



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 22, 2022

NY Times, MSNBC Partially Blame CONSERVATIVES for Cancel Culture

The *New York Times* editorial board recently proclaimed in an article title, “America Has a Free Speech Problem.” This was picked up by MSNBC, which had a panel discussion about the matter on Monday. The good news is that both liberal media organs agreed that cancel culture is a problem, that it has a chilling effect on speech in America. The odd news is this:

Both claimed conservatives were partially responsible for it.

Published Friday, the *Times* [editorial](#) begins, “For all the tolerance and enlightenment that modern society claims, Americans are losing hold of a fundamental right as citizens of a free country: the right to speak their minds and voice their opinions in public without fear of being shamed or shunned.... For a strong nation and open society, that is dangerous.”

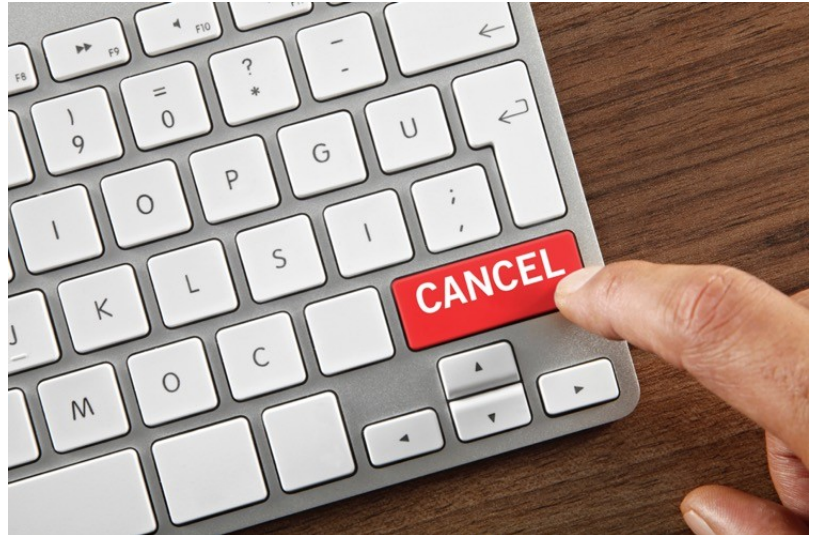
The mainly left-wing [MSNBC panel](#) — comprising hosts Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski and guests Charlie Sykes, Suzanne Nossel, and race-hustler Al Sharpton — joined the paper of (leftist) record in sounding this alarm. And that even leftists are troubled by cancel culture’s cowering power is a sign of the times. But then there’s a sign of the *Times*, evident when the paper sought to explain cancel culture’s genesis.

To wit: The phenomenon developed “because the political left and the right are caught in a destructive loop of condemnation and recrimination around cancel culture. Many on the left refuse to acknowledge that cancel culture exists at all, believing that those who complain about it are offering cover for bigots to peddle hate speech. Many on the right, for all their braying about cancel culture, have embraced an even more extreme version of censoriousness as a bulwark against a rapidly changing society, with laws that would ban books, stifle teachers and discourage open discussion in classrooms.”

As to the latter, the *Times* explained that it “goes far beyond conservative states yanking books about race and sex from public school libraries. Since 2021 in 40 state legislatures, 175 bills have been introduced or prefiled that target what teachers can say and what students can learn, often with severe penalties.”

“These bills include Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill, which would restrict what teachers and students can talk about and allows for parents to file lawsuits,” the paper later adds. “The new gag laws coincide with a similar barrage of bills that ostensibly target critical race theory.”

What the *Times* doesn’t mention is that “Don’t Say Gay” is a misrepresentation of a bill that merely



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prohibits teachers from discussing inappropriate sexual matters with very young grade-school children. But is any of this really an example of “cancel culture”?

Consider: Leftists also “ban books”; Dr. Seuss’s works and *Huckleberry Finn*, targeted because it contains the n-word, are good examples. But the reality is that devising curricula *is all about* picking and choosing and limiting what will be taught.

This is necessary, for starters, because it’s impossible to expose children to all the knowledge and books in existence. Going further, however, should we present kids with snuff material, porn works, and Nazi propaganda? How about a book presenting the argument that genocide can be a force for good? The point is that no one actually disagrees on whether we should draw lines, only on where they should be drawn.

As for the wider society, there never has been a time or place where people could say whatever they wanted without *at least* social consequences. Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was canceled permanently (i.e., killed) for, allegedly, corrupting the young and “mocking the gods.” In early America, transgressing against social codes could bring ostracism or even banishment. In the 1950s, espousing communism could destroy your reputation and career.

In other words, if “cancel culture” includes what the *Times* claims, then it’s simply an odd description for something timeless, something unavoidable, something as human as laughter and tears: social laws and their attendant pressure and the protecting of children from perceived bad influences. If this is so, then the far left is correct: “Cancel culture,” per se, does not exist.

But the *Times* tacitly confesses it’s a bit confused, as it opens its fifth paragraph with, “However you define cancel culture...” — but provides no definition at all. Yet it isn’t actually hard to define: Cancel culture is the enforcement arm of political correctness.

And political correctness is “the suppression of Truth for the purposes of promoting a left-wing agenda.”

Before proceeding, do note that there’s a very profound difference between actual cancel cultists and the conservative efforts to alter curricula. When traditionalists want a book removed or a teacher to cease indoctrinating students, this is invariably as far as their demands go; they don’t insist that the book’s author or the educator suffer career destruction and be permanently shunned and ostracized (which is partially why conservatives lose culture wars, mind you).

Leftists, however, *do* demand such consequences upon their dogma’s violation — even if the “trespass” occurred years back and the “transgressor” has apologized profusely. Cancel cultists are unrelenting and unforgiving. The *Times* ought to know this, too. It forced Editorial Page Editor James Bennet from his job in 2020 [merely for publishing](#) an op-ed by a Republican senator.

Moreover, the paper’s own research, a survey, implicates the Left in cancel culture. The researchers found that leftists were more likely than others to have retaliated against people over speech matters. “Democrats and liberals showed a higher level of support for sometimes shutting down such speech,” the *Times* admits, as “many progressives appear to have lost faith in that [First Amendment] principle.”

This isn’t to say leftists are never cancel-culture victims.

But their victimizers are *always other leftists*.

Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling and ex-tennis star Martina Navratilova, targeted because they opposed the “transgender” agenda; and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., shunned because he opposes COVID



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“vaccines,” are good examples.

Where is the “right-wing” analogue for this, people whose careers have been destroyed for opposing the conservative agenda? Neither the *Times* nor MSNBC panel provides even one such example, possibly because there is no such thing. People fear opposing the sexual devolutionary (“LGBTQ+”) agenda, COVID “vaccines,” Black Lives Matter, and anything else “woke” — *not supporting them*. Fact.

In reality, conservatives couldn’t be cancel cultists even if they wanted to because they *don’t control* the cultural establishment enforcement arms: mainstream media, entertainment, academia, Big Tech, and the rest of corporate America. The Left does. You can’t be a cancel cultist without cancellation power.

The fundamental difference between cancel culture and prior social codes — one the *Times* and MSNBC moral relativists couldn’t even begin to fathom — is that political correctness is based on skewed values and is wholly devoid of virtue. Unlike with the Puritans or earlier inquisitions, cancel cultists can’t even claim to be upholding an objective standard (i.e., Truth, God’s will). Their guide (often “offensiveness”) is completely subjective and relative, yet they enforce it with a zeal unrivaled by any jihadist.

The *Times* and MSNBC are rightly troubled by cancel culture’s danger, but they can’t and won’t come to terms with the fact that it’s solely the “Left’s” handiwork, their own demon child. So in accordance with their collectivism, they redistribute the complicity.

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