

## 81. Realist, Naturalist, Impressionist Narrative Techniques and Themes in Crane's the Red Badge of Courage<sup>1</sup>

Mehmet GÜNEŞ<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The distinguished American novelist Stephen Crane has been regarded as one of the pioneers of naturalism in American Novel. In his novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, naturalism occurs through the whole story, realism and impressionism also play an important part in his work. Cited for its fresh narrative style and naturalistic, realistic and impressionistic depictions of combat, the novel made him a celebrity. Naturalism sometimes depicts the relationship between individual and nature, focusing on the characters in their environment. Nature's indifference to humanity's fate is such naturalistic element explored in this novel. The reality of war is shown in its brutality, boredom and injustice. Crane carefully uses imagery that reflects the perspective and state of the protagonist. In this study, it is aimed to examine Stephen Crane's novel as a non-traditional war narrative, where he reflects the inner experience of its protagonist, a soldier fleeing war from the perspectives of realism, naturalism and impressionism. In this thematic and descriptive study, text analysis was used and examples of naturalism, realism and impressionism were interpreted. In this work, which is close to the naturalness of daily language, the use of images and colour is important. The author has managed to convey the civil war in the most effective way, even though he did not live during the war years. This work, which reflects the American Civil War through the internal transformations experienced by the soldiers, provided a different perspective as well as general topics such as the north-south conflict.

**Keywords:** Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Harran Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, Yabancı Diller Bölümü / Dr., Harran University, School of Foreign Languages, Department of Foreign Languages (Şanlıurfa -Türkiye), mehmetgunes.harran45@hotmail.com, **ORCID ID:** 0000-0002-6579-6359, **ROR ID:** https://ror.org/04pd3v454, **ISNI:** 0000 0004 0595 4604, **Crossreff Funder ID:** 501100005183

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## Crane'in Cesaretin Kırmızı Rozeti'nde Gerçekçi, Doğalcı, İzlenimci Anlatım Teknikleri ve Temalar<sup>3</sup>

### Öz

Önde gelen Amerikalı romancı Stephen Crane, Amerikan romanında natüralizmin öncü isimlerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. *Cesaretin Kırmızı Rozeti* adlı romanında natüralizm tüm hikâye boyunca ön plandadır, gerçekçilik ve izlenimcilik de eserinde önemli bir yer tutar. Kendine has anlatım tarzı ve natüralist, gerçekçi ve izlenimci savaş tasvirleri ile anılan roman yazarın ün kazanmasını sağlamıştır. Natüralizm bazen karakterlerin çevrelerine odaklanarak birey ve doğa arasındaki ilişkiyi tasvir eder. Doğanın insanlığın kaderi karşısındaki kayıtsızlığı bu romanda keşfedilen natüralist bir unsurdur. Savaşın gerçekliği, acımasızlığı, sıklıklığı ve adaletsizliği içinde gösterilir. Crane, ana karakterin bakış açısını ve içinde bulunduğu durumu yansıtan imgeleri özenle kullanır. Bu çalışmada, Stephen Crane'in savaştan kaçan bir asker olan kahramanının içsel deneyimini yansıttığı romanın geleneksel olmayan bir savaş anlatısı olarak gerçekçilik, natüralizm ve izlenimcilik perspektiflerinden incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu tematik ve betimsel çalışmada metin analizi kullanılmış ve natüralizm, gerçekçilik ve izlenimcilik örnekleri yorumlanmıştır. Günlük dilin doğallığına yakın olan bu eserde imge ve renk kullanımı önemlidir. Yazar, savaş yıllarında yaşamamış olmasına rağmen iç savaşı en etkili şekilde aktarmayı başarmıştır. Amerikan İç Savaşı'nı askerlerin yaşadığı içsel dönüşümler üzerinden yansıtan bu eser, kuzey-güney çatışması gibi genel konuların yanı sıra farklı bir bakış açısı da sağlamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Stephen Crane, Cesaretin Kırmızı Rozeti, Gerçekçilik, Doğalcılık, İzlenimcilik

### Introduction

Naturalism is a pessimistic form of realism that was firstly used by the French novelist Emile Zola. Naturalism wants to portray the harsher forms of social and human life although it was developed on the basis of realism. Naturalism is a literary movement of a pessimistic tone that came in the late nineteenth century, its way of studying human life is completely different from other trends (High, 1986). Regarded as the founder of naturalism, Emile Zola was widely affected by Darwin's writing about heredity and environment and he attempted to change these ideas into literary form, as Pizer stated:

"Zola believed that the literary imagination could make use of the ideas in books so long as the novelist functioned like a scientist observing nature and social data, rejecting supernatural and trans historical explanation of the physical world, rejecting absolute standards of morality and free will, and depicting nature and human experience as a deterministic and mechanistic process. All reality could be explained by a biological understanding of matter, subject to natural laws, available in scientific term" (Pizer, 1995, p. 47).

<sup>3</sup> Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

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Zola influenced many writers in America hence many realists became naturalists. Stephen Crane was the first naturalist in America; he wrote novels and short stories on the light of Naturalism such as *Maggie: A girl of the streets* (1893), *The Red Badge of Courage* (1845), *The Open Boat* (1898) and *The Experiment in Misery* (1894). Stephen Crane perceives the individual as a helpless object who is nevertheless heroic. He believed people were not really free; rather their lives, opinion and morality were all controlled by social, economic and psychological causes. Unlike many of his contemporaries, who focused on characters' situations, Crane focused on their thoughts and feelings. "This is obvious in his mostly known novels, *Maggie: A girl of the streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*. Crane's style is a mixture of realism, naturalism and impressionism" (Bode, 1995, p. 45).

Despite the advances in democracy, human rights, freedom and the strengthening of the middle class in the Western world, the persistence of sectarian strife and social strife has led to the collapse of the optimistic idealism and democratic ideals of the Age of Enlightenment. Born out of this despair, realism and its successor naturalism opposed conceptual realism and replaced it with factual realism, which placed the concepts of human and reality in art and literature. Impressionism is a movement that aims to show the effects left by impressions as they are and has the most important effects in the art of painting:

"Impressionism deals with reflecting the outside world within the framework of the impressions left on people and artists by the outside world, nature and objects, rather than carrying the outside world to art with its real lines and objectively as in realism and naturalism" (Çetiřli, 2006, p. 113).

In showing the difference between realism, naturalism and impressionism, Ferrell notes:

"When the character seemingly controls the environment or the environment is shaped in such a way to conform to the needs of characters, it becomes impressionistic. When the environment appears to control the character, it is naturalistic. Realism appears in between; allowing some control over and some influence by the environment" (Ferrell, 2000, p. 48).

*The Red Badge of Courage* has been regarded as one of the greatest novels ever written in American literature, which mostly deals with the experience of war and its psychological effects. In addition to giving people an idea about its distinctive style, which is often described as a mixture of Naturalism, Realism, Impressionism, this novel also clearly reflects how Crane wrote it without having had any battle experience. Although Stephen Crane was born more than six years after the end of the American Civil War, and he wrote this novel without any battle experience, the novel portrays the war realistically. Crane destroys the romantic ideals of war such as heroism, and describes the war's cruelty and its horror. In addition to employing realistic and naturalistic elements, he also employs imagery, and colour symbolism. According to Elsa Dixler, Crane's novel clearly shows a unique style of writing:

"The *Red Badge of Courage* has a distinctive style which is often described as naturalistic, realistic, and impressionistic or a mixture of the three told in a third-person not only withholds the name of the battle but also never mentions the Civil War" (Dixler, 1984, p. 20).

Crane presents many characteristics of both naturalism and realism in this novel. The protagonist of the novel, Henry Fleming, is the classic realist hero who is simply an ordinary man. At the beginning, he eagerly takes part in battle, but then his sense of cowardice causes him flee from the battle. Because of this unexpected situation, he is put into a serious mental dilemma. The deterministic philosophy of naturalism, 'survival of the fittest', shows its influence, and Henry Fleming cannot escape from its influence over him. Although Henry wants to leave the crowd, he understands that "it would be

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impossible for him to escape from the regiment. It inclosed him. And there were iron laws of tradition and law on four sides. He was in a moving box" (Crane, 1994, p. 31).

Crane, who is the first American writer to pursue European naturalism, was born on November 1, 1871 in New Jersey. He belongs to a crowded family and is the fourteenth and last child of his very religious family. Although his childhood passed through religious education, his life changed after his mother retreated due to his father's death and left Crane to his brothers. Crane has seen life in slums and battlefields in its most natural form. Although recognized primarily for *The Red Badge of Courage*, which has become an American classic, Crane is also known for short stories especially *The Open Boat*, *The Blue Hotel*, and *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*. His works clearly shows vividly intensity of realistic life experiences, distinctive dialects of his characters. Like his contemporaries in American and English novel, Stephen Crane was a social realist who struggled to change people's miserable conditions and depicted their lives as they really were. Crane's fictional works account for spiritual crises, social isolation and the social values, including customs, language use, and lifestyle.

In his psychological Biography, *Stephen Crane: A Critical Biography*, John Berryman writes, "His friends while he [Crane] was alive and his critics since have found Stephen Crane mysterious, inscrutable" (Berryman, 2001, p. 197). Due to his short lifespan, Stephen Crane was a puzzle to his contemporaries and critics both at his time and in the decades later. In spite of the short span of his career, his literary achievement is truly remarkable. The memorable Civil War novel titled *The Red Badge of Courage* was published in 1895 and was welcomed with great enthusiasm. His work has such a distinct naturalistic flavour that "he is the virtual embodiment of literary naturalism" (Holton, 1972, p. 5).

Despite being known for his novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, which has become an American classic, his true mastery is short stories. Besides, Crane, who also wrote poems and journals, is thought to have a deep influence on the 20th century writers such as Ernest Hemingway. Considered by today's critics as one of the most innovative writers of his generation, Crane's works are generally categorized as naturalist, realist, impressionist or a mixture of the three. Fear, spiritual crises and social isolation are generally seen as the common themes of his writings. "Crane's darker, more pessimistic version of naturalism can be found in his way of showing that the traditional concepts of our social morality are shams and the motivations presumably controlled by them are pretences" (Walcutt, 2008, pp. 271-272). Here, Walcutt hints at the social and collective forces that help to define Crane's philosophy. While Crane agrees with the naturalists who suggest that man is out of control of his destiny and is only influenced by the forces of his environment, Crane's naturalism embraces a hopelessness that goes beyond the mere lack of free will of the individual human. While he clearly agrees that humans cannot determine their destinies no matter how hard they try, Crane's naturalism is more specific and pessimistic in regards to human capacity to act.

Stephen Crane rebelled against Romanticism, a form of literature that dominated much of the nineteenth century. Crane, on the other hand, wanted to present his readers with as realistic a vision of life as possible. In his mixture of realism, naturalism and impressionism Crane wants his readers understand the real message of his works. Stephen Crane incites his readers to plunge into his works and find out by themselves what he intends to mean. He says openly:

"I endeavoured to express myself in the 'simplest' and most concise way. If I failed, the fault is not mine. I have been very careful not to let any theories or pet ideas of my own creep into my work. Preaching is fatal to art in literature. I try to give to the readers a slice of life; and if there is a moral

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lesson in it, I do not try to point it out. I let the reader find it for himself" (Stallman and Gilkes, 1960 pp. 31-32).

Crane's novel mentions about the story of the American Civil War from the point of view of one young soldier. The realistic experiences of the soldiers are presented psychologically, but Crane's descriptions of battle, fear, death, fighting are shown realistically and naturalistically. This novel presents events and happenings as they are sensed, not as they actually appear. The Red Badge of Courage gives an accurate report of Henry's thoughts and inner conflicts, both of which are ultimately more important to the story than the plain facts of the battle. Stephen Crane understands reality through "feelings" not through facts. He goes to say Realism is "misunderstood," and when one of his friends asked him for advice on writing, Crane threw a handful of sand into the air and said:

"Treat your notions like that. Forget what you think about it and tell how you feel about it. Make the other fellow realize you are just as human as he is. That is the big secret of storytelling. Away with literary cads and canons. Be yourself!" (Sorrentino, 2006, p. 30)

### **Realistic and Naturalistic Aspects of the Novel**

Realism is a literary movement that developed in American novel towards the end of the Civil War and focused on the hard realities of life as opposed to Romantic ideals and the imagined or fanciful. As a reaction to Romanticism, realism appeared to capture true pictures of life and to represent the horrors and disillusionment of the Civil War in literature. Since realism presents characters, events and ideas in literature as they are, it can be defined as "the faithful representation of reality" (Campbell, 2012, p. 5).

Henry Fleming represents the Everyman of war in his attempt to understand his battlefield experiences. Proponents of realism view the novel as the first unromanticised account of the Civil War and find Fleming's maturation from an inexperienced youth to an enlightened battle-worn soldier to be truthfully depicted. The narrator does not name the characters and only refers to them by descriptors. Henry initially embraces the Greek ideal of dying in battle; however, as he experiences war, he matures. The romanticizing Henry transforms into a realistic Henry. Calling Henry "the youth" is the most important indicator that this novel is about his maturity.

Regionalism and local colour are important aspects of American realistic writings and this realistic writing style can be seen in the first chapter of the novel, especially in the dialect of the soldiers who reflect their rural roots in the north: "We're goin't' move t'morra- sure, (...) We're goin' 'way up the river, cut across, an' come around in behind 'em" (Crane, 1994, p. 9). In their speeches, the soldiers clearly reflect their rural roots. Crane uses slang words to help show and give one a better picture of how life is. The Red Badge of Courage portrays many aspects of regionalism and local colour in the setting and the characters' dialogue. Regional dialects of the characters can also be seen in Henry's mother's words that remind him of his own insignificance in the larger scheme:

"Don't go a-thinkin' you can lick the hull rebel army at the start, because yeh can't. Yeh jest one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, and yeh've got to keep quiet an' do what they tell yeh. I know how you are, Henry" (Crane, 1994, p. 13).

Crane examines the psychology of a soldier. With the exception of a rare flashback, the entire novel involves war. Every crazed thought and desperate action stems from the imminence of, the engagement in, or the aftermath of, battle. There are no divergent interests, or as Eric Solomon says, "Crane writes a kind of grammar in which war is the subject, verb, and the object of every sentence" (Solomon, 1996, p. 73). Unlike romantic war accounts that portray heroes bravely going into the battle, Henry has no idea whether he has what it takes to fight. Crane's realistic depictions of soldiers in battle serve to create a

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realistic war novel. There is no gasping of last words, clever quips or philosophizing of death. We see men being shot and dying. This non-heroic portrayal of death is made clear as Jim Conklin fears dying and being run over by artillery wagons. Crane portrays realistic heroes, confident men, sure of their abilities as opposed to the gallant men portrayed in romantic tales of war.

Henry Fleming is Crane's classic realist hero who is simply an ordinary man put in extraordinary situations. From beginning to end, Henry is referred to as "the youth", suggesting that though he may become a fearless fighter, he never articulates the significance of his thought and action. We learn the full name of "the youth" at a critical point in the novel: he is trying to invent a lie so that his regiment will accept him after having deserted. Crane thus associates the major character's full name, Henry Fleming, with a lie, a deception, indicates that the identity of this self may not be what it appears. Crane realistically captures the emotions of a mother who sends her son off to war. She acts bravely, saying it is the Lord's will, and sends Henry off with lots of maternal, practical advice; but when the Youth actually departs, she cries silent tears. There is also realism in Henry's thoughts and actions. Troubled by how he will react in battle, he goes off by himself to contemplate his deep inner thoughts. He is comforted by the Tall Soldier who says many inexperienced soldiers will run away from fighting during their first battle; at least, Henry does not feel he is so alone.

Crane seldom gives a character's name, and instead he provides descriptions of them. In doing so, he creates an allegorical atmosphere. He places his focus on types, not individuals. Crane accomplishes the goal of showing the experience of battle in very broad and general terms. He is not interested in drawing out the uniqueness of individual heroes. Rather than heroic acts, he shows the common experience of most youthful soldiers in war. In this way, he creates a realistic approach to war and avoids making a hero out of a soldier. When Henry sees a dead soldier lying on the road and seeming to stare at the sky, he feels the reality of war. Especially the description of the dead soldier makes Crane's realism very effective:

"On the line encountered the body of a dead soldier. He lay upon his back staring at the sky. He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown. The youth could see that the soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinness of writing paper, and from a great rent in one the dead foot projected piteously. And it was as if fate had betrayed the soldier. In death it exposed to his enemies that poverty which in life he had perhaps concealed from his friends" (Crane, 1994, p. 32).

Behaving with honour in war and becoming a war hero were dreams commonly held by young men in the nineteenth century. Many parents and communities expected young men to go off to war and fight; it was something a young man did as part of growing up. Throughout the novel, Henry Fleming is in a constant between his illusions of war and reality. He perceives war to be a great struggle between two opposing forces fighting for their own beliefs. He believes that he would make a difference in battle and would have a direct impact on the outcome of battle. At the beginning of the novel, Henry is immature and thinks war is about being a hero and being glorified. His unrealistic, romantic views on war quickly change in the first battle. He realizes his view is completely wrong and unrealistic because war is not as glorified as he thinks. When he arrives for his duty in the military, he begins to guess himself secondly. In the third chapter, Henry is tested in battle for the first time and fights like a man should. This is the first time that Henry sees a realistic viewpoint of war. Henry enters the war not for the basis of serving his country, but for the attainment of glory and prestige. His wish of being a hero represents the natural human characteristics of selfishness.

In the fifth chapter, Crane gives an actual account of a battle realistically. In the atmosphere of the battle, the captain of the company speaks with the soldiers in a realistic way: "Reserve your fire, boys- don't

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shoot till I tell you- save your fire- wait till they get close up- don't be damned fools-" (Crane, 1994, p. 43). Henry begins to perceive war as a gloomy struggle, and understands the harsh reality of war for the first time. His unrealistic, romantic views on war quickly changes in the first battle. He realizes that his view is completely wrong because war is not as glorified as he once thought: "He felt that he was a fine fellow. He saw himself even with those ideals which he had considered as far beyond him" (Crane, 1994, p. 49). It can be noticed that Fleming is obviously unfit for the battle because all he wants is the glory. He would die because war is ruthless and Fleming as being a coward has no place in it.

Throughout the novel, there have been occasional complaints from the troops about the general's lack of ability. It is historically true that in the Civil War, the Union side suffered from poor leadership in its upper ranks throughout much of the war.

The death of Jim Conklin, who is Henry's friend from home, is described realistically. Henry follows and watches the horrible death of his friend. He sees his friend horribly suffer and then die from the wound. At the moment of his death, Jim could not speak too much like other people who are nearly to die: "The tall soldier made a commonplace smile. 'Hello, Henry,' he said" (Crane, 1994, p. 68). When a soldier is mortally wounded, he must find a place to die in order to help the war continue. Crane also employs this important aspect of war, and he creates a realistic aura. Leaving your friend behind while asking for your help is a reality and the ugliest face of war. Jim also leaves the road, moves into the field, and dies without disrupting the continuity of war:

"Ye'd better take 'im outa th' road, pardner. There's a batt'ry comin' helitywhoop down th' road an' he'll git runned over. He's a goner anyhow in about five minutes- yeh kin see that. Ye'd better take 'im outa th' road" (Crane, 1994, p. 69).

This act is the act of a soldier who knows that his time is over. The fact that when a soldier dies, he must move out of the way to allow the battles to continue shows the real face of war and the insignificance of human life.

Henry is shocked to meet up with his friend, mortally wounded and on the verge of the death. He follows and watches the horrible death of his friend. The war suddenly takes on a new meaning for him. Jim's death affects him seriously and Henry feels more isolated than ever; he also feels intensified guilt that he left the battle. Henry wishes he had a physical wound, a red badge of courage, like his friend. Jim is a symbolic character and Jim's death is of great significance to Henry primarily because Jim was invincible in Henry's eyes. To see Jim mortally wounded brings Henry face to face with his own mortality. After witnessing his friend's death, Henry feels that he does not belong to these people, who bring ghosts of shame into his mind. Furthermore, these men are near to death, although they have red badges of courage.

The dialogue between the soldiers recorded at the end of the twenty-first chapter makes extensive use of dialect in order to stress the fact that the soldiers are men, not machines. Insignificance of men is strongly stressed in this chapter. The commanding officer obviously regards them as something less than human; he sees them as mere objects in his strategy for victory. His attitude towards the soldiers is insulting and emphasizes their inferiority. Although the soldiers judge themselves as brave since they fight hard in the battlefield, the commander judges them as failures. The reason of their being labelled as failures is that they have failed to take the last one hundred feet of territory that he wants from the enemy. He only gives importance to the amount of land rather than their brave acts:

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"What an awful mass you made! Good Lord, man, you stopped about a hundred feet this side of a very pretty success! If your men had gone a hundred feet farther you would have made a great charge, but as it is- what a lot of mud diggers you've got anyway!" (Crane, 1994, p. 138)

The veterans judge them harshly for they are torn, tattered and disorganized in action and appearance. There is a deep contrast between what the soldiers think and what the veterans think of them. The use of dialect allows the reader to see that the soldiers have the same need for information, for praise, and for recognition, as well as the need to use the language they know to share their need with others:

"That's Flemin', an' he's a jimhickey,' he ses, right away. What? I say he did. 'A jimhickey,' he ses- those 'r his words. He did, too. I say he did. If you kin tell this story better than I kin, go ahead an' tell it" (Crane, 1994, p. 141).

Crane makes a realistic picture of war in his depiction of the relationship between the soldiers and the commander. In traditional warfare, the commander uses uplifting words to prepare the soldiers without food and water for a new attack against the enemy. In actuality, the commander makes the soldiers courageous by swearing at them:

"This was to be a poignant retaliation upon the officer who had said 'mule drivers', and later 'mud diggers', for in all the wild graspings of his mind for a unit responsible for his sufferings and commotions he always seized upon the man who had dubbed him wrongly" (Crane, 1994, p. 146).

The Red Badge of Courage is generally regarded as the first unromanticised account of the Civil War. It truthfully depicts Fleming's maturation from an inexperienced youth to an enlightened battle-worn soldier. Unlike romantic accounts of war that portray heroes bravely going into the battle, Henry has no idea whether he has the potential to fight. The realistic depictions of soldiers in battle serve to create a realistic war novel. The soldiers are portrayed as being sure of their abilities as opposed to the heroes in romantic tales of war. The convincing, believable characters, the distinctive speech of the soldiers, the complexity of Henry's thoughts, and the traits of the soldiers like everyday people are the representative of realism in the novel.

Naturalism, based on observation and experimentation, is a movement that has developed since the beginning of the 19th century, not in opposition to Realism, but as a continuation of it. The natural result of the principle of scientificity put forward by naturalism is objectivity. According to naturalism, the author should transfer the facts he observes to his work as they are, without adding his own subjective thoughts. Because of the principle of objectivity and scientificity, naturalists focused especially on the slums, poor environments and marginalized people at the bottom of the demography. Naturalism evades specific definition, but it can be defined like this:

"a philosophical position, empirical in method, that regards everything that exists or occurs to be conditioned in its existence or occurrence by causal factors within one all-encompassing system of nature, however spiritual' or purposeful or rational some of these things and events may in their functions and values prove to be" (Lamprecht, 1967, p. 160).

The scientific understanding of the universe in Crane's time (through Darwinism and other advances) led to an outlook that saw human decisions as dictated by environmental influences and not man's free will. Critic Harry Hartwick argues that "Crane's fiction plainly reflects the naturalistic concept of man as a helpless animal, driven by instinct and imprisoned in a web of forces entirely deaf to the hopes or purposes of humanity" (Hartwick, 1962, p. 221).

Naturalism is actually the literary expression of determinism. The predominant reasons why this novel represents naturalism are the portrayal of nature as hostile and even indifferent, the application of science to war, and the emphasis on the impotence and lack of self-control in Crane's characters. Crane

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makes extensive use of scientific parlance and references prominent theories of science throughout the novel. For example, when wondering whether he will run from the battle, Henry is called “an unknown quantity” and “accumulate information”, as if he were a variable in a scientific laboratory procedure. He tries “to mathematically prove to himself that he will not run from a battle” and makes “ceaseless calculations” to determine whether he possesses sufficient courage. The war setting also allows the story to be an important example of naturalism. This war setting is savage and drives out the most instinctual, primitive forces in humans. This is further supported by the use of third-person narrative within the story.

The first paragraph of the novel illustrates Crane's use of naturalism. A pessimistic view of life and nature in which man exists in an indifferent environment is described. Gloomy descriptions such as “sorrowful blackness, troughs of liquid mud, eyelike gleam of hostile campfires” (Crane, 1994, p. 9) are also given as the illustrations of naturalistic description. Henry comes to the battle without being aware of himself and negative impacts of the battle on his character: “He felt that in this crisis his laws of life were useless. Whatever he had learned of himself was here of no avail. He was an unknown quantity” (Crane, 1994, p. 17). This moment of awareness and self-analysis helps the reader see his helplessness and the effect of nature on him.

This portrayal of man as trapped and incapable of resistance is central to naturalism. In order to point out how people are determined by heredity or environment, and emphasize how they are powerless to resist the will of the masses, Crane states, “He had not enlisted of his free will. He had been dragged by the merciless government” (Crane, 1994, p. 31). His feeling of being boxed in captures Crane's naturalistic approach to war. Henry feels that he is determined by his social upbringing to act in a particular way and that his own free choice is simply not an option: “He assumed, then, the demeanour of one who knows that he is doomed alone to unwritten responsibilities. He lagged, with tragic glances at the sky” (Crane, 1994, p. 34).

The most convincing argument that this novel is a naturalistic novel is the repeated emphasis that Henry and his military companions are powerless and guided by forces beyond their control. Forces beyond human's control make a direct impact on his fate in naturalism. Henry is not aware of his personality, and loses his individual consciousness. He acts as a member of some greater force out of his control, and he fights for their preservation as much as his does:

“He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part- a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country- was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality that was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand” (Crane, 1994, p. 44).

Loss of individuality can also be seen in Crane's attributions of animal characteristics to the humans: “He, too, threw down his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit” (Crane, 1994, p. 52). In the universe of the novel, man is nothing but an animal determined by mechanistic forces over which he exercises no control. There is strong evidence in the novel that Crane intended this inference to be drawn, especially in the seventeenth chapter where Henry is about to engage in the first battle after having received his red badge.

The naturalistic belief that nature is indifferent to humankind is clearly pointed out in this novel. Man is an alien in an alien universe has been Crane's view all along that nature is alien to man. Especially in his flight from the battlefield, Henry discovers that he cannot find refuge and consolation in nature. Nature and natural objects do not allow him to escape from the chaos of war. Although he thinks that

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the forest is the source of peace and keeps him from danger, the nature does not cover and protect him. He faces with the reality that is the indifference of nature:

“After a time the sound of musketry grew faint and the cannon boomed in the distance. The sun, suddenly apparent, blazed among trees. The insects were making rhythmical noises. They seemed to be grinding their teeth in unison. A woodpecker stuck his impudent head around the side of a tree. A bird flew on light-hearted wing. Off was the rumble of death. It seemed now that Nature had no ears” (Crane, 1994, p. 58).

Henry comes across a dead soldier in his wanderings. This dead soldier symbolizes nature's indifference towards the accomplishments of man. The soldier is unrecognizable, no war tokens exist, and even the colour of his uniform has faded. The dead soldier is covered with ants, completely stripped of his identity. The soldier represents the futility of mortal accomplishments, all of which mean nothing after death. After Henry's initial battle, he is stunned but the sun goes on shining and the sky is blue. This shows that nature is indifferent and does not concern itself in man's affairs.

Henry attempts to leave the woods, but the trees intentionally try to prevent him from going on his way. Trees spread out their branches to hold him back. Nature's hostility helps him understand that she is an enemy who does not want him to act on his own impulse:

“Sometimes the brambles formed chains and tried to hold him back. Trees, confronting him, stretched out their arms and forbade him to pass. After its previous hostility, this new resistance of the forest filled him with a fine bitterness” (Crane, 1994, p. 62).

Henry sees the war as a machine that grinds men into injured beings and corpses. At this point, Crane gives a naturalistic view of war by using the very detailed descriptions of death:

“The torn bodies expressed the awful machinery in which the men had been entangled. Orderlies and couriers occasionally broke through the throng in the roadway, scattering wounded men right and left, galloping on followed by howls” (Crane, 1994, p. 64).

In these and many other instances, nature is personified as evil and hostile to man. It threatens, reaches out, and grabs at soldiers, taking an active, hostile role, as if it were a human enemy, even offering up a horrid, rotting corpse as a symbol of its evil. This is the central idea of humanism.

Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest is a very common theme in this novel. As the story progresses, we can see that Henry is mentally unfit for the war, and faces the consequences that nature imposes upon those who are not fit. In order to successfully explore and observe how humans are governed by their natural instincts, passions and surroundings, Crane places many intense obstacles in the way of Henry, such as decaying bodies, brutalizing officers, violence, pain and other similar things to the surface by displaying the depths of human nature to us.

Heredity and environment control the acts of the characters and they are subject to laws of nature beyond their control. Crane places great emphasis on human inability to act for oneself. He refers to mobs, crowds, and stampedes, pointing out how individual members are powerless to resist the will of the masses. Naturalism argues that individuals have little or no choice and free will. Henry acknowledges this naturalistic belief that what happens in life is largely determined, and man has no control over the actions. He does not want to think about the future battles, because the control of future is out of his hands. He thinks that his behaviours on the battlefield are determined, so he cannot predict what will happen in the future by dismissing his free will:

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"There was a little flower of confidence growing within him. He was now a man of experience. He had been out among the dragons, he said, and he assured that they were not as hideous as he had imagined them. In addition, they were inaccurate; they did not sting with precision. A stout heart often defied, and defying, escaped" (Crane, 1994, p. 106).

Crane views war as part of nature, a condition that is part of the physical environment. Crane many times repeats the idea that the individual loses his identity in the collective regimental personality. Crane writes of the military units as insects or machines. In the early march to the front, Henry wants to run away but cannot do so. He instantly sees that it would be impossible for him to escape from the regiment. In his flight from the battlefield, Henry discovers that he cannot find refuge and consolation in nature. Although he goes into the dark forest to seek comfort, he comes upon a ghostly corpse hidden in a natural chapel made of the boughs of trees. As he runs away from the scene panic-stricken, the bushes and trees seem to him to be blocking his progress. This is a picture of a youth who is helpless against his environment that is indifferent to his problems. Crane points out the serenity of nature in contrast to the fighting that is taking place. Nature does not work in accord with the needs and desires of man, in fact, nature in its indifference is more likely to seem hostile than helpful. Henry's experiences during the forest-chapel scene tell him that he is not nature's darling, that nature does not involve herself in the affairs of men.

The lack of organization or meaning in the war causes Henry to feel himself helpless that is felt by most of the soldiers. They cannot change the process of war and should obey the rules. This spirit of helplessness and predestination are strongly emphasized in the novel. They feel themselves as trapped, predestined away from being individuals:

"We are always being chased around like rats! It makes me sick. Nobody seems to know where we go or why we go. We just get fired around from pillar to post and get licked here and get licked there, and nobody knows what it is done for. It makes a man feel like damn' kitten in a bag" (Crane, 1994, p. 112).

In this very naturalistic picture of war, the soldiers are imprisoned by an unknown commander, and are regarded as insignificant beings that can do nothing about their plight:

"You boys shut right up! There no need 'a your wastin' your breath in long-winded arguments about this an' that an' th' other. You've been jawin' like a lot 'a old hens. All you've got t' do is to fight, an' you'll get plenty 'a that t' do in about ten minutes. Less talkin' an' more fightin' is what's best for your boys" (Crane, 1994, p. 112).

Henry is shocked to learn that he is very insignificant, which makes him look at the war pessimistically. One of the officers calls the soldiers as 'mule drivers', which indicates that they are not a polished unit of veteran, and do not have any importance:

"They fight like a lot a' mule drivers. I can spare them best of any. (...) New eyes were given to him. And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant" (Crane, 1994, pp. 121-122).

Henry realizes the dehumanization of war, but he accepts that he cannot change that. Henry and the other soldiers are seen as men who must do their responsibilities given to them by stronger forces. Henry is simply a man driven to fight and die. He does not know what causes him to do well in the battle. Crane implies that a naturalistic force drives the whole war effort.

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### Impressionistic Aspects of the Novel

Impressionism derives much from Romanticism in terms of description of sensory details and impressions. It emphasizes the accurate depiction of light and its effect like a shadow, darkness, and brightness with the employment of pure colours. Impressionism in art dates back to the 1830s with the works of Pissarro, Monet and Degas, but it was first coined in 1872 from the French painter Claude Monet work, *Impression, Sunrise*, and then term spread to other genres like music and literature. As quoted in Bert Bender, one historian of the painters' aesthetic has described it:

“The evident intent of the Impressionist was to catch the subject that he painted in one of the fleeting moments of its existence. He opened his eyes and looked at the world before him. He found that whatever objects he saw he perceived in virtue of the light they receive and as appearances conditioned solely by this light. Objects are coloured shapes, but one perceives the shapes only because they are coloured” (Bender, 1976, p.50).

The basic tenets of impressionism are light, colours and their arrangements, shadows, and their emotions and the soul. The superiority of this style lies within the music of the scene and the impressions it creates. Notable practitioners of the impressionistic style include Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad, and Charles Dickens, who made special use of the style in their works.

Crane is one of the chief impressionists of his day. Crane's style has often been called impressionistic since it displays a keen interest in sensorily received images that are depicted as reality. Joseph Conrad said of Crane, “He is the only impressionist and only an impressionist” (Holton, 1972, p. 6). Crane himself said that a novel “should be a succession of . . . clear, strong, sharply outlined pictures, which pass before the reader like a panorama, leaving each its definite impression” (Gullason, 1972, p. 187). Crane characterizes his people by giving an impression of a loud soldier, a tall soldier, a tattered soldier, or a cheerful soldier. He creates images that are impressions of mind rather than just impressions of line and colour. He develops images with figurative language, particularly personification. The cold, the fog, and the army are described as people with specific behaviours, feelings, and needs: “The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting” (Crane, 1994, p. 9).

Crane does not merely record incidents. The critic R. W. Stallman says that *The Red Badge of Courage*, “is a literary exercise in language, in the patterning of words” (Stallman, 1953, p. 175). Colour metaphor, an important aspect of impressionism, is used in order to describe the emotional states of the characters and how they perceive the happenings: “At last, however, he had made firm rebellion against this yellow light thrown upon the colour of his ambitions” (Crane, 1994, p. 12). The use of yellow refers to the feeling of cowardice felt by Henry whose mother discourages him from the war in this way. This metaphor shows that Henry denies his heroic dreams as necessarily falling to cowardice. Henry sometimes feels himself as an alienated and a lonely man who has been disconnected from the nature. Crane describes his melancholy by using the blue colour: “Now, with the new-born question in his mind, he was compelled to sink back into his old place as part of a blue demonstration” (Crane, 1994, p. 20).

The recurring colours in the novel serve to bring out certain characteristics of war, from fear to hope and purity. In the earlier parts of the book red, yellow, and grey dominate by bringing out fear and foreboding especially. Immediately preceding one skirmish, Crane describes the “faded yellow of their facings” to evoke foreboding of the danger in the battle to come. This also occurs in the first paragraph of the novel, where a “river, amber-tinted” and a landscape that “changed from brown to green” to bring out fear and foreboding concerning Henry's regiment, which will be soon exposed to the brutality of war. As Henry progresses through the war, the dominating colours change to blue, purple and gold. There are many descriptions of the Union soldiers as “the men in blue”, “the blue whirl of men”, or something of that

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nature, which are used to illustrate the soldiers' purity and strength as they move forward into battle. Blue fades on some men's uniforms, especially those of the dead, representing the fading of the characteristics it brings out. There are also several places toward the end where Crane uses purple and gold to represent the hope and triumph of the Union soldiers.

The regiment's moving out for the first time is described impressionistically, and all the colours employed mirror Henry's ambivalent situation:

"In the gloom before the break of the day their uniforms glowed a deep purple hue. From across the river the red eyes were still peering. In the eastern sky there was a yellow patch like a rug laid for the feet of the coming sun; and against it, black and pattern like, loomed the gigantic figure of the colonel on a gigantic horse" (Crane, 1994, p. 122).

The uniforms of the regiment are not the blue of melancholy and deep thought. Yellow is used as a symbol of courage and honour. Eyes that are red seem more violent and potentially harmful. The black of the colonel can be a fear of the unknown, a death symbol or a figure of authority like a judge.

Crane describes things as Henry perceives them, and Henry's observations are highly coloured by his emotions. Crane presents Henry's impressions of his surroundings. To convey these impressions, or psychological effects, he uses many images, symbols, and colour metaphors. For example, to Henry the campfires of the enemy across the river look like the 'red eyes' of a 'row of dragons.' The picture of the marching army is one of the striking images in the novel. They are described as moving monsters in order to foreshadow that war predestines human's fate, and acts like monsters:

"From off in the darkness came the trampling of feet. The youth could occasionally see dark shadows that moved like monsters. By using colours like a painter, Crane speaks of the enemy campfires as the red eyes: "Staring once at the red eyes across the river, he conceives them to be growing larger, as the orbs of a row of dragons advancing" (Crane, 1994, p. 22).

Henry, as part of the moving monster, feels very much alone with his thoughts and problems. The army is like a monster to him which forces him to be a part of it against his will and which makes him obey the orders he cannot understand.

The happenings in the war are not described traditionally, and Henry's doubts on his heads and his emotional situation are narrated through the images and use of colour. In order to refer to Indians, Crane uses the image of savage: "The guns squatted in a row like savage chiefs. They argued with abrupt violence" (Crane, 1994, p. 48). In the environment of war where great troubles and dangers arise, Henry describes the sky to produce a contrast between the chaos of war and the beauty of nature:

"As he gazed around him the youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun gleamings on the trees and fields. It was surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment" (Crane, 1994, p. 48).

In order to create an impressionistic effect, Crane also uses figurative language. In this way, he aims to make his images of war and of nature come alive. His use of synaesthesia (connecting two different senses, colour and sound, to create a unique image) is effective as he describes the battle as a 'crimson roar.' The tranquillity of the forest is broken with this image, and the destruction of war is felt. In the scene of Jim's death, Crane creates a mystic aura, and uses a unique combination of oxymoron and simile to make an image of the sun: "The red sun was pasted in the sky like a wafer" (Crane, 1994, p. 72). This sentence allows Crane to use nature imagery as a contrast to the mundane drudgery of the life of a soldier.

Crane's use of imagery to develop the mood of foreboding permeates the novel. Crane uses imagery in such a way that "a sudden flash of insight into a particular situation or physical setting" (Hough, 1972, p. 192) is given to the reader. The second chapter of the novel contains several examples of this imagery.

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Selected vocabulary words, similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech develop this sombre, dark mood. For example, Henry lives in a “mystic gloom”, a phrase that exemplifies Crane's talent in selecting the perfect words to express a mood. An example of Crane's use of simile occurs in his description of the regiments: they “were like two serpents crawling from the cavern of the night” (Crane, 1994, p. 23). Imagery for the impending battle is also developed using similar techniques. Fire and monster imagery combines with dark and gloom imagery. The battle is “the blaze” and “a monster”; the combatants are “serpents crawling from hill to hill”; Henry's regiment is a “blasting host” (a killing machine); “red eyes” (enemy campfires) watch across the rivers. All these images, which are metaphors, create an oppressive mood of foreboding.

Much of Crane's imagery uses animals to enhance the brutal aspects of war. Animal imagery appears frequently in the novel. At Henry's first exposure to battle, he believes the regiment will be “killed like pigs” (Crane, 1994, p. 33). When describing battles and retreats, Crane sometimes creates the feeling of scampering squirrels or diving birds of prey. This helps to portray the soldiers and their actions more fully than a direct description because it causes us to associate them with the most common qualities of that animal; with this, the enemy becomes “flies sucking insolently at his blood” (Crane, 1994, p. 115). The repeated use of animal imagery shows the inhumanity of war, bringing out its savageness. Crane also uses imagery to describe the movements of the forces, sometimes as waves, with sprays of light to bring out an image of a powerful, brutal ocean.

There are many instances where war is compared metaphorically either to an animal or to a machine. Throughout the novel, Crane frequently mentions about a machine or machine-like scenarios. Crane uses the machine motif as an impressionistic aspect to show that men lose vital human qualities during the war. The motif of war machine makes Henry's hopes for personal glory seem pathetic, even tragic. Henry sometimes urges his fellow soldiers on, but his encouragement is useless because “the regiment is a machine run down” (Crane, 1994, p.133). Crane also uses the theme of a mechanized war to make a grim comment on the industrialism of the late nineteenth century and its dehumanizing effect on labourers. Henry struggles with his inner and conflicting feelings, and cannot decide whether war is glorious or desperate thing. When Crane focuses on these mental debates of Henry and swings in emotion, usage of colour plays an important role in describing Henry's mental condition and his environment. After his negative and gloomy experiences about war, he begins to see war as “a blue machine.” This colour provides a contrast to his desperate situation, and indicates the beauty of nature that continues to shine through the death, dirt, and grime of war.

## Conclusion

Crane reflects the happenings in the outer world in addition to inner states of the characters and psychological portrayal of their fears. Unlike romanticism, the protagonist is not presented as an ideal hero, but all of his shortcomings, fears and deficiencies are given realistically. As an attempt of a young man to discover a real identity in the battle, the novel draws the narrow line between fear and bravery. Henry finally finishes his inner journey and he no longer deals with pressures of the battle. He eventually puts the past behind and does not let it bother his present state. He becomes a mature man and learns that there is nothing to be proud of or ashamed of in this life. His journey from immaturity to maturity is strongly emphasized. In order to show the dark and unenjoyable aspects of war, the author uses natural and realistic features which clearly reflects how a man come across difficult situations and learn to become a mature man.

The whole story mainly deals with the protagonist's evolution from a country boy to a veteran-like soldier. It is a chronicle of the boy's anxieties, moods and impressions as he progresses through the

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series of episodes making up the novel. The author acknowledges the naturalistic belief that what happens in life is largely due to chance and circumstance beyond man's control. The spirit of helplessness felt by Henry and the other soldiers who are trapped and predestined is broadly examined. Crane clearly brings out his naturalistic belief about the war by showing that the individual is unimportant to the war or the general scheme of things. In the universe of the novel, man is nothing but an animal determined by mechanistic forces over which he exercises no control. General atmosphere of the nature and the characters' feelings are given by using the colours and their reflections in their lives. Impressionistic usage of the colours has an important place for understanding the general happenings and inner states of the characters in the novel.

The Red Badge of Courage is considered as a pretext in the sense that the mixture of realistic things, naturalistic picture of events and imaginary things is given in the novel. This refers to the uniqueness and originality of the novel. The realistic narrative elements, naturalistic portrayal of life and characters, and reflection of the characters' individual senses are employed within the narrative structure of the novel. Crane's novel is narrated mostly objectively by using a third-person point of view with the influences of realism and naturalism. In addition to reflecting these objective portrayals, this novel also shows the inner experience of the protagonist with the help of impressionism. The fate of this protagonist is mostly based on his drive to be a part of the war adventure and to deal with the pressures of the war. During his service in the war atmosphere, Henry faces with the real face of life and encounters naturalistic concerns such as ideal life versus harsh reality, courage versus fear, spiritual crisis and loneliness in the context of impressionistic features, which help to understand the inner state and psychological situation of the characters. The author uses different kinds of imageries and symbols in order to show Henry's mental state and his surrounding world. Henry's struggle to be alive and survive in a crucial wartime has a great importance in Crane's narrative, because Crane's realistic, naturalistic, impressionistic writing styles heavily influences the general aura of the novel.

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