CHAPTER IV: A

PLOTS AND PLOT SITUATIONS
As commented earlier, Crane's primary interest was in the presentation of the experiences of characters, especially their reactions to events and situations, and less in the devising of any intricate plot as a matter of story interest. Thus, the discussion of Crane's skill in the ordering of the plots is necessarily brief, and is included as a section in aspects of technique other than character drawing.
Stephen Crane's novels and stories are mainly concerned with the study of the working of the minds of the people involved. As his primary intention is the study of mental conflict, there seems to be very little in the form of plot as a series of interrelated events in his novels. As for the short stories, the form is too short to permit any elaboration of plot. But we have incident and situation sufficient to illuminate life. The nature of man is brought out by his reactions to various situations; the nature of life is brought out by the events and situations.

The plots of his novels are simple, and there is a linear progression in most of them. *The Red Badge of Courage*, for example, has a simple plot. The plot situations are varied. A young man learns about himself and about others in the course of his experiences during a war. The events and experiences create certain reactions and raise certain problems. The youth tries to find the answers, and gets a new understanding of himself and of war.

As Warner Berthoff says: "In Stephen Crane's fiction the violences of war or of slum life and the suffering of the insulted and injured provide the main
occasions; the formulas of Naturalism are called into service; they do not, however determine what is presented. Crane's motive was not to diagram conditions or assert universal truths but to produce a certain kind of composition, a vivid showbox of serial impressions.\textsuperscript{1}

The situations provide the youth a chance to discover fear as well as courage in himself. The change is brought about by the experiences of war.

As Norman Friedman aptly remarks: "The essential change around which the plot turns, then, is from ignorance to knowledge rather than from cowardice to heroism. It is acting both as coward and hero that enables Fleming to know himself and not achieving self-knowledge which allows him to become courageous."\textsuperscript{2}

There is a simple linear progression in the plot, which moves chronologically through episodes. Beginning in doubt about his own courage and that of the regiment, he had sunk to despair over his cowardice and Conklin's death. His experience in the forest with fleeing animals and his encounter with a decayed corpse give him knowledge which

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
becomes deeper with his warm welcome back to the unit. The wound reminds him of what he is and what he should be.

This internal action takes place as a result of a series of experiences which come as episodes in the general context of a war. The episodic structure, almost that of a picaresque novel, is inevitable in the circumstances. If one is to learn from experience, there must then be a series of experiences which lead to knowledge.

In Maggie: A Girl of the Streets the crucible of experience is the slum-life. Maggie grows up in a mud-puddle but remains pure. She works in a factory. The poverty, the fighting and the drinking of the parents allow her no peace. She dreams of a prince charming and of far-off lands. The illusions are shattered when her lover rejects her. The mother and the brother do not accept her back. She has no place to go to. She walks the streets. Her condition becomes worse and she commits suicide. Her mother grieves over her dead body and declares, among the neighbours, that she will forgive her.

Here, too, the structure is simple and chronologically linear. The heroine is put in an untenable situation - a poor as well as loveless, cheerless home, and we are allowed to see her desperate attempts to escape to the world of her heart's desire. What she looked for from life may have been a romantic illusion but there is no gainsaying the fact that her present world needed to be escaped from. She is reduced,
like Hardy's Tess in search of a better life, finally to degradation and death. (Like Hardy, too, Crane seems, without saying it, to consider his novel the story of a virtuous woman - a victim of cruel social forces and more sinned against than sinning.)

The O'Ruddy has a completely different plot. A young man goes from place to place and from experience to experience. The situation provides Crane with a chance of writing a comic novel and he develops the plot in a mock-heroic fashion. He ends up writing a parody of the romantic novel with knights, lords and duel-fights.

The Open Boat has the sea as the testing ground of human virtues like courage, honesty, endurance and brotherhood. It is based on a single traumatic episode in the lives of four men, and it serves to bring out the hopes, doubts, fears, dreams, confusion, illusions, despair, courage and endurance. Their experiences lead to knowledge about themselves, about their mates and about nature. The harrowing experience, pain and suffering and the death of one of them enables them to be 'able interpreters' of life. The story unfolds a vision of man fighting alone in the vast universe with the minimum of weapons and under the most intense pressure, physically and mentally, to find some answers to the mystery of life. What we have here is a crucial situation, and the movement is less one of external
action than of internal reactions. We see that the basic plot-situation has been excellently chosen for the purpose.

Thus it is not so much the plot, which is very thin, but the plot-situation which is important here as elsewhere. Here is a crucial experience for those in this crucible and that is the important feature of this long short-story.

_The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky_ also has a very thin plot. The situation is finely devised. The ingredients are an upright Sheriff and a mean gunman in a town, with the gunman drunk and itching to have a showdown with the Sheriff. As the suspense builds up in this explosive situation, we come to the scene of the confrontation which has a surprising ending in an anticlimax that is far more powerful than a shoot-out could have been. It becomes strictly a non-event because, when Scratchy Wilson sees the Sheriff unarmed and accompanied by his new bride, he finds himself helpless, and lets him go unchallenged. The discovery by Scratchy and by us that, deep down in his warped self, there are elements of sporting spirit or even gentlemanliness, is the point of the story. Scratchy's inability to act - as in Hamlet's case - is more interesting than anything he has done or might do. The story gives us a pleasant glimpse into the surprising twists and turns of human psychology. Here, too, it is a single episode, well-chosen, which serves the purpose of illumination of character or psychology.
The Blue Hotel, set in the American West, is a strange story. Its central figure, a Swede, seems bound for death from the beginning. He has a fist-fight at one hotel, and provokes a fight in another, which leads to his death. There was justification for the first but none for the second which is entirely his fault. But the first leads on to the second. We are left with the feeling that the whole thing was pointless, which makes for the pathos of the story.

Crane's West was again more a state of mind than a physical place. As The Red Badge of Courage could be the story of any battle, in the same way The Blue Hotel could be the story of any place. Crane was more interested in depicting human responses to certain challenges. As such, his West is not conceived as a realm of terror but as a place where one's manhood could be tested in the face of the unexpected and unpredictable circumstances of life.

The Third Violet and Active Service have a love-triangle as the plot-situation. Active Service has Greece as the locale and the Greco-Turkish war as the background. It is a simple love-story. The Third Violet has the city of New York as the locale. The novel is set among the artists living in poverty and trying to produce a masterpiece. It is again a love-story with a happy ending. Crane has taken some situations of his own life in this novel and his own experience of failure in love, poverty and struggle are the experiences which the characters undergo.
The Monster is built round an episode in which a Negro servant makes a great sacrifice in trying to save the life of his master's son. Henry Johnson rises in our esteem but becomes the cause of a great controversy in Whilomville when his face is disfigured by burns and he becomes a little insane. Crane creates a situation which raises a moral problem. Though Crane does not comment, it is clear that his appreciation is for the Doctor than for the other residents of the town.

Another story about the Negro servants is The Knife where in contrast to The Monster, a man responds to a situation in a different way. The Negro servant tells a lie to save his skin. Crane creates a situation and allows the story to develop on its own causal connections.

The children's stories mostly have a simple plot where a child is put in a situation where he is put to shame by other children because of the carelessness of the parents or because of the child's non-acceptance of the behaviour of other children. Shame, His New Mittens, The Stove or Lynx Hunting provide Crane with a chance to explore the psychology of children. The situations are almost alike. Either because of having a tin lunch pail or having the new mittens, or the child a butt of insult, laughter and humiliation at the hands of other cruel children.
Thus we have seen that, though there is a simple linear plot in *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, the most important thing in Crane's fiction is not the plot, as a series of logically or chronologically linked events, but the central plot situation, which seems to enlighten the protagonist about life and about himself. This generalization does overlook *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* to some extent, for there is little by way of illumination gained by the protagonist in the course of her experiences, though we may say that she gets disillusioned. The devising of the crucial confrontation in each case shows Crane's skill. It does seem that Crane was, after all, not simply interested in the spinning out of a story with interesting people and interesting events, but in making a point about the nature of our life here, mainly through the protagonist's realization, though sometimes as in the case of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, it is we who see fully how things are in this world.
CHAPTER IV - B

OTHER ASPECTS OF TECHNIQUE
It is more than three-fourths of a century since Crane wrote but some of his stories and novels could pass very well for contemporary writing because they represent modern literary preoccupations and methods. He did not merely follow some of the canons of Naturalistic fiction but made experiments in the realistic technique of fiction-writing. He went a step further and, because of this, some of his works are classified under Psychological Realism. He added a new dimension to it with his technique of making impressionistic use of colours. His writing was so far ahead of his time, as far as narrative technique is concerned, that a modern critic like C.C. Walcutt makes the interesting comment that Crane's writings anticipate dramatic expressionism in America by twenty years and that only the earliest experimental work of Strindberg is as early as Crane's impressionism. This obviously qualifies Crane for the title of pioneer in this respect.

We may recall here the observations of the great novelist, Joseph Conrad, who was greatly concerned with the matter of raising the novel to the level of art; ".....All art,
therefore, appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses.... It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestivity of music - which is the art of arts."

In order to make this penetrating and far-reaching appeal through the senses, writers have employed various devices. Stephen Crane made a place for himself among the fiction writers of the 'Nineties by his mastery of the technique. It is difficult to put Crane in any particular category of stylists. He synthesized many devices and produced his work of art. It is not the intention here to prove whether Crane was a Naturalist, Realist, Impressionist, Expressionist, Romantist, Neo-Realist or Symbolist. There are many critics who have treated him as one or the other. E.H. Cady's seems to be the right approach. He calls him an 'apprentice sorcerer', and goes on to say: "He was any kind of an - 'ist' - available to him from the weather of times because he was investigating and experimenting with all and trying to find out just which best suited him. But he did not

belong to any of them, really, because he did not settle on any. He did an astonishing amount of brilliant work in various styles from various viewpoints."

Crane's aim was to picture real life in the most exact terms possible. And to this end, he used whatever method he deemed fit at the moment of writing. He himself declared: "It is the business of the novel to picture the daily life in the most exact terms possible, with an absolute and clear sense of proportion....... A novel is a perspective, certainly, made for the benefit of people who have no true use of their eyes."

He himself defined the novel as a 'succession of sharply defined pictures', and emphasized the importance of truth, honesty and vision while talking about the technique of fiction. Corwin K. Linson, his friend in whose studio he is supposed to have written the first draft of the novel, The Red Badge of Courage, says: "He was squatting like an Indian among the magazines when he gave one a toss of exhausted patience and stood up. 'I wonder that some of these fellows don't tell how they felt in these scraps! They

1. E.H. Cady
   Stephen Crane

2. Stephen Crane:
   "Howells Fears Realists Must Wait" in R.W. Stallman
   Stephen Crane : An Omnibus
spout eternally of what they did, but they are as emotionless as rocks!''

Crane chose to tell effectively how his characters might have felt in a situation. He selected a style which served his purpose and helped him realize his aim in fictionwriting.

Frank Bergon, a very modern critic of Stephen Crane, says: "No American writer of fiction before the twentieth century forged a closer stylistic approximation of immediate sensory and perceptual experience than did Stephen Crane.''

He goes on further to call it a personal quality which is referred to metaphorically by him, as 'signature', 'presence', 'personal voltage', and 'performance'. Voltage has been defined by Sean O'Fawlайн: "...... which does something to the material. It lights it up; it burns it up; it makes it fume in the memory as an aroma or essence.''

This personal quality is evident when we look at Crane's impressionistic technique. What Louis Weinberg says about impressionism, in general, seems to be true in particular

1. Corwin R. Linson, 
_Stephen Crane_ 

2. Frank Bergon, 
_Stephen Crane's Artistry_ 

3. Sean O'Fawlайн, 
_The Short Story_ 
for Crane when we note examples of depiction of scenes, feelings and events in his fiction.

"What we call impressionism as a technique is a means of recording the transitory nature of a phenomenon and the fluidity of motion. As a principle it is based on a philosophy of change. As painters, as writers, as musicians, impressionists are craftsmen recording the flitting sensation of an ever-changing world."

Crane's technique is composed of disconnected sense impressions and chromatic vignettes by which the reality of the experience is evoked through changing colour patterns. R.W. Stallman calls it 'prose-pointillism' and goes on further to say: "It is composed of disconnected images which, like the blocks of colour in a French impressionistic painting, coalesce into one another, every word group having a cross reference relationship, every seemingly disconnected detail having interrelationship to the configurated pattern of the whole. The intensity of a Crane tale is due to this patterned coalescence of disconnected things, everything at once fluid and precise."

1. Louis Weinberg
"Current Impressionism"
The New York Republic

2. R.W. Stallman
"Crane's 'Maggie': A Reassessment"
Modern Fiction Studies
Regarding Crane's use of impressionism, Russell Blankenship says: "Impressionism, a term borrowed from painting, is the name given to Crane's descriptive method, a method that today is in wide use. In literature it simply means the discarding of detailed description and narration for a 'snap-shot' that is as notable for its effectiveness as for its economy of words."

The impressionistic technique involves breaking of the experience into fragments. These fragments are to be respected for their own sake. Harry Hartwick defines it thus:

"Impressionism is sensory dodging, a confused mosaic of details, a rivulet of hyphenated photographs, which the reader himself must fuse into some essential relationship. Its character is well expressed in Proust's 'intemittances of the heart' and 'discontinuities of the mind'."

The narrative structure of most of Crane's best fiction is essentially made up of a series of fragmentary scenes. These scenes are often presented as impressions predominantly in terms of colour. Crane himself declared

1. Russell Blankenship
   American Literature: As An Expression of the National Mind

2. Harry Hartwick
   The Foreground of American Fiction
this when he wrote in 'War Memories': "I bring this to you as an effect - an effect of mental light and shade, if you like, something done in thought similar to that which the French Impressionists do in color....."

Robert L. Hough bases his statement on this comment by Stephen Crane, and says: "From this comment it seems clear that Crane saw the effectiveness of combining the symbolic and chromatic, and he worked hard at integrating the two. In fact, these quick, momentary images of color and meaning become a conscious device in the early stories, and Crane was perfectly aware of the critical excitement caused by his technique, one which H.G. Wells called Crane's 'force of color', his 'chromatic splashes'."

One of the most remarkable uses of the impressionistic technique is seen in his War Memories. His artistic intention is dramatized in his impression of a scene in which a church has been converted into a hospital during the war.

"The interior of the church was too cavelike in its gloom for the eyes of the operating surgeons, so they had

1. Stephen Crane
   "War Memories"
   in E.H. Cady, Stephen Crane

2. Robert L. Hough
   "Crane and Goethe: A Forgotten Relationship"
   Nineteenth Century Fiction
the altar-table carried to the doorway, where there was a bright light. Framed then, in black archway was the altar-table with the figure of a man upon it. He was naked save for a breech-clout; and so close, so clear was the ecclesiastic suggestion that one's mind leaped to a fantasy that this thin, pale figure had just been torn down from a cross."

Crane here depicts the impression which the scene leaves on his mind. He does it again in the story The Monster where he describes the scene of the burning room where Henry Johnson falls amid different jars containing acids which start burning and flowing out of the jars.

"There were a row of jars upon the top of this desk. For the most part they were silent amid this rioting, but there was one which seemed to hold a scintillant and writhing serpent. Suddenly the glass splintered, and a ruby-eyed snakelike thing poured its thick length out upon the top of the old desk. It coiled and hesitated, and then began to swim a languorous way down the mahogany slant. At the angle, it waved its sizzling, molten head to and fro over the closed eyes of the man beneath it. Then, in a moment, with a mystic impulse, it moved again,

and the red snake flowed directly down into Johnson's upturned face." (p. 90).

The impressionistic depiction of the flow of the acid as if it were the movement of a snake is one of the most remarkable examples of his technique.

We may note here the close connection between this general impressionistic approach and the presence of symbolic colour and of the figurative imagery in almost a fine excess in Stephen Crane's work. It is only in an impressionistic subjective view that things have colours which they do not really have in reality. (For example, 'red oaths' or 'crimson curses').

It is again such an impressionistic view that sees things in terms of other things. The imagination that expresses itself in simile and especially metaphor seems to be at work in such a case. A stream of burning acid is seen not only to be 'like' a snake, but as being a snake. Thus, in the examples which follow, the illustrations of the impressionistic technique resemble, in large measure, the examples of the use of colour and those of the use of imagery. The impressionistic pictures are seen thus to be the product of a lively or excited imagination at work on the objects and events before it. The discussions on Crane's use of colour and of imagery are to be viewed, therefore, as aspects of the impressionistic approach rather than as independent sections.
In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane describes a scene at dawn. The colour of the uniforms, the fire across the river and the appearance of the sun on the horizon are all presented in an impressionistic style. Against this, the figure of colonel on a horse gives the impression to the youth of a very large thing because of the contrast of colours and the background.

"In the gloom before the break of the day their uniforms glowed a deep purple hue. From across the river the red eyes were still peering. In the eastern sky there was a yellow patch like a rug laid for the feet of the coming sun; and against it, black and patternlike, loomed the gigantic figure of the colonel on a gigantic horse." (p. 15).

The colonel and the horse appear to the youth (Crane here presents the point of view of the youth) as huge figures. The distortion of reality comes almost because Crane intends to present how the youth perceives the scene. The colour contrast and the horizon join together to create such an impression on the mind of the youth, and Crane tries to capture that fleeting impression.

C.C. Walcutt makes an interesting comment regarding this aspect of Crane's technique. He finds it related to the 'expressionism' of the modern American theatre. He says: "There is an interesting connection which scholarship
has not yet traced between what we speak of as Crane's impressionism and the 'expressionism' of the modern theatrical mode that uses distortion, violent and intense motion, and the 'yell' to convey a sense of the world as it appears to one of the characters or the author. Usually it is the participant whose distorted view conveys something the author wants us to see."

Another example can be taken from *An Experiment in Misery* which is a midnight sketch of city life in New York.

"Through the mists of the cold and stormy night, the cable cars went in silent procession, great affairs shining with red and brass, moving with formidable power, calm and irresistible, dangeriful and gloomy, breaking silence only by the loud fierce cry of the gong. Two rivers of people swarmed along the sidewalks, spluttered with black mud which made each shoe leave a scar-like impression. Overhead, elevated trains with a shrill grinding of the wheels stopped at the station, which upon its leg-like pillars seemed to resemble some monstrous kind of crab squatting over the street. The quick fat puffings of the engines could be heard. Down an alley there were sombre curtains of purple

1. C.C. Walcutt
and black, on which street lamps glittered like embroidered flowers." (p. 32).

The description becomes very effective with the use of the impressionistic technique. The impression of a 'crab' or 'embroidered flowers' is as vivid as a picture.

A view of the street from the barber shop of Reifsnyder through the window glass is presented (The Monster) in terms of colour, and the impression of an aquarium is felt by the observer. Crane renders the impression of the view in exactly the same way as it might have been received by the observer. His description is one of the best examples of the technique of impressionism.

"The electric shine in the street caused an effect like water to them who looked through the glass from the yellow glamour of Reifsnyder's shop. In fact, the people without resembled the inhabitants of a great aquarium that here had a square pane in it." (p. 79).

We may recall also an example from the story The Open Boat where the men in the boat feel, see and hear the sensation, the colour and the sound of an enormous shark appearing near the boat. They have already lost strength, and do not wish to confront the shark. Crane does not describe the shark but notes the impression which its appearance leaves on the mind of the men.
"There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife......

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail......

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the 'whirroo' of the dark fin...... It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile." (pp. 155-56).

We can see how suggestive it is of the danger and of the reactions of those threatened by it.

Crane sees things at a rapid glance and with equal rapidity transfers the impressions to his readers. He does not describe or narrate in detail. He simply presents before our eyes a picture of impressions in vivid colours. The following passage from *Maggie; A Girl of the Streets* is a good example.

"The girl went into gloomy districts near the river
where the tall black factories shut in the streets........ She went into the blackness of the final block. The shutters of the tall buildings were closed like grim lips. The structures seemed to have eyes that looked over them, beyond them, at other things. Afar off the lights of the avenues glittered as if from an impossible distance........ At the feet of the tall buildings appeared the deathly black hue of the river. Some hidden factory sent up a yellow glare, that lit for a moment the waters lapping oilily against timbers. The varied sounds of life, made joyous by distance and seeming unapproachableness, came faintly and died away to a silence." (p. 81).

Crane has depicted the way Maggie's life takes, and goes from one sad experience to another. Regarding this Sergio Perosa says : "In tracing the course of Maggie's pathetic initiation into life and sin, that is, Crane has instinctively discovered and applied the basic canons - of impressionistic writing; the apprehensions of life through the play of perceptions, the reduction of elaborate syntax to the correlation of sensations, which leads to a sketchy and at the same evocative kind of writing."

1. Sergio Perosa
"Naturalism and Impressionism in Stephen Crane's Fiction" (ed.) Maurice Bassan
Stephen Crane; A Collection of Critical Essays
In *Maggie: A Girl of The Streets* Crane takes up a setting which suits his naturalistic theme but he uses a technique which gives his descriptions another dimension. This he achieves through impressionism.

"Withered persons, in curious postures of submission to something sat smoking pipes in obscure corners." (p. 15).

Or

"Eventually they entered a dark region where, from a careening building, a dozen gruesome doorways gave loads of babies to the streets and gutters...... the weight of humanity stamping about in its bowels." (p. 15).

Regarding this aspect of Crane’s impressionism John Berryman says: "The first intention, therefore, may aim at a naturalistic delineation; but the artistic rendering gives us an impressionistic vision of that sordid reality.

Van Wyck Brooks saw the work as 'consisting of visual impressions mainly'. Charles Child Walcutt, more interested in Crane's naturalism, stresses the naturalistic quality of what he calls 'Crane's impressionism'."

Somehow colour was very important to Crane. He seems

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1. John Berryman
"Crane's Art"
Maurice Basset (ed.)
Stephen Crane
to be so obsessed with colour words that he used them as titles for some of his works like

The Red Badge of Courage,
The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky,
The Blue Hotel,
The Five White Mice,
A Grey Sleeve.

Crane's use of colour even at the level of mere
description of a scene or event leaves us spell-bound as if
we are face to face with a grandmaster's canvas. The
spectrum of many shades of colours is an important element
in his craft. For example, the rising of the sun is
described in the story *The Open Boat* in the following manner.

"When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the
sea and the sky were each of the gray hue of the dawning.
Later carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The
morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of
pure blue, and the sunlight flamed the tips of the
waves." (p. 159).

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, a scene of the movement
of the army during night is described thus:

"When another night came the columns, changed to
purple streaks, filed across the pontoon bridge. A glaring
fire winetinted the waters of the river. Its rays shining
upon the moving masses of troops, brought forth here and there a sudden gleam of silver or gold. Upon the other shore a dark and mysterious range of hills was curved against the sky." (p. 22).

A street in the Bowery is described in George's Mother as follows:

"In the swirling rain that came at the dusk the broad avenue glistened with that deep bluish tint which is widely condemned when it is put into pictures. There were long rows of shops, whose fronts shone with full golden light. Here and there, from druggists' windows or from the red street lamps that indicated the positions of fire-alarm boxes, a flare of uncertain, wavering crimson was thrown upon the wet pavements." (p. 91).

Crane himself has mentioned here that the bluish tint which he has used to describe the avenue with rain drops falling is not usually accepted in pictures. Crane intends to convey the exact visual effect by using such an unusual colour for such scenes.

What Richard P. Adams says about the story The Open Boat in regard to the predominant use of colour is applicable to most of his stories and novels; "But the sheer quality of colour in the story, if anything else, makes the question of its meaning impossible to ignore. By my count there are
nearly a hundred more or less distinct terms referring to some kind or aspect of colour, and as every reader of Crane knows, this concentration is one of his most striking personal traits of style. Colour for him, whether it means something specific or not, is always a thing to be noticed, and this interest is in itself like any act of attention, a value judgment."

For example, in *The Open Boat* we can see how he uses colours to describe the sunrise.

"The sun swung steadily up the sky and they knew it was broad day because the color of the sea changed from slate to emerald green streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the color of the waves that rolled toward them." (p. 142).

One of the most effective uses of colour is in the scene in the story *The Monster* when Crane describes the burning room which Johnson enters. It is done thus:

"The room was like a garden in the region where might be burning flowers. Flames of violet, crimson, green, blue,"

1. Richard P. Adams
   "Naturalistic Fiction: The Open Boat"
   *Tulane Studies In English*  
   Vol. IV, 1954, p. 139.
orange and purple were blooming everywhere. There was one blaze that was precisely the hue of a delicate coral. In another place was a mass that lay merely in phosphorescent inaction like a pile of emeralds. But all these marvels were to be seen dimly through clouds of heaving, turning, deadly smoke." (p. 89).

The men in the story *The Open Boat* see a watch-fire. Crane's description is as vivid as a painting.

"Southward someone had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering roseate reflection upon the bluff in back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat..... and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest." (p. 158).

Again, in the story, *The Monster*, Crane describes a street in terms of colour. He says ; "The shimmering blue of the electric arc lamps was strong in the main street of the town. At numerous points it was conquered by the orange glare of the outnumbering gaslights in the windows of shops. Through this radiant lane moved a crowd." (p. 78).

And the setting of the sun in the story *The Open Boat* is seen by the four men in the boat.

"The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just
lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the West passed before the all-merging darkness and the sea to the east was black." (p. 153).

One of the most remarkable uses of colour by Crane is to be found in a scene in *The Red Badge of Courage* where the youth encounters the body of a dead soldier in a grove of branches and bushes.

"He was being looked at by a dead man who was seated with his back against a columnlike tree. The corpse was dressed in a uniform that once had been blue, but was now faded to a melancholy shade of green. The eyes, staring at the youth, had changed to the dull hue to be seen on the side of dead fish. The mouth was open. Its red had changed to an appalling yellow. Over the gray skin of the face ran little ants." (p. 54).

All the horror is evoked by the colour strokes. Instead of going into elaborate details about the dead body, Crane uses the colours to bring out the impression which the youth receives from his perception in his shocked and fearful condition of mind when he comes suddenly face to face with the dead body.

In a sketch of midnight life in New York, *An Experiment in Misery*, Crane describes the pavement at night during rain. He says:
"It was late at night, and a fine rain was swirling softly down, causing the pavements to glisten with the hue of steel and blue and yellow in the rays of innumerable lights."

In the same sketch, another description of day-break in a room in a flop-house provides an example of how Crane used colours to make the reader see the things which the characters involved see at that moment. Crane says:

"Finally a long lance-point of grey light shot through the dusty panes of the window. Without, the young man could see roofs drearily white in the dawning. The point of light yellowed and grew brighter, until the golden rays of the morning sun came in bravely and strong. They touched with radiant color the form of a small fat man......"

Many of Crane's effects are gained by recourse to the method of using colours or contrasts of light and shade. He describes the army at rest at night on a river bank in The Red Badge of Courage in the following manner:

"A river, amber-tinted in the shadow of its banks, purled at the army's feet; and at night, when the stream had

2. Ibid., p. 16.
become of a sorrowful blackness, one could see across it the red, eyelike gleam of hostile camp fires set in the low brows of distant hills." (p. 1).

The youth observes rows of soldiers in the morning at a distance. This is described in terms of colour.

"The rushing yellow of the developing day went on behind their backs. When the sunrays at last struck full and mellowingly upon the earth, the youth saw that the landscape was streaked with two long, thin, black columns which disappeared on the brow of the hill in front and rearward and vanished in a wood." (p. 16).

A very beautiful painting seems to have been done when Crane describes a scene of soldiers of the Union Army racing to attack the Confederate Army. He says; "The men scampered in an insane fever of hate, racing as if to achieve a sudden success before an exhilarating fluid should leave them. It was a blind and despairing rush by the collection of men in dusty and tattered blue over a greensward under a sapphire sky, toward a fence dimly outlined in smoke, from behind which spluttered the fierce rifles of the enemy." (pp. 146-47).

The practice of describing a distant object in terms of its colour and not its form is characteristic of Crane's technique. For example, the lighthouse, when seen by the
men in the boat at a distance in the story, *The Open Boat*, is depicted in colour.

"Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed color and appeared like a little gray shadow on the sky..... At last, from the top of each wave, the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea." (p. 147).

Imagery is a powerful means of conveying one's idea. Just as imagery helps to characterize persons, it helps also, cumulatively, to establish the atmosphere when all or most of the images tend to belong to one category - like the animal imagery in the war-novel and war imagery in slum-novels.

As we have noticed, a good deal of the imagery in Crane's fiction is owed to the impressionistic approach which was seen to be the imaginative approach. Apart from the literal or factual imagery which belongs to the external scene, and is the matter of actual observation, there is the large area of figurative imagery resulting from the operation of the imagination, whereby things are seen to resemble or actually to be other things.

In *The Red Badge of Courage* the war is a "composite monster" (p. 35) 'the red animal, war, the blood-swollen god' (p. 27) 'red and green monster' (p. 45) 'red-eyed
animal' (p. 73). The regiments were like 'dark shadows that moved like monsters' (p. 15). The youth conceives them to be growing larger, 'as the orbs of a row of dragons advancing' (p. 15) or 'it was now like one of those moving monsters' (p. 16), 'huge crawling reptiles' (p. 16). The regiments are constantly depicted through the image of the serpent. They were 'like two serpents' (p. 16). We are later told again that the 'long serpents crawled slowly' (p. 16). When the shells burst, the youth 'imagined them to have rows of cruel teeth' (p. 47). He conceived the two armies to be at each other 'panther fashion' (p. 56). One of the wounded soldiers is described in this manner:

"The tattered man was beginning to act dumb and animal-like" (p. 71). The serpent image is continued and Crane describes the advance of the regiment thus: "Presently the calm head of a forward-going column of infantry appeared in the road. It came swiftly on. Avoiding the obstruction gave it the sinuous movement of a serpent." (p. 73). When the enemies attack, the youth feels that: "They charged down upon him like terrified buffaloes." (p. 80). Even the bugles are described in animal imagery. 'The bugles called to each other like brazen gamecocks' (p. 95). Henry tends to perceive the whole affair in animal images (it changes from one animal to another, including fish and insects). He feels that the 'tormenters were flies sucking insolently at his blood' (p. 111).
In contrast to these animal images used in the war-novel, Crane uses war imagery in his slum novels. For example *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* begins with a fight scene, and the fighting goes on in the Johnson household. The novel abounds in war or combat images, such as these: Jimmie and other children are 'combatants' (p. 14). The two little boys were 'fighting in the modes of four thousand years ago' (p. 14). Mrs. Johnson moves with 'chieftainlike stride' (p. 17). The different sounds coming from the Johnson house are 'a confused chorus as if a battle were raging' (p. 22). Mrs. Johnson, while sleeping, is described as if 'she need only to awake and all the fiends would come from below' (p. 24). Jimmie is described in terms of war-images, particularly the image of a soldier wearing armour. Crane says: "He clad his soul in armour" (p. 24).

A remarkable use of combat imagery is made when Crane describes the fight between Jimmie and Pete:

"The arms of the combatants whirled in the air like flails. The faces of the men, at first flushed to flame-colored anger, now began to fade to the pallor of warriors in the blood and heat of battle. Their lips curled back and stretched tightly over the gums in ghoul-like grins. Through their white, gripped teeth struggled hoarse whisperings of oaths. Their eyes glittered with murderous fire." (p. 57).
In George's Mother, also, another slum novel, Crane uses war or combat images. In the novel, the buildings looked like 'castles and fortresses' (p. 91). The mother is described through war images. She wielded the broom and dustpan like 'weapons' (p. 96). When she starts cleaning the room, 'there was a flurry of a battle in the room' (p. 96). She inflicts 'mighty blows' with her broom, which was continually 'poised lance-like at dust demons' (p. 96). The sounds when she is cleaning the room are compared to 'clashings and clangings' (p. 96). When she sings, Crane says: "She raised her voice in -- a strange war-chant, a shout of battle" (p. 96). Even when she was resting, 'she planned skirmishes, charges, campaigns' (p. 97). She never stopped because 'the little intent warrior never hesitated' (p. 97). In George's room the decorations 'seemed like trophies' (p. 98). In the story, The Open Boat, Crane uses animal imagery to describe the boat. A seat in the boat is like 'a seat upon a bucking broncho' (p. 141). The size of the boat is compared to that of a horse, 'a broncho is not much smaller' (p. 141).

OR

'The craft pranced and reared and plunged like an animal' (p. 141) ... and again, 'she (the boat) seemed like a horse making at a fence' (p. 141).
A remarkable use of imagery in impressionistic technique is in the example taken from *The Red Badge of Courage*. Crane here uses sound, colour and imagery in an extraordinarily vivid manner to present the impression of the event of soldiers running away as if followed by some evil spirit.

"Directly the youth would see the skirmishers running. They were pursued by the sound of muskettry fire. After a time the hot, dangerous flashes of the rifles were visible. Smoke clouds went slowly and insolently across the fields like observant phantoms. The din became a crescendo, like the roar of an oncoming train." (p. 30).

In five sentences, Crane has concentrated the essence of a scene. It is an example of compression and economy through the use of words like 'pursued' and 'visible'. He also mixes two different sensory perceptions like the sense of touch (hot) and the sense of sight (flashes) into one concrete thing which could be seen, but then the word 'dangerous' gives a twist to the description and conveys the feelings also. Thus it mixes sound, sight, touch and feeling. The images of a phantom and the train are also from two different worlds of experience.

The animal imagery, in this case, the image of a panther with reference to the sudden movement of the flame and then another image of a lady for the same object is a very
powerful device to bring out the suddenness and the force of the flame in the story The Monster. Here, again Crane describes the form of the flame in terms of colour. (This aspect has already been discussed earlier in this chapter).

He says: "An orange-coloured flame leaped like a panther at the lavender trousers. This animal bit deeply into Johnson. There was an explosion at one side, and suddenly before him there reared a delicate trembling sapphire shape like a fairy lady. With a quiet smile she blocked his path and doomed him and Jimmie." (p. 39).

This hallucinatory sense of reality is due to Crane's strange imagination which viewed things from a different angle. About this aspect of his technique, James B. Colvert says:

"Crane's imagination was energized by an acute sense of the contradictory. He imagines the world as a complex of contrasts, a mystery of bewildering opposites impossible to reconcile. It is difficult to suggest the significance of these contrasts. They suggest a peculiar thrust of mind; but the full effect is in the accumulation — in the expansion of such contrasts in larger patterns of composition."

In a sketch, An Experiment in Misery, Crane describes

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1. James B. Colvert, "Introduction"
   (ed.) Fredson Bowers
   The Works of Stephen Crane
the men sleeping in a flop-house. He uses the imagery of a patient on the operation table, etherized, waiting for the surgeon’s knife.

"The men did not move once through the night, but lay in this stillness as of death like a body stretched out expectant of the surgeon’s knife." (p. 37).

In The Red Badge of Courage, Crane again uses such strange combinations of imagery, of colour and sound. The following two examples may be cited:

"They looked to be strange war flowers bursting into fierce bloom." (p. 44)

and,

"the cannons with their noses poked slantingly at the ground and grumbled like stout men, brave but with objections to hurry." (p. 48).

The mixture of image, colour and sound is done in an impressionistic style. Shells explode into flowers, and cannons are imagined as animals which thrust their noses in the ground when angry and make a sound, but Crane again changes the metaphor and compares them to men.

* The simile recalls the famous lines, "Like a patient etherized on a table" in T.S. Eliot’s The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.
The strangeness of such comparisons can only be understood when we consider how Crane's imagination worked. Here is another example from the same novel.

"Each distant thicket seemed a strange porcupine with quills of flame. A cloud of dark smoke, as from smouldering ruins, went up toward the sun now bright and gay in the blue enameled sky." (p. 114).

Frank Bergon comments on this aspect of Crane's art with different examples from the same novel. However, it gives support to the idea that Crane could synthesize many devices and successfully convey the idea through his peculiar way of rendering the scene. Frank Bergon says: "The reader now looks upon reality metamorphosed, a world in which tents can spring up 'like strange plants' and campfires can dot the night 'like red, peculiar blossoms'. For Crane, the real thing often seems not to be somewhere awaiting his discovery but rather a creation of his imagination, wrenched into existence."

Once Crane told a reporter: "This is the point of view; the bartender's boy falls from the Waldorf roof. The

1. Frank Bergon,
*Stephen Crane's Artistry*
minister's son falls from the park bench. They both hit the earth with the same velocity, mutilated beyond recognition."

Crane's statement shows how important the 'point of view' was for him, while presenting any reality. He laid emphasis on this, but mostly avoided a first-person subjective narration. The narrative point of view is mostly that of the character involved. The voice is that of a third person, an 'objective narrator', not a first person subjective teller who says, 'Call me Ishmael'.

E.H. Cady has discussed four classes of 'point of view' which function in fiction. He says: "In simplest forms these are the author's, as he imagines and builds his work; the narrator's which in any sophisticated fiction is not the author's way of looking at his work, but an instrument of his technique in presenting it; the character's (or characters'), in the interplay of which - with one another and the narrator's viewpoint - lies, a great deal of the craftman's resource, and finally, the reader's."  

1. (ed.) Maurice Bassan
   Stephen Crane: Critical Essays

2. E.H. Cady
   Stephen Crane
In *The Red Badge of Courage*, the point of view is mostly Henry's, and the author keeps himself detached with an attitude of humour and irony, but not without compassion. He is content to observe and describe phenomena without venturing into ultimate explanations. There is, most remarkably, an attempt to present life as it is; which involves a tremendous self-denial in regard to the author's right of comment and explanation. The world it presents is not one obviously constructed or distorted by the author according to his own point of view, nor are characters chosen that they may illustrate some view of life. It is life, but limited and given 'form' by the consciousness of the characters, their circumstances, desires, or experience. The omniscient, omnipotent author is no more a usual phenomenon. One way in which this realization illustrates itself is in the large admixture of the dramatic with the narrative, which comes about not only through the reproduction of the stylistic peculiarities of the speech of the characters but also by the presentation of action and events from their point of view. It is their story and not the author's, and the author allows the reader to have a glimpse of the character's point of view.

Crane uses the point of view of the characters involved to a great degree in the story *The Open Boat*. The whole story is presented as the four men look at the sea and beyond. For example:

"The sun swung steadily up the sky and they knew it was broad day because the color of the sea changed... The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the color of the waves that rolled toward them." (pp. 146-47).

Crane's aim was to achieve in art an intensity of vision, and he employed objectivity in rendering it. It is an attitude aimed at not becoming involved with his characters, and at commenting on the events and the phenomena not by statement but by evocation in picture and tone. 'Sentiment is the devil', he had declared. His aim was to get at the 'direct impression' of the experience, as Joseph Conrad, in his preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, says: "..... by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel - it is - before all, to make you see."

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1. Joseph Conrad, "Preface"
   *The Nigger of the Narcissus*
   Quoted in R.W. Stallman
   *Stephen Crane: An Omnibus*
It was an attempt to immerse the reader in the created experience, so that its impact on him would occur simultaneously with the discovery of it by the characters involved. Instead of panoramic views of a battlefield, Crane presents disconnected segments of it. Accurately enough, it is all that a participant in action or a spectator can probably take into view at any given moment. His combat descriptions are swiftly-shifting impressions of action.

Irony is an important element in Crane's narrative technique. Crane's irony is mainly directed towards the contradiction between what appears to be real and the reality itself. Regarding irony, in general, Andrew Wright says:

"The ironist is deeply concerned with both aspects of the contradiction he perceives; and this concern leads to an ambivalence of attitude to one side and the other - to both at once. Searching the orchards of human experience, he finds the bitter-sweet apple of confusing essence - and he becomes a man of divided, the ironic vision."  

Crane looks at and expresses the ironic contrast of the waves in the story The Open Boat as "wierdly picturesque."

1. Andrew Wright
"The Red Badge And the Limits of Parody"
*The Southern Review*
and 'barbarously abrupt'. (p. 140). Crane looks at things with an ironic attitude. For example, the lighthouse which has the main use of being seen has become so small that 'It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny'. (p. 145).

In the same story, when the four men are struggling to keep the boat adrift, Crane calls their adventure a success in sailing, and it sounds ironical: "Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep the sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise the sailing was a success." (p. 144).

A simple request made by the captain to his crew becomes ironical (not from the point of view of the characters involved or the speaker, but of the reader) in the given situation when he says, 'Don't spend yourselves'.

Maggie: A Girl of The Streets: starts in an ironical tone, by bringing out the contradiction of the reality of a slum and the idea of honour.

"A very little boy stood upon a heap of gravel for the honour of Rum Alley." (p. 1).

Donald Pizer finds irony a very important part of Crane's art. He says: "His fiction still excites because his ironic technique successfully involves us in the difference between moral appearance and reality in society."

Maggie's brother grows up and becomes the head of the family. Crane uses an ironic tone to describe his newly attained status.

"Jimmie grew large enough to take the vague position of head of the family. As incumbent of that office, he stumbled upstairs late at night." (p. 30).

Maggie's mother is also described in such a manner that Crane's irony becomes clear.

"The mother had gradually risen to such a degree of fame that she could bandy words with her acquaintances among the police justices." (p. 30).

When Crane describes Jimmie's attitude toward the people of the higher class and Christians, his technique is ironical. Crane, here, is using irony to delineate Jimmie's illusion regarding his own social status. He is totally unaware of what other people might think about him or whether his own opinion about himself has any element of reality. This is an important point, and this seems to be the point which Crane wanted to convey through his irony.

"Above all things he despised obvious Christians and ciphers with the Chrysanthemum of aristocracy in their buttonholes. He considered himself above both of these classes." (p. 26).
Crane's irony is the result of his keen observation of the people, and an understanding of their attitude towards each other and life in general. Donald Pizer says:

"Crane's irony emerges out of the difference between a value one imposes on experience and the nature of experience itself. His ironic method is to project into the scene the values of its participants in order to underlie the difference between their values and the reality."

The distortion of reality, and the characters' own conception of that distortion, is the point which gives Crane opportunity to use irony. In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, the mother weeps on the death of Maggie and declares to the neighbours that she will forgive her. Her own sense of social respectability and her own distorted view of reality are the main causes of Maggie's downfall and death. In the context, the irony implicit in the mother's declaration is obvious. Commenting on Crane's ironical attitude, Charles Child Walcutt says: "......... the distortion reflects the author's sense of distortion in a society where human values are subordinated to business and machinery. It projects a

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sense of outrage, of historical folly, of a reality so
unwrenched that it appears hallucinatory."

In the same context, E.H. Cady says; "Irony is not
an idea but a tactic. It is a way of taking the world
slantwise on the flank. It is probably necessary to suppose
that the ironic capacity, in any of its modes, is
temperamental...... Along other gifts, a most striking fact
about Crane is his possession of an irony so powerful, so
deep and so his own at an age so young. No serious student
of the complex, partially understood phenomenon we call by
that name can now afford to neglect the irony of Stephen
Crane."

Crane's irony becomes clear when he describes the
soldiers, in The Red Badge of Courage, bringing news about
further deportation of the regiment as 'reliable and
trustworthy bearers of rumour.' (p. 14),

Or

when he describes the guns which 'were assembling for
a grim conference.' (p. 42).

1. Charles Child Walcott
American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream

2. E.H. Cady
Stephen Crane
The title of the novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*, is based on the incident where Henry Fleming receives a wound on the head from a terrified and fleeing fellow-soldier. This wound which is the sign of cowardice is treated by other soldiers as a symbol of courage. This enables the youth, without any explanation of his action, to be received as a hero. The irony of the situation is magnified when the youth actually becomes a hero.

The title of the story, *The Monster*, can also be seen to be deliberately ambiguous so that, at the end of the story, we may catch the irony of it; 'who, really, was the monster?'.

The story *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky* is also ironical when we discover the trigger-happy character, Scrity Wilson, withdrawing from the confrontation with the sheriff.

Mrs. Johnson's declaration, in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, that she would forgive her daughter seems to be ironical when we consider her role in the downfall and death of her daughter.

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane handles Henry's ego in an ironical way. It is more pronounced in the closing chapters of the novel. The pattern of animal imagery
contributes much to the irony. The actions of men are compared to the behaviour of animals. During their earlier engagements, they are compared to timid, domestic animals. And during the successful engagements, they are compared to fierce wild animals. This dehumanization helps us to understand Crane's attitude toward war and the soldiers who are involved in it.

Another aspect of Crane's technique of irony is the use of the device of ironical juxtaposition of scenes revealing the absurdity, abnormality and the contradiction in the character of a person. The irony lies in the fact that the reader knows the absurdity but the character does not realize it.

In *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets*, when Pete's bad treatment of Maggie and Jimmie's treatment of Hattie are juxtaposed, we realize the irony. Crane gives them almost the same words to speak. Jimmie, like his mother, behaves like a judge and protector of morals in the society. But both of them are immoral. In Jimmie's case, Crane says: "Two women in different parts of the city and entirely unknown to each other, caused him considerable annoyance by breaking forth simultaneously, at fateful intervals into wailings about marriage and support and infants." (p. 29).
Pete, who is very conscious of his respectability, is shown in a scene being treated by some cunning whores in the same way as he had treated Maggie. When these scenes are juxtaposed, the irony becomes clear.

Thus Crane does not comment but creates scenes which, when juxtaposed, bring out the reality of these characters through the irony which emerges from it.

In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Crane treats the idea of respectability, in the context of Jimmie's life, thought and morality, with an ironic attitude. Crane does not put this into clear words, but suggests through his irony the idea which he intends to convey. Maggie approaches Pete at the barroom, and he asks her to leave the place immediately as it affects the respectability upon which, as he says, the proprietor insisted. The whole thing appears to be a mockery of the term in the mouth of a character like Pete. When he has driven away Maggie, he returns 'with an air of relief to his respectability.' (p. 77).

When Maggie is walking the streets because she has nowhere to go (as she has been removed from her house and has been rejected by her lover), she meets a priest. She approaches him with the hope that this man of religion will offer her a helping hand to save her from her sad and pitiable condition.
Crane says: "But as the girl timidly accosted him he made a convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a vigorous side-step." (p. 75).

Thus, by means of an ironic manipulation of the term, Crane reduces the idea of respectability to a hypocritical sham, a convenient justification for cruelty and a defence of irresponsibility by showing indifference.

Crane's language also produces the ironical effect. When Crane says that Jimmie 'studied human nature and found it no worse than he thought he had reason to believe it,' (p. 24), it becomes ironical. Crane has not used the word 'no better' in the sentence. This is not only unexpected but also tells us about Jimmie's cynicism and his sense of values. In his world, there is no concept of good or bad. He knows only bad and worse. This ironic twist is reinforced in the next sentence when he is described thus: "He never conceived a respect for the world, because he had begun with no idols that it had smashed." (p. 24).

Crane's irony is created in these examples by using an unexpected word or giving a twist to the sentence. Commenting on this, Donald Pizer says: "Much of Crane's fiction displays this technique of ironic deflation. In 'Maggie', a young urchin defends the honour of Rum alley on a
heap of gravel; in 'The Open Boat', the stalwart oiler suffers an inconsequential and meaningless death; in 'The Blue Hotel', the death of the Swede is accompanied by a derisive sign on the cash register; and in 'The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky', the long-awaited chivalric encounter is thwarted by the Bride's appearance. Each of these crucial or significant events has, as it were, Crane's desire to reduce the violent and extraordinary...."  

Regarding the story, *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, Robert Barnes says: "Crane's western tale has an obvious fundamental irony, that of the armed gunman, Scratchy Wilson, who is 'beaten' by the Sheriff, Jake Potter, because Potter is 'armed' with a new and different weapon, his bride."

Crane also uses the satiric mode as a device in his narrative technique. It brings out Crane's point clearly, and he is able to convey his ideas to the reader without his own comment or judgement. The reader has to form his own opinion

1. Donald Pizer
   *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century*  

2. Robert Barnes
   "Crane's 'The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky'"
   *Explicator*  
about the characters and the situations through Crane's narration. For example, in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, he describes a bar-show: "...... two girls billed as sisters, came forth and sang a duet which is heard occasionally at concerts given under church auspices. They supplemented it with a dance, which, of course can never be seen at concerts given under church auspices." (p. 39).

The effect of humour created by the distinction between the song and the dance, with the repeated phrase 'given under church auspices' may be noticed.

Frederick C. Crews says: "Crane's language, in the first place, is full of implied irony at the expense of all pretensions to human power apart from the connivance of circumstance. His habit of diminishing his character in metaphor to the stature of pygmies or children, while at the same time picturing war as a bloodswollen god or a relentless machine, limits the sense of free will so drastically as to reduce the moral question to insignificance. We cannot condemn the failings of a 'hero' who is caught, as he realizes at one point, 'in a moving box', but neither can we give him much' credit for the valour he does eventually reveal.......  

Surely this is blatant irony."

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Thus, it can be said that irony is an effective instrument of technique with Crane. The dehumanization symbolizes man's degradation due to his own petty ideas or the animal-like impulses which lead to War or brutal violence. It is also a source of humour when it is meant to expose the pretensions of a character as in the case of Jimmie and Mrs. Johnson in the novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

Crane's language is full of examples of similes, metaphors, inversions, compressions, transferred epithets and a curious device of mixing two different stimuli into one image. In some novels and stories, he uses dialect in a most appropriate manner. In the war-novel, he makes use of the spoken language of the soldiers. In *The Open Boat*, he uses a different language - the dialogue clearly brings before us the picture of people suffering and their hopes and despair. Crane's language itself becomes meaningful even if we do not notice the devices which he has used to make his expression more effective. The Negro servants are given a different language and vocabulary. The slum-characters speak a language, which is very similar to that spoken by such characters in such places. It can be noticed that Crane changes his language according to the characters, places and situations.
In *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane makes use of simile in a very effective manner. A yellow patch of colour is 'like a rug laid for the feet of the coming sun' (p. 15). There are 'red eyelike gleam of hostile camp fires' (p. 1). Shells burst 'like violated flowers' (p. 34). The regiments are 'dark shadows that moved like monsters' (p. 15). The regimental formation is 'like one of those moving monsters' (p. 16). Or 'like two serpents' (p. 16). The white-topped wagons strained and stumbled in their exertions 'like fat sheep' (p. 73). They charged down upon him 'like terrified buffaloes' (p. 80). The bugles called to each other 'like brazen gamecocks' (p. 95). Tents spring up 'like strange plants', while campfires, 'like red, peculiar blossoms, dotted the night' (p. 18). A shell screaming 'like a storm banshee went over the huddled heads of the reserves' (p. 33).

In *Maggie: A Girl of The Streets*, Jimmie is disturbed by the street cars, and they are compared to bugs. Crane says that they followed him 'like intent bugs' (p. 27). Maggie is disappointed when she finds the room in bad condition after she had taken great pains to make it look beautiful. The mother destroys everything in her drunken fury. Crane depicts Maggie's feelings through a simile. 'The knots of blue ribbons appeared like violated flowers' (p. 36). In *The Open Boat*, an effective use of simile is made when Crane says:
"They now rode this wild colt of a dinghy like circus men" (p. 147). Or 'The craft pranced and reared and plunged like an animal' (p. 141). Or 'She seemed like a horse making at a fence' (p. 141).

Crane also uses metaphors in *The Red Badge of Courage*. The war is described as a 'monster' (p. 47) as a 'red and green demonstration' (p. 13). The youth conceived the regiments 'as the orbs of a row of dragons advancing' (p. 15). A line of soldiers moving forward and avoiding the obstructions on its way is described thus: 'Avoiding the obstructions gave it the sinuous movement of a serpent' (p. 73). Again, war is described as 'War, the red animal, war, the blood-swollen god would have bloated fill (sic.).' (p. 80).

In *The Monster*, Crane makes use of a sustained snake image in the scene when the burning acids fall on the face of Henry Johnson.

There are many examples of pathetic fallacy and a kind of transferred epithet like, 'sullen grey ashes' or 'yellow discontent' or 'crimson fury' or 'red cheers' or 'red years' or 'blood-red dreams' or 'restless doors' or 'ominous buildings' or 'the structures seemed to have eyes that looked' or 'gruesome doorways' or the 'snarling crest' of the waves; or the cannons 'grumbled' like stout men, or
'un holy sink' or ' lurid altercation' or A stout gentleman, with pompous and philanthropic whiskers' or 'little glass-fronted saloon that sat blinking jovially' or 'It engulfed them with a gleeful motion of its two widely smiling lips' or, The waves are 'a fence outrageously high', or 'Then after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide and race and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace'. These examples would suffice to support the observation about Crane's technique.

The most shocking (and therefore also effective) feature in the first novel of Crane, Maggie: A Girl of The Streets was its bold language. As early as the first appearance of the book, William Dean Howells remarked:

"The student of dialect ought to be interested in the parlance of the class Mr. Crane draws upon for his characters. They are almost inarticulate; not merely the grammar, but the language itself decays in their speech. The Theta sound, so characteristic of English, disappears altogether and the vowels tend to lose themselves in the obscure note heard in 'fur' and 'stir'. What will be the final language spoken by New Yorkers?"

Pete, the bartender, is boasting about the power and authority which he enjoys in the bar. He is telling Maggie, and Crane reproduces the language of the slum-dwellers, as is clear from the following.

Pete says: "Dare was a mug come in d' place d' odder day wid an idear he was goin' t' own d' place. Hully gee! he was goin' t' own d' place. I see he had a still on, an' I didn' wanna giv 'im no stuff, so I says, 'Git outa here an' don' make no trouble', I says like dat, See? 'Git outa here', I says, See?" (p. 31).

The language of the novel is as close as possible to the spoken form in those days by such characters in those conditions. Eric Solomon comments on Crane's use of dialect in his slum-novel. He says: "As in most slum-novels, Crane uses dialect to an excess to characterize his slum dwellers and to indicate the paucity of their linguistic, intellectual and emotional resources. The author's prose is rich in metaphor and wit when he speaks in his own voice. The novel is packed with evocation of the streets, jammed with wagons and trolleys, dime museums, menageries. Crane's penchant for rapid succession of sharply outlined pictures is given full release in 'Maggie'."

1. Eric Solomon
   *Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism*
In fact, it was the use of dialect by Crane in the novel which prevented Gilder from accepting it for publication in his magazine 'The Century'. Crane uses the exact notations of the sounds, and the language was thought to be so crude that even William Dean Howells could not help Crane in getting it published in any magazine. Howells later expressed his opinion, which has been quoted by R.H. Cady. Howells says:

“All its conscience and all its art could not save it and it will probably remain unknown, but it embodied perhaps the best tough dialect which has yet found its way into print.”

As has been seen, Crane’s language, with many devices, renders scenes in their immediacy. The reader moves with the speed of the boat (in The Open Boat) and gets an understanding of a soldier’s feelings as if he is going through the experience himself. It may be noted that in the story, The Open Boat, Crane never uses the word speed or talks about the speed of the boat directly. He is still successful in conveying the fact that the open boat on the vast sea must have gained a very high speed. The idea is conveyed by the devices and the language.

1. R.H. Cady
   *Stephen Crane*
Frank Bergon says about Crane's language, "A paradox of Crane's writing, then, is that while he manipulated language for the sake of faithfully rendering experience in its immediacy, his peculiar arrangement of words often stylized experience and imparted to it a curious aesthetic distance. His words and their arrangement remain so forcibly peculiar that his prose style is normally viewed as one of the most idiosyncratic of the Nineteenth Century."

Crane also makes use of the dialogue between his characters as a means to convey his idea or to evoke the atmosphere of the scene. This is done remarkably in the story, The Open Boat. The dialogue expresses the confusion, doubt, horror and desperation of the four men. There is no comment from the author. The sentences are disjointed, and words are repeated.

"The cook had said, "There is a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse, and as soon as they see us they'll come off in their boat and pick us up."
"As soon as who sees us?" said the correspondent.

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"The crew," said the cook.

"Houses of refuge don't have crew," said the correspondent.

"As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crew."

"Oh yes, they do," said the cook.

"No, they don't," said the correspondent.

"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler.

"Well," said the cook, "perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I am thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light; perhaps it's a life-saving station."

"We are not there yet," said the oiler." (p. 142).

This chapter on aspects of Crane's technique, apart from that of characterization has shown, with illustrative examples, Crane's excellent use of the impressionistic technique - which shows how things seemed to or affected the characters, his use of colour and imagery, often impressionistically, to define character, create atmosphere or externalize the theme, and his use of language in dialogue to bring out the frame of mind or temperament of a character. All these point to more sophisticated uses of these devices in the modern period. Whatever the purists might say, it is clear that Crane had exerted himself consciously to present the texture of experience through the consciousness of the
participants, in the context of what they say as well as in their manner or style of speaking. It is obvious that Crane had the right ideas and that he was quite capable of presenting a character - his state of mind at a particular point of time as well as his abiding nature - with a few deft strokes.