

Neil Young and the '60s Cancel Culture That Continues to Haunt Us

The “Godfather of Grunge,” ’60s rock star Neil Young, seems to be making a comeback lately, at least in news headlines. The Grammy award-winning musician [made waves when he threatened to remove](#)—eventually doing so—his music from the streaming service Spotify, because of that company’s continued hosting of Joe Rogan’s podcast. Young disagreed with recent Rogan guests such as Dr. Robert Malone and Dr. Peter McCullough, who advocate non-establishment viewpoints about COVID and the best way to treat the virus.

The specter of a radical ’60s rock star attempting to deplatform someone with differing views has prompted some to wonder how such a change could occur. Why would Neil Young, who shouted down the establishment way back when, take the establishment’s side now and try to use his leverage to silence Joe Rogan? It makes one wonder whether Neil Young was ever truly in favor of freedom. Maybe he was just in favor of imposing his own views on the culture, as were the rest of the radicals from the ’60s.

Former *Arizona Republic* journalist and current Substack blogger, Geoff Biddulph, who says he was raised by hippies, [articulates the accepted vision of the supposed good old days](#). “It is important to understand that the protest movements of the 1960s and early 1970s were not just about free sex, drugs, rock ‘n’ roll and Vietnam,” he writes. “At its heart the protest movement of that era was about personal liberty.”

Really? I don’t remember that. I do remember that the protest movement championed the right to express certain intellectual and political positions. But opposition to those positions ...

not so much. It was acceptable, for instance, and almost mandatory to speak of a woman's right to legal abortion. The rock group The Gaunga Dyns even sang about it in their 1967 song, "Rebecca Rodifer," about a girl who dies from a botched back-alley abortion. If there are pro-life songs from that era, I haven't heard them. I was in college in the early 1970s, and I can testify without fear of contradiction that to express a pro-life view then would have earned one the era's equivalent of being canceled. Cancel culture, now at its zenith, was born in the 1960s and '70s. Ask any Vietnam vet.

Few today would doubt that the Vietnam War was a mistake, that the draft was wrong, and that everyone had the right to decline military service in the rice paddies of a faraway land of ambiguous political significance. I chose not to enlist and was spared the agonizing decision of whether to answer the draft when my lottery number came out 315 out of 365.

Others my age had a different understanding of the war, however, and when they acted on their convictions, they were ostracized. Two men I knew personally, a relative and a close friend, were both spat on by waiting members of hippie-era cancel culture when they deplaned upon returning from Vietnam. In the so-called era of personal liberty, some individual choices were forbidden.

Certain belief systems were also under attack during this time; in fact, recent attacks on "white" civilization have their origins in '60s protest-rockers like Neil Young. Underlying all the cultural eruptions of that era was the scent of anti-Westernism. Buddhism was cool. Christianity was not. This was—and still is—primarily because Buddhism is not a Western belief. And free enterprise? Sorry, just an excuse to colonize and enslave.

In truth, the supposedly liberty-loving artists of the '60s were anything but liberty-loving. They were soft-serve Jacobins attacking established power not for the sake of some

vision of freedom but for the purpose of imposing their own values on the culture.

And they succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. The ubiquity of identity politics and anti-Western rhetoric are their doing, and the collectivist mentality of "You're either with us or against us," a '60s trademark, characterizes what we are seeing today with COVID restrictions and vaccine mandates. Why wouldn't Neil Young, one of the era's high priests, try to dislodge a naysayer like Rogan and his freedom-loving, free-thinking guests? Rogan's actions in advocating for freedom directly question the hegemony of the culture that the '60s crowd have created—and in their eyes, that is unacceptable.

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