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Stephen Crane’s Naturalistic Vision of War
in *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)

Lewis T. C. Lu*

ABSTRACT

The American pathos of war at the turn of the century cannot be understood without a thematic reference to literary naturalism, to which the philosophy of Nietzsche made a tremendous contribution. His doctrines postulate that new values will emerge only after an individual meets the challenge of violence and hardness of life, in the conviction that power or will is a sacred mystery for which life can even be ignored. According to him, the ancient will to power is an unchangeable truth in light of the fact that there exist no things of permanent good or evil. As a result, only values can be assessed through the "drama of reduction or revelation" to give purpose to a man's existence.† Stephen Crane (1871-1900) was highly obsessed with the moment of crisis, especially that of war and poverty without losing an instantaneous balance between reality and imagination. Prior to *The Red Badge*, he uses the theme of futile bravery as a target of sarcasm in "A Mystery of Heroism." Out of the bitter tone and dark meaning of war arises an swift thrust, whose effect brings to focus the significance of the meaningless experience. In *The Red Badge*, his use of stream of consciousness, as a narrative technique, won him national distinction. Like a journalist reporting a story, Crane uses the adventure of a young soldier as the subject of social/psychological research. His impressionistic method of narration is so subtle that he gives his readers a unified perception that the hero's internal and external activities have been so intricately corresponded so as to make sense of each stage of his mental development. It is no cause for wonder that Crane’s imaginative approach to fulfill material differed from Howells's realistic treatment of the "smiling aspects of life." Crane’s achievement might have excelled Howells's in that he depicted experiences that he had not undergone before. In a society fraught with injury, violation, grievances, and aggressiveness, Crane seemed to believe that the weaker and more foreign elements are destined to be exploited, ingested, or assimilated. These are biological laws infused with intense sociological implications, and were extensively employed by American naturalistic writers aiming to seek an analogy for the conditioning of their literary genre, around the turn of the century. It is to that end that this paper seeks to contemplate the extent to which the Nietzschean vision of nature influenced Crane’s vision of war.

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Crane's Naturalistic Vision of War
in *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)

Most representative of Crane's impressionist work of naturalism is *The Red Badge of Courage*. After *Maggie*, Crane turned toward the realistic depiction of war by drawing on his experience as a war correspondent in Greece and Cuba. In this psychological portrait of fear, Crane subjected the protagonist's mind to a mechanical but firm impression under the conditions of pain and despair. While the author emphasized the supremacy of the felt life in impressions over the observed life in reality, he delicately exalted man's comradeship without sacrificing the importance of his individuality as an artist.

Using stream of consciousness as a narrative technique, Crane derived his imagination of war from oral tradition and from personal accounts of those who participated in it. In this novel, the general design of war is beyond the ken of a raw recruit. The war seen by him resembles a red monster that capriciously and malevolently swallows the helpless soldiers in varying degrees. In fact, he tends to define war in terms of social forces. Not only does he consider self-magnification the virtue of survival, but he also conceives heroism and honor as a way of enabling an individual to force his own will on others. The point worth stressing here is that Crane, in this novel, treats war as a human form of conflict, based on the principle of Darwinian competition—in opposition to the traditional vision of war as a romance. To him, war should not be justified by any moral reasons because it has little to do with the child-like fantasies such as crowns, high castles, and "breathless deeds" that are so often dealt with in the idealistic fictions. Instead, war symbolizes a society fraught with hypocrisy, repression, and human abuses, because anti-natural behavioral codes have both crippled humans and rendered them unable to live a fuller life.

In Crane's mind, war and conflict, though viewed as universal, have a political meaning that can create an effect of naturalistic shock. Behind the mask of imperial interest, the false value of violence has been sanctified by profiteers who, intentionally or not, use the corrupt ethics of patriotism to campaign for the execution of war. Not only does the social system sanction this value, but opportunists and manipulators also propagate these illusory values as an indispensable vice of civilization. That is, they use the ineluctability of physical suffering and death as an excuse to arouse popular resentment against the ideologies of the rivaling state.

War as a Religious Vitalism

Although political indoctrination seems absurd to Crane, the purpose of his naturalistic approach to war is to transfer human rage and suffering to the political
"beast" so that he can unleash his covert metaphysical despondence. This pathos sounds like the frustration and rage which has been transferred by Ahab to Moby Dick. Norris's obsession with violence is conditioned by his imaginative sensibility, to the extent that violence has been elevated to a level of apocalyptic revelation. Conforming to the naturalistic myths, Crane focused his imagination, via ritual-like observations, upon death, pain, anxiety, fatigue, extreme physical collapse, and other ceremonial dramas of battle. To him, violence is like poetry deeply charged with the ambiance of primitive mysteries, and possessing a purifying experience or force able to transpire the naturalistic truth onto a metaphysical level. In other words, since a naturalistic ethic is death-oriented, violence should be regarded as the deepest revelation of the natural and mystic religion. Drawing upon this notion, Crane compared war to the red animal or "the blood-swollen god" (RB 21) whose daring and savage image invokes a sense of awe, sending shock waves to touch upon the issue of death and sacrifice evocative of the religious revelation:

For, it seemed that the mob of blue men.... were again grown suddenly wild with an enthusiasm of unselfishness. From the many firings starting toward them, it looks as they would merely succeed in making a great sprinkling of corpses on the grass...But they were in a state of frenzy, perhaps because of forgotten vanities, and it made an exhibition of sublime recklessness... It appeared that the swift wings of their desires would have shattered against the iron gates of the impossible. He himself felt the daring spirit of a savage, religion-made. He was capable of profound sacrifices, a tremendous death... There were subtle flashings of joy within him, that thus should be his mind. (RB 113)

In this view, Crane bypassed the historical and political issues of the Civil War to explore the realm of pain and shock as a means of realizing the religious thematics, i.e., a belief that a reward of truth can be acquired through the authenticity of the fully expressed life. Restated, Crane's war is entirely deprived of any political or geographic connotation with two armies barely distinguished by the color of their uniforms. In the middle of war, impotent generals can barely keep their regiments in control. Mob-like Soldiers are "all deaf and blind" when running away or forward, entirely in the grip of a chaotic state (RB 27). The actual confusion can also be epitomized by the inconsistent and incomprehensible orders given by the commanding officers. Through war, Crane broadened the range of natural cruelty to cover the topic of society in the belief that the road of truth will open to a hero only after he goes through a series of tests of endurance and hardship. As a cosmic process in the fate of life, war is tinged with an air of religious transcendence whose value is metaphysical in the sense that any sacrifice of mundane safety has something to do with the moral purpose. Above all else, heroism in a moral sense of the word simply refers to courage without which a man is unable to confront the reality of natural cruelty undaunted.

Contextualized as such, the awesome meaning of violence has profoundly alluded to a "religious half-light" (RB 41). Immediately after he flees the battle, Fleming encounters a "thing," a dead soldier near a place in the forest where "the high, arching boughs made a chapel." Although he is stunned at the quasi-
inanimateness of the "thing," he is grasped with spiritual comfort when "the trees about the portal of the chapel moved sighingly in a soft wind." At this moment, a "sad silence" upon the "little guarding edifice" seems to have cushioned the harsh reality with a religious air concomitant with the natural law featuring "all life existing upon death" (RB 42). However, Crane described how Fleming feels when he is being looked at by the corpse:

The eyes, staring at the youth, had changed to the dull hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish. The mouth was opened. Its red had changed to an appalling yellow. Over the grey skin of the face ran little ants. One was trundling some sort of a bundle along the upper lip... He remained staring into the liquid-looking eyes. The dead man and the living man exchanged a long look. (RB 41)

Also conveyed in the religious allusion of war are Christ-like dying and other terminologies such as "chapel," "twilight," "redemption," "fall," "creed," and communion "wafer" (RB 51). Isolated and alone, Fleming grows aware of the vulnerability of romantic fantasy and he experiences extreme despair at the sight of the dead. At this moment, an elemental instinct to socialize with his comrades urges him to rejoin the regiment so that he can seek relief from metaphysical panic. Furthermore, the prolonged agony suffered by Henry's friend Jim Conklin in the parade of the wounded is assumedly equated with the "profound dignity" of the natural process (RB 50). The way this doomed soldier stars at the unknown seems as if that he were looking for a "grave" (RB 47). The dying confusion in his awful face conveys a stoic dignity of personal bearing, reminiscent of sentimental primitivism. To him, death is "something that he had come to meet," a place of "the rendezvous" (RB 50). This is significantly suggestive of a universal ritual mode that is to initiate Fleming into "courage," the ostensible theme of this novel. Fleming's escaping into the woods runs parallel to Jim Conklin's mad flight in search of a private and mysteriously chosen ground away from the retreat (RB 47). As the tall soldier lurches dangerously forward, the youth and the tattered soldier sneak behind as if they were drawn by the dance of death, but they have no courage to confront "the stricken man" face-to-face. At this moment, they

... began to have thoughts of a solemn ceremony. There was something rite-like in these movements of the doomed soldier. And there was a resemblance in him to a devotee of a mad religion, blood-sucking, muscle-wrenching, bone-crushing. They could not understand; they were awed and afraid. (RB 49-50)

The tall soldier finally collapses and dies with the mouth open and the teeth "in a laugh," while the youth "had watched, spell-bound, this ceremony at the place of meeting" (RB 50). At this point, "the magnificent pathos" of seeing the dead body has paved the way for Fleming's initiation into the mysteries of death. Touched by "the great death" (RB 121), Henry experiences an apotheosis in courage that later rekindles his redemptive initiation into fighting. Closely related to the revelation of death is a rite-like ennoblement that transfigures him into a warrior of male-oriented
vitalism enmeshed in the web of authenticity, self-realization, and ultimate survival. Since this transfiguration is closely linked with the pathos of savage religion, Jim Conklin's death has paradoxically taught Fleming a moral lesson. Like a natural mystery, Jim's death transcends beyond the motive of pride to arouse in Fleming an admiration for machoist vitalism, in conformity with a code of virile honor. Therefore, getting killed calmly in front of his fighting comrades becomes a deed of self-respect in tandem with the codes of vitalist manhood. Just as "red of blood and black of passion" are banners of manhood that lead him in the direction of the "good" (RB 118), so this magnificent pathos of being authenticated by Jim's honored death later compels him to lead a charge in battle.

From this can be sensed a mixture of the stoic faith in nature and the naturalist respect for truth. In such an instinctual context, characters can feel the natural growth of neo-primitive and stoic religion by means of redemptive experiences. That means, once sacrifice blooms into stoic virtues, a hero in pain or in extreme ordeal will become the man in close proximity with the apocalyptic God in nature.

As elaborated by Nietzsche, "life sacrifices itself for the sake of power." Crane seemed to imply that life should be best celebrated when it reaches the climax of its destruction. It is no accident that the dichotomy between primitive and collective psychology is also grounded in an ethos derived from a struggle for survival. Nietzschean motives seek to govern the myth of power by viewing sacrifice and suffering as the motivating forces in upgrading the moral of power. Their mission in the light of the naturalist redemption is to shatter, not only lies, but also repressive taboos by suffering violence and risking death and pain. Living in one with nature as such will yield a revelation that can be relied on to reach a province of spiritual "sublimation."

In the story, what motivates Henry to force a life to its crisis is his personal need for a redemptive act of self-assertion. Seeking the climax of pain, he uses violence to authenticate his own existence, and hence subjects his personal fate to the premise of naturalistic fate. This intention makes an act of violence seemingly indispensable - like a blissful process. Such a metaphysical imperative is derived from instinctual and primitive experiences, closely related to the stoic endurance of animal fate. To put it quite simply, the apocalyptic themes in naturalistic writing mirror a conventional need for metaphysical judgment, in which natural mystery is considered immanent in man's nature and with the drastic need of revelation resting with the authentic goal of suffering. All that could be said is that the value structure of ultimate apocalypse is firmly based on the harsh lessons of violence, in the absence of which a person can be in no way able to reach the "good" (RB 118).

The Social Vision of War

Also exhibited in the ethic of suffering pain and death is the growth of "a mysterious fraternity" in the regiment. It is conceivable that "subtle battle brotherhood" (RB 30) is stimulated by the force of the vitalist cult with group solidarity the inevitable outcome of acting out historic conflict. As a power in itself, collectivities are intriguingly complicated by pride, honor, fear, and shame amid the
cannon smoke. Living in the danger of being killed thus germinates an ethic of conflict and ordeal that can transform danger into fraternity—even to the extent of inviting violence in order to intensify this very fraternity. Similarly, being a moral outcast is far more humiliating than physical suffering. Although Henry's fear is lessened after he runs away from battle, he is deeply stirred by a self-ostracism like that plaguing a moral refugee.

Early in the novel, the way Crane described the army as the "moving box" (RB 19) corroborates his naturalist assumption that the army is merely an instrument with which to win the war. Like a force of nature, the army is perceived to be a social unit, possessing social processes and moral forces based upon disciplined and collective judgment. Like "a firework" (RB 30), the monster-like regiment is on the verge of exploding, with the potential of releasing, at any time, its organic and mechanical forces that will relegate each soldier's life to a meaningless quandary. As for Fleming, "whatever he had learned of himself was here of no avail" because he had become "an unknown quantity" (RB 8) presided over by a much larger group force. The imagery of the army as a "box" reveals that it resembles an enclosure of tradition and law that both demands soldiers to obey discipline and provokes their human instinct for battle, namely, a tragic pessimism toward the violence of society and its repressive social rules.10

After the flight, Fleming is seized with "envy" when seeing a column of soldiers marching toward the battle in such haste that it seems like they were forcing "their way to grim chances of death." In an instant, he "would have liked to have used a tremendous force" to "throw off himself and become a better." He imagines himself to have become a "blue, determined figure standing before a crimson and steel assault, getting calmly killed on a high place before the eyes of all" (RB 56). In other words, soon after Jim Conklin's death, he willy-nilly repudiates his rationalization of his running away from combat because the column of infantry he encounters is marching toward the front-line with unswerving and purposeful determination, as if they were "a procession of chosen beings" (RB 56). He was profoundly awe-stricken by the aura of fixed intent and irresistible resolution carried by those soldiers pressing forward like charging buffaloes. At this moment, he is deeply buried in remorse because this terrifying contrast strengthens the shame evocative of his retreating into the rear. Out of a sense of envy, he suddenly hopes to become a member of the fresh column of infantry, so that he can regain his pride and be resolute again. As he is enraptured with the transforming power of war in the light of the army's on-coming and unimpeded movement, his yearning for grandly heroic postures come back to grasp him in such a way that he feels urged to rejoin his regiment.

Within such a matrix, soldiers are encouraged to ignore the fear of death through the approving eyes of their comrades. No less bizarre is the persuasion that pain should be celebrated as a blissful travail. Once the group is driven from either within or without, the spirit of emulation is reinforced by existential sanction as absolute as death itself. In other words, paralleling death now is a social membership based on group discipline and collective will. From such paradoxical sensibilities, based on comradeship and collectivities, comes an omnipresent awareness that the premise of individual existence is dominated by the universality of group conflict. This makes the crisis of violence an inevitable reality, underlying the coexistence of
primitive savagery and highly organized civilization. Therefore, it is not unlikely for individuals to value the primacy of species over the individual instinct to survive, in opposition to what has been generally assumed to be otherwise.

On the one hand, the floodlike force of war resembles a "red animal" (RB 21) that unleashes passion, instincts, and primordial violence. On the other, the soldier is likely to be dominated by conventional battle romanticism in which "he measures himself by his comrades" (RB 11), and is highly sensitive to the shame of cowardice and the honor of heroism. A case in point is the "tattered man" who likes to compare wounds among the wounded soldiers, an act that constantly reminds Fleming, like "knife-thrusts" (RB 54), of his shameful desertion from the regiment. The power of emulation induces soldiers to value courage, endure pain, and face death in such a way that they can redeem themselves through the purgative and cathartic actions of war, as well as its motive forces. This idea later enables Henry to crave for a wound of his own so that he can go back to his original regiment with self-respect. The blow he has received from another fleeing soldier (RB 65) ironically serves this end. As a result, the ethos of a naturalistic political movement is substantially colored by an authoritarian discipline, serving to organize and motivate individuals like what the army has done to the soldiers.

A Delusion of Romance

From the flashback, readers become aware that, owing to the information obtained from idealized newspaper accounts and related details of village gossip, Fleming used to consider bravery and heroism an act of grandeur. This excessively romantic and sensitive vision of war eventually leads to Fleming's enlistment in the army. As a new volunteer, this average countrylad-turned-soldier thinks that he is "made to shine in war" without which he "might be a man heretofore doomed to peace and obscurity" (RB 11). While waiting to be sent to the front line, he is eager to "go into the blaze" in order to discover the "merits and faults" of his courage (RB 10). His childlike air, as evoked through the war romance, can be best illustrated by the following description:

He had burned several times 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 of 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. (RB 3)

In retrospect, the hero joined the army in a spirit of romantic exultation because he had long admired and been thrilled by heroic deeds. However, what he encounters in the army is simply uncertainty, confusing rumor, and humdrum monotony that rigorously disillusion his "dreams of glory." After his earlier dreams of military romance have been slowly shattered by self-doubt and despondency, he begins to "regard himself merely as a part of a vast blue demonstration" (RB 7). Through the baptism of the first battle, his short-lived
romantic illusions are thoroughly deflated to the extent that, for the first time, he awakens to scrutinize himself "in a dazed way as if he had never before seen himself" (RB 33). With the romantic vision considerably replaced by other rational illusions, there emerges in his mind an obsessive fear of running away that later becomes reducible to panic and self-doubts. As it turns out, this ethical sense of honor eventually develops into a sole restraint prohibiting him from desertion and thus sustaining his heroic dream. It is discernible therefore that conditions contribute immensely to his conflict with regard to the indecision of flight.

However, the sense of guilt he experiences after the flight comes back to haunt him constantly. It is to that degree that he becomes aware of how deep he has shared the criteria of the social ethic. What constitutes the complicated nuances of Fleming's environment are the instrumental factors that later determine his ensuing actions. Also composing the important part of the deterministic vision in the novel are Fleming's flashbacks that reveal his mother's moral persuasions (RB 5) as the chief source of his ethical sense of honor. It is this ethical sense that keeps telling the child of the widow that turning tail from battle is morally wrong. Later, his sense of guilt is simply an outgrowth of the very ethical motives passed on to him from his mother who, after her moral focus is reinforced, acted as the conduit of social values to lay the ground work of Fleming's spiritual structure.

Through a bleakly naturalistic view, Crane likened the uncontrollable and uncontrolled condition in society to the confusing and changing reality in the battlefield. This being the case, man's status in the universe is as degrading as other species engaged in a cruel Darwinian struggle for survival in the animal kingdom. In the face of the onset of death, individual soldiers fleeing in blind panic are no less than helpless and random victims, whose agony and amazement are closely attuned to the incomprehensible movement of the army, advancing or retreating according to no definite purpose or plan. On the difficult terrain of woods and thickets, stampeding soldiers are imaged as "dark waves" of overwhelming water (RB 64) emerging out of, or vanishing into, the blue smoke and pink flashes of the cannons with shells bursting and whistling through nearby. Under the threat of death is a revelation of ultimate truth that is accessible only through the sultry nightmare of fearful violence, confusion, and incoherence. As such, war seems to be the sole powerful image of life in which man is involved in uncaring, primitive, hostile, and savage struggles-just as Fleming has experienced in the Civil War. The disorder of the regiment in battle can be perceived from the following statement:

The line lurched straight for a moment. Then the right wing swung forward; it in turn was surpassed by the left. Afterward the center careereed to the front until the regiment was a wedge-shaped mass but an instant later, the opposition of the bushes, trees and uneven places on the ground split the command and scattered it into detached clusters. (RB 95)

What horrifies the protagonist in the first skirmish is the constant haunting of his self-doubts that considerably drain away and procrastinate his new found "courage." It dawns on readers that the heat and pain of war have converted men into animals, fighting for the fear of being annihilated. After the flight, not only is he unable to locate his regiment but he is also badgered by the "vigilance" (RB 54) of
explaining why he is absent from war. Furthermore, his craven behavior is to an extent dominated by the pure "chance" of war. If his regiment lost the battle, then his flight would not only prove to be a correct perspicacity but also go unnoticed. If the result was otherwise, he would rather be killed among the dead and be considered glorious. He rationalizes his desertion by using the excuse of the headless chaos incurred by the on-rushing movement of his unit, in order to explain all that is irrational and inexplicable. His quest for order and comprehension is tampered by the visual scene in which he acts out his conflict with the remains of the nameless soldier. After his neat justification is overturned, he uses a rational scheme to find a logical pretext so that he can be reinstated in his regiment.

The Biological Anatomy of Fear and Guilt

However, it is a condition of the similar fashion that had earlier caused the hero to run away from battle. This condition is accompanied by the awareness that his initial army experience is extremely inconsistent with the illusionary nature of his previous attitudes toward war. What constitutes the condition is a related network of causation that either inhibits or compels action to such an extent that man's actual position in the placidity of his ordinary existence can be tested out. Undeniably, battle is typical of such condition into which Fleming finds himself.

Especially significant is Crane's intention to articulate Fleming's impressions through a richly "imaginistic" style. He focuses on the hero's consciousness through a logic of keen psychological sense, in order to correlate between cause and effect. In doing so, the author tried to adumbrate the reader's sense of fate by alternating between the actuality of life and the imaginative experience of art. At one point, he used meticulous detail to convey his notions of truth and sincerity in his artistry; at the other, he intensified the protagonist's war experience with extraordinarily vivid flashes of army movements. Through the image of the machine, there reveals a vast destructiveness of war that is as much violent and inhuman as the truth found in the machine-dominated world. Seen in this light, it is taken for granted that Crane attempted to close in on his readers with the reality of life in the semblance of war.

Also contributing to the thematic emphasis upon causality is Crane's stilted and academic language whose stiffly formal phraseology, once intervened by the omniscient narrator in a heavy-handed fashion, have created an ironic effect. In an exact parallel, Crane used compressed economy of style such as splendid burst of rhetoric, deformed word order, and iterative understatements to explore Fleming's actions, feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. Moreover, the use of mockery and derisions is also facilitated by the narrator's detachment. He depicted his hero with compressed economy of style, as if his subject was simply a product of the biological world instead of being a self-governing agent.

Prior to Chapter Nine, fear is the primary factor that considerably affects Fleming's emotions. Owing to his predominant fear, he keeps convincing himself that "he had never wished to come to the war. He had not enlisted of his free will. He had been dragged by the merciless government. And now they were taking him out to be slaughtered!" (RB 19). Not until now are readers brought to know that it is
Fleming's fear of law that manipulates the content of his thoughts to significantly discourage him from running away. The advantageous condition resulting from the success of the first skirmish keeps him from acting on his latent emotion because it is more life-threatening to escape than to stay with the regiment. However, the thought of escaping persists unabated. He delays amputating himself from the regiment simply because the latter is now like a "fire-work that, once ignited, proceeds superior to circumstances." All that he knows is that once the regiment is annihilated, he will lose all the assurances, and can no longer keep his biological fear under control (RB 30). In the second skirmish, he is unable to perform any desirable military action so that, in the face of "an onslaught of redoubleable dragons," he is tremendously terrified at the "approach of the red and green monster" (RB 35).

Like others who are "smitten abject" and scampers away through the smoke, the youth "lost the direction of safety" after "destruction threatened him from all points." He "began to speed toward the rear in great leaps" like a "proverbial chicken" (RB 36). For an instant, he turns into immeasurable panic with little trace of previous "subtle battle-brotherhood" on which group solidarity has been based (RB 30). Fleming's early fighting is not courageous, much the same way as his later escape cannot be considered a cowardly imposture because he is simply an unfortunate creature of circumstance. Both the narrator and the reader know that the so-called courage and cowardice are simply exaggerated terms, no less exaggerated than the description of the enemy as "redoubleable dragons" (RB 35). It is difficult to judge Fleming's flight morally because he is dictated by detailed circumstances in such a way that he is compelled to run entirely in the grip of ungovernable panic.

However, society is not concerned about the condition under which he is motivated to escape. At the center of social concern are simply the consequences of desertion on a large scale. That is, if a large number of soldiers have deserted, the army will disintegrate and will thus become unable to implement its social goals. In this view, Fleming's desertion should be condemned on the ground that this behavior proves vulnerable to society in an absolute sense. Seeing that his unit has held fast, Fleming experiences guilt. If society is determined to brand an individual's behavior in moral terms, then Fleming is no doubt a criminal, despite the fact that, philosophically speaking, moral legitimacy can justify the primacy of the biological fear of death over the ethical fear of law. Nevertheless, desertion is immoral in a social sense and that, owing to its violation of the cultural demand, considerably fosters a psyche of guilt dwelling upon his culpable conscience. Once without such social sanction, the whole moral system can no longer function as deterrents against undesirable behaviors.

Nevertheless, he escapes the group and runs away from the violence and horror of war into the heart of the woods where he agonizes through the darkness of soul. Even though nature rules supreme in calm tranquillity, he is struggling with a medley of damming senses of guilt and pretexts of justification. In this brilliant scene, the protagonist's ideals of either romance or reason are entirely shattered. At the very least, he convinces himself that it is natural to succumb to the biological fear of imminent destruction. The extent to which he is overcome by the natural and religious atmosphere exuded by the chapel-like arching boughs symbolizes his adjusting himself at the spiritual and moral nadir to determined rationalizations.15 He tries to rationalize his timid act with the case in which a squirrel runs away from him
at the throw of a cone. The comforting consolation instilled by this serene and beneficent scene is further corroborated by the sight at an animal pouncing in water for a gleaming fish. However, this scene overpoweringly reminds him of the black ants "swarming greedily upon the grey face and venturing horribly near to the eyes" of the dead soldier he just saw (RB 41). All that is meant here is that the seductive atmosphere of the religious serenity has been immensely undermined by the reality in association with the stillness of the frightening death as manifested through the moldering remains of the dead soldier and the disfiguring image of ants.16

In terrible flight, he bursts out of the woods. But before he knows it, he finds himself a refuge amid the walking wounded moving rearward. The lack of any wound in him gives rise to another bout of guilty fear. After seeing Conklin's death in agony, he abandons the delirious and sorely-wounded tattered soldier whose glancing in the semblance of a smile "was not within human vigilance" (RB 54), even though he has been kind to Henry all along. Under constant self-reproaches of betrayal, he starts fleeing once again. Crane seemed to explain that Fleming's motives always succumb to the supremacy of conditions that strongly influence his actions and thoughts.17 Most parts of the narratives prior to Fleming's flight center around his fear of running away in the event of battle. The fact that he ends up in flight, just as he expected of himself, has made the atmosphere of determinism strikingly noticeable. No less deterministic is the fact that he cannot resist being pulled by war, despite his fear of it:

He saw that it was an ironical thing for him to be running thus toward that which he had been at such pains to avoid. But he said, in substance, to himself that if the earth and the moon were about to clash, many persons would doubtless plan to get upon roofs to witness the collision. (RB 42)

After Fleming's moral sense returns to become part of the casual world, his career as a soldier is immeasurably invigorated by valor and strength that enable him to stand his ground in the forefront. In Chapter Twenty-Four, he even leads his comrades in a desperate charge and successfully captures the enemy's flag to become a hero.

The Transition of Spectatorship

It has been taken for granted that Fleming's vanishing amid his surroundings is motivated out of the internal perspective of a presumed subject who sees and fears for the sake of his own safety. However, he is mortified at the thought of his respite from battle after his internal perspective is inverted to the extent that he is totally absorbed into the world once again. No more obsessed with the passive process of seeing, he is conscious of the communal gaze everywhere he goes, and that tremendously reduces him to an object of derisive scorn. As a result, he keeps "casting side-long glances to see if the men were contemplating the letters of guilt he felt burned into his brow" (RB 47). Overcome by an overwhelming feeling of shame, he wishes "he was dead." Much as he envies "a corpse," he later ambiguously
"achieves a great contempt for" some of "the slain" as if "they were guilty for thus becoming lifeless" (RB 59). The humiliating vision of himself causes him endless apprehension over the possibility that his dishonor will soon be uncovered. His paranoia is invoked to such an extent that he feels he is constantly exposed to a damning inspection, rendering his self-constitution highly vulnerable to the filter of others people's gaze. At this moment, he searched about in his mind then for an adequate mal diciation for the indefinite cause, the thing upon which men turn the words of final blame." He knows "whatever it was," it is responsible for his "fault" (RB 56).

Soon after, he is conscious of "the scrutiny of his companions" (RB 57) who seemingly "keep watch of him to discover when he would run" in the next engagement (RB 60). Their "insolent and lingeringly-cruel stares" are so pervasively felt that he is discouraged from looking at their faces on which hang "wide, derisive grins" (RB 60). In order to "throttle the dark leering witch of calamity," he all of a sudden becomes "sublime" (RB 44, 57, 61, 96, 113) and is ebullient with "the quiver of war-desire" that enables him to fly high with "the red wings of war" in anticipation of "a rapid successful charge" (RB 56-57). On the second day of the battle, "mad enthusiasm" once again runs so wild that it fails to "check itself before granite and brass." In a "sublime absence of selfishness," he goes through a pitch of "delirium," heedless and blind to the odds of "despair and death" (RB 96). By this action, nature, as he sees it, is different from what he saw when he was exonerating his own timidity in the thicket woods (RB 61).

Nature was a fine thing moving with a magnificent justice. The world was fair and wide and glorious. The sky was kind, and smiled tenderly, full of encouragement, upon him. (RB 80)

Such alternating points of view between the omniscient voice of the narrator and the protagonist's rudimentary one enable the reader to slip in and out of Fleming's consciousness, substantially giving a thrust to the atmosphere of indeterminacy. Assorted and conflicting voices on which characters are constructed are thus immensely en broaded by the third person viewpoint. From the resulting compound sentences, which are firmer and more confident in voice, emerges Crane's impressionist style in terms of the way things are presented and how they impress the reader. Such impressionism can easily absorb readers into a larger and discursive fictional world, as if they are allowed to see from a privileged position characters enacting their roles.

Owing to his desire for the admiring look from his comrades, Fleming has been reduced by a chain of conditions into a robot, the product of cultural and psychological determinism, completely living under the public gaze and seeing himself as either a lord or a knight. As a society's man, he is dispossessed of his own perceptions in favor of the personal sense of mental achievement. What he is concerned about is only the moral connotation of self-esteem, a social view of his own performance. Since he no longer belongs to himself as an free agent, the world of freedom for man is simply an illusion, amid which he is incapable of autonomous action with little meaning attached to values such as courage and cowardice, much less be morally responsible for them. It is Crane's contention that living in such
public view will not necessarily lead to an infallible and privileged omniscience in much the same way that the private view does not necessarily lack its merit. For instance, the public hard view of the colonel indicates that he fails to see things from the perspective of his soldiers as individuals (RB 106). Fleming's change into manhood is accompanied by his awareness of the fickleness of public view that has prompted the lieutenant to praise him as a "wild-cat" possessing a courage comparable to that of a "war-devil" (RB 89).

As a result, the plasticity of the boy's mind is witnessed by the sudden rise in his martial spirit. Since he directs his attention entirely at others in expectation of their admiration, he is relegated to become the mirroring reflections of a self obsessed with private moments of perceptual absorption. Such spectatorial dependency spurs him to feel that all comrades are "engaged in staring with astonishment at him" as "spectators" (RB 89). Much as he becomes an object of admiring communal gaze, he has been dislodged from his genuine self to live in a state of conspicuous enslavement without self-constructed autonomy.

However, the psychological pattern of his external view gradually absorbs him into battle without his knowing that he is conforming to a behavioral judgment that measures up to the standard of heroism. Enraptured with ocular excitement, he increasingly functions in a mindless manner that transposes him to a state of non-being performing the selfless activities. For much the same reason, he loses all self-consciousness. Such a lack of self-awareness in the context of war is synonymous to what he had experienced in the first skirmish. Because of the advantageous condition in the first skirmish, he "lost concern for himself and forgot to look at a menacing fate" that welds himself "into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire" to be "not a man but a member" (RB 29). As a result, he felt that:

... something of which he was a part--a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country--was in a crisis... For moments, he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand. (RB 29)

Seized momentarily by "an ecstasy of self-satisfaction," he was immersed in "the most delightful sensations of his life" as if he was standing "apart from himself" to view the magnificent scene in which he himself was fighting (RB 33). In much the same way that he figuratively stood outside himself in the first skirmish, he is now drawn by an external perspective of his own behavior with the result that he once again loses concern for himself. At this point, the youth considers himself "a barbarian, a beast," fighting like "a pagan who defends his religion" and basking himself "in the occasional stares of his comrades" (RB 90). To be more specific, he has not abandoned his concern for reputation, as he did out of panic last time. Instead, he enmeshes himself in the spectacle of war through a reactive process in which he behaves in response to how he is being looked upon by the public eye. Like a manifest object, he becomes something waiting to be seen without possessing a substantial core of the self, i.e., an object that is as much a product of constraining forces beyond his control as before. With a self-conception governed entirely by the ocular or visual perceptions, he experiences an inversion from the internal perspective underlying the overwhelming power of fear that had caused his flight into the woods in Chapter Seven. Such a psychological transition makes him feel as if he
is ablaze with glory. Though he had "fallen like paper peaks" owing to the shame in association with his desertion, he now ascends to find himself "a knight," a "tremendous figure" or "what he called a hero" (RB 90). A hero now as he might seem, he is no more autonomous than when he was seized by cowardice. The point worth stressing here is that Fleming's self-absorption derives from the outer-body experience of watching himself from afar. Enacting such a role out of dissociated sensibility robs him of a free-standing self, resulting in the loss of a self-regarding and self-conscious capability of holding himself responsible for his own behavior.

When coupled with the notoriously eccentric perspectives of narratives, altered consciousness substantially dramatizes the madness of war. The rhetorical trope challenges the reader's syntax of thoughts to the extent that passages all become a model of reflexivity. Against the stilted sequence of simple sentences, the world surprisingly is revealed through an internal and personal perspective. Conversely, the texture of Crane's idiosyncratic prose perennially seems to depict characters from an external and objective point of view with the effect of excluding the possibility that they possess an organizing will.\(^{21}\)

A Spectacle of the Self

There can be no doubt that Fleming is disposed to assert a law to his character so that he can predict his behavior in the event of battle. However, the loss of character indicates that there exists not any law inside him with which to control the psychological structure of desire. Unable to attest to the self with an organizing will, his presumed state of self-possession cannot withstand the force of his desires, considerably giving rise to an apprehension over his ability to comprehend the predictability of his behavior. His deliberation is so shallow that any ensuing resolution cannot be relied on to elicit a warrant for action. It is more than certain that, with action rarely intended, Fleming is swayed by impersonal and interdependent nexus of forces that are not only social but also psychological. Crane seems to be saying that his protagonist is not sure of himself in such a way that he inadvertently allows himself to be shaped by the collective behavior, to the total exclusion of the existence of a genuine self. Since what will happen eventually happens, a consciousness of the constraining will on the part of the reader is reinforced in proportion to Fleming's will of deliberation.

Uncertain about his own personal behavior, Fleming never maintains a belief in the constancy of his mental configuration. Failing to do this enables him to act in an inconsistent manner. All through the novel, Fleming's mind keeps rambling on in all directions, and that makes him unable to contemplate any actions beforehand. Even if he plunges "like a mad horse" at the flag toward the end of the novel (RB 114), he is less motivated by chosen and willed actions than by sheer desire. Crane made this point clear in several pages earlier (RB 111) by stating that he "was deeply absorbed as a spectator" enraptured by the "crash and swing of the great drama." This runs parallel to the design of the communal rationale that Jim Conklin had told him about (RB 10) and which had kept him from running away on the first day of the battle. The tall soldier has been Fleming's friend "since childhood" (RB 11) but his wise
assessment against desertion far exceeds Fleming's "diamond-point of intelligence" (RB 89). On the first day's battle, Fleming is deeply engaged in isolated mental struggle. But in the physical combats the next day, Fleming develops a close bond with Wilson and the lieutenant. At this time, Wilson has replaced Conklin by assuming a position of leadership that personifies duty, patriotism, and heroism.

Lacking a coherent character, Fleming is entirely dictated by either the desires which he cannot control or the actions which he cannot direct in accordance with the overriding conception of himself. Put quite simply, he is unable to either choose what kind of person he would like to be or to possess in a power strong enough to willingly alter his behavior.22 Owing to this unpredictability, readers are forced to bring the issue of identity into question. To fulfill a complacent sense of morality, Fleming attributes flattering motives to his own credit on the one hand and, on the other, intends to rationalize those actions that are not warranted by social sanction.

It is instructive to note that the differences between Crane's stylistic innovation and that of the realist conventions, fittingly sets the stage for the presentation of a self that is unable to act in order to be morally responsible for what he has done. Unlike the slack, contrived, and squeamish realism of the 1890s, Crane's naturalist technique featuring stylistic repetition provides a thematic appropriateness that once again precludes the assumptions of "agency".23 After descriptions are endlessly duplicated, there evokes a sense, in the reader's mind, that the character has been deprived of a self and is unable to act of his own free will.

In addition, the subject of various sentences is constantly diminished by additive clauses and elementary diction, in such a way that characters are reduced into a mechanical status unable to cohere in a self. Heavily overwhelmed by a sense of "stasis," the reader is explicitly disrupted by the overall narrative process. This syntactic disruption has suspended the narrative sense of duration on the part of the reader. After time is forestalled as such, the reader barely feels the progress of the plot. Temporal sequence of events and disjointed descriptions cause strained syntactical constructions to atomize the protagonist's modest capacities and his limited process of thoughts. To a large extent, the effect created by the sequence of simple sentences endows characters with sets of reflexive traits that allow their wills to be compulsively disavowed by the choppy syntax of narratives.

As hinted at by Crane, Fleming's mode of thoughts falls prey to a pathetic fallacy in that he tends to judge his actions by standing outside his actions in isolation. As such, readers find him entangled again into a circular logic without any significant shift in the mode of self-appraisal. Most crucial is his intention to connect his actions with a set of larger social categories. In other words, he relieves himself from a narrow view of self-rationalization by allowing his experiences to be absorbed into a larger goal. However, in doing this, he has been degraded into a victim of consequences, no longer capable of becoming a master over his own disposition. No less false is his attempt in structuring the self on the basis of a backward-looking logic, with which he can seemingly apply fixed categories of courage, responsibility, cowardice, freedom, and so on to behaviors he has already performed. He was a coward in the sense that he fled, leaving his regiment to hold fast, and later successfully withstand the attack from the enemy. Little wonder, he intended to rationalize his actions for the protection of his ego with the thought that a possible "defeat of the army" might suggest itself to him "as a means of escape from the
consequences of his fall." What he tried to vindicate was that "he had fled early because of his superior powers of perception" (RB 59).

He began to pity himself acutely. He was ill-used. He was trodden beneath the feet of an iron injustice. He had proceeded with wisdom and from the most righteous motives under Heaven's blue only to be frustrated by hateful circumstances. A dull, animal-like rebellion against his fellows, war in the abstract, and fate, grew within him. (RB 39)

In the same vein, he is now a hero because he fights savagely and his regiment wins. What if the regiment in both cases loses the battle? Then it seems meaningless to distinguish a coward in one case from a hero in the other. In this view, Fleming's attempt to trace the laws of his own character by means of moral fiat is fruitless, in that he has unwittingly imposed the paradox of moral luck on fixed categories of values, with the effect of having his view totally rely on what happens. The incoherence of Fleming's identity can be perceived from another example. After the unseen cheery soldier leads him back to his unit (RB 67-69), Fleming still lacks the power to transform his pride in the onward movement of the advancing regiment (RB 56) into a larger volition to act. With a weak autonomous selfhood, he now believes that he is merely a "unknown quantity" engaged in a process of self-assessment.

Another episode exemplifying the hero's impressionable personality in his transformation from timidity to unrestrained arrogance is the aforementioned events surrounding Wilson's letters. As soon as Fleming goes back to rejoin his regiment with his desired "red badge of courage" (RB 47), he does not feel lonely any longer. Instead, he behaves like a braggadocio swaggering and eager to show off his wound in the head (RB 70). In contrast, the loud soldier Wilson, who had entrusted Fleming with a packet of letters for safekeeping in case he was killed, no longer remains as audacious and boastful as before when he comes forward to greet Fleming. Out of embarrassment, Wilson sheds off his previous "tinsel courage" (RB 76) to become remarkably meek and humble. Fleming avoids using taunting remark to twit Wilson's earlier timid request because he feels "compelled to allow his friend to escape unmolested with his packet." He "took unto himself considerable credit," considering that he has done a "generous thing" (RB 81-82). In the grip of pride, his compassion toward his friend is declining and he feels like using this "exhibit" as a "small weapon" in order to "prostrate his comrade at the first signs of a cross-examination." Even if he "felt impelled to change his purpose" (RB 79) and "restrain himself," yet "the words upon his tongue were too bitter" (RB 84). He knows he is now "immensely superior to his friend" as "a man because he "had performed his mistakes in the dark" (RB 79). The indirect and free discourse of the narratives in this scene is presented so ambiguously that readers are seemingly in no position to adduce a law to Fleming's character, after he is suddenly deprived of the ability to hold himself responsible for decision-making.

Midway through the novel, readers notice that the enigmatic fellow Wilson no longer remains loud and boastful as he once was, trading on rumors of war and blustering in a loud and belligerent manner. Instead this previously "loud young soldier" is now "not furious at small words that pricked his conceits." Moreover, his
face is redolent with "fine reliance" (RB 75) and his voice is echoed with "calm confidence" (RB 86) partly because he now displays more "a quiet belief in his purposes and his abilities" than a concern for "the proportions of his personal prowess" (RB 75). Unlike Wilson's sudden about-face to become a kinder and better man, Fleming's flexible points of view indicate that he is not governed by a self as introspective as Wilson's.

In addition to the awe-struck gaze to which Fleming is vulnerable, also engrossing in the opening chapter is the personified view of the army that "cast its eyes upon the roads" with its "eye-like gleam of hostile camp-fires set in the low brows of distant hills" (RB 1). That is a view which, since juxtaposed between the spectacle of oneself and one's altering self-conception, Fleming cannot resist seeing. As a corollary, Fleming cannot control his own visual activity with the effect that his ever-vigilant gaze always carries an "eagle-eyed prowess" when he "looked upon" the war (RB 3). The impressionistic use of vision is compounded by another auditory dimension. For instance, a battery "spoke" after "the unceasing skirmish-fire increased to a long clattering sound." The skirmishers are pursued "by the sound of musketry fire" with the "din" of smoke-clouds whirling like "the roar of an oncoming train" (RB 23). After Fleming emerges from the woods still in the grip of rationalization, the "noise of the stupendous conflicts" is depicted as "the voice of an eloquent being, describing" (RB 43). Walking amid the wounded later, Fleming hears "the courageous words of the artillery," "the spiteful sentences of the musketry," the "red cheers" from the triumphant combatants, and the "steady current" of agony from the maimed (RB 44). Rather later in the novel, Crane again used the sound of the "hideous altercation with another band of guns" to describe the awakening and trembling of two monster-like armies on the brink of war (RB 86).

Not to be ignore here is the fact that what spurs Henry to return to the battlefield in the first place is his visual curiosity about war as a result of his "psychi wound". That is why he feels urged to "go close and see it produce corpses" (RB 43). His curiosity about war is further revealed from the following statement:

A certain moth-like quality within him kept him in the vicinity of the battle. He had a great desire to see, and to get news. He wished to know who was winning. (RB 58)

Not only is Fleming curious about war, he is also curious about the dead. Quite early in the novel, the ranks encountered a corpse in the road. While each soldier tried to avoid the corpse, Fleming on the other hand "vaguely desired to walk around and around the body and stare." The author stated that Fleming's curiosity is equal to an "impulse of the living to try to read in dead eyes the answer to the Question" (RB 20). When he "exchanged a long look" with the dead soldier in the "chapel," he received "a subtle suggestion to touch the corpse" (RB 41). It is partly out of this very curiosity that Fleming and the tattered man pursued Jim Conklin, when this "spectral soldier" ran away from the retreating column in order to search for a place where he can die a quiet death (RB 45-51).

With his will entirely guided by vision, Fleming intensifies his ocular absorption to the extent that he has to "centred the gaze of his soul" in the emotional drama of violently plunging at the flag in Chapter Twenty-Four (RB 114). In the
wake of the loss of his self, he is absorbed into the martial experience through the course of reflexive motions that significantly lessens his consciousness. Also gone is the cowardly concern for his own safety. What this implies is that sheer perception has robbed him of the will without which he could never be an active agent of the self. As soon as the hero is psychologically voided as such, Crane's fictional world is soon dominated by spectatorial activities. The fact that Fleming is described in apparently spectatorial terms attests to the authorial endeavor in adducing the hero's behavioral model from natural processes for the construction of his self. On the second day of the battle, Fleming therefore becomes all-perspective and is capable of seeing "everything" that is "pictured and explained to him, save why he himself was there" (RB 95-96).

Circumstance and Chance

In Crane's fictional world, characters are swallowed up by a vortex of contradictory events in which self-interpretation makes the protagonist believe that he possesses an effective will. The evidence of comforting assumption is so overwhelming that the scenes of physical violence gradually grow out of circumstances to enmesh characters in a radical view of socialized self. This creates an effect in which a "necessitarian" premise rules out the possibility of deliberate choice. With a self unable to control its future, the character cannot comprehend the alternating events, much less their moderate interpretation, culminating in behavior that lies outside one's control without being regulated by the agency of calm reflection. The juxtaposition between the narrative perspective and the subjective view of characters furthermore creates a gap between actual consequence and their futile intention. In so far as there exists a crevice between impersonal events and how one feels about them, the problem of action and agency is brought to the fore through Crane's imaginative vision.

Not skeptical of the strength of their wills, characters are still unable to take responsibility for events in the lack of a coherent sense of the self. Alteration between the external view and internal one, pending how a character explicates his acts, stimulates the reader to embrace an illusion that they possess a passionate self. In the deterministic context of his fictional world, Crane seemed to stress that the individual psychology is not so much a coherent process as it is a chaotic disruption amid which the possibility of moral growth is tremendously slim. In some major respect, characters are deprived of their autonomy, when trying to avoid the confusion of identity, without knowing that they have thus been dictated by erratic desires to such an extent that they have subverted the reader's assumption about the causation between desires and events. Related to this is the fact that characters seem to identify their personality more with a social system than an individual body. In the light of such an unsettling possibility, the possession of a coherent ego is simply an illusion. Once if a naturalistic hero lacks an opaque material of selfhood, he is unable to intrude upon the interaction between inner desires and outer events.

As a result, the hero turns out to identify his incoherent energies with environments with the thought that the transition from a participant into an observer
can significantly mollify his self-alienation. Taking a stance of wild-eyed staring, he is seemingly turned into a being possessing transparent eyes which, in the primary process of vision, transforms his passive experience into an actively figurative one. Unfolding episodes through such a person who can see all embodies not so much the liberating possibilities of social reform as the inherent constraints that shape the reader's vision.

Through the narrative repetition, Crane's version of the "participant observer" has slowed down the pace of reflection and action, causing an overlap between the two day's battles, and thus transpiring Fleming's dissociated sensibility into a physical fact.²⁷ Using determining causes in such a fashion undoubtedly lays bare the deterministic logic of behavior, in that it directly addresses the issue: what law governs man's acts at the moment of crisis. Since the ineluctability of events prevails, the presumption of agency in terms of a subjectively moral self is precluded to the point where the reader's self-confirming logic is virtually overturned. The more the reader enmeshes himself in the fictional world, the more likely he will suffer from visual paralysis marked by the "alienating effects of reification."²⁸

With a psychological realism primarily focused on the feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of individuals, what Crane attempted to dramatize is the meaning of "cowardice," "fear," "guilt," "pride," and "courage" as well as the effect created by these epithets through the interplay of actions they inspire. After the fear of being extinct clashes with the psychological faculty of experiencing guilt, Crane seeks to contemplate the extent to which man can internalize the social codes through the mechanism of fear for the maintenance of a social system. To define the peculiarity of man's status in nature, Crane intended to bind the animal instinct of survival to the rhythm of nature in order to see what impact will be exerted by such physical instincts on the moral system of society. Conveyed in overtones is the notion that society's value judgment on individual actions can give tremendous momentum to the novel, making fear and guilt the two most important determinants in military life, with behavior profoundly determined by these two emotions under the dictates of certain conditions.

The naturalistic genre of this novel resides in the issue of morality that had been modified by Crane into a behavioral, rather than an ethical, framework. No sooner has the protagonist come to terms with the reality by masking the sin of his abject desertion, and by walking out on the tattered soldier, than the reader is mesmerized by the correlation between cause and effect without knowing how to tell one from the other. In another instance, Fleming's early training in the seminary endows him with fear that tremendously prohibits him from escaping. Ironically, it is the same moral sense that profoundly arouses his feeling of guilt and shame and hence returns him back to his unit.

The plaguing guilt stemming from his flight from the battle symbolizes his social redemption. He abandons the intention to defend his flight because the nameless dead soldier is not supportive of the evidence provided by the squirrel (RB 41). After his guilt reaches deep into sin, he finds himself loitering back to a society "that probed pitilessly at secrets until all is apparent" (RB 54). Up to Chapter Twelve, Fleming's self-defense is entirely denounced by the voice from his gnawed conscience. The sense of guilt wells up to the level where he hopes for "circumstances" so as to materialize his reinstatement to his unit. Suddenly, he
"wished he was dead" so that it can release him from social censure. He believes that "he envied those men whose bodies lay strewn over the grass of the fields and on the fallen leaves of the forest" (RB 54). His last attempt of self-defense collapses because nature as now revealed to him is not "a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy" (RB 40); instead, she is indifferent and it is her indifference that makes his regiment look warmer. At the sight of Conklin's death, he feels ashamed that he failed to risk his life as did his friend.

While wrestling with guilt and anguished over his failure, the pure fickleness of chance intervenes to rid him of moral paralysis in expiation of his sin. After he returns to the regiment, he points to the wound caused by the panic-stricken and fleeing soldiers and cries out loud "I got shot, too" for the relief of the escaping disgrace (RB 70). Wilson's packet of letters under this circumstance also keeps his mortifying secret from being exposed. Resorting to a false sense of self, he starts embracing a distorted ego in order to create a salutary effect, while leaving a superego to vex over the possibility of exposure. 29 These illusions of the self perform well in relieving him of shame. Little wonder, he gloats at the conclusion that "retribution was a laggard and blind" (RB 81). So long as he keeps his flight a secret, he is considered a hero. Conditions hence nurtures in him a "little flower of confidence" (RB 81). After his former condition of fear is altered, the false pride in the personal glory during his pre-enlistment days returns to seize him once more. In Chapter Seventeen, he is observed to take combative action in an active and undaunted manner. No longer considering himself a poor risk for the army, he aspires to achieve the hitherto inaccessible goal of egotism by fighting enthusiastically.

However, his incentive to fight does not include any ideological conviction other than the self. His vital ingredient as a soldier now is merely a dream in which "he lost sense of everything but his hate" (RB 88). His "wild hate for the relentless foe" (RB 87) is developed not because he aspires to free the slaves. Nor does he crave to preserve the Union. The reason why he develops hatred against his enemy is that he can no longer stand "to be badgered of his life like a kitten chased by boys." For the sake of self-protection, he has to "develop teeth and claws" (RB 87). He fights not only in rage but also blindly without a sense of cause, until all his comrades cease fighting. As mentioned, his fighting lacks an ideological cause, because he has been badgered by the fear of being exposed for too long. Now he transfers this vexation to a socially approved target, the enemy, at whom he can vent his anger. Symbolizing his other polarized feeling in the battlefield is his love for the flag, another complementary impulse that profoundly spurs him to fight with enthusiasm. At the sight of a color-bearer who stumbles and staggers as if he "fought a grim fight" in order to "go the way that led to safety for it" (RB 115), Fleming's love for the flag is dramatically intensified. His love for the flag as "a woman" (RB 98) is reminiscent of his being awed by nature when he fled into the thicket. In his mind, the universe of yesterday had been censured by circumstance and compunction. Unlike the enemy who are symptomatic of his shame, the flag embodies another larger goal, the state, for which he prides himself on successfully capturing the enemy's flag. In contrast, "shame was upon" the four captive enemy soldiers who are either deeply buried in absolute dejection or wearing "morose countenance" in their faces (RB 116). Not until both shame and pride are manifested.
through, and converged at, the flag as a symbol of the state is social conflict elevated into a level of state conflict.

The Tranquil Philosophy of War

However, through the same public view, a jangling General once figuratively and pessimistically dismissed the whole unit as a pack of "mule-drivers" (RB 93). Fleming used to put pronounced value on public commendation, but now he knows that the public assessment of individuals is not necessarily realistic. When another Colonel chimes in with the General's reproach, there emerges in Fleming's mind a "tranquil philosophy" (RB 106). He becomes increasingly aware that the judgment by the Colonel and the General is made from the perspective of larger goals at the expense of the viewpoint of those soldiers who have suffered enormously from the heat of war. Feeling betrayed by commanders, Fleming develops a new illusion that sees the battlefield simply as a fiction of courage and cowardice, with which each soldier can regulate his behavior in response to his need for self-respect.

It is assumed that, in the center of Crane's indisputable determinism, conditions clearly dictate actions. For instance, Fleming's actions, such as fear of cowardice or admiration for courage, is clearly dictated by condition. When it comes to the issue of freedom, Fleming's vision toward the self cannot withstand the test of rational analysis. Partly because of this failure, there foster necessary illusions in his mind as a substantial means of reaching his manhood. It is worth noting that Fleming educates himself into "authentic" manhood by putting the primacy of the state interests over the individual ones. When his regiment wins the battle, he enthusiastically gazes about his comrades with "looks of uplifted pride" (RB 103). However, when the lieutenant criticizes the performance of his regiment, the youth's "tender flesh was deeply stung by these remarks" (RB 104).

At this point, Fleming knows that, in order to steer clear of built-in distortions, the significance he has attached to his own status through the public favor needs to be readjusted. The same could be said that Fleming's change into manhood is accompanied by his awareness that "he was very insignificant" because the officer "spoke of the regiment as if he referred to a broom" (RB 93). From then on, Fleming is no longer bothered by fear or by the illusions of heroism as revealed through the flashback. Even if so, Fleming, while bogged down in battlefield conditions, still maintains the sense of personal worth without spending too much time reflecting on the issue of personal significance. After he obtains a vision of manhood from the lessons he has learned, Fleming uses his more mature view of life to acknowledge the fact that excessive response to public praise is meaningless at all. Crane described Fleming's true learning with the following statement:

... he began to study his deeds--his failures and his achievements. Thus fresh from scenes where many of his usual machines of reflection had been idle, from where he had proceeded sheep-like, he struggled to marshal all his acts. A last, they marched before him clearly. From this present viewpoint, he was enabled to look upon them in spectator fashion.
and to criticize them with some correctness, for his new condition had already defeated certain sympathies. (RB 118)

In other words, Fleming has left behind the days when he refused to reflect with his brain. New conditions by now prompt him to criticize himself as a spectator with an angle of vision open to new ways as correct as that of the narrator. When he is no longer obsessed with public commendation, there arise a sense of inner worth and a private feeling of manhood with which he can muster force "to put the sin at a distance" and then regard it with "great calmness" (RB 120). This new found peace makes him neither rejoice over past deeds of holding the colors aloft in battle nor suffer from remorse over his walking out on the tattered soldier and leaving him "blind with weariness and pain" (RB 119). His eyes "seemed to be opened to some new ways" and he gleefully renounces the distorted vision that has spurred him to perform publicly, as he did in his earlier days when he was highly conscious of "the brass and bombast" (RB 121).

This new vision furthermore enables him to evaluate himself from the angle of the narrator in preference to the ardeny for public glory and gospel. Especially significant is his liberation from a previous dependence on public approval for the affirmation of personal worth. Because of these newly acquired conditions, there yields a "tranquil philosophy," with which he starts judging something from the perspective of the performing actor without being so conscious of the favor of the public eye as well as its harsh stare any longer. At one point, he starts affirming the existence of freedom in the battlefield as the necessary illusion, at the other, he is convinced of the insignificance of man under the gaze of distorted social vision. He will "no more quail before his guides wherever they should point" in proportion to the store of "assurance" that has enabled him to obtain "a quiet manhood, non-assertive but of sturdy and strong blood" (RB 121). In some major respect, his soul no longer remains the same after experiencing "blood and wrath," and from such "hot-ploughshares" come "prospects of clover tranquilly" (RB 121). In the final scene, it rains and all soldiers keep trudging under a wretched sky. Surprisingly, Crane concluded the story with these statements:

Yet the youth smiled, for he saw that the world was a world for him though many discovered it to be made of oaths and walking-sticks. He had rid himself of the red sickness of battle. The sultry night-mare was in the past. He had been an animal blistered and sweating in the heat and pain of war. He turned now with a lover's thirst, to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks; an existence of soft and eternal peace. (RB 121)

Aware of the illusory nature of freedom, Fleming positively confirms a new condition of tranquillity in which he sees how he committed his sin beyond the scope of the harsh public view. Through the abandonment of adolescent gospels, he seems to have obtained a self-worth of forgiveness. Much as his deeds commanded admiration in the bombast of earlier episodes, he experiences a transformation that renders him less conscious of the social scorn invited by his other deeds. In much the same way that the loud soldier has become war-chastened, Fleming feels that he is
"a man." At the end, the author does not seem to conclude anything other than the truth looming behind the illusion that the world exists for the self despite the premise of natural indifference. Given that all outcomes are dictated by conditions, readers are not sure whether or not Fleming's current will-power can remain firm in the future. Judging from the fact that the current reality is simply caused by the existing conditions, it is hard to predict if Fleming might put up another new revelation later on, and start fleeing from battle again. When the protagonist works purposefully to rid himself of the pain caused by animal-like war and "the red sickness of battle," there emerges a lover's feeling, a yearning for "tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks" that seem to parallel "an existence of soft and eternal peace." No less revealing is the suggestion that illusions can also be considered a realistic view of the world, even if it is "made of oaths and walking-sticks." Just as every man cannot survive in war without illusions, so Fleming cannot become a man in the absence of values such as bravery, cowardice, and freedom.

Convictions on the Basis of Illusions

Also exhibited is Fleming's confusion between moral judgment and the paradoxically subversive form of self-rationalization. His beguiling transfigurations come from the experience of military maneuvers, whose violence transforms individuals into things, events, or even onlookers. Generally speaking, one tends to use comforting assumptions about one's self and one's surrounding world to create the sense of being in one's illusion. The same is true of Fleming who relies entirely on events and codes beyond his control to integrate his emotions, perceptions, thoughts, and ideas in the hope of aligning his actions and behavior so that he can remain aloof over the surrounding world. Since agency is beyond his reach, he cannot however easily coordinate them for self-constitution. His poor self-integration in the absence of a coherent identity merely disrupts the projective assumption commonly known to the reader. Despite his newly achieved identity, his actions are still dictated by the whim of his unwilled desires. Toward the novel's end, Fleming submits to a cherished illusion in which he constructs a self by bearing upon assumptions that are as much comforting, habitual, and arbitrary as they used to be. As a result, it substantially precludes the possibility of his becoming a "free" man, as his illusions have suggested.

Consisting of merely a composite of conflicting energies such as emotions and desires, Fleming is presented as a gazing subject without possessing any meaningful predisposing emotion and motives. The lack of an independent self facilitates his adoption of the perspective underlying the external vantage. He becomes increasingly aware, however, that this public vision can also breed an inadequate fallacy, as exemplified by the harsh remark made by the Colonel and the General (Chap. 19). This knowledge significantly prompts him to embrace his "tranquil philosophy" (RB 106) as elaborated in the preceding section of this paper. Identifying himself with the physical causes of the current condition, Fleming uses complacent determinism to interpret consequences in reference to the reality in a self-justifying manner. His pathetic fallacy can be observed from the juxtaposition
between the narrator's animation of nature and Henry's earlier self-rationalizations. Crane seemed to signify that Fleming was quite complacent about the use of common tropes to such a degree that he could observe nature by associating her with the response of his flight (RB 41-42). This projective frame of reference is mistaken in that Henry's self-referential claims is achieved at the price of coherency. Also contradictory is the causative implication involved in his flight as manifested from the fear of law at first and from the feeling of shame later.

At one point, he is compelled, both psychologically and physically, to accept how things turn out; at the other, he accepts the harsh view of criticism as his own interpretation (RB 100). For instance, he feels indignant at the officers' remark that the regiment performs like a pack of "mule drivers" (RB 93), and actively repudiates such criticism from the perspective of soldiers fighting as individuals (RB 106). When his regiment falters in a disordered debacle, he however envisions "the retreat of the mule-drivers" as "a march of shame to him" (RB 100). Seen in this light, it is noted that Fleming's motives always come before action with his feelings largely dictated by consequences. Little wonder, he always views himself in reference to the frame of social convention. Also illustrative of such consequential inversion is the dramatic magnification of "fears" after his flight instead of the other way around (RB 36).

In addition to the religious allusion to sacrifice and death, Crane deliberately compared the universally atavistic nature of war to the imagery of an all-powerful animal whose irresistible force challenges the conventional notion that man is in a state of advanced civilization. In the form of either similes or metaphors, war is also depicted as a fierce and savage pagan god, who ceaselessly demands bloody sacrifice.30 Also embodying the exceptionality of civilization is the destructive principle of war, a generalizing impulse possessed by each species. As it turns out, Fleming's real enemy is not the rival regiment, but the blind and chaotic war itself from which he is unable to escape. In the novel, the onrushing soldiers are described as all-devouring dragons; however, neither Fleming's army nor the "dragons" win the battle. The only one coming out of battle unscathed is the war itself with the harried armies, either charging or fleeing, as its most pathetic victims. Crane seems to imply that the background of the Civil War is not important at all, and that this fictional war could also be any minor battle in history.

In addition, characters are associated with the allegorical names such as "the youth," "the loud soldier," "the spectral soldier," "the tattered soldier," "the man of the cheery voice," "the tall soldier," "galloping soldiers," and "fleeing soldiers" and so on and so forth. Crane intended to present the meaning and nature of war with pure allegory, in the hope that the lack of a definite identity for figures would weld the immediate into the permanent without anchoring the details of war on the historic reality.31 Only after the particular is linked to the universal could Crane give momentum to the novel by highlighting the notion that individuals are in the grip of "an immense and terrible machine" of war (RB 43) that processes its victims as if they were raw materials.

Fleming's spiritual journey is further enriched by the medieval Christian demonology underlying the animal imagery. At this, figures or events are foiled with the imagery of animals such as "eagle" (RB 3), "bees" (RB 19), "cat" (RB 27), "monster" (RB 28), "parrot" (RB 29), "beast" (RB 30), "sheep" (RB 31), "dragons"
(RB 35), "rabbit" (RB 35), "chicken" (RB 36), "worm" (RB 57), "moth" (RB 58), "loon" (RB 58), "cattle" (RB 62), "pig" (RB 62), "rats" (RB 85), "wolf" (RB 103), "horse" (RB 114), to mention just a few. This anti-romantic treatment of war gives phenomenal dynamics to the mechanistic and animistic aspects of military life.32

The plot of this novel begins with a group of soldiers speculating if there is going to be a fight. At the end of the novel, the outcome of combat is not clear because readers see neither gain of ground for the Union forces nor loss of it for the Confederates. In addition, Fleming's regiment is found to cross the river they had crossed several days before, as if nothing had really happened. The news that the regiment will soon be ordered to abandon the hard-won ground also illustrates the meaninglessness of war as a fruitless action.

Crane seemed to be saying that war is invariably just meaningless confusion, in which only anarchy, savagery and cruelty prevails. As a traumatic nightmare, war crystallizes humanity's outrage at itself. This sign of man's ultimate depravity can easily transform the reason possessed by the bravest into bestial ferocity, and the most timid into a terrified animal. Nowhere can nature's scheme of war be revealed more clearly other than through Fleming's wrestling with his inner conflict, prior to his running out on the tattered soldier:

To seduce her victims, nature had to formulate a beautiful excuse. She made glory. This made the men willing, anxious, in haste, to come and be killed... he thought of how nature must smile when she saw the men come running... he regarded the armies as large collections of dupes. Nature's dupes, who were killing each other to carry out some great scheme of life. They were under the impression that they were fighting for principles and honor and homes and various things... Nature was miraculously skillful in concocting excuses... It could deck a hideous creature in enticing apparel. (RB 54-55)

In Chapter Thirteen, Fleming obtains his "red badge" of dishonor when trying, in an incoherent manner, to question the unbelievable route taken by the fleeing blue-clad men. In this scene, all are in an ineffective mass of blind panic with an absence of any traceable reason or logic, save a torrent of horrified amazement. Everybody is asking what is happening? But no one answers. Failure of communication is further compounded by the protagonist's physical disorientation. At last, even the answer sought by him becomes non-existent. Along with the disappearance of order and meaning in the world follow first the youth's lost sense of direction and later his regained reorientation—that triggers his initiation into "manhood." Put simply, Fleming's progress lies in the shattering of his youthful vision of romance where he finds himself situated amid the harshness of the realistic war.

From such disillusion eventually extends a new maturity of understanding and acceptance. What he understands and accepts is the nature of growth in the process of life. As reiterated in the textual support of the last page, the hero is observed to shed his old and false self to embrace a store of "assurance." The moment when the butt of the rifle, dubbed as an "impotent stick" in the later page (RB 88), crushes upon his head, he sinks beneath its blow. Like a man "wrestling with a creature of the air," he tries to rise. Finally, with a twisting movement, he contrives to rise to

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his feet "like a babe trying to walk" (RB 65). Of the whole novel, this passage is the "mirror-image in miniature" that signifies the protagonist's redemption and restoration in the wake of his decline and fall.33

From the confrontation between a moving force and static opposition, Fleming receives the stunning blow that seems to have provided a solution to the problem, caused by the flashing and roaring war. He presses the temples in order to lessen the numbing pain and is delighted that he has eventually received a red badge of "courage." Like a visual slow action, all these movements are spiraled down inch by inch until they reach a final "stasis" of stillness.34 Much as Crane reiterated Henry's newly acquires peace, it is difficult for the reader to forget that his newly found redemption originates from his red badge of "dishonor," a reminder of neither courage nor heroic purpose but cowardice, confusion, and the panic of headlong flight. Drawing upon the irony of this scene, the reader cannot resist questioning the permanency of peace in Fleming's bosom because it is unlikely for his "scars" of dishonor to fade like "flowers" (RB 121).

After Fleming reintegrates himself into the society of his regiment, he slowly adjusts to the reality that he has been entangled in contradictory and irresistible forces, in which the self either inside or outside of himself as an individual has been relentlessly victimized.35 Blind and passionate rage spurs him to lead the charge and become a hero. Be that as it may, his impulse of rage carries as many animalistic attributes as does his ignominious flight in panic due to the impulse of fear. Whether he ran like a rabbit in the first day's battle or he kills like a beast leading to a unconscious success in the second day, his cowardice and fierceness are all animal-like qualities. In one case, he was a timid and terrified animal; in the other, he is a reckless and fierce one. Only after the conquest of his fear does he release himself from the contrasting animal-like forces. He has realized by then that he himself is merely a man rather than a beast in the battlefield where natural forces rule supreme. However, he achieves the illusion of being able to move freely like a willful agent of the self, simply by accepting his precarious lot as a man. What he has actually learned is no more than to exercise his tiny remnant of freedom, in collaboration with the destructive elements in reality. His assumption of "manhood" is thus fulfilled through the acceptance of the will-power functions that are generally complicated by the human situation.36

Arguing along similar lines, Fleming's new found status is as much a product of self-deception as is his red badge of a gratuitous wound. Crane did not intend to exonerate his hero with irony, judging that the latter's false sense of superiority and significance is merely more "mature" than his previously proud illusions. In this view, Fleming's version of maturation is simply an irony with the implication that he can hardly remain free of illusions all his life. All through the novel, Crane downplays the casual factors of social conditions per se to put much premium upon the psychic conflict stemming from "the alpha and omega of human life" in a wider sense.37 In the light of such a "parody"-like treatment of heroism, it is demonstrated that Crane articulated no reassuring confidence in either men or the universe in which they find themselves.38
Conclusion

According to Crane's religious vision of war, the competence of survival rests on a man's courage and fortitude in terms of his readiness to have his mettle tested by the imperatives of natural ordeal. Metaphorically considered a teacher, nature can thus inculcate in humans a "hard primitivism" with which to seek a stoic gratification.\textsuperscript{39} After the hero's initial flight from the battle, he carries his sore badge of dishonor, a guilt that keeps plaguing him until he is determined to atone for this disgrace. In simple seriousness, the wounded consciousness, however, impelled Crane to perceive the individual as a helpless victim caught in the scheme of nature.\textsuperscript{40} Such a resigned attitude corresponds to Dreiser's vision of man in nature, as an infinitesimal "speck" of energy whose unconscious action is drawn or blown here and there by large forces (RB 60).\textsuperscript{41} As a machine-like force subjected to larger forces beyond his control, an individual resembles a mechanism or machine driven carelessly and without efficiency, merely responding to pleasure, desire, pain and fear.\textsuperscript{42} With no prospect in any meaningful sense, this creature-mechanism of hunger and fear is only a product of the accidental and indifferent forces under the sway of the bitterly unrelenting cruelty of nature.

In other words, Crane attempts to unmask the traditional idealization by forcing his readers to confront the "frightful basic text" of human life.\textsuperscript{43} To him, the traditional ideology of transcendentalism is a "gold dust of unconscious human vanity," and humans are in no way to be aware of its deceptive junk, until they manage successfully to purge the old lie by facing the ugly truth.

As elaborated by Wallace Stevens, death as the pinnacle of primordial violence can be considered the only mother of beauty, in the light of its affirmation of courage and strength.\textsuperscript{44} This thematic rule of conflict and power can be nowhere more evident than in this novel. In an absolute sense, fear is equated with weakness, and courage with strength with the crisis being an apotheosis for the assessment of self-worth. Crane seems to assert that the war experience is like the ritual of manhood that can create an effect of neoprimitivist affirmation. Although war is commensurate to an explosion of conflict as a naturalistic mode of crisis, the army moving like a "box" (RB 19) symbolizes what has been denigrated by Nietzsche, i.e., laws of tradition upheld by human vanity and the deceptive emulation of society. Little wonder that the collision between armies looks like the impact of civilization. In this view, war is used by Crane as a primitivist entrance into nature's realm, a metaphor of life whose values range from the affirmation of self-worth to the appreciation of human solidarity, with violence and danger being their birthplace and testing ground.

Crane's sordid and grotesque presentation of violence and danger cannot be seen more clearly than through his ugly depiction of wounded soldiers in "formless, dehumanized, and incomprehensible slaughter" of war featuring denial of free will (Aichinger, xxi). Fleming is simply a pawn governed by instinct and other implacable forces just like other soldiers. War here is abstracted into a complicated machine like a moving box with iron bars of traditions and laws on four sides from which there is no escape. Moved by uncontrollable forces, the nameless unit...
resembles a gigantic trap like fate in miniature into which soldiers, moving aimlessly in compliance with no definite rule or pattern, are entangled. The nominal attack is simply a blind and disappointing rush toward a vaguely felt enemy hidden behind smoke emanating from sputtering rifles. For those who are shot, the shooters probably aimed at somebody else in the first place. However, when Jim Conklin was shot, his mortal wound made him appear as if he "had been chewed by wolves" (RB 51). What this simile suggests is that only blind forces rule supreme with man caught in their grip with little hope to break free.

However, male vitalist creed at this point is compounded by an animal response when soldiers, driven into rage and despair, are struggling to their death. Crane seems to suggest that ennoblement consists of the direct response to naturalist violence, instead of military courage and idealistic ends--as extolled by romanticism. To Crane, courage is a "sublime" recklessness with which the hero can dominate his natural fate and dictate any forms of energy to obtain a metaphysical and existential pride. Rather than a masculine pride, the pride of a naturalistic hero is sublimated through his obsession with a single desire for survival so that he can maintain his own identity at the lowest level in favor of the common personality. Only after he has the courage to face death can he transcend beyond his impotent-self to become a man possessing the power to survive. The sublimity of courage can thus forge a community out of the army on the verge of danger. At the height of war, Fleming loses concern for himself, extending his identity beyond the man and welding himself closely into the regiment, the army, and the country of which he is a member.

To sum up, Crane, like a journalist reporting a story, uses the adventure of a young soldier as the subject of social/psychological research. His impressionistic method of narration is so subtle that he gives his readers a unified perception that the hero's internal and external activities have been so intricately corresponded so as to make sense of each stage of his mental development. Such style and conception can reveal an implicit restraint of repressed violence. Crane's imaginative analysis of war experience of an impersonal youth is underlined by his attitude toward profound emotional forces arising out of the crisis of life. In this context, external events and psychological drive coming from within form circumstances that give color and meaning to the hero's initiation into manhood. At one point in his life, he is confronted with death with his fear inextricably linked to possible failure of courage in action. At the latest moment, the hero seems to have learned that the meaning behind death is still death. In a sense, the level of probing into the philosophical question of death is more profound than that in Maggie, as the latter resorts to suicide for the possibility of liberation. As alternating hopes and fears of the battlefield, assumedly Chancellorsville in a historical sense, are mixed with the din of war and the color of the sky, an impressionistic image of the environment to which human are helplessly subject is strongly sensed by readers. Just as the molecular movement of ideas are depicted, so motivation is defined through the anatomy of fear and guilt. For instance, man's kinship with brutal nature was earlier revealed through the fear of the squirrel at the throw of a pine cone. At this, Fleming justified his desertion with the excuse that man has to act in accordance with his animal nature. However, after he regained his courage, he was described to be as brave as an animal with teeth and claws that blisters and sweats in the heat and pain of war.
Central to the thesis of the novel is the vision that war has relegated soldiers to a lower form of animal, instead of initiating them to bravery and heroism. When Henry is running for his life like an animal, he is sickened with his cowardice. However, a wound in the head he obtains in an accident allows his comrades to mistake it for a red badge of courage. The fact that he is envisioned as a hero when he once again fights like an animal in another battle seems to indicate that the world, like a war, is filled with meaningless confusion with all goodness, badness, bravery, cowardice, heroism, and dishonor simply a matter of chance and fate. In a larger sense, Crane uses his naturalistic vision of heroism to ridicule, in a bitter tone, the romances of war, in the hope of transcending beyond the reality of war itself. Crane's formula of naturalism is thus based on a dismaying revelation that the only way for the hero to uncover his manhood invokes violent activities.

It is no cause for wonder that Crane's imaginative approach to fulfill material differed from Howells's realistic treatment of the smiling aspects of life. Crane's achievement might have excelled Howells's in that he depicted experiences that he had not undergone before. As his narrative in this novel is not highly organized, the loose plot makes this work seem less like a novel than Maggie, even though the former is more capable of avoiding the pitfalls of melodrama than the latter. To that end, the intense mood and overwrought imagery have successfully created a vivid impression of life that embodies a combination of instinct and circumstance. The fact that Henry is still making a fool of himself in the last scene allows readers to obtain a sudden revelation that human beings tend to chain their personal will to tragic issues.

Even after his first encounter with life in its awesome complexity, Fleming has been constantly poised between gratuitous self-assurance and half concealed doubt. In the end, he surrenders himself to the traditional value of courage that the red badge brought him. After supernaturally sanctioned faith weakens, he dispels the transcendentally derived truth and begins to question his tenacity in sustaining a clear sense of self. Alone and doubtful in an unknown world of struggle, his tragic fate compels him to seek an elusive and non-existent knowledge to confirm a solipsistic self. Under this circumstance, only a red badge can provide a solacing escape from his psychological predicament. Crane's style in this perspective gives a characteristic form to succeeding naturalistic writers such as Hemingway and Steinbeck at the turn of the century. Its being a harbinger of the naturalistic novel lies partly in the fact that the author's preconceived notion has, for long, answered the question proffered by war's role in nature.

Footnotes


4. Ibid., p. 104.
5. Closely related to suffering is the all too certain claims of death, to which life should not resist to its furthest extreme. Restated, in addition to suffering, also counted as the necessary negative crisis is death as the ultimate negation of life, when danger and vulnerability culminate at their highest point. Upon closer analysis, death serves as a channel of entrance into the metaphysical and antiworld state, where people can transcend the hardest test of suffering. In Nietzsche's view, human experience is made up of discrete moments of strongly aesthetic characters with the intersection of desire and death bringing to the fore aesthetic moments of surprising harmony. In certain respects, death is figured as a murderous crouching monster awaiting us, which undermines our transition from the harmony of diverse elements into a provisioned unity. Be that as it may, Nietzsche never considers death the necessary terminus of life. To counterbalance the grimness of death, man should celebrate an energetic vitalistic will to live. What this signifies is that everyone has experienced the idea of death, to which he is either blind or unable to master. In the face of death, there will arise, in man, a series of antithesis, crosscutting the noise of life and the silence of death, because a man's eager participation in life is wrought by his blindness or willingness to death with one subsisting in the other. The subtle relationship between both as symmetrical alternatives dispels the image of death as a hostile devouring "other," standing behind life as a shadow. Nor does life originate from a vitalistic energy of a self-identical subject. Instead, the necessary substitution of one for the other triggers an ironic opposition marked by the figurative interplay between noise and silence, light and shadow, order and chaos. For a more extensive elaboration on Nietzsche's concept of life and death, please see William Beatty Warner, *Chance and the Text of Experience: Freud, Nietzsche, and Shakespeare's Hamlet* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986) p. 145.

6. In fact, the thematic of this novel deals with a soldier's conversion to the "true faith" after he completes the wavering course of his spiritual adventure. Please see Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 216.

8. But how could man redeem nature? According to Nietzsche, ego and suffering were stimulants that could arouse empathy with all aspects of life whose realization and redemption can ultimately transform one from being an animal to being a man. However, at his later period, Nietzsche began to consider man a being who does not need redemption. Nature to him is no longer a pristine sphere, nor does it have any moral overtones or dimensions. Correspondingly, man's existence is beyond good and evil without any idealistic access to the intrigue of nature. After the removal of God from nature, man is liberated from his energies to become capable of recreating himself
into a "natural man". Central to the progress toward naturalness is the question of power, whose strength thus engendered can enable man to enjoy the feeling of growth. Please see Adrian Del Caro, *Nietzsche Contra Nietzsche: Creativity and the Anti-Romantic* London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) pp. 212-215.

9. Where the humanity of nature does not exist, going back to instinctive nature as in the avoidance of suffering can be considered a happy nihilism. Once science is accepted as a metaphysical ideal, metaphysics will require the tragic reconciliation with suffering. Once the tragic attitude reconciles with simulated presence, the bestowing of significance on suffering will enable the nihilistic metaphysics to be substituted for science. To the extent that tragedy can function as the tonic of life, a superman must possess courage to accept the natural drive or any metaphor for overcoming. Because the character of nature is not merely a matter of knowing, the possession of knowledge is not sufficient enough. What counts most is to accept nature in man by winning both courage and strength. Please see Caro, op. cit., p. 218; Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Immediacy Lost Construction of the Social in Rousseau and Nietzsche* (New York: Akademisk Forlag, 1988) pp. 213-217.

10. In the 1800s, the social was recognized as a condition suggestive of men's second nature. The constitution of social contracts supposedly restricted one's natural freedom. In this context, the process of civilization can domesticate humans through the simulation of an original immediacy. Nietzsche's purpose is to reflect such immediacy by using culture as an instrument to pit against the domesticated civilization. Please Schmidt, op. cit., p. 13.

11. To the contrary, war as described by Crane appears to be a "formless, incomprehensible, and dehumanized slaughter" that tremendously disappoints those young volunteers who "poured out in their romantic thousands." Please see Peter Aichinger, *The American Soldier in Fiction, 1880-1963: A History of Attitudes Toward Warfare and the Military Establishment* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1975) p. xxi.

12. Here, Nietzsche's influences on Crane are very ambiguous. In the process of life, the uncertainty of chance is an integral part of Nietzsche's cosmology. As opposed to the certitude in the matrix of cause and effect, chance in the form of random events presents itself in a "sublime" metaphysical mode that is widely condemned by Christianity in view of the suffering that chance entails. Please see Schmidt, op. cit., p.135.


14. The author's dislocated sense of moral responsibility in this novel is perhaps attributable to the fact that business and machinery have become the essential elements of human values in his contemporary society. Please see Charles Child


20. Nietzsche preaches that man should love his fate because what arises from the accidental might be at the same time painful and beautiful. Please see Warner, op. cit., p. 19.


22. Lars Ahnebrink, *The Beginning of Naturalism in American Fiction* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961) p. 186. Ahnebrink argued that so repressive were the existing economic and social conditions that Crane was constantly fretting over the enslaved human wills which, if held unchecked, would bode ill for the impending destruction of the moral and ethical values.


24. Friedrich Nietzsche's destruction of the vague moral idealism profoundly influenced American writers' view of nature in general and their view of society in particular. Their honest treatment of the horrors of existence originates from their tendency to look to science for salvation. Prior to Copernicus, man was perceived to be made in the image of God in the cosmic drama of revelation and redemption. Heavily tinged with the morale of religion was the old notion that the heavenly body moves in circles around the center and unique position of human beings, upon whom is bestowed the marvelous dignity to the extent that it even gives significance to suffering and death. However, the impact of free thought and science induces man to discard his former respect for himself, steering him into a unknown situation away from the center.


27. Ibid., p. 100.
28. Ibid.

30. Nietzsche reacted angrily to religion's morbid stress that the last hour of man's existence is his highest hour with humanity being an outcome evolving from nature. Defining Christian morality in terms of nature was repugnant to Nietzsche, who spurned man's resorting to that which is unworthy of faith, and that includes things like virtues, truth, justice, God, or even other ideals. In order to eliminate the dark influence of God, Nietzsche posited that men had to first dispel the darkness of their self-imposed dependency. Please see Caro, op. cit., p. 214.

34. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 111.


42. In opposition to the free thinkers of the positive science, Nietzsche however suggested that the world is in total chaos, not in the semblance of a mechanism at all. Because there is no persistent substance and matter in the universe, nature as a consequence is devoid of laws, purposes, and necessities that makes life simply a rare
form of death. What Nietzsche aims to deconstruct is the classical contradiction between good and evil which, he believes, should be liberated from traditional Christian morality. To him, evil, or shame for that matter, since not external in relation to the world, simply refers to an inner moment and must be "sublimated" and thinned out into something entirely spiritual that can be either purged or criticized. The reason why shame or dishonor cannot be purged is that, after constantly being constituted, it often fails to "sublime" into a generalized externality. Please see Martin, op. cit., p.14.

44. Kaplan, op. cit., p. 12.
45. To a risk-taker, the acceptance of suffering is an absolute necessity that can make one "sublime." Those who act impulsively without reserve and take risks for the sake of risk itself exalt the value of expenditure without heeding to what they might gain in return. Dangerously as he may live, a man should see pain and joy as equally essential to life, and therefore creates a God unto himself. What he must not do is to reproach against life on account of suffering. With the internal ability to interpret personal providence, one has to eradicate either God or outside chance. Only through the mysterious interplay or collaboration of both can one attain harmony in facing the moment of existing beautiful chaos. In his view, suffering and tortures are ordained not only for those who serve evil but also for those who are devoted to the good. To his regret, God has become an idol with which to justify the existence of many absurd rules. Please see Warner, op. cit., p. 133.

47. Ibid., p.1026.

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「鐵血雄師」中自然主義的戰爭觀

魯子青

摘要

十九世紀末，美國社會產生了劇烈的變動。這時歐洲的思潮，例如達爾文，史賓塞，尼采，種族主義，與馬克斯學說開始大量的被美國人所吸收。於是宗教被進化論質疑了，實證科學的崇拜模糊了道德的傳統定義。清教徒的工作倫理瓦解了，美國夢的迷思(the myth of American Dream)也被重新修正。此時自然學派(naturalism)的小說家，以他們大衆式的哲學觀鼓吹著人心的反叛。咸認爲，自然之所以偉大，就在於它能漠視一切的苦難而無動於衷，也唯有個人主義，甚至是超人主義，才能與進化論的邏輯相呼應。自民粹運動(populism)以降，浪漫的文風就被寫實主義所取代，自此，自然主義又取代了寫實主義成爲了小說的主流。史提芬・葛蘭(1871-1900)在這種衝擊之下，終於發展出了他虛無的戰爭哲學。