The Unfinished War:
Vietnam and the Collective Healing Process

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2:00 pm

DISCUSSION LEADER: Walter H. Capps

PARTICIPANTS: Stanley Anderson, Gayle Binion, Robert Blakemore, Judy Coburn, William Edwards, David Gold, Tom Griffith, Richard Hecht, William Mahedy, Peter Marin, Leonard Marsak, Donald McDonald, James McNamara, Leonard Marsak, Shad Meshad, James Grier Miller, Denver Mills, Joel Painter, Monte Schulz, John Stark, Ninian Smart, Steven Schlah, Stephen Weatherford

CAPPS: This is about the fourth dialogue sesssion we have had at the Hutchins Center on the impact of Vietnam, in fact, before the Center moved to the campus of UCSB there were discussions of Vietnam, Don McDonald will remember very well, up on the hill, Eucalyptus Hill Road in Montecito. We have gathered a number of persons around the table this afternoon who are able to view the Vietnam situation from a variety of perspectives. There are Vietnam veterans here, there are persons at the table who are involved in the resocialization of the Vietnam vet, there are historians, sociologists, students, and others. And I think the way I would like to proceed is just to have all of you at the table identify yourselves, and I'd like to do this rather slowly. Pat Cathcart has asked me to ask you to look at the roster in front of you, and if there are any changes that ought to be made in the way your name is listed, the way your name is spelled, will you, with all due respect to the typist, will you indicate that as you introduce yourselves, and we'll start with John Stark, and move around the room.

STARK: As was announced, my name is John Stark, religious studies department, correctly spelled, the second page.

SCHULZ: I am Monte Schulz, interdisciplinary program, in American studies at the University.

CAPPS: And a specialist in Vietnam. And doing a thesis on the Vietnam war.

PAINTER: I am Joel Painter, the chief psychologist at the Santa Barbara outpatient clinic of the Veterans Administration.

SCHLAH: I am Steve Schlah. They put me down here as a consultant. I am a Vietnam veteran, unemployed at the moment, and worked for the last five and a half years with the National Alliance of Businessmen in the business program.

BLAKEMORE: I'm Robert Blakemore, I am in the counseling center at UCSB, for about twenty-four years. My name is spelled correctly.

COBURN: I'm Judy Coburn. I am a journalist who was in Vietnam for three years.

McDONALD: Donald McDonald, editor of The Center Magazine.

BINION: Gayle Binion, department of political science, UCSB.

CATHCART: Patricia Cathcart, associate editor, Center Magazine.

GOLD: David Gold, department of sociology, UCSB.

GRIFFITH: I am Tom Griffith, I am a vocational rehabilitation counselor here on campus.

WEISMILLER: Frances Weismiller, I'm a writer.

McNAMARA: Jim McNamara, department of religious studies, UCSB.

MILLS: Denver Mills, I'm a Vietnam veteran, and on the staff here at the university, and I am a graduate student in public and social affairs.

SMART: I am Ninian Smart. I am in the religious studies department, UCSB.

EDWARDS: And I'm William Edwards, department of black studies, UCSB.

ANDERSON: Stan Anderson, in political science.

WEATHERFORD: Steve Weatherford, in political science.

MILLER: James Miller, in psychiatry and psychology. I was the first clinical psychologist in the Veterans Administration central office, and I am now the president of the Hutchins Center.

MESHAD: Shad Meshad, Western United States regional coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Operation OUTREACH program.

MARIN: Peter Marin. I'm a writer.

MAHEDY: Bill Mahedy. I'm the team leader of the Vet Center OUTREACH program in San Diego.

CAPPS: I am Walter Capps. I have the responsibility, also the privilege of leading off this afternoon. After I read a relatively brief paper, on the topic The Unfinished War: Vietnam and the Collective Healing Process, Bill Mahedy will speak, and then we'll have some discussion. There are several speakers this afternoon, consequently we'll take a break, I think in about an hour, and following the break, Peter Marin will lead off and then we'll give Judy Coburn a chance to speak, if she wants to, at that time. We all set?

This one starts off rather mildly, but I think it makes some fairly strong points near the end.

More than five years after the American fighting forces have returned home, the Vietnam war remains a frequent item of front-page news. The reaction of the return of the hostages from Iran demonstrated that Americans are continuing to be affected. For Vietnam era veterans are not the only ones who noticed the disparities between the extended and at times tumultuous welcome given those returned from Iran, and the

still postponed national homecoming for the 4.2 million men and women who served in Vietnam. President Reagan himself acknowledged the difference. In a special White House ceremony for Roy Benevitez, the forty-five-year-old retired Army sergeant, who was presented a Medal of Honor for bravery in Vietnam. Using the occasion, the President lamented the fact that when the troops returned from Vietnam, quote, they were greeted by no parades, no bands, no waving of the flag they so nobly served. End of quote. He offered that they came home without victory because they had been denied permission to win. He added that the lesson of Vietnam is that, again quote, never again do we sent an active fighting force to a country, unless it is for a cause we intend to win. Unquote.

Max Cleland, the outgoing Veterans Administration head, puts it slightly differently. He said, "Never again do we send our brothers and sisters into battle unless we are also willing to welcome them home."

The larger current stimulus for fresh appraisal of Vietnam is the political and military situation in El Salvador, and growing indications that U.S. involvement there is escalating significantly. The parallels to the manner in which the United States increased in involvement in Vietnam are all too similar. Indeed, the sequence is such, from sending the military advisers, to denying that U.S. forces would be involved in direct combat, to commiting the Green Berets, and to sending military combat weapons, the sequence is such that newspaper headlines about El Salvador in 1980 and 81 resemble those concerning Vietnam during the period of 1964 to 66. Public service television is not the only agency to provide a documentary

on the question, is El Salvador another Vietnam? The growing fear is that the fundamental conflict, the clash between those who both own land and wealth and those who seek a larger share, is virtually the same as that which sparked the drive for independence and hence the need for revolution under Ho Chi Minh's influence in Vietnam. Indeed, the stated American motives are the same, too. Namely, the need to resist the onrush of Communist aggression. This time the threat lies within our own neighborhood, as Secretary Haig describes it. But the intention is the same, and the fear is that the United States is playing out some assigned role in some perennial drama almost as if the earlier experience had no lessons to convey at all.

Vietnam remains in the news. It is in the news because it remains at the forefront of American self-consciousness. Though the direct hostilities have ceased, the memory will not go away. The emotional ruins remain. The psychosocial scars are prominent.

As Peter Marin as reminded us, we have not yet come to terms with Vietnam. In all of these respects, Vietnam remains an unfinished war, a persistent problem for the American conscience. For me the most eloquent clue to the unfinished character of the Vietnam experience is the fact that the responses are formed primarily through the mode of personal testimony. I refer to the fact that most of the writing about war is being done by veterans, and by veterans who have personal stories to tell. This, I believe, is a remarkable hermeneutical occurance. Personal testimony is certainly not the only

available mode of response or reaction to an event of such magnitude. Indeed, personal testimony becomes the appropriate mode of response only within certain carefully prescribed conditions. And I am suggesting that Vietnam was the kind of event which cannot be adequately captured with documentaries or even through memoirs, such as became prevalent following World War II. Or to put the suggestion in larger form, there are only certain human situations which give rise to autobiography or confession, and thus to personal documents as a primary mode of expression.

For example, such literature seems to abound in times of rather dramatic sociocultural transition, when more clearly conceptual systematic theoretical frames of interpretation are not available., when the pathways toward collective interpretation are not easy to come by. Hence one of the clues to the meaning of Vietnam for me lies in the genre which has been selected to give it expression. And I find myself searching those documents to spot the transitions from narrative accounts to discussions of topics more theoretical than abstract. As for example, the meaning of America, the nature of patriotism, the characteristics of heroism, and the like.

I have been guided in this respect by two sources. First, Paul ____-ssel's book, The Great War in Modern Memory, which deals with literary genre, as this pertains to the prosecution and interpretation of World War I, and secondly, though you may have a hard time believing it, St. Augustine's Confessions. The latter because there are clear transitions

between Augustine's narrative account, and the treatment of more abstract, even metaphysical concepts and themes, such as time, memory, and creation. What strikes me about the Vietnam narrative, the personal documents, referring to the experiences of Americans in Vietnam, is that the description of events within them provides access to a distinctive range of topics and themes, not simply what it is to be an American, not simply patriotism, heroism, the experience of Americans in Asia, et cetera, but the narrative accounts provide access to a distinctively religious set of topics, themes like shame, guilt, the need for restoration, et cetera. Well, this has indicated to me that what follows Vietnam is a collective process, a process in which Vietnam era veterans are leading way, a process over which persons like Shad Meshad, Bill Mahedy, and the various counselors I have met in the various vet centers around the country, are serving as practitioners, I believe, in a distinctively, though I think they would deny it, a distinctively religious form. The evidence I have for this is not entirely literary, however. I have watched what has happened each time we have had a dialogue at the Center on the subject of the impact of Vietnam. Each time, before we finish, we are given to a round of personal stories concerning how Vietnam affected virtually all of us. The veterans present have frequently wanted to tell their stories, but those of us who were not involved so directly but also involved passionately, we also have stories to tell. And when I listened carefully, I have thought that the personal testimonies, the confessions, we have heard are not only about Vietnam and about how Vietnam

affected us, but they give clues to the ways in which the speaker is coming to terms with some larger subject. Vietnam tends to symbolize what we find right and wrong about life itself. It tells how our enthusiasms are formed, in which direction our avowels are pointing. In this respect, the linkages between Vietnam and El Salvador may not be as directly political and military as they are psychic, emotional, moral, and, in this sense, religious.

I have also watched as undergraduates have sought to come to terms with Vietnam. There is no course I teach which has a greater emotional impact, even upon students who were infants when the war began, and were hardly through elementary school when it was finished,than the course I teach on Vietnam. After being exposed to Caputo's Rumor of War, or Michael Herr's Dispatches, or the film Apocalypse Now, or Coming Home, or to the personal account of the Vietnam era veteran, the responses of the students are highly personal, highly emotional, and yes, confessional. Within a short time they realize, as Michael Herr put it, in the closing lines of his book, Dispatches, Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam, we've all been there. In some sense we've been there too. And the recognition shows up among the students, and their dreams, the frequency of the nightmares that occur about Vietnam. And I believe it is a specific form of delayed stress reaction, which seems to involve everyone who allows himself to get close to the situation. I am not suggesting at all that the personal response is the only response that can be given. I am very conscious of the fact that excellent documentaries exist, A television portrayal done by the Canadian Broadcasting System, for example, and the one

that is coming from station WGBH in Boston over a PBS series in the fall. Neither is this to overlook the fact that the undeclared war in Vietnam was indeed a military event, which can be studied from the vantage point of military history. But after acknowledging all of this, I still believe it important definitionally that the event gets played out through the personal narrative account.

I think we can go much further, though, in portraying the legacy of Vietnam. T.B. Allman ?? comments in his article about El Salvador in the March, 1981, issue of Harper's, that the basic problem there is that the revolution or civil war in that country is being viewed as a contest via categories of interpretation which belong to strategic diplomacy in East-West relations. And he says that any change in U.S. policy in the region would involve asking the question that has been, as he puts it, ideologically and temperamentally impossible for any U.S. President, U.S. Congress, or U.S. electorate to answer honestly. The question is, could it possibly be that there are nations on the earth that are actually better off with governments we did not arm, and soldiers we did not train, with policies we did not support, a rule by governments which we as Americans did not approve?

I recognize our subject today is Vietnam and not El Salvador. But I wish to utilize Allman's comment about the power of the fear of Communist aggression to trace some of the effects of the perceived struggle between the East and the West, or the United States and the Soviet Union, the latter of which is referred to characteristically by President Reagan simply as our adversary.

My suggestion once again has to do with mode and genre. I wish to propose that the battle between the superpowers has indeed been elevated to a mythological frame. Or perhaps it is truer to say that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union is the modern world's primary expression of the mythological clash between superpowers. When I refer to the collossal battle between forces of good and forces of evil, or forces of freedom and forces of suppression, I wish to point out only the all-too-obvious that psychically and religiously for many Americans, the contest between these forces is the battle between God and the devil. It is our God-fearing way of life which is being threatened by as it is described, Godless Communism. And Vietnam and El Salvador become locations where the colossal battle takes place.

Lying behind all of this are some peculiar presuppositions about the meaning of life. These include the tendency to judge reality according to all-encompassing theories, lying behind which is our obsession with doctrine. And implicit in this, are certain confidences, hence intolerances, of knowing that we are the repositories of revealed truth, a confidence which carries an obligation to make the world conform to the world of God, say, or even to the Marxist design.

We have insufficient time today to identify the chief ingredients of these competing world views. My point is simply that the conflict between ideologies has been raised to mythological status. Hence, those countries which support the one point of view are understood to be among the devil and all his legions, and those who are on the other side are in company

with Michael and his angels. The battle is colossal. The battle lines are being drawn between good and evil, light and darkness, yes, between the godly and the godless, and the growing expectation is that the resolution will come only in some final conflagration, both international and cosmic in scope.

The point is that it is exceedingly difficult to maintain allegiance to this myth when one encounters Vietnam face to face. Through that experience, the lines of collective interpretation come apart, or as Morris Dickstein said, the myth, the myth about America is shattered.

Things are out of line. This is very embarrassing. I lost a sheet of paper here. Well, I am missing one sheet, and I apologize for that, but I think I can say the rest of it.

I wanted to say, in closing, I was near the end when that happened, that this collective interpretation, this myth about America, which conforms to the battle between the superpowers, I think is very difficult, very difficult to hang on to, after one faces Vietnam face to face. And that led me into the the page that is missing. Led me into saying something about the propriety of Christopher Lasch's comments about narcissism, that when the collective myth is gone, collective understanding is absent, it makes a great deal of sense to turn to kind of private individual survival strategies, and it seems to me that this is precisely what is, what has taken place. And when that takes place I think it signals that confidence in the collective myth, the comprehensive myth, is no longer there.

I think I first became impressed with that reality when I heard Cris Noel(??) say it at the vet center in Venice.

That you have a difficult time praying. And I've heard a lot of people say that. That she said she could start the prayer but she could never quite get to the word Amen. And she commented after that that she had lost her connection with her maker. And I have heard that over and over again in talking with persons who have come face to face with Vietnam.

Now, the final thing, and then I'll be finished. In the aftermath, after the collective of mythology is shattered, and the, there is this turn, I think, to kind of private individual resourcefulness, in the aftermath there is a tendency, particularly among liberals, to try to put the pieces back together again, either through intellectual or programmatic means. There is a perceived need to recapture the wholeness, to engage in an effective venture in reconstruction. So I'd like to suggest that the task of reconstruction, of putting the pieces back together, is not primarily intellectual, or if it is intellectual, it involves a mode of intelligence which incorporates the capacities of the collective wisdom. It is something much larger and more complicated than a simple conceptual task.

I am going to read the rest.

Coherence cannot be willed into being, coherence cannot be thought into being, cannot be legislated into being. We cannot simply announce,then reiterate,that we are Americans, the strongest force on earth, humankind's best hope, then act in accordance with our declaration. Now, the basic problem is that a pervasive injury has occurred. It was not merely intellectual breaking of the myth, it is not ideological warfare that we are most concerned about, for shame and guilt are involved this time.

The proposal: The necessary wholeness and wellbeing will be re-established, if it can be, only as the result of a collective healing process. The body politic needs to be healed. It won't suffice that we find ways to make our philosophies relevant again, or our policies resonant.

And this is why I believe the impact of Vietnam is being experienced through an ongoing collective ritual process, a process very much like that of confession, absolution, and restoration. This is why I also see the vet centers as being the places where the ritual process is being worked out. And though I know they make no claims to such offices or functions, I also view the counselors in the vet centers as being like confessors, thus even like secular or unordained priests. And this enables me to view the vet centers as functioning like neighborhood religious communities, all of them involving persons living and working together, to assist the ritual process.

But this brings me to the very intriguing role played by the Moral Majority. You would expect me, I believe, to offer a negative judgment about Jerry Fal well and those who are devoted to the movement he champions. I believe I am going to surprise you by suggesting that I think Jerry Falwell understands the healing process as the nation's fundamental priority. Indeed, I believe Mr. Falwell's instincts on this are superlative. His understanding of the nation's fundamental problem is far richer than many of those who very easily criticize him. But the problem is that the appeal of the Moral Majority lies in its attempt to meet the need for healing

by reinstating the fundamental mythology, that is, the cosmic battle between godly and godless forces, that the re-establishment of this nation is humankind's best hope.

Not long ago, President Reagan was speaking to a group of reporters informally about patriotism, heroism, devotion to the country, national pride, and the perennial virtues. He told them he thought we should try to sustain the unifying spirit the nation experienced at the time of the return of the hostages. In citing a scene from a silent Western movie, as he said, back in the time when I was a boy, he told the story of an outlaw who wanted to rob a mail train, and was persuaded not to by a companion, who said, look, the bank is all right, the stage coach, too, but you don't monkey around with Uncle Sam. The President then asked the reporters, how long has it been since anyone felt that way about our national government, that by golly, you don't futz around with Uncle Sam?

There is a tendency to use the force of such anecdotes to whitewash the Vietnam era. The alternative, of course, is to allow the dynamics of the healing process to work its way, no matter how painful, no matter how costly, to the American conscience. And if we are strong enough to let this happen, the real heroes of the Vietnam era, the martyrs, will not have fought and not have confessed in vain.

MAHEDY: Let me just, I have some ?? farewell thoughts. A little about my background. I am a Vietnam veteran myself. I was an Army chaplain, an ordained Catholic priest. Now, after my marriage, I needed a job. So I happened, quite by accident, to get to work with the VA. I met Shad Meshad here. The two

of us had the privilege of collaborating for years in the streets of Los Angeles, working with Vietnam veterans. And I was privileged to help him really set up these centers. At the present time I am the team leader, that's, the, you know, military terminology, of the center in San Diego. I also function on the side as an Episcopal priest in a parish in San Diego. So I am an ordained counselor in the vet center.

Now, I have been long interested in a religious issue which arose, I think, during the Vietnam war, I think germane to what Walter has said, religious issue still unresolved, of considerable magnitude. It affected primarily those who actually fought the war, but I believe it has had an impace upon an entire generation and probably it has altered the course of American history.

Let me begin by mentioning some of the clinical issues that I deal with professionally. Then I will quote sections of a small article that I did about a year and a half ago for the Christian Century.

We are dealing in the vet centers with what is called post-traumatic stress disorder, in the diagnostic and statistical manual. Psychiatrist in New York named Haim Shatton(?) who had a great deal to do with the change in the DSM characterized several symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder as related to the Vietnam war as six: 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; finally, doubt about continued ability to love and trust others.

Now, this is all very, very true. I mean, I have dealt with, besides being a Vietnam veteran, I have dealt with hundreds of Vietnam veterans, and it's so true. And there's much more to say in that subject.

But I found that at the root of what is bothering a lot of veterans, is a deep-seated 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. As one vet commented, we've all got a trace of it. The spiritual malaise may not always be as troublesome to the individual as the clinical syndrome, but it still produces a feeling of uneasiness, or discomfort, Part of a personality which seeks to transcend the self has been dulled, but is not yet dead. The person is usually 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 into subtle and 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 attitude toward oneself, the enemy, and others, which persist in the form of a spiritual numbness. Sensitivity and compassion become dulled. And 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. About about the ability to love and trust others precludes the self-transcending impulse which lies at the heart of morality and faith. In Vietnam there seemed to be neither past nor future, only the very meaningless present. One could die in a combat assault upon a useless piece of ground for which men had died the month before and would die again 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 best, in a perfect one-liner. It don't mean nothin'. Now, sadly, it don't mean nothin' has now 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 the 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 in terms of its political and economic systems, has never been far from the surface of our national self-perception. We are indeed the nation with the soul of a church, as Sidney Mead? expressed in his book title, and in the book itself. I think it is Bellah who, in defining civil religion as a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals, with respect to sacred things, attributed to the republic.

Now, hundreds of vets that I have talked to really see it this way. Just a few of the statements that I have heard--

END OF SIDE I OF TAPE

SIDE II:

--one young man in my group put it very well. He said, I believed in Jesus Christ and John Wayne before I went to Vietnam. And after Vietnam both went down the tubes. Another one said, I bought into the system, and I don't believe anything any more. And very commonly you hear, I fought for God and country, and then a cynical laugh. For many, 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, subcultural or ethnic groups. Most veterans embraced the theology of our foreign policy, and 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 altarboys among them. War, glorious war, that cultic act of civil religion, was unquestionably part of the mytholo gy which gripped them as they went off to the great crusade in Southeast Asia. Their statistical age, as they embarked upon the noble venture, incidentally, was nineteen. They were by and large black, brown, rural white, blue-collar types, high-school graduates and dropouts and college dropouts. I have almost never heard the Vietnam war discussed by its veterans in anything resembling the just war theory of Christian tradition. True, there were some agonized participants, as Edward Long calls them, who saw the war as a lesser of two evils, but the conceptual frame of reference seems always to have been the war ethic of the crusade.

And on this point, three examples.

First, the justifying motivations were religious and ideologic, as I have said. Second, the task of the soldier was viewed as a holy one, To this day, most veterans see themselves as having been involved in a noble profession, if not a noble war. And this 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 upon his return home. For he is a hero, having represented them under unspeakable conditions. This, of course, never happened to the Vietnam veterans. There was no ritual of return, and no respect. They were reviled. Third, the crusade spirit demands that the enemy be seen as the unrighteous, evil, the infidel. It was thus both necessary and quite easy to make of the Vietnamese gooks, dinks, slopes, into kill, kill, kill.

Finally, the soldiers in the field always resented, and for very good reasons, the restraints placed upon them for political and strategic reasons. A lot of them were killed because of those restraints. But in a crusade there are no limitations imposed for any reason whatever. The blood of the infidels must flow wherever it is found.

Now, as the antiwar movement developed, of course, the mythology was challenged. Much of the opposition, 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 the problem more evident than in the military

chaplaincy, as described in a brilliant passage by Robert J. Lifton, and I quote: "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." Lifton is right on the mark in citing a spiritually reinforced inner corruption as being at the heart of the post-Vietnam malaise. Carried along by the prevailing mythology, the men found themselves in Vietnam, and the reality of the war overwhelmed them. What was that reality? Those of you who were there know. There was dreadful, terrible combat, night ambushes, unbelievable atrocities committed by both sides, and contrary to belief, deeply rooted in the antiwar movement, the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese army also did atrocious things. 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 these conditions, survival became the primary concern. But each indivicual had to construct a 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. In retrospect, the rationale did not hold together. Civil religion was found wanting. 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 real prophetic role of religion. Quite simply, religion don't mean nothin'.

And I submit that now is the time to come to grips with this issue. Among other things, I propose that a study be undertaken of veterans and nonveterans in their age cohort, with respect to fundamental belief systems, as they relate to the war and to the questions that we are disc ussing. I have talked to several people in both the academic and church circles who are quite interested in something like this. And in line with what Walter said, in view of the military buildup now taking place, and the beating once again of the drums of war, particularly in regard to El Salvador, I propose that such a study also include nineteen and twenty-year-olds on college campuses, in the work force, and in the military. And I think those of us engaged in academic pursuits, in church work, and those of us in the emerging community of Vietnam veterans, have a very serious obligation to discuss our experiences and our findings in the public forum. A notice was brought home to me

last night, before I started my Tuesday night group, young man walked into the center. He was in the wrong place, he should have been in the VA regional office, had a problem with his GI bill, there was a new type of GI bill. Young man, couldn't have been more than nineteen years old. And he said that he was pulling his money out of the GI bill, because he heard that they were going to start a new one, and that he wouldn't have to participate in payment. And he obviously believed everything they were telling him. And I said, have you ever talked to any Vietnam veterans? And he said, yes, my uncle. But, here we go again, eighteen, nineteen-year-olds, and I would like to see a discussion of this, at least, before we do it again. Thank you.

CAPPS: I think we are ready for comments from anyone at the table. Stanley?

ANDERSON: Yeah, I'll say a few words. We have a religious perspective, we have the perspective of individual participants in Vietnam, and we have a sense of our nation, and its belief structures and theological battles. And I personally am having a hard time sorting them out. Taking the perspective of the individual combatant, or other participant in Vietnam, I think it's obvious that this country owes these people a great debt, on the logic that either the war was a good war, and they were not given the means to accomplish its end, which of course would have been even more brutal thing to do. A question of whether the end, even then, could justify the means. But at least those who are gung ho and anti-Communist and patriotic and so on would have had some, and perhaps people would have

an easier time adjusting who had that mentality, and thinking it was only the weaklings or the liberals who prevented them from accomplishing that end. But of course, more likely analysis is that it was a bad war, bad tactically, bad strategically, bad ideologically, bad morally, bad religiously, if you will, bad philosophically. In which case, as the evidence here has been so strong, it just put the, put soldiers and others over there in just an impossible situation, which obviously they are having a great difficulty restructuring in their own minds. And quite understandably so. And I would suggest that we might be capable of having a catharsis for the individuals, or even the individuals as a group, but I despair of a reconciliation, despair of an ultimate resolution as a nation, an absorption of this experience, for a very simple reason. And that is that basically speaking, the primary cul prits are the leaders of the nation. And I suppose if Hitler Germany had not lost the war, we'd have a lot of war criminals wandering around Germany, wouldn't we? They wouldn't have been convicted at Nuremburg. Or similarly in Japan. And so what we have, then, is the leadership which is basically unrepentant, both as to its ends and its means. And that puts the individual participant in a doubly difficult position. Because it puts that individual in permanent opposition to the dominant motif, the very attitude, which led to the problem in the first place. So I suggest that the hope for the individual has got to be a more philosophical one, and perhaps others would prefer to cast that as a religious one, but simple, and it isn't easy, but through understanding and even forgiving I suppose, to come to grips with this, with the impossibility of the situation, and them moving ahead. Now, that's very facile for one who h45

not suffered personally in any way. Thank you.

CAPPS: Mr. Blakemore.

BLAKEMORE: Stan reminded me of a number of things about the mythological nature of our psyche. One of them that I have always felt was a rather historical perspective for me to relate back to was the comment that when old gods die, they turn negative. And essentially this leads me to ask a few questions which are related to your paper. First of all, we have as a nation, gone through multiple collective wounds. We have gone through a period of time when it might be said that a whole generation was betrayed. Whether you were around at the time that Vietnam was an active horror for those who were being drafted for that experience, or when you were trying to examine your conscience about how to oppose the leaders who had designated this as a holy crusade, I wonder a bit,as we came through Watergate and all of those experiences, right down to day before yesterday, if we can really assume that there is a collective American conscience. I am beginning to wonder if this last edition of the Psychology Today, which is entitled, "The World Turned Upside Down," may not be reflecting the fragmentation of American society into a whole series of consciences or struggles with even the idea that a conscience is a viable issue. I think if this is true, and we have fragmented it to a whole series of collective subgroups, and subcultures, that we have lost the collective continuity by which this conference opened the collective healing process. And it may be that the loss of this collective continuity is one of the difficulties that we are experiencing. Anthropologically, when a tribal group goes out to lay waste 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, but it also allows the recognition of the returning warrior as one who has had a unique and horrifying experience. In contrast to that piece of anthropological wisdom, we seem to pick our warriors up one day out of Saigon, and set them down in Kansas City, Missouri, the next day, with their kit, and their discharge papers, and maybe, if they are lucky, a relative or two to pick them up at the airport. I think perhaps this has had a tremendous impact in fragmenting this continuity of collective conscience.

The other thing I was taken by is that healing is in fact a religious process. The Greeks knew this at the time of the Aesculapian temples. They also knew that one had to be identified as in need of some physical and spiritual event before that process could take place. It's been my observation that there's been tremendous national repression of the whole Vietnam experience, and therefore an encouragement to get on with it as rapidly as possible, and repress any experience that you might have had, to try to fit in. I think perhaps the meaning of life, then, becomes confused, and breaks down into what we've been talking about as rage, masked by apathy. I think underneath every disillusionment, every shattering of the image of what life was thought to be, there is a rage, and if that rage is so all-pervasive, one has this wonderful psychological way of numbing oneself, becoming apathetic almost to, to almost everything. I don't think this is only in the Vietnam veterans. I see it in college students in a more general way, perhaps not as intense, but we have seen in the last five years something

called kind of a chronic walking depression, in which you get this same sense of apathy, well, it really doesn't mattern, what the hell, you know, they are going to do as they please anyway. I really don't have any faith in what's going on, because I can't affect anything that's going on. Through that I think that loss of meaning of life is becoming much more profound issue. And I certainly think that a study, which would make some comparative examinations of that, would be well taken. The last thing I'd like to comment on is the instructions the Greek troops were given just before they entered Troy, by Agnememnon, in which he said, if you must choose between slaying a poet or a priest, slay the priest, because the poet is favored of the gods. And I suppose we have a bit of that still rolling around in our basic non-Christian, pagan, I'll stop with that.

ANDERSON: I want to just, building on what Bob said, I just want to make a point that I was trying to make. I think the healing process for individual Vietnam veterans and groups of Vietnam veterans should not be hinged to a collective healing process, that after all that we've already dumped on these people, we shouldn't dump on them further a responsibility to somehow heal the nation as a symbol of having healed themselves. Some, of course, may choose to follow that as a healing route, and more power to them, but let's not burden this group any more than we already have.

BLAKEMORE: I agree.

CAPPS: I wanted to say, on that particular point, a kind of a sub-theme in my paper, that I see the healing process running down two tracks in the, and the tracks are not even parallel,

they don't even coincide. I agree with you totally that there was a kind of a healing process going on among Vietnam era veterans and among persons involved in the war directly. I think there is a collective healing process that is being attempted within the nation, and it's coming primarily from the right and not from the left, and I think the Moral Majority, I know these are wild kinds of thoughts, but I think the Moral Majority is exercising that. I was tipped off to that by a comment Tom O'Day said, nearly weekly, that conservatives have excellent noses. He wondered about their heads at times, but he thought their instincts were right. And I think that healing process is at work. I mean, the things like bring us together again, I think is very well perceived in our society that there needs to be an antidote to fragmentation, and I see Moral Majority appealing to that. Peter.

MARIN: Well, it's partly on that point, but I think the thing must remember is, you just didn't have illusions being shattered, what you had was people seeing terrible truths, which was a different condition altogether. I would put it differently. They are not suffering the fact that they have lost their illusions, they are suffering the fact that they have seen truths which the society as a whole was not willing to credit. And I am not sure that you want a myth to take the place of the old myth. I mean, let me take not a religious point of view, but an existential point of view. Maybe the difficulty is living with the truths of certain kinds of discoveries about oneself and one's country. About the capacity for human savagery, which exists in all of us, but which the vets now

understand exists in themselves, the capacity which is not credited by their authority, neither their civic nor their religious authorities. Now, I don't think that the men who have discovered that will not have to live with that knowledge with the rest of their lives. There you can refer to the Greeks. But you would have to refer to Oedipus. That is, there are kinds of knowledge which change you absolutely, which make you fundamentally other than the other members of your society. And that is what the vets have become. And I don't think, given that,there is any kind of healing, not a universal national healing, which can include them. Because their knowledge is in a certain sense too direct and too terrible. They will have to make a kind of myth or a kind of wisdom for themselves which will be unlike what the culture makes. And then the contest will be whether or not the culture can be convinced to admit that particular wisdom into their universal wisdom. And it would seem to me that the curse of the vets, it is Oedipal, the curse of the vets because of their own actions, not just the actions of the nation, it's not just what they've seen, it's also what they've done, the burden that you carry is to make a wholeness or a wisdom unlike what anybody else has to make. There is almost nobody in the culture who can help them do that. Save other persons whose knowledge is as terrible as their own. There are people like that. I mean, I don't know what illusions we are talking about here. There are people who have said this was the nature of America, not fifty years ago, but a hundred years ago, two hundred years ago. We didn't have universal myths which disguised from all of our members what the country was like. There are adolesc

who didn't go to war, who knew something about what the country was like. There are people who grew up on city streets, in the ghetto, who know exactly what the vets know. And we haven't credited their wisdom, nor has a place been made for it. The problem with the Moral Majority is the Moral Majority wants to re-create a myth which has nothing to do with the savagery and suffering which some of us, not only the vets, understand exist at the very heart of the culture. Fortunately, most of us day to day are allowed to evade that knowledge, and go on with life as it seems it ought to be. The vets are not going to be able to do that. I don't think so. But the crisis would be that we don't have a collective wisdom, nor do our religions, I think, have that wisdom to be of use. They will have to make a wisdom which does not yet exist. And I don't know if they can do that or not, but I think there is not, I think there is no choice. And I would say, that that wisdom and the roots of that wisdom, were not to be found in religion, though that's really roots of forgiveness, are to be found. I would say the roots were partly intellectual, partly philosophical, partly literary, they were to be found among those persons over the last two hundred years who have tried to live without belief systems and illusions and myths, whether it's men like Camus, or Sartre, certain other Europeans, all right, and it's in their work that you would find the stubborn kind of illusionless courage which I think will be necessary to the vets, and is not to be found in religion.

MESHAD: The illusions that the vets have suffered in my ten years of work, is, will they forgive God? It's the other way around. And I think it's very important that we talk about that.

Most of the vets cannot forgive God for what they have seen, and the God-awful state that they've been in the last ten years. And it's very difficult as a counselor. Luckily, I have been blessed with Bill Mahedy who spent a lot of time, we both have, talking about re,we have a different wisdom now and a different understanding, and our spirituality has changed. How do you answer that. I mean, you are just part of the counseling process. You know, how do you forgive God? I mean, we can't even say that in our culture. You get slapped down in any type of school or religious school or whatever, and say, I don't forgive God today. You know, and people are talking about how, you know, it's not just our guilt that we feel like it, we feel, in so many ways, that God has left us out there. We have nothing to turn to but ourselves, and there are very few of us that we can turn to. There are very few Bill Mahedys, there are very few vet centers in the country. We can't get to everybody. And that's God-awful.

MAHEDY: You know, just a comment, on the two parts of the healing process. I found in the case of some veterans the wisdom that Peter is talking about, there is a wisdom within I think the religious tradition, a contemplative approach, something that is found to some extent, I think, in, obviously in Eastern religions, also in Western mysticism. I have a veteran right now who is a former drug addict, alcoholic, atheist, combat junky, the whole nine yards, who has developed a terrific relationship with a Benedictine nun, a cloistered nun. I found that in some cases that an approach going deeper into oneself, into the wisdom, the tradition, and so forth, that is on the one hand. The other thing, a kind of a collective catharsis, not

for the country but for the vets, something changed with the hostage release. The apathy began to crumble. The anger started tocome out. And some of us, in Southern California, Shad knows the LA situation, and I think an including Santa Barbara, and certainly in San Diego we have decided that we are going to go for the jugular vein. We are going to do all we can to get the word out, to tell the story, as Walter said, to the nineteen-year-olds, to the twenty-year-olds, to the country. You are going to hear it,folks, whether you like it or not. You may not want to hear it, but we want to tell it. That is a healing process. We're also going to find out whether or not the government is serious about certain little things like enterprise homes, we are going to try and get jobs for veterans, and so forth. We are going to find out. Now, that process itself, whatever the answers may be, are healing, in a collective sense, for the veterans. I know not what they are for the country. We will see.

CAPPS: Ninian?

SMART: Well, I speak doubly as an outsider, because not being a citizen of this country, and only having been in the British Army, and not involved in much ghastliness, really, but I was going to say that looking at it somewhat slightly from the, partly from the outside and partly from the inside, I think, it doesn't seem to the, looking at it, say, from a European perspective, that all the news is bad. So can I say what the good news is, and then I'll say something about the bad news in relation to not the question of the healing process for Vietnam veterans, of course I am obviously way outside that. But what

practical conclusions one might draw, in general. The good news, it seems to me, is one must remember that when I was in the Army I watched French troopships in Ceylon and Columbo coming in with the people going back from Vietnam and Indochina. And I remember saying to a friend, I don't know much about that war, but I know they have lost it, just from the look of them. And there have been a number of brutal wars, which we have fought since World War II, namely by Western countries, but not only by Western countries. And the good news about that in a sense 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. So I think that is a very important thing to recognize. This is not necessarily to say that all those who criticized the Vietnam war were all right, and all those who defended it were wrong, but a public debate occurred, which was very much more deeply felt and deeply sought than one would expect. So I think that that is in a sense the good news, and our discussion today is only a continuation of that in effect. So I would say that's relatively good. And, but the bad news it seems to me is, it goes back to the mythic question, the question of mythology. I think, my reaction, at any rate, to the events not only of Vietnam but of Algeria and other things, is it's not so much that, Professor Anderson said the war criminal, in effect, he didn't actually go on and draw his conclusions, but his implication was there are war criminals still walking around. Some of whose names might begin with R. At least the implication of his remarks. I don't think it's right to, I, O.K., I don't know that it's right leading and looking at the leaders of countries, and

including the United States, the main problem is blindness, not wickedness, it seems to me. I mean, we know that,the ghastliness of war shows us the wickedness of human beings, and of the unspeakable character of what human beings will do to one another. But largely because of the kind of blindness. And it does seem to me that one of the lessons one might mention would be of the Vietnam war is that it was entered into and it developed out of a crazy sense of, a crazy analysis of the situation. And for mythological reasons which were not realistic. And so I would say that one of the weapons in our hand, it's only a feeble weapon, but one of the weapons is education. That really, not only in the United States, but in many other countries, we have extremely ignorant leaders because of the nature of the kind of education which is given to people. Very often technical education. In the case of Henry Kissinger, technical politi cal science, which doesn't have humane underpinnings, I would say. So I would say that part of the, the bad news is a kind of spiritual ignorance, a darkness of the intellect, which has led people into these dreadful wars.

MAHEDY: You know, another part of the bad news, too, is what this gentleman here said about the different, fragmenting of conscience and of consciousness. When a state acts in war, what, it seems to me is one nation in a state becomes dominant and forces its conscience upon the other subcultural groups or nations, whatever. This is what happened, I think, in Vietnam, and this probably was going to happen again. That's what frightens me. I agree with what you said about the fragmentation.

CAPPS: Gayle Binion?

BINION: I share much of Professor Anderson's concern about the distinction between micro-level healing and the macro-level healing of the society, especially when compounded with Professor Capps observation on the right wing having pre-empted, in a sense having sniffed out, what would be healing. And a comment, such as,it's typical of Reagan or his associates,that we would never again send men to battle, and tie their hands, is not meant to suggest, I don't think, that we won't send them to battle, but rather that we won't tie their hands. And that political message, I think, cannot be ignored, or at least not that political message, but the politics in the political message of the macro-level healing , I don't think can be avoided. There has to be some conclusion as to what we as a society learned from Vietnam, separate from the healing process of what it means to treat people fairly who fought in it. That really can't be ignored. Because there has to be something that we do as a collectivity, have learned, that we will not repeat again or be careful about in the future. And I fear that the resolution may be a very jingoistic resolution. And the second part of my question, which should be much more of a question than a statement, is, both Mr. Hahedy and Mr. Capps refer to the religious dimension of the war, in two very interesting ways. And I think you both touched on both. The idea that it was itself viewed and portrayed as a battle of Christianity, or at least Western religion as against Communist non-religion or atheism. Secondly, that the foreign policy itself became a religious creed, and I see that as sort of an interesting way of dovetailing two aspects of religion. One thing that I

haven't heard you mention, and I would be curious as to your positions on the role of organized religion in the healing process. In other words, it strikes me that there is, that the institutions of religion, in terms of the future healing process, may be critical. And I am reminded of Michael Harrington saying one of our major problems in America today is the lack of effective religion. He never got a chance, time was up last October when he was here, he never got a chance to tell us what he meant by effective religion, as opposed to religiosity or spiritualism. But I am curious as to whether either of you have any sense of what the role would be, of organized religion in what you see as a national level healing process. I mean, the role may be a lot easier at the micro level for any individual veteran. But at the macro level of society, what is the role, potentially the role of organized religion, and what would and should be the role in the future insofar as its position must be accounted for with respect to war generally.

MAHEDY: I think the prophetic role of religion has really not been exercised in the United States.From the colonial times on, we have identified ourselves as the new Jerusalem, the new people, we've done everything by divine mandate, we stole the Mexican territories, we enslaved the blacks, we massacred the Indians, all with, I think, lurking in the back of our collective psyches that this was some sort of a divine mandate. Now, the churches did not make the distinctions between the culture and their own tradition, their deeper ethnic, their tradition. I know the history of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, when the Irish

came over. They couldn't become Americanized fast enough to buy into this whole thing. I think that these, a deepening process has to occur. I think the prophetic voice has to speak out. I kind of belong to what's loosely termed the Catholic Left. I think this is happening. El Salvador has brought a lot of people out of the woodwork. I think that there is a deepening process that is beginning to occur. And I see that as being a hopeful sign. What we go, beyond, I don't know, I am stuck on the prophetic role right now.

CAPPS: My own mind and I am, I am very unclear about that. I can try a hypothesis that I think is wrong and see if we can't get a better one. We had Robert White here a week ago, and he said the difference between El Salvador and Vietnam is that the churches are involved in El Salvador earlier, and the protest movement has started earlier in El Salvador with the support of so-called organized religion. I think that makes a big difference. But my suspicion is that the, that organized religion is not very effective at the moment with respect to the collective healing process. In fact, I am sure of that. I don't know quite why. I am guessing, this is an inadequate hypothesis, but I am guessing that because the people who would have, we could have expected to be effective or to be involved in the healing process are really the ones who were protesting the war during the time that it was occuring. They moved on to something else now, and the energies were spent on that and are not being re-directed toward healing, and therefore it's really not occurring within those places. Now, maybe it is occurring and I've missed it, but I hear very little talk about the

collective healing process within the framework of the Church.

SMART: Doesn't one have to define what this healing is? It seems to me, you know, that's a very peculiar to ___ose of the collective healing for the Vietnam war, other than trying to give the leadership of the American people a different perspective. What else is there? The, Americans, unlike many other nations, have recognized the tragedies of war over Vietnam, so in one sense, what's wrong with the American soul on that? I think the disease--

COBURN: Well, we keep electing leaders--

SMART: All right, yes, in other words--

COBURN: --country represents the most extreme version of supposedly what was discredited in Vietnam and that--

SMART: Well, yes, that's what I--

COBURN: What is this amnesia, you know.

SMART: Right, well that's what I mean, the blindness which comes, and I think half of that blindness comes from organized religion anyway. So I don't see how organized religion is going t(help collectively over this matter.Some religionists may help, but half of the blindness in the world comes from organized religion.

CAPPS: Richard. Are you going to speak on blindness?

HECHT: No, but on the prophetic,yes. There's a problem with suggesting that somehow this collective or macro-healing has something to do with the prophetic tradition. Because a lot of that prophetic stuff is exactly what creates the mythic tradition, which has us going off to conquer the barbarei, that's number one. I wouldn't throw,

I wouldn't trust a prophet any further than I could throw him. And I think that there may, there's a problem by speaking about the prophetic voice of Western religious tradition. But I'd like to suggest, I found this discussion, I was seated over there, and now I am over here, but I found this discussion immensely interesting, and I think that in regard to this mythic dimension of war or this aspect that both of the papers spoke to, one needs to consult comparative evidence. What has happened to other cultures who have suffered immense catastrophes? Such as Vietnam? I wouldn't want to say that somehow the Vietnam veteran or the United States is some elite case of catastrophe or disillusionment. And I think that we have examples within culture of, if you want, mythologies of destruction, of catastrophe, and rebuilding, which are important, not so much that we can draw from them and simply assimilate, but to remember that when a culture suffers a catastrophe or destruction, it often takes a very, very long period of time before that healing can take place. Obviously it's not a healing that will go on at the macro level. I mean, there may be therapists and counselors of various kinds, who can work with individuals, but this collective healing is not going to happen in our generation. Now, let me give you an example. Let's take a real good case of a catastrophe and destruction. Let us take Jerusalem in the year 69 and 70, of the first century. Maybe some people watching TV and finding about the year 71 and 72, but in that year, of course, Jerusalem was sacked, it was destroyed, the very

center of a religious tradition was annihilated in six months. Less than six months. A central institution was destroyed. Now, at one level that central institution was replaced in less than a decade by religious figures who carefully re-worked or began to rework the central aspect of the religious tradition which had been centered on that institution. But the complete healing at some larger level took perhaps five, six hundred years of re-exploration, reflection, until in this case, Jews could make sense of the fact that they no longer lived in their own land, and that somehow their relationship to God was different. Now, when Mr. Meshad says about the Vietnam veteran saying, can God be forgiven? that makes a lot of sense against that mythology of destruction, catastrophe, and rebuilding of Judea, when the very same question was asked in that historical context. Can we forgive God for the destruction of this central institution in our lives? And I daresay that the same question that is asked by Vietnam veterans in this regard has been asked also by Holocaust survivors. And that in many cases God was brought to trial, in the deaths at Auschwitz, for the historical events which people have suffered. So I think there may be a comparative evidence which may be helpful in beginning to see the broad outlines of a process that may take more than one generation.

CAPPS: Your reference to the five or six hundred year sequence reminds me that we need to take a break. I think we ought to do it now. And try to regather in about ten minutes, and at that point Peter Marin will lead off.

BREAK

CAPPS: I have to interrupt this conversation over here, because I am going to call on Peter to speak. Our plan now is to try to continue the discussion that was begun during the first part of the session. I am hoping that some of the veterans present will have a chance to speak during this session. We will start with Peter Marin, and then Judy Coburn knows that she has a chance to speak first if she wishes to exercise that option. Peter?

MARIN: Well, I hope that what I have to say doesn't take us too far from where we were. I am afraid it will, and then I will have to twist it in mid-turn to bring it back. But originally I had intended to talk, and probably will, about, at a micro-level, the kinds of therapeutic healing which would be appropriate to veterans. And I have to make several disclaimers before I begin that. First of all, I am going to treat the word not as if we were Jerusalem and it was our catastrophe, but as if we were fifty per cent Jews and fifty per cent Germans, and that what we suffer as a nation and what the vets suffer as participants in the war, and that's crucial, is not so much that they were only the victims of a catastrophe, though in some sense that's true, but they were also the perpetrators of a catastrophe. And that makes their individual pyschological situations much more complex. It is difficult to talk about that specifically, because the more vets you talk to, the more you read about the war, the more you see that you are talking about several dozen wars at once. And it is impossible to categorize the experience of veterans in particular, because 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 individual vets we are really not talking about the same war at all. And it is impossible to tell from the data or from the individual testimony for instance how many veterans were directly involved in what we would call atrocities, how many were witnesses to atrocities, how many heard about them, how many never saw them, how many were simply 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, 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, precisely because it is clear to all of us that the moral situation that created was that you did find apparently innocent persons who would turn out either to be your direct enemies or else to be wired as bombs in some cases. You never knew when you saw an innocent person whether they were genuinely innocent or a threat to you. Many vets were faced with that. But I am going to try to talk about very specific problems. I am going to presume, in this case, that many veterans are troubled by what I will call guilt, and that is the sense of having participated in a war which fundamentally unjust but more than that, 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.

And that one of the things which preys on many of our vets and disturbs them is that they understood during the war will begin to have to confront retroactively 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. That doesn't have much to do with the way we treated Indians, perhaps, or Mexicans, but certainly in relation to the two world wars and the Korean war, this 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, at the same time, another presumption which I don't have the time to justify here, but I'll try to go over it very briefly. I am going to assume that one of the great failures of contemporary therapy is that it has made no place in the maps of the psyche for conscience. There is a peculiar kind of fault there in which we have learned in this century to ascribe every other aspect of human behavior to nature. We ascribe savagery to nature, we ascribe speech to nature, we ascribe desire to nation, hunger, whatever we find in the human, we ascribe to human nature, however, when we come to morality, conscience, or ethics, we refuse to ascribe that either to nature or to human nature, and insist over and over and again, that it is either derived from divine authority or manufactured by culture and somehow imposed on the individual. And I am, for the sake of this particular _____, going to postulate that that is a mistake, that the moral capacity or conscience is very much like the capacity for language. It is a capacity which no individual

develops necessarily on their 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 exists both, or has its roots in nature, and also exists in all individual persons. The reasons I want to make that clear is because I think there are kinds of self-betrayal which occur in individuals, not just in the midst of war, but continuously, and you see them very often in therapy, in which persons have humiliated 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.

It would obviously be impossible to sort out the level at which that was in part instinctive, the level in which that had been derived from the world around them, either consciously or unconsciously, but it seems to me clear at some point, and Sartre talks about it in his philosophic psychology, in terms of what I would call bad faith. That's what he calls bad faith. I would call it bad conscience. And that is a person's sense that they have betrayed, through their modes of existence, or activity, what they understand at the best and deepest parts of themselves to be right or just.

All right. So I am going to presume that it was a war which was rife with certain kinds of guilt, I am going to leave out of this discussion, because I have to be as specific as I can, in a short period of time, certain other kinds of suffering which may indeed in terms of veteran

suffering overpower the suffering which comes from guilt. Certain kinds of horror, certain kinds of senses of having been betrayed, rather than betraying oneself, certain kinds of sorrow, certain kinds of fear, and simply the impact of certain sights and evengs which cannot be forgotten, but which in no way can be assimilated into the world to which one has returned when one comes home.

Those are all very profound problems, but I have a feeling that we have therapies, even though they don't deal with them very well, are equipped to deal with them. While questions of guilt and conscience are precisely those questions with which our therapies cannot deal in any way at all. And what I mean to say is that what the vets do in returning with their particular kinds of knowledge and experience, is to call into question the fundamental nature of modern therapy, precisely because it is not equipped to deal with them, though it has not been equipped to deal with similar problems in other persons who did not go to war. I have a friend, John Seeley, who used to be dean at the Center, who is now a practicing psychiatrist, who insists that every psychological problem is also a moral problem. And that what the therapist is involved with doing with the patient is deciding not just what he or she wants to do, but what he or she underneath everything else, feels he or she ought to do. And that a great deal of pain in the therapeutic situation is not just ignored, but manufactured by therapists who try to divorce the therapeutic from the moral, and deal with the problem as if it did not have a

moral dimension. There's reasons for this, and we can't go into that. It was obvious in, with the beginning of psychiatry that it was necessary for Freud and his cohorts and his colleagues and his descendants, in order to see the human being whole, or as being real, had to distinguish certain kinds of desire and feeling from moralities which were imposed from without. And that they tended for that reason to do two things. Freud tended to take moral traditions for granted, but to rule them out of the therapeutic situation. Though I don't think he meant to ignore them entirely.

Secondly, therapists tended to deal with individuals as if they were isolate individuals and integers, and not connected at a profound level to other persons. And that is therapeutically or psychologically a terrible mistake. So that you find at any one of several levels, whether it's sociological or moral, that persons are indeed connected to others, that the notion of an isolate ego is a fiction, and that when you are dealing with individuals about the kinds of pain they experience, you had best deal with them in terms of an underlying connective tissue in which, and I don't know how to make this as clear as I should, in which they feel intuitively and instinctively connected and have the need for connection to other persons, and where by which, and this is crucial, the pain they suffer is not necessarily their own direct pain. And that's terribly important. You see in every therapeutic situation not just returning vets, that the traumas people can experience are not simply a result of what has happened to them. So that when you deal with patients, as you did up through

the sixties, you would see that for many persons the assassinations of Kennedy and King had a traumatic effect which far exceeded what you could locate in their immediate private lives. And that the pain they felt was not so much a personal loss as something I would describe as the world's pain, the pain they experienced was something that had to do with the condition of the world. And what therapists tend to ignore is there is a way in which the religious know, there is a way in which the soul or the psyche suffers when it perceives the condition of the world. And finally, there is a way in which especially the psyche or the soul suffers when the condition of the world is perceived, is felt as being a private or personal pain that the person is paralyzed to act. That is the final kind of humiliation, to see a kind of pain, to be moved to act, to have the capacity to respond, and yet not to be able to find a way to make a change or to respond. There is a paralysis there which is quite extra-ordinary.

Now we know certain things about, I don't want to get into the question of genes and animals, but we do know about certain kinds of animals, falcons, wolves, and elephants, for instance, that there is a kind of weeping or suffering that goes on even in them as animals for their counterparts, for their others. There is a kind of bonding which we do not understand. And I would submit there is a bonding among persons for which we have almost no name, certainly no technical name, but which exists nonetheless. And if you are in the midst of war and see certain kinds of savagery, what you suffer is not just the existence of

the savagery, but you do in some sense, if you are open to it, not all of us are open to it, if you see innocent civilians killed, if you identify with the mother holding a child, what you experience is on the one hand the savagery of your side, and the other the empathic suffering of the innocent person. That this is a tremendous burden to bear. It's a burden Americans bear sometimes when they go to strange places and see people hungry or starving. Many people come back, this is interesting, and I think we missed this point. Many Americans, many people from the Peace Corps who went to certain kinds of country in Latin America or the Far East, came back with feelings not at all unlike the veterans' feelings. Rage and humiliation at a life which went on as if the suffering which you had seen did not exist. And in that sense what the veterans returned with is not just, you see, there's that terrible phrase, right, I mean, everybody around the table uses it, I can't believe it, right, delayed stress. Right, right, post-stress syndrome, or this, this terrible hygienic mechanical phrase which describes what in literary or religious language would be a whole series of things, right, whether it's suffering or response to suffering, or rage, or pain, or empathy. God knows what it is. But to use that antiseptic phrase as if it actually described anything makes no sense at all. Because it undercuts the situation entirely. One is talking about nothing then. Not only is one talking about nothing, but if we use that phase, we are then talking about something which is not connected to similar kinds

of human suffering, human rage, and human guilt. Right. What the vets went through in the war is special in terms of the kind of war it was. It is not special in terms of suffering. It is extreme, but it is not special in terms of suffering because many persons who have seen similar things around the world have suffered in similar ways and been confronted with similar existential and moral problems. Which is, having done this, having seen this, how should I now live?

And I think what you see in many therapeutic situations with vets is the result of persons who are not able on their own to answer that question. Just as you see it at other times in a therapist's office, depending on the problem which has brought a person there. 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 now live?

That, by the way, is the problem for any feeling, thinking person in this particular culture. It is unfortunately a problem which most persons in the culture have not directed their attention toward. So that there ought to be, and I think there is, but it's buried away in various books and poems, a body of knowledge, you see, which is appropriate to such a situation. And ought to have been the central substance of university education but is not. So it's not available for the veterans to make use of. But it is there, just hidden away. I mean, you could pick out a hundred examples, the way in which, for instance, almost no point,

the way in which Thomas Wolfe is turned around at the end of his whole literary life. He dies very soon after, when he goes to Germany and sees fascism and returns, unable to explain to Americans what he has seen. Much of what the vets feel is much the situation of Americans returning from Germany in the thirties, when they tried to explain to oblivious persons what was going on elsewhere in the world. I mean, I could name the authors who have done such a thing. This issue of guilt and redemption, and certain kinds of suffering, is to be found in Tolstoy, Dostoevski, it's in Conrad wherever he writes about the double, those are the great tragic psychologists of the last two hundred years far more than anything you will find in therapeutic literature. But since we only teach those and haven't actually taken them seriously as a part of common wisdom, what you would derive from them is not available to the vets.

Now, I would suggest that there are three particular kinds of categories or situations with which therapists could usefully deal, not just with vets, but with any patient which they ordinarily ignore. The first would be the condition of bad faith or bad conscience. That is, the veteran or the patient, the man or woman who understands that they have not lived according to their own best sense of what is right or just. Not only that they have not, but they do not know how to do it. You will find young persons, not necessarily old, young persons who will come in and they will begin to weep at certain points, because of certain kinds of suffering they have directly seen or know about,

and the fact that they want to do something, they can't--

END OF TAPE I, SIDE II

TAPE II, SIDE I:

(MARIN CONTINUES)--make a connection between the way they live and other people are forced to live, and the real problem is not that they have emotional or personal problems, but they do not know how to live a moral or ethical life which is equivalent to their capacity to respond to the world.

The second category which ought to be considered but is not is what I would call the world's pain, and that is something that you see, the kind of therapy, Reichean therapy, where the assumption is that if you deal almost directly with the body, bypassing 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 a kind of emotional catharsis. What you see when people work in that kind of therapy is something very simple. You can see it in individuals, too, not in therapy, just when you talk to them late at night sometimes. You will sometimes see the kind of weeping which is quite extraordinary, which is almost joyous, and there must be a religious term for it. In which someone finally begins to weep with the sorrow or suffering that they have for a long time felt about their own lives and the nature of the world but have kept constrained. And the weeping then has two simultaneous grounds. One is the way in which one has betrayed oneself, and one is the condition of the world, which for all thinking creatures, and animals, though it's wondrous and joyous in

is also horrific beyond belief for toleration in other respects.

The third category, which it seems to me psychologists tend to ignore, though perhaps they do it less than before, is not so much the problem people have in not being fully loved or not adequately loved, but the problem in not knowing how adequately to give their sense of love, gratitude, or anger and suffering back to the world. That's something you see in vets all the time, and not just in vets. Almost none of us are raised as if he ought to act firmly and with conviction on the basis of our deepest honest responses to what we see around us. There is a kind of at best politeness, and at worst silence which is taught persons almost from birth in relation to their genuine response to everything which occurs around them. And what you see in persons is not that they think they don't have a right to their response, but they think they don't have a right to act on the basis of their response. The way the whole set of wonderful myths like the quiet American, or Don Quixote himself, in which we believe that moral behavior will, or ethical behavior, will ordinarily or usually lead you to a kind of disaster or mistake, and it's best to leave things as they are.

The final thing, which I think is crucial, is the question of connection in other persons. I think it's right that a kind of moral activity or ethical activity based on abstractions or beliefs will genuinely lead you to grief. Let me choose for a moment Peace Corps persons. Some of whom, by no means all of whom, were transformed by their experience. They go to a far country,they see certain kinds of life, certain kinds

of suffering, certain kinds of community. They are deeply moved. Their own lives are called into question, their own rela tion to money, property, profession, all of that is called into question. And at the same time, something else happens. They locate a community of other persons in whose name they can speak. So that ethics and morality ceases to be an abstract or an ideological question, and is hinged to the concrete change in the best of these particular persons. And that is absolutely essential in any kind of emotional and moral existence. It is the other thing that we deprive our children of. What you see working with college students and high-school students, especially middle-class persons, over and over and over again, is whatever their sympathies or prejudices or illusions about the poor, they ought to like the poor, they ought not to like the poor, their actual contact with persons unlike themselves, suffering others, or simply others in whose name they could speak, as well as their own, hardly exists at all. And that one of the sources of moral and psychological and ethical and emotional pain is the inability to locate a community of persons with whom and for whom and in whose name you can speak, as well as your own. If you will look at the great moral texts, the great literary moral texts, they invariably belong to persons who were moved not by an idea but by the perception and living with concrete others, whether it was Steinbeck in Grapes of Wrath, or Tolstoi with the poor, right, their lives were transformed by the immediate experience of other living persons, and not

merely by ideas or ideals. And any effort has to be grounded in contact with a living community of other persons.

The other point I would make about giving some kind of love back to the world, and this is a problem in this country which is extraordinary. It was Kropotkin, I think, who said that morality was always an overflow of vitality, by which he meant the kind of natural morality and generosity. And I think his point was that if you feel at home in the world, as certain persons in certain tribes do, or certain peoples do, if you feel fundamentally that existence in the physical world was a gift, because it produces joy, the notion of repaying, of giving back comes as naturally as kind of song to birds, right? It is the same, people feel that when they fall in love, right? There's no question of I ought to do this for another person. There's a kind of sponteneity of response which is hinged to a kind of joy and gratitude which is, this has been given me, and this is what I owe in return. It is certainly the relation of many religions to their god. One gives back not because one is worried or simply because one owes it in theory, but one is indeed thankful. Now, what you see in the therapeutic situation in the United States, right, and this applies perhaps not to vets, perhaps less to vets than others, is that there is, the condition of existence seems to be in such a perpetual sort of depression that you do not find the natural overflow of any kind of generosity or gratitude based on the notion of this is my world which I as given as a gift. Though you could sort out, and we talked about this before, that every

human good is a gift, language, pencils, paper, everything comes to persons from somebody else's labor. So whatever you make use of and enjoy, immediately confers upon you a kind of responsibility and reciprocity, because there is nothing which is given to a person, even their thought processes, even their name, even their sense of ego, there is nothing which is given to a person which they can claim credit for on their own. It all comes to them mediated through others. And to the extent that it's used and enjoyed, one owes something in return. One would hope that was spontaneous. It's not spontaneous. So we deal, whether we are teachers or therapists, with the reality in which one is invariably saying, this is what you ought to do, because it's what you ought to owe, or ought to feel. Now, the reason we invent formal ethics is because we don't feel grateful all the time, we decide 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, and 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.

Now, I submit to you that all of this is to be found in the Wes tern therapeutic and literary and religious tradition. Furthermore, it all seems to me directly applicable to certain things that vets bring into the therapist's office. Yet it seems to me precisely the kind of general background which does not infuse the attitudes of the therapists who are

dealing with them. Just as it doesn't infuse the attitudes of therapists who are dealing with patients otherwise.

Finally, I would say one final thing because it seems to be necessary to be said. And that has something to do with the encounter between the therapist and the patient, or the teacher and the student. We are used to thinking of those things at their very best in terms of the I-thou relationship. That is, two persons who are open to one another. I would suggest that every relationship, given our nature as Americans and the power of our nation as a nation, and given the nature of moral life, is a triangulated relationship. And there ought to be present at every educational or therapeutic encounter what I would call the invisible third, or the witness. And that is the person who will be directly affected, or the persons who will be directly affected by the reality constructed or discovered by the therapist and the patient. That is,their responsibility 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 which is constructed. And there is not an I-thou relationship but an I-thou-he or they relationship, in which the invisible other who is the Vietnamese, or the El Salvadorean, or the American black, or woman, or whoever has been dispossessed, alienated, whoever is a stranger and a slave, has got to be taken into account in the way one reorganizes one's moral life. And that has two functions. It has the function of hopefully guaranteeing to the other from that point on the kind of

consideration which they are denied in their ordinary myths, but it is also to remind the patient, especially the patient, that no matter what it is they do, they do not exist in isolation in a moral vacuum, that there is a connection between every human good and every human gesture, and that there is no life which does not have an echo and a resonance in what one chooses to do or chooses not to do in terms of the well-being of others. So that a moral existence goes on.

Finally, I would say that if we all would take very deep breaths and look at our lives in these terms, what we would understand is that most of us to varying degrees had betrayed others and? at ourselves no more and no less than the Vietnamese veteran. And that the reason that one wants other persons to look at reality in this way is because it would teach us, and presumably the vets, that they were not isolated out by the nature of their experience simply by its specific quality and kind, but the questions which they face in terms of rebuilding a life or trying to deal with certain kinds of experiences, right, were questions which, did we all understand the nature of our own lives, right, would have to be faced by all of us. Every person who eats well and dresses well in a world where obviously, the man who has two coats while others have none, has, ought to face the same questions of guilt and suffering of others and responsibility that the vets do. That most of us do not. Everybody who lives in Santa Barbara, knowing that Watts or Oxnard is down the road, right, and does not act in relation to it, as most of us do not, right? has to face the same kind of question. So the whole, the

whole theoretical question of privilege in a suffering world or how to live in a suffering world, which I would assume was the most profound religious question you could raise, in secular terms, is one which we have ignored at almost every level, which we would have to confront in therapeutic situations because what you see at least part of the time in the therapist's office, is moral pain and failed moral lives. And that if we did that, or if we began to do that, we would perhaps come round about to an approach, or a kind of perception, or therapeutic perception, which would do the vets some good. What I hope, because I don't think that anybody is going to do this, right, what I think is happening now is you see certain books coming out in which, I had two on my desk because I was supposed to review them. One is by a guy named Al Santoli, though I don't know the name, maybe you do, do you know him? The other is by a man named Mark Taper, and is called Nam. And these are quite, short of out of how many, but they are first-hand accounts of the experience in Vietnam. One book is very down to earth, the Santoni book deals just with the facts. The Taper book has persons who, in the course of talking about the war, begin to raise very serious and emotional questions. So what you hope is that the recognition of dealing with the war goes in stages. And that we are at a phase now in which persons are beginning to declaim publicly, to witness publicly, the nature of their experience, thought they are not yet, it seems, in the literature raising the kinds of moral questions ultimately in terms of individual

subjective life which ought to be raised. So what you hope is as this, as the vets who have survived, because many have not, as the vets who have survived begin to deepen and broaden their point of view in relation to what it was they went though and saw, that they will be the ones who begin to raise these questions, not necessarily therapeutically, but certainly in the literature, or in the culture one way or another, and that you will, coming out of the Vietnamese war, have a changed perception in terms of religion or therapy, which is more accurate in terms of what human existence and suffering are all about. And they may come close to giving us as a culture a set of questions if not answers which approximate what you would find among the Greeks or some of the Russians. And it may be these are questions which only are raised and answered in a culture which is at as much trouble, or perhaps even dying that way that ours is, these may be late stage questions in cultural history. The nature of tragedy may visit a people only when they perceive that the history is no longer on their side. And I suspect if anybody raises these questions for us at this point, because we are not raising them for ourselves, they will have to be the vet.

CAPPS: I want to call on Judy first, if she--

COBURN: I am not sure how to integrate what Peter has said with what went on before the break. It may, I think we are really talking about the same kinds of things, but I think Peter explained something to me that I have never somehow been able to put together. And I think I said this

at the last seminar, and that is the problem of a healing process which somehow involves Vietnam veterans, but involves the rest of the society too. And in particular, I think, the two possibly adversarial groups would be the anti-war movement, people who essentially saw the war through the prism of the atrocities being committed there, the Vietnam veterans seeing it from being involved in those atrocities, but having a very different notion, at least consciously, if not subconsciously, of how their responsibility worked itself out from the antiwar people. I was an activist in the antiwar movement for eight years before I went to Vietnam. And it's very hard to somehow put those two experiences together. Certainly I wouldn't have the problems with that if I had actually been a veteran, but I think even as a journalist, it's possible to have experienced certain questions about responsibity and complicity by being there. Even if I didn't actually kill anybody, I would say that I certainly experienced things to which I would not approve of in the way that Peter was speaking, and certainly felt responsible for what was going on there. And I think, finally, you know, people say to me, well, what did you learn in Vietnam, I mean, you were very against the war when you went there. And when you talk about your experience in Vietnam, you sound as if you are very sympathetic to the veterans. Did you change your mind about it? And, you know, I always say, no, I didn't change my political positions about it, but I changed my feelings about it a lot. And I think that had to do with the fact that I came back from Vietnam feeling, which I hadn't before I was there,

knowing that for the first time that had I been a veteran I would have reacted exactly the way they had there. And I think that that, when Peter talks about that, I think that that's a sense that a lot of people who weren't in Vietnam don't quite have, and that people need to have. In other words, the link between the veterans, whose experience of brutality is something that most people in this society don't experience, unless possibly they grow up in the ghetto, the link between those veterans and those people who know that terrible truth, as Peter said earlier, and people whose experience in Vietnam was that their illusions were shattered, which is a very serious occurrence, to have but it is not the same as seeing terrible truths. The link between those two groups of people is essentially the perception and the conviction that were you in the position of being a soldier in Vietnam, you probably would hve done exactly what people did there. And that's the feeling I came back from Vietnam with. I don't know how people get that feeling or understand that without having been in a place. And I sit in these seminars, and I try to figure out, you know, how could you give somebody that sense of experience that Peter is talking about, that Peace Corps experience that you know, the experience of being a soldier and stuff, when they haven't had it. I mean, everybody is not going to be, you know, the war's over, people are not going to be veterans. I only know that I go after that experience as a journalist, and I know, as Peter said, that I never understand anything from

reading books, or from analyzing things. I only understand from being there. And you know, one of the main sensations I had when I went to Vietnam was that I had been active in the antiwar movement from the day that Kennedy sent the first advisers in. And I probably read absolutely every word written in English or French about the war, the newspaper reports to magazines. And yet from the first minute that I arrived there I was totally astounded by all that was going on. I mean, I simply could not believe it. And it's that problem, you know, of people's distance from things that they don't directly experience, that I never know how to deal with. I mean, it's the same problem with, you know, when Peter talks about Peace Corps volunteers going overseas and having, you know, apocalyptic experience of poverty and privilege and so on. There is a marvelous book written about it called The Un-American. Have you ever read that book? Peter? By Paul Cowan? It's an account of a Peace Corps volunteer who is actually now a journalist, who went to Ecuador, and how he became what he calls an un-American, as a result of the experience. And yet, you know, why do you have to go to Ecuador? I mean, you know, I live in the Venice ghetto. And yet I walk around all day, mostly trying to forget about the people who don't have what I have, largely because I don't know wha t to do, as Peter says about not having those things, I mean, do I give up what I have because I shouldn't have more than somebody else? But then, why should I do that when nobody else is doing it? And so on, you know. So I think that it's a problem in the society somehow that it's

all set up, I happen to think largely for certain privileged people's purposes. To somehow short-circuit everybody's feelings and politics and ability to experience and analyze everybody else's experiences from ours. And I simply don't know how you transcend that. I mean, I am a pessimist about all this. I'll leave it to Peter to be utopian.

CAPPS: Before the break, Mr. Edwards wanted to say something, and I don't know if it fits at this point, or --

EDWARDS: I am not sure if it does fit. I suppose there's an expression that nothing beats a trial but a failure, so maybe I'll try and perhaps it does, yeah, maybe it does. One of the concerned me in this whole question of the healing process, be that process collective or one that is an individual kind of thing, that's, you talk of the kind of fragmentations, and I think you are correct on that. Is that we are talking about healing, healing, and it seems to me that healing is something that suggests prognosis, that healing is something that's done for something. And two questions that come to my mind, is that if we are talking about healing, what is the diagnosis? What is the healing for? And the second question, who is the patient? We are going to heal something, and we are talking about the prognosis, if we all agree that the prognosis is correct, it's just a matter of procedure. Do we agree with the diagnosis, or do we even know what the diagnosis is? Now, another thing that kind of takes me back to the previous session that I really like, and I guess it has to do with my background, I sort of like the expression "It don't mean nothin'." I think Mr. Marin sort of commented

on this in the beginning of this session in his comment. That is, somehow or other, Vietnam tends to become a different kind of reality for some people who have never experienced the kind of reality that Vietnam became for them, because they never had that otherwise, and so it became a big shock, it became big horror. You talk about living in Santa Barbara as opposed to going down the highway and going to Oxnard. But there is another world out there. And the world that one exists in is not just the world in which one happens to be physically located.And what I see that Vietnam may have done, the horror of the experience, the atrocities of the experience, having simply had the experience, albeit whether it was good or whatever it was, that somehow or other had the capacity, and you use the term capacity in a number of ways here, it had the capacity to diffuse the reality. That what happened in Vietnam and what happened to people in Vietnam was in some sense a manifest and large version of what happened to some people every day. And in that particular sense, Vietnam is not a distinct reality, but Vietnam is somehow or other a kind of reality that has eluded a lot of people, but because it happened in a collective sense, and because it happened to a country, it becomes a part of the collective conscience rather than a part of individual consciences of people whom we very often do not pay any attention to. The person or the individual who says, "It don't mean nothin'", probably would not care that that's a double negative. The point is that here is someone who has a profound understanding of life.

Now, whether that fits in with the initial session, but I do want to say that. The second thing that kind of concerns me is that if we are talking about the healing process, and those of us who were intimately involved, or less intimately involved, in the war, the healing process, someone has suggested perhaps there's a terminal point,that healing is a process, there's a beginning, there's a middle point, and there's an end. It seems to me the great tragedy of talking about a healing process is that there is no one, or there is no individual, or no institution within our society composed of people who can ultimately grant absolution for that. There is no source, individual source, for absolution. So perhaps as suggested there is no end to the process. And perhaps we'll always chase the process, we'll always be posing these kinds of answers which have to do with our idea of what is the healing process. First of all, I don't think we really know who the patient is. Is the patient Vietnam? Or is the patient America? Is Vietnam a manifestation of what America has been for many people, and that other people have come to understand that reality.

CAPPS: Mr. Schulz?

SCHULZ: Yeah, I don't, my American studies program, I have been trying to make connections in American history and culture. And one thing I find amazing is that we are constantly talking about Vietnam, but apart from the American experience. Make analogies to Jerusalem, Peter Marin talked about Germans and Jews, John Stark pointed out to me in a discussion about America's first lost war, that it's not in fact true that

the Southerners lost the war, and the issues in the American Civil War have never been resolved. I don't think Americans, I don't think anyone in this room feels collectively too guilty about the Indian wars. We all say, well, that's right, we took their land, but sorry about that. What, you know, what can we do now? And again, not too many people supported the American Indian movement at Wounded Knee a few years ago. I don't, when we talk about healing process, I don't, I don't know that I really believe in it. I don't think Americans believe in it. When we talk about Americans collectively feeling guilty about the war. I don't think that's true, either. I think that you are possibly a minority, and I think we, if we, if a nation-wide survey was taken, that generally people are not upset about the war on moral terms, but that we just didn't win. They are just upset we didn't win. They were irritated at the student protests, they were irritated about the society becoming fragmented, but otherwise they don't care. And I think that I, I hate to believe that the Vietnam veteran is just going to be another relative of American history, but in looking at America over the last two or three hundred years, I think that's probably going to be the case. I, what I would think would be interesting would be to look at delayed stress in veterans, Southern veterans of the Civil War, and U.S. soldiers in the Indian wars. How did they feel? The country, you get the impression historically that the country backed the Indian wars, but that's not the case. There were protests, the same kind. It's just that they were ineffectual. We have a lot, we have casualties of all wars, I think, in our culture. Now

we have Vietnam veterans and we have counterculture veterans. And I don't, I just don't think, I don't think that until we begin to deal with the issues, to open the forum, that the healing even has a right to be doing.

MESHAD: I'd like to respond. First of all, I'd like to thank Peter Marin and everybody, all the comments. Because I think it's things like this that get me closer. And Judy, I agree with you. Peter almost got me there. I just about got it together. It's just like trying to sort everything out from all the comments from the different individuals, obviously post-traumatic stress is a technical term, but it does, it is nothing new. It is a new technological term. It happened with earthquake victims, Holocaust victims, or whatever. But the thing that I got really close data, really am overjoyed about, that Peter had said, was about the therapeutic checks. And I'd like to comment on that, because, and I'd like Bill to comment too. Because I think we've talked about, one about the bad faith, and the hope. But it's all connected even with the last statement here. And the black gentleman here who just brought up this thing, because you can ride down the road in, it's that faith that I think we've lost. I don't know if it's too late. I wouldn't be here if I thought it was too late. This is about my fourth time here, and I know probably twenty people in here. Maybe they are getting tired of hearing me. But it's important to me in response to your question, that maybe it's not healing. It may be, as the gentleman over here said, you know, who are we healing? And I think it is America, in response to your statement. I don't think it's the Vietnam vet, I think it

is America. And I think, I have good faith. I don't know why. Maybe it's an insanity that I've learned, through people I deal, people in the class as early as this morning, sixteen and seventeen-year-olds at an all-Catholic high school, that the raising of consciousness, the awareness, that I am even gaining today, and 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 sixti es, just kind of hiding out in the conservative South. And it took me ten years to tell my story, which will be out, actually, my story will never be told. It's like none of our stories. But the world's pain, number two, that he was talking about, weeping for, betrayal of oneself, the way of the world, something I deal with every day. I listen to sixteen and seventeen-year-olds talk about that. I see sixteen and seventeen-year-olds and eighteen and nineteen and twenty-year-olds, here, to me, that are helping me deal, I think there is a process going. I still have hope, though. I don't know if two people are enough, three people are enough. It's like with the MIA situation. Why should we beat our brains out over 2,500 people when we've got twenty-five thousand ready to riot in Atlanta? Why are they significant? But for some reason I continue to have hope. And maybe that's something I'll have to answer, but I'm here, I do have hope. I'm getting close. I may never get there, but I think some things have been answered. Yes, I think it is America. We have to use Vietnam. We could use the American Indians, we could use the black America, we could use the Chicanos or whatever.

Why do they continue to struggle for equal rights or to be heard or whatever? The Vietnam vet, the uniqueness about it, several things. One, they were 18.5 years old. That was the average age. And you've got to include the lifers and the colonels, whatever, who were there, and they are shouting down, do this, do that. They are still around. They covered all areas. And a lot of them had parents that were Holocaust victims, too. They had a few hints. They had had a few hints of what the sixties were about. A lot of them did protest the war, and choked, and said, I don't want to go to Canada, I don't want to go to jail, and they went in. And they suffered the atrocity. And they are dealing with that guilt. And they are also dealing with the sixties, and they are dealing with the fact that earthquake victims, Holo caust victims, black America, the ghetto, or whatever, and they are trying to put this in. They are weeping. The, how to give love and caring back to the world. I think a few of us feel it's important and Bill can respond to that. One thing I've learned, though, in the last year, over a year, through Dr. Capps, and through participating, going back to the, because I've been caught in a world of nothing but Vietnam vets. I meet some people like Judy who were in Vietnam, and all of a sudden I've got my blinders on, but I come out and I meet eighteen, nineteen, twenty-year-olds, twenty-one-year olds, as of this morning, sixteen and seventeen= year olds, all colors, all languages, the whole works. And they are asking me the same thing. Yes, it is American, for these are Americans. They are asking me how do we love,

how do we give something back? And for some reason, some of us once again, we're here, and we're doing it. And they're doing it. They are in this room now. And I think it's important. I don't know if we'll answer it. Maybe this is a cycle. I am just one person and I can't figure it out. Maybe we're just jawing(join??) as they say. Maybe it don't mean nothin', Bill, I don't know, but it does to certain ones of us. I think it's important. I haven't answered that yet. And I think the I-thou relationship, the importance of morale in treatment. You know, I went through a Freudian school of clinical treatment, and it was like you separate yourself. I could never buy it. I fought it all the way through. But I had to suck up a lot of it and kind of slip through so I got through. And a lot of us had to slip through, we do it today. Judy is talking about, hey, you live in Venice, you know, I had four teams in Los Angeles. Two of them are in two of the worst ghettos in America. And I go down there every week and I just, I feel like, wow, I want to go barefooted, I want to suffer, I feel that, you know, something's wrong. But then again, I realize that it's more than I-thou relationship.

COBURN: Shad, it's one of my favorite things I've learned in the civil rights movement, was a friend of mine who used to day, freedom is like taking a bath. You've got to do it every day to make it work. So I don't think there's any end.

MESHAD: But I think through these sort of things, I am getting closer. It makes me want to go back wherever that is and continue trying, to, here, the dialogue is going on, I

think is important, in response to the last gentleman's statements or whatever. All of those are true. And to Peter, about PTSD, or delayed stress, we have to fight with terminology. We had get that in the psychiatric textbook to fight them, and say, hey, just look at it. It's O.K. now to look at it. You don't have to,diagnoses is this, but it was our only way of desperation. We used it. I apologize. It is, but we have to use something, because when people ask me what post traumatic stress disorders are, or what delayed stress is, I can't stop. I mean, you could go all the way back to 69 AD, you know, back to the fall of Jerusalem. And you could talk on and on.

COBURN: No, because I think the thing, I mean, I had the same literary reaction to that phrase that Peter does, but it does describe something that's very important, and that is that delay in feeling that is essentially so long after the event that the person who is feeling it doesn't realize that it has any connection to the original event. And you know, I felt that really strongly, only in the last year have I really had feelings about what I saw in Vietnam. And I didn't even think that how I was going around feeling all this last year had anything to do with Vietnam until I read Kathleen's article. You know articles in the LA Times that talked about that, and said that people other than veterans could experience it and so on. So I don't know. Somehow we need to think of better words. But it is like something very specific that I think that people who are in traumatic situations go through to describe something that's important.

MAHEDY: From our point of view in the Vietnam veterans' movement, though, that gave us the legitimacy. We can talk to shrinks now. We can talk shrink talk to shrinks. Before we couldn't. It is truly a sanitized term. I am delighted, Peter, I thought your talk was tremendous. I now understand why some of the traditional mental health professionals don't like it, you know, I think we do some of the things you are talking about. In terms of individual therapy, I think the approach that some of us use, who's being healed, America or the veterans? I hope both of the above. But I like to look at it this way. When you are up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to remember that your first objective was to drain the swamp. I think the long-term objective is probably whatever healing means to America. But you have to, when you are dealing with the Vietnam war veterans, you've got to take it chunk by chunk, and bit by bit. You know, Friday morning I have got to go see a guy who I pulled into the VA Hospital two months ago, taking a rifle and a shotgun away from him about ten minutes before he committed homicide. He is a next-door neighbor, you see, this kind of stuff. A number of people who are just coming off the booze, and begun to realize they've got a problem in Vietnam, you know, the game is played again. I hope we also can do a little bit of healing with these folks, individually, you see. So I think kind of both of the above. But that's the situation that some of us in this business feel. I mean, the alligator is there, and the teeth are very big teeth. That's kind of where we're at right now.

BLAKEMORE: I am going to have to leave you before the break. I just wanted to say two things, one of which is that I really feel that you are an undercover Jungian analyst. Maybe you don't know it at this point in time, and maybe that's an insult to you. There is in your--

MARIN: --when he was called __ach--

COBURN: --Jungian gentleman--

BLAKEMORE: O.K. There are two minorities to this group. But there is in your comments a great deal of relevant material which directly relates to that whole body of literature. I think when you talked about the idea of finding a conscience, you are also talking about the idea of becoming consious, and that the way that one becomes conscious is to have experience. And that you cannot give other people experience, you have to have it yourself. But if you do become conscious as a result of tremendous experience, then the moral question arises, and I think that's right out of the analytic literature. So thank you for stating it in such a plain and straightforward way.

CAPPS: We are coming to the time close to the end of the time. And I know there are, it happens every time. There are people sitting at the table who really would like to speak, but might need to be encouraged a little bit. I am thinking specifically of veterans who may be here, haven't really had a chance yet. I saw your hand come up, too, on it. It's your turn.

PAINTER: A quick observation. Peter, I really connected with what you said about the relationship between therapy and morality. Again, I speak from the platform as a clinical psychologist, but also as a Christian. I think there is kind

of a prototype of the interface between therapy and morality in the self-help movement of Alcoholics Anonymous. Where this very successful program of,probably a million people in America are sober because of AA, in the twelve steps of AA there is first of all, there's kind of a moral crisis acknowledgement that I am powerless, I need a higher power. I need something to deal with my conscience, if you will. Mea culpa, Father, I have sinned, you know, there is an acknowledgement of a problem. And then throughout the twelve steps, there is a moral inventory being taken, there is an attempt at amends, to deal with an affront of one's conscience. And all of these are steps to sobriety. These also may be steps to healing.

MARIN: Walter, can I respond? I mean, I am, I want to zero in on a, what seems to me an immense difficulty here. I think without doubt that religions are, have sustained the kind of masterful psychology in which they understand far more about healing and forgiveness and the means by which people who feel themselves to have done what they themselves don't respect can be welcomed back to a community, and can be forgiven. The difficulty I have is this. I was trying to argue from a point of view in which though we don't have the time to go into it, in which human activity becomes credited precisely because there is no meaning to experience, right? Or to reality. Save what persons discover in it or convey to it. And the reason every gesture and human experience is significant is because without the power of individual experience and the wisdom to be drawn from it, everything is void, right. And that's the position I am trying to make,

right? That what finally credits individual experience, what makes the experience of every vet important is that unless they speak, truth will disappear, because it has no other source, and secondly, that one of the difficulties that we are dealing with here is this perpetual disillusion and humiliation, and the willingness to do what you ought not to do finally it seems to me issues from the fact that one credits to agencies and institutions outside oneself an authority that they ought not to have. And for that, institutional religion and religious persons are more guilty than anybody else in the nation. And the notion that you can set right through the institutions which have, because of the way they have raised and educated the young, created the situation where persons will do what they find horrific to themselves because they are told to do it, or given permission to do it, by an external authority of conscience or power, seems to me extraordinary. I don't think it can be done. I don't think, I mean, it's like asking the Catholic Church to institute birth control. There may be Catholics who are in favor of birth control, but if you want to bring birth control about, you don't go through the Church. And it seems to me, still I have not heard a convincing argument that if you want eighteen and nineteen-year-olds, or thirty-year-olds, now, people who were in the war, right, on a large scale, to come to terms with the significance of their actions, and the necessity of their creating a meaning from them which doesn't yet exist, that you can do that from a religious point of view. I don't believe it, though there are religious persons for whom I

have a great respect, I don't think it's to be found in that tradition, as a living tradition. I wish it were more in the secular tradition as a living tradition. But to tell you the truth, the , up till now, the fundamental cultural sources of generosity and understanding that I am aware of seem to me to have been secular rather than religious in this culture. And that's where you go to look for them.

CAPPS: Leonard, do you have--

MARSAK: Yeah. I have been flabbergasted by the wealth of understanding that's been displayed today. I would have very little to contribute to this, but one small thing that I think has already been hinted at by a number of people, beginning with Stanley, and with Gayle, and I think it's implied in something, some things that Peter has said. While politics and morality ought, while politics and morality ought not to be the same thing, I think they are and ought to be related. And that's where, when Peter talks about I-thou, and then they, that is, I think, the conveyance for the they and the others. And I mean politics, perhaps from the small p sense, but largely now in the large P sense. It doesn't matter--

END OF SIDE I OF TAPE II

SIDE II, TAPE II:

MARSAK CONTINUES: --whether we are talking about Democrats or Republicans in this country. After all, the Kennedy Democrats are the ones, and who were proposing counter-insurgency and describing the events in Asia as the result of a small band of outside agitators, who otherwise, who without them the Vietnamese peasants would be feeling just fine. So there, the liberal element in the country was

proposing this, and now the not-so-liberal, or right-wing element is proposing action on this basis, any which way around it is our political leaders, the political establishment, that has promoted these causes. Someone earlier said there are war criminals walking around among us whom we do not name as such. And I think it might be worthwhile in this country for some of us to name them. It's been going on, this scenario, for thirty-five, thirty, thirty-five years, ever since the onset of the cold war. And continues still with us today. It reminds me, well, back in the Vietnamese days when the, when Communism was supposed to be monolithic, then Russians and Chinese were perpetrating the Vietnamese horror to which we had to respond. Now it is Russians and Cubans who are perpetrating some sort of El Salvadorean horror to which we are meant to respond. It reminds me of the white Southern establishment, who in the face of any possible change, would claim that if only those few outside agitators who are stirring up trouble down there would leave, then everyone would be quite satisfied. All of this is nonsense. Once upon a time we preached national self-determination, Woodrow Wilson did, when it suited our interests. And now of course we are not about to let any people determine their own lives when it suits our interests to do that. And so I would like the point to be made, which is I suppose a perfectly obvious one, that once we finish this session on healing, and I think everything that was said here today was appropriate to the subject involved, and certainly I would want to see a healing, a moral healing,

a spiritual healing, if you like, as well as an emotional, psychological, and physical healing among the veterans. But when we talk about the larger community ourselves, the point is well taken that it doesn't come to some end at some point as if we are healed. It goes on forever. And what it is that goes on forever, of course, is the politics of life. And the only way in which the community, ourselves as Americans, can heal ourselves, is to undertake the business of speaking truth to power, as Quakers are fond of saying. And this, I think, it's perfectly obvious to all of us, but a, perhaps has to be said.

CAPPS: Don McDonald. This will be the final comment.

McDONALD: My comment is directed to Peter, I you won't have time, Peter, but a lot of important questions have been raised none of which is there time really to explore to the fullest. But would you, I would like to just comment on your comments on conscience. And the question of, I am leading up to, I think, is where you locate the authenticity of one's conscience. Because early in your first remarks, you said, rightly, I think, that where the feelings of guilt and remorse come in, is because one is aware of one's betrayal of one's own most, deepest feelings of what's right and what's wrong. And then later you, and in various ways, you raised questions about what the institutions have contributed, negatively, to conscience. I mean, that they have given us in some cases, apparently, the grounds, or the food for bad conscience, or poor principles. And yet you also at the same time recognize that there has to be some kind of input, that the conscience doesn't develop, there's

a paradox perhaps here, the conscience does not develop and form itself ab nihilo, from nothing. It,there is input from institutions, whether it's family, religion, state, politics, government, your peers, but at a certain point I would think in the human development, and maybe it's a process, not a point, you internalize these values and you discriminate and you begin to see that the institutions perhaps that gave you authentic values in some cases historically have, are now erring, and as I think in the case of the Vietnam war, when Cardinal Spellman, for example, blessed the war in so many words, and in so many deeds. And I think Catholics had then the profound obligation to distinguish between what was authentic in their religious tradition and what was not, historically, at that time, during the Vietnam war. So I really am, the question really is, and we have no time to finish this dialogue on this point, is how you would define and analyze the formation of human conscience vis-a-vis one's own internalization powers and also the institutional effect, and outside effect, so to speak, for--

MARIN: Yeah, I couldn't, I, I mean, it's impossible to do that in a, in a little bit of time. I think there are two things. One is I think in some ways conscience is phasic, so you do begin, you know, with a, with a, with almost a what I would call an animality of conscience, that there is something there biological, which is then developed at the lowest, at the soonest level by the community, the family and the community, and the smaller community of persons. It is then subject to the more complex articulation which you find in belief systems. I think what happens to some people

early on, though not to all of them, is people, many people at an early age accept, will reject the belief system on the basis of a point of view already formed, though I don't know where that's formed. Others do not. Others accept it wholesale. Now, why in some persons the belief system is called into question by their previous experience is really not clear to me. Except there are certain kinds of dissonance which are more clear to certain children than to others. They begin to lose their faith in authority very early. They don't need to see what went on in Vietnam to know that they are being lied to. Now why this exists in some children and not in others, I don't know. So I--

McDONALD: I should say by way of a footnote, I agree with you, completely with what you said, that morality is as natural as language, but it also is acquired as well as natural--

MARIN: I think some people begin to learn from their experience because they are allowed or taught to do that while others do not. The experience begins to call into question the belief systems, right? at various points in life. Some people wait until they are fifty, fifty-five, before, Joseph Campbell, for instance, we talk about Jungians, came back from India, the first time he went to India was in his sixties. He came back and he said he would never write a word about Indian myths any more because he hadn't understood the actual suffering which was associated with those mythic systems. And he could no longer treat the mythic system as abstractions or as goods in themselves, having seen that human suffering. So, I mean at that level it can happen to you at sixty, or eighty, rather than at fifteen or twenty. But there is a deeper problem which

is connected to all this. And this is in this, and obviously it would take a dozen Center dialogues, the relation of individual experience to institutional belief systems, because it is quite clear that at the very same time they seem to do this immense violence in their educational systems to the young in terms of individual conscience and choice, religions through their language and their over-all world view do keep alive in a way that secular life seems not to able to keep alive the notion of conscience and responsibility itself. So that it seems to me paradoxically the most responsible person I know and the most responsible work I have read, I mean, people previous to the theologians of liberation. All right. Whether they were Tolstoy, Camus, Paul Goodman, certain persons in this century, who perceived the suffering and the violence a lot sooner in many ways than religious persons, who are johnny come latelys, it seems to me, to this perception, did it on the basis of a response that had been learned and refined through secular existence rather than religious belief. And the capacity to respond was stronger in certain secular persons than in religious persons. However, given that, given that fact, it's also true that you cannot keep alive in secular terms the notions of response and conscience. And the essential necessary integrity of human action which seems to me, the tradition which seems to me much richer in religious thought than in secular thought. And -

McDONALD: So your argument about, your comment about religious institutions, go more directly to the historical performance of the institutions, say in the Vietnam--

MARIN: Well, I would argue something else, I mean, and this is the point. It is just that I would have responded to the talk about union. What I would argue and we don't have time to make it elegant, is that, is that, is that what has been passed to persons as religious perceptions or moralities, being divinely given, right, discovered and protected through the Church, I believe are fundamentally drawn from the community of human experience, that no religion has the right to lay exclusive or arbitrary claim to that morality or ethics, right, that that is, I mean, it, fundamentally marks, that is a human product. It is the cumulative experience, history, and wisdom of human beings which then make its way into some religious persons, and some secular persons. Because nobody has the right--

McDONALD: Well, St. Paul says nothing human is foreign to me.

MARIN: But nobody has the right to lay claims to that truth or to ascribe it to their particular god, because it issues from persons but it may be kept alive by religions more efficiently, than it can be kept alive by other persons. The other thing I think that keeps it alive, which we forget, are certain ethnic traditions. It's very difficult for me to disentangle in my own background what is Jewish out of religion and what is Russian Jewish as an ethic. And I am not sure whether we all were raised, and had it beaten into our heads, to side with the underdog because it was a religious ethic, or because it was a social ethic ultimately derived from religion, but kept alive by family rather than by the synagogue. I just don't know the answer to that.

The thing that I think is, those are questions which we, except for three or four, a handful of people in the culture, have ignored almost completely, to the immense detriment to any kind of dialogue about it.

CAPPS: We have to stop now, partly because the tape has run out. We are tape-recording this, and this is an agreed-upon time for us to stop. I won't attempt any kind of summary of this discussion. It would be foolhardy and impossible to do that. I think, looking at it from the point of view of the dynamics of collective conversation, I think we have made a giant step this afternoon. When we started this, our discussion, we didn't know what the topic was, several years ago. We called it simply "The Impact of Vietnam." We had, you were there, Shad. We had a second meeting called "The Impact of Vietnam." Then we had a meeting called "The Impact of Vietnam upon American Religion." And that's still too big. Today, we talked about the collective healing process, and I have more questions about that now at the end of the discussion than I had at the beginning. I think we have come to the point now where we can break this topic down into meaningful sub-topics. I think we are talking about civil religion, a lot of questions you raised didn't get answered at all. I don't think they have been raised very prominently within our culture yet. I think the Vietnam experience affects our understanding of civil religion very profoundly. I have, I come to the conclusion that the fragmentation of American society about which I can talk very glibly probably has something profoundly to do with the fact that various

segments of our society have responded or are affected by Vietnam, distinctively. And it's probably impossible to talk about America, the way we talk about America, or the American ethic, or American self-consciousness. We need to be much more refined and particular in our discussion of that. I may be speaking only for myself, but I have a hunch I am speaking for others, that we talk about the collective healing process, I think the form in which we are engaged around this table is appropriate for the carrying out of that healing process. I would like to think that the healing process is occurring as we talk about it, and we are being self-conscious regarding the dynamics of that process, in the very work that we do. That would be a tribute to the Center, to the work of Robert Hutchins. I hope that this discussion of this topic will continue on, in the next months, the next year. While I am still, speaking that way, and speaking somewhat historically now, I'd like to recognize that Larry Hewes is here today, who is a former fellow of the Center, and Mrs. Hewes. Could you raise your hand, or stand up, so we would know who you are? He spent a good amount of time with Robert Hutchins and the fellows in Montecito. Thanks to all of the presenters today, and thanks to all of you for participating, and also to all of our observers.

END OF MEETING