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Book Censorship in Nigeria: A study of Origin, Methods and Motivations, 1805-2018

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Abstract

Twenty-first century Nigeria may be described as the era of democracy yet freedom to publish, which is one of the hallmarks of true democracy, seem to be endangered more than ever before. Conversation around this subject has, however, been superficial, lacking in both historical and empirical depth. The aim of this study, therefore, is to investigate the origin, methods and motivations of censorship in Nigeria with a view to deepening the understanding of this phenomenon. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected offline and online using document analysis and interviews were analysed by simple percentages and the constant comparative method. Findings indicate that book censorship began in 1805, over two centuries ago. Eleven methods, including, burning, banning and bombing have been employed and three major motivations (political, religious and socio-cultural) were identified. This study, beyond the conjectures that make up the literature, sheds light not only on the murky history of censorship in Nigeria but also on the emergence of positive censorship—censorship not undertaken by politicians and religious leaders to stifle free speech but by communities, schools and social media to challenge books with culturally immoral contents. This development promises to strengthen the peer review process to the benefit of all stakeholders in the book chain.

KEY WORDS: School Censorship, Library, Cultural Values, Censorship Motive, Origin, 1805

Introduction

Book has always been viewed as a powerful instrument in the battle for and against freedom of speech. Thus, tyrants and other authoritarian forces often resort to different types of book censorship in their battle against truth just as freedom fighters, publishers and preachers have always deployed it as a potent weapon to spread democratic ideals, the gospel and socio-cultural wisdom. Censorship objective may be either positive or negative. It is positive when it is aimed at ensuring decency, removing explicit sexual contents from children's books or withdrawing books with violent and racism contents. But it is negative when it is aimed at inhibiting freedom of expression.

Generally, censorship refers to the control of information and ideas which ordinarily should circulate freely. And this is usually achieved by the removal, suppression or restriction of circulation on the grounds that the said materials are morally, politically or otherwise objectionable in the light of standards applied by the censor. Often it takes the form of examination of books or manuscripts for the purpose of altering or suppressing ideas found to

be objectionable, harmful, or offensive. A book may be censored before or after publication (Yaya, Achonna and Osisanwo, 2013).

Prior censorship occurs when a work is controlled before its release and may be done by publishers, governments, organizations, individuals and religious bodies, either by force or by negotiations. Post censorship takes place when a book has been made public. Generally, book burning, book banning, book banishing, book bombing, book registration, book restriction and defamation or sedition suits have been employed to achieve censorship objectives (Yaya, Achonna and Osisanwo, 2013). In Nigeria, scholars have examined aspects of censorship, especially with regards to newspapers and magazines, paying little attention to book censorship.

The Problem

Censorship of the printed word is older than publishing itself, and dates back to bible days when kings burned scriptures (Maxwell, 2002). It has always trailed published works from the developed world to the developing world. Scholars and newspapers have reported a few incidents of censorship recorded in Nigeria without taking a holistic view of the subject from either a historical perspective or an empirical perspective (Olorunsola, 1993). This study, therefore, focuses on the origin of censorship in Nigeria, various types of censorship involving either books published in Nigeria or books published by Nigerian authors elsewhere. It also investigates the motives behind reported cases of book censorship, with a view to enhancing the understanding of the subject. Thus, it attempts to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What is the origin of book censorship in Nigeria?

RQ2: What methods of book censorship have taken place in Nigeria since 1805?

RQ3: What are the predominant motivations for book censorship since 1805?

Brief Review of Book Censorship Literature

Book censorship is almost as old as the ancient man. In the 7th century B.C., King Jehoiakim of Judah burned part of a scroll written by Baruch ben Neriah at prophet Jeremiah's dictation (Jeremiah 36: 1-25). Nazis, Moslems, European monarchs, African dictators, apartheid racist and many others have burned books at one time or another. The same goes for book banning, book banishing, book registration and legal challenge which are generally associated with despotic rulers' clamp down on free speech (Maxwell, 2002). Reasons for censorship include inaccuracy, violence, sexism, drug abuse, suicide content, abortion, explicit sexual content, opposing political viewpoint, vulgarity and sacrilege (Wikipedia, 2018).

The first emperor of Qin Dynasty in China, ordered that hundreds of books be burned in the year 213 BC and commanded his army to bury alive about 460 Confucian scholars in 210 BC just to enable him hold on to power. In the same vein, the Roman Catholic Church burned and banned a long list of titles in many countries of Europe (Wikipedia, 2018).

The apartheid regime that ruled South Africa until 1990 was consistently accused of book burning and other types of censorship. *South African Censorship Works* is a 1980 collection of essays on censorship by South African novelist Nadine Gordimer and others. The book exposed South African government's clamp down on freedom of expression and authors. Scholars explained how and why librarians in South Africa became agents and accomplices

in book burning, describing this development as “holocaust of literature” or “authoritarianism in the library” and observing that it sprang out of a desire to regulate reading (Dick, 2004). In reaction to censorship, some publishers in South Africa found alternative publishing models. In the words of Venter, (2007) the context of legislative restrictions; and the impact of censorship on the climate of cultural production gave rise to an anti-apartheid publishing model which had to be abandoned when the regime was dismantled.

All through history, the nature of censorship has varied from place to place and from one historic period to another. One of the most popular types of censorship in literature is book burning, which refers to the ritual destruction by fire of books, usually carried out in a public place, and usually proceeding from a cultural, religious or political opposition to the contents of the books in question. Related to this is the destruction and removal or recalling of motion pictures, electronic games, the taking of television programmes off the air, or the shutting down of web sites publishing or reproducing the contents of the burned book, or adaptations from it. It is sometimes described as bibliocide. Book burning can be an act of contempt for the book's contents or the author. In such cases, the burning is intended to draw wider public attention to the content (Wikipedia, 2017).

Book banning occurs when publications tend to be taken out of reading lists due to sexual contents, violence, official secret, anti-religious motifs, medications, homo sexuality, transgender, transvestites, etc. In line with this thinking, the Catholic Church has maintained for centuries a list of authors and their offensive literary works in a standard index known as *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Martinez de Bujanda, 2002). As in book burning, the censure is sometimes also extended to adaptations, all amounting to a great loss to society. Besides the disadvantage of limiting knowledge distribution and learning, it often infringes on writers' freedom of expression, and in some cases, the destroyed or banned works are irreplaceable thereby constituting a severe loss to cultural heritage.

Almost all cases of pre-independence censorship were political or religious.

Scholars argue that what gave birth to the current wave of censorship in Nigeria started gradually with the growth of anti-intellectualism and book-shyness promoted by a distracted leadership (Ezeh, 2009). One of the leaders that added a new dimension to censorship was Sani Abacha who introduced author strangulation in 1995 when he executed Ken Saro Wiwa, the author that coined this term “author strangulation” (Asein, 2005).

The consequence of an overtly oppressive political environment could be that librarians, writers and publishers may engage in self-censorship as a way of survival. Scholars have raised concerns about library censorship processes which can censor library collections from within the profession itself (Yaya, Achonna and Osisanwo, 2013). Censorship has taken its toll on Nigeria's publishing industry. In a study that examined the concept of censorship and its influence on publishing in Nigeria, Enang and Umoh (2017) discussed the challenges of censorship and recommended that professional censors should be employed as acquisitions editors in book publishing firms. In other words, they advocate a formal adoption of self-censorship as a way out.

In Europe, censorship may appear to be minimal but scholars observe that it is there all the same. For instance, book censorship in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was sophisticated, involving the usual textual manipulation, aspects of the production cycle, choice of books, editorial preparatory work, self-censorship by authors and editors as well as printers. Explaining how censorship worked there, Thomson-Wohlgemuth () observed that the authorities influenced the availability and affordability of paper, printing and binding

materials to achieve censorship. Fabre (2014) made a connection between fascism, censorship and translation, explaining that each system of dictatorship evolves its own method of information control. But man has since moved on from censorship to peer review, an exercise that often refines content stripping it of all possible indecency, vulgarity and partisanship (Biagioli, 2002). Notwithstanding censorship in Nigeria seems to be on the increase.

Methodology

Historical research method was employed to collect data that answered the research questions. Extensive literature search was supported with document analysis online and offline. On the whole, 23 historical publications were consulted, while 11 websites selected purposively were visited and three authors and booksellers interviewed. Data collected were analysed historically and classified thematically. Data were presented and discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively

Data Presentation and Analysis

RQ1: What is the origin of book censorship in Nigeria?

Yandoto Book Burning and Desecration, 1805: Findings indicate that the first case of book censorship in the geographical area that became known as Nigeria in 1914 actually took place more than a hundred years earlier at a place called Yandoto in Northern Nigeria. The Yandoto book burning of 1805 is the first recorded account of book burning in the territory now known as Nigeria. The burning took place when a jihadist, Muhammad Bello, led his army to a town known as Yandoto, about fifty kilometres east of Gusau, conquered it and destroyed Islamic books he regarded as heretical. In Albasu’s account (1995) El-Kanemi confronted him in these words: “You are destroying books; you are scattering them in the roads; you are throwing them in the dirt. But the name of God is on these books and you know that he who throws the name of God in the dirt is heathen” (Albasu, 1995). It is remarkable that the culture of book censorship remains entrenched in the same region of Nigeria till date as findings on methods of censorship reveal.

RQ2: What methods of book censorship have been adopted in Nigeria?

Data from the analysed documents and the interviews indicate that there are 11 different types of censorship taking place in Nigeria, and that over 76 titles, one Act and two lives are involved. Details are presented in Table 1 followed by discussion of qualitative data:

Table 1: Methods of Censorship in Nigeria

SN	Censorship Type	Number of Titles/Authors
1	Book Burning	56
2	Book Banning	3
3	Book Challenge	9
4	Author Registration Acts	1
5	Censorship by Intimidation	2
6	Book Restriction	4
7	Self –Censorship	NA*

8	Retention of Retrogressive Colonial Laws	1
9	Author Strangulation	2
10	Book Drowning	1
11	Book Bombing	NA*
	Total	79

NA= Not Applicable

Kano Book Burning (2007): In May 2007, *A Daidaita Sahu*, the Kano State agency for the reorientation, organized a book and film burning at a local girl's school as a prelude to a proposed anti-publication law against over 300 young writers whose incursion into romance and western-style literature, known as *Littattafan soyayya*, threatened the conservative male-chauvinistic system operating in the state. Ibrahim Shekarau, Governor of Kano State at the time, publicly burned thousands of copies of Hausa romance novels describing them as pornographic and immoral to the customs and traditions of Northern Nigeria. Consequently, writers in the state sued him and he was forced to settle out of court and to slow down on his censorship. In February, 2016, government officials stopped a popular radio narrator of the novels, Isa Ahmed Koko, from visiting Kano to meet his fans (Akinsiku, 2014).

Rumaysah, one of the burned titles, deals with polygamy and the complications that come with it. *Rumaysah* is the name of a female character which, driven by jealousy, determined to stop her husband from taking a second wife and ended up murdering him. *A Daren Farko*, one of the bestsellers, meaning "On the First Night", is especially popular with girls and young women looking forward to getting married, and describes what they can expect on their first night in their matrimonial home. *Kainuwa*: A romance novel written by Maryam Salisu Maidala, a teacher, was also burned (Gordon, 2016). Some of the titles censored in Kano are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Some of the Titles Censored in Kano

SN	Book Title	Author's Name
1	<i>Sin is a Puppy that Follows You Home</i>	Balarabe Ramat Yakubu
2	<i>Season of Crimson Blossoms</i>	Abubakar Adam Ibrahim
3	<i>Alhaki Kuykuyo Me...</i>	Balarabe Ramat Yakubu
4	<i>Mugun Zarma</i>	Anty Bilkin Funtua
5	<i>Vultures in the Air</i>	Zaynab Alkali and Al Infeld
6	<i>Kaico</i>	Ado Ahmad
7	<i>Ku Rike Kissa Matta</i>	Hadiza Sani Garba

8	<i>Cikan Fanciki</i>	Hadiza Sani Garba
9	<i>Me Yafi Wannan?</i>	Hadiza Sani Garba
10	<i>The Initiates</i>	Zaynab Alkali
11	<i>The Whispering Trees</i>	Abubakar Adam Ibrahim
12	<i>City of Memories</i>	Richard Ali
13	<i>A life Like Mine</i>	N.A.

Bible Burning: Since 2003, thousands of copies of the holy bible have been burnt, often alongside church buildings and worshippers by members of the Boko Haram terror group in Northern Nigeria. In the words of a pastor whose church was burned: "Church buildings suffered... there wasn't a single Bible left – all were burned." He continued: "This is one of the most painful things for us to deal with – not having the word of God in our hands" (Lodge, 2016).

Book Banning: Books banned in Nigeria and Nigerian books banned elsewhere include: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Perhaps the most celebrated and unarguably the most translated African novel, it recalls the influences of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on traditional Igbo community. The colonialists were obviously indicted in the book. But demonstrated their disapproval not in their home countries but through some of their former colonies like Malaysia where the book is still banned. Malaysia, a former British colony, banned *Things Fall Apart* for its negative portrayal of colonialism and its consequences. Legal issues involving the book include a case of infringement on the title in 2011. An artiste, 50 Cent, who entitled his movie, *All Things Fall Apart* was sued for 200,000 Dollars by the Chinua Achebe Foundation and forced to change the title of his upcoming film *All Things Fall Apart* (Sryon, 2011).

The Man Died by Wole Soyinka (1972): Wole Soyinka was imprisoned without trial by the federal authorities in Nigeria at the beginning of the Nigerian civil war for condemning the genocide committed against Igbos with the connivance and support of the government, and for canvassing support for Biafra. In the book, he recorded his arrest and interrogation, the efforts made to incriminate him, and the mental torture occasioned by solitary confinement. The book was banned by the Federal Government of Nigeria for alleged libel as part of a deliberate plan to cover up the role played by the government in the thirty-month Nigerian civil war, 1967—1970.

Film Adaptation of *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie: The book detailed the atrocities of the bloody Nigerian civil war, which had all but been obliterated from Nigerian history. Coming at a time when history had been removed from school curriculum, the movie adaptation promised to be an avenue of education for young Nigerians, especially those born after the 1970s.

But that was not to be as the movie was banned in Nigeria immediately it was released at the

Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in 2013. There are unconfirmed reports that it was recently unbanned. Akinsiku (2014) explained that it was censored to avoid the Boko Haram terrorists associating it to any of the already volatile ethnic issues fueling or adding to distrust among the country's numerous ethnic groups.

Nigerian Titles Challenged

A book may be challenged in court, in a school system or an organization. In 1962, Professor Chike Obi, Africa's leading Mathematician, published a pamphlet entitled: *The People: Facts that You Must Know* in which he described the government of the day as enemies of the people, exploiters of the weak and oppressors of the poor. He presented the book in a lecture which was well received without riotous emotions. He was, nevertheless, found guilty of sedition. Though he appealed the judgment, the Supreme Court controlled by the government upheld the judgment (Ifeduba, 2004).

In 1982, Fourth Dimension Publishers released a book entitled: *How Jim Nwobodo Rules Anambra State*. The author and publisher of the book, Dr. Arthur Nwankwo, was tried for sedition and jailed for twelve months. However, the judgment was overturned by the Court of Appeal (Ifeduba, 2004).

In 2012, *Things Fall Apart* made the list of works that were challenged in Texas schools for similar reasons. Texas' list of challenged books included titles in which no obscene or violent action was taken, a group that includes Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (Cohen, 2012). However, *Things Fall Apart* was only challenged but was neither banned nor restricted. Details presented in the 2012 report indicate as follows:

School: *Centennial High School*

Book: *Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe*

Reason cited: *Violence or horror; politically, racially, or socially offensive; offensive to religious sensitivities*

Action Taken: *Retained without restriction*

Note: *None provided*

Books Challenged in the Mass Media: Sometimes parents take to the media to challenge a recommended textbook in order to browbeat the authorities into dropping it from the list. A typical example involved a Social Studies text for junior secondary schools in Lagos State: *Religion and National Values (Social Studies) for J.S.S.1* by S. O. Omotuyole. The book, according to Abdullahi Bello who blew the whistle on *Facebook* had a page teaching students the immoral act of masturbation as a method of abstinence (Vintage info, 2017). The *Facebook* user, Bello Abdullahi, shared photos of the textbook. As a way of blowing the whistle and demanding for censorship, Bello Abdullahi, described it as a matter requiring urgent attention.

In a *This Day* article of June 7, 2017, the paper reported that some concerned Lagos parents brought a law suit against the state ministry of education and others at the federal high court, 15 years ago over "the corruption of Integrated Science to include lewd matters such as masturbation, wearing of condoms, teen contraceptives, among others" (*This Day*, 2017). **Zumji and Uchenna:** *This Day* newspaper reported that a novel, *Zumji and Uchenna*

allegedly used in Lagos schools contained lurid sex stories and pictures aimed at making secondary school pupils sexually active (*This Day*, 2017). The newspaper also reported that in 2014, a Lagos-based NGO sued the federal ministry of education and others because a School Chemistry textbook for Senior Secondary, Modern Biology for Senior Secondary School were smeared with lewd content.

The Tears of a Bride by Oyekunle Oyedeji: This book recommended for School Certificate examinations was challenged successfully for promoting acts of indecency such as rape, violence, kidnapping and girl defilement. The books expose the vulnerable and unsuspecting minds of 10-12 year olds to amorous and deviant practices that can in turn breed rapists, cultists, homosexuals and kidnappers in youngsters.

The Precious Child by Queen O. Okweshine: This book also recommended for School Certificate examinations was challenged successfully for promoting immoral conducts and for corrupting young minds. The challengers, a school and its Parent Teachers' Association, P.T.A., made a strong connection between the use of the book and the prevalence of cases of rape among secondary students in the state.

In Dependence by Sarah Ladipo M.: Recommended for examinations conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, the book was challenged successfully for containing indecent and corrupting text considered unhealthy for students (Tijan, 2017). As a follow-up to the media complaints on the titles (*The Tears of a Bride*, *The Precious Child* and *In Dependence*) a secondary school and its Parent Teachers' Association petitioned the education minister and probably lobbied the National Assembly to withdraw the book. In October, 2017, the National Assembly issued a resolution mandating the education ministry to withdraw *The Tears of a Bride*, *The Precious Child* and *In Dependence*.

Book Restrictions: A book may not be banned outright depending on the content and the objective of the censorship. When a book contains content suitable for adults and unsuitable for children, a more appropriate control may be restriction to adult readership and not burning or banning. A Nigerian human rights activist, Shehu Sani, was sued in an Islamic court over a play he wrote and published under the title: *Phantom Crescent*, exposing what was described as "abuses and double standards by those implementing sharia law" in 12 northern states of Nigeria. On October 3, 2007, a few days before the scheduled performance, the Upper Sharia Court in Kaduna State issued an injunction, restraining anyone from "selling or in any way circulating" the manuscript (Dickinson, 2007). Though they claimed that it was restricted to readers outside the Northern part of Nigeria, the court injunction did not state it as such neither did similar cases of restriction justify the claim. In a similar case involving a film, the producer, Adamu Sango, was jailed even after proving that he produced and released the said film in faraway Lagos (Olatunji, 2007).

Following the public, media, school and parents' outcry and formal challenge of *The Tears of a Bride*, *The Precious Child* and *In Dependence*, they were withdrawn from the school list. However, nothing was said about copies in the bookshops and other places where they could be accessed by students. Thus, the censorship in this case is book restriction and not an outright ban (Emejo, 2017).

Writers' Registration: Kano State government made a writers' registration law in 2007 as a way of discouraging the diffusion of pulp literature which was, then, spreading like wild fire among students and women in the state. With the support of the Association of Nigerian

Authors, ANA, the writers in the state sued the State Government, forcing it to settle out of court and to relax the obnoxious laws (Akinsiku, 2014).

Censorship by Intimidation: Sometimes, people who have no legal ground to either challenge or censor a book which they would rather not see in public resort to intimidation of authors to achieve their aim. It is reported that in Kano and Kaduna, some writers have received threatening messages, urging them to stop writing. Some of the would-be actors of *The Phantom Crescent* received threats of violence and harassment (Dickinson, 2007). Before these cases, some other writers were intimidated. For instance, it is widely believed that military intimidation culminating in a freak accident that consigned Chinua Achebe to the wheel chair, after the release of *The Trouble with Nigeria*, forced him into exile.

Self –Censorship: Self-censorship takes place when a publisher controls or classifies his own book, sometimes out of fear or in deference to the sensibilities and preferences of others, especially people in authority. This is usually done without overt pressure from the authorities or institutions. In Nigeria, under the military and recent despotic democrats, publishers and writers have often removed materials that the government might find controversial for fear of sanction (PEN International, 2013). Self-censorship may also occur for the purpose of conforming to the expectations of the market or to consciously or unconsciously protect the publisher's livelihood. In the case of novella writers in Northern Nigeria, for instance, fear of terrorists, Islamic Police and government agents are major causes of self-censorship, especially in Northern Nigeria (Dickinson, 2007).

Book Bombing: Martel (2016) observed that the love literature published in Northern Nigeria has become over the years a prime target of reproach for Muslim leaders. More recently, Islamists claimed that the Boko Haram terror group had declared that open discussion of romance in Northern Nigeria was too dangerous for women, despite Kano not being one of the nation's most active hubs of Boko Haram violence. She stated also that *Atlas Obscura* described roadside markets in the region as one of the most active hubs for distributing these works, explaining that the same markets had lately become popular attack sites for suicide bombers (Martel, 2016).

Author Strangulation: Ken Saro- Wiwa who was imprisoned and killed by the military in 1995, wrote in his prison notes that Nigeria was advancing from book starvation to author strangulation, explaining that his impending death was a price he had to pay for using his books to sensitize his people about the misdeeds of the government and some oil companies. He wrote:

“... the most important thing for me is that I've used my talents as a writer to enable the Ogoni people to confront their tormentors. I was not able to do it as a politician or as a businessman. My writing did it. ... I'm mentally prepared for the worst but hopeful for the best. I think I have the moral victory (Asein, 2005: 163).

The point here is that the Abacha government used the killing of this author to intimidate many others to drop their pens. This is a kind of censorship, even if bloody. The government had no moral backbone to burn, ban or bomb the books in question, so it chose to accuse the writer of other offences in order to eliminate him and the influence of his works. The Managing Publisher of Fourth Dimension, the firm that published *The Trouble with Nigeria*

and a few other titles that questioned the status quo, Victor Nwankwo, was assassinated.

Book Drowning: Citing Mohammed Haruna who claimed that the Bishop of Akure led them in a procession to protest the sinking of three million copies of the Bible in the high seas by M.K.O Abiola, Kattey (2017) stated that a container load of the holy book bound for Nigeria was sunk in the high sea by people mobilized by Abiola, a Moslem and politician who needed to convince the North of his commitment to Islam in lieu of their 1993 presidential election support.

Retention of Retrogressive Colonial Laws: The United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, UPR, of March, 2013 indicates that several colonial laws, including a discredited sedition law, are still used by politicians to censor publishers. In this connection, PEN International made a formal submission with the following recommendations to the Nigerian authorities:

1. Refrain from arresting and imprisoning writers who are exercising their right to free speech
2. Take concrete steps to address impunity in the killings of writers, and end threats against them to prevent them from exercising their rights to freedom of speech;
3. Hold to account federal and state security forces and officials involved in infringing fundamental rights of writers and journalists guaranteed by the Constitution;
4. Actively protect writers threatened by Boko Haram and other oppressive forces
5. End the use of Sharia law in state courts to censor literature and continue to allow the free and unfettered transmission of information online and through digital media.
6. Repeal articles 50, 51, and 52 of the Criminal Code, and articles 416-422 of the Penal Code of the colonial-era sedition law in compliance with a 1983 ruling by a court of appeals (PEN International, 2013). The National Assembly is yet to repeal this law more than thirty-five years after.

RQ3: What are the predominant motivations for censorship?

The historical data examined indicate that politics and religion are the major reasons for censorship. Over 41.6% of the cases reported in this study were censorships arising from political decisions, 33.3% were censored for religious reasons whereas 25% were censored for debasing cultural values. Details are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Summary of Reasons for Censorship

SN	Censored Works	Nature of Censorship	Reason for Censorship
1	Yandoto Titles	Burned and Destroyed	Religious
2	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Banned and	Political

		Challenged	
3	<i>The Man Died</i>	Banned	Political
4	<i>Half of a Yellow Sun (Adaptation)</i>	Banned	Political
5	Northern Nigeria Love Novellas burned	Burned	Religious
6	Northern Nigeria Love Novellas bombed	Bombed	Religious
7	Book Registration Act	Content Scrutiny Prior to Publication	Religious
8	<i>The People: Facts that You Must Know</i>	Sedition Charges	Political
9	<i>How Jim Nwobodo Rules Anambra State</i>	Sedition Charges	Political
10	<i>The Precious Child</i>	Challenged through the Legislature (Withdrawn)	Cultural Values
11	<i>In Dependence</i>	Challenged through the Legislature (Withdrawn)	Cultural Values
12	<i>The Tears of a Bride</i>	Challenged through the Legislature (Withdrawn)	Cultural Values

Concluding Remarks

From this brief survey of book censorship in Nigeria, it is clear that censorship has been part of the story of publishing in Nigeria for over three centuries, 1805—2017. An analysis of frequency of occurrence (1805, 1962, 1982, 1972, 2007, 2013, 2017) indicates that censorship is becoming more frequent and the methods more sophisticated. Generally, reasons for oppressive censorship have revolved around politics, religion and morals values but the variety of censorship has diversified from burning and banning to bombing, sedition charges and book registration Acts. Interestingly, this type of censorship has neither broken the spirit of existing authors nor has it discouraged the entrance of new authors into the business. If anything, it has made the younger ones more adventurous and enlarged the population of female writers. In contrast, a robust culture of resistance seems to be

developing by which readers and industrial buyers of books now question unacceptable contents and follow through to title withdrawal. It is clearly evident in Northern Nigeria where women writers have become simply unstoppable even in the face of ferocious political and religious attacks.

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