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**CENSORSHIP SOURCE GUIDE**

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# 16+ MEDIA STUDIES

## INFORMATION GUIDE STATEMENT

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[www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/library/visiting](http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/library/visiting)

# Accessing Research Materials

## Copies of articles

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## Other Sources

### Your local library

Local libraries should have access to the inter-library loan system for requesting items they do not hold and they may have copies of MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN and SIGHT AND SOUND. Some recent newspaper items may be held by your local reference library. Larger libraries will hold other relevant materials and should offer internet access.

### Your nearest college/university

Universities may allow access to outside students, though you may not be able to borrow books or journals. Ask your reference librarian, who should be able to assist by locating the nearest college library holding suitable material. The BFI Film and Television Handbook lists libraries with significant media collections.

### Your school library

### Local bookshops

Some of the books mentioned in the bibliography will be in print and your bookshop should be able to order items for you.

### The British Library Newspaper Library

The Newspaper Library will have all the newspaper items referred to in this guide. Contact the library first if you wish to visit. 16+ students under the age of 18 will need to make an appointment.

### The British Library Newspaper Library

Colindale Avenue

London

NW9 5HE

Tel. 020 7412 7353

Email: [news@bl.uk](mailto:news@bl.uk)

[www.bl.uk/collections/collect.html#newsBL](http://www.bl.uk/collections/collect.html#newsBL)

# Approaches to Research

by Samantha Bakhurst

## Why do research?

You cannot simply rely on your existing knowledge when approaching essays in Media Studies. Although you will have some understanding of the area being explored, it is not enough to enable you to examine the area in depth. If you were asked to write about the people in your street in detail, you might have some existing information about names, faces, relationships, issues and activities but this knowledge would not offer you details such as every single one of their names, who knows who, who gets on with whom, how people earn a living, what has happened to them in the past and so on. This extra information could change your opinions quite dramatically. Without it, therefore, your written profile would end up being quite shallow and possibly incorrect. The same is true of your understanding of media texts, issues and institutions.

Before researching any area, it is useful to be clear about what outcomes you are hoping to achieve. Research is never a waste of time, even when it doesn't directly relate to the essay you are preparing. The information may be relevant to another area of the syllabus, be it practical work or simply a different essay. Also, the picture you are building up of how an area works will strengthen your understanding of the subject as a whole. So what outcomes are you hoping to achieve with your research?

A broad overview of the area you are researching: This includes its history, institutions, conventions and relationship to the audience. Research into these aspects offers you an understanding of how your area has developed and the influences that have shaped it.

An awareness of different debates which may exist around the area of study: There are a range of debates in many subject areas. For example, when researching audiences you will discover that there is some debate over how audiences watch television or film, ranging from the passive consumption of values and ideas to the use of media texts in a critical and independent way. Any discussion about censorship, for example, will be extremely shallow if you have no knowledge of these different perspectives.

Some knowledge of the work of theorists in the area: You need to demonstrate that you have read different theorists, exploring the relevant issues and investigating the area thoroughly in order to develop your own opinion based on acquired knowledge and understanding.

Information relevant to all key concept areas: You should, after research, be able to discuss all key concept areas as they relate to that specific subject area. These are the codes and conventions, representation, institutions and audience.

## Types Of Research

**Primary:** This is first-hand research. In other words, it relies on you constructing and conducting surveys, setting up interviews with key people in the media industry or keeping a diary or log of data (known as quantitative information) on things such as, for example, what activities women are shown doing in advertisements over one week of television viewing. Unless you are equipped to conduct extensive research, have access to relevant people in the media industry or are thorough in the up-keep of your diary or log, this type of research can be demanding, complex and sometimes difficult to use. Having said that, if you are preparing for an extended essay, then it is exactly this type of research which, if well used, will make your work distinctive and impressive.

**Secondary - printed sources:** This is where you will be investigating information gathered by other people in books, newspapers, magazines, on radio and television. All of these sources are excellent for finding background information, statistics, interviews, collected research details and so on. This will form the majority of your research. Some of these will be generally available (in public libraries for example); others such as press releases and trade press may only be available through specialist libraries.

**Secondary - online sources:** Online sources are also mainly secondary. You will need to be able to make comparisons between sources if you intend quoting online information, and to be wary of the differences between fact and opinions. Don't necessarily assume something is a fact because someone on a website says it is. Some websites will be "official" but many will not be, so you need to think about the authority of a site when assessing the information found on it. The structure of a website address (URL) can indicate the site's origin and status, for example, .ac or .edu indicate an academic or educational institution, .gov a government body, .org a non-profit organisation, .co or .com a commercial organisation. Websites sometimes disappear or shift location - make sure you can quote a URL reference for a site, and perhaps keep a note of the last date that you checked it.

**Other Media:** When considering one area of the media or one particular product or type of product, it is very important that you compare it with others which are similar. You will need to be able to refer to these comparisons in some detail so it is not enough to simply watch a film. You will need to read a little about that film, make notes, concentrate on one or two scenes which seem particularly relevant and write all of this information up so that you can refer to it when you need to.

**History and development:** Having an understanding of the history and development of the media text which you are researching will provide a firm foundation and context for contemporary analysis. There is a difference between generally accepted facts and how theorists use these facts.

**Theory:** This is the body of work of other critics of the media. Most of the books and periodical articles which you will read for research will be written by theorists who are arguing a particular viewpoint or position with regard to an issue within the media. It is this which forms the debates surrounding the study of the media, in which you, as a media student, are now becoming involved.

## Using Research

**Organising your research:** Before rushing headlong to the local library or web search engines, the first stage of research is to plan two things. When are you able to do your research and how are you going to organise the information gathered? You may, for example, wish to make notes under the headings listed above.

**Applying your research:** Always return to the specific questions being asked of the text. The most obvious pitfall is to gather up all of the collected information and throw it at the page, hoping to score points for quantity. The art of good research is how you use it as part of your evidence for an analysis of the text. The knowledge you have acquired should give you the confidence to explore the text, offer your own arguments and, where appropriate, to quote references to support this.

**Listing your research:** It is good practice, and excellent evidence of your wider reading, to list all references to secondary research, whether mentioned within the essay or not, at the end of your work.

References are usually written in this way:

1. Len Masterman, *Teaching About Television*, London, Macmillan, 1980.
2. Manuel Alvarado and Bob Ferguson, "The Curriculum, Media Studies and Discursivity", *Screen*, Vol.24, No.3, May-June 1983.

Other media texts referred to in detail should be listed, with relevant information such as the director, date of release or transmission, production company and, where possible, scene or episode number. Where you have compiled primary research, it is useful to offer a brief summary of this also at the end of your work.

# introduction

Given the extensive and often complicated area of censorship, the main focus of this Information Source Pack has been primarily on the history and nature of censorship in the UK. However, at the beginning of the pack a more general reading list has been provided which includes research on censorship in other countries so it is possible to draw comparisons.

The pack has been divided into different sections, focusing on different areas of the media: film, video, television, and, with the advance and increasing accessibility of computer technology, such areas as computer games and the internet. A selection of materials from the collections of the BFI National Library are presented under each category. This, however, is by no means an exhaustive listing but will, we hope, serve as a good starting point for study in this field.

There is also a section which gives three case studies of films which attracted wide media attention over their controversial nature/subject matter and which have been at the receiving end of UK censorship law as embodied by the British Board of Film Classification. We felt that these were significant examples of how the nature of censorship law in the UK been exercised but there are indeed many other titles which could be explored over the years since film censorship laws were first introduced in the UK.

Finally, although all attempts are made to give the precise details of references used throughout this publication, in some instances it may be noted that some newspaper articles are annotated without specific page references. This should not affect the ease of accessing the material.

Warning: The nature of “censorship” as a topic inevitably means that areas are covered which some may find offensive or difficult to deal with and users of this guide should be aware that this is the case. Nevertheless there is much available here that can be used with A level students. Please note however that the classification of the films selected makes them suitable for 18 year olds and above.

## websites

The following are particularly relevant:

### **The British Board of Film Classification**

[www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk)

### **Index on Censorship**

[www.indexonline.org](http://www.indexonline.org)

### **Internet Watch Foundation**

[www.internetwatch.org.uk](http://www.internetwatch.org.uk)

# censorship in the arts and media

## general reading

### books

Suggested bibliography for general reading on censorship.

BOYLE, C.K; PIETTE, Matthew  
**Information, freedom and censorship: the Article 19 world report 1988**

Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1988. - 340p. illus. tables. bibliog. index

Published by "Article 19", an international human rights organisation, this report examines the reality of the article 19 of Universal declaration of Human Rights which proclaims the principle of freedom of opinion, expression and information, by testing censorship in 50 countries. The first section introduces the issues at stake, as well as a historical perspective of censorship. The country-by-country analysis then looks at the structure of the control on the media and various forms of censorship. Finally, the 'themes and issues' section is a mini-dictionary on the subject. Although the facts and figures are now more than ten years old, the book remains a key reference on the issue of censorship on a world scale.

DHAVAN, Rajeev; DAVIES, Christie  
**Censorship and obscenity.**

Martin Robertson, 1978. - 187p. tables. index

The editors of this book have asked lawyers, psychologists and sociologists to apply their specialist knowledge to certain aspects of censorship, particularly in relation to the concept of obscenity. They examine existing and alternative methods of censoring obscenity in countries such as New Zealand, Great Britain and the United States, and try to assess the effects of censoring - or not - pornography by looking at the situation in specific countries. The approach to the notions of censorship and pornography is rather progressive and seeks to be as objective and scientific as possible.

FOERSTEL, Herbert N.

**Banned in the media: a reference guide to censorship in the press, motion pictures, broadcasting and the internet.**

Greenwood Press: London, Westport Connecticut, 1998. - 252p., bibliog. index

This new book explores the origins, history and modern developments of media censorship in the United States, by examining successively: newspapers, magazines, cinema, radio, television and the internet. Clearly a supporter of civil liberties against censorship, the author backs up his study with a series of incidents and court cases which have marked the evolution of censorship in the USA. The section on the internet is particularly worth reading [pp 42-52, 106-112, 194-201].

FRENCH, Karl

**Screen violence.**

London: Bloomsbury, 1996. - vi. 248p.

Not exactly a book on censorship, this collection of essays examines various aspects of violence - on the small and the big screen - from liberal and conservative points of view. A few articles look at the way in which violence is censored (for instance Dewe-Mathews' article on the banning of BOY MEETS GIRL, or Walker's article on screen violence, children and the law). A recent and eclectic anthology on a subject which is more than ever a motive for censorship.

MACMILLAN, P.R.

**Censorship and public morality.**

Aldershot, Hants: Gower, 1983. - 547p. bibliog. index

This book focuses on the *legal* aspects of censorship in relation to public morality in Britain. Like any law study, this is not easy reading but it gives you the information you need. It particularly analyses the Obscene Publications Acts and other statutory provisions, but also international rules. The main problem is that the book is more than 15 years old, and legislation regarding morality tends to change quite rapidly.

O'HIGGINS, Paul

**Censorship in Britain.**

Nelson, 1972. - 232p. bibliog. index. appendices

Examines various aspects of legal and extra-legal censorship operating in Britain, especially in the media. There is a chapter on the situation of film censorship in Britain in the early 1970s (p. 78-90). It seems rather dated.

POST, Robert C.

**Censorship and Silencing: practices of cultural regulation.**

Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995. - viii-xi, 344p. illus. index

Theoretical work on the concept of censorship. Even though it can seem a little hermetic, this book is an extremely interesting collection of texts written by feminists, legal scholars and cultural theorists. The interdisciplinary approach analyses the modern developments of censorship by going beyond the traditional conservatives-against-liberals dichotomy and challenging the western view on the subject.

# film censorship

## books

ALDGATE, Anthony  
**Censorship and the permissive society: British cinema and theatre, 1955-1965.**  
 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. - v-viii. 171p. illus. filmog. index

Aldgate examines this key decade in the postwar social and cultural history of Britain, through the slow and complex process of “decensorship” that affected theatre and film from the late 1950s to the “swinging sixties”. The author shows how the still rigorous censorship altered the work of young playwrights such as John Osborne, Alan Sillitoe and Shelagh Delaney, and directors such as Tony Richardson, Lindsay Anderson and John Schlesinger, and what impact this censorship had on the artistic renaissance of the period.

**British Board of Film Classification British Board of Film Classification information pack.**

[London: British Board of Film Classification, [1993?]. - [24]p. tables. Bibliog

Concise information on the origins, history and tasks of the BBFC. This pack is specifically aimed at students, with an FAQ section and appendix explaining the current procedure of film/video classification. Basic, but a fairly good introduction to the BBFC.

British Board of Film Censors  
**BBFC reports, 1928-1933/1935-1937**

This volume of annual reports from the late 1920s and the 1930s constitutes a unique primary source document towards a historical study of film censorship in the UK. Of course, the motives and decisions that the BBFC made at the time can be rather amusing to today's reader, but they give essential information on the changes that public morality has gone through in 70 years. For a much more detailed study of this subject, the researcher can also consult the BFI *Special Collection* of documents from the 1930s donated by

the BBFC. It includes reports of conferences on film censorship that took place between 1930 and 1935

British Board of Film Classification  
**Annual Reports, 1985 to date.**  
 BBFC, London

The annual reports of the British Board of Film Classification (Classification replaced *Censors* in 1985) are also extremely useful documents about the work, methods and motives of the British censor in the contemporary period. The reports provide a review of the year, annual statistics on film and video classification with a comment on the motives, and a section on digital media (computer games, interactive CD-Roms...). The appendices give a few symbolic examples of the BBFC's official decisions [see also the section on THE EXORCIST in this bibliography].

CURRAN, James; PORTER, Vincent  
**British cinema history.**  
 Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983. - 445p. tables. Bibliog

British film censorship and propaganda policy during the 2nd world war, by Nicholas Pronay and Jeremy Croft, pp 144-163

This essay first points out the fact that political film censorship in Britain began long before 1939. It then examines the pre-war political censorship, and looks at how the Ministry of Information (MOI) took over the political side of film censorship during the war to orientate it towards propaganda purposes. A detailed study of the case of Michael Powell's *A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH* helps to understand the notions of censorship and propaganda in that period.

FALCON, Richard  
**Classified! A teachers' guide to film and video censorship and classification.**

London: BFI in association with BBFC, 1994. - 141p. illus. tables. appendices

This book - and the video that goes with it - is a perfect resource

for teachers who intend to teach about censorship in films, television and video. The first part introduces the subject to the teacher. The second is a concise but informative chapter on the history of film censorship in Britain and on the current system of classification of the BBFC. The third section provides teaching materials based on case studies articles and official texts. It also gives a few well-argued suggestions for further reading.

HUNNINGS, Neville March  
**Film censors and the law.**  
 Allen & Unwin, 1967. - 474p. plates. bibliog. filmog.

Admittedly, a book that was published in 1967 cannot be up-to-date, yet, Hunnings' historical analysis of film censorship in eight different countries remains one of the best comparative studies on the subject, for it is extremely clear and well-documented. The first - and most detailed - section deals with British film censorship, and is particularly interesting for its analysis of the very origins of film censorship (1896-1909). Hunnings then looks at the situation of censorship in four federal countries (USA, India, Canada, Australia) and three European countries (Denmark, France, USSR). This should thus be crucial reading if your study relates to pre-1970 history, but not if you need an accurate account of the current situation.

JAMES, Derek; PLATT, Steve  
**Banned.**

London: BFI; Channel 4 Television; New Statesman and Society, [1991]. - 32p. illus

The publication of this booklet followed up a censorship season on Channel 4 in 1991. Its presentation - including an A-Z and a chronology of censorship - makes this difficult subject more appealing. It looks at censorship in various domains (from music to film) and in 30 different countries. It also reviews the situation of censorship in Thatcher's Britain. The variety of contributors and questions taken up makes this 32-page pamphlet a very interesting document.

KNOWLES, Dorothy  
**The censor, the drama and the film, 1900-1934.**  
 London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934. - 294p

This essay is a strong - but well-argued - criticism of censorship as it was organised in Britain before 1934. The first section analyses the origins and developments of censorship in theatre, and the second one looks at the history of film censorship in Britain. It includes an extensive study of films censored in the 1920s and 1930s, and a critical study of the BBFC (through its analysis of the BBFC's annual reports). An important piece of work for anyone interested in the history of British film censorship.

KUHN, Annette  
**Cinema, censorship and sexuality, 1909-1925.**  
 Routledge, 1988. - 160p. illus. bibliog. filmog. index

1909-1925 was a period of struggle over the nature of cinema as a new medium. In her book, Annette Kuhn attempts to show how censorship was involved in this struggle, and how various institutions, discourses and practices - especially in relation to sexuality and morality - influenced the evolution of film censorship in that period. The author argues that censorship was a complex phenomenon in which power relations played a considerable part. Her study is supported by a series of practical cases of banned films. A reference book for the early days of British film censorship.

MATHEWS, Tom Dewe  
**Censored.**  
 London: Chatto & Windus, 1994. - 291, [7] p. illus. bibliog. index

This is undoubtedly the most comprehensive book on film censorship in Britain from the very early days of cinema to the present days, even though the author admits that he is very much indebted to the work of other academics whose books are mentioned in this bibliography. Matthews' lively style as well as the collection of stills makes the reading very accessible. It also includes an exhaustive bibliography and a useful index. Admittedly, it has been argued

that certain facts mentioned in the book are not entirely accurate. It nevertheless remains one of the richest contributions on the subject - and the only fairly recent one.

MONTAGU, Ivor  
**The political censorship of films.**  
 London: Victor Gollancz, 1929. - 44p.

Criticism of the strictness of the British censors by one of the most influential personalities of the British film industry in the 1920s. Montagu argues that the unofficial status of the BBFC gives it "power without responsibility". For the author, the BBFC's excessive decisions can be explained by the actual subordination of the censor to the government. Practical examples are taken from the difficulties that the Film Society went through when it tried to screen Russian films such as *MOTHER* or *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN*. This pamphlet may be old, but it is still a crucial essay in the history of film censorship in Britain.

MURPHY, Robert  
**The British cinema book.**  
 London: British Film Institute, 1997. - vii-xiii, 297p.

**British Film Censorship**, by Jeffrey Richards (pp.167-177)

This article is a perfect start for whoever wants to learn the basics of the history of film censorship in Britain. It is short (10 pages), clear and illustrated with many practical examples. It also provides a concise bibliography on film censorship.

PETRIE, Ruth  
**Film and censorship: the Index reader.**  
 London: Cassell, 1997. - v-vii, 193p. [8] plates

This collection of articles by film-directors (Ivory, Almodovar, Wajda, Polanski, Forman...), critics (Philip Fench) and academics was put together to celebrate 25 years of "index on Censorship". These 33 essays look at all possible aspects of film censorship in many different countries. Recommended to anyone who wants to know what film censors are capable of around the world.

PHELPS, Guy  
**Film censorship.**  
 Victor Gollancz, 1975. - 319p. index

Often quoted by other researchers on censorship as one of the best references, Phelps' book looks at most aspects of film censorship in Britain from its origins to the early 1970s. It examines in particular the history and functions of the British Board of Film Censors, political censorship, the effects of television, the highly publicised campaigns by pressure groups like the *Festival of Light*, but also what the author calls "hidden censorship". Thanks to the meticulous research allowed by Phelps' unrestricted access to the BBFC's own records, this book is still a crucial document for any study of British film censorship before 1975.

PRONAY, Nicholas; SPRING, D.W.  
**Propaganda, politics and film, 1918-45.**  
 Macmillan, 1982. - 302p. Index

**Political censorship of films in Britain between the wars**, by Nicholas Pronay, p.98-125

First of all, the author notes the lack of information about film censorship in books on the history of British cinema, especially in the first half of the century. He then focuses his study on the political side of film censorship between the two wars, notably by analysing the relationships between the BBFC and the Home Office in that period.

ROBERTSON, James C.  
**The British Board of Film Censors: film censorship in Britain, 1896-1950.**  
 Croom Helm, 1985. - 213p. plates. bibliog. indexes

This book is one of the first comprehensive accounts of the history of film censorship in Britain in general, and of the BBFC in particular. It opens with a chapter on the events that led to the creation of the BBFC in 1913. The study then covers the major stages of the BBFC's development, in relation with the evolution of the British film industry throughout the century. It also investigates the connection between film censorship in Britain and in the USA. This book is also the first one that uses extensively the BBFC's

detailed records to back its analysis. [See also *The Hidden Cinema* by the same author]

ROBERTSON, James C.  
**The Hidden cinema: British film censorship in action 1913-75.**  
London: Routledge, 1993. - 199p. illus. bibliog. index

Even though this book seems to cover the same subject over the same period as Phelps' book, Robertson's approach is somewhat different. Its study of the different forms of British film censorship (BBFC, local authorities, film company's self-censorship and external pressure by groups or individual) is seen through the examination of a selection of films which were banned or caused controversy between censors and liberals, from *A SPANISH BULL FIGHT* (1913) to *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* (1971). A good complement to Phelps' more classical historical study.

SHORT, K.R.M  
**Feature films as history.**  
Croom Helm, 1981. - 192p. Index

**The first reality: film censorship in liberal England, by Nicholas Pronay, p.113-137**

This chapter looks at British censorship between the wars. It analyses the political and moral criteria and the functioning of the BBFC in that period, as well as the effects its decisions had on the British film production.

SIMPSON, A. W. B.  
**Pornography and politics: a look back to the Williams Committee.**  
Waterlow Publishers, 1983. - 143p. bibliog. index

Written by one of the members of the Williams Committee, this study looks back on the birth, progress and fulfillment of the Committee, on the reactions that the report caused and on the changes that occurred in film censorship after it was buried. Simpson regrets the disappointing outcome of the Committee's work, and calls for a revival of the progressive approach that it initiated. The book provides a useful bibliography on the work of the Committee. [See also the report in this bibliography]

TREVELYAN, John  
**What the censor saw.**  
Michael Joseph, 1973. - 276p. plates. index

Trevelyan is a major figure of British film censorship. He was the secretary of the BBFC between 1958 and 1971, and this book is a unique account of film censorship from the censor's point of view, in a period when Britain was going through a process of liberalisation. Trevelyan, whose principles were "the love of films and the disapproval of censorship in principle", initiated a more liberal view on censorship in the 1960s although, as some commentators pointed out, the changes remained limited.

WILLIAMS, Bernard  
**Report of the Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship.**  
GREAT BRITAIN HOME OFFICE COMMITTEE ON OBSCENITY AND FILM CENSORSHIP.  
HMSO, 1979. - 279p. tables. bibliog. appendices

This report is the basis of modern film censorship in Britain. Appointed in July 1977 by the Labour government to investigate obscenity and film censorship, the Williams Committee recommended the end of local authority censorship and the creation of a statutory body which would take over the role played by both local authorities and the BBFC. It also throws doubts on the ability of films to "deprave and corrupt". Although the report was shelved after the change of government, it raised a huge controversy between liberals and moralists by introducing a "modern" way of seeing film censorship. The report itself is a very clear document divided into three main sections - background, principles and proposals - which also offers a few useful appendices, such as a comparison with film censorship in other countries [See also Simpson, *Pornography and Politics*]

WISTRICH, Enid  
**'I don't mind the sex, it's the violence': film censorship explored.**  
Marion Boyars, 1978. - 160p. bibliog. filmog. index

In the 1970s, Wistrich chaired the Film Viewing Board of the Great London Council. She proposed at the time that the Council cease to censor films for adults over 18 of age, but lost. With this book she tells of her work as a censor for the GLC, and explains why she decided to adopt a progressive approach to censorship. By analysing a few symbolic films such as *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*, *THE STORY OF O* or *SALO*, she tries to show how the censorship system worked in the 1970s, and why the censors differentiated between sex and violence when it came to censor films. An interesting book on the role played by local authorities in British film censorship, with a refreshing, liberal view on the question.

## journal articles

**SIGHT AND SOUND**  
Vol.8. No.5. May 1998

pp.14-16,18

The censor and the state: As Britain's key film censor retires, Julian Petley and Mark Kermode put the events that led to the recent shake-up at the BBFC in context.

Article on the history and the workings of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), making the argument that Britain's censorship laws are illiberal and overly restrictive.

Gives brief notes on notable films which have run into problems with the BBFC: *THE DRILLER KILLER* (1979); *HENRY PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER* (1986); *VISIONS OF ECSTASY* (1989); *CHILD'S PLAY 3* (1991); *BOY MEETS GIRL* (1994) and *CRASH* (1996).

p. 16

### The distributor's tale

Nigel Wingrove accounts for the problems he has experienced as a video distributor, arguing that the BBFC's guidelines on sexually explicit material are confused.

**The custom officer's tale**

Mark Thompson gives a brief account of how and under what circumstances visual material is impounded.

pp.24-26

**'X' Films**, by Ian Conrich

Forms part of Sight and Sound's A-Z of cinema. Conrich considers the effect of the X certificate on controversial films in cinema history. Includes a chronology of significant events in the history of film censorship from 1908 to 1997.

**VERTIGO**

No.6 Autumn 1996, p.34

**Two or Three Things I Know About 'Media Effects'**, by Julian Petley

Article in which Petley takes issue with the idea that TV viewers, particularly children, are affected by violence in the media and that incidents such as the Hungerford massacre and the James Bulger case bear no evidence of a link with "violence in any one film, video or tv programme in particular, or with these media in general".

Petley questions what is actually meant by "TV violence" and criticises the notion that visual media can "promote" or "celebrate" violence as absurd.

Although Petley disputes the notion that the media can influence violent action in viewers, he does not suggest that the media has 'no influence' whatsoever.

**SIGHT AND SOUND**

"FORBIDDEN CINEMA" supplement June 1995.

Special 23 page supplement which accompanied the June 1995 issue of Sight and Sound magazine. A well researched and highly recommended publication which looks at the history of censorship in the UK from its beginnings to the present. The publication is divided into sections on the different areas of censorship (Blasphemy, Violence, Drugs etc) and gives definitions, listings of significant events and films which have been censored under each category. There are case studies on particu-

larly significant titles (eg. THE WILD ONE, THE DEVILS and STRAW DOGS)

**RUSHES**

April/May 1995, pp.14-15

**Censored: What we can and cannot see on our cinema screens and videos has become one of the most serious issues for the Industry to address. Nolan Fell investigates.**

Discusses film censorship in Britain in the 1990s, including the role of the BBFC, and uses the film BOY MEETS GIRL as an example. The nature of the film's violence is discussed and its repercussions in the BBFC's decision not to grant the film a video certificate. The James Bulger murder trial and David Alton's amendment to the 1984 Video Recordings Act are discussed as is the Criminal Justice Act which gives the state more power over the censoring of videos.

**EMPIRE**

No.59 May 1994, pp.84-91

**Violence**, by Kim Newman

Examination of violence in the cinema and the debates that surround it. The article includes contributions from MP David Alton, Doctor Raj Persaud (pyschiatrist) and James Ferman, then head of the British Board of Film Classification.

Newman looks at the history of violence in cinema, arguing that it was an element of narrative almost as soon as cinema was invented.

**EMPIRE**

No.4 October 1989, pp.56-61

**Censored!** by Lloyd Bradley

Article looks at the work of the BBFC, particularly at the guidelines followed by the censors in the following areas: Sex, Violence, Crime, Innuendo, Drugs, Swearing, Religion and Teenagers.

The article also has a list of significant dates and events in the history of censorship in the UK.

**FILMS AND FILMING**

No.399 December 1987, pp.12-13

**Censored: Britain's system of film censorship is eccentric and full of loopholes according to Nick Hasted, who investigates what is and what is not acceptable.**

Article on film censorship in Britain, looking at the work of the BBFC, the effect of the 1984 Video Recording Act and the involvement of Mary Whitehouse (head of the National Viewers and Listeners Association).

## press articles

**GUARDIAN (section 2)**

30 April 1999, pp.6-7

**Everything was in place for a clampdown on sex and violence. So where is it? Brian Pendreigh on the liberal rule of film censor Andreas Whittam Smith**

Article uses the passing of Lars Von Trier's film THE IDIOTS by the BBFC without cuts for theatrical release as a starting point in an article which more or less applauds the role of the new censor, Andreas Whittam Smith, in perhaps ushering in a more relaxed approach to censorship in the UK. Further evidence of this is cited with the release of the formerly banned film THE EXORCIST on video, along with the theatrical rerelease of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

Pendreigh points out the British censor must now consider the right to free expression as embodied in the European Conventions of Human Rights but believes it will be some time before Britain adopts the same standards as other European countries eg. France.

Unlike James Ferman, the previous head of the BBFC, Whittam Smith has been praised within the industry for making quick decisions about censorship procedures adopted to films (instead of sitting on them until any attendant media fuss had died down as was the method preferred by Ferman).

**INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY**

16 August 1998

**Lost in a tide of porn: A booming black market and unrestricted access to material via the Internet are making a mockery of the law. The outgoing director of the British Board of Film Classification says something must be done - which is the only thing all sides can agree with,** by Tobias Young

Article written in the light of the new R-18 certificate given to adult videos by the BBFC in an attempt to regulate more closely the type of material available on video and as a bid to stem the supply of material obtained from the black market. Young highlights that pornography per se is not illegal but the dividing line between what is pornographic and "obscene" has become blurred which in itself has led to an inconsistency in the way the law is carried out and juries being reluctant to convict.

**GUARDIAN (section 2)**

4 April 1998, pp.4-5

**Ban it? But we never ban any films in Britain....Instead, we prosecute them, cut them, or tell their directors not to ask for a certificate. Tom Dewe Matthews on films we are forbidden from seeing.**

Matthews illustrates how the BBFC does not actually ban films but in the case of CRASH and RESERVOIR DOGS for example will postpone their release until any controversy has died down before issuing a certificate. Other more sexually explicit material can be "refused a certificate" rather than banned and Matthews points out that video versions of non-certificated titles are often easily, though illegally, available.

The second half of the article focuses on famous titles which have been banned either on film or video or both eg. THE EXORCIST, STRAW DOGS and DRILLER KILLER. Two perspectives ("the official line" and "the unofficial line") on why this has been the case are given.

**GUARDIAN**

22 February 1995, p.20

**Natural Born Killers from Fleet Street: Since the Bulger case newspapers have seized the censor's agenda,** by Tom Dewe Matthews

Matthews argues that Britain's film censorship system as embodied in the BBFC is "in thrall" to the British popular (tabloid) press, citing the James Bulger case as the defining moment which led to a media campaign to increase censorship in the UK.

**INDEPENDENT (Section 2)**

7 November 1994, p.22

**Not coming to a screen near you: As the Criminal Justice Bill hands the British Board of Film Classification more powers, Sheila Johnston assesses its impact on film-makers and audiences and Ryan Gilby surveys the films the censors cut - and those we won't be watching at home.**

With the passing of the Criminal Justice Bill, the BBFC is now required by law to assess the harm a video or film can have on children and adults. This tightening up of censorship activity seems to be in contrast with the ease of video availability in Europe and in some cases it could be argued that it may have the opposite effect and add to a film's kudos (cites RESERVOIR DOGS as an example). The implications also suggest that film-makers and film distributors may be forced to carry out a degree of self-censorship in order for their product to reach the video market.

Second part of the article by Ryan Gilby looks at ten examples of films which are well known for the censorship difficulties they encountered, pointing out the official objections in each case. Films looked at include THE EXORCIST, DRILLER KILLER, NATURAL BORN KILLERS and THE BAD LIEUTENANT.

**OBSERVER**

30 October 1994, p.25

**Call off the taste police: Censorship is both patronising and corrupting, argues Philip French, as director Oliver Stone's violent new film languishes in the vaults**

Anti-censorship article which takes issue with the notion that children are influenced by violent images and believes that the rigorous censorship laws in the UK were born out of a fundamental middle class distrust of cinema in its early form. Censorship, French argues, in these terms is "aimed as much at what offends as what might produce anti-social behaviour".

**INDEPENDENT**

26 October 1994, p.15

**Poetry soaked in blood: The cult of film violence has a powerful romantic appeal in our fragmentary, fragile society,** by Bryan Appleyard

Appleyard comments on the popularity of gory, bloody and violent films as exemplified by the popularity of PULP FICTION and notes that apart from criticisms of the film's violent scenes, the film has been highly critically acclaimed. The article comments on arguments about violence in films influencing violence in society, citing the liberal anti-censorship argument about Japanese society where violent films are very popular but the crime rate is low. Appleyard contrasts the reception of violent films in societies which are more socially cohesive with those where it is perhaps more fragile.

# case studies

## A Clockwork Orange (1972 dir. Stanley Kubrick)

### book

ROBERTSON, James C.  
**The Hidden cinema: British film censorship in action 1913-75.**  
London: Routledge, 1993. - 199p. illus. bibliog. index

Chapter on A CLOCKWORK ORANGE facing campaigns by critics and moralists before and after its release, censorship from the BBFC, and finally the withdrawal of all the copies by Kubrick himself [pp 143-149].

### journal articles

**INDEX ON CENSORSHIP**  
Vol.24.No.6. 1995

#### Clockwork crimes, by Julian Petley

Article on the critical and popular press reaction to A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. Petley accounts for the fact that the film originally was regarded favourably as a piece of cinematic art by the then secretary of the BBFC, Stephen Murphy, but the combination of a hysterical press campaign and the banning of the film by some local councils perhaps contributed to the

director, Stanley Kubrick making the decision to impose his own ban on the film being shown in the UK.

#### EMPIRE

No.54 December 1993, pp.64-71

#### Alex Through the Looking Glass, by Tony Parsons

Feature on A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, including a history of its censorship in the UK, recollections from actors and critics. Parsons speculates on why the director Stanley Kubrick placed a self-imposed ban on the film in the UK (Kubrick never actually went on record to explain his decision). Parsons also accounts for the different cultural perceptions of the film (its status as an art movie in Europe contrasting with its resonances with British youth audiences in terms of echoing aspects of post-war youth subcultures). The moral panic caused by the film's release in the UK and its subsequent vilification in the media as being responsible for encouraging delinquency are also touched on.

#### SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.59.No.2. Spring 1990,  
pp.84-87

#### A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, by Philip French

Discussion of the antecedents of Alex, the central character of the film, and his progression from Anthony Burgess' novel, via Kubrick's film to an Royal Shakespeare Company stage production.

#### SCREEN

Vol.13. No.2. Summer 1972, pp.17-31

#### Straw Dogs, A Clockwork Orange and the Critics, by Charles Barr

In-depth article which looks at the way both STRAW DOGS and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. were reviewed by British newspaper media. Barr believes that the effect of doing this is to highlight "certain shared beliefs (ie. held by the reviewers under examination) and criteria with unaccustomed clarity". Issues such as the portrayal of violence and how certain cinematic effects were achieved in both films are also discussed in the light of their possible bearing on the perceptions of the reviewers and their subsequent opinions of the films.

### press articles

#### DAILY TELEGRAPH

23 March 1993

#### A moral fable blamed for rape and mayhem, by Mick Brown

Retrospective article which looks at the phenomenon of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. Discusses how Burgess's original tale about the state's power over the individual and the choice of good over evil was overlooked by certain sectors of the film's audience. Brown points out that the film arrived at a sensitive time for censorship in the UK, following shortly after the uproar created by Sam Peckinpah's STRAW DOGS and believes that in such a climate the uproar created by A CLOCKWORK ORANGE was "uncontainable".

#### THE TIMES (SATURDAY REVIEW)

30 January 1993, pp.4-5

Forbidden Fruit: If you watch Stanley Kubrick's A CLOCKWORK ORANGE in this country, you are witnessing a criminal offence. Tony Parsons looks behind the scenes of the art-house film which spawned so much ultraviolence in Britain that its maker insisted it be banned here 20 years ago



# STANLEY KUBRICK'S CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Extensive article on the social context of the film's release in Britain in the 1970s, the effect that the film had in terms of its relationship with, and appropriation by, youth culture. Parsons identifies this as a key element in the different ways the film is perceived by audiences.

On the one hand it is regarded as an art-house film by European and American audiences but has a different relationship with UK audiences who regard it as "a celebration of and incitement to teenage violence".

#### EVENING STANDARD

19 March 1992, p.21

#### Why we must see this terrifying vision again, by Alexander Walker

Open letter to Stanley Kubrick in which film critic Alexander Walker appeals to the director to lift his self-imposed ban on A CLOCKWORK ORANGE in the UK.

#### GUARDIAN (WEEKEND SECTION)

1 June 1991, p.39

#### Violent victim of time: The legend of Kubrick's film A CLOCKWORK ORANGE would crumble if it were ever shown, argues Ronald Bergan

Bergan believes that the inflammatory power the film once held does not stand the test of time and the stylised violence portrayed in the film seems pretty tame in the light of the "increased volume, amorality and explicitness of sex and violence" in contemporary cinema.

#### SPECTATOR

21 July 1973

#### A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, by Alexander Walker

Letter to the editor of The Spectator in which Walker takes issue with the alleged role that A CLOCKWORK ORANGE played in the case of a tramp who was murdered by a sixteen year old boy in Oxford. Walker maintains that "bigotry and ignorance have been indulged by the media to an extent unthinkable in any other sphere outside the highly inflammable one of the cinema".

#### DAILY MAIL

6 August 1973

#### Clockwork Orange author challenges judges: Tell us what we may write about

Report on the reaction of Anthony Burgess, the author of the original novel, to the film version of his book being cited as the inspiration for a number of crimes carried out by teenagers.

Burgess criticises the "vague attacks" by some judges and questions, as film and tv endure more attacks and censorship over other art forms, "is there some essential difference between modes of art which make some forms more immoral than others?"

## Crash

(1996 dir. David Cronenberg)

## books

#### British Board of Film Classification Annual Report 1996-97.

BBFC, London

Official statement by the BBFC - signed by its director James Ferman - explaining the reasons why Crash was given an 18 certificate without cuts.

#### SINCLAIR, Iain

#### CRASH

BFI, 1999 (Modern Classics series)

Primarily an analytical text which, whilst not directly touching upon censorship, gives insight into the film and Ballard's work. Useful for the chapter dedicated to the film and the images throughout the book.

## journal articles

#### SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.7 No.6 June 1997, pp.16-18

#### Road Rage: As David Cronenberg's much-vilified CRASH at last gets a UK release, Mark Kermode and Julian Petley detail the press campaign to ban it.

An analysis of the British press campaign against David Cronenberg's CRASH, beginning in the Evening Standard on 3 June

1996 in a review of the film by Alexander Walker, and taken up most particularly by the Daily Mail.

#### INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

Vol.26 No.3. May/June 1997, pp. 90-98

#### Set for collision

Conversation between David Cronenberg and the author of the original novel CRASH, J.G. Ballard on the film and censorship.

#### EMPIRE

No.91. January 1997, p.14

#### CRASH: Pranged by Government bandwagon (part of "Front Desk" editorial section)

Article on Westminster council's decision to temporarily ban David Cronenberg's CRASH; film directors, writers and producers are named who signed a letter arguing against the banning of the film.

#### FILMMAKER

Vol.5.No.2. Wint 1997, pp.47-50, 78-79

#### Breaking and entering: Scott Macaulay talks with CRASH'S David Cronenberg

Director David Cronenberg discusses CRASH, particularly its relationship to J.G. Ballard's book. Cronenberg also discusses his response to the controversy the film has stirred up in Great Britain.

#### SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

No.1085. 22 November 1997, pp.1,11

p.1

#### Censors and sensibility, by Boyd Farrow

Article about the controversial discussion around CRASH, the interim prohibition by Westminster Council and on cinema and tv censorship in the UK in general.

p.11

#### Censorship in the UK needs revision, unification and teeth, says Wilf Stevenson

Open letter from the then director of the British Film Institute, Wilf Stevenson, in which he points out that the controversy surrounding

CRASH “exposes the absurdity of the censorship/classification system in the UK”. Outlines a set criteria which should be used if the government decides it must intervene in the flow of material to UK audiences.

## press articles

**GUARDIAN (SECTION 2)**  
21 March 1997, pp.8-9

**Crash landing: in the week that the explosive film CRASH was finally given a certificate, David Cronenberg tells Tom Dewe Matthews why the fight to have it is symptomatic of Britain’s cultural malaise.**

Interview in which Cronenberg tries to account for the outrage caused by his film CRASH in the UK, contrasting it with the favourable reception it received in other countries. Cronenberg denies that the film is violent and believes that an inability to deal with the film’s portrayal of sexuality on the part of the British media led to it being described as a violent film. Cronenberg believes that the censorious reaction his film received in the UK is a symptom of the national psyche.

**SUNDAY TIMES**  
24 November 1996, p.6

**Old burghers fit to make film buffs scream: CRASH is the latest film to show our censorship system is a mighty fickle instrument, writes Stuart Wavell**

Article about John Bull, Councillor for Westminster Council and the man behind the council’s decision to ban CRASH temporarily from London’s West End. Cites other examples of films banned by local authorities (LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, MONTY PYTHON’S LIFE OF BRIAN).

**DAILY TELEGRAPH**  
22 November 1996, p.24

**Let cinema-goers make their own choice: If carried to its logical conclusion, Westminster Council’s decision to ban David Cronenberg’s controversial film CRASH would have far-reaching repercussions, says Quentin Curtis**

Anti-censorship article in which Curtis criticises the moral outrage directed against the film CRASH in some quarters of the media. Argues that if concerns against copycat actions inspired by the film are to be taken seriously then surely other films on general release at the time (THE FAN, THE GLIMMER MAN for example) could qualify for creating similar anxieties. Curtis points out that film is not unique in depicting sex and violence citing the theatre as an example.

**GUARDIAN (SECTION 2)**  
12 November 1996, p.8

**In search of depravity: David Cronenberg’s new film CRASH has riled the right and provoked calls for censorship. Dan Glaister and Derek Malcolm trace the moral outrage to political electioneering.**

Article draws parallels between the controversy surrounding CRASH with those which accompanied the delayed release of NATURAL BORN KILLERS. The writers believe that it was Alexander Walker’s article which initiated the sense of outrage and call for censorship of the film in the tabloid newspapers (although it is pointed out that Walker’s piece was taken out of context in some instances by other media to fan the flames) and question whether the decision by Westminster Council to ban the film in the light of then Conservative Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley’s call for the film to be refused a licence by local authorities was politically motivated.

**SUNDAY TELEGRAPH (REVIEW)**  
25 August 1996, p.9

**Why can’t we see for ourselves?: Porn or masterpiece? CRASH is the film that British audiences have to cross the Channel to view. Anne Billson finds the whole situation absurd.**

At the time the article was written, Britain was the only territory in which CRASH did not have a distributor. Despite the controversy caused by the film at the Cannes film festival, it was soon on release to audiences in France. Billson takes issue with complaints about the portrayal of sex and sado-masochism in the film, believing Cronenberg’s style to be such that any such portrayals are so clinical and distant that audiences are more likely to be turned off by it rather than turned on.

**EVENING STANDARD**  
3 June 1996, p.16

**A movie beyond the bounds of depravity: After KIDS and KILLERS comes a film that turns car accidents into sado-masochistic sex. CRASH will struggle to get past the British censor says Alexander Walker, who asks if it is the most corrupt film ever made.**

Walker takes issue with the offensive sexuality of the film’s protagonists portrayed in the film and believes that CRASH is “immoral by any reasonable standard”. Walker also believes that in the climate of public anxiety over such films as NATURAL BORN KILLERS and KIDS, CRASH itself will encounter enormous public resistance.



Crash

## The Exorcist

(1973 dir. William Friedkin)

### books

McCABE, Bob

**THE EXORCIST: Out of the shadows, the full story of the film.**  
Omnibus Press, London, 1999

This new book looks back on the origins, the production, the release and the "troubles" of THE EXORCIST. Two chapters in particular look at the issue of censorship. The first one examines the censorship problems experienced by the film after its American release, and the other comments on the release of the film in Britain in 1997.

KERMODE, Mark

**THE EXORCIST**  
BFI, 1997 (Modern Classics series)

Analytical text, but the prologue gives a flavour of the controversy that led to censorship of the film.

TRAVERS, Peter

The story behind THE EXORCIST  
RIEFF, Stephanie. - New York:  
Crown, 1974. - 245p. illus. index

The chapter "On the cutting room floor" examines why the producers were brought to cut certain scenes of the film to escape censorship.

### journal articles

EMPIRE

No.119. May 1999, p.52

#### The Devil rides out

Short article on the decision by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) to allow a video release of THE EXORCIST uncut.

EMPIRE

No.113. November 1998, pp.106-115

**The Devil Inside: Twenty-five years ago one film terrified the world. THE EXORCIST set a new standard for horror movies and caused consternation, religious conversion and sleepless nights. This month, as the British public gets another chance to feel the**

**fear, the cast and crew talk exclusively to Empire, by Bob McCabe**

Interviews with the cast and crew of THE EXORCIST who recall the production of the film.

Interviewees include: William Peter Blatty, William Friedkin, Max Von Sydow, Linda Blair and Ellen Burstyn.

#### SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.8.No.7. July 1998, pp.6-11

**Lucifer Rising: Rarely screened and banned on video, THE EXORCIST has a reputation for being the most terrifying film ever. Mark Kermode reveals the true story of its making and Nick Freand Jones describes previously unseen outtakes now shown in his documentary THE FEAR OF GOD.**

Extensive article on THE EXORCIST including interviews with some of the cast and crew involved with the film. The article contains a separate, smaller article written by James Ferman, (then director of the BBFC) in which he accounts for his reasoning behind the film's ban on video in the UK.

#### FANGORIA

No.130. March 1994, pp.14-21

**Speak of the devil...and you're talking THE EXORCIST. The creators look back at the controversies surrounding what you did and didn't see**

Discussion of the most controversial scenes in THE EXORCIST, including scenes which were cut from the final print. The article also highlights the reactions to the film at the time of its original release.

#### CINEFANTASTIQUE

Vol.3.No.4. Winter 1974, pp.8-13

**THE EXORCIST: The book, the movie, the phenomenon,** by David Bartholomew

In-depth article which accounts for the film's production, its coverage in the media and the reactions by audiences at the time (citing such things as an increase in church attendance in some areas in the USA).

MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

Vol.41.No.483. April 1974, p.38

Review, by Tom Milne.

### press articles

DAILY TELEGRAPH

12 February 1999, p.25

**I'm not scared of the Exorcist: This week film censor Andreas Whittam Smith passed THE EXORCIST for video release. He tells Ben Fenton how Europe will affect his powers, and how he copes with watching endless sex, violence and horror.**

Interview with the new film censor Andreas Whittam Smith. Discusses the decision to give THE EXORCIST a video certificate and points out the fact that the film's availability on video in Europe for many years indicates the contrast between British and European film and video classification standards.

The article highlights the significance which the European Convention of Human Rights may have on decisions made by the BBFC and points out Whittam Smith's perceptions of shifts in the British public's attitude to what they see on the screen.

THE TIMES

31 October 1998, p.5

**Repossession for horror of horrors: It's back after 25 years but the fears have yet to be exorcised, writes Deborah Collcutt**

Written at the time of the THE EXORCIST'S theatrical re-release, the article highlights the views of those people who are against the film's re-release and includes an interview with a Warner Brothers executive on why they have decided to release the film again.

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

9 August 1998, p.13

**New censor reviews video ban on 1973 shocker THE EXORCIST,** by Vanessa Thorpe

Short article about the new head of the BBFC's (Andreas Whittam Smith) decision to review the video ban on THE EXORCIST.

The views of the previous BBFC's head, James Ferman, on the film are reported and Whittam Smith discusses the merits on which the film would be reassessed before granting it a video release.

**OBSERVER**

14 June 1998, p.25

**Open letter: From Mark Kermode**

Open letter to the BBFC from film critic Mark Kermode (author of *THE EXORCIST* - [BFI Modern Classics]) in which he questions why, on the occasion of the film's twenty-fifth anniversary which was marked internationally by the film's re-release on laser disc and widescreen video, Britain is the only country to maintain its ban on the film. Kermode questions James Ferman's belief that the film is unsuitable for home viewing.

**-DAILY TELEGRAPH (ARTS)**  
21 February 1998, p.A1

**Aftershock: Twenty five years on, THE EXORCIST is still terrifying,** by Mark Kermode

In-depth article on *THE EXORCIST* in which Kermode examines the power of the film and its affect on audiences. The article includes an interview with the film's director, William Friedkin and the author of the original novel, William Peter Blatty. Kermode discusses the effect that the film's ban on video has on its enduring legacy in that it is precisely because it is banned people harbour a fear of it as they expect it to be the most extreme cinematic experience they will have.

**INDEPENDENT (SECTION 2)**  
11 April 1994, p.21

**THE EXORCIST,** by John Little

Article in which Little assesses the power that *THE EXORCIST* has over twenty years after it was first released. Little regards the film as a "reactionary commentary of the generation gap, a backlash against the youth explosion of the sixties". The article deals with the ban which was placed on the video by the BBFC during the "video nasties" scare of the mid-1980s and although it was considered for re-release at the beginning of the 1990s, the controversy over cases of so-called "ritual satanic abuse" against children in the UK and the attendant media outcry meant that the BBFC's sanctions on the film remained in place.



*The Exorcist*

# video censorship

## book

BARKER, Martin

**The video nasties: freedom and censorship in the media.**

London; Sydney: Pluto Press, 1984. - 131p.

Written as a reaction to the "video nasties" campaign launched in 1984 by right-wing pressure groups, and to the new Video Recording Acts passed by the Parliament the same year, it looks back on the anti-video campaign, and analyses the real nature of the videos in question through scientific research. In conclusion, it assesses the implications of this hostile movement for artistic freedom and civil liberties in Britain. A partial but interesting view on the crucial debate on censorship in the 1980s.

## journal articles

EMPIRE

No.96. June 1997, p.82

**Nasty Old Business: Kim Newman charts the scandal that was the Video Nasty...**

Article on the problems caused by the easy availability of "video nasties" in video rental shops in the early 1980s before the introduction of the Video Recordings Act.

EMPIRE

No.92. February 1997, p.77

**Nunchuckas a GoGo: The most notorious scenes that have felt the censor's scissors and why...**

Looks at fifteen films which have been either uncertificated or passed with cuts by the BBFC for video release. Films include A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, DRILLER KILLER and THE EVIL DEAD. The article is concisely presented in table form with different headings (eg. Title, Scene in Question, Grounds for Offence and Status on Video).

INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

Vol.24.No.2 Mar/Apr 1995, pp. 57-61

**Moral panic: Things are never as they seem. The debate on video violence has been dramatically entered by protagonists who appear to be touching the nerves of common sense, but turn out to be defending something else,** by Beatrix Campbell

Article discussing censorship of video in Britain, focusing on the video violence debate. The article forms part of a feature on liberty in Britain.

Campbell looks at the report by Professor Newson and discusses various aspects of its findings and finds that although arguable as to its legitimacy, the significance of the Newson report in the light of such events as the James Bulger murder is that the debates about cruelty against children now shifted to that of cruelty and violence perpetrated by children.

SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.3.No.7 July 1993, p.59

**All cut up: Brad Stevens on the Alternative Versions Zone of cinema**

Discusses the different versions of films that appear at the cinema, on television and on video.

SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.59 No.1 Winter 1989/90, pp.24-27

**The Video Image: 'More business for the reputable dealer is what the Code is all about...' Julian Petley discusses video's new image**

Discusses the application of the 1985 Video Recordings Act.

VIDEO BUSINESS

Vol.5.No.26 26 August 1985, pp.34-39

**Dead back to life: Video Business takes an in-depth look at the recent acquittal of Nik Powell and Palace in THE EVIL DEAD case, and assesses the legal ramifications for video now**

Feature on THE EVIL DEAD, which concentrated on the long video censorship battle which centred on the film as a "video nasty", with comments on the legal aspects of the string of prosecutions of the film's video distributors.

CITY LIMITS

No.217. 29 November 1985, pp.12-13

**The year of the censor: Moral panic plus state power have put the censors into your living room. Ruth Baumgarten tracks 12 months - and 60 years - in our rulers' concern for your decency**

In the light of the Video Recordings Act, the article looks back on censorship in film, television and the burgeoning video industry in the UK. Baumgarten takes a critical stance on the implications of the Video Recordings Act, signifying as it does an increase in the involvement of the government in the realms of censorship and the decision making process of what people can and cannot see in their own homes.

VIDEO BUSINESS

Vol.4. No.23. 6 August 1984, p.12

**Well Sir Michael, what does make a nasty?** by Richard Larcombe

Article takes its cue from official definitions of the term "video nasty" and focuses its criticism of the Video Recordings Bill and the guidelines put forward by then Attorney General Sir Michael Havers for the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the BBFC when considering future video film certifications. Takes issue with points raised in the report which were to act as guidelines in defining whether certain scenes/storylines fell foul of decency and would render censorship necessary.

**SCREEN**

Vol.25. No.2. Mar/April 1984, pp.68-74

**A Nasty Story: Julian Petley traces the evolution of a moral panic**

Article on the “video nasty” phenomenon: the initial disgust expressed by the British tabloid press, the events leading up to the drafting of the Video Recordings Bill, and the call for increased censorship, all of which were emotionally reported by the press.

## press articles

**INDEPENDENT**

21 June 1995

**A video that goes too far** (editorial)

Criticises James Ferman’s decision to award a video certificate to the EXECUTIONS video which depicts real executions from around the world. Takes issue with Ferman’s justification of the material being available on the grounds of being “within the range of discourse...which adults in a free society should be able to view” and the fact that it is set in the context of an anti-execution documentary.

**GUARDIAN**

14 April 1994, p.22

**Fast forward to video hell: VCR nasties are nothing compared to the horrors electronic technology is poised to spew into our homes**, by Tom Dewe Matthews

Argues that the clampdown on video violence inspired by Alton’s amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill does not fully address the problems faced by imposing more censorious laws on visual material. Where Alton’s amendment addresses the perceived problems with violent videos, changes in the way material is accessed and viewed (cable, satellite, home computers) point out the weaknesses in Britain’s censorship system and for it to address these problems it would have to be more “comprehensive”. Matthews discusses the ramifications for the video industry of the Alton proposals and also their impact on the creative liberty of those who make films.

**DAILY TELEGRAPH**

12 April 1994, p.23

**Why our children must be protected: MPs will vote tonight on David Alton’s motion to limit access to video nasties. Gerald Kaufman, MP and film buff, explains why he will support the move.**

Despite his anti-censorship beliefs, Kaufman argues that children are a special case and the ease with which they can be exposed to violent images needs to be controlled. Although Kaufman does not support the notion of violence inspiring imitation he nevertheless maintains that “it is simply wrong to poison and possibly traumatise the minds of young children by subjecting them to such scenes”.

**MAIL ON SUNDAY**

10 April 1994, p.28

**Protect our children but don’t nanny their parents**, by James Ferman

James Ferman takes issue with the Alton Amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill, believing it to be “unworkable and over-restrictive”. Ferman questions the alleged connection between videos influencing actual violence (he cites the James Bulger case) and points out that actual evidence of this would have to be demonstrated. Ferman believes that a sense of proportion needs to be maintained and calls for a partnership between regulators and parents if children are to survive in a “media saturated society”.

**GUARDIAN**

12 April 1994

**Video Debate: Three articles****In Britain the French film Betty Blue was given an 18 rating. In France it was shown on television at 8.30pm**, by Sally Weale

Contrasts Britain’s “strictest” censorship rules with those in place in other countries. Looks at various films and their fate at the hands of the censors in the UK compared with their treatment abroad.

**Young offenders’ viewing habits ‘normal’**, by Alan Travis

Reports on the findings of the Policy Studies Institute report, Young Offenders and the Media, commissioned by the British Board of Film Classification. Compares viewing habits of young offenders with those of non-offenders and finds little difference between the two arguing that viewing habits were just one element in “complicated kaleidoscope of background and behaviour”.

**Satellite sex and violence will escape video curb**, by Sally Weale

Greater flexibility in the regulation of satellite and cable stations means that households with children need to exercise greater parental censorship and the use of decoders.

**EVENING STANDARD**

7 April 1994, pps.32, 41

**Orange alert for the censor: Chasing the devils off the screen will not bring peace to our streets, warns Alexander Walker.**

Walker points out that despite the fact that the 1984 Video Recordings Act is the harshest video censorship law in Europe, videos are still being blamed for violent crime amongst young people. Walker criticises the Newson report (commissioned by MP David Alton as part of his amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill), questioning the validity of its findings of cause and effect in the video violence debate. A harsher video law could be detrimental to the video sale and rental industry and is an impingement on the liberties of those who wish to watch certain films in the privacy of their own homes.

**SUNDAY TIMES**

3rd April 1994, p.14

**For years child experts have stayed silent about a link between violent videos and crime - now they have been forced to admit...the nasty truth**, by Margarette Driscoll**DAILY TELEGRAPH**

1 April 1994, p.1

**‘Naive’ experts admit threat of violent videos**, by Jane Thynne

**DAILY MAIL**

1 April 1994, p.11

**Video nasties do cause violence,**  
by Jenny Hope

Three articles report on the findings of a report (*Video Violence and the Protection of Children*) by Professor Elizabeth Newson, head of the child development unit at Nottingham University. Newson admitted that experts who deal with disturbed children had been slow to make a stand for fear of offending the anti-censorship lobby: "Many of us hold our liberal freedoms of expression dear, but begin to feel we were naive in our failure to predict the extent of damaging material and its all too free availability to children".

Newson believes that censorship of violent material by parents had not been widespread as hoped and identifies aspects such as a failure to identify with the victims of violent acts in films, violence or sadism being portrayed as entertainment and the debatable notion of "justified" violence (where violence is punished within a film) as among those the report had highlighted as problematic.

**TIMES**

22 January 1994

**Violence in the home: Video sadism needs to be controlled**  
(editorial)

In the light of the amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill being put forward by MP David Alton, editorial discusses the significance of the amendment and discusses the James Bulger/CHILD'S PLAY 3 debate. Although it acknowledges that the film wasn't solely responsible for the crime, the article argues that stricter control of what images are available for home viewing (particularly where children are around) needs to be enforced. Argues that "strict imitation is not the only measure of influence" but that explicit violent images are contributing to a de-sensitized culture which accept cruelty and perversion as "normal".

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

4-5 December 1993, p.XX

**Why videos are not so nasty: Censorship removes insights as well as so called 'incitements',**  
says Nigel Andrews

Article puts forward belief that evidence suggesting violence in video leads to imitation in its viewers is questionable. Cites the James Bulger case as an example despite the media outcry about CHILD'S PLAY 3. Points out other cases where violent acts have been ascribed to the influence of other film/tv programmes (eg. Mary Bell who murdered two children in 1968 said she was influenced by the tv programme THE SAINT) which would seem innocuous to most other people. Andrews believes that a disturbed mind will find the stimuli it wants to find in order to act and that imitation which censorship lobbyists believe is the source of the problem actually has little or nothing to do with most filmgoers' responses to tv, video or films.



Child's Play 3

# television censorship

## books

PRICE, Monroe E.

**The V-Chip debate: content filtering from television to the internet.**  
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998. 363p. bibliog. indexes.

The V-Chip system is able to filter the content of broadcast media. It takes a significant part in the debate about whether television - and new technologies such as the internet - deserve special attention in terms of accessibility to children. In this essay, the author has asked contributors from various spheres to discuss the origins, the development and the impact of the V-Chip system on broadcasting policy. Even though the discussion focuses on the USA and Canada, it also looks at other TV rating systems throughout the world.

ROBILLARD, Serge

**Television in Europe: regulatory bodies: status, functions and powers in 35 European countries.**  
European Institute for the Media. - London: John Libbey & Co, 1995. - i-viii. 310p. bibliog. appendix

Analyses the status and competence of broadcasting regulatory bodies in 35 European countries. For each national broadcasting system, the legal framework is presented, and each regulatory body is described in detail according to 5 criteria: the power to grant a licence to broadcast, the supervision of the activities of TV broadcasters, the power to set rules for the broadcasters, the power to impose sanctions, and "quasi-legal" powers. Even though most of the bodies presented only deal with commercial broadcasting, the book also introduces the models of self-regulation that the public sector has developed. The conclusion offers a comparative analysis and outlines a number of areas for future research on regulatory bodies in the context of the so-called "information society".

HEWISON, Robert

**Monty Python: the case against.**  
Eyre Methuen, 1981. - 96p. illus

This book was written after the controversy over the release of MONTY PYTHON'S THE LIFE OF BRIAN. It analyses the motives and methods of those - outraged viewers, TV companies, critics - who have attempted to censor Monty Python's TV programmes and films in the 1970s, as well as Monty Python's responses. The author, Robert Hewison, is a cultural historian, a journalist and a Python fan. If his study is entirely based on facts - and illustrated with visual evidence - his comment is passionate and often cynical. All in all, this is an interesting account of film and TV censorship in Britain.

MUNRO, Colin R.

**Television, censorship and the law.**  
Saxon House, 1979. - 194p. bibliog. index

As the author sadly points out in the introduction, although there are a lot of books about the history of British television none directly tackles the crucial issue of censorship on TV. For Munro, "this book is an attempt to fill the gap". It is indeed an objective and well-documented account of television censorship in Britain which analyses the special rules applying to the BBC and commercial television, as well as the legal restraints caused by ordinary law. The book also looks at the external/internal pressure groups which have influenced television censorship. Only in the last chapter, the author allows himself a more personal view on censorship. Unfortunately, this authoritative book is more than 20 years old, and a lot has been happening in that domain since the late 1970s.

TRACEY, Michael; MORRISON, David  
**Whitehouse.**  
Macmillan, 1979. - 216p. index

The two authors investigate the motives and social significance of a woman whose name has become a household name in Britain. Tracey and Morrison interviewed Mary Whitehouse for many hours, and were given full access to her personal archive. The result is a detailed and objective study of her various fights, from the cleaning-up TV campaign to the Gay News prosecution. The authors conclude that Whitehouse's preoccupation with sex and violence on television goes beyond the defence of Christian morality, and that it could actually be seen as an attempt to re-establish the authority of the Church in all areas of social and political life. Although this essay was written in the late 1970s, it is still a powerful study of Whitehouse's ideas.

WHITEHOUSE, Mary

**Cleaning up TV: from protest to participation.**  
Blandford Press, 1967. - 240p. tables

Co-founder of the "Clean-up TV" campaign, which led to the creation of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (NVLA) in the mid-1960s, Mary Whitehouse

soon became the symbol of protest against the "flagrant disregard of good



Mary Whitehouse

taste and decency" shown by the BBC in a few of its programmes in that period.

In this book Whitehouse tells us how the the campaign took shape and developed, and exposes her Christian-based concept of television. Of course, the discourse is highly subjective and can seem rather dated, but the book is interesting to read as a crucial piece of evidence in the history of television censorship in Britain.

WHITEHOUSE, Mary

**Quite contrary: an autobiography.** London: Sidgwick, 1993. - vii. 239p. [8] plates. index

This recent autobiography gives an account of the various moral battles fought by Mary Whitehouse since the early 1960s, but it focuses on the most recent developments of her campaign against sex and violence on television, from the "video nasties" to THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST affair. Do not expect scientific objectivity, but it is worth reading as a partisan point of view on censorship, complementing other studies.

## journal articles

### BROADCAST

7 August 1998, p.16-17

**Twelve months of censorship,** by Julian Petley

A review of television censorship during the previous twelve months, written in a month by month diary form.

Petley argues that censorship on tv is less a matter of outright bans and more of a case of subtler pressures discouraging difficult programmes being made in the first place. These pressures he believes are "institutional and structural" and come as much from within a broadcasting organisation such as the BBC because of increasing concerns with producing market-orientated product, as from any politically motivated conspiracies to gag programme makers.

### INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

Vol.27 No.3 May/June 1998, p.172-178

**When more is less,** by Granville Williams

Cost cutting, market forces, ratings and vertical concentration of ownership are undermining the media's coverage of anything that does not look like entertainment.

There is evidence to suggest that there has been a drift away from making programmes whose subjects may be controversial or unlikely to attract high audiences. Williams cites the report *Serious Documentaries on ITV* (published by the Campaign for Quality Television in January 1998) which highlights the decline in the transmission of documentary films in the Network First slot.

### SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol 8. No.3. March 1998, p.33

**The absence of censorship,** by W.Stephen Gilbert

It is argued that producers' choices of British tv drama are dictated by the outside market and inside conventions. The result of this is self-censorship at a very early stage and subsequently an almost complete lack of political drama.

### INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

Vol.26. No.1. Jan/Feb 1997, pp.25-29

**The year of the bully: British TV censorship is largely a thing of the past. Far more threatening is the concert of pusillanimous management, government intimidation and the machinations of spin doctors**

Article asserts that television in Britain is subject to bullying and intimidation by the government and right wing press. It is also affected by attempts by lawyers and PR men to "manage" the news, and the weaknesses of broadcast organisations.

### CONVERGENCE

Vol.3.No.1. Spring 1997, pp.26-50

**The V-Chip, the Family, and Media Regulation,** by Matthew Murray

An in-depth discussion of the V-Chip as a form of media regula-

tion. Murray takes the stance that the V-Chip "will likely limit choices for most users as a result of the ideological commitment to 'family values' underlying its practical implementation". Murray believes it is important to reappraise the reasons a technological development such as the V-Chip is considered a positive solution to "a crisis in cultural control" and rather than allow for flexibility in viewing, the device will "rigify familial identities and social standards".

### JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION

Vol.46.No.4. Autumn 1996, pp.116-138

**Considering Policies to Protect Children from TV Violence,** by James Potter

Discusses three proposals for protecting children from tv violence: the V-Chip, the violence rating which would be displayed by television programmers, and "safe harbours" - periods when children are not viewing - and looks at the thinking behind each of them.

### INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

Vol.25.No.5. May 1996, pp.184-188

**It may be hi-tech, it ain't sense: Quick-fix technical answers to complex social problems only compound the issues they seek to resolve,** by Julian Petley

A criticism of the V-Chip device of censoring sex and violence on tv screens as an answer to the problem of how to protect children whilst respecting the rights of adults to watch what they want. Petley points out that the V-Chip is a "purely technological response to what is essentially a social and regulatory problem". It could be argued that the V-Chip places all responsibility on parents to regulate their children's viewing and takes away notions of responsible programming by broadcasters.

### SIGHT AND SOUND

Vol.6.No.5. May 1996, p.39

**Victory to V-Chip,** by Chris Jones

Article considers the implications of V-Chip installation in British Tvs in the light of the introduction of the technology in the US through Telecommunications Act of 1996. Points out the problems in rating



material for broadcast because of the sheer amount of material that would need to be rated daily and takes the view that the V-Chip cannot step in as a protector of children while issues of education and poverty are ignored.

**TELEVISION BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL**  
April 1996, p.12

**What the V-Chip will really cut out**, by Les Brown

Written from a US perspective, nevertheless in the light of the consideration of introducing V-Chip technology in the UK, the article by Brown looks at relevant issues of tv censorship in the home. Brown believes that the V-Chip will not solve the problem of unsuitable viewing by children as the areas where it is most needed are those with little or no parental control.

**EMPIRE**  
No.47. May 1993, p.63

**Get the frig outta here! Why watching films on TV isn't quite the same as watching films at the pictures...** by Jeff Dawson

Article about the need for dubbing over swear words in order to show films on television. As so many modern films contain bad language, film companies quite often prepare their output for broadcast by putting together a US tv version (with swearing overdubbed).

The BBC usually acquires a copy of the tv version along with the original cinema version but as the US tv is more heavily censored in the US than the UK, the tv version of a film can be too "soft". Dawson

discusses the problems this poses to broadcasters in the UK and how they work around it.

**FILM AND TV TECHNICIAN**  
No.542. November 1990, p.6

**Balancing act**, by Alistair Beaton

Article in which the scriptwriter of the dropped series DUNRULIN writes of the initial acceptance of the idea of the series and production of a pilot, and the sudden change of mind by the BBC, believing it to be self-censorship.

**TIME OUT**  
No.949. 26 October 1988, p.23

**The cruellest cut: Often a film shown on television is so butchered as to be unintelligible; whether for sex, violence, bad language or, perhaps worst of all, to fit into a designated time slot. Surely, not even Mary Whitehouse could object to 'South Pacific'?** by Nigel Floyd

Article on how films are censored and cut before being broadcast on British television. Floyd criticises the censorship of THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE and BODY HEAT when they were broadcast, maintaining that the sex scenes which were censored actually explain the nature of the relationships of the couples involved and how this motivates the ensuing action in both films. The article looks at the different approaches taken by the different UK tv companies to censoring "explicit" material. Channel Four appear to have the best record with regard to showing feature films with the least cuts but questions how much longer this can survive in a climate of "moral indignation".

**LISTENER**  
Vol.119. No.3049. 11 Feb 1988, pp.4-5

**Censorship is a turn-off for most viewers**, by David Docherty, David Morrison

Article about the findings of a Broadcasting Research Unit (BRU) survey about peoples' attitudes to sex and violence on television, conducted in the light of the then Tory government's decision to form the Broadcasting Standards Council.

**TELEVISION BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL**  
Vol.1. No.1. Feb 1988, pp.42-43,45-46

**Regulation by morality: Pressure is on for programmes to meet national standards of acceptability**, by Marta Wöhrle

Article looks at the growing concern about sex and violence on television and how standards are being applied to reflect European and American senses of morality.

Much of the discussion in the article focuses on UK broadcasting. The aftermath of the Hungerford massacre in 1987 is discussed in terms of its affect on programme content and how broadcasters reacted by removing any scenes which featured shooting in the weeks which followed the event.

Wöhrle also discusses the outcome of the broadcasting of the US mini-series SINS by ITV which was shown during the primetime viewing slot but which featured a rape scene and a violent attack on a pregnant woman. The programme controllers had not watched the series all the way through and were unaware of the violent content. This led to more stringent rules being enforced by the IBA that all programme content be fully viewed before transmission.

Article contains a chart on the percentage of primetime tv drama containing some violence and looks at how this is represented across six countries (including the UK).

**PRODUCER**  
No.2. Autumn 1987, pp.18-19

**Not on your telly!** by John Hocking

Article on the then Tory government's two attempts to bring broadcasting within the scope of the Obscene Publications Act 1959, and the implications for the independent producer if tighter legislation was introduced. Hocking believes that a tightening of censorship laws will restrict the independent producer, particularly those at the bottom of the broadcasting hierarchy. Such production companies tend to be very small and they would not be able to afford criminal proceedings in the event of contravening any new censorship laws. The result of this would be to introduce their own

self-censorship which would undermine any notions of innovativeness and originality characteristic of the independent production sector.

**TELEVISION TODAY**  
10 September 1987, p.20

**Censorship - the hot potato: The Victorians, lacking television, usually blamed violence on the music hall. John Dekker, a senior producer in BBC Television Current Affairs for 20 years, argues the case against making TV the scapegoat for society's ills and explains why new laws, quangos and well-meaning busy-bodies have nothing to do with censorship**

Article by BBC producer John Dekker, in which he advocates that producers use their own judgement to 'censor' television, and warns of the dangers of claiming that television violence is responsible for violence in society.

**BROADCAST**  
24 October 1986, pp.18-19

A cut below the rest: From time to time television encounters a bogeyman. For a while it seems as if television as we know and love it is about to give up the ghost in unequal struggle with the likes of Ted Turner, Professor Peacock...or Winston Churchill. For a while the battle is the subject of endless and agonised debate...and then things carry on more or less the same as before. Until the next time. by Julian Petley

Article on tv censorship in the UK: the cutting of feature films for potentially offensive action and language, problems with a gay film season on Channel Four and the effects of the failed Churchill Bill which tried to bring tv censorship under the remit of the Obscene Publications Act 1959.

# censorship debates: internet, computer games

## journal articles

**INTERMEDIA**  
Vol.26.No.1. March 1998, pp.10-11

**The question of Internet content liability - a delicate balance?** by Daniella L. Goldman

On the delicate balance between reaching an acceptable code of behaviour on the Internet whilst protecting free speech.

**SIGHT AND SOUND**  
Vol.7.No.7.July 1997, p.33

**Cybernotes: Flesh-eating bug,** by Chris Jones

Article on the British-based company Microtrope, who have developed a piece of software that can police a PC for pornographic images - if one appears on the screen it will block it out and then log it on disc with the name of the viewer.

**STAGE SCREEN AND RADIO**  
October 1996, p.8

**Lurking in the net: Tony Lennon argues that self-censorship by Internet Service Providers poses serious risks**

Article considering the risks of self-censorship by Internet Service Providers.

**JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION**  
Vol.46.No.2. Spring 1996, pp.19-32

**Playing Violent Video and Computer Games and Adolescent Self-Concept,** by Jeanne B. Funk and Debra D. Buchman

Research into the correlation between gender, length of time adolescents spend playing violent video and computer games and their self-perception.

**SIGHT AND SOUND**  
Vol.6.No.2. February 1996, p.62

**The Adjuster,** by Richard Falcon

Part of occasional column in Sight and Sound magazine, Falcon writes about the possible psychological effect of subliminal messages in computer games, refers to the game ENDORFUN.

## press articles

**THE TIMES** (Interface Supplement)  
19 May 1999, p.3

**Violent games clean up,** by Tim Wapshott

Report from the E3 computer games show where computer games industry insiders are playing down the criticism of violent computer games in the light of the high school shootings in Littleton, Colorado. Many computer games industry people feel that games which are characterised by violence are being made scapegoats for the violence in society, pointing out that violent games actually comprise a very small percentage of the games market.

**EVENING STANDARD**  
12 April 1999, p.8

**Porn: The Darker Side of the Internet: The Internet and You: The internet is already emerging as an unrivalled - if uncontrolled - source of entertainment and services,** by Gervase Webb and Mark Hughes-Morgan

Article takes the premise that the impetus behind the growth of the Internet has come from the pornography industry and points out that whereas most users and industry professionals agree that this is the case, there is strong disagreement about how this can be tackled.

The article discusses the formation of the Platform for Internet Content Selection which makes it possible for material to be rated

and tagged, identifying this as a “decentralised” solution which places the means of censorship into the hands of parents/guardians rather than the government.

**THE TIMES**

10 February 1999

**Is porn the price of a free-speech Internet?** by Joanna Hunter

As a high percentage of internet users are children the article raises the issue of how are they to be protected from material which is illegal and/or disturbing.

The article discusses the formation of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), an independent watchdog supported by the government and the police which aims “to protect (consumers) from illegal content and give them more choice over what they, or particularly their children, are able to access”.

**THE GUARDIAN** (Online Supplement)

22 October 1998, pp.2-3

Teenage Terror: Video games have changed. Super Mario and Sonic the Hedgehog have given way to ever more violent and realistic imagery. But the classification system for games hasn't kept pace. With a new version of one of the most notorious titles available due for release soon, Jim McClellan finds the game industry frustrated and consumers confused.



*Game over: Manhunt 2 was banned by the BBFC in 2006*

Article written at the time of the imminent release of CARMAGEDDON II. McClellan points out that if the computer industry is, as it claims, aiming to produce more games geared towards older users, then a more adequate classification system is needed for the games industry. McClellan points out the inconsistencies of the current ratings system, highlighting the faults of the current voluntary ratings system initiated by ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association) and the disadvantages of being assessed by the BBFC which approaches game material essentially from its background in film and video censorship.

A call for more public awareness of ratings systems used for computer games.

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

8 October 1998, p.20

**Regulators@odds: Should governments or markets regulate cyberspace? Guy de Jonqueres and Louise Kehoe explain why America and Europe have different answers**

Article identifies the dilemmas faced by international governments as to whether the development of the internet should be market-led or whether they themselves should take the lead in defining its direction. On the one hand it should remain free from bureaucratic hindrances but on the other hand if it remains unchecked it may challenge national laws and elude government control.

**THE TIMES** (Interface Supplement)

16 September 1998, p.8

**The name of the game is...trouble: Showdown with ministers over the ills of the games industry. Tim Wapshott reports**

Article about the president of ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association), Paul Jackson's meeting with Peter Mandelson and Gordon Brown and the White Paper on the state of the computer games industry in the UK. One of its features being the desire of ELSPA to undertake censorship responsibility currently in the hands of the BBFC. The fact that computer games are classified

as videos for age-rating is criticised and Jackson believes that the computer games industry should be allowed to impose and monitor its own censorship procedures.

**DAILY TELEGRAPH** (Connected Supplement)

27 August 1998, pp.4-5

**Have games got too nasty? Torture chambers and grisly assassinations feature in the new generation of ultra-realistic computer games. Steve Boxer argues that age classification needs more attention**

Steve Boxer's article looks at different computer games and identifies the violent characteristics of each (eg.TENCHU and THRILL KILL). Boxer believes that one of the reasons for the increased graphic violence in some games could be the fact that as technology improves, this allows characters in games to move in more sophisticated ways. Boxer acknowledges the arguments of the computer games industry which cite the small percentage of games on the market with a significantly violent content but maintains that as games become more graphic in their violence, it is becoming more important to pay attention to game classification codes.

**TIMES**

7 January 1994, p.28

**An X-cert for computer games: The electronic games industry is trying to impose a ratings system to protect children, says Matthew May**

Article written in anticipation of a large meeting of games manufacturers in Las Vegas in which they are to discuss developing a voluntary labelling system in order to reduce criticisms of violent computer games dehumanising children. The question of whether a system of censorship based on the ratings system present in the cinema industry is a sufficient method of categorising games is raised (would it take into account the interactive nature of computer games in which the player is not just the consumer of violent acts as in film or video, but indeed the perpetrator?)