

80/100

879

Nathaniel Hahn

Hst 195

Assignment 1

Of the several stories in part one, the one that impacted me the most, or at least the one I kept thinking about after reading part one was the story from George Watkins (pp. 21-25). After the first few paragraphs I admittedly was a bit apprehensive about the rest of the story; mainly because of his use of English. "I knowed very little about Vietnam" (pp. 22), for instance was a quote from the 3rd paragraph and honestly I was expecting a 'good ole boy', a 'go get em', bitter story from him. Not entirely fair and a bit judgmental, I know. However I was completely surprised by his account; he did not seem to be bitter and had a surprisingly insightful story for his part. *yes - good*

I was surprised by a few things he said, one of which being from a couple of paragraphs on page 23. He was talking about the Que Son Valley, and after clearing everyone out and destroying their homes, over half the people went right back and began rebuilding. You could tell that he was surprised by their perseverance and determination. Some people might have been enraged or reacted differently towards the villagers for returning right back home, instead he says that he was not angry at them, in fact he said that "there had to be some people among them to withstand all that" (pp23). He respected them for their determination and realizes that not just those villagers but he as well, was in fact *gr* victims of the "politicians that put everybody in that place" (pp23). *awk*

Another part of this story that was intriguing was the closing paragraph, and George was summarizing his opinion about the war and his experience throughout. I was surprised when he said that he didn't have much bitterness. This is somebody who had lost both his legs and his vision and is not bitter? Impressive, and admirable; but I wonder just how long it has taken to come to terms like that with what happened. Was he more angry right after the injury and war? Is it that enough time has passed since that he no longer is really bitter towards the war but more remorseful? He does say that he wishes it never happened for everybody's sake, which sounds remorseful not angry. *I agree*

I do have to compare a part of his story to that of the first story in part one, that of Bernard Trainor, the retired lieutenant general. It is interesting how the two men have dealt with their emotions and personal demons from their experiences. (How Trainor has never visited the memorial and even seemed to have a really hard time to even talk about it; while George has been there, even though he could not see it, but went and admits that it was the worse he felt since being home. *no*) *analysis of his credibility? You talk around the question.*

I am not exactly sure why this story stood out to me. They all were moving and interesting in their own right, but George's story grabbed me for some reason. Maybe partly because I had formed an opinion about him after the first few paragraphs and he proved me entirely wrong; maybe because of the tragedy of the story itself. Or perhaps it is

Good pt.
off to pt.
You focus on this issue & failed to analyze the credibility questions.

because of the simplicity of his summarization of the war itself, "a bad political mistake."

The most disappointing story from part two was the one by Paul Kattenburg (pp. 81-83), the former head of the State Department's Vietnam Task Force. He talked about this frustration of the "abysmal ignorance" (pp. 82) of the other people at the National Security Council Executive Committee meeting.

This story was disappointing because if true, this just showed the ignorance of the some of the key head figures of the war. They invited this man [Kattenburg] to the meeting because he had been in South Vietnam. He could provide some insight as to the situation of things over there, and yet when he said something that they just simply did not want to hear, they completely disregarded him and his opinion. While pulling out may not have been the right solution, they could have at least asked why or try to understand why he felt that way. What did he see or know that would have inspired that idea? They could have used that information to at least make a better, more informed decision about the course of action.

To address the final part of the assignment I would like to mention the story by Henry Prunier (pp. 38-41). He had gone into Vietnam in 1945 to support an anti-Japanese resistance and to help train Ho Chi Minh and his troops. This is a good story about how doing the right thing, showing compassion for a country and its people, can be inspiring and positive. We were helping a struggling country trying to gain independence and freedom from not just one, but a few oppressing countries. (That is what humanity and compassion is truly about.) The story is just as frustrating however because it shows a glimpse into what could have been if we did do the right thing and how a major disaster and tragedy could have been avoided.

too
simplistic
listen to
Paul, ~~was~~
situation solved

too
brief

- cliché

back to the negative

2 was weakest ... needed
more space ($\frac{1}{2}$ of the paper)

There were some definite
grammar issues that
hurt the
paper's readability