Batman and Robin Abstract Discussion Minutes from January 25, 2011

Present: Emily Dix, Florencia Foxley, James Taggart, Katrina Nayak, Vin Dioguardi, Alex Lee, Cyrus Vastola, Ben O’Neill, Sam Fox, Rebecca Kazinka, Amy Gruelich, Jon Switzer-Lamme, Baby Jacob, Noah Lavine, Lizzie Douglas, Ben Safran, Jonathan, Ivan, Angelo Ngai, Rob Marrero, Zoe, Hannah, Aaron, Mary Clare O’Donnell, Jacob “Academic Violation” Horn

1. Start with a Moment of Silence
2. Introductions
3. Emily explains that if you know the names of people involved, keep it to yourself, respect confidentiality, please don’t place it in any kind of context. Batman and Robin will not be revealing themselves, sorry if you got that impression.
4. Intro of Abstract
   a. Emily – panel really focused on the term “faggot,” the distinction was made between that and other insulting behavior. Do you all think that that distinction was appropriate?
   b. Ben – Divided over that issue at SAGA the other night, but yes, I think it is a bit problematic that the sexist issues were ignored, even though the term “faggot” is a stronger term.
   c. Ivan – Really strong opinions, unfortunate that this term is in someone’s vocabulary. Think the assumption that everyone around you is heterosexual is a mistake.
   d. John – seems that the statement of violation comes from how Batman took this insult, which is why “faggot” is problematic.
   e. Emily – what do you think about the intention? Does that change how you think about the situation?
   f. Noah – Yes, because if Robin had said that intentionally, this would not have worked out so well.
   g. Baby Jacob – For Batman, it was that specifically, but Robin’s behavior otherwise is a problem regardless. He should have been confronted anyways, such behavior is very un-Haverfordian.
   h. Emily – Role of alcohol?
      i. Ben – as Ivan said, he had the word in his vocabulary. Alcohol played a role, but he already had that idea.
      ii. Ben – was Robin aware that Batman was gay?
      iii. No
5. Reading the Statement of Violation
   a. Emily – focus of this statement of violation was on who this language was directed at and decided that it was offensive to the entire community
      i. Aaron – why is the community relevant since it was obviously offensive to Batman?
      ii. Emily – Trust breached also with the community, in terms of having someone in the community using this sort of hate speech,
against the values in the Honor Code. But what does everyone else think?

iii. Ivan – I think this was a breach of my trust
iv. Baby Jacob – Still goes back to the fact that he didn’t respect the authority of someone who works for the College. Disrespecting an authority figure, also offensive to a lot of people in the community, so it is a community breach.
v. Florencia – what if it had been said to someone who was closeted? Might have felt too unsafe to confront Robin, definitely a breach of trust with the community.

b. Emily – What do you think of the issue of “responding in a manner inconsistent with the principles of confrontation”?
i. Aaron – is the implication there that Robin was confronting Batman?
ii. Hannah – No, that Robin did not respond appropriately to Batman’s confrontation
iii. MCOD – So the confrontation occurred at the gala?
   1. Emily – yes
iv. Jon – on the surface it appears nitpicky, but if you can’t trust someone to fix their behavior when it’s been pointed out to them, it creates a wider violation. Destabilizes the system.
v. Baby Jacob – also disrespects the community standard of confrontation. Also disrespects the system/Haverford community.
vi. Lizzie – I think it was interesting that another volunteer felt uncomfortable confronting Robin, and I don’t think someone who is volunteering should ever feel uncomfortable confronting.
vii. Emily – But the Honor Code doesn’t really say we have to be receptive to confrontation. It’s implied. Interesting point.

6. Reading Circumstantial and Proposed Resolutions
   a. Emily – do you think separation is merited?
i. MCOD – Are words like that always super unacceptable or is it a lot worse since Batman is gay? Especially since it is personally attacking someone. The feeling that Batman was in danger heightens the need for a response, but Robin was using it not trying to scare Batman but in a way that people use it frequently.
ii. Ivan – I think the real problem is that people don’t stop to think about the word. Compares the history of the word “faggot” with that of the n word.
iii. Vin – I think regardless, we can all agree that Robin should not have used that word. However, I don’t think he should have been separated. Robin should have had consequently had repercussions if he did not complete the resolutions
iv. Emily – are you saying that separation should only been used after people have failed to complete other resolutions other than as time to reflect?
v. Vin – Yes.
vi. Florencia – what about if you need time away from the situation? Especially since Batman can’t leave work here.

vii. Alex – I don’t think this is a situation where Batman was totally uncomfortable in Robin’s presence.

viii. MCOD – I am very aware of the history of the term, but we need to differentiate according to intent, so separation would have been inappropriate. Especially since Robin was so horrified. Conflating intentionally threatening a gay person in that way with this situation is dangerous. I thought Ivan’s comparison of the n word is interesting, but not quite appropriate.

ix. Emily – There is a lot of emotional baggage with both words

x. Becca – Very unfortunate that using that word is commonplace, but it would be unfair to separate one person because it is so commonplace.

xi. Zoe – I think in general, when I hear someone say that word, I think that isn’t appropriate, but I don’t think it is fair to make an example of someone because it is commonplace and is obviously learned and who you are surrounded with, which isn’t always a choice. This sort of scenario is better because it educates about the problems of the word itself.

xii. Jon – I was looking at this from a different perspective. He wouldn’t have been separated to learn the errors of his ways, but so that Batman would feel comfortable. It seems that separation was not used as a method of justice, but as a method of recovery, which is not the best way to use the system.

xiii. Lizzie – Does Robin have a right to be at Haverford? Do we have to put up with someone who violates the community in such a way?

xiv. Zoe – I don’t think in this case specifically Batman was actually in danger and the focus on the word use is more productive.

xv. Emily moves us on to the Deliberations and Finalizing Resolutions

7. Finalizing Resolutions
   a. Emily – Sorry, just didn’t want people to think that Robin was actually separated
   b. Ivan – Think they did a good job addressing the alcohol education. Completely reasonable not to separate him. Would have wanted something more with the community to restore their trust.
   c. Baby Jacob – We didn’t talk about this, but I think it’s important. He came back and dealt with a trial when he didn’t have to. Big deal. Chose to go through the trial procedure
   d. Emily – how much should a jury consider how safe a party feels?
      i. Jon – in this case, I don’t think it was significant enough, but know that there are a lot of situations where that is not the case
      ii. Florencia – Also Robin changes over the course of the trial, and Batman subsequently feels safer here, so it was not as much of an issue.

These minutes reflect the opinions of Florencia “Funfrontation” Foxley and Ian “Consensus” Gavigan, the Council Co-Secretaries (ffoxley@haverford.edu or igavigan@haverford.edu) and are neither approved nor reviewed by the rest of Council. Questions/comments? E-mail code@he!
iii. MCOD – I think the change and sincerity of the confronted party is more important for decision making than the sometimes very subjective feelings of the confronting party

iv. Aaron – Issue of groupthink. Has anything been said to the team about this kind of vocabulary? To get to the root of the problem.
   1. Emily – not something the jury included in their resolutions, but might have been good to include.
   2. Johnathan – don’t we want to keep other people out of this issue?
      a. Emily – right, there is confidentiality issue and don’t want to come off as chastising the whole team.
   3. Aaron – maybe just talk to the coach.
   4. Ben – need to present it as an issue of education, not chastisement.

v. Jon – That’s the problem with Council, can only react, hard to be proactive.

vi. Emily – How does the social honor code play into this situation?

vii. Alcohol sidebar (Social Code situation because you have to be responsible for your actions regardless of the state you are in, being that drunk is a socially irresponsible decision)

8. Emily cuts off discussion in the interest of not making people stay forever, we are invited to keep talking now or come back tomorrow night. Also encourages us to read the letter to the community later.