

The Ordeal of Private Henry Fleming: Reflections on War and Maturity

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Abstract:

The purpose of this work is to depict Private Henry Fleming, the leading character in Stephen Crane's narrative, in the grip of doubt and fear. He is tormented by the specter of war, and his overactive fancy plays havoc with his fears and uncertainties. More precisely, using the theory of character development, the article shows that this fear has, over the course of his history as a young soldier, become the catalyst for his metamorphosis, revealing the subtleties of his personality and the depths of his emotional maturity.

Keywords: doubt, fear, war, metamorphosis, emotional maturity

Introduction

Inspired by Stephen Crane's *the Red Badge of Courage*, this work entitled "The Ordeal of Private Henry Fleming: Reflections on War and Maturity" plunges as deeply as the artwork into the emotional and psychological experiences of a young soldier confronted with the rigors of the American Civil War. At the heart of this story is Private Henry Fleming, a young man in search of identity and maturity, whose tumultuous journey through the battlefields offers a fascinating window on human nature and the process of personal growth. One of the richest perspectives through which we can conduct our analysis is the theory of character evolution. Using it as an analytical framework, we can thoroughly explore the development of Private Henry Fleming throughout this work, examining how his wartime experiences shape his perception of himself and the world around him, and how he ultimately emerges from his ordeal as a transformed, stronger and wiser man.

Part 1. Private Henry Fleming, A Naïve Vision of War

Generally, a naive view of war means having a simplistic, idealized or unrealistic understanding of what war actually involves. This can include notions such as glorifying war, underestimating its consequences, believing in a quick and easy resolution to conflicts, or ignoring the human suffering, loss and trauma associated with war. A person with a naive view of war may not understand the complexity of the political, economic, social and cultural issues that underlie it. They may also fail to grasp the long-term implications of armed conflict, both at individual and international levels. In short, it fails to take into account the brutal and often devastating reality of war (Early,1968:259).

However, this naive view of war may result from a combination of factors such as lack of direct experience, the influence of media and culture, political propaganda, denial of uncomfortable realities and lack of education and awareness. Individuals who have never been directly involved in armed conflict, or who have not lived in war-affected areas, may have a limited understanding of its realities. In the absence of personal experience, it is easy to rely on media representations or simplified accounts that do not fully reflect the complexity and gravity of war.

Representations of war in the media, films, video games and other forms of popular culture can often simplify, dramatize or romanticize the reality of war. These representations can lead to a distorted perception of war, sometimes presenting it as a heroic adventure or downplaying its tragic consequences. Also, in some cases, governments or political groups may promote a naive vision of war to justify their participation in armed conflicts or to mobilize public support for their political objectives. War propaganda can distort reality and present a skewed picture of the motivations and consequences of war. Yet when faced with the horror and suffering associated with war, some people may adopt an attitude of denial to protect themselves emotionally. They may minimize the atrocities committed during conflicts, or refuse to accept the gravity of human loss and material destruction. In these contexts, formal education may fail to provide an adequate understanding of history and geopolitics, which can contribute to a naive view of war among some individuals (Blum,1953:89). Lack of awareness of the root causes of conflict and its repercussions can lead to a simplistic perception of war, as seen in Private Henry Fleming, Stephen Crane's main character in *The Red Badge of Courage*. In this work, Stephen Crane tells the story of Private Henry Fleming, a young soldier in the Union army during the American Civil War. Private Henry Fleming is a complex character who undergoes an inner journey throughout the novel, moving from naive enthusiasm to the brutal reality of war.

At the start of the novel, Private Henry Fleming is driven by a sense of romanticism and idealism about the war. Like many young men of his time, Private Henry Fleming was exposed to romantic and idealized accounts of war, which glorified the courage and bravery of soldiers. Romantic illusions about war have always been occupying Private Henry Fleming's mind. On considering war, the word like Homeric or Greek-like rushes into his mind. He has always felt sorry for his not having a chance to witness a real Greek-like war with his own eyes. He has been dreaming of experiencing a true war and taking part in all kinds of amazing scenes

such as advancing, surrendering and fighting. He lives up to the Greek ideal because he thinks that he possesses the strength to fight bravely. He thought he would feel the heroism of lore once he enlisted. Clearly, these stories helped shape his expectations and perceptions of war before he was confronted with its reality. Before joining the army, Private Henry Fleming had never been confronted with the violence and brutality of war. His lack of first-hand experience makes him naive about the true horrors of battle. Nevertheless, Private Henry Fleming feels the need to prove his worth as a man and as a soldier. This quest for validation drives him to adopt an idealized vision of war, in which he imagines he can find the courage and glory he seeks.

Private Henry Fleming 's inexperienced thoughts are full of theoretical ideals. As Crane states it, "He was bought then gradually back to his old ideas. Greek-like struggles would be no more. Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions" (1993: 8). He is eager to become a hero revered by everybody. He is having a hard time reconciling the images of war that have been idealized in schoolbooks, of Greek soldiers cutting a valiant profile through battle, with the reality of day to day life in a muddy camp. Crane argues that:

From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be some sort of play affair. He had long despaired of witnessing a Greek like struggle. Such would be no more, he had said. Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions. (1993: 5)

Private Henry Fleming views war as a test of his courage to see if he measures up to his own definition of average. To him, courage is a willingness to stand and fight in battle. In his estimation, the average man would not run away from a fight as for him fear remains an internally constructed phenomenon. Private Henry Fleming is not afraid of the battle itself since he has never been in battle before. His emotions made him feel strange in the presence of men who talked excitedly of a prospective battle as of a drama they were about to witness, with nothing but eagerness and curiosity apparent in their faces. It was often that he suspected them to be liars (Crane, 1993: 14).

The seminary of Private Henry Fleming is also a trigger for his eagerness to enlist in the military service. Almost all the other books about the American Civil War which are stored in Private Henry Fleming's seminary share the same theme of reconciliation. Scenes of war are usually decorated with romantic features, so a romantic story between a hero and a beauty can be seen everywhere. If a soldier fights bravely in the battlefield, he can win the heart of a pretty young woman. Due to the influence of the conventional patterns, he feels proud in the school. Driven by these illusions, he thinks he is such a charming boy that girls might admire him openly or secretly. He envisions his being a part of the war as a way to get women, and be loved by everyone. Private Henry Fleming believes that any girl would throw herself at him for his being a strong "soldier-man." He also thinks that once he became a war hero, all the girls would throw themselves at him as well. He always thinks of the girls and how proud they would be of him since he is in the army. In the eyes of young Private Henry Fleming, the war is not a place of utter violence, but it is a place that guarantees his future life with a woman. Therefore, his childish vanity is greatly satisfied after his enlistment in the Union Army.

All these illusions about war before Private Henry Fleming's leaving home for the battlefield foreshadow his subsequent immature behavior in the coming battles. As an untried regiment, Private Henry Fleming's regiment has done nothing but days of waiting for the order to move, so for many days he has been thinking of himself as merely a part of "vast demonstration". The romantic illusions of Private Henry Fleming about war begin to shatter. Then the order that the regiment is going to the front line finally comes, which of course has greatly excited Private Henry Fleming, who has been dreaming of battles all the time. On the contrary, however, Private Henry Fleming is not so eager to go to the battlefield as he has expected, and he becomes anxious about what he will have to do in the coming battles, because he is just a new recruit, having no experience in the war at all and having no opinion about what a real war is like. From this moment on, Private Henry Fleming's mind is obsessed with uncontrollable fear toward the coming fights. As the novel progresses, Private Henry Fleming feels fear, doubt and shame about his own reactions in the face of danger. He is disturbed by his apparent cowardice, and wonders whether he will ever be able to behave like a real soldier. Private Henry Fleming senses more fear than excitement. And his mind is filled with the question, whether he will or will not run from a battle. He does not know, neither can he. Gradually a little panic-fear grew in his mind. He jumps up and questions himself loudly, "Good Lord, what's the matter with me (Crane, 2003:9-10). The great dilemma that Private Henry Fleming is in at that moment is more a matter of knowing himself and judging himself than that of war.

Although Private Henry Fleming's mind is obsessed with the romantic illusions of going to the battles and becoming an admirable hero, once he is confronted with a real battle, he is so afraid that almost all his romantic illusions about war leave him. He begins to realize that war is not just a joke, but it is cruel and ruthless, and it is always associated with death. As soon as Private Henry Fleming finds himself on the battlefield, he is confronted with the cruel and chaotic reality of war. He is terrified by the noise of the fighting, the violence of the confrontations and the prospect of imminent death. Even more terrifying is the fact that nobody can predict whether he can survive the battle or not. He tries to explore what the other soldiers' opinions about war are, but all his effort brings no answer to him. The only thing that he witnesses is that even people with confidence run. Private Henry Fleming keeps going back and forth, struggling between what he thinks at any given time and what his emotions are telling him to do. At this point, He has mixed feelings because on one hand, he is ashamed of himself for running. On the other hand, he justifies that he made a wise decision. Private Henry Fleming soon listens to his survival instinct and follows. He alters his view from courage meaning the willingness to stand in battle by adding this addendum: unless it is smarter from a self-preservation standpoint to run. Since Private Henry Fleming notices that, "A lad whose face had worn an expression of high courage threw down his gun and ran. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit" (Crane, 1993: 11). Private Henry Fleming also is beginning to see that having the confidence

of an average man is not the same as having courage during an overwhelmingly terrifying moment. Men running swiftly emerged from it. They grew in numbers until it was seen that the whole command was fleeing. The flag suddenly sank down as if dying. Its motion as it fell was a gesture of despair (Crane, 1993: 29).

Private Henry Fleming loses control of any individual thoughts, and is swept up in the compulsion of the group. This group will take on an importance in battle that Private Henry Fleming has never realized in all of his visions of individual valor to this point. As he perceived this fact it occurred to him 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 (Crane, 1993: 22).

Trapped in a mental predicament that nobody is able to offer him help, he begins to think that, "He had never wished to join the war. He had not enlisted out of his free will. He had been dragged by the merciless government" (Crane, 2003:26). After a fierce mental struggle, he draws a conclusion that, "it would be better to get killed directly and ends his trouble" (Crane, 2003:32). Private Henry Fleming's innermost fear hints that he may escape from the battle when his life is threatened by death.

Despite all these anxieties, Henry has to face the real fighting together with his fellow soldiers. With all these psychological burdens, he moves to the front line with his fellow soldiers in the regiment. In the first small-scale engagement, his side defeats the enemy and wins the battle. However, when Private Henry Fleming and his comrades are cheering over their temporary victory, the enemy starts a second attack, which is much fiercer than the previous one. As Private Henry Fleming feared, he is unable to stand his ground in battle. He ends up running away. He notices as he runs away that:

Since he had turned his back upon the fight his fears had been greatly increased. Death about to strike him between the shoulders was much more awful than death about to hit him between the eyes. When he thought of it later, he got the impression that it is better to view the terror than merely to hear it" (Crane, 1993: 17).

Private Henry Fleming is so frightened that he cannot even load his gun; he is shaking so badly that he throws down his gun and flees in a flurry. Private Henry Fleming discovers in battle that the fear of the unknown is worse than anything else he might face. Private Henry Fleming's shame at his reaction leads to fear that he will be found out. Approaching his camp, He put together his story to try to explain his absence, but "...he was much afraid that some unkind remark might strike him mentally low before he could tell his protecting tale" (Crane, 1993: 32). Things were not as bad as Private Henry Fleming imagined. No one suspected that Private Henry Fleming had run. At a time, he rejoices over his wisdom, but on hearing his regiment's success in defeating the enemy's attack, he has a guilty conscience at once. Over the course of the novel, Private Henry Fleming gradually abandons his naive view of war to face reality more lucidly. He becomes aware of the sacrifices and suffering caused by the conflict, and eventually finds his own path to courage and maturity thanks to the bravery and determination of other young soldiers like him.

Partie 2. Alterity, Private Henry Fleming 's Release from Introversion

The notion of alterity refers to the awareness and acceptance of the other's difference, be it cultural, social, ethnic, religious, philosophical, or any other aspect that distinguishes individuals from one another. It is the ability to recognize the other as a being distinct from oneself, with its own experiences, perspectives, beliefs and values. It also implies an openness to diversity and a willingness to interact with people different from oneself in a spirit of respect, tolerance and empathy. It is a fundamental concept in understanding and promoting diversity, inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

The notion of alterity encourages us to go beyond the limitations of our own perspective and recognize the richness that comes from encountering human diversity, thus fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between individuals and groups. This is where this notion can certainly play a role in the life of an introvert. For many introverts, interaction with different people can represent both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, interactions with different individuals can be stimulating and enriching for an introvert, offering new perspectives, ideas and experiences. These interactions can encourage open-mindedness, foster personal growth and provide opportunities for learning and development. On the other hand, for some introverts, interacting with otherness can be emotionally draining, as it often requires a certain level of energy to engage with others, especially when these interactions are frequent or intense. However, while it may be difficult for some introverts, otherness can also be a valuable way of stepping out of one's own comfort zone, developing social skills and learning to adapt to different environments and social situations. (Grassom,2006:184)

In short, for some introverts, otherness can be a remedy for isolation and offer opportunities for personal and social growth, as seen with Private Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of courage* by Stephen Crane. When it comes to social interaction, Private Henry Fleming respects both his own limits and his needs, finding a balance that suits him between exploring human diversity and the need for solitude and reflection.

The Red Badge of Courage explores the themes of war, courage and fear through the eyes of Private Henry Fleming, a young soldier in the Union Army during the American Civil War. In the novel, the notion of otherness is present through this character's interactions with his fellow soldiers. At the start of the novel, he is preoccupied with his own fear and his desire to prove his courage. His obsession with his own performance in battle leads him to be relatively egocentric in his thoughts and actions. However, as the story progresses, he begins to develop a broader awareness of the other soldiers around him. He observes his companions' reactions to fear, death and danger, and begins to realize the variety of experiences and emotions among the members of his unit. This awareness contributes to his personal growth and maturation throughout the novel.

As a reminder, the perception of Private Henry Fleming of alterity evolves as he matures as an individual. He moves from a narrow focus on himself to a deeper, more empathetic understanding of the other soldiers around him, which contributes to his moral and emotional development throughout the story. When Private Henry Fleming meets his friend Jim Conklin in the wounded army, the latter is so badly wounded that he ends up dying miserably in front of Private Henry Fleming. This fact intensifies the self-accusation of Private Henry Fleming to a deeper degree. All these facts make Henry long for a fight to eliminate his psychological burdens. He is determined to return to his regiment and get rid of his shame caused by his escape from the battlefield by fighting bravely.

Even when Private Henry Fleming has made up his mind to return to his regiment, he does not come to a peaceful mind. He thinks of himself as a deserter, a coward in the eyes of others. He keeps on thinking the question, how will he face his comrades' sneer? It is certain that his comrades will look down upon him because of his cowardice and timidity. He is clear that his evasion will make him a laughing stock in the eyes of his fellow men and "he would be compelled to doom himself to isolation" (Crane, 2003:82). All these considerations make him feel anxious and regret for his cowardice and timidity

The fear and the shame are overcome gradually by the inner conflicts of Private Henry Fleming, and moreover, an incident helps him a lot. He is relieved from the torture by a retreating soldier. When he asks the retreating soldier how things are going on the battlefield, he gets a wound on the head, because the retreating soldier who is in a panic mood caused by the cruelty of war, hits him on the head with his rifle. For a long time, Private Henry Fleming wishes to be among the wounded and the dead in order to demonstrate his contribution to the war, and finally he gets "the red badge of courage" (1993: 9) accidentally. When he returns to his regiment, he tells lies that he gets separated from his regiment in the fight, so he has to fight with the soldiers of another regiment, and unfortunately, he is shot on the head. Without any doubts, his fellow men admire him for his courage and look upon him as a hero. This successful lie puts Private Henry Fleming's anxiety to an end. In any case, Private Henry Fleming believes that it is the group that makes him doubt his strength and run. He runs because everyone around him runs. Private Henry Fleming becomes preoccupied with the thought of running from battle which is a recurring theme, as can be seen in these words from Crane:

However, he perceived now that it did not greatly matter what kind of soldiers he was going to fight, so long as they fought, which fact no one disputed. There was a more serious problem. He lay in his bunk pondering upon it. He tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from a battle. (1993: 9)

Private Henry Fleming was worried about running, not simply because it would be cowardly, but more on how the act of fleeing would be perceived by his comrades. He fears their ridicule more than he fears letting his country down. Private Henry Fleming deepens in an internal dilemma which helps a cyclical fear to form. The youth felt, however, that his problem was in no wise lifted from him. There was, on the contrary, an irritating prolongation. The tale had created in him a great concern for himself. Now, with the newborn question in his mind, he was compelled to sink back into his old place as part of a blue demonstration. (Crane, 1993: 12-13)

Before this overwhelming feeling, Private Henry Fleming dooms in a contemplation of his ability to stand up to fear. He wonders if he will have what it takes to stay in battle. Private Henry Fleming asks some of the other new soldiers in his unit if they think they will run. When John Conklin admits that he might run away from battle in the right circumstances, Private Henry Fleming "... felt grateful for these words of his companion. He had feared that all of the other men possessed a great confidence (trust in self). He was now a little reassured" (Crane, 1993: 15). For James Early, the social pressure of the situation dictates the reaction of Private Henry Fleming. He is ashamed of his flight not because he saved himself from harm, but because what he has done does not conform to the societal ideal of how he should have acted. Although Private Henry Fleming is still ashamed at having no wound to show as proof of his valor, the insistence of the Tattered Soldier on asking where his wound is reflecting the need that the soldiers have for camaraderie. Private Henry Fleming seems to have made little headway on the courage he desires, he acknowledges that the societal pressures he feels are overwhelming to the point of superseding the desire for life itself:

The simple question of the tattered man had been knife thrusts to him. They asserted a society that probes pitilessly at secrets until all is apparent. His late companion's chance persistency made him feel that he could not keep his crime concealed in his bosom. It was sure to be brought plain by one of those arrows which cloud the air and are constantly pricking, discovering, proclaiming those things which are willed to be forever hidden. He admitted that he could not defend himself against this agency. It was not within the power of vigilance. (Crane, 1993: 59)

While the instinct to run is "natural" (and in that sense justifiable), competing social pressures are enough for Private Henry Fleming willingly to face death. The natural instinct to survive is overridden altogether. Private Henry Fleming actually feels as if he wants to be wounded, and that he wants to die. Such an outcome would be heroic in the eyes of others. This emotional maturity emphasizes on how he learns the value of ventilating feelings.

The burst of courage that Private Henry Fleming feels is purely produced by the actions of those around him; he feels compelled to be like the idealized warriors he perceives the men in front of him to be. Yet, his internal doubt of being able to fulfill the social expectations that he feels ultimately holds him back from acting on this burst of courage. The fear of derision that Private Henry Fleming feels leads him to attempt to come up with lies about where he was during the battle. What is perceived among the men as the truth, and the relation of that "truth" to the ideal of valor is vastly more important than what actually transpired or the larger governmental "aim" of the war. With the newfound maturity of Wilson comes an acceptance of battle, which is neither the quaking fear of the new regiment or the biting sarcasm of the veteran soldiers. As they went along, the man questioned the youth and assisted

him with the replies like one manipulating the mind of a child. Sometimes he interjected anecdotes, “What reg’ment do yeh b’long the? Eh? But I guess we kin do it.” (Crane, 1993: 69-70)

This is the first glimpse of the true internal strength that Private Henry Fleming searches for within himself. It is a glimpse of something that does not surface often among the soldiers who have found it; for he sees that the veterans often cover up this internal strength with a cocky sarcasm that is both imposing and difficult to see through. Private Henry Fleming first encounters the experiential manhood he has been struggling toward (albeit unknowingly):

The youth reflected. He had been used to regarding his comrade as a blatant child with an audacity grown from his inexperience, thoughtless, headstrong, jealous, and filled with a tinsel courage. A swaggering babe accustomed to strut in his own dooryard. The youth wondered where had been born these new eyes; when his comrade had made the great discovery that there were many men who would refuse to be subjected by him. Apparently, the other had now climbed a peak of wisdom from which he could perceive himself as a very wee thing. And the youth saw that ever after it would be easier to live in his friend’s neighborhood. (Crane, 1993: 78)

He sees new qualities in his friend that he perceives as good; he envies them and for the first time, sees a tangible glimpse of the inner strength he desires to find in himself. Although the tone of this passage is still largely naïve and smacking of cocky youthful inexperience. Private Henry Fleming has taken a turn for the better. He has seen the soft assurance of his friend Wilson, and is heading in that direction himself:

His self-pride was now entirely restored. In the shade of its flourishing growth he stood with braced and self-confident legs, and since nothing could now be discovered he did not shrink from an encounter with the eyes of judges, and allowed no thoughts of his own to keep him from an attitude of manfulness. He had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man. (Crane, 1993: 81)

Private Henry Fleming’s relationship with Wilson constitutes the basis for the assurance he feels; and undoubtedly it has helps him to undergo a huge psychological turn since he was first languishing in camp. In anticipation of his death during the forthcoming battle, Wilson gives some letters to Private Henry Fleming at the end of the third chapter. It is an act of trust and faith. There is about the act an aura of self-pity and there exists something of a desire to have Private Henry Fleming commiserate with him in his fear and trembling, “It’s my first and last battle, old boy,” said the latter, with intense gloom. He was quite pale, and his girlish lip was trembling” (1993: 35). When Private Henry Fleming returns to his regiment after his flight during the second encounter, the first person he meets is Wilson who is most solicitous toward him. Wilson gives him coffee, binds up his wound, acting toward him as a nurse, “Well, come, now ... come on. I must put yeh to bed an' see that yeh git a good night's rest” (1993: 83). Finally, he covers Private Henry Fleming with his own blankets, leaving himself no covers to sleep on or under. Henry objects, “The loud soldier snarled: ‘Shet up an' go on t' sleep. Don't be makin' a fool 'a yerself,’ he said severely.” (1993: 83).

Private Henry Fleming uses the occasion of the letters and Wilson's shame at having to ask for them back as a means to make him feel superior to Wilson and to justify his atrocious conduct, “As he contemplated him, the youth felt his heart grow more strong and stout. He had never been compelled to blush in such manner for his acts; he was an individual of extraordinary virtues” (Crane, 1993 :92). Although the “truth” of battle lies in the actions of the group, the storybook ideal that the men hold has to do only with the individual. In praising Private Henry Fleming for his individual actions, the group is forgotten. When the enemy seemed falling back before him and his fellows, he went instantly forward, like a dog who, seeing his foes lagging, turns and insists upon being pursued. And when he was compelled to retire again, he did it slowly, sullenly, taking steps of wrathful despair (Crane, 1993: 90). It is the group's actions that allow Private Henry Fleming to be courageous on an individual level, but this is lost in the moment. This is perhaps how reality and the ideal that he read about in school become convoluted and the truth of battle covered up.

Private Henry Fleming comes to a major realization, that the mental boundaries and subsequent anguish he has put himself through were little more than that, mental boundaries. These incidents made the youth ponder. It was revealed to him that he had been a barbarian, a beast. He had fought like a pagan who defends his religion. Regarding it, he saw that it was fine, wild, and, in some ways, easy. He had been a tremendous figure, no doubt. By this struggle he had overcome obstacles which he had admitted to be mountains. They had fallen like paper peaks, and he was now what he called a hero. And he had not been aware of the process. He had slept and, awakening, found himself a knight. (Crane, 1993: 91-92). To this point, he has allowed his internal reflection to be mapped onto his perception of reality.

Part 3. Private Henry Fleming towards Emotional Maturity in Wartime

As a definition, emotional maturity is the ability to recognize, understand and effectively manage one's own emotions, as well as those of others. This implies having a developed emotional awareness, the ability to express one's emotions appropriately, to regulate one's emotional responses to stressful or conflictual situations, and to maintain healthy, balanced interpersonal relationships. Thus, an emotionally mature person is able to empathize with others, communicate constructively even in tense situations, and resolve conflicts peacefully. They are also able to step back from their own emotions and examine them objectively, enabling them to make thoughtful, rational decisions. Emotional maturity is often associated with personal growth and psychological development, and can be cultivated and enhanced throughout life through practice, reflection and learning. (Everett,1989:159)

However, achieving emotional maturity in wartime can be a challenge, as the circumstances are often stressful, traumatic and emotionally taxing. Even, to overcome what could represent an obstacle to developing emotional maturity in such situations, it is

important to practice self-awareness by taking the time to get to know yourself, identify your emotions and the triggers that cause them. This can help you better understand your emotional reactions in situations of stress or conflict. Also, cultivate empathy, i.e. try to understand the perspectives and emotions of others, even in situations of conflict. Empathy can foster compassion and mutual understanding, which is essential for maintaining positive interpersonal relationships even in times of war. The practice of emotional management is also necessary. It involves learning stress management and emotional regulation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation and positive visualization. These techniques can help maintain calm and mental clarity, even in the face of difficult situations such as war. At the same time, you need to develop your communication skills. This means improving communication skills to express emotions constructively and resolve conflicts peacefully. Open, honest communication can help prevent misunderstandings and strengthen relationships with others. (Everett,1989:98)

Cultivating mental resilience by developing an optimistic outlook and finding ways to find meaning and hope even in difficult situations is just as important as the qualities described above. It is about learning to bounce back from setbacks and setbacks, either by adapting to unforeseen changes or by seeking support from loved ones and friends. By integrating these strategies into daily life, we gradually develop an emotional maturity that will help us successfully navigate through the emotional challenges of war, as seen with Private Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane

Indeed, in this work, Private Henry Fleming, the protagonist, goes through an intense emotional journey during the American Civil War. At the start of the novel, he is a young, inexperienced soldier, full of bravado but also doubts and inner fears. Yet, as the story unfolds, we see signs of his emotional maturation as he acknowledges his fears. At the start of the novel, he is haunted by fear of battle and death. However, as he is confronted with combat situations, he begins to recognize and accept his fear, rather than deny it. This awareness of his fear, which he knows has harmful effects on him, leads him to accept the realities of war. Private Henry Fleming gradually realizes that war is not romantic or glorious as he had imagined, but rather brutal and chaotic. He learns to accept the dark and ruthless aspects of war, which reflects a more mature awareness of reality and leads to the development of compassion. Private Henry Fleming becomes more empathetic towards his fellow soldiers and begins to feel compassion for those who suffer or die around him. He becomes aware of the fragility of human life and the suffering shared by all those involved in war. Private Henry Fleming gradually assumes responsibility for his actions and choices, rather than making excuses or blaming others. He recognizes the importance of his own moral integrity and becomes more determined to act on his convictions, even in difficult situations. Despite the challenges and setbacks, he encounters on the battlefield, Private Henry Fleming becomes increasingly resilient. He learns to overcome his failures and learns from his experiences, demonstrating an ability to adapt and fortify himself emotionally. Overall, Private Henry Fleming's emotional journey in *The Red Badge of Courage* illustrates his transition from a young soldier full of doubts and fears to a more mature, self-aware individual capable of dealing with the emotional and psychological realities of war. Thus, when he thinks of the enemy as fierce, unstoppable beasts, he allows that belief to color his interpretation of events that transpire. Now, although, he realizes the discrepancy between belief and empirical reality, Private Henry Fleming has found the strength of the heroic ideal he once placed on a pedestal. His inner self has become less conflicted and confident.

Private Henry Fleming is suddenly aware of the situation. His messy psychological interior is relegated to the background; the emphasis is no longer on personal justification, but on humility in the face of reality:

These happenings had occupied an incredibly short time, yet the youth felt that in them he had been made aged. New eyes were given to him. And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant. The officer spoke of the regiment as if he referred to a broom. Some part of the woods needed sweeping, perhaps, and he merely indicated a broom in a tone properly indifferent to its fate. It was war, no doubt, but it appeared strange. (Crane, 1993: 95)

Private Henry Fleming is maturing emotionally, with the emphasis on a better understanding of his own feelings. He seems to be developing the qualities he saw in Wilson. It is not just the content of his thinking that has changed, it's also the whole understanding by which he perceives events that has changed.

The concept of manliness as a sinister, quietly confident feeling is an ideal repeated throughout the novel; it is a far cry from the idyllic mental images of manliness and war that led Private Henry Fleming to join the army in the first place. The latter is now entering the final phase of his emotional maturity. The impetus of enthusiasm was theirs again. They gazed about them with looks of uplifted pride, feeling new trust in the grim, always confident weapons in their hands. And they were men. (Crane, 1993: 106-107)

This confidence is reflected in the calm, down-to-earth demeanor Private Henry Fleming observed in his friend Wilson, and in the same feeling he has after battle, when he sheds his idealistic notions of bravery. Social pressures are evident, this time on the enemy. Of the four captured prisoners, the last feels ashamed, not because of imminent danger, but because he will be perceived as a disgraced coward:

The last of the four was always silent and, for the most part, kept his face turned in unmolested directions. From the views the youth received he seemed to be in the state of absolute dejection. Shame was upon him, and with it profound regret that he was, perhaps, no more to be counted in the ranks of his fellows. The youth could detect no expression that would allow him to believe that the other was giving a thought to his narrowed future, the pictured dungeons, perhaps, and starvations and brutalities, liable to the imagination. All to be seen was shame for captivity and regret for the right to antagonize. (Crane, 1993: 120)

At this point, the fear of Private Henry Fleming has almost completely disappeared, replaced by a need for justice in the face of his own command and the enemy, whether through victory or death. There was some long grass. The youth nestled in it and rested,

making a convenient rail support the flag. His friend, jubilant and glorified, holding his treasure with vanity, came to him there. They sat side by side and congratulated each other. (Crane, 1993: 120)

Private Henry Fleming has reached the final stage of his maturity, attaining the values he had observed earlier in Wilson. He has now completed his final phase of emotional maturity. With this conviction came a store of assurance. He felt a quiet manhood, nonassertive but of sturdy and strong blood. He knew that he would no more quail before his guides wherever they should point. He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man (Crane, 1993: 123-124). He put himself to the test and discovered that he could rid himself of the evils of battle and social expectations, leading him to an easy feeling of confidence and inner peace that he describes as true manliness.

Conclusion

The metamorphosis of Private Henry Fleming is particularly striking as he moves from innocence and uncertainty to emotional maturity through his experience on the battlefield. As Private Henry Fleming is confronted with the brutal realities of war, he must find within himself the strength and courage to survive and face adversity. Throughout his journey, Henry undergoes a veritable initiation, facing trials that test his determination, loyalty and sense of honor. Gradually, we witness his metamorphosis, as he gains in confidence, resilience and wisdom. His quest to overcome his own fears and doubts and find his place in the adult world is at the heart of the story, and it is through this journey that we discover the nuances of his personality and the depths of his emotional maturity.

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