

Embarrassment and the Zeitgeist

By Jim Meskimen

Okay, so we are all very different. Got that. Thanks to TV we know that we are all basically the same kind of species, anyway, and most of us individually have the same worries and concerns, family, income, health, blah, blah, blah. Right?

But we have a lot of different interests and totally different dreams and reactions to the world around us, this world we created– okay, maybe you don't think we created this world we live in, but maybe if you look around at your immediate, like, ROOM you can see how SOME of the responsibility or blame or CREDIT, you know, lies with you. I'm not blaming the whole thing on any one person. You're off the hook for right now.

There are billions of people on the planet, all shapes and sizes, colors, creeds etc. etc. etc. Billions. And as those digital readouts like to tell us by madly flipping so fast you can't even read 'em, we're growing every millisecond.

Okay, fine. Nice to know. No lack of people.

What I notice is an overriding sense of something among a lot of us today. And the word I have found best describes it is "Embarrassment".

What are we so embarrassed about?

Well, for starters, that things are so crumby. Crumby is an old fashioned word, from the last century. It not the same as "Crumblly", like a three day old scone. It means "Whack".

Okay, "Whack" is an old-fashioned word, from the eighties. What I should have said was, we're embarrassed, and rightly so, that things are so... craptastic.

I don't have an answer, by the way. I just notice things. And I also am embarrassed. Here's what I'm embarrassed about. And it isn't anything on You Tube that I'M in, anyway.

I'm embarrassed that human beings still go around figuring out how to murder each other and take stuff away from each other. Like that's a game. Like that didn't get old back in Egyptian times. Like we don't know any better. C'mon. We know so much better by now.

Okay, sometimes you have to kill someone. How often? I'm almost 50; I haven't killed anyone the whole time. Not even close. And I don't live in a bunker! I'm out in the world! I deal with A-Holes all the time, just like you– I mean, just like you do, not that you are an A-Hole.

Okay, we all hate war. Well, not everybody. A whole lot of somebodies actually must dig it a lot, because there are always a few going on. War is a kind of murder, usually, but for some reason, it makes sense at the time, and nobody puts it in the same category, unless they are on the receiving end of all the murdering. THEN, they are very clear about it.

Sometimes you hear people say, War is inevitable. War is a human instinct. Blah, blah, blah. Bad breath is inevitable. War, as far as I can tell, IS evitable. That means avoidable.

Take you, for example. How much war did you accomplish today? Not counting what was done with your tax money, which after it leaves your bank account is on its own, for the purposes of this discussion.

You probably didn't do a lot of warlike stuff today, unless you are in that profession. Then that would be about all you did.

And weirdly, I respect that. Because at least you are not being embarrassed about it. Some of us are warriors, or wannabe warriors. But often, too I find that the people who are closest to war, who actually prosecute, by which I mean in a fancy way, DO war, are the ones least committed to the idea that murder is the only way to fully handle certain kinds of human disagreements.

So, maybe it is safe to say that war and murder are a couple of things nobody is very proud of. We don't like ourselves when we murder, we don't like it when the neighbors do it, when your kid calls up and says he was doing a little murdering at school... not a great day. And when all the big governments of the world get slaphappy about the idea, we REALLY aren't proud of it.

Remember the Nazis? They were nuts about murder. Murder was the magic bullet. Of course, they didn't discriminate; any kind of bullet was fine with them. And none of us should be proud that there were once a bunch of governments, big and small run by those guys. That, not to belittle the Holocaust, is embarrassing. I mean, humanity let that happen on their watch. And we pretty much always have the watch. Why? Because we run the show. Not the shrimp, not the quail, not the orang-u-tans... we do.

So, barbarity, cruelty, murder, torture, all these different flavors of the same thing, are embarrassing because I feel, and maybe you do too, that we are WAY past that.

I mean, thousands of years of civilization, man! Technology. Communications. Literature, plays, films, television. Cultures, and great thinkers. Awesome people.

Do we really need to keep repeating the same dumb ass things over and over again? I don't think so. I don't keep repeating the same dumb ass things I did when I was eight, so why should we put up with that as a civilization? Why can't we actually MAKE a civilization, a nice one, for a change?

I gotta believe we can. I mean, we can do everything else.

Okay, if you agree, you agree. I obviously hope you do, and I'm trying to figure out how to say all this so that I don't create a lot of argument, although God knows some people love good rhubarb.

So, what I want to do, and maybe you will agree, is to try and BE LESS EMBARRASSED. Because as a species, although you hear all the time about how mankind is a plague and we're killing everything and warming everything up too much, and that guy in *The Matrix* said we were just "a virus", we still can do some really cool, respectable things. So that is redeeming, as far as I'm concerned.

My message today: Don't Be Embarrassed. Be effective. And by that I mean: Do what you know is right.

And ease up on the murder, 'kay? You'll save yourself a LOT of embarrassment.

Okay, over to you.