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THE WARRIOR IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY

A thesis submitted to  
Regis College  
The Honors Program  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for Graduation with Honors

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
II. The Castes of Men	7
III. The Warrior throughout History and Myth	20
IV. The Warrior and Technology	24
V. The Genetics of the Warrior	30
VI. The Warrior Today	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY	40

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Throughout history mankind has worked tirelessly to develop more efficient and more powerful ways to kill one another. Wars are fought for many reasons including land, trade, money, revenge, justice and the ever increasing demands placed on the limited resources found on earth.

When I was growing up I knew what I wanted to become before I truly knew what exactly was going to be required of me. I wanted to become a soldier to fight the bad guys. I wanted to stand up for those individuals who could not stand up for themselves, and I wanted to fight for their freedom. The first toy that I truly desired was a gun, but that was the one toy that was off limits to me. My parents did not want to support violence by providing their son with a toy gun, but when I started turning potato chips, Legos, and drills into guns, they realized that this was a fight they were not going to win. No matter how much they wanted to shield their son from violence, I was drawn to it. As I grew older I was pulled towards contact sports where I could push myself to my limits and be in direct competition with others.

My world changed when I was in second grade, on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. I was sitting in my second grade classroom just settling in for the day when our teacher called us all in, visibly upset. We were told that something bad

happened but were not given any explanation as to what it was. When we were released from school that day my parents sat us down and explained what happened in New York, how bad men had hurt a lot of people. My life changed on September 11th, when terrorists struck the World Trade Centers and killed thousands of American civilians. My initial reaction at this age was confusion as to what it all meant and how it impacted me as a seven year old boy. With education this knowledge quickly transformed into a feeling of fright, fright that a terrorist was hiding in my closet or that my house was going to be the target of an attack. This fear gripped my seven year old mind for a time before I talked about it with my parents. They quieted this fear and explained to me that I was safe because brave men and women in the military were protecting this country from terrorists attacking again. I didn't realize it at the time but this notion had such a profound effect on what I hold as my deepest desire and would shape the rest of my life to this day. At the time I believed this statement to be true and without fault, today I still believe that the military serves the people to protect against terrorism and to prevent tragedy from befalling the American public, accepting the fact that it is not a perfect system but rather the best system based off of the current resources available. This belief showed me that my deepest desire is to defend those who cannot defend themselves, and provided a fuel for the warrior spirit inside me. I believe that same warrior spirit has been found in generations upon generations of the warrior caste, it is the intrinsic drive to be the best version of you can be and to fight and defend the opportunity for others to do the

same. The warrior throughout history will be discussed in chapter three and so will the spirit of the warrior.

I started to search for ways in which I would be able to serve and to develop this desire to defend others within me, and I stumbled upon the military academies. One of the defining books in my high school years that helped to shape the direction that I wanted to go was Lone Survivor by Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell. The words of his book and the spirit of the warrior connected with me on a deeper level and inspired me to become one of the Navy's best. I started training for the physical tests that I knew that I would be facing and aimed my motivation to improving my athletic abilities on land and in the water. I quickly learned a deep truth about myself: I cannot stand swimming. I tend to sink like a rock in water so I quickly realized that I would need to search for a different path and turned my attentions to the United States Military Academy at West Point. When I did not receive an appointment to West Point I applied and was accepted into the Reserve Officer's Training Corps at the University of Colorado. Here I have honed my focus from a broad desire to serve in the armed forces to specifically the Infantry of the United States Army which I will be commissioning as a Second Lieutenant, in May of 2016, with the aspiration of joining the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment. This way I can physically get in the fight, while staying out of the water, I hope.

In a recent study by the Harvard Institute of Politics they found that while 60% of millennials, the group of fighting age, support sending troops to fight ISIS less than 16% of those asked would be willing to join the armed forces. Within that 16% only four percent said that they will definitely join if needed (Volpe, 2015). With numbers like this it is easy to see that less and less people are inclined to join the profession of arms even in the event of a large conflict.

With political correctness, an unethical media system and increasing rules in warfare, the warrior is no longer a generally accepted caste. Ray Starmann the creator of US Defense Watch has this to say about the relationship between the warrior and political correctness in his article All Glory is Fleeting – The Demise of the Warrior Ethos “The warrior ethos is being replaced by an ethos of political correctness... who have but one mission, the destruction of the warrior in the American military” Starmann goes on to say later that “Even the most hardened tough guys are so smothered by the sea of PC-ness that they must remain silent, or they will be flipping burgers in 24 hours. The word is out: warriors need not apply” (Starmann, 2015). The warrior by nature is not a politically correct individual, to find evidence of this simply look up Patton’s speeches or read the books of any member of the special operations community.

The media does not help with the image of the warrior due to its unethical system of reporting on the actions of the warrior not taking into account the real life danger that the warrior is in and the short amount of time the warrior has to

react to complicated situations. In the book Lone Survivor by Marcus Luttrell three goat herders come upon the SEAL's in their reconnaissance positions, three choices are left to the compromised men: kill the goat herders, bind them and leave them (most likely resulting in the death of the herders), or let them go and take their chances with the Taliban. One of the factors that was brought up in the book was the impact that the media would have, and it cost the lives of three brave men. Luttrell says "these are the problems of the modern U.S. combat soldier, the constant worry about overstepping the mark and an American media that delights in trying to knock us down. Which we have done nothing to deserve. Except, perhaps, love our country and everything it stands for" he says at another time "And if the liberal media and political community cannot accept that sometimes the wrong people get killed in war, then I can only suggest they first grow up and then serve a short stint up in the Hindu Kush" (Luttrell, 2007). When warriors are portrayed as the bad guys by the media, and then made to pay the price in order to satiate the thirst for justice of the people, warriors will disappear from society.

The direction that I would like this thesis to take is an analysis of the warrior caste. Specifically I would like to explore the importance of these men who throughout history have picked up the profession of arms, and excelled in it. In On Combat LTC Dave Grossman describes these men as the "killing machines" on the field of battle, they are the ones that all others support and who are seen doing most of the killing work (Grossman, 2008). In this thesis is the

idea that the warrior is a separate entity entirely from those who participate in the profession of arms and in combat itself as will be covered in chapter two in a discussion of the castes of men. By exploring who is and is not a warrior my intention is to enlighten those who are confused as to the purpose of those men and to highlight their importance and how they fit into the scheme of today's democratic society.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Castes of Men

The warrior caste is a unique group among men who are distinguished by their dedication to fighting for whatever their cause may be. While many of the same characteristics define the warrior, criminal, and mercenary there are few important distinctions that will be explored later in this chapter. The fight that the warrior has dedicated their life to must be physical in nature where they are putting their own safety on the line. The idea of having a physical conflict being a defining characteristic of the warrior rules out the possibility of keyboard warriors and those who believe themselves to be a member of the warrior caste but do not desire confrontation. For a person to be in the warrior caste they must subjugate themselves to the possibility of loss of life.

It is difficult to dissect who and what makes up the warrior caste and it is not as simple as just looking at the militaries of today and saying “those are the warriors”. There are: support elements, combatants who do not fall in with the warriors, and most easily distinguishable are the individuals who do not commit violence whether by strong moral convictions or due to a lack of fortitude for it. To begin to define the warrior caste it is helpful to first define the groups of individuals who do not qualify among the ranks of the warriors. There is nothing

right or wrong with identifying with any particular classification. Every individual has been molded into who they are today through a combination of their genetic predispositions and the environment and thus react to the same situation in drastically different ways. It is general consensus of researchers who study the nature versus nurture theory in the development of personality, that it is in fact an unmeasurable combination of both that lead to how people develop (Specht et. al., 2014; Ogrocki, 1998; Jang et. al, 1998).

Plato contemplated what the ideal society would look like, and how each individual would fit into such a society, playing a single part and nothing more. The Republic of Plato makes the argument that within a utopian society each individual has a place which is essential to the functioning of civilization. In Plato's utopia there are three castes: the producers, consisting of those who provide some service for society; the auxiliaries, a caste that he specifies as the warriors; and the guardians who are the rulers of the utopia (Bloom, 1968). When The Republic of Plato was written the world was far from the utopia that was described and in the world that exists today it is even farther. The castes of men described by Plato have to be complicated to truly understand the part that each individual plays in society. For this thesis there are five distinct castes of people: The conflict averse, the supporters, the fighters, the rulers, and the warriors each in turn will be discussed below.

All of the castes play an incredibly important role in relation to the functioning of society. The castes that are discussed before the warrior caste make up the population from which the leaders are produced and provide a balance to even out the violent and aggressive attributes of the warriors. Individuals from any of the castes who possess balance and wisdom provide the guidance for the blind aggression of the warriors and form the rulers, Plato defines these wise men as the guardians of the society. They keep the auxiliaries under control and provide the direction that is needed in order maintain balance and minimize the chaos in society (Bloom, 1968).

### The Conflict Averse

The first group to define consists of the individuals who reject conflict either by principle or because of some other aversion to the characteristics of combat. Most people actually fall into this group. LTC (Ret.) Dave Grossman speaks at length in his book On Killing about the aversion that men innately feel when asked to kill other men. He says “This lack of enthusiasm for killing the enemy causes many soldiers to posture, submit, or flee, rather than fight; it represents a powerful psychological force on the battlefield” (Grossman, 2009). Individuals from this group, when found in the military, are the individuals who refuse to fire their weapons with any sense of accuracy. Due to the nature of their objection to violence it can be assumed that the conflict averse will be found in supporting jobs such as intelligence, health services, or any other jobs which

are critical, but minimize the chances of having to do use violence as a tool. Yet as Grossman points out in on killing these individuals do not always have the choice to take these jobs. These individuals can end up on the front line in conflicts (Grossman, 2009).

Not all men who are conflict averse are risk averse in the heat of battle. There are countless stories of men who were by choice not willing to participate in violent acts who distinguished themselves on a battle field. One of the most famous examples of a conflict averse individual distinguishing himself for bravery was Private First Class Desmond Doss. Doss was a conscientious objector during World War II. Due to his religious beliefs as a seventh day Adventist he refused to carry a rifle or use it to kill. He served as combat medic in the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for going above and beyond the call of duty rescuing the lives of many of the soldiers within his unit until being wounded by a grenade while treating wounded in front of friendly lines<sup>1</sup>.

It is my belief that the concepts presented can be generalized to men outside of the military, for the military that is currently in place in the United States is an all-volunteer force comprised from the civilian populace. These same men, I hypothesize, could be looked at upon re-entry into the civilian populace, or prior to their joining of the armed services, and their responses to conflict, armed or otherwise, would be the same. In the civilian world these

individuals will not be as easily identifiable by their jobs, more so by their demeanor and their resistance to conflict. This resistance is more likely to be seen in verbal confrontations or the lack thereof and it would be a rare circumstance to see this individual approach someone and confront them directly. At this point I would like to again emphasize that there is nothing wrong with this behavior it is simply different than any of the others and necessary in its own way.

The conflict averse individuals provide a crucial balance in society. To explain this, imagine a society without the conflict averse providing a balance to the more aggressive factions. Imagine that society is filled entirely with aggressive, strong willed individuals. There would be too many people trying to assert their authority and trying to contest the ways in which things were done, never willing to compromise on solutions. Nothing would ever be accomplished.

### The Supporters

The next group identified is the men who support those who do all of the fighting. This group functions in the military as support for the warriors and the fighters (which we will look at next). Support is a very broad definition of the job that they do, examples could include: resupply, transportation, indirect fire weapons, weapons that replace the human interaction with a more mechanical or technological interaction, and any other position where they are able to provide some sort of service to the warrior class. In On Killing LTC Grossman references

a study commissioned by General S. L. A. Marshall in regards to the lethal capacity of his soldiers in World War II. Marshall's findings said "in situations where there were several rifleman together in a position facing an advancing enemy, only one was likely to fire while the others tend to such "vital" tasks as running messages, providing ammo, tending wounded, and spotting targets" (Grossman, 2009). The men in the position not firing but performing 'essential' tasks would be the supporters. They are not likely to be firing their weapons at the enemy, but they may be telling the shooter where they are and how many, as well as reloading weapons, magazines and refilling the ammunition supply. A perfect example of this can be found in the book One Man's War written by Charles Kelly, a Medal of Honor recipient in World War II. Throughout the story of Kelly's gallantry others within the building that Kelly and his company were defending were acting as spotters, ammo reloaders and medical aid to the wounded. Kelly said "I seemed to be the official sniper for the room. Somebody would yell, 'Hey, Kelly, come here' and then he would show me some Germans" the others acted as spotters for Kelly instead of engaging the enemy themselves. At another time Kelly describes another soldier "A man from upstairs came down with about fifty BAR [browning automatic rifle] clips, lay down beside me and began feeding me ammo" (Kelly & Martin, 1944). This is not to say that if the situation called for it, or their life depended on it, that they would not fight it is only that in the presence of a fighter or warrior the supporter will participate in a role that does not infringe on his desire not to kill his fellow man.

### The Fighters

The next distinction gets slightly more difficult than the other castes. The fighters are the men who fight but are not warriors. The difference may not seem obvious at first glance as both the fighter and the warrior are engaged in the act of combat, but I believe that Heraclitus summed up the truth of the matter when he said “Out of every one hundred men, ten shouldn't even be there, eighty are just targets, nine are the real fighters, and we are lucky to have them, for they make the battle. Ah, but the one, one is a warrior, and he will bring the others back” (Murray, 2004). These men are likely to embrace conflict and confrontation and can be found in units on the front line such as infantry units, cavalry units or any other position where they will be facing the enemy head on. These are the men that Grossman describes in his book On Killing as the firers, the ones who when engaged fight back (Grossman, 2009) and they are the ones who in the study by Swank and Marchand that were identified as suffering a psychological trauma (1946). They will have less of a resistance to engaging the enemy in combat and will provide a critical service on the battlefield.

The Fighters are the men who are in the fight that make up the majority of the fighting force, but they do not have the natural talent for violence and aggression that is seen in the warrior caste. Grossman talks about aggression as a gift in his book On Combat it is a gift he says much in the same way that some people are gifted at science or at interpreting history (Grossman, 2008). It is a

defining characteristic of the warrior that can be trained into the fighter but it is not innate. Over the summer of 2015 I was given the privilege of working with a number of outstanding men of the 82 Airborne Division. The distinction between the warrior and the fighter and their predisposition to aggression was made incredibly clear during a brief interaction between a platoon sergeant and one of the privates in the platoon. During the training the private was hesitant in his clearing of a building and this lack of violence caused a problem with the execution of the exercise. The platoon sergeant called over the private and asked him "how would you kill me right now" the private, hesitant to respond said "with my gun". The platoon sergeant looked at the private and painted a graphic image of how he would end the life of another in hand to hand combat. In this situation the private is clearly a fighter, he accepts the fact of killing another and was deployed in combat to back up his claim. The platoon sergeant is the warrior with a clear aggressive personality.

At this point an important distinction can be made between the fighter and the warrior. The fighter may have some sort of skill in the profession of arms, he may be disciplined, trained and eager to perform his violent duties, but he lacks the talent that is seen in the warrior. Talent is the natural ability that does not need to be developed. The fighter does not have a talent for aggressive and violent acts; rather he has developed the skill for such actions over the course of years of rigorous training by those who fall into the warrior caste.

The fighter at this point seems to play a role that only is second fiddle to the warrior in conflict, yet it is a critical part of the formula to the machine that is war. The fighter provides the majority of the manpower in war and makes up most of the tool that the rulers use to, as Clausewitz says in his book On War “extend their policies through other means” (Clausewitz, Howard & Paret, 1976). Without the fighter in this system the warrior would not be able to be employed as an effective force.

### The Rulers

When an individual from any caste distinguishes himself and earns the respect of the people they no longer are a part of the caste they were originally. They maintain the same characteristics from their group that made them who they are, but they are no longer able to operate solely within that capacity. In the Republic of Plato the rulers are referred to as the guardians, yet in the utopia designed by Plato the guardians are born to their position (Bloom, 1968). This is not the case in the United States today as is evidenced by the fact that we hold free elections where anyone from any walk of life can be chosen to lead. The ruler is unique in the way in which they are made a part of the ruler caste and not born to it. In all other castes individuals are formed by biology and the environment from a young age, but the ruler is selected from the other castes through some combination of traits that allow them to be a leader of all types of

men. This is because the ruler is willing to employ ways of the pacifist and the warrior depending on the situation that they find themselves in.

The ruler is made unique in their caste by the trust that the people place in them. In the democratic society that is present in the United States today the elected officials are the rulers. The majority of the people, hailing from all castes of men have voted to put their faith in the judgement and trust that these officials will do what is best for the people. In times of peace the people will desire to maintain their security, their wealth, and their freedoms. In wartime the same people expect that the leaders will do everything in their power to provide protection and stability. The Ruler must make the hard calls in order to maintain these basic rights for their constituents. If they fail in this duty it is the right of the people to seek out and elect new rulers to take their place.

This process is how democratic societies have been able to determine righteous authority in their eyes. The rulers must work to maintain the trust of the people and above all else be wise. In the Republic of Plato it is said that the leaders must be wise above all else, yet in the age of democratic societies, the rulers cannot be born to be leaders as they are in the Republic of Plato. It is not their job to do violence on behalf of the people, but it is their job to know when violence is needed to protect the people (Bloom, 1968). This then is how the warrior gets his mission. Yet an important note must be made at this point it seems that in american society the people tend to shy away from selecting

warriors to be their rulers, or the warriors stay out of the ruling sphere. Recent examples of this can be seen by great military leaders such as Colin Powell, George Patton, and James Mattis turning down opportunities to lead the country.

### The Warrior

The warrior is unique in his propensity and talent for aggressive actions. A fighter can be trained and desensitized to violence by attending rigorous training such as the U.S. Army Ranger School or by working with individuals like the platoon sergeant mentioned in the section about the fighter. Even with all of this training the fighter will reach a breaking point which is described later in this thesis in a study by Swank and Marchand (1946). The warrior on the other hand lacks that breaking point and is born into the world with a talent for aggression. The environment that the individual is raised in seems to play a major factor into the development of the warrior evidence of this can be seen in the process in which the Spartans developed warriors which will be discussed in chapter3. It dictates the path that he will follow when he has reached adulthood and realized the potential for violence. Yet we cannot discount the important role that genetics plays in the warrior either (Specht et. al., 2014; Ogrocki, 1998; Jang et. al, 1998).

The second trait that can be found in the warrior is a strong moral compass that is developed during the formative years of the warrior. The development of ethics and morals is a contested topic within psychology right now with sides arguing the impact of parenting, religion, biology, and institutions

as major factors in the development. For the purpose of this thesis I will avoid the controversy and say that all of these play a part in the development of ethics and morals. It is a critical piece of the warrior though because the line between warrior and criminal psychopath is a thin one and all it takes are the wrong influences to go down a path of criminal violence. The warrior's defense against this is a strong moral compass. It needs to be driven into them from a young age. If it is not, the warrior may be more prone to act in a manner that is violent purely for the sake of the thrill of violence. LTC Grossman cites in On Killing a study by Swank and Marchand that shows that those soldiers who were able to survive and thrive in 60 days of continuous combat also showed symptoms of psychopaths and sociopaths. Yet it can be seen that time and time again some of the best warriors, throughout history into the present, never committed an unsanctioned act of violence.

Sanctioned acts of violence are categorized as actions that take place through the authorization of the rulers. Just War theory developed by St. Augustine states three criteria for jus ad bellum, justice for war: just cause, right intention, and righteous authority (Mattox, n.d). The last of the criteria is the most critical for the warrior. For the actions of the warrior to be justified they must follow righteous authority. The ruler is selected by the people, from the people, and given the authority to decide what direction to take the people in. Only the ruler can sanction the violence of the warrior. This distinction, which appears small, separates the warrior from the criminal. A violent criminal has no authority

to act on, and commits violent acts according to their own desires, emotions, or misguided ideas of right and wrong. It is an important distinction to be made between the criminal and the warrior as many of the same tendencies to aggression and violence can be exhibited in both.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Warrior throughout History and Myth

The warrior caste has been around since the beginning of time the record of this can be seen throughout recorded human history. History is full of myths and legends of the impossible accomplishments of men who had a propensity towards violence and who had taken their talents and combined them with the skills of combat into an art form. We read ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Iliad, whose pages contain the stories of heroes and villains. There may be some truth to these myths that surround such men and it is through these stories that we are able to analyze the cultures that embrace these rough men.

One of the earliest examples of the warrior society and also the textbook example of the warrior in the ancient world are the Spartans. The Spartans were the foremost fighters in the ancient world. They trained for war starting as a child and focused this training throughout their lifetimes. The distinction in this society is hard to make between the true warriors and the fighters due to the fact that the entire culture revolved around the concept of dying a good death. In a culture like the one that the Spartans developed it is nearly impossible to make that distinction, simply because if a man was not a warrior he was forced to act like one anyways. One assumption that can be made from historical texts to differentiate between the soldiers in Spartan society and the warriors is provided

by Paul Cartledge in The Spartans, after completion of the training from age seven until age twelve there was a special unit that young Spartans could be selected for: the Crypteia. Cartledge provides another name for use, Special Operations Executive. There is some debate as to what exactly the duties and responsibilities of the Crypteia actually were, but it is known that it was a special privilege to be selected and that only those men who showed a talent for the Spartan training were selected, a talent for the violence that was sought from a violent civilization (Cartledge, 2003).

The people of ancient India followed a very strict caste system and at the top were the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. The Brahmins were the spiritual leaders who often lived apart from the rest of society whereas the Kshatriyas were the warriors who most often were in charge of the government (Dowling, 2015). The warriors played a critical role in the society of ancient India much as the warriors in Sparta did. Unlike the Spartans, the ancient Indian people followed the Hindu tradition which focused heavily on peace and balance within oneself and the collective. Yet even with this emphasis on peace there is still evidence that the warriors were justified in their actions and were powerful in society. Evidence can be found all throughout the Bhagavad Gita as to the justifications for violent action of the warrior, Arjuna, in a great battle for his brother's kingdom. The Bhagavad Gita is a part of the greater epic the Mahabharata.

In the Bhagavad Gita the great warrior Arjuna is being counseled throughout by the divine ruler Krishna, a Hindu Deity. Arjuna struggles with the fact that he is about to wage battle against his own countrymen and family. Krishna gives spiritual advice on how to overcome this fear and to justify the actions of Arjuna. One of the most outstanding quotes in relation to the duties of the warrior class comes in the second chapter of the tale. Krishna says to Arjuna “Considering your dharma, you should not vacillate. For a warrior, nothing is higher than a war against evil. The warrior confronted with such a war should be pleased, Arjuna, for it comes as an open gate to heaven. But if you do not participate in this battle against evil, you will incur sin, violating your dharma and your honor” (Eknath, 1985). Even in this ancient culture that focused on peace more than war as the focal point of society, it is evident that there is a great amount of emphasis placed on the warrior doing their job, fulfilling their dharma. It would be considered worse for a warrior to abstain from battle than it would be to kill one’s own kinsmen. In the secular society we live in today there is still a strong conviction among all who serve in the military to maintain your honor. The fifth of the seven Army Values is honor, and it is drilled into all soldiers at all levels and in all areas of the military.

To talk of the history and myth of the warrior without analyzing the role of the warrior in the Iliad by Homer would be to miss one of the most critical epics throughout human history. The Iliad is a story about the greatness of the ancient Greek warriors and the passion that drives them. On both sides of the conflict

we see the example of the one warrior who unifies the armies. On the side of the Greeks is Achilles, a legendary fighter whose abilities to execute violence against his enemies made him a force among men. On the side of the Trojans, Hector, a warrior to rival Achilles. One thing that both of these men had in common was the respect and admiration of their fellow soldiers and at the very least, respect from the people in their respective societies. This was historically the honor that was given to men of the warrior caste and they were made into myth and legend by their people upon glorious death.

In countless examples throughout history the warrior is glorified by the poets and people in society. One such example can be seen in the retelling and the fame that the Battle of Thermopylae has achieved, that even to this day people compare great acts of courage by small groups to the stand that the warriors of Sparta made. The Iliad as mentioned above is a dedication to the great actions of warriors in the Trojan War. Through all of these stories it is clear that there is an admiration that is seen in Spartan, Greek, and Indian cultures. The warrior was given respect because it was their job to fight on the behalf of all others. It was their job to be the one to bring the other ninety-nine home safely.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Warrior and Technology

Chris Hedges states on the opening page of his book What Every Person Should Know about War, “Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history” (Hedges, 2003). To put this into a more manageable perspective, if this statistic were applied to a single year, there would be twenty-nine days, four hours and forty eight minutes of peace. That is an abysmally small amount of time that people were not actively killing each other in war. With this startling statistic it is completely reasonable to say that mankind has lived the majority of its history underneath the shadow of death and war. It is our state of normality. With a world that holds war to be the constant state of affairs it is easy to see the dire need for a warrior caste to exist.

The fact that war has evolved throughout time is an unquestionable truth. When man first made war it was the most primitive of sorts. War started as groups of men fighting over resources. Slowly it developed and became more “civilized” with larger groups of men fighting for some cause or idea. War was fought with hand to hand weapons making killing a very personal experience. If you were going to end the life of another you were going to look him in the eyes as you did it. As civilization grew so did its capacity and efficiency at killing.

Weapons became hardened so that they could pierce armor and skin with greater ease. Weapons such as the bow and arrow were developed and employed with great efficiency. It was at this point that killing distance entered into the equation of war, but the range of a bow was limited to the strength of the shooter and the strength of the pull on the string itself. This was the first step in the ever increasing efficiency of war.

Technology is often driven by the desire to kill others in more efficient ways, this drive has led to great developments in peaceful technology. One such example of war driving the growth of technology was the Manhattan Project and the result of nuclear power. Yet it is clear that as technology has advanced in society so has the ability to use technology to kill each other. This places an interesting complication into the identification of who belongs to the warrior caste today. The complication that is seen today in defining the warrior caste that was not seen in years past is the disassociation of killing by the technological advancements available in combat today. No longer does an individual have to look into the eyes of the victim of aggression, in fact many weapons today remove any sort of identification of a victim whatsoever. (Grossman, 2009)

In the military of today there are many unbelievable technologies that serve the sole purpose of killing other human beings in combat. With the advancements of artillery, aircraft, missiles, drones, long range small arms, and heavy vehicles, killing that is done in an up close and personal matter is less and

less of a necessity. LTC Grossman goes on to discuss the different responsibilities that individuals take onto themselves for violent actions when at different ranges of combat starting with Maximum range and ending with hand-to-hand combat (2009). There is no physical interaction with the victims of violence when that violence is conducted across hundreds of miles through a computer screen and thus there will be little to no fighter's taking place in this act and even fewer true warriors. The same can be said of all weaponry that allows for killing over distances that put the enemy out of sight and therefore out of mind. An artilleryman for example is not hitting a person; he is hitting a grid coordinate on a map. The map does not hold any information about the individual being targeted, only terrain and elevation. The same can be said about drone pilots who fly their aircraft from half a world away and hit targets that appear much as they do in video games.

Once you move past the technology that puts the enemy out of sight, you are able to move into the domain of the warrior. The next range that needs to be considered is the range of the sniper rifle. The maximum effective range of the Barrett Model 82, the U.S. Army's premiere sniper rifle is over 1,800m (fm. 23-10). At this range most men are not even able to see the enemy. Weapons used to engage these targets would generally be mortars if there was no sniper present. The mortar teams may fall under the fighters but they lack the key characteristics that make the warrior at this range the sniper. The sniper, while separated by a massive distance fits with the criteria for what a warrior is. The

technology of the high magnification scope allows the sniper to observe targets at great lengths, yet giving the appearance of mere meters away. Because of this technology the sniper, unlike any other long range weapon operator, will look his target in the eyes before taking a shot, and will take the life of his target without any warning. Chris Kyle the author of American Sniper exemplifies how you can be a warrior at the distances that snipers operate. The men who operate these weapons without hesitation show what it means to be a warrior at a great distance. The tools of their trade make the kill more personal. When you look through the scope of a rifle you can see the target in a way that is more personal than with the basic iron sights found on most weapons. The target is no longer just a black shape in the silhouette of a person but now has a face with color and definition.

Technology allows the warrior to extend his influence over a great distance, but his true domain is within distance of sight and sound. Technology has been striving to make killing easier by increasing the distance and therefore decreasing the personal connection to the act of killing. From the advent of the bow and arrow as the most efficient killing machine, to the standard military assault rifle, it is evident how technology has worked in this direction. The standard range of an engagement in modern times is less than 500 meters, the effective range of the M16 and M4 assault rifles, with most combat at even shorter ranges than that. Both the fighter and the warrior are able to engage in this kind of combat where they are within range of sight and sound and can see

the direct effects of this action. The warrior can be seen to operate in this range effectively using the weapon systems at their disposal, but the true place of discernment that separates the warrior from the fighters is their ability to utilize advancements in technology to kill at close range.

In the last fifteen years of conflict in the Middle East, technology has expanded into areas that allow killing in a much more efficient way. The United States military is the most successful in the world due to a number of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that they own the night. The United States military owns some of the most advanced night optic technology and trains in a way to capitalize on the time of day where most people are either sleeping or are unable to operate due to lack of visibility. The most advanced of the optics can be found in use by the warriors in their most concentrated domain, the Special Forces. The night vision optics that the special operation forces use, are capable of panoramic views that can adjust to light in surprisingly short time. These capabilities allow for the warrior to close distances to mere meters without being detected and eliminate the threat with devastating effectiveness. When combat is fought at the distance where the individual has the ability to kill while looking into the eye of the opposing force, this is the true domain of the warrior. Man has a great aversion to the killing of his fellow man, a topic that Grossman delves into in great detail in his book On Killing. The main point he touches on that directly relates to the advancements in technology and the use of this technology in warfare is the distance that is created between aggressor and target, and how

the greater the distance between aggressor and target, the easier it is to kill. The warrior caste doesn't follow the aversion to killing in the same way that the fighters do or any of the other castes of men do in more profound ways. The warrior accomplishes the task at hand using any means and the advances in technology allow for a great range in which the warrior is able to operate.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Genetics of the Warrior

There is a gene that has been given the nickname of “the warrior gene” its true name is the monoamine oxidase A (MAOA) gene. It was initially brought to the public attention in 2007 by Rod Lea and Geoffrey Chambers in an editorial article about the Maori people and their tendencies to aggression, crime, and addiction. This initial study by Lea and Chambers caused a large deal of controversy in the behavioral genetics community due to their use of correlation as fact, by their broad assumptions as to the implications of their results, as well as their lack of analysis of the interaction between the genetics of the individual and the environment. However, further study by McDermott et. al. 2009 lent credibility to their naming of the MAOA gene as the warrior gene.

In a study conducted in 2009 by McDermott et. al., a group of participants were asked to “put hot sauce” into food of another person who was responsible for taking either 20% of a sum of money that was earned or 80% of that same profit. Due to ethical reasons adding hot sauce into the food of another is one of the only ways to test the aggression of a person. It is emulating giving an unpleasant stimulus to another person without causing any mental

distress. A higher amount of hot sauce added to the food of the individual who took the money correlates to higher aggression. The hypothesis was that the people who had low activity in MAOA, which is associated with increased aggression, would react more aggressively when provoked (lost 80%) and would not react any differently than MAOA normal activity during the less provoking condition (20% loss). The experiment found a correlation between the MAOA level and the aggressiveness of the behavior, such that, if the participants were in the MAOA low activity category they were more likely to act more aggressively when provoked than MAOA normal individuals (McDermott et. al., 2009).

Like the original study conducted by Lea and Chambers there is not much attention given to how the environment plays a role in the development of the aggressive characteristics that are exhibited by those individuals who have the warrior gene. What is evident from this study is that there is in fact a gene, that when affected by the right combination of environmental factors, seems to contribute to a higher expression of aggression. While there is at this time no way to concretely tie this gene to the warrior caste, it is not a far stretch to say that it is possible that there are a majority of warriors that have inherited this trait and that it plays a role, however slight or important in their actions as a warrior. If this gene does in fact play a large role in predicting aggression then it is safe to assume that those who exhibit more innate aggression, which is one of the defining characteristics of the warrior caste, may have the MAOA gene mutation.

The waters get slightly muddled at this point which is nearly always the case with behavioral genetics and their interaction with the environment. For if we take the study by Lea and Chambers as accurate in their identification of this gene and its correlation to crime, aggression and addiction then it may also lead to the most dangerous side of the warrior, the side of unchecked and unbalanced aggression that is without guidance from the leaders elected over them.

## CHAPTER 6

### The Warrior Today

The warriors only make up a small percentage of all of the men involved in combat and this needs to be an important distinction made. There is a love for aggressive acts and violence that is present in the warrior that is not seen in most other combatants. There is a raw talent that has been supplemented with trained skill in the warrior. In the normal combatant there are only the trained skills. This is not to say that they cannot be good at their job, for the combatant can be highly proficient he simply lacks that propensity towards violence that is integral to the ethos of the warrior. This aggression and propensity for violence is a difficult trait to fit into a society that looks negatively on these actions and the individuals who act in such a way. In a society that is moving towards stricter control of weapons and more negative views of violence where do the warriors fit in?

There is a thin line between the violence of a warrior and those of a criminal. The discerning characteristics are the righteous purpose, as defined by the leaders of society and the strong moral compass of the warrior. The military

has always been the proving ground of warriors; it provides an acceptable outlet for the violence and aggression of the warrior and provides a place of community with many likeminded individuals. Yet even more specifically in the military, warriors are most often found in Special Operations Forces. This highly selective group carries out missions that are deemed righteous by the powers that govern the people, fall in line with Just War Theory as described previously, and provide the opportunity for violent action that has been perfected and trained. Yet again, there has to be the discernment made by those who lead as to what constitutes a righteous act as opposed to a criminal one.

Yet the military does not contain all the warriors in today's society and it is not a career that allows for lifelong service due to the physical demands placed on the body and mind. At some point the warrior gets too old or too worn to provide the level of service that is found in the military. This leaves the warrior two options: assimilate into another class, or find a profession outside of the military that allows for use of their unique talents.

### The Warrior in the Military

The Special Operations Forces of the military are unique in the missions that they undertake. These missions are more often than not violent by nature or include the possibility of violence. To handle these missions the Special Forces uses rigorous training to discern who they allow into their ranks. The selection process is designed to weed out the weak of body and weak of mind using

training that is designed for exactly that purpose. The ranks of these units are filled out almost exclusively by warriors and fighters, with warriors taking on the majority of the work. An interesting discovery was made by researchers Swank and Marchand in regards to continuous combat exposure in World War Two. They found that after sixty days of continuous combat 98% of survivors will have some sort of combat neurosis. In the other two percent they found that they all shared “Aggressive Psychopathic Tendencies” (Swank & Marchand, 1946). Furthermore in On Killing, LTC Grossman points out another study: “An additional factor to consider here is – As Dyer points out – that the extremely rare “natural soldiers” [Warriors] who are most capable of killing (those identified by Swank and Marchand as the two percent predisposed toward aggressive psychopathic tendencies) can be found “mostly congregating in the commando-type special forces” (Grossman, 2009).

The Special Operation Forces in the militaries of today provide an outlet for the aggressive tendencies of the warrior and provide a challenge for them that they can work to overcome. These units focus the violence and aggression of the warrior to be a cog in a killing machine. It is a machine that is guided by righteous authority and governed by strict rules that outline what actions are allowed and what actions are criminal. Here the warrior finds a place where they are allowed to fill their primal need for aggression and violence. It is not only allowed, but it is encouraged.

### The Warrior in Society

Outside of the special operations there is a general climate in the military that reflects the general feeling of the larger populace in the United States. The democratic society that is in place today holds very little room for the warrior. In ancient times the warrior had a reserved place of honor, where they were recognized for their great deeds for the security of the society as a whole. Today however, the warrior has to stick to the shadows due to the scrutiny and delicate sensibilities of society at large. It is critical to find a place for the warrior where they are accepted and in community to practice and improve their skills in order to prepare to do violence on behalf of the people. The belief that violence is never the answer oversimplifies the complexity of world problems, problems where the warrior and combat may be the best or only solution. Father Schall has the following to say about the current approaches to current global conflict: "We are not in some new world-historic age in which we can bypass these "outmoded" instruments of power, however rhetorically fine it may be to talk that way. Human nature has not changed, neither for better nor for worse" (Schall, 2004). Father Schall is a professor at Georgetown University and a member of the Jesuit Order.

Problems that need to be addressed by members of the warrior caste do not tend to go away on their own; they simply grow and spread like a tumor until they need to be removed with brutal precision. The quintessential example of an

evil that continued to spread until checked by the righteous violence of a generation is Hitler and his Nazi agenda. No other means besides violent action would have put an end to the despicable actions of the Nazis. There was no improvement in life for the targets of his evil between the year Hitler became chancellor in 1933 and 1939 when he pushed too far against the world. The only time that those persecuted by Hitler finally received a reprieve from the oppression of an evil man was when good men did violence on their behalf. Today we face a similar problem that the world is only beginning to come to terms with the fact that violence is the solution. Father Schall goes on to say about terrorism in his article "When War Must Be the Answer" that: "Western secularist ideology is as absolutist in its own way... Theorizing that the "terrorists" are merely a side-show, a tiny minority which will naturally pass out of existence, is an easy way out of considering the more basic problem of the civilizational movement and what to do about it" (2004). This view of the situation will not provide a solution because it does not frame a problem. It says that it is merely a passing phase, yet terrorism is growing as is evident in the rise of organizations such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda.

So where does this leave the warrior? There is without question the need for warriors in society and this is evidenced by the fact that there is still evil in this world and those who would do harm to others. We are not in an era where it is practical or even possible that the solutions to all world conflict can be found in discussions; it is still a time in which war is an evil necessity to preserve decency

in mankind. It is time that society recognized that it needs the kind of men that the warriors are. The warrior is due their position of honor at the table once more.

Notes:

1. Citation was taken from <http://www.history.army.mil/moh/wwII-a-f.html#DOSS>

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