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Hst 195
Writing assignment 2

Part 1: Clark Dougan

Clark Dougan's turning point in the war is when a class mate of his dies in Vietnam. As its illustrated in the book by the speaker, he says "I think that was the moment when "Middle America" really turned against the war." Dougan may have seen this as the turning point, and relies on the press as his basis for such. Moreover, Dougan was likely looking at his situation as a microcosm of the United States at the time, when it could have just been his bias and feelings coming into play.

The facts of the press that Dougan brings to light are regarding the fact that the newspaper that had run the controversial editorial on the dead soldier (Fischer) was from a conservative chain of newspapers. At this time the chain was in full support of the war. With this being said, Dougan's claim about "Middle America" turning against the war does have merit. There are multiple reasons that could have been the reason behind the posting of that article, some even in support of Dougan's argument, but then it could have been a publicity stunt to gain a wider readership. Regardless, the article had a profound effect on Dougan and his community. Just as other media sources had a profound effect on the rest of the country, as the Herring book notes, the Johnson administration was responsible at least partially for the disillusionment in the media regarding coverage up to Tet, "television coverage of the war had been overwhelmingly neutral or favorable to the government... and had shown little of the actual horrors of war." (Herring 244) It is no wonder that when the stories hit home, the way they affected public opinion was magnified.

The other side of this story is that Dougan himself had hit a brick wall realizing he did not support the war. He states in his story that he could have been just as likely where Fischer was that day. As well, he mentions that many students at the time felt the pride or need to join the military. The death of Dougan's high school classmate struck a personal note at home. He began to feel a sense of bias concerning the war and those who were sent to fight in it. He realized that had his parents not been as insistent that he go to college, the lure of the military was still present in that time and he may have joined a war that sent him to his death.

Whether or not Dougan's microcosm view of the war, away and at home, was biased, correct or incorrect, it was the turning point for him. He saw that people that had originally

supported the war were faltering in their convictions: the press publishing the controversial piece, local members of the community and later even WW2 veterans saying “Fuck this”. He questioned whether the war in Vietnam was really worth Fischer’s life or his own? He may not have gone to Vietnam but he did not argue the allure to go there or that he supported people that did go there. When everything hits home, he realizes that he may support the soldiers, but not the war. In his closing sentence, and the reason I picked this story, Dougan states “The only tribute you could really pay, and I can still pay, is to remember.” He may have meant a few things by this, but one is that the only ways he can thank him for his service was to remember him and his deeds in life, to respect his memory and maybe change his view of others going over to Vietnam, to remember that it could have just as easily been him.

Part 2: George Evans

The ending of the war to Evans came quick upon entering Vietnam. He says that upon entering Vietnam he planned to be a good soldier, though he quickly saw the negative side of the war. Evan’s view of war was changed from what he thought of it as a child. He quickly realized it was not all sunshine and rainbows.

The actual end of the war for Evans was when he found out how the two boys had died. The war still waged on, but whatever pride he had left in his country had faded with the death of the two boys. He felt “betrayed”. Though Evans still continued to do his job, mentally and emotionally, he had checked out of the war. He was in open defiance of the war, though passively and on a smaller scale, like he says he was a small splinter in the grand scheme of stopping the war. Evans went to Vietnam with curiosity, pride, and a desire to help. What he received was a rude awakening.

Though it took a little bit for Evans to realize that the end of the war for him was upon him, the death of the two boys was the icing on the cake. By the end of his time in the military he was contemplating desertion, was openly defiant, and hated the war in Vietnam along with his countrymen.

From a young age Evans was brought up to have pride and respect for soldiers and the wars they fight for their country. He learned the disrespect and evils that war can bring out in man. Evans’ turning point to the end of the war for him may have been triggered by the death of the children, but it could have been any event. In a different situation he may have supported the war all the way through, though it is more likely that he would have opposed the war in the end either way. Once he realized the evils that war can bring out in a person, he realized that there is likely to be no good war rather than not knowing that there is a bad war.

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