

Free speech argument doesn't condone publishing

After the printing of the picture of the prophet of Islam, Mohammed, the moral line has been crossed but there seems to be no condemning of the actions by other European countries. In fact a few have merely fuelled the flames by reprinting the pictures in their papers, something I am glad that our nation has prevented itself from doing.

'Religious extremism Vs Free speech' is what Sarah Joseph of the Guardian described it as, and I feel there is no better way to put it. According to a statement made by the Danish paper, they feel that have a right, as an independent media tool, to print whatever they like as long as they can justify it. In a country that prides itself on free speech, their justification is clear. They had a right to print it. But surely with this right to have freedom of speech comes with it a responsibility to those who have access to what they print? As Gary Younge put it, *'If newspapers have a right to offend, then surely their targets have a right to be offended?'*

An argument for the cartoons being printed is that they are not meant to offend anyone intentionally. This seems a hardly justifiable argument, as they must know from previous experiences that attacking a religion is not something that should be done under any circumstances. In 2002, a Star of David was drawn impaling the Union Jack flag for the cover of the New Statesmen magazine with the headline 'A kosher conspiracy?' The cover was rightly condemned, but it was not re-printed in any other newspapers around the world. This is mainly because it would seem that Judaism is not the flavour of the month to hate at the moment. From the moment that those two aeroplanes fatally collided with the twin towers, hatred towards Muslims has escalated and recent events serve as proof. It has exposed Denmark's Islamophobia in a country where Muslims like in France, a nation that re-printed the pictures, feel segregated from society. Sympathising with the good people of the Islamic faith and not fuelling their fears would surely be a better idea. Right?

In the end, the small Danish paper may have shot its own country in the foot by exercising its right to have free speech. A boycott of Danish products in the gulf has cost Denmark \$27 million dollars. It has exposed Denmark's Islamophobia and incensed Muslims all around the world. The BNP leader Nick Griffin was found not guilty of stirring up racial hatred on Friday. He argued that he had a right to free speech and was not sorry for his comments. He called Islam a 'vicious, wicked faith'. Surely no one would rally against Christianity in this way. If they did this, they would be the scourge of the media and be given the heaviest punishment by the authorities. Is the western world not guilty of double standards?

Free speech should be encouraged without a doubt. But not to the point of bullying a religion. Not to the point of bashing their integrity. And not to the point of betraying the good work that the majority of this religion does for this world.

I have written an editorial arguing against the publication and republication of the satirical cartoons placed in a Danish newspaper depicting the Islamic prophet with a fizzing bomb in his turban. This caused outcry both among the Muslim world and the western world too. The argument centres on the boundaries of free speech. I have written this editorial as if it were to be placed in a broad sheet newspaper such as the Guardian. One reason is because of its left wing views. There are subtle messages of multiculturalism in my editorial, and they would be out of place in a right-wing paper. If it were to be in the Guardian it wouldn't ruffle any feathers as it would be in keeping with other editorials that have been published in the same paper. Examples of these are *'This is not a cartoon war'* written by Anas Altukriti and *'I respect your articles of faith - will you respect mine?'* written by Timothy Garston. Another reason for wanting it to be published in the Guardian is because of its respected position in the UK as a broad sheet paper. If published in this paper, compared to The Sun for example, it lends more weight to my argument. My main intention is not to influence the reader into my way of thinking, but merely provoke thought amongst the audience with the arguments I put forward. I expect the readers of this broad sheet to be able to understand the language used in the editorial. This is useful because I use new, complex language, such as *'Islamophobia'*. I also expect the reader to have previous knowledge about the subject before reading the editorial.

I have used deductive reasoning as the main structure of my monologue. This means that I have stated my principles first, then come to a conclusion. This is based on the belief that I feel the majority of the audience will agree with me. ***'...something I am glad that our nation has prevented itself from doing.'*** By doing this, I create a rapport with my audience and this keeps them on my side. This makes it easier to put my points across.

On line four it says, ***'...a few have merely fuelled the flames by reprinting the pictures...'*** The use of flames is a metaphor for the anger provoked by the pictures. It also serves as imagery for the reader, as it's common knowledge that fuel added to fire merely makes it worse.

On line seven I have started to counter the opposition's arguments, so as to make them look unjustifiable. This is a key component of debating, as you can not rely on just your own arguments to persuade the audience. ***'In defence of the Danish paper, they have a right as an independent media tool to print whatever they like as long as they can justify it.'*** This I countered by stating ***'But surely with this right to have freedom of speech comes with it a responsibility to those who have access to what they print?'*** This is a rhetorical question, and because the answer to this question is obvious I feel that it has more emphasis than a direct statement. Instead I could have said, The right to have freedom of speech comes with a responsibility to those who have access to what they print. I have used quotes from respected columnists such as Gary Younge to back up my points. One of example of this is when I wrote, ***'If newspapers have a right to offend, then surely their targets have a right to be offended.'*** To have the support of these respected columnists lends weight to your own argument, and that is what I have tried to achieve when quoting Younge. He has been shortlisted for the First Book award and has been a Guardian columnist for many years now. With the quote being where it is, it is linked to the point made before it, leaving people to come up with their own conclusions. Because I expect them to be an educated audience, I feel they are more than capable of doing this.

From line 29 I have started to bring into account the economic effects that the whole affair has had on Denmark. Using statistics to back up your argument is always affective because they can be shaped to be in your favour and it's hard to argue against economic loss. ***'A boycott of Danish products in the gulf has cost Denmark \$27 million dollars.'***

I have tried not to distance myself from the people that I aim to defend - the Islamic Faith. By stating ***'the Islamic faith...'*** instead of saying 'them' or 'these people' I have achieved what I have aimed to do. Distancing the Islamic faith would make my argument seem contradictory, or that what I was arguing weren't my true opinions. Using the adjective of 'good' in ***'good people'*** means that I am continuing to try and reassure my audience that I am allying myself with the Muslim community.

I have ended the middle three paragraphs with rhetorical questions.

If newspapers have a right to offend, then surely their targets have a right to be offended?

Sympathising with the good people of the Islamic faith and not fuelling their fears would surely be a better idea. Right?

Is the western world not guilty of double standards?

This is not only to put thoughts into the reader's head, as they don't need to answer the question because the answer is obvious. But by placing it at the end of those paragraphs, I have tied up my main arguments in a strong way.

To conclude, I have used many rhetoric devices in the final paragraph. This was to really get my point across to the reader, as it is the last impression that my argument would have on the reader. I have used the rule of three, repetition of ***'not to the point'***, and alliteration of the sound 'b'.

'Free speech should be encouraged without a doubt, but not to the point of bullying a religion. Not to the point of bashing their integrity. And not to the point of betraying the good work that the majority of this religion does for this world.' The short sentences used makes the three statements stand out more.