



# THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE STEPHAN CRANE

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## Courage, Cowardice, and The Natural World: a Study of the Red Badge of Courage

### Abstract

*The Red Badge of Courage* stands as a renowned war novel penned by Stephen Crane. Crane skillfully wove a narrative that explores the transformative journey of a young farm boy aspiring to prove his courage by enlisting in the army. The protagonist, Henry Fleming, initially dreams of becoming a celebrated hero, but the harsh realities of war prompt a shift in his perspective on heroism and the nature of armed conflict. Many scholars and writers have dissected Henry's character, labelling him a cowardly hero and a realistic representation of twentieth-century heroism. Some critics point to the pervasive use of irony in Crane's work, making it a challenging yet insightful reading. However, Henry achieves genuine self-awareness and a sense of manhood through a prolonged and intense internal struggle. Beyond Henry's character analysis, the novel delves into a significant theme: the relationship between man and nature. While human destructiveness is glaringly evident on the battlefield, nature remains indifferent to these actions. As Crane aptly notes, "Nature would never care if he is dead or not" (1960, 47). The study aims to explore both the intricate connections between nature and humanity and the transformative journey of the hero in Crane's narrative."

**Keywords:** War, Stephen Crane, Nature, Courage, Cowardice

## Cesaret, Korkaklık ve Doğal Dünya; "Cesaretin Kırmızı Madalyası" İncelemesi

### Öz

*Cesaretin Kırmızı Madalyası* Stephen Crane tarafından kaleme alınmış ünlü bir savaş romanıdır. Crane'in gerçek bir savaş deneyimi olmamasına rağmen, konuyu ele alan haberlerden, kitaplardan ve dergilerden ilham alarak Amerikan edebiyatında bir başyapıt yaratmıştır. Hemingway gibi savaş deneyimlerini ilk elden yaşamış çağdaşlarından etkilenen Crane, orduya katılarak cesaretini kanıtlamak isteyen genç bir çiftçi çocuğun dönüşüm yolculuğunu ustalıkla kaleme almıştır. Romanın kahramanı Henry Fleming başlangıçta ünlü bir kahraman olma hayalleri kurarken, savaşın acı gerçekleri onun kahramanlığa ve silahlı çatışmanın doğasına bakış açısını değiştirir. Birçok akademisyen ve yazar Henry'nin karakterini inceleyerek onu hem korkak bir kahraman hem de yirminci yüzyıl kahramanlığının gerçekçi bir örneği olarak nitelendirmiştir. Bazı eleştirmenler, Crane'in eserinde ironinin yaygın kullanımına işaret eder, fakat bu durum eseri biraz zorlu ama anlaşılır bir hale getirmiştir. Ancak Henry, uzun süreli ve yoğun bir iç mücadele ile gerçek bir öz farkındalığa ve erkeklik duygusuna ulaşır. Henry'nin karakter analizinin ötesinde, roman önemli bir temayı, insan ve doğa arasındaki ilişkiyi de irdeliyor. İnsanın yıkıcılığı savaş alanında apaçık ortadayken, doğa bu eylemlere kayıtsız kalır. Crane'in açık bir şekilde belirttiği gibi, "Doğa onun ölüp ölmemesini asla umursamayacaktır" (1960, s. 47). Elinizdeki çalışma, Crane'in anlatısında hem doğa ve insan arasındaki girift bağlantıları hem de kahramanın dönüştürücü yolculuğunu keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır."

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Savaş, Stephen Crane, Doğa, Cesaret, Korkaklık.

## INTRODUCTION

*The Red Badge of Courage*, one of the most widely read works of American literature and about which many positive and negative reviews have been made, was written by Stephen Crane, who died at a young age. The author, who lived between 1871 and 1900, managed to write important works in a short life of 29 years. Two of his most important novels are *Maggie: The Girl of Streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*. This article will be focused on *The Red Badge of Courage*. Stephen Crane wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* many years after the Civil War. Although he had never experienced battle firsthand, the novel is widely considered one of the most important war narratives in American literature. Especially for his work *The Red Badge of Courage*, some critics emphasize that it belongs to the Naturalist, some to the Realist, and some to the Impressionist group of works. One of the reasons that Crane is considered an innovative writer may be that the art movements highlighted below have already born in Europe were only recently arrived in America. When American writers began to write novels about the Civil War, De Vigny, Stendhal, Zola, and Tolstoy had already written about irony, realism, and war (Solomon, 1966, 69). It is understood here that some literary movements passed to America after going through a certain process in Europe. Crane's work, which has been analyzed from many different perspectives, is considered one of the cornerstones of American literature. It is also interesting that the author, who has never had war experience in his life, has written one of the most important war novels in the world. He obtained all the knowledge that he had about the war from the works he read, daily newspapers, and magazines. As stated by İbrahim Koç and Kemal Çapoğlu "He has never experienced the real battle field before writing this war novel, however, it is known that he made some detailed studies on secondary sources to compensate for his inexperience." (Koç and Çapoğlu. 2024. 61) After this work, Crane served as a war correspondent in Europe during the First World War.

In this novel by Stephen Crane different motifs such as the hero's constant inner defense mechanism, maturation and change, cowardice and courage, nature, and humans are handled. Many articles are written on all these issues. For this reason, it has become necessary to deal with a general characteristic of the event's hero. So many articles that have been written on this subject were examined. In addition to the character analysis of Henry Fleming, the human and nature relations, which are very important in the work, will also be examined in this work.

While making a character analysis of this work, first of all, it should be determined what courage is and what the difference is between the modern understanding of heroism and the traditional concepts of heroism that have come from the depths of history to the present day. In this study, beside the story of the courage of the protagonist Henry Fleming, the changes in his behavior and the internal defense mechanism he developed, and also the relationship between man and nature, or in other words, nature's perspective on man, were focused. To understand the issue that as an inexperienced war writer how Crane succeeded to stated inter relations of war and nature, the answer to following questions should be found. 1. What is the character development process of the novel's hero, Henry Fleming? 2. What symbols are used to represent nature in Crane's narrative? 3-How are the themes of courage and cowardice handled?

## 1. Courage and Cowardice

Courage is defined in the TDK dictionary as “the confidence, greatness, valor, bravery, courage, and boldness that one finds in oneself when undertaking a difficult or dangerous task” (TDK). Therefore, courage can be understood as the ability to cope with fear, pain, risk, uncertainty, or restriction. It is a fact that courage has both a physical and moral side. Cowardice, on the other hand, can be considered as panic, discouragement, and extreme emotional turmoil as a result of intense feelings felt at the time of danger. Therefore, cowardice lacks determination. The feeling of panic predominates in people. Courage is a phenomenon that requires determination. “It is always a reality that heroes who want the extra benefit of success go to their deaths without waiting for the praise of their friends.” (Jr. Casey, 2023,10) It is understood that Fleming’s behavior in the first chapters of the novel is not very courageous because he is not sure about how he will behave in a real conflict. The most important question in his mind is whether he will be able to escape from the battlefield at the moment of conflict. He is in a constant state of internal questioning. Therefore, Henry Fleming’s criteria of courage does not conform to the historical criteria of heroism and bravery. However, this situation is compatible with the hero type that realism puts forward. The protagonists of realist works are heroes who question events and, therefore, do not blindly jump into danger. “Variability is one of the important characteristics of twentieth-century characters” (Yeboah-Owusu, 2013,33). Modern realist character types starting from the last period of the 19th century do not have the traditional devotional character structure coming from the depths of history. For this reason, the heroes of the realist period exhibit different behavioral patterns from the traditional hero type. The hero types created by the realist writers of the 20th century are questioning, investigative people who come out of the public and have different professions, gender groups, different ages, and ways of thinking developed by society. They are new characters who do not accept events as they are and question the causes and consequences of events. Therefore, they never resemble the traditional hero type. For example, while the characters in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* behave as if they are commoners, completely aimless and idle, the protagonist of Clifford Odets’ *Waiting for Lefty* is the leader of the taxi drivers’ union and in a way an action symbol driver. On the one hand, he questions poverty, unemployment, and the situation of drivers in the capitalist system, and on the other hand, he aims to revolt against the order. Crane1900’s protagonist, Henry Fleming, is a peasant youth who is engaged in a similar struggle. He is a young soldier who tries to prove himself as an important person by enlisting in the army and, therefore, has an ideal. Willy Loman, in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, is a salesman who describes the tragic events experienced by salesmen in the capitalist system. The protagonists of the different works given above are ordinary people belonging to different professions who come out to the public. But they also have common characteristics. They are questioning people who bear the characteristics of the period they live in. They are sometimes afraid, sometimes brave, but always want change. Henry Fleming’s flight and internal struggle during the war shows that Crane considers courage not only as a physical quality but also as a process of moral and mental transformation. In this context, courage is not only a virtue displayed on the battlefield, but also a process of self-knowledge of the individual.

## 2. Henry Fleming’s Inner Defense Mechanism and Characteristic Change

Fleming is a young man who lives with his mother on a farm. In the days of the American Civil War, he learned about subjects such as war, heroism, and patriotism from the newspapers and magazines published at that time. He admires them for the stories about the soldiers fighting on the battlefields. That is why he is enlisted to participate in the war. Although his mother did not want it, he made his decision. He soon enlisted in the army and joined his unit. Just as the author of the work, Fleming’s combat experience is absent. In fact, this is an important similarity between the author and the hero he created. “He had repeatedly aspired to enlist..... He had heard of invasions, conflicts, sieges, and had long wished to join the war.” (Crane, 1960,14). Our young hero, who realizes this desire, begins to experience great confusion when he faces the battlefield environment. He is confused because the reality is not what he imagined. The rumor that his unit is about to take action alarms him as well. The first question that arises in his mind is whether he will flee the square in the event of a collision. Because this is one of the issues that the soldiers in the unit discuss. Fleming, who was now in a state of complete indecision, “suddenly had the idea that he could escape in the event of a collision” (Crane, 1960, 18). When he thought a little more about the fighting on the battlefield, “a little fear of panic began to develop in his mind.” (Crane, 18). The young man, who was burning with the fire of war before, is now in a state of indecision that does not know exactly what to do. He tries to put some blame on them by questioning his friends and commanders from within. He even goes a little further and thinks that “the ruthless administration has led him to this situation,” forgetting that he is a volunteer (Crane, 30). At one point, he remembers his mother and his farm days, and thinks that he misses those days, and that war is not for him. The author himself expresses his initial confusion as follows: “He wished he was at home unconditionally, running from house to farm,



from there to field, from field to house (Crane, 25). As mentioned above, our hero is floundering in a great deal of indecision and psychological and emotional complexity in every way.

Unfortunately, the first 16 chapters of the book are often filled with Henry Fleming's ambivalence and introspection. Therefore, Henry Fleming experiences both internal and external conflicts. The first is his own internal conflict and perspective on events, and the second is the real battlefield. Many critics say that Stephen Crane wrote a very good war novel, but he does not hesitate to emphasize that the behavior and development of the protagonist are full of uncertainties. The protagonist of the event treats Fleming in the first 16 chapters of the work in such a sarcastic way that it is as if he is mocking the hero he created. Therefore, the protagonist of the event turns into a toy in the eyes of the reader. In a way, it's as if the narrator is constantly digging the ground out under Fleming's feet and asking him to roll into a pit. This is a very serious irony. Finally, James Colvert sums up the situation by stating that "in the first 16 chapters of the work, Henry is the target of the narrator's relentless criticism of irony" (Colvert, 1967, 95).

The ironic distance between narrator and protagonist aligns with Crane's narrative strategy, which foregrounds psychological dissonance over heroic glorification. Especially when young Fleming gets stuck during the second collision, he panics and runs away, and his mood during and after the escape creates a very strange situation. During the escape, his water bottle and jacket constantly fly in the air and hit his legs, as if the people on the battlefield think that they are fleeing without looking back, creates an atmosphere of complete panic and falls into an embarrassing situation. In addition, after entering the forest and the situation calming down, the defense mechanism formed in his head creates an even funnier situation. Sometimes, he's glad he ran away. He agrees with himself by thinking that this behavior is a genius move. But a little later, he believes that what he did was a mistake and blames his friends and the commanders of the unit for his escape. In the meantime, when he returns to his unit, he begins to think about how to explain his situation. He thinks that everyone is waiting to mock him, but this is not the case because, in times of war, everyone is worried about their own lives or trying to protect their friends.

Sometimes our hero is in a duality, and he is confused. The sense of jealousy covers his soul. When Fleming witnesses the soldiers injured in the war, healing their wounds and taking pride in their injuries, he desires to be injured in the war this time, despite all the events he has experienced. In a way, he seems to be jealous of the wounded soldiers. He wishes to be in their place because he sees the bandages on their heads as a medal for bravery. In fact, even before he enlisted, one of the thoughts in his mind was to achieve heroism in war. This is one of the main considerations that led him to enlist in the military. For this reason, despite all the objections of his mother, he enlisted in the army.

*"The author creates one of the biggest contradictions in this work by injuring our young hero, who is jealous of his wounded friends and wishes to have someone in the bloody bandages on their heads. Unfortunately, our young hero accidentally receives a minor wound to the head with the butt of a friend's rifle. After this wound, change begins. After waking up the next day following his head injury, it seemed as though he had suffered a mental injury rather than a physical one. He stopped creating fictional scenarios in his mind and instead embraced the realm of reality" (Tanrıtanır, 2019, 56).*

Tanrıtanır describes Fleming as a cowardly hero. According to him, Henry's old mental confusion is lifted, and he becomes the standard-bearer of his unit towards the end of the war, but he never becomes one of those traditional heroes who emerge from the depths of history as we know it. In particular, Fleming's injury to the head emphasizes how important the head is for humans, so the change must start from there, and it is considered interesting that the wound is not fatal. The fact that Fleming's got rid of his old judgments as if a chip had been implanted in his brain with the butt wound he received from his head. He got rid of the prejudices about his friends in the union and acted in cooperation with them, and even rose to the level of the standard-bearer of his union, can be considered a sign of maturation, but this change is not considered very convincing for many critics. It is important not to underestimate critics who highlight the ambiguity in this regard. "A wide variety of critics have different opinions on Fleming's development. Is it the courage of cowardice, the inability to experience innocence, or the ignorance to understand?" (Mailloux, 48). Some critics have emphasized that Fleming's accidental injury is actually intended to humiliate the protagonist created by the narrator, stating that "Henry's accidental injury turns out to be a shield he wraps around himself to cover his lies, not a real medal of courage he longs for" (Selvi, 2016, 240).

Here Fleming shows the features of realistic hero. As stated by the majority of critics who considered *The Red Badge of Courage* within the framework of the realist novel tradition that developed in the nineteenth century. In other words, there is an important difference between the hero of the realist tradition and the hero from the depths of history. There is a dedication to the old traditional event heroes. While trying to achieve victory as a paragon of courage, they do not examine the background of the events too much. They are always heroes. It is of no consequence whether they die or are killed. The heroes of historical novels paint a flawless portrait. They fear nothing, they

refrain from reproaching, they experience separation from their families, and they remain unwaveringly devoted to their country (Tanrıtanır, 56). But on the other hand, the heroes of realist novels question and criticize events, and they can be cowards. Therefore, as they gain experience during the events, they also gain courage. In the end, they can improve both physically and morally. According to this tradition, this is perfectly normal, just as Fleming criticized his friends and commanders.

*I'd rather do something else every day without doing anything good, without benefiting anyone, without going around and exhausting ourselves for nothing... I didn't come here just to walk. If that were the case, I'd be walking around the farm (Crane, 34).*

As can be seen in this discourse, Henry criticizes his commanders for the fact that the unit is engaged in futile pursuits. Sometimes, he falls into such despair that he wishes he could die and go underground rather than live. No one understands him; at least he thinks that he will be purified from these problems and find peace in the next world. Mailloux, who evaluates this change in the hero of the novel *The Medal of Courage* according to the tradition of realism, evaluates it by expressing that “the realist war novel created a new type of plot that developed from cowardice and experience to courage and valor” (Mailloux, 50). According to Mailloux, Henry gained some experience during the war. But what is not clear here among many critics is “whether this character development is from cowardice to courage, ignorance to virtue and valor, or innocence to experience.” (Mailloux, 52). Of course, it is possible to give many examples in this regard.

John Anthony Casey, Jr., in his essay, *Searching for a War of One's Own: Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, and the Glorious Burden of the Civil War Veterans*, puts forward another interesting point of view about Crane's masterwork on war. He evaluates Crane's work as a criticism of the domination of War Veterans on modern American society, especially the idea that “War Makes Men.” He states that “Like Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage*, the men coming of age in the decades after the Civil War had been taught from birth that “war makes men.” Consequently, they longed for a chance to prove their own manhood on the battlefield.” (Casey, Jr. 2019, 2) So, it can be said that Crane investigates another path for the young American generations to prove themselves in modern society.

Stephen Crane wrote *Red Badge of Courage* years after the end of the Civil War. Although he had not experienced the war, it is considered to be the most important war novel ever written. What led Crane to write this work was the formation of a cultural structure that was dominant in American society at the time, and that affected young men in particular. The dominant idea in society was that men who had never served in the military or who had not participated in the war had not fully formed their true personalities, or, in other words, that merely military service makes a man. In a way, Crane also questions this idea. Crane questions this philosophy by means of his young protagonist, sometimes sarcastically and comically, sometimes with the real war environment, sometimes with his relations with nature, and sometimes with his own internal accounting. This is because war veterans or retired soldiers have become an important pressure or reference group in society. Henry Fleming is a soldier hero created by Stephen Crane, much later than the Civil War he deals with in his work. On the first day of the two-day work's two days of action, Fleming is a cowardly young man, questioning other young soldiers, while in the last part, only one day later, he becomes an experienced senior soldier hero.

### 3. The Relationship Between Man and Nature

In Stephen Crane's works, building on psychological transformation, the role of nature becomes increasingly prominent in Fleming's journey. The relationship between nature and man occupies a very important and special place. In his works, nature is either a savior to be taken refuge in and peace to be found, or it is a fierce, most powerful, supernatural force that cannot be dealt with. From the point of view of society, it is a savior from which people flee and take refuge or a terrible and unconcerned trap into which they fall. (Parker, 1985, 3) In *The Red Badge of Courage*, the incident is as the protagonist taking refuge in the forest in his most troubled moment, or in *The Open Boat*, nature does not care while people struggle for their lives with the terrible waves of the sea. As it is seen Crane's narrative is shaped by his unique portrayal of nature. No matter what crime a man commits against her, she always maintains her own order. She is like a mother who protects, nurtures, and develops not only people but also all beings living in her bosom. She does not care much about the personal behavior of beings and cannot be deceived.

In Crane's master work *Red Badge of Courage*, nature is like one of the characters. But it is not under the power of man. It shows the properties of anger and nervousness for sad situations, but for fare happenings, she shows her happy face. “The red sun pasted into the sky like a fierce wafer” (Crane, 64). The above expression is used when the tattered soldier saw his close friend seriously wounded and dying. As it is stated, the nature shows her to be fiery in a

bad situation. Maybe her unhappiness and sorrow are to show the bad situations, that man is murdering a member of his species without any pity. And at the same time, man is destroying nature as well. Besides the sorrow of nature, life is ongoing. Man is destructive, but feels peace. Thus, whenever he gets into trouble, he runs into the depths of the forest, even though he is ashamed and terrified. Because, as a part of nature, the forest is the only place to be protected. In the novel, the writer makes use of animals, landscape, and atmospheric conditions to visualize the scene of nature. It is a place of salvation and security where people still flee and take refuge during the most brutal scenes of war. Here, the forest is the most important place where our young hero, Henry Fleming, is the most stuck, panicked, and escapes, trying to find peace and do his inner accounting. As he dives deeper into the forest, he encounters different landscapes. Fleming and his friends muddy the waters while crossing a stream, and the little creatures with bubble eyes in the water watch in amazement as if to say what is happening to them. While the soldiers flee in panic, they continue their lives as if nothing happened.

While Fleming tries to interpret his escape from the battlefield as the right move in order to find peace and do his own internal accounting, he panics and fears the corpse of a dead soldier he encounters in a temple-like nook he finds deep in the forest, and on the other hand, he encounters a situation where he will learn a lesson. “The soldier, who is discolored, with his back to a thick tree, watches in amazement as some insects and ants crawl over his eyes and in his mouth, trying to get something” (Crane, 86). In fact, while the war is on going outside with all its speed, noise and pollution, the situation of the insects crawling on the corpse and trying to take useful food to their nests by obtaining something shows that the ecological balance is maintained regardless of our actions. This blood-curdling situation reminds our young hero that nature continues to run in its own order despite all conditions.

Fleeing the battlefield in a panic, Fleming takes different inspirations from nature as he moves deeper into the forest. On the one hand, he watches the cruel behavior of people, and on the other hand, he continues to be inspired by the creatures in nature. In a scene where the war continues at full speed, the bullets fired at each other cause destruction in the forest. The bullets that reached the forest hit the tree branches, and the branches fell to the ground like torrential rain. He sees that the creatures living in the forest protect themselves from this situation. A deadly rumble of battle is heard outside the forest, but he feels safe in the forest. A squirrel he encounters deep in the forest teaches him an important lesson.

*He picks up a pine cone he finds on the ground and throws it at him. The animal escapes and climbs to the top of a tree. At the top of the tree, it sticks his tiny head out and watches Fleming, while on the other side, it tries to hide its furry belly behind the thick branch of the tree so as not to be the target of incoming bullets (Crane, 53).*

Fleming learns a lesson from the little Squirrel’s behavior and justifies his escape from the battlefield. He finds peace in the forest when he flees in panic from the forehead of war (Alotaibi, 2009, 14). He considers it a law of nature that, since even a small animal protects itself from danger, he also has the right to protect itself by escaping from the deadly battles of war. He is somewhat relieved by this thought. He gets rid of that overwhelming mess in his head. Where there are people, there is danger and death. The forest, which is a part of nature, is a sheltered and peaceful place. But the bullets and smoke coming out of the guns invented by man seem to represent destruction. When the author says that “a wild voice echoed behind the dark wall of smoke” (Crane, 37), he describes what happened on the destructive battlefield created by man. Smoke, wild noise, cries, cannon, and musket sounds are death; All of these seem to be symbols of the destructive behavior of human beings. Here’s what happens during a battle scene:

*Bullets whistled through the branches and lodged in trees. Sprouts and branches began to rain down on the ground. It was as if thousands of hidden, unseen axes were striking in the forest altogether. People were constantly lowering their heads to the ground in the face of danger (Crane, 37)*

The war created by man not only harms the forest, which is a part of nature and serves as a place of protection and position for people, but also harms himself. Darkness, smoke, fire, wild sounds, and fear are symbols of war. These symbols don’t actually belong to nature. The war environment created by humans is responsible for these symbols. The phrase “War was like a huge grinding machine for him” (Crane, 2000, 56) is also a sign of man’s behavior towards nature. The author creates such an atmosphere that as our partners in nature, other living creatures, birds, all animals living in the forest, fish in the rivers, and insects all raise their heads together and ask the question of what this human being is doing and what he is dealing with. But nature doesn’t care about human behavior. After the most horrible scenes, the sun illuminates the surroundings with its golden rays, as if life begins again.

*The trees began softly to sing a hymn of twilight. The sun sank until slanted bronze rays struck the forest. There was a lull in the noises of insects as if they had bowed their beaks and were making a devotional pause. There was silence save for the chanted chorus of the trees. Then, upon this stillness, there suddenly broke a tremendous*

*clangor of sounds. A crimson roar came from the distance... (Crane, 55)*

Since the day they existed, people have always fought to achieve certain goals, shed blood, burned, and destroyed their environment, but nature remained carefree as if nothing had happened, repaired the wounds, and made a new start. Life has always gone on. Crane's descriptions of nature not only create atmosphere, but also serve as a metaphorical mirror in which Henry Fleming's inner conflicts resonate. Through figures such as the 'ant' and the 'squirrel,' the author strikingly presents man's neurotic state in the face of the workings of nature.

İbrahim Koç and Kemal Çapoğlu express a close relationship between industry, technological development and nature destruction. They state that the new war technology is quite dangerous. The missals, bombs, rifles, machine guns, the lack of powder all cause great noise and they are destructive. "Military technology made great progress during the two World Wars of the 20th century. Therefore, considering the technical conditions of the period, low-tech weapons and ammunition can be considered as a reasonable explanation for the fog-filled. .... *The Red Badge of Courage* contains numerous references to the dangers of mechanization and industrialization." (2024, 70.71)

## CONCLUSION

Our hero, who does not take everything for granted, has the characteristics of typical realist period heroes. Because he has a personality that questions events and clearly expresses his thoughts, fears, and excitement, providing a development that goes from rawness to maturity. The symbolic meaning that Crane attributes to nature with Henry Fleming's transformation still maintains its validity in the modern individual's conflict, fear and search for self. In this context, the novel is not just a war narrative; it opens the door to a universal questioning of the individual-nature relationship.

Nature is a secure place where man feels calm to make a right decision "For a period, he traverses the solitary expanses of the forest, observing the rhythms of natural existence, the fauna, and the flora." (Koç and Çapoğlu, 69) It is a fact that the relationship between nature and man stands out more than the situation of the hero. Mankind has tried to impose its dominance around it by making great efforts since its existence. In other words, it has tried to solve the problems that could not be solved by its neighbors and other communities around it by fighting. There may have been a victory at the end of these wars, but each war has also left irreparable environmental and social consequences. In particular, as the tools and means of war multiplied and modernized, their destructiveness increased.

The work is about the American Civil War. Different examples explain how the use of cannons, rifles, gunpowder, bombs, and similar destructive tools in war causes great destruction in nature and harms living things, forests, air, and all other imaginable creatures. The text illustrates the impact of the fire on the trees in the forest and the wounds suffered by soldiers, particularly the torn-apart appearance of a wounded soldier's half body, resembling that of a wolf's attack. Human beings are destructive and cruel. It can harm both itself, nature, and its environment. The war he creates is like "a huge grinding machine." (Crane, 56).

Despite all this noisy and destructive behavior, nature behaves in a way that does not care about events and happenings as usual. When the cannon, rifle explosions, cries, dust, and smoke stop after the war, the creatures and trees in the forest start to sing their sweet melodies as if nothing had happened. The sun reflects its golden rays on the earth among those clouds of dust. Insects are trying to produce other things from the liquids they suck from the corpse of the dead soldier. Ecological life does not stand still. In short, life goes on as if nothing has happened.

Today, people possess significantly more caustic and destructive war technology. Air, soil, and water pollution caused by human beings has reached its final stage. But during the lockdown and the short-lived pandemic, we saw how quickly nature renews itself. Despite all the abnormal conditions under which human beings have created, she continues to be carefree as if nothing had happened. We are destructive, but she is constructive and embracing.

Finally, the author connects the protagonist's relationship and devotion to nature in the last lines of the novel as follows: "He looked peacefully at the calm nature, the calm blue sky, the wide plateaus, the flowing streams, like a lover thirsting for love. A golden beam of sunlight filtered through the rain clouds to the ground (Crane,134).



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