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Book Review: To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion 1914-1918

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To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918. By Adam Hochschild. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011. 501pp. $12.63).

American journalist Adam Hochschild has created a work that is both striking in contextual intrigue and simple in structure. *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion 1914-1918* is an ambitious and fascinating interpretation of World War I, which predominately focuses on Britain's position and meager individualistic ideals of this time. Depending greatly on primary documents such as diaries and letters, Hochschild argues the position of those few British individuals who were *anti*-war, while also focusing on the over-abundance of nationalistic principles of this historic conflict. Although he does not distinguish a strong thesis, Hochschild subtly argues that the war created a divide amongst the British people, between those who supported the war and those who were opposed, and in doing so, tore apart loyalties and families of the time. By telling their stories, he not only creates an enjoyable and intelligible piece of nonfiction history, but also calls attention to the inefficiently studied moral dilemmas of activism in 1914. Published in 2011, this contentious text has received more than three nominations for honorary book awards, was on *The New York Times* Best Seller list, and won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Non Fiction in 2012.

This text is chronologically structured into seven parts. Part one begins in June 1897 with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and leads up to the summer of 1914, all the while focusing on individuals later involved in the First World War. Parts two through seven recount the events of World War I and feature the interlacing of individual wartime morals. From beginning to end, this work holds an intense emotional appeal; section seven ends with a particularly dramatic and memorable chapter titled "An Imaginary Cemetery." This segment highlights the lives of the

aforementioned individuals who took part in the conflict prior to the war's end. It is filled with emotional choices made by these characters, poignant reconciliations between family members, love-filled marriages, and torturously sad goodbyes; all of which ultimately makes readers question: was this war worth it?

Although his work is divided into seven parts, the content of the text is effectively split in two. First, Hochschild capitalizes on individuals who did not believe that the war was "right." He tells their stories in biographical form, exploring the importance of interrelationships during the war. He writes that "this book is the story of some of these war resisters and of the example they set, if not for their own time, then perhaps for the future. I wish theirs was a victorious story, but it is not" (p. xvii). Stories of these war-resisters include accounts of individuals such as Charlotte Despard, the strong and independent novelist, feminist, and anti-war crusader whose brother was enthusiastic for war, while she was not. Others include political activists Emmeline, Sylvia and Cristabel Pankhurst and the activist and aspiring actress Cecile Duval. By focusing on these individuals, Hochschild successfully supports his main ideas and thesis by citing the actions of these resisters as integral parts of the war.

The second part of this text focuses on the events of, and patriotic individuals within, World War I. Hochschild states, "in greater part, this is a book about those who actually fought in the war of 1914-1918 for whom the magnetic attraction of combat, or at least the belief that it was patriotic and necessary, proved so much stronger than human revulsion at mass death..." (p. xvii). Some of the British individuals who were attracted to war were army leader John French, senior army officer Douglas Haig, and statesman Alfred Milner. In describing the content of his work in this way, Hochschild provides a direct contrast of interests and ideas. Perhaps the most predominant being the prospect of loyalty, for, as he says "what should any human be most loyal to? Country? Military duty? Or the idea of international brotherhood?.. And what happens to loyalty within a family?" (p. xviii). Such questions force readers to consider these positions, brilliantly challenging one to make one's own decision on this topic.

These clever tactics leave readers with the feeling of loss *and* hope, just as these historical figures may have felt in real life. In order to make this happen, Hochschild uses primary sources such as personal journals, diaries, and letters from the front-runners of his text. The content of these sources contains insight to this time in history that directly contributes to the book. They hold the personal stories of these individuals, which show one's standpoint and opinion of the war. These sources not only create a historically accurate text, but also add an element of emotional appeal to Hochschild's work. He also uses secondary sources from the British National Archives, as well as other historiographic works pertaining to the First World War. The abundance of sources, both secondary and primary, adds creditability and strength to his scholarship. Historiographically, this is a revisionist history of World War I, which can contribute to the existing scholarship on the event by proposing a reinterpretation of the war from the British and anti-war activist perspective.

It is rare to come across a work that successfully combines historically accurate information with emotionally intense truths. *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion 1914-1918*, certainly accomplishes this goal. This text is an excellent form of popular cultural history for readers who are looking for an exciting outlook on the war; it is engaging, emotionally appealing, and an incredibly written representation of the gruesomeness of World War I. It can be read as a novel, with in-depth biographical accounts and dramatic events, but also contains accurate facts about the history of the First World War. This work gives an insight to World War I that is unique in content and has the ability to emotionally touch its audience. While this text does have some deficiencies, such as readers possibly needing background knowledge of World War I to fully grasp the work's theme and not containing a solid thesis, one cannot take away from the impressiveness of the scholarship. Due to the fact that Hochschild is primarily a journalist, this text contains factual information that is portrayed in a creative and highly enjoyable piece of work. If this text is being judged solely on Hochschild's purpose for the book, which was to create a powerful piece on the resisters of

World War I while showing the contrasting ideals within this time, then it can be concluded that he certainly succeeded.

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