

Censorship in modern america



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Censorship has affected America throughout its years, but modern America seems to be the most affected by censorship. Censorship occurs when we watch television or a movie, listen to the radio or buy music, or even read a book or magazine. There are regulations for what the public can and can't see or hear. So who decides what the public can and can't see? Who ultimately decides what is obscene and what should therefore be suppressed? Aren't we a society capable of making that decision for ourselves? Apparently not, and perhaps for good reason too, because what is not obscene to one person may be objectionable to another.

Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against," says Beatty, but he is saying this is the ideal aim of censorship, which can't exactly happen. Furthermore, much of the censorship in our society is mainly geared towards children. Age is used as the criteria for rating systems regulating what is proper for children to see at certain stages of their lives. Censorship is one way to regulate what children in a society should and shouldn't experience at a young age.

It serves to reinforce the morals a society hopes to instill in its children. But censorship is not solely aimed at children. Censorship is also a way of regulating ourselves, which might also be determined by the community in which we choose to live. From movies to television, from radio to CD's, from good old-fashioned reading books to the Internet, censorship will always play a role in today's society. Movie censorship is regulated by a rating system determined by age groups. Three main issues are scaled to decide how

movies are rated: violence, sexual content, and adult language. These issues can be considered obscene in society today.

Television has now taken on a rating system very similar to that of the movie industry. The old way to censor television shows was to show the programs for adults late at night. That safety mechanism isn't necessarily the case anymore. Furthermore, with so many channels today, how does one know the content of what he or she is watching? As movies have had ratings for many years, television shows now have ratings explaining to the viewer what they are watching. Television ratings are closely related to movie ratings. By knowing these ratings, a viewer can better know the content of the show he or she is watching.

Television and movies can be wonderful, but censoring them is a good thing at times because of what you see with your eyes, " Its real beauty is that it destroys responsibility and consequences," said Beatty. Another important place where children need supervision and protection is the Internet. As of right now the Internet is not censored because it is internationally connected. This lack of censorship already has created problems. For example, the Internet is now a major way for certain hate groups to relay their hate messages to a larger audience.

The internet also has a lot of sexual content on it. Would most people consider these types of websites immoral and objectionable? Perhaps most would, but obviously others have a different opinion. However, regulations should be made so that it isn't so easy for children to find or wander on those kinds of web sites. Schools that have the Internet in their libraries have

a blocking systems on their computers. The blocking system blocks out any kind of search of sexually explicit or violent web sites so children can't see them.

Many Internet censorship laws are trying to be passed in the Supreme Court, a difficult task since the Internet is internationally connected. Should United States regulate what the world can see if Internet censorship laws were to be passed? Obviously not, the United States cannot and should not have any form of authority on other countries' censorship laws. It will also be very difficult to pass any kind of censorship laws on the Internet mainly because of the First Amendment and how it deals with the freedom of speech. The First Amendment plays a large role in why things can and cannot be censored.

The First Amendment states that: " Congress shall not make no law representing an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and petition the government for redress of grievances. " Someone's opinion on the other hand should not be censored for people to read or hear as long as it is done in a peaceful manner. The First Amendment is specially geared toward this idea that everyone has the right to say what they feel and to have an opinion.

People may disagree with one another, but by knowing what other people think people can expand their own knowledge and become conscious of other ideas and opinions. From knowing what other people think, one can better determine the basis of their own opinion. The music evolution in this

past century has been like no other. When rock n'roll first came out it received rejection, especially by older generations, because it was a new sound that was popular with a younger crowd. The same thing occurred with other music such as punk, heavy metal, and rap or hip-hop.

Newer music today such as happy hardcore, techno, trance, and jungle or drum and bass also receives that kind of rejection. Commonly, parents fall out of the music trend and when their child brings home a new musical sound that they are not familiar with the parents tend to disapprove. It seems almost like a tradition now for parents to disapprove of the younger generation's music. Music carries many trends from generation to generation, but one of the oldest forms of censorship is what can and can't be read on paper. Banned books are usually illegal because of certain information that could be a threat to someone or security.

Censorship in today's society can get out of hand real quick on both ends of the issue. It seems like there is always someone who is personally offended by something and tries to take whatever offended them away from everyone else. Then again, if there was no censorship, perhaps collective morals would cease to exist in society. What is not obscene to one person could very well be to another and that is one main reason why censorship does exist.

However, that something is obscene to one person shouldn't forbid another from seeing or hearing that form of expression if they want.

Censorship helps gives the right to parents to raise their children in an environment in which parents feel comfortable and it helps parents decide what materials their children can be exposed to and what should be

withheld. “ We are living in a time when flowers are trying to live on flowers, instead of growing on good rain and black loam,” said Faber. What Faber is talking about is that censorship can also blind the public from the truth. There are positive and negative aspects to censorship, which is why it is a big issue to tackle.