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Bard College

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Welcome back to *The Free Press*. I'd like to start by thanking everybody who's contributed along the way, on the record or not. This publication is only possible as a community endeavor, and without informants, statements, and you, our readers, us editors would have nothing to do. So thank you for going against your better judgment and speaking to *The Free Press*.

While I'm here, I'd also like to congratulate our seniors for finishing this insane part of early adult life. Good luck in the beyond!

The New Regime issue set the stage and introduced you to the cast of characters. Now we begin act one: The Spectacle.

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Letter to the Editor

Hayden,

I am writing you after reading your debut release as editor-in-chief of *The Bard Free Press*. I hope to have this letter published in the next issue for this spring semester.

The cover image of this most recent issue is the famous image of the Soviets raising their flag over the Reichstag.

It is an iconic image, symbolic of the defeat of Nazism, which you then captioned, "The New Regime Issue."

Who, then, is the old regime?

You seem to have thought that it was a fair comparison to liken the fall of Nazism to the departure of the previous *Bard Free Press* leadership. This was a tasteless, antagonistic, and (I really hope) careless association. No matter how I look at this picture, it does not reflect well on you, the institution you now run, or our school overall. It was cheap, irresponsibly delivered, and unnecessarily damaging towards fellow students.¹

Even if you did not mean to imply an "old regime," do you really consider yourself such a liberator? Do you feel that you actually deserve the association of "new regime" in the visual context you provide us? I really hope not. Please don't make our school paper about you.

I have tried, I promise you, to read these first few pages differently, but I have only come to comparable conclusions as to what they mean all together. The nail in the coffin is your letter from the editor, in which your ego and opinions reek of narcissistic antagonism. I can't help but read within it a subdued "make *The Free Press* great again."

I will, however, give this to you: *The Free Press* has not been the strong publication that many students have wanted it to be over the years. This opinion has been a general constant since I stepped foot on this campus nearly four years ago. I thought so, too, a year-and-a-half ago when I co-founded an on-campus alternative, *EUGENE* (I do not intend to speak for *EUGENE* herein, and my views do not necessarily reflect those of that organization overall. I only intend to speak of my personal experience within it).

Despite *EUGENE*'s weariness of the the 2014-

2015 *Free Press* leadership (your freshman year), we turned our critiques into alternative options for on-campus reading.

We even collaborated with *The Free Press*, who generously co-funded our second and third issues. We were able to help fill a void on campus, and didn't attack anyone in the process.

In the end, both *EUGENE* and *The Free Press* adapted, cooperated, and learned from each other's shortcomings. A positive change rolled out, and nobody called anybody a Nazi in the mean time.

A number of other issues with your debut were embarrassing to me—as a reader and as a fellow Bardian. You used professional artwork (when there are so many student artists who would have happily provided you and image to replace Ralph Steadman's image of Trump) and you tooted your own horn about inclusivity while your list of contributors is no greater than those of *Free Presses* past—and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

In taking yourself too seriously, you seem to have left the Bard community behind. The above (and other) issues only make clear that the problems that have faced *The Free Press* historically continue to be an issue today: lack of contributions, lack of active involvement, and a small staff that gets crunched when deadlines roll up.

Evidently, this issue is far from deserving the title "New Regime."

All of this said, I hope that you apologize for comparing students to Nazis whether you meant to or not. Even if you didn't intend such a comparison, the lack of journalistic responsibility on your part is embarrassing for our school, especially in a political context in which journalism is under such attack.

You took on a really hard job when you took on the role of editor. After this issue, it is only clearer that you have a lot more work to do. I maintain the highest of hopes for the future of this publication, and I know how hard the responsibility of editor can be. I encourage you to bring to the table, next time, an excitement to serve. Such an excitement is the only way a proper job can be done.

Best of luck,
Tom Moore
Class of 2017

¹ Full disclosure: one of the previous editors is a close friend of mine. So I will obviously be taking this more personally than others might. However, I am not blind, nor have I been so or silent, to the problems *The Free Press* has faced. Do I still think that you reduced an important issue to juvenile name-calling? No doubt.

Dear Tom, previous editors of *The Free Press*, and the Bard community,

I apologize for blaming the deep-seated problems facing *The Free Press*, many of which you inherited, on your editorial decisions or you personally in my editor's letter published in the April issue. My assessment was factually inaccurate, and you don't deserve to have your creative and intellectual labor derided. Journalistically it was sloppy, and personally, it was a dick move.

Additionally, the cover's implication of any previous editors' affiliation with Nazism was wholly unintentional. I was hoping the cover would connote a tongue-in-cheek commentary on journalists' fight against (and hopeful victory over) fascism. In hindsight, I see how that flopped.

When I stumbled into my editorial position in January, the publication was struggling. All of the previous editors had left for various reasons, and the *Press* was now in the hands of a megalomaniacal lout-me.

Reader engagement seemed at an all-time low. From my (admittedly limited) polling, surprisingly few people had read, let alone contributed to *The Free Press*.

Finding the cause of this problem seemed pretty straight forward: Who had it last? This logic proved, however, to be rather short-sighted. In my diagnoses of *The Free Press*, I mistook previous editors' responses to problems for the issues themselves. For instance, it was disingenuous to say that *The Free Press* "lost its niche by diversifying into art [and] creative writing," because the expansion into those fields was itself a response to the loss of our niche.

This is not to pass the buck to your predecessors and subsequently theirs. The answer to the question "What do we do now?" will not be found by pinpointing and analyzing when *The Free Press* fell from greatness, if it ever was.

My team has different goals for the publication, and the solutions to our problems will look different from yours. We might also fail, although—hopefully—differently.

Tom's letter pointed to a number of the publication's, and my own editorial, shortcomings. I appreciate his thoughtful comments and always welcome feedback on how we're doing and how *The Free Press* can improve.

The truth is: I don't know how to run a newspaper; I just try everything I can think of. And until I die alone in Xanadu, I'll keep trying.

Sincerely,
Hayden FW Hard
Editor-in-Chief

The Trials of Getting Tested

Bard's Health Services Criticized for Mishandling STI Exams

Rachel Hodes

A visit to Bard College Student Health Services for sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, might not be as simple as we are led to believe. In recent interviews, many students reported obstacles that complicated their search for diagnosis and treatment. People expressed a fear of being judged for their sexual activities and worried that the confidentiality of the testing might be compromised if they are on their parents' health insurance plans.

One student who I spoke with explained that they decided to get tested off campus, in part because they "just didn't feel that comfortable with Health Services at Bard." Others said their anxiety about being tested was not properly dealt with by Health Services. "I was really nervous and uncomfortable the whole time," one student told me, "and it was fine at first, but then she starts talking about why I had the sex. And all the sudden I felt like I was on a witness stand defending myself." This narrative seems to be quite common among students who have been STI tested on campus. In one student's experience, after completing a sexual history form, the Health Services professional told them "If it's an orgasm you're looking for, just go home and do it yourself."

I reached out to director of Student Health Services, Barbara-Jean Briskey, to discuss the issue. Briskey described her work as "on the ground, real life, in the trenches." The professional staff at Health Services is struggling to find the right balance between educating college students, especially about potentially risky behavior, and remaining mindful of delicate boundaries. Briskey admitted that her staff has had difficulty with the "changing ways people are manifesting sexuality."

Briskey has seen the anxiety over STIs skyrocket in recent years. "Anxiety is fueling a need for constant testing," she said, noting that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends testing just once yearly in most cases. "As professionals, we're required to give certain information," she tells me, "and if students are feeling this anxious after sexual activity, we need to address that."

For many, the main worries lie with insurance issues. "I didn't want my mom finding out," one student told me, and I found this sentiment echoed across the board. Briskey explained that in the past when all students had been required to obtain Bard insurance, their privacy was protected. However, now that many remain on their parents' insurance, she finds herself cautioning students about insurance statements that might be mailed home. "We're up against misconceptions about confidentiality because of insurance," she explained. She also called the switch from required Bard insurance to the option of retaining parental

insurance "really bad for confidentiality."

In one instance, when a student had specifically requested to be notified by email, Health Services mistakenly left a voicemail with their STI test results on a phone belonging to the student's mother, as this was the number they had on file.

With students feeling as though their sexual activity is not only misunderstood but also actively questioned, Briskey asserted that changes were in the process of being made. "We are trying to hone our motivational interview skills... we are definitely on a learning curve. We had an in-service workshop [to teach more effective interview skills] last semester. Trying means there's going to be failures sometimes," she said. Briskey also detailed plans in educating Health Services staff on sex positivity, including a speaker from LGBTQ Kingston. "We recognize the need for sex positivity -- integrating into our practice these techniques in order to balance [sex positivity and education]."

Some students expressed a medical need to be tested more frequently than CDC standards suggest, while others simply find that being tested more often makes them feel more comfortable. Even in a case where the reason for frequent testing was a medical condition, Health Services did struggle and ultimately fail to meet the student's needs. Briskey admits that she suggests students get tested elsewhere in some cases, such as when insurance copays become an

issue or when students on their parents' insurance wish to keep the testing completely confidential.

Health Services has been trying to meet its patients' needs more fully. Briskey related the effort in gender-inclusivity that has been made throughout the Health Services process, including on the sexual history form she provided me. Just as they have been trying to respond to the need for a more gender-inclusive practice, they are also working to address concerns in the way they respond to STI testing.

While many of the issues that students have encountered with the process have yet to be fully resolved, Briskey encourages students who have had uncomfortable experiences to contact her directly. "We are so open to learning how to drive a positive conversation," she explained. A longtime healthcare professional, Briskey feels adamant that when students express their concerns, Health Services becomes more capable in navigating their responsibility to educate with more respect and sensitivity for the student body.

In terms of confidentiality, insurance is the biggest obstacle. In order to be tested without the charge in an insurance statement, either utilize Bard Insurance, or get tested at an off-campus clinic. Peer Health also brings free and confidential STI testing to campus once per semester.



Hip to Puff Squares

Jack Lustig

Judging by the new signs, we are in the midst of another anti-smoking campaign by the administration. As previous issues of *The Free Press* show, rumors of Bard going smoke-free crop up every year, much to the dismay of Bard's smoking population.

Smoke-free campuses are a somewhat new phenomenon. According to Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights, between 2010 and 2017, the number of smoke-free colleges and universities increased by approximately 200%, going from 446 in October 2010 to 1,827 in April 2017.

Bard, however, is not on the list. Tobacco Free U: 2015 New York State Dean's List, run by the New York State Colleges Tobacco-Free Initiative, gave Bard a "D," the lowest grade, for our school's "few, if any, outdoor restrictions" for smoking.

Internet forums scoured by suburban mothers, such as collegeconfidential.com, have multiple threads expressing concern over the "lax attitude towards smoking" at Bard. It appears that we have earned ourselves a reputation.

It's true that smoking seems especially widespread on campus, but there are alternatives to going tobacco-free that can accommodate both smokers and nonsmokers.

I transferred to Bard from a tobacco-free state university, and the notion that tobacco-free policies curb smoking is laughable. While this evidence is anecdotal, all the smokers I knew at my old school felt merely inconvenienced, not deterred. The removal of the cigarette disposal

poles was arguably counterintuitive, as smoking continued nearly unabated, and butts littered the ground instead of being disposed in a receptacle. Were Bard to adopt a smoke-free stance, it's likely that the situation would be similar.

The question then comes to why Bard would go smoke-free? Throwing the large smoking population under the bus by banning smoking would undoubtedly tank student morale, especially during midterms, finals, and moderation/senior project deadlines. After talking with several non-smokers, the consistent opinion I heard was that the smoke is actually easy to avoid. They agreed that smokers adjacent to doorways is annoying, but none said that they would advocate for a full ban. However, Bard going smoke-free would provide good PR for the admissions department, going hand-in-hand with what appears to be an initiative to shed Bard's reputation as a school for hippies, lefties, and freaks. Smoking is undeniably harmful, but the college should sponsor initiatives that advocate mutual respect and create spaces for both sides to coexist instead of pushing for outright prohibition.

Possible ideas for such initiatives could be designated smoking patios or areas with protection from weather, as the tendency of smoking by the door is often driven by a desire to avoid the effects of the notorious Hudson Valley winter.

By implementing a campus-wide tobacco ban, Bard would effectively be trading the freedom and comfort of its students for some flashy new admissions bait, which smoker or not, we should all oppose.

Dear Community Members

Clark Hamel

The newest signage at Bard is not addressed to students, faculty, or staff. It is addressed to Community Members. These signs, posted on bathrooms throughout campus as of Wednesday, April, 19, remind us, the Community, that we, the Community, will not tolerate “harassment, violence, intimidation, or discrimination.” It “strongly encourages” us all to report bias incidents and hate crimes that happen on campus. I’m here to talk about what happened when I reported the hate crime that led to the posting of these signs.

On March 29th, I was called a slur in the men’s room on the first floor of Olin Hall. I was threatened to leave the bathroom, physically intimidated, and called a r****y. I did what any millennial would do—I posted on Facebook, in a group for Transgender/GNC¹ students, asking what to do. The last time I was slurred in a bathroom was ninth grade, and the girls were telling me they wouldn’t change if I were also there, because they knew I’d be staring at them. I’ve always been proud of who I am, but in these moments I am not. It’s not necessarily that I am not proud, but there is a feeling of shame and embarrassment.

I was told to email Ken Cooper, our head of safety and security. I told him exactly what had happened, where, and the description of the man who did so.

He responded swiftly. “Ugh!” I cringed reading that word. “So sorry this happened to you Clark - some people just do not get it.” “If you see this man, just email or call me so I can speak with him.” That was all he said to me. I figured I should clarify, that I was scared, unsafe, uncomfortable, and my bladder was starting to hurt.

When I emailed Ken the second time, I was angry and scared. Some could say it was aggressive. Or at least, that’s what a long standing Dean in the Bard administration told me. Because it’s totally her place to say things like that, right?²

Ken emailed me back, clearly offended. His response was rude and unprofessional. Ken Cooper is not transgender, nor is he gender non-conforming. He is a cis-gender, white, straight, American, employed man. And this is a trope that gets a lot of flak, I know. The cis straight white boy is often teased and taunted for being obnoxious and having a holier than thou attitude. They are the most privileged and powerful demographic group in society. So, when Ken responded to me, offended and mean rather than helpful, I went to the administration. And I was called aggressive.

Ken sent out an email to the Bard undergrad email, telling us all that my transness is a “personal struggle” and I’m “climbing my own personal Everest.” It also used the word I was called, which you’ll notice I did not spell out

here. It is not a kind word. It is not a word to be used by any non-transgender person, especially not to prove a point or make a statement. I would like to publicly state that I am not undergoing a personal struggle, I am doing great, my transness is made difficult by all y’all calling me slurs in bathrooms and refusing to do anything about it.

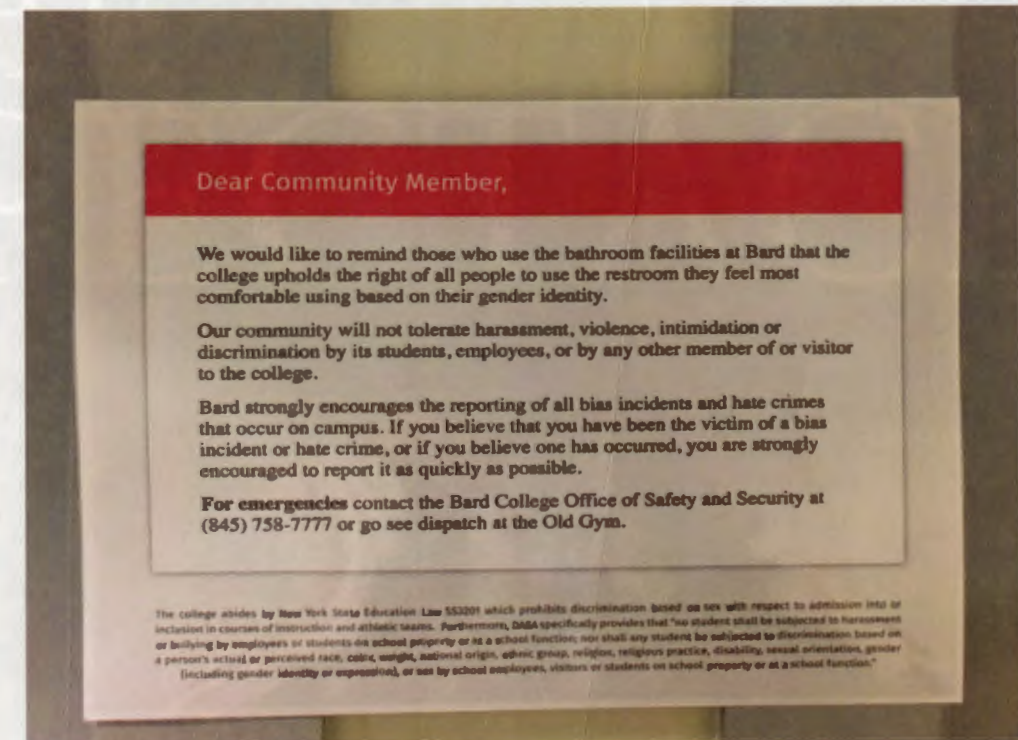
Erin Cannan sent out a follow up email, a more professional email, which is when I knew that they were acknowledging their fuck up. I was told by an administrator that Cannan and others were surprised by how insensitive Ken’s email was, and that they felt the need to send out another email, a clearer one, about the resources available to those that experience hate crimes.

Soon after, I met with Ariana Stokas, the Dean of Inclusive Excellence, which she requested. It was less of a meeting than a long apology mixed with some words on my sad and angry feelings. She told me that they would work on putting up signs reminding the Community that hate speech is not tolerated here at Bard, which was nice, and hey, it did actually happen. The only person who has reached out to me of their own accord was the new Title IX coordinator. No one in the Administration felt the need to talk to me about this. No one felt the need to apologize. I was told that I was aggressive by Bethany Nohlgren, told that some people just don’t get it, told that next time they’d do better, and told that this was a personal struggle I’m going to need help with.

I don’t like being the guinea pig for hate crimes. I tend to think no one would enjoy that. It’s past the feeling of tokenization; it is a level of othering that stems from a societal discomfort with not knowing how to deal with transgender “issues.” I got a lot of messages that day about how people would go with me to the bathroom, and be there for me and my “personal struggle,” as Ken Cooper phrased it. No one has.

These new signs outside bathrooms around campus are wonderful. I seriously hope they are more than an apologetic and performative attempt at allyship. I hope they are useful and genuine. I also hope that my trans/GNC siblings know that they can use whatever bathroom they want, and I will be there to help them, hug them, and tell them it will be okay.

Bard’s administration is virtue signaling. They think that they can get away with a lot, and fix it with signs on bathroom doors. But I’m here to let them know that they can’t. I’m here to name names and point fingers. You messed up, Bard. Fix it.



You can find them in Olin, Henderson, Hegeman, the Library, and other community buildings, if you're wondering exactly what they look like. Of course, you won't find these signs in the gym, where there aren't any gender-neutral bathrooms or locker rooms.

1 Gender Non-Conforming

2 It's not her place to say things like that

Al-Quds Students Denied Re-Entry Into Palestine; Bard Administration Responds

We reached out to Bard's administration, specifically Aileen Hanel, for comment on a group of Bard Al-Quds students denial of re-entry into Palestine by the Israeli authorities. We wish we could bring you the accounts of the students involved, but many of them didn't feel comfortable publishing their opinions so close to the event in question.

Bard is disturbed by the April 7th barring by Israeli authorities of three of its students from entering Israel and Palestine. The students were studying abroad at Al-Quds Bard College for Arts and Sciences (AQB) and participating in a Bard-sponsored tour in Jordan; they were denied reentry when attempting to cross the southern border between Jordan and Israel, preventing the students from completing the spring semester at AQB. While AQB is not located in Israel, Israeli authorities control all crossing points and travelers cannot enter Palestine without Israeli permission. Bard began a study abroad program at AQB in 2011, which has served over 30 students coming from 19 different US institutions. Prior to the incident this month, no other Bard-sponsored students have been denied entry. Bard has lodged formal complaints with Israeli authorities and the US Department of State. This unsettling and unprecedented development comes at a time when international student mobility is subject to tighter regulation and heightened scrutiny, by the United States as well as some of the countries in which Bard operates. Such visa denials have regularly hindered Palestinian AQB students from participation in Bard-sponsored network events. Bard condemns these obstructions to student movement and will continue doing its part to cultivate an international higher education network committed to free inquiry and expression.

THE SPECTACLE

Welcome to The Spectacle: our coverage of the controversial lecture series sponsored by the Hannah Arendt Center. Our primary goal was to deliver accurate, honest reporting from multiple perspectives. Additionally, I hope that our coverage can be used as a meta-analysis of the events and the thinking behind them.

The Hannah Arendt Center's *Myth of Gender Equality* and *Crossing the Divide* events are decidedly sensational stories. By covering the controversy, we are contributing to the power of the spectacle.

As journalists, it's our job to report on the world around us, and in turn, the world comes to partially reflect our vision of it.

It's easy to become lost or confused, but amidst the chaos and vitriol, we mustn't forget that a shitshow is still a show.

Hayden FW Hard

On April 13, the author and *Fox News* contributor Suzanne Venker spoke at Bard as part of the “Tough Talk” series, a student-run initiative sponsored by Bard’s Hannah Arendt Center. The lecture, titled “The Myth of Gender Equality,” aimed to provide a non-feminist perspective on femininity and women’s roles in society.

She spoke for about twenty minutes, then fielded questions from the audience for roughly an hour and a half. The questions were tough. Students challenged Venker to see the intersectionality of race, class and gender; she was taken to task for disassociating the causes of sexual assault from masculinity; she was pushed to question *why* she believes what she does. By the end, there were still over ten hands in the air.

Professor Roger Berkowitz, the director of the Arendt Center, considered the event a success. Venker has been disinvited from other schools, such as Williams, following mass protests, and Berkowitz was heartened to see Bard students willing to engage and debate with someone with opposing, if offensive, opinions. For him, debating ideas is intellectually enriching, forcing us to confront where our thinking falls short and where we were actually correctly to begin with. Politically, debate empowers us to discursively combat in the public sphere ideas we may find abhorrent.

I spoke with a student who also found the event enriching, although he was a bit less enthusiastic than Berkowitz. The student found it interesting to engage with the multifaceted critiques of Venker’s anti-feminism in a way that was up-front and immediate. Normally at Bard, our criticism is from afar: sitting in a seminar room with the author absent. As the event progressed, the student noted that Venker became defensive and actively avoided topics like domestic violence and sexual assault, which he found unproductive as people seldom think critically when they’re backed into a corner.

Venker’s lack of preparation and unwillingness to engage with students left many, particularly the women I spoke with, feeling that the event was ineffectual. One student found Venker’s defensiveness more displeasing than her opinions. She appreciates hearing other people’s opinions on tough issues, but found Venker rather close-minded and unreceptive. She felt like “[the speaker] didn’t take the time to really think about what we had to say about the issues she brought up,” which is what really bothered her.

Another woman found the Q&A “really tense and stressful, because she was completely shutting down anyone that tried to challenge her.” She left feeling pessimistic about our ability to reconcile these vast differences.

The final woman I spoke with found the dialogue itself unproductive and the whole affair draining and ultimately futile. Venker knew the venue she was entering but

came across as unprepared to answer students’ questions. The speaker based her arguments on her personal experiences, but dismissed students’ experiences that contradicted her own. The event was successful, this student added, at providing a space for people to articulate their arguments against one of many opposing viewpoints. But for her personally, the student said she would rather focus her energy on helping vulnerable communities.

Venker penned an article in *The Daily Caller* describing her experience at Bard as alienating and adversarial. In the piece, she restated arguments from the lecture, mainly that sex is biologically determined. She complained that her



tutelage was rejected, and in a shocking reversal, the students tried to educate *her*.

In an ironically racist jab against women of color, Venker identified her ignorance of intersectionality as one of the core disagreements of the talk. “Everything I said in favor of America, and in particular, of American men, fell on deaf ears. I suspected from the moment I walked in the room this might be the case, for there were more students of color than there were white students. And feminism is a white woman’s game.” She didn’t clarify this statement, implying that feminism *should* be white. Venker concluded that American universities are divorced from reality.

According to Berkowitz, speakers from the “Tough Talks” series are usually compensated for travel expenses, dinner with students, and are given a small honorarium.

Hayden FW Hard

The “Tough Talk” series is related to the liberal ideology espoused by the early 2000s political drama *The West Wing*. Over seven seasons, the Emmy-winning television series presented an idealized view of liberalism, rationality, and fact-based decision making that pervades public discourse.

The show is still wildly influential. Many Washington, D.C. staffers have claimed the show captures the everyday reality of politics and government. Reciprocally, the values extolled by the television program were put into policy by the Obama administration. More recently, Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign appealed to her qualifications, intelligence, and decorum, which are the idealized

Today, the debate format pervades cable news channels like CNN and Fox News. To “get both sides,” a climate scientist is often booked with a climate denier. The conversations produced by these matchups are predictably shallow. Perhaps the most dramatic and potentially dangerous instance of this phenomenon is when CNN’s *The Lead with Jake Tapper* ran the banner “Alt-right Founder Questions If Jews Are People,” as if that’s a question worth considering.

Some late night programs, such as HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, are also founded on the dramatic and spectacular elements of debate. For Maher, the ideas communicated are secondary to the comedic extravaganza. The genre’s absurdist apex was *The Rumble in the Air-conditioned Auditorium*, a 90-minute debate between Jon Stewart and Bill O’Reilly, the televisual titans of their era’s political media. While the event was clearly satirical, both Stewart’s and O’Reilly’s audience saw them as legitimate sources of political news and commentary.

If anything, debates make for great TV.

From left to right, this media landscape fosters opportunistic provocateurs such as Milo Yiannopoulos and Lucian Wintrich, who manipulate the conversation for their own benefit.

Formal debate is founded on the techniques of rhetoric, thus as one might imagine, unvirtuous sophists have been manipulating spaces of free speech since ancient Greece. Today, sophists well-versed in media theory manipulate the convergence of news and entertainment to create irresistible spectacles, which, through our cult of celebrity controversy, imbues them with more power.

They cannot be destroyed through debate because they’re a product of the spectacle.

Although Venker’s event was ignorant, close-minded and offensive, it didn’t pose an immediate threat to the community. Her ideas are inherently banal: gender norms from the 1950s presented as radical. Disinviting her would have played into the right wing media’s narratives of the left as intolerant snowflakes. Plus, the college could appear to take the moral high ground in the debate by allowing her to speak and be publicly rebuked by students.

But here’s a radical idea. Perhaps instead of inviting purposefully inflammatory speakers, paying them, and further encouraging the sensationalist spectacle of debate, we don’t.

However, as the editor of *The Free Press*, the Venker and Wintrich events are irresistible. I couldn’t have filled my page count without them. In the struggling news-media industry, the spectacle sells, so how can we resist?

characteristics of politicians espoused by the show.

In the program and in real life, Clintonesque Democrats argue with their Republican colleagues using logic and statistical facts. But only on the show, the Republicans’ rhetoric is identical, along with their mutual respect for reasoned debate. Nobody on the show speaks like Alex Jones; there are no Richard Spencers. Through rational debate, two people with enormous moral and ideological disparities forge a compromise, and ultimately both sides benefit.

Viewing or participating in the spectacle of the rational debate is a ritual for the intellectual left. Well-reasoned zingers, backed up by hard facts, can be used to expose hypocrisy and inconsistencies in the opponent’s logic. The platform given to the other side can be used to delegitimize them, or so it’s thought.





Dear Faculty,
I would like to bring to your attention my amended statement and requests that I, on behalf of TLC and QSA, have made of the Arendt Center. The statement was emailed out on Friday, April 14th. I have not received any form of response. In order to draw attention to this lack of response, I have decided to distribute a hard copy of this statement to the faculty. When Roger emailed me to meet on April 13th, I responded within 24 hours with my availability. I have not heard back since.

Dear Arendt Center Faculty,

My initial statement requesting that the Arendt Center apologize for the opaque decision making process surrounding the Crossing the Divide event and invitation of Lucian Wintrich, known white supremacist, transphobe, and provocateur was sent out to the faculty on April 14th. I have not received a response since. Trans and queer students members of the Bard community deserve a response to their concerns, even if it is the Arendt Center publicly stating that they will not agree to the requests made in my statement. In case they were not clear enough in the first place, I have made them clearer. The demands are in bold and rationale/additional explanation is offered below each demand. Trans Life Collective and Queer Students Association demands that the Arendt Center:

I. Apologize for the opaque decision making process that:

a. Led to the invitation of Wintrich in the first place.

- The failure to consult relevant parties (including but not limited to campus groups that represent marginalized identities such as the Council for Inclusive Excellence, Queer People of Color, Queer Students Association, Trans Life Collective, BRAVE, etc.) regarding the potential impact of his presence on their communities means the Arendt Center has placed unnecessary burdens on these communities to absorb the impacts of the event. Any and all attempts to mitigate these impacts on the part of HAC have occurred after it became clear that there would be controversy, not as a precaution to ensure the safety of students and thus is not adequate.
- This decision making process signifies a willful ignorance towards the diversity of opinions on campus and the possibility for meaningful, challenging dialogue on campus without needing to bring in these speakers.
- The opaque decision making process infringes on students' ability to hold individuals/institutions accountable for putting their safety at risk.

Statement from Harper Zacharias and Erin Gifford, TLC and QSA Co-Heads on the Lucian Wintrich Event (4/26)

b. Has resulted in contradictory logistical details about the event being provided to students without proper rationale.

- The Arendt Center has provided contradictory information about the location of the event and the mediums through which an individual is able to attend (e.g. whether or not there will be registration, event location information, who will be allowed to attend, etc.). Whether or not this is intentional, it can easily be read as an attempt to circumvent student protest, which a method of free speech, and quiet any student voices.
- The original logistics planned for the event were as follows: the event was supposed to begin at 6 in MPR and be open. It was later announced that there would be first-come-first-serve registration opening April 1st. April 1st came and went without any registration opening. As of a couple weeks ago, the event emails began to say TBA instead of MPR (while continuing to have MPR booked so that other events could not be held in the room the same day). A few days ago, the event location was semi-officially changed, though not on the official email, to be Bito in the conservatory meeting. As of yesterday, the event registration was released as a lottery system, with only 70 winning, that requires entering affiliation within the school.
 1. This understandably looks sketchy and confusing even if it was not intended to be such.
 2. No other event at Bard has had this lottery system and all other overly attended events, especially political ones, have only ever been moved to either Olin Auditorium or Fisher. MPR can hold more than 70 people. *Why make the event less accessible rather than more if the Arendt Center believes so deeply in public dialogue and free speech, even if that takes the form of protest?*

II. Implement an Arendt Center-wide policy in which the individual inviting a speaker must consider the impacts that the speaker will have on student groups.

- *This is not a one time issue, this is an emerging pattern.* Milo Yiannopoulos was previously invited to Bard. Milo has publicly announced names of and harassed undocumented students and trans students, which has led to these students being harassed by their peers at other campuses.
- To clarify: this demand is NOT one for a committee decision making process on whether or not to invite a speaker. *This is instead a demand for the group/individual sending the invitation to consult relevant parties about the potential impact of the speaker when making the decision of whether or not to invite that speaker. It may be that after consulting these parties, the pros still outweigh the cons.* While I cannot ensure that the individual/group inviting the speaker will appropriately consider the impact, a committee decision making process would infringe on academic freedom and that is not our goal.

III. Remove a student who has engaged in harassment from the panel.

- A student who has regularly harassed students of color and queer and trans students is currently a student discussant for the panel. *He has physically threatened at least one student on campus.* This student has already started emboldening younger students on campus, meaning the damage he has done, amplified by platforms he has been given, will continue on past his graduation.
- It's one thing for the student to voice these opinions online and on campus, but it's another for an institute run by *faculty* to give a serious platform to someone like this student.
- Not all Bard students are innocent. A prerequisite for engaging in meaningful dialogue in the public sphere is feeling that violence is not a possible or likely reaction. His presence communicates otherwise, stifling others' abilities to engage in meaningful dialogue.

In case there is any doubt about our motivations, I will spell out exactly what we want through these demands:

1. Accountability,

2. A culture in which student voices and opinions are treated as legitimate and worthy of discourse rather than intentionally circumvented, and

3. Recognition of the vulnerable position that marginalized members of the Bard community in, especially queer and trans students and in particular QTPOC, and the way that other members of the community can contribute to either intensifying or lessening that vulnerability.

We believe that these motivations and requests are reasonable and deserve a swift response.

Harper Zacharias and Erin Gifford, QSA and TLC Co-Heads

The Reports

Lucian 1, Bard 0

Dylan Sparks

"Show respect and suspend judgment" or "Find common ground and appreciate differences" were just two of the guidelines at Wednesday night's Living Room Conversation. Both were ignored by Lucian Wintrich and the Bard audience members protesting his presence. The aim of the event was to promote greater understanding in an increasingly polarized time, with a panel of three liberals and three conservatives, moderated by Professor Roger Berkowitz. Unfortunately, what followed was not a discussion but a case study in provocation and political performance.

From the moment Professor Berkowitz introduced the panelists to the audience, both sides of the political spectrum played into the hands of their opponents. While texting, Mr. Wintrich poured himself a whisky, in what he would later declare was a "very expensive tumbler," (read: it was a prop to his political performance). Several audience members coughed loudly, walked out and jeered as soon as his name was mentioned. In doing so they gave Mr. Wintrich what he had come for: attention. Mr. Wintrich, like a school-boy, taunted the audience members who stormed out at the mention of his name, declaring their footsteps made them sound "a little overweight, making it sound more pro-

nounced." These students had foregone their opportunity to engage in an intellectual debate, something supposedly at the heart of liberalism and our institution, with the controversial Bard alum. He got the last word, immature as his perfor-

dience.

In his email to the community prior to the event, Professor Berkowitz observed: "Politics, for Arendt, is the exercise in expanding our perspective and learning to see the world from as many different view-

blame for this?

Professor Ann Seaton, who managed to stay above the crossfire, encouraged fellow panelists and audience members to reflect on the power of words, citing eugenics, segregation and discrimination as examples of the consequences of labels: "Words do have implications. It's not just about emotional harm, it's about the history of the way these words have been deployed."

Amidst the insults, alcohol, flirtation, and ego, there were some genuine attempts by students probing him, but questions were often interspersed with distracting taunts from the audience. It was obvious Mr. Wintrich wanted this, since the alternative was actually answering questions or taking responsibility for his claims.

His behaviour begged the question: Is Mr. Wintrich really passionate about Trump and his policies, or is he simply a political opportunist who has hitched his career in provocation to the tremendous gold-plated Trump wagon?

Our controversial alum may have been the one to polish off his bottle, but the remnants of his whiskey will mark Bito auditorium's floor and our campus conversations for the foreseeable future.

mance was – while the Bardians fit his "liberal snowflake" narrative, unable to take the heat of opposing opinions. Apart from a few serious questions from the audience, the most notable being about fake news, the provocateur dominated the room, and went mostly unchallenged by the moderator, the panelists or any rigorous intellectual cross-examination from the au-

points as possible." This was a noble goal but one left the event with an overwhelming sense that the political divide engulfing the country – acknowledged by all panelists – had not been bridged, but widened. Ironically the jeering, snickering, insults and accusations prevented the Hannah Arendt Center from achieving its goal of civil discourse. But was Wintrich to



Pictured Roger Berkowitz and Ethan Quinones. Photos by Anne Burnett.

The Boys Are Back in Town

Jack Lustig

Last week, the Hannah Arendt Center played host to Bard alum and overall detestable shithead Lucian Wintrich. The panel he sat on, entitled *A Living Room Conversation: Crossing the Divide*, was supposedly intended to foster dialogue among the Bard community about free speech and political differences.

Instead, Wintrich used the platform he was given to provoke and enrage the so-called "progressive fascists" that made up a large portion of the audience. Anyone familiar with Lucian's brand of trolling could have foreseen this mess transpiring. But according to the event description, he was invited in good faith to participate in a dialogue meant to "reach across raw political and ethical divides."

Wintrich arrived with an entourage of two MAGA hat-clad "bodyguards." Some suspect they were



fans who volunteered for the holy duty. One of them, a chimp in a salmon-colored v-neck, sported a fresh "Proud Boy" tattoo on his forearm. Started by Vice Media's co-founder Gavin McInnes, the Proud Boys are an alt-right fraternity that has spiraled into an overt paramilitary force. They have been involved in multiple instances of violence at Berkeley, and at NYU, where one of their members was arrested for punching a journalist.

It was strange to see people like this at Bard. Maybe it's because we really are in the often-mentioned "liberal bubble," or maybe it's because these people lack self-awareness to such an absurd degree that that they debase themselves just to "trigger libs."

Whatever bizarre machinations in Roger Berkowitz's mind that made him think this would be a productive event were, in a word, misguided. Dialogue is of course important, but the debate over free speech is often the home turf for "political artists" (read: attention-starved cretins) such as Wintrich, who provoke people into a hostile reaction for no reason other than provocation itself.

I am all for another attempt at one of these Living Room Conversations, but this particular event was misguided, overblown, and destined to be a counterproductive shit-show from the moment Wintrich was announced.

All of us played into Lucian's jelly-encrusted hands. I feel more stupid having attended.

Lucian Comes to Bard

Ethan Quinones

Lucian Wintrich told Bard, at the Living Room Conversation held by the Arendt Center, that we should not take him too seriously. Of all that was said before, during, and after the event, this was the most succinct statement.

Lucian is a provocateur. He seeks to mock, belittle, and reject leftists' social justice rhetoric. He holds that liberals, especially the campus variety, are crybabies who cannot handle ideas which contradict their BuzzFeed-approved PC nonsense.

He wanted to prove himself right by coming to Bard. By protesting the event, by calling for Roger Berkowitz to be fired, by interrupting Lucian, by getting up and snatching his drink, by screaming insults, by asking "A sphincter says what?" we proved him right. Bard gave Lucian ample evidence to go back to his crowd and say "Look, I was right." The videos he took of students at Bard will help convince a new crop of young people that the "alt-right" is cool and funny, and the campus left is childish and uptight.

Many people have many opinions on the panel. My opinion is that the only real winner was Lucian, and that the behavior of the students distracted from his lack of substance. Our inability to confront him as a free-thinking individual, to give him the benefit of the doubt, to even allow him the chance to speak without interruption, was the real problem—not Lucian. Trolls are supposed to cause problems—that's why they are trolls! Students should be solving problems, thinking deeply, and coming up with solutions. Isn't that why we are here? If we couldn't take down Lucian Wintrich, how can we expect to eradicate poverty, end mass incarceration, or achieve any goals? How can you convince your uncle not to vote for Trump if you can't even understand why he wants to?

If you want to know why Trump won or why Lucian and Milo are popular, watch the video on YouTube. Lucian had a great time at Bard. He got his point across, he got attention, and he even had a song written about him! Check out his twitter, he was a huge fan of the song. The "alt-right" is having fun. They don't get bent out of shape and scream, they laugh and have a drink.

Maybe we could learn a thing or two from Lucian and Milo—if you want people on your side, you need to have fun. They don't even have good arguments a lot of the time. They persuade people by contrasting their easy going, breezy attitude, with angry, hysterical protests. If you're not having fun, why would anyone want to be on your side in the first place? They bring people in by offering them an escape from the suffocating atmosphere of stringent ideology that exists on many campuses.

We also need to listen and respond like adults, not petulant children. Immaturity created Lucian and Milo, and it will only continue to bolster them if met with more immaturity. Next time someone you don't like comes to campus, think about a good question to ask instead of simply insulting them. You might even learn something.



Talk of the Town

The Wintrich of Our Discontent

Hayden FW Hard

Now, we at *The Free Press* have been pretty harsh on the Hannah Arendt Center and its director Roger Berkowitz for sponsoring and then bungling the lead-up to this one-time-only performance of *The Lucian Wintrich Show*, but let's take a moment to appreciate their contributions to *The Theater*.

First off, the lighting and set design were brilliant. Bito Auditorium's wood paneling and soft lighting pleases the senses; ambiance alone would justify Mr. Berkowitz's change of venue. The panelists within those panels were anything but wooden and were loosely arranged according to political affiliation: professor Roger Berkowitz, student Ethan Quiñones, and economist Ralph Benko were arrayed stage right, while professor Ann Seaton, and students Clark Hamel and Kevin Barbosa occupied stage left. Naturally, Lucian, playing himself, took center stage.

Sadly, some of the casting decisions seemed poorly thought out. Quiñones broke character sometime in the third act; he dropped his stoic platitudes about open discourse and waxed both defensive and cagey trying to justify his calling people "faggots." It was a surprising misstep for Bard's preeminent gadfly.

I was deeply saddened that Lucian's performance failed to meet expectations. Sure, he called some people fat; he drank a lot; and he did a creditable imitation of a raging, right-wing asshole. But we've come to expect so much more. His well-honed enfant terribleness and attention-seeking dishonesty should have been a winning combo, but alas, he just wasn't on his game, and I for one

felt let down. Although lighter on his feet than Quiñones, Lucian's schtick was almost embarrassingly unoriginal. He came across like a store-brand Milo Yiannopoulos. His zingers zung, but my socks, to name two, were not zung off.

Meanwhile, Lucian's supporting cast nearly stole the show. I'll refer to them as Chud 1, a frumpily muscled "Proud Boy," and the more delicate Chud 2, who may be Lucian's main squeeze. While Ann Seaton was introducing herself to the audience, Chud 1 came stomping up on stage to give Lucian a bottle of whiskey. The apparent forethought going into that bit of business was a nice touch in what was otherwise a mess of improvisational miscues. The Chud proceeded to drop the N word a bunch, call someone a "cunt," assault students outside in the parking lot, and most egregious of all, tell your reviewer to "shut up" while he was innocently asking Lucian what a sphincter says. He comes across as the kinda guy you can just have a beer with, you know?

Disappointingly, the director of the evening's performance, Roger Berkowitz, clearly lacked control over the misen-scène. Maybe it was the change of venue, which is too bad since a room as decent as that one holds such promise. His vision for the show clearly diverged from his cast's, evidenced by his repeated, and increasingly plaintive, calls for order and civility. Despite the event embodying the antithesis of Berkowitz's stated intentions, the Arendt Center's director has insisted that it was a success. Anyone who gets through a day as a substitute teacher in a Kindergarten without committing murder would probably regard that as a raging success too.



The Spectacle

Performance & Praxis: The Crystal Glass

Discourse, Dialogue, and The Spectacle

Reverie & Quotes from Bea

T h e
Free Press recently spoke with Bea, a student and artist at Bard, who became a quasi-participant in the *Crossing the Divide* panel. An hour and five minutes into the event, Lucian was called out on lying about being disinvited from Bard by a student, and amidst the raucous uproar, during which insults and outrageous language filled the room, he mumbled into the microphone “with your body, babe, you should *not* wear horizontal stripes.” Bea incredulously retorted, “can you smell my vagina from here,” a comment referring to the events leading to Lucian’s Title IX case in 2010 when he was a student at Bard. As an infantile rebuttal, Lucian repeated his earlier ‘joke’ about horizontal stripes, prompting Bea to storm on stage, chug Wintrich’s whiskey, drop his precious “crystal glass”, and leave the building. During her dramatic departure, one of Lucian’s “Proud Boy” friends shamelessly called Bea a “cunt.” Acrimoniously, a fight nearly broke out between the Proud Boy and a student audience member, who was later ejected from the venue.

This scene transpired in a matter of seconds, and it was certainly the most volatile moment of the whole event.

We wanted to hear from Bea, in her own words, about the panel and her thoughts on performance theory and praxis.

“It was called a “free speech” panel, but my initial thoughts were that it was not going to be a discussion about discourse, given the people involved: Ethan, Ralph, and Lucian. Which is not to say that it’s just the fact that conservatives are on the panel; there’s obviously no issue with that, but it’s more that Lucian and Ethan don’t really participate in any sphere that I would consider discourse.”

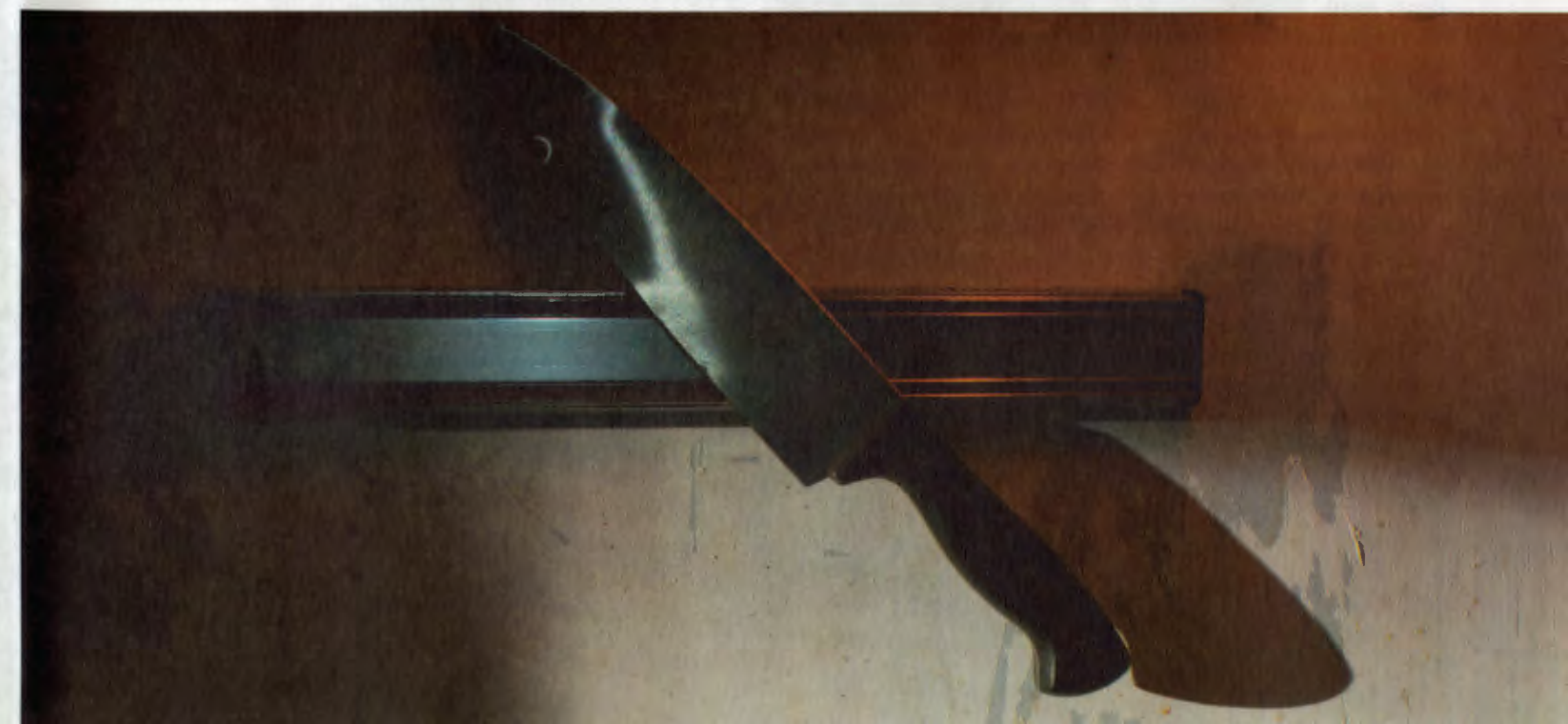
“Lucian considers himself a performance artist, which is technically a type of discourse, and one that I respect, at least in theory. He equates his art with journalism, but you look at lot of his photos, and the young gay guys he depicts aren’t even Trump supporters. They’re guys looking for modeling jobs. There’s a level of exploitation that I think real discourse doesn’t do. Lucian’s artistic practices and his rhetoric take advantage of people’s fears and, in some ways, effectively.”

“By discourse, I mean open dialogue. Like a territory where free speech is allowed. At the end of the day, this isn’t the agenda that Lucian seems to actually be interested in. He seems to be more specifically interested in ideology and not creative rights or intellectual rights. Discourse is a productive dialogue, and if it’s not productive, then it’s at least thoughtful.”

“The idea that it was a spectacle is true in some senses, but people on campus run into that kind of bigotry in their day-to-day lives... it’s an unfair assumption that that instance brought anything new to people who live it.”

“Spectacles are one way we are predisposed to engage in public conversations, but I think it’s also a distancing mechanism, and that makes for bad politics at times. People are not able to see themselves in whatever place is called the performer, in this case Lucian or myself or anybody on the panel.”

“This genre of gay art, and parody in gay art, is a conversation that is on the sidelines for a lot of people, but it’s also central to the conversation because that’s what he posits as central to his conversation. So if that panel was meant to be about engaging each other’s politics, I would have been interested to see them talk about these issues of gender, sexuality, and race that are brought up constantly in Lucian’s art, instead of listening to Ralph tell a bunch of 20 year olds that they’re responsible for the state of global poverty.”



Letter To To The Bard Student Body

I want to preface this note by saying that I'm a Bard alum. I now live in New York City as a writer and editor. I'm white. I'm a woman. And I fucking hate this Lucian Wintrich bullshit.

"Good" institutions are always on the precipice of betraying you, us. Their primary delusion is that they are morally stable, and therefore stand on permanently *good* ideological ground, which is where, when pushed or challenged, so much of their righteousness must come from.

Bard is a "good" institution. We are taught critical thinking, we are taught to deeply engage in texts and experiences that challenge us to become more than a series of test questions, or parrots of our professors' ideas. We are taught to experiment, play, un-conform, revolt. We are taught to embrace "freedom."

Bard's faculty is a huge part of this freedom. They are primarily composed of thinkers and artists who are not just academics, but out in the world crafting their ideas, letting not just the academic institution, but the world, invigorate and transform their work, and in turn, handing that worldly ferocity back to their students to learn from.

So when Lucian Wintrich, a fellow Bard Alum, who embodies the opposite of everything I just said, get's invited to speak at Bard, it not only makes sense that students would feel disheartened at the invitation, but would also feel it their civic obligation to counter it. Du Bois surely didn't write: *"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder,"* so that Lucian Wintrich could come to Bard to intimidate his alma mater's marginalized co-horts and insult his elders. And we surely weren't meant to read *The Souls of Black Folk* to gain a superficial knowledge of black pain only to dismiss black and other marginalized pain when it comes to real world action.

The harm of this "good" institutional precipice always about to betray us is so visceral, is so active and affecting, and its casual denial so deeply confusing, that I believe it can make us truly ill. I know I am not the only one who reads through these Facebook threads overcome with the innate and hopeless feeling of vertigo: 'why would this happen at Bard?' I can only imagine what it's like for students who actually attended the panel and are at Bard right this second.

In celebrating Lucian, Bard faculty are celebrating mediocrity. In telling your students they are being childish or undemocratic, you are underestimating the substantial intellect of your student body and belittling their sense of moral integrity. By refusing to learn from them in the name of defending "free speech," you are insulting their civic maturity and political prowess.

Bard students have proven themselves capable of listening to, and having, real hard conversations with people they disagree with. Conservative speaker Suzanne Venker, who recently came to Bard to speak, just wrote about it. The student body's awesome and thoughtful counter-protest-day schedule—that Lucian pathetically tore apart on twitter—is further proof. Not that we need further proof. We live it.

So, to you Bard students who matter so much, I say this: What happened is sickening, and if you feel betrayed by Bard that is totally reasonable. But don't feel like you have to compete with Lucian (those of us who know him know he has proven to be gross and horrible over and over again), or give your energy to this particular issue any more. He is irrelevant. That panel, and its layers of secrecy and harm, are not you and are not what you represent. I hope you can take this shitty event and use your sadness, anger, and exhaustion to make real WORK out of it. Not the fake bullshit "work" that the panel insists on—but the real heart on the floor, brain at 120mph, blood, sweat, hope WORK that you are meant to do.

There are alumni here to help you. Always, forever and with love.

In Solidarity,
Cornelia Barber
Class of 2013

From all the staff at *The Free Press*, we thank you for your continued support. We value feedback from the Bard Community and invite you to take part. Is your voice represented by *The Free Press*? If not, let's change that. Our publication is yours too. Our editorial team wants your articles, reports, and think-pieces. Although we primarily publish text, we need your documentary photo, skills. We also like comics. The topic is up to you, provided you deem it pertinent to our community. We value precision in language and information. You can remain anonymous. If you have any scoops, articles, or ideas, please let us know.

You're welcome to join us at any of our meetings, which are usually Tuesdays at 6:00 pm in Olin 101. Contact us directly at bardfreepress [at] gmail.com or the editor-in-chief hh5684 [at] bard.edu



