

Does War Truly Bestow Glory?

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In the broad theater of human history, one finds recurring questions that challenge our moral, ethical, and philosophical paradigms. Among these, the role of war and its alleged valor stands out, for its ability to both exalt and diminish humanity.

The Illusion of Valor

The vast, barren terrains of wars, filled with haunting echoes of the perished, are not the hallowed grounds of heroism as often claimed. They are the harbingers of chaos, disarray, and suffering. Here, one might pose an argument that the true cost of such valor is immeasurable anguish. Soldiers, in their steely resolve, often face the paradox of pursuing peace by preparing for war. They brave storms both external and internal, for war does not discriminate in its ability to inflict trauma.

In stark contrast to this, the military, as an institution, emerges as a beacon of order, unity, and commitment. The camaraderie formed under trying circumstances, during training, and on the battlefield is deep and lasting. Such brotherhood, one may argue, is a manifestation of valor. But is it not a valor born out of necessity rather than glory?

The Literary Facade

Literature, a mirror to society, has historically presented war with a dual lens. While it amplifies tales of gallantry, it seldom shies away from revealing war's grim face. The Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, is replete with such duality. Lord Krishna, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, posits war as a path of righteousness, or dharma. A relevant Sanskrit shloka from the text says:

"Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana"

Translated, it implores: "You have the right to perform your duties, but you don't have the right to expect any results." This sentiment echoes the necessity of war at times but emphasizes detachment from its outcomes, subtly deriding the pursuit of glory.

Deconstructing the Glory

Despite the seemingly inescapable cycle of creation and destruction reminiscent of Nataraja's cosmic dance, one must query the essence of this glory in warfare. If the battle is waged for just reasons, does it not merely fulfill duty without seeking glorification?

The poet Wilfred Owen, acquainted intimately with the torments of warfare, opined thus:

"Red lips are not so red

As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.

... My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.”

Here, Owen dismisses the traditionalist notion of a glorious death for one’s nation. Instead, he unveils the deceptive nature of war’s supposed honor.

Conclusion

As with many of life’s profound questions, the discourse on war’s supposed glory remains multi-faceted and endlessly intricate. While the pursuit of peace should always be paramount, one must also remain wary of romanticizing the destructive, paradoxical nature of warfare. In true Russellian spirit, we ought to continuously scrutinize, analyze, and reflect upon our preconceived notions of war, pushing forward to a more enlightened understanding.