



WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY? BEN SHAPIRO

You probably think your opinions matter.

You probably think you're an individual with unique experiences, thoughts and ambitions.

Well, I hate to break it to you, but according to current leftist orthodoxy, you're wrong. You see, your opinion only matters relative to your identity—and where that identity ranks on the hierarchy of intersectionality.

If you're now thinking, "What the hell are you talking about?" you haven't spent much time on a modern college campus.

Intersectionality is a form of identity politics in which the value of your opinion depends on how many victim groups you belong to. At the bottom of the totem pole is the person everybody loves to hate—the straight, white male.

And who's at the top? Well, it's very hard to say, because new groups claim victim status all the time. No one can keep track.

So, how does this intersectionality thing play out?

Something like this:

Let's say you're a gay, white woman. Your opinion matters, but less than that of a gay, black woman. Why? Because while all women are oppressed by the patriarchy, and all gays are oppressed by the heterosexual majority, blacks have a victim status that whites obviously don't.

Of course, a gay black woman's victim status is less than that of a black trans woman, who ranks below a black, Muslim trans woman, and so on. The more memberships you can claim in "oppressed" groups, the more aggrieved you are, and the higher you rank.

Get it? Good, because it's about to get even more complicated.

Intersectionality takes your victim status and uses it as the basis for creating alliances with other victim groups. Thirty or forty years ago, activists encouraged racial solidarity among blacks to combat oppression. But today, that's not enough. Today's activists demand blacks make common cause with other allegedly "oppressed" people—gays, lesbians, transgenders, Palestinians, Native Americans, whomever.

Here's the logic:

A black gay and a Hispanic gay may not belong to the same victim group racially, but they do belong to the same victim group on the basis of their sexuality. By focusing on the places where various victim identities intersect, intersectionality creates a united "us" versus "them" paradigm: righteous victims rising up together to fight the oppressor, those dreaded straight, white men.

This explains why at a rally protesting the treatment of Palestinians by Israel, you might see a contingent of lesbian activists. That's intersectionality at work. They're so united by their victim status that it doesn't matter if Islamists throw gays off of buildings or murder female family members who defy their father's wishes. Victim solidarity trumps all other considerations.

The term "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a professor of law at Columbia University.

She explains that intersectionality "was my attempt to make feminism, anti-racist activism, and anti-discrimination law do what I thought they should—highlight the multiple avenues through which racial and gender oppression were experienced..."

To Crenshaw, America is a terrible place full of victim groups, each with their particular set of grievances. Why shouldn't these victim groups get together and form a political coalition unified by the belief that the majority society has harmed them?

That some professor tucked away in an ivory tower would come up with this nonsense is not surprising. What is surprising—and disturbing—is that so many people actually go along with it. America is the most open, least racist nation on the planet. That professor Crenshaw is free to spin her nonsensical theories and get paid well for it should offer adequate proof of that.

And since when do you have to live someone's experience in order to understand them? You don't have to live as a slave in order to understand that slavery is cruel and wrong. You don't have to live as a woman in order to recognize the evil of rape.

Finally, and most important, intersectionality promotes the biggest hoax of all: that we aren't individuals who are to be judged on the basis of how we act, but are merely members of groups to be judged on the basis of our group identity. In other words, you and I as individuals with our unique experiences, thoughts and ambitions count for nothing; our racial and sexual identity count for everything.

It's hard to imagine an idea less likely to produce a free and equal America than that.

But what do I know? I'm just a straight, white male.

I'm Ben Shapiro for Prager University.