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The ends of censorship

One type of censorship comes to an end, but a new is developing, writes cultural theorist Dave Boothroyd. The power that corporations such as Network Solutions or YouTube wield produces a new form of subjectivity characterized by self-censorship.

There is never any pure censorship or pure lifting of censorship, which makes one doubt the rational purity of this concept
(Jacques Derrida, *The Eyes of the University*)

It's important to know what one means by "censorship" (indeed, what has become "censored" in the definition of censorship) in order to understand the limits of its eradicability as well as the bounds within which such normative appeals might plausibly be made.
(Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*)

Censorship and the present conjuncture

When I heard that one of the events at the Gothenburg Film Festival this year was to be Markus Öhrn's *Magic Bullet* installation, showing forty-nine hours of "all of the film ever censored" in Sweden, various thoughts immediately came to mind. Firstly, I was surprised to hear there was so much of it. It is after all an aspect of Sweden's reputation in the world that it has for a long time been a very liberal society, especially in the popular sense of not being prudish about matters and representations of sex and sexuality (something quite the opposite of what the British are traditionally known for!). This no doubt superficial and populist interpretation of "Swedish liberal society" tends to get linked with an idea abroad about its having been ahead of the rest of Europe (and especially of Britain) in terms of liberal attitudes and progressive social norms and mores associated with the sexual revolution of the 1960s, as well as with Swedish social democracy in general. A more serious historical reflection on Swedish liberalism with regard to the protection of "freedom of expression" would at least want to acknowledge and assess the importance of the country's landmark *Freedom of Printing Act* of 1766 — the earliest of its kind — and consider the influence that the spirit of that Act has had on the Swedish approach to censorship, in film and other media, and in general.

Much of what I have to say here will attempt to draw out the significance of the cultural context of "censorship", which is constituted as much by the

materiality of communications technologies and media as it is by tradition — codes, laws, norms and mores and institutions.

It is widely known, of course, that Sweden's Statens Biografbyrå (SBB) has not made a cut to any film shown here since 1995. Not only that, its recently resigned former director of some twenty five years, Gunnel Arrback, made it clear in various public statements that the mission and purpose of the SBB was anachronistic in its assumptions, and, in view of technological developments such as global TV and the Internet, now fundamentally misguided in its belief in its own power to "protect" audiences from any supposed negative "effects" of viewing "harmful material". It should be noted in any case at this point that the crudely causal "effects theory" of media influence, which is traditionally appealed to in this context and often referenced by such a discourse, is long since dead in the water as far as media and communications theorists are concerned. There simply never has been good evidence produced to support it. In short I think we can acknowledge, as Arrback appeared to some degree to do, that none of the concepts involved in the censorship/classification system practiced by the SBB stand up to *critical*, and by that I mean rational, scrutiny.

Regimes of censorship and the beliefs surrounding them are really no more, one might surmise, than a feature of historically specific cultural formations. In rational, secular societies we expect censorship to be justified by "good reasons" — scientific arguments and evidence — when, for example, it is claimed to be protecting certain groups of people, or society at large, from harm. But, I reiterate, there has never really been any convincing evidence of, for instance, "psychological damage" to children or anyone else (historically a key concern of SBB) resulting from viewing of products of the film industry. There is no evidence either, to invoke for a moment the discourse of the British obscenity laws central to the history of censorship in Britain, of "depravity and corruption" being *caused* by exposure to film, literature, TV etc. To point this out is not to deny in any way the need for adults to take some care and responsibility with regard to what they allow young children to view or experience, just as they might in other real life situations which they judge to call for protective measures of one sort or another. The exercise of that responsibility calls, at the very least, for a realistic attitude, to the "domestication" of access to cultural material in the wired world we now live in.

After viewing *Magic Bullet* one really has to wonder what possible difference it could have made if none of the cuts to films which it gathers together had ever been made. It is a small step then to wonder also, whether the likes of the SBB, and in the United Kingdom the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), should just close their doors. Well, it could be argued that they have, indeed that they did some time ago, as what they do now is not "censorship" at all: what they are now are the classification services they publicly claim to be. The BBFC, for instance, claims it seeks to maintain a balance between the liberal principles of its own classification guidelines and the rigid inflexibilities of certain aspects of the law in Britain. Most cuts made by the BBFC are agreed in consultation with film directors in relation to their own commercial concerns surrounding the likely impact of the classification licence awarded on box office returns. A key activity of the BBFC is to undertake what is, in effect, "market research", aimed at ascertaining what the film consumer is likely to find objectionable, unacceptable, unsuitable for children, and so on, in relation to range of themes and subjects. To the extent to which it engages in this kind of activity, one could say the BBFC is part of the bigger cultural machinery whose purpose is to match up the consumer with the cultural

product. It helps to mediate between distributors and, for the most part, anxious–parent consumers; the former generally wanting to meet their target audiences' expectations and the latter wanting to know in advance what they are likely to get in terms of raw imagery.

Ought such an "end" to (or perhaps we should say "goal" of) film censorship as this one — ending, that is, is in a classification system in which an advisory body aims to mediate between the public, the law and film makers — be regarded as an indicator of a new stage of maturity in our European societies? Once again, I suggest, we can only address that question by reconsidering our understanding of the cultural "context" and its transformation by media themselves — and I shall return to that question shortly. Markus Öhrn's *Magic Bullet* installation must be credited with the provocation to us all to reflect directly on the idea of "context". It makes us reflect on the particular conjuncture we find ourselves in today with respect to a certain model of censorship which has *already ended* — at least in one medium, and at least in a certain place. By presenting us *here* with a collation of censored film clips — clips which were excised at a particular historical moment from their original contexts — he shows how technical processes such as cutting, editing and archiving are enmeshed with the wider socio–technological management of society as a whole. And, by a further "recontextualising" of this archived material, the installation itself reiterates a specific idea of the "end of censorship".

Given the way I have just characterised the work of the SBB and the BBFC; and given that we are all free to watch uncensored–censored film in Sweden, it might be reasonable at this point, and as it were at this historical conjuncture, to conclude that in "enlightened liberal society", at least this one cultural form has become free of a specific kind of censorship — the kind previously imposed by state power. Upon arriving at such a place, it might be supposed, we ought now to direct our critique of, and indignation at, censorship elsewhere; to other places, where, for instance, illiberal and dictatorial regimes and states whose populations are subject to the rule dogmatic religious authorities, or who are living under some other kind of absolutist power which censors, often brutally, not only film and other forms of art, but every form of free expression — as *we* understand this. There are no doubt plenty of candidates. Yet instead of going to such places now though, figuratively speaking, I want to stay closer to home and ask instead the following question: who are "we" in all of this? The answer, perhaps, is this: we who variously think of ourselves as modern subjects of the enlightenment — which the philosopher Immanuel Kant, incidentally, explicitly understood as a certain "cultural maturity"; we who think of the modernity of our subjectivity, precisely, in terms of its being antithetical to a certain idea of censorship as the negation of, and threat to, an idealised notion of "freedom of expression". It refers, surely, to we who believe the freedom of expression must be defended at all costs.

Censorship and the subject of power

If we do indeed think of censorship as the antithesis of free expression; if we do think of censorship as the repressive use of *sovereign* power by the state, or some other *sovereign* authority which curtails freedom of expression; and, if we suppose that liberal states, by virtue of being democratically accountable, are able to "protect" us, their citizens, against the harm done to us *by our being subject to censorship*, then are we not forgetting something important? Are we not forgetting that there cannot be any state, or condition of human

subjectivity, or society, which is ever *wholly free* of censorship? This is so not because there is, or may always be a little bit of censorial practice left over here and there still needing to be challenged in the name of free expression. It is, rather, because the very founding interdiction *against censorship* (as expressed, for instance in Sweden's 1766 Freedom of Printing Act; in the first amendment to US Bill of Rights or in Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, etc.) is itself a "censoring of censorship". It is a foundational restriction and a delimitation of the meaning of "censorship" which coincides with the production of a modern social subject who, at its birth, so to speak, concedes sovereign power to the state in exchange for the protection of its freedom so defined. As Judith Butler says, "it's important to know [...] what has become 'censored' in a definition of censorship".¹ For this reason, we need to hold in mind that it doesn't make sense to be either "for" or "against" censorship *per se*: the pursuit of the complete freedom of expression and its defence in the name of the inclusivity of all, implicitly and inescapably involves the exclusion of others. It is thus, paradoxically, but nonetheless by definition, a totalising gesture.

Conventional accounts of censorship, as Butler notes, "presume that it is exercised by the state against those who are less powerful. Conventional defences of those less powerful argue that it is their freedom that is being constrained and sometimes, more particularly, the freedom of speech."²

We need to recognise that various consequences follow if we think about censorship only in terms of the exercise of juridical power in this way, that is, as a question of the right to "free expression" before the law. "Before the law" means, in other words, *before* censorship. One of these consequences is that the freedom/censorship dichotomy requires that we concede the necessity of the institution of a "regulatory agency". This conundrum of the "illegitimate foundation of the Law" is particularly acute and pertinent today in relation to what could be described as the emergence of a new general "culture of offence" being played out in the context of our European multicultural societies. Societies in which well-meaning anti-hate speech and anti-incitement to violence legislation (intended to protect the vulnerable against abuse and attack) also gives rise to the unintended consequence of curtailing freedom of expression of some in relation to others. The Law is, in effect, the censorial regulatory agency that is tasked with censoring malicious free expression by insisting that all expression be regarded as context specific. Witness the debate surrounding whether the "right to offend" is superior to the "right not to be offended". In the United Kingdom, the recent extension of the law on hate speech to cover abusive references to a person's faith have been central to this.³ Similar issues have arisen and excited controversy across Europe. Think for a moment of the "Danish cartoons affair", for instance: in the UK the BBC, other national TV channels and British newspapers all decided not to show the cartoons, in their reportage of the incident and surrounding international furore, claiming that they feared that by doing so they would be in danger of literally repeating the "offence", namely, an actual act of islamophobia. Any viewers wanting to judge for themselves, somewhat absurdly, had to turn to other sources. The media were less willing, I suspect, to declare that they also feared they would be liable to prosecution; liable to be judged socially irresponsible for stirring up the violent protest that could follow; and, of course, liable to be subjected to some form of direct, retaliatory action themselves, by militant sections of the offended. The French satirical paper, *Charlie Hebdo* and others elsewhere did republish or re-show the cartoons and, indeed, various attempts at secondary prosecutions were mounted (the one against *Charlie Hebdo* failed).

The paradox I am drawing attention to here is that when we unquestioningly accept the normative juridical idea of censorship, we falsely attribute to "regulatory agencies" (including the legislature itself) *sovereignty of power* — in other words, *the power to do what they say*. We mistakenly suppose that through such an agency, the state can, in principle and in fact, guarantee the defence of a set of putative shared cultural values, including the one about "free expression for all". But this is a fantasy: a fantasy that being-for and being-against censorship in the conventional juridical sense, does not involve a contradiction — which in reality it obviously does. This is the fantasy that "freedom of expression" is universalizable. The reality is, rather, that there is in society *an unrelenting power struggle surrounding who censors whom*; a struggle within which all manner of instruments and weapons come into play.

This contradiction this fantasy would magically resolve, and which is normally invisible, arises because a certain "censorship of censorship" has always already taken place. Censorship, in fact, always precedes and makes possible the *intelligibility* of any appeal to such a regulatory authority in the first place — just as the rules of grammar predetermine the intelligibility of any meaningful statement in language.⁴ Censorship is, to all intents and purposes, what makes any form of expression intelligible in the first place — within a specific community, society or "culture". It is only because there is censorship that anything meaningful can be said at all, in so far as it enables what is and what is not allowed to be identified as such. For this reason censorship cannot be thought of simply as the *repression* of what is otherwise free. Censorship, rather, makes possible and conjures into being a certain kind of subject, or citizen, or form of artistic expression, whilst rendering other kinds *impossible*.

Let me try to illustrate this point with two different kinds of example:

(1) Firstly, a very British story: not so long ago a man called Steve Gough decided to hike naked 1000 miles from Cornwall in the bottom south-west corner of England to John O'Groats in the north-east of Scotland. He was arrested by the police on several occasions for various "offences" under laws pertaining to being naked in public, he was charged, bailed and each time continued on his walk. (He was also, incidentally, violently attacked and injured on one occasion, and on another he was reported to police again by other hill-walkers, resulting in an expensive, helicopter police search operation.) When he was just 10 miles short of his destination he was arrested yet again by police and this time taken to a mental hospital, from where he was then returned by police to Cornwall because he was in breach of his bail conditions in that county. Gough claimed throughout that he was just trying to "express himself freely" by doing his walk. My point is this: by the censure of the law Gough was subjectified, on the one hand, as a criminal and as a madman, but the only *conceivable* alternative to that was, on the other hand, to "subjectify" him as a protestor of the ilk, let us say, of the "militant naturist". Any other possible understanding of his "identity" is not so much juridically censored, as literally *inconceivable*.

(2) Secondly, I'll attempt to relate this same idea to film: Any film is the product of a set of "decisions" which can be viewed as acts of censorship. Take for example, the decisions of a film director in the cutting room to keep certain shots, sequences and frames and to remove others. There can't be a film — an "original", a "directors cut", as we say, without there being a "cutting-out" of something from something else. There must be an *act* of censorship in this sense, for there to be something we think of as the uncut film the first place. But this is actually a misnomer: there is no such thing as an "uncut" film and,

therefore, no such thing either as an "uncensored" film. I am suggesting we should conceptualise the very notion of "the film" itself as an act of original form of censorship: a film, so to speak cuts–out some bit of the reality the film deals with and "presents" it (that is, makes it present) for the first time as it were. (As a matter of fact, I would suggest, that is the kind of deep originality we prize in the context of film.) Of course, traditionally we think of film in terms of the *re*–presentational capacities of the medium of the essentially "photographic" image made of some external, ontologically independent reality. This traditional concept of filmic representation, however, is inadequate to the manner in which the "cut" of the real, which a film individuates uniquely and singularly is able to accomplish and to show. Film is, in this way, no more subject to censorship than it is an original act of censorship; it is both censorship and a performative form of expression. In view of these two examples, I suggest, the "politics of censorship" is not ultimately about the "uncensored", or the right of access to the uncensored *as the measure of freedom*, but rather about the power of expression *as a creative intervention in the world*. The traditional conceptualisation of the relationship between film and the world in its thinking of the boundary between the two on the basis of a metaphysic of "representation" is, precisely, an example of how the "censoring of censorship" serves to limit the way in which we can conceptualise the film/world relation. Censorship no more hinders expression than it makes it possible in the first place: the power expressed by censorship is, in its own ways, just as *productive* as any other power.

In her analysis of hate speech and hate speech legislation in terms of "performativity", Judith Butler directs us to what she calls the "implicit censorship" which is always at work determining the distinction between the permissible and the impermissible, noting that "The regulation that *states what it does not want stated* thwarts its own desire, conducting a performative contradiction that throws into question that regulation's capacity to mean and do what it says, that is, *its sovereign pretension*."⁵

The "sovereign pretension" of censorious power means, primarily, that censorship is always incomplete, or fails. It fails not because of weakness, but rather because it calls into being the forms of subjectivity that it desires to prohibit. Hence, generally speaking, we can't think about "freedom of expression" without "censorship". Butler's analysis of the politics of hate speech legislation draws heavily on the Foucauldian account of power as productive force rather than as repressive force.

Self–censorship and technology

That the "sovereign pretension" of the state as regulatory authority with regard to censorship is today clearly exposed for all to see, is, in effect, what Arrback was touching upon when she noted that in the age of Internet, the old idea of a regulatory censorship is redundant. In other words the sovereign pretension of power, any power, is no longer invisible. There may well be dictatorial states, such as China and North Korea, which will attempt to censor access to and uploading of information and data of all kinds to Internet sites, and can do so with varying degrees of success.⁶ But, the specific technical nature of the digital info–sphere is such that what one might, for brevity, describe as "censorship of access and participation" cannot be imposed in the manner which was possible with modern traditional technologies and power structures. During the first weeks of 2009 this was never clearer: Israel's denial of access to Gaza to all western news agencies did not prevent the world from seeing many images, including at least some live pictures of the violence unfolding.

The Israeli military–state machinery attempted to censor what was seen, but by way of what Butler calls a "performative contradiction", its forceful prohibition was itself on full show, and effectively turned everything we did see into examples of "what Israel didn't want us to see" — making Israeli censorship a significant part of the event.

I am not suggesting for a moment that the power of the state to prosecute what it identifies to be breaches of the law determining what is allowed or not allowed to be shown or said, is a thing of the past: it is not. There is a litany of cases of one could point to; doors still get kicked down, computers are seized, records subpoenaed from Internet Service providers (ISPs), websites can be taken down. The United Kingdom, for instance, has a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) which can compel ISPs to track all data traffic passing through its computers and route it to the blithely named National Technical Assistance Centre for analysis. Anyone with a concern for civil liberties in democratic countries clearly should be concerned about such developments. Still, it can prove almost impossible for the state to stop the circulation of the material it would care to sanction from being published and aired in the first place. The reverse side of this situation is that no national news agency can expect to command the attention of its entire population; such agencies cannot pose as the *deus ex machina* any longer. Every node in the networked–communications society is a potential "editor", a "remixer" and "information generator" — the figure of the blogger comes to mind, for instance. In this general situation, there is a sense in which the arrival of the technologies that make such interventions and countless others possible (and technically easy) dissolves the traditional power of the censor. If I want to see Dutch politician Geert Wilders' grubby little islamophobic film *Fitna*, but Dutch TV doesn't show it because it is deemed to breach laws on incitement, then I can watch it on numerous websites. If western journalists are denied access to Gaza then I can turn likewise to alternative sources for footage of what Israel is doing in Gaza. If film theatres feel too threatened to show Theo Van Gogh's *Submission*, then the YouTube copy will always be available.

That all of this is possible has led to a widely held belief that the Internet represents a *prima facie* democratisation of communications and information, and thus signals yet another "end" to censorship by virtue of its subversion of traditional forms of power of sanction. However the truth is that we are living in a highly complex situation, one which demands a new analysis of the operation of power itself in the context of the newly–configured digital mediascape. In a short, but well–known essay of almost twenty years ago, entitled "Postscript on the societies of control",⁷ Gilles Deleuze, anticipated the transfiguration of power structures the "information society" would lead to in a way which I believe is insightful for theorizing the present state and prospective future of censorship. Recalling parts of that essay, I shall identify just a few of the "socio–technological" phenomena that illustrate the complex interaction of various "powers" that are related to the way issues of censorship are currently understood and get played out.

Basically, Deleuze gives an account of the transition in the organisation of power: a transition from state power to what terms "corporate power". This obviates, he says, the need to ask "which is the toughest regime, for *it is within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another*". So, for instance, we can trace a shift in the power of censure toward corporations such as, say, Network Solutions — one of the biggest and oldest Internet domain name registrars — which operates its site hosting business according to its own Acceptable Use Policy. That particular policy states, for instance,

that Network Solutions will not host "material of any kind or nature that is obscene, defamatory, libellous, profane, indecent, or otherwise objectionable material." Another kind of "corporate" organisation is the Internet Watch Foundation, founded, as it says of itself, by the "Internet industry" in 1996 and sponsored by a long list of other corporations, many of which are familiar "high street names", including the likes of Tesco, Vodaphone and News International. The declared mission of the IWF is to be a "hotline for the public" to report suspected illegal content, especially "online child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world and criminally obscene and incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK" and it makes clear that it "works in partnership with the police, government, the wider online industry and the public to combat" such (possibly) criminal activity.

I am not citing the IWF mission here in order to question its specific aims as such (though its scope is clearly greater than the sanctioning of "Internet paedophiles", which is its "headline" activity) but rather to point out the way in which the power it and other corporations wield produces a new form of subjectivity, one which is now characterised by self-censorship. Such self-censorship is the *modus operandi* of the subject, in the context of the self-regulating system. I think this can quickly be illustrated by the following example: think for a moment of the way in which YouTube may choose to censor the content it carries by removing (rather than by preventing the uploading of) a video by a user, on its website, if it receives a certain number of complaints from other users that the video is offensive. So great is the quantity of material posted on YouTube that it actually depends on users to spot such "offensive" (and possibly illegal) material. However those complainants do not constitute a "public" in the traditional sense of the term — for there is no discussion, no argument made in "public" and no apparent need for a "public sphere" for a decision to censor to be actioned. The complainants are a disparate set of individuals, each of whom has "self-censored" in what could be described as a "YouTube-corporate-style", and they are rewarded for doing so with the apparent power of censure over others. YouTube might take a corporate decision to actually reinstate a particular censored video following the submission of a further set of complaints from users that such action constitutes unacceptable censorship of free expression.⁸ In order to gain full access to "the system" — in other words, to use it fully as a YouTube member — one is required to individually internalise the principle that at any moment an "exclusion mechanism" can be automatically initiated, or, rather triggered, by interactions with the system as a whole. Campaigners for freedom of expression on the Internet would surely be concerned by such an instance of censorship; concerned at the way in which the power of censure is being corporatised, and they might argue that they would rather see the power of censure remain the prerogative of the law (even though some of them at least might consider themselves to be opposed censorship *tout court*). Why? Because in this transitional phase in our culture, at least censorship under the law can be appealed. On the model of corporate censorship I have just sketched, the problem is that one has no clear sense of who, or what, is censoring whom — the situation is in danger of developing into something more akin to that depicted in Kafka's *Trial*. The model I have described aims to show how the subjective intentionality traditionally serving as the foundation of a public sphere is being undermined. At least it illustrates, I believe, the manner in which censorship could become, perhaps already is becoming, an internal feature and control mechanism of socio-technological systems of governance.

According to Deleuze the emergence of a power structure that operates along these lines coincides with the production of a "continuously modulated" social subject. Corporations replace the kind of institutions that traditionally, he says, "moulded" the subject (such as factories, schools, hospitals). One of his examples, admittedly a bit tangential to the point I am making here, is the shift in the system of capitalist production from wages for particular jobs, to salaries paid to individuals on the basis of merit. And the constant monitoring of performance, for instance in education, in the form of continuous assessments rather than end of course examinations, or, in other public services, in the form of the use of continuously updated performance tables (a technique now highly developed, and widely disparaged, in the United Kingdom), is now a widespread control mechanism which instantiates this Deleuzian notion of the continuous "modulation" of the subject.

Unending censorship

We are living at a time when the old paradigm of the censorship–power–subjectivity nexus overlaps with a new one of the kind I have just been indicating. It is a time when the changes ushered in by digital technologies bring new dangers as well opportunities for free expression. The very concept of "free expression", though, as I have attempted to show here, was always the outcome of a particular power struggle: a struggle not "against" censorship — even if that is how the libertarian might think of it — but rather "within" censorship. It seems to me this situation has consequences for the liberalism which continues to engage in the struggle to defend free expression, and free speech in particular today, for it has to do so without the clarity it once supposed it possessed as to what exactly it is that it seeks to defend. It has to do so in the global context of socio–technological change, on the one hand, and in the local contexts of diverse multicultural societies, on the other. Alarm bells are ringing as we begin to perceive new dangers posed by the interaction between these two dimensions. What is clear is how in this situation there is a tendency for two liberal impulses to be pitted against one another (and often in the same individual): the assertion of freedom of expression versus the desire for inclusiveness. This division, moreover, is set against the background of the creeping culture of fear: we are living with a post–9/11 state–authoritarianism backed up, on the one hand, by anti–terror legislation, and on the other hand by sporadic "panics" and populist fear–mongering about such things as paedophilia, drug–taking and youth crime. This situation has led to a degree of general obfuscation of the dangers currently posed to civil liberties in liberal democracies such as "ours" by a generalised censorious culture within which knee–jerk reactions and unholy failures to defend freedom of expression abound. Let me end by now just recall a few from Britain.

Recently, the executives and teaching staff of British Universities were called upon by the government to clamp down on the use of their premises by "religious extremists" and to report their suspicions about their students' political sympathies with extreme views. Yet, when a major regional theatre staging a play *Behzti* (Dishonour) by a young Sikh female playwright, Gupreet Kaur Bhatti, was not so long ago forced to close the production because of the intimidation and violence directed at the theatre and its staff by the male members of the local Sikh community, the British government did nothing at all keep it open — choosing to see the issue as one internal to the Sikh community. And just the other day, the tax–funded state broadcaster the BBC decided not to broadcast the international Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for humanitarian donations for Gaza, for fear, it said, of compromising its famous "impartiality" in the eyes of its viewers. So, impartiality, religious

tolerance and the protection of educational establishments can be said to be is at stake in these examples, and yet they could all be viewed as typical failures to defend the freedom of expression.

The list of instances and examples of where power moves to censor, is, of course, unending. Whenever it does so move, it also limits and determines the way in which a situation might be viewed. So long as the rhetoric of "respect for others" substitutes for "engagement" across what divides us, on censorship as much as on anything else, then we could be in for long night of conflict. But then, there's never been a time when free expression wasn't a dangerous idea, nor a time when how we understand the end of censorship didn't determine who "we" are.

¹ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge), p. 140

² Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 128

³ See the UK Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006). Available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060001_en_1 (accessed 17.02.09)

⁴ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, pp. 129–38

⁵ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 130

⁶ That the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is planning to spend 55 million pounds developing and deploying internet-use filtering technologies provides a clear indication of how restricting free access is high on agendas of democratic regimes as well as dictatorial ones. For further information see Lara Parker's recent article in *The Guardian* (20.11.08) "Fears over Australia's £55m. plan to censor the internet", available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/nov/20/australia-internet-filter-censorship> (accessed 17.02.09)

⁷ Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" *OCTOBER* 59, Winter 1992, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 3–7

⁸ An interesting case to cite in this context is that of the censorship of Pat Condell by YouTube. Pat Condell is a professional British comedian who has in the last year posted a series of anti-religious videos on YouTube. It is easy to see why they might cause offence to the religious, and it is interesting to follow the public debate and media representation of the case that the removal of some of his posts by YouTube generated, following the receipt of complaints from within the "YouTube community". To follow this case you could start here: <http://www.mediawatchwatch.org.uk/2008/10/02/now-condell-video-is-banned-from-youtube/>.

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