

Due date: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 11:55 PM

Last edited: Sunday, 10 April 2011, 11:33 PM (887 words)

Part 1

The story of "Tran Thi Gung" wasn't a story I expected, probably because I have only read things about Vietnam from American perspective. The way in which Gung talks about her view of Americans at the time with such coldness was far from what I had heard in any other account I had read previously. Due to the personal knowledge and experience of her people, I wouldn't say the story was told as a reliable account of why the war was being fought or as a generalized perspective. Heightened-emotions, mislead fear, and paranoia from past situations, coupled with misunderstandings of other cultures and political views and objectives, distorted reality at such a tumultuous and vulnerable time in Vietnam and the rest of the world, in my opinion. Gung, having been there, makes her personal account reliable but only from her perspective if it is understood to be just that. In her story, there seemed to be no compassion, or understanding of Americans, and Gung seemed almost cold and heartless when recalling her memories of killing them, "As soon as I started to fire, I killed an American. After he fell, some of his friends came rushing to his aid. They held his body and cried. They cried a lot. This made them sitting ducks. Very easy to shoot. From then on we knew that if we just shot one American soldier others would rush to him and then we could shoot many more," this is why I believe Gungs' view was blind to all but her emotions and need to seek revenge; making this a very subjective account (Appy 17). Although I was enlightened by her perspective because it helped me see things in a new light and in a different persons view that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to see without.

Part 2

When reading the "Richard Olsen" story, I was disappointed because of his "...I'm not one of those veterans who's embittered with a whole host of grievances," nonchalant attitude about what occurred in Vietnam while he was there (Appy 63). Regardless of what side you are on or what you thought at the time, people who lack the capability of looking at the situation and acknowledging regrets, are missing the only positive Americans can gain from this and also emotionally lacking in regards to other humans. Human compassion should compel a response from those who witnessed or

participated in carrying out such **tragic atrocities** against people, such as the massive deaths that resulted from the war in Vietnam on both sides, so they can prevent such horrific events from occurring in the future. Olsen does mention many things that make me question how much of his sentiments toward the war were impressed upon him by propaganda of the time with regards to American objectives in Vietnam, and the possible lacking of knowledge about the Vietnamese culture. I know a lot of people were supportive of American initiatives in Vietnam because of the fear of communism and the US claims of supporting the independence, liberation, and democracy, but when he says "I had the thought that we needed Americans there to show them how to do it," I was offended by the arrogance it seemed to portray about himself (Appy 64). I did see some good in his story, it wasn't all disappointing to me, but I thought the way he seemed to have had no compassion or respect for Vietnamese or the role he played in the war was very sad.

In the "Malcolm Browne" story, I found the tone to be caring, and respectful for the people, and soldiers alike which I found impressive. At a time when there were so many people willing to put the blind fold on because of fear, Browne seemed to want to show the truth whether it looked good for him, the US, communism, Vietnam, etc., showing a lot of integrity for Browne. I felt his role in reporting news for the AP was one he held with high regards, and wanted to do so in an honest manner no matter the obstacles he faced. There was compassion in his words for humans and distaste for poor moral conduct even though he could be viewed as a traitor, or communist if he expressed anything that could be considered negative or opposition to the US and their involvement in Vietnam. Browne **talks** about the way it was, exposing how, "Americans certainly knew that their Vietnamese counterparts sometimes resorted to torture. The "ding-a-ling" torture was common. It was done with a hand-cranked generator used to produce electricity for radios. The interrogator hooked electrode to the genitals of prisoners and turned the crank causing agonizing pain," which shows Browne had courage to not be intimidated by fear, and I believe this makes his story the more reliable personal testimony about the Vietnam war experiences that I have read (Appy 66). Browne seemed to not be explaining, or reasoning why or what but rather he told about it as he remembered. **Others I read told what they remembered but they excluded or left out unfavorable events to protect the image of the group they associated themselves with,** whereas Browne included these regardless of who would find it favorable.

Nice catch. Well done. Be sure to better explain some of the issues which are complex and can come across as vague (such as part 1).

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- 1-1** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Very unclear what you mean here.
- 1-2** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Specific examples are needed to make such grandiose claims.
- 1-3** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Long quote. 20-25% of the paragraph.
- 1-4** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Yes, but this doesn't address my question directly. Do we believe her or not?
- 2-1** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Examples, or are you just referring to war itself?
- 2-2** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Good quote and reaction
- 2-3** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
Write history in past tense
- 2-4** Apr 23, 2011 2:57 PM, Joe Escobar
This seems to imply that he was threatened with this torture personally, which was not the case.