

Military Afterlives

GRM Week 18 Seminar

Saadia Gardezi

What does the end of a war look like?

- While PTS is a clinical psychosocial term tied to specific events that can happen to a person in or out of war, moral injury is a newer concept that has been primarily linked to soldiers' 'emotional, spiritual, and psychological wounds that stem from the ethical and moral challenges that warriors face in combat'. So while a soldier can experience a traumatic event and suffer some of the affects of PTS, they will not necessarily experience moral injury unless they critically examine different factors of the event and then find the circumstances tied to that event immoral. The variety of immoral acts that occur include feelings of betrayal (by leadership and/or peers), disproportionate uses of violence, facing the morality of killing, and mistreatment of target populations.
 - Schrader, **The affect of veteran activism, 2015.**

- The process of militarization works to erase the moral implications of war through the previously mentioned military socialization, but also through a hierarchical structuring of onus. A soldier's chain of command is expected to be responsible for ensuring that the war is just (*jus ad bellum*) and that their orders are compliant with the rules of war (*jus in bello*) (Walzer [Citation2006](#)).
- The activism that these veterans participated in after leaving the military worked to lessen the impacts of moral injury, subsequently often helping with symptoms of PTSD, and worked to demilitarize the self through creating critical communities and the reframing of their service.

- What does it mean to 'demilitarise' or 'undo' militarism? Is it possible?

“Many veterans see their activism not only as a continuation of military service to the nation, but as inspired by their service, which in turn causes a demilitarizing reinscription of patriotism. This service is primarily done through social justice work that is seen as needed for the betterment of the nation that creates a critical narrative of western liberal democracy and US policy”

Schrader, **The affect of veteran activism, 2015.**

- Taking either an individual or a state: What would it take to 'demilitarise'? What would it look like? What would it involve? Can you think of any examples of 'successful' demilitarisation?

New virtual reality program helps aging veterans re-experience Vietnam settings to find peace, therapy



AARON DORMAN

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A veteran uses VR goggles to view settings in Vietnam. (Photo courtesy of Mynd Immersive)

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- <https://www.mcknightsseniorliving.com/home/news/tech-daily-news/new-virtual-reality-program-helps-aging-veterans-re-experience-vietnam-settings-to-find-peace-therapy/>

"Earlier, NATO supply lines were ongoing... container after container. Now, all that has stopped." Shop keeper in Peshawar Pakistan, on the US withdrawal and smuggled goods.



Pakistan's sealing of the border and the pullout of foreign troops has led to dwindling supplies in the markets Abdul MAJEED



The Trustees of the British Museum (Creative Commons)

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The real story behind Afghanistan's war rugs

The war rugs are distinctive and dynamic, but they're often wildly misunderstood.



[Photo: Ramin Talaie/Corbis/Getty Images]

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90678962/the-real-story-behind-afghanistans-war-rug-industry>

- Thinking about your own life: What would you need to do to 'demilitarise'? Do you want to?