

Cancel Culture Goes Down Rabbit Hole of Absurdity

by Conrad Black



J.K. Rowling

The [cancel culture](#) is plumbing new depths of absurdity and injustice every week.

By my casual count the *New York Times*, for years the most prestigious and constant media defender of liberal American

values, has conducted four professional lynchings in its own ranks.

Donald McNeil, Andrew Mills, James Bennet, and Allison Roman were all forced out by a vote of a number of their fellow workers because of what can only be described as exceedingly minor transgressions of even the most pettifogging and intolerant guidelines against political incorrectness.

In McNeil's case, his offense was committed while conducting a group of students on a tour in Peru. He was asked if someone had in his judgment committed a professional offense in referring illustratively to an African-American person as a Negro, or variant of Negro, (as I am doing here).

He responded by asking if the individual in question had himself employed the word derisively or was merely citing it as inappropriate usage by somebody else. For this, he was eventually forced out of the *New York Times* after a petition of 100 of his fellow editorial department members judged his remarks unacceptable by current standards of sensitivity. The other cases, as far as I can discern, were no more fundamentally offensive than McNeil's.

J.K. Rowling

The eminently successful British novelist J.K. Rowling has been engaged in a lengthy controversy over her references to transgender people. She has been accused of being a TERF (Transgender-Exclusionist Radical Feminist) after a number of incidents, most recently a tweet taking issue with a reference to women as "people who menstruate."

She has on every occasion been entirely supportive of and empathetic towards transgender people in both directions, but has expressed the view that since apparent men can be so described if they have come to the determination to effect a surgical sex change but have not carried it out, permitting

them unlimited access to female public lavatories would be effectively opening them to all men, with resulting increases in sexual assault cases against women.

Agile wordsmith and imaginative writer as she is, Ms. Rowling seems to enjoy tweaking the sensitivities of the most militant and easily agitated guardians of the dignity of the trans community. She often causes them to come snorting out of the undergrowth vehemently accusing her of being a shameless TERF.

Someone as wealthy and successful as Ms. Rowling, and whose comments are as inoffensive to all but the most extreme bigots on the subject, can bear the storms well, and she seems at times almost to enjoy them and retains the support of most of her huge readership.

[*Epoch Times*](#) .