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# Faith and Literature: A Look at Book Censorship

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# **SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL**

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Faith and Literature: A Look at Book Censorship”**

written by

**Laura Cox**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for completion of the  
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## INTRO

For centuries, society has debated the issue of book censorship. Before Johannes Gutenberg introduced the printing press in 1455, the burning of hand-scribed books destroyed limited copies and guaranteed they would not be read. With the printing press, books could be produced in greater numbers; yet, printed speech was still a commodity that could be controlled. In 1517, Pope Leo X condemned Martin Luther's *Ninety Five Theses*, an early example of religious censorship of materials deemed dangerous or subversive. Political censorship quickly followed when Emperor Charles V issued the Edict of Worms, containing a "Law of Printing" which banned the printing, copying, sale, or reading of Luther's writings (Foerstel xi). Beginning in 1564, the Catholic papacy promulgated its *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Prohibited Books). Compiled by the Holy Inquisition in Rome, the Index listed the books and authors Catholics were prohibited from printing or reading. This censorship system was finally abandoned in 1966, the last list having been published in 1881 and last revised in 1900 (Karolides 156). Protestant censorship during this time relied more on the state as the source of censorship. In England, the crown issued censorship regulations that were then enforced by civil agencies. However, Europe's heterogeneity and lack of political cooperation allowed authors to have their books printed in other countries, thereby avoiding local censorship (Foestel xii).

In the nineteenth century, a social consensus on censorship emerged. Private virtues and propriety became grounds on which books were examined. Ann Alter claims, in her introduction to the 1984 New York Public Library exhibition on censorship, that there may have been more censorship, self-imposed or otherwise, during the nineteenth century in the United States and England than during all the preceding centuries (Foestel xii). In the twentieth century in

America, book censorship debates continued, predominantly centered around the interpretation of the First Amendment. Today, the debate goes on.

Throughout history, books have been banned and suppressed due to the beliefs of the times. As society changes, many books that were once banned become acceptable and many even become classics such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* or Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Books that were once deemed inappropriate, such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, now appear on college courses' required reading lists (Karolides IX). While these books have not changed, the social environment has.

Huge strides have been made against book censorship; yet, twenty-first-century society continues to debate the issue of free speech versus book censorship. At the close of the twentieth century, several infamous book censorship incidents gained international media coverage. Many who are familiar with the title *The Satanic Verses* (1988) know of Salman Rushdie's novel not because they have read the book but because of the massive media coverage of the international controversy it spurred. *The Satanic Verses* led to public outcry, numerous bomb threats, violent demonstrations, a death edict against Rushdie issued by the Iranian government, and a three-million-dollar reward for Rushdie's death. In the United States, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) created controversy when religious fundamentalists claimed it promoted satanic worship, witchcraft, and occultism. Book burnings, church sermons, boycotts, and media coverage of the controversy reminded Americans that book censorship is still an active issue today.

Most censorship attempts in the United States today challenge books available in libraries and taught in the classroom. The American Library Association (ALA) Office for Intellectual

Freedom recorded 3,869 book challenges in school or public libraries during the years of 2000 to 2007. Research suggests that for each challenge reported there are as many as four or five which go unreported. If that is correct, the number of challenges made in the United States between 2000 and 2007 could easily be 19,000 (American Library Association).

As a Christian and English major at a Baptist university, I believe this issue is particularly relevant to my life. How has the history of book censorship impacted society today? What are the current United States Supreme Court rulings on book censorship? How does book censorship affect my education at a private Baptist university? Where should I draw the line between valuing literature as art and staying true to my faith? These are the questions I hope to answer.

#### POLITICAL CENSORSHIP

Throughout history, books have been censored on political, religious, sexual, and social grounds. Books that are anti-war, revolutionary, critical of the government, unpatriotic, contain government secrets or socialist or communist ideology, or portray the government in a negative light fall into the political category. There are two main sources of political censorship: the government blocking information and ideas that are deemed critical, embarrassing, or threatening and the local community attacking works used in schools which contain controversial political ideas or messages.

One well-known example of Government censorship is *The Pentagon Papers*, which the United States government attempted to stop the *New York Times* from publishing in 1971. The government claimed that the *Times* publication of these classified documents, regarding United States and Vietnam relations, was a threat to national security. The *Times* countered that government censorship of the press was a violation of the First Amendment. The case made it all

the way to the United States Supreme Court where a 6-3 decision upheld the rights of the *Times* to publish materials from the Pentagon study (Karolides 195).

Two examples of community censorship of works with political themes are George Orwell's *1984*, due to its revolutionary message, and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, due to its antipatriotic portrayal of war. In *1984*, Orwell paints a scary picture of the future under a totalitarian society. In the novel, "the Party" controls all aspects of life, even the thoughts of its citizens. By taking away free expression and thought, the Party ultimately destroys society and dehumanizes its people. Ironically, Orwell's warning against the suppression of human freedoms has been censored many times since its publication in 1948. Though the United States is far from the dystopia depicted in *1984*, the warning is still relevant today. The fight for free speech remains an ongoing battle, as shown by the censorship attempts on *1984*.

*1984* is a response to World War I, Stalin's reign of terror, Nazi Germany, World War II, and the threat of nuclear warfare. During this time, many feared the spread of communist ideologies of the Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Russia. Jane Graves claims: "The novel *1984* took these fears to their furthest point, projecting a future world that is entirely totalitarian and describing in-depth the problems of humanity in such a world" (Karolides 138).

Many censorship attempts have been made on *1984*. Lee Burrell, author of *Celebrating Censored Books*, ranks *1984* fifth of the 30 most frequently challenged books in American schools from 1965 to 1982. Many of the censorship attacks are due to the immorality, profanity, and sexual explicitness of the novel (Karolides 141). However, I found these objections to be unfounded. I believe that these claims mask the underlying attack on the political ideas of the novel. Some people indeed challenged the "procommunist" message of the novel. One school principal claimed the novel "shows communism in a favorable light," while another parent on

the same survey stated that the “socialistic state shows utopia which is wrong” (Karolides 141). I cannot help but wonder if these individuals actually read the novel in question.

Far from creating a utopia, Orwell creates a society in which terror reigns. In fact, O’Brien, a prominent inner Party member in the novel, describes it as “the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself” (Orwell 267). The novel follows the life of Winston Smith, a member of the outer party in Oceania. “The Party” is in control of the past, present, and future and is the creator of truth. The past is revised; statistics are faked. Individuals have no personal freedoms. Big Brother is always watching, as people can be monitored by telescreens at all times. Even one’s thoughts are monitored by the “thoughtpolice.” All thoughts and actions that even suggest resistance to “the Party” lead to arrests. People disappear, never to return. This creates an ever-present sense of fear. In addition, Oceania is constantly at war. Living conditions are poor. Although the Party claims life is much better than it was in the past, Winston’s memories disprove this. Food is tasteless and limited. The buildings are falling apart. Life in Oceania is one of fear, uncertainty, and ignorance.

By depicting Oceania in such a way, Orwell attempts to show what can happen when socialism is taken too far and twisted into a totalitarian system. *1984* serves as a warning concerning the future of man. In *1984*, the government uses terror, ideological, and psychological manipulation to control people. Over time, they lose their human qualities without even being aware of it. Man loses all sense of individuality in devotion to the party. All natural ties are cut. Relationships have lost all meaning as children turn their parents in to the thought police, as do friends, husbands, and wives. Love, truth, integrity, and thought are all sacrificed to

devotion to the Party. *1984* depicts truth as relative to the Party. O'Brien tells Winston, "reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind and nowhere else... whatever the Party holds to be truth is truth" (Orwell 249). By controlling minds, the Party controls truth.

One way in which the Party controls the minds of the people is through "doublethink." Winston explains, "doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them... The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt" (Orwell 35). People are brainwashed into accepting two contradictory beliefs. The new language of the Party, "Newspeak," gives the Party further control over the minds of the people. "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible... a heretical thought—that is a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words" (Orwell 299). By limiting language, the Party is able to limit thought.

Winston is one of the few who cannot force himself to believe "doublethink" or ignore the lies of the Party. His memory still functions, and by working in the Ministry of Truth, he is well aware of the Party's lies. He knows all along that he will die for his rebellious thoughts, yet he cannot force himself to think otherwise. He is inevitably arrested and tortured. By the end of the novel the Party has taken everything from him that makes him human except for his life. In the final lines of the novel he succumbs to the Party and loves Big Brother.

*1984* warns us of what can happen to humanity when man loses the ability to think. Orwell is telling his readers to never stop thinking for themselves. Since the message of the novel focuses on the suppression of truth and thought, I find it ironic that so many attempts have



been made at censoring Orwell's message. Orwell depicts the terror of a society in which one is not allowed free thought, yet his message is suppressed. *1984* causes its readers to question authority and truth. Just because some idea is generally accepted by society does not mean it is true. Winston is one of the few in Oceania who remember the past and knows the truth. He rebels against the lies spread by the Party. Though he is in the minority, he is not wrong. The challenge presented by this novel, to think for oneself and not accept everything one is told, is potentially dangerous to those in authority. Perhaps this is why this novel is so often challenged. However, by suppressing this message, one takes away others' rights for free thought and free expression. As Orwell shows in *1984*, this is a far greater threat to society than any ideas presented in the novel.

Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* has also faced censorship for its political message. Published in 1969, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is one of the most censored books in recent years. Ranked 15<sup>th</sup> on Lee Burrell's national surveys-based list of the 30 most challenged books from 1965 to 1985 (Karolides 165), *Slaughterhouse-Five* continues to face censorship today and is ranked 45<sup>th</sup> on the American Library Association's Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books in 2000-2007 (American Library Association). Eric P. Schmidt claims, "students, parents, teachers, administrators, librarians and members of the clergy have called for the removal or destruction of the Vonnegut novel for one or many of the following reasons: obscenity, vulgar language, violence, inappropriateness, 'bathroom language,' 'R-rated' language, ungodliness, immoral subject matter, cruelty, language that is 'too modern' and 'unpatriotic' portrayal of war" (Karolides 165).

*Slaughterhouse-Five* mixes history, autobiography, fiction, and science fiction to tell the story of The Allied Forces annihilation of Dresden during World War II, which caused

destruction similar to a nuclear explosion, destroying the city and leaving thousands dead. Vonnegut and other American prisoners of war survive the attack in “Schlachthof-funf,” Slaughterhouse-Five, an underground shelter in which they are being held. Writing from personal experience and historical accounts of the attack, Vonnegut creates a fictional account of Billy Pilgrim, a G.I. lost behind enemy lines in 1994 (Reed 465).

The novel has been charged with being an indictment of war, critical of government actions, anti-American, and unpatriotic. In his essay, “Authenticity and Relevance: Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*,” Peter Reed challenges these statements claiming, “even while Vonnegut seeks to de-romanticize war, insists on its horrors, and rejects jingoistic nationalism as a rallying cry for war, he is not unpatriotic... The book is not un-American, nor anti any other nationality... The novel is staunchly pro-human, however, and insists on the tragedy of human suffering and death regardless of nationality” (Reed 468). In other words, the novel questions the morals and motives of nationalism when propagated to promote war and unnecessary suffering. June Edwards states, “Young people may refuse to serve in future combats after reading about the horrors of war in novels like *Slaughterhouse-Five*..., but this does not make them un-American. They do not want their country to engage in violence, to exterminate whole populations, but to find other ways to resolve conflicts” (Karolides 166). The novel challenges readers to think for themselves and question government decisions.

In 1973, Bruce Severy, an English teacher in North Dakota’s Drake High School, assigned *Slaughterhouse-Five* to his class, which led to objections by a student citing “unnecessary language.” At a school board meeting to discuss the novel, a local minister denounced the book as “a tool of the devil.” The school board decided to burn the novel despite the fact that no board member had read the book in its entirety. Severy, whose contract was not

renewed, responded to the objections against the novels language, stating, “A few four-letter words in a book is no big deal. Those students have all heard these words before; none learned any new words. I’ve always thought the purpose of school was to prepare these people for living in the ‘big, bad world,’ but evidently it isn’t so” (Karolides 166). The same year as the Drake book burning, a school board in Iowa ordered the burning of 32 copies of *Slaughterhouse-Five* because of objectionable language. In McBee, South Carolina, a teacher was arrested and charged with using obscene materials after using the text. Reed defends the language used by the soldiers in the novel, stating, “The soldiers’ uttered profanity is as nothing beside the obscenities of war we are shown. This emphasizes one of Vonnegut’s points, that we are constantly indignant over the wrong things and righteously irrelevant” (Reed 469). Language is often the cited cause of censorship when ideas are the real issue. It is easier to pick out offensive language in a novel than to explain why controversial ideas should not be allowed.

While there are numerous examples of censorship attempts on *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the most important example led to the lawsuits and countersuits of *Pico v. Board of Education*, *Island Trees Union Free School District* cases of 1979, 1980, and 1982. This was the first case of school library censorship to reach the United States Supreme Court and serves as a key case in the current United States legal system.<sup>1</sup>

## RELIGIOUS CENSORSHIP

The history of literature suppressed on religious grounds dates back to the early church’s suppression of competing ideas. The banning of Martin Luther’s *Ninety-Five Theses* and the publishing of the first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* attests to the rise in religious suppression of literature in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The suppression of literature on religious grounds continues to this

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<sup>1</sup> This case will be discussed in greater detail beginning on page 21.

day. In fact, religious fundamentalists are the most common source of censorship attempts. Literature suppressed on religious grounds includes three major categories: heresy, blasphemy, and immorality. Heresy is defined as opinion or doctrine at variance with the orthodox or accepted doctrine. Works falling into this category include those by Galileo, Montaigne, and Bruno, who was burned at the stake for his “many various heretical and unsound opinions” (Karolides 275). Blasphemy is profane or irreverent utterance or action towards the sacred. Works in this category include Naguib Mahfouz’s *Children of the Alley* and Nikos Kantzakis’s *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

Three of the most infamous 20<sup>th</sup> Century examples of religious censorship concern Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, and J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter*. Each of these works was strongly suppressed by fundamentalist religious groups and received a great deal of publicity. They also serve as examples of works attacked as being heretical, blasphemous, and immoral, respectively.

Published in 1859, Darwin’s *On The Origin of Species* occasioned widespread controversy. The first edition sold out on the day of publication, and Darwin’s ideas gained popularity in scientific circles, eventually becoming the foundation of modern evolutionary theory. Though his ideas were gradually accepted, they created great controversy. Karolides writes, “Darwin was accused of ‘dethroning God,’ as one critic put it, by challenging the literal interpretation of the book of Genesis” (Karolides 277). His book was widely banned. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, American high schools began to use science textbooks that incorporated Darwinian evolution. Areas with large fundamentalist Christian populations pressured school boards and state boards of education to reject these textbooks and pass antievolutionary laws. In 1925, Tennessee passed a law that prohibited teachers from teaching evolutionary theory in state-

supported schools. John Scopes, a science teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, intentionally violated the act and became the test case against the anti-evolution law. Scopes argues that the legislation violated academic freedom and the separation of church and state. The Scopes trial gained national media coverage in the summer of 1925. Scopes was found guilty, and the case was taken to the Supreme Court of Tennessee where it was thrown out on a technicality: the judge rather than the jury had fined Scopes \$100. This error reversed the verdict that found Scopes guilty (Karolides 278). The Tennessee anti-evolutionary law was not repealed until 1967. The following year, Susan Epperson, a high school biology teacher, challenged the constitutionality of Arkansas's Anti-Evolution Statute of 1928, which stated that teachers who included Darwin's theory of evolution could lose their jobs. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court where the statute was deemed unconstitutional as it conflicted with the First and Fourteenth Amendments (Karolides 278-279). In the early 1980s, Arkansas and Louisiana state boards of education required that both evolution and creationism be taught in public schools. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled these laws unconstitutional in Edwards v Aguillard. The Court stated the laws advocated a religious doctrine and violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment (Karolides 279).

Perhaps the most famous target of book banning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* generated international controversy and media attention. Published in 1988, the novel is a mixture of realism and fantasy. Rushdie, an Indian-born British author, describes his novel as "the story of two painfully divided selves. In the case of one, Saladin Chamcha, the division is secular and societal; he is torn, to put it plainly, between Bombay and London, between East and West. For the other, Gibreel Farishta, the division is spiritual, a rift in the soul. He has lost his faith and is strung out between his immense need to believe and his new inability

to do so. The novel is ‘about’ their quest for wholeness” (Karolides 289). The novel tells three interconnected tales. The first relates the present-day story of two Indians who survive a plane crash. The second, told in alternating chapters within the book, takes place in the dream of Farishta, who becomes the archangel Gibreel. Evoking the historical origins of Islam, the dream parallels the story of the prophet Mohammad. The third tale, also Farishta’s dream, tells of a village’s pilgrimage to Mecca. The controversy is primarily focused on the parts of the novel recounting Gibreel’s visions (Karolides 290). The allusions to the Prophet’s life suggest doubt regarding the historical reliability of these episodes. An episode in a brothel where twelve prostitutes assume the names and personalities of the twelve wives of Muhammed is another point of controversy. In the book, Abraham is referred to as “the bastard,” the Prophet Muhammad is given the archaic medieval name of Mahound, meaning devil or false prophet, and the Islamic holy city of Mecca is portrayed as Jahilia, which means ignorance or darkness. The novel concludes with Farishta losing his faith due to his dreams of doubt and being so tormented that he commits suicide (Karolides 291). Many Muslims find the novel to be extremely insulting to Islam.

The controversy surrounding the book began even before its publication on September 26, 1988. Soon after the novel was published in England, India banned the book and importation of the novel was prohibited. The United States publisher received bomb threats and thousands of letters, and within weeks, the novel was banned in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Qatar, and South Africa. On November 11, 1988, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced, “there are no grounds on which the government could consider banning the book” (Karolides 292). However, there were massive book burnings in England and the U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs released a

statement demanding the destruction of the books, stating that the work “not only greatly distorts Islamic history in general, but also portrays in the worst possible colours the very characters of the Prophet Ibrahim and the Prophet Mohamed (peace be upon them). It also disfigures the characters of the Prophet’s companions...and the Prophet’s holy wives and describes the Islamic creed and rituals in the most foul language” (Karolides 291). Violent demonstrations against the book led to numerous deaths and there were several bombings of bookstores. On February 14, 1989, Iran’s leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie’s death. Khomeini stated, “it is incumbent on every Muslim to employ everything he has, his life and his wealth, to send him to hell” (Karolides 294). The 15 Khordad Foundation, an Iranian charity organization, offered a 2.5 million dollar reward for Rushdie’s murder. Rushdie went into hiding February 16, in which he remained for 9 years. In 1991 the Japanese translator of the book was stabbed to death and the Italian translator was seriously wounded. In 1993 rioters attacked the Turkish publisher and set his hotel on fire, killing 37 people. In 1996, a translator was tortured to death by Iranian security forces. While news coverage of the controversy has died down, the Iranian fatwa is irrevocable and still in force, and the reward for killing Rushdie is now 3 million dollars (Karolides 296).

Nine years after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, the first *Harry Potter* book appeared. As of 2008, the *Harry Potter* series has sold over 400 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 67 languages. The immense popularity of J.K. Rowling’s series is paralleled by the numerous censorship attempts that have been made on the books since the first one, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, was published in 1997. The ALA documented 125 censorship attempts during the years of 1999-2003 (Karolides 241). In the ALA’s Top 100 Banned Books in 2000-2007 List, *Harry Potter* ranks first (American Library Association). The

major concern with the series is that it promotes the occult, Satanism, and antifamily themes and encourages witchcraft.

Parents and Christian groups believe *Harry Potter* is corrupting and dangerous and have sought to restrict access to or remove the series from classrooms and libraries<sup>2</sup>. One of the first legal challenges to ban the series came in July 2002. A student and her parents sued the Cedarville, Arkansas school board. After a parent filed a Reconsideration Request form, as is the school's policy for a book a parent wishes to be withdrawn from all students, the review committee voted unanimously in favor of keeping the book without restrictions. The board of education later overruled this decision, voting 3-2 to restrict access (DeMitchell 162). The books were then placed off limits to students unless they had parental permission. The restriction was based in part on a parent's complaint that the books show "there are 'good witches' and 'good magic' and that they teach 'parents/teachers/rules are stupid and something to be ignored'" (Karolides 241). U.S. District Court Judge Jimm L. Hendren in Fort Smith ordered in April 2003 that the Cedarville school district return the books to open shelves "where they can be accessed without any restrictions other than those. . . that apply to all works of fiction in the libraries of the district." He claimed, "Regardless of the personal distaste with which these individuals regard 'witchcraft,' it is not properly within their power and authority as members of the defendants' school board to prevent the students at Cedarville from reading about it" (Karolides 241). As in this case, most censorship attempts on *Harry Potter* have ultimately proved unsuccessful (Karolides 240).

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<sup>2</sup> When asked about controversy involving the *Harry Potter* series, Ouachita's Director of Library Services, Dr. Ray Granade, said, "I have had people who didn't like it, but I really have not had anybody object to the fact that we have all of them here."



However, efforts continue to ban the series. During the years of 2001-2003, the Harry Potter series was publicly burned or shredded by fundamentalist church groups in several states, including Pennsylvania, Maine, New Mexico, and Michigan (Karolides 243). In a 2000 interview with the *Baltimore Sun*, J.K. Rowling responded to the censorship of her books: “I think it’s shortsighted in the sense that it is very hard to portray goodness without showing what the reverse is and showing how brave it is to resist that. You find magic, witchcraft, and wizardry in all sorts of classic children’s books. Where do you stop? Are you going to stop at *The Wizard of Oz*? Are you going to stop at C.S. Lewis? The talking animals in *Wind in the Willows*?” (Karolides 243). While the controversy has died down since the final book of the series was published in 2007, censorship attempts continue, proving that the battle over religious censorship persists today.

#### SEXUAL CENSORSHIP

Society’s standards of what is appropriate are constantly evolving. This is especially evident when it comes to literature suppressed on sexual grounds. As Nicholas Karolides points out, “Changing social mores have moved many books formerly forbidden because of explicit sexual content out of locked cabinets and onto the open shelves in libraries and bookstores” (311). Books such as D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and Voltaire’s *Candide* were once deemed lewd and indecent and banned from the public. Today these works are considered classics and many are taught in college literature courses. Karolides asks, “When did the ‘obscene’ and the ‘pornographic’ become the ‘erotic’ and the ‘classic’?” (311). Today’s society is much more comfortable with sex. Many books that were once banned due to obscene language and portrayals of prostitution, unwed pregnancy, adultery, and sexual content would not faze today’s reader. The media’s portrayal of sex in everything from TV and

movies to the Internet and advertising has desensitized today's audience. The question concerning sexual content today is whether a work is considered "obscene." A work is defined as obscene if it has no redeeming social importance.

Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* faced great censorship efforts when it was first published in Paris in 1939. Banned from the United States for three decades, this book was smuggled into the United States by the thousands. In 1950, Ernest Besig, director of the American Civil Liberties Union in San Francisco, attempted to import *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* into the United States, initiating the first court case involving the novels. When the United States Customs Department held the books, Besig sued the government. The case went to trial without a jury, and U.S. District Court Judge Louis A. Goodman condemned the books, declaring them obscene. He claimed, "The many long filthy descriptions of sexual experiences, practices and organs are of themselves admitted to be lewd... It is sufficient to say that the many obscene passages in the books have such an evil stench that to include them here in footnotes would make this opinion pornographic" (Karolides 388). Besig appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and in 1953 the novels were again declared obscene by a unanimous decision. After Grove Press published the novel in the United States in 1962, the federal government refused to ban *Tropic of Cancer* despite at least 40 criminal cases against the book (Karolides 388). Five state courts declared the novel obscene (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York), while three state courts declared the novel not obscene (California, Massachusetts, Wisconsin). On June 22, 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Florida decision declaring, "material dealing with sex in a manner that advocates ideas, or that has literary or scientific or artistic value or any other form of social importance, may not be branded as obscenity and denied the constitutional protection" (Karolides 289).

Based on this ruling, there is not much of case to be made today for banning a work from society due to sexual content; however, sexual content is a common objection raised against books that are taught in classrooms or available in school libraries. Judy Blume's *Forever* has faced numerous attempts to remove it from school libraries since it was published in 1975. Ranked 13<sup>th</sup> on the ALA's Top 100 Banned/ Challenged Books in 2000-2007, the book has been repeatedly challenged and banned due to its detailed sexual descriptions and the frequency of sexual activity in the novel (American Library Association). In 1993, parents in Schaumber, Illinois, charged that the novel was "basically a sexual 'how-to-do' book for junior high students. It glamorizes sex and puts ideas into their heads." The novel was removed from the Frost Junior High School Library (Karolides 334). That same year the novel was placed on the parental permission shelf and later confiscated from the high school library in Rib Lake, Wisconsin. When the high school guidance counselor, Mike Dishnow, spoke out against the policy, he was not rehired the following school year. He sued the school district and a federal jury awarded him \$394,560 in damages. In 1996, the courts reversed the jury's verdict and determined the board was only responsible for paying legal fees and not lost wages to Dishnow (Karolides 335). Numerous other cases against *Forever* have resulted in its removal from school libraries or restricted access to the novel.

## SOCIAL CENSORSHIP

Sexual and social censorship are both based on what society deems inappropriate. As mentioned previously, the standards determined by society are constantly evolving.<sup>3</sup> Works that

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<sup>3</sup> Growing up in Arkadelphia, one Ouachita professor remembers when *To Kill a Mockingbird* was considered a "bad book" and kept on restricted access in the Arkadelphia Public Library. When the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird* came to town there were riots in the streets. She even recalls seeing a car that had been overturned in the protest. The theater never showed the movie.

were once suppressed on social grounds are now deemed classics, such as Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Anne Frank's *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Karolides defines works censored on social grounds as those "that have been banned, censored or challenged because of language, racial characterization or depiction of the drug use, social class or sexual orientation of characters, or other social differences, that their challengers have viewed as harmful to readers" (Karolides 395).

Allegations against works in this category are often broad, including language, and sexual, social, and racial content. J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* has come under attack due to the language in the book as well as the sexual content and rebellious attitude of the protagonist. Between the years of 1966 and 1975, it was the most frequently banned book in American schools (Karolides 436). In 1981, it held the unusual distinction of being the most frequently banned book in the United States while at the same time being the second-most frequently taught novel in public schools (Foerstel 146). It ranks 19<sup>th</sup> on the ALA's Top 100 Banned/ Challenged Books in 2000-2007 (American Library Association). Why is this novel so controversial and popular? *The Cather in the Rye* recalls three days in the life of Holden Caulfield following his expulsion from his latest school. The novel conveys the difficulty and ambiguity of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. The literary merit of the book is well attested to, but, at the same time, many objections have been raised against the book's content.

The most common objection to the book is its profane language. In the 1978 school board decision to ban the book in Issaquah, Washington, one woman asserted that the book contained 785 uses of profanity. Concerned parents have challenged the novel's "filthy and profane

language” and “excessive vulgar language,” and one man complained that “the Lord’s name is taken in vain throughout” (Karolides 436-438). This is due to the fact that the protagonist Holden Caulfield narrates the story. The narrative style is captivating for it is if Holden is speaking aloud to the reader. Salinger uses profane language because that is the diction his character would use. The language of the book is a reflection of a rebellious teenager’s colloquial speech. The language is not gratuitous, but rather adds to the realistic speech of the narrator.

Another objection to the book is its sexual content. When a group of parents in Pittsgrove Township, New Jersey challenged the novel, they charged that the book “promoted premarital sex, homosexuality and perversion, as well as claiming that it was ‘explicitly pornographic’ and ‘immoral’” (Karolides 436). Although Holden thinks of sex and has an encounter with a prostitute, sexual thoughts and scenes are far from explicit. The U.S. Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography observed in 1986 for a book to meet its criteria of pornography that it be “sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal” (Karolides 313). American obscenity laws state that a work is deemed obscene if it “depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive manner” (Karolides 395). *The Catcher in the Rye* contains some sexual content, but this content is never explicit. Holden’s interest in sex seems to be that of a normal teenage boy.

Parents have also found the ideas expressed in the book to be objectionable, claiming that the novel is “centered around negative activity” and contains “actions that were not appropriate behavior for an adolescent” (Karolides 436-437). Holden is kicked out of school, gets in a fight with his roommate, spends three days in New York engaging in underage drinking and other rebellious acts, deceives his parents, cusses, and considers running away. Clearly Holden is a troubled youth. However, he does not find happiness in his rebellious life. He is lonely and

searching for purpose. In the end, the reader is led to believe that Holden wants to change for the better and is at least considering returning to school. Rather than promoting rebellious behavior, the novel seems to suggest that such behavior will not satisfy.

Despite objections to the book's language, sexual content, and moral issues, *The Catcher in the Rye* continues to be widely read in schools. It is a well-written novel that allows its reader to get inside the mind of a teenage boy as he struggles to find where he fits in to the world around him. Holden tries to escape crisis in his life and the phoniness of society but realizes that running away is not the answer. The negative content in the book is an accurate portrayal of Holden's character and the struggles he faces.

#### LEGAL ISSUES

Applying the First Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution is the key debate in book censorship today. The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." While the First Amendment protects freedom of religion, speech, and the press, there are limits to this freedom. Exceptions include obscenity, slander, defamation, breach of the peace, incitement to crime, sedition, and establishment of religion. The Fourteenth Amendment applies the First Amendment to States and political bodies at the local level. The Fourteenth Amendment commonly referred to as the Due Process Clause states:

Citizenship – Due process of law – Equal protection: All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall

abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Several key United States Supreme Court cases have led to the current legal understanding of book censorship. In 1957, in Butler v. Michigan, 352 U.S. 380, 77 S. Ct. 524 (1957) the Court struck down Michigan Penal Code §343 that prohibited printed material with obscene language. Butler argued that the Michigan law unduly restricted freedom of speech as protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in that the statute (1) prohibited distribution of a book to the general public on the basis of the undesirable influence it may have upon youth; (2) damned a book and proscribed its sale merely because of some isolated passages that appeared objectionable when divorced from the book as a whole; and (3) failed to provide a sufficiently definite standard of guilt. The court stated:

We have before us legislation not reasonably restricted to the evil with which it is said to deal. The incidence of this enactment is to reduce the adult population of Michigan to reading only what is fit for children. It thereby arbitrarily curtails one of those liberties of the individual, now enshrined in the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, that history has attested as the indispensable conditions for the maintenance and progress of a free society.

That same year, in Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476, 77 S. Ct. 1304 (1957) the Court redefined what constitutes obscenity. Samuel Roth was convicted for sending materials deemed to be “in the prurient interest” through the mail for advertising a publication called “American Aphrodite.” The question in Roth was whether the federal obscenity statute violated the First Amendment since it was a federal prosecution of a law enacted by the U.S. Congress. The

Supreme Court upheld this conviction, which reaffirmed that obscenity is not protected under the First Amendment. The Court opinion, written by Justice William Brennan, stated “The dispositive question is whether obscenity is utterance within the area of protected speech ... this Court has always assumed that obscenity is not protected by the freedoms of speech and press.” Ten of the fourteen states that ratified the Constitution gave no absolute protection for every utterance. The Court held “that obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press” and defined obscenity as material that appeals to the prurient interest and has no redeeming social value. Brennan stated, “unless the book is entirely lacking in ‘social importance’ it cannot be held ‘obscene.’”

In Jacobellis v. Ohio, 378 U.S. 184, 84 S. Ct. 1676 (1964) the issue was what “community” is used to apply the definition of obscenity set forth in Roth. When a Cleveland Heights, Ohio theater showed a film with an explicit sex scene, the owner, Nico Jacobellis, was arrested for violation of the Ohio state obscenity statute. Jacobellis was convicted and fined \$2500 by the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. His conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court of Ohio. The United States Supreme Court reversed the conviction, ruling that the film was not obscene since it had been screened across the country without incident. “Community does not refer to state or local communities but within “the community” in the sense of “society at large; the public or people in general.” In this case, Justice Potter Stewart made his famous observation about obscenity stating, that perhaps he would never be able to define obscenity in writing but “I know it when I see it.”

The next key case, Memoirs v. Attorney General of Massachusetts, 383 U.S. 413, 86 S. Ct. 975 (1966) came in 1966 when the United States Supreme Court clarified the definition of obscenity as established in Roth v. United States. Reversing a state court’s ruling that John



Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*," commonly known as *Fanny Hill*, written in 1750, was obscene, the United States Supreme Court declared that although the book's content could be construed as offensive and geared toward prurient interest, the book was not "utterly" without redeeming social value. Under the definition of obscenity in Roth:

Whether to the average person applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest, under this definition, as elaborated in subsequent cases, three elements must coalesce; it must be established that (a) the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to a prurient interest in sex; (b) the material is patently offensive because it affronts contemporary community standards relating to the description or representation of sexual matters; and (c) the material is utterly without redeeming value.

The Court determined that the lower court misinterpreted the social value criteria. The Court stated "A book cannot be proscribed unless it is found to be utterly without redeeming social value." Each of the three federal constitutional criteria are to be applied independently and all possible uses of the book must be considered.

In 1973, Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15, 93 S. Ct. 2607 (1973) redefined obscenity, superseding the standard established in Roth v. United States. The defendant, Marvin Miller, was convicted under California's obscenity law after mailing sexually explicit advertisements for adult books and films. The California Court of Appeals upheld the decision. The Supreme Court vacated the ruling and remanded the case, in effect affirming the lower courts' decision. The majority concluded that the standard for defining obscenity was too rigorous, since it is difficult to prove that anything is utterly without any redeeming social value. Therefore, the court redefined the standard of judging obscenity. The new standard was: (a) whether "the average

person, applying contemporary community standards” would find that work, taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest, (b) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law, and (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. The Court stated:

We conclude that the neither the State’s alleged failure to offer evidence of ‘national standards’ nor the trial court’s charge that the jury consider state community standards, were constitutional errors. Nothing in the First Amendment requires that the jury must consider hypothetical and unascertainable ‘national standards’ when attempting to determine whether certain materials are obscene as a matter of fact.

This decision, while affirming the Roth holding that obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment, held that such material can be regulated by the States, subject to specific safeguards without a showing that the material is “utterly without redeeming social value” and held that obscenity is to be determined by applying “contemporary community standards” not “national standards.” Essentially, this decision marked a more conservative standard of determining obscenity and transferred responsibility from national bodies to communities.

In 1982 in Board of Education v. Pico, 457 U.S 853, 102 S. Ct. 2799 (1982) the United States Supreme Court determined in a 5-4 majority that school boards do not have the absolute right to remove books from school libraries. The most important decision regarding book censorship in schools, this case is still the standard today.

When school board members attended a meeting in 1975 of Parents of New York United (PONY-U) they received a list that contained books considered by the PONY-U to be objectionable in other high school libraries. Richard Ahrens, the president of the school board, and Frank Martin, a board member, checked their library one evening to see which books it

housed of those cited on the list as objectionable. Eleven books from the list were found in the library, including *The Fixer* by Bernard Malamud, *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, *Best Short Stories of Negro Writers* (edited by Langston Hughes), *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich* by Alice Childress, and *A Reader for Writers* (edited by Jerome Archer). At a meeting in February 1976, the board decided to remove nine books from the district's libraries. The board wrote:

This Board of Education wants to make it clear that we in no way are BOOK BANNERS or BOOK BURNERS. While most of us agree that these books have a place on the shelves of the public library, we all agree that these books simply DO NOT belong in school libraries where they are so easily accessible to children whose minds are still in the formulative [sic] stage, and where their presence actually entices children to read and savor them...

Superintendent Richard Morrow objected to this decision stating that it was "wrong for the Board—or any other single group—to act to remove books without prolonged prior consideration of the views of both the parents whose children read these books, and the teachers who use these books to instruct... and to by-pass the established procedure for reviewing challenged books" (Karolides 167) On April 6 the board and Morrow agreed to appoint a four parent, four teacher review committee of the 11 books. The committee determined six of the eleven books, including *Slaughterhouse-Five*, should be returned to the shelves and two should be removed from the school libraries. Of the remaining four books, the committee could not agree on two, took no position on one, and recommended that the last one be made available to students only with parental approval. However, the board overruled this report and voted to return to the library only *Laughing Boy* without restriction and *Black Boy* with the restriction that

it be available only with parental approval (Foerstel 13). The Board gave no reasons for rejecting the recommendations of the committee it appointed.

On January 4, 1977, Stephen Pico and other school students filed a lawsuit claiming that their First Amendment rights had been violated by the board's removal of the books. This began a seven-year court struggle. The school board claimed the books were "anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, and just plain filthy." In a press release, the board stated, "It is our duty, our moral obligation, to protect the children in our schools from this moral danger as surely as from physical and medial dangers" (Forestel 13). The United States District Court found in favor of the school board. The students appealed this decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which then reversed the District Court decision. The school board appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which granted a review in 1982. Pico claimed the board's actions to be unconstitutional and asked the Court to recognize a First Amendment "right to know." The Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 in favor of Pico and his fellow students. The Court stated "[The School Board] rightly possesses significant discretion to determine the content of their school libraries. But that discretion may not be exercised in a narrowly partisan or political manner." The Court held "that local school boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'" The disputed books were returned to the library shelves without restriction, and a Supreme Court decision limiting the rights of a school board to determine books was established.

The plurality of the Court announced a new constitutional right described as a "right to receive" ideas. Justice Powell in a dissent stated:

The plurality opinion today rejects a basic concept of public school education in our Country; that the States and locally elected school boards should have the responsibility for determining the educational policy of the public schools. After today's decision any junior high school student, by instituting a suit against the school board or teacher, may invite a judge to overrule an educational decision by the official body designated by the people to operate the schools.

Justice Powell then stated that the new constitutional right is framed in terms that approach a meaningless generalization; that "[A] school board's discretion may not be exercised in a narrowly partisan or political manner is a standardless standard."

#### OBU LEGAL

The First Amendment applies to Congress not private entities. Ouachita Baptist University is a privately funded institution of higher education, governed by an independently elected Board of Trustees. Ouachita receives no federal or state government funding that would bring it under the purview of the First Amendment. While the First Amendment states "*Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech,*" it says nothing about private institutions. In other words, Congress cannot tell Ouachita or Ouachita's professors what to say; however, Ouachita can abridge an individual's freedom of speech. Ouachita is protected under the First Amendment, but the individual at Ouachita is not and cannot claim his or her First Amendment rights were violated by Ouachita.

While censorship at the public level is an issue of the First Amendment, censorship at a private university is 100% contractual. The legal rights of Ouachita professors are defined in The Ouachita Baptist University Faculty-Staff Handbook which states:

"The University supports in principle the statement on academic freedom of the

American Association of University Professors<sup>4</sup>:

(1) Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

(2) Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

(3) College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. (28)

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<sup>4</sup> The American Association of University Professors is an organization whose “purpose is to advance academic freedom and shared governance, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and to ensure higher education’s contribution to the common good” ([www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)). Following a series of conferences, representatives of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges agreed upon the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

The handbook makes it clear that the freedoms of the teacher in the classroom are limited. Teachers are expected to represent the University well. They are not to discuss controversial subjects in the classroom that have no relation to their subject. The Ouachita Baptist University Faculty-Staff Handbook goes on to clarify the three statements on academic freedom stating:

The above principles of Academic Freedom are interpreted in the light of Ouachita's institutional commitment to strengthening the Christian faith and life of her students, and to responsible service to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. As indicated earlier in the Manual, Ouachita finds no conflict between the professional search for truth and a personal commitment to the ultimate truth of God in Christ. (28)

As Ouachita is a Baptist college affiliated with the Arkansas Baptists State Convention, its teachers are expected to not violate Ouachita's commitment to strengthening its students' faith in the classroom.

Bryan McKinney, dean of Ouachita Baptist University's school of business, points out that legally Ouachita Baptist University can limit what teachers can and cannot discuss in their classes. However, he argues that though this is legal and defensible, it is not the foundation of a good education. The Ouachita Baptist University Faculty-Staff Handbook states that Ouachita professors' "primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it... They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge" (29). Professors' judgment and discretion in what they choose to teach in the classroom is the primary way in which books are censored at Ouachita.

When it comes to Ouachita's Library, there is a policy in place to prevent book censorship. The Ouachita Baptist University Riley-Hickingbotham Library Acquisitions Policy

states:

In its selection of materials, the Library subscribes fully to the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read Statement*, the *Library Bill of Rights*, and the *Statement on Labeling*.<sup>5</sup> The student body at Ouachita Baptist University represents many and varied groups of people. As an academic institution, the University seeks to provide materials on as many points of view as possible . . . Books on controversial subjects or issues may be acquired . . . The presence of any item in the library does not indicate endorsement of its content by the institution. All requests for reconsideration of materials purchased under the principles of this policy will be handled in the following manner. Any patron complaining about library materials will be asked to fill out the appropriate form<sup>6</sup>, which will be submitted to the Director. All such objections will be discussed by a joint meeting of the Library Committee and the Library's professional staff to determine whether or not the material was selected in accordance with this policy. After that meeting, the group will convey its findings as a recommendation to the Director. The Director shall then make the final determination, and convey the decision to the objecting patron in writing. The material in question will not be removed from the shelf while this process is underway.

As Director of Library Services, Dr. Ray Granade claims that this policy keeps others from imposing their "opinions on the reading populace. It allows you to challenge the works on the grounds of its content."

#### OBU INTERVIEWS

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendices A-C.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D.



To find out how professors perceive the issue of censorship on Ouachita's campus, I interviewed 13 professors<sup>7</sup>. The purpose of my study was to research book censorship as enforced by legal or university guidelines as well as personal beliefs. In my study, I interviewed each participant about his or her personal experiences and beliefs regarding book censorship. Each participant was given the option for his or her views to be kept confidential. Of the 13 professors interviewed, four asked for their names to be omitted from any report, with one commenting, "I guess I better make this confidential. I don't want to be fired." Clearly, this topic remains controversial today. From my research, I gathered personal stories of the effects of censorship on today's classroom as well as how professors perceive book censorship on Ouachita's campus.

The results from my survey are as follows:

● English  
 ● Religion  
 ● Art  
 ● Science  
 ● Politics  
● History

What academic areas are more prone to censorship?\*



Participants were allowed to choose more than one answer.

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<sup>7</sup> I interviewed only professors who volunteered to be a part of my study. This influenced my results as responses were mostly from professors who had an interest in my research. However, every major school of study was represented. For the list of questions, see Appendix E.

● Yes    ■ No

Have you ever wanted to teach a book but knew that it contained some controversial or objectionable content?



● Yes    ■ No

If so, did you choose to teach the book anyway?



● Yes    ■ No

Does the fact that OBU is a private, Baptist college affect your decisions about what you choose to teach?



● Yes    ■ No

Do you feel that there are some books that should not be taught at OBU?



● Yes    ■ No

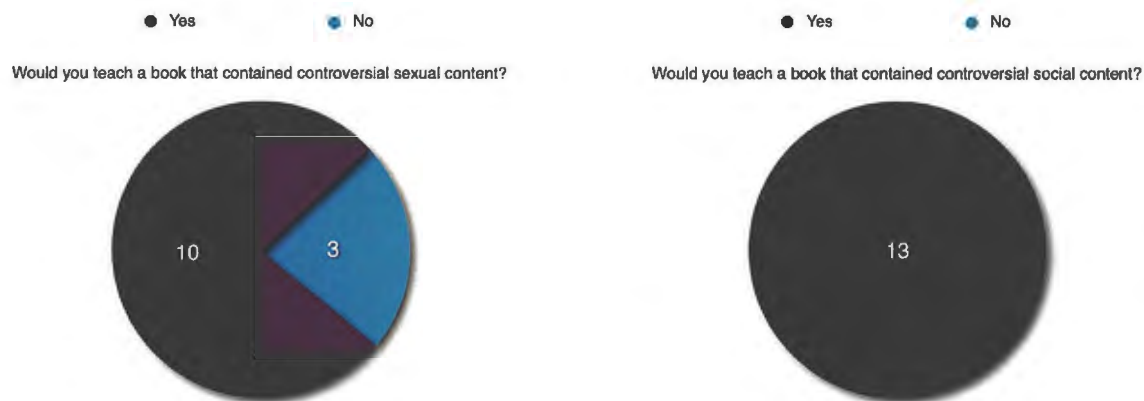
Would you teach a book that contained controversial political content?



● Yes    ■ No

Would you teach a book that contained controversial religious content?





Most professors told me they had never had any trouble with the university trying to censor what they taught. Ouachita’s policy is generally to trust the professors’ discernment in choosing what books to teach. Dr. Danny Hays, Dean of Christian Studies, states that Ouachita’s policy is to “hire good professors and let those professors...make that decision [of what to teach].” Dr. Raouf Halaby, Professor of English and Visual Arts, agrees, claiming, “the administration has enough trust in the faculty to know what is appropriate and what is not appropriate.” This method seems to be working. Although professors were divided 8-5 in whether there are some books that should not be taught at Ouachita, I only heard a few stories of students or other professors objecting to any book being taught.

The worst difficulty Dr. Johnny Wink has had in matters of censorship as a professor in the English Department was in the late 1970s when he taught John Updike’s novel *Month of Sundays*. Realizing it might create difficulties due to some graphic sexual scenes, Dr. Wink told his class at the beginning of the semester that if they ran into any books they found objectionable, he would give them a substitute book to read. Two students found the book objectionable. One student asked for another book to read. The other student read the book and

then felt guilty about it. Angry with Dr. Wink, the student considered going to administration, but out of personal weakness for Dr. Wink decided not to do so. Dr. Wink did not think that he did anything wrong, for he was teaching what he calls a “complex master work on the difficulties of being a human being and being a preacher.” Out of consideration for his student, he agreed to never teach that book again. However, he did teach Updike again in early 2000s. Teaching one of the Rabbit books, Dr. Wink had a student come to him and ask to read another book. Dr. Wink consented.

Dr. Halaby related three incidents he has been involved in regarding book censorship. Several years ago, Dr. Halaby taught a freshman English class in which a student made a sarcastic comment about Dr. Halaby’s being politically correct in discussing literature with minority, gay, and feminist themes and authors from different ethnic and national backgrounds. Dr. Halaby asked the student, “Do you not think that exposure to expressions by a variety of people is important?” Although Dr. Halaby tried to explain the importance of studying literature from different perspectives, the student was upset because he believed Dr. Halaby was promoting the ideas in the freshman-level reader.

In another case, Dr. Halaby was lecturing on *Agamemnon* in Western Letters and, in an attempt to point out the futility of war and draw a parallel between ancient and modern times, made the comment that “the Iraq War was not a war that should have been fought, and [that] it was politically motivated.” Dr. Halaby argues that he was trying to make the literature relevant to current times by drawing this parallel. A student talked to him after class and protested against his criticizing President Bush. By his own admission, the student stated that he checked with colleagues in other non-Western Letters classes Dr. Halaby had taught, and concluded that Dr. Halaby's teaching "ran counter to conservative views." Dr. Halaby was “irritated” because he felt

that the student wanted his own views taught in class instead of a wide education in which both sides of issues are presented.

Dr. Halaby's most serious incident of book censorship occurred in the early 80s when Dr. Halaby taught a Humanities literature class which consisted of three five-week module topic classes. For modern literature, Dr. Halaby taught a class called Literature of Alienation in which he used Phillip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus*. A student and her boyfriend came to his office to protest against this book. The student's boyfriend told Dr. Halaby he did not want his girlfriend reading *Goodbye Columbus*. In the novel, a young couple engages in sexual relations. Dr. Halaby states the book was "chosen for its depiction of a protagonist whose self-centered and selfish character was an excellent depiction of the social temperament of the me-generation of the 1960's." The book depicts an unhealthy relationship in which the protagonist is selfishly using his girlfriend to fill his needs. The student's boyfriend did not want his girlfriend reading the novel because he claimed, "If she reads it, we're going to have sex... We're going to be forced to do so." Dr. Halaby's policy for students who find books offensive is to let them read another book. The student's boyfriend went to Ouachita President Dr. Grant to get the book off the reading list. Dr. Halaby was called to a meeting with Dr. Grant, the chair of the English Department, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Realizing he could not coerce Dr. Halaby not to use the book, Dr. Grant asked Dr. Halaby to remove the book from the reading list for one year. Admitting that it was an issue of academic freedom, Dr. Grant asked Dr. Halaby remove the book from the list for a period of one year "as a personal favor to me" or at least until the student graduated from Ouachita. Dr. Halaby agreed to take the book off the reading list and has not taught it since. He claims it was the diplomatic choice and a good example of self-censorship.

Dr. Hays spoke of an incident that occurred five years ago in a CORE class taught by a Christian Studies adjunct professor stating, “The only one problem we’ve run into... was in a sophomore reading’s class. Someone was reading a book by Marcus Borg, who argues against the deity [and resurrection] of Christ and the historicity [and authority] of the Bible. I think on campus there was the feeling that that was inappropriate for a sophomore readings class. They are not Christian studies majors. They don’t have any way to discern” (Hays). The Dean of the Pruitt School of Christian Studies objected to this book’s being taught to this class because he claims, “there was no required textbook that offered a response to Borg’s skeptical view.” When he heard the concerns about this text and its approach to Scripture, Dr. Stan Poole, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, met with the instructor and asked if he would consider two things: “1) Would he allow [Dr. Poole] to visit the class and explain that the book had become a matter of concern, making sure students understood that it did not reflect the university's views? 2) Would he be willing to assign one or more reviews of the book that would offer an alternative perspective on Borg's major claims so that students would have other arguments to consider?” The Vice President of Academic Affairs states:

The instructor thought about these proposals, and though I'm sure he had reservations, he later contacted me by email and invited me to visit the class and also agreed to find an appropriate review to assign. When I actually attended and observed the class, I felt that the students responded to the controversial text appropriately. Some challenged Borg's claims; others agreed with certain parts of the book. Several expressed appreciation for the opportunity to consider thought-provoking material.

Though the teacher continued to teach the book through the end of the semester, he did not

choose to teach it again in subsequent semesters.

Dr. Ray Granade taught Desmond Morris' *The Naked Ape*, which looks at humans by comparing them to other animals to show how the human species has evolved. While students did not complain about the fact that the book discussed the idea of evolution, several students had a problem with a chapter in the book that dealt with human physiology. Dr. Granade's policy is that the student has the choice to read or not read any book, but there will be consequences for that choice.

In Literary Criticism in fall 2007, Dr. Amy Sonheim taught Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, a rewriting of E.M. Forster's *Howards End*, which deals with homosexuality. Sonheim explained, "To get the same shock value factor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Smith used a very steamy, what my student called 'pornographic,' love scene between a young black girl and an older British man." One student objected to reading the book. Dr. Sonheim states, "My student came to me in tears... She said she chose Ouachita as a Christian school because she didn't want to read dirt like that . . . she could not think of any redemptive reason why we had to read the novel. She had those images in her head that she could not erase." As her professor, Dr. Sonheim apologized and explained that because she is older she is more callused. Although the class finished reading the book, Dr. Sonheim told the student she did not have to finish it and gave her another book to read. The situation gave the class the opportunity to discuss book censorship and whether it was worthwhile to read controversial books. Dr. Sonheim brought to class some theoretical framework for dealing with controversial subject matter. One student who was in the class stated, " I think [it] was really helpful and an educational process in itself for us to think about that kind of thing."



Another professor was considering teaching a book in one of her classes, but she knew it had some controversial language in it. When she found out that one of her colleagues had previously taught it in a sophomore readings class, she spoke with her colleague about the book. Her colleague told her the students missed the point because they got so carried away with the language. The professor decided not to teach the book.

During the time that Dr. Granade has been the Director of Library Services, two books have been challenged. The first book was an art book; the second was Anton La Vey's *Satanic Bible*. Dr. Granade relates, "We had some people who thought that shouldn't be in our library. So it went through the process and they gave their reasons, but the library committee at the time, basically being the jury, asked the folks in religion, 'Do you see a problem with it being in the library?' and the answer was no. To the library committee, I think it was pretty clear that you had a student who was bothered by the *idea* that such a book was in the library." This person, who had not read the book and did not intend to read it, claimed the book should be removed from the library. Dr. Granade claims, "That is not a statement you can support. It is an opinion." In both cases neither of the offended parties had read the work in question. Both books remained in the library.

In addition to these two cases that were protested before the library committee, Dr. Granade mentioned several other ways people protest against books in Ouachita's library. Some people were offended by a periodical and would hide it. Others take razor blades to books and excise offending parts. Still others steal books they find offensive. Dr. Granade claims, "Mutilation and theft are forms of censorship."

I believe the fact that there have been so few controversies over book censorship at Ouachita is due to professors practicing self-censorship. Mr. McKinney claims, "I think that we



have a good faculty who understands the mission and purpose of the university and they respect that.” Crediting the University for never telling him what he can or cannot teach, Dr. Wink cites his self-censorship as the reason for having so few difficulties with objections to books he has taught. He hopes that he has not avoided controversial material for cowardly reasons but rather to practice wisdom. A strong advocate of self-censorship, Dr. Wink points out that we all practice self-censorship daily in what we choose to say or do. There are many books that Dr. Wink respects as books but would not teach at Ouachita, such as James Joyce’s *Ulysses* or Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*. Yet, he claims, “I would not ever say book x here should not be taught at Ouachita. I might decide that I ought not to teach it. . . If I have a colleague that wants to teach something I wouldn’t, I have to think that he might be wiser than I am on this.” Dr. Bass agrees, “My general perspective is that literature that is cherished by the profession is worthy of consideration to not be denied to students.”

When it comes to practicing self-censorship when teaching literature, Christians should consider Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 10. In verse 23-24 Paul states, “‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.” Paul is speaking of eating meat that has been offered to idols but the same principle applies to what one writes, says, and teaches. He goes on to say in verses 32-33, “Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.” Dr. Sonheim cites this Biblical mandate, noting that everyone is going to react differently to subject matter in literature. “some people won’t be bothered by a sex scene. Other people will be so bothered by a sex scene that it will make them so uncomfortable that any artistic reason for the scene is just mute. . .The

thing to keep in mind is the people that aren't bothered are no less zealous in the Christian faith than the people who are bothered. And the people who are bothered are no less superficial in their Christian faith.”

On the other hand, professors have the responsibility to teach students about differing views and beliefs. Several professors credited Ouachita with providing a good education unhindered by censorship. Three professors stated that Ouachita offers more freedom than other schools by giving professors the freedom to teach religious subjects and express their faith. In addition, Ouachita professors try to expose students to new ideas so as to prepare them for the real world. Mr. McKinney claims that the “university has the right to assign curriculum that it thinks is necessary . . . To really understand the world we live in we need to help students see that there are people with different faith perspectives, there are people with different sexual orientations. So I don't think we should hide from controversial issues at all.” Dr. Halaby claims, “[Ouachita's] faculty have been very judicious to exposing students to what is out in the real world . . . Acquiring an education is being exposed to things you don't like or don't approve of.” Another professor agrees, claiming, “we have a responsibility to our students to let them know what's going on.”

That means teaching ideas that are not necessarily in line with Ouachita's Evangelical views. Dr. Hays claims, “There are books that theologically we might, as evangelicals, disagree with; there is still something to be benefitted from. Sometimes those books still have some value. They have some good things. We want to read them. We want to engage. We want to pull out that 20%, 25% of insight from that book, but that takes a certain level of discernment. . . Read what people have to say even though we don't agree with them. Let's read liberal scholars, see what they have to say, and realize we can learn from them but we are going to disagree.”

In fact, as a Christian University, Ouachita is one of the best places for students to learn about controversial topics. Ouachita provides a safe environment to learn and form one's own beliefs. Referring to works by non-evangelical theologians, Dr. Hays claims, "You are going to run into these other views. You might as well deal with them here." Dr. Granade echoes this perspective stating:

Do I want my child, and by extension anybody else's child, to study what they find disturbing? The answer is yes, because the search for truth is always disturbing. The next question is: Do I want my child, and by extension any other person's child, to go through that time of unsettledness in an environment in which they have no support group or do I want them to go through it in an environment in which they do? And, of course, the answer is support group.

Ouachita's professors are in the position of guiding students through controversial subject matter. Dr. Granade claims that at Ouachita "you have people who are teachers, who are rigorous, who are studious, who ask all the things of you that any good school should ask of you, and yet can also play the role of wise council or helper. That is what you are talking about in a Christian University."

However, as Dr. Bass points out, the role of professors is to teach students, not to shock them or be intentionally provocative. There is a fine line between objectively exposing students to new ideas and different beliefs and being intentionally controversial. As Dr. Granade states: "The Christian's job is not to keep people from the truth. The Christian's job is to help them find the truth and do it in a caring manner." In general, professors at Ouachita seem to be able to provide a solid education without crossing the line of what is appropriate.

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

While most professors claim to practice discretion in what books they choose to have their students read, they are equally divided 6-6 in whether they practice self-censorship in what they choose to read on their own time.<sup>8</sup> When it comes to what one personally chooses to read, should one practice self-censorship? From a Christian perspective, there are several reasons one should practice self-censorship. As Christians, we are called to live lives that are set apart. In Romans 12:2 Paul writes, “Do not conform to the ways of the world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” Paul is writing to Romans Christians, telling them not to conform to the ways of the world at a time when Christians were living under Roman rule. Following Christ meant sacrificing old beliefs, traditions, and sometimes even one’s life. As Christians, we are called to a new standard. Being a Christian means living in this world without succumbing to moral relativism. As Christians, how we live our lives, including what we read, should be different from those who do not follow Christ.

Christians are called to live a life of obedience. If certain literature causes us to sin, then we should have nothing to do with it. In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.’” If literature causes us to have impure thoughts, then it is causing us to sin and we should not read it.

Furthermore, the Bible instructs Christians to protect their hearts and minds. In Colossians 3:1-2 Paul writes, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above,

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<sup>8</sup> One professor did not respond to this question.

not on earthly things.” Reading literature that sets our minds on earthly things goes against Paul’s exhortation. He calls us to put to death anything that belongs to our earthly nature.

In Phillipians 4:8 Paul states, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” If certain books do not fall into the previous categories (whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy) perhaps we should not be putting them into our minds. Christians are given a new life in Christ. 2

Corinthians 7:1 states, “let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” We are called to be holy and “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). If literature is contaminating our minds, bodies, or spirits, then it is wrong for us to continue reading it.

Reading literature that is not in line with Biblical standards can negatively influence Christians’ actions. There is a connection between what one puts into one’s mind and one’s actions. In July 2000, four national health associations (the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry) issued a joint statement linking media violence to increasing violence among children. “Prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence in real life . . . The conclusion of the public health community, based on over 30 years of research, is that viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behaviors in children” (Waliszewski). This is true of books as well. The more one reads of violence, sex, or other negative behaviors, the more likely one is to act on these temptations. Christians can become desensitized to the ways of this

world and begin to conform to society's moral relativism. Repeated exposure through literature to the worldly principles and actions can have a corrupting effect on Christians.

The above-mentioned reasons lead me to believe that Christians must be discerning in what we choose to read. However, there are also good reasons for reading a wide range of books, including those with controversial subject matter. Christians are called to pursue truth. Books are a source of knowledge. Even if one does not agree with the ideas in a book, it is still beneficial to read. Learning about false beliefs is a part of the process. As one Ouachita professor put it, "It is good to expose yourself to different controversial topics and ideas so that you can form your own opinion about things." For example, it is important to study other religions so as to better understand Christianity. If we are grounded in the truth, we should not fear other ideas.

The Bible itself has been censored; in fact, it is the most censored book in history. If we as Christians refuse to read controversial literature, then we cannot read our holy book with its stores of murder, incest, violence, sex, rebellion, and sinners. When asked if he would teach a book with controversial political content, Dr. Hays responded, "Absolutely, that's the Bible. If you can't do that then you can't teach the Bible." In 1993 challengers to the Bible claimed it is "obscene and pornographic" and contains "more than 300 examples of obscenities" and "language and stories that are inappropriate for children of any age, including tales of incest and murder" (Karolides 212). Clearly these topics are not off limits for Christians as God has included them in his word.

Christians are not called to reject the world by isolating themselves from society. Like Jesus, we are called to interact with the world and be a light to others. As Dr. Motl put it, "Baptists live in the world; they have to interact with it." Reading literature can help Christians relate to people. The desensitization mentioned earlier can be beneficial if it allows

Christians to interact with others more effectively. Literature can expose Christians to situations they themselves have not experienced and give them greater perspective. If a friend comes to me with a difficult situation, which I have never personally experienced but have read about, I am better prepared to deal with the situation and relate to him or her. For example, if one of my friends opens up to me about being homosexual or being a victim of abuse, I will not respond with shock or ignorance. Reading experiences can help prepare us as Christians to deal with real life situations we ourselves have never personally experienced.

Living in a fallen world, we must accept that evil is part of our world and ignoring it is ignorant. Christians cannot avoid all encounters with evil. Literature is a safe way to expose oneself to the realities of life. Knowing about evil strengthens one's morality. Reading does not equal endorsing. One can read of negative behavior in books without implying approval. In fact, reading can deepen disapproval. For example, if I read a novel such as *Slaughter-house Five*, which depicts the horrors of war, my hatred of the evils of war will grow. By avoiding controversial topics in literature, we are not preparing ourselves to understand and encounter the realities of this world.

Furthermore, one cannot judge a book unless one has personally read it. Dr. Wink claims, "I don't think a person has a moral right to have an opinion about a book you haven't read. That doesn't mean you have to read it, but if you want to discuss it and have an opinion about it you need to have read it." Christians who condemn books they have not read appear closed minded and afraid, such as those who participated in the mass Christian protest against *Harry Potter*.

Censorship necessitates an authority. For some Christians, that authority is the church as it has been in the past. When the church limits access to information, it controls truth. Christians should not be afraid of truth. As Dr. Granade puts it, "If we really believe what we say, that God

is truth, that all truth is God's truth, then we look at it, then we test it. And if we discover [that] what we thought was truth is not truth, if we are going to be Christians, then we have to sweep that away, and we have to go with the truth that we've found. But it requires a rigorous testing of what we believe to be truth." We must figure out truths and incorporate them into our belief system. In the past, the church has attempted to censor new ideas, which have turned out to be truth, such as Galileo's heliocentric theory. As Christians, we have to think for ourselves.

Through my research, study, and interviews, I have realized the dangers of censorship. The right to think, share ideas, critique others' ideas, and form one's own beliefs is an important part of human development and education. When freedom of speech is suppressed, humanity suffers. If everyone showed discernment, there would be no need for censorship; however, there are always going to be people who push the boundaries and cross the line of decency. Therefore, although public censorship is an extremely dangerous thing, I believe there are times when it is necessary. The limits to freedom of speech as current legal rulings have defined them are adequate. When it comes to censorship in schools, educators must find the balance between protecting children's innocence and providing a good education that prepares children for the realities of life. It is impossible to define a set standard of which books are appropriate for specific age groups. Therefore, it is up to individual discretion to look at books on a case-by-case basis.

Although I am hesitant to endorse public censorship except in extreme cases or in the case of children, I do advocate self-censorship. I do not think any topics should be off limits, but I do believe that one should question how certain topics are addressed. Scripture does not refrain from including controversial topics; however, it includes them for a purpose and does not go into unnecessary or gratuitous detail. As long as a work is good literature, deals with controversial



subject matter in a way that is not gratuitous or unnecessary, and makes me think or teaches me about the world, then I should not hesitate to read it despite any controversial political, religious, sexual, or social content.

## APPENDIX A

### *FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT*

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas of manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and

expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis or the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art of literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experience in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes

upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state the propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

## APPENDIX B

### *LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS*

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

## APPENDIX C

### *STATEMENT ON LABELING*

#### An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Because labeling violates the spirit of the *Library Bill of Rights*, the American Library Association opposes the technique of labeling as a means of predisposing readers against library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling (the practice of describing or designating certain library materials by affixing a prejudicial label to them or segregating them by a prejudicial system, so as to predispose readers against the materials) is an attempt to prejudice the reader, and as such it is a censor's tool.
2. Although some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association must oppose the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of a magazine or book in a library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.
4. No person should take the responsibility of labeling publications. No sizable groups of persons would be likely to agree either on the types of material which should be labeled or the sources of information which should be regarded with suspicion. As a practical consideration, a librarian who labels a book or magazine might be sued for libel.
5. If materials are labeled to pacify one group, there is no excuse for refusing to label any item in the library's collection. Because authoritarians tend to suppress ideas and attempt to coerce individuals to conform to a specific ideology, the American Library Association opposes such efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge.

APPENDIX D

PATRON REQUEST  
FOR LIBRARY MATERIAL RECONSIDERATION

MATERIAL: Book   Periodical   Other (Please specify)

Author:

Title:

Publication information:

PATRON INFORMATION

Patron represents: self   organization   \* other group   \*  
\*if other than self, please specify

(If objection is to material other than a book, please change wording of the following questions so that they apply.)

1. Have you read the entire work? Yes   No   . If not, what parts have you read?
2. Why do you wish this book's acquisition reconsidered? Please be specific, citing pages if possible.
3. What do you suggest the library do about this book?
4. Can you suggest another book to take its place?

Patron signature

Date

Received by:

APPENDIX E

PERIODICALS REQUEST FORM

TITLE:

ISSN:

INDEXED IN:

LISTED IN: Farber Katz CHOICE

ANNUAL COST: \$ (Paper) \$ (Microform)

BACKFILES: AVAILABILITY (Y/N)  
YEARS AVAILABLE  
YEARS RECOMMENDED  
COST OF BACKFILE

PROJECTED USE: GENERAL (Y/N)  
DISCIPLINE (Y/N)  
CLASS-SPECIFIC (Y/N)  
(If class, please specify)  
PERSONAL RESEARCH (Y/N)

JUSTIFICATION:

Do other periodicals cover the same area? If so, please name:

Is this periodical a general or a specialized one?

Should this periodical replace another, or be an addition to the Library's holdings? (If a replacement, please specify the periodical to be replaced.)

Would "microform only" be acceptable if available quarterly? (Y/N) If available only annually? (Y/N)

Is this periodical favorably reviewed, or is it a standard in its field? If so, give source of judgment:

FOR THE REASONS LISTED ABOVE, I RECOMMEND THE NOTED TITLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE HOLDINGS OF RILEY-HICKINGBOTHAM LIBRARY.

SIGNED:

DEPARTMENT:



## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you taught at OBU?
2. Did you teach anywhere before you came to OBU?
3. If so, where and for how long?
4. You teach in the \_\_\_\_\_ department. Do you think specific academic areas are more prone to censorship? Which areas?
5. Have you ever wanted to teach a book but knew that it contained some controversial or objectionable content?
  - If so, what book?
  - Did you choose to teach the book anyway?
  - If so, what reaction did you receive from the University? From other faculty? From the students? From parents?
6. Have you ever wanted to or thought about teaching a book but felt you could not in good conscious assign it on this campus (personal decision of self censorship)?
  - If so, what book?
  - Why was it objectionable?
7. Have you ever assigned a book to one of your classes that you felt was appropriate, which the University, other faculty, parents, or students objected to?
8. If a student objected to reading a book you assigned one of your classes, how would you handle the situation?
9. Does the fact that OBU is a private, Baptist college affect your decisions about what you choose to teach?
10. Do you feel that there are some books that should not be taught at OBU?
  - If so, what steps, if any, should OBU take to prevent these books from being taught?
  - Should there be written guidelines preventing certain books from being taught?
11. I'm looking at books that have been censored on political, religious, sexual, and social grounds.
  - Would you teach a book that contained controversial political content?
  - Controversial religious content?
  - Controversial sexual content?
  - Controversial social content?
  - Do you feel that one or more of these categories are more offensive than the others?
12. Do you practice self-censorship in what you choose to read?
  - If so, what are your personal guidelines for self-censorship?

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