

1399 words

over the max limit

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(fine if the
paper is good
& on point, which Part 1 is not)

Part 1:

In the first part of the book Patriots, written by Christian Appy, one particular story resonates with me much stronger than any other story in this section. The first story, ~~the story told~~ from Bernard Trainor, stands out to me for three main reasons. In the second paragraph on page four I found myself full of questions when Appy penned:

- ① We viewed Communism as a monolithic dragon which controlled all of the Eurasian land mass. (...)
- ② We were on a holy crusade to stop the spread of godless Communism and to give the budding democracy in South Vietnam an opportunity to take root.

This Particular excerpt brings several pieces of information regarding the history of the United States to the forefront of my mind. I recalled learning about the colonists in the United States and our country's westward expansion being taught as the idea of Manifest Destiny. Through my experience learning about Manifest Destiny, I found that the United States seemed to collectively justify their actions and slaughter of the Native American population, because Manifest Destiny was saying that God himself desired the Anglos to inhabit and control the land of the United States. So when Appy writes about Bernard Trainor's understanding of the situation in Vietnam as a holy crusade to stop the spread of godless Communism, I find myself wanting to read the propaganda from this era that brought people to believe that the violence and the death of soldiers and civilians alike was in fact a holy event.

Furthermore, and from the same previously quoted excerpt, I find several more disturbances or questions arising from the two words godless Communism. The United States seems to continually push propaganda onto the nations civilians and military personnel collectively portraying any group of people that do not adhere to the expectations and desires of the United States ruling elite as godless people. Again returning to Manifest Destiny, the United States regularly portrayed the Native American population as godless savages to gain the support of the Anglo population in the United States attempt to conquer the country.

I found the story of Bernard Trainor to re-cement my preconceived understandings and beliefs regarding why the United States goes to war and how war becomes justified. I have a major problem with God and or religion being used as a qualitative reason for anyone to take the life of another person. Continually, and in conjunction with God and religion, I also have a problem with a group of people, in this case the U.S. Government, invading another country in an attempt to convert the people of the invaded country into a population of people that abide and live by the American standards, specifically governmental democracy. I cannot speak for you the reader or anyone else in the world, but I do not see how the U.S. has the right to forcefully attempt to tell any other group of people how to live and behave. So in conclusion as to why this particular story resonates with me the strongest, I found this story to enrage my intellectual being and increase my desire for the United States to mind her own business, so this story is likely to continually resonate in my mind for an immeasurable amount of time.

However, when coming to my conclusion regarding why this story resonates with me so strongly, the questions related to source creditability become paramount. Personally, I find a few reasons why this particular source is credible. First, and likely the most obvious reason for believe this source to be credible, Bernard Trainor was a general in the United States Marine Corps commanding troops in Vietnam during the war, so Bernard Trainor had to have been an upstanding, trustworthy, and responsible soldier for the Marine Corps to give him the rank of General, and Trainor was actually an on the ground eye witness to the struggles in Vietnam during the war.

Secondly, I believe the story Bernard Trainor shares is credible, because Trainor was also an instructor at the Command and Staff College. Although not everything an instructor says is completely factual and 100% accurate, being an instructor requires a person to be professional, knowledgeable, and trustworthy in the eyes of the institution that employs them. Furthermore, Trainor speaks of the Westmoreland tactics that are being used in Vietnam in a manner that reads as factual instead of entertaining when Appy pens, "You could see the disillusionment and unhappiness that officers returning from Vietnam had toward Westmoreland's strategy of search-

I'm worried here.
You focus on Appy's words,
not Trainor's.

Not Trainor, but
APPY

only
trustworthy
people
get
promoted
to leader?

is this
the
same
Government

you despise?

who?

not mine.

wrong

pwc

obsession? rant?

gva

and-destroy," in the fifth paragraph of page five.

Although I ultimately believe that Trainor's story is a credible one, there is one part of his shared experience in Vietnam that arouses some questions regarding the degree of credibility I can give this story. My question of Trainor's credibility comes from his story about how two marines found an entrance to a cave in the Hue-Danang-Chu-Lai area when Appy wrote:

A day or two later, two snuffies [marine infantrymen], out of sight of their maters and bored to death with senseless exercise, decided to entertain themselves with a Frisbee. They tossed it back and forth until it went over one kid's head and landed in a clump of bushes. When he went to retrieve it, lo and behold he spotted a hole. He enlarged it with his K-bar and sure enough it opened into a tunnel. It turned out to be one of the many entrances to a cave that was the Quang Da Special Zone headquarters for the Hue-Danang-Chu-Lai area. (Appy 6)

The possibility of two marines being bored and wanting to throw a Frisbee for entertainment is believable in and of itself. However, believing that the Marines found a cave entrance that later resulted in a large gain of intelligence information regarding covert agents from a poorly thrown Frisbee is hard for me to believe. But overall, and as I stated previously, I believe Trainor's story is credible, but one must decide for him or herself whether or not they wish to believe anything written in Trainor's story.

Part 2:

In the second part of the book Patriots, written by Christian Appy, one story was extremely disappointing for me to read. Malcolm Browne's story, "You could smell the burning flesh," was extremely difficult and disappointing to read, because Browne talks about a horrific event that he witnessed, and I became overwhelmed with feelings of grievance when Browne described the Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc burning himself in protest against the anti-Buddhist policies of the South Vietnam catholic president.

Later on in Browne's story I again found myself being highly disturbed, specifically when Browne describes one of the common tortures during the Vietnam War known as the "ding-a-ling" 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 electrodes to the genitals of prisoners and turned the crank, causing agonizing pain. (Appy 66)

The idea of someone hooking a person up to an electric generator by electrodes connected to their genitals is disturbing and appalling. I cannot imagine being either the interrogator or the person in question when this torture tactic is being used, and being utterly disturbed by the burning monk and the "ding-a-ling" torture method is why Browne's story was the most disappointing story for me to read.

Unlike Browne's story, however, I did find a story in the second part of this book that showed me some signs of hope in humanity or at a minimum some goodness in the people involved in the Vietnam War. Daniel Redmond's story, "The doctor who won the war in Indochina," is one story that gave me some good vibes, although limited. When Appy writes, "Occasionally he'd suggest we go up to a field hospital and visit the French survivors of Dien Bien Phu. He was genuinely concerned about these people," I find my first real feeling of anything or anyone being something or someone positive during a time of atrocities. (Appy 49) To me, knowing that during a time of war someone was genuinely concerned about anyone involved in conflict provides me with a sense of faith in humanity, because caring about the wellbeing of ones fellow man plays a paramount role in a society being good, hole-some, and peaceful.

Justyn, it became clear that you wanted to write a paper on your preconceptions & NOT on my questions & with historical facts & evidence presented in this class & the given materials (textbooks & DVDs) Part 2 was much better & on track. There were a number of grammar errors which hurt readability.