

Night Journey 63: *Pledge of Allegiance: Ask Not What You Can Do For Your Country – Ask What Your Country Is Doing To You*

In the words of Gore Vidal “the dream of every society is total control.” The achievement of that dream is dependent upon a “population largely uneducated by public schools that teach conformity.” What holds true in Vidal’s statements is that public education begins each day with a pledge of allegiance and focuses on recitation of content knowledge, rather than on thought-producing, dialectic investigation. National loyalty and obedience are among the prime values taught in our education system, stressing the importance of collective compliance over individual thought.

Another Vidal assertion worthy of examination claims that “the United States has become an empire of the most predatory kind.” The proof? Count the wars and conflicts in which the U.S. has participated since the end of WWII, tally up all the militarized financial expenditures associated with waging war and defending national interests, count the number of casualties caused by U.S. military actions, and imagine how different the world would be if those expenditures were used for humanitarian purposes, both at home and abroad.

In *Night Journey 63*, I have literalized the symbolic flag into an actual architectural sanctuary where human conformity can bow and pledge its allegiance to a deified illusion that belies democracy and freedom. The true deity of all militaristic societies is the mythological Greek Titan, Cronus (Saturn, in Roman mythology). Embedded within the stars is an image of Francisco de Goya’s *Saturn*. The God Saturn ate his newborn children to insure none would grow up and usurp his power. Goya’s *Saturn* painting was and continues to serve as a symbol of the brutality and carnage of war, and a metaphor for nation states, especially aggressive nations that consume their young for the sake of national interests and power. Goya has sent humanity a message from the 19th Century that has been ignored and forgotten. I have restated his message in the 21st Century, and it will likewise go unheeded.