

Courage In For Whom The Bell Tolls By Ernest Hemingway And The Red Badge Of Courage By Stephen Crane

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Abstract—There are some values in the history of mankind that have always been cherished and nurtured. Courage is among those values. It is even taken for granted when it comes down to defining soldiers. The latter are often deemed as the embodiment of that great quality. In this respect, it is a theme that has been thoroughly tackled by two of the greatest writers in the history of the United States of America. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Red Badge of Courage*, the theme of courage has been thoroughly depicted. This paper examines those three steps that constitute the journey that leads to courage, which are the grappling with fear, the recovery of the sense of honor and the display of courage by mustering one's inner strengths.

Keywords— *courage, fear, honor, inner strengths, war*

I. INTRODUCTION

Stephen Crane never participated in a war. Yet, he is well known for having written a novel, *The Red Badge of Courage* that is renowned for its main character's struggle with his inner conscience and his journey from fear to his display of the utmost quality of any soldier, which is courage. After having spent eighteen years in Spain and witnessed the Spanish Civil War that lasted from 1933 to 1939, Ernest Hemingway, greatly endowed with the knowledge of the Spanish culture and character, wrote the novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in which he addresses the theme of courage.

In those two novels, the reader is presented with characters that are involved in Civil Wars that encapsulate the very essence of destruction. The examination of the theme of courage will revolve around three axes. The first one deals with the grip of fear that is very strong in any soldier. The second one addresses the theme of honor that is instrumental in enabling the characters to resist dishonor and he last one explores the way they draw on their inner strengths to exercise courage.

I. The grip of Fear

For a very long time, war was considered a normal step for men and a stage where they would be able to display their sense of honor and courage. It is worth noting that in many cases it is a matter of patriotism for the sake of defending great principles like freedom, democracy...or simply a matter of survival for nations that are attacked. No wonder to see that most of the greatest figures in the imagery of mankind were war heroes who achieved great feats. Thus, there has always been a sense of glory that accompanies war. This is the reason why there is another component of war that is often neglected and that is extremely serious, which is fear. Even for soldiers who enlists or who are drafted, it is rarely the first feeling that comes to mind. It is when they are faced with the realities of the battlefield that the feeling starts to build up in the war protagonists.

Similarly, when the feeling comes up, the first fear of soldiers is desertion. The latter is the most shameful crime that a soldier can commit. It is supposed to be inconceivable for any soldier. However, in the heat of action, they tend to realize that it is very difficult to suit the actions to the noble principles when they find out that it is their lives which are at stakes. So, when soldiers start to be aware of the destructive nature of war, they start questioning their true character. Henry Fleming, the main character of *The Red Badge of Courage* goes through the process once he finds himself about to engage in real combat for the first time:

Previously he had never felt obliged to wrestle too seriously with this question. In his life he had taken certain things for granted, never challenging his belief in ultimate success, and bothering little about means and roads. But here he was confronted with a thing of moment. It had suddenly appeared to him that perhaps in a battle he might run. He was forced to admit that as far as war was concerned he knew nothing of himself. (Crane: 8)

Fleming honestly acknowledges the fact that he does not know for sure if he would be able refrain from any urge of deserting if the situation becomes

confused and his life in jeopardy. It is all the more true that most of the soldiers who go to war are very young and face an unprecedented situation for them. However, they know that there are some standards that are very high in terms of expectations. They also look up to their war companions and the latter's behavior as a measuring stick. In Gary Paulsen's American Civil War novel *Soldier's Heart*, the young soldier Charley experiences the feeling of fear to the point of wetting himself:

He took a deep breath and let it out – his first whole breath since they had started walking across the meadow – and looked down and was shocked to see that he'd wet himself. Across the meadow, he thought; I must have done it then. Walking through the bodies. Maybe then. He couldn't remember doing it, could only remember the fear – it stopped his breath, mad him almost want to die – and it must have been then. He started to hide himself, turn away, but he saw that he was not alone, that several other men had done the same thing. First battle. (Paulsen: 18)

It can be noted that he is comforted by the fact that he is not the only one who wetted his trousers. Those reactions that people do not expect from soldiers are those of young men who enlist for glory and find out that war is mostly about destruction and killings. Once they find themselves in the battlefield, they often realize that fear is one of the most prevalent feelings they all share, prompting some to perform acts like desertion: The next passage from *The Red Badge of Courage* describes a scene witnessed by Fleming in which a young panic-stricken soldier decides to run, only to be rebuked by his superior:

The lieutenant of the youth's company had encountered a soldier who had fled screaming at the first volley of his comrades. Behind the lines these two were acting a little isolated scene. The man was blubbing and staring with sheeplike eyes at the lieutenant, who had seized him by the collar and was pommeling him. He drove him back into the ranks with many blows. The soldier went mechanically, dully, with his animal-like eyes upon the officer. Perhaps there was to him a divinity expressed in the voice of the other-- 35 stern, hard, with no reflection of fear in it. He tried to reload his gun, but his shaking hands prevented. The lieutenant was obliged to assist him. (Crane: 35-36)

Fleming is as surprised by the young soldier as he is a little marveled by the lieutenant who seems fearless and manages to keep his poise despite the critical situation they are entangled in. Not only does the lieutenant stop him from running, he also helps him save his face. From the U.S. civil war to the Spanish Civil War, the feeling of fear is a constant reality for soldiers. Even the guerilla soldiers described in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* who have an even better reputation when it comes to courage and fearlessness are found grappling with the issue of courage. The best example of Hemingway's book is Anselmo who is an old man who has great principles and is also endowed with a sense of discipline. He believes in the

Republic and is willing to follow orders and die for the cause. Yet, his main fear is to fall short when the moment comes because he has difficulties standing his ground and preventing his legs from running. He tells Robert Jordan the example of his first fight of the Civil War they participated in and the way they all scampered away without exactly knowing what they were doing:

We fought in Segovia at the start of the movement but we were beaten and we ran. I ran with the others. We did not truly understand what we were doing, nor how it should be done. Also I had only a shotgun with cartridges of large buckshot at a hundred yards, and at three hundred yards they shot us as they wished, as though we were rabbits. They shot much and well and we were like sheep before them. (Hemingway: 46)

Anselmo had the misfortune to find out the answers to the questions that Henry Fleming was asking. He got involved in a fight for the first time in his life with his comrades and they found themselves running. Therefore, the reality is that even if desertion is a serious felony for soldiers, in wartime, it can become the normal thing to do for people who cannot harness enough forces to man up and abstain from running. In fact, even for those who go to war with strong resolutions and who think that they are courageous enough, it might be difficult to cling to those resolutions when their lives are really endangered. Fleming who at first sets his standards against those of his comrades comes to that realization when he sees fear taking over some of his comrades first endowed with the best resolutions:

A man near him who, up to this time, had been working feverishly at his rifle suddenly stopped and ran with howls. A lad whose face had borne an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of he who dares give his life, was, at an instant, smitten abject. He blanched like one who has come to the edge of a cliff at midnight and is suddenly made aware. There was a revelation. He, too, threw down his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit. (Crane: 41)

The revelation that comes to the second young soldier is that of death threatening to take away his life. Death is indeed the ultimate enemy of human beings. It is the very symbol of destruction and nothingness for many people. It is what urges many soldiers to lose all their noble principles when they face its very destructive nature. Fleming finds out the same thing happening to him when he sees people running away towards all directions just to save their lives. It is all the more true that he feels that the mission of his whole regiment is to survive. Of course, it is an impression but it is also what fear does to people. It can derail people and impair one's judgment. Fleming quickly finds it out:

Others began to scamper away through the smoke. The youth turned his head, shaken from his trance by this movement as if the regiment was leaving him behind. He saw the few fleeting forms. He yelled then with fright and swung about. For a moment, in the great clamor, he was like a proverbial chicken. He lost

the direction of safety. Destruction threatened him from all points. Directly he began to speed toward the rear in great leaps. His rifle and cap were gone. His unbuttoned coat bulged in the wind. The flap of his cartridge box bobbed wildly, and his canteen, by its slender cord, swung out behind. On his face was all the horror of those things which he imagined. (Crane: 41-42)

This is the way Fleming discovers the effects of fear and how relevant it can make desertion appear. In the thick of battle, there is not much time to think and the reactions become almost instinctive. It is hard to reproach young soldiers who act that way in the midst of confusion. David Galloway also underlines the unique atmosphere of war that can be very unsettling and frightening: "There are things about battles that movies cannot teach you, and that is the true horrendous noise of battle: bullets cracking, bombs landing, artillery shells exploding, people screaming... It's just a cacophony that is almost deafening" (Galloway: 225)

In cases like the one faced by Fleming with his first encounter with war, heroism can be relegated to a secondary position. It is a pattern that has been noted in the evolution of the warring soldiers and Peter Alchinger who wrote *The American Soldier in Fiction, 1880-1963: A History of Attitudes Toward Warfare and the Military Establishment* highlights the ascending of individualism at the expense of heroic selfless deeds: "Yet the actions and attitudes of the nonhero, although they conflict with accepted patterns of conduct, are not selfish or cowardly. Rather they represent a new approach to the problem of individuality in a world where traditional values, especially the concept of heroic action, have become deceptive." (Alchinger:147)

Thus, once confronted with the destructive effects of war, some soldiers start developing an instinct of survival that can lead to an individualism that can hinder their potential for heroism. This is mostly enabled by the fact that they have sometimes difficulties to see the glory that they relate war to once in the battlefield. In his attempt to justify his flight, Fleming reckons that it is absolutely normal to save one's life in moments of danger such as the one he was just confronted with. He convinces himself that he resorted to the most strategic reaction possible and that he was right to do so:

If none of the little pieces were wise enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then, where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to very correct and commendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things. They had been full of strategy. They were the work of a master's legs. (Crane: 47)

For Fleming as well as for many other soldiers, fear is something that is unavoidable and that constitutes their most assailing feeling. Desertion is often what follows. In order to avoid it, they end up resorting to their sense of honor to refrain from acting cowardly.

II. The sense of Honor

It is true that fear is a feeling that can be prevalent in wartime. It is then relevant to explore the ultimate quality that can enable war protagonists to quell their desire to submit to their fear and act cowardly, which is Honor. It is something that goes beyond the individual's own principles. Honor is most of the time defined by a society's moral standards and values. It sets actions and deeds that are doable and undoable. By coming up to one's society's honorable qualities, individuals gain in pride. In contrast, when one falls short to a society's moral standards, it only brings about shame and discredit to the individual and his (her) relatives.

The reading of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* presents the reader with the Spanish society's acute sense of honor. It mostly uses the ultimate ritual in the Spanish culture that is Bullfighting that constitutes the confrontation of the Spanish character with his fear and ordeal of showing one's worth and high sense of honor. As a matter of fact, it is a cultural and sporting activity in which the bullfighter is faced with death and his performance shows how honorable and gracious he can be perceived in the society. When they come up to the expectations they become heroes and are lauded by a whole society. Nias Ashorn draws the parallel between Hemingway's characters' in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and the typical Spanish bullfighter confronted with danger and whose honor is tested:

Because *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a novel that takes place during the Spanish Civil War, the characters are in the almost constant presence of danger. Therefore, their honor is tested in much the same way that a bullfighter who is in the constant presence of danger has his honor tested. Just as matadors must show an allegiance to courage, skill, and grace under pressure, so must the guerrillas in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* show an allegiance to these same virtues in order to maintain their honor. (Achorn: 27)

Throughout the novel, anecdotes about bullfighters are called upon so as to compare their feats or failures to the performances of the fighters involved in the Civil War and their potential for courage or cowardice. It further highlights how important the sense of honor of a person is also inherent and ingrained in his society's measurements of honor. Bullfighters are thought to be the epitome of skill and courage in the Spanish society. However, it does not mean that they do not experience the feeling of fear. It rather demonstrates their capacity to overcome their fear and act honorably despite their fear. Pilar gives the example of Finito who is said to have been a bullfighter of great fear before the action and capable of weathering the feeling when under pressure: "Never have I seen a man with more fear before the bullfight and never have I seen a man with less fear in the ring." (Hemingway: 201)

It shows that however nagging the feeling of fear can be, it should not stop one from acting bravely. The

issue therefore is to be able to overcome one's fear and act as honorably as possible. Throughout the plot of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, almost all characters have in turn experienced authentic fear at some point. The feeling is exacerbated when they witness the firepower of the enemy and realize how formidable they can be. At the sight of the planes and war machines that fly over and go by them, they realize that they can be crushed by the enemy's firepower but there is still the bridge to be blown for the Republic to win a battle that can be very instrumental for the war's general outcome. From there on, Robert Jordan and most of the guerilla fighters belonging to the band of Pablo realize that they have to call on their sense of honor to carry out their task risking to be killed or choose the option of running away. The only one whose sense of honor is downgraded is Pablo who shows hostility and a desire to run away in order to survive. When Augustin tells Pilar: "...Pablo I know is smart", the latter replied telling him: "But rendered useless by his fear and his disinclination to action." (Hemingway: 104)

It might be argued that Pablo here undergoes the backlash of his fear taking over his sense of honor. It is dishonorable for a man to act below the standards set by his comrades. Pablo is not more fearful than the others. He simply no longer has the will to fight for a great and nobler common purpose. All the other members of the group are willing to take the risks knowing that their lives are at stake. It is clear there that the group's standards constitute the measurement for honorable actions. The same thing can be argued in *The Red Badge of Courage* where Henry Fleming is in constant comparison of his behavior and moral judgments with the ones of his comrades:

In regard to his companions his mind wavered between two opinions, according to his mood. Sometimes, he inclined to believing them all heroes. In fact, he usually admitted in secret the superior development of the higher qualities in others. He could conceive of men going very insignificantly about the world bearing a load of courage unseen, and, although he had known many of his comrades through boyhood, he began to fear that his judgment of them had been blind. Then, in other moments, he flouted these theories and assured himself that his fellows were all privately wondering and quaking. (Crane: 12)

Thus, Fleming is always questioning the heroic nature of his companions and their level of fear. He knows that he is judged by the standards of the others. It is also a way to find comfort in his potential failure in the event that some of them fail to be up to the task. What is inconceivable for him is to fail while the others manage to hold their ground and act bravely. They all got involved in the war thinking of the glory and fame they can get by acting honorably and courageously. It is therefore the sense of honor that accompanies war that has prompted Henry Fleming to go to the war: "He had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be

distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them." (Crane: 3)

It shows that Fleming's participation in the war also lies with his quest for glory. It is a known fact that human beings naturally crave for the recognition of their peers. There are many things men do because of the judgment of the others. Society plays a very important role in the shaping of the mind of young individuals and their motivations. The desire to be admired and respected urge many teenagers and young adults to act on the basis of the standards set by the society by and large. Hmoud Alotaibi underscores the potent influence of society in his work *The Power of Society in the Red Badge of Courage* :

To further support the idea that the ideological forces of society are somehow determining the fates of young men, Crane fills his protagonist with values that come from the mainstream of society. For example, the values of masculinity, heroism, and glorious warfare reflect biblical stories, Greek myths, and traditional teachings of history. The bible and traditional patriarchal society supports masculinity as a —good trait. Young men and women are taught both by —mobs of peers and by educational and religious institutions that men must display certain traits such as fortitude and confidence in contrast to feminine domestic traits. (Alotaibi: 32)

In other cases, honor has more to do with the fact of acting according to what is morally right. This is the highest sense of honor and Anselmo embodies the Spaniards that are endowed with that sense of honor. He is an old man who does not like to kill, except for when it is absolutely necessary but he is absolutely willing to lay down his own life for the general cause. The only problem he has is how to behave when he is stricken with fear. Not only is he willing to remain honorable, he goes as far as praying his Lord for granting him the quality to remain brave and gracious in times of danger:

I will do exactly as the Inglés says and as he says to do it. But let me be close to him, O Lord, and may his instructions be exact for I do not think that I could control myself under the bombardment of the planes. Help me, O Lord, tomorrow to comport myself as a man should in his last hours. Help me, O Lord, to understand clearly the needs of the day. Help me, O Lord, to dominate the movement of my legs that I should not run when the bad moment comes. Help me, O Lord, to comport myself as a man tomorrow in the day of battle. Since I have asked this aid of thee, please grant it, knowing, I would not ask if it were not serious, and I will ask nothing of thee again. (Hemingway: 352-353)

This passage shows that Anselmo is ready to die for the cause. All he wishes for is to be able on D-day to muster enough strength to refrain from running. He also thinks of the planes of the enemy, which they saw flying above them with a firepower that had been unheard of so far. Furthermore, he is a man of faith who wants to join his Creator on the best terms possible. Above all, he belongs to a group, a

community fighting for the same cause, and which he should not disappoint. He honestly confesses to Robert Jordan: "I have never seen a battle without running...I do not know how I would comport myself. I am an old man and I have wondered." (Hemingway: 47)

The same resolution can be found in Henry Fleming whose fear is slowly being taken over by the realization that he belongs to a greater entity. Indeed, human beings become selfless when they understand that they can thrive by taking into consideration the fate of their own community, race, country; in sum, that of mankind. For the preservation of mankind, there are some values like freedom and justice that are worth fighting for. During the American Civil War, the stakes were very high because people were fighting for economic, political reasons...but the most important one was the fight against slavery. Southern states were unwilling to grant black people their freedom and wanted to keep on exploiting them. In that respect, fighting against such an unfair regime is definitely a noble cause. Honor is into consideration when assessing the evolution of Henry Fleming from a frightened young soldier to a more resolute fighter prompted by his greater sense of belonging:

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 crisis. He was welded into a common personality which 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: 33)

It can be seen here that it is the feeling of belonging that comes at play. Fleming becomes conscious of a supreme reason that is worth fighting for. In *Soldier's Heart*, Gary Paulsen describes another young soldier, Charley, who is terrified after what he saw during his first war fight but does not run away because he sees none of his comrades do it: "I'll be there soon, he thought. I'll be there on the ground with them. If I don't run away I'll be there like a broken doll. We all will. None of us can live if we walk out there again. But he could not run away. None of the others had and he couldn't." (Paulsen: 16)

The young boy does not run only because his companions did not run. He does not want for fear of being downgraded in the eyes of society. It is his honor that he does not want to lose. The same thing can be said about Robert Jordan, Anselmo, Augustin, Pilar, Henry Fleming...Honor therefore enables soldiers to avoid disgrace. However, what enables them to display courage goes beyond honor, it is the ability to dig within themselves and summon up their inner strengths.

III. The call on inner strengths to achieve Courage

When human beings face a great danger, different reactions can be expected. Some people are disinclined to act when they face danger, others are willing to do just whatever it takes to survive, whereas the nobler ones can seek within themselves the best levers to do the right thing in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan called the *Inglés* by the local folk is somebody who demonstrates great inner strengths. He has his mind locked in his assignment because he is convinced that it is the right thing to do. He knows that there is a big chance that he might lose his life along the process. He even experiences an additional obstacle when he falls in love with the girl Maria. Notwithstanding all those elements, he knows that he does not have to put forward his own life or happiness when what he deems the fate of mankind is at stake: "He had only one thing to do and that was what he should think about and he must think it out clearly and take everything as it came along, and not worry. To worry was as bad as to be afraid." (Hemingway: 11)

He is definitely the embodiment of a resolute man fighting for a noble purpose with a clear consciousness of the risks. It does not mean that he does not want to survive and live a long and happy life with Maria. It simply means that he is able to think selflessly so as not to compromise himself or the cause. The fact that he decides to disregard his own worries and set all his mind to his task is a demonstration of his commitment. After the fashion of Hamlet in Shakespeare's work *Hamlet*, too much thinking can lead to prevarications that can cause postponement of actions whereas actions can be the only thing needed in some cases.

Besides, actions are what leads to victory in wartime. Anybody who thinks too much about his own life can be tempted not to engage in actions. Henry Fleming also undergoes the same process. He flees the first time he is involved in a war fight because he has the impression that the movement of all the regiment was directed towards the rear and survival. He has too many issues and questions going on his mind. When he wonders too much about how he would act in case of fear and great danger without having the response. He makes up his mind: "He finally concluded that the only way to prove himself was to go into the blaze, and then figuratively to watch his legs to discover their merits and faults." (Crane: 11)

Fleming decides to see himself in action before assessing his potential for courage. It shows that he is intent on following a process that can tell him more about his own character. He does not have the same resolution or commitment that Robert Jordan has. Yet, Robert Jordan is the archetypal committed fighter who is not always easy to find. In spite of his commitment, he also has to find the courage to continue within himself. Most of the other characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as well as in *The Red Badge of Courage* have to go through a much difficult process that still requires to find out and unleash their inner strengths.

In fact, if courage is the ultimate quality in wartime, fear is the most prevalent feeling. The reason why those characters go through a much difficult process is mostly due to their greater fear. If the sense of honor is almost present in all those characters, a strong resolution is sometimes lacking and the latter is granted by a better knowledge of politics and a clear consciousness of what one fights for. Robert Jordan knows exactly what he fights for because he is knowledgeable and understands the dangers of fascism. The outcome of Spanish Civil War the justifies his sacrifice as Janet Pérez and Wendell Aycock states it in their book entitled *The Spanish Civil War in Literature*: "The heroic resistance of the Spanish people gave hope and inspiration to democratic forces all over the world" ("Pérez, Aycock 2007: 9)

For Henry Fleming, his main motivation lies mainly with a need for recognition and the pursuit of glory. Still, even if fear is the most pervasive feeling, there are ways to overcome it. It is what courage is really about. It is not totally the absence of fear, it is rather the capacity to act rightly despite one's fear or worries. Doc Peret, one of the characters of *Going After Cacciato* by Tim O'Brien believes that the capacity to demonstrate courage is not necessarily linked with fearlessness:

The issue, of course was courage. How to behave? Whether to flee or fight or seek accommodation? The issue was not fearlessness. The issue was how to act wisely in spite of fear. Spitting the deep-running bilges; that was true courage. He believed this. And he believed the obvious corollary: the greater a man's fear, the greater his potential courage. (O'Brien: 72)

It might be argued that some people display their potential for courage when they are more fearful. When a man comes to the point where he thinks he has nothing to lose, he becomes extremely bold. In the two plots, we can see that many of the soldiers have at some point reached that point, thereby maximizing their potential for action. In the case of Henry Fleming, his transformation is absolutely stunning. From a sheer feeling of fear, he manages to compare himself to his companions and refer to the norms of honor so as to truly achieve glory. At some point, he even feels jealousy for his wounded companions who bear the sign of their courage and bravery: "At times he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage." (Crane: 56)

In point of fact, when soldiers come back from war wounded, people will always tend to believe that they were inflicted the wounds while defending the principles they hold dear. From this point on, Fleming's fear is replaced by a desire to benefit from the same consideration granted to his companions. The other factor that incites him to switch on his courageous mode is the impression of harassing that he feels more and more from the enemy making him aware that he has to react in order to survive. It even turns him a little

mean inside and he realizes that he is capable and willing to inflict great pain to the enemy: "He felt that he and his companions were being taunted and derided from sincere convictions that they were poor and puny. His knowledge of his inability to take vengeance for it made his rage into a dark and stormy specter that possessed him and made him dream of abominable cruelties." (Crane: 101)

Fleming starts to feel that he needs to prove that he is not weak. He realizes that he no longer is scared to death; for all the events that happened have showed him that his desire for vengeance and self-assertion can be greater than his fear. He thereby starts to turn from a fearful person into a person who has nothing to lose. In this case, his thoughts are no longer preventing him from acting. He rather exploits them to activate the inner levers that can enable him to act in a brave manner beyond his own imagination:

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. Once he, in his intent hate, was almost alone, and was firing, when all those near him had ceased. He was so engrossed in his occupation that he was not aware of a lull. (Crane: 102)

The attitude described is in stark contrast with Fleming's behavior when he was first engaged in a combat and had to flee. It has to do with the actions of a man who has turned fearless because of his desire to seek revenge and his hate for the enemy caused by the numerous attacks they have undergone. Crane was praised for his understanding of the psyche of soldiers who go through those different steps. Henry Fleming epitomizes it more than anybody else. He sums up the different feelings that assail soldiers in the course of war, that are fear, prevarications, transformations and willing actions at last that can go either way. Thanks to his actions, Fleming ends up gaining the admiration and respect of his comrades and superiors. The overzealous lieutenant commanding them beams with pride at the sight of the brave actions of Fleming: "The lieutenant was crowing. He seemed drunk with fighting. He called out to the youth: "By heavens, if I had ten thousand wild cats like you I could tear th' stomach outa this war in less'n a week!" He puffed out his chest with large dignity as he said it." (Crane: 103)

The lieutenant is extremely proud of the young soldier. He cannot imagine that this is the same soldier who ran away during his first battle in the war. It substantiates the fact that heroism in wartime is most of the time a matter of process. Fleming is lucky to have had a second chance and he manages to make the most of it. All his questions have been answered in the course of few days. Yes, he was scared to death when he first was engaged in a battle; he subsequently ran away but now he knows that he is capable of heroic acts. It is sometimes hard for human beings to

know what they are truly capable of doing as long as they are not put in situations that request them to draw on their inner strengths and find it out themselves. After all these events, Fleming is left musing:

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 103)

Henry Fleming has discovered that it is a process that has led him to the heroism that he eventually displays. He refers to the term "mountain" because the journey has not been easy. The same can be said about Robert Jordan who unfortunately passes away by the end of the story. But he does so courageously by overcoming his own fear and salvaging his honor. He sacrifices his life allowing people like the girl he loves Maria or Pilar to survive. It is also by summoning his inner strengths that he manages to fulfill his mission.

CONCLUSION

Courage is a concept that is often overused. It is often equated with fearlessness while it is not the case. The stories recounted in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and in *The Red Badge of Courage* show that it is more about overcoming one's fear by drawing on one's inner strengths, thereby preserving one's honor.

The most pervasive feeling in wartime is fear and almost all soldiers go through that feeling and have to overcome it. Robert Jordan and all the members of the band of Pablo have all experienced it, especially when they saw the planes and the demonstration of the enemy's firepower. Henry Fleming has also experienced it to the point of running away in his first war battle.

It is honor that stops most soldiers from deserting and giving in to their fear. It is that sense that if they fail to come up to the expectations of the moral standards set by the society, they will be a disgrace for themselves and their families. Those standards are even higher for warring soldiers who are always expected to be brave and courageous. That sense of honor is deeply displayed in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in conjunction with the analogy of the Spanish ritual of the bullfighting.

At last, it is by tapping into one's inner strengths at the end of the process that one can give free rein to the expression of courage. It is a beautiful and noble quality that comes as a reward at the end of a hectic journey. For Fleming it brings him about the admiration

of his companions and superiors. For Robert Jordan, it is under the guise of an honorable death.

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