut down, cities under martial law, workers and police killed, dynamic exploding and men either baffled and unemployed or deeply uncertain about their position in a rapidly changing urban, industrial war (214).

The 1880s and 1890s might be seen as a time of intermittent violence that was tantamount to warfare: these skirmishes were fought not on battlefields but on the streets and outside the contested mines and factories.

In fact, the mood of the nation as a whole was becoming increasingly militant throughout the. In the same year that Crane published his novel, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution approving of Cuba's use of force to resist Spanish domination. Within three years, the country would declare war on Spain and the quarter century of facial peace would come to end. Army Kaplan sees *The Red Badge of Courage* as commenting on and participating in this mood. The heightened militarism in America and Europe at the end of the nineteenth century shapes his novel as does the historical memory of the Civil war. The novel looks back at the Civil War to map a new arena into which modern forms of warfare can be imaginatively projected (78). Teddy Roosevelt, who soon after fighting with his Rough Riders in Cuba would be elected president of the country, knew that the sentiments of the nation were shifting in favor of war. And, in fact, Roosevelt himself hoped for a war, if fit his ideal of the strenuous life, in which men exerted themselves in sport, politics and battle. In a remarkably candid letter of 1897, he confided to a friend: "In strict confidence ... I should welcome almost any war, for I think this country needs one" (qtd. In Zinn 290). Why would a country "needs" a war? Howard Zinn links Roosevelt's desire for war to the struggles of labor over the last quarter century, asking, "Would not a foreign adventure deflect some of the restless energy that went into strike and protest movements toward an external enemy?" (290). What the country needed, according to men like Roosevelt, was to find some foreign target on which to vent its anger over domestic policies, living standards and working conditions. *The Red Badge of Courage* is therefore a remarkably prescient book, for it looks not only back on the

history of the Civil War but also ahead to an increasingly militaristic U.S. foreign policy.

In a fascinating example of life imitating art, Crane would accompany U.S. soldiers to Cuba and Philippines as a war correspondent. It was a role that Crane helped to define and one that would figure prominently in twentieth century literature. In fact, it is hard to imagine an Ernest Hemingway or a Norman Mailer without Crane's example. Crane's own career therefore mirrors a larger national process that began in the 1890s and continues through to the present day: the gradual entanglement of interests among the media, industries and the military. One of the reasons that Crane refers to soldiers as "tall", "loud", "young" and "tattered" instead of using their names is to show that this is a book about war in general. All armies have tall soldiers and loud soldiers and young soldiers and old soldiers. If you don't read carefully you can even miss the names of the soldiers. Here are the major characters:

The youth: Henry Fleming

The soldier: Jim Conklin

The loud soldier: Wilson

The Tattered soldier: not named

The book opens with a rumor. Look at those sentences on page 1 in the second paragraph that begins "he was swelled with ....." The rumor that they are going to attack in three generations away from the original – and who knows how many days? War is filled with rumor and part of the reason for that is that most of the time soldiers are not fighting; they are drilling and practicing and talking. In Crane's novel they are bored. They want something to happen, so they want to believe or disbelieve the rumors they hear. On page 7 we read, "He [Henry] had the belief that real war was a series

of death struggles with small time in between for sleep and meals; but since his regiment had come to the field the army had done little but sit still and try to keep warm”( ).

Henry Fleming calls it “one of those great affairs of the earth”. He considers the wars of the past as something more glorious than these present battles. One of the reasons for that is that his view of war has been shaped by Homer. Homer wrote the Iliad and Odyssey, two books that glorify war, that glorify the heroes of battles and that also glorify death in war. To Fleming these men seem to be different than the men of his day who he says are “better, or more timed. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions”. (4) He’s not sure if they are better.

Maybe the men homer writes about are braver and more manly then he will ever be. Henry’s reflection of leaving his mother to go off to battle is important. First, notice that Henry has a preconceived notion of how his mother will react. He expected some wonderful scene, may be in which his mother would tell him how proud she was of him to do such a novel things, but she destroys his fantasy. She continues to be simply his mother, making socks for him and giving him about being a soldier and the company he keeps. Henry didn’t want to be treated like a boy –like a son- he expected his soldier ship to immediately change his mother’s perspective of them. Is not this a common experience? Have you ever wanted to ask your parents something maybe it’s something you want to do that you know they will be reluctant to be you do and in your mind you work out all your answers to the objections they will have and you feel very prepared and think that there is no way they can say “no” and them when you ask them the first thing out of their mouth is a response that you

had not expected and from that point on the conversation resembles very little what you imagined.

Henry's first problem is his uncertainty about what he will do in battle. He is never been in battle so he has no experiences that will give him a clue as to what he might do when the bullets start flying. He thinks of himself as an "unknown quantity". (9) He is an enigma even to himself. Do you know what an "enigma" is? In other words, he's puzzled and perplexed about himself because he cannot, even with all the thinking about it that he does determine what he will do in a furious battle. "For days he made ceaseless calculations, but they were all wondrously unsatisfactory. He found that he could establish nothing" (11). There are two things at work in Henry Fleming. First he does not want to be coward and it seems to him that everyone around him possesses a "great and correct confidence" (11). One of the reasons that he likes Jim Conklin, the tall soldier, is because he admits he might actually run. Henry doesn't want others to think of him as a coward, but he also does not want to be a coward, he would have trouble living with himself Henry is a kind a paradox. He thinks highly a himself and you can see this in the type of thoughts, he has thinking about Homer and Greek like struggle and the philosophical implication of war and yet, he must wishes he didn't think about such things – the things that is philosopher's, soldiers don't think about because it would make his life easier. "He told himself that he was not for made for a soldier. And he mused seriously upon the radical differences between and those men who were dodging imp-like around the fires" (16). He thinks of himself as a "mental outcast" (18).

Henry's second problem and really the biggest is his fear of death. Henry does not want to die. Why? no one knows what happens after you die. There is no one to talk to with experience. It is difficult to put ourself in the same place as soldier in

battle. What would be like to be in a battle knowing that at any moment you might die? It is easy to think of oneself as being brave from the comfort of a cozy couch in the living room, but what if we were hitting the beach on Normandy in World War II knowing that very likely you were going to die? Again, Henry is paradoxical. In a person it would be someone who possesses traits that are contradictory. On the one hand Henry is afraid of death and yet on the other he can think this: "Regarding death thus out of the corner of his eyes, he conceived it to be nothing but rest and he was filled with a momentary astonishment that he should have made in any extraordinary commotion over the mere matter of getting killed" (26).

Henry survives the first battle and is very pleased with himself and his comrades. They assume that it is over that they have won- and then they attack again. Henry cannot believe this. He just cannot believe that men would charge again, so soon directly in to the face of death and he thinks of them as something more than men and this is when he falters, this is when he decides to run.

Once he gets away from the battle he begins to justify himself. He does not want to think of himself as a coward and he wants to see his running away from the battle as the best thing to do as a necessary and intelligent thing to do. But he knows that he is fleeing will not be seen that way and that, he thinks, is unfair. He looks to natural answers and tries to convince himself that because a squirrel runs from danger he too is justified in running from danger (44). Next he meets the tattered soldier who wants to know where his wound is and then he finds his friend. Jim Conklin, who dies shortly thereafter they meet up with the tattered soldier again who also dies but not before he asks Henry about his wound. "The simple questions of the tattered man had been knife thrusts to him. They asserted a society that probes pitilessly at secrets until all is apparent" (59). Henry feels that all must know his



secret and it does not occur to him, as it often does not occur to us, that those around him are more concerned about themselves than him to notice that he has no wound. Those around him seem to assume that he is injured even though no wound is visible.

Henry's thoughts torment him. On the one hand he begins to convince himself that he will go back to the battle, back to the front and he envisions himself leading a great charge and dying gloriously before everyone – but then the reality sinks in – has no gun, it would be difficult to find his regiment – than doubts – then fear – and finally he ends “in despair, he declared that he was not like those others. He now conceded it to be impossible that he should ever become a hero” (62). When Henry considers himself to be a “slang phrase” he is thinking about the possibility of his name being used as a symbol for cowardice. For instance, someone might say before a battle, “Don't pull a Henry Fleming in us, boys!” and that would be a slang phrase.

In one of my past classes I showed scenes from the 1951 movie, *The Red Badge of Courage*, directed by John Huston. Gwynne Dyer entitled, simply, war. “War I'll send you the quote I read in class from Heller's book in a separate email. Gwynne Dyer wrote a book entitled simply, war. It contains a starting statistics from a study done in 1943-45. They found that of the trained combat rifleman only 15 percent fired their weapons in battle, even if their life was in danger. The book also has a couple of pictures of Civil War soldiers who look like they were 15, 16 or 17. In Tolstoy's famous novel, *War and Peace*, he writes about, among other things, the frenzied state of battle, how quite often, orders from generals are irrelevant by the time they reach infantrymen. In battle men are attempting to preserve their lives and are not necessarily. The second half of *The Red Badge of Courage* begins with Henry Fleming, the youth, getting clobbered on the head by someone from his own side. Before that, however, he asks, several times, “Why?” In the first instance you see the

whole question, “Why – why – what – what’s in the matter? (66). In the following paragraphs we only get “why.” What do those words mean? On the level, it’s the youth asking where everybody is running to. He wants to know what’s going on. On another level, however, it is Crane asking about war: why? Why do we have to continue fighting like this? Why are there wars? Why are humans unable to get along together? Why do they, finally, resort to war to solve their differences? Here’s a quote from *All Quiet on the western front* that relates to this “why” question. Some German soldiers are talking about the war, in their case world war I. “Then what exactly is the war for?” asks Tjaden. Kat shrugs his shoulders. “There must be some people to whom the war is useful” ( ). “Well, I’m not one of them”, grins Tjaden. “Not you, nor anybody else here.” “Who are they then?” persists Tjaden. “It isn’t any use to the Kaiser either. He has everything he can want already.” “I’m not so sure that”, contradicts Kat, “he has not had a war up till now. And every full grown emperor requires at least one war, otherwise he would not become famous. You look in your school books.” “And generals too” ( ). Adds Deterring, “they become famous through war.” “Even more famous than emperors,” adds Kat. “There are another people back behind there who would profit by the war, that’s certain,” growls Deterring.

Crane in his excellent novel offers political and personal reasons for war both relating to men who desire to be remembered and who wish to be famous. Once Fleming receives his wound eventually makes it back to his regiment. The first person he meets is the loud soldier, Wilson. He does not get the treatment he expects. Wilson is glad to see him and so is his corporal. Fleming notices a big change in Wilson and it is important to notice that the loud soldier, Wilson, becomes the friend. If I’m not

mistaken this is the first time he is clear he feels a strong affection for Henry that he didn't have before the battle.

Wilson remarks, I was a pretty big fool in those days. "Those days" refers to yesterday. It is been one day! Not only does Henry see the change in his friend but Wilson recognizes the change in himself he passed from boyhood from to manhood in a matter of 24 hours. Why? Look what happens when Wilson breaks of the fight between the three soldiers. He says "I hate not see the boys fighting among themselves" ( ) the day before he was willing to fight why this dramatic change? The war did something to him. He saw his comrades die besides him. The text is not clear on what happened inside Wilson's head to bring about this change but as readers we can surmise when on faces death one begins realize that much of what we think of as so important really is not. It changes the way person sees life the questions for us as readers and as people who probably will not experience war as soldiers is this: is it possible to gain this different view of life without growing through that kind of experiences? Can you learn not to worry about trivial things without going in to battle? I think so. There are a series of paintings by Thomas Cole called "The Voyage of Life". They include "Childhood", "Youth", "Manhood" and "Old Age". The middle who relates strongly to the change that Wilson goes through. In youth one is often very sure of himself or herself and the worlds seems t be a place that is easily managed. The goal is clearly seen and, it appears, easily attained. In adulthood one begins to realize the difficulties of life and it can temper that youthful certainty about things. In "Manhood" notice that the river is no longer calm, that there is darkness in the sky that was not there in youth. You can view these images at: What about Fleming? Has the youth changed? Has he become a man? Look at him. He feels superior to his friend and adopts "an air of patronizing good humor" toward him. His

“self-pride” is back in force. He feels superior to all those poets who he thought about in his misery. That’s a reference to writers and philosophers, probably many of the people we will be reading in this course. He considers himself a “successful man” (83). When he gives the letters back to his friend he considers it a “generous thing”. He has a new kind of confidence that he did not have before. Where does it come from? Ironically, it comes from his, “red badge of courage”. He gets knocked on the head by one of his own men. His regiment thinks he’s been shot, grazed by a ball and suddenly Henry Fleming feels like a war veteran. He gives grandiose opinions, but can suddenly fall silent if he feels like a war might find out what he did the day before. The story becomes even ironic when Henry shows his courage in battle. Where does that courage come from? He is not even conscious at the times he is fighting bravely. You’ll see the words, “not conscious” or “unconscious” in reference to what he is doing. Much of his so-called “courage” is a response to the insults he has received. He’s upset that people think of him as a “mule- driver”. He had thought of a fine revenge upon the officer who had referred to him and his fellows as mule drivers”. In the paragraph after that his “greater hatred” is not toward the enemy but toward the man who called he and his comrades “mule drivers”. There is a similar sentiment on page 118 in the first full paragraph. It’s the “scorn” that bothers him. There is no great cause that Henry Fleming is fighting for. He seems to be fighting because he’s worried about his reputation.

Try to imagine what would be like to charge toward another line of men with guns who are shooting at us with the intent to kill you. It would be a frightening thing. Pickett was a General for the Confederate army during the Civil War. Here are some excerpts: “The sacrifice of life on that blood-soaked field on the fatal 3<sup>rd</sup> was too

awful for the heralding of victory, even for our victories foe....No words can picture the anguish of that roll call – the breathless waits between responses” (136).

An interesting statistic about the American Civil war is this: more soldiers died in that war than in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined. 622,000 American soldiers died in the Civil war.

Anyway, Henry’s attitude towards the battle, at the end of the second day, is one of happiness and elation. He looks at the universes in a completely different way than what he did in the beginning of the novel. In the beginning he felt the universe was against him, but at the end he feels as if he understands it. He still feels a twinge of guilt when he reflects of his “sin” as he calls his flight from the battle. (128) But he is able to forget about this. In this way, crane represents the civil war ironically to satirize the foolishness of political leaders and concerned people in authority who were responsible for the destruction of American social structure and murder of innocent soldiers.

### III. Conclusion

American writer Stephen Crane published *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1895. This book is taken as the popular text used of the politics of irony, in this fiction, he portrays the American Civil War. It shows how a common soldier and lower class people suffer in the midst of impersonal forces. Next important and reality of this fiction is difference between reality and appearance for example the protagonist of the tale Henry Fleming, a youth who has enlisted in the Union Army, seduced by dreams of military glory, but who discovers that real warfare is totally bitter and different from what he expected before he joined in the Union Army. Stephen Crane tries to satirize the politicians and the upper class people who take unnecessary benefits by using and imposing brutality upon the lower class people. For that, here, Irony is the best alternative to apply because, irony means different between reality and appearance. Linda Hutch eon, the greatest ironist, uses radical irony. It throws the established bad concept that advocates in the favor of upper class people but opposite of this radical irony speaks for those who have been edged for a long.

In Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, politics of irony, seems effective, because the soldier, Henry Fleming, is seen alone and exploited in this vast universe. He enters into the war with romantic feeling, dreaming of glory and valor of battle but he knows the bitter reality that the war is really inhuman and cruel. He often feels isolated. The universe spins on indifferently. It does not care about him. Through the whole text, it is found that due to the over exploitation and over ambition, the protagonist gets failed and negative result. *The Red Badge of courage* succeeded in deglamourizing war showing that it is not a string of heroic acts and the heroic acts are not truly acts. It shows that war is war and the soldiers are still just men who can go crazy with this much stress. This book fails however at typing up the ending or

really taking us into the psyche of Henry, something this book dealt much about. This book became a classic for what it succeeded in doing. It is different from other books about war by catching the actual spirit of the war. The most remarkable feature of this fiction is that the protagonist Henry Fleming and his thought before and after joining in the bloody war becomes totally changed so it satirizes Henry Fleming himself, too.

At last, the gist of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* is the war is not good nobody should involve in war without thinking the destructive results at the end of the war. Due to the Civil War America also lost a huge numbers of people and property .

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