

Politics in Awards Shows

BY ANNA FRITZE

The obvious point made when asked if celebrities should be allowed to further their political stance is the right to free speech. If celebrities were hindered from spreading political views when they wanted to, America would freak out. So, of course, we cannot say that they can't talk about politics, but should they?

Rational arguments against the topic include civility and courtesy to others. It's tough to look at politics in the media as a broad term when celebrities like Andrew Garfield, on LGBTQ rights, says, "We are all sacred, and we all belong," at the Tony's in June, and then Robert De Niro can be quoted saying, "F*** Trump!" Both are topics that many people agree with but are brought up in two very different ways.

It's pretty sad, though, how much people do take away from celebrities talking at awards shows. Is this really the best way to get political points across? Awards show speeches used to be for thank yous and recognitions for hard work put into the productions that won. Suddenly, these thank yous disappear and instead arise the problems: poor living conditions for children and the #metoo movement. People hear the message and get riled up because, of course, these issues are things that should be addressed. So, if this is the only way to get these messages across, then yes, it is important that celebrities use their platforms for these purposes. What should be talked about during awards shows is how ridiculous it is that political topics need to be brought up at awards shows for the government to actually get involved. But then the whole topic sort of contradicts itself, doesn't it?

Here's the thing: for political messages to get from celebrities at awards shows to viewers, people have to care about all three. They have to watch the awards show, respect the celebrity talking, and care about the political subject that is being talked about. Yes, there are instances where a political statement made by a celebrity goes viral, but that is when people are already excited about the topic, or it's something that should have been discussed years ago, finally being discussed in the present.

The general agreement is that the government needs to be better at making it known that these hot-button topics are being worked on (when they are) and to work on the ones that need to be (when they aren't). It's ridiculous that a platform made for entertainment has to be used to make changes in society.



Should politics and awards shows mix? CREDIT: Anna Fritze

Cancel Culture Among Young People

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

Urban dictionary defines cancel culture as, "A modern internet phenomenon where a person is ejected from influence or fame by questionable actions. It is caused by a critical mass of people who are quick to judge and slow to question. It is commonly caused by an accusation, whether that accusation has merit or not [...]."

'Cancel culture' is a new phenomenon, and like most things can be used for both good and evil. *The New York Times* reported one recent incident involving cancel culture in November. A young girl named Neelam, in a Catholic school, was sitting at her desk when a boy in her class started playing R. Kelly's song "Bump and Grind."

The young girl asked her classmate to turn off the music, as the artist had become known for his criminal actions. The student replied, "It's just a song, we understand he's in jail and known for being a pedophile, but I still like this music." This was not the first time he had been problematic in Neelam's eyes. After this incident, she deemed him canceled in her life. Neelam is quoted saying, "When it comes to cancel culture, it's a way to take away someone's power and call out the individual for being problematic in a situation [...]."

In this particular instance, cancel culture (among young people) appears to be nothing more than a fancy title for a common practice: ignoring bullies. This is a process most Americans have been taught from a young age. I remember my parents, teachers, and other adults in my life telling me to ignore people that bothered me because giving them attention gave them power. In a way, the only difference between my parents' advice and cancel culture is that cancel culture seems to be something the youths found for themselves; it wasn't a mantra taught from elementary ages.

I think it's fantastic that people have discovered the benefit of just ignoring the haters and annoying people! It's a great power: understanding the strength of being able to move on from negativity and simply reject it. This has been effective in high schools everywhere! Students have been canceling the ignorant, theirs or other's bad habits, and even Juuls in some locations.

In Neelam's case, she was bettering her life by rejecting an ignorant, inconsiderate classmate. However, there are instances where the people doing the "canceling" are the true ignorant people. Some students reported saying that cancel culture is just a mean way of removing people from your life because now that person is only known for how they (in your opinion) wronged you. Others are less likely to accept or forgive them as a consequence. It has become a new form of gossip.

I believe that it is not a bad tactic to ignore those who bother you and move on with your life. However, there is always a line that you might cross in doing so. If you privately ignore someone or get a trusted adult and or friend involved, that's great. But, if you use cancel culture to condemn people – you are no better than the original offender.

