

A close-up portrait of Ben Shapiro, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The image is framed by horizontal bands of white, torn paper, creating a layered effect.

BEN SHAPIRO

5 LIES

COLLEGES TELL YOUR KIDS

AND HOW TO DEBUNK THEM

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FIVE LIES COLLEGES TELL YOUR KIDS... AND HOW TO DEBUNK THEM

INTRODUCTION

Vanderbilt University, November 2015.

Picking up on the media obsession with college students claiming racism and sexism across America, 200 students decided to protest the white privilege and microaggressions of the administration. They didn't give any particular examples of discrimination by the administration, but that didn't matter – they *felt* victimized. The students loudly demanded diversity classes and a more “diverse” student body.

The next day, a bag of crap showed up at the front door of the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center.

The apocalypse ensued. The student activist group sponsoring the original march rushed to Facebook to denounce the “vile act,” weeping, “The violation of a place that in many ways is the sole home for many Black students is deplorable. As many of us sit in grief, recognize that these types of actions are what we speak of when we note the reality of exclusion and isolation of students of color and specifically Black students on our campus.”

The police investigated. Nobody was arrested or prosecuted.

Clearly, racism was alive and well on America's campuses, right?

Well, no.

It turns out that the bag of excrement wasn't a racist attack. It was left by a blind girl with a service dog. She couldn't find a trash can, and so she followed normal procedure: she left it outside the door of a building, knowing that some janitor would pick it up and discard it.

Oops. You'd imagine the student group would have some dog poop on its face, no? Well, not exactly.

Instead, the student group apologized – and then added that “the needs of students with disabilities on this campus are also marginalized.” Yes, our self-appointed victims co-opted the blind girl responsible for the dog poop bag into their victim support group.¹

And thus it goes at America's campuses.

Protests have rocked American campuses this year based on *nothing*. From University of Missouri to Yale, from California State University at Los Angeles to Penn State, from University of Wisconsin to University of North Carolina, it's become the norm for students to scream, get violent, block free speech events, and demand “change” from the administration while claiming that America is a racist, sexist, homophobic country filled with bigots who staff its institutions of higher learning.

All of it is nonsense. But that doesn't stop the preaching.

Some of the language used on campus is too bizarre to be believed by those who haven't been on campus for the last several years. I've been speaking on college campuses for more than fifteen years, but only in the last two have I required security. I've been rioted against at CSULA and near-rioted against at Penn State; I've been banned from DePaul University and screamed down at University of

Wisconsin. All of this is thanks to a new mentality of privilege that has seeped down from the most radical leftists to young students, who assume an air of unearned moral superiority while violating basic decency.

It's not a coincidence this is happening on campus. American college campuses have become a breeding ground for American failure: career failure, moral failure, emotional failure. And that's thanks to a perverse leftist ideology that rewards subjective self-aggrandizement over objective truth.

In this e-book, we'll examine five of the most common claims of the campus left: first, that people who are more successful in America are more successful due to "privilege," and therefore cannot speak about the merits or demerits of American policy and society; second, that "social justice" requires redistribution of resources and imparts "rights" that allow you to demand things from others; third, that subjective feelings eclipse truth and free expression, and thus necessitate "trigger warnings" and campaigns against "microaggressions"; fourth, that Americans are better off if they are protected from those who disagree in "safe spaces"; and fifth, that "diversity" should trump decency.

The campus left is determined to inculcate each of these pernicious ideas in young men and women across the country, to convince them that America is unfair and awful, that they are victims, and that they can establish their own moral rectitude by passing along these gross notions. Campus leftism is an ideological multi-level marketing scheme: if you sell leftism to your friends, you get credit for their leftism; if they sell it to *their* friends, you've only increased your circle of virtue!

There's only one way to stop this: by debunking the most popular buzzwords the left enjoys employing.

So, let's begin.

1. "CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE"

America's college campuses have one overriding, leftist utopian goal: to level all inequality of outcome. America's Founding Fathers believed in equality of opportunity – they thought, rightly, that God or Nature provided mankind with rights to life, liberty, and property. The international left believes that true opportunity can only be reflected in result: any inequality must be the result of inequity. That's true for individuals, and it's true for groups. And we can't just measure inequality in economic terms – we must *feel* equal.

On college campuses, to achieve this end, the left has set up its mini-utopias. Grade inflation assures that everyone is satisfied with his or her grade. Government-sponsored tuition ensures that everyone is able to achieve a college degree, whether or not that degree is in a useful subject. College administrators work to ensure that every individual on campus feels equally valuable.

But that's not enough. Because reality does not match the vision – because there will always be individuals and groups that do not achieve equally – the left must blame something. And so they blame the structure of America: its history, its values, its economics. They state that anyone who fails at anything has done so because of the racist, classist, sexist, homophobic "system," both on campus and off.

And they say the system must be torn out root and branch.

This is all part of a theory called “intersectionality,” which suggests that we are all members of broader groups, that our identities as members of those groups make us victims or victimizers, and that we only have the right to speak out on a particular issue to someone more “privileged” than we are. The “privilege” hierarchy goes something like this, as described by Damon Linker in *The Week*: straight white male at the top, then “straight, able-bodied white women, with straight ‘people of color’ of either gender even less privileged, followed by gay, lesbian, transgendered, and disabled variations on each identity category – with a hypothetical disabled black lesbian perhaps least privileged of all.” This hierarchy, of course, means that white males should shut up.²

Intersectionality is drilled into students from the moment they step on campus, with classes dedicated to destroying “white privilege” and telling students to “check their privilege.” The campus left simply gives people a feeling of virtue by counting them as members of victimized identity groups. If you’re an underachieving black woman, the left blames your failures on your identity: you must be failing because the “system” hates blacks and females. If you’re an underachieving gay Hispanic, you must be failing because the “system” targets people like you.

For those who are left – white heterosexual “cisgender” males – the left grants conditional virtue so long as those white heterosexual “cisgender” males admit their guilt and make penance. The process is easy: all these people have to do is perpetually acknowledge their “privilege,” and all is forgiven.

According to the campus left, the true bad guys in the world are these white heterosexual “cisgender” males. The “system” was built to benefit them; the Founding Fathers designed a governmental and economic system to protect their own evil interest, at the expense of minorities everywhere. This “white privilege,” say members of the campus left, extends to every area of American life. It’s inescapable. You’re born into it so long as you’re born white; you’re born with a heavy burden on your back that can never truly be alleviated if you’re born non-white, non-straight, non-male. Here’s the definition of “white privilege” from the Southern Poverty Law Center, quoting Jennifer Holladay’s *White Anti-Racist Activism: A Personal Roadmap*:

White skin privilege is not something that white people necessarily do, create or enjoy on purpose. Unlike the more overt individual and institutional manifestations of racism described above, white skin privilege is a transparent preference for whiteness that saturates our society. White skin privilege serves several functions. First, it provides white people with “perks” that we do not earn and that people of color do not enjoy. Second, it creates real advantages for us. White people are immune to a lot of challenges. Finally, white privilege shapes the world in which we live — the way that we navigate and interact with one another and with the world.

This is, to put it mildly, ridiculous and insulting.

Now, before we go further, it’s important to define our terms. It *is* true that black people, and other minorities, suffered historic discrimination in the United

States. That's *inarguably* true. But that doesn't mean black people are suffering institutional discrimination *now*. And historic discrimination is insufficient to explain current levels of inequality, or to justify discrimination against white people who had nothing to do with Jim Crow. Individuals all over America have different histories ranging from the wealthy to the poor. Some people are born rich, some are born poor; some have histories of discrimination, some have histories of privilege. *Nobody* is capable of righting wrongs done to people three generations ago by penalizing people who had no part in those wrongs without doing grave injustice.

The solution to historic injustice isn't modern injustice. Three generations ago, my people were being slaughtered by the millions in Europe, and FDR wouldn't let Jews into the country. That doesn't mean there's widespread anti-Jewish privilege throughout America that requires restitution from the government or today's taxpayers.

In the United States virtually all such inequalities result not from historic injustices but from cultures that embrace poor values. Individual failures in the United States aren't due to an unfair system, by and large, but to individual irresponsibility and bad decision-making. And inequality among groups exists in every society in history. We can't fix where you start in life. That's beyond your control and it's beyond my control. But the notion of "white privilege" suggests that you can *never* overcome where you started in life because there's a big bear called "white privilege" trying to eat you – that if you make all the right decisions, white privilege will still stand in your way.

That's a lie.

In general, there's another reason that some people fail and some people succeed in America: some values are better than others. And people who tend to hold fast to those values do better than others because of them. White privilege isn't reality. It's just a cowardly way to blame someone else for your failures to live up to decent standards.

Let's examine some of the myths of "white privilege."

First, advocates of "white privilege" rhetoric claim that disproportionate poverty in the non-white community is the result of continuing institutional racism. That's bunk. To avoid permanent poverty in the United States is not particularly difficult. You must simply follow three rules, according to the left-leaning Brookings Institute: 1) finish high school, 2) get a full-time job, and 3) wait until age 21 to get married and have children. According to Brookings, "of American adults who followed these three simple rules, only about 2 percent are in poverty and nearly 75 percent have joined the middle class."³

Fully 71 percent of poor families with children are unmarried. The poverty rate among non-married white families was 21.7 percent as of 2008; the poverty rate among black married couples that same year was 6.9 percent.⁴ The question of intergenerational poverty isn't one of race, but one of decision-making. And it's not a question of racism, either. The single motherhood rate has jumped across racial lines, and white people are not forcing black women to get pregnant out of wedlock disproportionately.

Then there's the question of who actually earns in the United States. If color is inherently tied to privilege, why is it that, according to the Census Bureau, in 2015

the racial group with the highest median income was...wait for it...Asians?⁵ Was that because the American system is based on “Asian privilege,” or because Asians have historically been treated fantastically well (forget all the internment stuff or the exploitation of Asians on the railroads), or because the Constitution is written in Korean?

Advocates of “white privilege” also claim that higher imprisonment rates among blacks reflect institutional white racism from which whites disproportionately benefit. That’s asinine. More black people go to prison by proportion than white people because more black people commit crimes by proportion than white people. Don’t want to go to jail for murder? Easy: don’t murder people. Here’s the fact about that supposedly evil justice system: it *underprosecutes* murder in minority communities because minority communities are underpoliced. As Jill Leovy, a liberal reporter for *The Los Angeles Times*, wrote, “In predominantly African-American neighborhoods of U.S. cities, far too many killers have gotten away with far too many crimes for far too long, fueling a disastrous murder epidemic.”⁶

When the police *do* come into contact with black people, police are *less likely to kill black people* than white people in the same circumstances, according to Professor Peter Moskos of John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY. Moskos found that “Adjusted for the homicide rate, whites are 1.7 times more likely than blacks to die at the hands of police. Adjusted for the racial disparity at which police are feloniously killed, whites are 1.3 times more likely than blacks to die at the hands of police.”⁷

Moskos isn’t alone. A widely-publicized study in July 2016 from Harvard Professor Roland Fryer surveyed over 1,000 police shootings and found that black suspects are shot less often than white suspects in comparable situations. Fryer, for what it’s worth, is both black and of the political left. In 2015, the cops shot 987 people; a huge majority were armed or threatening deadly force, and blacks represented 26 percent of those shot. Police officers are 18.5 times more likely to be shot by a black male than an unarmed black male is to be killed by the police.⁸

As early as 1994, the DOJ surveyed felony cases in the country’s 75 largest urban areas and found *lower* felony prosecution rates for blacks than whites.⁹ A deadly force lab study from Washington State University found that participants were biased *in favor* of black suspects in simulated threat scenarios.¹⁰ In 2015, the DOJ analyzed the Philadelphia Police Department and found that white officers were *less* likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot unarmed black suspects.¹¹

How about the “white privilege” of “stop and frisk”? It doesn’t exist. In New York City, minorities keep running into cops because minorities keep committing an outsized share of crimes. From January to June 2008, 98 percent of all gun assailants in NYC were Hispanic or black, as Heather MacDonald has reported. Stop and frisk in that city statistically *undertargeted* minorities – only about 85 percent of those stopped and frisked during that time were black or Hispanic.¹² If there’s white privilege, it’s in *overpolicing* white communities. Black areas plagued by violent crime need more cops, not fewer – and they’re not going to get them, thanks to Black Lives Matter.

How about “driving while black”? The DOJ and New Jersey attorney general commissioned a study in the 1990s that clocked the speed of all drivers after finding that police pulled over blacks disproportionately. They found that black people sped disproportionately. Blacks were 25 percent of all speeders and 23 percent of drivers stopped for speeding. Naturally, the DOJ tried to kill the study.¹³

What about the “white privilege” of sentencing disparities? The disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences came about because crack is easier to obtain and distribute, and because *black legislators wanted stricter sentencing* to rid their areas of drugs. The sentences for crystal meth are precisely the same as those for crack. Just 16 percent of state prisoners were convicted for drug offenses, and most of those drug offenses involved distribution (just 3.6 percent of state prisoners are in for simple drug possession, and most of those people pled down their original charges from trafficking).¹⁴

Advocates for “white privilege” also argue that non-white people are victimized by institutional “redlining” – banks rejecting people because of the color of their skin. There’s only one problem: banks reject more whites than Asians. And when the government attempted to cram down subprime mortgage regimes in order to rectify the supposed imbalance, the economy collapsed.¹⁵

“White privilege” fanatics also bluster on about college admissions, as though university officers are attempting to keep black people out, when in fact the only racial policies generally accepted on campus discriminate in favor of black Americans. A Princeton University study showed that blacks received a “bonus” of 230 points on SAT scores versus their competitors on the old 1600-point scale; by contrast, Asians are penalized 50 points.¹⁶

Finally, “white privilege” advocates say that Americans suffer from “implicit bias.” To defend this proposition, they generally use the result of the so-called Implicit Association Test, in which you are asked to sit at a computer and hit a button to match a word to a person of a certain color. Typically, leftists say that the studies show that both white and black people associate criminal words with black faces. But it turns out that the tests are unreliable, and largely invalid, since it doesn’t predict behavior. That’s not my contention. That’s the science. As Jesse Singal, a left-leaning writer at *New York Magazine*, writes, “A pile of scholarly work, some of it published in top psychology journals and most of it ignored by the media, suggests that the IAT falls far short of the quality-control standards normally expected of psychological instruments. The IAT, this research suggests, is a noisy, unreliable measure that correlates far too weakly with any real-world outcomes to be used to predict individuals’ behavior — even the test’s creators have now admitted as such.”¹⁷

“White privilege” is a way to divide, to silence. We can all agree that discrimination is terrible. We can all stand together when a black man is wrongfully shot by police. But to attribute that shooting to unspecified “white privilege” and then state that America itself is racist is actually racist in and of itself. You can’t assume white people don’t care about innocent black people getting shot without evidence. That’s disgusting – and by the way, it’s racist.

The same holds true with regard to accusations of generalized sexism and “rape culture.” Women are not paid less for the same work,¹⁸ nor are they victims of

discrimination on college campuses, where they now constitute the majority of students.¹⁹ And the talk of a campus “rape epidemic” is pure fantasy – as Christina Hoff Sommers has pointed out, the “one in five women is raped on campus” statistic is an out-and-out lie reliant on conflating “attempted forced kissing” with sexual assault. In actuality, the Bureau of Justice Statistics “Violent Victimization of College Students” report shows that from 1995-2002, there were six rapes per thousand per year. The rape rate has been dropping rapidly, too.²⁰

We should all be held to the same behavioral standard: decency and responsibility. The “check your privilege” slur dispenses with decency, along with the facts. It grants the “privilege” of avoiding responsibility for individual action so long as you check certain social group boxes. And that destroys the possibility of social harmony or individual growth.

2. “FIGHT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE!”

The left’s supposed hatred of “privilege” springs from their quest for what they term “social justice.” Now, social justice is an oxymoron. Justice is, by necessity, individual. If a guilty man is acquitted because he’s the right race, that’s *anti-justice*. If an innocent man is convicted because he’s the wrong race, that’s *anti-justice*. White southerners in *To Kill A Mockingbird* would have said that Tom Robinson’s murder was “social justice.” Black racists would have said that Nicole Simpson’s murder was “social justice.” Social justice suggests that your group identity relieves you of individual responsibility.

Today, hard-core leftists call themselves social justice warriors. They do this because they believe that individual justice is racist, sexist, bigoted, homophobic. Individual justice suggests that we each be held responsible for our actions. But the SJWs think that’s unfair. After all, we’re not just individuals – we’re members of groups! What if those groups are disproportionately poor? What if they’re disproportionately in jail? How can we achieve *group justice* if individual justice keeps getting in the way?

The most coherent advocate for social justice is the philosopher John Rawls. Rawls suggested that individual justice wasn’t justice at all, because it didn’t create actual fairness – it only created the *appearance* of fairness. Rawls believed that “undeserved inequalities call for redress.” As Thomas Sowell explains, “A fight in which both boxers observe the Marquis of Queensberry rules would be a fair fight, according to traditional standards of fairness, irrespective of whether the contestants were of equal skill, strength, experience or other factors likely to affect the outcome-- and irrespective of whether that outcome was a hard-fought draw or a completely one-sided beating. This would not, however, be a fair fight within the framework of those seeking ‘social justice,’ if the competing fighters came into the ring with very different prospects of success-- especially if these differences were due to factors beyond their control.”²¹

To rectify these imbalances, as Sowell points out, is “the quest for cosmic justice,” an attempt to overcome all imbalances in nature by violating individual rights and destroying individual liberties. It is unjust, as Sowell says, to force a poor student to study more – but if we don’t, the poor student falls behind. And it is just as unjust to force a good student to redistribute his income to the poor student in

the future rather than driving the poor student to a higher level of success on his own. Social justice isn't merely unfair, it's counterproductive.²²

Proponents of social justice are the leading antagonists of what they term "income inequality" – the gap between the highest earners and the lowest earners. They treat "income inequality" as though such gaps have not widened and narrowed over time, or as if there is a correlation between levels of inequality of outcome and general success of the society or individuals within it. It's quite possible for income inequality to grow while those at the bottom end of the scale get richer. In fact, that's precisely what's been happening in America: the middle class hasn't dissipated, it's bifurcated, with more Americans moving into the upper middle class over the past few decades. The upper middle class grew from 12 percent of Americans in 1979 to 30 percent as of 2014.²³ As far as median income, myths of stagnating income are greatly exaggerated, as Edward Conard points out:

Misleading income measures assume tax returns – including pass-through tax entities – represent households. They exclude faster-growing healthcare and other nontaxed benefits. They fail to account for shrinking family sizes, where an increasing number of taxpayers file individual tax returns. They don't separate retirees from workers. They ignore large demographic shifts that affect the distribution of income. Nor do they acknowledge that consumption is much more evenly distributed than income. More accurate measures show faster income growth, especially for non-Hispanic workers, and wage growth that parallels productivity growth.²⁴

As to the notion that income mobility has declined dramatically, inhibiting social justice, that's bunk as well. The probability of movement from the lowest income threshold upward has remained stable over the past several decades. And income inequality has no impact on income mobility, which is why American income mobility is just as strong as European countries with far more redistribution. Want to know why certain populations in America suffer from lack of income mobility? Because income mobility declines when you drop out of high school or have a baby out of wedlock.²⁵

As for poverty in America generally, the poor are the richest poor on earth: as Pew Research points out, "The US stands head and shoulders above the rest of the world. More than half (56%) of Americans were high income by the global standard...Another 32% were upper-middle income. In other words, almost nine-in-ten Americans had a standard of living that was above the global middle-income standard. Only 7 percent of people in the US were middle income, 3% were low income, and 2% were poor."²⁶

Proponents of "social justice" continue to maintain that the best way to curb inequity is by curbing inequality. They neglect to mention that social justice can only do so by destroying personal freedom, liberty, and the most powerful economy in the history of mankind. They also neglect to mention that American attempts to quash inequality have actually exacerbated it – we've now spent \$22 trillion in the so-called war on poverty, to no avail,²⁷ and we spend \$30,000 per year to poor non-elderly families.²⁸

3. TRIGGER WARNINGS AND MICROAGGRESSIONS.

Because the left believes that equality of outcome is essential – and because equality of outcome can never be achieved – they fall back on the notion of *subjective* equality: equality of feelings. Everyone’s feelings must be protected ...except, of course, if you’re on top of the victim hierarchy posited by intersectionality. Then, shut up.

In order to ensure that you shut up, colleges have begun wielding two terms as weapons: trigger warnings, and microaggressions. What are microaggressions? Let’s use the definition provided by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, a professor at NYU, in *The Atlantic*: microaggressions are “small actions or word choices that seem on their face to have no malicious intent but that are thought of as a kind of violence nonetheless.” Your subjective perspective on when you have been “aggrieved” is all that counts.²⁹

As the word itself connotes, these offensive words or actions aren’t merely unpleasant – they’re violence, presumably to be met with violence. When I was scheduled to visit California State University at Los Angeles, one particular professor, upset at my upcoming lecture, threatened to wrestle students who sponsored my visit, then put up a notice on his office door: “The best response to micro-aggression is macro-aggression.”³⁰

Such microaggressions can range from the utterly benign (“I’m colorblind”) to the completely normal (using terms like “he” and “she” can be perceived as offensive to those who do not consider themselves “cisgender”) to the curious (“Where are you from?”) to the factual (“Black single motherhood is a significant predictor for higher crime in the black community”). The only commonality among microaggressions: somebody finds them subjectively offensive. Subjectively. Not objectively. There is no reasonable standard when it comes to microaggression, no stopping to ask, “would anybody truly find this bigoted?”

And of course, nobody bothers to ask whether such microaggressions are protected freedom of speech. All perceived offenses must be quashed. That’s why last fall, when the students at University of Missouri decided to target the administration for its supposed racism, the police department actually asked students to report “hurtful” words.³¹

That’s totalitarian – it’s using the force of the gun to silence those who oppose you. But those who claim microaggression are treated as heroes on campus. They control the campus dialogue. This reaches ridiculous proportions. At Brandeis University, for example, even discussing microaggressions is considered a microaggression. Last year, the Brandeis Asian American Students Association put out an “installation” in the public square to “bring attention to microaggressions that are frequently heard in and out of the Brandeis community,” according to the BAASA Facebook page. Unfortunately, some Asian American students felt microaggressed *by the display*, so it was removed.³²

To prevent people from being upset by microaggressions and other offenses, campuses have begun using “trigger warnings.” Trigger warnings are notifications required before showing material that could dredge up negative feelings among those who view the material. So, for example, colleges have required that certain

works of classic literature be accompanied by warnings that students may encounter scenes that “trigger” memories of past events. Sure, Vietnam vets don’t get trigger warnings before fireworks displays, but college students need trigger warnings just in case physical abuse in *East of Eden* reminds them of a story they heard about a cousin’s mom from Ann Arbor. Books that require trigger warnings have actually included *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. A student at Rutgers suggested, “The examination of suicidal tendencies in Mrs. Dalloway may trigger painful memories for students suffering from self-harm.”³³

All of this has created an entire generation of mentally and emotionally stunted Americans unprepared for the real world. Jonathan Haidt writes, “The recent collegiate trend of uncovering allegedly racist, sexist, classist, or otherwise discriminatory microaggressions doesn’t *incidentally* teach students to focus on small or accidental slights. Its *purpose* is to get students to focus on them and then relabel the people who have made such remarks as aggressors.” This is the opposite of cognitive behavioral therapy, where we attempt to cure people of distorted thinking and see the world more clearly. PC 2.0 actually reinforces subjective assessments of victimhood and suffering. This vicious cycle creates adults unwilling to face up to reality, determined to blame the world for their problems, convinced that the more they claim offense, the more they deserve from others. It’s not just un-American, it’s unhealthy.

It also makes morally bereft human beings. Professor Roy Baumeister writes in his book *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty* that evil behavior generally springs from idealism that turns to violence; unjustified self-esteem, and hypersensitivity. “People who think they’re better than they are will be the dangerous ones,” Baumeister writes. “Hypersensitive people who often think their pride is being assaulted are potentially dangerous. Even when a neutral observer would conclude that no serious provocation occurred, it is still important to recognize that, in the perpetrator’s own view, he or she was merely responding to an attack.”³⁴

Self-appointed victimhood is dangerous stuff. And millions of students are learning it each year, and then going forth to destroy basic American philosophy. That’s why a November 2015 Pew poll found that 40 percent of so-called millennials, aged 18-34, believe that the government should be able to prevent people from making “statements that are offensive to minority groups.” That would involve repeal of the First Amendment.³⁵ But that’s the logical extension of a philosophy that prizes protection of individual feelings over protection of individual rights.

Trigger warnings aren’t available in real life. And microaggressions don’t matter. As former Marine and police officer Chris Hernandez wrote, “f*** your trauma. My sympathy for your suffering, whether that suffering was real or imaginary, ended when you demanded I change my life to avoid bringing up your bad memories....If your psyche is so fragile you fall apart when someone inadvertently reminds you of ‘trauma,’ especially if that trauma consisted of you overreacting to a self-interpreted racial slur, you need therapy. You belong on a

psychiatrist's couch, not in college dictating what the rest of society can't do, say, or think. Get your own head right before you try to run other people's lives."³⁶

4. SAFE SPACES.

Once microaggressions have been policed and trigger warnings issued, campuses are finally deemed "safe spaces." Again, the implication is clear: if you are subjected to language that offends you, you have been made "unsafe." You require the protection of men with guns. You require segregated areas. In fact, black students at the University of Missouri insisted that no white people be allowed to rally with them, lest their safe space be invaded. On campuses around the country, black students are now calling for blacks-only housing, a suggestion with which the Ku Klux Klan would presumably be overjoyed to comply – after all, it's both separate *and equal!*³⁷

Those safe spaces must never be penetrated, under any circumstances. Here's what one columnist from the *Harvard Crimson* wrote earlier this year:

In a class I attended earlier this semester, a large portion of the first meeting was devoted to compiling a list of rules for class discussion. A student contended that as a woman, she would be unable to sit across from a student who declared that he was strongly against abortion, and the other students in the seminar vigorously defended this declaration. The professor remained silent. In a recent conversation with peers, I posed a question about a verse from the Bible. A Harvard employee in the room immediately interjected, informing me that we were in a safe space and I was thus not permitted to discuss the controversial biblical passage. And these are just stories from the past three months.³⁸

When safe spaces are threatened, violence breaks out. And college administrators now use the threat of violence from their own students to shut down free speech events. At DePaul University, for example, alt-right popularizer Milo Yiannopoulos spoke, and leftist students charged the stage while campus-sponsored security stood by and did nothing. Afterward, the president of the university, Dennis Holtschneider, sent a letter to students: "Universities welcome speakers, give their ideas a respectful hearing and then respond with additional speech countering the ideas. I was ashamed for DePaul University when I saw a student rip the microphone from the hands of the conference moderator and wave it in the face of (the) speaker...This is unworthy of university discourse."

That opened the floodgates. One prominent law professor wrote, "the president has betrayed [marginalized] students and has undoubtedly done lasting harm to their perceptions of DePaul." The DePaul Black Leadership Coalition smacked Holtschneider, too, saying that Yiannopoulos' speech was just the latest in a line of terribly racist events – such horrors included chalkings that said "Build a Wall" and "Blue Lives Matter," plus oil paintings on the quad in support of Trump.

So Holtschneider apologized for allowing Yiannopoulos on campus at all. He wrote, "When discussing this in classrooms, our students heard other students recommend that they develop 'thicker skins' or 'shake it off.' They were surprised to

find that some faculty were unaware of the events, and they were concerned that the stress and trauma of the situation would adversely affect their ability to complete the term successfully. They read my letter about free speech as they were still shaking from the frightening effects of the hate speech they experienced....In short, many of our students, staff and faculty felt insufficiently supported by the DePaul community last week, including by me. For all of this, I deeply apologize.”³⁹

Then he resigned.

And the administration banned me from coming.

What did I do? The university couldn't name any ideological sins, but they knew that I'd been rioted against at Cal State Los Angeles, protested at Penn State, and walked out on at University of North Carolina. So Bob Janis, Vice President of Facilities Operations at DePaul, announced, "Given the experiences and security concerns that some other schools have had with Ben Shapiro speaking on their campuses, DePaul cannot agree to allow him to speak on our campus at this time."

Later that year, I attempted to speak at DePaul in conjunction with intersectionality expert Christina Hoff Sommers. The school promptly deployed several dozen security officers and called in the sheriff of Cook County to arrest me if I dared set foot on campus. When I showed up, they barred my entry and informed me that they would indeed put me in a cell if I tried to even sit in the audience for Christina's lecture.

There were no protesters at the time.

That's how safe "safe spaces" must be: even the hint of dissent must be quashed.

Take, for example, Yale University. At Yale, Nicholas Christakis and his wife Erica, who serve as the heads of residential college Silliman, weren't willing to go along with the PC regime. Before Halloween, the Intercultural Affairs Council sent an email to students telling them not to wear costumes that would "threaten our sense of community." This being rather vague, Erica, a professor of developmental psychology, sent out an email asking, "Have we lost faith in young people's capacity - in your capacity - to exercise self-censure, through social norming, and also in your capacity to ignore or reject things that trouble you?"

Turns out she should have lost faith in young people's ability not to be precious snowflakes. Over 700 students and faculty and alumni signed an open letter whining, "In your email, you ask students to 'look away' if costumes are offensive, as if the degradation of our cultures and people, and the violence that grows out of it is something that we can ignore." The letter did not list incidents of violence springing from Halloween costume racism.

Then Nicholas encountered 100 students in the residential college quad, where intrepid social justice warrior Jerelyn Luther confronted him. There, she told him that it was his job to create a place of comfort for students. When he said that was not in fact his job, she decided to scream at him, demand he apologize, tell him to "be quiet," call him "disgusting," and wail, "Who the f*** hired you?" It turns out, by the way, that she was on the search team that brought Christakis to Yale.

Nonetheless, the gauntlet had been thrown: 1,000 Yale students then joined a March of Resilience for a supposedly inhospitable climate for people of color. Then the students demanded all undergraduates take useless ethnic studies courses,

which qualify you to be useless ethnic studies professors; that mental health professionals join all the cultural centers (maybe that one's a good idea); that the title "master" be abolished, and that the Christakises be fired.

And the Yale administration caved. Dean Jonathan Holloway said he supported the IAC Halloween costume guidelines, which were "exactly right." Then they increased the budget for the cultural centers and abolished the title "master." Of course, the word "master" comes from the Latin word *magister*, which means "chief, head, director, or teacher," and in academic settings, has always meant expertise in a subject.

Reality has no place in the "safe space" bubble.

But America *is* a safe space. When protesters chant at me and threaten me, they're free to do so. At University of Wisconsin, social justice warriors stood up and shouted "Safety!" at me, as though my hulking 5'9", 165-lb. presence threatened them. I answered that they were in the safest place in the world: America. But America isn't a safe space for conversation and debate when the left insists on fascistic, thought-free areas.

5. "DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH."

A few days before I was scheduled to speak at California State University at Los Angeles, the president of the university realized that I would be saying something with which some students might disagree. So he did what leftists are so fond of doing: he tried to stifle the speech. He did so in the name of "diversity." He wrote, "After careful consideration, I have decided that it will be best for our campus community if we reschedule Ben Shapiro's appearance for a later date, so that we can arrange for him to appear as part of a group of speakers with differing viewpoints on diversity. Such an event will better represent our university's dedication to the free exchange of ideas and the value of considering multiple viewpoints."

According to the left, diversity does not include philosophical differences. That's because the left believes that diversity *of race and culture* can't thrive where people disagree. It can only thrive where people agree that racial and cultural diversity matter more than decency. Herbert Marcuse called this idea "liberating tolerance," as opposed to the "repressive tolerance" of free speech. He said only powerful people want free speech. The powerless need speech limited so that they can be on even footing with the powerful. More specifically, Marcuse said, conservative thought had to be silenced, since it was "repressive." "Liberating tolerance," said Marcuse, "would mean intolerance against movements from the Right, and tolerance of movements from the left."⁴⁰

Marcuse' ideological grandchildren run the campuses. When I got to campus, a near-riot broke out. Students barricaded the doors. Inflamed by their professors and their pathetic administration, they pushed around students who wanted to listen to an alternative viewpoint. I had to be escorted to and from campus by armed police officers.

The only sort of actual diversity the left desires is racial and cultural diversity. But racial diversity doesn't mean anything. A racially diverse criminal gang isn't a better enterprise than an all-black church choir. Values matter. Skin

color doesn't. Anybody who doesn't believe that is a racist. "Diversity" isn't our strength – decency is our strength.

Robert Putnam, author of the book *Bowling Alone*, is a leftist, and he believed in the mantra "diversity is our strength." Then he started doing experiments regarding communities, and what he saw was that diversity in communities – racial, ethnic diversity, which these days comes along with diversity of fundamental values thanks to the left – didn't lead to better, more cohesive, more tolerant communities. He said, "The only two things that go up as the diversity of your census tract goes up are protest marches and television watching."⁴¹ Putnam concluded that the only way to create social capital – that stuff that allows us to leave our doors unlocked at night and trust each other to babysit our kids – comes from shared values. The only thing that could allow people of diverse backgrounds to live together and overcome their tribalism was decency.

But the left cares *only* about racial diversity. Which means that at Yale University, the Yale Dramatic Association Board held new auditions for a play after people whined that a white woman was cast in a role normally played by a black man. It didn't matter that the white woman was cast after apparently outcompeting nine people of color who auditioned. No, the auditions had to be reheld because diversity mandates that the role go not to the best actor or actress, but to the one with the appropriate level of melanin. The Board said, "We recognize the pain that this situation has caused and that this new decision may come too late for some and may hurt others. Still, we hope that reopening auditions will give the Yale community another opportunity to bring new and varied voices to the stage." Except for Sarah Chapin, the white woman thrown out of the role, of course.⁴²

The desire for diversity ends in discrimination against people based on skin color and background. It means diversity quotas that harm Asians and Jews. It means that intersectionality determines value, rather than merit. It is precisely the reverse of the Martin Luther King Jr. injunction to judge people by the content of their character rather than the value of their skin.

Why Not?

The left contends that it is creating a better world with its utopian vision and its PC jackboots. Why shouldn't society attempt to conform to the hopes and dreams of those who live in it? Why shouldn't society adapt to our feelings and perceptions? Why shouldn't subjective perceptions of reality trump objective facts? Why not pursue safe spaces, complete with trigger warnings and microaggressions, in the name of diversity, and then we can all fight for social justice? Wouldn't that make the world a kinder, gentler place?

What does it matter, after all, if we simply toe the PC line and say that broad American racism is responsible for high rates of inner city crime, rather than individual choices made by individual human beings? Why not pretend that police forces target black Americans, if by acknowledging that untruth we create a bond of understanding with black audiences? Why shouldn't we all frontally lobotomize ourselves to the truth that Caitlyn Jenner is a man, if by calling him a woman we help him find acceptance and happiness and prevent suicide of those like him? Why not push redistributionism, even if it means a bit of demagoguery?

After all, people will *feel* better!

Barry Glasner, president and professor of sociology at Lewis & Clark College, and Morton Schapiro, president and professor of economics at Northwestern University, think we should embrace such a philosophy: “As educators, we seek to develop in our students the cultural literacy that reduces the chances that someone will inadvertently belittle another. Wholesale denunciations of young people’s concerns only hinder our efforts to do right by our students.”

Sure, doing right by students means doing wrong by America. But that’s all right: a better world will result.

Unless it doesn’t. A society that demeans achievement gets less of it. A society that incentivizes a victim mentality gets more of it. A society that blames itself for individual failures ends up destroying itself on the shoals of self-esteem.

America is the greatest social experiment in history. Our Founders asserted that individual rights trumped social engineering, and that no man had the right to use government to shape his own utopia. The result: the greatest, most successful nation ever conceived.

America’s campuses are working hard to tear that down.

And they’re winning. The college totalitarians are stacking up bodies at an increasingly rapid rate. They brook no dissent, and they tolerate no disagreement, even from those on their own political side. There’s a reason that when I spoke at Otay Ranch High School, an administrator dismissed students after I told them that the only reason for permanent poverty in the United States was poor monetary decision-making – he said he had an obligation to protect the students from such information. There’s a reason that some students at California State University in Los Angeles vowed to stop me from speaking, and one professor offered to wrestle the “white supremacists” who had invited me, bragging, “I lift, bro.”

The college totalitarians have ousted a president of Harvard, liberal Lawrence Summers, for recognizing that men and women might perform differently in math and sciences. They’ve gotten the president of University of Missouri to step down from his position for failing to bow before the idol of “white privilege.” They’ve destroyed the career of University College London Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Tim Hunt for making a joke about women in the workplace. They’ve assaulted dissenters. They’ve targeted those who disagree. They’ve purged the universities.

And by purging the universities, they’ve ensured that the next generation grows up in their utopian leftist “safe space.” Of course, those Americans will be dumber, less well-rounded, less informed, less tolerant, and significantly more mentally and emotionally fragile than their parents and grandparents. But at least the precious little snowflakes will never have to face down the terror of reality.

Conclusion

We can fight back.

America is the greatest place on the planet, with the best value system – a system that the left has been attempting to destroy for three generations. Nobody is better off in a system of repressive fake diversity, or preaching phantom white

privilege, or whining about trigger warnings, or being offended by microaggressions, or retreating to safe spaces.

We're better off when we all embrace fundamentally good values. When we share those values of responsibility and decency together.

So, what are the common, fundamental values we should be teaching on campus? Let's start with values such as those embodied in the Constitution: freedom of speech, of religion, of the press, of assembly and petition. Let's add in some basic civic values: don't have babies without being married, don't engage in crime, don't do violence to people who disagree with you.

Let's all be better to one another – not in terms of being oversensitive or worrying that we're all going to offend one another, but in assuming that we *will* offend each other from time to time, and that's okay. That doesn't mean we should go around insulting each other. But it does mean that we have to respect facts as facts, opinions as opinions, and insults as insults – they're not all the same thing.

Then we don't have to shut down debate and strongarm protesters and destroy the country in order to make ourselves feel good. We can feel good about what we share together: a constitutional system that prizes individual liberty and individual responsibility, a simple goodness that agrees to disagree about what we do in our own lives, but agrees generally that being a *mensch* is required of everyone. We share not "our own truths," but actual, factual truths – and actual standards.

We're all in this together. So let's stop letting the fascist left separate us with buzzwords and the tyranny of subjective feelings. If we do that, we'll finally begin to build what the founders foresaw, what Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed of, and what generations fought and bled and died to achieve: a society of values rather than races, of commonality rather than polarization, of truth rather than lies.

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