

Essay

Speech on Cancel Culture

Last name:

Name:

Instructor:

Course:

Date:

Fellow young people, I feel deeply honored to stand before all of you this afternoon. Today, I have an important topic I would love us to discuss. You all have probably heard or engaged in cancel culture online. Now, I understand that cancel culture is a sensitive topic with polarized views. I am not here to tell you what to think about cancel culture. Contrarily, I want us to engage both sides of the coin of cancel culture and understand the pros and cons of cancel culture as commonly practiced in social media.

Let us start by understanding what cancel culture is. Although understood differently by different people, the core of cancel culture is to call out someone on the internet for a controversial act or speech. Now, cancel culture does take various forms. However, as young people, we have witnessed or even participated in censoring a celebrity, YouTuber, or even politician for a controversial comment, text, or action.

As the world progresses, more youths are getting involved in ensuring equity and abolishing racist, sexist, and bigotry ideologies on the internet. The youths have a great responsibility to ensure that people engage responsibly online. Statistics from the Pew Research Centre by Auxier Brooke and Anderson Monica show that young people aged 18-29 are the most prolific engagers of social media apps. As young people, we must ensure that people using social media respect race, ethnicity, sex, and identity. Indeed, social media users often cross lines by posting hurtful comments that negatively impact minority groups.

Unfortunately, many online users misuse their online platforms to promote racist, sexist, and bigotry ideologies that harm minority groups. As Ali Saperstein analyzes in a Forbes article, we have a duty to call out such people and censor their harmful ideologies. Oftentimes, young people on the internet have called out people who post sexist comments that degrade the position of women in society. Also, others have been called out for homophobic comments that harm the LGBTQ+ community. By practicing cancel culture, celebrities, and online users become more conscious of how they use their online space. According to Pew Research Center cancel culture forces people to engage online responsibly and makes online users accountable for their words and actions.

On the other side, cancel culture damages people's lives and hinders freedom of speech. According to psychology expert Dr. Steven Hassan in Psychology Today, while online users call people out for their controversial acts and words, cancel culture can oftentimes be extreme and damaging to the person being canceled. Let me offer a relatable example of the harm of negative backlash on an individual's life. In high school, we may have witnessed a popular girl or boy become unpopular overnight because of a silly text or action that went viral in school.

Now, put yourself in their shoes. Their high school experience cannot be the same again. Every day in school will feel like walking on eggshells because of the intense judgmental atmosphere surrounding them. What is worse, they can do nothing to restore their position in school after the mishap. Now imagine someone experiencing backlash on a massive scale.

According to a blog by Verywell Mind cancel culture encourages hurtful comments that the receiver may never recover from. Making matters worse the internet never forgets. In summary, cancel culture destroys

an individual forever and makes people fearful of engaging in controversial subjects.

I advocate for people to engage responsibly in the internet and be sensitive to how their comments and actions affect others. However, I would like all of us to engage in cancel culture with a little more empathy for the person being canceled. Often, canceling someone causes more damage than good to that person's life. We all say or do dumb things often. What happens to us if these single acts of un-thoughtfulness define us forever? As young people, we can shape the online dynamics and participate in starting conversations on how best to handle controversial issues online. Thank you all for your time.

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