

Politically Incorrect

Censorship, Outrage, and Public Dissent in American Cinema and Writing

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Description: The history of U.S. cinema and literature is also the history of censorship. Some of the most renowned (and nowadays canonized) works were banned or at least controversial at some point in time. What were the political and social reasons for such acts of public ostracism? How did censorship influence the reception of these texts and how did the public react to these forms of restriction? We will investigate some infamous cases of banned books, such as J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" (1955), and Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) as well as representative cases of film censorship, such as Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* (1939). A main focus is on the techniques and aesthetics employed in Hollywood cinema after the imposing of the Hays Code in the mid-1930s? What distinguishes films of the Hays-Code-era from productions made in the pre-code era (e.g., Cedric Gibbons's adventure film *Tarzan and His Mate*)? In addition, we will look at a few films and TV shows which were (or are) regarded as socially controversial or 'politically incorrect'; examples include John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus* (2006), Seth MacFarlane's *Ted* (2012), and the animated cartoon series *South Park* (CBS, 1997 – today). What are the reasons for the public outrage and (often times) censorship concerning these texts? How does our knowledge that these works were (or are) considered controversial change our perception of them?

Filmography

Freaks. Dir. Rod Browning. Warner Bros., 1932.
Gone with the Wind. Dir. Victor Fleming. MGM, 1939.
Shortbus. Dir. John Cameron Mitchell. Fortissimo Films, 2006.
South Park. Dir. Trey Parker and Matt Stone. CBS, 1997-today.
Tarzan and His Mate. Dir. Cedric Gibbons. MGM, 1934.
Ted. Dir. Seth MacFarlane. Universal Pictures, 2012.

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