

On Cancel Culture

Maybe it's because I'm gay. As a gay man, I exist in a culture that, from a historical standpoint, is only just now emerging from an eternity of being "cancelled" by mainstream society, particularly by threatened "Christians" and conservatives.

Perhaps that's why I view the Right's latest brouhaha against "cancel culture" with unbridled delight. Their insistence that the Left "invented" cancel culture is downright hilarious, completely ludicrous, and loaded with a shitload of irony.

Let's jump into our time machines and travel back to 1852, shall we?

Historians point to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published that year, as the first banned book in the United States. Believing it to have a pro-abolitionist agenda, and because it aroused heated debates about slavery, the Confederacy barred it from bookstores.

The Confederacy. You remember them, don't you? They're that wannabe-nation with a pro-slavery agenda that caused an American Civil War – and whose disgraced flag is still so popular in parts of the Deep South (and with others who should know better).

A decade or so later, Congress passed a law that prohibited the mailing of "pornographic materials." Among items too sexy for U.S. postal service were textbooks about anatomy and/or reproduction, *The Canterbury Tales*, and anything written by Oscar Wilde.

"Sure sounds like a *left-wing* conspiracy to me!" I typed sarcastically.

Unbelievably, "comstockery" (the act of banning books) continues to this very day. The American Library Association publishes an annual list of the year's 10 most challenged books.

In 2019, eight out of ten of the books were challenged for LGBTQ content. What a shock.

Ninth was Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, for obvious (chauvinistic) reasons.

And #10 on the list? A book series so evil, it contains "actual curses and spells." Most of you have heard of it.

That's right! Some conservatives actually believe reading the *Harry Potter* series leads to Satanism.¹

But let's talk about "cancellation" on a far more personal and destructive level.

Even today, even right now, as you're reading this – some "Christian" parents are disowning their own children when they learn he or she is LGBTQ.

Worse, a few parental monsters will even throw a teenaged or even pre-teen kid out into the streets when they make that discovery. It's horrific, but it still happens.

To me, that's the *ultimate* in "cancel culture." Created by the Right.

So bitch, please.

After the endless indignities of Trump (and Weinstein and Musk and Epstein and Spacey and Cosby and...), many liberals are merely – and finally – screaming "ENOUGH!" to toxic ways and customs of the past.

And if we're doing so a bit too shrilly, too earnestly, perhaps it's because we've put up with racism, and sexism, and homophobia, and inequality, and double standards, and systemic and institutionalized bullshit for as long as we can remember.

The problem isn't that we're finally using the Right's tactics against them. The problem is that it took us this long to do so.

¹ Apparently *writing* the books leads to bigotry, but that's a whole different discussion.