

A New Approach to Military Professionalism: On the Need for “Soldier-Artists”

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Education does not eliminate these moods of reconciliation and estrangement. These poles between which human life is tossed are inseparable from the human condition. Education seeks rather to use them as a means for fuller self-understanding. Hence, education is something we suffer from before we can profit. Indeed, suffering in many of its forms seems indispensable to the educated person, however unwanted and ultimately undesirable it may be. The educated man must first be estranged before he can know reconciliation; he must be driven into the confines of his own skin, before he can experience that aspect of his being which is a part of the larger world. Or to put it another way, we must first experience the inner and outer being as a painful reality before any reconciliation is effected. And this does not happen once for all. Most of us never finally heal over this breach. To become fully at home in our world is an unrealizable and vain ideal, dreamed of by certain idealists. But to renew the struggle to achieve involvement and intimacy with this larger natural and human environment is surely the fuller meaning of the educational adventure.¹

Introduction

At a time when ethical and legal violations by combatants—whether a “tragedy,”² “highly publicized allegations of unlawful acts,”³ a “scandal,”⁴ a “critical event,”⁵ “serious operational incidents,”⁶ or “military excesses”⁷—have led militaries and military academies around the world to an interest in and appreciation for a shift of focus away from simply supplying combatants with rules and regulations to instead searching for new methods for creating just combatants, it is necessary to provide a method that is *truly new* if we hope to ever produce different results.

I emphasize this to indicate that what is currently being undertaken under the guise of

¹ J. Glenn Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy of Education* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1968), 35-36.

² Jeffrey Wilson, “An Ethics Curriculum for an Evolving Army,” in Paul Robinson, Nigel de Lee, and Don Carrick, ed., *Ethics Education in the Military* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 33.

³ Patrick Mileham, “Teaching Military Ethics in the British Armed Forces,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 44.

⁴ Martin Cook, “Ethics Education, Ethics Training, and Character Development: Who ‘Owns’ Ethics in the US Air Force Academy,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 58.

⁵ Colonel Yvon Desjardins, “Canada’s Defence Ethics Programme and Ethics Training,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 69.

⁶ Jamie Cullens, “What Ought One to Do? Perspectives on Military Ethics Education in the Australian Defence Force,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 79.

⁷ Stefan Werdelis, “Ethical Education and Character Development in the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 103.

being new, of being a change, of being an improvement, is in reality merely the same program under a different banner. Therefore even though it would appear that we have started to recognize that the old ways are no longer working because of the sorts of violations just mentioned, the response—much of which has revolved around the idea that we must rediscover the meaning of “military professionalism”—is not intended to be a rejection of just war theory but rather a way to better inculcate the tenets of just war theory into combatants.⁸ Some, such as Cian O’Driscoll, may argue that this is perfectly legitimate insofar as just war theory “must always be subject to processes of negotiation and re-negotiation as its advocates seek to re-interpret and apply it to new scenarios and historical contexts.”⁹ I believe however that this “quest to realize more fully the principles upon which our common life is based,” is, contrary to O’Driscoll’s attempt to convince us otherwise, “a linguistic prison house from which one cannot escape...an argumentative iron cage, hermeneutically sealed, in which people may find themselves sealed,”¹⁰ precisely because it assumes that such a “common life” exists.

Just war theory from Walzer to the present has operated under this false assumption and yet at the same time it has followed a trajectory of dualisms that reveals its inconsistency and incoherence. This trajectory can be summarized as having followed a path something like the following: confronted by what he saw as the dangerous dualism presented by realism between the moral world of peace and the amoral world of war, a dualism that was dangerous in its ability to leave us vulnerable to precisely the sorts of manipulations and crimes committed during the Vietnam era, Walzer replaced this dualism with another, that of the moral world of justice and the immoral world of aggression. This new dualism was intended to not just defeat realism and

⁸ This is the goal of not just most of the essays found in the volume *Ethics Education in the Military*, but also of Anthony Hartle’s *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*, and Martin Cook’s *The Moral Warrior*.

⁹ O’Driscoll, “Learning the Language of Just War Theory: The Value of Engagement,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 6, iss. 2 (2007): 110.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

help us avoid political and military subterfuge, but also to offer action-guiding principles to the powers-that-be such that the rest of us could hold them accountable for the decisions they made, either praising them for acting justly or blaming them for their failures to do so.

However, because this dualism, unlike the one it replaced, would now seem to require being able to distinguish, in the heat of battle and after, just aggressors from unjust aggressors, Walzer argues that combatants are in actuality moral equals, all of whom, regardless of side, are themselves victims of aggression. Yet, not wanting to argue that combatants are therefore free of praise and blame, Walzer instead claims that they are moral equals only with regards to the cause for which they fight, but not with regards to how they fight for their cause. As this necessarily brings back into play the problem of trying to correctly distinguish aggressors, another dualism is created, this time separating the moral world of those who do not endanger others from the immoral world of those who do, of those whose hands are clean from those whose hands are dirty.¹¹

Unsatisfied with such a conclusion, a conclusion that would seem to stand in opposition to the stated goal of maintaining a continuity between common morality and the morality of war, McMahan and others have more recently instituted a new dualism, separating the moral reality of war from the legal reality of war. While this is meant to solve the problems and paradoxes that Walzer left behind—such as how combatants could be just and yet thought liable to be killed to the same degree as the unjust, or how supreme emergencies could require that we do what is

¹¹ See Michael Walzer, “Response,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 6, iss. 2 (2007): 170: “...it seems that the soldier must accept a very great risk or none at all. My own conversations with soldiers and former soldiers suggest that many of them are willing to accept *some* risk, and that seems right, even if we cannot easily say how much. Does it matter if the soldier is fighting justly or unjustly? Perhaps McMahan would say that it does. Is there a difference if the soldier is a volunteer or a conscript? Perhaps Kasher would say that there is. But I am inclined to the view that the soldier’s responsibility derives from the weapon in his hands; it doesn’t matter how it got there or whether it is serving a righteous cause.”

thought immoral for the sake of morality¹²—it is clear that this does nothing to change the current state of affairs, merely substituting linguistic gymnastics and conceptual confusion for moral and political paradox. What this does change however is the method of philosophy used by just war theorists—from Walzer’s casuistry to McMahan’s hypothesizing,¹³ though both having in common that they require empathic projection to work—such that what becomes more and more apparent is a dualism that was at times latent and at times painfully clear already in Walzer’s writings.

This new and final dualism is between those who would want to judge combatants and those who would want instead to understand combatants, a dualism that could also be described as being between those who are suspicious of combatants and their intentions and those who are instead responsible to the idea that combatants suffer for us and we are thus obliged to investigate rather than increase this suffering. This piling of dualisms upon dualisms by just war theorists does nothing but further estrange combatants from us, and reveal how our attempts at judgment can be experienced as attempts to exclude and exile them from the common life we purport to share with them. Therefore, while I agree with just war theorists that there will be times when war is necessary, I believe that in order to declare a war “just” we must first be honest with potential combatants about what they are likely to experience during war and how they are likely to be seen if and when they return home. Such disclosure would require however

¹² See Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2006), 155: “I propose that much can be gained from viewing the supreme emergency condition analogously under two different perspectives: the moral and the prudential. Morally, a supreme emergency is a terrible tragedy. Prudentially, it is a struggle for survival.” See also Martin Cook’s defense of Orend’s view for precisely why it ends up replacing one paradox with another. Cook writes, “...Orend’s analysis eliminates the maddeningly paradoxical shape of Walzer’s treatment. In emergency conditions, you do wrong, pure and simple—understandable wrong, but wrong nonetheless” (Martin Cook, “Michael Walzer’s Concept of ‘Supreme Emergency,’” *Journal of Military Ethics* 6, iss. 2 (2007): 145). Thus, as Walzer himself points out, “But the paradox remains, given the fact that political leaders are morally bound to act prudently...and this is a deep agreement” (Walzer, “Response,” 168).

¹³ See Barrie Paskins, “Realism and the Just War,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 6, iss. 2 (2007): 126: “In general, *JUW* [*Just and Unjust Wars*] is invaluable in its concentration on real as distinct from fancifully hypothetical cases. It might be interesting to hear how Michael Walzer now sees this standing temptation to open a way to barbarism by the hypothetical case.”

that we endeavor to understand this experience and recognition rather than take for granted that we already do.

Towards a New Approach

Needing a truly new way forward, it is my contention that J. Glenn Gray can help us to seek an alternative understanding of combat and combatants through a phenomenological-existential framework that focuses on experience and education rather than on adjudication. What difference a change from one framework to the other might make can be seen if we look at the work of Martin Cook. For Cook, in a vein similar to Gray, a primary concern is that a superficial approach to and understanding of ethics will create only an appearance of teaching ethics to combatants rather than providing them with the fundamental appreciation for what it means to be ethical that is necessary in order to become military professionals capable of reflection and not merely action. Hence whereas many military academies have put into practice a professionalization strategy that utilizes what Cook describes as the “formation of habits through the application of pleasure and pain to the cadet,” a process of which “it is rather obvious that Aristotle is the intellectual father,” he argues that they have “largely, if not entirely, neglected...the role of *phronesis* (practical wisdom)” in such appropriations of Aristotle.¹⁴ Similarly, Gray, in *The Promise of Wisdom*, worries about the “danger” of “a misguided

¹⁴ Cook, “Ethics Education, Ethics Training, and Character Development: Who ‘Owns’ Ethics in the US Air Force Academy,” 58. Though Cook is here referring solely to the practices of the U. S. Air Force Academy, one can also find explicit references to a similar Aristotelian influence at the British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (Stephen Deakin, “Education in an Ethos at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 18), the US Military Academy (Wilson, “An Ethics Curriculum for an Evolving Army,” 36), and the Netherlands Defence Academy (Peter Olsthoorn, “The Ethics Curriculum at the Netherlands Defence Academy, and Some Problems with its Theoretical Underpinnings,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 123). Thus as one of the editors points out in the conclusion, “one philosophical giant of the past, Aristotle, figures strongly in the present papers...it is therefore relatively easy to see why ‘virtue ethics’ currently has centre stage in terms of being the moral theory most in favour” (Don Carrick, “The Future of Ethics Education in the Military: A Comparative Analysis,” in *Ethics Education in the Military*, 188-189).

professionalism” based on the idea that “to be effective, the individual has to be one-sided,”¹⁵ and thus argues for the importance of education based instead on an Aristotelian idea of “artistic morality” that would rely on “more individual notions of the appropriate, the fitting, or the congruous as a standard.”¹⁶ Trying to clarify what such an “artistic morality” might look like in the context of the military will be the concern of the remainder of this article, and I will try to bring it out by contrasting it with Cook’s picture of the “moral warrior.”

It would appear to be a cruel twist of fate that it is Cook who is forced in his essay to bemoan the current state of ethical education in the military and its lack of a “*normative* ethical framework for leadership discussions,” favoring instead a “*descriptive* and social science approach”¹⁷ in the few ethics courses they do offer. For it is Cook’s own earlier work, *The Moral Warrior*, that one often finds on the syllabi of such courses, especially since a central aim of that work is to provide precisely such “normative dimensions” to our understanding of “military professionalism.”¹⁸ In this earlier work Cook is concerned primarily with the use of the concept of “professionalism” without its having been first “examined critically”¹⁹ such that military professionals could be expected to be simultaneously obedient tools of the state and yet also uniquely talented and skilled members of the state whose particular expertise is necessary for the state’s continued existence. It is owing to this perspective towards the military that Cook believes that, on the one hand, members of the military have been wrongly accused of being “unprofessional” for being hesitant to blindly obey orders, and, on the other hand, members of the military have wrongly been resistant to adapt to changing circumstances because of their

¹⁵ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁷ Cook, “Ethics Education, Ethics Training, and Character Development: Who ‘Owns’ Ethics in the US Air Force Academy,” 62.

¹⁸ Cook, *The Moral Warrior*, 55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

view of what it means to be “military professionals.”

Trust Us, We’re Professionals

Having in mind the failure of military professionals during the Vietnam War to make use of their expertise and knowledge to advise politicians to avoid disastrous military policies, Cook is trying to demarcate the important differences between obedience, hesitancy, and obstinacy. To do this, Cook argues against those—such as Don Snider and Tony Pfaff—who would compare the military profession to the service industry, with the idea that anything less than giving the client what he or she wants (e.g., “service with a smile”) is seen as acting “unprofessionally.” Instead, Cook advocates for comparing the military to the medical and legal professions, as it is understood that doctors and lawyers ought to use their skills as they think best because their unique training and experience enables them to have a better grasp of where their skills are best-, and least-, suited. Hence Cook wants us to move away from seeing the military’s recent emphasis on “force protection” as an external question of the military’s professionalism or unprofessionalism, and instead as a question that must be asked from within the military’s self-understanding of what it means to be a “military professional.” In other words, the military’s “professionalism” cannot be properly judged in cases where orders are not simply and immediately carried out without first investigating how members of the military understand their roles and obligations so that we can properly see that “prudent disinclination, like intellectual independence, may be a manifestation of professional seriousness, not a lack of it.”²⁰

It is thus the apparent contradiction between the soldier’s traditional self-understanding,

²⁰ Ibid., 65.

which requires that we respect the meaning of obedience for soldiers before passing judgment on their willingness to obey, and the recent trend of soldiers to be more concerned with “force protection” than completing the missions they have been assigned, that leads Cook to examine how this self-understanding can motivate both obedience and resistance. The key, according to Cook, for seeing through this tension is to recognize how recent developments in the world of political and military affairs—namely, the demise of the Soviet Union and of both the type of threat it represented and the consequent type of military it required to be constructed in response—has led to a conflict between it means to *become* a military professional and what it means to *be* a military professional that had not formerly existed. To become a military professional, much like becoming a professional in any field, is, as Cook describes, to “imbibe” a knowledge, language, set of customs and mannerisms that are both shared in the present and have a history behind them such that professionals can be recognized and distinguished from either non-professionals or “para-professionals.”²¹

However, the “warrior ethos” that this way of being is aiming at and preparing the military professional for is at odds with the present demands placed on military professionals, demands that require the skills of a police officer or humanitarian aid worker far more than the skills of a warrior. The feeling of this conflict between who the military professional was meant to be (with regards to training) and who the military professional is expected to be (with regards to the present geo-political situation) is captured for Cook in the oft-heard refrain of military professionals, “this isn’t what I signed up for.” It is this feeling of not being able to be who one was meant to become that has resulted in the current confusion between what is professional or unprofessional, what is obedience, hesitancy, or obstinacy.

Just as Cook wants us to see this problem from within the perspective of the military, so

²¹ Ibid., 67.

too does Cook want us to see that the solution to this problem must be sought from the military itself as well. Here, in this earlier work, Cook provides little indication of how the military ought to resolve this tension other than by finding the “intellectual creativity” or “intellectual flexibility” necessary to move from having to “cling desperately” to an anachronistic self-understanding to instead “embrac[ing] fully the need to lead in its own adaptation to that environment.”²² However, in his more recent work, as we have already seen, Cook more helpfully provides an indication of how the military is meant to achieve this adaptability by being able to develop early on not only the habits necessary to serve in the military but also the ability to reflect on the meaning and purpose of those habits through “phronesis,” or “practical wisdom.”

Yet even if Cook were to succeed in expanding the definition of “military professionalism” to include not only behaving like a professional but also understanding why one *ought* to behave like a professional, the corresponding change in the curriculum of military academies would only appear to require offering more of the philosophy classes already available and offering them sooner rather than later.²³ While such changes might better enable military professionals to “adapt” to changing circumstances in the sense of being able to better understand the behavior that is expected of them, it is not at all clear that these changes would also enable an adaptation in the sense of being able to remove the aforementioned tension between this expected behavior and the military’s self-understanding. Instead it would appear

²² Ibid., 76-77.

²³ See Cook, “Ethics Education, Ethics Training, and Character Development: Who ‘Owns’ Ethics in the US Air Force Academy,” 65: “So what can one realistically hope for at this stage? First, one can still work on the formation of habits. As Aristotle so well argued, if we can form strong habits and beliefs about what is right and wrong, even if the reasons are not well understood, that is an invaluable and necessary foundation for later development and more explicitly rational ethical analysis. Second, we can motivate cadets and inculcate high moral ideals by means of the non-rational appeals to emotion and role models to emulate which, at its best moments, the Character Development Center’s efforts provide. Lastly, we can begin laying the foundation in a core philosophy class which, if effective, at least demonstrates that a method of systematic and rational analysis of ethical matters exists, and perhaps motivate them to explore those questions further as they gain the experience of mature officers.”

that rather than the “multilateral negotiation”²⁴ for how to adapt that Cook recommends on the model of medical and legal professionals, we have not moved far from the unilateral “service with a smile” model found with Snider and Pfaff. Though the “smile” may now be more self-imposed than simply demanded by the expectations of superiors, there still remains even under Cook’s model a disparity between the behavior and the self-understanding of a military professional.

We’re Professionals, But Please Trust Us

The reason for this is that the problem encapsulated for Cook in the expression “this isn’t what I signed up for” cannot be resolved by merely getting military professionals to see for themselves the connection between their oath of service and the current nature of their service (e.g., that police work and humanitarian aid do contribute to the protection of the state and its citizens). Cook is right to point out that the questions surrounding military professionalism cannot be answered by only following the Aristotelian model of habit formation through pleasure and pain and the use of role models, thereby forgetting that Aristotle also saw the need for practical wisdom for the proper implementation of those habits once they have been initially formed. However, that is not the entirety of Aristotle’s ethics and understanding of habit formation either. What is missing is precisely what is missed by Cook’s depiction of the tension between the military’s self-understanding and the demands placed on the military today as an “intellectual” or even a “psychological” problem, the likes of which can be solved by essentially having the time and guidance necessary to “think outside the box.”²⁵

²⁴ Cook, *The Moral Warrior*, 66.

²⁵ “Young officers enter a military full of challenges, different in kind from those that faced any of their predecessors. It is theirs to take the lead, not only in command, *but in thought*, about what the future will be” (ibid.,

We can see what is missing here if we return to Cook's description of how one becomes a military professional, for it is there that, I would argue, Cook does not sufficiently appreciate what he has himself described, which can perhaps best be seen in the ambiguity of his use of the term "imbibe." Though Cook is describing the process whereby one becomes a military professional, the metaphor of "imbibing" the way of being that is the essence of the profession can be understood as either appropriate to the significance of this process or as reductive and simplistic. If this image is meant to capture that becoming a professional is like becoming an alcoholic, in that drinking is not merely an activity or habit that alcoholics share but is rather their very essence, such that their drinking is not a difference of degree from that of non-alcoholics but a difference in kind, then the use of "imbibe" here would seem to be appropriate. Alternatively, if this image is meant only to suggest that becoming a professional is to learn a behavior that can be mimicked more or less successfully, in much the same way that one can drink because that is the only way to be accepted by others who are drinking, then the use of "imbibe" here would instead appear to be sorely lacking and superficial.

Given the gravity of the problems of "professional disillusionment, lowered morale, and diminished sense of commitment to the profession"²⁶ that Cook finds among current members of the military, it would seem that we should be wary of following this reductive understanding of the meaning of becoming a military professional. In much the same way that Plato warns us in Book VII of *The Republic* against thinking that becoming educated could similarly be reduced to "putting sight into blind eyes," or Aristotle warns us in Book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics* against confusing someone who speaks the right words with someone who knows what the words mean, so too must we avoid misunderstanding the true meaning of becoming of a military

53; emphasis in original).

²⁶ Ibid., 68.

professional. And yet, just as it is Cook's own description of the tension currently experienced by military professionals that leads us to see that something is wrong with his subsequent solution to this tension, so too is it Cook's own analysis of the causes and effects of this tension that can point us toward what it is that is wrong with his solution.

Just as it is difficult to "cure" an alcoholic without recognizing drinking as more a matter of identity than of behavior or even of inebriation, similarly it is difficult to "cure" the military of its focus on "force protection" or its problems with disillusionment and commitment without recognizing, as Cook does, that these are matters of identity and motivation rather than of a lack of professionalism. Motivation and identity are intimately linked, as Cook notes, insofar as it is necessarily the case that for one to become a military professional one must first *want* to become a military professional, and one cannot want to become something without first having an *idea* of what that something *is*. Hence much as it could be said that one becomes a doctor because one wants to be a doctor, and one wants to be a doctor because one wants to heal the sick, so it could be said that one becomes a soldier because one wants to be able to serve one's country, to defend and protect one's fellow citizens from those who would harm them.

If we were to extend this idea further, we could say that to be a healer or to be a protector is to be able to heal or to protect, which requires, before one learns how to heal or protect, that one feels capable of healing or protecting and thus that one finds within oneself already the potential to actually become a healer or protector. This feeling or discovery of potential is what has traditionally been referred to as a "calling,"²⁷ such that a doctor or soldier could say that he or she was called to serve either her society or humanity and can often even remember a specific

²⁷ Though Hartle's use of this term is primarily confined to a discussion of how other authors (i.e., Ernest Greenwood and Allan Millett) have used "calling" in their analyses of professionalism, it is clear from his discussion that he believes it applies to the military profession as well (Hartle, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 20-21).

event earlier in life that led her to feel so called. To feel called is to be both connected to others who have likewise been called and disconnected from others who have not. This connection and disconnection therefore create a profession at the same time as they create a distance between the profession and the rest of society. Hence even though the profession is comprised of those who feel they have been called to serve society there is nevertheless a distance that separates the professionals and the rest of society such that the former can feel both morally superior²⁸ to and alienated²⁹ by the latter, while the latter can feel both a need for and distrust of the former.

The tensions experienced between profession and society serve to similarly distance and distinguish the unity, or “culture,”³⁰ belonging to both. In the same way that different societies set themselves apart by their cultural differences, so too do professions set themselves apart from both other professions and from the society they serve. However, whereas a society can often be set apart from other societies more by geography than by choice, with the resultant culture created more by accident and time than by a feeling of unity, a profession is, as we have seen, distinguished instead by unity, such that its culture is more concrete and recognizable. Indeed it could further be said that the stronger the unity experienced by members of the profession (and, correspondingly, the stronger the disunity with the rest of society), the more powerful and pervasive is the culture of the profession.

For there to be such a correlation between identity and culture—as is found in the military profession far more than in the medical or legal professions³¹—there must be something

²⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹ “Military professionals unquestionably have a strong sense of identity, reinforced by a certain alienation from the society they serve. The military services have developed extensive systems of self-administration, and they profess a set of ethical standards and rules that have developed over time. Some members of the profession see the military as guardians of deep values rooted in national character” (ibid., 22).

³⁰ “While ‘culture is a less precise term, we are all familiar with the concept of the military environment, which does indeed consist of specific ‘values, norms, and symbols.’ [...] And indeed the military probably finds its identity in symbols to a greater extent than any other group that might be termed a profession...” (ibid., 19-20).

³¹ “We have long associated one additional characteristic with professional activity—the idea that professionals are

that the members of the profession receive from their cultural bonds to each other that they are not receiving otherwise because of their lack of social bonds to those outside the profession. Here again we can find a clue to what is missing from Cook's account within his own descriptions. According to Cook, one source of the current disillusionment experienced by military professionals can be found in their having lost their "jurisdiction." Hence as we move from a state of affairs that calls for large-scale warfare to instead situations that require humanitarian interventions, the military in turn becomes reduced not only in size and function but also in the nature of its mission and ability to determine how to carry out that mission. Cook likens this post-Westphalian situation that the military currently finds itself in to a situation where surgeons are no longer required. Thus, in the same way that surgeons, confronted with irrelevancy or redundancy, could either adapt and find new ways to make use of their training and expertise or choose not to adapt and instead let others more willing than they take over their jurisdiction from them, Cook argues that the military has to similarly adapt or get out of the way. The disillusionment experienced by military professionals is thus seen by Cook as simply a natural consequence of finding oneself in such a time of transition and confusion.

Again this description must be seen as over-intellectualizing a phenomenon that operates at a much deeper, existential level. For if we return to the idea of a professional as someone whose identity is determined largely by the feeling of being called to serve, and who in turn feels united with others who have similarly been called while feeling separated from those who have not, then we can see that one's professional "jurisdiction" is far more meaningful than merely serving as the bounded region of one's authority. To be who one is, to live in accordance with the way of life that one feels is most appropriate for oneself, can and should be understood by the

committed to their work in a special way. [...] Because of the relative lack of financial and social rewards, the military may qualify as a profession on this account more clearly than a number of other commonly recognized occupations" (ibid., 20).

concept of freedom in both a positive and negative sense. Hence, as Rousseau and Kant argued, we are free insofar as we can live according to laws of our own making and without having to live in accordance with laws imposed on us by others. Where one can thus live freely, by one's own laws and not by the laws of those who would want to live differently, is more than to be within one's own jurisdiction, but to be at home.³²

I would argue therefore that what Cook is here referring to as "jurisdiction" can be more usefully understood as a manifestation of the need to feel at home in the world, and it is this feeling that one both loses (with regards to society) and gains (with regards to the profession) in becoming a professional. Though by "home" we typically mean nothing more than a "place to hang one's hat," and thus can say that one's "need" for a home is nothing more than a need for a place to be free from the elements or protected from intruders, there is a more fundamental "need to feel at home in the world" that I am referring to here. This need manifests itself, for example, in the common rituals of decorating that we tend to engage in when we want to make a new space "feel like home," such as surrounding oneself with photographs of friends and family or with various keepsakes and knickknacks from memorable events in one's past, all of which can be used to try to hide, if not replace, the alien character of the unfamiliar.

However, as can be seen if we look to Dan Baum's recent *New Yorker* article "The Price of Valor," for a combatant such attempts to find or re-create a home away from home can manifest themselves in a radically different manner. Baum writes:

Debbie watched the waitress clear our plates, then she leaned forward to tell about a night in July,

³² For a historical account of the connection between "jurisdiction" and "home," see Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, Ltd., 2003), 52: "The *earth* or the *world* appeared to be a circle, an *orbis*, although the ambiguous word 'orb' can signify a disk, a circular surface, as well as a spherical body. Its boundaries were determined by mythical concepts, such as the ocean, the Midgard Serpent, or the Pillars of Hercules. Its political security rested on exclusionary defensive structures, such as border fortifications, a *great wall*, a *limes*, or (according to Islamic law) the concept of the 'house of peace'; outside these defenses was war. The purpose of such boundaries was to separate a pacified order from a quarrelsome disorder, a cosmos from a chaos, a house from a non-house, an enclosure from the wilderness."

after Carl's return, when they went with some friends to the Afterhours Enlisted Club at Fort Benning. Carl had a few drinks, Debbie said, and started railing at the disk jockey, shouting, "I want to hear music about people blowing people's brains out, cutting people's throats!" Debbie continued, "I said, 'Carl. Shut up.' He said, 'No, I want to hear music about shit I've seen!'" Carl listened to Debbie's story with a loving smile, as though she were telling about him losing his car keys. "I don't remember that," he said, laughing.³³

It is tempting to see in such an account a description of classic symptoms of PTSD—such as hyperarousal, intrusive memories, avoidance, and emotional numbing—however I believe it is more useful, because more revelatory, to see this instead as an instance of what Heidegger refers to as the feeling of “uncanniness” [*unheimlichkeit*], of literally “not-being-at-home.”³⁴ While this suggestion would seem to contradict the *fact* that this episode occurred after Carl had returned home from Iraq, I would argue that his violent need to hear such music, music specifically about “people blowing people's brains out, cutting people's throats,” points to the conclusion that Carl does not *feel* at home, but in an alien place, a place that urges him towards, paradoxically, the security and comfort of war.³⁵

It is this idea that combatants could feel more at home at war than with friends and family—combatants who are like Carl and thus not, as Walzer claimed, “wholehearted”—that not only requires further investigation but also points once more at precisely what is missed when we either take for granted that there is one moral world such that we could use empathic projection in order to understand this type of experience, or when we tell military professionals to expand their minds so as to better adapt to an ever-changing world. Further, I would argue

³³ Baum, “The Price of Valor,” 44-45.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1962), 233 [188]. See also J. Glenn Gray, “Homelessness and Anxiety: Sources of the Modern Home of Being,” *Virginia Quarterly Review* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 29.

³⁵ Similarly, Baum ends the article with the following story: “Carl's mother, Geraldine, who lives with the couple, was just getting home from her job at an Army and Air Force Exchange Service convenience store, a kind of mini-PX on the base, and was still in her red-white-and-blue uniform. Carl asked if I'd ever seen ‘Band of Brothers,’ and his mother gave a sigh that sounded like a locomotive clearing its brakes. ‘Band of Brothers’ is a ten-part HBO series that follows a company of Second World War paratroopers through the European theatre; Geraldine said that Carl has watched it ‘millions’ of times. Carl put on the episode about D Day, and, as Andrew climbed around on his daddy and Anthony dozed on the carpet, men on the screen were falling from the sky in flames, spewing blood from severed arteries, tommy-gunning enemy prisoners to death” (Baum, “The Price of Valor,” 52).

that this idea also points us back to my earlier claim that what is needed here is something like what is offered by Gray's theory of an "artistic morality." For what Gray envisions is a new way of education based on a return to Aristotle's ethics. However, unlike the so-called return to Aristotle of military academies or even of Cook, Gray would have us remember that Aristotle's ethics included, along with habit formation and practical wisdom, a call for standards of the good that would start from the individual and move towards the communal rather than communal conceptions of the good being forced upon individuals. In other words, what has been left out of the versions of Aristotelian ethics found in military academies and even in Cook's criticisms of those academies is Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean.³⁶

The Need for "Soldier-Artists"

In *The Promise of Wisdom*, Gray presents us with an account of "artistic morality" that, I would argue, is meant to be understood as both a phenomenological and existential description of moral life as it is (or, to be more exact, how it stood in the America of the 1960's) and a normative prescription for how one ought to be educated in order to attain a proper moral life. As we have already seen, "proper" is the key word here, as it should be read as "proper for oneself" rather than as "proper according to society." In order not to be misunderstood, Gray distinguishes this advocacy for *individuality* from an advocacy for *individualism*, arguing that the

³⁶ It should be noted that Gray does not in fact refer to his conception of "artistic morality" as based on Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean, but rather as based on "the ancient Greek ideal of *aretē*, virtue in the meaning of skill in the art of good living" (Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 98). Though Aristotle does not indeed appear *explicitly* in this part of Gray's discussion, I read Gray as *implicitly* having Aristotle's ethics in mind here, and specifically the Doctrine of the Mean. For more on the Doctrine of the Mean, and in particular on how it is not a doctrine of moderation and thus not a "simple decision procedure for the wise man to use," see J. O. Urmson, "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie Rorty (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 161-163.

former is about striving for “educated sensibility and intelligent intuition,”³⁷ the ability to discern how best to respond to “the great variety of situations”³⁸ found in “the torrent of the world,”³⁹ as opposed to the latter, which is instead about “the temptation to identify the appropriate with what they immediately desire.”⁴⁰ Likewise, Gray distinguishes such seeking for what is *appropriate* from following what is *conventional*, insofar as it is from poetry and “imaginative literature” that one should look “to form his conception of the fitting and congruous”⁴¹ before turning to one’s “experience of community,”⁴² rather than giving in to “the tendency to fall back upon the socially accepted habits of one’s immediate environment,” with its attendant “tendency to over-conform,” which necessarily inhibits “growth in moral freedom.”⁴³

Gray’s ethics can therefore be seen to be first and foremost an ethics of engagement, meant to guide us away from the extremes of “uncritical worship of sheer intellectualism” on the one hand and of “exuberant activism”⁴⁴ on the other. What is to be sought after in being educated in accordance with this ethics is a self-knowledge that—much like the “knowledge” Heidegger believes we attain in the experience of the uncanniness of anxiety—reveals us to be not isolated subjects confronted by and distinguishable from the objects around us, but rather beings who are intimately and necessarily bound up with the world. Furthermore, and again in a vein very close to Heidegger, Gray believes that it is only through experiences of a particular kind, only through “exposure to the hazards of uncontrolled experience,” through “experience of the extremes of human conduct,” that we can discover such knowledge about our selves and our

³⁷ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 102.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 100. That “artistic proficiency” would appear to oppose and be located between both of these extremes would seem to further indicate the parallels between Gray’s account and Aristotle’s Doctrine of the Mean.

place in and amongst the world, and in particular “discover dimensions of the self we never suspected.”⁴⁵ However, unlike Heidegger, Gray argues that this is at the same time a discovery of oneself as a communal and natural being,⁴⁶ for whom Aristotle’s well-known dictum that we are “social beings” would mean not merely that we need or want others in our lives, but that true morality demands a “sense for the whole,” or the “willingness to respond to the demands of his time and situation”⁴⁷ that comes from the “self-realization [that] can take place only in a focus of community.”⁴⁸

With this brief sketch of Gray’s philosophy of education and of morality in place I believe we are now better situated both to investigate Carl’s aforementioned episode at the nightclub and to understand why Gray concludes *The Promise of Wisdom* by not only referring to the “opportunities to educate oneself in military service” but by stating his belief “in the concept of required national service for all our youth, of which military training should be only one segment.”⁴⁹ It is clear that the picture of what it means to be genuinely educated that Gray presents has much in common with the picture Clausewitz presents in *On War* of what it is like to be transformed by entering into military service, and yet, for Gray, unlike Clausewitz, this is meant to be understood as a transformation that would make one into a truly “civilized”⁵⁰ individual. Furthermore, if we recall the stories and statistics from Baum’s article *and from*

⁴⁵ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁶ See Gray, “Homelessness and Anxiety,” 36-37: “Having gone this far I would not wish to agree with either Kierkegaard or Heidegger, however, that anxiety always isolates the person and throws him utterly back on himself. [...] For good or ill, I have been too imbued with Greek thought to agree with that; I have been too persuaded of the primacy of human community by Socrates and by Aristotle. The experience of anxiety seems to me to be a necessary condition for the realization of what it is to be a human being. It is true, of course, that in some sense you and I are always alone in living and in dying. But there is a profounder sense in which we are communal beings, links in a generational chain, at one with the human career.”

⁴⁷ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 126.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 273.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 102. Cf. Carl von Clausewitz, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 122: “In war the experienced soldier reacts rather in the same way as the human eye does in the dark: the pupil expands to admit what little light there is, discerning objects by degrees, and finally seeing them distinctly. By contrast, the novice is plunged into the deepest night.”

*Gray himself*⁵¹, it would seem that there must be something either missing from or wrong with Gray's picture and the lessons we are supposed to take from it. However, rather than accuse Gray of contradicting himself, I believe that we must see that what is missing and what is wrong here is not to be found in Gray's theory but in these stories and statistics.

While combatants like Carl are, much as the military often advertises, being provided with opportunities to experience the "escape" that Gray advocates "from the security of wealth and comfort, fond guardians, and the protective environment of pedagogues and books,"⁵² they are not being provided with the other side of this education, the side that would allow these combatants to properly learn from their experience. For along with the experience necessary to discover who and what one is, Gray likewise advocates for education to include learning how to reflect on experience, as "unless one learns how to reflect on these experiences, the peculiar kind of self-knowledge required for moral skill will fail."⁵³ It is important to clarify here though that by "reflection" Gray is not calling for combatants to learn practical wisdom in the sense meant by Cook discussed earlier. What Gray argues for is neither learning the intellectual abilities of "logical sharpness" and "contemplation"⁵⁴ required of Cook's "soldier-scholar,"⁵⁵ nor learning the values of "detachment"⁵⁶ and "dissociation"⁵⁷ of Nancy Sherman's Stoic soldier, nor learning

⁵¹ See J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 26-27: "The majority of my fellows seemed content with the satisfaction of their natural urges—eating, drinking, and lusting for women. Interests and refinement that transcended these primitive needs, and that I had built up over the years, were rapidly falling away, and I felt that I was becoming simply one of the others... [T]he soldier who has yielded himself to the fortunes of war, has sought to kill and to escape being killed, or who has even lived long enough in the disordered landscape of battle, is no longer what he was."

⁵² *Ibid.*, 105.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁵ Cook, *The Moral Warrior*, 73.

⁵⁶ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 105.

⁵⁷ Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 164. I believe that Gray would therefore similarly argue against the "detachment" and "dissociation" offered in the current strategies of using either medication or unmanned warfare to distance combatants from the traumas of the battlefield. Such distancing strategies can at best postpone suffering, or at worst give us the dangerously false impression that we have "cured" it. See Gertz, "Unmanned Warfare," 76.

to think of morality as a “burden...in opposition to all natural inclinations”⁵⁸ as would be expected of Peter Kilner’s and just war theory’s “soldier-ethicist.”⁵⁹ Instead, what Gray believes is necessary to accompany a combatant’s experiences would be to learn to become a *soldier-artist*, to develop an “awareness”⁶⁰ of the relationship between the individual and the world; a “discipline of will”⁶¹ for imposing structure and order on an otherwise chaotic world too dangerous for formlessness and idleness, thus allowing for the proper ordering and recognition of responsibilities; and a “style in living” and “imagination” in order to have the flexibility and “radical openness”⁶² to respond to the spontaneous and novel of experience.

Clearly much more can and should be said about the possibilities and insights to be found in Gray’s conception of morality and education. However, that this is so clear to me (and hopefully now to you as well) and yet his philosophy has nevertheless fallen by the wayside, throws light on what is perhaps the greatest flaw in this philosophy, preventing its adoption and realization. For what would be required for this artistic education to be put into practice is a level of trust heretofore unimaginable, and, with regards to the military specifically, impossible. As Gray notes, “To insist on *self*-knowledge, *self*-discipline, and *personal* style in the moral life is to make generous assumptions about the capacity for imagination, reflection, and radical openness to new experience in the *rising generations*.”⁶³ To overcome this distrust of giving individuals, in particular young individuals, the freedom to pursue projects, develop relationships, and discover role models on their own, must be achieved before any of Gray’s ideas could ever be realized. This distrust—a distrust that we have found to be widespread

⁵⁸ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 108.

⁵⁹ Peter Kilner, “Thoughts of a Soldier-Ethicist,” last modified November 13, 2011, <http://soldier-ethicist.blogspot.com/>.

⁶⁰ Gray, *The Promise of Wisdom*, 106.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 106-108.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 108-112.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 112; emphasis added.

among just war theorists—is of course nowhere more profound than in the rigid hierarchies, radical conformity, and pervasive prohibitions of the military, which is perhaps why it is members of the military who likewise experience most profoundly that “the only escape from their stifling environment is to depart from it.”⁶⁴ Thus the only possible answer to this situation, aside from the suggestion I made earlier to be honest with combatants about their ensuing exile, may be the method that Gray advocates: overcoming distrust through mandatory national service, sharing experiences in order to do away with the combatant/noncombatant dualism, and creating for the first time the truly “common life” Walzer and others unfortunately already believe exists.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 109.