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HST195

Patriots – The Vietnam Remembered From All Sides

Part 1:

As I read the story, though it did not affect the Vietnamese soldier, the theme seemed to linger upon death. Death is often feared and he did not seem to carry fear with him at all. This is why I believe he was a heroic character in the story. Often in war it is predicted that life will be cut short. I think the story portrays a noble character but it is unrealistic to not fear the end of your life or the pain of death. I think that parts of the story are very realistic and he is portraying a hero because he is willing to give his life for safety others. The soldier deserved his metals and rewards and also deserves a large chunk of credibility. I think the amount of subjectivity portrays the value of a soldier like the one in the story because of the many trials he encountered throughout the story. The soldiers possess courage and compassion.

Death is often a prevalent theme in Christian Appy's short stories. In this story there are a few examples where death is the focus. He says, "It was such a dangerous mission the commander feared I might be killed, so my unit conducted a death ceremony for me before I left." In the story it tells us that it was just as if he were already dead. The significance of this death ceremony was that there was an absence of fear from the soldier. This draws me to the conclusion that he was a brave and courageous soldier. In the story the soldier received credibility for his bravery and accomplishments. I think it was well deserved due to his willingness to die for his country.

In the story the author shows that the soldier had compassion. He says "I hated the enemy but when I captured an American, I felt sorry for him." The story also shares that he had nightmares about the horrifying experiences which tells us that it was mentally draining for the soldier to kill other people.

Part 2:

The story *All My Ancestors Are Buried Here* disappointed me the most. When trying to move the Vietnamese couple that lived in a free-fire zone, American soldiers burnt the house down to make the move permanent for the old couple. After a few days the couple returned to the land and built a new house to live in the same place. They explained that part of their heritage lies within the land because many of their ancestors were buried there. In this story American soldiers lacked attention and precision and fired at anything that could possibly be a threat. This resulted in loss of loved heritage, deaths and wounds of innocent people. The drafted soldiers were forced to face tragedy that took a toll on everyone. In the story you can see that taking the lives of innocent people affected the American soldiers in a negative way but they could have taken more precaution that could have saved lives.

The writer portrays the heartbreak and compassion that the soldiers had for the people. He also states "With so many experiences like that, our overwhelming hope was simply that the war would end." The soldiers had hope that the killing would end. They sent the old Vietnamese couple to a refugee camp with the intentions to protect them and not hurt them. This tells us that the characters in the story have compassion and goodness in their hearts. The story also says "In general, my generation hated the war, but we had no choice. We were drafted." The soldiers didn't choose to go to war and they didn't want to kill anyone but they weren't given an option. The writer's tone shows us that it was despairing to kill innocent people and that the American soldiers were remorseful. I believe that parts of the story display that the soldiers had compassion and were not cold hearted.

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