

Keeping Your Mouth Shut Is a Thought Crime

Late last week I discovered that fashion influencer Jessica Mulroney (pictured above) was the latest to be guillotined by those waging the current cancel culture war. Mulroney, famed friend of Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle, was called out by fellow influencer Sasha Exeter on Instagram.

[Exeter challenged Mulroney's white privilege](#), saying that she was "very well aware of her wealth, her perceived power and privilege because of the colour of her skin," according to *The Independent*. Exeter also "claimed Mulroney... 'took offense' to 'a very generic call to action' for people to join the Black Lives Matter movement," shaming Mulroney for failing to use her public platform to speak out on the movement's behalf. Mulroney's claim that she "did not feel that she needed to" only served to further anger Exeter.

I'll not weigh in on the personal argument between Exeter and Mulroney. When such disagreements happen, it's quite likely that apologies need to be made over poor word choices and offensive actions.

What troubles me, however, is Exeter's insistence that Mulroney needed to speak out at all. What if Mulroney simply was unsure where she stood on the issue? It used to be that those who could keep their counsel and hold their tongues about a matter were thought wise. Is it now a crime to weigh evidence from various sides of an argument before taking a personal stand?

Unfortunately, public opinion seems to think it *is* a crime. Author Andrew Sullivan sums this difficulty up in a [recent column for New York Magazine](#):

In this manic, Manichean world you're not even given the space

to say nothing. 'White Silence = Violence' is a slogan chanted and displayed in every one of these marches. It's very reminiscent of totalitarian states where you have to compete to broadcast your fealty to the cause. In these past two weeks, if you didn't put up on Instagram or Facebook some kind of slogan or symbol displaying your wokeness, you were instantly suspect. The cultishness of this can be seen in the way people are actually cutting off contact with their own families if they don't awaken and see the truth and repeat its formulae. Ibram X. Kendi insists that there is no room in our society for neutrality or reticence. If you are not doing 'antiracist work' you [are ipso facto a racist](#). By 'antiracist work' he means fully accepting his version of human society and American history, integrating it into your own life, confessing your own racism, and publicly voicing your continued support.

Perhaps you agree with Kendi. You certainly have the right to do so. But should that right infringe on the right of others to remain silent? To process their own thoughts? To do research and even come away with the opinion that, hey, there may be something to both sides of this debate?

Somehow, we have gotten into the habit of thinking that there is only one legitimate stance on certain issues. I'm not denying that this one side doesn't have some legitimate points to consider – they do! But when we limit our thoughts and debate to only one side, we enter very dangerous ground. [Benjamin Franklin recognized this fact](#) years before the American Revolution was even fought. In July of 1722 he quoted an extensive passage from the *London Journal* in one of his infamous Silence Dogood columns:

'Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such Thing as Wisdom; and no such Thing as publick Liberty, without Freedom of Speech; which is the Right of every Man, as far as by it, he does not hurt or controul the Right of another: And this is the only Check it ought to suffer, and the only Bounds it

ought to know.

‘This sacred Privilege is so essential to free Governments, that the Security of Property, and the Freedom of Speech always go together; and **in those wretched Countries where a Man cannot call his Tongue his own, he can scarce call any Thing else his own.**” [Emphasis added.]

We’ve seen a lot of virtue signaling in the last few weeks, virtue signaling which tells us there is only one right way to think of these matters. But is that not slavery of thought? If so, could it explain why actions made out of wisdom and discernment seem headed for the endangered species list?

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