STEPHEN CRANE ON FILM: ADAPTATION AS INTERPRETATION

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PREFACE

Criticism of film adaptations based on Stephen Crane's fiction is for the most part limited to superficial reviews or misguided articles. Scholars have failed to assess cinematic achievements or the potential of adaptations as interpretive tools. This study will be the first to gauge the success of the five films attempting to recreate and interpret Crane's vision.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Movies help get books out of college classrooms and into the streets where they can do some good. There is a sense in which literature is defused by its respectability. Shakespeare's original popularity was attained in a theatre in London's red-light district; his audience had in it whores and pickpockets and vagabonds. Dickens circulated originally by means of newspaper serialization; his work was by no means designed as the subject of seminars. Literature loses its 'presence,' its virility, when given no other environment than library or classroom; movie adaptations help restore literature's significance. I have a great deal more faith in the potency of a book first encountered via a movie adaptation than in its power if it is first encountered in a college classroom.[1]

Although Charles Eidsvek's conclusion that literature ought to be encountered first through movie adaptation and then in the classroom would obviously disturb litterateurs, his basic assumption that film can renew the "virility" and "presence" of literature is worth addressing. According to William Kittredge, "When a skilled filmmaker is in control, the medium's ability to inflame our mind's eye is virtually unlimited."[3] Thoughtful film viewing then is not a banal, passive acitivity, but a form of intellectual exercise. Carole Berger calls the film experience inherently more gripping than the reading experience "because it adds to the anxieties related to knowing those associated with seeing."[3] The immediacy of watching film can stimulate imagination, and in a media age where more people view than read, it is only wise to explore ways in which adaptations can fine tune our perceptions of an author's vision.

The viewing of an adaptation should not be designed to replace a work of literature; however, it should visualize and interpret it in new ways.

Unfortunately, studies which address the relationship between literature and film adaptation often focus on anecdotes about the author, plot, actors, general film theory, censorship problems, studio pressures, and Hollywood minutia rather than providing a specific literary/cinematic analysis of the transformation process. Books such as Frank J. Laurence's Hemingway and the Movies (1981) and Gene D. Phillips' Hemingway and Film (1980) contain massive detail, but the insights center more on Hollywood and the chosen fiction writer's relationship to it than on aspects of literary content and style.[4] Their contributions to criticism on adaptations are for the most part negligible. While production histories are interesting and often partially explain the success or failure of a film (whether or not it is based on a literary work), a more thorough discussion of how film can contribute to our understanding of literature is in order. Pioneering works in this area of study include George Bluestone's dated but still useful Novels Into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction Into Cinema (1957) and a more recent anthology, The Classic American Novel and the Movies (1977), edited by Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin. Both examine film adaptations from several theoretical viewpoints.

For the most part, it is the casual viewer, not the serious critic of adaptation, who holds to the view that experience of watching a novel or story-based film "ruins" the reading experience and destroys the imaginative world created by the author. However, some well-known critics contend that some literary works ought to be left alone. Michael J. Arlen, for example, argues that "these new, solemn practitioners

of visual story-telling /adaptors/ are soul devourers."[5] Using WGBH's version of The Scarlet Letter as a test case, Arlen contends that adaptors "abuse the essence of literature" and their self-serving commercial appetites feed on "artistic" material. Underlying the acerbic tone of Arlen's comment there is a core complaint held by many critics; film adaptations, they argue, do not improve upon, update, or interpret the original. They merely rearrange or reconstruct at a lesser intensity, thereby vitiating the "artistic" material of a novel or short story. A companion critic to Michael Arlen is the French director Alain Resnais, who has been quoted and requoted for labeling adaptations warmed-over meals.[6]

Less visceral and more intelligent in its approach to adaptation theory is a group of critics which assesses literature and films as inherently disparate (but not necessarily incompatible) art forms. In Theory of the Film, Bela Balazs asserts that an adaptation of a literary work produces different content:

> There can be no doubt that it is possible to take the subject, the story, the plot of a novel, turn it into a play or a film and yet produce perfect works of art in each case--the form in each case adequate to the content. How is this possible? It is possible because, while the subject, or story, of both works is identical, their content is nevertheless different. It is this different content that is adequately expressed in the changed form resulting from the adaptation.[7]

In Balazs's view (as well as in George Bluestone's), the literary work is raw material to be shaped into an infinite number of forms.

The question which develops from these issues is that of fidelity. What responsibilities does an adaptor have to the literary original and the intentions of the author? Opinions on fidelity abound: for Bluestone and Balazs, who assert that literature is the raw material to be

shaped anew, fidelity is a negligible issue. The most common concern regarding the responsibility of an adaptor is "respect." A central problem here is grounded in terminology, for words such as "respect" for mood, spirit, intent, and vision are so vague and general that they become meaningful only when applied in specific cases. Yet these terms appear repeatedly in the mainstream of literature-to-film criticism. For example, Gerald Barrett asserts that "a successful adaptation will reproduce as much of the spirit and as many of the themes of the original as possible given the limitations of the film medium."[8] This broad statement of concern for fidelity does become more than sententious rhetoric when specific matters are addressed.

Sheer length becomes a problem in adapting a novel. Writers Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur cut the number of scenes in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights virtually in half, without, as George Bluestone has pointed out, "obliterating the book's final meaning."[9] Dudley Nichols suggests that "in some respects the filmplay even improves upon the novel by concentrating upon the central drama in the lives of the possessed lovers."[10] It is seldom stated that a film is better than a novel, especially when the length of the original is drastically cut, because many critics still view this editing process as what Richard Hulseburg defines as "a kind of vulgar cultural cannibalism"; in fact, the novel is fixed as a "sort of standard and the filmmakers improvement or desecration is seen as a modification and criticism of the 'original.'"[11] This literary preciosity is understandable, for we all associate "leaving something out," or varying in any other way from the text, to be a comment which reads something like "what was left out wasn't worth inclusion in the first place." However, the bias is

entirely impractical, for it leads the critic to a dead end--it implicitly undercuts even the possibility that film can effectively "reconstruct" a novel or short story.

George Bluestone, in his pioneering Novels Into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction Into Cinema, cites another major issue:

> The rendition of mental states--memory, dream, imagination--cannot be as adequately represented by film as by language. If the film has difficulty presenting streams of consciousness, it has even more difficulty presenting states of mind which are defined precisely by the absence in them of the visible world.[12]

The problem in handling figures of speech, which Bluestone also cites, is a very real one for the adaptors and critics alike. To raise these issues is not to construct an impossible barrier, but to present a formidable challenge.

The "language" of film is multi-dimensional. As Harris Elder has pointed out, "film as a rhetorical strategy of several presentational modes employs verbal language (dialogue, visualized print, voice-over narration), sound, and music to add a connotative dimension to objects and action which exist in physical space."[13] The keynote of Elder's dis-discussion is the term "connotative dimensions"; film can suggest the the interior mental state of character, though the demands on the filmmakers and actors may be great. Generally speaking, because film is primarily visual, the challenge of presenting psychological states or literary tropes which demand conceptualization involves finding a visual analogue (an external image) which suggests thought appropriately.

Many critics, however, find film incapable of probing consciousness. Richard Hulseburg, for example, states that film has "difficulty approximating these interiors."[14] Likewise, Fred H. Marcus suggests that

"verbal abstraction cannot always find a visual equivalent."[15] Both critics grasp the issue, but Marcus uses a case in point which reveals a typical underestimation of the medium's capabilities. His example involves the opening two sentences of Chapter Two of The Scarlet Letter:

> A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments, and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods and others bare-headed, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak and iron spikes.[16]

Here, Marcus observes that the filmmaker has a vast array of alternatives available.[17] However, the next sentence, he claims, is untranslatable:

> The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison.[18]

Marcus points to Hawthorne's rhetorical irony and abstraction, which are used to conjoin Utopia and prison; he claims that here verbal abstraction lacks visual equivalents.[19]

This is exactly the sort of challenge that a filmmaker can meet by inventively using cinematic elements. The filmmaker might, for instance, juxtapose shots of a thriving, harmonious community with shots of a barren cemetery.and closeups of prison bars and locks. The succession of disparate images alone would suggest that film can convey, by means of montage, abstract concepts. The issue of conveying mental states and verbal abstractions on film leads directly into other issues which also touch on fildelity or "respect" for the original: deletion, alteration, and invention. A test case in the present study treats NBC's version of Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage. This adaptation proves that filmmakers can find cinematic analogues for literary techniques. For example,

director Lee Philips uses a subjective camera to capture the protagonist's "fleeting vision" and reverse camera angles to render the chaos of battle.

If a critic approaches adaptation with respect for the filmmaker's vision, the economic exigencies, and the inherent differences between the mediums of literature and film, as well as for the author's intent, alternatives such as deletion, rearrangement, and invention each become permissible, in fact, necessary. For example, in several scenes of the 1980 PBS adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" the filmmakers alter and invent both action and mise en scene. In one scene, a montage of beautiful flowers follows Giovanni watching the unaware Beatrice skipping lightly through the garden. The music is as contented as the maiden in her world. The lute in the previous scene is replaced by a wind instrument and the sounds of rippling water jetting from the fountain. Beatrice tastes the water in the fountain, then embraces her pink "sister." While she is cavorting about the garden, a colorful butterfly drops into the palm of her hand; the pace of the music slows then stops altogether; a close-up of Beatrice against a dark background is followed by a high angle shot of the wilting, death-stricken insect.

In this scene, the filmmakers do not literally follow the details of Hawthorne's plot, for his narrator describes the butterfly as circling the head of Beatrice rather than lighting in her hand. No doubt, scriptwriter Herbert Hartig and director Dezso Magyar felt this change in detail necessary to establish the poisonous nature of woman after the Fall. Things are not as they seem: the close-up shot of the delicate, withering insect cupped in the ivory white hand of the alluring Beatrice

visually underscores the theme of the intermingling of good and evil which is also repeated in Hawthorne's symbols of shrub and fountain.

As this scene progresses, we are made more fully aware of the deadly power of Beatrice. Hawthorne closes the first interview between Giovanni and Beatrice with only the suggestion that the young hero watches the flowers that he has given Beatrice fade within her grasp. She quickly disappears beneath the sculptured portal. The filmmakers alter detail in their rendition of the scene. Following a close-up shot of the wilted flowers is a close-up of Giovanni's distraught face. If the side-lighting in this shot does not indubitably suggest that Giovanni recognizes the poisonous nature of the maiden, the sounds of an impending storm seal the argument. At this pivotal juncture in the tale, the filmmakers (using invention) cinematically interpret Hawthorne's meaning. In a second montage of the garden, the vegetation is drenched and rendered a deeper, darker green. The storm montage and the alteration of detail may appear to some critics as marks of an unfaithful film adaptation because it is an invention; however, the filmmakers have actually devised a visually and dramatically effective transformation of Giovanni's impression of this "wild offspring" of nature.

Invention, deletion, and alteration apply to various elements of plot, setting, and characterization. Although these issues are outgrowths of the concept of fidelity, they ought not to be; in the critical vocabulary of adaptation, the term "faithful" should be replaced with adjectives such as "effective" or "interpretive." Judgment of the cinematic product could then be based on an assessment of the skill of the filmmaker in finding and utilizing cinema's visual and aural techniques which serve as analogues to an author's style, point of view, and--most

important--theme.

Effective film adaptations can recreate or refabricate such literary techniques as realism and impressionism. In doing so, they expand a cinematic contribution into a literary one. In commenting on the work of fiction he adapts, the filmmaker may be considered a critic and his product a work of scholarship. The purpose of this study is to analyze how effectively the adaptors of these Crane fictions preserve the form and content as well as enrich an understanding of the literary work. To assess the potential which film has to reconstruct an author's vision and offer new interpretation, I have chosen to discuss five film adaptations based on four literary works, all by Stephen Crane: The Red Badge of Courage, "The Three Miraculous Soldiers," "The Blue Hotel," and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky."

All of the film adaptations addressed in this study have been superficially reviewed, but none has been given the scholarly attention it deserves. Through these films, the work of this major author is revisited during an era in which Crane scholarship is becoming excessively devoted to editorial problems and other textual issues. In 1978, Studies in the Novel devoted Volume 10, no. 1 to a special issue on Stephen Crane. Though guest editor Hershel Parker claims to make a "brave attempt" at bridging the gulf between literary and textual criticism, the contents of the essays remain heavily weighted with editing problems and biographical tangles; new interpretation is in order. To explore these film adaptations of Crane's work is to appreciate newly discovered dimensions of Crane's art.

A consideration of what Crane's style has in common with cinema needs to be made in order to place discussions of individual fiction-to-

screen processes in the appropriate contexts of literary and film scholarship.

NOTES

[1]Charles Eidsvek, "Toward Politique des Adaptations," in *Film and/as Literature*, ed. John Harrington (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 32.

[2]*Stories Into Film*, ed. William Kittredge and Stephen M. Krauzer (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 5.

[3]Carole Berger, "Viewing as Action: Film and Reader Response Criticism," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 6 (1978), 146.

[4]As Regina K. Fadiman has observed about *Faulkner and Film*, Bruce Kawin's attention to "the techniques through which novels evolve into screenplays and then into motion pictures" is more comprehensive than that of Phillips or Laurence and his focus is atypical of adaptation studies. See "Of Hemingway and Hollywood," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 7 (1982), 185-189.

[5]Michael J. Arlen, *The Camera Age* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Ltd., 1981), p. 194.

[6]Eidsvek, p. 28.

[7]Bela Balazs, *Theory of the Film*, trans. Edith Bone (London: Dennis Dobson, 1952; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 260.

[8]Gerald R. Barrett and Thomas L. Erskine, Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (Encino, CA.: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), p. 25.

[9]George Bluestone, Novels Into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction Into Cinema (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 111.

[10]Dudley Nichols, Twenty Best Filmplays, ed. John Gassner and Dudley Nichols (New York: n.p., 1943), p. xix.

[11]Richard Hulseburg, "Novels and Films: A Limited Inquiry," Literature/Film Quarterly, 6 (1978), 58.

[12]Bluestone, p. 47.

[13]Harris J. Elder, "From Literature to Cinema: The American Short Story Series," Diss. Oklahoma State University, 1979, p. 11.

[14]Hulseburg, 62.

[15]Fred H. Marcus, Film and Literature: Contrasts in Media (Scranton, Ohio: Chandler Publishing Company, 1971), p. xvi.

[16]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond Beatty, and E. Hudson Long (1850; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 38.

[17]Marcus, p. xvi. Though Marcus does not elucidate these alternatives, obvious choices would include establishing shots of a door and the townspeople assembled in front of a wooden edifice. In short, concrete visual images could be taken directly from the text.

[18]Hawthorne, p. 28.

[19]Marcus, p. xvi.

CHAPTER II

FILM MEETS CRANE'S ART

As D. W. Griffith and Joseph Conrad have suggested, a film director and a novelist share the same interest, to make the viewer or reader "see." Yet, George Bluestone and other critics have focused more on the differences between the two media than on the similarities.[1] Bluestone's often cited theoretical framework centers on "mutation," and in the concluding comment of the opening chapter of Novels Into Films he claims that "the filmed novel, in spite of certain resemblances, will inevitably become a different artistic entity from the novel on which it is based."[2] At first, Bluestone's comment seems to discourage a comparative study of fiction and film; however, the whole concept of the "mutation" process involves points of intersection. As Harold Schneider claims, "literature and film are not totally different disciplines. They interrelate, they associate, they hobnob."[3] Examination of the various points of intersection in the mutative process of adaptation will lead to a better understanding of how the forms of fiction and film operate. It will also gauge the potential for filmic reconstructions of Crane's vision.

How Crane's style both suits and shuns the camera eye needs to be explored. One critical problem which presents itself concerns the perennial debate as to whether Stephen Crane was a realist, impressionist, or naturalist. The sound approach is to avoid literary classification by suggesting that each of these movements surfaces at one point or another

in Crane's fiction. In this study, naturalism will not be treated separately from realism. The naturalistic element of Crane's style--as it appears in the four works which have been made into film adaptations--is subsumed by a multidimensional definition of realism. As Donald Pizer has suggested, the "traditional and widely accepted concept of American naturalism . . . is that it is essentially realism infused with a pessimistic determinism."[4] Once the elements of Crane's style are identified, the question then becomes "can the author's eclectic style be effectively rendered by a cinematic vocabulary?"

More than one critic has suggested that Stephen Crane views his fictional world as if through a camera eye. Robert Stallman observes that "Crane once defined a novel as a 'succession of sharply-outlined pictures, which pass before the reader like a panorama, leaving each its definite impression.'"[5] As Eric Solomon suggests, in Crane's best prose the "imagist concept that one perfect image might be better than a lengthy work" dominated his style.[6] George Wyndham echoes Crane's power to make an experience immediate: "He stages the drama of war, so to speak, within the mind of one man, and then admits you as to a theatre."[7] At the heart of Crane's appeal to filmmakers, there is more than popular interest in his anti-war or anti-western themes. The fiction of Stephen Crane contains his own particular mixture of realism, impressionism, and naturalism. This stylistic eclecticism would at first seem anathema to filmmakers, but the case studies treated in this work indicate that Crane's stylistic melange left appropriate running room for the cinematic imagination.

Frank Bergon's discussion of Crane's "cinematic" prose style is more explicit than that of any other critic:

> There is a movement in Crane's prose, and the movement is not always from scene to scene, but often zooms in on a scene; the writing often moves from a wide-angle view to a close-up of significant details . . . /in the/ description of the corpse in The Red Badge . . . the sentences work like separate frames in a film.[8]

It may be suggested that Stephen Crane's method of observing the particulars of physical reality could be easily achieved by the filmmaker who, with visuals, can forcefully instill these graphic details in a viewer's mind; however, for Crane, realism is not strictly synonymous with observation. Bergon himself concurs that it seems too simplistic to view Crane's art as imitation: "his fiction renders the components of experience with local intensity and yet with enough perspective so that those components might be measured from a large, indifferent, and often non-human point of view."[9] Though Bergon's comment here is demonstrably vague concerning Crane's "point of view," his analysis indicates that there are many layers to Crane's realism: it is physical, psychological, and cosmic--all at once. Putting this a little differently, Charles Mayer suggests that "the realist in Crane . . . insists that our hope of salvation lies in knowing the variegated shimmering surface of the world, as well as in understanding our subjective selves in relation to them."[10] Adjectives such as "variegated" and "shimmering" are well chosen, for they aptly suggest that shades and forms of "truth" take on sundry appearances which are always subject to change--and to various points of view. All this might suggest that the physical, psychological, and cosmic dimensions of Crane's realism may not be rendered cinematically. But a case in point proves otherwise.

Consider a scene in The Red Badge of Courage where the tall soldier (Jim Conklin) faces his "rendezvous" with death; it is an incident of

Crane's three-dimensional realism at work. The physical realities of war and death include the tall soldier's "bloody hands," his heaving animal-like chest, "pastelike face," and wounded side that "looked as if it had been chewed by wolves."[11] Here, grim and graphic realism is obviously available straight from the makeup studio. But, what about the challenge of simultaneously conveying the psychological states of the spellbound onlookers, Fleming and the tattered soldier? Crane's narrator depicts them:

> . . . sneaking as if whipped, feeling unable to face the stricken man if he should again confront them. They began to have thoughts of a solemn ceremony. There was something ritelike in these movements of the doomed soldier. And there was a resemblance in him to a devotee of a mad religion, blood-sucking, muscle-rending, bone-crushing. They were awed and afraid. They hung back lest he have at command a dreadful weapon. (p. 57)

Here psychological realism is dynamic. Notions that the traditions of battle are great ceremony and that death can be noble are shattered; the tall soldier himself is reduced to an animal who topples to the ground with no more dignity than a "falling tree." Yet, at the same time, the youth and the tattered soldier perceive another "reality," one of awe and respect that has been grounded in what is for Crane a false cultural tradition of idealized courage and chivalry.

In the television version of The Red Badge of Courage (1974), director Lee Philips manages to capture both the deluded psychological pose of the youth and the tattered soldier at the same time that he renders Crane's cosmic irony. The central symbol in the film adaptation of this scene is that of an enormous and contorted dead tree stump, which is used more than once to convey the brutality of the war machine. A close-up of the gray dead stump reveals wrinkled and decayed knots of wood, which sharply contrast with the plush green high grass surrounding

it. Conklin staggers off the road into the forest and falls to the ground; then with a last gasp of life, he rises and attempts to climb the winding dead tree up toward the sky. Sunlight flickering through the branches is blinding to the protagonist and it effectively conveys the fruitless "ritelike" ceremony of war and heroism in the face of a hostile Nature.

Texture here is rich: low angle shots of the tree stump and leaves pointed like needles are juxtaposed with high angle shots of the doomed soldier to reinforce the tooth-and-nail conflict between man and a godless environment. The final stroke of death leaves the tall soldier (up to this point the character most symbolic of courage and valor) almost as if pinned or staked to the ground, a victim of fate; in this high angle shot his arms and legs are pointed stiffly in four directions. The symbolic "death" of conventional heroism is watched, but not fully comprehended by the onlookers. Close-up reaction shots of the youth and tattered soldier reveal the complex response that Crane suggests, a mixture of awe, fear, horror, and "livid rage." As Ingmar Bergman once said, "'In the close-up lies the great suggestive power of the film medium.'"[12] While Fleming himself curses God for what he has just witnessed, it is his eyes that tell us with the economy of visual expression that he demands an explanation.

Bela Balazs goes a step further in defining the close-up as an instrument for uncovering human nature and for providing dramatic revelation: "a good film with its close-ups reveals the most hidden parts in our polyphonous life . . . close-ups are often dramatic revelations of what is really happening under the surface of appearances."[13] What theory and application suggest here is that an effective adaptation,

with its own set of communicative tools, can in fact capture the complexities of Crane's realistic mode. The close-up makes pain and disappointment more immediate and brings the viewer face to face with an experience. Technologically, as the means to an end, it tunes our perceptions to a character's emotion through graphic detail and interpretive visuals.

In _The Red Badge of Courage_, "Three Miraculous Soldiers," and elsewhere, Crane's art is not limited to the use of realism; the challenge of capturing on film his impressionistic mode of presentation must be addressed for, as Sergio Perosa says of Crane's _Red Badge_, it is the "visual and aural impressions" which give "substance" as well as "vividness" to the portrait of war.[14] Stephen Crane is not strictly an impressionist, but he certainly makes full use of an impressionistic style.[15]

If a prospective adaptor of Crane's work actually looked up definitions of impressionism in literary handbooks, he might at first be discouraged and perplexed: in impressionistic paintings

> all outlines are blurred and all formal values slighted . . . [literary impressionism] scorns logical progression and relies on the unpredictable movement which is effected by mental associations. Here, too, outlines are blurred, forms dissolved and images stillborn. Instead of naming the thing he is concerned with, the impressionist describes the effect which it produces.[16]

If impressionism is a mode which seems to defy all rational explanation how, then, can it be duplicated in a film adaptation? There is no theoretical explanation, but there is a technical one. Fleeting expressions of a character, disjointed narrative flow, and phantasmagoric imagery--all components of Crane's impressionism--can and have been duplicated by

cinematic devices such as a subjective camera, lighting, special effects, montage, flashbacks, dream sequences, and a dutch, or wide angle shot. Clockwork Orange (1972) contains particularly fine examples of cinematic impressionism. In Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Anthony Burgess' novel, cinematic technique recreates Alex's perception of the stark violence of the modern age as well as the victimization of the individual. In an opening scene, a drunkard gets beat up by Alex, Pete, Georgie, and Dim. Burgess' text highlights "the old boot-crush" and blood "real beautiful"; the narrator also characterizes the old bum as a "veck" who was "made of some new horrorshow plastic stuff."[17] The adaptation uses a subjective camera and lighting to dramatize Alex's fleeting impressions. High angles of the stricken tramp convey horror as the dizzying camera captures the brutality of their actions. Two close-ups of Alex's face follow; here, backlighting and framing render only an outline of his features. The silhouette downplays the reality of the scene while emphasizing its representative nature. The disjointed narrative flow of Burgess' novel is also produced in the adaptation by the use of montage.

Much of Stephen Crane's art, like that of Anthony Burgess, is noted for its sharp sensory description. As James Nagel points out, it is the literary equivalent of what in impressionistic music and painting is termed a vistazo, a single moment of experience, or a flash of perception: this concept results in "episodic" units which must be designed into an aesthetically satisfying whole.[18] In "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," Crane numbered his four sections or sketches, juxtaposing new and old in the West before bringing them into final conflict. Part one deals with Sheriff Potter and his bride riding on the train from San Antonio to Yellow Sky, part two with the drummer in Yellow Sky's Weary

Gentleman Saloon, part three with Scratchy Wilson's rejection of civilization, and part four with the encounter of the old West and its civilized counterpart--the bride. Direct conflict does not take place until the end of the story, and even then there is no traditional shootout. However, Crane's juxtaposition of scenes and ideals provides the dramatic tension. The side-by-side arrangement of the brief episodes structurally secures the humor and ultimately the irony because, seen back to back, neither the drunken remnant of the old West, the Eastern drummer who is out of his element, nor even the Sheriff, who shows too much interest in the frivoloties of civilization, represents an admirable direction for an expanding America. The impressionistic juxtaposition and parallel action used by Crane are used effectively in the 1952 RKO adaptation. The film intercuts extensively between the world of the Pullman, the world of the saloon, and the Old West Scratchy is trying so hard to revive. Here the filmmakers enhance the conflicts between old and new by increasing the number of times the disparate ideals come "face to face."

Fleeting impressions and phantasmagoric imagery, which comprise Crane's episodic narrative structure, are likewise available to the filmmaker, though some literary tropes are so difficult or awkward to render that they seem best deleted or replaced. In The Red Badge of Courage, after Fleming has been wounded by the butt of a comrade's rifle, Crane's narrator begins to describe the world the youth sees with impressionistic images. Half-stunned by the blow, Fleming perceives the world with all the more obscurity: "He saw the flaming wings of lightning flash before his vision" (p. 70). Consciousness here is described only in glimpses. When Fleming watches an ongoing battle, he sees only a blur:

"The blue haze of evening was upon the field. The lines of forest were long purple shadows. One cloud lay along the western sky partly smothering the red" (p. 71). Here colorful but obscure images of smothering cloud, shadow, and haze all convey Fleming's delusion at the same time these oppressive symbols foreshadow the weight of cowardice on the mind of the hero. Blurred outlines of this impressionistic scene are again emphasized: "Turning to look behind him, he could see sheets of orange light illumine the shadowy distance. There were subtle and sudden lightnings in the far air. At times he thought he could see heaving masses of men" (p. 71). Here the fuliginous nature of the war setting is underscored because the youth cannot even positively identify those vague "heaving masses" as soldiers.

The television movie of _The Red Badge of Courage_ effectively captures Fleming's fleeting impressions as well as the obscurity of his vision. The adaptation, however, makes some alterations to meet this end. After the youth is struck in the head by the rifle butt, he does not just stagger and swoon, as he does in Crane's text; he passes out completely, affording the filmmakers an unambiguous segue into Fleming's dream world. As he imagines looking up at the forest, he sees images of the dying tall soldier and the tattered soldier before him in a close-up. A distorted lens and the bright streaks of sunlight capture the ghost-like visage of the dead and the mocking expressions as well as the blurring strokes of Crane's impressionistic brush. As Fleming runs from this reminder of his own cowardice, he imagines other soldiers (moving in slow-motion) toward the front. Reverse camera angles convey both the confusion of battle and the rhythm of internal conflict within the mind of the protagonist. The final achievement here is a cinematic actualization

--a portrait in motion of Crane's colors, tones, and blurred impressionistic images. The adapted scene succeeds because not only do the filmmakers reproduce the visuals of Crane's prose, they actually recreate Fleming's process of perception.

The rest of this study will be devoted to a more complete analysis of points of intersection between Crane's art and the extant film adaptations. The challenge of duplicating Crane's style and vision was often skirted in John Huston's _Red Badge of Courage_ (1951), but the other adaptations treated here indicate that filmmakers can construct a "faithful" adaptation, and that alteration and invention can serve the thrust of the original as well as suggest new interpretations to scholars. NBC's _Red Badge of Courage_ (1974) focuses more clearly on Crane's irony than does Huston's version. BFA's _Three Miraculous Soldiers_ (1976) is a particularly important contribution to Crane criticism because it has the potential for renewing lost interest in a story which has been misinterpreted by scholars and quickly dismissed as overly sentimental. Jan Kadar's _The Blue Hotel_ (1977) capitalizes on setting and music to convey Crane's situational irony. RKO's _The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky_ (1952) contains alterations and inventions that have been lambasted by critics; but, as this study will prove, these changes actually serve Crane's structure, style, and theme quite well.

Scholarship on film's potential for interpreting literature is minimal. Articles on "The Blue Hotel" or "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," for example, have mentioned the existence of an adaptation, but then dismissed it with a vague qualifier such as "good" or "bad." A. M. Tibbetts, in his study of "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," says that RKO's film is "excellent," but his discussion ends there.[19] James Fultz, in an article

concerning James Agee's script of <u>The Blue Hotel</u>, merely states that the PBS adaptation exists.[20] These visual "texts" deserve much more than mere casual allusion because an effective adaptation is a contribution to both our cinematic and our literary heritage; it illustrates how film can envision and interpret fiction. The detailed, pragmatic analyses of adaptations based on Crane's work will gauge the success of filmmakers in critiquing, not copying a work of literature.

NOTES

[1]George Bluestone, Novels Into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction Into Cinema (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 1.

[2]Bluestone, p. 64.

[3]Harold Schneider, "Literature and Film: Marking Out Some Boundaries," Literature/Film Quarterly, 3 (1975), 32.

[4]Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), p. 11.

[5]Robert Wooster Stallman, Introd. The Red Badge of Courage, by Stephen Crane (New York: Random House, 1951), p. xxii.

[6]Eric Solomon, Stephen Crane (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 93.

[7]George Wyndham, "A Remarkable Book," New Review, 14 Jan. 1896, 32

[8]Frank Bergon, Stephen Crane's Artistry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 13.

[9]Bergon, p. 1.

[10]Charles W. Mayer, "Stephen Crane and the Realistic Tradition: 'Three Miraculous Soldiers,'" Arizona Quarterly, 30 (1974), 129-30.

[11] Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, ed. Fredson Bowers, II (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1975), p. 58. Subsequent references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text.

[12] Morris Beja, Film and Literature (New York: Longman Inc., 1979) p. 194.

[13] Bela Balazs, Theory of the Film, trans. Edith Bone (London: Dennis Dobson, 1952, rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1972), pp. 55-6.

[14] Sergio Perosa, "Naturalism and Impressionism in Stephen Crane's Fiction," in Stephen Crane: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Maurice Bassan (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 88.

[15] For a discussion of Crane's use of impressionism see James Nagel, Stephen Crane and Literary Impressionism (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980). Nagel's book is the most recent, thoughtful, and comprehensive study of its kind.

[16] "Impressionism," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 381.

[17] Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange (New York: Ballantine Books, 1962), p. 14.

[18] Nagel, p. 124.

[19] A. M. Tibbetts, "Stephen Crane's 'The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky,'" English Journal, 54 (1965), 315.

[20]James R. Fultz, "Heartbreak at the Blue Hotel: James Agee's Scenario of Stephen Crane's Story," _The Midwest Quarterly_, 21 (1979-1980), 433.

CHAPTER III

JOHN HUSTON'S RED BADGE OF COURAGE (1951): GOOD INTENTIONS, DILUTED VISION

In 1925, Mark Van Doren said that the "precise excellence" of *The Red Badge of Courage* deserves analysis but has not yet received it.[1] Fortunately, over the last five decades, Crane's classic novel has received intense critical attention. Van Doren's statement concerning critical neglect now applies to John Huston's film adaptation.

The making of the film *The Red Badge of Courage* was a battle in itself. Huston intended *The Red Badge of Courage* to be an innovative treatment of war. Like his uncompromising documentary, *The Battle of San Pietro*, *Red Badge* was at first designed to dispel the public's overly reverent notions of battle. However, Huston's intentions conflicted with those of the M-G-M studio. Executives wanted to produce a "filmed classic": as L. B. Mayer said, "'I want to give the public clean American entertainment.'"[2] Huston, disillusioned by the typical war film that provided merely excitement and escapist entertainment, intended *Red Badge* to be a glamourless, realistic portrait of war. Fearing commercial failure, M-G-M summoned Dore Schary to trim and reshape Huston's graphic adaptation of Crane's text into a more conventional war film. The resulting portrait of battle contained less nightmare and more heroics: indeed, this studio-trimmed version borders on contrived propaganda because Huston's interpretive irony comes seldom; when it does appear, it is

immediately diluted by conventions of the war film. In lieu of the disparate intentions of artist and producers, it is no wonder that most critics have approached the film as a case study in how corporate demands affect film content[3]; unfortunately, exclusive focus on institutional pressures has led writers to ignore the details of cinematic value and critics to forego discussion of the literature-to-screen process.

Labeling Red Badge a "problem picture because it lacked glamour, Arthur Loew summarized Hollywood's priorities, but a close examination of the challenges facing director John Huston (or any other adaptor of Crane's Red Badge) is called for.[4] How, rather than "that" the film fail- needs to be explored. This chapter will outline the various accomplishments and shortcomings of M-G-M's production, the only example in the present study of a thwarted and ultimately unsuccessful film version based on Crane's prose. This chapter's discussion will address exacerbating corporate demands; but more important, it will illustrate the challenge of finding visual and aural analogues that define Crane's subjective point of view, project his surrealistic imagery, and sustain his ironic tone.

Until Crane's time, American war fiction had been mostly informed with adventure and romance. The novels of James Fenimore Cooper and William Gilmore Simms resounded with frolicsome battle scenes and valiant heroes. Speaking of later Civil War fiction in the Cooper-Simms tradition, Eric Solomon has noted that "the patriotic element provided the controlling theme, battle was spirited and chivalric, and the hero was a born soldier who needed to undergo no tempering process through war."[5] Seldom did writers mock heroism in the Romantic era; the grim backgrounds of war were overshadowed by the quixotic efforts of the hero.

In The Red Badge of Courage, Crane shattered this idealistic vision, since Henry Fleming is no familiar romantic hero. Displaying the frailties of human nature, he cowers, deserts his friends, and lies. For all of his eventual success as a warrior, Henry rejects the romantic tradition. It was "impossible for him to see himself in a heroic light."[6] With vivid impressionistic montages, Crane offers a harsh view of individuals trapped in the war machine. The battle flags are "jerked about madly in the smoke," men drop "here and there like bundles," twisted corpses "litter" the battlefield. Fleming's wartime education involves more than a test of combat heroism; it is an exposure to the frailties of human conduct. When he earns his red badge, it is an episode that travesties heroic action: Fleming only pretends that he suffers a wound. Similarly, the dogged behavior of the regiment shows a sober recognition of battle fear. In other war tales, such as "The Little Regiment" and "Three Miraculous Soldiers," Crane focuses more on fear than he does on the active elements of war. The problem for the protagonist becomes, then, not how to deal with men, bullets, and bayonettes, but the issue of confirming the notion that war has a purpose and that heroic action is applaudable.

Crane's attempt to portray war realistically and without compromise interested director John Huston. He shared Crane's dark vision of war and realized that the war-machine was in no sense sympathetic to individuals. As a documentary filmmaker during World War II, Huston had first-hand experience to draw from: The Battle of San Pietro (1945) had attempted to explore the realities of combat in what Lewis Jacobs labeled an "outspoken anti-war film." Here, Huston endeavored to symbolize the nature of war by illustrating a single battle against an

impregnable position. In contrast to most government-sponsored documentaries, which merely combined edited newsreels, Huston's Battle of San Pietro used close-ups of soldiers moving toward the front line. Viewers sense that each man is a distinct individual with his own hopes and fears. The poignancy of their dilemma is intensified when the voice-over narration laconically relates that "none of these men ever returned."[7] As Eugene Archer has noted, Huston avoided verbose editorializing: "narration is sober and restrained," but the raw, grey photography captures the ugliness and poverty of the environment.[8] The film concludes without an elative triumph. Close-ups of villagers reveal victims so numbed by battle that they cannot give the recent visitors a proper welcome. The Battle of San Pietro was so disquieting that the Army refused to release the film until it was edited. Huston has recalled the screening of The Battle of San Pietro:

> The reaction was very strongly against the picture being shown, and I was called in to General Surrold's office. There were two or three others there, high-ranking officers, and this conversation ensued: one of them said, 'Well, this could be interpreted as an anti-war film.' I couldn't repress myself, and I said, 'Gentlemen, if I ever make anything other than an anti-war film, I hope you take me out and shoot me, because I'll very well deserve it.' This didn't go down well, either.[9]

Public information objectives would simply not be served by such a candid portrait of the face of war.

Huston took his camera inside an Army psychiatric hospital to explore the condition of servicemen suffering from battle fatigue in Let There be Light (1945). Once again, Huston's realism was too powerful for audiences used to Hollywood's antiseptic portraits of battle. As Lawrence Suid has noted, the document is one of the strongest anti-war statements on film because of its graphic focus on the psychological trauma

of war victims.[10] Although Let There be Light concluded with moderate optimism, the War Department withdrew the film from general circulation in 1945. Huston's own description of the filming process reveals dedication and empathy. "I was very moved to find men like this, and the actual photographing of them was, by God, practically a religious experience."[11] Huston's two war projects showed both compassion for the foot soldier and a sense of irony about the fortunes of war. Discussing his filmmaking style, Huston once said, "'Maybe it's what Hemingway says about writing: "You must write it as if you were there." Maybe I just try to do it as if I were there.'"[12] As an artist, he was well prepared to understand the themes of The Red Badge of Courage.

Setting in Stephen Crane's prose is inherent to theme. As John Shroeder has noted, "Anything pertaining to warfare in this book of war is apt to be visualized in terms of the natural universe, and this universe itself is constantly personified."[13] In the opening scene of Crane's novel, "The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and retiring fog revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting" (p. 1). At night, the river was colored with a "sorrowful darkness" and at daybreak it was "amber-tinted" with shadows. Here is Crane's primary view of nature--subtly savage and foreboding. When he adds that the "red eye-like gleam of hostile campfires" can be seen across the river, it is obvious that the peopled world will pose an even greater threat to the protagonist. With this impressionistic view of setting, Crane immediately sets up two separate confrontations: man against nature, man against man. Description in the novel is complete with wine-colored bridges, gleaming orange battlelines, and dragon-like postures of the soldiers. "The regiment went swinging off into the darkness. It was now like one

of those moving monsters wending with many feet" (p. 15). Crane, blending color and darkness, conveys the nightmarish quality of the experience.

The film fails to impart nature as a threat to the protagonist. In the opening scene, an over-head shot captures the rising mists on dusty marching grounds. As the camera pans the campsite, it presents an uninspiring vision of soldiers before a battle. Preparing for ceremony, not war, the men conduct "close-order drills." These placid environs paint an unheroic vision, but are in no way a subjective menace to the protagonist. Likewise, the _mise en scene_ of the battle sequence also lacks Crane's nightmarish vision. As Fred Silva has noted, there is a peaceful background in the final battle. Gently rolling hills are scattered with a few haystacks and broken farm wagons. Pastoral imagery here evokes a quite ordinary experience.[14]

Monotonous settings were obviously designed to de-romanticize the public's notion of combat experience. Perhaps Huston found it difficult to duplicate the colorful impressionistic imagination of Henry Fleming without sacrificing the dreary realities of battle. While the demand for realism somewhat justifies the lack of surrealistic visuals, the filmmaker seems to have lost touch with Crane's vision. To a man facing injury, ambush, bloodshed, and possibly death, nightmarish visions seem to be part of "normal" psychological reaction. Since the film fails to capture the sensational quality of the experiences as they stream into the boy's mind, one of the more significant themes of the novel is slighted. By having Fleming develop actual objects into "real" nightmares, Crane made "psychological fear" a fact of combat.

Several aspects of Crane's nightmarish vision could have been

captured with surrealistic visuals without compromising "realism." In the novel, Fleming watches a horde of black ants "swarming greedily upon the gray face" of a dead man in the forest. Here, Crane's verbal description of the horror of death could be graphically rendered for tremendous dramatic effect. We are reminded of the vivid scene in Salvadore Dali's Un Chien Andalou, where ants pour out of a man's hand. The shock effect of extended close-ups would no doubt be appropriate in Red Badge, for audiences would instantly associate swarming ants with swarming armies and better comprehend the purpose of setting in Crane's fiction. A scene of this poignance was made but never released. It was not Huston who ignored Crane's most evocative "visual" symbols; Dore Schary cut the entire scene in which Henry discovers the dead man because preview audiences were disturbed by its morbidity. Though audiences may have been stunned by such striking visuals, these deletions are inappropriate because they considerably lightened the impact of the ironic Huston-Crane vision of war.

The narrative line of Crane's Red Badge of Courage traces the thoughts and feelings of a young recruit during his first days of active fighting. Fleming's impressions of battlegrounds, campsites, booming rifles, and dying soldiers are collected in a series of episodes. While Crane's work is full of vivid detail, it does not contain the particulars of a war story. The battle is not designated by title though it is described; the rights and wrongs of the war itself are not discussed, and few characters are named. Even the central figures is often referred to as "the young man," and the enemy is simply a force which is not to be trusted. As V. S. Pritchett has noted, "the whole thing is almost as anonymous as a poem or a piece of music."[15] In addition, Red Badge is

not a particular war story, but an Everyman's reaction to a representative war experience.

While this lack of discernible narrative line presented obvious complications for the filmmakers, writer-director John Huston, producer Gottfried Reinhardt, and advisor Dore Schary were all worried that the book contained no single incident, no romance, and no female characters.[16] Schary believed that audiences demanded action and resolution in war films, and Huston's script, which focused on the thoughts and impressions of the boy, struck the producers at M-G-M as a poor financial gamble. Huston's version contained battle sequences structured according to Crane's novel: the charge-retreat-charge rhythm of the major battle episode was no doubt intended to visually parallel the vascillating mental state of the protagonist. As Crane noted, battle is "chaos and confusion" for the youth. Unfortunately, Schary deleted the dogged behavior of the regiment and transformed this scene into a single forward movement. He assumed audiences expected the action, climax, and victory typical of previous war films. Unfortunately, these rearrangements comprised and obscured the mental struggle of the protagonist.

According to George Linden, a successful adaptation must express the actions and events of the original; it must also capture the subjective tones and attitudes towards those incidents.[17] Consequently, there are two considerations to be made in discussing the point of view of _The Red Badge of Courage_--the nature of _dramatis personae_ and the tone of narrative voice. The narrator of Crane's novel sees through Fleming's eyes; however, the voice is third-person limited omniscient, not first-person subjective. According to Edwin Cady, Crane handles point of view like a movie camera: "The reader stands to see somewhere back of Fleming's eyes.

Sometimes the reader gets the long 'panning' shot, sometimes the view only Henry could see, sometimes an interior view."[18] This "interior" view is purely imaginative, though its vivid detail makes it convincing and almost realistic. Henry's nightmarish impressions of nature and the regiment in battle were obviously impossible for Huston to capture without the use of surrealistic visuals. Therefore, he chose to remove the concentrated focus from the youth's perceptions.

Huston did not intend to translate every eccentric metaphor for the screen, but to relate Crane's ineluctable irony about war. In several effective invented scenes, Crane's ironic "voice" becomes the camera's eye. One invented scene features a blustering general on horseback. As his tall white horse paces the ground, the general addresses the soldiers with a pep talk more appropriate for a Boy Scout troop than a regiment about to engage in battle: "Howdy doody! We're gonna give the rebs a good lickin', aren't we boys"?[19] The viewer is shown the disingenuousness of this remark as the general says the same thing to each regiment. Low angle shots of the general and his tall white horse emphasize the leader's authority. As his horse prances about, we are aware that this scourging optimist is doing little more than kicking up dust. The general then comes to a company of veterans who know that battle is no joy ride; they chortle at him and shake their heads. Here, the general symbolizes the sanguine attitude of leaders who are at liberty to stand back and watch the action. The entire scene makes a relentless comment about the ceremony of war. Visually and aurally, we sense Crane's ironic vision: our military heroes are devotees of a "mad religion." And as other depictions of the general suggest, these leaders do a great deal more talking than fighting. One scene, which was cut from the final version, features

a wounded man berating an officer for "small wounds and big talk." Thus, Fleming's growing suspicion that the officers are idiots who send the men "marching into a regular pen" becomes a realistic fear.

A second invented scene in Huston's film captures both the cruelty of war and the cruelty of fate. A wounded soldier falls and loses his glasses. After groping across the ground, he finds his glasses, puts them on, and dies instanly. Here is Crane's order of the universe graphically visualized: since the soldier regains "sight" only to be overcome by death, we sense that man is not only at the mercy of an outrageously brutal war; he is also the victim of a savage indifferent world. There is a similar use of irony at the famous closing scene of All Quiet on the Western Front (1930). As the hero reaches for a flitting butterfly, a traditional symbol of beauty and sanguine nature, he is shot by a sniper. Huston's invented scene likewise comments on the futility of war; in both cases, black-and-white photography, with its intense shadows and stark patterns of light and dark, visually polarizes ideals and reality.

The photography in The Red Badge of Courage probes the youth's interior struggles and evokes the spirit of comraderie between Fleming and his regiment. Huston uses the stark effects of black-and-white photography, the broad tableau composition of shots, and alternating long shots and close-ups to both individualize Crane's soldiers and to establish the importance of the group as it faces the experience of battle. The film was shot in black-and-white for several reasons. First, color was not a convenient option until after 1953; second, the common vision of Civil War battles conformed to Matthew Brady's photographs of the era; and third, with black-and-white photography, Huston could easily control chromatics for dramatic purposes. As Huston recalls,

> I tried to reproduce the feel of the photographs with a kind of bleached effect, because originally they were made by wet plate photography. I wanted the blonde fields, the blonde, bright skies and foregrounds, contrasted with the explosive quality of the black-and-white.[20]

This natural and somewhat stark effect, which Huston also used in his documentaries, served to capture the looming dangers of wartime as well as to subtly mirror the clouded mental state of the protagonist.

At the opening of the film, Fleming's alienation from his regiment is established because he is most often pictured in close-ups away from other soldiers. In later scenes, Huston zeroes in on other individuals. Montages of close-up shots reveal faces which provide expressive reactions to the blood and sweat of battle. According to Fred Silva, this nonconstricted point of view relaxes a good deal of the tension intended in the novel.[21] But, on the other hand, these close-ups of other members of the regiment universalize the sense of fear and the emotional states affecting men in battle. All of this serves Crane's intention that _Red Badge_ convey a representative war experience. Huston's long shots and tableau shots of the regiment in camp or on the battlefield were also intended to establish the importance of the group. Soldiers were drilling in the dusty marching ground at the opening of the film. Here we glimpse Crane's general vision of the boring routines inherent to war, which is just as much a part of _Red Badge_ as it is of Crane's other battle-related stories.[22] Perhaps most important, the juxtaposition of long, medium, and close-up shots sets up a contrast which makes the individual struggle all the more poignant. Even in major battle sequences, the action is not spectacular. Shots of smoke and haze, dusty barricades, and plodding soldiers fill the screen. As Fred Silva points out, "Huston conveys the idea that although armies wage war, individuals

fight battles."[23] By varying camera distance and focus, Huston has, however, done more than extend the center of consciousness; he has managed, though in too general a way, to match Crane's horrific evocations of the war experience.

Two of Huston's most vivid death scenes were cut from the final version of Red Badge because the producers thought them "excessively grim." These deletions are especially disappointing because the scenes contained Huston's most evocative photography. Graphic visuals of fatally wounded men and close-up reaction shots of the witnessing soldiers would have effectively rendered the central irony of Crane's story. The youth thinks of a wound as a "red badge": however, this perspective serves only to trivialize human suffering and point again to his delusive romantic sensibility. In the novel, Henry's discovery of the hideous corpse in the forest teaches him a valuable lesson. Nature is indifferent and a threat to individuals. The scenes of the tattered soldier's slow death, which were also excluded from the film, paint an equally gruesome portrait of war: "The youth saw with surprise that the soldier had two wounds, one in the head, bound with a blood-soaked rag, and the other in the arm, making that member dangle like a broken bough" (p. 52). Following this scene, after Fleming has fled from the dying man, Crane's narrator comments on the thoughts of the youth with gruesome irony: "He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he too had a wound, a red badge of courage" (p. 54). In the novel, this "mob" of bleeding men had sunk down to an animal level of consciousness. As the "tattered" man is dying he still utters words, but in a horrifying, mechanical way. Here is Crane's derisive portrait of institutions like the army, which force individuals to surrender their autonomy. This brutal depiction of war is reiterated in the last passages of the novel, when

the narrator says, "this pursuing recollection of the tattered man took all elation from the youth's veins" (p. 135). As a "flashback," this perception is essential to the novel because it implies that Henry's courage in battle is basically an impulse, an act of survival within the confines of a nightmare.

Symbolic imagery is used in Crane's novel to portray the harsh threats of nature. Mechanical characteristics are often given to inanimate objects. The grotesque and distorted dimensions of war were defined with the metaphors of the "monster," "the red animal," the "black-swollen god." Huston's symbolic imagery, while it generally is taken from Crane's text, defines the elements of external nature in a more conventional manner. Like the mise en scene of the camp at the opening of the film, the final battle scene is scattered with ordinary details such as broken farm wagons, tattered flags, and haystacks on fire. Through these images, the war experience is defined as destructive; however, as developed symbols, flags, haystacks, and broken wagons offer a strained, clicheed, ineffective parallel to the grotesque dimensions of Fleming's world.

In short, the battle environs are an objective threat to the protagonist rather than a subjective menace, as is suggested in Crane's novel. It seems that a good deal more could have been done with looming shadows and distorted lenses. These special effects would convey the youth's internal struggle. Moreover, without compromising realistic non-romantic battle scenes, the filmmakers could have penetrated the inner workings of Fleming's mind using dream sequences and flashbacks. In John Ford's adaptation of Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, for example, photographer Gregg Toland captures Muley's bitter reaction to

being thrown off his land by the use of flashback, dramatic lighting, and dissolves.[24] Unfortunately, M-G-M executives resorted to the awkward device of voice-over narration in their attempt to capture interior reactions.

The soundtrack in Red Badge of Courage contains dialogue, special effects, and music. James Whitmore's narration is didactic and obviously intended to patch up what M-G-M considered "gaps" in the sequences of the film. Huston combatted the additional narration at every opportunity, saying that the visuals in combination with music and dialogue should speak for themselves. M-G-M executives took an alternate stance, saying that the picture was simply not clear. The plight of the youth was not explained: "The youth must inspire measureless sympathy . . . We must understand him, 'root' for him, and finally admire him."[25] The "clarifications" provided by the narration unintentionally lessen the impact of the film. We are told that the youth had a "terrific personal problem; he was a mental outcast."[26] Here, the voice-over narrator is used to tell a story that the images and dialogue themselves did not effectively communicate.

In Robert Sklar's terms, voice-over "destroys the illusion of the screen image's presentness and forces the narrator's interpretation of visual experience on the viewer instead of allowing him or her to feel directly."[27] That audiences resent being told how to interpret visuals was not so obvious to M-G-M executives. It is fair to say that Huston was trying to reach a different audience than his sponsors in both The Battle of San Pietro and Red Badge of Courage. As Lawrence Suid points out, independent producer Lester Cowan wanted Huston to direct The Story of G. I. Joe (1945) because he had been in the army: "Cowan felt that

this gave him 'irreplaceable experience of living with soldiers under frontline conditions, so that he knows and feels the difference between the real thing and any Hollywood version.'"[28]

He was an artist committed to an ideal, eager to expose the shortcomings of the military. M-G-M officials were candy salesmen all too conscious of public relations and the recruiting advantages of pro-war films. It seems that they felt obligated to spell out Fleming's mental struggles for a single reason: a cowardly hero without any excuse would not do. Moreover, the voice-over narration provided an inadequate solution to the problem of defining point of view because it summarized rather than visualized the youth's dilemma.

Music was intended to unify images and to provide a definite viewpoint toward major characters. Basically, Bronislau Kaper's score contributes to the mood of the death scenes and reinforces irony. As Kaper noted, the final gestures of Conklin's death are accompanied by silence.[29] Here, the raspy breathing is the soloist, and we sense that soldiers are being asphyxiated by the war machine. Similarly, in the scene of the death of the tattered man, which was cut from the final version, Kaper used two contrasting instruments to elicit irony: a light harmonica tune is appropriately mixed with a trumpeted military score to present a gay, yet clearly sardonic interpretation of men in battle.

At other times, music was designed to impart the fears inside the raw recruit. While he is running, the spasmodic music simulates a heartbeat. At a campsite, the orchestra is either silent, or playing solemn, almost inaudible tunes. During these meditative scenes at camp, the youth frequently wallows in his dilemma--here Kaper considered silence to be dramatically effective. These silent meditations work well in the film;

however, the contrasting enthusiastic tune, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," which plays during the marches, is a cliche that drums more loudly than the drum. Similarly, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," which pervades the climactic battle sequence, mocks the dramatic irony of the final charge by eliciting a positive, romantic feeling that was anathema to Crane. Worst of all, the victorious tune is so incongruous with symbols of tattered flags, flaming haystacks, and disheveled walls, that the viewer is likely to see the hero's courageous act as foolish rather than heroic.

These failures of Huston's Red Badge should, however, be weighed with its successes. An analysis of one of the more effective scenes in Red Badge would help gauge the achievement of Huston's "psychological realism." The gyrations of Jim Conklin's rendezvous with death are expressed in Crane's novel with broken rhetoric and a stalking narrative pace. The tall soldier stutters, stammers, and moans with despair. With the morbid metaphor of "gray paste," Crane describes the face of the tall soldier; on trembling legs he danced a "sort of hideous hornpipe" (p. 58). The youth is equally observant. "As the flap of the blue jacket fell away from the body, he could see that his side looked as if it had been chewed by wolves" (p. 58). Crane's narrative pace reflects the strain of doom.

> The youth and tattered soldier followed, sneaking as if whipped, feeling unstable to face the stricken man if he should again confront them. They began to have thoughts of a solemn ceremony. There was something ritelike in these movements of the doomed soldier. And there was resemblance in him to a devotee of a mad religion, blood-sucking, muscle-wrenching, bone crushing. They were awed and afraid. He hung back lest he have at command a dreadful weapon. (p. 57)

Here, the repetitive syntactical units are as much a weapon for the author

as the morbid imagery. Describing the awe and bewilderment of the onlookers (Fleming and the tattered soldier) Crane makes a relentless comment on the injustice of war: "This spectacle of gradual strangulation made the youth writhe, and once as his friend rolled his eyes, he saw something in them that made him sink wailing to the ground" (pp. 57-58). Vivid expressions of agony, together with the furious motion of the narrative, underscore and justify the youth's response of "livid rage."

In the novel, form defines meaning. Likewise, in the film, this grim encounter with death is underlined by a dexterous use of cinematic elements.[30] Various camera angles and distances illuminate its effect on Fleming and the tattered man. Low angle shots of the tall man emphasize his pillar-like stature and make his dilemma dominant. Close-ups of his pale grey face provide obvious visual translations of the bewildered emotional state described in Crane's novel. The close-up reaction shots of Fleming and the tattered man might have made similarly poignant remarks on dominant emotions. Unfortunately, Audie Murphy's expressionless facial features manage to capture fear and awe, but fail to show rage. Huston's camera is therefore primarily fixed on the tall soldier. In a few over-the-shoulder shots we see Jim from Henry's point of view; however, an "objective" camera shoots Jim from every angle.

Though Huston considerably loosened Crane's strict point of view, it is effective because our vision of the doomed soldier is not distracted by another character in the frame. As in earlier scenes, Crane's disturbing details such as the teeth of the "laughing" dead man, the mutilated gut, and the gory hand were excluded from the film. These particular deletions, however, carry both advantage and disadvantage

the advantage of less powerful visual imagery is that the audience will focus on psychological trauma; on the other hand, Crane's morbid imagery could have been translated into the screen to dramatic effect. Here, explicit visuals would have heightened the impact of the "ceremonious" death and drawn obvious parallels between the physical trauma and psychological tumult of the war experience.

Huston's soundtrack during Jim Conklin's death scene was designed to accent visuals. The trumpets in Bronislau Kaper's musical score crescendo during the shots of Conklin's convulsive death; silence is also used effectively to underscore tension, allowing the audience to absorb the impact of death. However, the introduction of "taps" during the final shots of the scene, like the use of "Johnny Comes Marching Home," accents spectacle rather than Fleming's "livid rage" at the sight of his comrade's death. As a cliche for the mourning, "taps" imposes rather than elicits an emotional response. Referring to the musical score of Red Badge, Dore Schary reveals a set of priorities foreign to John Huston and, fortunately, to most adaptors:

> I think all music in pictures has to be cliche to be effective. Let's not debate it. I'll prove it to you. In Marine pictures, you play 'Halls of Monezuma.' In Navy pictures, you play 'Anchors Aweigh.' In this picture, the music that's effective is the sentimental cliche music. It's a fact. Let's not debate it.[31]

No one did. Thus, another potential avenue to Crane's irony was blocked. John Huston has expressed the first principle of filmmaking as economy: "No extra words, no extra images, no extra music."[32] In Conklin's death scene, Huston achieved economy with words and images, but the musical score is intrusive because it attempts to dictate rather than elicit emotional response.

Red Badge is a particularly interesting "case study" in adaptation, not only because of exacerbating corporate demands; Huston faced the challenge of capturing Crane's surrealistic images, subjective point of view, and eccentric metaphor. Though the film does preserve the author's general vision of war, it does not convey the nightmarish quality of the experience. Crane's work has often been labeled the first anti-war novel; however, the film has never been noted for its anti-war content. Huston should hardly shoulder all the blame: his most vivid death scenes, which offer psychological portraits of victimized soldiers, were cut by Hollywood executives who thought them too grim to be "entertaining." Huston's Red Badge of Courage could have been a milestone in cinematic art both as a triumph in adaptation and as a study in psychological fear. But when vivid death scenes, shots of ragged veterans, and extended close-ups of men in battle were cut, the ironic tone of the film was smothered. As director George Stevens observed, "'the industry doesn't want good pictures. It wants the norm.'"[33] As an artist and filmmaker, John Huston offered a startling portrait of war, intending to popularize Crane's novel; Hollywood diluted the poignant vision, thereby compromising the intentions of the filmmaker as well as those of the author. Twenty-three years later, a television movie of Red Badge would reconstruct Crane's ironic vision of war more faithfully and more forcefully.

NOTES

[1]Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 176.

[2]Lillian Ross, Picture (New York: Avon Books, 1952), p. 169.

[3]In Picture, Lillian Ross dwells on the lack of communication between director and studio; her focus is on the complex power struggle enmeshing M-G-M executives, and she comes to no conclusions about Huston's cinematic achievements. See also Fred Silva, "Uncivil Battles and Civil Wars," in The Classic American Novel and the Movies, ed. Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 114-123. This essay approaches Red Badge as a case study of how corporate demands affect aesthetic intentions. Opinions concerning who is to blame for the diluted vision in Red Badge are conflicting. In The Cinema of John Huston (Cranbury, New Jersey: A. S. Barnes and Co., Inc., 1977), Gerald Pratley takes Huston's side in suggesting that the director left Hollywood after completing the picture and then it was changed to fit corporate demands. On the other hand, Dore Schary's Heyday (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), tells quite a different story. He contends that Huston "asked me to take over the film, assuring me that I could fix it." (p. 226)

[4]Ross, p. 215.

[5]Eric Solomon, Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism (Cambridge,

Mass: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 70. As Solomon and other critics generally agree, Crane's parody of sentimental notions of war was possibly influenced by John W. De Forest, who wrote *Miss Ravenell's Conversion From Secession to Loyalty* in 1867. See also Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962). Wilson points out that De Forest tried to tell the "whole truth" about war and that his use of realism was similar to Crane's.

[6]Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*, ed., Fredson Bowers, II (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1975), p. 65. Subsequent references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text.

[7]Lewis Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1971), p. 22.

[8]Eugene Archer, "Taking Life Seriously," *Films and Filming*, 5, No. 12 (1959), 14.

[9]Pratley, p. 55.

[10]Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978), p. 182.

[11]Pratley, p. 54.

[12]Eugene Archer, "John Huston--The Hemingway Tradition in American Film," *Film Culture*, 19 (1966), 97.

[13]John Schroeder, "Stephen Crane Embattled," in The University of Kansas City Review, XVII (Winter, 1950), 124.

[14]Silva, p. 121.

[15]V. S. Pritchett, "Crane and Modern War," in The Living Novel (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), p. 175.

[16]Ross, p. 22.

[17]George W. Linden, "The Storied World," in Reflecting on the Screen (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1970), p. 45.

[18]Edwin Cady, Stephen Crane (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972) p. 120.

[19]John Huston, dir., The Red Badge of Courage, with Audie Murphy, Bill Maudlin, and Royal Dano, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1951.

[20]Pratley, p. 83.

[21]Silva, p. 121.

[22]Tales such as "Three Miraculous Soldiers" and "The Little Regiment" further reveal Crane's preoccupation with a banal wartime experience.

[23]Silva, p. 120.

[24]In a second flashback, Muley recalls the caterpillars combing the fields surrounding his homestead. The power of this tractorized army is accentuated by a montage of long, medium, and close-up shots of

the machines. The dissolves which join these shots are delineated with streaks that match the tractor tread we see in the following shots. When the tractor annihilates Muley's homestead, the camera pans the shadows of the stricken family, the treadmarks, and the ruined site. Oppressive effects of progress and their impact on the family are thus communicated with visuals.

[25]Gottfried Reinhardt, as quoted in Ross, p. 117.

[26]The Red Badge of Courage, M-G-M, 1951.

[27]Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 282.

[28]Suid, p. 64.

[29]Ross, p. 125.

[30]John Huston, John Huston: An Open Book (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980), p. 179. In his autobiography, Huston recalls the experience of filming and screening the scene of Conklin's death:

> "It's a strange death. The tall soldier has climbed a hill to meet it. He warns the others to stand away from him as death comes closer and closer. When he finally falls, it's like a tree falling.
>
> The tattered soldier, followed by the boy, descends the hill. He is garrulous and repetitive. He walks in circles then drops to his knees. He, too, is mortally wounded, and he doesn't know it. The scene is an anticlimax as in the novel, but all the more shocking for being unexpected. It was in

fact, too shocking. It backfired. It was during this scene, beautifully acted by Royal Dano, that the preview audience began to walk out."

[31]Ross, p. 148.

[32]Hollywood Voices, ed. Andrew Sarris (New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), p. 111.

[33]Ross, p. 205.

CHAPTER IV

NBC'S THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE (1974): SMALLER SCREEN--BETTER FOCUS

A second attempt at adapting The Red Badge of Courage was made more than two decades after John Huston's version. Directed by Lee Philips with a screenplay by John Gay, this 1974 NBC movie (by the novel's title) is still being aired. The week of its premiere, TV Guide ran a special background story to "supplement" the public's viewing of the film. Interestingly enough, Irving Howe's short article is less a promotion for the film (actors Richard Thomas and Michael Brandon are never mentioned) than a thoughtful precis of Stephen Crane's life and vision. Howe concludes: "To read the book is not to be lulled into familiar warmths of consolation and conclusion, but for some readers, there can be a kind of happiness in being bruised by the truth."[1] Though there is no internal evidence that this critic actually previewed the film, his accurate estimation of the reading experience can also be applied to the viewing experience.

To say that Philips' version of Red Badge is everything that Huston's is not would be an overstatement. First of all, Philips obviously echoes Huston's style of visualizing the dreary realities of war. Second, two decades of cinematic technology had passed, offering Philips more advanced technical options. Third, color was an obvious advantage in the television version, as much of Crane's phantasmagoric and

grotesque imagery is painted in vivid hues. When Huston made Red Badge in 1951, color was not a convenient option; in the seventies it was standard fare. As Gerald Mast has pointed out, "black-and-white is a medium of unities and contrasts; color, of individuation and proliferation . . . color calls attention to the minute diversities of objects."[2] In a vivid color film the viewer's attention is shifted to the shade of color rather than to the texture of an object. Substances such as blood become much more visually effective and emotionally horrifying. As Reid Maynard and other critics have observed, a color such as red is also used as a "leitmotif" which contributes significantly to the pattern of Crane's cosmic view.[3] The visual and symbolic power of Crane's vision is thus served by the color film, though the emphasis on texture associated with black-and-white is shifted to individual objects and hues. Last, audience demands and tastes have changed drastically over twenty years: these graphic details of blood and guts no longer offended viewers for as Mast asserts, the "rise of color" partly resulted in "the new audience's taste for rougher sensations."[4]

Admissions aside, it is the quality and effectiveness of the product, not the social or even financial pressures, which must determine the place an adaptation takes in film history. In the final analysis, Lee Philips' version of The Red Badge of Courage more effectively conveys Crane's vision than does John Huston's. An effective adaptation, NBC's Red Badge is not without variation; the mutations, however, serve the intent of the author and the substance of the original. Moreover, the television movie illustrates that filmmakers can capture an author's vision and recreate his style with visual analogues, music, and editing.

NBC's The Red Badge of Courage opens with a drummer boy methodically

pounding out the rhythm of a soldier's march. It is hard not to focus on the fact that this youth is excessively frail, barely more than a child. Clouds on the horizon underscore the ominous cadence of a march away from innocence and into battle. Patches of red, orange, and purple sky color the landscape. Seconds later, a voice over narrator laconically relates the fact that great numbers of these "green recruits" are "expendable."[5] The first shots of the camp reveal a playful atmosphere: members of the regiment are shaving, bathing, dancing, or arm wrestling; one man is even singing and tap dancing on a large drum. This carefree world vanishes when Jim Conklin (played by Michael Brandon) arrives in a frenzy of excitement with news that they are moving out. Conklin's exaggerated gestures here reveal more than eagerness for action. Implicit are signs of what crazy delusions about the war experience the "gods of traditions" can implant in a young man's mind.[6] To convey the fact that Henry Fleming (played by Richard Thomas) is wrestling with these issues, the camera rests on the youth staring at himself in a mirror. This tradional symbol of contemplation is dramatized by sobering music. Only at this point does the issue of "running away" erupt in the men's conversation.

In Crane's text, Fleming does a lot of thinking about the securities of home and his duty as a patriot, even before the regiment moves out of camp. He recalls the myths he had associated with battle when he first "burned" to enlist:

> Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them. He had read about marches, sieges, conflicts, and he had longed to see it all. His busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds. (p. 5)

He also remembers his mother's lecture on doing what is "right" as well as her face "stained with tears" at his departure (p. 8). "You watch out . . . take good care of yourself . . . I've knet yeh eight pair of socks . . . yeh must never do no shirking, child, on my account . . . be a good boy" (p. 7). Henry's mother delivers her speech while peeling potatoes and the ordinariness of the scene disturbs the youth:

> 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 certain sentences which he thought could be used with touching effect. (p. 6)

The upshot of the chapter is emotional confusion. Henry and those around him are excited, expectant, regretful, disappointed, sad, and afraid. When Henry recalls saying goodbye to his school-mates, he swells with "calm pride" one moment, and in the next sorrowfully reflects that a girl "grew demure and sad at the sight of his blue and brass" (p. 8).

The television adaptation captures the vast spectrum of emotions in two flashbacks which appear almost side by side. Dialogue here is taken directly from Crane's text; in addition, visuals inventively summarize the vascillation of the youth's sentiments. Fleming is sitting near a pond not far from camp. As he stares at his reflection in the water, a dissolve takes the viewer into the past. He and his mother stand face to face. The filmmakers alter the location of their encounter for dramatic effect. Instead of having them in the kitchen where she is peeling potatoes, they are out on the front porch, surrounded by a pastoral environment which visually suggests the comfort, peace, and security of home. Innocence is elaborately stressed by the woman's white dress, the white farmhouse, and the white picket fence. The sun is shining brightly as his mother's echoing voice reminds him "not to

think of anything else but what's right," to remember his father's example, and to look to his bible for guidance.[7] Henry enfolds his mother and his bible in the same embrace; one set of codes is thus communicated.

On the other hand, Henry experiences waves of pride, self-admiration, and expectations that war will be a "Greeklike" struggle. The second flashback in the film addresses these emotions. He is lying on a cot in his tent and opens up his bible. The picture dissolves to a close-up of a young girl at a curtained window. Henry is there, surrounded by youngsters, being ceremoniously dressed in his war uniform. Some very young children are playing on a seesaw. In this self-aggrandizing fantasy, laughter, sunshine, and the harmonica music evoke a playful mood. Shots of the young recruit basking in attention, convey what Crane defined as Fleming's own notion that "they had thronged about him with wonder and admiration" (p. 8). His last farewell is more sobering, however, for close-ups of the saddened faces of young girls suggest a future marked by personal loss, not by heroic achievement. A quick dissolve returns the viewer to the troops on their way to battle.

This scene is one of urgent motion; the men march faster and faster, until at last they are running. The tension is broken only by shots of a dead soldier in their path. Following Crane's description, Fleming is pictured staring into the face of the man: graphic visuals of the "ashen" skin covered in dust and the toes jutting from the worn shoe convey the horror and fear Fleming feels. In Crane's text, he perceives that "they must not all be killed like pigs . . . The generals were idiots to send them marching into a regular pen" (p. 25). In the film, imagery alone successfully imparts the slaughterous effects of war, and close-up

reaction shots of the youth's distraught face relate the fact that he perceives them. Here cinematic analogues manage to externalize Fleming's interior psychological state, preparing the viewer for his decision to run.

The brigade's first brush with battle reveals the inexperience of the raw recruits and the fear of death. In Crane's text, Fleming perceives the battlefield in glimpses or blotches. Through the smoke he sees a "cantering cluster" or "fleeting form" (p. 41). Fear grips the youth so mightily that he is almost in a state of shock and his apprehension grows more abstract: "it was an onslaught of redoubtable dragons. He became like the man who lost his legs at the approch of the red and green monster" (p. 41). Like several other men in his regiment, Fleming panics and runs. The fever of delusion takes over and he imagines the monsters which are trailing him to have "rows of cruel teeth that grinned at him" (p. 42).

A literal film rendition of this scene would be impossible, because to include "monsters" amid realistic details of battle would be ridiculous. Instead, the filmmakers convey the monstrosity of the war machine and focus on the delusive response which fear elicits in an individual. Reverse camera angles, heavy smoke, and whirling bullets translate into the unrelenting chaos of war. Henry himself staggers, falls, and scrambles across the battleground. As Crane's narrator observes, "He ran like a blind man" (p. 42). This simile is effective because along with the other "green recruits," Fleming is <u>groping</u> for an explanation of this horrific but <u>unheroic</u> war experience as well as for his individual safety. In the film, close-ups of trampling feet illustrate a stampede which appears to stem more from the instinct for survival than from

cowardice; as subtle cinematic allusions to Crane's animal imagery of pigs, sheep, rabbits, and chickens, these scurrying feet seemed to be thumping to one of "Nature's signs." A handheld camera tracks the youth as he bounds through the forest: every dead twig, broken branch, lashing vine, and mound of dirt becomes a subjective menace. The dizzy movement of the camera recreates Fleming's physical panic as well as the commotion within his mind.

In the next scene of Crane's novel, the youth tries to rationalize his decision to run:

> He had fled, he told himslf, because annihilation approached. He had done a good part in saving himself, who was a little piece of the army. He had considered the time, he said, to be one in which it was the duty of every little piece to rescue itself if possible. Later the officers could fit the little pieces together again, and make a battle front. If none of the little pieces were wise enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then, where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to very correct and commendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things. They had been full of strategy. They were the work of a master's legs. (p. 45)

In spite of this argumentative interior monologue, thoughts of his courageous, but haunting comrades plague this youth, so he looks to the landscape for assurance.

> He threw a pine cone at a jovial squirrel, and he ran with chattering fear. High in a treetop he stopped, and poking his head cautiously from behind a branch, looked down with an air of trepidation.
>
> The youth felt triumphant at this exhibition. There was the law, he said. Nature had given him a sign. The squirrel, immediately upon recognizing danger, had taken to his legs without ado. He did not stand stolidly baring his furry belly to the missile, and die with an upward glance at the sympathetic heavens. On the contrary, he had fled as fast as his legs could carry him; he was but an ordinary squirrel, too--doubless no philosopher of his race. (pp.46-7)

Both the interior monologue and Nature's exterior reinforcement of

Henry's argument are reproduced in part by the makers of television's Red Badge. Fortunately, in communicating the protagonist's mind state, they did not resort to the use of voice-over narration which, as Harris Elder has observed, so often becomes a "limited surrogate" for the narrative voice: "This 'solution' to finding a clear and faithful point of view in film merely avoids the issue of finding analogous rhetorical techniques of the original."[8] Unlike Huston's Red Badge, Lee Philips' adaptation uses voice-over very sparingly. The scene in which Fleming considers his "crime" aptly illustrates how inventive cinematic technique can more effectively render psychological states.

After his exhausting race through the forest, the youth drops to the ground, burying his muddy, scratched face in his hands. Anguish is underscored by the dead twigs prominently placed in the foreground of the close-up shot. To convey a dream state, the image is slightly blurred. The camera assumes an appropriate low angle position and Fleming looks up at the sky to see his commander propped ceremoniously on his white horse. High angles of the deserter and low angles of the leader suggest a strained relationship between officers and enlisted men which Crane's text does not dispute. In a dominating voice the commander assures the youth: "You have made a wise decision to run and save yourself. Even a squirrel is wise enough to run when his life is in danger."[9] The approving voice echoes "well done" more than several times, and the blurring subjective camera reproduces the character's fantasy. It might be argued that a verbal reference to the symbolic squirrel scene is uninventive and awkward; however, in this particular case, the simplistic rationalization which Henry attempts is made all the more objectionable by the fact that the utterance is so contrived.

Other scenes in NBC's Red Badge deserve attention because they further support the point that alteration and invention are not necessarily impediments to fidelity. Jim Conklin's emblematic death has already been treated in an introductory chapter of this study; however, the scene in which Fleming deserts the wounded and dying tattered soldier merits analysis. Uncharacteristically, this episode in Crane's novel is strictly dialogue and narrative commentary. The tattered man begins to stammer and slur; Fleming sees "that he, too, like that other one, was beginning to act dumb and animal-like. His thoughts seemed to be floundering about in his head." Unable to cope with another graphic death, the youth "climbed a fence and started away" (p. 62) The tone of Crane's prose here (and of Henry's action) is quite distancing. In memory, Jim Conklin becomes "that other one"; the tattered soldier is unnamed and referred to only as a "late companion" (p. 62). The reader comes face to face with the indifference of the universe; man is helpless against fate.

The film adaptation adds one inventive visual to stress the theme of an uncaring cosmos. The wounded man, with a blood-soaked rag tied about his head, stumbles deleriously in an open field. As the troubled youth runs away, shots of the tattered soldier walking away from the camera underscore distance--thematically the gap is one of helplessness. The composition of one long shot is particularly interesting: the sun is nearly set behind the lone soldier and he is stumbling between railroad tracks; as the camera dollies out away from the dying man the tracks fuse together on the horizon. The visual effect of this scene quite powerfully conveys the punitive arrows of fate as well as the anonymity of the character created in Crane's text.

The major battle sequence of Red Badge is also effectively rendered

in the television adaptation. Editing, sound, lighting, and color combine to achieve the impressionistic style of Crane's prose as well as the grim realities of war. Both novel and film break up the final charge to illustrate the drudgery of battle. Men stumble and fall, dropping like "bundles" on the field. In Crane's text, the advancing regiment "left a coherent trail of bodies" as it passed by "gray walls and fringes of smoke (p. 105). While the landscape seems obscure, the youth clearly perceives the men's "staring eyes and sweating faces." Like Fleming's mind, Lee Philips' camera takes a "mechanical and firm impression" (p. 69); like Fleming's imagination, the camera also captures the "confusing clouds" of smoke, the bright fury of exploding shells, and the battle flags "flying like crimson foam."

In the film, parts of the charge are presented in slow motion, each leap of the men's bodies blending into the next. Editing stylistically recreates Crane's imagery of masses and the rhythm of a line falling "slowly forward like a toppling wall" (p. 104). Intercut are close-ups of wild, angry faces. Wounded and exhausted, the men halt in the middle of the field. As Crane describes the scene, the "regiment, involved like a cart involved in mud and muddle, started unevenly with many jolts and jerks" (p. 107). The purposefully repetitive and choppy style of Crane's prose is conveyed with visual analogues in the film: lifting one staggering limb at a time, the soldiers attempt to move. Fleming heads the regiment and as Crane's narrator observes, he was "unconsciously in advance" (p. 105). The slow-motion sequence in the film adaptation recreates the mental haze of the protagonist as the subjective camera surveys a blur of greens, yellows, and purples. There is triumphant music here and the echoing voice of Henry's mother: "do

what's right, right, right."[10] Ironically, the war screams of the soldiers dominate the soundtrack. Ceremonial music and conventional advice are but a plaintive cry in the wake of the voice of instinct. A brief scene of hand to hand combat follows the charge, and the battlefield is suddenly silent. Fleming turns to set eyes on a landscape littered with bodies.

When the action concludes in Crane's novel, "the regiment was a machine run down" (p. 112). Likewise, in the film the music is slow and drudging. The men throw their hats up in the air and cheer victoriously; but the irony of celebrating this ugly "god of war" is conveyed by a freeze frame of the hats superimposed on shots of wounded men staggering away, instead of marching home. The colonel is no longer riding his horse, and the flag is reduced to shreds.

NBC's adaptation of _The Red Badge of Courage_ successfully conveys Stephen Crane's ironic vision of war; likewise, it illustrates how cinematic invention can serve the intent of a work of literature. Because audiences in the 1970s were less shocked by grotesque details of war than were viewers of the 1950s, the filmmakers could more forcefully visualize the blood and gore of battle. The use of color heightens the impact of the adaptation; at the same time it helps render Crane's impressionistic style. George Wyndham celebrates the novel, claiming it "is full of sensuous impressions that leap out from the picure: of gestures, attitudes, grimaces, that flash into portentous definition, like faces from the climbing clouds of nightmare."[17] Under Lee Philips' direction, the unique features of Crane's style and vision also "leap" to the screen.

NOTES

[1]Irving Howe, "*The Red Badge of Courage*," *TV Guide*, 30 Nov. - 6 Dec., p. 11.

[2]Gerald Mast, *Film/Cinema/Movie*: *A Theory of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 89.

[3]Reid Maynard, "Red as a Leitmotiv in *The Red Badge of Courage*," *Arizona Quarterly*, 30 (1974), 141.

[4]Mast, p. 87.

[5]*The Red Badge of Courage*, dir., Lee Philips, with Richard Thomas and Michael Brandon, NBC, 1974. This film was first aired on Dec. 3, 1974.

[6]Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*, ed., Fredson Bowers, II (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1975), p. 14. Subsequent references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text.

[7]NBC's *The Red Badge of Courage*, 1974.

[8]Harris J. Elder, "From Literature to Cinema: *The American Short Story* Series," Diss. Oklahoma State University, 1979, p. 28.

[9]NBC's *The Red Badge of Courage*, 1974.

[10]NBC's The Red Badge of Courage, 1974.

[11]George Wyndham, "A Remarkable Book," New Review, XIV (1896), 36.

CHAPTER V

BFA'S THREE MIRACULOUS SOLDIERS (1976): SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON CRANE'S STORY

Stephen Crane was a virtually uncelebrated author until The Red Badge of Courage (1895) began to redefine the "war novel" as a commentary on the effects of war for the sensitive individual who is inextricably bound by myths of heroism, the reality of marches, sieges, conflicts, not to mention the fear of death. Since that time, most of Crane's other war stories have been revisited, indeed evaluated as stepping stones to or from the masterful parodic/realistic structure present in Red Badge. One story, however, has been almost completely ignored.[1] "Three Miraculous Soldiers" was first published in 1896 in a volume entitled The Little Regiment. Like the other stories, it is a "tale" of war, but it is told from the point of view of a girl who is forced to see the humanity of both sides.

Critics may have chosen to ignore the story for a variety of reasons: stylistically, it cast a shadow on the limelight produced by Red Badge; unconventionally, the tale is told from a young woman's point of view. Moreover, most Crane critics dismiss it as melodramatic and sentimental.[2] Perhaps taking Crane's complaints about the frustration of creating war stories (after Red Badge) too seriously, certain critics have quickly dismissed the tale as flawed and a case of stylistic backsliding.

For whatever reason, "Three Miraculous Soldiers" had been left nearly untouched until BFA Educational Media (a division of CBS) produced it in 1976 for the screen. Written and directed by Bernard Selling, the film has received less attention than the story, if that is possible. Promoters of this film have claimed that it is an "interpretation" and not a "synopsis" of Crane's story. The verity of this claim needs to be tested. Ideally, an exegetic set of visuals, music, and dialogue will suggest an interpretation to scholars, for not yet have either story or film been carefully evaluated in terms of form and meaning.

Crane's "Three Miraculous Soldiers" is not unlike _The Red Badge of Courage_, at least with respect to problems facing the makers of a film adaptation. The narrator is not omniscient, and events, though they are described in third person, are seen from the protagonist's limited angle of vision. This problem of subjectivity is accentuated by the strain of impressionism in both stories: metaphors, though vivid, are not necessarily realistic, and the line between imagination and reality is obscured. Perhaps the most difficult issue of adaptation concerns the dialogue. In "Three Miraculous Soldiers" as in _Red Badge_, dialogue advances plot, but hardly contributes at all to character and theme. Images must then be carefully chosen and juxtaposed to convey important elements of parody and irony, as well as to provide a window into the mind of the silent character.

What is interpretive and inventive about _Three Miraculous Soldiers_ is certainly not dialogue, for it is taken directly from Crane's text; visuals, music, and sound effects, however, do what film can do best--intensify an experience. By graphically and effectively visualizing

Mary Hinckson's impressions, the filmaker can actually recreate Crane's artistic method. As Frank Bergon has observed with respect to Crane's "habit of imagination," his fictions reflect an intensely emotional state and this "consciousness" is a "bulwark" against a cosmic void:

> The basic assumption of Crane's method is that the most insignificant of objects, even an array of tiny toes jutting from a torn shoe, if properly perceived can become something monstrous, overwhelming, crushing, not in the sense of necessarily providing some new form of knowledge but in offering the senses and consciousness a new fulness and awareness. In such moments the surfaces of inconsequential things take on a new look. All this matters because, as Crane's art finally implies, there is a hint of the divine in such moments of heightened perception and feeling.[3]

What Bergon suggests here, that perception, immediacy, and visualization all define the value of the world as Crane sees it, clearly justifies a study of Crane's particular impressions and their presence on the screen.

The incidents of Crane's "Three Miraculous Soldiers" are atypical of battle stories, and in terms of the conventional war film, would provide an unsuitable plot. The only element that would have appealed to MGM executives would concern the presence of a female protagonist; there is, however, no "love interest." Mary Hinckson is on the family farm in the rural South during the Civil War. Her father is away fighting in Lee's army; her hysterical mother offers little solace. Union cavalry arrive on the farm and when they leave, Mary goes to the barn to check on the horses only to discover three Confederate troopers hiding. The Union soldiers return (the Confederates are in the feed box), and this becomes a version of hide-and-seek drama. Mary (peering through a knothole) watches her friends who are hiding in a feed box go undiscovered, and perceives the situation in terms of a "miraculous" hallucination, for she is astounded to find the men appear at her feet, having dug their way out

of the barn under the floor. When one of the escaped soldiers returns to knock out the Union sentry and free his prisoner, Mary rushes into the barn, sobbing and fretting over the ailing "should-be" enemy. The plot is plain, too plain it might be suggested; however, it is not as sentimental as critics assert; it is ordinary, which is the very comment about the war experience for which Crane is famous. It is not Crane who utters the final inane words of the story which concern the touching features of womanhood: "'War changes many things, but it doesn't change everything, thank God.'"[4] The speaker is a Union trooper, who like Mary and others, has suffered the delusion that war involves heroics and tragedy.

From the opening paragraph of "Three Miraculous Soldiers" forward, Crane emphasized "deluded" eyes which anticipate the war experience. From the narrator's point of view we are provided with a description of the interior of the farmhouse. Selection of detail and metaphor qualify the assertion that this "best room" is only tasteful according to rag-tag Victorian standards. It features a "new rag rug," "dyed with alternate stripes of red and green," two clayed figures, "a shepherd and shepherdess, probably," pillows and a mattress like "great dumplings," and a newspaper which serves as a "mat" (p. 22). In the realistic tradition this vivid portrayal of Victorian taste is matched only by that of the innocent observer Huck Finn, who exposes the artifical decor of the Grangerford household:

> Well, there was a big outlandish parrot on each side of the clock, made out of something like chalk, and painted up gaudy. By one of the parrots was a cat made of crockery, and a crockery dog by the other; and when you pressed down on them they squeaked, but didn't open their mouths nor look different nor interested.[5]

The interiors of the Grangerford and the Hinckson households are neither functional nor tasteful. And, like books in the library of

Silas Lapham, the newspaper of this Southern society simply gathers dust. Crane's parody of setting functions just as Howells' or Twain's does; household bric-a-brac is merely an extension of the cluttering romantic and sentimental notions of the characters. As Charles Mayer has pointed out, the traditional discrepancy between illusion and reality, which is a chief motif of Crane's fiction, is always depicted in the setting by either "false order" or "disorder."[6] The "false order" of the opening of "Three Miraculous Soldiers" proves, then, not the backdrop for a sentimental story, but the roadmarks of a deluded character's brush with the war experience. Mary Hinckson, like Henry Fleming, will offer alternating views of illusion and reality because her dreams are shattered by the recognition of the banality of war experiences. It is the constant jolt of derangement and the question of Mary's delusion which provide the meaningful conflict in the story, and the first hint of this discrepancy between illusion and fact comes in the opening scene of "Three Miraculous Soldiers."

The opening scene of the film adaptation does, though not with respect to all of Crane's detail, attempt the same plunge into the "false order" which suggests Mary's delusions; at the same time, the particulars of a realistic setting prepare the viewer for the surface action of the story. First, a sequence of Matthew Brady photographs marks the time period of the story with stills of marching troops, dug-outs, and dead Confederates. The camera zooms out to an establishing shot of a white farm house in an autumn setting; glittering golds, reds, and oranges on the surrounding farm house, and the pastoral environs evoke the mood of Crane's opening which contains meadows, frogs, gentle winds, dark green pines, "inexpressibly" blue

sky and the "rhythmic click" of insects. Brilliant sunshine highlights the peaceful surroundings as the tune "My Old Kentucky Home" aurally communicates the innocent environment which will soon be clouded by confrontation. A cut to a Confederate soldier's photograph pronounces the fact that the man of the house is away at war. The camera pans to the pensive Mary Hinckson, who is standing in an upstairs room. A mirror behind her reflects the gray and white dominated color scheme, effectively suggesting a clouded interior which contrasts with the peaceful pastoral exterior. What is missing in the opening scene of the film adaptation are particulars of decor which would symbolize, as they do in Crane's story, the protagonist's false notion of the "best room" in the house. Mary's entrapment in sentimental and romantic ideas could have been visually conveyed by close-ups of the rag carpet, the clay figures, and perhaps some revealing portraits which glorify the war experience and prepare the viewer for her expectations of heroism and romance. At this point in the film, the only visual element which suggests that viewers are seeing more of "appearance" and expectation than reality, involves the use of windows as a framing device. In the story, Mary peers through the slats of blinds. The film uses over-the-shoulder shots of Mary anxiously eyeing the road to imply the same selectivity and subjectivity of vision.

After short scenes of dialogue that reveal the idea that Mary would rather watch for the exciting arrival of soldiers than tend to her housework, Crane's narrator begins to see the world and explain it strictly from Mary's point of view. Likewise, in the film, the camera is either positioned over the shoulder of Mary or right beside her. From this plot point (the arrival of Yankee troops) on, Crane's narrator

and Selling's camera dramatize Mary's emotional vascillation between reality and illusion. Because, as Charles Mayer has pointed out, "Mary experiences her uncanny physical world as a series of surrealistic images and distorted fragments," the use of montage, flashback, distorting lenses and, especially, dramatic lighting effects are appropriate cinematic tools available for rendering the turmoil of the protagonist's senses.[7]

In Crane's story, after the Yankee soldiers have approached the farm and passed by, Mary goes to the barn (despite her mother's frantic warnings) to check on her horse Santo:

> The breeze was waving the boughs of the apple trees. A rooster with an air importantly courteous was conducting three hens upon a foraging tour. On the hillside at the rear of a grey old barn the red leaves of a creeper flamed amid the summer foliage. High in the sky clouds rolled toward the north. The girl swung impulsively from the little stoop and ran toward the barn. (p. 26)

In this passage, images of the red "creeper" and the rolling clouds suggest an intrustion on the placid environs, and the narrator's tone and word choice carry Mary's air of anticipation and fear.

In the film adaptation of the scene, the same effect (where a pastoral setting gets transformed into and perceived as the opening of a nightmare) is achieved, though the means to the end differ slightly. The camera follows Mary as she leaves the house and goes to the barn to check on Santo. Birds chirp in the background; as she enters, cascading, whitish dead willow branches fill half the frame. The dead tree (a traditional visual metaphor for death) is accompanied by a close-up of the protagonist's face, her hair glistening in the sunlight. The next shot of Mary staring into the dark barn is clarified only by a scream as she discovers three men in grey who are drenched in shadows,

relaxing in the hay. In Crane's story, the soldiers are depicted more as phantoms than men: "their dust-covered countenances were expanded in grins" (p. 26). Likewise, in the film as the light (which becomes a motif for Mary's innocence) fades, the camera dwells on the sinister effect of one man's rolling eyes. Close-ups and medium shots of the wounded man reaching out to the girl, together with soft, barely audible music elicit sympathy. Mary herself appears mesmerized. When drums signal the arrival of another Union troop (and briefly snap Mary back to reality), the three Rebels look frantically for a place to hide. Both Crane's story and Selling's film adaptation convey the imperiled soldiers as phantoms which alter shape and form according to Mary's imagination.

Crane's comments about his deluded protagonist continue throughout the story, and the scene in which Mary contemplates her duty as a Southern heroine verbally imparts the tension between her romantic sentiments and practical instinct.

> It semed to her that . . . it was her duty to be a heroine. In all the stories she had read when at boarding school in Pennsylvania, the girl characters, confronted with such difficulties, invariably did hairbreadth things. True they were usually bent upon rescuing and recovering their lovers, and neither the calm man in grey nor any of the three in the feed box was lover of hers, but then a real heroine would not pause over this minor question. (p. 33)

Crane's parody of pulp novel sensibility is effective not only because Mary is incapable of doing the heroic deed, but also because her motive is empty of true cause, even within the conventions of melodrama. Delusion is further established by the narrator's comment that Mary knew heroines "severed the hero's bonds, cried a dramatic sentence, and stood between him and his enemies until he had run far enough away" (p. 33). Like the soldiers in the feed box, Mary is trapped; romantic convention demands that she act, but even she, for a moment, realizes "One

by one . . . the gorgeous contrivances and expedients of fiction fall before the plain, homely difficulties of the situation" (p. 33).

This extremely revealing surge of Mary's emotions would have been awkward if conveyed through dialogue or voice-over narration. Selling's film adaptation, however, uses a dream sequence to visualize Crane's comment that heroism is wishful thinking, not a practical approach to war. Mary, standing at the window, sees the Yankees go into the barn and fear triggers her dream: a rifle is directed at a horrified Confederate climbing out of the feed box, and a shot resounds. Mary imagines herself forbidding the soldier's entrance into the barn. The rifles pointed in the air and the blue lighting convey a dream state while soaring music brings Mary's imaginary heroic act to a climax. The "false order" of this deluded world is sustained as Mary--still in her dream--slowly staggers back to the farmhouse. Mocking grumbles from the Yankees echo and follow the ineffectual heroine. At this point, a fantasy of Mary reaching out to help the wounded man in the barn reinforces the discrepancy between the ideal and the real. Her ears ring with the echoing comment, "Daddy would have wanted us to help," but a sinew of sound (attaching the suffix "less, less, less") imaginatively conveys what Crane summarized as a "deep humiliation":

> She was not then made of that fine stuff, that mental satin, which enabled some other beings to be of such mighty service to the distressed: she was defeated. She was defeated by a barn with one door, by four men with eight eyes and eight ears--trivialities that would not impede the real heroine. (p. 34)

This passage, like its counterpart (the invented dream sequence), is particularly illuminating because it contains a melange of so-called "truths." The juxtaposition of images effects a polarization between illusion and reality. As a devoted reader of pulp heroics, Mary expects magic and

"magicians"; instead of such a facile deus ex machina, she faces four men with "eight eyes" and "eight ears."

The climax of "Three Miraculous Soldiers" comes with nightfall when Mary has gone to the barn and is peering through a knothole. Again, while the events kindle the fires of the protagonist's imagination, ultimately the war scene is a singularly unromantic affair. Just before Mary leaves for the barn, the narrator foreshadows the ending: "When confronting the problem, she felt her ambitions, her ideas tumbling headlong like cottages of straw" (p. 35). For a brief moment, Mary senses that her grand ideals provide a weak stronghold against a banal but threatening war experience; throughout the rest of the story, glimpses of this truth come to her. Mary's illusions gradually give way to reality: the ghostly hands, waxen figures, shadows, "mystic head" all dissolve into concrete observation as she perceives the "bunching" brown hair, the "puckered" scowl, and the ring on the third finger of the left hand of the sentry. As Charles Mayer concludes, Mary "knows now that the simplest facts of war are violence and death, not heroic acts of self-sacrifice. In the face of these facts, all men are vulnerable, even helpless, and all suffer, regardless of their colors."[8]

The story and the film adaptation of "Three Miraculous Soldiers" sustain the gradual dissolution of Mary Hinckson's uncanny world. Her concrete observations are introduced piecemeal amidst distorted fragments and surralistic images. Thus, the turmoil of senses is sustained to the end of the tale. When Mary approaches the barn at nightfall, it is enveloped in shadow: "Down in the orchard the camp-fires of the troops appeared precisely like a great painting, all in reds upon a black cloth. The voices of the troopers still hummed" (p. 36). Mary's

perception here is both visually and aurally indistinct, and in the language of the sentimental novel, Crane's narrator summarizes, again, Mary's delusion as it is whispered through the "voice of the wind":

> At first she felt like weeping. This sound told her of human impotency and doom. Then later the trees and the wind breathed strength to her, sang of sacrifice, of dauntless effort, of hard carven faces that did not blanch when Duty came at midnight or at noon. (p. 36)

Crane's parody of the romance is all the more biting because of the images which preface it; not only is Mary's moral and intellectual pose determined by the stuff of fiction, she is looking at and listening to her physical environment through the same distorted lens. Fortunately, the movements of soldiers snap her back into reality as she listens to a sentry "swearing away in flaming sentences" (p. 36) and observes (through the knothole) the eyes, mouth, and nose of a tall and lean officer.

In the film adaptation, Mary's sentimental digression (at this point) is not conveyed, but color conveys the fact that her imagination is dyeing the fabric of reality in horrific hues. There are alternately blueish and reddish tones to the bodies of the soldiers and close-ups reveal red shadows dancing off their faces. Reality presents itself only when a Yankee soldier is ordered to check out the feed box.

Crane depicts Mary's reaction to the discovery of an <u>empty feed box</u> in terms of a complete dissociation from reality: "She was astonished out of her senses at this spectacle of three large men metamorphosed into a handful of feed" (p. 37). Again her horrific imagination takes control and the feed box becomes "a mystic and terrible machine, like some dark magician's trap. She felt it almost possible that she should see the three weird men floating spectrally away through the air" (p.

38). The filmmakers convey the escape and Mary's reaction somewhat differently. She views the empty feed box with astonishment, but reaction shots of her face convey a mindstate of curiosity, not terror. Like the wending "monsters" in The Red Badge of Courage, visuals involving "ghosts" floating through the air would have rendered the scene ridiculous, so they were deleted. The shadows, however, which are often used by Crane to symbolize mystery and confusion, are highlighted for dramatic effect. In the adaptation invented details of action also supplement the protagonist's emotion of astonishment. As Crane depicts the scene, Mary sees the escaped Confederates as they crawl out from under the barn to safety; however, the filmmakers heighten the emotional tension of the scene by showing a hand reach out beneath the barn and touch the legs of the unaware protagonist. This convention of the horror film aptly suggests the ghoulish and sinister appearance of the event at the same time it makes the surprise more immediate.

The three men crawl out from under this "tragic barn" (p. 41) slowly and silently. Mary returns to her senses and dwells on the "dirt" which has accumulated on the clothes of what before appeared to her as a "ghost." Although grime is definitely a fact of the war experience, Bernard Selling chose to treat the realities of battle more graphically, and the emphasis in his rendition of the scene is blood. Red and blue lighting dominates as two of the soldiers drag the visibly wounded man over the dry, crackling hay; heavy breathing, grunts, and groans alarm the viewer who anticipates an untimely discovery on the part of the sentry. When the escape is complete, the Rebels return to free their captain who is being held prisoner in the barn. Crane's narrator conveys the consequent scuffle as if Mary (who is again at the knothole) sees

it in slow motion. The shift from reality to imagination comes again and she sees the prisoner, sentry, and Rebels only as tall, black, vanishing figures or as merely shadows. Returning to her senses, Mary runs into the barn and flings herself, sobbing, beside the wounded Yankee sentry. Inherent in this element of action is the notion that Mary finally perceives that suffering and death strike both sides; perhaps, then, the shadows she has been following have led her to some measure of truth: she is sobbing over a man who is wounded, not an abstract, noble cause which is threatened. In the film, Mary Hinckson makes the same observation of the Yankee sentry that she did of the injured Confederate: "His wound looks real bad."[9] Pain and misery imbue her final impression of the war experience.

It is unfortunate that both story and film version of Crane's "Three Miraculous Soldiers" have been slighted, for, as this examination has illustrated, the tale is more inherent to the author's unique style and vision than has been recognized. The female protagonist may never <u>totally</u> abandon her romantic illusions or the womanly sympathies that critics seem to agree ruin the tale; however, she is <u>exposed</u> to the fact that pulp novels and boarding school myths of heroism do not apply to the realities of war. Like Maggie Johnson, who must look beneath the veil of Christian virtue and "respectability," like Henry Fleming, who must realize that the "blue demonstration" sheds false hues on reality, Mary Hinckson must let "tumble" her ideals which are as weak as "cottages of straw," and look closely enough to discover that the "magician's box" is in fact empty. This message is an urgent one in Crane's fiction, for, as Charles Mayer concludes, "survival itself depended so often on separating one's dream of reality from one's knowledge of experience."[10]

The adaptation of "Three Miraculous Soldiers" is an especially significant contribution to Crane scholarship because it should renew interest in, and incite closer examination of, a minor story which has been consistently misinterpreted by major critics. Although Three Miraculous Soldiers is no prodigy with respect to cinematic experimentation, it does effectively use shadows, lighting, and color to present and dramatize a major theme of the story--illusion vs. reality--that Crane critics have, for the most part, ignored. Moreover, the film illustrates that a successful adaptation will visualize an author's intent as well as provide fresh interpretation.

NOTES

[1]Major Crane critics such as Eric Solomon, Milne Holston, Frank Bergon, Donald Gibson, and James Nagel treat "The Three Miraculous Soldiers" in one of three ways: they either mention the title in passing, dismiss the story as sentimental, or offer such a sparse commentary on it as to suggest it is not worth including in the canon of Stephen Crane's important work. Charles W. Mayer, however, suggests that "Three Miraculous Soldiers" is "related to all of Crane's principal achievements and to the mainstream of realistic fiction." See "Stephen Crane and the Realistic Tradition: 'Three Miraculous Soldiers,'" _Arizona Quarterly_, 30 (1974), 127-134.

[2]Eric Solomon dismisses "Three Miraculous Soldiers" as "sentimental and popularized, like the work of Thomas Nelson Page or George Cary Eggleston. See _Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism_ (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 100-101. In _The Fiction of Stephen Crane_ (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), Donald B. Gibson iterates Solomon's assessment (p. 97).

[3]Frank Bergon, _Stephen Crane's Artistry_ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 59.

[4]Stephen Crane, "Three Miraculous Soldiers," in _Tales of War_, ed., Fredson Bowers, VI (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1970), p. 22. Subsequent references to this work will appear

parenthetically in the text.

[5]Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn: _Text, Sources and Criticism_ (1885; rpt. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1961), p. 54.

[6]Mayer, 129.

[7]Mayer, 132.

[8]Mayer, 133.

[9]Bernard Selling, dir., _Three Miraculous Soldiers_, BFA (a division of CBS), 1976.

[10]Mayer, 128.

CHAPTER VI

JAN KADAR'S THE BLUE HOTEL (1977): A VISUAL READING OF CRANE'S CLASSIC STORY

"The Blue Hotel" (1898) remains Stephen Crane's best known, most frequently anthologized and analyzed short story. An intense study in fear, Crane's story falls short of The Red Badge of Courage (1895) only in length. "The Blue Hotel" is the tale of a disturbed immigrant (call-ed "the Swede") who has read too many dime novels about the badlands of the Wild West. With other travelers, the Swede arrives at the Palace Hotel in Fort Romper, Nebraska, convinced that he will be robbed and murdered by the proprietor, Patrick Scully, by his son Johnnie, or by one of the guests. At first, the Swede acts timidly and apprehensively; then he becomes hysterically frightened. Scully calms him with liquor and induces him to join the other guests in a friendly card game. He plays with manic verve, suddenly accuses Johnnie of cheating, and then beats him in a fist fight. Flushed with this triumph, the Swede goes to a nearby saloon where, trying to browbeat the local gambler into drinking with him, he coaxes the death he has long feared.

This isolated hero fails in Crane's world because of his internal contradictions. In Crane's world, which anticipates Hemingway's, man is damaged and alone in a hostile, violent universe; life is one long war we seek out and challenge in fear and controlled panic.[1] "The Blue Hotel" contains familiar elements of Crane's fiction; the vainglorious

hero, the images of Nature as antagonist, the delusive victory, the critical irony of the narrator. Though the plot is simple, the emotional responses of the protagonist are intense. The Swede's horrific imagination resembles that of Henry Fleming in Red Badge of Courage; for both heroes, imagination poses a greater threat than external reality. As Daniel Weiss has noted, the Swede's mind is a "graveyard of decaying realities, baseless fears, disguised desires, and futile strategies."[2] Stephen Crane's nightmarish vision and imaginative presentations are still relevant for modern audiences, and to renew interest in this "master writer" of The American Short Story Series chose to adapt "The Blue Hotel" for television. *A slightly altered version of James Agee's film script (1949) was used.

Critics have had mixed feelings about Agee's script. James Fultz contends that "there is in it a quality approaching nihilism, a repressed rage, a certain perversity, which may be in Crane's story in a slightly different, less social and more metaphysical form."[3] Roberta Madden complains that "his version, by sometimes explaining too much, by attending too closely to loose ends, tends to lessen the aura of stark mystery that is one of the story's strengths." Yet, at the same time, Madden heralds Agee's script as an "example of cinematic art" and a "perceptive treatment" of the story; "thus the script is both creation and interpretation."[4] This chapter will gauge the extent to which Jan Kadar's film, which was based on Agee's script, is both a new creation and a perceptive interpretation of Crane's "The Blue Hotel." The film has been praised as faithful, but it has never been carefully analyzed as a basis for critical study of Crane's story.

The late Jan Kadar, director of The Blue Hotel, was a

Czechoslovakian-American filmmaker known in the United States for films such as The Shop on Main Street, Adrift, Angel Levine, and Lies My Father Told Me. In an interview with Calvin Skaggs in April of 1977, Kadar explained his personal interest in putting "The Blue Hotel" on screen:

> The political content of the story is not only universal but timeless. It spoke to me very closely, and probably my position is a very personal one. I felt so close to the character of the Swede because the problem of being put in an alien environment and the desire to cooperate - how difficult it is! Today people are being transported from one place to another and looking for survival and some form of identity. So the story became very contemporary.[5]

As an immigrant in Hollywood, it is clear that Jan Kadar came to The Blue Hotel project well prepared, both personally and professionally, to portray Crane's text as well as the basic philosophy behind the story.

Since "The Blue Hotel" is a study of internalized fear rather than a story of a particular event in Western history, its "adaptability" must be a function of the extent to which the author can present the interior world of the characters. An author's focus on the inner-consciousness of characters is usually a stumbling block for the filmmaker who is looking for visual correlatives in the ordinary world of sight and sound. As Richard Hulseburg has noted, "Film's very reliance on the perceivable, externalized image necessitates a precarious search for visual equivalents of interior or psychological states."[6] This challenge can be met by the use of mise en scene, dialogue, music, action, or by the awkward device of voice-over narration which has been illustrated in the discussion of Huston's Red Badge of Courage (1951). However, if a narrator records the thoughts of a character rather than shows them through action, character reaction, and dialogue, the resulting

experience is not immediate or visual; film demands both. Here lies the difference between telling and showing. An effective film "tells" by actively showing; it does not simply record thoughts.

In contrast to the interior monologue of Red Badge, Crane's "Blue Hotel" is a drama of inarticulate characters: psychological states are most often conveyed by mood and setting, rather than by the inner reflections of the main character. This basic externality obviously aided Kadar. The imagery of "The Blue Hotel" is real as opposed to surreal. Cards symbolize fate; the blizzard is a tangible metaphor for psychological turmoil. In Red Badge, Henry Fleming perceives his fellow soldiers as "crawling reptiles" and the battlefield as a "blue demonstration." In Gaston Pelletier's words, "so abundant is the flow of color that reality becomes obscured if not altogether eliminated."[7] The narrator of Red Badge looks out at the world primarily through Fleming's eyes; thus, the point of view is both subjective and extremely limited. In "The Blue Hotel," the narrative voice is third person and better suited to the "objectivity" of a camera.

The plot and sequence of scenes in Kadar's film adaptation of "The Blue Hotel" are structured according to the nine sections of Crane's story. Kadar's version contains only one variation. In Crane's story, the Swede leaves for a local saloon, where he meets his death; in the film, he dies in the Palace Hotel. It would be unsound to assume that this minor alteration was made primarily for economic reasons. Kadar justifies changing the location of the ending, saying that a film must sustain unity of time and place:

> From a practical point of view, you cannot achieve on film what Crane does in the story. In literature you can describe in one paragraph who these new people are in the saloon and whom the Swede is provoking. But the main purpose of placing

> the climax of the drama on the hotel, rather than in the saloon, was to let all of the characters witness the destruction of the Swede, since all of them are responsible for destroying him. Seeing his death is, dramatically and emotionally, more powerful than just hearing it.[8]

Kadar also saw the stranger who killed the Swede as a dramatic device designed to serve the theme of destiny. Because he was simply "a gambler," rather than a man with depth of character, Kadar reasoned that it made no difference whether the stranger came to the hotel to kill the Swede, or whether the Swede went to a saloon to get killed.[9] * The underlying assumption here is that the story centers on the fears of the Swede, whether he is inside or outside the hotel; therefore, the location of the death scene is thematically insignificant.

Though Kadar's three-fold justification for altering the setting of the climatic scene seems justified, it is difficult to ignore the fact that setting is central to Crane's work. As Eric Solomon notes, setting in "The Blue Hotel" embodies three worlds: the world of the Swede, the world of the Blue Hotel, and the world of the saloon. He adds that perhaps nowhere in Crane's work is the setting of more "structural and qualitative value"; furthermore, the world of the saloon, shown briefly and violently, is that of Western reality, "where the Swede's mythic preconceptions about the West discover more reality than in what has passed for actuality in the hotel."[10] Insofar as the saloon society is very different from the hotel society, it seems that Kadar has compromised a considerable degree of Crane's irony. In spite of the fact that Agee included the saloon scene in his script, Harry Mark Petrakis, who shortened the earlier screenplay for Kadar, sealed the fate of the Swede back in the hotel.

In the story, the gambler is a man excluded (like the Swede) from

the "club" of the saloon. *While the gambler accepts the fact that some societies are closed, the Swede loudly attempts to force his way into the group. He breaks the rules and demands comradeship. When he accosts the gambler, who is coolly ignoring him, the gambler stabs him with a knife. Crane's narrator points out: "The corpse of the Swede, alone in the saloon, has its eyes fixed upon a dreadful legend that dwelt atop of the cash-machine: 'This registers the amount of your purchase.'"[11] Here is one of the fine touches of Crane's cosmic irony. The modern West of streetcars, school buildings, and machines has only "bought" the violent death which is still associated with the old West. As Solomon notes, "The finest irony of all is that society's debt from the outsider Swede is collected by another outsider, the gambler."[12]

Kadar's film adaptation of this scene does preserve Crane's notion that the death does owe something to chance. A stranger arrives at the hotel, and the Swede provokes the stranger into stabbing him. Kadar also preserves the final ironic comment that the killer is another outsider. However, the "real society" of the saloon (including a doctor, a lawyer, and merchant), which is as different from the mythic Western barroom crowd as from the "mock gamesters" of the hotel, is missing. In the saloon, the Swede has no experience (imaginary or real) from which to draw. He is prepared for either the expostulation and ineffectual fighting of the hotel society or the barroom brawl of the dime novel; instead, he faces a quiet knifing. Thus, the Swede suffers an emblematic death because he relies on this stereotypic vision of Western life. Deletions, additions, and alterations in the adaptation process do not unequivocally signal unfaithfulness. However, in this instance, Kadar has compromised a degree of Crane's intended irony by

omitting that sign on the cash register and the characters of the saloon. Fortunately, the settings that delineate the world of the Swede and the world of the Blue Hotel have been richly evoked in the film.

At the opening of Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel," landscape is literally and figuratively described in terms of gray swamps, vast seas, and barren deserts. The Palace Hotel stands only two hundred yards from the Fort Romper community; however, it is isolated because a crust of snow covers the entire Nebraska prairie. The town is colorless, gray, clearly a world unto itself. While the community is "invisible," the world of the Blue Hotel is visible in all its isolation: the hotel is colored by a peculiar shade of blue that would declare itself against any background; it clashes with the town and like "the legs of a kind of heron" (p. 142) seems unnatural because it denies protective isolation. Crane's narrator describes the doorways of the hotel as portals, and the frame of the building as a "temple" of opulence and splendor. In this opening section, Crane has effectively mixed the metaphors of temple and ship to portray the hotel as an isolated, unnatural object amidst the natural environs of sea and earth.

Opening scenes in Kadar's film adaptation do not contain mixed or unrelated metaphors; however, the _mise en scene_ does effectively evoke the mood of isolation. Establishing shots of Fort Romper in the grip of a winter storm depict the world of Nature as a source of conflict for man. A straight-on shot of the train barreling down the tracks beside the Fort Romper Station directly confronts the viewer; dramatic impact is increased by the roar of engines and the grinding of wheels. Following Agee's script, Kadar brings the sounds of the train and the station bell up "as loud as the audience can stand."[13] Shots of the train

are set against the background of a coal-black station and an overcast night sky. As steam from the engine dissipates, a tracking camera reveals that the station is empty, except for the presence of the inn-keeper, Patrick Scully. Here a loud, howling winter wind accents the visuals to reiterate the mood of isolation. Through the darkness peeks the faint light of dawn. Scully meets the weary travelers and directs them to his hotel. As the men trudge through the snow and ice to the Palace Hotel, the camera surveys the desolate main street of Fort Romper. A bleak white sky dominates the screen and a howling wind fills the soundtrack; the Swede and his world seem pathetically small and insignificant. In a close-up, the Swede is silhouetted in the right side of the frame; directly above him hang the leafless, spindly limbs of a tree. Here, the traditional symbols of barren landscape and raging blizzard provide apt metaphors which visually and aurally underscore the theme of man's isolation and Crane's notion of inhospitable Nature. The camera then cuts to a slightly low angle shot of the bright blue hotel, with its smoking chimney. At first, the hotel appears to be a refuge for the foreigner, but stark color contrasts between the bleached land-scape and the lucent blue Palace Hotel imply that the hotel is an arti-ficial object amidst the indigenous but bleak environs of nature.

According to Crane's story, once inside the hotel, Scully welcomes the guests with "boisterous hospitality." The men huddle around a wood stove, then wash up for supper. The narrator notes that the cowboy and the Easterner "burnished themselves fiery red with this water," but the Swede merely "dipped his fingers gingerly and with trepidation" (p. 143). The Swede is not only apprehensive in gesture, he is silent while the others hold idle conversation.

In the second "scene" of Crane's story, the Swede's aloofness develops into physical isolation and fearful contemplation. He stands near the window, at a considerable distance from the group. The blizzard outside forecasts the psychological turmoil of the Swede: "The huge arms of the wind were making attempts--mighty, circular, futile--to embrace the flakes as they sped. A gate-post like a still man with a blanched face stood aghast amid this profligate fury" (p. 144). Though the reader is aware that the aloof Swede shows an "inexplicable excitement" and seems to be haunted by what he sees, the other characters are not; they remain absorbed in their card game until the Swede asserts "'suppose there have been a good many men killed in this room'" (pp. 145-46). While the others sit calmly at the table, the Swede springs up "with the celerity of a man escaping from a snake on the floor" (p. 146). Johnnie and the cowboy are dumbfounded as the Swede continues to declare his fate. "'I suppose I am going to be killed before I can leave this house?'" (p. 147). *The Swede's unshaven face and the tattered clothes provide a harried exterior that reflects his harried interior.

According to Joseph Satterwhite, Crane is demonstrating here how society, by its failure or refusal to understand individuals within it, can effectively destroy man.[14] Scully, Johnnie, and the cowboy merely dismiss the Swede as half-crazy, and do not attempt to initiate him into the group; they react with bewilderment rather than sympathy to this foreigner. As the Swede backs rapidly into a corner of the living room, Crane's narrator vividly conveys his tragic attitude: "In his eyes was the dying-swan look. Through the windows could be seen the snow turning blue in the shadow of the dusk. The wind tore at the house, and some loose thing beat regularly against the clapboards like a spirit

tapping" (p. 147). With snow imagery and symbols of snake and swan, Crane makes the Swede's terror quite poignant: the raging blizzard symbolizes an unfriendly cosmos; furthermore, the fact that the Swede is taking "shelter" in another hostile environment makes the symbolic nature of his situation all the more reprehensible.

Kadar's adaptation of this scene effectively captures the aloofness of the Swede and the dramatic impact of his first fearful impressions of the Palace Hotel. The Swede is often shot in isolation from the group. He moves slowly and warily, as if he were plodding through a jungle full of "snakes." Here, silence is used for dramatic effect; there is no music, just an eerie howling wind, which provides suspense and echoes the mood in Crane's story. Kadar makes Crane's point lucid: Nature--both inside and outside--is hostile to man.

The Swede's silence and his unwillingness to participate in the simple daily routines of the hotel (such as washing up for supper) render him an outsider. *During his initial exposure to the world of the Palace Hotel, sidelighting is effective: shadows cast on the Swede's face render him mysterious. A slow editing pace is equally effective in underscoring the Swede's fearful, apprehensive attitude.

From a corner of the room, the Swede watches the men absorbed in a card game. Immediately after the cards have been shuffled, there is a series of close-ups of the tremulous Swede; simultaneously, a phonograph begins to play. Here, the tinny sound of an old scratched record provides an aural metaphor for the fears which are grating on the mind of the Swede. Shots of the Easterner, Johnnie, and the cowboy are intercut here in order to establish them from the Swede's perspective. As the camera shifts from the Swede, who is staring out the window into the

darkness, to the men at the card table, it becomes obvious that the Swede is linking the raging blizzard to the cold, unfriendly environs of the hotel "society." Next, a slightly high angle shot of the men at the card table is followed by close-ups of their hands and the cards; these shots are effectively juxtaposed to imply that each character holds "a hand" in the game of the Swede's destiny. Here, the augmented thudding sounds of the cards as they hit the table reiterate Crane's dominant theme--the men are indeed vulnerable to the "slap" of fate.

Inscrutable fate is not the only dominant theme of "The Blue Hotel." The men of the hotel society conspire to force the Swede outside the circle of understanding and accpetance. The most effective dramatic development of the "failure to understand" theme occurs in parts III and IV, which take place simultaneously on the two floors of the hotel. *Scully takes the Swede upstairs and attempts to reassure (but not understand) him. *At the same time in the living room below, Johnnie and the cowboy attempt to categorize (but not understand) the Swede. Scully does not succeed in comforting this foreigner when he points out the civilized aspect of the town. "'Why, man, we're goin' to have a line of illictric streetcars . . . Romper'll be a met-ro-pol-is'" (pp. 149-150). When the Swede's fears cannot be allayed, Scully grows more intimate: "'There, that's the picter of my little girl that died. Her name was Carrie . . . I was fond of her, she--'" (p. 150). This approach fails, so Scully offers the Swede a drink of Bombay Gin--an ostensible panacea for communication problems. It is significant that the men are not sharing the ritualistic drink as a gesture of comradeship; the Swede drinks only to obliterate his fears. As Satterwhite has pointed out, this typically unsatisfactory communication is the "muted tragedy" of the story.[15]

Downstairs, Johnnie and the cowboy identify the Swede in terms of his nationality, rather than in terms of his bewilderment as an immigrant, which should claim their sympathy. Johnnie, in perplexity, cries, "'That's the doddangadest Swede I ever see,'" and the cowboy replies, "'It's my opinion he's some kind of a Dutchman'" (pp. 151-152). In Jan Kadar's film adaptation, shots from these two scenes are effectively juxtaposed to intensify the Swede's struggle against misunderstanding. A tracking camera follows Scully and the Swede up the stairs of the hotel, while the men downstairs begin to quietly discuss this "stranger." A direct cut to the Swede, who is crouched in the corner of the bedroom, follows quite appropriately. It is obvious that the Swede is afraid of his "companions" in the hotel; however, the bottom lighting used on Scully's face (in an over-the-shoulder shot from the Swede's point of view) as he enters the room makes the innkeeper appear exceedingly sinister. As Scully draws near the Swede, the light of the oil lamp envelops the frame. Here, eerie lighting effects define the Swede's paranoia. Various close-up shots (both high and low angle) establish the Swede as victim and as villain.

As Scully tries to comfort the Swede with his enthusiastic portrait of Fort Romper, which is soon to become a "'met-tro-pol-is,'" the Swede stares intently at the walls and ceilings. Scully points to the portrait of his dead daughter, Carrie, and the camera cuts to a close-up of the picture, nostalgically rendered by the sepia-tinted frame. The scene upstairs, shot with a high contrast of dark and light, effectively captures the macabre surroundings of the hotel from the Swede's point of view.

As a last resort, Scully drops to the floor, and reaching under the

bed, pulls out the bottle of gin. At first the Swede backs away; then he takes a swig quite reluctantly. Warmed by the liquor, he guzzles from the bottle several times and a low-angle close-up shot reveals his mouth and throat pulsing. Almost immediately he chortles violently, and the camera cuts to the men downstairs. The Swede's hysterical laughing fills the soundtrack and is held over to the scene in the living room.

Here the Easterner, a passive observer, defines the Swede's paranoia: "it's not where he is, but where he thinks he is; he thinks he's in hell."[16] In these two scenes, various camera angles and chiaroscuro lighting, together with the dialogue intercut in the scene downstairs, effectively depict the Swede's intense isolation. His fears are temporarily numbed; nevertheless, the threats seem very real.

As the men play cards and wait for dinner, the camera surveys the living room of the hotel. Symbolic details of setting (such as the clock) are held in focus for several seconds; here the camera simulates the perspective of Crane's omniscient narrator as it visually forecasts the hero's doom. The Swede has already noted the urgency of his predicament, but a series of close-up shots of his distraught face, the ticking clock, the spinning phonograph, and the Queen of Spades in the card deck, all provide traditional symbols which signal the slap of the "hand of fate," or at least the fact that time is slipping away.

Perhaps the most effective cinematic element in this scene is the musical score. Music which is used sparingly has obvious dramatic impact. In this case the leitmotif associated with the Swede--"It's a Hot Time in the Ol' Town Tonight"--plays on the phonograph. The record is so scratched that the musical theme is hardly recognizable; never

theless this raspy tune effectively relates the vertiginous psychological state of the Swede, in addition to increasing tension in the audience.

The next section of Crane's story contains the supper scene. Once the Swede is in a drunken state, his fearful apprehension evolves into hysteria. As Daniel Weiss has noted, "Manic elation is the literal rendering of the ancient 'Whom the Gods destroy they first make mad.'"[17] Here, Crane stacks the cards along this order: before he is destroyed, the Swede discharges his newly liberated energies in card playing, drinking, and fighting.

> At six-o'clock supper, the Swede fizzed like a fire-wheel. He sometimes seemed at the point of bursting into riotous song, and in all his madness he was encouraged by old Scully . . . The Swede domineered the whole feast, and gave it the appearance of a cruel bacchanal. He seemed to have grown suddenly taller; he gazed, brutally disdainful, into every face. His voice rang through the room. (p. 154)

As Crane's narrator points out, the Swede carries on quite feverishly, much to the amazement of the others; he is all the more isolated now because of his crude manners and derisive commentary. Indeed, the daughters of the house, having finished serving the food, flee with "ill-concealed trepidation." This is literally the "Last Supper" for the Swede. It is both obvious and tragic that he is not honored as a guest, but misunderstood and feared.

Kadar's film version of the supper scene effectively depicts the characters' growing negative estimation of the Swede. In this scene, the Swede wolfs down food, crassly demands more wine, and insults the cooks and his host. As he walks into the living room, he belches loudly and without hesitation. This scene is done more effectively on film than in Crane's story: obviously, such graphic aural and visual explication can more fully justify the negative reactions of the members of

the Blue Hotel society.

The vertiginous action of the next scene of the story leads to the Swede's death. The card game, a traditional setting for Western fictional quarrels, resumes and the Swede, who is now quite aggressive, accuses Johnnie of cheating. The men bustle about in an attempt to cope with the situation, and the Swede adamantly demands a fist fight, probably to fulfill his expectations of having a real barroom brawl. When the men go outside, the raging blizzard comments on the man's frailty and stupid verbosity; a gust of wind scatters the valueless argument out of hearing. The ensuing fight is a "pinwheel" of fists, grunts, and loud shouts. The ineffectual observers yell "Kill him!" to Johnnie, and ironically the Swede does die in the end. When the Swede "conquers," he is immediately overcome with arrogance. He prepares to leave the Palace Hotel; in view of the literal meaning of the hotel's name, the Swede is choosing to leave an unreal, or fairytale setting, in order to go forth into "reality." As he mimics the earlier bloodthirsty cries of the men in the Blue Hotel society who witnessed the fight, we sense that the joke is on him.

Jan Kadar's film rendition of the card game and the fight scene does justice to Stephen Crane's vision of a bitter cosmos. In addition, the film both visually and aurally captures his parody of classic Western fisticuffs. As the men put on their coats and head out for the barn to fight, a forecful wind rushes through the door and scatters the cards which are strewn about the floor. The cards, which have provided a traditional symbol for fate throughout the entire film, are shot from an extremely high angle. After this forecast of doom, the camera pans the dark, snow-covered environs of Fort Romper. The men rant and argue,

but their ravings are absorbed by the sound of howling winds. During the fight, Scully's oil lamp appears to be the only source of light. No snow is falling, but frantic winds stir the snowdrifts as the camera pans the icy ground, tinted blue by the shadow of the bright hotel. With effective lighting, Kadar captures Crane's setting of a land "blue with the sheen of an unearthly satin" (p. 158). The editing pace quickens as Johnnie and the Swede bustle about ineffectually. Just as Crane's narrator observes, the men seem to be merely "shadows"; this tragedy "which is greater than the tragedy of action, was accentuated by the long, mellow cry of the blizzard, as it sped the tumbling and wailing flakes into the black abyss of the south" (p. 159). In Kadar's film, both visually and aurally, the details of the fist fight are obscured by the raging snowstorm. Like Crane, Kadar is saying that the Western duel is only a myth fostered by dime novels. The crucial conflicts are between man and Nature; men who fight over trivial card games are, like flakes of snow, tumbling into the "black abyss."

Although the Swede triumphs, his fighting tactics appear as futile as Johnnie's, and he never assumes a heroic posture. Kadar knew that Crane saw the Swede's victory as a delusive one. Following this scene in James Agee's script, the filmmakers of <u>The Blue Hotel</u> have made the fight sensational, but not in a traditional melodramatic manner. Here, Kadar has heeded every detail of Agee's instructions:

> It is extremely violent but spasmodic, full of unskillfulness, and very clumsy--the clumsiness enhanced by heavy clothing and by occasional veerings onto patches of glare-ice. Though violence is of itself shocking, the chief shock or sensational element is getting the shock of two essential amateurs, non-fighters, in something close to mortal combat: almost as disconcerting as if one saw a couple of clergymen trying to beat each other's brains out.[18]

As the fight ensues, the Swede, losing patience, tries to bulldoze Johnnie. With his sudden dive toward the camera, the close-up of his angry face envelops the frame. As Agee noted, the fighters should "all but knock over the camera";[19] thus Kadar, following this cue, emphasizes the ungainliness and lack of skill which characterize the Swede and Johnnie. The Swede "whips" Johnnie, but not with any distinguishable move; in the darkness and snow, even the final blow appears only as an obscure "perplexity of flying arms." As the men carry Johnnie into the hotel, the Swede's macabre laughing, mixed with a howling wind, fills the soundtrack. Here Kadar is effectively echoing Crane's cosmic laughter concerning the delusive victory of the Swede.

In the next scene of Crane's story, the cowboy and Scully argue about retaliating against the Swede. The cowboy wants to fight, but Scully still has a touch of gentility left in him. The Swede makes a "theatric" entrance as he swaggers into the room; convulsing with "ironical humor," he mimics the men who were rooting for Johnnie during the fight. When the Swede leaves, Scully bursts into sudden brogue: "'I'd loike to . . . bate 'im to a jelly wid a shtick!'" (p. 164). The cowboy groans in sympathy.

At this particular point, both Petrakis's and Agee's scripts depart from the text but in different directions. In Agee's version, the Easterner intervenes and explains to Scully and the cowboy that Johnnie was cheating and that all of the men are responsible for whatever becomes of the Swede. The Easterner fails to convince them of the truth; then he goes out into the blizzard in search of the Swede, hoping to "set things right."[20]

Jan Kadar chose not to include the Easterner's expose or his humane

gesture. Though in his interview Kadar never spoke to this issue, some speculations can be made that justify this departure from Agee's script, which had been followed so closely in the first seven scenes. It seems that although selfless action on the part of the Easterner might have made the Blue Hotel society more than a world where "conceit is the very engine of life," this dramatic relief would also have undermined Crane's thematic intentions. One major theme in the story is the failure of human communication; therefore, even a sincere (but futile) attempt at bridging this gap would have violated the nature of this seemingly unpeopled, "disease-stricken, space-lost bulb."

In both Crane's story and Agee's film script, the climactic scene of the Swede's death takes place in a saloon. In Kadar's film, a stranger comes to the hotel and kills the Swede. The fact that this alteration serves to compromise a degree of Crane's irony has already been discussed. Kadar's film version of this scene does, however, visualize Crane's major themes in the Blue Hotel"; moreover, the photography here is so effective that one tends to forget about lost irony and to concentrate on the dramatic destruction of the Swede.

With valise in hand, the Swede is preparing to leave the Palace Hotel in search of some "hospitable" company. Just as he reaches the door, a small, slender figure of a man enters the lobby. This stranger seems to appear out of nowhere during the raging blizzard: his curious presence suggests that he is the "still man with a blanched face," whom the Swede imagined earlier, as he gazed into the darkness (p. 144). The blizzard is raging outside, and a gust of wind scatters the cards that litter the table. The room is dimly lit and the gust flickers the flames of the lamp; this produces an eerie, foreboding mood, which is

accentuated by a close-up shot of the grave,pale-faced stranger.

When the stranger removes his coat, the Swede seizes the opportunity to boast of his triumphant fight. As he tells the stranger that he knocked the "living soul" of a man tonight, the leitmotif, "It's a Hot Time in the Ol' Town Tonight," plays on the phonograph. This frivolous tune, which is appropriately mixed with sounds of a raging blizzard, reinforces the irony of the Swede's newly acquired self-confidcence. The Swede clutches the shoulder of the stranger who has been coolly ignoring his impudence. At this point the stranger turns around with cat-like swiftness. The camera cuts to a close-up shot of the long, slim knife-blade that has sprung into his hand; this shot is held for an instant as the lamplight glistens on the blade. Facing the Swede, who is looming over him, the stranger thrusts the knife into the Swede's chest. Violence here is shocking, but not gruesome. The Swede grunts and gasps for air, but appears more astonished than painstricken. Here a close-up shot of the face of the Swede depicts a man swept with the disillusion that has been a cause for his death all along. When he falls to the floor with a thud, reaction shots of Scully, the cowboy, and the Easterner follow quite appropriately; they are stunned by the sudden murder only for an instant. Then the viewer is hit with a disrupting shot of the dead man's face and a hand. The stranger calmly requests that someone call for a sheriff or marshal; then Scully, in his routine hospitable manner, takes the stranger up to his room.

This scene in Kadar's film emphasizes the paralyzed world of the Palace Hotel and the inevitability of the Swede's death. Chance and accident rule man's fate; clearly, if the Swede had left one minute earlier, nothing would have happened to him. The question naturally

arises: was it fate that killed the Swede or was it the men of the Blue Hotel society? The epilogue of Crane's story addresses this issue. The Easterner claims that "'every sin is the result of a collaboration,'" and all of them share responsibility for the murder of the Swede. After this self-accusatory indictment, Crane's cowboy cries out, "'Well, I didn't do anythin',did I?'" (p. 64). Thus the cowboy, who is invincible in his stupidity, has the final word. This dullness of vision directly mirrors Crane's cosmos. There are infinite explanations for events. Man must accept the ambiguity of life and death, truth and lie, isolation and complicity. These last irgnorant words of the cowboy are indicative of Crane's detachment; they are also a gesture toward his cosmic laughter.

The last scene of Kadar's film adaptation sketches Crane's wheel-of-fate with equal dexterity. It is morning and the blizzard has subsided. The cowboy and the Easterner sit in the empty Fort Romper train station, awaiting the next train. As they discuss the Swede's death, the Easterner points out that Johnnie was actually cheating and that the death of the Swede was unjust. Here dialogue is based on Crane's story and the cowboy asserts his innocence (and ignorance): "I didn't do nothing, did I?"[21] Perhaps the most emphatic portrait of Crane's indifferent cosmos is the fact that another train pulls into the station and heads down the tracks. Men of this microcosmic Blue Hotel society are not taking responsibility for their actions or inactions. The final shots of the film emphasize the banality of man's existence: as the train pulls out from the Fort Romper station, the camera exposes a bleak, deserted Nebraska landscape.

Jan Kadar's film, The Blue Hotel, is a particularly interesting

case study among other adaptations because it contains the interpretative irony that is missing in John Huston's Red Badge of Courage, a film that has been lambasted as "dramatically unequivalent" to Crane's classic novel. It is true that redundant voice-over-narration, cliche-ridden music, and over-used conventional visual symbols render the war experience too ordinary. Huston's final product, which was cut into the mold of the Hollywood War film, did not sufficiently impart Crane's cosmic irony, nor did it probe the inner-consciousness of the hero.

No such criticism can be made of Jan Kadar's Blue Hotel. Where Huston's Red Badge of Courage failed as a study in the psychology of human fear, Kadar's Blue Hotel triumphed. The world is shown from the Swede's point of view as well as from Crane's. In The Blue Hotel, the inner world of the Swede is in focus; however, Crane's bitter cosmic irony is not compromised. Nature (specifically the symbolic blizzard) is effectively depicted as a threat to man. In Huston's Red Badge, warfare, not Nature, is the predominant threat.

For the adaptors of The Red Badge of Courage, Crane's psychological realism demanded visuals which were inappropriate to the conventional war film: Henry Fleming's nightmarish visions clearly overshadowed realistic presentations. In addition, war is generally viewed as a cooperative enterprise; it is not often studied in terms of one man's identity crisis. As Robert Warshow has noted, in war films, "heroism belongs to the group more than to the individual."[22] Thus the inner struggles of Crane's hero were foreign to these conventional filmmakers.

Of course, Kadar had the advantage of dealing with the genre of the Western; here the staple formula does contain a focus on the deportment and values of the solitary hero. Though Jan Kadar's task was less

problematic that Huston's, his successful study in the psychology of fear is nonetheless significant.

Jan Kadar's film adaptation of "The Blue Hotel" is more than an illustration of Crane's text. In each work of The American Short Story Series, the producers wanted to offer viewers interpretations that would raise film consciousness and urge readers of literature to fresh alertness concerning the visual and aural qualities that mark much great writing. By basically adhering to the plot of Crane's story and by visualizing the dominant images, Kadar has effectively rendered Crane's vision. The dominant theme of man's isolation and the Swede's particular fears as a foreigner, who is attempting to adjust in a hostile society, have been conveyed realistically. Still, Kadar's photography and soundtrack have made the film adaptation a "transformation" of the story rather than a "translation," to use George Bluestone's terms.

Bela Balazs noted that the invention of film is on a par with the invention of the printing press. In his words, the "microphysiognamy" of the screen image preempts the domain of nonverbal experience: "The gestures of visual man are not intended to convey concepts which can be expressed in words, but such inner experiences, such nonrational emotions which would still remain unexpressed when everything that can be told has been told."[23] Kadar has created anew the experience of Crane's "Blue Hotel": with his focus on the inner fears of the Swede, he has entered the imagination of the character and conveyed it for the viewer. Though symbols such as the cards and the blizzard are taken directly from the text, they are used simply as raw materials; shown from the particular angle of Kadar's art form, they achieve a mythic life of their own. In comparing the story to Agee's script, Roberta Madden says, "Where Crane

has argued, Agee persuades."[24] Both argument and persuasion are visualized in the PBS adaptation.

NOTES

[1]Eric Solomon, Stephen Crane: From Parody to Realism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 257.

[2]Daniel Weiss, "'The Blue Hotel': A Psychoanalytic Study," in Stephen Crane: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Maurice Bassan (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 163.

[3]James R. Fultz, "Heartbreak at the Blue Hotel: James Agee's Scenario of Stephen Crane's Story," The Midwest Quarterly, 21 (1979-1980), 423-24.

[4]Roberta Madden, "An Examination of Story and Film Script: 'The Blue Hotel,'" Film Heritage, 3 (1967), 21.

[5]"Interview with Jan Kadar," The American Short Story, ed., Calvin Skaggs (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), p. 70. Kadar's The Blue Hotel first appeared on PBS television in May of 1977.

[6]Richard Hulseburg, "Novels and Films: A Limited Inquiry," Literature/Film Quarterly, 6 (1978), 62.

[7]Gaston Pelletier, "Red Badge Revisited," English Journal, 57 (1968), 25.

[8]Skaggs, ed., p. 74.

[9]Skaggs, ed., p. 75.

[10]Solomon, p. 259.

[11]Stephen Crane, "The Blue Hotel," in Tales of Adventure, ed., Fredson Bowers, V (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1970), p. 169. Subsequent references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text.

[12]Solomon, p. 271.

[13]James Agee, Agee on Film: Five Film Scripts by James Agee (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 393.

[14]Joseph Satterwhite, "Stephen Crane's 'The Blue Hotel': The Failure of Understanding," Modern Fiction Studies, 2 (1956-1957), 239.

[15]Satterwhite, p. 240.

[16]Jan Kadar, dir., The Blue Hotel, PBS Television, May, 1977.

[17]Weiss, p. 163.

[18]Agee, p. 447.

[19]Agee, p. 448.

[20]Agee, p. 469.

[21]The Blue Hotel, 1977.

CHAPTER VII

RKO'S THE BRIDE COMES TO YELLOW SKY (1952): A HAPPY UNION OF LITERATURE AND FILM

"The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" (1897), like "The Blue Hotel," concerns the ritual Western duel as well as Crane's unique depiction of frontier decorum. Both stories prove the entire mystique of a Wild West to be only a game; each treats the closing of the frontier with irony. In the case of "The Bride," the lever of irony is controlled by Crane's humorous travesty of Dime Novel tradition. Beneath the steady stream of burlesque and spoof lies, however, a serious examination of an era of gunfights, courage, and Western chivalry, which is being replaced by one of bourgeois domesticity. The central irony is that for Crane (and the reader) the sound of a church-bell civilization rings as discordantly as do the shots of a drunken ex-gunfighter's pistol. A glance from the Pullman (the central symbol of opulent urban culture) reveals the "green" grass, the "little" houses, the "tender" trees, all "sweeping into the east, sweeping over the horizon, a precipice."[1] Onomatopoeia and consonance stress movement as the train is "whirling onward," but progression is not always progress. Describing the essence of the story's parodic force, Ben M. Vorphal suggests that "It leads not toward myth, but away from it, into the grave."[2] When the modern East moves into Yellow Sky, Old West emblems and ritual are diminished and perverted. Narrative structure, character, and descriptive setting of "The Bride" all feed

into this thematic conflict; Crane's comic tone makes the serious bearable and brings new insight into what Leo Marx has labeled the invasion of the "machine" in the "garden."

"The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" opens with a town marshal (Jack Potter) and his new bride returning by rail to Yellow Sky from their wedding trip in San Antonio. The town's inhabitants are unaware of the marriage, and Potter fears that he has committed an "extraordinary crime," that "he had gone headlong over the social hedges" (p. 111). By going "East," and going there to bring home a wife, he had abandoned Western ritual. Not only is the typical Western hero an upholder of justice no longer a loner; he travels back to Yellow Sky without a gun. This is what the ex-gunfighter 'Scratchy Wilson' is rejecting--the disintegration of a Western code. Section two of "The Bride" takes place in the Weary Gentleman saloon. Here the reader learns of Scratchy Wilson's epic binges and the necessary ritual of shutting up the town with lock and bolt until this eccentric relic of the Old West is satisfied by a reinactment of the ritual shootout. The gunfight is always controlled by Sheriff Potter, who manages to put in a chink in old Scratchy's armor, but never kills him. Section three shifts to the street to present the ex-gunfighter's swaying revolvers and fuming rage at the fact that even Sheriff Potter has abandoned the game. The final section brings the action to a climax and treats the confrontation between the armed and angry anachronism of the passing frontier and the newlyweds who are armed with a more effective weapon--the decorum of civilization.

Unable to proceed without the staple Western code (pistol for pistol), Scratchy departs, his feet leaving "funnel-shaped tracks in the heavy sand" (p. 120). A variation on the traditional symbol of the hourglass,

the funnel-shaped tracks pictorialize the codes of the Old West as they "whirl" into the "precipice" of a bourgeois Eastern Society. Thus the images of motion (sweeping and pouring) evoked in the opening scene of the story are brought to rest.

Donald Gibson has called "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" a "jewel of excellence exquisitely carved."[3] An examination of Crane's diction, structure, character, and theme supports this claim. In 1952, RKO released a short film adaptation of the story under the title of Face to Face.[4] It was produced by Huntington Hartford, directed by Bretaigne Windust, and the script was written by James Agee.

The only article-length analysis of the adaptation has been written by Warren French. He argues that "this highly pictorial story" could have been brought to the screen with virtually no alterations in the story; "those that are made, therefore, represent not necessary adjustments of the material to a new medium but the alteration of one socially-minded artist's material by another with his own particular axe to grind."[5] In his discussion of the adaptation, French makes the same mistake Peter Harcourt did in his criticism concerning Tony Richardson's invented scenes in The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner.[6] The impatience with invention in adaptation (on the part of both critics) only reveals a common misconception of the metamorphosis of fiction into cinema. Gerald Barett explains the procedure: because a short story usually treats few sequences of actions, "filmmakers tend to expand plot."[7] Warren French's critical misconceptions about the adaptation of "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" go deeper, however, than a bias against invention. His comment that Agee's script "does not faithfully translate Crane's concept to the screen" is grounded in a misunderstanding

of the author's vision as it is presented in "The Bride."[8] It is surprising that French, who authored an excellent case study of The Grapes of Wrath, would make the misguided assertion that a church-bell society has no "counterpart in Crane's story."[9] Critical misconceptions such as French has made can be corrected by in-depth analysis of the film.

As in his script for "The Blue Hotel," Agee's scenario technique in his script for The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky involves invention and critical commentary. In fact, his directions and descriptions are so comprehensive and insightful, that reading the script is like reading a most exacting and almost poetic scholarly article. Using Agee's clues, the filmmakers of The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky employ various cinematic techniques to produce a less literal, but unusually interpretive adaptation. Editing, music, and alteration or invention of both character and setting illuminate Crane's form and content. Viewers are offered a vision of Crane's text which ultimately proves that the marriage between literature and film can be provocative as well as faithful.

Narrative structure in "The Bride" lends itself well to adaptation because of its episodic nature. The central theme of an encroaching civilization is itself based upon a conflict of opposites, and short episodes with parallel action structurally set up the battle of ideals. Regarding Crane's use of setting, Ben Vorpahl contends that "each sequence . . . contains not one landscape, but two, balancing each other in sharp contrast."[10] The same tension between opposites created by Crane is visualized in the film adaptation by the use of juxtaposition.

Crane's text opens with the "great Pullman" in motion and the vast flats and "tender" trees "sweeping" east "over the horizon" (p. 109). In the next paragraphs, it becomes obvious that progress is not only

affecting landscape, but custom. On the train sit a "newly married pair": the groom has a face "reddened from many days in the wind and sun," which is all the more obvious because of his contrasting attire--"new black clothes" (p. 109). The first set of opposites pits the machine age against a pastoral rural landscape; the second pits appropriate rugged Western appearance against the middle-class fashion indicative of "civilization."

The first scene of the film adaptation sustains the tension of opposites though the filmmakers use different visuals to achieve that end. A head-on shot of the train barrelling down the tracks introduces the film, and the first shot is of the town's church bell. The sound of the train dissolving into the clamoring of the bell and a blaring church organ is all but deafening; here, as in the adaptation of "The Blue Hotel," the filmmakers convey what Crane has suggested are the exacerbating effects of "progress" and "civilization."

In Crane's story, visual details which sustain the tension between old and new are not <u>always</u> dispersed in pairs as they are in the first paragraphs; rather, the drama arises from the arrangment of the four sketches. Structurally, Crane's narrator moves from the Pullman car to the saloon, then to the street for the final confrontation. The settings themselves are diametrically opposed, but neither the fancy civilized world of the Pullman nor the chaotic world of the drunk ex-gunfighter is suitable. Crane mocks both: Sheriff Potter and his bride are too awkwardly conscious of brass, silver, and velvet trimmings; Scratchy dons a "maroon-colored flannel shirt, which had been purchased for purposes of decoration, and made principally by some Jewish women on the East side of New York" (p. 116). At the core of the story's dramatic tension is

what Frank Bergon and other critics have called "descriptive polarities" of cememony and chaos.[11]

Interpretation, then, must comment on the manner in which the poles cross. In his discussion of The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky, Warren French complains that scene shifts are too "complicated" and bring the story to "its climax one-third of the way through the picture."[12] This assessment is misguided, for it slights entirely the achievement of the filmmakers, as well as revealing a misconception of the story's structure. The RKO film adaptation successfully recreates the basis of Crane's narrative design in "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" by the use of editing and inter-cutting of parallel action.

In one scene on the Pullman car, the camera pans the over-decorated, suffocating, Victorian decor of the train. The bride comments on the "palatial" surroundings, but a close-up shot reveals the sheriff's uncomfortable adjustment to new customs. Later in the dining car the imposition of unfamiliar ceremony is more pronounced. The couple is stunned at the price of supper--$1.25 per person--water glasses are an anathema, and coffee gets spilled in the wake of mounting anxiety. Intercut between the coach car and diner car fiascos is a parallel scene which establishes the equally ceremonious and awkward ritual of Scratchy Wilson. A soft-focus close-up of the bride's face dissolves into an expreme close-up of Scratchy's gun, which he calls "Sweetheart." Obviously drunk, he dry-fires at a poster picture of an Indian on his wall calendar. Crane's depiction of Scratchy (and of the bride) is characterized by anonymity: she is never given a first name and he is first introduced as "a man." The camera conveys Scratchy's symbolic function by not showing his face. Shots of a whiskey bottle, an Indian blanket, Scratchy "scratching"

himself, and close-ups of the gun parallel the chaos-ridden ceremony in the Pullman.

Visual details are diametrically opposed: water vs. whiskey, brocade and velvet vs. coarse blanket, wallet vs. pistol. The soundtrack of the film reinforces this opposition. The scene on the train features either a clinking music box or jazz trumpets, but Scratchy, who is preparing for his ritual by cleaning his guns, is muttering to himself and singing "We shall Come Rejoicing--Bringing in the Sheaves." The conventional church hymn mixed with sounds of Scratchy gurgling whiskey and coughing offers a fine touch of irony Crane would have applauded. Close-ups in this scene function for filmmakers like a synecdoche does for a writer: guns and whiskey bottles are the only symbols of the Old West left untouched by civilization.

Later in the film, Potter, who is still on the Pullman car, reaches (as Agee instructed) with a "helpless gesture" for his holster.[13] There is a dissolve to Scratchy's loaded cartridge belt and he rises to his feet. The camera assumes Scratchy's point of view appropriately blurring in and out of focus. A wobbly hand-held camera follows the inebriated ex-gunfighter to a clothes rack and he yanks a glaringly tasteless pseudo-western shirt off the peg.[14] Scratchy grabs for an equally gaudy necktie but fails to bring it under control. A sharply focused shot of this off-color cultural symbol is followed by a close-up of Potter's conservative necktie. To build suspense concerning what Scratchy in this drunken state will do next, the filmmakers have cut back to the Pullman where Potter and his bride compare watches. This short scene, with its dialogue taken directly from the first section of Crane's story, is effectively placed later in the film not only because it peaks viewer

curiosity: the "seventeen jewel" watch, as a symbol of civilized life, is appropriately contrasted with loaded revolvers and empty liquor bottles. A fast dissolve provides the transition back to the interior of Scratchy's house. A subjective camera stares with him into a dirty, broken, distorting mirror: his own savage facial expressions momentarily fascinate him; then he reaches down and pulls open a drawer of the bureau. Finding only empty bottles, suggesting the frequency of this rite, he pulls open another drawer to discover his beloved Western hat. Unlike other symbols of the past, his has been protected and is still, apparently in mint condition; but, like his flashy shirt and tie, the height is too pronounced and it becomes another artificial detail which is now misplaced. The film adaptation is effective because of this purposeful intercutting, editing, and focus on symbolic detail; alterations and invention of character and setting also interpret Crane's East/West conflict.[15]

In Crane's story, the character of the drummer is rather nondescript, even more anonymouns than the bride or Scratchy. The narrator describes him talking "a great deal and rapidly" (p. 113). Only when he hears of Scratchy's eruptive binges does his function in the story become apparent. Afraid of a gunfight, the drummer "seemed to be swayed between the interest of a foreigner and a perception of personal danger" (p. 115). Moments later, as the legend of Scratchy is disclosed, his cowardice surfaces: "mopping his brow" he positions himself in the part of the saloon where he can "'make a break for the back door'" (p. 116). Basically, all the reader learns here is that the drummer is loquacious, cowardly, and out of his element.

The film version expands upon this character for both thematic and dramatic effect. Forcing his salespitch on the saloon patrons, he

promises to bring "Paris" to their doorstep. Here, every minute detail suggested by Agee's script is presented.

> Drummer (soft and almost lascivious) speaks louder than words, doesn't it! You tell her, gentlemen, in all your experience, did you ever meet a lady that wouldn't swoon just to look at it? (eyes back to center) Sheer as twilight air. And just look at that clocking! (he points it out, then his subtle hand impersonates a demi-mondaine foot). Nothing like it ever contrived before, by the most inspired continental designers, to give style to the ankle and moulding to the calf. (He runs fingers up his arm to the armpit, his eyes follow.) And they run all the way up--opera length. (He casts his eyes down, then returns to off-center and gives his eyes all he's got. With a trace of hoarseness, almost whispering) How about it, madam? (he gives her an homme-fatale smile. A grand pause.)[16]

This overbearing portrait is accented by the fact that the drummer is bulbously obese. Improprieties like "Paris" stockings are reminiscent of Scratchy's flannel shirt (which was made in New York) or his red-topped boots "with gilded imprints, of the kind beloved in winter by little sledding boys on the hillsides of New England" (p. 117). The implication is that this "foreigner" perpetuates cultural displacement, corrupting even the last vestiges of Western tradition. This interpretation is well within the bounds of Crane's major focus--encroaching civilization.[17]

A second case of alteration of Crane's characters in "The Bride" involves the barkeeper. In the story, the barkeeper is a man of unstated age, but he is wise to Scratchy's ritual. In the film, the barkeeper (named Laura Lee) is an older woman who though dialogue displays her own set of traditional Western values as well as respect and compassion for Scratchy, who makes fruitless attempts at bringing the past to life. Laura Lee is likewise alert to the drummer's beguiling rhetoric and frivolous product; to underscore her verbal summary of those "fool stockings," she slams the suitcase shut on his hand.

Other aspects of setting are altered and at least two characters are totally invented in the film version. Each addition serves to emphasize Crane's point that these appealing emblems of the Old West, which sadly enough involve most relics and myths, are being displaced by a civilization which is both materialistic and hypocritical.

At the opening of the film, a scene is invented which establishes location as well as Jack Potter's character. He is dressed for travel and carrying a piece of luggage down the main street. In true Hawthorne fashion, the camera travels directly from the church to the town jail. This cinematic allusion to the hypocrisy of the townspeople is underscored by dialogue. An invented character (Deacon Smeed) approaches Sheriff Potter only to reveal himself as a repressive church provincial: "every respectable person in Yellow Sky agrees with me. If only for appearance' sake, you ought to come to church."[18] Potter asserts his rational nature <u>and</u> his independence, but he also seems to realize the fact that the Deacon's religious code is becoming more effective than his Western code. "Looky here, Deacon. We never did get nowheres with that argument, and we never will. I ain't got nothin' against church-goin'; I just don't hold with it fer myself."[19] Church organ music stresses domestication; the passersby are all dressed "properly." Medium shots of the Sheriff and the Deacon are divided by a street pole fittingly placed to isolate discrepant attitudes.

Later in the film the tension between Western code and bourgeois decorum intensifies considerably. Though the scene in which Scratchy goes on the war-path through the main street of Yellow Sky is based on Crane's text, the film version defines with much more particularity the nature of Scratchy's enemy. Crane's narrator describes Scratchy

frightening a dog, fusillading the windows "of his most intimate friend," and howling challenges, mingled with "wonderful epithets" (p. 118). Following Agee's script, the filmmakers tighten the focus of Scratchy's wrath by inventing stereotypical characters for him to confront. One of these is Jasper Morgan, a bourgeois of the town who shows no respect for Scratchy's "heroic" bent. He offers the ex-gunfighter (who is out of work) only the base job of cleaning out his cesspool. Each detail of setting and dialogue in Agee's script is reproduced. Scratchy halts directly in front of Morgan's house:

> You, Jasper Morgan. Yeah, and that snivellin' woman of yourn, too! Too dainty to do like ordinary folks. Too high an' mighty! Git yerself a lot o' fancy plumbing, an' ye ain't man enough to clean out yer own cess-pool. 'Let Scratchy do it." Ain't nuthin' so low but Scratchy'll do it for the price of a pint.
>
> He glares around for a target. He spies a potted fern suspended from the porch ceiling. He shoots the suspension chain and the whole thing drops to the porch floor with a foomp. There! Clean that up! He turns, Deacon's house is opposite.
>
> Scratchy (continuing; a horrible travesty of a sissy voice) Deacon! Oh Deacon Smee-eed! (he makes two syllables of Smeed). You home, Deacon? Kin I pay ye a little call? Most places in town, ye just knock an' walk in, but that ain't good enough for a good man, is it, Deacon? Oh no! No--no! Pay a little call on the Deacon, ye got to shove a 'lectric bell, real special. (a hard shift of tone) All right, Smeed, start singin' them psalms o'yourn. You'll be whangin' 'em on a harp, few mo' minutes, you an' yer missuz, too. Can't stop in right now, I'm a mite too thirsty. But I'll be back, Deacon. Oh, I'll be back. (He studies the house) Here's my callin' card.

He takes aim, and hits the doorbell, fusing it so that it rings continuously. A woman screams hysterically.[20]

Scratchy's violent attempt at rekindling self-pride would have been less humorous and more tragic had he shot at people rather than objects. Still, there is a serious theme beneath icons of progress like electric

doorbells and houseplants. Like the overwhelming sound of the train (with its suffocating decor), the buzzing bell (now short-circuited and out of control) is an imposition on the landscape--another "civil" machine in the pastoral garden. While Scratchy is flouting progress and the hypocrisies of civilized society, he is also lamenting the fact that he is getting old and his guns are obsolete. No one will participate in the ritual shootout, and when he confronts the unarmed Sheriff, it's simply "'all off now'" (p. 120). As the film version ends, Scratchy walks off, dropping both revolvers in the dirt. "Bringing in the Sheaves" confirms the triumph of the church-bell civilization.

The RKO film adaptation of Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" contains an unusual amount of alteration and invention--all of which serves to bring Crane's theme of encroaching civilization into sharp focus. Donald Gibson suggests that the mounting tension of the story is "a direct result of the arrangement of its material."[21] The filmmakers effectively capture the various structural confrontations by the use of montage. Though "arrangement" is altered, the film serves Crane's apparent intent, because it recreates what Frank Bergon once termed the author's "compressive" style.[22] The montages in RKO's adaptation of "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," like those present in NBC's Red Badge of Courage, effectively engage the reader in the protagonists' dilemma and sensations. Bergon links reading Crane's "The Bride" to a "sensation of a train ride through a kinesthetic detail."[23] These same flashes of vision and perception are achieved in the film version because of effective editing. Crane's major theme of encroaching civilization is served by invented and developed characters in the film adapation, as well as by structure. The drummer, for example, with his "Paris"

stockings and fancy rhetoric, is more corrupt than the drunken ex-gun-fighter. While Scratchy is pathetically obsolete, he does hold on to an admirable set of values. The drummer is cowardly and his moral pose is dictated by dollars. RKO's adaptation of "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" iterates with great impact Crane's point that civilization is displacing more than a Western landscape or even a social order; a once substantive moral code is whisked away in the funnels of sand. Stephen Crane called "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" a "daisy," giving it his own approval. Additions on the part of James Agee and the filmmakers make the flower blossom again.

NOTES

[1]Stephen Crane, "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," in *Tales of Adventure*, ed., Fredson Bowers, V (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1970), p. 109. Subsequent references to this will will appear parenthetically in the text.

[2]Ben Merchant Vorpahl, "Murder by the Minute: Old and New in 'The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky,'" *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 26 (1971), 218.

[3]Donald B. Gibson, *The Fiction of Stephen Crane* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), p. 124.

[4]An adaptation of Joseph Conrad's "The Secret Sharer" was also included under the title *Face to Face* because both stories feature a confrontation between frontier and civilization.

[5]Warren French, "*Face to Face*: Film Confronts Story," *English Symposium Papers* (New York: State University College Fredonia, 1974) pp. 56-57.

[6]Peter Harcourt, "I'd Rather Be Like I Am," *Sight and Sound*, 32 (1962-63), 18. For commentary on Harcourt's misinterpretation, see my article, "Novel Into Film: *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 9 (1981), 186-7.

[7]Gerald R. Barrett and Thomas L. Erskine, _From Fiction to Film: D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking-Horse Winner"_ (Encino, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), p. 19.

[8]French, p. 66.

[9]French, p. 65. In _Filmguide to the Grapes of Wrath_ (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), French thoroughly discusses and analyzes the film's adherence to or departure from John Steinbeck's novel.

[10]Vorpahl, 200.

[11]Frank Bergon, _Stephen Crane's Artistry_ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 124.

[12]French, pp. 59, 60.

[13]James Agee, _Agee on Film: Five Film Scripts by James Agee_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 371.

[14]As a parody of Western formula, this detail of _mise en scene_ has been matched only in _Cat Ballou_ and _Blazing Saddles_: in _Cat Ballou_, the Kid, an obsolete gunfighter like Scratchy, puts on a black satin suit before he goes into a Mexican hat dance; in _Blazing Saddles_, clothing is equally inappropriate as the black Sheriff arrives in a tan polyester suit with saddlebags by Gucci.

[15]Here, James Agee's script must be credited, for the filmmakers follow nearly every "inventive" clue contained therein.

[16]Agee, p. 374.

[17]Warren French conveniently ignores the expanded character of the drummer because a discussion here would contradict one of his main points--that the film does not effectively convey "the industrial East as the force that has destroyed the old, irresponsible Western way of life" (p. 63).

[18]Bretaigne Windust, dir., The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky, with Robert Preston and Marjorie Steele, RKO, 1952.

[19]The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky, 1952.

[20]Agee, pp. 379-80.

[21]Gibson, p. 126.

[22]Bergon, p. 95.

[23]Bergon, p. 95.

CHAPTER VIII

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Any study of Stephen Crane on film must assess the contributions extant films make to our understanding of his fiction as well as highlight the challenges of adapting the author's distinct vision. Robert Stallman recalls that "Crane's style has been likened to a unique instrument which no one after his death has ever been able to play."[1] Eric Solomon asserts that Crane's work was "inconsistent."[2] Defining this author's _oeuvre_, Milne Holton points to the intentional ambiguity of Crane's design:

> One can never quite settle on meanings appropriate to the allegedly symbol-bearing images. One can never be entirely sure whether, at a given moment, Crane is being ironic. One can never quite characterize the style or explain the almost unbelievable unevenness in the quality of his later work . . . The critics retreat to biography and intellectual history, while Crane's fiction remains elusive, its meanings still unclear.[3]

Fortunately, adaptors of Crane's fiction were not discouraged by these statements of inaccessibility. They have asserted more boldly that interpretation is possible.

In a case such as M-G-M's _Red Badge of Courage_ (1951), a great deal of the author's irony concerning heroism and romance is missing, but an _attempt_ is made to illustrate Crane's notion of the dreary realities of war. NBC's _Red Badge_ (1974) better captures Crane's cosmic irony and his impressionistic style through the use of flashback, color, and

editing. Three Miraculous Soldiers (1976) is a film which has potential for renewing lost interest in Crane's story; it is also unique in that it suggests a new and solid interpretation, which for odd reasons Crane scholars have quite consistently neglected to define. Jan Kadar's Blue Hotel (1977) takes details of setting from Crane's story, and while maintaining the mood and theme of the original, manages to expand their symbolic value. Likewise, in RKO's The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky (1952), alteration and invention of character and setting underscore Crane's major theme of encroaching civilization; at the same time, the use of intercutting and montage recreates the structural basis of the author's narrative design.

With the exception of John Huston's Red Badge, in which a faithful adaptation was attempted but thwarted, the films based on Stephen Crane's fiction succeed in capturing the author's vision. In addition, they take what Maurice Yacowar has termed "creative liberties."[4] The result is a viewing experience which is informed with essential elements of the original and the interpretation of the filmmakers. These adaptations not only bring the stories to the screen, they reflect upon the meaning of the literature as well.

From this survey of specific cases can be gleaned some "lessons learned" which can aid prospective adaptors and critics in understanding the challenges and capabilities of rendering an author's vision for the screen. First of all, respect for and fidelity to an original piece of fiction should concern mood and theme more than length or even plot. As the films of Crane's work suggest, it is possible to alter character or plot, invent or delete settings and symbols, and still serve the thrust of the work of literature. Some critics have even gone so far as to

suggest that a filmmaker can improve upon a novel with deletion and/or invention. For example, in his assessment of the 1970 version of D. H. Lawrence's The Virgin and the Gypsy, Julian Smith contends that "though the film develops some characters and incidents considerably, the result is even more compact than Lawrence's original."[5] On the other hand, Robert Nadeau lambasts Peter Ustinov's rendition of Billy Budd (1962) because "what is most conspicuously absent in the film . . . is the richness, variety, and terrible ambiguity found in Melville."[6] The task of the filmmakers, then, is to capture the texture and spirit of the original. The responsibility of the literary scholar is to look as carefully at the film adaptation as he does at the story on which it is based. He must keep in mind that to the attentive viewer, invention can often serve the fiction better than literal translation. As criticism of films such as The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky and The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner reveal, this liberal stance is not always characteristic. Scholars Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin concede: "Often it is not the filmmakers who have been negligent at their task but critics who have been indolent about creating a vocabulary to articulate the characteristic qualities of the cinema."[7]

Since adaptation is a literary enterprise as well as a cinematic one, filmmakers should study critical interpretation. Discussions of theme, tone, and style can be springboards to new interpretations in the films, just as they suggest new directions to scholars. Ultimately, the filmmaker is a critic; he selects an emphasis and an interpretation to present.

If he were to film "The Open Boat," for example, the adaptor would have to realize that Crane's story focuses on the sea as a metaphor

and symbol; however, the author is not concerned with nautical details as Melville was in Moby Dick. A visual catalogue of ship details in an adaptation of "The Open Boat" would downplay the central concept that a ship can represent mankind struggling with destiny. Here, the traditional apparatus of sea fiction and sea films, involving strict attention to realistic detail, would have to be altered. The camera would have to convey the men's perceptions and hallucinations as they are on the verge of death. Both the external conflicts between man and nature and the internal conflicts like fear, hopelessness, and what Frank Bergon has labeled "the battleful ways of their minds" would have to be addressed.[8] The events of "The Open Boat," like those of Crane's war and Western tales, have many layers. According to Bergon, "To say only that men learn of nature's indifference and of their bonds of brotherhood is to diminish that experience."[9] The camera would have to assume the various points of view of the characters as well as to convey the notion that monstrous rolling waves signify an unrelenting cosmos.

"The Upturned Face" (1896) is another fiction which would surely challenge an adaptor. There are only traces of battle action, and Crane focuses on the psychological states of several men in charge of a burial, not on the context of war or on descriptive setting. The story is divided into two sections: the first sets up burial preparation, and the second deals with the emotional hardship of interring the body. As James Nagel has pointed out, the "significance" of the story "is subjective, internal, psychological."[10] "The Upturned Face" is worthy of cinematic consideration, however, because it narrates a powerfully moving event, evoking what Eric Soloman has called "the disgust endemic to the tiny burial scene" as well as "the repugnance of war itself."[11] In

rendering the psychological realism of Crane's story, the filmmakers would have to make effective use of the only real concrete image--the corpse itself. Gruesome details would be necessary, but perhaps more significant would be the characters' aural and visual reactions to the sight of death. Here, distortive lenses, accentuated sound, and expressive reaction shots could convey the nightmarish world. The rendering would be constricted not by the story, but by the imagination of the adaptors.

Crane's "Five White Mice" (1898) is another story with an apparent lack of appeal for the camera eye. Like "Three Miraculous Soldiers" (1896), it is a little-known tale, but one which deserves attention. As Benjamin Giorgio has observed, "'it is probably the finest example of Crane's success with internal impressionism and it also demonstrates Crane's understanding of the mental flow as delineated by William James.'"[12] In one scene the narrator describes the protagonist (called the "New York Kid") as he imagines the aftermath of his death:

> The story would be a marvel of brevity when first it reached the far New York home, written in a careful hand on a bit of cheap paper, topped and footed and backed by the printed fortifications of the cable company. But they are often as stones flung into mirrors, these bits of paper upon which are laconically written all the most terrible chronicles of the times. He witnessed the uprising of his mother and sister, and the invincible calm of his hard-mouthed old father, who would probably shut himself in his library and smoke alone. Then his father would come, and they would bring him here, and say: 'This is the place.' Then, very likely, each would remove his hat. They would stand quietly with their hats in their hands for a decent minute. He pitied his own financing father, unyielding and millioned, a man who commonly spoke twenty-two words a year to his beloved son. The kid understood it at this time. If his fate was not impregnable, he might have been liked by his father.[13]

A projected scene which comments on the nature of the protagonist's isolation could be effectively rendered through a flash forward which

carries the tone of the fantasy. Textual details and implications of the impersonal cable company and the distant, rich parentage could be conveyed through mise en scene; if effectively done, the adaptation would be a companion piece to Jan Kadar's Blue Hotel in which the Swede's alienation is communicated through the symbolic blizzard. Both protagonists decide they are going to be killed in their respective Western settings. In the Swede's case, the pronouncement is realized; in the kid's case, it is not. Both episodes are ironic and both contain the ambiguities created by the complexities of fate and societal pressures.

In Stephen Crane's fiction both physical and social environment is essential in defining character and theme. At least most aspects of Crane's war and West settings have been rendered on film. However, the sea and the city are yet to be addressed. One would hope that a novel like Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1896) will soon be adapted, for in this work the origins of Crane's amoral world are forcefully portrayed. Maggie is a victim of an impoverished slum environment, a hypocritical family, and her own romantic delusions. A film version of Maggie would be an especially great contribution to the area of adaptation because, in treatments of other naturalistic writers, filmmakers have eliminated powerful imagery and diluted the moral anger of their visions. John Ford's adaptation of Grapes of Wrath (1940), for example, is less a statement of social consciousness than an assertion of the indomitability of the family. This is clearly not the world of John Steinbeck. Likewise, William Wyler's film Carrie (1952) dilutes Theodore Dreiser's vision so drastically that it becomes a romantic tale about the doomed love affair between Carrie and Hurstwood rather than a description of a diseased socity. The horrible pathetic death scene of Hurstwood was

filmed but cut from the final version. Like grotesque details in Huston's Red Badge, this vivid death was too controversial for its time. As Carolyn Geduld points out, "In the McCarthy era of the early fifties, the idea of producing a film faithful to any of Dreiser's works was a strikingly self-defeating proposition."[14] Audience expectations and studio demands would not allow an American to be shown in such an unflattering light. A film adaptor true to Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900) or Crane's Maggie would be obligated to render the squalid tenements, the casual brutality, the drunken characters, as well as the inability of conventional institutions like religion to deal effectively with environmental forces.

A filmmaker using a work of literature as the basis of a cinematic rendition certainly has the right to "creative invention" and selection, but his product must serve the thrust of the original and intent of the author. As this study has illustrated, the vision of this author has been served quite well. Where Huston's Red Badge of Courage (1951) has failed in capturing psychological fear, adaptations such as The Blue Hotel (1977), NBC's Red Badge (1974), and Three Miraculous Soldiers (1976) succeed. RKO's The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky (1952) takes an unusual amount of "creative liberty," but it ultimately succeds in duplicating Crane's notion of the East/West conflict. Only only hopes for new interpretations and a larger scope.

In estimating the literary contributions of the author, Edwin Cady concludes that "the real power of Stephen Crane is in awareness, the power to register and to make the reader see what he saw."[15] If the trend of cinematic Crane scholarship continues, we look forward to "seeing" the intensity of Crane's literary design as well as the creative interpretations of filmmakers on the screen.

NOTES

[1]Robert Wooster Stallman, "Stephen Crane: A Revaluation," in _Critiques and Essays in Modern Fiction, 1920-1951_, ed. John W. Aldridge (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), p. 251.

[2]Eric Solomon, _Stephen Crane_ (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 5.

[3]Milne Holton, _Cylinder of Vision: The Fiction and Journalistic Writing of Stephen Crane_ (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), p. 13.

[4]Maurice Yacowar, _Tennessee Williams and Film_ (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), p. 141.

[5]Julian Smith, "Vision and Revision: _The Virgin and the Gypsy_ as Film," _Literature/Film Quarterly_, 1 (1973), 34.

[6]Robert L. Nadeau, "Melville's Sailor in the Sixties," in _The Classic American Novel and the Movies_, ed. Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), p. 129.

[7]_The Classic American Novel and the Movies_, p. 4.

[8]Frank Bergon, _Stephen Crane's Artistry_ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 86.

[9]Bergon, p. 87. Edwin Cady, in Stephen Crane (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1962), echoes Bergon's concern for the importance of point of view. Calling the neutrally observing narrator one vehicle for unraveling meaning, Cady adds that "it is in the correspondent's mind and point of view that the key symbolic perceptions occur in the story" (p. 153).

[10]James Nagel, "Stephen Crane's Stories of War: A Study of Art and Theme," North Dakota Quarterly, 43 (1975), 16.

[11]Solomon, p. 128.

[12]Nagel, p. 79.

[13]Stephen Crane, "The Five White Mice," in Tales of Adventure, ed., Fredson Bowers, V (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1970), pp. 48-9.

[14]Carolyn Geduld, "Wyler's Suburban Sister, Carrie, 1952," in The Classic American Novel and the Movies, p. 152.

[15]Cady, p. 161.

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