

"Censorship"**Stupid People, Telling Us What to Think by Nate A. Lindell**

Not much pisses me off more than a f-ing idiot trying to tell me what to think, especially when they try to justify it by claiming "It's for your own good." That's like telling me I'm too stupid to recognize bullshit, need Big Brother to protect my fragile mind.

Where was Big Brother when I really needed protection? Where's Big Brother now, when I need protection from... Big Brother?

Just thinking about prisoncrats "protecting my fragile mind" from tainting ideas, as you can surely tell, pisses me off. But, because I want you readers to think critically, even about

my ideas, don't let my passion sway you to share my disgust at censorship; instead, consider the merits of my arguments, fairly, rationally.

I have certain ideologies, beliefs, which I'm always willing to re-evaluate based on new information, new facts/evidence, which itself is one of my ideologies, beliefs, an ideology that our country's First Amendment was created to... protect, facilitate, make meaningful. Some of my beliefs might be unjustifiable, even hurtful, which I can only learn about if those with different ideas are allowed to "speak" them, which censorship prevents.

Imagine if I was a governmental official, say the warden of your prison, and I disrespected your right to critical thinking, used my authority to suppress ideas that weren't supportive of my beliefs. Imagine that I used my authority to ban books & magazines that discussed, for example, all of the murders and tortures committed by Catholics in their effort to force their religion on the world – that information is "controversial", to some (e.g. those raised under Catholic ideology), but it's historical fact, backed up by texts in the Vatican's Library (see Deceptions & Myths of the Bible, explaining this); suppressing that information will allow someone to be self-deceived, when, if exposed to that information, a "good" person might change their entire life, come out of deluded darkness and pursue genuine enlightenment.

Now, I concede that I'm using examples that are slyly intended to pry open eyes when it comes to my personal view of the evils of Monotheism, specifically Catholicism (unlike Monotheists, I'm willing to have my ideas tested, questioned, willing to prove them under penalty of having them rejected). But the principle, Free Speech, free thinking, is helpful for any belief, any ideology... that is valid, legitimate.

It's only the chicken shits with dubious ideas that hide behind censorship – they know their lies can't take the heat of critical thinking, so they censor critical ideas.

Us prisoners needn't "imagine" censorship: we experience it all the time; it's only those outside of prison who, when they learn of our experiences with censorship, who are "amazed" that prison officials actually deny things like college textbooks or religious history books.

It was, I think, either a Justice in my state's Supreme Court or for the U.S. Supreme Court who said "Free Speech nourishes democracy", meaning that if the public doesn't know what's really going on (such as within the government's prisons), the public can't make meaningful decisions in the voting booth. (For those who don't know, you non-imprisoned readers – those in prison will know – prisoners who dare to try & inform the public of what's going on in prisons experience myriad form of retaliation & deterrence; I've been moved into shit-smearred cells, strip searched, denied recreation, had property destroyed, threatened, had guards try to get others to kill me, because I wrote internet articles about what was really going on in prison.)

While this essay isn't crisply articulated, my point is that courageous, honorable people, genuinely intelligent people, those who value freedom and democracy, need to respect Free Speech and never condone censorship. Critical thinking, understanding the difference between sophistry and legitimate rhetoric (manipulative persuasion vs. reasonable arguments), will enable the public to spot bullshit & disregard it; censorship, on the other hand, is a necessary tool for those pushing lies and fearful that those lies will be spotted as such.

Hi Readers. This is an essay that I submitted for Prisoner Express's March '22 theme, "Censorship."

I hope you find it "chewy". The thing I like about P.E. is that they supply themes each month. I try to submit each month, as doing so exercises my imagination & writing skills.

I'm busy, as usual... My Best,
Nate.