

Table Talk: 1

by James Como



* Why are healthy symbols, some happily traditional others hallowed, yielded so easily to the fanatics? The okay symbol (thumb and forefinger making an O, the other three fingers raised) and the Betsy Ross flag are now *verboten*. Why? Because some lunatics have adopted them? And so we are told we may not use them (by Colin Kaepernick, no less)? Shall we yield every symbol to the crazies simply because they take them as theirs, or because self-appointed avatars of social justice nix them? What's next?

* Should we continue to wait for two particular prosecutions, as we do for O.J to track down the real killer? I'm thinking of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. The first pursued and subdued the man who eventually shot him. The second, a huge

thug, who was, in spite of a warning, approaching a policeman whose gun he had already tried to grab. In both cases we were promised either civil or federal suits, including by the then-Attorney General Eric Holder. But we have no suits, and for the obvious reason: both dead men invited their own deaths. In the case of Brown, all the original claims – most notoriously “hands up, don’t shoot” – were entirely discredited, largely by black onlookers. And yet . . . and yet . . . both Kamela Harris and Elizabeth Warren referred to Brown as ‘murdered’. Have you no shame, ladies, have you no shame?

* How long before the *DSM* includes the diagnosis of political incorrectness as a species of Tourette’s: Compulsive Obstinance Independence Trauma.

* How long before we have Antifa Re-Education Centers, with group therapy for those suffering from COIT, ‘facilitated’ by a person who has been victimized when her safe space was violated by use of the wrong pronoun?

* What do we make of the two goomba Cuomos (can a family have two Fredos?) and De Niro “Fuck Trump,” then, overcome by a fit of creativity, a second “fuck Trump,” (as well as a VM rant that has gotten him sued)? Models of Italian-American manhood?

* In light of Roman Polanski’s upcoming movie, what do we make of Her Majesty Queen Meryl? She called Harvey Weinstein “god” and gave a standing ovation to Roman Polanski, who drugged and anally raped at least one fourteen-year-old girl.

* Empires have gotten a bad rap, in most cases deservedly. Rome got it right for about three hundred years, a good run; here and there the Brits got it very right, but only here and there. The Incas did not last long: the culture was a hive, really, and the resentment of conquered tribes contributed mightily to their downfall. The European colonial empires –

German, Italian, Portugese, Spanish – were largely shameful. Yugoslavia, though, a sort of empire, worked for a spell but could not significantly outlast its strongman. The Ottomans had their day, as did the Mongols: yet, what's to show for that? But the Holy Romans and Austro-Hungarians did yeoman work, both in building and preserving Western Civilization. And then there were the Soviets: the nail in the coffin of empire. Or was it? Maybe we are in the age of crypto-empires, for what else does the EU aspire to, however covertly? True, without the Brits they are back to a contiguous land mass, but overseas colonies never were essential to empire status. The Chinese are imperialists without the name, and Iran is certainly giving it a good shot. Don't giant corporations (e.g. Google) deserve a look? I say if they've got the game they get the name and so are re-defined, re-considered and re-assessed.

Some Questions I'd Like to Be Asked . . .

Exactly why do you so dislike movements of all kinds?

Have you ever thought your brand of individualism is dangerously extreme?

How in the world can you claim that the original *King Kong* is the greatest movie ever

made?

Can you explain your inclusion of Angelica Huston, let alone Vanessa Redgrave, on

your list of screen goddesses?

Really? Mickey Mantle over Willie Mays?

Just how miserable were the James Weldon Johnson Housing Projects in Harlem?

Not having voted for Trump in 2016, how can you realistically consider voting for him

in 2020?

Are you Islamophobic?

Is there any way you can deny being a beneficiary of White Privilege?

Are you serious, in calculating Reparations for African Americans, that the *they* owe

the *country* money?

Ali *not* in the top ten boxers of all time?

Why do you no longer call yourself a Conservative?

How many mulligans in life do you wish you had? Single-, double-, triple-digits?

Why do you despise Sinatra, especially his "My Way" (what you call "the worst song

ever written")?

Can you defend The Mills Brothers as "the greatest singing group of all time"?

Shane and *Heaven Knows Mr. Allison* were influential in "teaching the essence of manhood": are you nuts?

So few people, even among the educated, care about rhetoric (except as a threat): how can you defend it as "the spine of human activity"?

What are the origins of the Catholic pedophilia scandal?

Why do gangsters like Capone and Gotti not embarrass you as an

Italian-American?

What do you make of the vast differences of dimensions, say, between the nano-world

of sub-particles and the cosmos? or the six numbers that, in their absolute exacti-

tude, hold the cosmos together? or the absence of significant divergences of charac-

ter in the animal kingdom, compared to us?

Can you explain your fascination with Best lists (e.g. TV sitcoms, boxers, actors

and actresses, movies, beautiful [women, cities, buildings] in any terms other than

mental illness?

Do you have a favorite fallacy?

What five words or phrases drive you the craziest?

How, exactly, did *The Phil Silvers Show*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *The Rifleman* "save" your

"sanity"?

Would you ever join a public demonstration or protest?

Do you see the Mainstream Press making a comeback, now that they've sold their

birthright for a pot of message?

So you take seriously the Goliard poets (*who?*) and, as a

literary critic and historian,

. . . *Ezra Pound*?

How many more knuckleheaded questions will you subject us to –
those of us, that

is, who have hung in this far?