

Perspective

Serena Williams, Satire and the Politically Correct World

You can have your point of view on which is the larger disgrace, Serena Williams' outburst at the US Open or her inequitable penalties relative to male tennis players. But today I write about the ancillary matter of an incendiary cartoon of the incident in the Australian newspaper, the *Herald Sun*. Seen it? Go look.

by
PETER M. LUPOFF

There's been much public and social media outcry about this cartoon, most outraged by it, but some questioning the limitations on free speech, satire and humor, lamenting our "PC culture." The *Herald Sun* has doubled down, pushing the matter to its cover to run a post-brouhaha cartoon, entitled, *Welcome to PC World*. Williams, in the original cartoon, is stomping on her tennis racket, a baby pacifier on the ground next to her, while her opponent, Naomi Osaka, is asked by the umpire to "just let her win." Note that Osaka, who is bi-racial (Haitian dad,

Japanese mom), is rendered very much like a blonde, white woman in the cartoon. Note too, that the question by the line judge along with the Serena tantrum paint a picture of a situation where Williams is solely to blame and wholly accountable. This is the artist's point - fine.

But surely you noticed that Williams is drawn with Jim Crow-style exaggerated features?

So this is the rub: In the name of humor, satire, free speech, is it fair to exploit stereotypes in the imagery? I don't think so. Taking this same cartoon, is the message lost absent the 1920s depiction of Williams' facial features? In the converse, is part of what you find funny the offending rendering?

The *Herald Sun*, in support of the artist and of free expression, offered up a cover the next day, replete with many newsworthy personalities drawn with cartoonish exaggeration and captioned, as mentioned, *Welcome to PC World* - one problem with this "defense" however, is that none of the other drawings exploited racial stereotypes, just that of Williams.

It strikes me that bemoaning a politically correct world

is the knee-jerk response of someone not targeted and offended, or someone in the business of getting a laugh or rise from an audience and fine with the simplest way. Or perhaps, just someone tired of working through this new minefield created by people not like them, seeking fairness and equality? Crying PC is frequently about an incursion in our previously unfettered but hurtful communications.

We are supposed to work harder to be funny and to make our point without wounding people based on race, religion, physical challenges, etc. To do otherwise is deliberately cruel at worst, lazy at best.

With this in mind, think again at the cartoon of Williams. We may agree or disagree about the unfortunate conclusion of the Williams-Osaka match, but respecting the artist's point of view, is the cartoon any less potent without racial caricature?

Peter M. Lupoff and his family have a home in Putnam Valley. He teaches at Yale and Fordham Universities.

A Good Time at Cold Spring Senior & Volunteer Luncheon

The sun was warm and bright Saturday afternoon, as the Mayor's Park pavilion was filled with laughter and satisfied stomachs at the Cold Spring senior luncheon. The village-sponsored event also honored the village's employees and volunteers.

The food, such as sandwiches, pasta, and desserts, was graciously provided by local vendors. Volunteers, including village trustees, were also on hand to whip up some hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill.

After everyone had their fill of lunch, and popsicles, cookies and cake, it was time to reveal who won the raffle prizes, also donated by a host of local businesses. Friends cheered as those sitting next to them heard their names called out, and Mayor Dave Merandy handed out the prizes.

- Dennis Mazzuca



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Lecture by Mark Forlow
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In honor of the West Point Foundry's Bicentennial, join historian Mark Forlow, as he shares the story of Robert Parker Parrott and his invention of the Parrott cannon. From the inception of his innovative design to the patent infringement trial of Treadwell vs Parrott in 1865, come learn about the munition that is said to have helped the Union win the Civil War.



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If you have any questions, please contact Catherine Platt at 845-265-4010, ext.10.

Putnam History Museum is located at 63 Chestnut Street in Cold Spring.

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