The Progress of Henry Fleming: Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

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EGOCENTRICITY, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT LEADS TO RATIONALizations away from personal responsibility, is the primary target of Stephen Crane's characteristic irony.[1] In *The Red Badge of Courage*, for example, instead of privileging Henry Fleming's rationalizations and contradictions as proof of determinism, Crane exposes and judges the youth's foolish dreams and selfish dishonesty, relenting only when Fleming is finally able "to more closely comprehend himself and circumstance" (Levenson 210).

Numerous scenes and specific images, however, are so striking that *The Red Badge* has been read as both episodic and allegorical.[2] The problem is Crane's deceptive style. When writing dialogue, Crane lets his characters speak for themselves, but their private thoughts are devoiced and reported in the narrator's ironically judgmental voice. When a character's thinking meets with the narrator's approval—a rare occurrence for Henry Fleming—the irony is dropped, and the language is flat, as in the simple statement, "He was a man" (212).

The ironic narrative voice consistently employs detachment, a long-range viewpoint, to reveal discrete moments in the egocentric imagination of a terrified youth. Fleming confronts the whole world from the restrictive and totally subjective viewpoint of a single moment. When his fleeting reflections change, the world according to Henry Fleming also changes. *The Red Badge* is thus a diachronic telling of Fleming's synchronic distortions and rationalizations.

By decoding Crane's narrative voice, we can see that *The Red Badge* is neither allegorical nor episodic. If images and scenes are then read in their relevant contexts and the continuity of the narrative is recognized, the novel seems more concrete than allegorical and the language unified rather than disconnected.

In the last chapter, for example, Crane says that Fleming "had been to *touch the great death,* and found that, after all, it was but the great death" (212; emphasis added). Read as a discrete image, the comment seems absurd. Neither a naive and freshly declared hero enjoying sudden maturation nor a fool suffering from new-found illusions would face his unmistakable demise and say, "Never mind; it's only death."

The image, however, is the climax of a series of events and insights used to describe Fleming's various reactions as he is forced to confront the idea of his own death. Early in the novel, before Fleming has seen combat, he personifies death and imagines himself as a selected and personal target: He "glared about him, expecting to see the stealthy approach of his death" (102). That afternoon, Fleming indulges in a fantasy of self-pity: He decides to die and "go to some place where he would be understood" (105).

When he comes upon the dead man in the forest chapel, he imagines death as a grotesque, magical ogre. He is afraid that if he turns his back, "the body might spring up and stealthily pursue him." In spite of his fear, he feels an urge "to *touch the corpse*," but then he runs away because he is afraid "some strange voice would come *from the dead throat* and squawk after him in horrible menaces" (127; emphasis added). Coming upon "four or five corpses keeping mournful company," Fleming is afraid "that one of the swollen forms would rise and tell him to begone" (129). Basing his conclusions about reality on fragmented moments has caused the youth to imagine a world filled with the trappings of a Gothic novel.

Finding that death is "but the great death" does not suggest that Fleming has come to a superficial evasion of an awesome reality. The suggestion, rather, is that he "shuddered profoundly" at the thought of touching death—that is, at the thought of an actual, tactile experience of death as distinguished from the "neat plan" (106) of a merely imagined death or the nightmarish death pictured by his fear. At the end of the novel, as we have seen, he has "been to touch the great death." He has progressed from synchronic illusions—death is a corporeal fiend pursuing him personally, death is a place where he will be understood, dead bodies will berate or chase him—to a diachronic understanding of death as an awesome force ("the great death") that is neither a supernatural horror nor a comforter conscious of and interested in an individual named Henry Fleming.

Fleming's growth from "a babe" (100) or "beast" (113) to "a man" (212) suggests considerable progress toward maturity, but *The Red Badge* is more concerned with a revolving process than with closure in the story of Henry Fleming. The youth also develops "an attitude of manfulness" even before he has done anything heroic—and merely because he "performed his mistakes in the dark" (165), and the successful lie about his "red badge of courage" (133) leads him to conclude that he is "still a man" and has "a license to be pompous and veteranlike" (165). In the final passages, Fleming has progressed, but he is only two days older, still young enough to be silent about his flight from combat. Crane, a realist, knew it would be psychologically convincing to have Fleming confess his initial cowardice (in "The Veteran") only when he had more firmly proved himself in combat and after many years had passed.

Crane's diachronic vision of an initiation story marked by backsliding and contradictions includes Wilson, the "loud" soldier. At first, Fleming thinks Wilson is "a blatant child," a "swaggering babe" (161); yet, after the first day of fighting, Wilson has apparently "climbed a peak of wisdom from which he could perceive himself as a very wee thing" (161), a foreshadowing of Fleming's realization that he is "very insignificant" (179).

But Wilson is no more perfect after climbing his "peak of wisdom" than Fleming is predicted to be at the end of the novel. Shortly after Fleming grabs the flag away from Wilson and the regiment retreats, Wilson comes to his friend and repeats the gloomy prophecy he had made earlier when he was still called the loud soldier: "Well, Henry, I guess this is good-by-John." Fleming tells him to "shut up" (191).

When the general berates the colonel for retreating, Wilson begins to complain in a now uncharacteristic petulance: The general "must think we went out there an' played marbles." This time it is Fleming who, for the moment, takes on the role of the mature soldier: "Oh well . . . , he probably didn't see nothing of it at all . . ." (197). When Wilson continues his immature complaint and threatens to "stay behind [the] next time" the regiment charges, he is not speaking from a "peak of wisdom." Then Fleming, whose moment of maturity is no more absolute than Wilson's "peak of wisdom," gets caught up in his friend's jawing and breaks out with "sudden exasperation," calling the general a "lunkhead" (197). Progress, in Crane's diachronic world, includes steps forward, steps backward, societal pressures, harsh and often cruel circumstances, and emotional extremes that are appropriate for soldiers in their first two days of combat.

Along the way, motive—what a person wills toward—is more important to character development than what grade that person might earn on some single-standard scale of moral performance. In his admirable *The Pluralistic Philosophy of Stephen Crane*, Patrick Dooley writes, "Crane rejects [Immanuel Kant's] categorical imperatives that command exceptionless obedience to universal maxims" (94). Crane was no Kantian, but his credo of "personal honesty" (Wertheim and Sorrentino 195)—doing the best one can with what one has been given—is a tough-minded newspaper reporter's version of Kant's four formulations of his categorical imperative. Because it requires no specific code of behavior and emphasizes motives rather than predetermined rules, the categorical imperative can be applied universally. Exceptions are not the issue, because the categorical imperative recognizes the necessity of granting individual circumstances *before* an ethical judgment can be made. A major difference between Crane and Kant is that Crane would grant far more power to environment than would the pristine and sheltered Kant. Both, however, believed that human beings have an ethical responsibility to seek to bring about the good with whatever ability they have to see it and with whatever ability they have to enact it.

Crane's emphasis on will in *The Red Badge* is characteristic of his writings. Maggie Johnson, for example, does the best she can with what she has been given. Maggie does not "feel like a bad woman. To her knowledge, she had never seen any better" (53), and thus she is not subjected to Crane's satire. Her brother Jimmie, by contrast, rejects the ethical obligations he does have an opportunity to see, and he rejects them out of a bad will: "Two women in different parts of the city . . . caused him *considerable annoyance* by breaking forth, simultaneously, at fateful intervals, into wailings about marriage and support and infants" (23; emphasis added). Jimmie's devoiced suffering is reported in the same ironic voice used to show Fleming's egocentricity. Maggie and Jimmie's mother, Mary Johnson, is such an extreme example of personal dishonesty that she could be called a caricature.

Henry Fleming's motives, as often noted, are flawed from the very beginning. He enlists because of a selfish desire for newspaper glory and romantic adulation. He is not interested in patriotism or civil rights. In his reflections, he apologizes for the war's lack of tales that are "distinctly Homeric" but still yearns to enlist because "there seemed to be much glory in them." He has read newspaper stories of the war, and his "busy mind ha[s] drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds" (83). He believes that a dark-haired young girl "grew demur and sad at sight of his blue and brass" (86).

Mrs. Fleming, however, looks "with some contempt upon the quality of his war ardor and patriotism" (83). She thinks it would be more sensible for him to stay on the farm than join the army. Basically, "on her side, was *his* belief that *her ethical motive* in the argument was impregnable" (84; emphasis added). Finally, "however, he had made firm rebellion against this yellow light thrown upon the color of his ambitions" (84). Leaving to join the army, Fleming looks back and sees his mother "kneeling among the potato parings" and crying: "He bowed his head and went on, feeling suddenly *ashamed of his purposes*" (85; emphasis added).

In the last chapter, the statement that Fleming has "rid himself of the red sickness of battle" (212) needs to be read in the context of his awareness of and responsibility for his selfish "ambitions," his dreams of Greek heroics that would be no more. His education includes the realization that heroism in war may be a "red sickness" rather than something grand and glorious. In *The Red Badge*, achieving heroism in the face of arbitrary death is a cruel process, a dangerous way to purge one's self of egocentric dreams of glory.[3]

Images such as the following—referring sometimes to Fleming, sometimes to the regiment[4]—suggest what drives people to fight in a war: "hate" (174); "an insane soldier" (182); "a madman" (186); the "insane fever of haste," "mob of blue men . . . grown suddenly wild with an enthusiasm of unselfishness," "sublime recklessness" (204); "state of frenzy," "the daring spirit of a savage, religion-mad," "wild battle madness" (205); "mad horse,"

"beaks and claws" (206); and "mad cry of exultation" (207). Even Wilson, when he sees a wounded Confederate flag bearer, leaps for "the flag as a panther at prey." As the flag bearer dies, Wilson grabs the emblem "with a mad cry of exultation" (207).

Having experienced "battle madness," Fleming turns, finally, with "a lover's thirst to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks—an existence of soft and eternal peace" (212). If Crane is describing a newly created illusion, *The Red Badge* is a case-study of a psychopath; but I think a better reading comes from responding to Crane's invitation to read the last chapter in terms of what has gone before: "The sultry nightmare was in the past. He had been an animal blistered and sweating in the heat and pain of war" (212). Fleming's ambitions for glory and his fear of disgrace have led him to behave like "an animal," but now he is thinking like a "lover"—that is, a human being. Images of "monsters" and dead men who "squawk" have been replaced by images of nature and peace.

Jim Conklin, the "tall" soldier, does not survive long enough to undergo a significant change, but his death is an integral chapter in the story of Fleming's roundabout progress from rationalizations toward maturity. The critical debate about the tall soldier may be divided, roughly, into two camps: first, critics who believe that Conklin is a Christ figure, the "red wafer" is a Christian symbol, and Fleming, at the end of the novel, is redeemed; second, critics who believe that Conklin is not a Christ figure and that Fleming's final achievement is merely a new illusion, or else that the novel suffers from a badly flawed ending.[5]

I believe that this debate is based on a false dichotomy. Clearly, the novel asks the reader to associate Conklin with Christ—the initials J. C., the "bloody hands" (136), the wound in the side (137) if the specific language is ignored, and the words suggesting that Conklin's death is a ritualistic sacrifice: "solemn ceremony," "something ritelike," "rendezvous" (136), "ceremony at the place of meeting" (137).

Evidence for rejecting the Christ analogy is equally clear however: the image of an "animal" in Conklin's chest "kicking and tumbling furiously to be free" (136); the description of a tremor that causes the dying Conklin to dance a "hideous hornpipe," his arms beating "wildly" in "implike enthusiasm" (137); and finally the description of his dead, "pastelike face" with "teeth" showing "in a laugh" (137).

Since standard associations with Christ and sharp variations from the Christ story both appear in the novel, why should we opt for one and deny the other? Crane's reason for including ambiguous signals, I think, is indicated by his most fundamental change in the traditional Christ story: Jim Conklin is not in the service of the Christian God. He is "a devotee of a mad religion, blood-sucking, muscle-wrenching, bone-crushing" (136)—namely, the god of war. Simply, Crane has said to the reader: You know the

story of Jesus Christ and the meaning of his sacrifice to the biblical God; this is the story of Jim Conklin and the meaning (or lack of meaning) of his sacrifice to the god of war.

Once again, Crane is thinking both/and, not either/or. As we see in Chapter 3, Conklin is a good soldier. He does spread rumors, argue heatedly, and get in a fistfight, but his emotional explosions are a sign of pride and overly excited anticipation, not of disobedience. When the wisdom of the regiment's leadership is questioned, the tall soldier quietly demonstrates his loyalty. Fleming, for example, complains about being ordered to move out as soon as the men have finished "erecting tiny hills" (103) for protection. Conklin, "with calm faith," immediately begins "a heavy explanation, although he had been compelled to leave a little protection of stones and dirt to which he had devoted much care and skill" (104).

Fleming next complains about being "marched from place to place with apparent aimlessness," and Conklin, now dubbed "the philosophical tall soldier," again tries to defend the orders of the commanding officers: "Oh, I suppose we must go reconnoitering around the country jest to keep 'em from getting too close, or to develop 'em, or something" (104).

Coming off poorly in his attempt to hush the complaining loud soldier, Conklin eats "as if taking poison in despair" but then becomes peaceful, as his "spirit" seems "to be communing with the viands" (105). The good soldier dines—and does so with ecstasy—at the convenience of the army. In addition, he marches and works as ordered and without whining or complaining: "He accepted new environment and circumstance with great coolness, eating from his haversack at every opportunity. On the march he went along with the stride of a hunter, objecting to neither gait nor distance" (105).

Crane's good soldier, however, serves a bloodthirsty god. Before the regiment has seen combat, the men go forward "to look at war, the red animal—war, the blood-swollen god" (103). As the second attack begins, Crane writes, the "slaves toiling in the temple of this god began to feel rebellion at his harsh tasks" (118). Such imagery, of course, represents the exaggerated imaginations of soldiers in their first day of combat, but Conklin's devotion to the god of war results in his dying with a wound in his side that "looked as if it had been chewed by wolves" (137). The beginning of death for the "tattered man" is a pitiful sight, and Crane's descriptions of generalized death and of specific bodies constitute a vivid critique of the horrors of war.[6] In *The Red Badge*, both flight and courage seem dehumanizing, at least at the moment of happening.

Nonetheless, the novel expresses an admiration for courage in combat, and we know that Crane did admire bravery.[7] Wildly charging forward into enemy fire has the beneficial effect on Fleming and on the regiment in general of earning them, afterward, the word "man" instead of "animal" or

"madman," but that progress—ongoing or temporary—is possible only for those lucky enough to survive. To see the ideological backdrop of Crane's ambiguous attitudes toward war, toward Conklin, and toward the question of Fleming's progress, it is helpful to look at the infamous "red wafer" image (137), in both its immediate and structural contexts.

Henry Fleming is a youth, a farm boy with an imagination that instantly paints glorious dreams of heroism and garish portraits of death. He is isolated because of his terror of war and his internal debate between the glory he desires and the cowardice he fears. The youth feels that his spastic stand against the first charge should have been his allotment of horror, but during the more consciously observed second charge, he bolts. Then comes a series of unsuccessful rationalizations. There seems to be no alleviation for the guilt-ridden and terrified youth, but then he finds Jim Conklin stalking precariously among the wounded. Finally, Fleming has found relief for his agony. Here is something honorable he can do: He can help his wounded friend. But then Conklin refuses help and, driven by a mysterious compulsion, runs to his death. With "sudden, livid rage" (137), Fleming shakes his fist at the cause of his misery—the battlefield, the war—as if to deliver a sharp speech of protest against the injustice of forces that oppress him.

Crane then draws a parallel between the immediate scene he has painted and the ongoing story he is telling: "The red sun was pasted in the sky like a wafer" (137). The sky is sealed off as an envelope is sealed off with a wax wafer.[8] The universe, the ultimate—whatever the final power may be—does not condescend to answer the protests of mere human beings. Egocentric demands for answers or personal attention from the universe are met with silence.

Fleming is being initiated into a cruel and violent level of reality he has not seen back on the farm, but his synchronic assumption that the battlefield should answer his protest of injustice reveals an immaturity that can be exposed in war, in a dinghy on the open sea, even in Whilomville, the small-town setting of Crane's *Whilomville Stories*. When the youth is fleeing, rationalizing, or charging ahead, he has little time for honest reflection; and the fact that his "philippic" consists of one word, "Hell" (137), shows that his initiation, at this point, is equally aborted. (In the next chapter, he commits his deepest sin: his desertion of the tattered man.) The scene, however, dramatizes a fundamental principle in Crane's values.

For Crane, protests, pleadings, questions, and curses directed to the universe are signs of immaturity and egocentricity. Fleming's abortive protest and the "red wafer" are directly comparable to an expository passage in "The Open Boat":

> When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. (902)

Crane's ironic language—"maim the universe," the childish urge to "throw bricks"—makes it clear that he believes the lesson of nature's indifference is an elementary lesson needed only by the naive, the idealistic, the cynical, or the egocentric. Nature's indifference, per se, does not suggest determinism. Crane is not exposing virtue. His target is the foolish expectation that ocean waves should reward the virtue of hard work. Satirizing indulgent subjectivity is Crane's signature.

Fleming's egocentricity is shown after the first charge when he finds it "surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment" (116). Other examples include Fleming's feeling that "swishing saplings tried to make known his presence to the world" (125); his "combating the universe" (172); and his recalling the time, just yesterday, "when he had *imagined* the universe to be against him" (172; emphasis added).

An important step in Fleming's progress from egocentricity toward maturity occurs when he and Wilson know an "ironical secret." The odds are that not many will survive, yet the two young friends "see no hesitation in each other's faces" (181). Fleming is learning that the inability of human beings to control events does not release them from responsibility—in this case, a soldier's obligation to perform the duty he has voluntarily undertaken.

Finally, "it came to pass" that "his [Fleming's] soul changed" (212), but Crane's frequent use of biblical language implies a humanistic rather than a Christian context. This is why Fleming can only "put the sin" of deserting the tattered man "at a distance" (212). In Crane's world, there is no benevolent deity to absolve Fleming's sins or to strengthen him against backsliding. Just moments after the youth feels a "serene self-confidence" (199), he remembers the man who called his regiment "mule drivers" and develops a self-pitying idea, "vaguely formulated, that his corpse would be for those eyes a great and salt reproach" (202).

What Fleming is struggling to overcome is a foolishly romantic and self-centered imagination that keeps him from seeing what is in front of him and from knowing himself. Teased by dreams of glory, terrified by death, and agonizing with guilt, Fleming creates distorted pictures.[9] In the first chapter, the youth's "busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds" (83). When veterans tell him tales

of the ferocity of the enemy, "the youth imagine[s] the red, live bones sticking out through slits in the faded uniforms" (87).

By contrast, on the second day of fighting, "it *seemed*" to the youth that he "saw everything," including each "blade of green grass" (93; emphasis added), an exaggeration, certainly, but nonetheless a sign of his growing away from the glorious and nightmarish distortions that have characterized his whirling perceptions.

After returning to the regiment with his "red badge of courage" (133), Fleming reviews "the battle pictures he had seen." He then decides in supreme dishonesty that he has enough experience to tell tales back home that would leave "his gaping audience picturing him as the central figure in blazing scenes" (166).

In the final chapter, Fleming is beginning to purge himself of the distorted picturings of self-indulgent subjectivity: "For a time the youth was obliged to reflect in a puzzled and uncertain way. His mind *was undergoing* a subtle change. . . . Gradually *his brain emerged from the clogged clouds*, and at last he was enabled to *more closely* comprehend himself and circumstance" (210; emphasis added).

This "subtle change" is largely a matter of reflecting on his deeds in "spectator fashion," thus getting outside himself, becoming less egocentric, and developing enough honesty to "criticize" his actions "with *some* correctness" (210; emphasis added). The concluding description of Fleming's progress is not undercut by the absurdity of his earlier dreams, posturing, rationalizing, and lying. The conclusion is reportorial and valorized rather than ironic and judgmental. The conclusion also represents Fleming's, not the author's, thoughts: he "understood . . . the past"; "he began to study his deeds, his failures, and his achievements"; "he struggled to marshal all his acts" (210).

In this moment of euphoria, Fleming is certainly exaggerating. He knows the next battle will not begin his "existence of soft and eternal peace" (212), and he knows that farm work is not a lazy, pastoral life, but Fleming's moment of celebration should be read in the context of Crane's diachronic narration. In the opening chapter, Fleming's head is filled with a childish ambition for the glories of bloody conquests. In the concluding chapter, he yearns for life.

A "golden ray of sun" breaks through, but it breaks through "hosts of leaden rain clouds" (212). The soldiers, in language recalling the opening paragraph, are "a bedraggled train, despondent and muttering, marching with churning effort in a trough of liquid brown mud under a low, wretched sky" (212). Fleming, however, has learned that though suffering and death are real, so are his accomplishments and his "store of assurance" (212). He is experiencing his version of what others may learn in an open boat at sea: Both the view "from a balcony" (886), which shows human efforts

to be "absurd," and the view from the boat, which reveals a brotherhood so real it "dwelt" (890) in the boat and gave off heat, are real.[10]

It is fair, I think, for Crane to have the youth enjoy his moment of celebration, his release from the torment of egocentricity and his emergence as a local hero. A "store of assurance," meaning *some* assurance, is more realistic than "[h]e knew that he would no more quail before his guides" (212), meaning *never* quail; but during this brief respite from combat, the youth is ecstatic to have "rid himself of" both the desire to be a bloodthirsty hero and the nightmarish picturings promoted by a demeaning fear of his own death. His dishonest and self-serving motives have been quelled. He is a person of worth.

In the diachronic world of Stephen Crane, both idealism and cynicism distort reality, but the distortions of such absolutes do not relieve his characters of responsibility to move, as best they can, from egocentricity toward a "personal honesty."

Notes

[1]For readings fundamentally different from mine, see, for example, Conder and Kaplan. Conder (53–68) argues that any belief in the reality of values is indoctrination and therefore invalid; any negative influence is valid and therefore the truth, which is determinism. Thus, Fleming's humanistic thoughts at the end of the novel are illusions, because nature is indifferent. Kaplan holds that with the story of the cheery soldier, "Crane makes the major turning point in his narrative gratuitous and parodies storytelling by exposing its arbitrariness" (94).

[2]Shulman (202–16) argues that Crane made Fleming a modern Everyman but included no authorial judgments. Conder also says that Fleming "is an everyman" (68). Beaver says *The Red Badge* "reads like some zany inscrutable allegory of *non-sense*" (191). Pease describes *The Red Badge* as "a series of discontinuous incidents" (157) and Fleming as a character who "perceives . . . little more than sheer impressions, unrelieved by any signification whatsoever" (158).

[3]Becoming courageous in battle is an ambiguous prerequisite to the development of Fleming's character, but Dooley's insightful emphasis on morality is impressive: Fleming's

> growth to adulthood is not due to battlefield heroics and public deeds. Rather, his quiet manhood is the fruit of three separate moral realizations: his confrontation with a serious ethical choice, his acknowledgment that he had failed to respond morally, and his most difficult and humbling experience, the decision to forgive and accept himself. (*Pluralistic Philosophy* 89)

[4]Solomon makes a convincing argument (220–34) that Fleming's regiment undergoes a pattern of experience similar to his own.

[5]For a convenient list of essays relevant to the question of Christian symbolism, plus lists of essays on three other topics central to criticism of *The Red Badge*, see Dooley's *Stephen Crane: An Annotated Bibliography* (70–71).

[6]Whatever one's interpretation of *The Red Badge* may be, Benfey's emphasis on physicality (106–19) is a valuable addition to Crane studies.

[7]In "The Little Regiment," Crane's praise of "that splendor of heedlessness which belongs only to veterans" is so extreme that it could be called newspaper propaganda, but

it shows that Crane admired a devotion to duty that is opposite to the whining and complaining of Fleming and Wilson (Gullason 277).

Brooke-Rose contends that Fleming's supposed courage in battle is false: "The role of color bearer that the youth so desires can be seen as the equivalent of a cheerleader—but, more importantly, it represents the position of one who does not fight" (140). A cheerleader, however, is not shot at, does not see friends being wounded and killed, and can go home at night to a hot meal and a warm bed. The color bearer's job is to stay conspicuously out front; it is difficult to duck down low or find cover when holding a flag aloft, and the enemy's flag bearer is a favorite target because the enemy's flag is a prized possession. The role is even more dangerous than that of a soldier with a rifle.

Nevertheless, I think Brooke-Rose has made a valuable insight. Choosing the role of flag bearer for Fleming may have been Crane's way of resolving his own ambiguous feelings toward war. *The Red Badge* is clearly an antiwar novel that praises courage in combat; however, "Marines Signalling under Fire at Guantanamo," "The Upturned Face," "An Episode of War," and Crane's other writings on war, along with *The Red Badge*, emphasize courage associated with duty and character rather than the type of courage represented by personally shooting a large number of enemy soldiers.

[8]Osborn suggests "wafer or seal" but offers no interpretation (362, n. 3).

[9]For an excellent study of picturings in Crane, see Nagel (especially 56); Brown's analysis of photographic images in *The Red Badge* is also excellent (149–59).

[10]In two excised passages, Crane had Fleming deciding that the sin of deserting the tattered soldier could be made useful by "hindering the workings of his egotism"; that the "machinery of the universe" was a "deity laying about him with the bludgeon of correction"; and that "[i]n the space-wide whirl of events no grain like him would be lost" (most commonly available in Stallman 369).

Fleming does seem to be taught, in part, by "the bludgeon of correction." However, I believe Crane was right to omit these two passages, because they come too close to being messages from the author, rather than the youth's ecstatic celebration, and because they are inaccurate to the novel and to Crane's own credo. To say that the "machinery of the universe" is a "deity" with the purpose of correcting Henry Fleming is to repudiate Crane's fundamental belief in the indifference of nature. Bullets in warfare, like waves in "The Open Boat," do not reward good and punish evil. One wave rescues the correspondent; an undertow, or something, kills the oiler. Circumstance is mindless, not a "deity."

Developing the courage to go forward in the face of injustice is essential to maturation in the world of Stephen Crane. Also, the statement that "no grain like him would be lost" ignores Jim Conklin, Maggie, Tommie, and others who are "lost" through no fault of their own.

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