Cumming

TOGETHER

APART

the strength of the hills is MINE

a guide to the (often masturbatory) events + effects of March 2, 2017
A Violent Attack on Free Speech at Middlebury

Middlebury, My Divided Campus

The Middlebury Mob Shows How Thin the Veneer of Our Civilization

March 2nd, Middlebury College, AN ELITE INSTITUTION.
A community forever changed. But who were the key players in this drama? Let's take a look…

"Bell Curve" author attacked by protesters at Middlebury College

Understanding the Angry Mob at Middlebury That Gave Me a Concussion

Middlebury College punishes students who disrupted Charles Murray talk

Discord at Middlebury: Students on the Anti-Murray Protests
Charles Murray @charlesmurray · May 17
Mugged at Middlebury, mugged at a Congressional Hearing. Middlebury was more fun.

Charles Murray @charlesmurray · May 6

"traditional"
"intellectual"
Along with psychologist Richard Herrnstein, political scientist Charles Murray infamously published *The Bell Curve* in 1994, arguing that IQ scores are, to a significant extent, rooted in genetics. They point to inheritance and the environment as possible reasons for racial differences in IQ. On March 2, Charles Murray came to Middlebury to discuss his recent book *Coming Apart*. In it, he claims that the economic elite have maintained their class status through work ethic, productivity, and family values, whereas people who are poor are lacking in these same attributes. By providing Murray with a platform to speak, by co-sponsoring the event, and by providing introductory remarks, Middlebury College, the Political Science Department, and Laurie Patton help to define Charles Murray as a “traditional intellectual”: a person of letters and distinction (Moorti). Murray is presented as apolitical and outside of systems of power, but he comes into being precisely through his politicized position within hierarchies of power (Moorti). Murray becomes known only in relation and in opposition to the “Thugs,” the “Anna’s,” and the “Categorically Insanes.” Because the the “Thugs,” the “Anna’s,” and the “Categorically Insanes” are marked as irrational, deviant, and out-of-control, Charles Murray is defined as the “objective” social scientist.
they would have been another human being. There is a lot to be angry about in America today, but nothing good ever comes from demonizing our brothers and sisters.

"Just give me another chance"

Stanger described the incident on Facebook as the saddest day of her life.
I shouldn't leave my previous Tweet at that. Bill Burger was heroic. The story is complete and utter bullshit.

1/ On the bright side: Made two new friends Thursday. Bill Burger, who among other things drove our getaway car through the mob, and...

Got a fundraising letter from Middlebury (Anna is '07) on (wait for it) Thursday. Ought to send something in Bill's & Allison's names.
Though many believe Russell J. Leng ‘60 Professor of International Politics and Economics, Allison Stanger, and Vice President for Communications/Chief Marketing Officer, Bill Burger, are just humans of the female and male variety, their participation in the Charles Murray events reveal them as cyborgs. These two can be identified as cyborgs due to their reliance and absorption of the non-human into their identities as victims. The boundaries between Burger and his “getaway car” and Stanger and her neck brace and sunglasses have dissolved in the time since the event. Without these items, who are they, how do they continue to gain the support and pity of the masses? Stanger and Burger operate under the knowledge that a failure to embrace the cyborg would be contrary to their interests. As Haraway states of the age of cybernetics, “We had better get it that this is a zone where we had better be the movers and the shakers...it’s a military project, a late capitalist project in deep collaboration with new forms of imperial war” (Gane and Haraway, 139). Stanger and Burger use their non-humanness to participate in capitalist and imperialist agendas. Attaching herself to the glasses and neck brace allows Stanger to garner the media attention required to sell her new book. She continues to wear them with dedication, making many dubious of the severity of her injuries as well as her full humanness. Framing both he and his car together as a savior of Murray and Stanger, charioting these figures away from the angry “thugs,” rather than as a weapon of violence against student protesters, allows Burger to ensure the College continues to receive funding from wealthy donors and alumni. Both Stanger and Burger promote the imperialist agenda within the college, literally and figuratively squashing student dissent and confirming hegemonic, institutional power.

**Charles Murray**
@charlesmurray

PS Middlebury Prof. Allison Stanger is really cool. Great conversation.
PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

May 12, 2017
Aliza Laurel Cohen
2198 Middlebury College

Dear Aliza,

Please accept my sincere apologies for my delay in providing you with this outcome letter. I am writing to discuss actions at that event, concerns were raised that you may have violated Middlebury’s Demonstrations and Protests policy. As we discussed on March 12, during the Charles Murray protest. If you have any questions about this outcome.

The Handbook provides the following description of Probationary Status:

Students may be placed on probationary status when the number or nature of their College policy violation(s) is sufficiently concerning that an additional policy violation will most likely result in official College discipline (please see below). Probationary status provides students with an opportunity to avoid this outcome. They may do so by demonstrating improved conduct, generally reflected in their sustained ability to respect community standards and adhere to College policies.

If students commit new policy violations while on probation, an appropriate course of action will be determined. Considerations may include the gravity and impact of the new infraction; the student’s response during and following the new infraction; and the student’s progress during the probationary period.

Parents or guardians are informed when students are placed on probationary status. Probationary status is informal College discipline and is not part of the student’s permanent record. Students who are placed on probationary status can answer negatively if they are asked if they have been subject to official College discipline. Although probationary status concludes after a designated period of time, a probationary status letter remains in a student’s file until graduation, when it is removed. It is important to note that discipline is cumulative at Middlebury, and further infractions following the successful conclusion of the probationary period may still result in more severe outcomes.

Aliza, I know this event has been provocative in ways that have been painful, but I am also hopeful that it has been provocative in ways that will ultimately prove to be productive for you and for Middlebury. Growing and sustaining a diverse community is a complicated and ongoing endeavor, and I encourage you to continue to remain involved in that process in constructive ways.

I look forward to crossing paths with you under happier circumstances in the future. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this outcome.

Sincerely,

Karen Guttenag

Karen Guttenag
Associate Dean for Judicial Affairs and Student Life

[the necro-politician]
Karen Guttentag, Associate Dean of Judicial Affairs and Student Life, almost unilaterally possesses the power to dictate punishments. She chooses to pursue both unofficial and official judicial action for student protesters while sidelining allegations of policy violations committed by faculty, staff, and administrators. She has discretion in choosing which students to punish (if at all), but she rarely uses this power to exhibit mercy. Guttentag is an agent of the institution—her role is to punish protesters in order to secure the continuous influx of donations from wealthy benefactors who demand punitive action. Her power to define who occupies the sphere of social death reduces the protester to “bare life,” a condition in which a person exists outside of the realm of liberal human discourse, where the person is a person but possesses no rights (Braidotti). Bare life in the protester is “that in [them] which sovereign power can kill: it is the body as disposable matter in the hands of the despotic force of power” (Braidotti, 5). As representative of the institution, Guttentag exerts power and enacts punishment, ultimately revealing who has the right to exist at Middlebury, who will never be accepted, and who receives the protection of the institution.
The Special Snowflake Brown-Shirited Thug
The protester present for Murray, Stanger, and Burger’s escape from Wilson Hall into the “getaway car,” is known by many as the “Thug.” Typically a “person of color,” they fall into Murray’s category of the lawless, violent, genetically inferior. The “Thug” does not have a “body” but is rather made up of brandable, unnameable “flesh” (Spillers, 67). The flesh of the “thug” is degendered and dehumanized through this title, becoming a symbolic marker for all racialized others (Spillers, 68). Their individuality, even their identities, are indistinguishable from one another, hence the punishment of students of color who were not even present at the protest. The presence and existence of the “Thug” in this narrative is key to create the foil of the “Victim.” The fabrication of the violent “Thug” ensures that Stanger, Burger, and Murray can describe themselves as the harmed party and elicit pity.
I stood at the podium. I didn't make any attempt to speak—no point in it—but I did make eye contact with students. I remember one in particular, from whom I couldn't look away for a long time. She reminded me of my daughter Anna (Middlebury '07) — partly physically, but also in her sweet earnestness. She looked at me reproachfully and a little defiantly, her mouth moving in whatever the current chant was. I'm probably projecting, but I imagined her to be a student who wasn't particularly political but had learned that this guy Murray was truly evil. So she found herself in the unfamiliar position of activist, not really enjoying it, but doing her civic duty. — CM
The character "Anna" is identified by her docile nature. Swept along in the crowd of fanatical student protesters, Anna succumbs to peer pressure to become activist for a day. Anna is a figment of Charles Murray's imagination. She is the result of a semi-erotic, paternal, patriarchal fever dream in which Murray imagines his daughter among the protesters. Anna falls into the unfamiliar position of dissenter, and it's pretty adorable. She is the equivalent of a white nationalist's fluffy puppy, she might try to bite sometimes but she's quite harmless, cute, and trainable.
These really are America’s dumbest people.

Charles Murray @charlesmurray · Mar 13
Muting idiots is one of life’s underrated pleasures.

Charles Murray @charlesmurray · May 14
I’m a patient man, but this is bullshit.

Aliza: People have done this. In Q&As that we’ve watched from other schools, and in his speeches we watched from other schools, people have tried to engage with him, and he’s pretty unresponsive and kind of evades people’s questions. His ideas have been discredited for years and years, and so there’s no argument to be had.

Charles Murray @charlesmurray · May 14
I regret calling it bullshit. I should have said “This young woman is knowingly lying.”

Students Protest Lecture By Dr. Charles Murray at Middlebury College

The categorically insane

Upon further examination, The Daily Wire found several courses taught at the liberal arts college that were found to be categorically insane. Here are the top five worst courses from the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies department followed by their descriptions:

5 Courses At Middlebury College That Will Send Your Face Through A Desk

"The inmates ran the asylum last night at Middlebury," Murray told TIME

For $64,332 a year, some Middlebury students will take such asinine courses and receive a college degree for it. Despite the exorbitant price, these ridiculous “scholarly” departments are cheapening the worth of a Bachelor’s degree.

Christina Sommers @CHSommers

The Gender Studies program at Middlebury College. Oy vey.
While the “Thug” finds its strength as a label under the banner of racism, the “Categorically Insane” and the “Stupidest Woman” thrive off of ableist assumptions of diminished intelligence and cognitive function. This label is attached specifically to members of the Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies department for supporting protesters and teaching what many conservative “traditional intellectuals” perceive as nonsense. They have the audacity to believe in coalitional politics, creating connections between oppressed peoples to “resist.” In Reagon’s article, “Coalitional Politics: Turning the Century,” she argues for coalition-building by saying, “There is no chance that you can survive by staying inside the barred room” of one’s own identity category (Reagon, 358). These “Categorically Insane” feminists breach the bars of the asylum to create solidarity with other deviants such as the “Thug” and even the “earnest” yet fickle “Anna’s.” The media tried to keep these “crazies” in their place by exposing the list of courses available through this department, but they still remain at large. This character is often conflated with the “Snowflake,” because they are seen as too sensitive and reactionary to injustices. The general sentiment is “Why can’t they just toughen up?”
As many of you are aware by now, a large group of student protestors disrupted Charles Murray's talk yesterday afternoon in Wilson Hall in McCullough Student Center. I am deeply disappointed by the events that I witnessed and it was painful for many people in our community to experience. I know that many students, faculty, and staff who were in attendance or waiting outside to participate were upset by the events, and the lost opportunity for those in our community who wanted to listen to and engage with Mr. Murray.

With some effort, we were able to move Mr. Murray to another location where he and Prof. Allison Stanger, who was scheduled to moderate the talk and a probing conversation after the talk, were able to go ahead with the talk and the group of demonstrators aggressively confronted Mr. Murray and the event turned into a confrontation about to go ahead with the talk and were leaving campus. We were unable to contain the situation and today we are looking into the event and its aftermath. We will be responding in the coming days.

Following the event, protests continued outside Wilson Hall. I have been in contact with the police about the group of demonstrators that were on display last night. I am grateful to those who were open to an open discourse as a core Middlebury value, and to those who are concerned about that in the days ahead.

Today our community began to come together to establish a climate of inclusion, class, sexual identity, and the other issues about that in the days ahead. Last night we failed to live up to our core values. But I remain hopeful. Last evening, several students, faculty, and staff representing a large spectrum of political perspectives remained in Wilson Hall to discuss the events and to talk about building bridges. Their ability to reach across differences in a rigorous but respectful way was a stark contrast to the events that preceded it. I firmly believe these are the Middlebury values that we have lived so long and that we must strive to embody in the future.

I extend my sincerest apologies to everyone who came in good faith to participate in a serious discussion, and particularly to Mr. Murray and Prof. Stanger for the way they were treated during the event and, especially, afterward.
President of the College Laurie Patton is both the mourner and the one who is mourned. In her email on the morning of March 3 in the immediate aftermath of the Charles Murray protest, Patton writes that she is “deeply disappointed” and explicitly notes “how painful” the events were for people waiting to hear Murray speak. She assures that disciplinary action for the students who “clearly” violated protest policies will be quickly forthcoming. The email ends with Patton “extend[ing] [her] sincerest apologies to everyone who came in good faith to participate in a serious discussion, and particularly to Mr. Murray and Prof. Stanger for the way they were treated during the event and, especially, afterward.” Patton marks “those in our community who wanted to listen to and engage with Mr. Murray,” Charles Murray, and Allison Stanger as the victims of the protest. She aligns herself with these “victims,” and she is able to do so because they have always already been coded as worthy of praising, remembering, and mourning (Butler). While naming who deserves to be mourned, she simultaneously defines herself as the one to be mourned through her tears, her claim that “seeing the “Fuck Rhetorical Resilience” sign was the worst moment of [her] life,” and her grief that student protesters ignore “all of [her] hard work on inclusivity over the past two years...like putting up the Black Lives Matter Flag and working to increase financial aid.” (Note: The percentage of students on financial aid is decreasing from 44% to 42% in the 2017–18 academic year.) Through claiming victimhood, she more clearly defines the protesters as disruptive perpetrators of violence.
We understand this zine as a mechanism for resisting the dominant narrative that has simultaneously paints protesters as unruly thugs and thoughtless snowflakes. This zine is both a parody of the events of March 2nd and wildly true. We take our inspiration from Hemmings’ “Why Stories Matter.” Hemmings states, “Feminist theorists need to pay attention to the amenability of our own stories, narrative constructs, and grammatical forms to discursive uses of gender and feminism we might otherwise wish to disentangle ourselves from if history is not simply to be repeated” (Hemmings, 2). Who we rely on to tell stories, who we invoke, and which narratives we believe allow us to tell particular types of stories. By writing this story, we reclaim the power to define our own narrative and reclaim our own voices as student protesters, a narrative that was often silenced by college administration as well as national media. This reclamation is one of many acts of resistance to Charles Murray and an administration that only protects a select few.

Thank you for reading our zine. In the words of Russell J. Leng ‘60 Professor of International Politics and Economics Allison Stanger, “Namaste brothers and sisters.”

by: Julia Haas  Aliza Cohen  Morgan Grady-Benson
Works Cited


Gane, Nicholas and Donna Haraway. “When we have never been human, what is to be done?: An Interview with Donna Haraway.” Theory, Culture and Society 23, nos. 7–8 (2006): 135–158.


