

CENSORSHIP

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The first shows Marker as less a documentarist or historian than a tourist, sending his thoughts and impressions to people back home. He displays the everyday details of existence: a parade, going to work, observing the death of a child, going to the shops. In the second half he deliberately abandons this style; it is as if the camera suddenly retreats, leaving the stage open for the Cuban president. Castro is allowed to put his own case without editorial interference. The Catholic Church's claim that he is a dictator is answered by archive footage of the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, surrounded by cardinals. In a post-script Marker celebrates the defeat of the US-backed invaders at the hands of Cuban forces at the Bay of Pigs on 15 April 1961.

On 31 July 1961 the French Commission de contrôle des films cinématographiques agreed to ban *Cuba si!*, by a vote of five to three, with six abstentions. Those who voted for the ban took the view that the film was a naked apology for Castro's regime:

Certainly everything that is recalled or reported concerning the previous regime conforms to historical truth, but the change from an extreme right-wing totalitarian system to an extreme left-wing totalitarian system has not prevented any new excesses or deprivations of liberty, which the film in question in no way reports.

The majority's opinion was stiffened by the observation that the Cuban government had given its full collaboration and support – rare indeed in any communist country – allowing Marker access to a remarkably wide range of subjects. The film's anti-American postscript was judged to be particularly inappropriate. Finally, the commission returned to the French establishment's traditional readiness to defend its colonial policy. Martinique and Guadeloupe are on Cuba's doorstep, and the press in both these territories was showing, it was thought, an inordinate interest in the activities of Castro's regime. The commission was determined not to give the Cuban leaders another public forum for their opposition to the maintenance of colonies anywhere in the western hemisphere. (The two islands remain parts of France to this day.)

The effect of the commission's judgement was to ban the film abroad as well as in France. Marker responded with a series of

clandestine showings for foreign journalists and critics, in and around Paris. He also published the first of his volumes of *Commentaires* (1961, Commentaries), which includes the text of the commentary accompanying *Cuba si!*, a selection of stills, and the texts of the narrative tracks of his six earlier documentaries, together with copies of his correspondence with the Ministry of Information pertaining to bans on his films.

Later in the 1960s clandestine screenings and the circulation of illicit prints caused the film to be seen and reviewed in Germany, Scandinavia, and, ultimately, Britain (in 1969). It has never been publicly screened in the United States, where uneasiness about the presence of Cuba so near to its southern edge has hardly lessened since the general demise of Communism at the beginning of the 1990s.

In 1967 Marker organized the making of *Loi du Vietnam* (Far from Vietnam), a film composed of episodes directed by himself, Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard, Agnes Varda, Joris Ivens, and others, which attacked US policy on Vietnam and was in turn attacked by supporters of that policy. However, the fact that calls for it to be banned went unheeded in France was perhaps an indication that, even in relation to a country that had been a French colony until only 13 years before, opinion was becoming less hostile to radical critics such as Marker and his colleagues. Alternatively, it may have been an indication that denouncing the US government was more acceptable in France than denouncing the French government.

SANDRA GARCIA-MYERS

Films

Les Statues meurent aussi, 1953
Cuba si!, 1961
Loi du Vietnam, with others, 1967

Writings

Commentaires, 2 vols, 1961–67

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MARKET CENSORSHIP

Market censorship refers to a broad class of economically driven constraints or interdictions on the cultural production of ideas and creative works that shape what can be said, written, published, distributed, broadcast, or communicated in visual form. It encompasses both overt actions by cultural producers and the systematic effects of production practices that subordinate content to commercial considerations. The term amends and extends Adam Smith's classic metaphor by suggesting that "the invisible hand of the market" is as pro-active as the visible hands of church or state censors. By virtue of its invisibility and its capacity to operate automatically, market censorship is, however, more efficient and insidious than other forms of censorship.

Market censorship includes the direct interventions by the private owners of the organs of cultural expression or their agents that suppress, expurgate, or "spin" aural or visual messages. The most common and pervasive forms of intervention occur as a result of the media's dependency on advertising. In the United States, about two-thirds of the revenues of newspapers and magazines come from advertising, while broadcasting is almost entirely dependent upon advertising for its profits. Media that serve local markets, newspapers, and local broadcast news are especially vulnerable to such interventions. For example, automobile dealers are major advertisers in local media markets. Some local newspapers and television news organizations that have undertaken investigative reports of the

unethical practices of car dealers have had their stories suppressed by management. Where the stories have been allowed to run, the reporters and producers responsible have sometimes been reassigned or dismissed. Experienced journalists learn not to waste time or take career risks by pursuing such stories.

Self-censorship of this kind frequently becomes a routine procedure in the organizational practices of the commercial media, where it functions automatically and largely invisibly as "business-as-usual". Standard conventions for framing news stories filter out stories that cause "flak" for journalists and thereby interfere with the efficiency of news organizations.

The category of overt market censorship encompasses self-censorship by writers and artists who fear that their work will not be published, exhibited, or distributed. For example, long before the advent of modern economies of scale in publishing and marketing, the American writer Herman Melville complained: "Dollars damn me . . . What I feel most moved to write, that is banned, it will not pay."

Under the constraints of commercial pressures, self-censorship frequently becomes a natural and normal practice. Individual writers and artists internalize market imperatives and produce what they think will sell; and commercial media organizations coordinate their production practices in order to maximize their financial returns. What is not considered to be marketable is not produced.

Many routine business practices are constituents of market censorship when they operate in the area of cultural production. For example, economies of scale may preclude the production of specialized or esoteric forms of knowledge or other cultural products unless the production costs are subsidized by cultural workers, producers, or public or private grants.

Economies of scale in the mass media also affect the production of cultural products for young children. Pre-school children constitute a small percentage of the population and they do not directly control consumer purchasing decisions. Consequently they are not a profitable market for commercial television broadcasting. In the United States the main commercial television networks have produced very little television programming for children.

Economies of scale may reinforce psychologies of dominance and submission. For example, broadcasters know that girls will watch children's programmes in which male figures play all or most of the major roles, but boys will not watch programmes that feature female characters. To increase the size of this already proportionally small audience, programmers will develop shows in which male characters significantly outnumber female ones. The same logic applies in much adult prime-time broadcasting. The newer technologies that facilitate narrow-casting, for example, cable, pay-per-view, and the Internet-based communications, are alleviating some of these pressures for economies of scale and making way for programming that is more age and gender specific, or featuring minority and non-dominant languages. Nevertheless commercially driven alternative or target-marketed programming is as tightly bound to the systematic constraints of the economic bottom line as broadcast media.

The cross-ownership patterns of the big conglomerates can facilitate the control of supplies or the pricing of essential resources, such as paper for print media and access to spectrum or band-width in broadcasting. Suppliers of paper, ink, and

other manufacturing materials that give discounts on large orders favour large producers, and in some culture industries such as publishing this may force small producers who serve specialized or minority markets out of business.

In the book trade, distributor discounts favour retailing chains over small independent bookshops. Distributor discounts exert pressure for the production of trade books over academic books, for blockbusters over modest runs, and for books by writers with recognized names (even if ghost-written) over works by talented but unknown authors. The huge advances given by the publishing industry for books by newsmakers are compensated for by cost-cutting measures in other areas of a publishing operation. These advances, for example \$6.5 million to General Colin Powell, the former US military chief, \$5 million to General Norman Schwartzkopf, director of the 1989 war against Iraq, \$4.2 and \$3 million for the leading attorneys in the footballer O.J. Simpson's murder trial, also exert pressure to keep the news stories that precipitated the advances on the public agenda. Chain distribution diminishes the "shelf-life" of books; rapid turnover of stock maximizes shop profits.

In the film and television industries, the profitability of residual rights through syndication and increasingly through global marketing encourages formulaic productions that will succeed in export markets. That is, they favour homogeneous, action-based plots that are easy to translate into other languages and culture-contexts. This encourages investment in formulaic scripts featuring stock characters and high levels of violence and sex. As a result, fewer scripts with complex plots and nuanced character development are produced by the major film and television studios.

Lawsuits or threats of protracted and costly litigation by big businesses have a chilling effect on media organizations, especially the producers of news and documentaries. Investigative reports, even when demonstrably true, are subject to this kind of litigation. In the United States, for example, two of the main commercial television networks, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and the Columbia Broadcasting Company (CBS), experienced substantial legal pressures to soften or cancel stories about the tobacco industry in 1995. Even scientific researchers increasingly face pressure, including attacks on their professional reputations, from patent advocacy groups and drug companies that have vested financial interests in suppressing their findings.

Corporations, like governments, sometimes wage active disinformation and propaganda campaigns. Censorship by corporations and industry-wide associations seeks to shape public opinion and influence news coverage by structuring information strategically and first testing the potential responses to it in focus groups. In recent years, for example, major corporations have employed the public relations firm Hill and Knowlton to develop pro-China campaigns in an effort to influence the American public and to pressurize Congress into renewing China's trade status as "most favoured nation". The tobacco industry has a long and widely documented history of both suppressing and actively misrepresenting information about the health risks of smoking.

Copyrights and patents are, technically, forms of market censorship. They protect the capital investments of the producers of cultural products, including authors, artists, and performers

as well as the patrons, sponsors, manufacturers, and shareholders. Workers in cultural fields often complain about the specific terms of their arrangements with their publishers, exhibitors, or distributors; but few could afford to write or create without copyright constraints on the reproduction or circulation of their products.

In an absolute sense, piracy allows for a freer flow of ideas than the protected markets of advanced capitalism. Non-copyrighted forms of expression, materials in the public domain, and share-ware are therefore, in theory, freer from market censorship than the cultural products actively stocked by the cultural industries. Some constraints on the free exchange of cultural products were built into the founding assumptions of the legal reasoning that secures freedom of expression in liberal societies.

The term "market censorship" is of recent origin, coined around 1980, but the practice is as old as capitalism. The term has wider currency in critical media discourses in the United States than in other countries because there the practice is more ubiquitous and intractable. In addition to the enormous size and global reach of the American media industry, two other important factors contribute to the pervasiveness of the practice there.

First, in the United States, the ideology, if not always the reality, of the separation of the powers of government and of press is almost as sacrosanct as the American constitutional commitment to the separation of church and state. The First Amendment to the constitution formalized this separation, and prohibited Congress from making any laws that might curtail the freedom of the press. Although Congress does have an oversight capacity in broadcasting, the United States is the only major industrial nation that has relied completely on private, commercial interests to develop and manage its broadcasting industry. Consequently, press and broadcast organizations have traditionally exercised extraordinary power in the country. Some media critics have compared the cultural power of American television to the power of religion in medieval Europe. In the United States this cultural power has been exercised with considerable autonomy. The regulatory agency established by Congress in 1934, the Federal Communication Commission, has generally served the interests of the industry; and the industry has often served as a training ground for future regulators.

Second, in the United States, the deregulation and privatization initiatives of the Reagan-Bush era have proved to be particularly fortunate for the media and telecommunications industries. The omnibus Telecommunications Bill of 1996 was written at the behest of long-distance telephone companies, the local telephone carriers, and the cable television industry. These interests funded multi-million dollar lobbying and advertising campaigns to promote the passage of the legislation, while at the same time pouring several million dollars into political contributions to both the Democrats and Republicans to keep the bill moving through Congress. Conversely, some media outlets, for example Cable Network News (CNN), refused to carry advertisements by public advocacy groups against the bill. The legislation dismantled the long-standing regulatory principle that had separated control of the conduits from the contents of electronic media. It allowed telecommunications,

and broadcasting interests to diversify their holdings and it lifted many restrictions on cross-ownership of media in local markets.

The United States is the leading force in the current globalization of the marketplace, and cultural products are among its leading exports. The deregulation and privatization of the media are, however, now global processes. As a result, market censorship is becoming a worldwide experience. Governments of weaker states are unlikely to possess either the resources or the will to regulate large global corporations that operate without borders and recognize no government as sovereign.

Even in an era when media industries are dominated by huge global corporate conglomerates, however, market self-censorship does not control or suppress all the messages that challenge the authority, interests, or profits of media moguls. Ralph Miliband's distinction between democratic and elite pluralism is useful in describing the slippage within the system. He maintains that elite pluralism has replaced democratic pluralism but that competition among elites still permits some openings in the system of corporate control. Elite pluralism does, however, result in the formation of a dominant economic class, which has a high degree of cohesion and common interests and goals that greatly outweigh their competitive differences. The slippage created by competition among elites appears to be more volatile in the post-Fordian economy than it was under the Cold War economic conditions that Miliband analysed. This volatility creates greater risks for elites and greater pressure on opportunities for market censorship, including overt interventions in news operations.

Because market values are constituent values of liberal societies, free markets and free expression have sometimes been equated as, for example, in Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's valorization of a "marketplace of ideas". The restrictive templates that market values impose on the production of knowledge are usually invisible to those who hold these values in common.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explored the distortions imposed on language and philosophy by market imperatives in *The German Ideology* (written 1845-46, published posthumously). The 19th-century humanist Aleksandr Herzen directly equated market forces and censorship and abandoned his native Russia in protest against tsarist censorship, but he later expressed deep disillusionment with the extremely narrow limits of permission imposed on freedom of expression by market censorship in the West. A century later, another Russian, the Soviet exile Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, would express similar disappointment at what he viewed as the moral bankruptcy of Western materialism.

Every powerful force in social formation, whether church, state, or corporation, creates order, stability, and continuity by suppressing disorder. Gaining control over communications has always been a vital move in securing social order. From the tablets of Moses to computer encryption codes, human communications and communities have been governed by rules. This proclivity for order has imposed a fundamental or constituent censorship on all human communities, even those that provide legal protections for freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Some global corporations are now larger, richer, and more powerful than many individual nations. Like nations, corpora-

tions seek to preserve and advance their own interests by controlling communications. They are, in effect, private governments. Unlike democratic governments, which are formally accountable to citizens, corporations are only accountable to their principal shareholders.

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GEORGI MARKOV

Bulgarian novelist, dramatist, and broadcaster, 1929-1978

Georgi Markov was a prolific and successful literary figure in Bulgaria before he defected to the West in 1969. His first novel, *Muzhe* (Men), was published to highly favourable reviews in Sofia in 1962 and won the year's most prestigious literary prize. The novel, which concerns a Bulgarian teenager's psychological problems before entering military service, was translated throughout eastern Europe and was made into a film. Two other novels followed: *Portretut na moya droynik* (1966, Portrait of My Double) and *Zhinite na Warshawa* (1968, The Women of Warsaw). Markov also became a successful dramatist with the play *Gospozhata na gospodin Furgovetsa na Sirene* (1963, The Cheese Merchant's Good Lady). He entered the privileged world of the Bulgarian literary and intellectual elite, and joined the officially approved Bulgarian Writers' Union. Communist Party leaders who mingled with theatre and literary circles also accepted Markov into their fold. He attended their parties and knew the intimate details of their personal lives, which were carefully hidden from the public.

In the early 1960s a roof under construction at a huge show-piece steel works collapsed, killing and injuring several workers. The party failed to inspire or lead workers in the search for victims. Years later, Markov wrote a novel entitled *Golemiyat pokriv* (The Great Roof), which was not approved by the censorship. He called the novel "an allegory and docu-

ment of the moral degradation" of Bulgarian socialist society: "In the fall of the roof, I perceived a symbol of the inevitable collapse of the roof of lies, demagoguery, fallacies, and deceit that the regime had constructed over our country". He also wrote a play entitled *Ubiytsite* (The Assassins), which depicts a plot to kill a leader in a police state. That play was censored in a party newspaper article signed by Todor Zhivkov, then president of Bulgaria. Markov's career took another turn for the worse on 15 June 1969, when his play *Chovekut koyto beshe az* (The Man Who Was Me) was previewed before an invited audience, including party officials. Reportedly, most of the audience responded enthusiastically to the play; the party members did not. Further performances of the play were cancelled and a close friend warned Markov to leave Bulgaria.

Georgi Markov defected to the West the next day with a "sense of the unbearable". He later explained that: "I tried to compromise as much as I could and it was eventually too much. And the whole atmosphere was in deep disagreement with myself." As a defector, he was branded a "traitor" by the Bulgarian media. Five years later, a Bulgarian court tried him *in absentia*, sentenced him to six and a half years in prison, and ordered the confiscation of all his personal property. His books, which had once been bestsellers, were banned and his plays were no longer performed.