

80

Due date: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 09:05 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 20 November 2010, 05:20 PM (769 words)

Samantha McCourt
History 101
Due:11/20/2010

Assignment 3



I feel like the turning point in this book and the war itself, at least according to the accounts I read are My Lai. Each story teller had his or her own interpretation of what a turning point in the war would look like, but to me the people who talked about this event seemed to feel the most difference, and see the most drastic turn from one way which the war was progressing to another totally different way. The story told by Larry Colburn (346) was the most significant to me. He tells of his own experience fighting during the My Lai massacre.

He starts off his story by stating that he by no means believes that they have been saints throughout the whole war. "We weren't pacifist. We did our job and when we had to kill people we did. But we didn't do it for sport." (346) Though the Vietnam war had been horribly violent for all of the soldiers, obviously, they had been more direct in who they were meant to be attacking and he didn't believe that they had purposely gone out to kill innocent people. This all changed as the war went on. I feel like from all the readings, but in his particularly, that people felt like the violence increased more and more as the war went on. This massive shift accumulated in the hideous massacre caused by American soldiers. Turning away from the idea of fighting for a cause and instead losing sight of what they had come to do in the first place. He says that soldiers were killing in a different way, they were killing blindly for the revenge of their fallen comrades. (348)

This was most certainly a turning point. The war had gone from a fight against the communist enemy to the literal and figurative raping of a people. "And it wasn't just murdering citizens. They were butchering people. The only thing they didn't do is cook'em and eat'em. How do you get that far over the edge?" (349).



In section five the theme was ending, and not just in the literal sense of the war actually coming to an end in 1975, but more surrounding stories about how the war began to end for that individual person. The piece that I felt most summarized the events leading to the end and brought together a sense of finality was a

story that was told by Morton Halperin (403).

I think what first drew me to his concept of ending is that he choose to tell his whole story from the beginning, working his way through the war to try and make sense of the incidents that he saw (though not really first hand) committed. Throughout he wasn't a soldier, but he saw the war through the politicians involved and through its impact on America. He felt through the whole war things were always troubling, the American casualties were high and he thought they could have fixed this with simple strategy changes, but no one cared to do so. No one seemed to want fight the war right in his mind (403).

He seems to feel that ending came along with the Nixon administration for many reasons. They believed that they could get all of the troops out as long as they continued military assistance to South Vietnam. They supported continuing of aids because they knew that stopping all support would not have benefited the south (406). He felt that the administration was not very opened to telling people what was really going on, even those who worked for them. Because of this he thought that the end was coming, with the American people up in arms the government was trying its hardest to get troops out in the safest possible and quickest way.

The eruptions of the anti-war movement signified spiral towards the ending of the war. The more violently that the American people opposed the war, the more that politicians needed to tread on egg shells in order to not offend anyone by doing something wrong. "I always thought the antiwar movement was totally irresponsible because of the assumption a lot of people had that you could negotiate this magic thing called a neutral, democratic, independent South Vietnam." (406). The government they were fighting wasn't going to negotiate or willing to lose the war. So the more that America moved away from the war, the closer they came to the end for better or for worst.



Close this window

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)