**THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM**

**May 16, 2015**

**Pamela Geller’s “South Park” idiocy:**

**Satire, hatred and the right’s faith-based fear-mongering**

**by Sophia McClennen**

***On Sunday, two assailants attacked the “Jihad Watch Muhammad Art Exhibit and Cartoon Contest” in Garland, Texas. The attack left both assailants dead and a security guard wounded. Coming as it does on the heels of the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists in Paris, it has sparked a new round of debate over the line between free speech and hate speech.***

**Sophia, the term "hate crime" is a recent invention (1984).**

[**http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hate%20crime**](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hate%20crime)

**The related term "hate speech" is not listed in Webster's, but can be found in Dictionary.com.**

**The recent creation of the term "Hate speech" represents the greatest attack on freedom of speech since blasphemy laws were ruled unconstitutional in:**

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\_Burstyn,\_Inc.\_v.\_Wilson**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Burstyn%2C_Inc._v._Wilson)

**Just as "intelligent design" replaced "creationism" in an attempt to sneak it back into science classes in the public schools, the term "hate speech" is a similar attempt to euphemize the word "blasphemy" and force Americans back into submission.**

***And it has returned us again to the question of whether or not it is an unacceptable offense to challenge Muslim practices by depicting the Prophet Mohammed.***

**No Sophia, for Americans who understand the Bill of Rights, it has not returned us to that question. Only those of you who "don't get it" are confused.**

**(Next, Sophia goes into a long-winded distraction in which she tries to create a false equivalency between the threats received by the creators of "South Park," and the attempted mass killing in Garland, Texas. So I will skip ahead to the part where she finally gets back on the subject)**

***Rather than attempt to spark a debate about how fear, threats, and aggression can lead to censorship of satirical cartoons, Geller wants to draw out a fierce debate about the evils of the Islamic community. She wants to hype fear, not diminish it.***

**Sophia, in what journalism school did they teach you, to assume to know the motivations of the people you write about?**

**Even a professional psychologist would not dare to attempt to do, what you just did.**

***Even though she bristles at the idea that she would be characterized as anti-Islam the Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC] describes her as “the anti-Muslim movement’s most visible and flamboyant figurehead. She’s relentlessly shrill and coarse in her broad-brush denunciations of Islam.” They clearly describe her work as an example of hate speech.***

**Sophia, then the SPLC is complicit in returning America back to an era ruled by blasphemy laws.**

***Now we can all agree that violence is an inappropriate response to speech of any kind. And the attacks are an outrage. That is clear.***

**Sophia, nice disclaimer. But why do I feel a major "But" coming?**

***But there is a radical difference between satire and hate speech. While many debated whether the Charlie Hebdo cartoons had gone too far,***

**Sophia, just to prove that I'm willing to share the spotlight, I'll allow Jon Stewart to explain the difference to you:**

[**http://crooksandliars.com/2015/05/jon-stewart-takes-lone-star-lunatics-texas**](http://crooksandliars.com/2015/05/jon-stewart-takes-lone-star-lunatics-texas)

**Get it Sophia?**

**If those two would-be murderers would have treated this event, as other Muslims in Garland did, they would be alive today. But they have religious leaders and holy books encouraging them to violence; and as long as there are people like you, who are willing to cave in to terrorism (but call it "playing nice") rather than having the courage to confront it ... matters will only get worse.**

**Running from, or submitting to, violent threats has never paid off; unless you consider living as a submissive slave ... paying off.**

***there is little question that the “Jihad Watch Muhammad Art Exhibit and Cartoon Contest” had none of the irony, critique, or sarcasm of satire.***

**Sophia, so in addition to your expertise in psychology you are also an accomplished art critic?**

**My, what an arsenal of wisdom you possess.**

***It was just aggressive. Satire, of course, can get mean too. It can cross the line and punch down when it is supposed to punch up, but it’s goal is to attack ideas and institutions that deserve critical scrutiny and productive skepticism.***

**Sophia, it sounds like you just conceded.**

***So we should not be surprised that the editor-in-chief of Charlie Hebdo was outraged to hear that Geller organized her event in honor of the magazine. Gerard Biard told The Guardian ”When we make a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad, or Jesus, or Moses, we don’t mock or attack people.***

**Sophia, if that were true Biard wouldn't have multiple job openings for cartoonists at Charlie Hebdo, would he? If that were true, then how does Biard explain the hundreds of thousands of Muslim protesters around the world who thought the magazine got what it deserved?**

**Sophia, why don't you ask Biard those questions?**

***We mock or attack institutions, representatives, powers, and, again, political powers.”***

**Sophia, Biard's statement was a contradiction because political leaders ARE people.**

***At the heart of satire is the interest in calling attention to accepted truths, to questing* [SIC] *the status quo, and to exposing a lack of critical thinking. Geller’s project demands that her followers work entirely off of fear-based emotions, leaving all reason aside.***

**Sophia, how does her project demand work from fear-based emotions? What evidence do you offer to support your claim that they are "leaving all reason aside?"**

**Unless you can produce evidence for your claims, they are nothing more than baseless assertions designed to attack the person rather than her positions. By the way Sophia, do you plan to attack *any* of her positions, or is character assassination your whole plan?**

***This, of course, may be her greatest insult to the idea of free speech.***

**Sophia, talk about the pot calling the kettle black - it is you, and those like you, who represent the greatest insult to the idea of free speech.**

***Free speech is not a license to be stupid;***

**Sophia, from where did you draw the conclusion that free speech cannot be stupid?**

**There is no requirement that free speech be intelligent. Please feel free to provide evidence to the contrary ... I'll wait.**

***in fact, the very right to free speech depends on the idea that humans are rational subjects.***

**Sophia, then we are in big trouble because in the 21st century, the vast majority of humans still believe in invisible ghosts who control their lives; and half of those people believe that those ghosts are capable of mass murder and eternal torture; and they not only believe in these monsters ... they actually worship them.**

**So, if free speech depends on humans being rational subjects, as you claim, then our world would be so quiet you could hear an ant pass gas.**

***Sure we defend all sorts of speech under the notion of the first amendment, but we would never have even had such an amendment without a firm belief that the rights of the citizen should be grounded in reason and not faith.***

**Sophia, the very amendment you refer to ... is the same one that grants freedom of faith.**

**Nice contradiction.**

***And there is no greater testament to reason than satire.***

**Sophia, personally I would go with science.**

***Satire requires the brain to understand layers of meaning, to unpack irony, and to form independent ideas.***

**Sophia, understanding how satire may affect violent people also requires the brain to plan ahead and hire plenty of security before free speech events.**

**Sounds like Geller may have a better understanding of satire ... than you give her credit for.**

***This is why we need to see Geller as another example of the faith-based, fear-mongering thinking that increasingly defines the GOP, rather than the critical satire of Molly Norris’s cartoon poster or the work of Charlie Hebdo.***

**Sophia, see what you've done?**

**You've decided who should have free speech and who shouldn't. Frankly my dear, I'm glad that the First Amendment grants everyone that right rather than it being dictated ... by you.**

***Clearly Geller seems to be attempting to incite the exact sort of violence that took place in Garland, Texas.***

**Sophia, think about how insane (yes, I chose that word specifically) your statement is: you actually stated that you believe that Geller wanted two people killed, and hundreds more, including Geller herself, placed at risk of being murdered.**

**Do you even have any idea - how crazy you sound?**

**Your statement ranks right up there with those Texas Loonies who are calling in the National Guard to monitor military exercises.**

**That's why I could never be a Conservative nor a Liberal ...**

**you ideologues scare the Hell out of me.**

***In fact, it is worth asking if she already knew about the controversy surrounding the first cartoon effort. If she did, and there is good reason to suspect the possibility, then it is worth wondering whether Geller was hoping for violence.***

**Sophia, do you read "Alex Jones" - the conspiracy guy?**

[**http://www.infowars.com/**](http://www.infowars.com/)

**No?**

**Well, I bet he reads you.**

***She clearly knew what had already happened to Charlie Hebdo. As she all-too-excitedly claimed after the attacks: “This is a war, and the war is here.”***

**Sophia, there are thousands of people around the world (in graves) who would probably agree with Geller.**

**Ignoring war will not make it go away ... just ask Neville Chamberlain.**

***While she continues to whip up hype and hysteria, her anti-Islam smear campaign is about to come under satirical fire as a group of Muslims launch the “Fighting-Bigotry-with-Delightful-Posters Campaign” set to appear in New York City buses and subways next week.***

**Sophia, if Muslims had responded that way to begin with, Geller might not have needed to get involved in the free speech movement. Then maybe she could have devoted her energy to other issues such as the erosion of women's rights in America.**

**Sophia, think about this: those two Muslim men tried to kill a whole bunch of people with assault rifles. But the bus ads don't say "fighting violence and murder with love and understanding," do they?**

**The ads are only concerned with telling Americans not to punish peace-loving Muslims; and as far as I know, there has not been a violent backlash against Muslims in America this century.**

**What they want is the same thing Christians want ... they want their blasphemy laws back; and they're using people like you to get them.**

***The entire series is aimed directly at exposing the deep-seated bigotry of her projects. According to the organizers: “We decided our ads would be ridiculous, totally loving, and/or (hopefully) hilarious.”***

**Sophia, I'm all for it. In fact, that is Geller's message too (which you completely missed in this amateurish hack job): post bus ads, protest at events, organize to ensure equality - but stop the violence.**

**This event only proved that her work is still a long way from being finished. But we already knew that from world events, didn't we?**

***They go on to explain that they are explicitly using satirical humor to expose hate speech: “So why not ignore that Certain Bigot’s posters and check out ours?***

**Sophia, so Geller's a bigot - but they aren't?**

**Perhaps you could explain that one?**

***Besides, if you’re stuck on a subway platform staring at posters, wouldn’t you rather be laughing? Hate just doesn’t have the same entertainment value!” Their optimism is infectious, but sadly they miss the reality that for extremists like Geller who don’t understand satire, hate is extremely entertaining.***

**Sophia, watching you call someone a hateful extremist for attempting to exercise her First Amendment rights, made me go back to the point in this essay where you briefly referred to the men who wanted to murder her, and as many other infidels as they could catch in their gunsights.**

**I notice you didn't call them any names. You didn't even call them extremists.**

**It's psychologically intriguing how you reserve all your hate and vile insults for the woman they intended to murder, but had almost nothing to say ... about them.**

[**http://www.salon.com/2015/05/06/pamela\_gellers\_south\_park\_idiocy\_satire\_hatred\_and\_the\_rights\_faith\_based\_fear\_mongering/**](http://www.salon.com/2015/05/06/pamela_gellers_south_park_idiocy_satire_hatred_and_the_rights_faith_based_fear_mongering/)

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Global pandemic of fake medicines poses urgent risk**

**Poor quality medicines are a real and urgent threat that could undermine decades of successful efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Scientists report that up to 41% of specimens failed to meet quality standards in global studies of about 17,000 drug samples. An article describes the discovery of falsified and substandard malaria drugs that caused an estimated 122,000 deaths in African children in 2013. Other studies identified poor quality antibiotics, which may harm health and increase antimicrobial resistance. However, new methodologies are being developed to detect problem drugs at the point of purchase and show some promise.**

**This problem continues to spread globally, creating an even greater challenge to cooperation among stakeholders, many with limited resources. The need is urgent for collaboration among those with expertise in policy, science, technology, surveillance, epidemiology, and logistics, in order to secure global supply chains.**

**Globalization has added layers of complexity to the drug supply chain that requires greater oversight. Today's medical-product landscape blurs the line between domestic and foreign production, drawing attention to the need for global quality and safety oversight to prevent patient exposure to falsified products.**

**The pandemic of falsified and substandard medicines is pervasive and underestimated, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where drug regulatory systems are weak or non-existent.**

**An urgent and coordinated international response is required to address the pandemic of poor quality drugs. Policy proposals include a global agreement, similar to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and stricter national laws to prosecute those who knowingly sell counterfeit medicines.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Anonymous**

**"I’m sorry if my insensitivity towards your beliefs offend you.**

**But guess what – your religious wars, jihads, crusades, inquisitions, censoring of free speech, brainwashing of children, murdering of albinos, forcing girls into underage marriages, female genital mutilation, stoning, homophobia, and rejection of science and reason offend me.**

**So I guess we’re even."**