

Essay on "Censorship and Silence"

Zihua Li

CSE 13S

Prof. Darrell Long

January 15th, 2023

In my opinion, "Censorship and Silence" (Umberto Eco) is a review and summary of what happened in history, and it is also a satire of reality. I certainly agree with Eco, I am from the People's Republic of China, a communist country with a "dictatorship of the proletariat", and actually the "reform and opening up" that started in the late 70's has made my country abandon the Soviet model such as the planned economy, In turn, like the United States, it has moved towards a national economy guided by capitalism. China is currently the second largest economy in the world, but the huge economic development has not allowed this country to open up more freedom to the people in politics. The Chinese people are more inclined to strive for more political freedom, and The gigantic state apparatus has become a complete replica of the social control mechanism adopted by the fascist regime in Italy in this article.

A peaceful and stable society, or civil liberties, is a never-ending issue. There will always be those who will try to justify strict social controls, and there will always be those who will fight for civil liberties. I think I am more for civil liberties, but sometimes I also ask myself: Is it not feasible to sacrifice some freedom to gain social stability?

Just a month ago, massive protests erupted in China against zero-covid policies. The Chinese Communist Party has been trying to eradicate the novel coronavirus through strong social control measures, locking down cities with infected cases, a policy that has been in place for three years. Last month, when a fire broke out in a community in Urumqi, China's Xinjiang

Uyghur Autonomous Region, police barred firefighters from entering because there were cases of COVID-19 infection in the community, leaving residents to burn to death. This matter immediately caused a huge reaction on the Internet, and many people took to the streets to protest the tyranny of the Communist Party. Coincidentally, within a few days, a very well-known Chinese actor was detained by the police for soliciting prostitutes. At the same time, another very well-known Chinese-Canadian actor was sentenced to 13 years in prison for rape in China. As soon as these two incidents were reported, the fire in Urumqi was instantly overshadowed on social media, and society returned to calm. Within a week, there were no more protests on the streets. A few weeks ago, the Chinese Communist Party finally abandoned its zero-covid policy and stopped imposing coercive measures on cases of COVID-19 infection, successfully resolving the crisis in power.

This made me think, in fact, the same as the C language - teaching a chimpanzee to use a chainsaw is very dangerous. If the leader is a wise man, then he can balance social stability and civil liberties very well. If the leader is a tyrant, it will be a disaster for his people.

The significance of the existence of the Constitution is to limit the scope of the rights of those in power, and at the same time stipulate the obligations that citizens should perform and the rights they have. Because freedom of speech is protected, people can express their opinions freely and convey their opinions to others, thereby influencing others. It can be malicious, and its ultimate purpose can be to mislead others and manipulate the public mind. I am not trying to convince people who are reading this essay that only the government does this, in fact, it exists among each of us, and we ourselves become his supporters unknowingly, such as on tiktok or youtube Watching the video on the Internet has actually been affected, because we will not verify the authenticity of the information.

A simple conclusion, each of us, more or less, has been influenced, manipulated, and benefited from it. Because most people will always want to ingest "junk information". It is an undeniable factual phenomenon of human society, and maybe it is a charm.

Works Cited

Eco, Umberto. *Associazione Italiana di Semiotica.*, 2009