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## CENSORED DATA

*See* STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF, *article on* TRUNCATION AND CENSORSHIP.

## CENSORSHIP

Censorship is essentially a "policy of restricting the public expression of ideas, opinions, conceptions and impulses which have or are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or the social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect" (Lasswell 1930, p. 290). Censorship usually takes two forms: prior, which refers to advance suppression; and *post facto*, which involves suppression after publication or pronouncement has taken place. Although it is more frequently practiced under autocratic regimes, it is also present, in varied forms, in those states normally viewed as Western liberal democracies; and its execution is as variegated as are the states and governments involved. Broadly speaking, however, those who favor and those who oppose censorship normally bracket themselves with one of two approaches to society as represented by great names of the past. The former agree with Plato, St. Augustine, and Machiavelli that those who are qualified to identify evil should be empowered to prevent its dissemination. The latter, siding with Aristotle, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and John Dewey, maintain that a man is free only so long as he is empowered to make his own choices.

In its contemporary form, censorship is exercised both by public and by private authorities. Although it is still predominantly associated with governmental (public) action, its exercise by private groups—with religious as well as secular interests—is becoming more common. In the United States, since the end of World War II, the rise of private vigilante groups in a number of areas of everyday life clearly indicates this trend. The erstwhile dichotomy (Lasswell 1930, p. 291) of either political or religious censorship no longer suffices. Today, censorship, both public and private, may be generally grouped into four categories: political censorship; religious censorship; censorship against obscenity, i.e., censorship of morals; and censorship affecting academic freedom. It is important to remember, however, that these are merely categories of convenience and that a given act of censorship may, of course, embrace more than one category. Thus, the Tridentine Rules (formulated at the Council of Trent in 1564 under the guidance of Pope Pius IV) were religious in origin, but to some extent they were involved with obscenity; their enforcement was political; and there was then no academic freedom as we know it today. The investigations of alleged subversive influences in American schools, colleges, and universities in the years following World War II had political, as well as educational, overtones.

### History

The history of censorship, so closely linked with a basic sense of insecurity, represents a continuum of the battle between the individual and society and can be sketched only briefly here. Turning first to the Bible (Jer. 36.1–26), we find that the prophet Jeremiah encountered censorship when the book he had dictated to Baruch was mutilated by King Jehoiakim. During classical antiquity, censorship was sporadically applied. In the fifth century B.C., Sparta placed a ban on certain forms of poetry, music, and dance, because its rulers believed, or wished to believe, that these cultural activities tended to induce effeminacy and licentiousness. For their liberal thoughts on religious matters, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes felt the censor's sting. Republican Rome considered itself devoted to virtue and assumed the right to censor any citizen who did not embrace that concept in the cultural realm. The theater was banned by the censor, except on the occasion of certain games (where tradition bestowed upon dramatic art a degree of license in both gesture and speech). Although there is no conclusive evidence of literary censorship either in Rome or Greece, the famed poet Ovid was banished to the Black Sea area by Emperor Augustus, allegedly because of his "licentiousness" but more likely because of his political views.

In the era of the Christian church, the earliest and most extreme manifestation of censorship is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, said to have been written in A.D. 95 by St. Clement of Rome at the dictates of the apostles. The constitutions forbade Christians to read any books of the gentiles, since it was thought that the Scriptures were all a *true* believer need read. There then followed a long series of prohibitions issued by the early church fathers, among them the death penalty

edicts of the Council of Nicaea and the Emperor Constantine against the pens of Arius and Porphyry in 325; the decree of 399 by the Council of Alexandria under Bishop Theophilus, forbidding the Origens to read and [illegible] books; the stern punitive measures, akin to the book-burning days of the Hitler era, by Pope Leo I in 446; and the first papal Index, which made its appearance in 499 under Pope Gelasius. The concept of the Index, which was formalized by the amended Tridentine Rules, embracing a list of proscribed books for Roman Catholics, is still in existence today (see Gardiner 1958, pp. 51–54).

During the Middles Ages a new version of prior censorship commenced: the submission of manuscripts by writers to their superiors, both as a matter of courtesy and as a prophylactic against subsequent censure. But with the advent of printing and with steady cultural growth, the ecclesiastic authorities insisted upon formal, organized censorship. In 1501 Pope Alexander VI issued his famous bull against printing of books, which was designed to protect the vast domain of the Church of Rome against heresy. Even more drastic measures were taken by the Scottish Estates in 1551. By 1586, all books printed in England had to be read and approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London prior to publication. But the written word was not all that felt the censor's power in England; it was extended to drama by the public authorities, once religious drama, always under the control of the church, had become obsolete. In 1693, England substituted *punitive* for *prior* censorship of printing. This form essentially exists in many lands now and is generally much preferred to prior censorship, if there must be censorship. Probably the best-known illustration of this type of censorship is the John Peter Zenger case in 1735, often referred to as the birth of freedom of the press; for New York Governor William Cosby was unsuccessful in his gross attempt to silence and punish the courageous printer (see Zenger 1957, pp. 3–131).

It should be noted here that the triumph of Protestantism, and the subsequent rise of the nation-state, had brought about a significant switch in emphasis in the employment of censorship. Practically speaking, the monarchs became separated from the church, and to a considerable extent their interests in censorship no longer coincided. Thus, the compelling force necessary to sustain censorship was no longer concerned with religious beliefs. In those instances in which a state still guarded against blasphemy or heresy, it was from the conviction that these were often antecedent steps to sedition and treason, especially where the authority for the monarch's position came from the doctrine of the divine right of kings. Censorship was still aimed at beliefs and facts, but the orientation had switched from the religious to the political arena.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the transition years in the development of the freedoms and rights of men, which we value so much. Here the first voices began to ring out for the rights of the individual against the state, so that by 1695 the last formal governmental restraint upon literature in England had been withdrawn. Among the voices who made themselves heard in those centuries were Milton, Spinoza, Voltaire, and Locke.

Prior to this transition period, sundry intriguing devices had been employed to look after the interests of the monarch. King Henry VIII had entrusted the control of books to the infamous Court of Star Chamber. Queen Elizabeth maintained control by giving the Stationers' Company a monopoly on printing, for which they reciprocated by hunting out all undesirable books. Coincident with this she granted powers of suppression to the archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The Stuarts brought with their rule even more severe censorship, allowing their bishops control over the importation of books. The first breakthrough for free thought came in 1640 when the Long Parliament abolished the Court of Star Chamber. This brief respite lasted until 1643, when Parliament reintroduced licensing. This was the specific act that resulted in Milton's eloquent plea for free speech, his *Areopagitica*. In this work, he exposes the many absurdities, anomalies, and tyrannies inherent in literary censorship. During the Restoration, the devices of censorship employed by the former monarchs were maintained with the passage of the Licensing Act of 1662, which was aimed at "heretical, seditious, schismatical or offensive books or pamphlets."

The move toward individual rights being generated in England at this time reached its culmination in 1695, when the Licensing Act was not renewed, and governmental censorship temporarily disappeared from the English scene. Although the English had gained their freedom, in those nations where Catholicism still held sway, there was very little freedom to express ideas that would offend the church. This tradition has lasted even into the modern era in such nations as Spain.

The eighteenth century is conspicuous in historical perspective because of the freedom of expression that it attained. Even in the colonies, with the spread of the Great Awakening (dating from about 1740), the growth of freedom from the

chains of Puritan control was evident. By 1789, the freedoms of the bill of rights were accepted as the natural heritage of all men. The remarkable feature of this phenomenon, both in England and America, was that it was a reality, not just an idea on a piece of paper.

It is in the field of morals—the area of censorship commonly classified as that of obscenity—that not only the most widespread but the most extreme forms of censorship and attempted censorship have transpired during the past two or three centuries. This censorship has been both on a public and private level, the former chiefly by virtue of a host of defense-against-obscenity statutes and ordinances, the latter by pressure groups, chief among them the Catholic church, whose emphasis in the realm of censorship has perceptibly changed from the old preoccupation with heresy to one that emphasizes morals, although the religious overtones are understandably present. But public and private aims and designs again merge here.

Although in certain types of censorship the political authority is concerned with defending the *status quo* and its position in it, this is not true of censorship of morals. More often than not, state action is not in defense of itself but in the form of a service to some influential members of the polity, in ridding the society of certain ideas that are considered offensive by these influential members. The common method of achieving these ends is the formation of watchdog groups that comb the arts and letters and upon finding works—books, plays, movies, etc.—that they consider obscene strive either for their official suppression or for private boycotts. The first of these societies, the English Society for the Suppression of Vice, appeared in London in 1802. It was to be the forebear of such American vigilante groups as Anthony Comstock's New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and the New England Watch and Ward Society (Craig 1962, pp. 138–139).

The effectiveness of these groups in the United States is evidenced by the vast amount of obscenity legislation that has been passed in the last century. Beginning with the clause in the Tariff Act of 1842 that barred the importation of obscene matter, American legislatures have produced a multitude of statutes designed to protect the minds and morals of both children and adults in our society. The 1920s through the 1940s marked the height of this moralistic legislation.

In England, the single most important piece of censorship legislation was the famous Campbell Act of 1857 (the Obscene Publications Act of 1857), named for its proponent, who was the lord chief justice. There was a great cry against it in Parliament, because in Campbell's attempt to strike down the sale of obvious hard-core pornography from the shelves of the bookstores of Holywell Street in London, he had left few safeguards to defend against similar attacks upon all literature that dealt with sex. The act was finally passed when Campbell defined an obscene work as written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth, and of a nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency in any well-regulated mind.

However, his successor, Lord Cockburn, in the grasp of the Victorians, did not so limit the obscene. In the famous Hicklin case he said, "the test of obscenity is this, whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall" (L.R3/QB/371, 1868). Using standards such as this, the Comstocks on both sides of the Atlantic—indeed throughout the world—infiltrated various boards of censorship, and by the turn of the century succeeded in reducing "acceptable" literature to that fit for reading by children. At that time, more than one author was endangering his chances of publication if he referred to a leg as a "leg," rather than calling it a "limb." Starting in the late 1920s, however, American federal courts have been instrumental in salvaging some semblance of reasonableness in these matters.

In a series of opinions, the most important of which were the combined 1957 cases *Roth* v. *U.S.* and *Alberts* v. *California* (354 U.S. 476), the Supreme Court both defined the obscene and detailed the protections to which literature accused of being obscene was entitled. Associate Justice William Brennan, in his opinion, made clear that "obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press," because it is "utterly without redeeming social importance" (354 U.S. 484, 485). However, he cautioned that "sex and obscenity are not synonymous," and the portrayal of sex, for example, in art, literature, and scientific works, "is entitled to constitutional protection as long as it is not obscene." But his judicial test is not entirely helpful: Material is obscene when "to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest" (354 U.S. 487). This standard, and its later application by the courts to specific works, seems to indicate that the Supreme Court's view of

what literature is obscene in modern America is limited to that genre of literature generally known as hard-core pornography. But the need to define hard-core pornography reintroduces the basic dilemma of drawing lines.

A categorized, comprehensive list of works censored in the United States was compiled in 1940 by Morris Ernst, one of the foremost crusaders against censorship. It includes some of the world's greatest classics, for example, works by Homer, Shakespeare, Whitman, and Darwin (Ernst & Lindey 1940, pp. 228–230).

The history of censorship in France and the other European nations has an amazing historical similarity to that of America. The giants of French literature, such as Baudelaire, Hugo, Verlaine, and Zola, have felt the same stings of censors as their counterparts in English. The modern laws regarding obscenity in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, roughly parallel those of America; whereas those of the Scandinavian nations are a little more lenient. This is probably a reflection of the different attitudes toward sex prevailing in those nations.

Censorship in the world of dictatorships must be viewed from a different perspective, of course. Essentially, the rights of individuals in these nations are at a pre-Renaissance level in terms of the Western world. Consequently, censorship there is designed to propagandize as well as to forbid. This has been especially true in the totalitarian dictatorships, where complete control of the mind is a prerequisite for complete control of the society.

## Critique

In its most general form, censorship is involved with the realm of ideas, ideas that naturally must take the form of something written or spoken in order to be censorable. Censorship implies that certain ideas are not only invalid, but that they should not be presented; that they constitute a genuine danger. In Lasswell's terms of "who gets what, why and how," censorship is thus concerned with controlling "dangerous" expression of ideas. It follows, then, that those who have been most successful in controlling ideas that endanger their interests are those who already possess authority. Hence, the most successful practitioners of censorship through the ages have been the authority figures themselves—church, monarchs, dictators. Those in nonpublic positions, who desire the suppression of certain ideas but do not of themselves have the necessary official authority to do so, will thus endeavor to enlist the aid of whatever authority may be promising. Because this is often difficult, if not impossible, private groups in today's Western democracies then resort to personal pressure tactics, designed to intimidate those who have influence over, or who are in command of, channels of communication. A pertinent illustration of this technique, very successfully employed in the United States since the 1940s and 1950s (particularly during the McCarthy era), has been the so-called blacklisting of controversial literary figures as well as performing artists, thus blocking their employment in certain media of communication, notably the movies, radio, and television—the live stage having more successfully resisted that type of pressure (see Cogley 1956, *passim*).

Far less successful, especially in the United States, however, have been attempts to censor the press, which has enjoyed a unique position of communication freedom, even more so than in traditionally censorship-leery Britain. Although press censorship has continued in many lands even in the 1960s, not excluding certain Western democracies (France, for example), the Supreme Court of the United States again made quite clear in 1964 that the press is not only not censorable by way of prior restraint but that it cannot even be sued for allegedly libelous statements unless deliberate malice is proved conclusively in a court of law (*The New York Times Co.* v. *Sullivan*, decided March 9, 1964, 84 U.S. Sup. Ct. 710).

The bases of censorship are themselves largely repugnant to the ideas of Western liberal tradition, yet even the West must comprehend the three possible rationalizations that seem to exist for censorship.

The first rationalization is that ideas presented, or about to be presented, are "false" and/or "dangerous" by the standards of the authorities in power and that they must hence be suppressed or punished.

Related to this is the second rationale for censorship, equally obnoxious to Western traditions, that of elitism, the justification of which goes back to Plato and the *Republic*. Here, the belief is that the minds of those who would be subjected to the ideas to be censored are not capable of seeing the "falsity" and would hence be led astray. Western political tradition rejects this notion, but many a private pressure group in the West does not, as the persistent attempts by them, and at times by public authorities, to censor school textbooks demonstrate to this day. Yet any historical investigation will quickly prove that those who have set themselves up as being uniquely qualified to ferret out the truth have been no more capable of doing so than their adversaries.

The third rationale for censorship seems to be the one that stands on strongest grounds. Ideas that lead to "antisocial action"—for example, hard-core pornography—may be censored. Here, however, a crucial distinction enters: We are no longer so much in the realm of ideas as in the realm of overt action, and it is here that even the West may wish to, indeed may have to, draw a line between the cherished freedom of expression and the right of society to establish a modicum of standards of overt behavior. How, where, and by whom such a line is to be drawn is the peculiar dilemma of those who love and cherish the precious tradition of ordered liberty.

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[*See also* ACADEMIC FREEDOM; CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, *article on* CIVIL LIBERTIES; FREEDOM; TOTALITARIANISM.]

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## CENSUS

A census of the population—that is, a counting of the people within the boundaries of a country—has become indispensable to any modern government. How many people are there? What are their basic socioeconomic characteristics? Where do they live, and how are they affected by the processes of social and biological change? These questions arise daily in the governments of all industrially developed countries, not to mention the governments of those that are still developing.

Censuses have come to include many topics other than population. Censuses of manufactures, agriculture, mineral industries, housing, and business establishments are taken by many countries, often independently of the census of population.

The following discussion is concerned primarily with censuses of population, but many of the comments—especially the comments on methods, tabulation, and quality of results—apply with equal force to other kinds of censuses.

**Some early censuses.** Counting the people, or some portion of them, is a practice that is probably as old as government itself. No one knows which ruler first enumerated the men for military purposes, or drew up a list of households with a view to taxing them. Figures obtained from censuses have long served as items of political propaganda, particularly in order to justify territorial expansion.

Population counts were reported in ancient Japan and were taken by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Hebrews, Persians, and Romans. Many of these early censuses appear to have covered only