

Hedges, *The Last Act of the Human Comedy* (September 3, 2019)

"Justice cannot be fought for in the abstract. It must be grounded in a concrete confrontation with power—which is almost always embedded in white, male patriarchy—on behalf of the oppressed. This means sustained acts of defiance and civil disobedience that shut down city roads, airports and pipelines. Corporate capitalism and imperialism, which created the ecological debacle, will be destroyed or these forces will kill us in an unprecedented global genocide. . . . And yet, no more than 3% to 5% of the population need be engaged to challenge despotic power. This means, first, naming and accepting reality. It will not be easy. It means grieving for what is to come, for there is certain to be mass death. It means acting, even if defeat is certain, to thwart those who would extinguish us. Extinction Rebellion plans to occupy and shut down major city centers around the globe in October. This is a good place to start. By defying the forces of death, we affirm life."

Chris Hedges

Hedges has been one of my favorite columnists for years. Whether I agree with him on a particular issue or point or not. Always intelligent, always provocative. Always very clear-headed about where the power lies (pun intended), where the bodies are buried.

In the past couple of years (since the nutcase got into the White House?) his articles have seemed to me to be less readable, possibly more shrill, certainly more pessimistic. Which is to say, since he's never been what one might call an optimist (or given to the kind of "positive psychology" he flogs in the present piece), sometimes very dark. Maybe it's that the dark side is getting darker, or that there's more of it to look at. In any case, looking at it and urging us to look with him is what he's about: to look, see, think about and take action.

And of course he realizes, as most of us do, that taking action is precisely what's hardest: to change -- our habits, our routines, our lifestyles, our eating habits, our patterns of consumption, our attitudes, our beliefs, our retreat into business-as-usual passivity and consequent collusion with the fossil fuel matrix, our conviction that it's too late, that individuals can't make a difference, that what's needed can't happen in a single generation, that I'm already doing more than most people, that I gave at the office -- our failure to even look inside deeply enough to recognize our own personal excuses for not taking action.

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