

Cartoons and the Freedom of Speech

By LISA MAUTI
Copy editor
LMM355@PSU.EDU

Cartoons and the freedom of speech. How did they become so deadly when intertwined. For those who don't pay attention to the news... WAKE UP! And second, let me catch you up to date.

A Denmark newspaper printed 12 cartoons that depicted the prophet Muhammad back in late September. The most offensive of them all was one where a bomb replaced the turban on Muhammad's head.

I want to state that first and foremost this cartoon is religiously offensive. But I also want to address why I think the actions taken surrounded by this incident are not only scary, but question our rights as citizens of a democracy that was created to escape not being able to say what you want.

Denmark, as well as the US, practices a freedom of speech policy that enables people to say what they think. Sure, people have this right, but if they do use it, will it piss people off? Yes it may piss people off, but lets face it, what doesn't piss people off these days?

However, lately you can't say anything about anything because there may be someone, somewhere that has a problem with it. But if the newspapers are supposed to report the news, how can there be someone that isn't mad? It is their job to say what is going on. Now they are being persecuted if they don't censor themselves? Is this our beloved freedom of speech?

Because of this cartoon, the Muslim people are demanding a cartoon of the holocaust be drawn up and published worldwide. Let's check our facts here.

There were two reasons for these cartoons being created and then hitting the press, one being more prevalent than the other. The cartoons were created in a contest by a children's author to find a cartoonist for a book about Muslims.

The second was for a test of the freedom of speech that Denmark has. Over the past few years, Denmark has had heavy immigration of Muslims from other European countries. So, the paper tested out just how free their freedom of speech actually was.

A little more than a year ago filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was murdered in the streets of Amsterdam. He made a film critical of the Islamic way of life and was then murdered by a Muslim extremist.

Now that you know why they were created and then printed, I ask why is the Muslim world now

demanding that everyone who used their freedom to print the first cartoons, now use their freedom of speech to "sway" to include a cartoon of the Holocaust.

The cartoons weren't printed to chastise a way of life. Everyone has the right to believe in what they want. They were printed to prove a point.

In a class I am in, we had to choose if, as a newspaper editor, we would print the cartoons or not. Then we had to stand in front of the class and defend our decisions.

I learned that it was tough making a choice, but it was even harder trying to change people's perceptions of what freedom of speech is, and how it mixes with the news.

You ask would I have printed the cartoons. My answer is yes. It is affecting the safety of our citizens that are overseas, and even though the U.S. was not involved in this cartoon, we became a target. People deserve to know why. This is one thing that the government can't hide, so why let them?

Muslims have been storming Denmark, US and Austrian embassies, along with many others, and unnecessary deaths are taking place. I suppose that this is a recurring question that has become a theme for the past five years: Why are innocent people, whether US citizens or not, dying for reasons that are beyond their control?

We all have the chance to vote in our leaders. We live in a democracy and that's just how it works, but we don't have control over what our leaders say or do. So why do they get all the protection and we are just put out in front of the targets???

No, No I'm not a blatant idiot... I do realize the actual answer to this question, but do you get my drift?

Too many of us young people ignore what is happening around us, but what is happening now is what the future will be when we actually have to grow up and enter the real world.

So why is it that now, when all of this crap is happening, we are just letting it pass us by? We need to learn as a society to question things, and not just believe everything that is thrown at us by the media.

Guess what, media is a business, and that business has an owner, and that owner belongs to a political party. What side of the story do you think he will tell you? Yup, one that brings him more money, and doesn't piss people off.

So all I'm trying to say, is pay attention to things happening around you, don't listen to everything you are told and for heaven sakes, question everything!

CULTURALLY INEPT

A BI-MONTHLY PONTIFICATION



By OSCAR BEISERT
Columnist
ODB102@PSU.EDU

From the time of our youth—and sometimes even birth—the idea of higher education—post secondary—is almost engrained in our basic upbringing; it is, without a doubt, no longer a special effort and has lost the extra-terrestrial twig light that once evaded going away to study.

In fact, not only has the spirit of prestige left attending university, we have almost lost the true idea of scholarship; or have we? If you haven't ever, take some time to count the number of people you know, or have met, who are off to pursue their studies, but—for some reason—have no mind for the premise of their endeavor.

As a master's student enthralled by some aspects of my selected major and simply bored by others,

I have a notion of what it means to experience academic endurance that is countered and, sometimes, even surmounted by the excitement of more intriguing subjects.

In this I am describing the ability to endure some classes because of their prospective education worth so that you can get to others that are most enticing; this, I find, is an attribute of true scholarship. Recently, in my Theories and Methods class, the subject of the "hard working American" was entertained. This premise provoked a diverse milieu of opinions that seemed to include every possible take on the subject.

One take, which I found to be most intriguing, was the contention that the majority of Americans don't work hard, which—to be expected—was immediately countered as though it were targeted as an insult.

I thought for a moment about my great grandmother, who—born in an era wherein a domestic role was a woman's only domain—befell all sorts of hardships in order to become a school teacher which included her work as a nanny for a local publisher and even cooking in the college's cafeteria.

Does this remain the modern trend or was it even the trend then? While I am aware of some students who work through school, is the percentage

of those attending college while working even close to the number of individuals who don't work, take 12 hours, and spend the better part of their free time not studying? In this modern era of student loans, will a plethora of endless career paths and choices be awaiting a generation whose undergraduate degree is equivalent to grandpa's high school diploma? And is it possible to undergo this type of change with out serious consideration and analysis. Do students even think before borrowing, majoring, or loafing?

On another scale, we must take the time to look at the type of work most Americans are capable of doing. In the past, the majority of Americans were farmers, factory workers, and/or any other type of "hands-on" production laborers. In the same seminar, a contemporary of mine alleged to the growing loss of jobs for the type of American apt to performing manual labor—the former farmers, factory laborers, etc.

He alluded to the idea of certain aptitudes of work for certain individuals. With the eastern movement of the laborious processes of capitalism benefiting America—some of America, will these "apt individuals" be left out in the cold or will they—have they—adjust(ed) to the growing changes in America? Is

everyone apt to the information age? And like those we taxpayers support in Section 8 housing, will these individuals fall into social welfare's lap of luxury?

Industrious Americans can only hope that the individuals able to fix a machine in a factory are the same as those fixing hard drives. While these questions, raised by my classmates and I, are endless and thought provoking, we must see that with the coming of constant change, must also be an effort to fathom the ramifications of such changes.

This brings me to the key question, do we as Americans analyze our issues with a fine tooth comb or do we simply allow society to change and problems to arise, paying little heed to their origination and or their prospective consequences? Many issues that effect our daily lives as Americans have been accepted with very little thought or accession.

Do college students really consider the ramifications of student loans; do parents consider the reasoning behind their marital choices—their divorces; do employers consider the lifestyles of their employees and the effects these lifestyles have on production; and is there a lucrative job for the factory worker in today's society? Is there really a lack of cultural analysis, or am I over analyzing?

Surviving THON 2006

One dancer's perspective on a timeless tradition

By ERIN MOSKALCZAK
Staff Reporter
EEM5001@PSU.EDU

In any other American university 4.0 is as good as you can get. At Penn State 4.2 is just the beginning. For all of those who came to support the dancers at THON know exactly what I am talking about. This year, Penn State students raised 4.2 million dollars to help fight pediatric cancer. THON would not have happened if it weren't for all the supporters in the stands cheering us on. I cannot thank all of the Harrisburg students enough for coming out to help us make it the full 48 hours. You have no idea what it was like to look up in the stands and see our friends holding signs and smiling as we looked all disheveled.

THON first began with the "Run to Rec. Hall." This is when all the dancers make their journey to the dance floor. It was incredible. There are no words to describe

what it felt like to see the streets of State College lined with supporters cheering for all the dancers. I'm not going to lie to you, THON was tough but looking up and seeing familiar faces helped make it a little easier. The no sleeping thing did not bother me as much as I thought, but the no sitting for 48 hours killed me. My feet started to hurt early Saturday. And by the finish of THON, my feet were dead – not in extreme pain, just dead. And on top of my feet disowning me, my knees also liked to lock up on me. After a few trips to the EMS room to get iced and wrapped, my feet and knees felt a little better. Submerging my feet in ice for about 15 minutes was the most painful experiences of the weekend. After my foot ice bath, the medical team wrapped my feet, which was done while I remained standing. The only time we were not completely standing was when we were getting a foot massage, and even then one foot had to be on

the floor at all times.

I was somewhat delusional Saturday night. At the time, I hated the feeling, but hearing other dancer's stories of seeing Aladdin fly across Rec. Hall on his magic carpet, makes me wish I had seen something like that. I quickly snapped out of my delusional state when the Pep Rally began. Most Penn State athletic teams came and had a dance contest between the teams. After the winner was announced the teams just roamed around the floor with the dancers. It was awesome to see the football team giving piggyback rides to tired dancers.

All the dancers went through different mood changes. Almost all dancers went somewhat delusional. I would sometimes just not want to be bothered and just wanted to be alone. At those times I would just walk around the floor. I saw one dancer beg her moraler (the person who's job it is to cheer us up) to take her off the floor.

Some dancers included myself were cranky at times while others seemed they were in another world.

Looking back at THON weekend, I don't know where all the hours went. The last four hours were great. The energy in the stands gave the dancers energy to make it. Some Harrisburg students made it to the pit section of the floor (a section of the floor that was roped off for fans to be closer to the dancers). They stayed there for the remainder of THON. I cannot thank everyone enough for coming out and supporting Steve and me during THON. You always offered to rub our feet or even just let us lean on you for moment. You are all the reason we survived the weekend.

I am still not fully recovered from THON. I sleep about 12 hours a night and after a week, I have just started feel like myself again. THON is an amazing experience and I would encourage all of you to get involved with it next year.

Student Government Association

Student Government elections are coming...

For more information, contact Mike Edwards mle5000@psu.edu