

VIEWPOINT

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THE OBSERVER

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■ AND IN THIS CORNER

Appalling ends: The parting shot across the bow

Now that it's the end of the semester as we know it, and therefore my last column of this academic year, I thought it only appropriate that I summarize everything I've learned in this, my first year at Notre Dame:

- There is but One God, and Lou Holtz is his prophet.
- There is but One Student Life Tyrannical Overlord, and her name is Patty O'Hara.

Matthew Apple

• You, too, can start your very own rechts-radikalen "good news" magazine. All you need is a prelatore and a dream.

• Diversity is tolerated in all its forms, as long as the tolerated don't demand any respect from the rest of us.

• There exists no cold and rainy day that gusts of 40 mph can't make even more miserable.

• There really isn't anything to do in South Bend other than to drink.

I've often been accused of sensationalism; I've been told that I seem to write "controversial" columns just to get a rise out of people.

There are two primary reasons I write this column. First and foremost, I like to write. It's that simple. I like to express my own opinions, misinformed or otherwise, because it's fun to spew. It sometimes happens that people find my opinions "controversial" — though, all things considered, it's not too difficult to be considered "controversial" at God's

College.

It's always surprising to me how afraid people in general are of differences. Different cultures, different political viewpoints, different preferences (religious, sexual, sports teams) — people tend to react to the unknown or the inexperienced through fear or hatred.

I suppose that's the second reason I write this column — to remind people cloistered here that Notre Dame is not the be-all or end-all of humanity. It has been remarked to me (mostly via email, which allows anyone to speak their mind without the annoyance of having to talk in person) that students came here, to Notre Dame, to "get away from you people," i.e., to run away from "liberals." (I suspect the real reason these people came here is because their daddies had the money to send them.)

I never claimed to represent the "liberal establishment" — in fact, I was unaware that there was one in the good ole U S of A. If anything, this country is among the most politically conservative of the current Western democracies. It has been fairly conservative for most of its history (not that there's anything particularly wrong with that; the US just tends toward gradual rather than abrupt social and political changes.)

I obviously don't associate myself with anything conservative, or else Notre Dame would surely have welcomed me with open motherly arms. I tend to consider myself more in the middle, and, as usual, those in the middle get it from both sides.

I suppose it would be easier for me to side with one camp or another, or to side with one religion of another, or one major interpretation or another. But I don't. I prefer to remain a free agent for now, a "free thinker," with somewhat anarchist opinions (in the sense of

Bakunin and Kropotkin, not the Unabomber — though obviously this is an extremely complicated subject which I won't get into right now.)

"Free thought," or "intellectualism," seems to be a much-frowned upon concept at Notre Dame. Or, at least, Notre Dame grudgingly tolerates it, so long as

‘Actually, that would be a third reason why I write: to try to make people think. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's the appalling indifference and unquestioning attitude some people have here . . . Blind acceptance, even in faith, leads to black and white attitudes, the concept that in the world things are either wrong and right, A and B, Us or Them . . .’

the individuals in question agree not to make waves and to adopt a "Christian" outlook (whatever that means — wholesale cultural butchery, religious intolerance, and regicide are among the more vicious aspects of the historical Christian outlook, but people always seem to nonchalantly skip over glaring hypocrisy).

Actually, that would be a third reason I write: to try to make people think. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's the appalling indifference and unquestion-

ing attitude some people here have. I suppose this would also apply to people in general, but, of course, people in general don't read my column. Blind acceptance, even in faith, leads to black and white attitudes, the concept that in the world things are either wrong and right, A or B, Democrat or Republican, Us or Them, "Christian" or "heathen," "God" or the "Devil," Coke or Pepsi (sorry, got carried away). It's easy to divide the world into twos. It's easy not to think.

Or, as Mark Twain wrote, "For every problem there is an answer which is simple, easy, and wrong."

This fall, Notre Dame will initiate a new class of Freshmen (that's FRESHMEN, not "1st Year Students." God, I never thought ND, of all places, would stoop to PC standards. It's freshmen, dammit, pronounced FREHSH-min, got it? Freshmen freshmen freshmen. Nyah.)

And within the first month of the semester, Notre Dame's new students will unconsciously adopt their beloved institution's insistence upon the continuation of high school lifestyles, with 9 class periods a day, immature gender relations, high school-ish sports pep rallies and dances, an over-reliance on authority figures instead of developing their own independent consciences, the indifferent acceptance of bland Mid-Western homogeneity, and the automatic merging with the March of the Lemmings between DeBartolo and LaFortune each morning.

Unless I get to them first.

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■ DOONESBURY

GARRY TRUDEAU



■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

—Oliver Wendell Holmes