

Vietnam Generation

Volume 1

Number 1 *The Future of the Past: Revisionism and Vietnam*

Article 2

1-1989

Introduction

Kali Tal

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/vietnamgeneration>

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tal, Kali (1989) "Introduction," *Vietnam Generation*: Vol. 1 : No. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/vietnamgeneration/vol1/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vietnam Generation by an authorized editor of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.

INTRODUCTION

KALÍ TAL

I am proud to introduce the first issue of *Vietnam Generation: A Journal of Recent History and Contemporary Issues*. We have put together a very fine collection of articles, representing disciplines as diverse as economics, literature, education, sociology, history, film, and popular culture. Each article also represents an individual response to the highly charged term "revisionism".

Ben Kiernan's article, "The American Bombardment of Kampuchea, 1969-1973", is an example of classic revisionist scholarship — the revision of historical narrative based on new or reinterpreted information. Tom Riddell's article, "The Inflationary Impact of the Vietnam War", also deals with revisionism in the classic sense: Riddell challenges the revisionist scholarship of economists Walker and Vatter, and charges that their reinterpretations of the past are ill-founded. David Berman's article, "In Cold Blood: Vietnam in Textbooks" takes a historiographical approach toward revision, and examines the way in which historical narratives are rewritten over time. Mariam Frenier, in "Two Quiet Americans: Turning British Literature into American Propaganda", and Don Kunz, in "First Blood Redrawn," examine the revision of popular concepts of history through the mediums of literature and film. Larry Rottmann, in "One Hundred Happy Sparrows: An American Veteran Returns to Vietnam", explores the personal revision process as he describes his emotional journey. Harry Haines, in "Disputing the Wreckage: Ideological Struggle at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial", demonstrates how the process of personal revision intersects with the generation of public history at the site of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC. My own article, "On the Cover of the Rolling Stone: Toward a Theory of Cultural Therapy", deals with the cause and effect of the revisionist impulse, and suggests a new approach to the problem.

Despite the high calibre of the individual articles represented in this collection, it is apparent that articles on a number of topics are conspicuously absent. Included here are no papers devoted to the topics of race or gender and the Vietnam War, no papers which deal with Vietnamese perceptions of the American presence in Vietnam, no papers on the POW-MIA obsession, and no papers on the subject of these subjects are absent that they are inconsequential. What is missing is often at least as important as what is included.

There is only one article by a woman in this issue. There are no articles by Vietnamese scholars; in fact, there are no articles by non-white men. This imbalance cries out for an explanation. It is not enough merely to say that no papers were submitted by men or women of color. It is not enough to say that only three papers were submitted by white women scholars, and that we accepted one of them for publication. We cannot excuse ourselves for failing to include these perspectives by saying that we would have been open to publishing them *if they had been submitted*.

Vietnam Generation is intended to provide a forum for Vietnam War, Vietnam era, and Vietnam generation scholars. If our field, at this point in time, is so narrow that it does not include the work of scholars of color, or of women, then we must broaden our topic area until it does include this work. We are devoting one issue this first year to an exploration of race issues and Vietnam, and another issue to a study on gender and war. But even this is not enough. We are committed to make a sincere and consistent effort to incorporate questions of race and gender into every issue of *Vietnam Generation*. In the future we will not simply wait for these articles to come to us in the mail; we will make a direct effort to solicit them. And if, at times, we fail to present these alternative views, we will always try to be honest about what we have not published, careful to point out the missing articles in our table of contents.