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The American Civil War: Stephen Crane's
Red Badge of Courage

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To my father, up in heaven. I know you are looking out for me; I hope you are proud.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this paper to all those who have fallen in war, you may be gone but you aren't forgotten. War is in fact the cruelest noun in the English language.

‘‘When a man is in despair, it means that he still believes in something.’’

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich

Abstract

This TFG, *The American Civil war: Stephen Crane's Red badge of Courage*, aims to highlight the presence and the absence of facts and events concerning the American Civil War in Stephen Crane's novella *The Red Badge of Courage*.

The TFG is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on contextualizing the novella and the second part focuses on analysing the presence, or the omission of the Civil War in the novella. In order to understand and contextualize the novella I first briefly explain the American Civil War, the two sides, key battles, and strategies used both by the North, and the South. I then explain the battle of Chancellorsville and provide some examples within the novella that pinpoint the battle of Chancellorsville, as it is the battle that was used as inspiration for the novella. In the same part, I make a quick reference to the Irish and to the part they played in Chancellorsville. I then give a quick summary of the authors' life.

In the second part, I first analyse what aspects of the American Civil War are included in the novella. Then, I analyse what Stephen Crane omits. In order to do this, I research many encyclopaedias, webpages, and journals for detailed information on the Civil War. I make notes of what I find and, compare it to what is included, and what is omitted in the novella. In the conclusions, the reader will be able to find possible reasons as to why the author could have possibly omitted these key elements.

Key words: War, Chancellorsville, Slavery, North, South.

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1. Introduction

Erich Remarque, a post-war German novelist who described the horrors of the First World War says in *All Quiet on the Western Front*:

*“Comrade, I did not want to kill you... But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response... I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy?”*¹ (Remarque 1929, Chapter 9)

This attractive view of war made me think about a similar response that appears in Stephen Crane’s *Red Badge of Courage*, a novella that also raises the question of how courage plays a fundamental role in the life of the main protagonist. Thus, my main research will focus on the analysis of the causes, effects and horrors of the American Civil War from two different though complementary perspectives: on the one hand, how some causes, effects and horrors are included in the narrative and on the other, how other causes, effects and horrors are absent from the narration. By the end of the paper, the reader should be able to appreciate how the novella has been constructed as a fictitious narrative around the inclusions and omissions concerning the American Civil War. In order to understand how the novella reflects and omits the various historical factors that

¹ Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Chapter 9. This quote is ushered by Paul to the corpse of a French soldier he has just killed. <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2662852-im-westen-nichts-neues>

led to the outbreak of the American Civil War, I will take into considerations some topics of different value and scope such as courage, manhood, and physical and moral destruction.

2. Methodology

The methodology followed throughout the paper is based on research about *The Red Badge of Courage* within the historical circumstances that Stephen Crane includes in his novella to make a historical moment in the life of the United States a novella that soon attracted the reader's attention and was acclaimed as a breakthrough in the genre of war tales. The methodology used is divided into three phases: A first reading of the novella that allowed for the gathering of a number of articles and books. Second, a selection of the main facts of the war with an eye on the work of fiction which is the main focus of this essay. And third, a rereading of the novella while trying to find out how the real facts appear in the novella, and how others are not mentioned, or simply overlooked. After a few months of reflecting on these two aspects, I decided to divide my paper into two big blocks: Historical facts, and the novella. These two parts or sections were conveniently divided into smaller sections or chapters with the intention of clarifying and highlighting the historical elements that intervene in the novella as well as those elements that are absent in Crane's narrative. The previous groundwork done in conjunction with the close reading of *The Red Badge of Courage* enabled me to reach my conclusions that attempt to round off this piece of research work.

3. Contextualization of the novella

3.1 Historical context: The American Civil War

In order to understand Stephen Crane's novella, it is necessary to explain the American Civil War to contextualize the novella. Amongst other historical events related to this war, it is also important to highlight the importance of the battle of Chancellorsville in Stephen Crane's novella.

The American Civil War waged from 1861 to 1865 between the Northern states and the Southern states. Before and during the conflict, the American North and South had very different economic systems. The North was more of an industrial model whereas the South was more rural. The definition of the American Civil War usually entails the slavery issue. In reality, the war was about slavery's economic consequences. It started when the southerners saw that Lincoln and the Republican party wanted to make changes to the southerners' way of life when it came to using free slave labour. The people in the South believed that if Lincoln was elected, their slave owner rights would be severely restricted. Lincoln was elected and it led to the secession of 11 southern states. The southerners preferred to break-away rather than give up their way of life. Lincoln and the Northern states considered this to be illegal.

The conflict sparked when John Brown raided Harpers Ferry in 1859. Brown, a white abolitionist, wanted to free slaves. The first shots of the Civil War were shot at Fort Sumter by the Union army (North) when they tried to repossess the federal base².

The North held more advantages than the South. Some clear examples would be that the North had highways, canals and railroads. This is seen as an advantage because it made

² History.com editors(2020) *John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry*. HISTORY.
<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/john-browns-raid-on-harpers-ferry>

transportation of supplies easier. Furthermore, the North also had most of the world's support. Having this support meant that they had much-needed funding. The South on the other hand did not have these advantages. For example, they lacked factories that would produce enough war materials; and lacked world support that could provide them with funding. Nevertheless, the South did have some advantages, such as fighting on home terrain, young enlistees, and the leadership of great commanders such as Robert E. Lee, 'Stonewall' Jackson, or Jeb Stuart. The Northern states also produced great military figures such as William Sherman, Winfield Scott or Patrick Cleburne.³

To defeat the South, the North came up with a strategy known as the *Anaconda plan*⁴. This plan consisted of a naval blockade of the Confederate's coast (South), control of the Mississippi River, and isolation of land military forces. The South, on the other hand, had to accumulate victories early on, so as to weaken the North. They also aimed to get international recognition as a free sovereign state. The South also had to keep the Union forces from claiming their territories. In the end, the South was unable to achieve its goals. After nearly four years of many battles, losses, and injuries, the North won. It is important to highlight that in line with many other wars, the price of victory was bittersweet: More United States soldiers died during the American Civil War than in WWII.⁵

3.2 Battle of Chancellorsville

Stephen Crane never specifically denotes in the novella that the battle present is that of Chancellorsville. Nevertheless, it is confirmed in a later short story called *The Veteran*⁶

³ Retrieved from Hassler, W. W. and Weber, . Jennifer L. (2021, April 5). American Civil War. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War>

⁴ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2018, May 18). Anaconda plan. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anaconda-plan>

⁵ According to the American Battlefield's Trust 620,000 soldiers died in the American Civil War. - (2021) Civil War Facts. *American Battle Trust*. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-facts>

⁶ Crane, S. (2020, November 11). The Veteran. Retrieved from <https://americanliterature.com/author/stephen-crane/short-story/the-veteran>

that features a much older Henry Fleming (the protagonist) who tells his grandson about getting shot at a battle and then how he ran away:

His hands were clasped nervously, and his eyes were wide with astonishment at this terrible scandal, his most magnificent grandfather telling such a thing. "That was at Chancellorsville. Of course, afterward I got kind of used to it. A man does". (Crane, 1896, para. 4)⁷.

The Battle of Chancellorsville started on the 30th of April 1863 and ended on the 5th of May of the same year. It was an assault directed by the Union army (North) that lost to the confederate army (South) of Northern Virginia. Before the battle, the two armies had fought each other during the winter of 1862 at Fredericksburg. The Union had changed their command (after the loss of Fredericksburg) to general Joseph Hooker. He trained his army during the spring. His goal was to capture the confederate (South) capital of Richmond, Virginia. The odds were in his favour as he had more men fighting on his side than general Lee from the Confederate side had.⁸ On the 27th of April 1863, Hooker came up with a plan he thought would guarantee him a win. Two-thirds of his forces were put in front of Fredericksburg to feign an attack from the front and the other third was led by Hooker across the Rappahannock River. Despite this, Hooker underestimated Lee. Lee, too, divided his force. He retained about 10,000 troops to hold Fredericksburg before marching his army West and meet Hooker face to face. The two armies faced each other in an open field on the 1st of May 1863. Despite having more soldiers, Hooker made his men retreat to defensive positions and Lee split his army once again. This led to Lee's

⁷ The Veteran was first published in Mc Lure's magazine in 1896, a year after the publication of *Red badge of Courage*. It is usually described as a sequel to *Red Badge of Courage* as the protagonist in both stories shares the same main character: Henry Fleming. - (2020) The short story of the day. *American Literature*. <https://americanliterature.com/author/stephen-crane/short-story/the-veteran>

⁸ According to the American Battlefield Trust, a total of 154,734 men fought at Chancellorsville. 97,382 were under Hooker's command and 57,352 were under Lee's command. (2021) Chancellorsville. *American Battle Trust*. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/chancellorsville>

and the Confederate's victory, however, it also led to the death of Lee's best general: Thomas Jackson; also known as 'Stonewall'⁹.

I would also like to refer the Irish brigades at *Chancellorsville*. In the novella, there are a few references to the Irish and the Irish culture. The fact that the author chooses the battle of *Chancellorsville* as inspiration may not be a mere coincidence. There are many more battles the author could have chosen which are far more relevant. Chancellorsville is known for its many casualties, including many Irish¹⁰.

"A shell screaming like a storm banshee went over the huddled heads of the reserves. It landed in the grove and exploding redly flung the brown earth. There was a little shower of pine needles." (Crane, 1895, Chapter 4. para.4.)¹¹ – Banshee here refers to the sound of the explosive. He compares the sound of the explosive to that of a Banshee.

The youth laughed. "Yer changed a good bit. Yeh ain't at all like yeh was. I remember when you an' that Irish feller--" (Crane, 1895. Chapter 14.) – Here is the reference to an Irish person. There doesn't seem to be an explicit reason for him to say, Irish, he could have said German or French. Furthermore, Stephen Crane began an Irish novella, *The O' Ruddy*¹², in which he wrote some tales about the American West. Therefore, my point is, the author may have wanted to make reference to the Irish who participated in the American Civil War.

⁹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, February 12). Confederate States of America. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Confederate-States-of-America>

¹⁰ The "Irish rifles" (37th NY) was decimated in the battle. Of around 400 effectives, 222 men were lost. 115 of those were killed, 107 missing and they also lost their regiment flag. (2020-2021) Warfare history. *Warfare history*. <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2015/09/15/the-irish-rifles-at-the-battle-of-chancellorsville/>

¹¹ According to History, Ireland, a Banshee is a female spirit and is considered to be an omen of death. The Banshee roams the countryside and can be heard screaming at night when somebody is facing death's door. - (2018) Ireland's best-known Spirit: The Banshee. *Claddagh Design* <https://www.claddaghdesign.com/history/irelands-best-known-spirit-the-banshee/>

¹² Monteiro, G. (s. f.). *The O'Ruddy (1903) - Stephen Crane*. Cambridge Core. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/stephen-crane/oruddy-1903/B111FC2CD8E9FB500ADE640A7436C4E8>

4. Biographical Aspects

Stephen Crane was an American novelist, poet, and short-story writer. He is known for his novels: *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*. He is also known for his short stories: *The Blue Hotel* and *The Open Boat*. Born in 1871 and died in 1900, Crane was the 14th child, and was raised by his older sister. He attended college for two years in Easton, Pennsylvania, but soon left as he preferred outdoor activities. He then moved to Paterson, New Jersey with one of his brothers. They frequently travelled to New York City where he wrote short pieces on his travel experiences. Crane began his literary career in the 1890s as a freelance writer when he moved to New York. There, he experienced poverty and the life of the slums. This experience inspired him to write his first book: *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* under the pseudonym of Johnston Smith. Unfortunately, the book didn't spark much interest and left 1871 Crane penniless¹³.

In 1895 Crane published the novella that would completely turn his life around: *The Red Badge of Courage*. The novella (which would later influence great writers such as Hemingway), follows the emotional turmoil an ordinary soldier goes through in a battle, set during the American Civil War. The novella became famous because it portrayed the violent conflict authentically, and realistically. It is important to highlight that Crane had to do extensive research on war as he had never actually been in any type of military conflict when he wrote the novella. This is parallel to another novella *City of Glass* by Paul Auster. The protagonist in Paul Auster's novella is hired as a detective. Like Crane, Paul Auster is a writer who has no experience on what he is writing about¹⁴. However, both authors can describe the experience in a very realistic manner.

¹³ Retrieved from: (1998, July20). Encyclopaedia Britannica *Stephen Crane | American writer*
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stephen-Crane>

¹⁴ Retrieved from: Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, January 30). Paul Auster. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Auster>

This novella gave Crane a new reputation as a war writer. Due to this, and to his curiosity, and accuracy of describing the psychological effects of war, he embarked on a new career. He wished to report on war, so he became a war correspondent¹⁵. He was first dispatched to Cuba to cover the insurrection there. A turn of events saw Crane surviving the sinking of the boat he was journeying on: *The commodore*. An account of this experience was published a mere five days later in the *New York* newspaper¹⁶. A year later he would use said experience as inspiration for his story *The Open Boat*, published in *Scribner's* magazine¹⁷.

Becoming a war correspondent for me is a paradox between *The Red Badge of Courage* as an indictment on war, and the instigating effect that his articles about the Spanish – American War had on American readers who very soon gave support to the war. The war in Cuba became the biggest foreign news story for Americans during those times. Back then, newspapers wished for a large number of readers, rather than reporting accurate facts¹⁸. This reporting is present in the novella itself when Henry (the protagonist) says in the first chapter: *They were in truth fighting finely down there. Almost every day the newspapers printed accounts of a decisive victory* (Crane,1985.Chapter 1. p.2)

War correspondents such as Creelman, or Crane himself, bought bias and bravado to their reporting. Nevertheless, they were considered ingenious and intrepid as people saw the stories as dangerous and frustrating to cover (one correspondent died, some caught malaria, or like Crane, caught yellow fever). An example of how he influenced the American people would be when Crane, and a fellow New York World correspondent

¹⁵Morris Jr., R. (2020, January 14). *Stephen Crane at the Front*. HistoryNet. <https://www.historynet.com/stephen-crane-at-the-front.htm>

¹⁶ (1897,Jan 4) *New York Journal*. Retrieved from the library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn84024350/1896-01-04/ed-1/>.

¹⁷ Crane, S. (January 01, 1897). The open boat. *Scribner's Magazine*, 21, 6.)

¹⁸ Hamilton, J.M (2016, April 16) [Online Magazine] *How Yellow Journalism Sparked the Spanish American War*. National Geographic. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/magazine/2019/03-04/yellow-journalism-role-spanish-american-war/>

unofficially rode to Mount St Augustine. Mount St Augustine overlooks Santiago Harbour. The two men rode there to spy on the Spanish. Upon arrival, they found where the entire Spanish fleet was hiding. This information was then passed on to the American army¹⁹ and many troops were moved to be out of reach from the Spanish. However, it was not all glory as the whole ordeal left Crane ill for the remainder of his life. Onboard the ship Crane was first diagnosed with yellow fever, but then that was corrected to malaria. In his descriptions he says that he felt like he was a living corpse: “*I discovered that I was a dead man. The nervous force having evaporated, I was a mere corpse. My spinal cord burned within me as if it were a red hot wire*” (Crane, 1900)²⁰. As a result of his weakened immune system, Crane eventually developed Tuberculosis, and died at the young age of twenty-eight²¹.

¹⁹ According to history net, this information was crucial. 16,000 troops were stationed near Daiquiri, out of reach from the Spanish fleet. (2020) War Stories | Stephen Crane at the Front *MHQ—The Quarterly Journal of Military History* (32)(2)-<https://www.historynet.com/stephen-crane-at-the-front.htm>

²⁰ This quote is found in Stephen crane’s book: *Wounds in the Rain: War stories*, published in 1900 in chapter IV: *War memories*. Gutenberg.org [E-Book] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/43706/43706-h/43706-h.htm>

²¹ Moore, T. (2015, January 27). *Stephen Crane*. Biography. <https://www.biography.com/writer/stephen-crane>

5. *The Red Badge of Courage*: War and other horrors

The American Civil War is considered by many as one of the first modern wars, both for its technological advances, and for the strategies used. At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned a cinematographic work inspired by the First World War. Like many authors, I have also found many historical connections between the two wars. Both wars are an example of radical change in the way wars were fought. Henry's vision of war is also shared by the soldiers in the First World War. Both went to war with promises of reputed glory and patriotic fervour. It is not long before both participants in both wars realize that they are simply carnage tossed out into the battlefield with no regards to their life nor to their wants. The romantic notion that war is virile, glorious, and heroic has existed throughout all wars: not just in North American history, but throughout the world's history. Stephen Crane, author of *The Red Badge of Courage*, wishes to demolish this perspective in his novella.

A novella that depicts the reality of war, in this chapter, I analyse what aspects of war, specifically the American Civil War, are present in the novella. In order to de-romanticize war, Crane narrates the story of Henry Fleming: a naïve young man who continuously seeks to be seen as a brave hero. Eager to prove how brave and heroic he feels; he sets off to enlist without his mother's approval:

He had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric [...] But his mother had discouraged him
(Crane, 1895. Chapter 1, page 5)

The contrast between Henry's romantic view of war, and reality is seen early on in the novella. Before he departs, as he prepares to leave his mother, he expects a type of Spartan send-off. Henry prepares a speech that he never says out loud as his mother did not part with him as he had expected:

Still, she had disappointed him by saying nothing whatever about returning with his shield or on it. He had privately primed himself for a beautiful scene. He had prepared touching sentences which he thought could be used with touching effect.

But her words destroyed his plans. (Crane, 1895 chapter 1)

Crane contrasts this romantic view with a dose of reality. To accomplish this contrast, the author uses Henry's mother's voice. When Henry announces he is leaving because he had enlisted, contrary to her advice, she simply replies that it is God's will. This comment is very interesting and led me to research God during the Civil War. God was an important figure to both the Union and the Confederate side²². This comment highlights that people believed that they were never in control of their lives.

In the past, Henry's mother had told Henry he was needed at the farm, and to not be a fool:

She could calmly seat herself and with no apparent difficulty gave him many hundreds of reasons why he was of vastly more importance on the farm than on the field of battle. She had certain ways of expression that told him her statements on the subject came from a deep conviction. Moreover, on her side, was his belief that her ethical motive in the argument was impregnable (Crane, 1895. Chapter 1)

This conviction about war has to do with self-preservation rather than the knowledge of the effects of previous wars. Henry's mother is afraid that he will become a 'bad man'. She gives her son advice on how to behave and what company to keep. She reminds him that his father never once tried a drop of liquor and tells him that he is to think as if she is watching him. If he listens to her advice, she says, that *he will come out right*. This reference to liquor, and how she connects it to bad men is a reflection of the

²² This information has been taken from (2019) both armies in the civil war. Wyatt Massey. *Timesfreepress* <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/life/entertainment/story/2019/nov/23/both-armies-civil-war-god-churches/508964/>

period the novella is set in. Alcoholism was a main issue in the American Civil War that lasted until the Prohibition period²³.

Crane's description of Henry's mother is very realistic. As a mother, she gives her son advice and when he does not heed said advice, she gives him more advice. She doesn't stop him, therefore allowing him to make his own choices. She is hurt but doesn't want to stop her son from learning about the world around him. He only notices her hurt when he looks back and sees tears roll down her face.

Still, when he had looked back from the gate, he had seen his mother kneeling among the potato parings. Her brown face, upraised, was stained with tears {...}
(Crane, 1895. Chapter 1)

The contrast between reality and romanticization continues to be evident with Henry's eagerness for battle. As he departs home, Henry feels admired, proud, and like a hero, for that is how his town treats him:

The regiment was fed and caressed at station after station until the youth had believed he must be a hero. As he basked in the smiles of girls and was patted and complimented by the old men, he had felt growing within him the strength to do mighty deeds. (Crane, 1895. Chapter 1).

In line with what is said above and with the town's treatment, Henry is led to believe he will constantly be fighting and have little time to eat: *'He had had the belief that real war was a series of death struggles with small time in between for sleep and meals'* [...] (Crane, 1895. Chapter 1).

Yet again, Stephen Crane contrasts this belief by describing the young protagonist's experiences. Henry begins to regret war for the first time when he is on guard and converses with a fellow soldier: *'Yank', the other had informed him, 'yer a right dum*

²³ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2019, November 20). Prohibition. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Prohibition-United-States-history-1920-1933>

good feller'. This sentiment, floating to him upon the still air, had made him temporarily regret war". (Crane,1895. Chapter 1). Henry is not automatically a hero as he had expected to be. As the notion of an actual battle starts to form in his mind, he starts self-doubting. Filled with this self-doubt he continuously seeks comfort from other soldiers by asking them how did they know they wouldn't run when battle came: *'how do you know you won't run when the time comes?'* Asked the youth. *'Run?'* Said the loud one; *'run? - of course not!'* He laughed. (Crane,1895. Chapter 2).None of his fellow companions seemed to be facing the fear-induced problems Henry seemed to face. Henry continuously makes mathematical calculations and asks many questions to veterans and fellow soldiers. Nevertheless, nothing can comfort his insecurities. These insecurities frustrate him even further when he realizes he has to put up with months of doing nothing at camp with continuous false rumours of movement. It is in one of these moments that make the first implicit reference to the battle of *Chancellorsville*:

Once a certain tall soldier developed virtues and went resolutely to wash a shirt... He was swelled with a tale he had heard from a reliable friend, who had heard it from a truthful cavalryman, who had heard it from his trustworthy brother, one of the orderlies at division headquarters. He adopted the important air of a herald in red and gold. 'We're goin' t' move t'morra – sure' he said pompously to a group in the company street. 'We're goin' way up the river, cut across, an' come around in behind 'em. (Crane,1895. Chapter 1) 'Cutting across the river and coming up behind them' was exactly what the Unionists did in the battle of Chancellorsville (see part 1).

When the army does finally move, it frustrates Henry even further as he says that the army seems to be moving aimlessly. This aimlessness makes Henry feel as though he is merely a part of a 'blue demonstration'.

*The youth had been taught that a man became another thing in a battle{...}
Hence this waiting was an ordeal to him. He was in a fever of impatience. He
considered that there was denoted a lack of purpose on the part of the generals.
[...] He wished to return to camp, knowing that this affair was a blue
demonstration. (Crane,1895. Chapter 3)*

The first thought that comes to mind when thinking about the Civil War is that this feeling of aimlessness was normal between the soldiers' ranks. Many times the ordinary soldiers didn't know the orders given to the generals nor that these orders could change as quickly as they were given out. This poor communication between soldiers, and their superiors often led to the impression soldiers were moved with no apparent reason. Another thought that comes to mind is that Henry's feeling was right, and soldiers were moved so the enemy could feel the vastness of the opponent. This demonstration of power is reminiscent of other battles when instruments are played to seem more numerous.

Sooner than Henry anticipates; the scenes of battle and death start to unfold. It is in these scenes where the contrast between Henry's vivid imagination, and reality becomes most striking and fascinating. Throughout his infancy, Henry has read about great Greek-like struggles, Spartan battles and glorious victories. During the first chapters, he continuously doubts himself but still looks forward to battle.

Henry even finds himself envious of the injured soldiers:

*At times he enviously regarded the wounded soldiers. He conceived persons with
torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red
badge of courage (Crane,1895. Chapter 3. Para. 3)*

Furthermore, death is present numerous times. He finds his friend Jim and witnesses him die. He eventually comes to a conclusion that makes him see death as an end to his troubles. He finds himself envious of the bodies strewn over the grass:

He now thought that he wished he was dead. He believed that he envied those men whose bodies lay strewn over the grass of the fields and on the fallen leaves of the forest. (Crane, 1895. Chapter 10)

Again, Crane presents reality by contrasting Henry's idealization of war with war's crude reality. He portrays this reality through Henry's thoughts. When Henry Fleming experiences war, he doesn't see vague and bloody conflicts as he had expected. Instead, Henry finds that war is foul; its atmosphere noisy, and the smoke so dense, he feels like choking. After the first taste of battle, Henry feels exhausted and suffocated. At the same time, he feels relieved because he had not run. It is not until the second round of battle when (after analysing the situation and is sure they were all going to be slaughtered) he runs away. Contrary to his vision of heroic actions, he soon realizes that the battle was anything but that. Henry witnesses many other soldiers run, the horrific death of one of his friends, and injury. He discovers that being injured is not enviable. Death is also portrayed in a realistic manner with vivid descriptions. An example of this is found in Chapter Seven when he had been running away from the battle, and enters the thick woods:

Near the threshold, he stopped, horror-stricken at the sight of a thing. He was being looked at by a dead man who was seated with his back against a column like tree. The corpse was dressed in a uniform that had once 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 a dead fish. The mouth was open. It's red had changed to an appealing yellow. Over the grey skin of the face ran

little ants [...] The youth shrieked as he confronted the thing. He was for moments turned to stone before it. He remained staring into the liquid looking eyes. [...] He feared that if he turned his back the body might spring up and stealthily pursue him. (Crane, 1895. Chapter 7)

This description of a corpse is interesting for the lack of personification of the body. The body is referred to as 'it'. The colour of the fallen soldier's eyes is compared to the colour of the side of a fish. The body of the dead soldier is dehumanised by Henry to the extent he is afraid the corpse will recover life and pursue him. The way Crane describes these colours, the ragged clothing, and other striking imagery is a much-celebrated feature of his style. The colours used by Crane are admittedly very interesting. With colour; Crane uses his technique of contrast to describe war. In chapters 11 to 13 he combines colours with concepts. Henry experiences '*the black weight of his woe*', '*he soared on the red wings of war*' and war is described as a '*red animal*'. Even on the battlefield, colours seem to be very important, smoke is blue, and the evening is 'orange light' 'purple shadows and darkness'.

Crane also uses irony to ridicule the American Civil War. Henry eventually receives his much desired '*Red Badge of Courage*' in Chapter Twelve. In this chapter, Henry finds himself at a roadway when waves of men come sweeping out of the woods and through the many vast fields towards him. These men were running all over the place. He kept asking them why. He held on to one of the Unionist soldiers to try and get answers. The soldier screamed at Henry to let him go. Henry did not, and the soldier swung his rifle at Henry's head. This injury is ironic as it was inflicted on Henry by one of the soldiers of his army rather than by the enemy which is what would be expected. He finally makes his way back to the regiment and is so ashamed by his running away that he lies and says he had got shot in the head.

The reality of war and its horrors are also portrayed through Henry's fellow soldiers' voices. At first, like Henry, they all say they will not run from war, or that they would defeat the enemy 'no problem' all by themselves. It is not long until they change their minds. A clear example of this would be in Chapter 14. Henry is asked by his comrade if in the next stage of battle they will win. Henry finds himself surprised by this answer and says: *day-b'fore-yesterday [...] you would a' bet you'd lick the hull kit-an'-boodle all by yourself* (Crane, 1895. Chapter 14). With these words, it is clear that battle has thrown the soldiers into the cruellest of realities and it has left them in a state of shock.

The notion that wars makes a boy a man is also present at the end of the novella when Henry says that thanks to experience, he was now a man: *There was a little flower of confidence growing within him. He was now a man of experience.* (Crane, 1895. Chapter 15) This feeling of patriotism and hatred is contrasted by what happens to him. As Henry had been cursing, the enemy had fought back. Henry realizes his error and states that he had fought like a pagan, but at the same time he realizes it was the only way he could survive and become a hero:

He had fought like a pagan who defends his religion [...] by this struggle he had overcome obstacles which he had admitted to be mountains [...] he was now what he called a hero [...] he had found himself a knight. (Crane, 1895. Chapter 17)

Crane also portrays the feeling of hatred. In Chapter 17, Henry only desires to see his enemy crushed. It is his hatred towards the enemy, that keeps him going: *He lost sense of everything but his hate, his desire to smash into pulp the glittering smile of victory which he could feel upon the faces of his enemies* (Crane, 1895. Chapter 17).

The last aspect of war Crane describes is, to me, the most interesting one: Patriotic Fervour. Henry doesn't seem to have any motivation to go to war other than that of being called a hero. However, by the end of the novella we see how this changes and Henry

wants to defend his flag no matter what: *Within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him. It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. It was a goddess, radiant, that bended its form with an imperious gesture to him. It was a woman, red and white, hating and loving, that called him with the voice of his hopes. He kept near, as if it could be a saver of lives, and an imploring cry went from his mind* (Crane, 1895. Chapter 19). This feeling that the flag would save lives is contrasted with reality once again when immediately after the sergeant flinches and becomes motionless. Crane describes the death as useless by using the flag as a symbol: *The dead man, swinging with bended back, seemed to be obstinately tugging, in ludicrous and awful ways, for the possession of the flag [...]* (Crane, 1895. Chapter 19)

Crane contrasts Henry's romantic vision with stark reality. This reality is portrayed through the voices of other characters in the novella, with realistic descriptions, and creative imaginary. Throughout this chapter, we have seen how Crane talks about the horrors of war. How he describes victory, helplessness, fear, solitude, injury, death... Many authors describe this novella as an episode of the American Civil War²⁴. In some editions, this referral is placed next to the original title. However, this may not be entirely true as we will analyse in the next chapter.

²⁴ Amazon, a webpage for buying different materials which includes books, describe the novel as an episode of the American Civil war. <https://www.amazon.com/Red-Badge-Courage-Episode-American/dp/0679602968>

6. *The Red Badge of Courage*: Omission of the American Civil War.

In the previous chapter, I have analysed how Stephen Crane includes elements of The American Civil War in his novella *Red Badge of Courage*. However, upon researching, I realized that although he uses the American Civil War as the novella's setting, many important Civil War elements are not mentioned enough, or are completely omitted.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will be analysing the Civil War elements that are omitted.

6.1 Slavery

In this paper, specifically in chapter three, I talked about the main cause of the American Civil War: Slavery and its economic consequences.

At first Lincoln's objective was the preservation of the Union rather than the abolition of slavery. He believed in gradual emancipation. It was not until September 1862 in the Emancipation Proclamation that he declared that all slaves who resided in the states were to be free²⁵. That is when the Civil War became a war to end the practice of slavery. The people who defended slavery would argue that ending the practice would cause a catastrophic reaction to the economy in the South, and eventually: kill it. Slave labour had founded their economy and so, therefore, they relied on it. The South argued that tobacco, cotton and rice would cease to be profitable. They proclaimed that if slaves were freed there would be unemployment and chaos, which would eventually lead to riot, bloodshed and mutiny²⁶. They compared this possibility with what happened with the people who fought in the French Revolution. Furthermore, they stated that slavery had existed throughout history (the Greeks, the Romans, and the

²⁵ Crane, S. (2020, November 11). The Veteran. Retrieved from <https://americanliterature.com/author/stephen-crane/short-story/the-veteran>

²⁶ Retrieved from: UShistory.org. (n.d.). The Southern Argument for Slavery [ushistory.org] <https://www.ushistory.org/us/27f.asp>

English had all had slaves) and was, therefore, a natural state of mankind²⁷. Defenders of slavery also believed they had God on their side²⁸. They would regularly quote the bible to defend their actions (Abraham had slaves), and state that Jesus never spoke against the practice. The abolitionists (those against slavery) also put forth their arguments. Those included:

1. **Economic arguments:** Sugar could be produced cheaply in India, and Britain no longer depended heavily on the slave trade as the industrial revolution was booming.
2. **Humanitarian arguments:** Slaves were denied their freedom and human rights. Many people died on the voyage, including British sailors.
3. **Christian arguments:** Slavery broke the ten commandments because Christianity represented treating everyone as equals.²⁹

After this research, it is clear that slavery was an important economic, religious, and moral reason for the war. However, Stephen Crane omits this in his novella.

This omission of the war's main cause seems shocking and strange but there may be an explanation.

The first reason for this omission could be because Crane wished to de-romanticize war. Slavery is used as an excuse to have fought the war; by removing the element of slavery, Crane is removing any idealism connected to the Civil War. It may

²⁷ There was even a paper published in pamphlet form the introductory chapter of a book entitled Negroes and Negro slavery that promoted the idea that Negroes were naturally meant to be slaves. The pamphlets made a profound impact and impression on the Southerners mind because for them it stated the absolute truth. You can find the book here on amazon: <https://www.amazon.ca/Negros-Place-Nature-Anthropological-Society/dp/B008M9YY08>

²⁸ This information has been taken from (2019)botharmiesinthecivilwar. Wyatt Massey. *Timesfreepress* <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/life/entertainment/story/2019/nov/23/both-armies-civil-war-god-churches/508964/>

²⁹ According to Dr Will Hardy, a London historian and lecturer at the Open University, the 'Christian duty' was being re-interpreted towards the oppressed. This was due to the emergence of what is known as 'public opinion' via the growth of newspapers and relatively high levels of literacy. <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/the-rise-and-fall-the-slave-trade>

be a psychological literary device. In the same way that people believe the First World War was an unnecessary carnage (as there was no justification for the war except fervid patriotism and imperialism); an American Civil War without the anti-slavery movement, is simply a bloody and useless war between co-citizens. Furthermore, having read the whole novella and analysed the symbolic meaning of the flag, this argument is further sustained. The second reason is perhaps more sinister. As I said in Chapter four, Stephen Crane was a man of complex, and seemingly contradictory morals.

In the novella, the main character is a unionist soldier who through a unionist perspective explains his experience in war. This can be interpreted in two different ways. The author was a unionist and wanted to give the unionist side protagonism, or second we can interpret a negative side of the Union. In the third chapter, Henry says: “*He had not enlisted of his free will. He had been dragged by the merciless government and now they were taking him out to be slaughtered*”. Without further research, this could be interpreted as a criticism of the Unionist government. This, and the fact that the author makes no mention of the carnage witnessed on the Confederate side. However, with further research it is clear that this sentence means people are never in control of their lives; they are subjugated by merciless circumstances (political, sociological, genetic). Outward forces governing the lives of people were very much in vogue at the time as a reaction against Romanticism and Transcendentalists that believed in the endless potential of the individual. Determinism was very much cherished by Crane who knew how to unfold external circumstances with an acute selection of moments in Henry’s life. Thus, Crane has been seen as one of the best representatives of Naturalism in fiction (like Zola or Pardo Bazan).

When we talk about Crane’s questionable morals, another novel comes to mind called *The Monster*. *The Monster*, (portrayed by a black person) and the intention of the

author, has been widely studied as being racist³⁰. This example, plus the omission of slavery, the authors' decision on being a war correspondent, the spying on Mount Augustine, the biased journalistic writing, amongst others, can also lead to the belief the author had racial sympathies. However, it is important to bear in mind that most of the population was racist. Those who were more advanced (as far as the USA is concerned) believed in segregation. Segregation was, in fact, the result/ victory of the American Civil War. When you compare slavery and segregation, the latter may be seen as a sort of social moral advancement.

After analysing the possibility of both arguments, the first argument is more realistic and sustainable than the second argument which is mere speculation and has not yet been affirmed by any expert on the topic.

6.2 The African American issue.

During the American Civil War, many African American leaders such as the author William Wells Brown or physician and author Martin R Delany recruited blacks into the unionist armed forces³¹. According to Wikipedia, 186,097 black men joined the unionist army³². Before the Emancipation Proclamation black people were not allowed to serve due to a federal law enacted in 1792 (this did not apply to the navy nor did it stop them from participating in the war of 1812). African- Americans accounted for about 10 per cent of the troops and 20,000 served in the navy. However, many injustices occurred. The North was hypocritical and bigoted when it came to African-Americans serving in the

³⁰ Landa , José Ángel García. "Reading Racism: The Assumption of Authorial Intentions in Stephen Crane's : The Monster." *Miscelánea*, Universidad de Zaragoza, vol. 10, ¿1989papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1737231.

³¹ Lynch, H., & T.E.E.B. (n.d.). African Americans - The Civil War era. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-American/The-Civil-War-era>

³² Wikipedia contributors. (2021, June 3). *Military history of African Americans in the American Civil War*. Wikipedia.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_African_Americans_in_the_American_Civil_War

war. The soldiers were placed in segregated units, few of which saw real battle action. Their duties were building forts or put on guard duty. Furthermore, their regiments were commanded by white men. Very few African Americans received an officer's rank as it was a position of power. These exceptions made African-American soldiers be in camps where they were at a greater risk of contracting diseases and illnesses. These conditions caused two-thirds of deaths within their troops³³.

To contrast these differences even further, African American soldiers were paid less than white soldiers. Besides they were required to pay for their uniforms whereas white soldiers got them for free. It was not until 1864 that this changed but their equipment was usually poorer quality or old. Blacks also faced a threat the whites did not: If a black soldier was captured, they could be put into slavery.

Despite all these disadvantages, black troops who did see battle performed many heroic acts and fought admirably. They participated directly in fights at Milliken's bend, Louisiana, port Hudson, etc. Twenty-five of these troops were even awarded the Medal of Honour for their bravery. The influence of African Americans is also omitted in the novella and they played an important role. Why Crane omitted these important people in his novella remains unclear. Still, there is a reason that comes to mind. As I said above, African-Americans hardly ever saw battle and even though some did actively participate in battles such as those fought in Louisiana, Tennessee, Nashville or port Hudson, I have not found any reputable source that claims African Americans fought in the battle of Chancellorsville. Crane could have possibly deemed the inclusion of African-Americans as irrelevant. Nevertheless, I embrace this opportunity to offer some criticism towards the author. In my personal opinion, Crane should have found a way to include these soldiers

³³ Retrieved from: *American Civil War - African American troops*. (n.d.). Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved June 4, 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War/African-American-troops>

and navy personnel in his novella. By not mentioning them he is thus condemning them to silence. Silencing history is also a way to manipulate history. Whether he did this on purpose or not, is a question for future research.

6.3 Women's issue

The American Civil War changed American society profoundly and quickly. When talking about how it changed people's life we tend to think of how it changed life for slaves, but, it also significantly changed women's lives. The Civil War opened new paths for women and allowed them to pursue roles that had previously been allocated to men. An example of this would be nursing. Thousands of women started to serve as nurses across the nation's hospitals. These nurses would provide treatment to sick and injured soldiers, by which, they saved countless lives³⁴. This was true for both the South and the North. In the South, we have nurses like Kate Cumming, and Phoebe Pember. In the North, we have nurses like Mary Livermore, and Clara Barton. After the war, these two nurses advocated for reforms using their experience in war as a way to persuade others. These reforms impacted (positively)the quality of medical care in the United States.

In the years that preceded and led up to the Civil War, many women started advocating women's rights in the North. It was women like Abby Kelley who continued this fight throughout the Civil War while at the same time fighting for abolition and the Union.

It is important to highlight that women in the South were no less outspoken or less important. Many women like Rose O'Neal and other female spies provided information to the Confederacy that would later be very valuable in battle.

Furthermore, and more shockingly as it was not allowed, both in the North and in the South, many women fought in the battlefield. Even African American women like Harriet Tubman fought in sometimes very dangerous roles as Union scouts³⁵. Although

³⁴ Retrieved from: *Female Nurses During the Civil War*. (2021, June 1). American Battlefield Trust. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/female-nurses-during-civil-war>

³⁵ Scouts were spies. According to Wikipedia, Harriet Tubman, born Araminta Ross escaped slavery and rescued 70 enslaved people, including family and friends. When the war was over, she was also an activist for women's rights.

an exact count is impossible, it is estimated that between 400 and 750 soldiers were women. Studies point to women going to war for the same reasons men went to war. Some went because they wanted adventure, the promise of reliable wages and others for patriotic motivations. Sarah Edmond Seelye, also known as Franklin Flint Thompson fought in the 2nd Michigan Infantry. She preferred to fight rather than stay at home and weep. She is also the only woman who received a veteran's pension after the war.

Women were hardly ever discovered because most soldiers had no prior military training, so men and women fought alike and learnt how to fight at the same pace. Most soldiers slept clothed in case they had to face battle, bathed separately and avoided public toilets. This helped women to stay hidden and pretend to be male. The clothing was also ill-fitted and heavy and that also helped conceal women features. The fact that they couldn't grow a beard was also overlooked and usually attributed to youth. It was only when injured in battle when they could be discovered³⁶. The nurse mentioned earlier in the chapter, Barton, discovered Mary Galloway's (a woman who had fought in the battle of Antietam) identity. When a woman was discovered she would usually be sent home with no punishment, but some did face imprisonment.

In summary, the Civil War changed the nation's perception on women and their capabilities. This in turn led to a push towards equality not just between races but, also, between genders.

Crane, however, hardly mentions women. When women are mentioned, they are portrayed as mothers or lovers. They are described in their traditional roles and no female soldiers are mentioned. In one case, they are even compared to a flag: *It was a goddess [...] it was a woman, red and white, hating and loving, that called him with the voice of*

³⁶ Retrieved from: *Female Soldiers in the Civil War*. (2021, April 13). American Battlefield Trust. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/female-soldiers-civil-war>

his hopes. It is necessary to mention, once again, that Crane never actually experienced the American Civil War first-hand. His experience in war is extracted from extensive research, and from interviewing veterans. It is also important to highlight that the extent of female soldiers present in the American Civil War is unknown. As both sides forbade their participation in war, many disguised themselves as men. As I said above, most were not discovered, and those who were discovered were sent home. All of these facts are probably the reason as to why Crane omits women in his novella. When analysing why Crane portrays women as weak, or as a goddess it is necessary to analyse how women were viewed in the 19th Century. During the 19th Century women and men were not seen as equal. Women were seen as the ‘weak’ sex and had very few rights³⁷. Things started to change towards the end of the century as women, and some men demanded women had a right to vote. *Red Badge of Courage* was published in 1895 and Crane may have shared his centuries mindset and saw women as weak. However, it is important to highlight that when Henry’s mother is crying because her son is leaving, it doesn’t strike me as weakness. She cries when Henry has his back turned. If Crane really saw women as weak, he would have described the scene in a more dramatic way. This leads me, as a reader, to think that his mindset was changing with society, and that, he, in fact, agreed to women’s rights. If this is true and he supported women’s rights, it leads me to once again offer some criticism. Why would he not name Henry’s mother? Is it to silence her opinion? Again, I believe that literature should not be seen through the rose-tinted glasses of today. As with the question of slavery, if a man stood for women’s rights, he would be considered advanced/modern for the times he lived in.

³⁷ *Woman’s Rights Activists during the Civil War*. (n.d.). National Women’s History Museum. Retrieved May2021 <https://www.womenshistory.org/resources/general/womans-rights-activists-during-civil-war>

6.4 The Confederate side

Red Badge of Courage is seen through the eyes of a soldier (Henry) from the Unionist side. In chapter three of this paper, I explained that the American Civil War was fought between two sides. In most of my paper I refer to both sides as North and South. The North was known as the Unionist side, and the South was known as the Confederate side. Having read the novella it is curious that Stephen Crane should only briefly mention the Confederate side, being the enemy of the protagonist in his novella.

The first allusion of the confederate side can be found in chapter 3 when Henry encounters a dead soldier.

Once the line encountered the body of a dead soldier. He lay upon his back staring at the sky. He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown[...] soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinnes of writing paper[...] In death it exposed to his enemies that poverty which in life he had perhaps concealed from his friends.

From this quote we can infer that the dead person is in fact a soldier from the confederate side³⁸. The description seems to be rather objective as the author only remarks on the colour of the uniform and the poverty the soldier must have lived with when describing his shoes. There does not seem to be any sign of hatred from Henry.

It is not until Chapter 11 (when the enemy is described through figurative language) that this 'pacific' vision of the enemy changes. In Chapter 11, the enemy loses all personification and is described as 'dragons' or as 'charging buffaloes'. This loss of personification and use of strong, fierce, blood-thirsty animals connotes negative feelings

³⁸ Union soldiers often referred to those soldiers on the Confederate side as 'butternuts' because their uniforms were a yellow-brown colour. <https://www.ncpedia.org/media/confederate-soldier>

towards the enemy. These negative, and hateful connotations are worsened when in chapter 17 in a dream Henry desires to squash his enemy.

When in a dream it occurred to the youth that his rifle was an important stick, he lost sense of everything but his hate, his desire to smash into pulp the glittering smile of victory which he could feel upon the faces of his enemies.

It is interesting to see how Henry's character evolves over the chapters. At first it seems as if he only knows about glorified war and wants to be a hero. However, as he continues to grow, he starts to hate his enemy and 'fight for his country'. This hatred however doesn't seem to be linked to ideals of slavery or any other cause of the American Civil War. It seems once again, that Crane wishes to portray the war as simple patriotic fervour. This patriotic fervour is magnificently portrayed throughout the last chapters in the book. When faced with battle, and with the knowledge that they would not win, they still are ready to fight:

Still they saw no hesitation in each other's faces, and they nodded a mute and unprotesting assent when a shaggy man near them said in a meek voice: we'll git swallowed. (Chapter 18)

It is important to say that it seems that the few mentions of the enemy are present in battlefield. Crane mentions how they charge, and how they fight. There is no mention to why they are fighting each other. Therefore, the reader is unable to understand (with the book alone) what motivated the American Civil War. The reason of this omission could be because Crane only interviewed soldiers from the Unionist side when he was researching for his novella. According to *LA Rocca*, Stephen Crane drew his inspiration from the 124th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, who were commonly called the

"Orange Blossoms"³⁹. The 124th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, as the name states, was a volunteer regiment from New York that fought on the Unionist side. I have not found any sources that say Crane interviewed any regiments from the Confederate side. Therefore, that is the reason for the omission of the Confederate side in *Red Badge of Courage*.

³⁹ LaRocca admits that there was never a diary entry, letter nor conversation that proves that the 'orange blossoms' were the model for the novel. However, the title of the book is proof enough as it gives an important clue... The main character receives a 'red badge of courage' which was also known as a Kearny patch. The 124th also wore the red badge, and was the only untried Corps unit at Chancellorsville who wore the badge – Just like Crane -<https://www.soldierstudies.org/blog/2011/03/the-red-badge-of-courage-inspired-by-charles-weygants-orange-blossoms/>

7. Conclusions

Throughout this paper I have analysed Stephen Crane's most famous work: *The Red Badge of Courage*. I first gave a brief introduction on the historical background in order to contextualize the novella. I then mentioned brief details of Stephen Crane's life and how he became a war correspondent. This research helped me question and understand different areas of the American Civil War, which in turn helped me analyse what Civil War elements Stephen Crane omits, and includes in the novella. I first analysed what aspects of war were included (the feeling that war is glorious and virile, the presence of God, the alcohol problem ...). After this analysis I examined whether there were any important aspects that had been omitted. Indeed, there were many (omission of slavery, African-Americans, women...). I also gave possible reasons as to why Stephen Crane could have chosen to omit these elements.

Upon reflection, I have come to a second realisation. The elements Stephen Crane includes in the novella are elements which are present in all wars. The feeling that war is glorious and virile is present in many wars, and can also be seen in more contemporary novels or films such as the beginning of *All quiet on the Western Front* from the First World War, or even in novels such as from the saga *Narnia* when Edmund, the protagonist wants to enlist but they realise he is too young. The feelings of love ones left behind, the town send-off, the presence of death, patriotic fervour, sacrifice, injury... are also items present in many wars. All of these films and novels have been published and released many years after *The Red Badge of Courage*, but the main themes remain the same throughout history. This fact, and the fact Stephen Crane omitted many key elements such as slavery, the role of African-Americans, the role of women or the enemy leads me to conclude that the novella is not a novella from which you can learn about the American Civil War nor one which is about that war in particular. The novella may be based on the

American Civil War and used for inspiration, but it is essentially a study of courage and fear seen through Henry's perspective.

These facts, however, do not in any way dismiss the importance of *The Red Badge of Courage* as it is a classic. It is highly influential, vivid, realistic and speaks of human experience. This novella served as an influence for future war writers as instead of a romantic perspective, it allowed for realism.

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