

Reader Response #1  
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In the book Indian Killer Chuck Shultz represents a driving force adding to the conflict between races and cultures. In the story, he's a needed cog in the machine of fiction. His role is to keep the conflict moving while also illuminating how easily ignorance can be manipulated. His motives are simple greed. The reader never learns if he does indeed believe in the hatred that he spouts, all we learn is that he knows what's good for his ratings. In terms of the story, I would have to say that his role is a necessary evil. However, in the real world I would not be a proponent of his.

Dissent is an important factor in adding to the evolution of societies. History proves that we have taken our biggest leaps forward when individuals like Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. stepped forward. However, while these two individuals are widely praised today, both had their beliefs admonished by many while they were alive, and both were assassinated because their views broke against the currents of segregation that marked their times; elimination of a messenger is an indicator of the power of the message. Individually, and as a whole, we tend to accept the negative in life as a natural part of it, and something that is meant to be endured. A positive view will affect change, but change creates havoc in the lives of some, who lash out against the symbol of that change. This type of dissidence is not the same as what marks Mr. Shultz's actions. His words and actions are not formed by a love of humanity, or by a strong will to better the world of today and infect our children with love and hope. His words are simple ignorance and denial.

Religions are formed for two main reasons: to make life more meaningful for people in general, and to give our lives more meaning in particular. It aids us in our times of need and gives us assurance that no matter what happens, we are loved by something greater, and will always be looked after. Yet religion has been manipulated by figures throughout time as a way to

control some and destroy others. It is because of this history of violence that has been waged that so many people have begun to turn away from religion. People have become bitter and estranged, and are missing out on all of the hope, and sense of support that they are supposed to be gaining. I have heard some who say they hate God because someone toting a cross around abused them as a child. In the same manor, Mr. Shultz is utilizing the airwaves and current shocking situation to manipulate his listeners for his own good. The result is not a stronger community, but one that is battling with itself. There is no support of one another because it has been replaced with fear of everyone different. Where there is fear there is destruction.

The people who are most susceptible to Mr. Shultz's rants (like those who run to religious fanatics) are those who have become disillusioned with life. These people are looking for answers without ever asking the right questions. They want reasons for why life has been so cruel to them, and are willing to blame any or everyone in order to make it easier on themselves. These are the people who do not rationalize what they are doing, but simply act on what feels right. One person like this will start an argument, two will look for fights, and when there are enough, war erupts.