

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After having analysed the portrayal of the protagonist in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, I come to some conclusions. Crane has successfully described the development of the protagonist of the novel, Henry Fleming.

From the start, Henry is portrayed as a naïve man. He becomes a soldier with a belief that a battle will end with victory. He also believes that he will then become a hero.

Besides as a naïve man, Henry is also portrayed as a vain man. He shows his feeling proud of his capability of becoming a soldier in front of his classmates. He has already thought himself as a hero when getting the attention and praises from his surrounding.

However, everything changes when he arrives at the real battle field. Henry becomes doubtful after knowing that the battle is to kill or to be killed. Then, he is not sure about himself whether he will survive as a soldier or not. He also doubts whether to join his regiment or not after his fleeing in the battle.

Besides being a doubtful man, he is portrayed as a fearful man. He fears whether he can cope with the battle, while he sees that his group keep their fighting spirit and do

not have the same fear as he does. He also feels fearful on arriving in the new region. He is so afraid that he wants to die. He thinks it is better for him to be killed than fighting the enemies.

The climax is when Henry becomes cowardly. He runs away from the battle after seeing his comrade flees. He also tells untrue story about the fact of how he gets his wound in his head.

Crane then makes Henry's characteristics change into positive ones. The turning point is when Henry remembers that he still keeps his comrade Wilson's letters. He realizes that Wilson also has the same feeling of fear as he does and Henry becomes a confident man. He feels sure that he can face the battle: he shoots his enemies with his rifle in the battle, and he feels sure that he can win the battle and bring laurels.

Apart from being portrayed as a confident man, Henry is also portrayed as courageous. It is shown from his actions which receive the praises from his lieutenant and his comrades. Henry's courage is also shown when he moves forward leading the regiment. He turns into a mature man when the battle ends.

In my opinion, this novel tells that a soldier is also a human being that has weakness. He has doubt and fear and can become a coward. The protagonist Henry Fleming represents that a soldier has such weaknesses as an ordinary person, although people usually stereotype a soldier as being a courageous person or a man with honor. Henry is a life-like character. Crane has portrayed Henry Fleming realistically. As a young man who has no experiences in the war before, Henry undergoes changes in the characteristics. He becomes a mature man at the end of the novel. His development is in accordance with Crane's purpose, that is, to portray the development of Henry Fleming from an inexperienced soldier to become a mature one through the battle. It seems that

experience is a good teacher. Through what he experiences in the battle, Henry becomes a much better soldier.

After reading this novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, I get the impression that Crane has realistically described a young inexperienced soldier although he himself has never been involved in a war. He can exactly describe a soldier's feeling as an ordinary person. He has also succeeded in elaborating the battle by using the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist, Henry Fleming. These facts make this novel worth reading.

From analysing the novel, I also learn several things. To survive in life, one has to face every problem that one encounters. Running away from the problems does not solve them. Moreover, one can learn from one's mistakes and change into a better person.

