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Freedom to Political Cartoons: Charlie Hebdo & Ethical Dilemmas in Cartoon Communication

Abstract

Popular discourse assumes that political cartoons and caricatures are much different than the other journalistic genres due to their unique nature of satire, wit and humor. This is the reason that no one can reject or raise questions at political cartoons for ethical reasons. While subsuming all kinds of humor under this single paradigm, political cartoons can be unfair and no subject can be tagged as an inappropriate for them but on the other hand, the cartoon controversy of Blasphemy always raises a serious debate between two schools of thoughts. One of them supports the absolutist view and complete freedom of expression while the other always criticizes ridiculing the religions and offending their followers on ethical grounds. The French cartoon controversy of Charlie Hebdo is one of the several examples when the world has witnessed the same polarization of 'us versus them'. Almost the whole world chanted that 'are you Charlie Hebdo' or 'freedom hating fanatic'? The West supported Charlie Hebdo for its freedom of expression while the East and the Muslim states declared it as a continuous publication of hate speech and politics of emotions. This paper provides the panoramic view of the ongoing debates of two complete opposite poles and observes that there is still no end of this 'love-hate syndrome' and the story of 'us versus them conflict'. This also highlights the functions and responsibilities of political cartoons and emphasizes to distinguish a thin line between humor and offensiveness according to social conventions operative in any social context. This further draws a new paradigm of "responsible freedom of expression" in political cartooning as the need of the hour to bring freedom lovers and 'absolute freedom' haters to a central point of tolerance.

Keywords: Political cartooning, Limitations, Freedom of expression, Ethical dilemma, Responsibility.

❖ *"Cartoons are likely dynamic caps. They look harmless. But they are extremely dangerous when purposefully set off" (Ward, 1969)*

❖ *"When political cartoonists are at their best, they're like switchblades…simple and to the point; they cut deeply and leave an impression" (Lamb, 1996, p. 19).*

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1.1. Introduction

Popular discourses argue that political cartoon is different than the other journalistic genres due to its unique nature of satire, wittiness and humor. According to Koetzle and Brunell (1996), "in the world of the cartoons, there is no scandal too sensitive, no charge too outrageous and no feature drawn to proportion. Political cartoons are only limited by the amount of lead in their pencils" (p. 112). This is the reason that the ethical boundaries for cartoons are also different from other journalism. Cartoons can be unfair. No subject can be tagged as inappropriate for cartooning (Anderson, 1988; Ashfaq, 2012; Harrison; 1981) but on the other hand, the cartoon controversy of Blasphemy always raises a serious debate between two schools of thoughts. One of them supports the absolutist view and complete freedom of expression while the other always criticizes the ridiculing the religions and offending their followers.

The recent case study is Charlie Hebdo, a French weekly magazine which features humorous reports, satirical cartoons, sardonic polemics and mocking jokes. Charlie Hebdo became the burning issue of enduring debate between two schools of thought with opposite opinions regarding freedom of expression. It was initiated when two gunmen entered the Paris headquarters of the magazine and opened fire on January 7, 2015. They killed twelve staff members including the editor, Stéphane Charbonnier with the pen name Charb, the cartoonist, Jean Cabut with the pen name Cabu, the copy editors, Bernard Verlhac (Tignous), Georges Wolinski, Philippe Honoré and Mustapha Ourrad, the columnists, Bernard Maris and Elsa Cayat and the building maintenance worker, [Frédéric Boisseau](). Two police officers Ahmed Merabet and Franck Brinsolaro were also shot down while an office visitor Michel Renaud was also killed. During the violent attacks, the gunmen chanted "*Allahu Akbar*" (God is great) and also "the Prophet is avenged" (Davidson, 2015, January 7). Their slogans and bearded appearances made them perceived as 'Islamist terrorists' who attacked Charlie Hebdo in retaliation against the caricatures of Holy figures of Islam. Almost the whole world condemned the brutal terrorist attacks and flooded social media with messages using hashtag of #JeSuisCharlie. Muslims all over the world also endorsed on social networking sites (twitter & Facebook) that "the Islam of the murderer is not mine". According to a report, 3.7 millions French marched and showed their solidarity with the slain staff across France (Hird, 2015, January 17). The former publisher of Charlie Hebdo, Mr. Val broke in to tears on the local French radio and commented that "a certain way of doing journalism has been exterminated; people that were able to make people laugh with serious ideas have been exterminated" (Bender & Chow, 2007, January 7). On the very next day, when the staff of Charlie Hebdo announced to continue its publication with the cover that depicted Muhammad holding a sign of 'Je Suis Charlie' and the caption "all is forgiven (tou est pardonne)", a viral debate on the right of freedom of expression began across the world.

While looking into the cartoon journalism and ethical boundaries, the major reasons for considering the Charlie Hebdo's controversy as a significant case study are the magnitude of the events, the debate it created and the lessons that can be learned. The blasphemous cartoon controversy of Charlie Hebdo is not merely an incident that brought the protests and riots rather it is a root cause of a

dispute between defenders of freedom of expression and defenders of responsible freedom in ethnic, racial and religious satire and raise the questions about the ethical limits of humor and satire. These views divided the entire world in terms of opinions between liberals and conservatives. Therefore, this paper is an effort to give an account on ongoing debate about absolute freedom and freedom of expression with responsibility. This paper also concerns to highlight the aesthetic values of humor against the ethics of avoiding harm. It attempts to look at the widening a fissure between Islam and the West and the clash of civilizations between liberals and conservatives, aims at analyzing and giving an account of the ongoing debates of two complete opposite poles and observes their 'love-hate syndrome' and the story of 'us versus them'. Another objective of engaging into this case is to negotiate and highlight a very thin line between humor and offensiveness, free speech and cultural respect, and absolute freedom of expression and religious sensitivity in a pluralist society.

1.2. Charlie Hebdo with a Long History of Provocative Religious Satire-A Retrospect

Charlie Hebdo has a long history of publishing offending images and lampooning other religions. The magazine describes itself as strictly anti-religion, anti-racist and left wing, publishes articles, jokes and cartoons on religions and extremely right wing supporters (politicians and public figures). The magazine was first published in 1970 as a successor of *Hara kiri* magazine with a similar style of satire and comics which was banned for lampooning the death of the former French President Charles de Gaulle but it continued its tradition to skewer a wide range of religious and political personalities from Pope Benedict XVI to former French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Goldstein (January 7, 2015) introduced the magazine as "the small-circulated paper generally is left-leaning, using cartoons and fake news reports to take shots at those generally in powerful positions" (Goldstein, January 7, 2015). So far, the magazine has critiqued Islam, Catholicism, Judaism and a number of public figures (Sneed, January 7, 2015).

The first controversy related to Islam arose over the publication of the special edition on February 9, 2006 with the reprints of all twelve controversial cartoons of Muhammad published in Danish magazine, *Jylland Posten.* Beside those caricatures, the magazine also published a mocking cartoon of Muhammad on its cover page under the title "*Mahomet débordé par les intégristes*" ("Muhammad overwhelmed by fundamentalists"). The cartoon of the cover page depicted Muhammad crying and saying that "*C'est dur d'être aimé par des cons*" ("it's hard being loved by jerks"). It was assumed that the magazine always used such kind of controversies to increase its circulation that was vividly seen during this reprinting strategy of the Danish controversial caricatures because compared to a regular circulation of 100,000 sold copies, that edition enjoyed much great commercial success. 160,000 copies were sold and another 150,000 were in print later that day.

While following its tradition to mock religions, it published a controversial issue that "promised "100 lashes if you don't die laughing" and poked fun at its "guest editor," the Prophet Muhammad" (Goldstein, January 7, 2015). It resulted into the violent protests all over the Muslim world. The office of Charlie Hebdo was also firebombed in November 2011. The editor of the

magazine defended under the umbrella of freedom of speech and stated to the Associated Press in 2012 that "my magazine does caricatures of everyone, and above all every week, but when we do it with the Prophet, it's called provocation. Muhammad isn't sacred to me. I don't blame Muslims for not laughing at our drawings. I live under French law. I don't live under Quranic law" (Goldstein, January 7, 2015).

Besides the depiction of Prophet Muhammad, *Charlie Hebdo also* supported France's controversial law banning women from wearing burqas in public in 2010 with the cover headline "Yes to wearing the burqa … on the inside!" and self-explanatory image with intended meaning (Krule, 2015, January 7) which was also condemned by the Muslim states. The most controversial issue arose in September 2012 where the nude caricatures of Prophet Muhammad were published that outraged Muslims all over the world. One of them entitled "Mohammad: a star is born" depicted "a bearded figure crouching over to display naked buttocks and genitals, a star covering his anus" (Vinocur, 2012). The second cartoon was with reference to the scandal over magazine's decision to publish topless photos of the wife of Britain's Prince William. This cartoon depicted topless and bearde**d** character with the caption: "riots in Arab countries after photos of Mrs. Mohammad are published" (Vinocur, 2012). The whole world including the French government overwhelmingly criticized the publications of Charlie Hebdo.

The French government rapidly apologized for this controversy of the magazine in consideration of the local Muslims and also announced to shut down temporarily premises including embassies and schools in 20 Muslim countries because of the fear of violent protests against the mocking caricatures of Prophet Muhammad. The French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius added that "we saw what happened last week in Libya and in other countries such as Afghanistan. We have to call on all to behave responsibly" (Vinocur, 2012). At the announcement of the French government, Stephane Charbonnier, the editor of the magazine refused to be apologetic and agreed on publishing the controversial caricatures as the journalistic right to freedom of expression. He stated while talking to Reuters' reporter that "we have the impression that it's officially allowed for *Charlie Hebdo* to attack the Catholic far-right but we cannot poke fun at fundamental Islamists. It shows the climate — everyone is driven by fear, and that is exactly what this small handful of extremists who do not represent anyone wants — to make everyone afraid, to shut us all in a cave" (Vinocur, 2012).

The story of provocative satire did not end here. The magazine published a biography cartoon book 'The Life of Muhammad' in January 2013 depicting Prophet Muhammad through a goofy-looking character leading a camel through the desert. At one point, the book represented Prophet Muhammad as a boy taking his clothes off to join other naked fellows. Similarly, another page of the book showed Prophet Muhammad as a naked man wearing turban on his head and standing with women showing their naked breasts and genitalia. This publication also outraged Muslim states. The editor of the magazine received life threats and was provided police security. According to him, it was an educational work prepared by a Franco-Tunisian sociologist ("Comic bio of Muhammad…", 2013, January 2). While commenting on the world's criticism, he stated to Agence

France-Presse (AFP):

> It is a biography authorized by Islam since it was edited by Muslims. I don't think higher Muslim minds could find anything inappropriate. Before having a laugh about a character, it's better to know him. As much as we know about the life of Jesus, we know nothing about Muhammad. It is perfectly halal. ("Comic bio of Muhammad…", 2013, January 2)

On the other side, the Muslim world maintained the same stance that the depiction of Prophet Muhammad in any visual form is prohibited and deemed sacrilegious by all Muslims. The latest issue right before the violent attacks on Charlie Hebdo mocked the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS. Before spreading the news of slain staff, the last tweet on the magazine's twitter account was about the cartoon of the ISIS group leader, Abu Bakr al-Bakr al-Baghdadi and that cartoon was published on the very day when the terrorist group attacked the office. BBC clearly highlighted its timings and provenance ("Comic bio of Muhammad…", 2013, January 2).

1.3. Interpretations of the Cartoons Affairs

The attacks on Charlie Hebdo and its publications were viewed differently across the world with different terms from blasphemous, disrespectful and racial to the victory of freedom of expression. This controversy divided the world in 'to be' and 'not to be' Charlie. The major frames were on the following grounds:

1. A clear violation of Islamic teachings that completely prohibits the drawing the caricatures of Prophet Muhammad: The anger of Muslim states was not only due to the way of the representation of Prophet Muhammad but also his depiction at all because in the mainstream Islam, the drawing of Muhammad is forbidden in any way. This goes back to the origin of Islam in the 7th century when paganism and idol worshipping was the part of culture but the new religion Islam was based on monotheism. That is why; the Prophet stopped his followers to draw him in anyway, fearing that people will turn him to worship not God.

2. Freedom of speech, democracy and liberty are the western values that allow the cartoonists to draw whatever they want to regardless the religious sensitivity.

3. Islamophobia and racial exclusion of Muslims. Despite the well established democracy in the West and specifically in France, the publication of controversial cartoons of Muhammad was viewed as an evidence of increasing Islamophobia. The case studies like the French *Charlie Hebdo* and the Danish *Jylland Posten* worsened the situation of Muslim minorities which have been marginalized socially, politically, culturally and economically and have also been portrayed as a threat to the West. Several scholars called this process as 'racialization', 'otherness' and 'groupness' (Modood, Bleich, Joseph, 2006) that goes back to the historical perception of European/white people and their treatment of other different cultural and racial groups. Though Muslims do not fall under any biological category of Black, Chinese, South Asian etc but a long history of racialization and otherness turned the religious group in to the race.

1.4. Responding to the Muhammad Cartoons: The Voices of Muslims across the World

On the Contrary, the frame of 'criticism and demands to limit the freedom of expression' was clearly seen in almost all Muslim states. Eide, Kunelius and Phillips (2008) argued that one of the reasons behind the publication of Muhammad cartoons in Danish newspaper in 2005 was to see what would happen if the Holy figure was satirized. By keeping this view, it was examined that in the whole Muslim world, the dominant frame is captured by a statement that *"tells Muslims when one kills just one innocent person, it is as if he has killed all of humanity* but ridiculing the religion is offending, provocative and prohibited'. In this frame, Muslims from almost all over the world including the local Muslim community of France overwhelmingly criticized the Muhammad caricatures and declared it as a deliberate effort to create chaos. The French Council of the Muslim Religion and the Union of French Islamic Organizations immediately released a statement right after the spread of the news of new publication with the cover of Muhammad's caricature to keep the local Muslims calm. "Stay calm and avoid emotive reactions that are incompatible with its dignity ... while respecting freedom of opinion" ("Swedish Muslims react to…..", 2015, January 14). Ahmed Miktar, the Imam at the Villeneuve d'Ascq mosque near Lille in northern France also added that "mocking the most precious person for you is a lack of respect. If they were mocking Jesus or Marianne, it would also be a lack of respect. But it's Charlie Hebdo's right to be able to express itself. We are asking for a pacified reaction and for people to keep calm."

Outside France, the same pattern of interpretation was followed, Yahya Adel Ibrahim, an imam in Australia added on his Facebook account to counsel his 100,000 Facebook followers , "as it is clear that the cartoons are to be published again, Muslims will inevitably be hurt and angered, but our reaction must be a reflection of the teachings of the one we love and are angered for. Enduring patience, tolerance, gentleness and mercy was the character of our beloved Prophet" (Burke, 2015, January 14).

Dawud Walid, an executive director of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations stated that "the depiction appears benign is of little consequence because it will be seen as offensive and deliberately provocative" (Burke, 2015, January 14). Yasir Qadhi, an American cleric also rejected the relationship of the notion of freedom of speech with mocking depiction of Prophet Muhammad. He stated that "while he respects the right to free speech, there appears to be a double standard when it comes to what Western society -- and Hebdo -- find suitable for mocking. Did you happen to notice any cartoons mocking the death of the cartoonists themselves, and lampooning their work and efforts?" (Burke, 2015, January 14).

In Sweden, the Muslim community also stated the caricatures as provocative and hurtful to Muslims. A man named Shaoib talked to The Local Sweden, "but as Muslims we must be careful with our reactions, we must simply not acknowledge them or give them attention, because that is what they want" (Burke, 2015, January 14).

Similarly, Essam Erian, acting head of the Egyptian Muslim

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Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, told Reuters: "we reject and condemn the French cartoons that dishonor the Prophet and we condemn any action that defames the sacred according to people's belief" (Vinocu, 2015, January 20).

Another clear frame was also found that refused to accept the free speech established by Charlie Habedo and moved their dimension toward the attack against races. They viewed these publications as meant for deliberate attack on minority groups that is becoming a cause to grow the level of intolerance and prejudice against ethnic groups especially multicultural societies. They reject the self righteous stance of freedom of speech and refer this to 'hipster racism' against Muslims. Adnan Hussein, a communication scholar and deputy vice chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia updated his status on his social media account and added that "you can't insult the Jews - that's anti Semitic. You can't condemn the gays - you are homophobic. You can't call the blacks negros - that's racist. But feel free to demonize and insult Islam - it's freedom of speech."

The Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad also stated in his interview for Czech newspaper *Literarni Noviny*. He argued that 'we need to remind many in the West that we have warned of such incidents since the beginning of the crisis in Syria". The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdo an blamed Charlie Hebdo for a deliberate attack on Muslims and accused that "games are being played with the Islamic world; we need to be aware of this. The West's hypocrisy is obvious. As Muslims, we've never taken part in terrorist massacres. Behind these lie racism, hate speech and Islamophobia. The French citizens carry out such a massacre, and Muslims pay the price. That's very meaningful ... Doesn't their intelligence organization track those who leave prison?" (Malm, January 13, 2015). The very next day of President's press conference, the Turkish courts issued orders to ban all the websites showing Charlie Hebdo's cover page with the image of Prophet Muhammad (Fraser, January 14, 2015).

1.5. The Voices of the Politicians across the World: Clash of Civilization & Emotions'

While looking in to the different stands from leaders of the West, it comes to understand that this is not merely the debate of free speech about religions in cartoons and nor about the policy implementation in this sensitive dimension. Rather this issue goes deeper into the ideological and multicultural western identity that is an old battle between the West and the East. Sajo (2007) argued that the West always sees itself as the defender and the champion of the freedom of speech, democracy and liberty and this is reason that the self claimed freedom defenders stand on the side of cartoonists. Therefore, the caricature controversy immediately emphasized the phrase of Samuel Huntington "Clash of Civilization" extended attention across the world and highlighted the popular views of a western conspiracy and hate speech against the Muslim world but on the other hand in the West, it, once again, prompted the defense of freedom of expression, Islamophobia, fundamentalism and radicalism. The enduring debate was again initiated between freedom of speech advocates and those who believe that lampooning religion is unethical. The West chanted the slogans of "live long freedom of expressions" and "Je suis Charlie" in the solidarity with the slain staff of Charlie Hebdo. The debate was vividly depicted all over the world between either "*vous êtes Charlie Hebdo*" *(Are you Charlie Hebdo)* or "*you are a*

freedom-hating fanatic". As Bidawi (2015, January 25) argued that according to the freedom lovers in the West, "the attack wasn't calculated murder, or akin to other recent terrorist acts; it was an assault on 'western values', 'European freedom', 'democracy itself'; the targets could have been 'you and me'; that's why all freedom-lovers must declare: 'I am Charlie'."

The Prime Minister of United Kingdom, David Cameron openly supported freedom of expression and declared the publications as the right of magazine. He added that

> It's not for politicians to tell magazines or television stations or radio stations what they should publish or what they shouldn't publish. It does up for us to defend your right to publish what you believe is right within the confines of the law. When your freedom of expression is attacked in this way I don't think it is surprising people want to stand up and fight for the freedom of expression they believe in but being offended by something is not a justification for violence and the overwhelming majority of Muslims completely understands and share that view. I'm a Christian. I obviously don't like seeing the religious things I hold dear mocked in an unpleasant way. But in a free country if people want to attack my religion and my beliefs you accept that because that's part of living in a free country. (Akkoc, January 14, 2015)

Similarly, the Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott criticized the attack and killing in Charlie Hebdo offices. He added that "Now, I rather like that cartoon. I'm not sure that I would have liked everything that Charlie Hebdo produced but this is a cartoon of the prophet with a tear streaming down his face saying all is forgiven because this is a matter of free speech" (Akkoc, January 15, 2015).

1.6. Defending Free Speech & France

The French defended the publications in a way that this is the country of René Descartes (the French philosopher) who believed in "I think therefore I am' (cogito ergo sum) and the French people showed the world that they think therefore they are Charlie Hebdo. This is the country of Voltaire (the French philosopher) who stated that "I don't agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" (Sham, 2015, February 3).

On the contrary, popular discourses assumes that any speech related to religion is not an easy task to handle because of its association with social, cultural, historical and public ties. For instance, Mahlmann (2007) asserts that ridiculing religion and its traditions is "part of the most inspiring and heinous, courageous and cowardly, emancipating and suppressive, fortunate and tragic struggles in human"s crooked history of civilization and thought" (p.41) because religious expressions are always regulated though legals procedures in almost all countries and the different laws of blasphemy are the examples across the world. Mahlmann (2007) further adds that freedom of religion is ensured "not because of the worth of the religious creed as such, but because of the respect for the individual who believes" (p.42). Therefore, any speech that will be abusive related to religion would be 'hate speech'.

1.7. The Third Emerging Paradigm: The Paradigm of Limited/ Responsible Freedom beyond the Religious Satire

The magnitude of the incident and the debate associated with Charlie Hebdo has left several questions for the researchers and scholars in the genre of cartoon communication that are

1. If political cartoons are counted as an integral part of journalism, are there any journalistic code of ethics, principles, rules and newsworthiness apply as a journalistic genre?

2. The whole discipline of journalism agrees that the components of worthiness included timeliness, human interest, proximity, prominence and consequences. If they are, what is the worthiness of depicting any Holy figure naked (not restricted with only Islam)?

3. If cartoons can be provocative, what is the purpose of this provocation that hurt the emotions of millions?

4. If these publications are only meant for satire and humor, are there any moral and ethical boundaries for making the witty publication?

5. Why are the cartoonists and the editors not unable to access the magnitude of consequences and human interest?

Younge (2000) stated that "the idea that we should never draw an ethical line between what is acceptable and what is offensive when it comes to comic is as disingenuous as it is bankrupt" (p.3) because according to Palmer (1987) "excessive contentiousness produces offense instead of humor, [and] excessive politeness produces boredom" (p. 175) but there is no absolute agreement on the boundary between humor and offensiveness. At this point, Lockyer and Pickering (2010) added that "if we accept that we should never draw an ethical line between what is acceptable and what is offensive, then we accept that anyone can say anything about other people, however malicious or laden with bigotry, and that they may do so with impunity" (p.16). Specifically focused on western societies where the standards of acceptance are associated with liberty, democracy and freedom as their vital traditions, they are also not so liberal in terms of comics. According to Lockyer & Pickering (2010), there have been several ethical systems in western culture over the period of time. One of them is 'royal command' ethics, in which ruler determines the moralities. The meanings of being right and wrong, ethical ad unethical are strictly obedience to a ruler. This is the kind of ethical system of Biblical religion where God (ruler) issue the commandments. The second system in ancient world was 'virtue ethics' of Greek philosophers like Aristotle where people do take care of one another and try to bring happiness in their lives (Lockyer and Pickering, 2010). The third was 'duty ethics' of Immanuel Kant in which every individual must act in a way as he/she wants others to act and consider others as valuable as himself/herself. The newest major ethical system is utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and John Staurt that was introduced in 20th century. It says that "what is right is what produces the the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people" (p. 66). Of these four, utilitarianism seems the most suitable ethical system to discuss any form of humor including cartoons and caricatures. Therefore, based on this approach if the humor published in Charlie Hebdo brings unhappiness among people and create a wide clash of emotions and

civilizations, is certainly unethical.

While considering the nature of the humor and the magnitude of the adverse reaction that may cause, the basic questions arise :

1. Why are people offended by what when the intended meaning is fun?

2. How do these people need to deal with offense?

3. Should they need to counter that offense?

4. Are there certain private and public areas that are meant to be remained as taboos and not to be touched in any kind of humor.

When a person takes offense at a racist cartoon, this does not mean that he lacks a good sense of humor or cannot laugh at himself or his culture. The matter of fact is that the identity is of great significance. Therefore, it becomes significant to see that who is ironically treated by whom in a particular cartoon. That would actually determine the magnitude of consequences. Humor and comic are very much dependent upon contexts and social conventions but if it is against the social conventions, would be considered as 'black' or 'sick' humor. Based on this, Pope Francis 's statement while stating on Charlie Hebdo's publications, also endorses that black humor causes offenses. He added:

If my good friend Dr. Gasparri says a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It's normal. It's normal. You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith of others. They are provocateurs. And what happens to them is what would happen to Dr. Gasparri if he says a curse word against my mother. There is a limit. (Hallowell, 2015, January 15)

Therefore while considering magnitude of the reaction the followed after the controversial publications of Charlie Hebdo, it triggers the need to consider different approaches to deal with cartoons and caricatures. Therefore, taking into consideration the freedom of speech, western democracy and religious sensitivity, there are the following suggestions for political cartoonists:

1. Freedom of expression should not be considered as an obligation but as a right which should be used by the political cartoonists with great responsibility according to the context. Black/sick humor and offensive religious publications that leads to destructive consequences can not be justified in the name of free speech or democracy.

2. The rights of religious minorities in countries like France and Denmark should be protected. Hate speech with reference to religion towards majority does not lead to the same consequences as when it is directed by the minorities.

3. In case of religious issues, apology should be very quick due to its sensitivity.

Conclusion

The controversy has left the enduring debate between two schools of thoughts with almost nil conclusions once again. The followers of "to be Charlie" defend their right of freedom of expression with self claimed supporters of free speech, democracy and liberty and tagged the 'other' group as freedom hating fanatic, fundamentalist, extremist, conservative, intolerant and allergic to criticism and satire. While the followers of 'not to be Charlie' criticized the West for spreading deliberate hate speech, racism and Islamophobia against Muslim community. Some scholars named it as clash of civilizations while others labeled it as clash of emotions.

According to Fischer (1996), cartoons and caricatures are "to invoke not only truth but higher artistic, above the ethical parameters of the printed word even if the facts are not consistent with their pictorial representation of the situation (p. 55) but on the other hand, the giving and taking offense and inciting the hate and violence through political humor and cartooning emphasize to define and re-define freedom, limitations, ethics and fundamental values and principles for political humor as a journalistic genre which is seriously lacking in the field of cartoon communication.

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