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The Evil Hours: A Biography of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, by David J. Morris

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more players, losing China prestige, and showing no sign of ending (page 203).

It is as yet unclear that continuing irresponsible expansion will be the gravamen of President Xi Jinping's foreign policy. China's current leader took power in November 2012 months after the Scarborough Shoal standoff began and while he has not repudiated the policy he seems far more intent on domestic reform.

China could even liberalize: recently the down-market and often xenophobic Beijing tabloid *Global Times* attacked Western "pro-China" scholars for insulting that country by explaining away repression as the only answer to otherwise inevitable chaos. "Western scholars have never imagined that China might have a 'peaceful democratic transition,'" the tabloid observed (8 March 2015). These astonishing words did not appear by accident: the *Global Times* is wholly owned by the party's most authoritative mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*. Xi must be aware that even small external distractions will almost certainly derail domestic reform.

As for what the rest of the world should do, obviously it is time to prepare: to rearm and deter seriously. The region, however, is responding so robustly to Chinese aggression that Beijing is alarmed. Japan today is not a mighty power only because it chose to try peace instead. Let no one doubt that if Tokyo deems it necessary, it will emerge again—indeed that is its current direction—which would be perhaps the greatest imaginable setback possible for the Chinese political and economic future. Nearly every other state in Asia too, from India to the Philippines and beyond, is rapidly and effectively preparing military capabilities that

could present China with a nightmare scenario in which it is at war with a multiplicity of capable adversaries along a front of more than four thousand miles, from India to Tokyo.

Pillsbury speaks of the risk of prematurely "asking the weight of the emperor's cauldrons," or *wending* (page 196), which sounds exotic. What it means is showing your cards too soon. China has in fact done just this, with the consequences the Chinese sages would have predicted: creating failure as others react in time. My conclusion: we will certainly soon see a highly militarized Asia; we may see some skirmishes or worse (though recall that the Chinese esteem most those victories achieved without fighting; they abhor long-term, attritional war), but we most emphatically will not see Chinese hegemony, either in the region or in the world.

ARTHUR WALDRON



Morris, David J. *The Evil Hours: A Biography of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 338pp. \$27

The numbers are staggering. In 2012 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimated that eight thousand veterans take their own lives every year. Think about that—twenty-two people die every day of whom many, in pain and having lost hope, have carried their war with them for far too long. For some it may have been recent fighting in Afghanistan or Iraq; for others it may have been decades ago in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Regardless, the trauma these people experienced knows no boundaries between deserts and mountains, between marshes and

oceans. Or as the great First World War poet Wilfred Owen said: “These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.”

David J. Morris, former Marine infantry officer turned war correspondent, tells us that post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, as it is commonly known, has been called many things throughout history: shell shock, combat exhaustion, the blues, or simply being worn down and played out. It’s a condition that “went unacknowledged for millennia . . . and is now the fourth most common psychiatric disorder in the United States.” Not until 1980, when PTSD was added to the psychiatric manual—the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or DSM—did PTSD get more attention.

Morris’s book is not only timely—arriving at the end of two long wars—but it is grand in its ambition and scope. Similarly to Siddhartha Mukherjee’s approach in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, Morris covers the history of trauma and war; how trauma affects the mind; the therapies that are often used to fight it; the drugs that are prescribed to numb it; and some alternatives to modern medicine. But what makes it truly a powerful book, beyond a journalist’s endeavor, is that PTSD is personal to Morris. His book is an exploration that begins with basic yet difficult questions: “Why does the world seem so different after I got back from Iraq? Why do I feel so out of place now? What does one do with the knowledge gained from a near death experience?”

In October 2007, in the middle of the surge, Morris was imbedded with the Army’s 1st Infantry Division. While riding in a Humvee in the volatile neighborhood of Saydia in southwestern Baghdad, his patrol was attacked. The

Humvee in which Morris was riding was hit by an improvised explosive device. Battered and bent, the vehicle held together and the patrol was able to get back to its forward operating base. Morris escaped serious physical injury, and after a short medical examination he left Iraq and was back in California a week later. The explosion would change his life. It would lead him on a long journey, trying to understand his experience, through literature, research, and writing. It left him with nightmares and anger. It left him sitting in VA centers watching others suffer silently, with shaking legs and blank stares.

Morris tells us, in beautiful, searing language, that “we are born in debt, owing the world a death. This is the shadow that darkens every cradle. Trauma is what happens when you catch a surprise glimpse of that darkness, the coming annihilation not only of the body and the mind but also, seemingly, of the world.” And yet the world is still trying to understand how trauma affects us. Not surprisingly, the science is mixed. Some therapies have empirical evidence showing that they help trauma victims—whether it is combat trauma or one of the other big-*T* traumas that Morris describes. The big-*T* traumas are those that are soul crushing—airplane crashes, extended combat, rape, physical assault, and natural disasters. These are the traumas that overwhelm our brains and destroy our sense of time.

The VA’s response to trauma patients, the “gold standard” therapies, focuses on two types: prolonged exposure and cognitive processing therapies. Most have heard of prolonged exposure. It is essentially a reliving of the event, over and over, in which the patient, with help from a therapist, is trying to change

the stimulus to the traumatic event. Yet there is no consensus on what the best treatment for PTSD may be. For as Morris notes, the “gold standard” treatments often do not account for those that leave the program prior to completion.

Drugs are just as questionable. Some drugs, like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors—Prozac and Zoloft—have been around for years, and are the more popular drugs prescribed for PTSD. And like many of the therapies, some patients find that the drugs help them. Then there are drugs like propranolol, originally developed to prevent heart attacks, which now challenge our ethics on how we deal with trauma victims. That is because propranolol, when provided correctly, can inhibit the brain’s ability to etch a traumatic event in your mind if taken within a few hours of the traumatic event. This is a drug that can disrupt the brain’s ability to embrace a memory; it can change our sense of self. Morris rightly raises the concern that messing with our “flight or fight response” can fundamentally alter what we view as dangerous or not.

In the end, we are reminded that as humans we are idiosyncratic creatures—each of us responds to traumatic events in our own way. Therapies that work for some do not necessarily work for others. Just the simple act of listening to our bodies—say, practicing yoga—is a powerful therapy for some PTSD patients. As for Morris himself, he does not discount anything that might work for you, even if that is a moderate amount of alcohol; if it works, then consider it a remedy, or just another way to make it through the day.

The Evil Hours is not simply a book for combat veterans and service members. It is a book that deserves a much wider

audience. Trauma and the suffering and pain that follow have been with us since Homer’s time and will be with us for many more years to come. David J. Morris has shed much needed light on this all-too-human and -deadly thing.

CHRISTOPHER NELSON



Jones, Charles A. *More than Just War: Narratives of the Just War Tradition and Military Life*. London: Routledge, 2013. 224pp. \$120 (Kindle \$33)

Pedestrian forms of philosophical innovation often involve the application of old ideas to new cases. It should therefore come as no surprise that the creative bulk of what is published today on the ethics of war achieves its novelty—when it does at all—by applying the just war tradition to hitherto-unexamined aspects of contemporary warfare, for example, drones and unmanned systems, cyber warfare, intelligence and covert operations, asymmetric warfare, and terrorism.

Now, this is a useful thing to do; it has expanded conceptual categories within the literature on the ethics of war (e.g., the *jus post bellum* and *jus in intelligentia*). But it falls short of that deeper kind of philosophy that overthrows preconceptions and generates entirely new areas of rational inquiry. This more difficult (but potentially more fruitful) way to innovate in philosophy would call into question the entire edifice of knowledge that, through university schooling or professional military education, everyone takes for granted when discussing the ethics of war.

Charles A. Jones does exactly this in his provocative, original, fun-to-read, and tightly argued book *More than Just War*: