

MISE(RY)-EN-SCENE: REMARKS ON THE NOTRE DAME TEN
FORTY YEARS LATER

Nescire autem quid antequam natus sis acciderit id est semper esse puerum

"Not to know what happened before you were born -- is to be a child forever," wrote Cicero, just before the beginning of the Christian era.

We'll be talking tonight about things that happened before many of you were born, and our purpose is that you not be a child all your life, in spite of quite strong forces in our society that encourage just that.

We'll be talking about some people I was privileged to know when they were practically children -- on this day, forty years ago, when they decided not to be -- and suffered for it.

And we'll be talking about institutions -- government, corporate, academic, and ecclesiastical -- that caused great suffering by committing crimes and by being actively and passively complicit with them.

The Notre Dame Ten and many others called our attention to those crimes. And they continue to do so.

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In order to understand the story we have to go back to the generation after the Second World War, roughly from 1945 through 1969. The United States was the only undamaged major country to emerge from that war. Russia had won the war against Germany but had been devastated in the process. The US had devastated Japan from the air, not just with atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the US had acquired what was left of the empire of our putative ally, Britain, notably in the Middle East. In the year after the end of the war, half of what the world produced was produced by the United States.

What American planners (Republican and Democrat) were thinking was set out clearly in 1948 in a secret State Department policy planning document [PPS 23 2/48]:

"We have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population.... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity.... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction.... We should cease to talk about vague and... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better."

Noam Chomsky comments, "recall that this is a Top Secret document. The idealistic slogans are, of course, to be constantly trumpeted by scholarship, the schools, the media, and the rest of the ideological system in order to pacify the domestic population." And the most idealistic slogan -- and the biggest lie -- was that the US had to oppose the dire threat of communism, emanating from the Soviet Union.

The USSR up to its collapse twenty years ago never controlled an economy even half the size of that of the US. In the years after World War II, when the US insisted that it had to defend Europe against Soviet attack -- that's what the NATO armies were supposed to be for -- the mechanized divisions in the Russian army were horse drawn. But dominant social groups in the US wanted to control the world economy that had fallen into their laps, and the Cold War was born.

The Cold War was in fact functional for both the US and the USSR because it gave them an excuse to control restless clients. When the US wanted to overthrow a recalcitrant government in Latin America, we said we were "stopping communism." When the USSR invaded Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968, it was to stop the reestablishment of capitalism. But we can see now from the distance of another generation, that the dominant partner in this malign conjunction was always the United States.

"In 1955 the Communist threat was defined, very perceptively, in an extensive study of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the National Planning Association, *The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy*, a study that involved a representative segment of the tiny élite that largely determines foreign policy, whoever is technically in office. The primary threat of Communism is the economic transformation of the Communist powers 'in ways which reduce their willingness and ability to complement the industrial economies of the West'.

Communism, in short, reduces the 'willingness and ability' of underdeveloped countries to function in the world capitalist economy."

That was the danger in South Vietnam, when President Kennedy decided to invade it in 1962. The people of South Vietnam (where most of the war was fought) didn't have the good grace to accept the government that the US government had picked out for them (as Latin American countries were taught to do). They had the temerity to resist, and the Kennedy administration decided to make an example of them. The rest of the world -- particularly Asia -- was to be shown that no small country was allowed to develop its economy and society in ways that did not co-ordinate with the American control of the world economy. We killed four million people to demonstrate the Mafia principle that no one was allowed to run independent operations in territory that we controlled.

It was in fact hard to see the real situation through the mass of propaganda that the American government and media put forth throughout the 1960s, but the critical spirit grew throughout that decade. (That's why the Sixties have to be condemned by all sides today -- see for example Barack Obama's book.) By 1969, when the Notre Dame Ten bravely and non-violently took on the criminal complicity of the University of Notre

Dame with that war, about 70% of the public had come to regard the war as "fundamentally wrong and immoral," not "a mistake." But Notre Dame and its president chose to support the killing.

In the years after the Ten's demonstration, the US withdrew its troops from SE Asia, but it didn't lose the war. The American military had so destroyed and poisoned the land and the people that the independent development that the US had meant to forestall was indeed impossible. The US did not achieve its maximum war aims, but Vietnam and all SE Asia was forced into a subservient role in a world economy dominated by the US.

There were three things that brought the war to an end: [1] the bravery and sacrifice of the Vietnamese people's resistance to the invader;

[2] the mutiny of the American conscript army in Vietnam, which led to the withdrawal of American troops and the hasty end of the draft; and [3] the opposition of the American people, like the Notre Dame 10.

"The protest movement began largely on campus, in very scattered ways. Each effort seemed completely alone, and almost hopeless, in the face of enormous antagonism [such as that shown by the ND administration]. But students persevered, and small efforts inspired others, and finally grew to a major mass movement ... largely as a result of the impact of student protest on general consciousness. And that mass opposition compelled the business community and then the government to stop the escalation of the war."
[Noam Chomsky]

And it is by the way a myth that the draft was the principal reason for the protests. The draft was always class-based -- it caught people from the 80% of the population who were poor and working class. The 20% of the population who went to college could always manage to escape it. The student leaders of protests were not in much danger of being drafted. That's not why they protested.

Again, in the next decade, the wide-spread protests against the Reagan administration's murderous wars in Latin America -- protests that were perhaps even more broadly based than those of the 1960s -- grew up without any threat of a draft. And that itself was a result of the '60's protest. When the Reagan administration came into office in 1981, they modeled themselves on the Kennedy administration, twenty years earlier, in many ways. One was that they wanted to put US troops into Latin America, as Kennedy had put troops into SE Asia.

But the Republicans in the 1980s found that they could not invade other countries as easily as the Democrats of the 1960s. The Reagan foreign policy was driven underground, as in the vicious war against Nicaragua, directly as a result of the protests of the 1960s.

But America is in fact a more civilized place than it was forty years ago. In the Middle East today the carpet bombing and chemical warfare that were the way the Vietnam war was waged are impossible.

When the first Bush administration was able to arrange a foreign war in 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union -- and the resulting absence of the fake excuse for American wars since WWII: "stopping communism" -President Bush Sr. exclaimed that the real advantage of killing people in the Persian Gulf was that it showed "The Vietnam Syndrome is dead!"

By "Vietnam Syndrome" he meant the revulsion in the US populace against wars like Vietnam. US planners had to overcome at least that revulsion if the ongoing foreign policy of the American elite was to continue to be enforced by war, regardless of the reluctance of the American people.

And at the center of that foreign policy was the insistence of the American government that it control Mideast energy resources. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was actually to be called "Operation Iraqi Liberation" until it was noticed that the acronym revealed too much...

What the Pentagon calls the "Long War" (in the Middle East) did not begin with 9/11. It stretches back deep into the twentieth century. During World War II the US State Department described the Mideast as the "most strategically important area of the world," and the area's vast energy resources – oil and natural gas – as "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history." In the years since then, oil companies and their associates have reaped colossal profits; but, even more importantly to the US, control over two-thirds of the world's estimated hydrocarbon reserves provides what every administration since WWII has seen as "critical leverage" over European and Asian rivals, what the State Department called "veto power" over them.

The US does not need Mideast oil for domestic consumption, and we in fact import very little oil from the Middle East. But we insist on controlling the region from Palestine to Pakistan, from the Caspian Sea to the Horn of Africa -and will kill a lot of people to insure it, with Israel as our "local cop on the beat," as the Nixon administration put it.

And it should by now be clear that – whether we call them al-Qaeda, Taliban, insurgents, terrorists, or militants – the people whom we're trying to kill in the Middle East are those who want us out of their countries and off of their resources. In order to convince Americans to kill and die and suffer in this cause, the US government in successive administrations has repeatedly lied about the situation, the biggest lie being the current one, that the US is fighting a "war on terror," as they expand the war to Pakistan, which they see as the center of opposition to US control of the region.

The policy faces opposition from two groups: the American people, who are reluctant to go to war; and the people of the region, who are reluctant to be colonized. In a

devastating guerrilla raid in that war, a resistance group killed thousands of Americans in the home country on 11 September 2001.

Al-Qaeda said that they did it because of (a) the murderous sanctions on Iraq, (b) the oppression of the Palestinians, and (c) the American military presence in the Muslim holy places.

Although elected as a peace candidate, President Obama has chosen to continue the Long War more brutally and extensively than did the Bush administration. Chris Floyd comments accurately, "...to see the expansion of the AFPAK War finally, formally promulgated, and to realize what this really means, not in terms of the ludicrous political theater of Washington and the media, not in the war-game fantasies of think-tankers and armchair warriors, but in the actual costs -- the death and suffering of thousands of innocent people, the ruinous chaos and the violent hatred engendered, the massive financial corruption and gargantuan debt added to our already corrupt and bankrupt system, the further coarsening and brutalization and militarization of our society, and again, because it bears repeating, the physical and emotional destruction of countless human beings whose only crime was to be born in a region targeted by the Great Gamesters of the world, the warlords in turbans and those in Brooks Brothers suits, the gangsters in the alleys and in the corridors of power -- this is a bitter and sickening thing."

* * *

I'll conclude with an observation from a book I'd read just months before the Notre Dame Ten took their action. My ghostly father, the late Dominican theologian Herbert McCabe of Oxford, had written, "...the relevance of Christianity to human behaviour is primarily a matter of politics, it is concerned first of all with the [forms] of communication, the structures of relationship in which [people] live."

Carl Estabrook, Ph.D

It is good to be back on campus for this event. My involvement in the Dow-CIA protest is a lesson in how ordinary students can take an action that moves them from bystander status to taking a more active role in moral and ethical issues of the day. I was an ordinary student – not one of the leaders or organizers of the protest. I was pre-med and actually on my way that morning to the library to study for an organic chemistry test that evening. Organic chemistry was a weed-out course and I needed to do well – so some anxiety about it since I was not a naturally gifted chemistry student.

But I had been keeping in touch with the events leading up the protest – may have even attended a planning session prior to it. I was troubled by the war and the stark contrasts between my Catholic upbringing and the words of the gospel and what was going on in Vietnam. I was becoming increasingly aware of how Notre Dame was connected to those issues institutionally, for better or worse. And I was personally at a point where I was ready to move beyond being on the sidelines of the antiwar movement.

But when I decided to take some time from studying and go by the administrative building I wasn't thinking of blocking doorways. And while I grew convinced that it was a defensible action given the enormous symbolic meaning of the presence of Dow and CIA under the statue of Mary, I of course had no idea of how things would unfold following the invocation of the 15 minute rule and the weeks of events that followed – culminating in our appeals trial. And while this event was personally difficult to bring back to my parents – my father was an ND grad and had served in the Navy in WWII – my mother was a South Bend native – this event was also an incredible part of my education at ND. I met wonderful faculty like Charlie McCarthy and Carl Estabrook, and worked with a great group of students like Mark Mahoney. I am sure that students here feel as though some of the work outside the classroom that they have done in the community or internationally to work for peace or alleviate poverty and suffering has the same meaning for them.

But if there is a lesson in my example, it is that there are many ways to respond to violence and injustice. You don't have to always be the leader or the person on the front pages. You can take small steps that can make a big difference.

I never went on to be a physician – rather, when I returned to ND after my suspension I switched to psychology – then went to graduate school and am now a professor of Human Development at Cornell – where I direct the Family Life Development Center - that does work to address issues of violence in families – such as child abuse and neglect and partner violence – as well as promote development among at-risk youth.

This is how my own life course and professional life connects to issues of violence in our society. Although still concerned with issues of war and peace on a larger national and international arena, I did not become a prominent antiwar activist after I graduated. Again –

there are many ways to integrate our values and commitment to nonviolence in our personal and professional lives – mine happens to be around research and teaching aimed at preventing violence to children and adolescents.

It is with that concern in mind that I approach the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with dismay. I worry about the generation of children growing up in those environments – for the many innocent children have been lost – and for those who have survived — what it means for their development when they have been exposed to so much loss and violence. In the name of a war of terror, we have terrorized millions of children. In our name, our country has destroyed whole communities like Fallujah and left behind environments that are toxic to children living there – both physically as with the poison left behind with spent munitions, and socially, as family networks necessary for healthy child development have been ripped apart and all too often the learning that occurs are lessons of violence and hatred. Of all the rights and freedoms that I believe should rightfully be bestowed on children – such as the right to life, freedom from exploitation and abuse, and so forth, one core fundamental value should be the right not to hate.

To illustrate let me read the beginning of an article published in the Guardian in 2007:

The car stopped at the makeshift checkpoint that cut across the muddy backstreet in western Baghdad. A sentry appeared. "Are you Sunni or Shia?" he barked, waving his Kalashnikov at the driver. "Are you with Zarqawi or the Mahdi army?"

"The Mahdi army," the driver said. "Wrong answer," shouted the sentry, almost gleefully. "Get him!"

The high metal gate of a nearby house was flung open and four gun-toting males rushed out. They dragged the driver from his vehicle and held a knife to his neck. Quickly and efficiently, the blade was run from ear to ear. "Now you're dead," said a triumphant voice, and their captive crumpled to the ground.

Then a moment of stillness before the sound of a woman's voice. "Come inside boys! Your dinner is ready!" The gunmen groaned; the hapless driver picked himself up and trundled his yellow plastic car into the front yard; the toy guns and knives were tossed by the back door. Their murderous game of make-believe would have to resume in the morning.

Abdul-Muhammad and his five younger brothers, aged between six and 12, should have been at school. But their mother, Sayeeda, like thousands of parents in Iraq's perilous capital city, now keeps her boys at home. Three weeks ago, armed men had intercepted their teacher's car at the school gates, then hauled him out and slit his throat. Just like in their game.

"That day they came home and they were changed because of the things they'd seen," said Sayeeda as she ladled rice into the boys' bowls. "The youngest two have been wetting their beds and having nightmares, while Abdul-Muhammad has started bullying and ordering everyone to play his fighting games. I know things are not normal with them. My fear is one day they will get hold of real guns. But in these times, where is the help?"

The boys live with their widowed mother and uncle in a modest family house in al-Amil, a once peaceful, religiously mixed suburb in western Baghdad that is yielding to the gunmen, street by street. Similar tales of growing up in the war zone are heard across the country.

Parents, teachers and doctors contacted by the Guardian over the past three months cite a litany of distress signals sent out by young people in their care - from nightmares and bedwetting to withdrawal, muteness, panic attacks and violence towards other children, sometimes even to their own parents.

Amid the statistical haze that enshrouds civilian casualties, no one is sure how many children have been killed or maimed in Iraq. But psychologists and aid organisations warn that while the physical scars of the conflict are all too visible - in hospitals and mortuaries and on television screens - the mental and emotional turmoil experienced by Iraq's young is going largely unmonitored and untreated.

(The Guardian, Tuesday, February 6, 2007)

I fear for these children. But I am also afraid that the situation for civilians in Afghanistan and now Pakistan is getting worse as we move to a more remote-controlled air war using drones. In a 2009 article in the New England Journal of Medicine researchers from Kings College London presented data from an analysis of the impact of different weapon types on civilian deaths across over 14,000 events and over 60,000 civilian deaths. When looking at deaths per incident related to weapons like guns, roadside bombs, guided missiles, and so forth, the average number of civilians killed was 4 – itself a cause for alarm given the propaganda we are fed about the accuracy of our military weapons – either they are not so smart after all or they are being used indiscriminately in direct violation of just war principles. But when you look at the data from airstrikes, the average no. of civilians killed was 17, similar to the no. killed by suicide bombers on foot – which was 16. So our high tech approach to war – with drones being directed by operators at computer consoles in Arizona and Virginia – is no more protective of civilians than the indiscriminate terrorists we are trying to stop. The women and children can't tell the difference.

The iconic picture from 1972 of the 9 year old “girl in the photo”, Kim Phuc, horribly burned by napalm, helped galvanize a nation against a war that so readily killed and maimed children. For that girl, however, she survived. She not only survived, but she is now married, has two children and runs a foundation devoted to addressing the problems of children and war. In psychological parlance we might call her resilient. She describes her Christian faith as one factor that helped her overcome this terrible childhood and the years of medical procedures that followed. But it was also an extended network of family and friends, and a loving husband. Children can recover from the horrors of war, but it is not automatic nor easy. We have a duty to the children Iraq and Afghanistan – to paraphrase Colin Powell – if we break them we must now fix them.

Unfortunately our country, in order to protect its right to go to war and not be held accountable to the community of nations - lags behind in its commitment to children and to preventing civilian deaths in armed conflicts. In 2 days, Nov. 20 – we will mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Currently 193 countries have ratified the Convention – only 2 states have not – Somalia because it lacks a recognized government and the U.S.

Likewise, by the end of 2004, 104 countries had signed the Protocol on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons – that bans use of weapons such as napalm and white phosphorus on civilian populations or military targets close to civilian populations. The U.S. is not a party to the protocol and of course used white phosphorus in Iraq as we have seen. So there will continue to be children growing up now in Iraq and Afghanistan who will have to endure the experiences of Kim Phuc in a previous generation.

So 40 years later at Notre Dame and elsewhere – I ask what has changed? I am encouraged by some developments in recent years, such as the establishment of the Kroc Institute or the hiring of faculty who teach about nonviolence or peaceful resolution to conflict. But I also see a vigorous ROTC program on campus and other signs that ties to the military –industrial complex are alive and well. So this is a continuing conversation – and one I hope we can engage in tonight and into the future.

John Eckenrode, Ph.D. '72
November 18, 2009
University of Notre Dame

On the 40th Anniversary of the “Dow-CIA Demonstration” and the “Notre Dame Ten” November 19, 2009.

Mark J. Mahoney¹

I never got my ID card back. The last I saw of it was when the Dean of Students, Fr. Jim Riehle, asked me for it on November 18, 1969, directly under the Golden Dome where the university’s Placement Office was located. I remember thinking, when I saw him in his cameo



appearance in the film “Rudy,” “he looks just the same as when he took my ID card!” [Odd twist of fate: my nephew is married to Rudy’s niece!] However when I look at my dining hall card from that time I know how much different I look now, after the passage of 40 years. To a student today I am sure that it seems like an eternity until they reach my age. It is not. It is like yesterday. *Tempus fugit*. The lesson: don’t wait. Life is not a dress rehearsal. Do not postpone for too long the habit of acting on your dreams or of taking a stand for what you value and what you believe.

A word about what actually happened on November 18, 1969. While this was very much about what Dow Chemical and the CIA were doing in the world, it was as much about how Notre Dame was responding to the moral crisis presented

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by enabling them to recruit ND students. We were not, like students elsewhere, seeking expulsion of recruiters. Arranging recruiting interviews off-campus would only reduce the symbolic effect, but not the reality. We were seeking a process to enable students to make an informed choice – an open forum where recruiters could be questioned. This was about a Catholic university covering up, and refusing to even acknowledge that there was a moral crisis presented by unqualifiedly encouraging students to consider employment that involved finding better ways to burn the skin off of human beings, or to destabilize and overthrow democracies using murder and the threat of murder. This was Notre Dame, not Columbia, and that is why we were there.

I had not blocked any doorways. I was innocent of what I was accused of, and not the only one. So why did we all appeal together, all for one, up or down? We were there at the demonstration because the Administration was wrong. I stuck with the group because they were right. I could not walk away. I intuitively knew that sending a message by punishing us students was far more important to the Administration than getting it right about how Notre Dame ought to respond to the moral crisis that confronted the country, the university and anguished its students.

The incident is trivialized in the administration's version of the events, and the chapter dedicated to it in Ted Hesburgh's memoir, as being harmless to the 10 students. In reality, tragically, two students never came back and a third came back but never graduated. Of those who graduated, not all were able to graduate on time. And at that time, having been suspended for political reasons impacted on our options upon graduation.

I have been asked whether the event changed my life, as if the events like this shape who we are. I rather think that it is one's life, and values and beliefs, that shape the event. You are there because you care, and you cannot act honestly

except out of your own values and beliefs, and so the event reflects, rather than determines, who you are. You may say, “I hope I get a chance to take a stand like that,” or you may say, “I hope *I don't* get a chance to take a stand like that.” But the fact is, the chances will always be there, all around you. Life is full of opportunities to affirm what you believe in, to act when you have the ability to respond to human suffering, to oppose evil and violence. But you have to be able to perceive the opportunities, and have the courage of remembering what you truly believe in, when the opportunities arises.

So it begins with what you believe in. For us it was in the Gospel, and the teachings of the Catholic Church, and our belief in Notre Dame as a Catholic university. We looked with utter horror at the war in Viet Nam, and some of the overt and covert activities of the United States abroad, and these could not be squared with Christian teachings. True, as my father later would point out in a letter to Fr. Hesburgh, these were not the Catholic teachings I had gotten at home. Somehow at home, our Catholic schools and parish managed to avoid discussion of any connection whatsoever between Catholic teachings and military or covert homicidal activity.

But here at Notre Dame we were discovering in basic theological texts, like Fr. John L. McKenzie’s “The Power and the Wisdom,” that the Church, and the Gospels, were talking to these issues, and that it was very clear what the Gospels were saying. And the war we were conducting, the things the U.S. were doing around the world, things that were mostly covert then, but were well known, were flatly inconsistent with these teachings.

Of course a lot of what we were about was simply opposing the U.S. government. But what the Dow-CIA demonstration really was about was Notre Dame, and its role as the leading Catholic university. In its relationship to the military, the war, the covert U.S. actions in Latin America and Southeast Asia,

Notre Dame was no different than any secular school. But it should have been, and we were unwilling to accept that, or the hypocrisy demonstrated by this fact.

The role of the Program for the Study of Nonviolence, and Fr. McCarthy, and Jim Douglass in all this cannot be understated. It was here mainly that students directly encountered Gospel Nonviolence. The power of this program was not in some theological stylings, or special personality of the teachers, but in the ineluctable clarity of the fact that the Gospel message rejects violence. The use of napalm as a weapon at all, but especially as weapon often directed to innocent civilians, could simply not be squared with Christian teachings. So it is today, where the slaughter of innocent children and civilians is simply accepted as part of the cost of the business of making the United States feel safe in the.

At the end of it all, although we lost, and some lost much more than others, one can say categorically that we had greater impact on the university by our opposition, and being unfairly sanctioned for violation of the rule, than any impact the rule itself had.

But we continue on with our lives and these values and beliefs and continue to challenge violence in the world around us, in different ways.

When I first got involved in defending Death Penalty cases I was struggling with trying to understand why so many Americans had a stake in using death as a punishment for crime. I called up Fr. McCarthy for guidance and we talked, and he pointed me in a direction that added a new dimension to my understanding of the violence we are concerned about, and more. In the Non-Violence Program we learned the importance of defining “violence,” and we learned to identify instances of violence. But what I never understood is why so many people depend on violence.

Rene Girard, in his book “The Scapegoat,” demonstrates that the process of

collective selection of a person or persons to be sacrificed for the larger good is a generative organizing principle in human culture, religion and institutions. Girard explains we are in constant fear violence and threats to what we have or desire, and resolve these fears in actions of collective violence against directed a single victim or group of victims, “scapegoats,” which causes our fears to subside, even though the danger and risk still remain. These sacrificial processes are ritualized, and lie at the root of early religions and culture, and other processes of collective punishment and homicide.

I wish I had read this book in college, for two reasons. First, it was not published in English until 1986, and therefore I would have been quite a bit younger if I had read it in college. Second it has substantially enhanced my understanding of the problem of violence, and the problem of ending violence, and even my understanding of these events 40 years ago.

At the risk of over simplification, I will repeat how the South African theologian Robert Hamerton-Kelly describes this principle of generative anthropology in this narrative form:

Once upon a time there was a group of hominids that found itself unable to do anything in concert because of rivalry among them. Each one [was] inwardly compelled to imitate some other. As the imitation became more successful he found himself arrival of his model, and the more like the model he became the more violent became the rivalry. Cooperation was impossible until one day, [the momentous day human culture began, two] of them discovered that it was possible to agree on one thing, to agree to kill someone else. This was such a compelling possibility that the whole group imitated them, and so the first moment of human society happened as the fellowship of the lynch mob.¹

In every culture, and in every generation of humanity we have seen the scapegoat mechanism at work. Ritual human sacrifices of primitive societies, the killing of the *pharmakos* in Ancient Greece, the killing of Jews by Christians in

the Middle ages who accused the Jews of poisoning the wells (causing deaths that were really caused by the plague), the burning and hanging and torturing of witches and heretics, lynchings in the United States in the past two centuries, and the execution of arbitrarily or discriminatorily selected murderers: all these examples of collective violence serve the same underlying function of attempting to unify the community against an individual (or group), real or conjured up, which has been made the object of the community's fear of crisis and violence from within or without. The myth is that this human sacrifice will cure the crisis, stop the violence we fear so much.

These acts of collective violence are ritualized and justified in myth, culture and law to reinforce their legitimacy and the belief in their power to alleviate fear in the community. The belief in witches was fervent, and the persecution of witches was approved by sober community leaders. We find it hard today to take their beliefs seriously, but fail to critically examine the lore and myths that we use to justify equivalent practices in our own time.

Defining violence is critical, and having the faith to believe that violence is contrary to Christian teaching is also critical, and that is what we were about. But equally important is to understand why so many have a stake in the objectification and even annihilation of other human beings in violent ways. In understanding the scapegoating mechanism at work in every level of culture and human interaction, we understand that this is hard-wired into the human brain. We need our victims. This was the point of the famous Shirley Jackson short story, "The Lottery," that many have been assigned to read in high school.

The challenge to human society is to lose its dependence on scapegoating, on the "fellowship of the lynch mob." The message of the later Hebrew prophets, and Jesus Himself, was that retribution, blood for blood, was to be replaced by a new order, in which we love our enemies, and where how we treat the "least ones"

in our community is the true measure of our humanity. The revelation contained in the crucifixion of the most perfectly innocent of victim was the revelation that our justifications for violence are just mythical camouflage for collective violence, and the victim is only a scapegoat. Even for the correctly convicted killer, his or her execution—out of all potential lynchees— is wholly symbolic, as all ritual sacrifice is. Our redemption, indeed our survival, as a species is dependent upon discovering a new principle to replace collective violence as the unifying mechanism in society.

For us Christians the answer is clear and obvious. But why do so many of those who profess to be civilized, and even those who profess follow the teachings of Christ, feel they have such a stake in violence toward others, mostly in rituals of sacrifice?

In her poem entitled “The *Chicago Defender* sends a man to Little Rock,”² Gwendolyn Brooks recounts her thoughts as a reporter for the famous African-American newspaper on being sent there to expose the presumed ugliness of the White community which violently resisted the desegregation of the schools in 1957. The “mob” behind the violence, however, was made up of normal and good people, probably no better or more foolish than those in generations past who have been active or complicit in sacrifices, burnings, lynchings of our fellow human beings.

Gwendolyn Brooks

The *Chicago Defender* Sends a Man to Little Rock

Fall, 1957

In Little Rock the people bear
Babes, and comb and part their hair
And watch the want ads, put repair
To roof and latch. While wheat toast burns
A woman waters multiferns.

Time upholds or overturns
The many, tight, and small concerns.

In Little Rock the people sing
Sunday hymns like anything,
Through Sunday pomp and polishing.

And after testament and tunes,
Some soften Sunday afternoons
With lemon tea and Lorna Doones.

I forecast
And I believe
Come Christmas Little Rock will cleave
To Christmas tree and trifle, weave,
From laugh and tinsel, texture fast.

In Little Rock is baseball; Barcarolle.
That hotness in July . . . the uniformed figures raw
and implacable
And not intellectual,
Batting the hotness or clawing the suffering dust.
The Open Air Concert, on the special twilight green . . .
When Beethoven is brutal or whispers to lady-like air.
Blanket-sitters are solemn, as Johann troubles to lean
To tell them what to mean . . .

There is love, too, in Little Rock. Soft women softly
Opening themselves in kindness,
Or, pitying one's blindness,
Awaiting one's pleasure
In azure
Glory with anguished rose at the root . . .
To wash away old semi-discomfitures.
They re-teach purple and unsullen blue.
The wispy soils go. And uncertain
Half-havings have they clarified to sures.

In Little Rock they know
Not answering the telephone is a way of rejecting life,
That it is our business to be bothered, is our business

To cherish bores or boredom, be polite
To lies and love and many-faceted fuzziness.

I scratch my head, massage the hate-I-had.
I blink across my prim and pencilled pad.
The saga I was sent for is not down.
Because there is a puzzle in this town.
The biggest News I do not dare
Telegraph to the Editor's chair:
"They are like people everywhere."

The angry Editor would reply
In hundred harrings of Why.

And true, they are hurling spittle, rock,
Garbage and fruit in Little Rock.
And I saw coiling storm a-writhe
On bright madonnas. And a scythe
Of men harassing brownish girls.
(The bows and barrettes in the curls
And braids declined away from joy.)

I saw a bleeding brownish boy. . . .

The lariat lynch-wish I deplored.

The loveliest lynchee was our Lord.

In the capacity, in the need, of normal people for violence, in their need for scapegoats, Brooks saw reflected the lynch mobs of the past, but also the banality of evil. And she saw the connection between the innocent victims of today, and that perfect victim past.

The significance of the Notre Dame Ten lies in part about the fact that we were scapegoats. And it is not important so much as who we were, as it is why we had to be sacrificed, and for what. And that was to preserve the University from the moral scrutiny which it could not stand, and gratify the desires of the public to

which Notre Dame speaks, to strike at antiwar activists. You read then, and today, in the words of University administrators, an absolute incapacity to acknowledge that that Notre Dame's moral position was even at issue. So the challenge remains for all of us.

One of the several great writers among us then was Richard Moran, editor of the Scholastic magazine. Speaking to these events, in the final issue of the Scholastic in 1970, he wrote, in part:

I am reminded of a passage from Trotsky, once related by one of my teachers. Trotsky describes history as a troop train moving through the countryside. The train is packed with soldiers. One particular soldier stands at a small window of the train and gazes at the miles of barren wasteland. Finally the train passes through a town and the soldier sees a girl standing not far from the track. He winks at the girl and she winks in response--but then she is gone.

For Trotsky, the train represents the irresistible force and direction of the mass movement of history. The soldier is a meaningless integer. His love and his passion mean nothing amidst the ruthless force of history.

But if we look at this metaphor, not from the perspective of the train, but from the inside of the soldier's soul, we see that the wink means everything. And if we imagine the train as our deteriorating yet relentlessly brutal society and the Christian university as the soldier on that train and perhaps even Christ as the girl at the side of the road, we can understand the importance of the wink, the importance of a generous and gratuitous gift of understanding and love. If we are to fulfill the possibility of this wink, we must first be courageous enough to unfix our eyes from the course of the train, to put aside our blind, uncritical love of our country, its history and its power.

And if we then choose to wink, within that wink must reside a willful acceptance of the responsibilities of love. For while the soul of a university demands that we look outside the train, the flesh and bones that distinguish a Christian university demand, first, that our gaze be permeated with passion--a passion seeking eternal happiness--and, second, that it be generously committed to its vision.

* * *

For if we continue to make claims to Christianity and continue to ignore the demands that these claims make upon us, we are no better than the soldier who stares hard-faced and unblinking at the girl whose tenderness lays siege to his soul.

And so the issue for us is first one of faith – having the beliefs in what the Gospel teaches, and the courage to act. But also it is that most elusive of virtues – hope. The hope that, our collective dedication to those beliefs, to that “wink,” will gradually bend the tracks on which the train rides, tilting its arc, the arc of destiny, toward the God of Love.



Notre Dame Ten: Fortieth Anniversary Remembrance to Re-member

November 18, 1969–November 18, 2009

Presentation by (Rev.) Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

Jay Gould, one of the infamous robber barons of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, once remarked: “I can hire half the working class to kill the other half.” And he did.

The key word here is “hire.” The central reality to which that word points is money—money to be made by the working class for killing people that those with money and power want killed. Money doled out for homicide, or anything else, becomes for so many Christians the determining factor in how they will use their one life’s time; how they will think and speak; what they will do, and what they will morally support. Money, Jay Gould rightly believed, could be made the *de facto* god of the working class—a god its members would serve, and serve to the point of downgrading every other possible value, as well as every possible understanding of God, that interfered with acquiring it.

One of the great temptations that Catholic Christians— indeed all human beings—confront is the temptation to refuse to see what is readily available to be seen, but which they do not want to see for “some reason.” That “some reason” in an extraordinary number of instances, large and small, is that money will be lost or lost-out-on, if they see what they know is there. Why? Because, they also know, whether they consciously acknowledge it or not, that it will cost them dearly if they were to choose based on what is actually there to be seen. Such people therefore “don’t see,” and they build a profitable world, seemingly in good conscience, around their self-imposed blind spots. And so it is for Jay Gould’s working class people, whom he hires to kill other working class people. They do not see—that is, they refuse to see—that those they are murdering are exactly like their own moms and dads, aunts and uncles, sisters, brothers and close friends. All they permit themselves to see is the view of these other human beings that Jay Gould pays them to see, which blindness makes it possible for them to kill their fellow, ordinary, working class people without physically, spiritually and morally perceiving the abomination in which they are engaging.

All the advertisements run this week by the Notre Dame Ten in the campus daily newspaper, the *Notre Dame Observer*, inviting people to this evening, have included what is probably the most famous photograph from the Vietnam War: the photo of a little girl running down a dirt road, screeching in pain—her clothes having been burned off and her skin burned raw by napalm that has just been dropped on her. The photograph instantly became famous around the world because it forced those who refused to see, but who in their souls knew what was taking place in Vietnam, to come face to face with the consequences of their own self-imposed lack of awareness. The little girl in the picture represents hundreds of thousands of innocent children and

adults in Vietnam who had been thrown into an agony beyond description by a highly profitable, industrialized U.S. military operation that can only be accurately described as sociopathic. Another Notre Dame Ten advertisement for this evening includes, along with the screaming Vietnamese child, a picture of a baby in Iraq suffering through the grotesque consequences of the depleted uranium campaign of destruction being waged against the born, and yet-unborn, people of Iraq. This picture of a tormented little one represents reality for hundreds of thousands of children in Iraq today and an untold number of children in Iraq tomorrow.

In one of our *Observer* advertisements, we show a picture of, and quote a napalm-dropping U.S. pilot who, during the War on Vietnam, said this in a *LIFE* magazine interview:

We sure are pleased with those backroom boys at Dow. The original product wasn't so hot – if the gooks were quick they could scrape it off. So the boys started adding polystyrene – now it sticks like shit to a blanket. But then if the gooks jumped under water it stopped burning, so they started adding Willie Peter (WP – white phosphorous) so's to make it burn better. It even burns under water now, and just one drop is enough. It'll keep on burning right down to the bone so they die anyway from phosphorus poisoning.

Who are these “backroom boys?” They are the very same people Dow came to Notre Dame to recruit, 40 years ago today. They are the half of the working class Jay Gould said he could hire to kill the other half. They may have had a B.S., an M.S., or a Ph.D. in science, and they may have been among the “best and the brightest,” cognitively speaking, of the human population of the planet but, *de facto*, they were just paid killers murdering people like themselves and their loved ones, in order to make a buck.

The murder of people in modern war, indeed the mass murder of people in modern war, is all but invisible. It involves and requires a long chain of men and women doing their part by individually obeying orders and collectively acquiescing to a social order that will ultimately result in the large-scale destruction of innocent human beings. The conscience of each person in this assembly-line, bureaucratic, killing operation has been formed by people and institutions which tell him or her that he or she is morally responsible *only* for doing a meticulous job in the little piece of the process he or she is being paid to take care of, and that the end result of what they are doing need not morally concern them.

A grateful nation gave a sigh of relief when General Tommy Franks said, in answer to a question about the number of Iraqi military and civilians who had been killed by the American military: “We don't do body counts.” U.S. citizens were equally grateful when President George W. Bush placed a militarily-enforced embargo on photographs of American working class men

and women returning home maimed or in caskets. It's "out of sight, out of mind"—and therefore out of the range of any serious moral problem that a Catholic Christian or any human being has to confront.

But even if one refuses to see the misery he or she is bringing into people's lives, that does not mean he or she is not doing so. Today, a dad or mom can sit in a climate-controlled, comfortable office in Langley, Virginia, or the deserts of Nevada and use joysticks to guide lethally armed drones into entire populations 10,000 miles away. With that day's work of high-tech, "invisible" murder under his or her belt, he or she can then go out and coach his or her son's or daughter's Little League team that night. The man or woman at the drone's control lever, like the chemist at Dow, is just another one of the working class "boys in the back room" whom Jay Gould, or one of his legitimate successors, hires to kill working class people for "some reason." And, a most terrible part of all this is that he or she will do this killing believing himself or herself to be a solid Christian, an authentic follower of Jesus.

Herein lies the horrid evil of which Notre Dame is willing to be a part, of which the U.S. Catholic hierarchy is willing to be a part, and of which most U.S. Christian Churches are willing to be a part: The nurturing of a moral conscience that permits its people, who are a substantial part of each of these institutions, to become the "boys and girls in the back rooms" for the Jay Goulds of the world—and nurturing them to believe that this is living in conformity with the Way taught by Jesus. *Corruptio optima pessima est* are the only words to describe the depth of such infidelity, such a loss of direction and such rejection of the grace of Baptismal vocation.

And herein lies the spiritual essence of the November 18, 1969 Dow-CIA protest at Notre Dame, and of this event, 40 years later to the day: *Corruptio optima pessima est*—"The corruption of the best is the worst." What is taking place at Notre Dame, and among the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, vis-à-vis their chosen subservience to U.S. military and corporate powers and their money—a subservience that demands nurturing those in their spiritual care into "a habitus of blindness to the evil of governmental and corporate murder"—is nothing other than *corruption optima pessima est* – in spades!

I will conclude with this short video, which exposes that corruption and simultaneously communicates to Notre Dame, to the Catholic bishops of the U.S., indeed to all Christian Churches, what they are nurturing and what they should be nurturing in the souls and spirits of those placed in their care by Jesus—as well as what they should **not** be nurturing people into doing or supporting in any way. In 1969, the administration of Notre Dame never answered—not one word—any of the reasons the ten students presented in their formal defense of their choice to interfere with Dow and the CIA recruiting that day. The administration refused to openly confront or dialogue communally on the searing Christian moral issue of the place of a Catholic university in a designed and maintained perpetual-war economy. As of November 18, 2009, it has still refused even to see what is patently before it and what it is participating in. And so, for the last forty years, it has partially employed its great Christian/Catholic spiritual and academic

capacities to channel a ceaseless flow of “backroom boys and girls” and “frontline boys and girls” out for hire in order to kill and maim other infinitely loved sons and daughters of the *Father of all*, and to be killed and maimed. And, to do it all under the pretense that one is following Jesus and His Way. Why such a mad use of a Catholic university? Because when Jay Gould for “some reason” calls, the administrators at Notre Dame cannot resist the temptation he places before them, and they therefore degrade, ignore or dismiss every Gospel value and presentation of God and God’s will as revealed by Jesus that would interfere with serving what the robber baron has to offer. If this is not *corruptio optima pessima est*, nothing is.

<http://www.video4viet.com/watchvideo.html?id=Xjz2gCnhr-I&title=Kim+Phuc+Nzone+Feature>

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