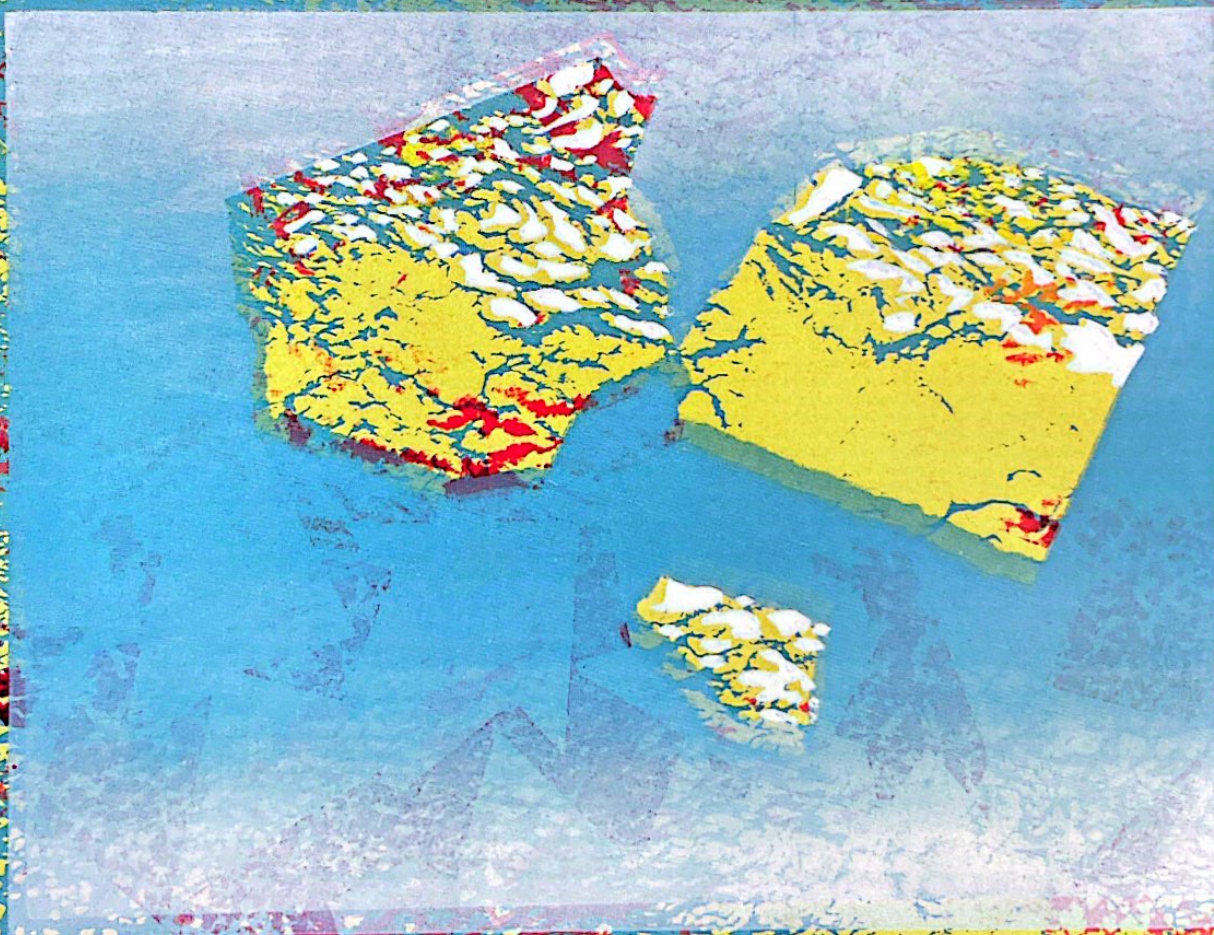


Volume XIV Number 4 July/August 1981

THE CENTER MAGAZINE



Vietnam—Will There Be a Collective Healing?

JA
1
C4567
v.14
n.4

Special
Collections



LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

THE ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
[with the University of California at Santa Barbara]

ins (1899-1977)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Robert A. Huttenback, Chairman; Roger L. Horton, Chief Financial Officer; David L. Bazelon, Glenn Campbell, Don L. Gevirtz, Vesta Hutchins, George David Kieffer, Joseph M. Kitagawa, Morris L. Levinson, James Grier Miller, Edward A. Morris, Marc B. Nathanson, Frederick M. Nicholas, Monroe Price, Omer L. Rains, Douglas Schmidt, William Wilson; Raymond Sawyer, *ex officio*; Paul Bohannon, *ex officio*

James Grier Miller, President of the Center

STEERING COMMITTEE: Paul Bohannon, Chairman; Gerald Blum, Sylvia Brickley, Teddy Canvel, Billiana Cicin-Sain, Herbert Fingarette, Richard D. Hecht, Vesta Hutchins, Harold Lewis, Betty McDermott, Lloyd Mercer, William Murdoch, Anthony Friess Perrino, Robert Porter, A. Edward Profio, Carroll Pursell, Leinie Schilling Mullin, John A. Stephens

NATIONAL COUNCIL: Joseph P. Antonow, Harry S. Ashmore, Marshall Bennett, Ramsey Clark, Jr., Harold C. Fleming, Frank Gibney, Phillip M. Klutznick, Edward Lamb, George A. McAlmon, Maurice Mitchell, Stewart R. Mott, Seniel Ostrow, Bernard Rapoport, Maurine Rothschild, Philip Wain, Bernard Weissbourd

ASSOCIATES AND CONSULTANTS: Stanley Anderson, Harry S. Ashmore, Noah ben Shea, Paul Bohannon, Elisabeth Mann Borgese, Benjamin Bycel, Douglas Capps, W. Richard Comstock, Hugh Downs, Paul Ehrlich, Mircea Eliade, Clifton Fadiman, Paul Fillinger, Herbert Fingarette, Richard Flacks, Frank Gibney, Norton Ginsburg, Peter R. Goldschmidt, William Gorman, Otis L. Graham, Jr., Bernard Haber, Robert L. Hess, Laurence I. Hewes, Jr., Christopher Jencks, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Clark Kerr, Alexander King, Joseph M. Kitagawa, Joseph P. Lyford, Peter Marin, William May, Milton Mayer, Jürgen Moltmann, Alva Myrdal, Gunnar Myrdal, Fred Warner Neal, Jacob Needleman, Melville B. Nimmer, Arvid Pardo, Ralph E. Peterson, Raúl Prebisch, Karl H. Pribram, Isidor I. Rabi, Lord Ritchie-Calder, Robert Rosen, Nathan Rotenstreich, Adam Schaff, Joseph J. Schwab, Sander Vanocur, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, David Wise, Herbert F. York

STAFF: M. Gerald Bradford, Administrative Director
Deborah R. Sils, Program Coordinator
Nancy Andon, Office Manager
Donald McDonald, Editor, *The Center Magazine*
Patricia Garvin Cathcart, Associate Editor, *The Center Magazine*
Michael Crandell, Executive Editor, *The Center Magazine*; Project Coordinator
Robert Bason, Consultant for Membership Services

THE CENTER: University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106
Mailing Address: Box 4068, Santa Barbara, California 93103
Telephone: (805) 961-2611

THE CENTER MAGAZINE

A Publication of The Robert Maynard Hutchins
Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions

Editor—Donald McDonald

Associate Editor—Patricia Garvin Cathcart

Executive Editor—Michael Crandell

On June 30th, Walter Capps stepped down as director of the Center to return to full-time teaching. Mr. Capps assumed the directorship at a pivotal time in the Center's history and almost at once faced some significant challenges. He needed to complete the final phase of the move of the Center's headquarters from its former home in Montecito to its new location on the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California. In the following months, he oversaw needed renovations in the Center's new quarters, including extensive landscaping and the renovation of a new, enlarged conference room. Also during this time he put into effect a number of economy moves calculated to insure that the Center would continue to operate in the black. In all this Mr. Capps had the backing of the administration of the University and the full support of the Center staff.

Mr. Capps' most noteworthy achievement is reflected in the academic program which he and the staff conducted during his tenure as director. In the last year and a half, the Center has sponsored over one hundred dialogue sessions, lectures, and conferences. A number of these have been reported in recent issues of the magazine. Subjects ranged from international concerns (the political and social implications of revolution in Iran and El Salvador, U.S. foreign policy and human rights) and energy matters (the pros and cons of nuclear energy and the social costs connected with long-range energy planning) to legal developments (the rights of criminal suspects, women's rights, and divorce law reforms) and the future of liberalism.

A highlight of Mr. Capps' administration came in October of 1980 when the Center sponsored a series of events marking the rededication of the Center in affiliation with the University of California. Joseph Duffey, Norman Cousins, and Michael Harrington were among the featured participants of those events.

Mr. Capps said of this affiliation that it puts the Center in reach of objectives far beyond its previous capacities. "We intend the finished product to be as radical and innovative as anything the Center inspired before, and substantial and compelling as befits the commitment of a gifted and challenged academic community."

We share this assessment and optimism. Walter Capps has played a key role in bringing the Center to this stage in its distinguished career. His administration reflected both continuity with the past and concern for adapting the Center's tradition to its future. We wish him well in his academic pursuits.

JAMES GRIER MILLER
President

JULY/AUGUST 1981

The Center's Tradition	2
<i>James Grier Miller</i>	
THE UNITED STATES AND EL SALVADOR—I	5
There Is No Military Solution in El Salvador	
<i>Robert White</i>	
Questions and Comments	10
Vietnam — Will There Be a Collective Healing?	14
<i>Walter H. Capps, William P. Mahedy, Leonard Marsak, Judy Coburn, Shad Meshad, Joel Painter, Richard Hecht, Monte Schulz, Peter Marin, Gayle Binion, Ninian Smart, Robert E. Blakemore</i>	
Too Much Judicial Review May Be Injudicious	29
<i>Jesse Choper</i>	
Discussion	34
The Continuing Tragedy of Ireland	39
<i>Maeve Binchy</i>	
Discussion	47
Religion and Abortion	51
<i>J. Robert Nelson</i>	
The Holocaust Was Unique in Intent, Scope, and Effect	56
<i>Lucy Dawidowicz</i>	
Discussion	60
Cover	
<i>Reita Newkirk</i>	
Design	
<i>Barbara Smith</i>	

THE CENTER'S TRADITION

Scientific emphasis will be added to humanities commitment

by James Grier Miller

The Robert Maynard Hutchins Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions has meant many things to many people. Robert Hutchins had an outstanding intellect and in his approach to important issues, he encouraged disagreement as long as it clarified the issues. The Center has always meant a commitment to excellence, and it has always been unique. On the morning after it was announced that I was coming to the Center, I opened the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and saw the Center referred to as having "won an international reputation for its scholarly undertakings, publications, and seminars as an independent institution."

Thirty-four years ago, I was given a three-hour examination by Robert Hutchins personally before he hired me as a professor at the University of Chicago. I am sure you must understand how I feel to be standing in his shoes.

Although the Center is starting a new phase, its goals and its missions are not changed. They will be interpreted differently under my presidency, but the Center's purposes remain unchanged.

My understanding of Hutchins' purposes — an understanding gained from personal contacts with him between 1947 and 1952, and then occasionally until a few months before his death four years ago — is, of course, my own. But I think I have a fairly clear idea as to what he wanted to achieve.

Hutchins formulated that mission as dealing with major human problems, in the light of the great

books and ideas of thinkers of the past. Often his work was in the tradition of humanism. I respect that tradition. I also respect the legal tradition which Hutchins represented. And I respect his emphasis on international relations and the cause of world peace.

I hope to add something to the Center's tradition — a greater emphasis on science. In the world as it is, late in the twentieth century, we must try to meld the humanities and the sciences if the Center is to accomplish the goals set for it by Robert Hutchins in 1959.

The purpose of the Center is to deal with complex, seemingly overwhelming, social problems and issues. As individuals, we feel vulnerable on these issues. I know I feel that way, and I think most people do. Ordinarily we do not have the time to analyze the issues in any satisfying detail. We are confused and we are skeptical about what the newspaper and television reporters tell us, even as we know that most of the things they are talking about are indeed real.

The Center is now associated with all the campuses of a great state university, the University of California. In the Center's new relationship, it will continue to conduct an unbiased forum, one committed to no cause, except, as Robert Hutchins often said, the causes of justice and democracy. That is what he wanted, and that is what I want.

I have my own views. Hutchins and the people



James Grier Miller, President of the Center, addressing dinner-meeting founding the new Santa Barbara Center Club. At left is Robert Huttenback, Chairman of the Center's Board of Directors and Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

in the Center in his time had their views. The people in the new Center will have their individual views. That is fine. As individuals all of us are entitled to our views. But the Center itself will not be committed to propagandizing for the views of any one person or any causes, whatever they may be, except those of justice and democracy.

Someone has said that democracy is a ship of state whose officers are trying to steer a straight course in all directions at the same time. Winston Churchill once said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried.

The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions will try to bring to bear philosophy, law, the humanities, and the sciences in order to improve the institutions and the organizations of democracy.

Dialogues conducted in the last year during the directorship of Walter Capps have covered a wide range of topics: the environment, anti-Semitism, Iran, energy, peace, liberalism, agriculture, the family, literacy, criminal justice, book publishing, Mexican-American history, nuclear proliferation, black history, the problems of the aged in our society, and many more.

We intend to continue the practice of hearing many voices and viewpoints on such issues over the long run, although not necessarily in every single dialogue or conference.

The Center is now a California rather than a New York corporation, as it was formerly. We are private and independent, but the regents of the University of California have accepted us as part of the university. We do not expect to receive any state appropriations of money in our affiliation with the university.

The regents' action indicates that we will relate to all nine campuses of the university, but our headquarters will be in Santa Barbara. That means, among other things, that we will be able to call on the intellectual resources of the nine U.C. campuses, from Berkeley to San Diego. It also means we may, on occasion, hold some of our dialogues or conferences on those other U.C. campuses. For the first time, we shall have an active research program studying the institutions or organizations that make up our democracy.

A number of issues will receive major attention at the Center in the year ahead. One of these is the professionalization of college sports and its impact on the quality of higher education. That dialogue will be attended by athletes and coaches, university administrators, and moral philosophers. We will examine rather closely ethical aspects of current college sports practices as well as their educational effects.

Also we plan to hold a dialogue on El Salvador and the long-term significance of current events

there for our nation. Is El Salvador a new Vietnam, or isn't it? We want to hear from all sides on this issue. Our conference will extend the discourse of the meetings we had on El Salvador earlier this year, the first of which is reported in this issue of *The Center Magazine*.

We intend to hold a dialogue on the very major matter of genetic engineering and the related scientific, moral, and ethical aspects of current DNA research.

Another Center dialogue will be held on crime and violence. In that connection, we will make a preliminary critique of various federal and state programs in existence and being planned to deal with the drastic impact of violent crime on the quality of life in our society.

A former chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University will be the principal organizer of a Center discussion of health care which will deal with the total patient, the patient's family, and environment. There will be a debate on the desirability of orienting health care toward maintaining wellness rather than treating sickness. In this dialogue we shall have, among others, a past president of the American Medical Association, as well as an expert on hospital management.

Also we shall have a discussion on the First Amendment and the media, with a focus on conflicts between the right to privacy and the media's right to gather information.

One of our dialogues will be devoted to differing theories about the causes and means of handling inflation.

Another dialogue will look at why organizations succeed or fail. A distinguished student of how power and authority are wielded in organizations will report his analysis of confidential case histories of chief executive officers of a number of for-profit, as well as not-for-profit, corporations. We shall be particularly interested in how C.E.O. administrative styles resemble and differ from each other.

We shall also, on another occasion, deal with the increasing worldwide problem of terrorism and the taking of hostages.

A center dialogue led by an internationally known anthropologist will take up the problems of and changes in the next generation — the babies being born now. What kind of society will those children face in terms of environment, education, communication modes, morality, politics, and technology?

Our purpose in all of this is to try, in an interdisciplinary setting of academic and nonacademic leaders, to clarify the complex issues of our time, to get to the bottom of problems that are bannered in newspaper headlines and signaled by the broadcast media. Our conviction is that before we can begin to solve problems or ameliorate difficult conditions, we must understand them. The media give us plenty of information, but often the more we know, the less we understand. We hope the Center can contribute to public understanding.

The Center is now financially in the black. We have no debts. Our budget is highly restricted, and consequently our program is limited, but we intend to remain in the black.

Since no state funds will be available for the Center, we must continue to depend for our support upon our members' contributions and on private gifts if we are going to expand and be effective in our program. We want to bring to our dialogue table leaders from around the country and around the world. For that we need continued and increased contributions from private sources.

We shall be an unbiased forum for all points of view on the issues we take up. We intend to be practical — Robert Hutchins was fond of saying that he and the Center were always interested in the ultimate problematic question of every dialogue: "What can be done?" We shall continue to have a wide range of disciplines at the Center. And we shall hear from Marxists, liberals, moderates, conservatives, and reactionaries. The Center — as an institution — will not and can not take or advocate positions on issues that divide people according to simple concepts of left and right.

We hope to emphasize a videotape program in addition to the print media, such as *The Center Magazine*, which has been so important over the years, and our audiotapes. And that, too, will require more expenditure of funds. Video has become the dominant medium of mass communication today. We look toward national and international use of that medium in our dialogue program in the years ahead.

James Grier Miller, former President of the University of Louisville, is the new President of the Robert Maynard Hutchins Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. This statement is adapted from remarks he made at a dinner announcing the formation of the Center Club of Santa Barbara.

VIETNAM—WILL THERE BE

In the latest of its series of dialogues and conferences on the meaning of Vietnam, the Center invited a number of people to reflect on the existence and/or possibility of a postwar healing process in America, six years after this country ended its military activity in Indochina. Earlier discussions dealt with the Vietnam

Task of Reconstruction Will Have to Be a Work of Ritual

WALTER H. CAPPS
*Professor of Religious Studies
University of California at Santa Barbara*

We have not yet come to terms with Vietnam. Vietnam remains an unfinished war, a problem for the American conscience. The most eloquent clue to the unfinished character of the Vietnam experience is the fact that the responses are formed primarily through personal testimony. Most of the writing about that war is being done by veterans who have personal stories to tell. We know that only certain human situations give rise to such autobiography or confession.

These personal documents of Americans in Vietnam do not simply tell what it means to be an American, and about the nature of patriotism and heroism; they also touch on a set of religious topics, themes such as blame, guilt, and the need for restoration. We are witnessing a collective process in which Vietnam-era veterans are leading the way.

Vietnam tends to symbolize what we find right and wrong about life itself. It tells us how our enthusiasms are formed, and what we are avowing.

The conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union has become, it seems to me, the modern world's primary expression of the mythological clash between superpowers. Psychically and religiously for many Americans, it is a battle between God and the devil, between our God-fearing way of life and, as it is described, godless Communism. Vietnam and El Salvador are simply the locations where this colossal battle takes place.

It is exceedingly difficult, however, to maintain allegiance to this myth when one has personally experienced Vietnam. It is then that the lines of collective interpretation come apart, when as Morris Dickstein has said, the myth about America gets shattered.

After that, there is a tendency, particularly among liberals, to try to put the pieces back together again, through either intellectual or programmatic means. But the task of reconstruction is not primarily an intellectual one. It involves a kind of intelligence which incorporates the capacities of collective wisdom. Reconstruction is larger and more complicated than simple conceptual work.

Coherence cannot be willed into being; it cannot be thought into being; it cannot be legislated into being. A pervasive injury has occurred. The breaking of the myth was not merely an intellectual event. Nor is it ideological warfare that we are most concerned about. This time, shame and guilt are involved.

If wholeness and well-being are to be re-established, it can only be as the result of a collective

A COLLECTIVE HEALING?

war and American values (*The Center Magazine*, July, 1978) and the impact of Vietnam (*The Center Magazine*, July, 1979, and September, 1979). The series was organized and directed by Walter H. Capps, former director of the Center. Here are the views of participants in the dialogue on healing.

healing process. The body politic needs to be healed, and for that it is not enough to find ways to make our philosophies relevant again, or our policies resonant.

The impact of Vietnam is being experienced through a continuing ritual, a process very much like that of confession, absolution, and restoration. The Vietnam veteran centers are the places where that ritual is being worked out. The counselors in these vet centers function as confessors, like secular priests. The vet centers themselves are like neighborhood religious communities, all of them involving persons living and working together in the ritual process. □

Veterans' Ills Are Rooted in Moral and Religious Malaise

WILLIAM P. MAHEDY
Vietnam veteran
Director
The Vet Center
San Diego, California

I am a Vietnam veteran, former Army chaplain, and ordained Catholic priest. After my marriage, I

needed a job, and went to work with the Veterans Administration, where I met Shad Meshad. The two of us had the privilege of collaborating for years, working with Vietnam veterans in the streets of Los Angeles. I am the team leader of the Vet Center in San Diego. I also function as an Episcopal priest in a parish in San Diego. So I am an ordained counselor in the Vet Center.

We are dealing in the vet centers with what in the diagnostic and statistical manual is called "post-traumatic stress disorder." A New York psychiatrist who had a great deal to do with changes in this manual has found six characteristic symptoms of the disorder in some Vietnam veterans. They are: guilt feelings and self-punishment; perception of oneself as a scapegoat; rage and other violent impulses directed against indiscriminate targets; brutalization resulting from combat and its attendant psychic numbing; alienation from one's own feelings and from other people; and doubt about one's continued ability to love and trust others.

Now this is all very true. I have dealt with hundreds of Vietnam veterans, and it is so true.

But I have found that at the root of what is bothering a lot of veterans is a moral and religious malaise. Even those who have slipped back into the American mainstream seem to experience a vague feeling of unease, suffering in varying degrees from a spiritual debilitation. We've all got a trace of it.

This spiritual malaise may not always be as troublesome to the individual as the clinical syndrome, but it still produces a feeling of uneasiness, or dis-

comfort. Part of the personality which seeks to transcend the self has been dulled, but is not yet dead. The person is vaguely aware that something is amiss, but apathy is the common response.

Characteristics are similar to those found in the clinical syndrome. The sense of guilt is often present. The feeling of having been victimized or scapegoated by the government extends in a subtle, sometimes almost imperceptible way, to the moral and spiritual authorities: the churches, and the spokespersons of the various movements spawned by the war. Rage in many cases manifests itself as the cynicism toward institutions and authorities formerly believed and trusted. The war-engendered attitudes toward oneself, toward the enemy, and toward others persist in the form of a spiritual numbness. Sensitivity and compassion have become dulled. The reservoir of moral resources has begun to run dry. Besides alienation from one's own feelings, there is also alienation from one's own spiritual center.

In Vietnam there seemed to be neither past nor future, only the meaningless present. One could die in a combat assault upon a useless piece of ground for which men had died the month before and others would die next month. People were killed, bodies broken, spirits seared and scarred for what seemed to be totally senseless goals. The task in Vietnam was to survive until the freedom bird returned one to the world. The GIs themselves described their Vietnam experience in a perfect one-liner. "It don't mean nothin'."

Now, sadly, "it don't mean nothin'" has become for many veterans a deeply imbedded way of perceiving all of life. It informs their evaluation of their own spiritual and moral capacity, and it describes their experience with religion, at least with a distinctively American brand of religion.

At the beginning of the Vietnam war, a peculiar national mythology was invoked to bolster support for our military endeavor. As a people, we seemed to be convinced that God had called us to a special destiny. The feeling that America has a divine mandate to evangelize the world on behalf of American political and economic systems has never been far from the surface of our national self-perception. Robert Bellah has defined civil religion as a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things, attributed to the Republic.

One young man in my group put it well. He said, "I believed in Jesus Christ and John Wayne before I went to Vietnam. After Vietnam, both went down the tubes." Another said, "I bought into the system,

but I don't believe anything anymore." Commonly one hears, "I fought for God and country," followed by a cynical laugh.

For many veterans, the American political system seemed invested with an ultimate value. It had been religionized. And the object was the nation-state itself, not any of the competing nations nor subcultural or ethnic groups. Most veterans embraced the theology of our foreign policy. They went to Vietnam with great fervor to stop the onslaught of godless Communism. Most were products of homes which were at least culturally Christian. Many former altar boys were among them. War — glorious war, that cultic act of civil religion — was unquestionably part of the mythology which gripped them as they went off to the great crusade in Southeast Asia. They were eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds for the most part; they were by and large black, brown, rural white, blue-collar types, high-school graduates and high-school dropouts, and college dropouts.

I almost never heard the Vietnam war discussed by any veterans in anything resembling the just war theory of Christian tradition. Some saw the war as the lesser of two evils, but the conceptual frame of reference seems always to have been the war ethic of the crusade.

So, the justifying motivations were religious and ideologic, and the task of the soldier was viewed as a holy one. To this day, most Vietnam veterans see themselves as having been involved in a noble profession, if not a noble war. And that is the root of much of the veteran's problem. The soldier bears the burdens of his people, makes great sacrifices, and deserves the respect of his people when he returns home. He is a hero; he represents his people under unspeakable conditions. But the hero's welcome never happened, of course, to the Vietnam veterans. There was no ritual of return, no respect. Instead, they were reviled.

The crusade spirit also demands that the enemy be seen as evil, the infidel. It was thus both necessary and quite easy to make of the Vietnamese "gooks," "dinks," "slopes," whom one must kill, kill, kill. The soldiers in the field always resented, and for very good reasons, the restraints placed upon them for political and strategic purposes. A lot of them were killed because of those restraints. But in a crusade no limitations are imposed. The blood of the infidels must flow wherever it is found.

Now, as the antiwar movement developed, of course, this mythology of a holy crusade was chal-

lenged. Much of the antiwar feeling, however, also seemed to be rooted in the same premise of a quasi-religious national destiny. The nation had sinned against its special covenant by becoming involved in Vietnam, and the voices of the prophets were raised against it. The soldier was caught right in the middle of this crisis of civil religion.

Nowhere was this problem more evident than in the military chaplaincy. Robert J. Lifton has described it brilliantly in his article, "Advocacy and Corruption in the Healing Profession" (*Stress Disorders Among Vietnam Veterans*, ed. Charles R. Figley):

"... the men had a special kind of anger best described as ironic rage toward two types of professionals... chaplains and shrinks. They talked about chaplains with great anger and resentment, as having blessed the troops, their mission, their guns, and their killing. Whatever we were doing — murder, atrocities — God was always on our side. . . . In that sense, chaplains and psychiatrists formed an unholy alliance, not only with the military command, but also with the more corruptible elements in the soldier's psyche. . . . We can, then, speak of the existence of the counterfeit universe, in which pervasive, spiritually reinforced inner corruption becomes the price of survival. . . ."

This kind of corruption is at the heart of the post-Vietnam malaise. Carried along by the prevailing mythology, the men found themselves in Vietnam, and then the reality of the war overwhelmed them. What was that reality? Those of you who were there know. There was dreadful, terrible combat, there were night ambushes, unbelievable atrocities committed by both sides (contrary to a belief deeply rooted in the antiwar movement, the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Army also did atrocious things). There were search-and-destroy missions, free-fire zones, broken bodies, the screams of the dying, friends blown away, assassinations, the killing of one's own officers. In the name of what God and of what political system did these things happen?

Of course, under such conditions, survival is the primary concern. But each individual had to construct his own rationale in order to continue the business of killing. Whether or not the chaplain played a role, the GI had to conceive a moral self-justification, but this was shaky at best. Fear, the momentum of the war itself, the kill-or-be-killed dilemma, the overpowering daily reality of life in the combat zone, drugs, boredom, all conspired to

postpone serious reflection for many vets, until after their return from overseas. Vietnam caught up with them after they were out of the service, and the rationale of civil religion did not hold together. The reality of the war exceeded the capacity of any mythology or religious system to sustain it. The veteran, having been exposed to platitudes on the one hand and slogans on the other, did not experience the authentic prophetic role of religion. For him, quite simply, religion "don't mean nothin'."

The prophetic role of religion has really not been exercised in the United States. From colonial times on, we have identified ourselves as the new Jerusalem, the new people. We have done everything by divine mandate. We stole the Mexican territories. We enslaved the blacks. We massacred the Indians. And all the while, lurking in the back of our collective psyches was our notion of some kind of divine mandate.

Now, the churches did not make the distinctions between the American culture and their own deeper tradition. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, when the Irish came over here, they couldn't become Americanized fast enough. They wanted to buy into the whole thing.

I think a deepening process has to occur. The prophetic voice has to speak out. I belong to what is loosely termed the Catholic Left, and I think the deepening is happening. El Salvador has brought a lot of people out of the woodwork. The deepening process is beginning to occur. That is a hopeful sign. Where we go from there, I don't know. For the moment, I am stuck on the prophetic role.

But now is the time to come to grips with the Vietnam issue as such. Among other things, I propose that a study be undertaken of veterans and non-veterans in their age cohort with respect to fundamental belief systems as they relate to the war and to the questions we are discussing. This study should include nineteen- and twenty-year-olds on college campuses, in the work force, and in the military.

Also, those of us engaged in academic pursuits, in church work, and in the emerging community of Vietnam veterans, have a most serious obligation to discuss our experience and our findings in the public forum. The country may not want to hear it, but we want to tell it. That is an essential part of the healing process.

We are also going to find out whether or not the government is serious about little things, like enterprise homes. And we are going to try to get jobs

for veterans. Now, that process, too, whatever the answers may be, is healing for the veterans; I know not what it will be for the country. □

True Healing Requires Speaking Truth to Power

LEONARD MARSAK
*Professor of History
University of California at Santa Barbara*

It was the Kennedy Democrats who proposed counter-insurgency in Vietnam in the early nineteen-sixties. They portrayed the events in Indochina as being the result of a small band of outside agitators, without whom the Vietnamese peasants would be getting along just fine. It was the liberal element in our country proposing this view. Today it is the not-so-liberal element, it is the right-wing element proposing the same perception in Central America.

In any case, it is the American political establishment that promotes these causes. There are, as someone has pointed out, war criminals walking around among us today — people whom we do not name as such. It might be worthwhile to name them. Their scenario has been enacted for more than thirty-five years, ever since the outset of the cold war. And it continues today. Back in the sixties, Communism was supposed to be monolithic; the Russians and the Chinese were perpetrating the Vietnamese horror to which we had to respond. Today, it is the Russians and the Cubans who are perpetrating some kind of El Salvadoran horror to which we are supposed to respond. This is nonsense.

Once upon a time — during the Woodrow Wilson era — we preached the doctrine of national self-determination. That was when it suited our interests to do so. But today we are not about to let other people determine their own lives if it does not suit our interests.

After the healing — spiritual, psychological, and physical — what still goes on is the politics of life. Henceforth, the only way in which the American community can heal itself is, as the Quakers teach us, to speak truth to power. □

Experiencing Vietnam Was a Different Kind of Reality

JUDY COBURN
*Journalist and author
Venice, California*

I was an activist in the antiwar movement for eight years before I went to Vietnam as a journalist. Even as a journalist, one can experience certain questions about one's responsibility and complexity simply by being there. I experienced things in Vietnam of which I would not approve, and I felt responsible for what was going on there.

People ask me, what did you learn in Vietnam? You were against the war when you went there, and now when you talk about your experience, you sound as if you are sympathetic to the veterans. Did you change your mind about it?

I did not change my political position about the war, but I did change my feelings about it. After I came back from Vietnam, I knew for the first time that if I had been a soldier I would have reacted exactly the way they did there. A lot of people who were not in Vietnam do not have that understanding. They need to have it, but I don't know how they can get it if they have not been in the place. How can you give somebody the experience of being a soldier? I know that I never really understand anything simply from reading about it in books, or from analyzing it in the abstract. I only understand from being there, from experience.

When I went to Vietnam, I had been active in the antiwar movement from the day that John F. Kennedy sent in the first American advisers. I probably read everything I could find written in English or French about the war: books, newspaper reports, magazine articles. Yet from the moment I arrived in Vietnam I was astonished by what I found there. That is the problem: people's distance from things.

I remember reading an account of an American Peace Corps volunteer who went to Ecuador, and how, as a result of his experience, became what he calls an un-American. But why do you have to go to Ecuador? I live in the "ghetto" of Venice, California. I walk around all day, mostly trying to forget about the people who do not have what I have. I

do this largely because I don't know what to do about their not having the things I have. Should I give up what I have because it is wrong to have more than anybody else? But why should I do that if nobody else is doing it?

Our society seems to be set up in such a way that it short-circuits everybody's feelings, their politics, their ability to experience and analyze somebody else's experiences. □

It Is Not Just Guilt; We Feel God Has Left Us Out There

SHAD MESHAD

Vietnam veteran

Regional Coordinator

Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Program

Operation Outreach

Most of the vets cannot forgive God for what they have seen and for the God-awful state that they have been in for the last ten years. That makes it difficult for me as a counselor to the veterans. How do you respond to that attitude? How do you "forgive God"? It is not just our guilt that we feel. We also feel, in so many ways, that God has left us out there, that we have no one to turn to except ourselves. And there are so few of us, so few Bill Mahedys, so very few vet centers in the country. We cannot get to everybody. And that is God-awful.

I don't think it's too late. I wouldn't be here if I thought it was too late. This is about my fourth time here at the Center. Maybe people are getting tired of hearing me. But I think I have good faith. I don't know why I think that. Maybe it is an insanity that I have learned, through the people I deal with.

This morning I talked with sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds at an all-Catholic high school. This was a raising not only of their consciousness, but mine. I am even gaining more awareness today. I have been doing this for ten years. I spent a year in Vietnam, almost lost my life there. I spent several years running away from Vietnam in the nineteen-sixties, hiding out in the conservative South. It has

taken me ten years to tell my story, but, of course, my story will never be fully told.

The sixteen- and seventeen- and eighteen- and nineteen- and twenty-year-olds that I talk with are helping me deal with this reality. There is, indeed, a process going on. I still have hope.

The average age of the Vietnam soldier was 18.5 years. A lot of them did protest the war, then choked and said they didn't want to go to Canada or to jail. So they went into the military. They suffered the atrocity, and they are dealing with that guilt today. They are also dealing with the sixties. And they are dealing with the fact of earthquake victims, and Holocaust victims, and ghetto victims in black America.

They are weeping, and they are asking how to give love and caring back to the world. And the sixteen- and seventeen-, eighteen-, nineteen-, and twenty-year-olds are asking me the same thing: How do we love? How do we give something back?

I don't know if we'll be able to answer their question, but I know it's important. □

A.A.'s "Twelve Steps" May Be Key to the Healing Process

JOEL PAINTER

Chief Psychologist

Veterans Administration Outpatient Center

Santa Barbara, California

I speak as a clinical psychologist, but also as a Christian. There is a prototype of the interface between therapy and morality in the successful self-help program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Probably a million people in America are sober because of A.A. In the "twelve steps" of A.A. there is, first of all, acknowledgement that I am powerless, that I need a higher power. I need something so that I can deal with my conscience, if you will. *Mea culpa*, Father, I have sinned. Then throughout the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, a moral inventory is being taken. There is an attempt to make amends, to deal with the affront to one's conscience. All of these are steps to sobriety. These may also be the steps to the healing we are discussing here today. □

"Repaire me now..."

*Thou hast made me, And shall thy worke decay?
Repaire me now, for now mine end doth haste,
I runne to death, and death meets me as fast,
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;
I dare not move my dimme eyes any way,
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast
Such terrour, and my feeble flesh doth waste*

JOHN DONNE

*By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh;
Onely thou art above, and when towards thee
By thy leave I can looke, I rise againe;
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
That not one houre my selfe I can sustaine;
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.*

Holy Sonnet I



The Collective Healing Will Not Happen in Our Generation

RICHARD D. HECHT

*Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
University of California at Santa Barbara*

With regard to the mythic dimension of war, one needs to consult comparative evidence. What has happened to other cultures which have suffered catastrophes as immense as Vietnam? I would not

want to suggest that the experience of the Vietnam veteran and the United States represents a unique example of mythologies of catastrophe and rebuilding. Others' mythologies are important, too, not that we can simply assimilate their experience, but to help us remember that when a culture suffers a catastrophe, it often takes a long period of time before healing is complete. That healing will not occur at the macro level overnight. Therapists and counselors can work with individuals, but collective healing is not going to happen in our generation.

Take the case of a historic catastrophe and destruction. Take Jerusalem in the years 69 and 70 of the first century. Jerusalem was sacked, it was destroyed. In six months the very center of a religious tradition was annihilated.

At one level the central institution that was destroyed was replaced in less than a decade by religious figures who carefully began to rework the central aspect of the religious tradition in that institution. But healing at some larger level required five to six hundred years of re-exploration and reflection. Only then could Jews make sense of the fact that they no longer lived in their own land, and that somehow their relationship to God was different.

The Vietnam veteran asking, can God be forgiven, makes a lot of sense when placed against the destruction and rebuilding of Judea. The identical question was asked in that context. The Jews asked, can we forgive God for the destruction of this central institution in our lives? I daresay the same question has been asked also by survivors of the Holocaust, and regarding the deaths at Auschwitz.

Comparative evidence is always helpful when we are trying to discern the outlines of a process that may take more than one generation to complete. □

Americans Do Not Really Believe in the Healing Process

MONTE SCHULZ
*Graduate student
 Interdisciplinary Program in American Studies
 University of California at Santa Barbara*

I find it amazing that we Americans talk about Vietnam, but we do so apart from the total American historical experience. We make analogies to Jerusalem, we talk about the Holocaust. We say we never lost a war until Vietnam. But that is not true. The Northerners did not win the Civil War; the issues in that war have never been resolved.

I don't think Americans — including those in this room — feel collectively very guilty about the Indian wars. We say, well, that's right, we took their land, but what can we do about it now? Not too many people supported the American Indian movement at Wounded Knee a few years ago.

We talk about a collective healing process, but I don't know that I really believe in it, and I don't think Americans believe in it. We talk about Ameri-

cans collectively feeling guilty about the war, and I don't think that's true, either. If a nation-wide survey were taken, we would find that people generally are not upset about the war on moral terms. They are just upset because we didn't win. They were irritated at the student protests. They were irritated about the society becoming fragmented over Vietnam. Otherwise, they don't care.

It would be interesting to look for evidence of delayed stress in the Southern veterans of the Civil War, and in the U.S. soldiers in the Indian wars. How did they feel after those wars? You get the impression that the country backed the Indian wars; but that is not the case. There were the same kind of protests we had during the Vietnam war. It's just that they were not very effectual then. □

Modern Therapies Cannot Deal with Guilt and Conscience

PETER MARIN
*Center Associate and writer
 Santa Barbara, California*

I must make several disclaimers before I begin. First, I am going to treat the idea of healing not as if we were Jerusalem and it were our catastrophe, but as if we were fifty per cent Jews and fifty per cent Germans. In other words, what we suffer as a nation and what the vets suffer as participants in the Vietnam war is not so much that they were only the victims of a catastrophe — though in some sense that is true — they were also the perpetrators of a catastrophe. That makes their individual psychological situations much more complex. It is difficult to talk about that in specific language, because the more vets you talk to and the more you read about the war, the more you see that you are talking about several dozen wars at once. It is impossible to categorize the experience of Vietnam veterans in particular. We can add up, through their experiences, what the war was like, but in individual cases the experiences were so various that when we talk about particular veterans, we are really not talking about the same war at all.

It is impossible to tell from the data or from individual testimony, for instance, how many veterans were directly involved in what we would call atrocities, how many heard about them, how many never saw them, how many were distressed by the injustice of the war, how many were distressed simply by the fact that it was a war we did not intend to win. It is also hard to know how many persons were deeply affected in that very complicated moral way by the atrocities practiced by the Vietnamese, by the Vietcong, by the other side. That created a moral situation where you found apparently innocent persons who would turn out either to be your enemies or, in some cases, to be wired as bombs. You never knew when you saw an apparently innocent person whether that person was indeed innocent or a threat to you. Many vets were faced with that situation.

I will presume that many veterans are troubled by what I will call guilt, that is, the sense of having participated in a war which was fundamentally unjust, but more than that, of having participated in a war in which they themselves actually did certain things, or saw certain things done, which clearly, by anybody's standards, violated the lines that people draw, even in the midst of war, between combatants and civilians, between guilty antagonists and innocents.

One of the things which preys on many of our vets and disturbs them is the fact that the violence in the war was arbitrary, in many cases unjustifiable; and that it was a war fundamentally different from the kinds of war that we have fought as a nation in the rememberable past. Certainly in relation to the two world wars and the Korean war, the Vietnam war was a special kind of war, one in which not just the war itself, but behavior within the war was clearly often unjustifiable in anyone's terms.

I am going to make another presumption which I do not have the time to justify here, but I will try to go over it briefly. I will assume that one of the great failures in contemporary therapy is that it has made no place in the maps of the psyche for conscience. This is a peculiar kind of fault. We have learned in this century to ascribe every aspect of human behavior to nature. We ascribe savagery to nature, we ascribe speech to nature, we ascribe hunger and desire to nature. But when we come to morality, conscience, or ethics, we refuse to ascribe that to either nature or human nature. Instead, we insist over and over again that conscience is either derived from divine authority or manufactured by

a culture and somehow imposed on the individual.

For the sake of this discussion, I postulate that moral capacity, or conscience, is very much like one's capacity for language. It is a capacity which no individual develops necessarily on his own, but what you find mirrored or represented in culture as moral or ethical points of view, or ethical concern, is itself a complicated adumbration of something which has its roots in nature but exists also in all individual persons. I want to make that clear because I think there are kinds of self-betrayal which occur in individuals, not just in the midst of war, but continuously. You see those betrayals very often in therapy, when persons humiliate themselves, or feel themselves to be humiliated, by having betrayed their best and deepest sense of what is right, or what they ought or ought not to have done.

Sartre talks about this in his philosophic psychology; he calls it bad faith. I call it bad conscience; that is, a person's sense that he has betrayed what he understands, in the best and deepest part of himself, to be right or just.

My presumption, then, is that Vietnam was a war rife with certain kinds of guilt. I leave out of this discussion other kinds of suffering which may, indeed, in terms of the veterans' suffering, be much greater than the suffering which comes from guilt. There are horrors, a sense of having been betrayed, fears, and simply the impact of certain sights and events which cannot be forgotten, but which cannot be assimilated into the world to which one has returned when one comes home. Those are all profound problems, but we have therapies equipped to deal with them, although they may not deal with them very well.

Questions of guilt and conscience, on the other hand, are precisely those questions with which our therapies cannot deal in any way at all. What the vets do in returning with their particular kinds of knowledge and experience, is call into question the fundamental nature of modern therapy, precisely because it is not equipped to deal with them, just as it has not been equipped to deal with similar problems in other persons who did not go to war. A friend who is now a practicing psychiatrist insists that every psychological problem is also a moral problem, and that the therapist is deciding not just what his patient wants to do, but what the patient, underneath everything else, feels he or she ought to do. A great deal of pain in the therapeutic situation is not just ignored, it is manufactured by therapists who try to divorce the therapeutic from

the moral, who try to deal with the problem as if it did not have a moral dimension.

There are reasons for this, and we can't go into them in detail here. With the beginning of psychiatry it was necessary for Sigmund Freud and his colleagues and followers, in order to see the human being whole or real, to distinguish certain desires and feelings from moralities which had been imposed from without. Freud tended, for that reason, to do two things. He tended to take moral traditions for granted, but rule them out of the therapeutic situation, although I don't think he meant to ignore them entirely. Second, he tended to deal with individuals as if they were isolated integers, not connected at a profound level to other persons. Therapeutically and psychologically, that is a terrible mistake.

You find at any one of several levels — whether sociological or moral — that persons are indeed connected to others, that the notion of an isolated ego is a fiction, and that when you are dealing with individuals about the kinds of pain they are experiencing, you had best deal with them in terms of an underlying connective tissue. Persons feel intuitively and instinctively connected to others. They need this connection with others, and so the pain they suffer is not necessarily their own direct pain. This is terribly important. In every therapeutic situation — not just that of returning vets — the traumas that people experience are not simply a result of what has happened to them.

Dealing with patients up through the nineteen-sixties, one saw that for many persons the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, had a traumatic effect far exceeding what they could locate in their personal lives. The pain they felt was not so much a personal loss as something I would describe as the world's pain. Their pain had to do with the condition of the world. Therapists tend to ignore that there is a way — which incidentally the religious know — in which the soul or the psyche suffers when it perceives the condition of the world. Finally, there is a way in which the psyche or the soul suffers when the condition of the world is felt as a private or personal pain, but the person is paralyzed to act. That is the final humiliation: to see a pain, to be moved to respond, and yet not to be able to find a way to make a change or to respond.

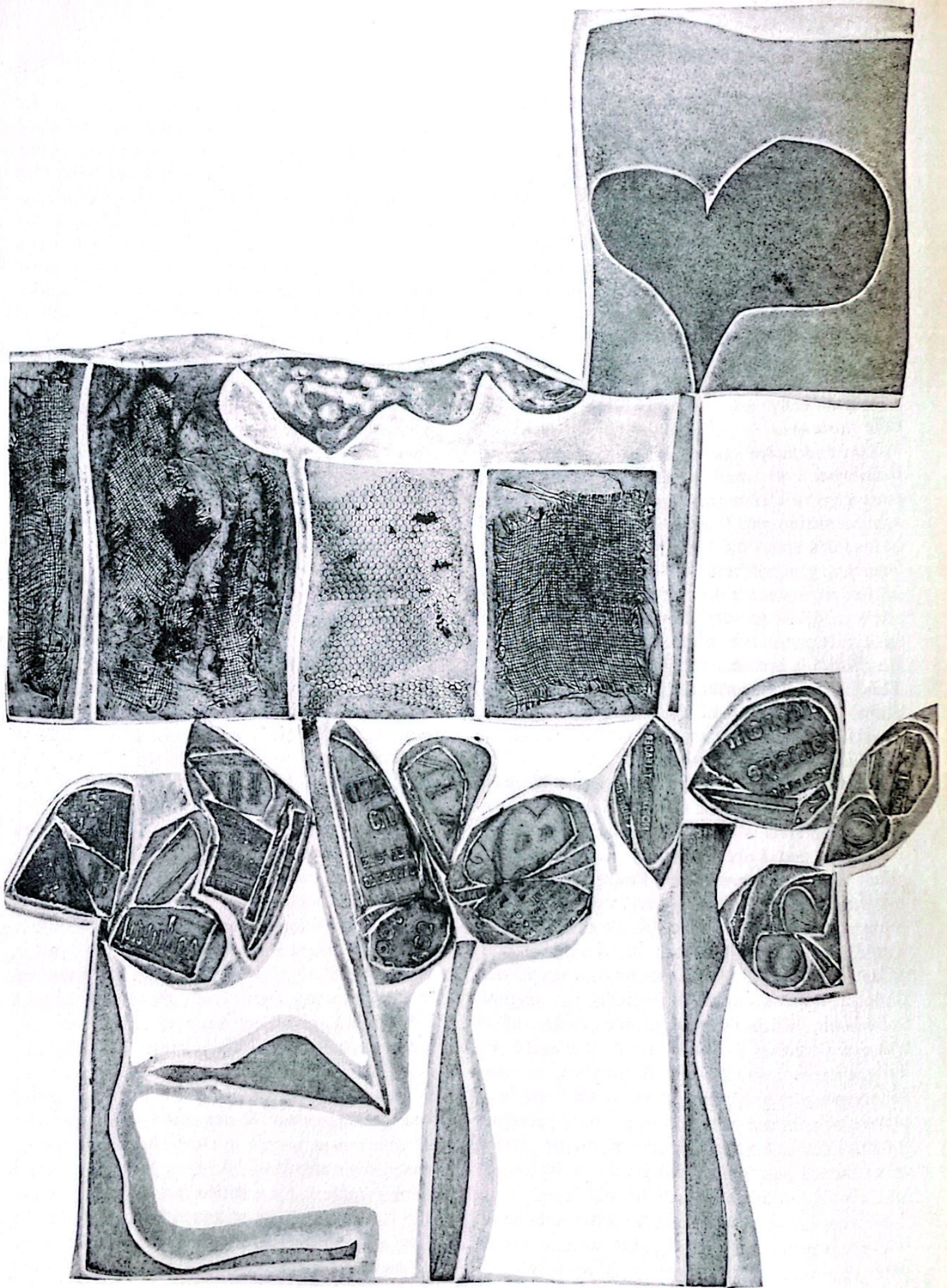
We do know with respect to some animals — falcons, wolves, and elephants, for instance — that there is a kind of weeping or suffering they expe-

rience for their others. They have a kind of bonding which we do not understand. I submit there is a bonding among persons for which we have almost no name, certainly no technical name, but which exists nonetheless. If you are in the midst of war and you see savagery, what you suffer is not just the existence of the savagery, not just the killing, say, of a mother holding a child, but, if you are open to it — and not all of us are open to it — you experience the empathic suffering of the innocent person. This is a tremendous burden. It is a burden Americans sometimes bear when they go to strange places and see people starving to death. Many Americans, many people from the Peace Corps, who went to countries in Latin America or the Far East, came back with feelings not at all unlike the Vietnam veterans' feelings. They felt rage and humiliation at the life which went on in America as if the hunger they had seen did not exist.

In that sense, what the Vietnam veterans returned with is not just that terribly hygienic phrase, a post-trauma delayed stress syndrome. To use that anti-septic term as if it actually described anything makes no sense at all. It undercuts the situation. It is not connected to human suffering, human rage, and human guilt. What the vets went through in the war is special in terms of the kind of war it was, but it is not special in terms of suffering. It is extreme, but it is not special. Many persons who have seen similar things around the world have suffered in similar ways and been confronted with the same kind of existential and moral problem: that is, having done and seen this, how should I live now?

What one sees in many therapeutic situations involving Vietnam veterans are people who cannot, on their own, answer that question, just as one sees it with other patients in a therapist's office, depending on the problems which have brought those persons there. The patient says, given my knowledge, given my suffering, given my feeling, given my empathy, given my anger, given my sorrow, and, on top of that, given my sense of alienation — because I seem to feel all these things while others do not — how should I live?

That, by the way, is the problem for any feeling and thinking person. Unfortunately it is a problem to which most people in our culture have not directed their attention. There ought to be — and I think there is, but it is buried away in various books and poems — a body of knowledge appropriate to such a situation. And that ought to have been the substance of a university education, but it is not.



It does exist, it is just hidden away. One could pick out a hundred samples; the way, for instance, in which Thomas Wolfe is turned about at the end of his literary life. When Wolfe went to Germany and saw fascism and returned, he was unable to explain to Americans what he had seen. He died very soon after. Much of what the Vietnam vets feel is like what Americans felt upon returning from Germany in the nineteen-thirties. Both tried to explain to others what was going on, but couldn't. The issue of guilt and redemption, and certain kinds of suffering, can be found in Tolstoy and Dostoevski. It is in Conrad. Those are the great tragic psychologists of the last two hundred years. But since we only "teach" those and have not taken them seriously as a part of common wisdom, what can be derived from them is not available to the vets.

There are three kinds of categories or situations with which therapists could usefully deal — not just with vets, but with any patient — and which ordinarily they ignore. The first concerns the condition of bad faith or bad conscience in the veterans or patients who understand they have not lived according to their own best sense of what is right or just, and that they do not know how to deal with it. Young persons come into a therapist's office and will begin to weep at certain points, because of certain kinds of suffering they have seen or which they know about, and they want to do something about the suffering but cannot make a connection between the way they live and the way other people are forced to live. The real problem is that they do not know how to live a moral or ethical life equivalent to their capacity to respond to suffering in the world.

The second category which ought to be considered, but is not, is the world's pain. In Reichian therapy, if you deal almost directly with the body, if you bypass the psyche and work on the ways in which people armor themselves against certain kinds of feelings which are too much to bear, you will achieve an emotional catharsis. What you see in that kind of therapy is something very simple — and you can see it in individuals, too, who are not in therapy — it is an extraordinary, almost joyous, kind of weeping. The person finally begins to weep because of the sorrow or suffering that for a long time he has felt about his own life and the nature of the world but has kept constrained. The weeping then has two simultaneous grounds: one is the way in which one has betrayed oneself; the other is the condition of the world, a world which, though it is

wondrous and joyous, is also in other respects horrific beyond belief or toleration.

The third category which psychologists tend to ignore, though perhaps they ignore it less now than before, concerns not so much the problem people have in not being fully or adequately loved, but in not knowing how adequately to give their sense of love, gratitude, anger, and suffering back to the world. You see that in vets all the time, but not just in vets. Almost none of us is raised as if he ought to act firmly and with conviction on the basis of his deep and honest responses to what he sees around him. There is a kind of politeness, at best, and, at worst, silence, which is taught persons almost from their birth with regard to their response to almost everything around them. It is not that persons think they do not have a right to their response; rather they think they do not have a right to act on the basis of their response. There are wonderful myths like the "quiet American," or Don Quixote, which persuade us to believe that moral or ethical behavior will usually lead you to a disaster or a mistake, and so it is best to leave things as they are.

What is crucial in all this is the question of connection with other persons. It is right that the kind of moral activity that is based on abstractions or beliefs will lead you to grief. Take Peace Corps people, for example. Some, by no means all, were transformed by their experience in the Corps. They went to a far country, saw suffering and certain kinds of community. They were deeply moved. Their own lives were called into question. Their relation to money, to property, to profession, all of these were called into question. At the same time, something else happened. They located a community of other persons in whose name they could speak. As a result, ethics was no longer abstract or ideological.

Now what some of the Peace Corps people learned is absolutely essential in any kind of emotional and moral existence. But that is what we deprive our children of. What one sees in working with college and high-school students — especially middle-class persons — is that, whatever their sympathies, prejudices, or illusions about the poor, their actual contact with people unlike themselves, with the suffering others, or simply with others in whose name, as well as their own, they could speak, hardly exists at all. One of the sources of moral and psychological pain is the inability to locate a community of persons with whom and for whom and

in whose name one can speak, as well as in one's own name. The great literary moral texts invariably are by persons who were not moved by an idea but by the perception of and living with concrete others, whether it was John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath*, or Tolstoy and the poor. The lives of such authors were transformed by their immediate experience of other living persons, not merely by ideas or ideals. So any effort at healing has to be grounded in contact with a living community of other persons.

The matter of giving some kind of love back to the world is an extraordinary problem in this country. Kropotkin said that natural morality, generosity, if you will, is an overflow of vitality. If you feel at home in the world — as certain persons in certain tribes do — if you feel fundamentally that existence in the physical world is a gift because it produces joy, then the notion of repaying, of giving back, comes as naturally as song does to birds. People feel that way when they fall in love. Then there is no idea that I “ought” to do this for the other person. There is rather a spontaneity of response, one springing from joy and gratitude. That is the relation of many religions to their god. One gives back, not because one is worried or because one owes it in theory, but because one is thankful.

Now, what we see in the therapeutic situation in the United States — and this applies perhaps less to vets than to others — is that the condition of existence is in such a continual sort of depression that there is no natural overflow of any kind of generosity or gratitude based on the notion that this world was given to me as a gift.

Every human good is a gift: language, pencils, paper. Everything comes to persons from somebody else's labor. Whatever you make use of and enjoy, therefore, immediately confers upon you a kind of responsibility and reciprocity. Nothing is given to people — not their thought processes, not their name, not their sense of ego — which they can claim credit for on their own. Everything comes to them through others. To the extent that it is used and enjoyed, to that extent, one owes something in return.

One would hope that what is returned is returned spontaneously. But it is not, so, whether we are teachers or therapists, we deal with that reality and invariably we say, this is what you ought to do, what you owe, what you ought to feel. We invent formal ethics because we do not feel grateful all the time. We decide, rather, that this is how we ought to act. We will act as if we were grateful. We will

act as if we felt love. We will act as if we experienced connection. This is what we ought to do if we felt all those things, but because others suffer, we will act that way all the time, not just when we actually feel it, because if we waited until we actually felt it, there would be too much suffering altogether.

All of this is in the Western therapeutic, literary, and religious tradition. Furthermore, it is all directly applicable to certain things that the Vietnam vets bring into the therapist's office. Yet it is precisely the kind of general background which does not infuse the attitudes of the therapists who are treating the veterans as well as other patients.

With respect to the encounter between the therapist and the patient, or the teacher and the student, we are used to thinking of that, at its best, as an I-thou relationship; that is, two persons open to each other. But given our nature as Americans, given the power of our nation, and given the nature of moral life, I suggest that every relationship is a triangular one. There ought to be present in every educational or therapeutic encounter the invisible third, the witness, those persons who will be directly affected by the reality constructed or discovered by the therapist and the patient. The responsibility of the latter two is to construct a mode of feeling and behavior which takes into account the destinies of all those others who will subsequently be affected by the reality being constructed.

So, there is not an I-thou relationship, but an I-thou-he or -they relationship, in which the invisible other is the Vietnamese, or the El Salvadoran, or the American black, or the woman, or whoever has been dispossessed, alienated, whoever is a stranger and a slave. That other has to be taken into account when one reorganizes one's moral life. That has two functions: it can guarantee to others, from that point on, the consideration which they are denied in their ordinary myths. But it also serves the function of reminding the patient that no matter what it is he does, he does not exist in isolation, in a moral vacuum. There is no life which does not affect the well-being of others. What we choose to do, what we choose not to do, affects others. That is moral existence, and it goes on.

If we would look at our lives in these terms, we would understand that most of us, to varying degrees, have betrayed others no more and no less than has the Vietnam war veteran. The reason we should look at reality this way is that it will teach us — and presumably the vets — that we have been not

isolated out by the nature of our experience, by its specific quality or kind. The questions which vets face in rebuilding their lives or trying to deal with their experiences are questions which, if we all understood the nature of our own lives, would be faced by all of us.

Every person who eats well and dresses well in a world where some men are naked and hungry ought to face the same questions of guilt that the Vietnam vets do. But most of us do not face such questions. The whole theoretical question centering on privilege in a suffering world, about how to live in a suffering world — a question which I assume is the most profound religious question one can raise in secular terms — is one which we have ignored at almost every level. And yet it is one we would have to confront in therapeutic situations because what one sees, at least part of the time, in the therapist's office, is moral pain and failed moral lives. Now if we did that, or if we even began to do that, we might come around to a therapeutic perception which would do the vets some good.

What I hope — since I do not think that anybody is going to do this — is that the recognition of dealing with the war will proceed in stages. In fact, we are at a phase now in which some people are beginning to witness publicly the nature of their experience. But the literature is not yet raising the kinds of ultimate moral questions that must be raised in a context of subjective life. What one hopes is that as the vets who have survived begin to deepen and broaden their point of view in relation to what it was they went through, they will raise these questions, not necessarily therapeutically, but in the literature or in the culture, one way or another. The hope is that, coming out of and because of the Vietnam war, there will be a changed perception of religion and therapy, one that is more accurate with respect to the nature of human existence and suffering. That may come close to giving us, as a culture, a set of questions, if not answers, which approximate what one could find among the ancient Greeks or the nineteenth-century Russians.

It may be that these are questions which can only be raised and answered in a culture which is in as much trouble as ours is. In other words, these may be late-stage questions in cultural history. Tragedy may visit a people only when they see that history is no longer on their side. I suspect that if anybody raises these questions for us at this point, because we are not raising them for ourselves, it will have to be the Vietnam veteran. □

What Role for Organized Religion Regarding War?

GAYLE BINION

*Assistant Professor of Political Science
University of California at Santa Barbara*

For there to be a collective healing, there must be some conclusion as to what we as a society learned from Vietnam. This is apart from healing of individuals who fought in the war. There has to be something that we as a people have learned, something that we will not do again. My fear is that any national resolution of the Vietnam experience may, instead, be a very jingoistic one.

I am concerned, too, with the role of organized religion in the healing process. The institutions of religion may be critical to the outcome. When Michael Harrington was here last year, he said he thought one of the major problems in America today is the lack of effective religion. The role of religion may be a lot easier to define and to make operative at the level of the individual Vietnam veteran. But at the level of society, I am wondering what potentially the role of organized religion will be with respect not only to the healing of the nation, but also with respect to war generally. □

American Leaders Were Blind, Not Necessarily Wicked

NINIAN SMART

*Professor of Religious Studies
University of California at Santa Barbara*

I speak doubly as an outsider, not being a citizen of this country, and not having been involved in the Vietnam ghastliness. But it doesn't seem, from a European perspective, that all the news is bad.

The good news, as far as the United States is

concerned, is that America has shown more self-criticism and sensitivity in this matter than any other of the major nations in similar situations. That is an important thing to recognize. This is not necessarily to say that all those who criticized the Vietnam war were right, and all those who defended it were wrong. But a public debate did occur in America, one which was much more deeply felt and deeply sought than one would expect. Our discussion here is only a continuation of that.

But the bad news goes back to the question of mythology. My reaction to the events, not only of Vietnam but also of, say, Algeria, is that we are dealing with blindness, not wickedness, in the leaders. The ghastliness of war does show us the wickedness of human beings and what human beings will do to one another. But one of the lessons of the Vietnam war is that it was entered into and developed out of a crazy analysis of the situation, and for mythological reasons which were not realistic.

So I would say that one of the weapons in our hand — and it is only a feeble weapon — is education. Not only in the United States, but in many other countries, we have extremely ignorant leaders because of the kind of education that we give to people. It is very often a technical education. In the case of Henry Kissinger, it was a technical political science that he learned, one which had no humane underpinnings. So, the bad news is a kind of spiritual ignorance, a darkness of the intellect, which has led people into these dreadful wars. □

The Profound Issue Is Loss of the Meaning of Life

ROBERT E. BLAKEMORE

Counseling psychologist

Counseling Center

University of California at Santa Barbara

We have gone through a period when it might be said that a whole generation was betrayed. Vietnam was an active horror for those who were being drafted for that experience; others tried to examine

their conscience about how to oppose the political leaders who had designated the Vietnam war as a holy crusade. And then there was Watergate. I wonder if we can assume that there is such a thing as a collective American conscience. A recent issue of *Psychology Today* is entitled, "The World Turned Upside Down." That may reflect the fragmentation of American society into various subgroups and subcultures. Maybe we have lost the continuity of the collective healing process.

We know, from anthropological studies, that when a tribal group goes out to lay waste to its neighbors' lands, there is usually a period of time when the returning warriors are kept outside the village for purification. This not only allows the hot blood to cool, it also allows the community to recognize the returning warrior as someone who has had a unique and horrifying experience. But we picked our warriors up one day in Saigon, and set them down the next day in Kansas City, Missouri. This may have had a tremendous impact in fragmenting the continuity of a collective conscience.

Healing is in fact a religious process. The ancient Greeks knew this. They had their Aesculapian temples. They also knew that one had to be identified as in need of some physical and spiritual event before the healing process could take place.

In contrast, we have had a national repression of the entire Vietnam experience. We tell people to get on with life as rapidly as possible, to repress any Vietnam experience that they might have had. We tell them to try to fit in. As a result, the meaning of life becomes confused, and the individual breaks down into rage masked by apathy. Underneath every disillusionment, underneath every shattering of the image of what life was thought to be, there is a rage. When rage is all-pervasive, one responds by numbing oneself, becoming apathetic to almost everything.

This is true not only of the Vietnam veterans. I see it also in college students in a more general way. In the last five years, we have begun to see a chronic walking depression among college students. They are apathetic, convinced that nothing matters, that they can't affect anything going on around them.

The profound issue here is the loss of the meaning of life. A comparative study of that among veterans and non-veterans would be well worth undertaking. □