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The theme I have chosen is values, the three stories I read all had different values on human life and war and what this means to certain groups. I feel that personal values made up a huge part of the behind the scenes there was so much more than what really was shared. I think the stories I chose scratch a little bit more off the surface than some of the others. I feel that the different perspectives on value connect the stories I chose. I will be sharing my ideas from the following stories: Quach Van Phong out of Morale Boosters, Jim Soular in the Free-Fire Zone, and Julian Bond in From Civil Rights to Antiwar.

The first story I chose was Quach van Phong from the Morale boosters section of the book. I found this expert to be truly special in a different light than any of the other stories I have read, he had a personal value that he chose to share through his artwork, images of the battles and the way of life. He contributed so much to the soldiers in the camps. He captured images from his own eyes and shared them; I think this was valued because it was a way to freeze the time and the moment, a way to capture what they were feeling from their facial and body language. The fact that Quach Van Phong was not taken seriously by some commanders and chiefs at other posts was felt when he was gone, he was a part of what I believe was food for their soul and partially a remembrance of why they were there fighting. I think it was a way for them to be proud and to be able to look back at these images and remember they are fighting for a way of life; they are fighting for their family and personal values.

The second story I would like to talk about was from Jim Soular in the Free-Fire Zone section of the book. Jim went from a gong ho flight engineer to questioning the value of life and machinery. I was truly moved from this story based on Jim's initial feelings of the war and his change of heart. For a man to have truly had a face to face moment to change their personal views on what they are doing in Vietnam. I found it moving that he was so excited about what he was doing and loved his job and had so much pride in it. I think he placed his self-value in it, to be in a chopper and to feel as one with the machine based on its sounds and movements. As you read further in to this passage Jim starts to second guess what he is doing in Vietnam and what is coming from his work here. I think he is starting to question his values and what is really going on. I feel

that when Jim begins to talk about his friend David who was murdered in Vietnam by one of their own people face to face I think this is where people cannot help but really look at their personal values. To then latter go to a trial of the murder and find out the country you are fighting for places more value in machinery then life must have shook this man to his core. I think that his values and everything in him must have been turned around and begged for reprioritization. To imagine giving your life to your country and to realize that maybe you are not valued as a human or that your value is low on the overall scheme of things would be devastating.

The third story I would like to analyze is about Julian Bond in the From Civil Rights to Antiwar passage. I chose to talk about this story because it is another struggle of values and self-worth. I found it moving to read of a man who is sticking up for his people in one of the most criticized fields in the war, politics. And then to add on to this struggle he is an African American, at this time in the world African Americans did not have equal rights and were treated as a lesser class. To read this story and to have some prior history on civil rights movements is suck a proud time in African American history. For Julian to be able to stand up during this already difficult time in the US and to speak out for equal rights and for values of African Americans is truly an act of bravery. I think that this is a true story of perseverance and value in another level altogether, to fight a fight that is not your own is an unrealistic expectation of any man. But to fight for a fight that is not right to begin with is not acceptable. I truly feel that this is a side of the Vietnam War that was not exposed as it should have been.

The reason I picked these three stories is because they are all uniquely different but they all have a heart to them and I think it centers on value. I think value is sadly underplayed in allot of the stories, to talk about something so personal and to remember your own value and the things that you believe in and to know what you are really fighting for is priceless. If everyone could establish and recognize the value in one another I am sure many a tragedy could have been prevented.

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