

cse13s essay

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There are a variety of elements that I agree with in Eco's *Censorship and Silence* lecture. Modern day society is heavily reliant on the internet not only for connection and communication, it is deeply ingrained in our culture. There is constantly new media, new shows, new products, and new trends that never end from this wellspring of human interaction. It seems like there's an event every day and huge stories seem like old news after only three days. There are many different factors that contribute to this phenomenon, but Twitter has been an especially prominent example as of late with Musk's approximately 44 billion dollar purchase of the company. For many, twitter is their main form of entertainment, communication, and news source. With the brevity of posts, it is difficult to make serious, concrete arguments or announcements citing specific sources and yet it remains one of the biggest platforms for companies and the average person. The format of replying, quote replying, private retweeting, are all different ways of adapting someone else's words onto your own page and there certainly is not any requirement to post something true. There's a culture of mindlessness that has brewed for years. Tiktok, Tumblr, Twitter are all prime examples, where anyone can make a post that spins up a tale or a "fact" for views and people will immediately agree without taking the time to search for other sources. This encourages influencers to post and talk about what is popular or what gets views rather than what the audience *should* know about. This has persisted in other forms of media beyond internet social media, but it is on a gargantuan scale that is influencing a generation of children to believe in what is entertaining rather than the truth. Eco describes noise as a form of censorship but he does not necessarily distinguish real important news as not noise either. What is considered crucial will depend on the audience of course, but in many ways real news can contribute to the noise; much in the same way Eco uses the example of planting a bomb in order to hide ones crimes in the newspaper, the supersaturation of news creates noise. It is hard to sift and parse through stories to find what really matters when it seems like everything matters. It is unrealistic to expect one person to be constantly up to date with the politics and nuance of every country on earth; even the big players. Even if news media took the time to go as in depth as possible into a story, they cannot spend the air time giving a history lesson on each country. Huge events are often interconnected in ways that news just cannot extrapolate upon. A particularly tricky subject that Eco brings up is the ways

that media influences people as it reports various crimes and subjects. Eco describes, "the press generates revenge attacks, suicides, classroom shootings—news about one school shooting provokes other school shootings, and a great many Romanians have probably been encouraged to rape old ladies because the newspapers told them it is the exclusive speciality of immigrants and is extremely easy to commit." Whether or not this is true is difficult to say. There are some philosophical elements regarding humans and if humanity is innately evil. One of his examples, school shootings have been prevalent in America, but is extremely uncommon in Europe despite the news still covering school shootings. News does greatly influence its audience, that is true, but there are certainly outside factors contributing to crime. Placing the blame on media and news solely can lead down a slippery slope of denying the truth of news. It's also true that media is super saturated with negative events rather than celebrating the joys and triumphs of life and humanity. There has to be a balance between consuming media to stay informed on current events and being able to take a step back and reflect on the information being absorbed. In being able to reflect on what we read or watch, we can better sift through the noise. There are other deep social factors that also contribute to this phenomenon such as non-standardized education making it difficult to push for critical reading skills across America and the world, socio-economic factors that make spending the time to search through info and inform oneself to be difficult for people of middle to low class; all of which are too lengthy to delve in to. There also exists this pressure to be informed and caught up and to know everything. "You haven't caught up with this show? Just another thing to watch. How come there isn't more attention on this? If you scroll past, you're a terrible person." It might seem trivial to brush off these statements and ignore them as just empty provocations, but imagine for a moment, a teenager who wants to fit in and follow their role models on Twitter. It is much easier to visualize the guilt that can worm its way into a child's psyche. That is not to say it is bad to be informed, on the contrary, but it is suffocating for the average person to be pressured to keep up with everything. Eco's conclusion focuses on the concept of silence. He admittedly not so much as explores it as he simply provokes the reader to investigate it themselves, but he brings up a flurry of different situations and prompts in regards to what silence means in our culture and society. The first thoughts that come to mind with silence is inaction, but in a world where noise is easy to produce and so readily abundant, silence speaks volumes. Silence makes for an especially difficult medium to utilize as it is so highly context driven. Some might describe it as reading between the lines; what is written is important but just as much as what is *not* written. Silence can be used in serious situations, it can indicate disapproval, when glaring at someone. It can mean quiet anger as someone steeps in their rage. It can mean surprise while someone is stunned to silence. It can be used with positive connotations as well. Silence is key in humor and delivering jokes. A silent audience can be one that is bored, but also one so enraptured, they hesitate to make a sound. Silence is critical in poetry and music, especially movie soundtracks, where the music has to balance itself with the dialogue and

visuals of the film. Humans place emphasis on one's words since they typically provide more explicit clarity in comparison to silence (despite the fact that words can just as easily be misconstrued without context). It is with silence that we can better emphasize and provide importance to our statements and opinions. Extraneous words can muddle our points rather than support them.