



We all ask, at one time or another, "What do I want to do with my life?"

On the one hand, we all want to do something that matters in some way, that makes a difference, that is meaningful, that is fulfilling. Something that's worthwhile, something real.

On the other hand, when we phrase the question "what do I want to do with my life?" - and sit with it - it often seems like such a huge, vague, looming, slippery, cloud of fog, like trying to catch a cloud in a milk carton - a frustrating experience.

In his book 'The Master Game,' Robert De Ropp has offered a few pointers, which might help us get a more sturdy handle on the matter:

"Seek, above all, for a game worth playing."

De Ropp paints with broad, strong, and sweeping strokes, clearing a basic way to begin thinking about the problem: essentially life is a series of "games," and from here, it's really a matter of which game you want to play. By "game," he does not mean anything unimportant, trivial, or not serious; quite the contrary, as he states, "having found the game, play it with intensity - play as if your life and sanity depended on it. (They do depend on it)."

The Low Games:

The "Hog in Trough"

"The aim is to get one's nose in the trough as deeply as possible, guzzle as much as possible, elbow the other hogs aside as forcefully as possible." The trophy of this game is **wealth**.

"Cock on Dunghill"

"is played for fame. It is designed primarily to inflate the false ego and to keep it inflated." "Players of Cock on Dunghill are hungry to be known and talked about . . . the real player of Cock on Dunghill, whose happiness depends entirely on the frequency with which he (or she) sees his name in the papers..."

"The Moloch Game"

De Ropp describes as "the deadliest of all games," consists of "professional mankillers trained to regard such killing as creditable provided those they kill favor a different religion or political system and can thus be collectively referred to as 'the enemy.'" The 'trophy' for this game is **glory or victory**.

The Neutral Game:

This "Neutral Game" De Ropp describes as "**The Householder Game**" is simply "to raise a family and provide it with the necessities of life." It is stated as neutral because it is "the basic biological game on which the continuation of the human race depends."

The High Games:

"The Art Game"

as De Ropp describes, "ideally is directed toward the expression of an inner awareness loosely defined as beauty." In this game, as in all others, there are good players as well as bad. The goal of this game is defined loosely as **beauty**.

"The Science Game"

De Ropp describes as the pursuit of "**knowledge**," and then outlines many of the ways that this game as well is often corrupted, muddled and tainted. Says De Ropp, "Much of it is mere jugglery, a tiresome ringing of changes on a few basic themes by investigators who are little more than technicians with higher degrees . . . Anything truly original tends to be excluded by that formidable array of committees that stands between the scientist and the money he needs for research. He must either tailor his research plans to fit the preconceived ideas of the committee or find himself without funds. Moreover, in the Science Game as in the Art Game there is much insincerity and a frenzied quest for status that sparks endless puerile arguments over priority of publication. The game is played not so much for knowledge as to bolster the scientist's ego."

"The Religion Game"

De Ropp describes loosely as the pursuit of "**salvation**," and then outlines as well many criticisms of that particular game: "The Religion Game, as played in the past...was essentially a game played by paid priests of one sort or another for their personal benefit. To compel their fellowmen to play the game, the priests invented various gods, with whom they alone could communicate, whose wrath they alone could assuage, whose cooperation they alone could enlist. He who wanted help from the gods or who wished to avert their wrath had to pay the priests to obtain his ends..."

The game was further enlivened, and the hold of the priests on the minds of their victims further strengthened, by the invention of two after-death states, a blissful heaven and a terrible hell. To stay out of the hell and get into the heaven, the player of the Religion Game had to pay the priests, or his relatives had to pay them after his death. This 'pay the priest' aspect of the Religion Game has caused several cynics to define it as the world's oldest confidence trick designed to enable certain unscrupulous individuals to make a profit out of the credulity and suggestibility of their fellowmen by interceding on their behalf with some nebulous god or ensuring their entry into an equally nebulous heaven."

"...it must be obvious to any fair-minded observer that there is another element in the Religion Game besides that of playing on the credulity of believers and selling them entry permits into a phony heaven. All the great religions offer examples of saints and mystics who obviously did not play the game for material gain, whose indifference to personal comfort, to wealth and to fame was so complete as to arouse our wonder and admiration."

These individuals De Ropp puts in another category altogether:

"The Master Game"

in De Ropp's words, describes as "the most difficult game of all...the aim of which is the attainment of full consciousness or real awakening."

He continues: "The basic idea...is that man is asleep, that he lives amid dreams and delusions, that he cuts himself off from the universal consciousness...to crawl into the narrow shell of a personal ego. To emerge from this narrow shell, to regain union with the universal consciousness, to pass from the darkness of the ego-centered illusion into the light of the non-ego, this was the real aim of the Religion Game as defined by the great teachers, Jesus, Gautama, Krishna, Mahavira, Lao-tze and the Platonic Socrates."

Which game are you playing? Which one do you want to play?

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NEVER FORGET - TO REMEMBER

The Pentagon finally admitted to the long-obvious fact that it killed ten Afghan civilians, including seven children, in an airstrike in Kabul in August.

In an article with the obscenely propagandistic title "**Pentagon acknowledges Aug. 29 drone strike in Afghanistan was a tragic mistake that killed 10 civilians,**" the New York Times pats itself on the back for its investigative journalism showing that the so-called "**ISIS-K facilitator**" targeted in the strike was in fact an innocent aid worker named Zemari Ahmadi:

"The general acknowledged that a New York Times investigation of video evidence helped investigators determine that they had struck a wrong target. 'As we in fact worked on our investigation, we used all available information,' General McKenzie told reporters. 'Certainly that included some of the stuff The New York Times did.'"

Indeed, the Pentagon only admitted to the unjust slaughter of civilians in this one particular instance because the mass media did actual investigative journalism on this one particular airstrike. This is an indictment of the Pentagon's airstrike protocol, but it's also an indictment of the mass media.

This after all comes out following a new Byline Times report which found that "at least 5.8 to 6 million people are likely to have died overall due to the War on Terror—a staggering number which is still probably very conservative."

It also comes out two months after whistleblower Daniel Hale was sentenced to nearly four years in prison for leaking secret government information about America's psychopathic civilian-slaughtering drone assassination program.

It also comes a few months after a Code Pink report found that the US and its allies have been dropping an average of 46 bombs **per day** in the so-called War on Terror for the last twenty years. (A War that has cost taxpayers around \$300 million a day during those two decades.)

Do you remember seeing an average of 46 news reports a day on bombings conducted by the US and its allies? Do you remember even reading about one single US bombing per day in the mainstream news? I don't. The US power alliance has for decades been continuously raining explosives from the sky on impoverished people in the Global South and the mainstream news reports on **almost none** of those instances, much less launches an in-depth investigation into whether each one killed who the military claims they killed.

The difference between the August 29 airstrike and the thousands which preceded it in America's post-9/11 wars was that this one was politicized. The Biden administration ordered it to look tough on terrorism after the Kabul airport attack (most of the fatalities from which were probably due to panicked gunfire from US and/or allied troops), amidst a withdrawal for which Biden was being aggressively slammed by plutocratic media outlets eager to paint ending US wars as a bad thing that everyone should oppose.

The Pentagon doesn't care that it snuffed out innocent lives in an airstrike; it does that all the time and its officials would do it a lot more if that's what it took to secure their futures as lobbyists, consultants, board members and executives for defense industry corporations after they retire from the military. And the mass media don't care either; they only cared about this one particular highly politicized airstrike during a withdrawal from a military engagement the mass media vehemently opposed.

"Pentagon acknowledges Aug. 29 drone strike in Afghanistan was a tragic mistake that killed 10 civilians." Can you believe that headline? Not "**admits**" but "**acknowledges**". Not "**killed children while targeting an aid worker based on flimsy evidence**" but "**was a tragic mistake**". How many times did New York Times editors rewrite this? Imagine if this had been a Russian airstrike.

Think about all the murder victims we'd have known about if the news media had done its job and used

their immense resources to investigate them as journalists should over the last twenty years. Think about how much harder it would have been for the war machine to inflict these evils upon the world if they had. Instead it's been left to obscure bloggers and indie journalists to question these actions using scant resources and shoestring budgets.

They've shown that they can do these investigations into the validity of US airstrikes, and they've shown that they've spent two decades choosing not to. The mass media manipulators who provide cover for mass military murder by journalistic malpractice and negligence are just as complicit in these depraved acts of human butchery as the people firing the weapons and the officials giving the orders.

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