

The Role of the Modern Warrior:

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*“Out of the night that covers me,
black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
for my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
my head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
looms but the Horror of the shade,
and yet the menace of the years
finds, and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
how charged with punishments the scrolls,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.”*

—William Ernest Henley, Invictus—

In the end, we must ask ourselves: **“Has the warrior become obsolete?”** We live in an era where the soldier can kill with proficiency, on the basis of intellect alone. Sanitized from the carnage he reaps in an underground bunker, distanced by a TV screen, the modern soldier can extinguish whole cities as easily as playing a video game. It would seem that technology has emerged the cold and heartless victor. Where is the need for honour amidst the steel and circuitry of this machinery? Where is the need for the discipline forged by the blood and sweat of our more manual ancestor? The modern defense intellectual has no need to wound his own body in the acquisition of lethal knowledge. In this way, he can be de-sensitized to

the ramifications of what he is learning. In the end, the danger is that both the soldier and the society he or she seeks to protect have become numbed, distanced just enough from their own mortality to barely see it on the sight. Are we all left to wander blindly, surgical button-pusher void of understanding of our enemy's suffering and ultimately of our own humanity?

The harsh reality is that the war machine will not undo its evolution. War works for the political establishment and is an integral aspect of the way of our world. Modern warfare wins wars and so it will continue to spread like a disease. I will not say however that the modern battlefield has no vacancies for the Warrior; I know too many brave souls who have trudged through the mud and battled from house to house in pursuit of the ideal of liberty. Still, it would seem that these valiant few are obsolete in the context of the greater war machine. Where then will he find his home?

Much like the renegade Samurai of the 16th century, the modern warrior is a *Ronin*, a masterless warrior. As Fields wrote:

"The apparent fierceness of the warrior proceeds from a primary caring for others...like the thorn on the rose, the warrior exists to protect others...in the contemporary world, where the interdependence of all forms of people and of all forms of life is now clear, the warrior's loyalty and protection is beginning to extend to the earth itself."

This "*extension to the earth*" may include a very literal transference to ecological concerns. As our planetary abuses quite plainly show, our gluttony and raping of this world may have cost our children a future. If nothing else, the discipline of the Warrior can serve as a powerful example to those around us of the potential that still exist within us as a species. **The warrior shows us that there is an alternative to the excessive appetites robbing our world.** It is a more fulfilling alternative filled with strength and discipline. The warrior thereby becomes a role model of harmony and confidence and of the merits of a focused life-style—a *spiritual vigilante*.

Perhaps, beyond all of these concerns, the role of the modern Warrior will remain fundamentally unchanged—to understand death. The Warrior's purpose has always been to be prepared to sacrifice his or her self in order to protect the greater good.

To accomplish this, their path has always led into the very heart of fear. As Fields wrote:

“The sword the warrior holds is the key that unlocks the fortress of fear that we hide within.”

As our society continues to grow more and more distant from their own finitude, perhaps the Warrior’s role as an ambassador of mortality and an archaic reminder of our own human condition will be reason enough to continue.

While the civilian has always been provided the luxury of forgetting the bloodier shadows of their past, the Warrior has always been obliged to remember. John Keegan, in *A History of Warfare*, cited the efforts of the American Anthropologist Harry Turner-High to re-sensitize the public to their animal natures. He illustrates this fact, apparent in the thousands of museums worldwide, bearing traditional weaponry in static environments that betray their hideous purpose:

“Turner-High was determined to make his brother and sister anthropologist comprehend the dark and violent side of the life of the peoples they studied, the bone-crushing, flesh-piercing purpose of the weapons they carried in ceremony...”

Keegan continued to explain that:

“Warfare is almost as old as man himself and reaches into the most secret places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct in king.”

It seems likely that as society continues to drift away into denial, that the modern Warrior will increasingly become a guide to these “secret places”, a link to our primordial ancestry, and a reminder of the fragile fiction of civility. The truth is that human history is written in blood. Whether we are the product of some fundamental genetic error, some aspect of evolution gone awry as Arthur Koestler posited in his master work *Ghost in the Machine*, or whether we are simply following the natural growth pattern of a creature whose over-sized brain has removed him from the security of his tooth and claw past, to the point where his gift of contemplation has made him a paranoid killer that destroys everything just in

case, matters little. In either reality, our predicament does not change. **We are the product of violence and violence continues to exist.** Despite all of our efforts to distinguish ourselves from our hairier predecessors, our palettes still crave blood. We have applied our intelligence to our appetites.

Keegan said that it is the intellect that directs the urge to hurt and the ability to kill. Given this reality, the modern Warrior seems slated to be even more distanced from the society he or she seeks to protect, more ridiculed, more misunderstood. His way has always been a way of solitude, but perhaps, in the very near future, social distaste will increase. Perhaps the Warrior will become a painful reminder of the dark urges that lurk within our souls. Worse still, if society continues to be fattened by the excesses of material attachment, an awareness of mortality may well evolve from something impractical into something overwhelmingly offensive. Perhaps a time will come again where governments will forbid the individuality of the Warrior and outlaw the practice of cultivating the self. Perhaps a time will come when the controlling powers will no longer be content to rely on the influence of the media or the subtler poisons they inject into our minds. Or, perhaps, despite centuries of failure, society will at last heed the Warrior's message.

No matter what you decide, the fact remains that this book is not for everyone—in the end, it's only intended only for those who value their lives. This may sound harsh, but in reality, there will be little value in these pages for anyone who has not taken an honest inventory of what they value and hold dear. This guide is for those who fear; those who do not feel the burn of fear will lack the realism and appreciation of life to be able to develop their inner being. Only through understanding our role and obligation to the totality of life's stream can we correctly understand violence and deconstruct the artifice of fear that it creates. I have given you every ounce of knowledge that I could squeeze onto these pages. Take from it what you can and go forward openly, without ego or labels or style or judgment..

You will never be the same now that you have read this book. You cannot go back in your understanding. **Today, you are entitled to be anyone you want to be.** Tomorrow you may achieve any goal that you set your mind to and adopt any identity you wish to impose on the machinery of your body. We do not need more than what we have to do everything that we desire to do. We simply need to optimize what we already possess. Empower yourself with the knowledge that you carry this power. In a universe of thousands of blazing stars and endless pockets of undiscovered space, there is only one you. You will find every answer that you are

looking for inside of yourself. Your potential is sleeping. The call of the Warrior is waiting to be answered. In the end, the one thing for which I am most thankful is that despite all opposition, the Warrior spirit endures. I find peace in the company of fighters.

Today is your day. Claim it.