

## Editorial

Curtis W. Hart

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At the *Journal*, we receive clusters of manuscripts addressing topics that are also timely in the dialogue between religion and spirituality and health. These topics vary widely and have recently included HIV in North America, Europe, and Africa and a collection of articles addressing dietary issues in Islam, particularly as they focus upon ritual fasting. For this issue, we begin with six articles having to do with mental health, the military, and veterans' affairs from the United States, the Balkans, and the Middle East. They include essays on warrior culture, suicide, religiosity and absence of belief among combat veterans, and predictably post-traumatic stress disorder. This confluence of articles appears to be no accident but is rather indicative of interest among social science researchers into matters not merely of interest for those in their own professional cohort but also for those practitioners in the clergy and pastoral care and counseling field who are often among those who directly encounter sufferers of war and its aftermath. In reading over these articles, I was struck by the thought about how these conditions affect a wide domain of persons including family members, especially spouses, partners, and children along with friends and work colleagues who vicariously experience the trauma of war through their fellow human beings.

It is hardly a novel idea that there exists a cultural narrative describing directly or indirectly the impact of war on the popular imagination in the United States. We have always had motion pictures like Gary Cooper in “Sergeant York” for World War I or John Wayne in “Sands of Iowa Jima” for World War II that celebrate unyielding heroism and sacrifice. We have also as part of the motion picture canon “All Quiet on the Western Front”, “The Best Years of Our Lives” (it won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1946) along with “The Men” and “Home of the Brave.” These motion pictures tell stories about terror in the trenches, the suffering involved in returning to civilian life after the intensity and war, the agony of rehabilitation, and confrontation with the ugliest of racism. For Viet Nam, there is “Apocalypse Now”, “Platoon”, and “Born on the Fourth of July.” And for America's most recent involvement, there is the unforgettable “The Hurt Locker.”

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C. W. Hart (✉)  
New York, NY, USA  
e-mail: cuh9001@med.cornell.edu

It would not be hard to make a listing of books (fiction and nonfiction) and music for which similar claims could be made.

The universal questions arising from an encounter with these movies are implied or directly engaged in the six articles we see in the first section of this issue of the *Journal*. These articles address similar concerns in robust and open-minded ways. They are not works of art *per se* but complement what we find in memorable books and movies about the experience of war trauma. I have thought more and more of late about the indivisibility of art and social sciences (and experimental “hard” science as well) as having much to say to one another if only we look closely at their respective methods, messages and meanings. Taken together, these first six articles testify to that connection. They are followed by psychiatrist in the Veterans’ Administration, Mary Rorro’s, brief lyric “Anointing 9/11” which serves as a fitting valedictory to conclude this selection of articles appearing on the twelfth anniversary of that most horrific of days.

And the *Journal* moves ahead and breaks some new ground in this issue with Steven Pirutinsky’s pithy critique regarding the often discussed topic of the connection between religiosity and psychological functioning. We are pleased Steven has chosen to publish with us, and we hope to hear more from him and from those who might wish to respond to his findings and critique. That is one of the main reasons what we at the *Journal* remain in business for and, frankly, what makes editing a continually rewarding enterprise.