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Part 1

George Watkins' story is perhaps the most interesting and influential in part one because of his clarity of vision. Unlike the United States' government, who clearly failed to understand Vietnamese culture, Watkins admitted that he "knewed very little about Vietnam" (22). Yet, he refused to allow his ignorance or position against Communism to blind him to the suffering caused by the war. Instead of viewing the Vietnamese as nameless, faceless enemies, Watkins respected them as human beings. When discussing the bombing of Vietnamese homesteads, he notes that "they had to be some good people to withstand all that... They's some of the most determined people I've ever run into. I don't hate them. They did what they had to do. It's the politicians that put everybody in that place" (23). Although he lost both eyes and legs in the war, a sacrifice which would justifiably make anyone bitter, he still sees the truth. When others were lost in the "them vs. us" or "democracy vs. communist" idea of the Cold War Era, he saw only human beings. Watkins' story becomes increasingly significant in current times, where wars are far off places such as Iraq with increasing amounts of impersonal technology. It is critical to remember that real, tangible, human people suffer because of war and politics.

Overall, the facts stated in the testimony are certainly plausible. His wounds prove that he was hit by a land mine. Furthermore, the fact that he received an impromptu infantry training is also quite possible. All personal stories are subjective to an extent, but Watkins appeared relatively objective because he did not subscribe to either Vietnam's or the U.S's ideas about the war. It sounded as if he was there only because he was drafted and did create personal investment in the war effort.

Part 2

Malcom Browne's story is definitely one of the most disturbing stories in Part 2 because it depicts the famous burning of the Buddhist monk. It is a sad comment on humanity when in order to draw attention to suffering, corruption, oppression, and the desires of the community, people must publicly sacrifice themselves. Furthermore, the fact that America, the legendary land of the free, was figuratively holding the reigns in South Vietnam when it occurred makes the tale more disgusting. In addition, the censorship and persecution which Browne suffered as a consequence of his photography and relationship with the Buddhists also leaves a bad taste in the reader's mouth. For instance, Browne says the police attacked him and his colleague, smashed their cameras, and then charged them with assaulting the police (69).

Yet, in its sadness, the story also holds a somewhat positive message: the people can never truly be silenced. Particularly with modern media, injustice and community voices may be heard or viewed internationally. The recent revolutions in Egypt are evidence of the empowerment people received through the media.

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