CHAPTER III

CHARACTERS AND TECHNIQUE OF CHARACTERIZATION
More than the events in a story, it is the human figures in it which claim our interest. The events themselves are rarely interesting except insofar as they represent the actions or the reactions of the characters. One need not dwell at length on the distinction - never an absolute one - between 'flat' and 'round' characters. What is important is that they should engage our interest, and a fiction-writer's skill is evaluated to a large extent from this point of view. It is by putting characters of a certain sort in situations of a certain kind that the author is able to get the best out of both, and convey his theme.

We may first consider the range of Crane's characters before studying his method of characterization. The most striking element in Crane's choice of characters is that though he selects only a limited part of society and some kinds of people, he still creates them with the depth and variety of human life.

Crane's range of characters encompasses within its radius people who are actively involved in the business of life. A very large number of characters are chosen from the
younger age group, though old people and children are not ignored. The numbers are not important. What is most important is Crane's deep sense of responsibility as a writer and his depth of knowledge of human nature and especially of the psychology of children. In fact, the children's world in Crane is typical and reminds us of the children's world created by Mark Twain. Of course, Crane's is a different world as his concerns are different. He chooses to select those aspects of children's life which he feels would express the ideas he wanted to convey.

Crane seems to have a greater interest in the world of men than that of women. Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and George's Mother and to some extent, The Three Miraculous Soldiers are among the very few examples of a full-fledged study of women. The Third Violet and Active Service also have fairly important women characters.

Crane's preference is obviously for people who are actively involved in the world of games, war and violence. They belong generally to the lower middle class, and most of them are workers in factories, living in slum areas. There are outlaws, gamblers, drunkards, prostitutes, hobos, hoodlums, village people, negro servants, and city bums who sleep in flop-houses and struggling artists in New York. There are soldiers, officers, correspondents and fugitives also. There is one exception in the form of Mr. O'Ruddy who poses as a
rich man belonging to the Irish aristocracy. But he is not what he says he is.

There are characters like Henry Fleming who run away from the battlefield but later when he becomes old he sacrifices his life in saving an old horse from his burning barn. There are characters who are simple and naive and limited in their gifts but who, on occasion, rise to the great height of mythical heroes who sacrificed their lives doing their duty or saving others' lives.

Henry Johnson, a negro servant, is one such character in the story *The Monster*. The negro is laughed at by the whole town of Whilomville for his habit of copying the manners of the rich white people. But when his master's son's life is in danger, he saves him at great risk and heavy cost to himself.

James Hafley has evaluated this character and the situation very aptly: "Henry-like Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* becomes once he is understood, a man according to which it is not he but the whole town that has lost face and gone mad; the townsfolk are the real monsters, but in a society where their mechanical civilization controls values, Henry appears both monstrous and insane for his godlike virtues."

1. James Hafley
   "*The Monster* and the Art of Stephen Crane"
Crane does not give importance only to his heroes but creates interesting minor characters who are capable of doing some noble deed. An ordinary soldier who does not like his officer very much is ready to do anything to save that officer's life. He is simple, honest, sincere, dutiful and naive like Peter Washington of *The Knife* or the two brothers Dan and Billie Dempster of *The Little Regiment*.

About Wagram's desperate effort to save his officer's life, Thomas A. Gullason says: "There is a touching pathos as the private tries desperately to save his officer's life by trying to stop the flow of blood with his hat."

Another minor character in *The Red Badge of Courage*, who is nameless and is called the tattered man, brings out clearly the height which a simple and ordinary man could achieve by sacrifice and devotion to duty. Eric Solomon says about this nameless character: "... the tattered man, one of Crane's most brilliant portraits of a nameless figure. We know nothing about the tattered man except that he is wounded, and that he is a rather naive and gentle soul. He is the antithesis of the young soldier in every way. The tattered man has been hit; he talks proudly of his regiment and its performance; he is

---

1. Thomas A. Gullason
"The Significance of 'Wounds in The Rain'"
humble and loves the army. In other words he stands for the simple man who has done his duty and received his mark of honor."

There is a long list of simple and ordinary people who are capable of following some code of behaviour though they may not be accepted by the society as noble creatures. A rough and violent outlaw of the West, Scratchy Wilson, is unable to shoot at the sheriff, withdraws from the fight when he finds that his arch-opponent, Sheriff Jake Potter, has no gun and that he has just got married. Crane himself describes this typically surprising behaviour of Scratchy in this manner: "Scratchy was not a student of chivalry; it was merely that in the presence of this foreign condition he was a simple child of the earlier plains." (p. 205).

The oiler (one of the four characters in The Open Boat) who dies at the end of the ordeal is, like so many of Crane's characters, a simple human being with all the human weaknesses and ordinary wishes such as those of eating pie and sleeping. All of them talk of food and sleep and the ordinary comforts of life in the face of the great dangers of the sea, but they are capable of obeying the orders of the captain and performing their duty of rowing the boat with great discipline and dignity.

---
1. Eric Solomon
   *Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism*
The oiler uses his talent of rowing to the best of his ability. He dies with true courage and though he is defeated physically, he achieves spiritual triumph like Santiago in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Henry Fleming, another simple youth from the village, also develops some sort of consciousness and grows in knowledge and understanding. He is also afraid of death and like a coward runs away but makes a very genuine effort to remove this cowardice from his life.

Regarding this aspect of Henry Fleming's character, Frederick C. Crews says: "Most readers would agree that there is development of some sort in Henry's character. He may not have undergone a moral redemption by the end of the novel, but he does seem to have acquired a new poise. Crane makes this explicit when Henry has discovered that he can do without his former bombast."

Henry Fleming is a young, innocent, ordinary soldier with all the fears, cowardice, doubts, dreams, desires and illusions of that condition but he tries to achieve real courage by controlling these weaknesses. Regarding this Max Westbrook says: "Fleming's courage in both *The Red Badge of Courage* and *The Veteran*, is real courage in that it

1. (ed.) Frederick C. Crews
   *The Red Badge of Courage*
is grounded in experience, not in the tinsel unreality of newspaper headlines or the equally unreal fury of animalism. Further, he is able to come to terms with himself and with his place in the universe. And herein lies the reality of the sanction. When a concept is confirmed in the experience of an individual, that concept has received testimony of its reality which exists outside the individual."

Henry as an old man shows that he is capable of sacrifice. Crane again suggests that quiet devotion to duty gives dignity to man. Eric Solomon says: "The Veteran' provides the author's own reassessment of the value of Henry's war ordeal. The old man admits that he ran. The veteran dies as a calm, unheroic individual doing his best for society. The last words of the story indicate that quiet devotion to duty leads to the real glory and that selflessness raises one above the mass of men."

Max Westbrook has put Henry Fleming in the category of great characters of American fiction like Ishmael, Huck Finn, and Santiago. He says: "Ishmael, Huck Finn, Henry Fleming and Santiago live in godless worlds; but they have a sense of values which is presented as real, not as the illusion it must

1. Max Westbrook

2. Eric Solomon
be if naturalism is the ultimate reality. These heroes do not spring from a conscious literary tradition but they are united by the common theme of the personal universal, a theme which suggests that the worlds they inhabit are not strictly naturalistic."

The Swede in *The Blue Hotel* is different from other characters in respect of an important question of what lends dignity to life. He is unnecessarily scared of the West and provokes people to fight with him because of his pride. His values differ from the society in which he is put. However, his death proves the responsibility of the society toward an individual. Regarding this character, Walter Sutton says: "He is a stranger in a mechanistic universe which give his scale of values no meaning beyond a limited and imperfect social context. Nevertheless, human values are praised, for only their integrity can lend dignity to life; and their loss or subversion is regretted. The Swede, as man, is pitiable, his death is not inconsequential, and interestingly enough, the author's final emphasis is on society's responsibility for the fate of the individual."

1. Max Westbrook
   "Stephen Crane And the Personal Universal",
   *Modern Fiction Studies*,

2. Walter Sutton
   "Pity and Fear in The Blue Hotel",
   *The Southern Review*,
Maggie is a Bowery character. By choosing a character from the slum area which is full of all the evils of society and the immorality of the people in addition to their illusions, Crane has enlarged the range of characters in his fiction. He studies her in all the aspects of life of that particular society in that particular environment. She has been compared with Madame Bovary of Flaubert, Nana of Émile Zola and Sister Carrie of Theodore Dreiser by different critics. Regarding her, Donald Pizer says: "Zola's portrait of Nana dying of disfiguring disease which symbolizes her spiritual as well as physical corruption is more convincing. Crane's desire, however, was to stress that the vicious deterministic force in the slums was its morality, not its poor housing or inadequate diet, and it is this emphasis which controls his characterization of Maggie." 1

Maggie's mother, Mrs. Johnson with her greed, selfishness, wrong notions, double moral standards, immorality, irresponsibility and the typical, distorted Bowery version of reality symbolizes the limit of human corruption. The only woman who shows any sympathy for Maggie during her rejection by the family and the neighbours is the gnarled old woman with the music box. Crane creates this character to show the contrast between her and Mrs. Johnson. In spite of

being labelled a woman, she shows some signs of being a ::

with.

virtuous woman when she is compared to the priest who turns

down Maggie's request.

Mrs. Johnson, on the other hand has the characteristics of the Bowery. Donald Pizer says: "Her drunken rages symbolize the animal fury of a slum home, and her quickness to judge, condemn, and cast out Maggie symbolizes the self-righteousness of Bowery morality. In a sense she symbolizes the entire Bowery world, both its primitive amorality and its sentimental morality."

Of all his characters O'Ruddy is the only one who does not have the least regard for the virtues of life. He is given to the vices of drinking, cheating, telling lies, timidity, cowardice and a protective sort of cunningness. He is very selfish. He is also the only Crane character who could be called humorous. The American tall-tale suits his purpose. He is created to act and behave in a humorous manner in all situations and circumstances, so that he becomes a lovable sort of rogue.

There are some old people in Crane's fiction who deserve mention. The most important of them all is Dr. Trescott.

---

A simple village doctor, he stands for his principles and convictions against all odds and the risk of being rejected and ostracized by the society. If Henry Johnson achieves nobility of his sacrifice, Dr. Trescott achieves it by his social and moral responsibility. He is an example of man showing true courage.

Crane shows deep insight, minute observation and a compassionate attitude in his treatment of children in his fiction. They are shown as having dreams, desires, pride, selfishness, cruelty and the tendency to copy the adult world. The most important of them are Jimmie Trescott, Cora, Horace and even some unnamed ones. They appear repeatedly in many stories. Through these characters Crane tries to show how society's carelessness can give unimaginable pain and suffering to these children. Eric Solomon says: "Stephen Crane's children are at once young and old, reflecting and prefiguring the action that such a world will demand."

When we compare Peza, the war-correspondent, with the child playing on the mountain, it becomes clear that Peza, though a young university graduate, is unaware of the fundamentals of life. The child is equated with Nature in the

1. Eric Solomon
   *Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism*
story *Death and the Child*. He is described thus: "His tranquillity in regard to the death in the plain was as invincible as that of the mountain on which he stood." (p. 345).

Thus we find that the range and scope of characters in Crane's fiction is large. They have a flavour and colour of their own. Crane's preference is for the lower middle class people, but he creates them with a magnificent variety. Within his limited choice of characters from a comparatively limited field, Crane has created a world which is as varied and as throbbing with activity as life itself is.
CHAPTER III - B

TECHNIQUE OF CHARACTERIZATION
A character in a novel may be presented through his actions and reactions and his speech, sometimes by a description of the character's appearance and dress, his habits of thought or attitudes. Or, the character's thoughts may be presented directly also, with such introductions as 'he thought', or 'he felt'. Apart from these devices, which are self-evident, Crane's technique of characterization consists of some others. Some important devices are his use of colour, imagery and irony. Somehow colour was very important in Crane's thinking and expression. His use of colour for other purposes has been discussed at other appropriate places. Here, his use of colour as a technique of characterization will be dealt with. He uses colour in three ways - that is for simply describing a person, thing or event; the second is the use of colour in an impressionistic way and the third is the symbolic manner.

There is scarcely any need to illustrate how we form an impression of a character through an account of his actions. As in real life, we judge characters by what they do. For example, when the young Henry Fleming (The Red Badge of Courage)
runs away from battle, we know that he is afraid; and when he later fights bravely, we know that he has mustered courage by then. We see it confirmed when old Henry Fleming in *The Veteran* performs a heroic act of self-sacrifice. Likewise, we know characters through what they say. The speech of a character, its style no less than its content, is revelatory of the nature, temperament or state of mind of the speaker. For example Pete (*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*) looks at the moon and expresses his admiration thus, "Deh, moon looks like hell...." (p. 40).

There is more scope for the author's observation and imagination in the description of a character's appearance or his reactions as well as of the minor details of facial expression or gestures. We see that Crane excels in the art, and we can see his skill as much in the delineation of the minor characters as in that of the major characters. For example, the gnarled old woman with the music box appears in the novel only twice but Crane has taken pains to delineate her with full detail. Crane does it with the speech of the woman which indicates her emotion. She tells Maggie that Maggie could go to her and stay with her as she had no moral scruples. This happens when the whole Bowery world has rejected Maggie.

Even greater scope is there for a writer in the delineation of character through his/her internal reactions,
by a description or presentation of what he or she thought or felt. Stephen Crane is truly a master in the art of presenting characters from within. This is done partly by the author's own description, as in the following example from *The Red Badge of Courage* when Henry is thinking about his future action: "He lay in his bunk pondering upon it. He tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from a battle." (p. 9).

It is done even better by presenting the reactions themselves through the dramatic device of 'he thought' or 'he felt' or 'it seemed to him'. Such a presentation of character from within, as it were, through his or her own impressions of external events - the way the external reality strikes the character, coloured by temperament or state of mind - is the most effective of the devices of characterization, and Crane is seen at his best in his use of this device. An example from *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* will show how Crane delineates the character of Maggie. She thinks of her lover and his higher standard of living: "She thought he must live in a blaze of pleasure. He had friends and people who were afraid of him. She saw the golden glitter of the place where Pete was to take her. It would be an entertainment of many hues and many melodies, where she was afraid she might appear small and mouse-colored." (p. 35).

Crane introduces a character with the description of how
he looks and behaves and by the description of his mannerism and even by the description of the way the character wears his hat or smokes a pipe. Pete, the seducer of Maggie, and the cause of her initiation into the life of sin, is a man who lives for himself and who does not respect the norms of society. Crane says: "Down the avenue came boastfully sauntering a lad of sixteen years, although the chronic sneer of an ideal manhood already sat upon his lips. His hat was tipped over his eye with an air of challenge. Between his teeth a cigar-stump was tilted at the angle of defiance. He walked with a certain swing of the shoulders which appalled the timid." (p. 12).

All the important traits of Pete's personality, even as a boy of sixteen, become clear with this description. We know the kind of person he is.

In the same novel Mr. Johnson is introduced with a description of his feelings and attitudes toward his children and the atmosphere which pervaded the tenement. His indifference and general lack of effort to do something for his children is hinted at in this introduction. It also brings out his character clearly: "Up the avenue there plodded slowly a man with sullen eyes. He was carrying a dinner-pail and smoking an apple-wood pipe. As he neared the spot where the little boys strove, he regarded them listlessly. But suddenly he roared an oath and advanced upon the rolling fighters...... He began to kick into the chaotic mass on the ground." (p. 14).
Mr. Johnson is a typical Bowery bum, who has resigned himself to his poverty, and whose behaviour is characterized by fighting and drinking and a general neglect of his children. These aspects of his personality are clearly brought out here.

Mrs. Johnson, the woman who was responsible for the tragedy in the family, is described in such a manner that her anger, frustration, unhappiness, and her attitude toward life and her children come out clearly in the following example.

"As the father and children filed in she peered at them. 'Eh, what? Been fightin' agin!' She threw herself upon Jimmie........

The mother's massive shoulders heaved with anger. Grasping the urchin by the neck and shoulder she shook him until he rattled. She dragged him to an unholy sink........ At last she tossed him to a corner. The wife put her immense hands on her hips, and with a chieftainlike stride approached her husband........

The woman screamed and shook her fists before her husband's eyes. The rough yellow of her face and neck flared suddenly crimson. She began to howl...........

'You've been drinkin', Mary, ' he said.' *(pp. 16-17).*

Mrs. Johnson is seen as a peevish, drunken, violent type of woman. She does not contribute anything towards making
the house a home, a place of peace and love. She has all the bad qualities which make her home look like hell. Crane here, successfully, brings out the character of the woman with his description.

Henry Fleming, the hero of *The Red Badge of Courage*, is an inexperienced recruit. His feelings, dreams and illusions before his first encounter with the enemy are described thus:

"There was a youthful private who listened with eager ears to the words of the tall soldier and to the varied comments of his comrades. After receiving a full of discussions concerning marches and attacks, he went to his hut........ He wished to be alone with some new thoughts........

The youth was in a little trance of astonishment. So they were at last going to fight........ there would be a battle, and he would be in it........ he was about to mingle in one of those great affairs of the earth." (p. 3).

The youth's thoughts regarding war and his participation in it as a great affair are the aspects of his personality which have been depicted here. Later the youth gains knowledge and that too is depicted, thus:

Henry's character with emphasis on youthfulness and inexperience has been depicted first. He has to go through experience and learn the lesson himself. As for Henry himself, "He felt that in this crisis his laws of life were useless.
Whatever he had learned of himself was here of no avail. He was an unknown quantity. He saw that he would again be obliged to experiment as he had in early youth." (p. 21).

The youth undergoes an experience and achieves a new understanding of himself. His character will take shape, after the initial doubt and illusion, only after the experience.

Crane depicts this achievement of Henry through an episode where the loud soldier has to shamefacedly ask back his letters which he had given to Henry in case he should die in the encounter. Crane does not describe Henry's process of learning directly but expresses it through the contrast of another soldier's cowardice and shame. Henry notices the change in the loud soldier. He becomes a meek man. Henry wonders at the impact of this experience on the loud soldier. Crane says: "The youth reflected. He had been used to regarding his comrade as a blatant child with an audacity grown from his inexperience, thoughtless, headstrong, jealous and filled with tinsel courage, a swaggering babe accustomed to strut in his own dooryard. The youth wondered where had born these new eyes; when his comrade had made the great discovery that there were many men who would refuse to be subjected by him. Apparently, the other had now climbed a peak of wisdom from which he could perceive himself as a very wee thing." (p. 96).
This self-knowledge from another's experience is a further turning point in the character of Henry Fleming. Henry Fleming's character is here revealed through these reactions to his companion who has changed. His thoughts and feelings - or merely impressions - reveal a new consciousness in the boy, and this internal change is presented through an account of his mental process.

Crane employs the same technique of characterization to depict the feelings of shame and cowardice of Henry Fleming when he runs away from battle and gets a wound on his forehead. It was caused by another soldier of his own army with the butt of his gun. The tattered man is seriously wounded, and he puts some questions to Henry. Henry is suffering from the wound of conscience caused by his shameful desertion of his comrades. The tattered man suggests that some wounds are strange and cannot be seen by others. The tattered man here stops being a physical being and becomes rather Henry's other self-rebuking him for his cowardice. Henry is compelled to compare his condition with that of the tattered soldier, and learns another lesson. His simple questions involve Henry in a bitter debate with himself, and his shame becomes so painful that he even wants to die. By presenting the contrast between the two men's wounds, Crane has allowed us to know what Henry thinks and that gives us a glimpse of Henry's evolving character.
In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* Maggie's brother, Jimmie, goes to the bar to beat sense into Pete. He picks up a friend on his way. The friend is very cautious but Jimmie boasts that nothing wrong is going to happen. He also boasts about his power to control people like Pete. During the fight, the police come and Jimmie runs away, leaving the friend to face the consequences in the jail. Crane depicts the scene and the basic quality of cowardice in Jimmie's character comes out clearly in that scene.

In *The Open Boat* the captain is injured and lying down in the boat. Crane presents the thoughts of the captain: "The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy-nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down." (p. 140).

Here, Crane presents the captain, not by physical description but by the mental condition of the man who has been incapacitated and finds himself unable to help his fellowmen in a state of crisis, where laborious work is needed. The most important element in the character of the captain is his sense of responsibility. And here that aspect has been conveyed to us by this description. With these few touches, Crane presents before us the whole character of the captain.

The correspondent, another character in the story
The Open Boat, is the type of person who, because of the nature of his work, would be more interested in analysing causes and consequences than in doing physical work like rowing a boat. Crane has brought out this trait in the character of the correspondent by presenting the thoughts of the man.

Crane says: "The correspondent, pulling at the oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there." (p. 140).

In The Red Badge of Courage, Crane presents the character of Henry Fleming mostly by the description of the thoughts and feelings of the boy. There is repeated use of the words 'he thought' or 'he felt' or some such phrase which introduces us to his thought-processes and helps us to know him, as it were, from within, which is also to know a person more deeply and intimately.

The youth had been hearing of movement of the regiment and he had been troubled by the thought of cowardice:

"The youth felt, however, that his problem was in no wise lifted from him. There was, on the contrary, an irritating prolongation. The tale had created in him a great concern for himself." (p. 13).

Or,

"The youth achieved one little thought in the midst of
this chaos. The composite monster which had caused the other troops to flee had not then appeared. He resolved to get a view of it, and then, he thought he might very likely run better than the best of them. * (p. 35).

The youth runs away and tries to find a justification by seeing some soldiers retreating: "The youth felt comforted in a measure by this sight. They were all retreating. Perhaps, then, he was not so bad after all." (p. 73).

Or,

"He thought that he was about to start for the front. Indeed, he saw a picture of himself, dust-stained, haggard, panting, flying to the front at the proper moment to seize and throttle the dark, leering witch of calamity." (p. 75).

Or,

"He told himself that, despite his unprecedented suffering, he had never lost his greed for a victory, yet, he said, in a half-apologetic manner to his conscience, he could not but know that a defeat for the army this time might mean many favorable things for him." (p. 76).

"Again he thought that he wished he was dead." (p. 78).

"He seemed to hear someone make a humorous remark in a low tone. At it the others all crowed and crackled. He was a slang phrase." (p. 79).
Later he fights like a brave soldier; "He himself felt the daring spirit of a savage religion-mad. He was capable of profound sacrifices, a tremendous death." (p. 147).

At the end he proves that he has courage. Crane describes it by presenting the youth's thoughts; "For a time this pursuing recollection of the tattered man took all elation from the youth's veins. He saw his vivid error, and he was afraid that it would stand before him all his life....... And at last his eyes seemed to open to some new ways." (pp. 155-56).

Thus, we see how Crane has depicted the youth's inexperience, weaknesses doubts, hopes, despair, dreams, illusions, confidence and courage through a study of his mind. He is a normal young man with the human weaknesses. He becomes selfish and wishes that the whole army should be defeated so that he could hide his shameful act. Crane has depicted all the aspects of his personality including the defects in these lines.

Crane's technique of characterization involves the use of imagery. He uses many types of images to bring out his characters clearly. Sometimes, they give us a hint of the conflict and doubt troubling the mind of the character. At other times, these images represent the character's imagination.

Crane uses animal imagery in *The Red Badge of Courage* and war imagery in *Maggie; A Girl of The Streets* and
George's Mother to let us know that the characters involved behave in an animal-like manner in war, and exhibit a tendency to violence in their lives in slums. Crane also uses these images to record the feelings of fear, horror, doubt and helplessness of these characters. In the case of Henry Fleming, the hero of The Red Badge of Courage, the images used change from meek, timid animals like sheep, cow, and chicken to those of strong, wild, fierce animals like buffalo, panther and tiger.

Throughout the novel war itself has been represented in the image of a monster, which reveals the great fear in the mind of the youth.

Maggie and Mrs. Johnson in Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and the mother in George's Mother have all been characterized by war images to bring out the essential quality in their character. George's mother is known to us as a woman who is fighting the battle of life, so to say, to save her son from becoming bad. This is her character and it comes out clearly, without any comment from the author or without any long and direct description of the woman. Crane does it by using a war image where she is presented as fighting the enemy: "In her arms she bore pots and pans, and sometimes a broom and dust pan. She wielded them like weapons........ There was a flurry of battle in the room. Through the clouded dust or steam one could see the
thin figure dealing mighty blows. Always her way seemed beset. Her broom was continually poised, lance-wise, at dust demons. There came clashings and clangings as she strove with her tireless foes........ And she went on her way, her voice was often raised in a long cry, a strange war-chant, a shout of battle and defiance, that rose and fell in harsh screams." (p. 96).

The Johnson household in Maggie : A Girl of the Streets has been continuously depicted through war images to present before us these characters in their true nature - which is greed, selfishness, hunger and violence. Maggie is like a pursued tigress in that atmosphere. Jimmie crawls upstairs and ; "He heard howls and curses, groans and shrieks - a confused chorus as if a battle were raging within." (p. 22).

Mrs. Johnson's character of being a cruel, heartless, selfish woman is depicted by the image of a fiend. Her posture when sleeping is described thus ; "They continued looking at her for they thought she need only to awake and all the fiends would come from below." (p. 24).

She is the person responsible for making the home a hell, and Crane has presented her through the appropriate image of a fiend which conveys everything about her personality.

Crane's description of the Johnson children's eating
combines both war and cave images. They also show an animal-like competition for food. The "babe" is Tommie, the youngest child.

"The babe sat with his feet dangling high from a precarious infant's chair and gorged his small stomach. Jimmie, forced with feverish rapidity, the grease-enveloped pieces between his wounded lips. Maggie with sidelong glances of fear of interruption ate like a small pursued tigress." (pp. 18-19).

All the savagery of these characters, even as children, comes out clearly. As they grow up, these qualities also grow and this becomes their character.

The passage of time finds the characters in no way better than they were. For example, Jimmie's growth into a youth makes him worse. Crane says that, in their lives, progress was not from good to better but it was always from bad to worse.

Crane describes Jimmie's growth thus: "The inexperienced fibres of the boy's eyes were hardened at an early age. He became a young man of leather. He lived some red years without labouring. During that time his sneer became chronic. He studied human nature in the gutter, and found it no worse than he thought he had reason to believe it..... He clad his soul in armour by means of
happening hilariously in a mission church........ He smoked his pipe calmly...... he entered terrifically into the quarrel and sometimes roared oaths and violently got himself arrested...... He became so sharp that he believed in nothing." (pp. 24-25).

Crane has used an impressionistic technique to trace the growth of the boy. His character is clearly seen in this passage, which through direct as well as metaphorical description, gives us a vivid picture of the effect of the passage of time on his body, mind and soul.

Mrs. Johnson continues to drink and fight with the members of her family and neighbours. Her bad qualities are so obvious that she becomes known to the police officials through her notorious drunken behaviour.

Crane describes her in an ironical tone: "The mother had gradually risen to such a degree of fame that she could bandy words with her acquaintances among the police justices. Court officials called her by her first name." (p. 30).

Crane describes Pete, the deceiver of Maggie, in such a way that all the traits of his personality become known. He is cunning, cowardly and conceited. He poses as a gentleman but remains at heart a Bowery bum and rogue. The description of his dress and his attitude and mannersisms and airs, readily enables us to know him
literally inside out; "He sat on a table in the Johnson home, and dangled his checked legs with an enticing nonchalance. His hair was curled down over his forehead in an oiled bang. His pugged nose seemed to revolt from contact with a bristling moustache of short, wire-like hairs. His blue double-breasted coat, edged with black braid, was buttoned close to a red puff tie, and his patent leather shoes looked like weapons. His mannerisms stamped him as a man who had a correct sense of his personal superiority. There were valour and contempt for circumstances in the glance of his eye. He waved his hands like a man of the world who dismisses religion and philosophy." (pp. 30-31).

Crane rarely devotes so much space to the description of the physical appearance and clothing of his characters. But when he does, it is very effective.

Another example of this technique is seen where Crane describes Henry Johnson in the story The Monster.

"After Johnson had taken his supper in the kitchen, he went to his loft in the carriage house and dressed himself with much care. No belle of a court circle could bestow more mind on a toilet than did Johnson. On second thought, he was more like a priest arraying himself for some parade of the church. As he emerged from his room and sauntered down the carriage drive, no one would have suspected him of ever having washed a buggy."
It was not altogether a matter of the lavender trousers, nor yet the straw hat with its bright silk band. The change was somewhere far in the interior of Henry. But there was no cakewalk hyperbole in it. He was simply a quiet, wellbred gentleman of position, wealth, and other necessary achievements out for an evening stroll, and he had never washed a wagon in his life." (pp. 77-78).

Scratchy Wilson, the outlaw, in the story The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky is depicted in the typical American Western tradition of fiction. It brings out the characteristic element of the Mexican outlaws who are ready to shoot anything that moves, and are capable of starting a fight for no good reason visible. Scratchy is out on the road with two revolvers and the town of Yellow Sky closes all doors.

"The man's face flamed in a rage begot of whiskey. His eyes, rolling, and yet keen for ambush, hunted the still doorways and windows. He walked with the creeping movement of the midnight cat. As it occurred to him, he roared menacing information. The long revolvers in his hands were as easy as straws; they were moved with an electric swiftness. The little fingers of each hand played sometimes in a musician's way. Plain from the low collar of the shirt, the cords of his neck straightened and sank, straightened and sank, as passion moved him. The only sounds were his
terrible invitations. The man called to the sky. He bellowed and fumed and swayed his revolvers here and everywhere." (pp. 163-64).

Crane also uses irony for characterization. The most effective use is in the case of Mrs. Johnson in Maggie: A Girl of the Streets. It is very clear from the novel that Maggie's downfall and death is due, among other reasons, to the double-standard of morality of the mother. She is responsible for driving Maggie out from the house and compelling her to walk the streets. When she dies, the mother weeps and wails and declares that she would forgive her. Crane has used irony to bring out the basic weaknesses and illusions of this Bowery woman who thinks herself to be a paragon of virtue whereas her character is that of a vicious, selfish, crude, greedy, violent woman.

Crane often introduces his characters without giving them names. Almost all are nameless at first and some continue to remain so throughout the story. The hero of The Red Badge of Courage is called the youth in the beginning of the novel. The loud soldier, the tattered soldier and the tall soldier are the identification of some of the characters, as in The Open Boat there are the captain, the correspondent, the oiler and the cook in the same way in The Blue Hotel, they are known as the cowboy, the Swede, and the Easterner. In Maggie: A Girl of the Streets one of the
minor characters remains the 'gnarled old woman with the music box'. All these characters are presented with the suggestion of their vocation or some particular trait of their personality which is closely linked with the theme of the story or with the general atmosphere of the situation. This namelessness of the characters along with the unspecified locations could be due to the fact that Crane intended to show an individual and his response to a situation in general and not a particular man. The method, apart from generalizing the person and the situation, has also the effect of creating suspense, arousing our curiosity.

Commenting on this aspect of Crane's technique of characterization in *The Red Badge of Courage*, Thomas Goethals says about the hero, Henry Fleming: "Although the youth bears the name of Henry Fleming, the youth remains nameless in effect, throughout the narrative; and his very namelessness emphasizes, on the one hand, not only his universality but the object of his search and, on the other hand, the impersonality of both war and nature, which obliterated the individuality he seeks."  

Henry Fleming, the youth, is not so much an individual

---

person as a representative of the average, untried, innocent, inexperienced soldier who goes to war for the first time and has his first confrontation on the battlefield.

Arthur Hobson says: "Henry Fleming is not an individual person. He is a representative of the untried soldiers in general...... being a mere pawn in a game of which he does not know the rules."

Thus, Crane's habit of leaving some characters nameless, gives a quality of universality to them, and lifts his stories from the particular to the level of the general.

As a comic character O'Ruddy is the best in all Crane's writings. He is endowed with all the elements required for such a character. He is shrewd, cunning, deceptive, cowardly and boastful. He loves his life more than anything. He narrates his own story and what he says about his ancestors is true about himself because he models his life and forms his attitude in the same style.

"My chieftain ancestors had lived at Glendore for many centuries and were well known. Hardly a ship could pass the old Head of Kinsale without some boats putting off to exchange the time of day with her, and our family name was

1. Arthur Hobson Quinn
"The Journalists"

American Fiction, An Historical and Critical Survey
on men's tongues in half the seaports of Europe, I dare say. My ancestors lived in castles which were like churches stuck on end, and they drank the best of everything...." (p. 1).

The style as well as the content of the speech reveals him clearly for what he is.

The children in Crane's fiction are characterized by childlike curiosity, innocence, boastfulness and a great desire to copy the adult world. Cora, Jimmie and Horace (in *The Angel Child, Shame and His New Nittens* respectively) are depicted as such. The most impressive element in Crane's depiction of these children's responses and reactions to situations is the deep psychological understanding of their thinking.

Thus, it can be said that Crane depicts his characters with great vividness. Because of this vividness of his characterization, the inhabitants of his fictional world, more or less important, become memorable. We know them - and know them well - because we have been given a clue to their inner nature, to what is special about them.