

Ratio non Grata

a demi-Rant

by James Como (October 2016)



Whether good or bad, socio-cultural entropy has neither an end nor a beginning,

and for it there is always a price to pay (i.e. the Civil War brings a substantially botched Reconstruction, the fall of Communism brings the Russian plutocracy and Putin). Yet, though always with us, not all entropic events are symmetrical: some are *substantially* good (say, the fall of Communism) or bad (say, the imposition from above – rather than it rising from a cultural consensus – of abortion-on-demand, which has led not only to the breakdown of serious social repulsion but, effectively, to the abandonment of the practices of persuasion and of consensus-building and also to our tolerance of showing just *this* disgusting event – baby seals being killed, for example – but not *that* – babies being killed in what should be the very safest place in all creation). Each of those claims, I know, would ordinarily require argument, and were this a different sort of essay I would provide that, but my interest here is not historical but rhetorical: our entropic public discourse

One is tempted to jump all *Apocalypse Now* on the enormities and their perpetrators: fighting “the horror, the horror” with horrors of one’s own – that is, rhetorical horrors, *rants*. But that’s incorrect: *one* is not tempted; *many* are tempted, and these days very many. I don’t mean on our socio-political fringes only; nor am I equating extremes of judgment (our Number One Threat is climate change) with extremes of language and temperament (Jeremiah Wright’s “God damn America!”). Rather my interest here lies in what we might think of as certain rules of engagement.

For example, have we noticed how many entertainments (serious, comic, serio-comic) rely upon titles with “American” in the title? My first recollection of this was a book called *The Ugly American*[here](#).

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