

Jonathan Rowlett
HST 195
Joe Escobar
Assignment 2

89/100

665
↑
under min
length

Part I: Turning Point

The best example of a "turning point" in Part Four of Appy's book is the interview with Douglas Kinnard. Kinnard says, "We had made it a war of wills, rather than a war of power. The problem was, while we had the power, it turned out they had the will" (p. 322). The difference between WWII and the war in Vietnam was that there was no noble and well prepared purpose behind the fighting. Commanding officers were given orders, but they did not know or understand the purpose of the actions they were commanding their troops to carry out. There is a definitive difference in how a man fights when he is killing for a purpose – to protect, defend, etc. – and a man killing just to kill. It requires a different mindset; it requires a man to lose a part of his humanity.

Soldiers began their tour of Vietnam with the idea that they were going over to help the Vietnamese; to be the heroes, the saviors of Vietnam. However, after they had spent years touring the country, executing missions, they suddenly became these machines instead of men. The "turning point" was from a nation wanting to save another nation, to a nation that wanted win no matter the cost. The war became a vindictive slaughter which culminated in the My Lai Massacre. Larry Colburn said of the My Lai incident, "The only thing I remember feeling back then was that these guys were really out for revenge. They'd lost men to booby traps and snipers and they were ready to engage" (p. 348). A few short sentences later he says, "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?" (p. 379). This reinforces what Kinnard described in his interview with Appy. The soldiers knew and understood what it meant to be a soldier; what they didn't understand was their purpose in Vietnam. A soldier fights to uphold justice and to protect the innocent, but the soldiers in Vietnam were being tasked to do things that would have been held a tragedy back home. Kinnard says that one of the major portions of analysis was body count. Obvious, right? If a country is losing its people they will change their behavior; but in the case of the Viet Cong, this wasn't so. America had the power to wipe out hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, but the Viet Cong were far more resolute. (The Vietnam War was truly an issue of mind over matter, but how does a soldier fight the mind?)

— nice reference

— careful here

No impo?

AWK ending

strange use of only VC

Part II: Ending

The best example of an "ending" in Part Five of Appy's book is the interview with Judith Coburn. Coburn began her time in Vietnam reporting on the happenings there, but she ended her time in Cambodia. Ms. Coburn had been kicked out of Vietnam in 1972 and was not allowed to return until 1979; even then she was not allowed to return as a journalist. After being issued a 3-day visa to visit Cambodia by the Foreign Minister (Nguyen Cao Thach), she managed to extend that visa to travel for six weeks across Cambodia and document what had happened there. "There would be these huge welcomes and almost as soon as we got out of the car they would take us to the mass grave where their friends and family who had been slaughtered by the Khmer Rouge were buried" (p. 412). The pictures that she describes of Cambodians asking for lost loved ones, sending letters with her in case she sees them are an end to the myth that the

Vietnam War was confined to Vietnam, or even that it was confined to soldier fighting soldier. The mass graves that Judith Coburn was shown were not filled with soldiers, they were filled with the bodies of women, children and the elderly.

Part 2 felt rushed

I'm not sure how you
planned this to relate to "endings" theme
civilians = end?

Part 1 better