

History 195- Assignment #2

Kye Ruddell

Part One:

NICE
Info
(# qualifications)

Clark Dougan experienced a very personal turning point in his view of the war, and in doing so, symbolized the same change in mindset which much of the youth of America undoubtedly experienced as well. This makes his account an excellent example, in its commonality and very lack of originality. Dougan experienced the war much the way young people experienced it throughout the country. While he was aware of the war and the fact that people were going over to Vietnam, fighting and dying, he saw it through the eyes of a young man who felt that the war was removed from his reality. He saw it as names of the fallen and songs to sing when being silly with his classmates. After he went off to college, he didn't think much of it at all. This is the experience of thousands of young men who chose college over the military during the time of the draft.

The choices that Dougan and those in his high school were making about their future were based mainly on the expectations of others and the opportunities they felt were waiting (or not waiting) for them when they graduated. The lack of total understanding that Dougan had for the war in high school increased when he entered the isolation of college, and began his studies, which in no way mirrored that which he would be doing for his career.

When Dougan returned to his small home town on Memorial Day weekend of 1968, he experienced an event which was not only a turning point in how he viewed the war, but was also a major catalyst in the direction his life would turn forever. His turning point came at a time when the nation was going through its own shift in view regarding the war. This was highlighted by government indecision, public scrutiny, and multi-generational protests. Away from the segregation of college, the editorial in the newspaper which Dougan found was a shock to him. Learning that his school mate had been killed created a profound link between Dougan and the war, and allowed him to recall the seemingly innocuous conversation he'd had with this classmate before graduation as an interaction which played a large role in his shift toward a new understanding and feeling about the war. yes

This interaction he'd had a year or so before, as well as his newly learned knowledge of his classmate's fateful decision, created a decisive moment for Dougan which changed his view of the war from being a far-removed event to having a face and a place in his life. With this, he began to see the changes around him, as with the difference in the tone of the newspaper which ran the editorial, which he'd found to be historically supportive of the war. He stated that he began to see the change in the attitude of Middle America at this time, and whether this had already been happening unbeknownst to Dougan is unclear. What is clear is that this was the turning point which changed his opinion of the war, changed in part his view of the past, and irrevocably

changed the direction of his life, choosing to become a Vietnam War historical writer.

Part Two:

The choices Daniel Ellsberg made, and the reactions they elicited, were a catalyst for several endings related to the era surrounding and including the Vietnam War. These included having a part in the end of the American public's idealization of government officials, the end of journalistic subservience, and the end of the Nixon presidency.

While Ellsberg was assisting McNamara in his compilation of the Pentagon Papers, he found himself speaking with a man who was willing to face prison for his ideals- in this case, dodging the draft he opposed. This made Ellsberg re-evaluate his stance and ended his determination to focus on the personal ramifications of his choices. He learned of the high level cover-up of the murder of a Vietnamese allied agent by U.S. soldiers. This heralded the end of his belief in the sanctity of the government at all costs. It was then that he resolved to release the Pentagon Papers. *(insightful)*

Some endings are highlighted by the beginnings they elicit. The release of the Pentagon Papers marked the beginning of a new kind of journalism, which appeared for the first time to be questioning authority and finding integrity in standing up to government pressure. When they were faced with lawsuits to stop printing the Pentagon Papers, 17 different newspapers released excerpts without question, before the courts deemed them legally able to do so. *It makes me think about journalism today*

The Pentagon Papers themselves highlighted the insincerity, rigid thinking, and illegalities of former policy-makers regarding the Vietnam War. It showed the actions and decisions of a few as directly affecting the lives of many thousands of young men and their families. Because Ellsberg demonstrated a willingness to do whatever he found necessary to expose the government corruption concerning Vietnam, President Nixon grew more concerned with the possibility that Ellsberg would bring to light his plan to extend the war indefinitely. Nixon's response to the Ellsberg threat was not proportional to the actual threat. Utilizing "the Plumbers" to spy on Ellsberg and break into his psychiatrist's office led to a connection between Nixon and Watergate- the only concrete connection said to exist at that time. This overreaction by Nixon marked the end of his power in office, as well as the end of the American belief that honesty and integrity are inalienable facets of the presidency. *careful here. NA*

Overall, Ellsberg's actions marked an ending to the belief that there was anything just and pious about America's involvement in the war, as well as ending for many the idea that all war is the same, and that we Americans are always fighting for a moral and just cause in a moral and just manner. Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers also marked the end of the more docile, sidelined position the media took on events, bringing about the beginning of the new media which was unafraid of the ramifications of getting

to the real truth of a story.

- although today's media 

The release of the Pentagon Papers also ended the rose-tinted view many had of the government leaders which came before. While inconsistencies and untruths in the Johnson Administration already existed for many Americans, the information released in the Papers was also the end of their shining view of Kennedy's Camelot, and the beginning of a pervasive cynicism which exists as a given today with regard to our government officials. These are examples of the reason Daniel Ellsberg was a catalyst in the ending of the era marked by the Vietnam War.

Yes.

Yes
(& no, unfortunately)

(Can you believe Nixon's
opposition to the Pent Papers
was not to protect him
personally, (He was not included in the reports)
but to protect "THE Presidency"
& it's authority. Amazing unknown
fact of this
incident

Excellent paper ... best in class.
May I have your permission to
use as an example for future
students (anonymous)?
Moodle message
me