

# Chris hedges book war is a force that gives us meaning

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Question The number one thing that sticks out to me when reading Chris Hedges' book War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning his is comment in the introduction where he says, " I wrote this book not to dissuade us from war but to understand it" (17). Since he is someone who has seen war first hand and has seen what it has done to the soldiers, the innocent people living in the war zones, and even himself - someone who was merely reporting on the war - I cannot comprehend how he could support most wars. This is especially suspicious to me since Hedges blames the media for " mythologizing" wars while he continues to earn a living as part of the media (22).

In chapter one, Hedges discusses the first war in the Gulf in 1990. He talks about the ways the U. S. military lied, giving the example of the Saudi troops who surrendered and fled the Iraqis rather than fight. The U. S. military reported that those Saudis stayed and fought, which all the reporters who witnessed the battle knew to be a complete lie, and yet no one in the press called them out on the lie. (23) Hedges says this is part of the " potency of myth" and something that " allows us to make sense of mayhem and violent death" (23). But if it is a lie, do we really understand the true reasons for the battle dead? Isn't the true reason for war something far less noble, such our own country's interests in oil and money? I do not understand how Hedges cannot dissuade us from so many wars and so many dead for such selfish and immoral reasons. Does he think we simply cannot handle the fact our elected leaders would do such a thing, so we need to give it a noble reason? To me, that is still a war fought on a lie, and is therefore unjust.

One thing I think I can agree with him on comes in chapter two when he talks

about how illogical it is that wars are waged in a very black and white way, with one side being all good and one side being all bad. He tells the story of a Muslim man named Fejzic and his Serbian neighbors, the Soraks. (50-53) During the bitter and nasty Serbian war, Fejzic risked his life to share what little milk he had from one surviving cow with the Soraks, who had lost two sons in the war and were close to losing their infant daughter. While their nation was completely torn apart by vicious fighting between Muslims and Serbians, here were two families who had been neighbors for years, still looking after each other. While Muslims in battle had killed their two sons, the Soraks couldn't say that all Muslims were evil, because one Muslim - Mr. Fejzic - had helped save their baby's life. Hedges says this is proof that it is "impossible to condemn, legally or morally, an entire people" (53). I agree with him on this. Governments create the wars. Not the average people living under those governments. But again, I do not see how this fits into his belief that we should not as a people be dissuaded from war. He is again, contradicting himself.

#### Question #2

I think the two most important qualities of a good discussion forum post are honesty and respect.

People should say exactly what they believe and not what they think other people want to hear them say. If everyone just repeats what the loudest or most forceful person says, without giving it any thought of their own, then no one will learn anything. Class discussions will be one-sided and boring, and probably not very useful to anyone. We won't learn anything. And hopefully we will hear from everyone and not just the same few people over and over

again.

But in order for people to be comfortable speaking their minds, everyone needs to agree to respect everyone else and respect everyone's different opinions. Yes, a person has the right to disagree with what someone else is saying. I think that should be encouraged. However, no one has the right to call someone "stupid" or "dumb." People should argue about the facts and not about the personalities involved. Disagreements in class should be to help us all learn something new and see a different view point. They should not be petty or intentionally mean, and never should someone feel intimidated to speak his or her mind in class.