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Opinions Section

*The Gettysburgian*

Clearing The Air… One Last Time

Okay, okay. That is enough. I am beginning to wish that I had never written the past article, *Ashamed to Triumph*. Instead of just the blowback from embittered Trump-hating liberals, I have also been receiving some remarks of disappointment and even hostility from Republicans on campus with regard to my “apologizing” for having voted Trump. It is coming to the point where I am afraid that public perception of my position may interfere with me receiving submissions from political organizations. So, to satisfy betrayed Republicans and to clarify my view for hurt Democrats, I will type up a quick piece to regain the faith of the contributing masses. After this clarifying article, the whole divisive issue will be in the rearview mirror once and for all.

I do not actually regret voting for Donald Trump. Yes, I know that I wrote that if I could do it over again, I would have voted for John Kasich, but that was just me waxing dramatic, as I tend to do from time to time. But waxing dramatic should be no excuse for dropping my journalistic integrity or personal conviction. So, to explain this better, yes, I would have voted for KAsich, but with conditions: the voting system through which our presidential candidates reach the White House must be reformed. When I voted for Trump, aside from expressing doubts regarding Trump’s organizational ability; personal sensitivity and restraint; public speaking skills and presentation; and awareness of the turbulent social climate that he was entering and, in part, responsible for creating, I still thought that he showed promise insofar as negotiation, free trade, and economic restrengthening go, and I still maintain that he shows promise in those areas.

What really got me to vote for Trump, though, on a much more personal level, was that I wanted to measure the reactions of the Democrats that I knew on campus when they heard my decision. I am known to be a contrarian, and I wanted to test the Democratic Party’s youth, who claim to be members of the party of love, tolerance, progress, and right to see whether they lived up to that title. I wanted to see if they were accepting enough to tolerate a Trump voter in their midst. The results of my experiment have been mixed so far, but there has been a fair bit of intolerance, self-righteousness, and criticism evident in people’s responses, which I have recorded in my memory for analysis later, to see what mindset the liberal youth of today have, how that group feels about their social and political environment, and how it reacts to and copes with things when they do not go its way. Agreeing to disagree is not enough; there must always be some judgment of either logic or character, morality or personality, placed on the voter. This is not a sustainable model; just put differences aside and let tolerate one another.

Anyway, it would be shallow for me to have made Trump or any candidate president just to get a reaction out of people. I am not that immature. I still stand by my reasoning as written in *Ashamed to Triumph*, and will continue to do so consistently. That article’s reason was the political and public reason; this one’s is the personal and private reason.

In truth, I was almost one-hundred percent sure that Trump would not have won, and my vote did not mean much in any event, as it is the delegates’ choice ultimately who controls the executive office. Now, of course, I did accept the slight possibility that Trump would win, as it is a big country, and I could not at the time say with confidence that I understood each and every state, from Maine to Georgia, from Delaware to New Mexico, from Hawaii to Alaska (nor can I say I can understand them now), so the likelihood of a Trump presidency was still present in my mind. However, I could say one thing for sure: New Jersey was never going to vote Republican that year.

Our voting system relies on a derivative count. None of you had to graduate high school to know that. The delegates from each state are the ultimate force in deciding the way that the state votes. This is common knowledge. And I knew that the voters from my state would never vote for Trump. I live in South Jersey, I watch the local news, stay in tune with public sentiment. No way would a conservative get through there. Knowing that my vote was completely useless and insignificant to virtually the fullest effect of the word, I felt no risk in voting Trump, and I felt a sense of total disconnection from the absentee ballot as I mailed it to Election Headquarters last November. No harm, no foul, no worries.

Now, if the popular vote was the direct count, and the electoral college scrapped as being one of the imperfect institutions of old America, then I would have played it safer and voted Kasich. This would not have been a vote made only in retrospect, though. It took me a good long while to decide whether I wanted to vote for Kasich, or whether I wanted to proceed with my experiment. After sorting through the thought process explained in the previous paragraph, I deiced to take the latter course. I am a school journalist, I wanted to something journalistic: understand the liberal social movement and how it deals with opposing voters, even ones of whom they would like to think better. Now, depending on how his presidency ends up by 2020, I still may not vote for Trump again only for the purpose of proving a point in an experiment, because, well, why would I? I already would have gotten what I wanted (results) by that time, so to simply repeat the study again would be a needless redundancy, as well as obnoxiously petty.

To shift this article away from coming down too hard on the Left, as this was meant to be an olive branch to help both sides understand the sentiment of their editor, I will address the right now, Young Americans in Freedom in particular: I do not regret voting Trump.

Heck, with advancements made in the pursuit of fair trade; a surge in national economic growth; much-needed cleaning-up of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs; ultimate decision not to burn bridges with China by declaring the country a currency manipulator; the declaration of the opioid crisis as a Public Health National Emergency; focus on infrastructural improvements; pushes in civil service reform, oversight, and protections fo federal employees; the extension of protection to agricultural and veterinary resources from bioterrorism under a 2002 Department of Homeland Security bill; and the seeking of a peace plan between Israel and Palestine, there is room for credit to be given to the president, amidst a staggering slew of criticisms. Viva la Trump.

What I intended to put across in *Ashamed to Triumph* was, with emphasis, that I abhor the alt-rightists using Trump and playing off of his flaws and insecurities for the promotion of their backwards agenda. In fact, if Trump had done the most managerially correct thing in the beginning of his term, and fired the wild-eyed gang of prehistoric droogies that helped him fume, shout, and manipulate his way into the White House (Jesus, that was a nasty electoral cycle) at the start, and replaced them with actual party experts and/or up-and-coming political prodigies, then the administration and the country would be in a much better place as of the writing of this article. It is not necessarily Trump himself who I take the most issue with, though he is problematic, truly, but the Steve Bannons, Paul Manaforts, Jeff Sessionses, Kellyanne Conways, and Peter Schweizers who I resent the most, and the underlings whose collective influence continues to permeate the executive office. Their cancerous doctrine cannot continue to infect our democratic republic.

The reason that I am writing this for YAF particularly is that that group has for a while been playing the alt-right game of initiating relentless, intentionally disgusting and infuriating campaigns (i.e. the tasteless “Unborn Lives Matter” gimmick) in the very fashion of *Breitbart* and other alternative Republican online news outlets. YAF alleges to want a change of course in the country by perpetuating “traditional” (actually fairly recent, though that is another article altogether) conservative beliefs; returning to simpler social norms; reading the constitution through a lens of strict constructionism; and clearing the name of capitalism by extending the economic concept’s benefits to the rising members of the middle class. YAF is in its own mind the “actual conservative” group, the kind that likes Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio.

Then why orchestrate ad campaigns designed solely to annoy people and rile up opponents? And why press so hard on abortion rights? Surely there are more urgent concerns other than that to be debating. Are global diplomacy, campaign finance reform, economic revitalization, race relations, public health resources, the quest for energy independence, etc., etc. not important enough to warrant even as much concern as an already-resolved issue as abortion? Really? Focusing on such a small matter only strengthens the case against YAF as a legitimate campus organization, as throwing around flyers like the ones that insensitively mocked the Black Lives Matter movement is something that you would expect to find Milo Yiannopoulos doing. It is because of this shift to the more extreme elements of the party that some members of this and other conservative organizations thought that I was apologizing for Trump, when, really, I was criticizing the alt-right. For once one begins to take on the characteristics of a group that they opposed and claim to oppose yet, one fails to recognize the similarities between themselves and their rivals, and is in denial of the growing resemblance.

Neither Left nor Right should feel offended or attacked by this article. Again, it was meant to clear the air, not fog it up further. I want all to know, from every political group, that I never meant to turn any of you off from contributing, and that while I write critically of both parties Democratic and Republican, I am also critical of myself. *Ashamed to Triumph* was misconstrued, but I understand that I acted too much like a writer, with a dramatist’s flair, and made statements a touch too sweeping and a bit too vague. My bad. But, as I wrote, this article is an olive branch to both sides, not only a piece of constructive criticism. So how about we drop the petty personal gripes and get back to sharing our opinions in a respectful, understanding way, preferably in the Opinions Section? Let’s all be friends again; how about it?