

# Political and art

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Summary and Reflection According to John Frohnmayer's article "Censorship and its Progeny", the First Amendment's acknowledgement of the freedom of conscience requires the public to protect anyone who speaks against the flag as they are given the right of speech (Frohnmayer 34). In this amendment, it is a requirement for the public to protect the right of such individuals as much as they may not agree with their views. The author believes that it is an abdication of the duty of citizens by keeping silent about those individuals who engage in hateful speech. The author reviews the history of America where intolerance, repression and censorship were upheld against individuals who were observed to engage in degrading speech against the flag. Judgment against such speech in different countries was harsh to the extent that individuals such as Socrates and Salman Rushdie were sentenced to death due to their speeches as presented in both their talk and their writings (Frohnmayer 35).

The artists of that generation did not have the kind of freedom that is enjoyed in the current society, and they were free to present their ideas in any way they opted. The author identifies different individuals such as Antony Comstock and their long careers in advocating for censorship of some of the literature that was regarded as obscene, in the view of protecting the youth from indecent photography that he believes was mistakenly recognized as at. According to Frohnmayer, Comstock "railed against so-called artists, shielding themselves in the cloak of free expression while producing material that "fans the flames of secret desires"" (Frohnmayer 36). Comstock brought about a revolution that so the development and passing of laws that would prohibit the selling of "

obscene” literature. Such prohibition has been extended throughout different fields of art including music with a common stance of protecting the public from what is ‘harmful’. Censoring has been enforced with the view of promoting order and not freedom.

In the words of Frohnmayer, “Freedom is imprecise, inefficient, ambiguous, and often annoying” (Frohnmayer 37). As such, the censor was developed not to review what was within obscene material but to bar it without logical considerations as much as it is deemed harmful to the public. The author believes that a large part of the public does not agree with the societal blasphemers who hold disregard for the flag in their speech. However, the First Amendment is seen to protect the minority who are in support of the freedom of speech at the expense of the safety of some individuals such as the youth who could be negatively affected by the content of such speech or art (Frohnmayer 40). The author believes that it is upon the artists to ensure that they protect the rights of the public in their artwork by not necessarily explaining their artwork, but through providing a background that would allow the audience to share in their creative journey (Kershaw 139). Another measure that should be upheld by artists is not to take their works out of context in order to promote fairness and to prevent misunderstandings. It is also important for the artist to present discussions that remind individuals of the First Amendment prior to presentation of their works. In addition, the artist should provide the public with an opportunity to engage in dialogue after presentation of a controversial piece of work as it would allow for the representation of the society to itself (Kershaw 138).

Work Cited

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Kershaw, Baz. " Performance, Community, Culture." Kershaw, Baz. The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention. London: Routledge, 1992. 136-142.