



A DEFENSE OF FREE SPEECH

Posted on May 1, 2018 by P.J. Glinos



Into blind darkness enter they that worship ignorance; into darkness greater than that, as it were, they that delight in knowledge (Isa Upanishad).

On March 20th, 2018, Faith Goldy was going to give a presentation at Wilfrid Laurier Universities' Paul Martin Center.

LSOI (Laurier's Society for Open Inquiry), the group hosting the event, claims that they invited five professors to challenge her views, but that none of them accepted. Thus, the debate was turned into a presentation.

Yet, before Goldy could give her controversial presentation the fire alarm was pulled. With the sound of alarms, Goldy left the campus and adjourned to the adjacent Veteran's Green Park with her audience.

[LSOI promised that they would invite Goldy back for a second appearance.](#)

This promise underscores the need to make a definitive judgement as to whether the WLU should allow Faith Goldy, and others like her, to be able to speak on campus.

I argue that it is in the interest of the school to rule in favor of allowing the speaker to return and give her presentation uninterrupted.

The university should allow the presentation because otherwise they may fall prey to dogmatism, the regulation of speech may lead to inequities, and free speech is in the interest of the marginalized groups they seek to protect.

Before diving into the ethics, I wish to discuss Faith Goldy's position. She describes Euro-Canadians as the "native people" of Canada. She proposes a solution to stop the "ethnocide of the White race" and save European Canadian Identity.

One of her claims is that "High IQ Chinese are taking over the class rooms," and that universities should do the opposite of affirmative action to Asian applicants, i.e. select against them in the admission process.

Commonly accused of being a "white supremacist" she counters that the reason for her measures are the opposite of white supremacy. She does not think that White people are the smarter superior race, on the contrary, it is because Asians, Jews and Indians are smarter "races" she takes her discriminatory stance.

This discriminatory stance is to "save" White people from becoming subservient to new "masters." Also, she adopts what many would call an anti-Semitic stance.

Goldy says, "the first time we got an immigrant over-class was in 1881 with the great wave of Ashkenazi Jews" (who are "literally the smartest race on the planet") came to Canada.

But wait, there's [more](#).

I want to make it clear that these are Faith Goldy's views and not my own. It would be deceitful and unjust to omit these views to reader when discussing this controversy, especially when I seek to defend her presence here at WLU. For my own part, I abhor this line reasoning.

But, this article is not about what I think of Faith Goldy, it is about the effects that come with regulation of free speech.

The first reason why the university should allow freedom of speech is because it negates a slippery slope into dogmatism.

Universities are meant to be the anvil of new ideas, paradigm shifts, and revolutionary ways of thinking. When institutions regulate the speech of their constituencies, they tend to build their own echo chamber.

The fallout of this policy is that it creates a continuous cycle of reinforcing the status quo. As John Stuart Mill points out, dogmatism presupposes one's own righteous stance on an issue.

Historically, it is hard for intellectuals to claim any level of infallibility in regard to evaluating "Nazi" points of view. In fact, people forget that the original Nazis were part the university intellectuals of their day.

The Einsatzgruppen were swarmed with highly educated members. [Dr. Ohlendorf](#), one of the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen even had two PHD's.

Intellectuals may be wise, but they're not infallible. As long as that is the case they can never justify dogmatic policies for what are often grey areas.

Even if they are correct about Faith Goldy, who is to say they will continue to give correct evaluations of the speakers after her? Dogmatism is avoided completely when one ceases to regulate speech.

The second reason why universities should allow controversial speakers to discuss is because they may have a few good points to make, even if they are racist bigots.

There is always the possibility of a "diamond in the rough" when it comes to notorious orators regardless as to whether they are racists.

For example, many of the pro-slavery arguments that came from South of the United States were despicable. But even these Southerners made some good points that the US Northerners were afraid

to confront.

The pro-Slavers contrasted the well-being of their slaves with the wretched lives of black factory workers in of the North.

Pro-Slavers might have been dead wrong about everything else, but they made great point when they showed that the horrors of industrial capitalism for blacks were not that far off from the conditions of a Southern slave.

If the North seriously confronted that statement, they might not have waited till the 1960's (over 100 years later) to initiate social programs against poverty.

Even a broken clock is right twice a day. That saying might be true for Goldy and other controversial speakers after her.

The third reason why controversial speakers like Goldy should be allowed to speak is because the violation of rights such as free speech endanger the public good in the long run.

Politics can be unpredictable.

You might have a party in power who "justly" silences the "unjust." But what happens when power changes hands?

After initial censorship, that the silencing of others has been normalized, so now who is going to stop the misusing of that power?

The forth reason why free speech should be allowed is because it dissolves hate speech in the long run.

Dialogue is the crucible of changing thought. The best way to destroy hate speech is by argument, reason, and public discourse.

John Stuart Mill points out how if we do not fearlessly discuss truth then it loses its lively quality and becomes a dead dogma.

Speech is more than just fact and fiction, communication is the fabric that holds our societal consensus together. If we cease to be engaged in grappling with what we believe in as a society, then we might forget why we believe in the values we profess.

As time passes and truths become unquestioned, we forget over the generations why we believe them.

Members of our community begin to stray ideologically from the truths we have established in the past. Free speech is how we recover those members who have been lead astray.

For example, take Harvey Milk's famous Hope Speech in 1977. Harvey Milk was the first openly gay congressman in the USA. He was a civil rights leader for the gay community.

After years of toil, abuse, and violence the gay community questioned the continued protest as opposed to going back in the closet.

In his Hope Speech, Harvey encouraged them to hang on to hope. Here, he extended his sympathy to the hardships of the gay community.

But at the same time, he utilized the power of free speech when he told them "unless you have dialogue, unless you open the walls of dialogue, you can never reach to change people's opinion."

Far from telling the LGTBQ+ community to remain silent, he told them to speak out.

He advised them all to come out of the closet, so that they could show the world that they were not pedophiles or a sexual menace, but that they were people like anybody else.

Free speech may seem like it is against the wishes of the marginalized, but, it is their most powerful weapon. Can we really afford to take that away because some members of the population feel offended and unsafe?

The whole point of a PRIDE parade was to offend the sensitive conservative onlooker. The flamboyant display was meant to be an act of provocation to the members of society who preferred that gays remain behind closed doors.

The idea was to be proud instead of being ashamed.

Once upon a time, it was the LGTBQ+ community who were seen as the dangerous misfits who made the world unsafe for society.

John Stuart Mill and Milk were right. They knew that free speech led to ideological cohesion, not fragmented hate. Truth brings people together more than it drives them apart.

Free speech allows for the hateful to be confronted.

When it is illegal to express ones hate in public then one keeps it a secret. When this happens, hate is preserved behind closed doors and whispered behind the backs of future victims.

The hateful do not change their minds just because we make it illegal for them to hold a hateful stance. Instead they simply go on unopposed.

For example, if I was a racist and the school made it illegal for me to express my racist views, then I would never bring it up in public.

My hateful opinion would go unchallenged and I would simply become a secret racist who went around committing quiet acts of racism.

If I am allowed to express myself, then I increase the chance that others will confront my views. This increases the possibility of swaying hateful people through dialogue to reasonable positions.

The worse thing we could do is let hate to speak out unchallenged. When society failed to mobilize an ideological counter to Faith Goldy, we missed our chance to shed light on the darkness of her thoughts.

I'm not saying we would change her mind, but we might have changed the minds of audience members grappling with these demons.

I concede that there are times when one should break the law to do what's right. I sympathize with the person who pulled the fire alarm on that day. But was this person really doing what was best for society by pulling the fire alarm?

I do not think so.

I argue that allowing free speech was the right thing to do, not shutting down dialogue. Because a true conscientious objector breaks the law for the good of society, and this person did more harm than good, thus I deny labeling them as a true conscientious objector.

I would not be surprised if they thought that they were doing the right thing, but they were misled.

These are the reasons why I think Wilfrid Laurier University should allow Faith Goldy to speak again upon her return.

It's not because I agree with her views. On the contrary, I think they are horrible. But if we regulate free speech we fall into the greater darkness of dogmatism. Intellectuals are smart, but they are far from infallible.

Free speech may take a while to prove its worth, but in the long run it becomes the safe guard of the marginalized. It is the arguably the most powerful tool for keeping society engaged and on the same page.

Furthermore, it is our obligation as citizens to take on these speakers. We should not support these horrible views, rather we owe it to the marginalized to stand up on their behalf by debating these orators.

More importantly, we owe it to members of the community who are struggling with these ideas and those who have been blinded by them. Since Socrates, our task has been to take people out of the cave of illusory shadows and show them the light (even if they make us drink hemlock for doing so).

The photo shows, "What Freedom!" by Ilya Repin, painted in 1903.

