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"It was as if an *underground stream* flowed through the country and broke out in *sudden springs* that shot to the surface at random, in *unpredictable* places."– Ayn Rand

TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY



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OBJECTIVISM

The Undercurrent's cultural commentary is based on Ayn Rand's philosophy, Objectivism. Objectivism, which animates Ayn Rand's fiction, is a systematic philosophy of life. It holds that the universe is orderly and comprehensible, that man survives by reason, that his life and happiness comprise his highest moral purpose, and that he flourishes only in a society that protects his individual rights. In these pages we hope to defend these values. To learn more about the ideas behind them, you can begin by reading Ayn Rand's books, such as *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, or by visiting AynRand.org.

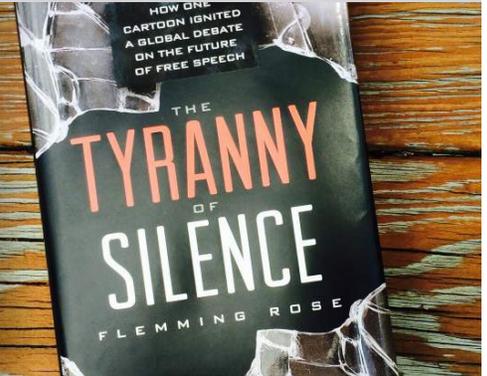


by Jon Glatfelter

A Three-Part Interview Series

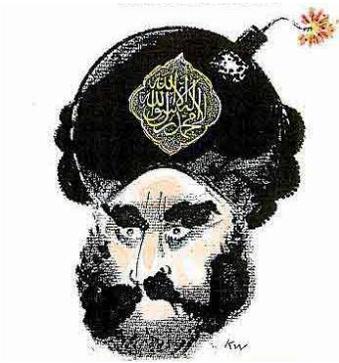
Recent attacks on free speech by Islamic radicals—including the Charlie Hebdo massacre and the “Draw Muhammad” contest shooting in Garland, Texas—warrant honest, open discussion. In the following interview excerpts, *The Undercurrent*’s Jon Glatfelter dove into the minds of three free speech advocates to get their separate takes on this crucial topic. Interested readers are encouraged to check out the full interviews, available at the links below each excerpt.

Part 1: The Tyranny of Silence: An Interview with Flemming Rose



Flemming Rose is the Foreign Editor for *Jyllands-Posten*, Denmark’s largest daily newspaper. In September 2005, he commissioned and published twelve cartoons about Islam, prompted by his perception of the European media’s self-censorship. One of those cartoons, an image of the prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his hair, sparked what would become known as the “cartoon crisis,” in which both peaceful and violent protests erupted across the world. The following excerpt samples ideas from Rose’s new book, *The Tyranny of Silence*,¹ including some of the history of the current crisis, the value of free speech, and how we can act to defend it.

The Undercurrent: I’d like to begin by talking about your decision to publish Kurt Westergaard’s Muhammad cartoon in September 2005. Why did you feel it was important to do?



Rose: Westergaard’s cartoon was one of twelve cartoons published. From the outset, my intention was not to offend Muslims’ religious sensibilities. Those cartoons were published for a reason, as part of a debate about self-censorship in Denmark, and Western Europe broadly, when it came to Islam. Westergaard’s cartoon was made in a context that included, just two months earlier, the “7/7 bombings” in London.²

On September 11th, 2005, *Jyllands-Posten* had a piece in the Sunday paper about a research project by Dr. Tina Maggaard of the University of Aarhus, which compared concepts of the enemy and images of violence in the central texts of ten reli-

gions.³ That started a big debate in Denmark. Imams joined in. People critical of Islam joined in. And during this time, a Danish children’s writer, Kare Bluitgren, came forward and gave an interview to *Jyllands-Posten*. He was writing a book for children about the life of the prophet Muhammad, but having difficulties finding illustrators to depict the prophet. *Jyllands-Posten* had an editorial meeting the following Monday. At that time, we didn’t know if Bluitgren was telling the truth or not. One of our reporters came up with the idea to invite illustrators and cartoonists to draw the prophet to see if self-censorship was legitimately happening. So I sat down and wrote a letter to the Danish cartoonist association and I invited 42 members to draw the prophet as they saw him. There was no requirement to ridicule. Denmark does have a tradition of religious satire, though only four of the twelve drawings published were actually depictions of Muhammad.⁴

Meanwhile, several incidents happened in Denmark and Western Europe that convinced me that this climate of self-censorship was real. First there was the incident at London’s Tate Britain gallery in mid-September 2005 involving an installation by artist John Latham. Latham’s work was a copy of the Bible, Talmud, and Koran torn into pieces, titled *God is Great*. Right before the installation was about to open, the museum’s board removed it without consulting Latham or the museum’s curator—nor did they ask Muslims, Jews, or Christians how they felt about the work—nor did they ask the police whether they saw any danger in displaying the installation. They retracted it because they were afraid of what might happen if they didn’t. So this was a clear example of self-censorship. A similar case in Gothenburg, Sweden occurred, when the Director of the Museum of World Culture removed the work of an Algerian artist that depicted a man and woman having sex. Inscribed above them were the Koran’s opening words.

And then Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who co-wrote the manuscript for a documentary by Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who was killed in 2004 for the film’s focus on the Koran’s justification for violence against women. In 2005, while one of Ali’s books was being translated into several Western European languages, several of the translators insisted on anonymity. They didn’t want to appear on the same cover as Ali because

¹ amzn.to/1MYuJEI

² <http://is.gd/2FooOV>

³ <http://is.gd/xkcLyp>

⁴ <http://is.gd/plrvlp>

The Undercurrent

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Mailing Address: *The Undercurrent*, TU Publications, Inc., 340 S. Lemon Ave #5680 Walnut, CA 91789
Telephone: (919) 747-3601

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J.A. Windham **Editor-in-Chief**

Thomas Duke **Assistant Editor**

Jon Glatfelter **Writer**

Sarah Martinson **Writer**

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she was receiving death threats. The publisher even deleted a sentence from her book's manuscript that was critical of the prophet.

Around the same time, in an interview with *Jyllands-Posten* a Danish comedian told me that he had no problem mocking the Bible in front of a camera, but feared for his life in mocking the Koran publicly.

Lastly, in Copenhagen, there was a meeting between the Danish Prime Minister and a group of Imams after the 7/7 Bombings. They talked about the relationship between the Muslim communities of Denmark and society-at-large. Afterwards two of the Imams called upon the Prime Minister to use his political influence to mandate that the Danish media cover what they viewed as blasphemous acts against Islam in Europe. They specifically called for laws that would criminalize criticism of Islam. That was clearly a call for censorship, to use governmental laws to control the press, which is incompatible with a liberal democracy.

All of these cases happened within a very short period of time. They convinced me that Bluitgren's difficulty finding an illustrator for his children's book was part of a broader story. That's why we published the twelve cartoons. The key point is that the cartoons didn't come out of the blue. It wasn't a way to provoke and gratuitously offend. There was a history and a debate and it made perfect sense to me. As a journalist you hear about a problem and want to find out if it is true or not. And one way to find out was to see how cartoonists would handle an invitation to depict Muhammad. We learned that there is self-censorship, and the fear is based in reality. People are being killed for drawing cartoons, as we saw in Paris earlier this year.⁵

TU: I'd like to turn to an idea you touch on in your book's closing, which seems to underlie much of your thinking on

free speech—the idea that any breach or limit placed on free speech is not merely a “political crime,” but a “violation of human nature.” Would you expand on that?

Rose: Yes, this in fact is something that I took from Salman Rushdie who I talked to in 2009. I think he put it very eloquently. The point here is what makes human beings different from other creatures is our ability to use language. We can use words to express ourselves in very eloquent and complex ways. We grow up telling and listening to stories. That's what turns us into the people we are. We create stories about ourselves, about our family, our environment, about our social interactions. Language is the key in all of this. In authoritarian regimes, what happens is that those in power forbid you from having your own stories. You can't say “This is the story that I want to tell,” or “This is what I believe,” or “This is important for this reason and that reason.”

Take the Soviet Union, where millions of people perished in concentration camps. You couldn't make that story public in the Soviet Union. You start to talk about it, then people in power say, “No, that's not the story, the story is building socialism in the Soviet Union.” Preventing people from having the opportunity to tell their own stories is a widespread method used by repressive regimes. But language, the ability to express oneself, is what it means to be human. I agree with Rushdie: when you infringe on that right, you not only commit a political crime against important democratic institutions, but against human nature itself.

TU: What do you think citizens can do to defend free speech and help prevent another Charlie Hebdo massacre or Garland, Texas shooting from happening?

(continued on page 12)

⁵ <http://is.gd/nib7YB>

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Legislative Paternalism:

How Toxic Laws Endanger Police and Citizens Alike



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by J.A. Windham

Less than a year since the deaths of Michael Brown¹ and Eric Garner,² police officers in this country are once again under national fire. In the wake of those earlier tragedies—which sparked destructive riots,³ mass protests,⁴ and even saw officers violently ambushed⁵ or murdered⁶ in cold blood—the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore poured gas on the fire of public dissent.⁷ Regularly referred to as “callous,”⁸ labeled “anti-black,”⁹ and likened to the “Gestapo,”¹⁰ police today are taking a public beating.¹¹

Although reliable statistics remain difficult to come by, there’s no doubt that unjustified police brutality does occur.¹² When it does, the officers responsible absolutely deserve condemnation and punishment for abuses tragically paid for in shattered human lives.

But there’s something missing from a perspective that pins the blame for that cost squarely on the shoulders of law enforcement officers.

Police officers are trained to be good at a very specific job: law enforcement. Murderers, thieves, kidnappers, and rapists pose a real threat to all of us, and it’s the job of police to enforce the laws that ban such savage, dangerous behavior. When criminals threaten innocent lives, officers must make split-second decisions about how to wield deadly force. It’s therefore crucial that police be well-enough trained and legally empowered to wield this force *only* in retaliation to the threats that criminals pose. But make no mistake: because their job is to protect people’s *lives*, officers must still be trained to wield potentially *deadly* force in response.

Understandably, reformers have focused on the need for procedural changes to better hold officers accountable for their conduct. For instance, recall that Officer Pantaleo killed Eric Garner by the use of a chokehold administered on suspicion that Garner was selling untaxed cigarettes—a criminal offense.¹³ Had Pantaleo simply followed department rules, some noted, he would never have administered that chokehold, and Garner would still be alive today.¹⁴

But chokehold or not, Pantaleo’s enforcement would nevertheless have involved some other *physical* means. Even if there are legitimate procedural concerns about how officers like Pantaleo engage with suspected criminals, adjusting the dial on the amount of force used can’t change the reality that laws must nevertheless *be enforced*, and that mistakes will sometimes be made. If we dial back the amount of force the police can use, we at some point run the risk of making them impotent bystanders to lawlessness.

The real problem—for officers and civilians alike—arises when procedures designed for dangerous criminals are applied to peaceful persons. What should shock us about a case like Eric Garner’s—or Tarika Wilson’s,¹⁵ or Kathryn Johnston’s,¹⁶ or Derek Cruice’s,¹⁷ or Bounkham Ponesavanh’s—is that Garner *wasn’t hurting anybody*.¹⁸ Had Garner just stabbed a man before resisting arrest, a chokehold might have been appropriate. But there was a glaring discord between Garner’s fundamentally peaceful sale of cigarettes, and the violent chokehold that brought him to “justice.” That discord arose, not as some

¹ <http://is.gd/Ck8hwi>

⁴ <http://is.gd/z1wBcB>

⁷ <http://is.gd/wOtNdd>

¹⁰ <http://is.gd/53cVDs>

¹³ <http://is.gd/Ha2gO9>

¹⁶ <http://is.gd/IS6jJs>

² <http://is.gd/YELB5i>

⁵ <http://is.gd/fKpWjd>

⁸ <http://is.gd/7Y1qyK>

¹¹ <http://is.gd/oGA8Vk>

¹⁴ <http://is.gd/VsvkwM>

¹⁷ <http://is.gd/PiFNA7>

³ <http://is.gd/a6Anls>

⁶ <http://is.gd/D43cSc>

⁹ <http://is.gd/BRv6JA>

¹² <http://is.gd/DJN1iE>

¹⁵ <http://is.gd/Yp24hd>

¹⁸ <http://is.gd/Qj6Dh5>

claim,¹⁹ from a problem with chokeholds *per se*, but from the fact that a *law* authorized an officer to exercise *any* force at all in dealing with Garner.²⁰

When the law is used paternalistically, to *rule* peaceful people like Garner, it should come as no surprise when enforcement itself becomes corrupted. While a proper legal code protects peaceful citizens exclusively from dangerous acts like murder and theft, paternalistic law goes beyond this. The hallmark of paternalistic law is that it attempts to use force against citizens for their own good or to enforce conventional morals. Because it creates a series of victimless crimes and seeks to nanny the choices of the perpetrators themselves, paternalism opens the door for police to engage in a litany of abuses not otherwise permissible. Nowhere is this clearer than with the War on Drugs.

As David Simon notes, “[p]robable cause was destroyed by the drug war.”²¹ Because of the War, police are given greater incentive and leeway to stop citizens randomly in the streets, to pry into their pockets, to search their cars, to break down their doors and to search their homes—all on suspicion of carrying a few leafy greens. Where the standard for police-citizen contact should have been the probability that a suspect was doing harm to others, paternalism reduces it to the probability that a suspect isn’t living the life that the law commands him to live. Paternalism makes nagging tyrants of the men that should have been our protectors. It’s an atrocious sham—a complete mockery of law itself.

Predictably—just as occurred during Prohibition—when the law levies the penal code against peaceful persons in this way, it also unnecessarily endangers the lives of all involved.²²

Paternalism forces those who might previously have been peaceful (albeit, flawed) members of society to take security into their own hands. Others, like those seeking to transport and sell large quantities of drugs, get pushed into a deviant criminal underworld where police are the enemy, rather than guardians. It’s no surprise that the greater the incentive for private citizens to take security into their own hands, the higher the chances that police get harmed in the line of duty, and thus the greater the incentive for officers to further militarize enforcement. Asking officers to enforce paternalistic laws exhibits a profound disrespect for their lives and safety.

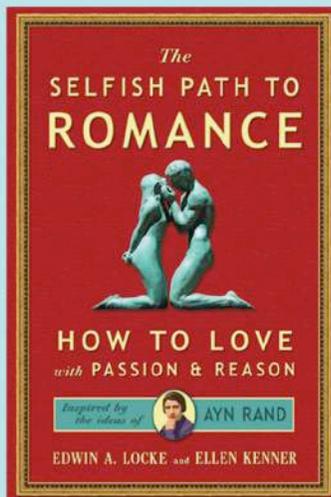
What paternalism does to well-meaning police is especially tragic. While drug pushers don’t force us to smoke blunts, police officers can and *must* enforce the law against all who engage in such conduct, and by coercive means. Not only does this force officers to risk potentially life-threatening physical altercations (should their fugitives resist arrest or retaliate), it also forces those who signed up “to serve and protect” to act in direct contradiction to that purpose. In so doing, it bastardizes the good-will of those who want to protect, while tragically incentivizing the lowest type of people—those who seek *power* over others—to sign up for a chance to rule.

Paternalism thwarts the very purpose of a proper legal system: to *protect us* from harm by others. When police dedicate resources to hunting down mere vices, they’re necessarily *not* focused to that extent on catching truly dangerous criminals. Neglecting dangerous criminals to persecute peaceful persons

(continued on page 12)

¹⁹ <http://is.gd/w4eMDW> ²⁰<http://is.gd/7muKZ4> ²¹<http://is.gd/klym1o>
²² <http://is.gd/uFhU1l>

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—Equality 7-2521, *Anthem* by Ayn Rand

"That's Why I Draw You":

An Interview with Bosch Fawstin



Bosch Fawstin is an accomplished artist, cartoonist, and free speech activist. His entry, printed above, took home First Prize in the “Draw Muhammad” event in Garland, Texas. The Undercurrent’s Jon Glatfelter had the privilege of interviewing Bosch.

The Undercurrent: In a recent interview with Fox News, you stated that you draw Muhammad because it’s dangerous. What is it about these radical Muslims that makes drawing a cartoon so dangerous? Further, is there any danger in *not* drawing them, by way of self-censorship?

Fawstin: If telling the truth about something can get you killed, then that truth needs to be told again and again and again and again. And the same thing goes for drawing Muhammad. What kind of world would it be if none of us drew Muhammad? The Muslim world. And a small minority of us understands that and will continue drawing Muhammad. As for the Islamic origins of the prohibition of drawing Muhammad, as with everything else in Islam, it’s convoluted. Idolatry is rejected in Islam, yet Muslims idolize Muhammad and murder those who draw him. Moreover, there have been images of Muhammad throughout Islamic history, so this modern war on those who draw Muhammad is likely part and parcel of the Jihad on us, where Muslims feel so encouraged by our weak leaders, that they want to make us de facto Muslims.

And yes, self-censorship is dangerous to the individual practicing it and to our culture at large, because it allows savages to have power over your mind. And further, if you’ve consigned yourself to shutting your mouth, you see those who speak out and defy the savages as a threat to your own safety, and you begin seeing them as the problem. Just look at the reaction to Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer and me, post-Garland.

TU: The tolerance mentality runs rampant today, most especially in our universities. What do you think the American people—and students in particular—can do to support free speech and condemn those tolerance warriors who would silence it?

Fawstin: To speak the truth. Speak it, and put these “tolerance warriors” on the defense. They’re bullies who will go to great lengths to protect themselves from the truth, and we should never play along. These tolerance warriors tolerate evil and

should be called on it. I think we should speak and act as if political correctness—and its offshoot, what I call Islamic correctness—doesn’t exist, and should not be observed. Because if you do play along and bite your tongue, you’re taking part in corrupting the truth.

Image courtesy of Bosch Fawstin

Read the full interview at: <http://theundercurrent.org/thats-why-i-draw-you-an-interview-with-bosch-fawstin/>

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Triumph over Tragedy:



The Tale of Adrienne Haslet-Davis and Hugh Herr's Self-Dedication



by *Sarah Martinson*

The conspirator behind the Boston Marathon bombings was found guilty only days before the second anniversary of the bombings and a week before the second marathon since the attack.¹

The Boston bombing was a terrible tragedy. Thousands of marathon runners descended upon Boston to celebrate human achievement, and in minutes, their lives were turned into madness and

unimaginable terror.

Despite the horrific nature of this event, in the midst of the panic that erupted, people didn't let the actions of the man behind the Boston bombing destroy their optimism about their lives and futures. One story in particular illustrates this poignantly.

A year ago, in Vancouver, British Columbia, to the shock and awe of many, Adrienne Haslet-Davis,² a dance instructor and professional ballroom dancer, made her dancing debut after losing her left leg in the Boston Marathon bombings.³ With the help of a bionic prosthetic ankle, Haslet-Davis was able to learn to dance again.

Only days after witnessing gruesome horror and bloodshed with her stitches still in place, Haslet-Davis announced on national television against the unlikely odds that she would dance again.⁴

For months, Haslet-Davis spent hours in intense physical therapy with unwavering focus.⁵ When the nub of her left leg swelled up from a poor-fitting prosthetic, she endured the pain and kept walking. Every time she fell down, she got back up. Despite the uncertainty of whether she would ever be able to dance again, she had the resilience to keep moving forward in her recovery.

During Haslet-Davis' recovery, walking through the streets of Boston was a nightmare for her. Everywhere she went, she thought a bomb might explode and that every stranger was out to kill her. Even though she felt this way, she did not succumb to her sorrows. Instead, she continued to live a productive life. She had the honesty to accept that what had happened to her was only one moment in her life and it didn't have to define the rest. With integrity and courage, she moved forward by persistently trying to find a way to dance again.

But her story doesn't end there. Despite her determination, Haslet-Davis wouldn't have been able to dance again without the help of a biomechanics professor for MIT, Hugh Herr.⁶

A traditional plastic prosthetic leg only allowed Haslet-Davis limited motion, but dancing is a tricky art that requires a full range of movement. To dance, a person has to be able to move consistently to a steady beat in a systematic way. She has to be light on her feet while being able to pivot 360 degrees, all while maintaining a center of gravity. When she tried to move gracefully, her prosthetic leg was like a ball and chain tripping her every step. She needed a prosthetic limb that was light and allowed her a full range of motion. The limb she needed didn't exist until Hugh Herr created it.

Herr first heard about Haslet-Davis' story when he saw her initial interview with Anderson Cooper on CNN, where she proudly announced she would dance again. After hearing her story and meeting her in person, he realized the only way she would be able to dance again was if he created her a custom bionic leg, and he decided to do just that.

When Herr was 17, he was in a mountain climbing accident on Mount Washington in New Hampshire.⁷ He and his friend were stranded in a blizzard for four days that resulted

¹ <http://is.gd/KyJEXG>

² <http://is.gd/qxghvo>

³ <http://is.gd/tx9Xjt>

⁴ <http://is.gd/piNdLf>

⁵ <http://is.gd/cuGCCq>

⁶ <http://is.gd/0pKeMn>

⁷ <http://ti.me/1zZ5Sth>

in the amputation of both of his legs. After his accident, Herr felt an overwhelming amount of guilt because the expedition had been his idea. Now he could no longer mountain climb, his friend had lost his left leg, and a rescue worker died in the avalanche trying to save them. Despite his grief, he was determined to climb mountains again.

Before Herr, little advancement had been made in prosthetics. Until the last decade, prosthetics operated very much as they did 500 years ago when they were first invented. Since there were no prosthetics designed to help Herr climb mountains again, he decided to create his own.

At first Herr used raw materials such as scrap metal and wood, but it would not be long before his technique would become more sophisticated. He studied mechanical engineering at MIT and went on to earn his Ph.D. in biophysics at Harvard. Later, he got a postdoc at MIT to study biomedical devices. In 2004, *TIME* magazine named his computer-controlled knee prosthetic one of the year's best inventions.⁸ In 2011, *TIME* named Herr the "Leader of the Bionic Age."

To achieve all that he did, Herr had to have much more than a Ph.D. in biophysics. He had to have the honesty to accept what happened to him and then the courage and integrity to move forward with his life. Since no prosthetics were available to help him climb mountains again, he had to be self-reliant and take control of his situation. Through his years of school, he had to have unyielding focus on his goals and endure the demanding and frustrating mental task of discovering new ways to improve prosthetics. His situation seemed bleak, but Herr had to have the determination and perseverance to make it better.

Herr related to Haslet-Davis' story because of the way she

braved circumstances he had faced himself. She was determined not to let the actions of men that tried to kill her define her life. In defiance of the terrorists who tried to end her life, she reclaimed it. Similarly, when nature tried to seize the reins of Herr's life, he did not surrender. He maintained control over his life.

For Herr and Haslet-Davis to achieve their goals, they first had to develop the character traits necessary to achieve specific goals and values. Haslet-Davis' recovery depended on her honesty, productivity, courage, determination, self-reliance, and integrity. And before Herr could help Haslet-Davis, he had to possess these same character traits to pursue his own recovery and a career as an inventor.

By developing the same self-sustaining virtues, Herr and Haslet-Davis were able to improve their lives tremendously. Yet the virtue we are told to strive for today is not selfish dedication to our own lives, but selflessness.

Instead of investing in our own goals, our parents, teachers, and political leaders tell us to dedicate our lives to others. They tell us to put others before ourselves. We are told to devote our time and money to the less fortunate in soup kitchens, retirement homes, and third-world countries. We are told that our happiness is not possible otherwise. We are told that we owe our success to society and that dedicating our lives to others is payment for our debt to them.

But imagine if Herr and Haslet-Davis followed this advice. Would the outcome of their stories have been the same?

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⁸ <http://ti.me/lz0nbPq>

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Fostering a Culture of Consent: How to Cultivate Fundamental Opposition to Rape



by J.A. Windham

In recent years, the issue of sexual assault—especially on college campuses—has commanded heightened public attention.¹ Despite a 58%² reduction in rape rates across all age groups between 1995 and 2010, outrage over a “sexual assault crisis” seems stronger than ever.³ The Obama Administration has now taken action, ordering schools governed by Title IX to employ a lower evidentiary standard for sexual harassment and assault cases.⁴

Feminists in particular have popularized the term “rape culture”⁵—the idea that sexual assault is the product of longstanding social mores, such as an underlying “historic and systemic”⁶ violence, or an underlying cultural sexism—often flatly labeled “patriarchy.”⁷ Social symptoms commonly labeled expressions of this “rape culture” include “victim blaming,” “slut shaming,” “sexual objectification,” and “rape trivialization.”

Rape and sexual assault are morally atrocious and profoundly evil. And the idea of a “rape culture” does have its finger on an important issue: that this is a deep cultural problem which cannot be resolved easily by harsher penalties⁸ (or louder protests).⁹ But the social factors identified by proponents of the “rape culture” diagnosis are relatively superficial; to focus on them is to ignore the deeper causes of the rapist’s mentality.

While some sexual assault is horrendously violent, a high percentage of sexual assaults occur when both parties have been drinking, and often this counts as sexual assault only because the victim is simply not in a position to consent.¹⁰ Assuredly, any sex without consent is inexcusable. But the fact

remains that sexual assault is not always violent in the sense of involving a physical struggle. Victims in these cases will either not think to protest or to put up physical resistance, and may only later realize that they were not in a position to consent. Sexual assault cannot be an expression of an underlying culture of violence when so many sexual assaults involve no physical struggle. What makes sexual assault of an intoxicated victim a crime is that the victim lacks the capacity to rationally consent.

Some feminists blame sexism. But while many rapes may be partially motivated by sexism, sexism is not the key element explaining their continued occurrence. There are plenty of sexists who would never dare commit the act of rape. And as RAINN reports, many rapists are more likely to become serial *criminals* than serial rapists: 46% are re-arrested for other crimes, including other violent crimes and property offenses.¹¹ Many rapists are thus equal opportunity victimizers: they don’t seem to care about getting *anybody’s* consent for anything.

It takes the mindset of a criminal to commit the act of rape—the attitude of someone with a one-track mind bent on satisfying his momentary whims, unconcerned with abstract hindrances like the “consent” of others. But why *does* consent matter?

Consider the quintessential example of disregard for the consent of another: slavery. Like the rapist, the slave master assumes control over the slave’s body—not for the span of one encounter, but for the slave’s entire life. Slaves knew that if ever

¹ <http://is.gd/I0GTM8>

² <http://is.gd/XqA89u>

³ <http://is.gd/jDFTx1>

⁴ <http://is.gd/q9rICn>

⁵ <http://is.gd/ccn1Yr>

⁶ <http://is.gd/c3vtix>

⁷ <http://is.gd/X6Vrxx>

⁸ <http://is.gd/HyZaIK>

⁹ <http://is.gd/XayND6>

¹⁰ <http://is.gd/hpmpCL>

¹¹ <http://is.gd/2G0mdq>

they did resist, the whip was sure to follow. The master treated his slaves as mere tools or beasts of burden that existed for the sake of his profit and pleasure. As Frederick Douglass put it, “The first work of slavery is to mar and deface those characteristics of its victims which distinguish men from things, and persons from property. . . . It reduces man to a mere machine.”

What distinguishes persons from property, or even from pets? Unlike other animals, human beings live and flourish through the use of their rational minds.¹² To ignore and trample on the consent of another is to treat him as a mindless object to be used and abused as one pleases—to act as an animal oneself. To respect the consent of another is to acknowledge the sanctity of his sovereign mind and his right to live in accordance with it, just as one demands the same sovereignty and right for oneself.

Consent is *especially* important to the value of sexual interaction. Unlike dogs who, out of instinct, mount everything in sight just because they can, human beings aren’t bound to act on whim. We spend our lives scrupulously searching for that perfect companion for life’s journey. And we ultimately choose our partner, not because they’ll serve our needs and placate our sexual desires, but because of what their conscious minds have to offer us.¹³ We choose our partners for all they’ve *chosen* to be. To rape is to deface a richly rewarding celebration of partnership and love. To rape is to mount another as unscrupulously and mindlessly as a dog would.

Sadly, sexual interactions aren’t the only cases where our culture undervalues the importance of consent. Ask yourself whether you always consider the consent of others in your everyday life. Do you care about the consent of the musician when you download his music without payment?¹⁴ What about the consent of the t-shirt vendor who refuses to sell shirts with your design?¹⁵ Do you consider the consent of the baker when he denies you the cake you would like baked?¹⁶ How about the consent of the restaurant owner whose facility you storm in political protest? Do you care about *my* consent, when you vote to force me (and everybody else) to buy health insurance, whether I desire it or not?¹⁷

To be sure, rape is far worse—far more repugnant—than any of these offenses. But is it different in principle? The dormroom rapist who bypasses the consent of his intoxicated victim is entirely unconcerned with his victim’s most intimate personal wishes—it’s *his* will that comes first. And just as the rapist trivializes the mind of his victim by taking command of a body not his own, so does the demonstrator who takes control of a space that isn’t his to occupy, interfering with the lives and careers of others who have the right to use it. The same is true for the healthcare-mandators, the cake-demanders, and even the illegal-downloaders: to one extent or another, their victims are treated as objects to be owned, used, and commanded. The reasoning of the perpetrator in each case is simple and vicious: “I *feel* like taking this. I’ll take it.”

If we hope ever to succeed in the battle against sexual assault, it’s this cavalier attitude towards consent that we must fight. For if we consistently permit the use of force in society *to run people’s entire lives*, how can we possibly expect to be taken seriously when suddenly stressing the importance of consent in cases of non-violent sexual assault?

The way to combat behavior like sexual assault is not to speak out against a “rape culture,” but to advocate and foster a *culture of consent*—not just about sex, but in every area of life. Each of us as individuals must internalize and practice a sincere respect for the lives of others. This demands recognizing

the sanctity of the sovereign mind, of the fact that others are not mere fodder for our whims, and that they can never be of value to us if treated as such.

A culture of consent respects the idea that my end does not justify the seizure of your means. It demands that when I seek my favorite artist’s new album, I purchase it—that when I want a cake or a shirt designed my way, I ask the maker if he would be willing to do it my way—that when I want to start a charity for the poor, I *persuade* others to donate to the cause. And yes, it absolutely demands that when I seek the romantic affection of another, I earn it—not take it. Ultimately, a culture of consent offers the only civil terms on which individuals may deal with one another, treating persons, not as mere fodder, but as ends in themselves.

¹² <http://is.gd/qaXqBu> ¹³ <http://is.gd/6mx9Px> ¹⁴ <http://is.gd/9pZ3TS>
¹⁵ <http://is.gd/Ma9nLw> ¹⁶ <http://is.gd/Cn49yv> ¹⁷ <http://is.gd/wyMg4s>

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THE TYRANNY OF SILENCE

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Rose: They can do many things. First, teach their kids the importance of free expression. Introduce these issues into the school curriculum. That's where the battle for hearts and minds is being fought, at the various educational institutions. Right after the attack in Paris and Copenhagen, a lot of people were afraid—and still are. Editors are censoring themselves and are afraid to admit it. But I think it's very courageous to admit you are afraid. So we can have this honest discussion: do we want to live in a fear society, or a free society? Many of the mechanisms that I saw in the Soviet Union, of a fear society, are showing their face in liberal democracies in Europe, even though Western Europe is fighting not a state, but rather individuals and groups who threaten to kill offenders. I want to have an honest discussion about that.

Read the full interview at: <http://theundercurrent.org/the-tyranny-of-silence-an-interview-with-flemming-rose/>

The Undercurrent is happy to offer interviewees a platform for their ideas. Their responses do not necessarily represent the views of the publication at large.

LEGISLATIVE PATERNALISM

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is a surefire way for police to become public enemy number one. When the public loses trust in officers, enforcing the law becomes vastly more difficult—just ask the Baltimore police.²³

If we recognize the root of the problem, we'll see that it doesn't have to come to this. Law enforcement is a *two-part* endeavor: police enforce the laws—that legislatures enact. While officers like the one who killed Eric Garner deserve to be punished, legislatures deserve *primary* blame for commanding him to engage a peaceful person in an inherently violent way.

Lawmakers aren't our rulers. Their job is to *pass laws designed to protect us* from those who *would* try to rule us—the murderers, the thieves, the kidnappers, the rapists. Just as legislators depend on police to get the job done when they make murder illegal, so too do officers depend on lawmakers to pass laws that are worth the risk of enforcing. When that dynamic

is compromised by laws authorizing officers to pull guns on peaceful persons, police are put in lose-lose situations. Officers must then choose between risking their lives to harm the citizens they swore to protect, and turning their backs on the laws they swore to enforce. No officer should ever have to make that choice.

The gravity of the power and responsibility with which we entrust officers lends itself to impassioned reactions to their victories, but also to their mistakes. Officers who halt killing sprees are praised as heroes, while officers who gun down innocent men become, in an instant, villains. But police aren't philosophers or jurists. While we can rightly expect that they think critically about their jobs and refrain from wanton abuse, we can't expect officers to “pause and reflect” on the justice of every law they enforce and still remain effective. The whole point of their job is not to pick and choose some laws to enforce, but to enforce *the* law—and to enforce it *well*.

Insofar as lawmakers deviate from their purpose of protecting us, they make tyrants of the men that should have been, and swore to be, our guardians. In so doing, they endanger the lives of officers and civilians alike. We can tinker with enforcement procedure all we want—and we ought to, until we get it *right*. We can blame and punish police officers all we want—and we ought to, until *they* get it right. But no amount of procedural justice can cure the abuse implicit in fundamentally oppressive laws. And letting legislatures off scot-free grants them license to continue corrupting law enforcement at its core. That's a dangerous way to treat our police officers, and quite a vile evil to unleash on our fellow citizens.

²³ <http://is.gd/oGA8Vk>

TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY

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If Haslet-Davis had put others before herself after the Boston Marathon bombings, she would have dedicated her time and money to other families affected by the tragedy. But if she had spent her time consoling others impacted by the tragedy, she would not have been able to put the necessary time into the physical therapy she needed to dance again.

If Herr had spent all his time in VA hospitals bonding with veterans who had missing limbs like himself, he wouldn't have had time to scavenge scrap yards for materials to build new prosthetic limbs, and he wouldn't have had time to experiment with his new limbs on canyons and cliffs.

Incidentally, Herr and Haslet-Davis have both been able to help others far more by putting their own lives first.

By choosing to create better, more mobile prosthetics, Herr helped Haslet-Davis enormously on her journey to dance again. But before Herr could create a custom prosthetic for her, he first had to pursue his own rational self-interest. Herr's happiness depended on improving his own life above all.

Haslet-Davis' dancing triumph has now become an inspiration to other amputees that their disability does not have to be a barrier from achieving their goals. But she had to value her own ability to dance above all other things to be able to offer this inspiration.

What Haslet-Davis and Herr's story powerfully illustrates to all of us is what a person can accomplish when he pursues his own rational self-interest and what he can accomplish with others who do the same.



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An Interview with Onkar Ghate

Dr. Onkar Ghate is a senior fellow and the Chief Content Officer at the Ayn Rand Institute.¹ He has written and lectured extensively on philosophy and serves as Dean for the Institute's Objectivist Academic Center in Irvine, California. In the following excerpt, Dr. Ghate discusses the recent shooting at the "Draw Muhammad" cartoon contest in Garland, Texas, as well as religion and free speech more broadly.

The Undercurrent: Many of the major U.S. media players, including CNN and FOX, still have not published the cartoon contest's winning piece. Why do you think that is?

Dr. Ghate: I haven't kept tabs on which outlets have and have not published that cartoon, but there were similar responses in regard to the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons and, before that, the Danish cartoons in 2005-2006. Sometimes a media outlet would try to explain why it is not showing its audience a crucial element of the news story, and I think these explanations have revealed a mixture of motives at work.

Here's a non-exhaustive list: fear, cowardice, appeasement, sympathy. Let me say a word on each. Some media outlets are afraid of violent reprisals and of the ongoing security costs that would be necessary to protect staff. And because the U.S. government refuses to take an unequivocal stand in defense of the right to free speech, the totalitarians are emboldened, which makes violent reprisals more likely. So that's one reason. But despite this legitimate fear, I do think there is often an element of cowardice. The likelihood of an attack can be overstated, and of course if more news outlets publish the cartoons, it is more and more difficult to intimidate and attack them all, and less and less likely that a particular organization will be singled out. Here there is strength in numbers. A third motive is the appeaser's false hope that if he gives in and doesn't publish the cartoons, he will have satisfied the attackers and no further threats or demands will follow. Finally, many are sympathetic:

out of deference to the non-rational, faith-based emotions of Muslims, they don't publish the cartoons, even though those cartoons are news. They view the cartoonists and publishers as the troublemakers and villains. (The roots of this sympathy I think are complex and often ugly.)

TU: Some have condemned the contest's organizer, Pamela Geller, and the winning artist, Bosch Fawstin.² They say there's a world of difference between good-natured free expression and malicious speech intended solely to antagonize. What do you think?

Dr. Ghate: I disagree with many things that I've heard Pamela Gellar say but I refuse to discuss her real or alleged flaws when totalitarians are trying to kill her, as though those flaws, even if real, justify or mitigate the actions of the aspiring killers. The *New York Times* editorial to which you link is a disgrace. After a sanctimonious paragraph saying that we all have the right to publish offensive material and that no matter how offensive that material may be, it does not justify murder, the rest of the editorial goes on to criticize the victim of attempted murder. As my colleague and others have noted, this is like denouncing a rape victim instead of her rapists.³

And notice what the editorial glosses over: in the first paragraph stating that offensive material does not justify murder, it concludes with the seemingly innocuous point that "it is incumbent on leaders of all religious faiths to make this clear to their followers."

This is the actual issue. Why don't you similarly have to tell a group of biochemists or historians, when they disagree about a theory, that their disagreements don't justify murdering each other? The answers lies in the difference between reason and faith, as I'm sure we'll discuss, a difference the editorial dares

¹ <http://aynrand.org/> ² <http://is.gd/lsR8ps> ³ <http://is.gd/S8wo5V>

not discuss.

But contra the editorial, the Garland event had a serious purpose. Look at the winning cartoon: it makes a serious point.



Image courtesy of Bosch Fawstin

Whether we will admit it or not, there exists today a growing number of totalitarians who seek to impose their version of Islam on the world and to dictate what we in the West can and cannot say. A precedent-setting episode was the fatwah against Salman Rushdie. A foreign leader openly calls for the assassination of a Western author and those involved in the publishing of his book, *The Satanic Verses*, and the U.S. and other Western governments do virtually nothing in response, sometimes worse than nothing.⁴

Fast forward a few years and should it be surprising that there exists a climate of self-censorship with respect to Islam? Western writers, artists and cartoonists are afraid to publish things that might be deemed blasphemous by Muslims. To investigate the extent of the self-censorship in regard to illustrations of Muhammad, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* runs a cartoon contest in 2005. Worldwide riots and outrage ensue, death threats proliferate, cartoonists and newspaper editors go into hiding, some are later attacked, and the official Western response to all this is again mostly pathetic.

To me this is a serious problem. There are many other episodes that could be mentioned to drive home the extent of the problem, but a simple way to appreciate its extent is to ask yourself whether you can imagine that instead of the sacrilegious *Book of Mormon* winning over audiences and critics on Broadway, it is the equally sacrilegious musical *The Koran*. Right now, this isn't even in the realm of the possible. Remember what happened when, in the face of the Danish cartoon crisis, Trey Parker and Matt Stone tried to depict Muhammad on *South Park*?

Now in the face of a totalitarian movement that commands us not to utter blasphemous thoughts and threatens us with death if we do, coupled with our own governments' appeasing responses, I think it becomes the responsibility of any self-respecting citizen to refuse to cower and for us as a culture to refuse to collapse into self-censorship.⁵ Instead, proudly and defiantly utter the blasphemous thoughts. I think a worthy project during the Rushdie years would have been to raise a fund to make his life in hiding easier, purchase the rights to his book for a generous sum, and then publish and distribute millions of copies for free. Similarly with the *Charlie Hebdo* assassinations, I argued that the forbidden cartoons should be plastered all over the Internet.⁶ Let it be seen that the attempt to ban these works



Charlie Hebdo image from November 3, 2011 cover

achieves the opposite. Make it clear that the totalitarian's goal requires killing us all. Declare that I, too, am Spartacus.⁷

I view the Fawstin cartoon as in this same spirit and thus as making a serious, needed point.

TU: In a recent panel⁸ with Flemming Rose, author of *The Tyranny of Silence*, you said that an individual's right to free speech is one application of a more fundamental right: their right to think.⁹ Could you explain that?

Dr. Ghate: The great battle for freedom in the West was a battle for freedom of thought, including everything this freedom presupposes and everything it leads to. The right to freedom of thought is the right to think for yourself, which means the right to engage in a reasoning process: to gather evidence, logically analyze and weigh it, entertain different arguments, form and follow hypotheses, perform experiments, pursue various lines of questioning, etc., etc. A reasoning process can have no master other than facts and logic. It cannot be subordinate to the approval of a king, pope, president, or fellow citizen, no matter how much they disagree or are offended by what you think. An aspect of this process is to be able to freely discuss and debate ideas with others, and to then present your views and conclusions in an effort to persuade others. Freedom of thought and freedom of speech go together.

Historically, the opponents of freedom of thought and freedom of speech are political authorities operating with the sanction of religion (or some other mystical dogma, like Marxism or Nazism) and religious leaders wielding political power.

Read the full interview at: <http://theundercurrent.org/free-speech-vs-religion-an-interview-with-onkar-ghate/>

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⁴ <http://is.gd/j5EfTg>

⁵ <http://is.gd/vTUbUz>

⁶ <http://is.gd/bWxChQ>

⁷ <http://is.gd/RapRff>

⁸ <http://is.gd/kqzDKH>

⁹ <http://is.gd/mFKXog>

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