

The idea of war in media

Government, Military



I can understand why the media would work with the military and lie or oversensationalized the war. First, it is easier for them to do what the military tells them to do, rather than put up a fight and face what I can only guess is an unpleasant punishment – or at least a one-way ticket home. But the press also has hidden motives: war makes them money. When a war breaks out, like when the USA invaded Afghanistan right after 9/11, people were glued to their TVs. People were watching CNN and all the commercials for products that came on in between the latest war updates. Reporters come back from the war and write books – just like Chris Hedges did – that make them money. Why is the media not talking much right now about the war in Afghanistan or the war in Iraq? People grew tired of seeing it on their TVs. The wars have become like a TV show that has been on the air for too long and no one watches it anymore. So the media doesn't report on it much. Where I cannot really agree with Hedges is his belief that Americans see war as entertainment. I understand his point – especially when I look at how we reacted after 9/11 with American flags everywhere and yellow ribbons tied to everything, and the language we used to like “ War on Terror” or “ Never Forget.” Yes, we do glorify those we consider war heroes, or as Hedges says “ the enterprise of the state became imbued with a religious aura” (146). While reading this I thought of “ The Star-Spangled Banner” and how even our National Anthem is a song about the glory of battle. But I cannot believe that we do this for any sinister reasons, which is what I see Hedges hinting at. I think that in the case of 9/11, we were viciously attacked on a large scale, which leveled two landmark buildings in NYC, severely damaged the Pentagon, and caused a plane full of ordinary citizens – not soldiers – to rise

up against hijackers even though they knew they would die by doing it. These acts make it nearly impossible for us not to come together as a country and demand some sort of vengeance. We weren't looking to be "fashionable" or "entertained." We were all in shock that something so horrific happened in our own country. And I think that was the intent of the terrorists – to terrify us. Banding together as a nation, singing overly patriotic songs, and calling for vengeance is part of our human nature. I think Hedges acknowledges this, but I also think he somehow expects us to recognize it and not respond that way again. I don't think that is possible.

Additionally, I think Hedges doesn't use the best example at the end of chapter six to explain the irrationality and self-destruction experienced by the "losing" side at a war's end. He mentions the people in the suburbs of Sarajevo. As part of the peace agreement, this Bosnian Serb area was to be turned over to the Muslim-led government. People lit their own homes on fire in protest, to assure no Muslim would live there. (153) Hedges follows a man to a graveyard, where he is spending what little money he has left to dig up his dead son's body and take it with him, to be buried in an area that will not be Muslim. He does this because "They would dig up my son and take his bones and burn them" (154). I don't believe Hedges can say this man is an example of "the Serbs, like all who are defeated, were consuming themselves" (153). Isn't it possible this man was experiencing a level of grief at all he had lost that the thought of leaving behind his son's remains was simply too much for him to handle? At the end of the war, those who waged it – meaning the governments and the governmental leaders – don't suffer the way the civilians did. That is a distinction I think Hedges needs to make.