

Part One: The Turning Point

To me, a story that is a great example of an important turning point in the Vietnam War comes from Clark Dougan. It is a short story, but I feel that it exemplifies one of the most important turning points for Americans. Clark tells us about a boy that he knew in school. His name was Greg Fischer, and he was just a typical high school boy that played sports, just like Clark. When Clark asked Greg what his plans were after high school, he said that he was going to join the marines rather than go to college because he was, "going to get drafted anyhow, so if I'm going to get drafted, why not be the best, ya know?" After graduating high school, Clark Dougan goes to college and admits to being, "really kind of oblivious to the war," until he picks up a copy of the Cleveland Press one day. The article titled, "He Was Only 19 - Did you Know Him?" was about Greg Fischer's death in Vietnam. This was a very important turning point for him, because it made him really think about the fact that every death in Vietnam is likely some normal person from home that had a normal life. Dougan thinks that this article created a turning point in "Middle America," turning them against the war. While this one article probably did not have as great an impression on all of the rest of America, I believe that these same kinds of situations happened to many people, where they had that realization that "troops" in Vietnam are really their neighbors, and their friends, and their store clerks, and so on. These types of realizations increased the general opposition to the Vietnam War from the American people, which is why to me, it is an important turning point in the war.

Part Two: Endings

A story about an ending that I think is important is the story by Truong Tran. I think that it is important to learn about how the other side felt, which is why I love that this book has both American points of view and Vietnamese points of view. In his account, Tran talks about how because of the "help" from the Americans, South Vietnam could not have won the Vietnam War. In fact, the opening quote of the story is, "We could either lose or tie, but not win." He further explains that if the Americans had been successful in defeating the North Vietnamese, all that they would have one is Southern Vietnam since the southern Vietnamese only really fought within the South, rather than trying to take over the north. On the other side, Northern Vietnam was guaranteed the north, even if they lost. As Tran put it, "The best we could ever do is keep half the country. On the other side, the communist could either win or tie, but not lose. Since we were never able to fight in the North, the worst they could do is keep half the country." Not only did having Americans fighting for South Vietnam destroy any hope of unification between the north and the south, but they also just completely destroyed the south. Below the 17th parallel, the Vietnamese suffered economically and socially. Most southerners made their livings from their plantations. Not only did Americans take them from their rural land and relocate them, but they also destroyed the potential that the land had for growing crops with their chemical warfare. The point that I believe that Truong Tran is making is that not only did the Americans not help them, but they actually hurt them in their supposed pursuit to fight for them. He is also expressing that at the end of the war, the south was left with less than they started with. I think that it is important to realize that the loss of the Vietnam War was not just a major loss for the United States, but also for the Southern Vietnamese people. Their livelihood was ruined while Americans got to return to their untouched homeland.

80/100

687

min length

all narrative

2

brief analysis

outside source proof

not true

bombing of the North?

clarify Agent Orange not used or vice paddy. Jingles yes.

there seems to be "loss" more than "ending" at this point

unclear. Are all of the above Tran's points yours (are you in agreement with him?)
Factual problems throughout.